

**Goal Setting, Self-Confidence and Group Cohesion as Predictors of Sports Performance
among Football Academy Trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria**

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Degree in Sports Sociology and Psychology**

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Certification

This is to certify that Adeoye Obaseyi ONIGBINDE with matriculation number LCU/PG/20/001729 carried out this research titled ” Self-Confidence, Group Cohesion and Goal Setting as Predictors of Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria” in the Department of Kinesiology, Sports Science and Health Education, Faculty of Education, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) in Sports Sociology and Psychology and that this has not been previously submitted.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to God Almighty

My Father Chief Adegboye Osuolale Onigbinde

and

My Late Mother Chief Mrs Regina Omonike Onigbinde.

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Despite the above-mentioned institution and persons who have assisted in the process of this research. I alone stand responsible for the errors, if any found in the work.

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Abstract

The research addressed the persistent underperformance of amateur footballers in the region, despite physical training efforts, by focusing on critical but often overlooked psychological determinants. This study investigated the self-confidence, group cohesion and goal-setting on sports performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. The study was based on Edwin A. Locke Goal Setting Theory and Festinger's Theory of Cohesion. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population was all

registered football academies in Ibadan Metropolis. A sample size comprised of 1 120 male trainees across five registered football academies. Standardized instruments, which included the Trait Sport-Confidence Inventory (TSCI), Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ), Goal Setting Questionnaire (GSQ) and the Perceived Sports Performance Scale (PSPS) were all adopted and used for the study. Findings revealed that the joint prediction of self-confidence components self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy did not significantly predict sports performance ($F_{(3, 116)} = 1.604, p > 0.05$). There was no significant relative prediction of self-confidence component; self-belief ($\beta = -0.287, p > 0.05$), self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.052, p = 0.05$) and self-assurance ($\beta = 0.019, p = 0.05$) on sports performance. There was a significant joint prediction of team cohesion ($F_{(4, 115)} = 2.512, p < 0.05$) on performance. There was no significant relative prediction of team cohesion components attraction to group-social ($\beta = -0.226, p > 0.05$), group integration-social ($\beta = -0.052, p > 0.05$), group integration-task ($\beta = -0.173, p > 0.05$), only attraction to group-social was a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.238, p = 0.045$). Goal-setting was not a significant predictor of sports performance ($F_{(3, 116)} = 1.273, p > 0.05$). There was no significant relative prediction of process goals ($\beta = -0.150, p = 0.126$), performance goals ($\beta = -0.057, p = 0.561$) and outcome goals ($\beta = 0.025, p = 0.788$) on sports performance. There was no significant difference among the groups based on age ($t = -1.045, df = 118, p > 0.05$). There was no significant difference among the groups based on playing experience ($F_{(2, 117)} = 1.217, p > 0.05$). Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there was no significant joint and relative prediction of self-confidence on sports performance among the respondents. There was a significant joint prediction of team cohesion on sports performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. There was no significant relative prediction of team cohesion components on sports performance only attraction to group-social was significant on sports performance among the respondents. There was no significant joint and relative prediction of goal-setting on sports performance. There was no significant difference among the groups based on age and playing experience. The study, therefore, recommended that football academies should prioritise interventions that enhance social bonding and team culture, rather than relying solely on traditional goal-setting or confidence-boosting strategies.

Keywords: Sports Performance, Self-confidence, Group Cohesion, Goal Setting, Football Academy Trainees.

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List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
SC	Self –Confidence
GC	Group Cohesion
GS	Goal Setting
S	Sports
SDF	Socio-Demographic Factors
LCFA	Lead City Football Academy
TFA	Triple 4 Football Academy
MFA	Marvelous Football Academy
KAFA	Kareem Adeyemi Football Academy
YE	Year of Experience
VNLM	Not Very Likely Me
UM	Unlikely Me
LM	Likely Me
VLM	Very Likely Me
SPSS -	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Performance in sports is a multifaceted concept that goes beyond mere physical abilities. It encompasses a myriad of factors that collectively contribute to an athlete's ability to demonstrate proficiency and skill in a particular sport. There are a wide range of physical, mental, and environmental factors that affect performance in sports. Understanding and addressing these diverse factors are crucial for maximizing athletes' potential and achieving success in sports. Physical factors here play a pivotal role in determining an athlete's performance in sports. These deal with attributes such as strength, speed, agility, endurance, flexibility, and coordination¹. In addition to the physical attributes, mental factors significantly influence an athlete's performance in sports.

Psychological characteristics such as confidence, focus, motivation, resilience, and emotional regulation are integral components of successful athletic performance². Another important factor that could determine performance is goal setting. Goal setting is a process for thinking about player's ideal future and for motivating him to turn his vision into reality. Setting specific and challenging goals can significantly enhance performance³. Specific goals lead to higher performance compared to easy or vague goals because they help focus attention, mobilize effort, increase persistence and encourage the development of strategies and action plans⁴. The process of setting goals enhances self-efficacy, which is the belief in one's ability to achieve these goals. When individuals set and achieve small goals, their confidence in their ability to achieve larger goals increases, thereby creating a positive feedback loop⁵.

A goal is something one is trying to accomplish; the object or aim of an action although goals can function at an unconscious level, the goal setting process represents the

delivery establishment and refinement of goals and the evaluation of goal progress⁶. Goals in sports and exercise settings are often looked into in terms of objective and subjective goals. Objective goals focus on attaining a specific standard of proficiency on a task, usually within a specified time. Subjective goals, on the other hand, are general statements of intent that are not measurable or objective (For instance, “I want to do well”; “I want to have fun”). Types of goals include outcome goals, performance goals and process goals⁷. Outcome goals typically focus on a competitive result of an event, such as winning a race, earning a medal or scoring more points than an opponent and achieving these goals depends not only on player’s personal efforts but also on the ability and play of the opponent.

Performance goals focus on achieving standards or performance objectives independently of other competitors, usually on the basis of comparisons with player’s own previous performances; performance goals tend to be more flexible and in player’s control. For example, running 100m in 30 seconds is an example of performance goals. Process goals, on the other hand, focus on the actions an individual must engage in during performance to execute or perform well. For instance, a basketball player may set a goal of squaring up to the basket and releasing the ball at the peak of his jump. Meta-analyses on goal setting in sport indicate that it can have a positive effect on sport performance with effect sizes generally being small to moderate^{8,9}. Sport psychology practitioners use goal setting when working with individual athletes and teams because of its performance-enhancing benefits¹⁰.

One key thing that ensures optimal performance in sport is the ability to hold a positive thought about oneself. Also believe in one’s personal skills and ability to perform optimally. This ability to believe in ones skill is referred to as self-confidence. Self-confidence plays a crucial role in helping athletes to perform at an optimal level. It is one of the key elements of psychological concept, and it has been found to be an emotional necessity. Self-confidence in sports has been defined as the beliefs or values that an

individual has about his abilities to succeed in sport¹¹. Self-confidence refers to an individual's belief in their own abilities, worth, and judgment, which allows them to approach challenges and opportunities with a positive and assertive attitude¹². It involves having a strong sense of self-assurance and a belief that one can successfully navigate various situations and achieve desired outcomes. Self-confident individuals tend to display resilience in the face of setbacks and are more likely to take calculated risks to pursue their goals¹³. Lack of self-confidence in any human life has been found to be a major cause of difficulty in such life¹¹. Self-confidence plays an active role on the mental status of athletes and it can change the reactions encountered by the athletes in training and competitions¹⁴. The concept of self-confidence in sport and exercise research has been conceptualized by expressing sport confidence, self-efficacy, performance expectancy and perceived competence¹⁵.

Self-confidence as a concept can be explained in two ways. The first one is the self-confidence in sport which is special to a certain circumstance, certainness of the performance or behavioural responses. The other way is consisted of the concept of trust that takes places consistently. In addition, the conceptualized model of sport confidence as talent and demonstration, physical and mental preparation, personal presentation, social support, leadership of the trainer, environmental comfort, demonstration of situational appropriateness and the experience gained¹⁶. Self-confidence leads to increased knowledge, taking risks, thinking positively, being courageous, setting goals, and self-belief¹⁷. These in turn influence an individual's success. An athlete's having self-confidence and showing his/her skills successfully causes him/her contribute to a happy and positive life. Athletes with high self-confidence have physical and mental skills that will reveal all their potential to reach success even under risk. In fact, it has been found that such athletes can control their anxiety more easily and focus on positive thoughts. They can also show their calm and relaxed behaviours during a competition when compared with other athletes.

Research has emphasized the importance of mental skills training in enhancing athletes' psychological readiness and performance¹⁸. Visualization techniques, goal setting, and stress management strategies are commonly employed to enhance athletes' mental toughness and resilience. A study underscores the significance of confidence in elite football players, highlighting its positive association with performance outcomes². Footballers with high levels of confidence are more likely to approach challenges with a proactive mindset, maintain focus during critical moments, and persevere in the face of adversity. Focus and concentration are essential mental skills that enable athletes to direct their attention effectively and block out distractions. Scholarshave emphasizes the role of attentional control in optimizing performance, particularly in sports requiring precision and split-second decision-making¹⁸. Athletes who can maintain a narrow focus on relevant cues while filtering out irrelevant information are better equipped to execute complex motor skills and tactical strategies.

In addition, among the psychological variables related to group dynamics, interpersonal relations play a fundamental role in achieving success¹⁹. However, for a group to develop interpersonal relations in a satisfactory way, it is necessary to understand in depth a specific psychological aspect, team cohesion²⁰. Team cohesion is very important and directly contributes to a team's outcome. Team cohesion is a process that changes over time and refers to the tendency of a group to unite and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental goals and/or to fulfil the affective needs of components^{21, 22}. Group cohesion revealed a salient impact on affective states, satisfaction and goal attainment²³. In the sport, it can be defined as 'a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs²⁴.

The conceptualization of cohesion has been found to have two distinct facets which includes an individual and a group facet. The individual facet of cohesion deals with the attractions to the group that is individual's perceptions about personal motivation to remain in a team²⁵. While the group facet deals with such concepts like group integration that dwells majorly on the individual's perceptions about the closeness, bonding, and similarity within the group as a whole. These two facets have however metamorphosed into a social orientation which deals with how the team sticks together and remains united for social functions and a task orientation which deals with how the team sticks together and remains united around the task it has to perform²⁶.

Cohesion is a concept that has received considerable attention in sport, and is defined as a vibrant process which is reflected in the propensity for a group to stay close and remain united in the pursuit of instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs²⁷. Although the majority of research pertaining to this construct has involved adult populations²⁸, there is growing interest in relation to its implications for child and youth athletes²⁷. Importantly, in younger cohorts (9-17 years), cohesion has been comprise of task and social dimensions, whereby task cohesion refers to a group's integration and commitment to their task (performance), and social cohesion refers to how well individuals are socially integrated and attracted to the group (friendship).

There are four major perspectives to explore group cohesion²⁴. Based on a framework that has largely been used in the sporting context to explore the construct of group cohesion²⁵. These dimensions include: Individual Attractions to the Group-Social (ATGS), Individual Attractions to the Group-Task (ATGT), Group Integration Social (GIS) and Group Integration Task (GIT). ATGS refers to the degree of implication in which an athlete is in the group task whereas ATGT refers to the involvement of an athlete in the group carrying out the group tasks. GIS includes the perception of the integration and the unity of the group

whereas GIT is the unity and integration of the goals to pursue achievement and to work for them²². Subsequently, the aforementioned four core dimensions may play a crucial role in their relationship regarding affects, satisfaction and goal attainment. Cohesion is very important and directly contributes to a team's outcome. If a team displays togetherness it has a greater chance of success.

Athletes within sports teams often work together to achieve a common goal. It has been found that young athletes who are closely related to their own sports teams can perceive more cohesion, which seems to be promoted by the existence of collective-oriented team members²⁹. Lack of group cohesion in team sport has been found to be a major source of failure³⁰. In a sports like football, there is need for unity among the players to ensure that the group goal is achieved. Since a team is made of individual talents, the lack of group cohesion among the team will ultimately lead to the failure of such team because the players may not play as a team. Playing as a unit in a team sport is very important as this will allow the players not only to achieve the group goal but also to interpret the technical instructions and training of the coach³¹.

In football, group cohesion influences performance outcomes across various dimensions, including tactical execution, communication, and teamwork. Research has consistently shown that cohesive teams demonstrate greater synchronization in their on-field movements, resulting in more effective offensive and defensive strategies³². Players who trust and support one another are more likely to anticipate teammates' actions, make timely passes, and execute coordinated attacks, leading to increased scoring opportunities and defensive solidity. Moreover, group cohesion enhances communication among team members, facilitating the exchange of information, instructions, and feedback during matches³³. Effective communication is essential for coordinating defensive formations, orchestrating set-piece plays, and making quick tactical adjustments in response to the dynamic nature of the game³⁴.

Cohesive teams exhibit open communication channels, where players feel comfortable expressing their ideas, concerns, and insights without fear of judgment or reprisal. Furthermore, group cohesion fosters a supportive team climate characterized by mutual respect, empathy, and camaraderie, which in turn, enhances players' motivation, confidence, and resilience on the field³⁵. In football, where matches are often decided by narrow margins and psychological factors play a significant role, a cohesive team possesses a psychological edge over its opponents. Players who feel valued and supported by their teammates are more likely to display greater self-belief, determination, and composure under pressure, leading to improved performance outcomes in critical moments of the game.

Football academies serve as specialized training programmes designed to develop young players' skills and prepare them for potential careers in professional football. These academies provide structured coaching, access to top-quality facilities, and opportunities to compete against other talented players³⁶. Players in football academies receive comprehensive instruction in technical skills, tactical understanding, physical conditioning, and sometimes, academic education, with the aim of nurturing well-rounded athletes capable of succeeding at the highest levels of the sport. On the other hand, amateur players participate in football at a recreational or non-professional level, often for enjoyment, exercise, and social interaction rather than as a career pursuit.

In addition to the aforementioned factors, playing experience and age significantly impact the performance of football trainee players. Playing experience contributes to skill acquisition, tactical knowledge, and psychological resilience³⁷. More experienced players tend to exhibit better decision-making, positional awareness, and technical proficiency, which are crucial for high-level performance. Experience also fosters mental toughness and confidence, allowing players to handle competitive pressures more effectively. Moreover, playing experience fosters mental toughness and confidence, essential traits for handling the

pressures of competition. Experienced players are often more resilient, maintaining focus and composure under stress, which can positively influence their performance during critical moments of a game³⁸. This mental fortitude allows them to recover from setbacks quickly and maintain a high level of performance throughout the match.

Age influences physical and cognitive development, affecting performance. Younger players (10-15 years) are in critical periods for developing fundamental motor skills and tactical understanding³⁹. As players age (16-25 years), they typically experience increases in strength, endurance, and strategic thinking, essential for peak performance in football. However, the benefits of age and experience are maximized when training is age-appropriate and developmentally tailored. Effective coaching must consider both age and experience to enhance player development and optimize performance outcomes⁴⁰.

In Ibadan, academy trainees often undergo training programmes that focus predominantly on technical skills and physical conditioning, with limited emphasis on psychological aspects such as group cohesion and self-confidence. Research suggests that many football academies prioritize technical proficiency and tactical understanding over psychological development. Players may lack sufficient guidance in developing vital psychological skills for success both on and off the field. In all, understanding the roles of self-confidence, group cohesion and goal setting is vital for optimizing the performance of football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis. By addressing these psychological factors, coaches can enhance individual and team success, fostering a culture of excellence and sustained achievement. Despite research on self-confidence, group cohesion and goal setting in sports, a gap exists for football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis. Hence, this study will investigate their combined effects on performance, considering playing experience and age.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Sports performance encompasses the physical, mental, and strategic abilities that contribute to success in athletic activities. Benefits include improved physical health, mental resilience, discipline, teamwork, and career opportunities. Despite these advantages, it has been observed that football trainees in Ibadan face significant challenges in achieving optimal performance, often due to psychosocial, environmental, and motivational barriers. Many lack the psychological skills, such as goal setting, self-confidence, and group cohesion are necessary for success. These deficiencies hinder both individual and team performance, making it difficult for trainees to transition to higher competitive levels. Studies have shown that self-confidence enhances performance and resilience, while group cohesion fosters teamwork and satisfaction. Addressing these psychological aspects is crucial for developing well-rounded athletes capable of excelling in competitive football environments.

Coaches have come to realise that self-confidence, group cohesion and goal setting are particularly important for optimal performance in sports. First of which is the fact that coaches strive for an effective cohesive team and secondly because group cohesion has been found to relate with satisfaction of group members, team success and performances. It has been observed that amateur football teams in Ibadan are deficient in two key skills: self-confidence and group cohesion, hindering their overall performance. The absence of goal setting, self-confidence and group cohesion adversely impacts team performance in high-ranking competitions, hindering collaboration and belief in abilities. This deficiency may hinder trainees' transition to professional status, limiting opportunities for advancement. Addressing these shortcomings is vital for success. Coaches have however paid little or no attention to the impact of these psychological factors may have on the performance of their players. It is in the light of this that this study investigated the goal setting, self-confidence and group cohesion as predictors of performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan

Metropolis. It also investigated how the moderating variables of age and playing experience in relation to performance.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate goal setting, self-confidence, and group cohesion as predictors of performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to:

- i. assess the level of sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- ii. determine the joint prediction of goal setting (process goals, performance goals, and outcome goals) on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- iii. establish the relative prediction of process goals, performance goals, and outcome goals on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- iv. examine the joint prediction of self-confidence (self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy) on sports performance among football academy trainees within the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- v. ascertain the relative prediction of self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy on sports performance among football academy trainees within the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- vi. determine the joint prediction of team cohesion (attraction to group-social, attraction to group-task, group integration-social, and group integration-task) on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

- vii. establish the relative prediction of attraction to group-social, attraction to group-task, group integration-social, and group integration-task on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- viii. examine the difference in sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria based on age.
- ix. determine the difference in sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria based on playing experience.

1.4 Research Question

This study answered the following research question:

1. What is the level of performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria?

1.5 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level:

1. There is no significant joint prediction of goal setting (process goals, performance goals, and outcome goals) on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relative prediction of process goals, performance goals, and outcome goals on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant joint prediction of self-confidence (self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy) on sports performance among football academy trainees within the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

4. There is no significant relative prediction of self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy on sports performance among football academy trainees within the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
5. There is no significant joint prediction of team cohesion (attraction to group-social, attraction to group-task, group integration-social, and group integration-task) on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
6. There is no significant relative prediction of attraction to group-social, attraction to group-task, group integration-social, and group integration-task on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.
7. There is no significant difference in sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria based on age.
8. There is no significant difference in sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria based on playing experience.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be useful to a number of stakeholders in the sports industry, which include the players, coaches, sports administrators, policymakers, and the field of sports psychology. This study brought to light the importance of the psychological component to training for trainees in team sports. The outcomes of this research maybe beneficial to the players as it will acquaint them with the effectiveness and enhancement potential of elevated self-confidence, goal setting and the team's group cohesion on their performance. This study also informed coaches on how to employ psychological interventions to improve self-confidence, goal setting and group cohesion among teammates and how this could be employed to improve the team's performances.

The outcome of the study provided scientific data on the importance of the mental process in the preparation of the team to achieve success in the sport. Additionally, this study added to the body of knowledge in the field of sports psychology and kinesiology. This was because the study provided scientific data on how psychological components of sports such as self-confidence and group cohesion enhanced athletes' sports performance.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focused on goal setting, self-confidence, and group cohesion as predictors of sports performance of football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. For this study, the independent variables were goal setting, self-confidence, and group cohesion, while the dependent variable was sports performance. The moderating variables were age and playing experience. The respondents were football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

1.8 Limitations to the Study

One of the major limitations encountered in this study was that some players were reluctant in filling out the questionnaires claiming that they had tight schedules. However, the researcher, with the help of research assistants were able to persuade and administer the questionnaires after their trainings. They were also assured that the exercise would not take much of their time.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Terms related to this study are operationally defined as follows:

Sports Performance: This refers to the measurable outcomes and achievements of football trainees in competitive sporting activities.

Goal Setting: this refers to defining clear, specific, and measurable objectives, setting realistic and achievable targets, ensuring goals are relevant to broader objectives, establishing

a timeline for achievement, and incorporating regular feedback mechanisms to adjust and refine goals as needed to maintain alignment with desired outcomes.

Process Goals: This means the actions a trainee must engage in during performance to execute or perform well.

Performance Goals: These are goals set by a trainee by focusing on achieving standards or performance objectives independently of other players, such as improving personal standard.

Outcome Goals: This occurs when a football trainee focuses on a competitive result of a competition.

Self-confidence: This is expressing sport confidence, self-efficacy, performance expectancy and perceived competence.

Assertiveness: this refers to the ability to express one's thoughts, feelings, and needs confidently and respectfully. For football trainees, assertiveness means communicating effectively with teammates and coaches, standing up for themselves on the field, and making decisive actions during games, which can enhance team dynamics and personal performance.

Self-belief: Self-belief means trusting the skills and decisions of football trainee on the field, which boosts their performance, helps them overcome challenges, and contributes to their overall success in the sport.

Self-efficacy: This refers to the belief in one's ability to achieve specific goals or tasks. For football trainees, self-efficacy means feeling confident by the football trainees that they can successfully execute plays, improve their skills, and contribute positively to their team's performance during games.

Group Cohesion: This refers to the interaction among players with the same aim at performance improvement.

Attraction to the Group-Social (ATG-S): This refers to football trainees' interest in and enjoyment of the social aspects of being part of a group, such as friendships and social interactions with other group members.

Attraction to the Group-Task (ATG-T): This means the football trainees' enthusiasm and dedication to team practices, strategies, and working together to win games and improve performance.

Group Integration-Social (GI-S): This refers to how well football trainees bond and interact socially. The strength of their friendships, trust, and social connections within the team, which can enhance team spirit and cooperation both on and off the field.

Group Integration-Task (GI-T): this refers to how well group members work together to achieve common goals. For football trainees, this means their ability to effectively collaborate, coordinate, and support each other during practices and matches, which enhances the team's overall performance and success in achieving their objectives.

Football Trainees: Football trainees are football players within Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria who participate in structured training programmes designed to develop their skills, tactics, and physical abilities in football with the aim to prepare them for competitive football at various levels, including amateur and professional.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Reviews

2.1.1 Goal Setting

In the realm of sports, achieving excellence goes beyond physical prowess and training regimes. Psychological skills are indispensable components that enable athletes to optimize their performance and manage the mental demands of their sport.

Goal Setting: One of the foundational psychological skills in sports is goal setting. Athletes use this skill to establish clear, specific, and challenging objectives that guide their training and competition¹. Goal setting provides a sense of direction and motivation, helping athletes navigate the path to success.

Recent research underscores the practical importance of goal setting in sports. Athletes who

set specific and challenging goals tend to outperform those who do not¹. This skill enables athletes to maintain motivation and commit to their training, ultimately leading to better performance and achievement of their desired outcomes.

Visualization and Imagery: Visualization and imagery are psychological skills that allow athletes to mentally rehearse their actions and scenarios related to their sport. By vividly picturing themselves succeeding, athletes enhance their motor skills and improve their focus and concentration².

Recent studies have further solidified the effectiveness of visualization and imagery in sports. Athletes who engage in regular mental rehearsal tend to exhibit better performance and composure during competition². This skill allows athletes to fine-tune their mental approach, optimize their physical abilities, and prepare for high-pressure situations.

Self-Talk: Self-talk is the practice of using inner dialogue to influence thoughts and emotions. Athletes use this psychological skill to maintain a positive and motivating self-narrative, which enhances their self-belief and focus¹. Recent research findings highlight the practical applications of self-talk in sports. Positive and motivational self-talk has been shown to boost an athlete's self-confidence and focus, leading to improved performance¹. Self-talk helps athletes maintain mental fortitude and composure during competition, enabling them to perform at their best.

Motivation: Motivation is a fundamental psychological skill that fuels an athlete's commitment to their goals and training. Athletes must sustain their motivation, especially during gruelling training regimens, to achieve peak performance. Goal setting, self-talk, and intrinsic motivation contribute to an athlete's drive and commitment to their sport¹.

Recent research has highlighted the effectiveness of intrinsic motivation in sports. Athletes who are intrinsically motivated, meaning they engage in their sport for the sheer joy of it, tend to exhibit higher levels of commitment and better performance outcomes¹. This

psychological skill empowers athletes to maintain high levels of motivation, even during challenging periods.

Concentration and Focus: Concentration and focus are critical psychological skills that allow athletes to maintain optimal attention and precision in executing their skills. Athletes must be able to filter out distractions, stay present in the moment, and direct their attention to relevant cues².

Recent research underscores the practical significance of concentration and focus in sports. Athletes who possess strong concentration skills tend to perform more consistently and accurately². These skills enable athletes to execute their physical skills with precision and maintain unwavering focus, even in high-pressure situations.

Emotional Regulation: Emotional regulation is a key psychological skill that enables athletes to manage their emotions effectively. In the world of sports, emotions can fluctuate widely, from excitement and joy to frustration and anxiety. Emotional regulation skills help athletes maintain a balanced emotional state, particularly during competition¹.

Recent research has emphasized the practical importance of emotional regulation in sports. Techniques such as relaxation and visualization have been found to reduce anxiety and enhance emotional control¹. This skill empowers athletes to manage their emotions and perform at their best, even in challenging situations.

2.1.1.1 The Power of Goal Setting in Sports

Goal setting is a powerful psychological skill that has a profound impact on an athlete's performance and overall success in the world of sports. It provides a clear sense of direction, motivation, and purpose, shaping an athlete's journey to excellence. Goal setting is a fundamental psychological skill in sports that enables athletes to establish clear, specific, challenging, and time-bound objectives³. Goals serve as the guiding force that steers an athlete's training and competition, providing a roadmap to their desired outcomes. Goal

setting is not merely about the destination but also about the journey, as it motivates athletes to strive for continuous improvement. Studies have consistently shown that athletes who set specific, challenging, and time-bound goals tend to outperform those who do not³. These findings highlight the practical importance of goal setting as a cornerstone for achieving excellence in sports.

Effective goal setting in sports comprises several key components that help athletes create clear and actionable objectives³:

Specificity: Goals should be precise and clearly defined. Athletes need to know exactly what they are striving to achieve.

Challenge: Goals should be challenging but attainable. They should push athletes out of their comfort zones without being unrealistic.

Time-Bound: Goals should have a specific timeframe or deadline. This helps athletes track their progress and stay accountable.

Measurability: Goals should be quantifiable so that athletes can objectively assess their progress.

Relevance: Goals should be relevant to an athlete's overall objectives and aspirations.

2.1.1.2 Practical Applications of Goal Setting

Goal setting is more than just creating a wish list of aspirations; it involves developing a structured plan to achieve these goals. The practical applications of goal setting in sports are multi-faceted³:

Training: Athletes use goal setting to structure their training regimens. By setting specific training objectives, athletes can optimize their performance and monitor their progress.

Competition: Goals play a vital role in competition. Athletes establish performance and outcome goals to provide direction and motivation during the heat of battle.

Motivation: Goal setting is a powerful motivator. It ignites an athlete's drive and commitment

to achieve their desired outcomes, even when faced with adversity.

Performance Evaluation: Goals provide a framework for evaluating performance. Athletes can compare their actual performance to their set goals, identifying areas for improvement.

Resilience: Goals also contribute to mental resilience. Athletes can use setbacks and failures as opportunities for growth, keeping their motivation alive by setting new objectives.

Recent studies have expanded our understanding of the practical applications and effectiveness of goal setting in sports². Studies have delved into the impact of goal setting on athlete performance and motivation, further reinforcing its significance. One of the key findings in recent research is the influence of goal specificity on athlete performance². Athletes who set specific goals tend to perform better, as these goals provide a clear sense of direction and purpose. The study highlights the practical importance of establishing precise objectives in goal setting.

Furthermore, research has revealed that challenging but attainable goals are more effective in maintaining athlete motivation². Setting goals that push an athlete's limits while remaining within the realm of possibility fuels their motivation and drive, resulting in better performance.

2.1.2 Concept of Self-confidence in Sports.

Self-confidence is a multifaceted and dynamic psychological attribute that holds immense significance in the world of sports. It defines an athlete's belief in their abilities, influences their performance, and plays a pivotal role in their ability to set and achieve goals. Self-confidence is instrumental in helping athletes navigate the pressures of high-stakes competitions and contributes to their overall psychological well-being. It is a critical component of sports psychology that continues to be a subject of research, practice, and development in the realm of sports performance.

It is a critical psychological attribute that plays a pivotal role in sports performance.

Athletes often face intense physical and mental challenges, and their ability to believe in their capabilities, set and achieve goals, and maintain composure under pressure significantly influences their success. This essay explores the definition and significance of self-confidence in sports, providing insights into the vital role it plays in athlete development and achievement. Self-confidence in sports can be defined as an athlete's belief in their own abilities to perform effectively in their chosen discipline⁴. It encompasses a combination of self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy, which are integral components of an athlete's mental makeup. Self-confidence is not a fixed trait but rather a dynamic, situation-dependent psychological construct, meaning it can fluctuate in response to various factors such as the level of competition, past performances, and the athlete's overall psychological state⁵.

It is a key determinant of athletic performance. Athletes with higher self-confidence tend to set more ambitious goals, persist through challenges, and demonstrate better focus and execution during competitions⁴. As a result, they are more likely to achieve their full potential in their respective sports. Sports often involve high-pressure situations, such as crucial game moments or decisive competitions. Self-confident athletes are better equipped to handle these stressful situations. Their belief in their abilities helps them maintain composure, make effective decisions, and perform at their best when the stakes are high⁶.

It is closely linked to goal-setting and goal attainment. Athletes with self-confidence are more likely to set specific, challenging, and achievable goals, and they possess the motivation and belief necessary to pursue and achieve those goals⁵. This contributes to their long-term success. Self-confidence is not limited to performance benefits; it also has positive implications for an athlete's psychological well-being. High self-confidence is associated with greater emotional stability, self-esteem, and a more positive self-image⁴. This, in turn, fosters mental toughness and the ability to handle setbacks effectively.

Self-confidence is a cornerstone of success in sports, a psychological attribute that can

significantly influence an athlete's performance and overall well-being. In sports, self-confidence sports is not a one-dimensional construct but rather a multi-faceted concept with various components. Researchers have traditionally distinguished between trait self-confidence and state self-confidence⁴. Trait self-confidence represents an athlete's overall belief in their abilities, while state self-confidence refers to the momentary or situational variations in confidence levels. Recent research⁴ has further underscored the importance of distinguishing between these two dimensions, as they can yield distinct insights into athlete performance. Additionally, self-confidence in sports can be sport-specific, reflecting an athlete's confidence in their abilities within a particular discipline or context. This sport-specific self-confidence recognizes that athletes may have varying levels of confidence in different aspects of their sport, such as technical skills, decision-making, or physical conditioning⁵.

Determinants of Self-Confidence

Several factors contribute to an athlete's self-confidence, both on and off the field. Some of the key determinants include:

Self-Efficacy: Self-efficacy, a core concept in social cognitive theory⁶, refers to an athlete's belief in their capability to perform specific tasks within their sport. Recent research highlights the significance of self-efficacy in shaping an athlete's confidence⁷. Athletes with higher self-efficacy are more likely to approach challenges with confidence and perseverance.

Past Performance: An athlete's past experiences and performance outcomes can significantly influence their self-confidence. Recent studies have shown that athletes who have a history of success and positive outcomes tend to exhibit higher self-confidence⁸. Conversely, repeated failures or setbacks can erode an athlete's confidence.

Social Support and Feedback: Athletes often rely on the support and feedback of coaches,

teammates, and sports psychologists to bolster their self-confidence. Scholars have highlighted the role of social interactions and external sources of feedback in enhancing athlete self-confidence⁹. Constructive feedback and encouragement can positively impact an athlete's belief in their abilities.

Psychological Preparation: Mental skills training, a fundamental component of sports psychology, plays a pivotal role in enhancing self-confidence. The effectiveness of positive psychology interventions, mindfulness practices, and goal-setting techniques in bolstering an athlete's self-confidence¹⁰. These psychological strategies can help athletes develop a resilient and confident mindset.

Understanding the concepts of self-confidence in sports is not just an academic exercise; it has significant practical implications for athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists.

Coaching and Feedback: Coaches and support staff can use the knowledge of self-confidence determinants to provide athletes with tailored feedback and support. Recent studies have emphasized the role of coaches in building self-confidence through effective feedback and motivation¹¹. Coaches can cultivate an environment that fosters positive self-belief and resilience.

Mental Skills Training: Sports psychologists can employ various mental skills training techniques to enhance an athlete's self-confidence. Cognitive-behavioral interventions, imagery, self-talk, and goal-setting strategies can all be incorporated into training programs, as suggested². These techniques equip athletes with the tools to manage anxiety, setbacks, and self-doubt effectively.

Individualized Approaches: Recognizing the multidimensional nature of self-confidence, personalized interventions can be developed to address an athlete's specific needs and challenges. Recent research has demonstrated the effectiveness of tailored interventions that consider an athlete's unique characteristics and experiences¹². This individualized approach

can maximize the impact of self-confidence enhancement.

Holistic Athlete Development: Beyond performance outcomes, self-confidence contributes to an athlete's psychological well-being and resilience. Athlete development programs can encompass mental toughness training and strategies for coping with pressure¹³. These holistic approaches focus on nurturing the athlete's self-confidence while promoting overall mental health.

2.1.2.1 The Role of Self-Confidence on Athlete Performance

In the world of sports psychology, the role of self-confidence in athlete performance is undeniable. It is a dynamic and multifaceted construct that enhances performance, fosters resilience under pressure, fuels goal achievement, and contributes to an athlete's psychological well-being and mental toughness. Self-confidence, in the context of sports, is defined as an athlete's belief in their own abilities to perform effectively in their chosen discipline¹. It encompasses self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy, which are integral components of an athlete's mental makeup. Self-confidence is not a fixed trait but rather a dynamic, situation-dependent construct that can fluctuate in response to various factors such as the level of competition, past performances, and the athlete's overall psychological state³.

One of the most compelling aspects of self-confidence is its undeniable impact on athlete performance. Research has consistently shown that athletes with higher self-confidence tend to set more challenging goals and persist through adversities, leading to improved focus and execution during competitions¹. These athletes are more likely to perform to their full potential, displaying a higher level of skill and success. Recent studies have shed light on the significant role of self-confidence in optimizing motor performance. For example, scholars¹⁴ demonstrated that self-confidence enhances an athlete's motor skill acquisition and execution, particularly when confronted with complex, precision-demanding tasks. This implies that self-confidence not only boosts athletic performance but also aids in

skill development.

High-pressure situations are a common part of sports, and self-confidence plays a crucial role in an athlete's ability to navigate these stressors. Self-confident athletes tend to handle high-pressure moments more effectively. Their belief in their abilities helps them maintain composure, make well-informed decisions, and perform at their best when the stakes are at their highest³. Recent research⁴ emphasized that self-confidence serves as a buffer against the negative effects of anxiety and stress, enhancing an athlete's adaptability and resilience during competitions.

Self-confidence is intricately linked with an athlete's goal-setting and achievement. Athletes with higher self-confidence are more likely to set specific, challenging, and achievable goals. They possess the motivation and belief necessary to pursue and ultimately attain these goals². Recent studies have corroborated this relationship. For instance, findings from certain studies¹⁵ highlighted that self-confident athletes demonstrated superior commitment to their training regimens and were more likely to achieve their long-term athletic objectives. Beyond the performance benefits, self-confidence also positively affects an athlete's psychological well-being. High self-confidence is associated with greater emotional stability, self-esteem, and a more positive self-image¹. This contributes to an athlete's overall mental toughness. There is a link between self-confidence and an athlete's capacity to cope with setbacks, suggesting that self-confident individuals exhibit better resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity¹⁶.

Self-confidence does not operate in isolation. It interacts with various other psychological constructs, further influencing athlete performance. One such construct is self-efficacy, which refers to an athlete's belief in their capability to execute specific tasks within their sport. Recent research⁹ explored the reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and self-confidence, revealing that an increase in one construct often leads to an increase in the other.

This interconnectedness amplifies the positive effects of self-confidence on athlete performance.

2.1.2.2 Evolution of the Understanding of Self-Confidence in Sports

Self-confidence is a concept deeply embedded in the world of sports psychology. Over the years, the understanding of self-confidence in sports has evolved significantly, shaped by research, empirical findings, and advances in the field. In the early history of sports psychology, self-confidence was often portrayed as a relatively straightforward and fixed trait. Athletes were believed to either possess self-confidence or not, and this attribute was thought to remain constant across situations. Such simplistic notions failed to capture the complexity and dynamism of self-confidence in sports.

They introduced the concept of trait self-confidence and state self-confidence, recognizing that self-confidence could indeed vary in response to different situations. This paradigm shift marked the beginning of a more nuanced understanding of self-confidence. One of the most influential developments in the understanding of self-confidence was the introduction of the concept of self-efficacy by Albert Bandura in the 1970s. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to perform specific tasks successfully¹⁷. This construct emphasized that self-confidence was not a broad, global trait but rather a domain-specific perception. It was no longer a question of whether an athlete had self-confidence but, rather, where they had it. Recent research has further explored the domain-specific nature of self-efficacy¹⁸. This research has shown that an athlete's self-efficacy can vary across different aspects of their sport, from technical skills to mental resilience. Understanding the domain-specificity of self-confidence is crucial for tailoring interventions to enhance an athlete's performance effectively.

As the field of sports psychology continued to evolve, it became evident that self-confidence is not static but dynamic. Athletes' confidence levels fluctuate depending on various factors,

including their recent performances, injury status, and the level of competition. This dynamic nature was acknowledged in research conducted by certain scholars⁹, who found that athletes' self-confidence levels could vary significantly between training sessions and competitions. The dynamic perspective on self-confidence has important implications for coaches and sports psychologists. Recent studies have highlighted the need for interventions that address the situational variability of self-confidence, providing athletes with strategies to bolster their self-confidence in high-pressure situations¹⁹. This shift in focus from trait-based to dynamic self-confidence has improved the practical applications in sports psychology.

The evolution of self-confidence in sports also involved a deeper understanding of the social and cognitive factors that influence an athlete's confidence. Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory emphasized the role of social influence, self-regulation, and observational learning in shaping self-confidence²⁰. Recent research by Martin and Moore²¹ highlighted how peer and coach feedback, as well as observing successful performances, can significantly impact an athlete's self-confidence. This perspective underscores the importance of the social environment in which athletes develop and maintain their self-confidence. Coaches and teammates play a pivotal role in building an athlete's self-belief. Recognizing the power of social interactions and feedback in shaping self-confidence has paved the way for more holistic interventions in sports psychology.

As the understanding of self-confidence in sports advanced, researchers and practitioners began to acknowledge the significance of situational and competitive factors. Athletes' self-confidence can be strongly influenced by the context in which they compete. Recent research demonstrated that athletes may experience fluctuations in self-confidence based on the importance of a particular competition or the quality of their opponents²². The pressure of high-stakes events can either boost an athlete's self-confidence due to the challenge or undermine it due to anxiety. Understanding these situational and competitive

influences is crucial for effective sports psychology interventions. Recent studies have focused on strategies to help athletes maintain their self-confidence in high-pressure situations²³. These strategies include mental imagery, self-talk, and mindfulness techniques designed to enhance an athlete's ability to cope with the demands of competitive sports.

The understanding of self-confidence in sports has evolved significantly from early notions of a fixed trait to a dynamic and domain-specific construct. The introduction of self-efficacy, the consideration of the social environment, and the recognition of situational and competitive factors have all contributed to a more nuanced perspective. This evolving comprehension empowers coaches, athletes, and sports psychologists to tailor interventions that are both effective and responsive to the dynamic nature of self-confidence in sports.

2.1.2.3 Key Milestones and Contributors in the Field of Sports Psychology

The field of sports psychology has witnessed significant growth and transformation since its inception, marked by key milestones and the invaluable contributions of influential figures. From early pioneers like Coleman Griffith to contemporary experts in positive psychology and coaching, these figures have left a lasting imprint on the field. Recent developments, including the integration of technology and the emphasis on athlete mental health, continue to expand the horizons of sports psychology. The evolution of sports psychology is an ongoing journey, characterized by adaptability and a commitment to enhancing athlete well-being and performance.

The roots of sports psychology can be traced back to the late 19th century. In 1898, Norman Triplett conducted pioneering research on social facilitation, one of the earliest investigations into the psychological aspects of sports²⁴. His work marked the inception of sports psychology as a distinct field. One of the field's earliest contributors was Coleman Griffith, often regarded as the "father of sports psychology."

In the mid-20th century, researchers explored the relationship between anxiety and

performance, emphasizing the importance of an optimal level of arousal for peak performance. This research provided insights into the impact of psychological factors on athletic achievement, setting the stage for future investigations. In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced the "five stages of grief," a model originally developed to understand the psychological responses to death and dying. In 2003, this model was adapted for use in sports psychology by Mainwaring and Finney. It offered a framework for athletes and coaches to navigate the emotional responses to setbacks and losses, aiding in the development of coping strategies²⁵.

The 1980s witnessed the establishment of academic programs and professional organizations dedicated to sports psychology. The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) was founded in 1986 and played a significant role in the development and promotion of applied sport psychology²⁶. This organizational milestone contributed to the standardization and professionalization of the field. Biofeedback, an innovative technique that allows athletes to monitor and control physiological responses, gained prominence in the late 20th century. Pioneers in this field, demonstrated the effectiveness of biofeedback in improving athletic performance and managing anxiety²⁷. Recent studies, continue to explore the application of biofeedback to enhance athlete self-regulation and mental skills training²⁸.

The turn of the 21st century saw the integration of positive psychology into sports psychology. Martin Seligman, a prominent figure in positive psychology, emphasized the importance of cultivating strengths and well-being. Researchers applied this perspective to sports psychology, focusing on the development of resilience, grit, and character in athletes²⁹. Recent studies have extended this approach to explore the impact of positive psychology interventions on athlete mental health and well-being³⁰. Several contemporary figures have made significant contributions to sports psychology. Angela Duckworth's work on "grit" and its role in predicting long-term success has garnered attention in the field³¹. Her research has

opened new avenues for exploring the psychological factors that underpin athlete perseverance and achievement. Furthermore, the work of Daniel Gould, a leading expert in the field, continues to shape the development of coaching and sport psychology²⁹. His contributions have been instrumental in fostering a deeper understanding of the psychological aspects of coaching and athlete development.

The last few years have witnessed several notable developments in the field. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted research on the psychological impact of disruptions to sports competitions and athlete mental health. Studies have shed light on the mental health challenges faced by athletes during the pandemic and underscored the importance of providing adequate support and resources³². The emergence of technology and virtual reality has also influenced sports psychology. The use of virtual reality-based interventions to enhance athlete self-confidence and performance³³. This innovative approach demonstrates the field's adaptability to new technologies for athlete mental skills training.

Factors Influencing Self-confidence

Self-confidence is a pivotal psychological attribute in sports that is influenced by a myriad of factors, reflecting the complex nature of this concept. One of the most influential determinants is self-efficacy, a foundational concept in social cognitive theory¹⁷. Athletes with higher self-efficacy tend to approach challenges with greater self-assurance, believing in their capacity to perform specific tasks effectively. Recent studies³⁴ emphasize the critical role of self-efficacy in shaping an athlete's confidence. Another crucial factor is past performance and experiences. An athlete's history of success and positive outcomes is strongly correlated with higher self-confidence²¹. In contrast, repeated failures or setbacks can erode an athlete's confidence, underscoring the significant influence of past performance on self-confidence.

Social support and feedback from coaches, teammates, and sports psychologists also play a

vital role in an athlete's confidence levels³⁵. Constructive feedback and encouragement can significantly impact an athlete's belief in their abilities. The role of coaches in building self-confidence through effective feedback and motivation³⁰. The field of sports psychology continues to explore and deepen our understanding of these and other factors that shape self-confidence, with contemporary research shedding light on the dynamic nature of this crucial psychological attribute.

2.1.2.4 Personal factors that influence self-confidence

Various personal factors are essential to an athlete's psychological makeup. One of the foremost personal factors is an athlete's self-efficacy, a belief in their own ability to perform specific tasks within their sport. This domain-specific perception is closely tied to self-confidence and has garnered significant attention in recent years³⁴. An athlete's self-efficacy reflects their confidence in particular aspects of their sport, be it technical skills, decision-making, or physical conditioning. Furthermore, past experiences and performances have a profound impact on an athlete's self-confidence. Athletes with a history of success and positive outcomes tend to exhibit higher self-confidence²¹. Conversely, repeated failures or setbacks can erode an athlete's confidence, underlining the enduring influence of past performance on self-confidence.

These personal factors do not exist in isolation but interact with each other and are modulated by an athlete's unique characteristics and experiences. The need for tailored interventions that consider these individual differences, emphasizing a holistic approach to self-confidence enhancement³⁶. Understanding these personal factors is integral to the quest for improved self-confidence and, subsequently, enhanced athletic performance.

Self-confidence and self-esteem are two closely intertwined psychological constructs that play pivotal roles in an athlete's performance and well-being. Recent research has shed light on the dynamic relationship between self-esteem and self-confidence in sports. The interplay

between self-esteem and self-confidence in sports is dynamic and multifaceted, with each construct influencing and reinforcing the other. Recent research has illuminated the reciprocal relationship between these constructs and the profound impact they have on an athlete's performance and psychological well-being. Nurturing positive self-regard and self-worth can be instrumental in boosting self-confidence, while overly inflated self-esteem should be carefully balanced to avoid overconfidence. The field of sports psychology continues to explore these interactions, offering insights and interventions to help athletes harness the power of self-esteem to enhance their self-confidence, ultimately contributing to their success on and off the field.

Self-esteem is a broader, more general construct. It relates to an individual's overall evaluation of their self-worth and self-image. An athlete's self-esteem is influenced by various life experiences, societal factors, and personal beliefs³⁷. It can impact how an athlete views themselves in and out of the sporting context.

Recent research has highlighted the reciprocal relationship between self-esteem and self-confidence in sports. Athletes with higher self-esteem tend to exhibit greater self-confidence in their sporting abilities. This positive self-regard spills over into their self-belief on the field³⁸. Conversely, an athlete's self-confidence can also bolster their self-esteem. Successful performances and achievements in sports can contribute to an athlete's overall sense of self-worth³⁹. The recognition of their competence and accomplishments in sports can elevate their self-esteem and, consequently, their self-confidence in various life domains.

Positive self-regard, a central aspect of self-esteem, can significantly enhance an athlete's self-confidence. Athletes who hold a positive view of themselves are more likely to believe in their abilities, set challenging goals, and persist through adversities in sports⁴⁰. A higher sense of self-worth provides a solid foundation for developing self-confidence, enabling athletes to face challenges and setbacks with resilience.

Moreover, athletes with positive self-esteem tend to employ adaptive coping strategies when dealing with performance-related stress and anxiety. Athletes with higher self-esteem are better equipped to manage the psychological pressures of competition, which, in turn, supports their self-confidence⁴¹.

While a positive self-esteem can provide a strong foundation for self-confidence, the relationship is not without complexities. Athletes must strike a balance, as an overly inflated self-esteem can lead to overconfidence and complacency, which can be detrimental to performance³⁹. Recent research has emphasized the importance of fostering a realistic self-appraisal in athletes⁴². A healthy level of self-esteem, combined with self-awareness and self-regulation, can lead to a well-balanced and adaptive self-confidence. Athletes who accurately assess their strengths and areas for improvement can develop a more authentic and effective self-confidence.

Conversely, athletes with lower self-esteem may encounter challenges in nurturing self-confidence. A negative self-image and diminished self-worth can hinder an athlete's ability to believe in their capabilities³⁷. This can lead to self-doubt, anxiety, and a fear of failure, all of which are detrimental to self-confidence in sports. Recent research has highlighted the adverse effects of low self-esteem on an athlete's self-confidence⁴³. Athletes with low self-esteem are more likely to engage in self-handicapping behaviors and self-sabotage, undermining their confidence and sabotaging their own performances.

The dynamic relationship between self-esteem and self-confidence presents opportunities for interventions in sports psychology. Recent studies have explored the effectiveness of self-esteem enhancement programs in boosting an athlete's self-confidence. Strategies that promote positive self-regard and self-worth can have a cascading effect on self-confidence⁴⁴. Moreover, mental skills training and goal-setting techniques can play a pivotal role in nurturing both self-esteem and self-confidence. By setting and achieving challenging goals,

athletes can not only bolster their self-confidence but also enhance their self-esteem³⁹.

2.1.2.5 The Influence of Self-Efficacy on Self-Confidence in Sports

Self-confidence is a fundamental psychological construct in sports, impacting an athlete's performance, persistence, and overall well-being. One of the critical determinants of self-confidence is self-efficacy, a concept that has been extensively explored in recent research. To comprehend the interplay between self-efficacy and self-confidence, it is essential to define these two concepts. Self-efficacy, a cornerstone of social cognitive theory refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific task or achieve a particular goal⁶. In the context of sports, self-efficacy pertains to an athlete's conviction in their capability to excel in their chosen discipline. On the other hand, self-confidence in sports encompasses an athlete's overall belief in their abilities to perform effectively¹. It embodies self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy, significantly influencing an athlete's performance, resilience, and psychological well-being.

Recent research has illuminated the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between self-efficacy and self-confidence in sports. Self-efficacy serves as a foundational determinant of self-confidence. Athletes with higher self-efficacy are more likely to exhibit greater self-confidence in their sporting abilities³⁴. Athletes with robust self-efficacy tend to approach challenges with greater self-assurance and a resilient mindset. They believe in their ability to overcome obstacles, set challenging goals, and persist through adversity⁴⁵. This conviction empowers them to confront challenges head-on, further boosting their self-confidence.

The influence of self-efficacy on goal setting and achievement is a critical aspect of its impact on self-confidence. Recent studies have highlighted how athletes with high self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging and specific goals⁴⁶. These goals provide a roadmap for performance and bolster an athlete's self-confidence. The belief in their ability to attain these objectives underpins their confidence in their skills and capabilities. Furthermore,

self-efficacy influences the perception of effort and persistence in athletes. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to perceive effort as a means to improvement rather than as an indication of incompetence⁴⁵. This perspective on effort encourages athletes to invest in their training, overcome setbacks, and persist in the face of challenges, ultimately enhancing their self-confidence.

Self-efficacy plays a pivotal role in how athletes cope with adversity and anxiety, which are common experiences in sports. Recent research has demonstrated that athletes with high self-efficacy are more adept at managing the psychological pressures of competition⁴⁷. They exhibit greater resilience and adaptability when facing adversity and anxiety, which contributes to their self-confidence. Moreover, self-efficacy can modulate the impact of anxiety on self-confidence. Athletes with strong self-efficacy are less likely to perceive anxiety as a threat to their self-confidence³⁴. Instead, they view anxiety as a natural part of the competitive experience, which can be managed and even harnessed to enhance performance.

Recent studies have explored the effectiveness of self-efficacy interventions in sports psychology. These interventions aim to enhance self-efficacy, ultimately boosting self-confidence and performance. Researchers have emphasized the importance of employing strategies like imagery, modelling, and performance feedback to enhance an athlete's self-efficacy⁴⁸. These interventions can be integrated into an athlete's training regimen, providing practical tools for boosting self-confidence.

While self-efficacy is a potent determinant of self-confidence, a careful balance must be struck. Overly inflated self-efficacy can lead to overconfidence and complacency, which can be detrimental to performance³⁹. A realistic self-evaluation, combined with accurate self-awareness and self-regulation, can contribute to a well-balanced and authentic self-confidence. Athletes must possess self-efficacy that is aligned with their actual capabilities

and is not overly optimistic or pessimistic. Self-confidence grounded in genuine self-efficacy is more resilient and adaptable in the face of challenges.

The interplay between self-efficacy and self-confidence in sports is complex and profound. Recent research has shed light on the dynamic relationship between these constructs, highlighting the critical role of self-efficacy in influencing an athlete's self-confidence and performance. Self-efficacy serves as a foundational determinant of self-confidence, shaping an athlete's approach to challenges, goal setting, and persistence. Its impact extends to how athletes cope with adversity and anxiety, ultimately bolstering their self-confidence. Understanding the dynamics of self-efficacy and its influence on self-confidence is integral to the practice of sports psychology. Balancing self-efficacy and self-confidence is essential to fostering authentic self-belief that supports an athlete's performance and psychological well-being.

2.1.2.6 The Influence of Personality Traits on Self-Confidence in Sports

Self-confidence is a critical psychological factor in sports, significantly influencing an athlete's performance and well-being. Recent research has explored the intricate relationship between personality traits and self-confidence in sports. Before delving into the influence of personality traits on self-confidence in sports, it is crucial to define these constructs. Personality traits are enduring patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior that are relatively consistent across different situations and over time⁴⁹. The influence of personality traits on self-confidence in sports is a multifaceted and evolving area of research. The relationship between personality traits and self-confidence is moderated by an athlete's self-concept, emphasizing the need for self-awareness and self-regulation. This understanding has practical implications for athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists, paving the way for personalized coaching and targeted interventions that enhance self-confidence while preserving the athlete's authenticity. Striking a balance between adaptation and authenticity in the context of

personality traits is essential for athletes seeking to maximize their self-confidence and excel in the competitive world of sports.

In the context of sports, an athlete's personality encompasses characteristics such as extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. Self-confidence in sports represents an athlete's overall belief in their abilities to perform effectively in their chosen discipline¹. It embodies self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy and significantly impacts an athlete's performance and psychological well-being.

The relationship between personality traits and self-confidence is complex, with various personality traits exerting different influences on an athlete's self-confidence. Recent research has illuminated the multifaceted nature of this interaction.

Extraversion: Extraversion, characterized by sociability, assertiveness, and the pursuit of stimulation, can positively impact an athlete's self-confidence. Athletes with higher levels of extraversion tend to seek out social interactions, support, and motivational feedback⁵⁰. These interactions can enhance their self-confidence, as they receive validation and encouragement from their social networks.

Neuroticism: Neuroticism, characterized by emotional instability and susceptibility to stress, can influence an athlete's self-confidence negatively. Athletes with higher neuroticism levels may be more prone to performance anxiety and self-doubt⁵¹. This emotional instability can undermine their self-confidence, particularly in high-pressure situations.

Conscientiousness: Conscientiousness, associated with self-discipline, orderliness, and goal-directed behavior, can positively impact an athlete's self-confidence. Highly conscientious athletes tend to set clear goals and adhere to structured training regimens⁴⁹. This goal-directed behaviour enhances their self-confidence, as they perceive themselves as well-prepared and capable of achieving their objectives.

Openness to Experience: Openness to experience, characterized by a receptivity to

novel ideas and experiences, can also influence self-confidence. Athletes with higher openness may be more willing to explore and embrace new training techniques, mental strategies, or perspectives⁴⁹. This adaptability and openness to change can positively impact their self-confidence.

2.1.2.7 The Moderating Role of Self-Concept

An athlete's self-concept, which encompasses their self-esteem and self-efficacy, can act as a moderator in the relationship between personality traits and self-confidence. Recent studies⁵², have highlighted how an athlete's self-concept can either amplify or mitigate the impact of personality traits on self-confidence. For instance, athletes with high self-esteem may be more resilient in the face of self-esteem-threatening experiences, which could include criticism or setbacks related to their personality traits⁵¹. In contrast, athletes with lower self-esteem may be more susceptible to the influence of personality traits on self-confidence.

Understanding the influence of personality traits on self-confidence in sports has practical implications for athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists.

Self-Awareness: Athletes benefit from self-awareness regarding their personality traits and their potential impact on self-confidence. Recognizing one's personality characteristics allows athletes to anticipate challenges and capitalize on their strengths. Coaches and sports psychologists can facilitate this self-awareness through personality assessments and guided reflection.

Personalized Coaching: Coaches can adopt personalized coaching approaches that align with an athlete's unique personality profile. For example, an athlete with high neuroticism may benefit from stress management techniques, while an athlete with high extraversion may thrive in a socially supportive training environment⁵³. Personalized coaching strategies can enhance self-confidence.

Psychological Support: Sports psychologists can provide tailored interventions that

address the specific interactions between personality traits and self-confidence. These interventions may include cognitive-behavioural techniques, goal-setting strategies, and self-regulation skills. By addressing the athlete's unique personality characteristics, sports psychologists can foster authentic self-confidence.

While athletes can benefit from understanding how personality traits influence self-confidence, they should also strike a balance between adaptation and authenticity. Recent studies⁵², underscore the importance of being true to one's self while navigating the influence of personality traits. The key is to harness personality traits as tools for self-improvement and self-confidence, without compromising one's authenticity or adopting behaviours that are incongruent with one's true self.

2.1.2.8 Environmental Factors That Influence Self-Confidence

Environmental factors play a pivotal role in shaping an athlete's self-confidence within the realm of sports. These environmental factors extend beyond the individual athlete, encompassing the broader context in which they train and compete. The training environment, for instance, plays a significant role in an athlete's self-confidence. Recent studies have emphasize how the quality of training facilities, the expertise of coaching staff, and the availability of resources can significantly impact an athlete's self-confidence⁵⁴. A well-equipped and supportive training environment can instil confidence, while a suboptimal one may erode it. Furthermore, the competitive context and the presence of spectators can influence an athlete's self-confidence. Research has explored the impact of home advantage in sports, demonstrating that the support of a home crowd can boost an athlete's self-confidence and performance⁵⁵. On the contrary, competing in unfamiliar or hostile environments can challenge an athlete's self-confidence.

The social environment, including interactions with teammates and coaches, also plays a crucial role. Recent research highlights the significance of interpersonal relationships

in sports⁵⁶. Constructive feedback, positive social support, and effective communication within the team can bolster an athlete's self-confidence, whereas conflicts and negative interactions can have the opposite effect. These environmental factors provide a multifaceted backdrop against which an athlete's self-confidence is shaped and tested. They serve as a reminder of the interconnectedness of individual and contextual factors, shedding light on the need to consider the broader environment in strategies aimed at enhancing self-confidence and optimizing athletic performance.

2.1.2.9 The Influence of Coaching Style and Feedback on Self-Confidence in Sports

Coaching in sports is a dynamic and influential relationship that extends far beyond the technical aspects of the game. Coaching style and feedback are integral components of an athlete's journey in sports, significantly influencing their self-confidence and performance. Recent research highlights the profound impact of coaching styles that prioritize autonomy support, transformational leadership, and constructive feedback. The coach-athlete dynamic, characterized by effective communication, mutual respect, and a balanced approach to challenge and support, is crucial in achieving optimal results. Striking this balance in coaching style and feedback is essential in fostering self-confidence while empowering athletes to reach their full potential in the competitive world of sports.

Before delving into the influence of coaching style and feedback on self-confidence, it is essential to define these constructs. Coaching style refers to the coach's overarching approach to teaching, motivating, and guiding athletes. It encompasses the coach's demeanor, communication style, and methods of instruction⁵⁷. Feedback, on the other hand, is the information and guidance provided by the coach to the athlete regarding their performance. Effective feedback includes both positive reinforcement and constructive criticism, aiming to facilitate improvement and boost an athlete's self-confidence⁵⁸. Coaching style has a profound impact on an athlete's self-confidence. Recent research has revealed that different

coaching styles can elicit varying responses from athletes.

Autonomy-Supportive Coaching: Autonomy-supportive coaches emphasize an athlete's self-determination, choice, and input into their training and performance⁵⁸. This coaching style can boost an athlete's self-confidence by fostering a sense of ownership and control over their development. Athletes tend to feel more competent and intrinsically motivated under such coaching, which contributes to higher self-confidence.

Authoritarian Coaching: In contrast, authoritarian coaches often employ a more controlling and directive approach⁵⁷. While this style may be effective for some athletes, it can undermine self-confidence in others. Athletes may perceive their role as passive followers rather than active contributors, potentially eroding their self-belief.

Transformational Coaching: Transformational coaches inspire and motivate athletes through a focus on individual growth and development⁵⁸. Recent studies have shown that this coaching style can significantly boost an athlete's self-confidence by instilling a sense of purpose and a vision for personal improvement.

Transactional Coaching: Transactional coaches, on the other hand, tend to emphasize external rewards and punishments for performance⁵⁷. While this approach may produce short-term compliance, it can undermine an athlete's intrinsic motivation and self-confidence in the long run.

2.1.2.10 The Role of Feedback in Self-Confidence

Feedback, as a component of coaching, plays a vital role in shaping an athlete's self-confidence. Effective feedback can bolster self-confidence, while poorly delivered or absent feedback can have detrimental effects.

Constructive Feedback: Constructive feedback, provided in a supportive and encouraging manner, can boost an athlete's self-confidence. Recent research underscores the importance of constructive feedback that addresses areas for improvement while highlighting

an athlete's strengths⁵⁹. This type of feedback is instrumental in nurturing self-confidence, as it empowers athletes to believe in their capacity for growth.

Positive Reinforcement: Positive reinforcement in feedback, such as praise and acknowledgment of accomplishments, can enhance an athlete's self-confidence. Recent studies have emphasized the role of positive feedback in reinforcing desirable behaviours and promoting self-belief⁶⁰. Athletes who receive positive reinforcement are more likely to exhibit self-confidence in their abilities.

Frequency and Timeliness: The frequency and timeliness of feedback are also critical. Research has shown that timely and consistent feedback enables athletes to make immediate adjustments and experience the positive effects of their efforts⁶¹. This, in turn, enhances self-confidence.

Goal Alignment: Feedback that aligns with an athlete's personal goals and aspirations can be especially empowering. Athletes tend to exhibit higher self-confidence when they perceive that the feedback provided is helping them progress toward their desired outcomes⁶².

Recent research underscores the importance of balance in coaching style and feedback. Coaches should provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support, as overly critical or excessively lenient approaches can undermine self-confidence. Effective coaching should challenge athletes to extend their abilities and reach their full potential⁶². Challenging athletes, when done constructively, can empower them to stretch beyond their comfort zones and enhance self-confidence. At the same time, coaches should offer unwavering support and encouragement. Recent research has highlighted the importance of athletes feeling emotionally supported by their coaches⁶⁰. This support builds a sense of safety and trust, contributing to self-confidence.

2.1.2.11 The Coach-Athlete Dynamic

The coach-athlete relationship is central to the impact of coaching style and feedback

on self-confidence. Recent studies have shown that the quality of this relationship significantly influences an athlete's perception of coaching and feedback⁶². Coaches are responsible for guiding, mentoring, and nurturing athletes, aiming to maximize their performance and personal growth. This dynamic, marked by communication, trust, and collaboration, is pivotal to the success of athletes and teams. The coach-athlete dynamic is underpinned by various elements that contribute to its complexity.

Effective communication, mutual respect, and an open dialogue between coach and athlete create an environment where coaching style and feedback are more likely to enhance self-confidence. Athletes who feel heard, valued, and understood by their coaches tend to exhibit higher self-confidence. Effective communication is a linchpin of the coach-athlete relationship. Coaches must convey their knowledge, instructions, and feedback in a manner that resonates with athletes. Likewise, athletes must express their concerns, questions, and feedback to coaches. Open and transparent communication, facilitates mutual understanding and is essential for setting and achieving goals⁶³.

Trust and respect form the bedrock of the coach-athlete dynamic. Coaches must trust athletes to execute strategies and training regimens. Similarly, athletes need to trust that coaches have their best interests at heart. This trust is developed over time and is a central focus of studies⁶⁴. A lack of trust can lead to friction and hinder the coach-athlete relationship. Both coaches and athletes share a common goal: achieving success in sports. Research emphasizes the significance of goal alignment in the coach-athlete dynamic⁶⁰. Coaches and athletes must work together to establish clear, achievable objectives that guide their efforts. Misalignment in goals can create confusion and impede progress.

Coaches often need to tailor their coaching approach to the individual needs of athletes. Notably, athletes have distinct learning styles, personalities, and motivations. Coaches must be adaptable and capable of identifying the most effective methods to support each athlete.

Scholars have highlighted the importance of recognizing individual differences and preferences in coaching⁶⁵.

Feedback is a critical aspect of the coach-athlete dynamic. Coaches provide feedback on athletes' performance, while athletes may also offer feedback to coaches regarding their training programs. The quality of this feedback, influences the dynamic⁶³. Constructive and well-structured feedback fosters athlete development. Challenges and adversity are inherent in sports. Coaches play a pivotal role in helping athletes navigate difficult times and build resilience. The capacity to weather setbacks relies on a supportive and empathetic coach-athlete dynamic⁶⁴.

2.1.2.12 The Influence of Social Support and Team Dynamics on Self-Confidence in Sports

Participation in sports is not just about individual athleticism; it also revolves around the dynamics of teams and the social support systems within them. Social support and team dynamics play a pivotal role in shaping an athlete's self-confidence within the sphere of sports. There is a comprehensive list of growing literature that has showed that these have a profound influence of emotional, informational, and tangible support, as well as the dynamics of cohesion, communication, leadership, and shared goals. Recognizing the interplay between these factors and their reciprocal relationship is instrumental in optimizing athletic performance. The quality of social support and team dynamics directly impacts an athlete's self-confidence, contributing to their belief in their abilities and overall success in the world of sports.

Before exploring their influence on self-confidence, it's crucial to define the concepts of social support and team dynamics. Social support in sports refers to the assistance, encouragement, and backing provided by coaches, teammates, and significant others within an athlete's social network⁶⁶. This support can be instrumental in various facets of an athlete's

journey, including emotional, informational, and tangible support. Team dynamics, on the other hand, pertain to the interactions, relationships, and group processes within a sports team. It encompasses elements such as cohesion, communication, leadership, and shared goals⁶⁷.

Social support from coaches, teammates, and significant others profoundly influences an athlete's self-confidence. Recent research has shown that different types of social support can bolster an athlete's self-belief.

Emotional Support: Emotional support from teammates and coaches, such as empathy, understanding, and encouragement, can be a powerful source of self-confidence⁶⁸. Knowing that one has a support system that believes in their abilities and cares about their well-being contributes to increased self-confidence.

Informational Support: Informational support, which involves guidance, advice, and instruction, can enhance self-confidence through competence-building⁶⁹. Athletes who receive useful information from their peers or coaches tend to feel better equipped and more confident in their abilities.

Tangible Support: Tangible support includes practical assistance, such as access to resources or physical help⁶⁸. For instance, providing access to state-of-the-art training facilities or medical resources can boost an athlete's self-confidence by giving them a competitive edge.

Team dynamics within a sports team also play a crucial role in shaping an athlete's self-confidence.

Cohesion: Team cohesion, which refers to the level of unity and solidarity among team members, significantly impacts self-confidence. Recent studies⁶⁷ have demonstrated that athletes who perceive higher levels of cohesion within their team tend to exhibit greater self-confidence. This unity fosters trust, mutual support, and the belief that they can rely on their teammates, which is empowering for self-confidence.

Communication: Effective communication within a team is pivotal for self-confidence. Open and transparent communication allows athletes to voice their concerns, share ideas, and seek help when needed⁶⁹. This promotes a sense of belonging and trust, contributing to self-confidence.

Leadership: The role of team leaders, including captains and coaches, is instrumental in shaping team dynamics and self-confidence. Recent research⁶⁷ has shown that effective leadership can foster an environment where athletes feel motivated, valued, and confident in their team's direction.

Shared Goals: Team dynamics are also influenced by shared goals and a collective vision. When athletes share a common objective, they tend to rally behind it, supporting each other's efforts to achieve it. This shared purpose can boost self-confidence by reinforcing a sense of belonging and the belief that they are part of a unified effort⁶⁹.

The relationship between social support, team dynamics, and self-confidence is reciprocal. Athletes who possess self-confidence are more likely to engage actively in team dynamics and seek social support, while a supportive team and social network can enhance an athlete's self-confidence⁶⁷. This reciprocal relationship highlights the interdependence of these factors and underscores the importance of nurturing them collectively to optimize athletic performance.

Understanding the influence of social support and team dynamics on self-confidence has practical implications for athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists.

Team Building: Coaches and team leaders can facilitate team-building activities to enhance cohesion and communication within the team. These activities can foster a sense of unity and trust, which, in turn, boosts self-confidence.

Effective Communication: Promoting open and effective communication within the team can encourage athletes to seek and provide social support when needed. It can also contribute to a

healthy team dynamic that reinforces self-confidence.

Leadership Development: Developing effective leadership skills among coaches and team captains is critical for shaping team dynamics. Effective leadership not only fosters a supportive team environment but also empowers athletes to feel more confident in their abilities.

Social Support Networks: Encouraging athletes to build strong social support networks outside the team can provide additional sources of encouragement and confidence. Coaches can support athletes in creating and nurturing these networks.

2.1.2.13 Situational Factors and their Influence on Self-Confidence in Sports

In the realm of sports, an athlete's self-confidence is not solely an internal construct but is deeply intertwined with the dynamic and often unpredictable nature of situational factors. Recent research has brought to light the multifaceted interplay between situational factors and self-confidence in sports. These factors encompass a wide array of contextual variables, all of which can significantly affect an athlete's self-belief, impacting their performance and well-being.

The competitive context in which an athlete finds themselves is a prominent situational factor that can sway self-confidence. Recent studies have emphasized the impact of variables such as the stakes of the competition, the caliber of opponents, and the degree of pressure involved. Athletes often experience fluctuations in self-confidence based on the perceived challenges and demands of the competition. Performance outcomes, such as recent successes or failures, play a pivotal role in shaping an athlete's self-confidence. Recent research has highlighted the psychological impact of achievement and the implications of setbacks. Positive performance outcomes can bolster an athlete's self-confidence, reinforcing their belief in their capabilities, while failures can erode this confidence, leading to self-doubt.

Situational factors also include the social feedback an athlete receives from coaches,

teammates, and spectators. Recent studies have underscored the significance of the quality of social interactions in shaping self-confidence. Constructive feedback and positive reinforcement from these sources can be empowering, while criticism or a lack of support can hinder self-confidence. Environmental conditions, such as weather, venue, and external distractions, are additional situational factors that can affect self-confidence. Recent research has demonstrated that adverse weather conditions, unfamiliar venues, or distracting elements can challenge an athlete's self-confidence, as they grapple with external factors that are beyond their control.

In short, situational factors are dynamic and context-dependent variables that have a profound influence on an athlete's self-confidence. They encompass the competitive context, performance outcomes, social feedback, and environmental conditions. Recognizing the role of these situational factors in shaping self-confidence is essential for athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists seeking to optimize performance and enhance an athlete's well-being.

2.1.2.14 The Influence of Competitive Pressure on Self-Confidence in Sports

Competitive pressure is an inherent aspect of sports that can both challenge and inspire an athlete's self-confidence. Recent research has shed light on the complex interplay between pressure, self-confidence, and performance. Athletes must navigate this intricate relationship, utilizing coping strategies, resilience, and support networks to harness competitive pressure's potential for optimal performance. Coaches, too, play a critical role in helping athletes build and maintain self-confidence under pressure, providing guidance, support, and feedback. In the end, understanding the dynamics of competitive pressure and its influence on self-confidence is crucial for athletes and their support networks, as it empowers them to harness the power of pressure and transform it into a catalyst for success. Competitive pressure in sports is the heightened psychological and emotional state that athletes experience when competing in high-stakes situations. These situations often involve

the pursuit of victory, prestigious titles, or personal bests. The pressure may emanate from external sources, such as the expectations of coaches, teammates, and spectators, or internal sources, including an athlete's own desire for success and fear of failure. Competitive pressure can be a double-edged sword. Recent studies have shown that it often challenges an athlete's self-confidence. The fear of making mistakes, the awareness of high expectations, and the pressure to perform can lead to self-doubt and reduced self-confidence. This psychological state may manifest as anxiety, nervousness, and negative self-talk⁷⁰. The pressure to perform well can exacerbate the significance of performance-related factors.

Athletes may become hyper-focused on outcomes, making it difficult to maintain a strong self-belief. Research⁷¹ has indicated that an athlete's perceived competence and self-efficacy can be significantly influenced by the competitive pressure they experience. Athletes employ various coping mechanisms to navigate competitive pressure. Recent research⁷² has highlighted that athletes may use strategies like relaxation techniques, visualization, and goal-setting to bolster their self-confidence. These strategies help athletes manage anxiety and enhance self-belief in high-pressure situations. Resilience plays a pivotal role in mitigating the negative impact of competitive pressure on self-confidence. Resilient athletes tend to adapt more effectively to high-pressure situations, maintaining their self-confidence in the face of adversity. Recent studies⁷³ have demonstrated that resilience is a psychological asset that can help athletes navigate competitive pressure and preserve their self-belief.

Coaches and support networks, including teammates, play a significant role in mediating the impact of competitive pressure on an athlete's self-confidence. Effective coaches provide guidance, feedback, and strategies to help athletes manage pressure and maintain their self-belief⁷⁴. Moreover, the support and encouragement of teammates can create a positive and empowering environment, bolstering an athlete's self-confidence in high-pressure situations⁷⁵.

2.1.2.15 Strategies for Building Self-Confidence under Pressure

Athletes can employ various strategies to build and maintain self-confidence under competitive pressure. **Positive Self-Talk:** Recent studies⁷⁶ have demonstrated the effectiveness of positive self-talk in boosting self-confidence. Athletes who engage in constructive self-talk during high-pressure situations tend to maintain a more robust belief in their abilities.

Mental Imagery: Mental imagery and visualization are powerful tools for enhancing self-confidence under pressure. Athletes who vividly picture their success and visualize themselves performing well can reduce anxiety and reinforce self-belief⁷⁷.

Goal Setting: Setting specific, challenging, yet achievable goals has been shown to enhance self-confidence. Recent research⁷⁸ has highlighted the role of goal setting in maintaining focus and self-assurance during high-pressure competitions.

Psychological Training: Psychological training programs, such as mindfulness and relaxation techniques, can help athletes manage the stress associated with competitive pressure. These strategies foster emotional regulation and bolster self-confidence⁷⁹.

2.1.2.16 The Influence of Previous Performance Outcomes on Self-Confidence in Sports

Previous performance outcomes in sports are a powerful determinant of an athlete's self-confidence. There is a complex relationship between past performance, self-confidence, and subsequent athletic success. Previous performance outcomes are an integral part of an athlete's self-confidence journey. The profound impact of these outcomes, whether positive or negative, on an athlete's self-belief and self-efficacy. Successes reinforce self-confidence, while failures challenge it. How athletes interpret and respond to these outcomes, coupled with their resilience and self-efficacy beliefs, ultimately determines the trajectory of their self-confidence.

Coaches and sports psychologists play a pivotal role in helping athletes navigate past performance outcomes. They can assist athletes in interpreting outcomes as opportunities for

growth and learning, fostering a positive self-belief that transcends momentary success or failure. In essence, understanding the dynamic interplay between previous performance outcomes and self-confidence is essential for athletes and their support networks. It empowers them to embrace the lessons of the past, build resilience, and harness the influence of their athletic journey for future success.

Past performance outcomes are more than mere statistics. They represent an athlete's journey, a narrative of successes and setbacks that has a lasting impact on self-confidence. Recent studies have indicated that these outcomes serve as a reference point for an athlete's self-efficacy beliefs⁸⁰. Successes build self-confidence, while failures can lead to self-doubt. Positive performance outcomes, such as winning a competition or achieving a personal best, have a substantial influence on an athlete's self-confidence. Research has shown that athletes who experience success tend to view themselves as competent and capable⁸¹. Positive outcomes serve as evidence of an athlete's ability, reinforcing self-confidence and the belief that they can achieve similar success in the future.

Conversely, negative performance outcomes, such as losses and underperformance, can be detrimental to self-confidence. Recent study⁸² has indicated that athletes who experience setbacks often grapple with self-doubt and lowered self-confidence. These outcomes challenge their belief in their own abilities and can lead to a cycle of apprehension and reduced performance.

The interpretation of past performance outcomes is a critical component of their influence on self-confidence. Recent studies have demonstrated that athletes who adopt a growth mindset, perceiving failures as opportunities for learning and improvement, tend to maintain higher self-confidence levels⁸³. In contrast, athletes who view failures as evidence of their limitations may struggle to preserve their self-confidence.

Self-efficacy beliefs, or an athlete's perceived ability to perform a specific task, play a central

role in the relationship between past performance outcomes and self-confidence. Recent research⁸⁴ has highlighted that athletes with high self-efficacy beliefs tend to be more resilient in the face of setbacks. They interpret negative outcomes as challenges to overcome rather than as insurmountable failures, preserving their self-confidence.

Psychological resilience is a key factor in how athletes respond to previous performance outcomes. Resilient athletes are better equipped to bounce back from failures and maintain their self-confidence. Research has demonstrated that athletes with high levels of resilience are more likely to perceive setbacks as opportunities for growth, bolstering their self-confidence in the long term⁸⁵.

2.1.2.17 Strategies for Building Self-Confidence through Past Performance

Athletes can employ various strategies to harness the influence of past performance outcomes on self-confidence.

Goal Setting: Setting specific, challenging goals is a powerful tool for enhancing self-confidence through past performance. Recent research⁸⁶ has emphasized the role of goal setting in maintaining focus and self-assurance. Achieving these goals serves as a testament to an athlete's competence, reinforcing self-confidence.

Positive Self-Reflection: Encouraging athletes to reflect on their past successes and achievements can boost self-confidence. Recent studies have demonstrated that positive self-reflection helps athletes recognize their growth and development, instilling a sense of self-belief⁸⁷.

Mental Imagery: Mental imagery and visualization can help athletes rehearse past successes and boost self-confidence. Research has underscored the role of mental imagery in enhancing an athlete's belief in their capabilities⁸⁸.

2.1.2.18 Measuring and Assessing Self-Confidence in Sports

Self-confidence is a pivotal psychological construct in sports, influencing athletes' performance, motivation, and overall well-being. Accurately measuring and assessing self-confidence is essential for athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists to understand and enhance this critical aspect of athletic performance. Measuring and assessing self-confidence in sports is a multifaceted endeavour that draws from various methodologies, from self-report scales and performance outcomes to physiological measures and qualitative approaches. Recent research in this field has expanded our understanding of how self-confidence is evaluated and its implications for athlete performance and well-being. As sports continue to evolve, so too do the methods and tools used to assess and enhance self-confidence, offering valuable insights for athletes and those who support their development.

The measurement and assessment of self-confidence offer several advantages in the sports domain. Firstly, they provide athletes with self-awareness about their self-confidence levels, helping them identify strengths and areas for improvement. Coaches and sports psychologists can use this information to tailor interventions and support to meet the specific needs of athletes. Furthermore, objective assessments of self-confidence can be valuable for monitoring changes over time and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. Various methods are employed to measure and assess self-confidence in sports. Recent research has shown that questionnaires and self-report scales are commonly used tools. These instruments ask athletes to rate their confidence levels in specific situations or domains of performance. For example, athletes may be asked to rate their confidence in penalty shootouts in soccer or their self-confidence in making free throws in basketball⁸⁹.

Assessing self-confidence can also involve evaluating an athlete's performance outcomes. Researchers have found that analysing an athlete's track record of success and failure provides insights into their self-confidence. Consistent high-level performance often indicates strong self-confidence, while recurrent underperformance may suggest a lack of

self-belief⁹⁰. Recent studies have explored the use of physiological and neurological measures to assess self-confidence. These measures include heart rate, cortisol levels, and brain activity patterns. Changes in these indicators can provide insight into an athlete's state of self-confidence, particularly during high-pressure situations⁹¹.

Qualitative approaches, such as interviews and observations, are increasingly employed to assess self-confidence. Researchers and practitioners conduct in-depth interviews with athletes to gain a comprehensive understanding of their self-confidence experiences and challenges. Observations during training and competitions also provide valuable insights into how self-confidence is expressed in athletes' behaviour and body language⁹². Measuring and assessing self-confidence in sports present challenges and considerations. Self-confidence is a dynamic psychological construct that can vary from moment to moment. Researchers must carefully select the most appropriate assessment methods for the specific context and research question. Additionally, self-confidence is influenced by multiple factors, including self-efficacy, performance history, and the competitive environment. Researchers and practitioners should consider these interdependencies when assessing self-confidence⁹³.

2.1.2.19 Self-Report Measures in Sports: Insights, Challenges, and Innovations

Self-report measures have become a valuable tool for assessing various psychological constructs in sports, with self-confidence being one of the key areas of interest. The use of self-report measures in sports has evolved significantly in recent years, bringing forth valuable insights, challenges, and innovative approaches. Self-report measures have become indispensable tools for understanding self-confidence in sports. Recent research has expanded our knowledge of self-confidence by employing various self-report questionnaires and scales. While challenges and limitations exist, innovative approaches are addressing these issues and enhancing the effectiveness of self-report measures. The future of self-report measures in

sports is bright, as researchers continue to harness technology and adapt their methods to the evolving needs of athletes and the sports community.

Self-report measures, including questionnaires and scales, are widely used to assess psychological constructs in sports due to their versatility and efficiency. These measures enable athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists to gauge various aspects of an athlete's mental state, including self-confidence. Self-report measures serve as a valuable window into an athlete's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, shedding light on their mental preparation and readiness for competition. Self-confidence is a crucial psychological factor that impacts athletic performance. To measure self-confidence in sports, researchers and practitioners often rely on self-report measures specifically designed for this purpose. Recent studies have highlighted the use of questionnaires like the Sports Confidence Inventory (SCI) and the Competitive State Anxiety Inventory-2 (CSAI-2) to assess an athlete's self-confidence levels in various sporting contexts⁹⁴.

Self-report measures have yielded valuable insights into self-confidence in sports. Recent research has demonstrated that self-confidence is a dynamic construct that can fluctuate before, during, and after competitions⁹³. By employing self-report measures, researchers have been able to pinpoint critical moments when self-confidence rises or wanes, offering a deeper understanding of the ebb and flow of an athlete's mental state. Despite their utility, self-report measures in sports face challenges and limitations. Athletes may not always provide accurate responses, whether due to social desirability bias or an inability to accurately self-assess their mental state. Additionally, the context in which self-report measures are administered, such as during the heat of competition, can influence the reliability of the responses. Researchers must also consider the potential impact of factors like cultural background and language barriers when using self-report measures in a diverse sporting environment⁹⁵.

In recent years, innovative approaches have emerged to enhance the effectiveness of self-report measures in sports. These innovations aim to mitigate some of the challenges associated with self-report data collection. Advancements in technology have allowed for real-time data collection of self-confidence using mobile apps and wearable devices. Athletes can provide self-assessments of their self-confidence levels immediately before or after a competition, offering insights that are not clouded by recall bias⁹⁶. Some innovative approaches involve integrating self-report measures with performance data. For instance, researchers are exploring how an athlete's self-confidence relates to their actual performance outcomes. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interplay between self-confidence and athletic success⁹⁷.

Qualitative self-reports, such as open-ended questions or interviews, are increasingly used alongside traditional self-report measures. Athletes can provide narrative accounts of their self-confidence experiences, offering nuanced insights into the complex nature of self-confidence in sports⁹². Tailored self-report measures are designed to capture an athlete's unique experiences and mental states. Athletes can complete assessments that align with their specific sport, role, or performance context, allowing for more individualized insights⁹⁸.

To address the challenges associated with cross-cultural research, self-report measures are being adapted and validated for different cultural contexts. This approach ensures the applicability and reliability of self-report measures in diverse sporting environments⁸⁰. The future of self-report measures in sports holds promise. The continued integration of technology, individualized assessments, and qualitative data will likely yield a richer understanding of self-confidence in sports. Moreover, addressing cross-cultural considerations will ensure that self-report measures are applicable and meaningful in a global context.

2.1.2.20 Observation and Behavioural Assessments in Self-Confidence in Sports

Observation and behavioural assessments serve as critical tools in unravelling the intricacies of self-confidence in sports. Recent research has shed light on the importance of observing an athlete's body language and behaviours as indicators of self-confidence and how self-confidence influences an athlete's performance and decision-making. While challenges exist, technological advancements and the involvement of expert observers are enhancing the effectiveness of these assessments. The future of observation and behavioural assessments holds promise for providing a more comprehensive understanding of self-confidence and its impact on athletic performance.

Observation is a fundamental method for assessing an athlete's self-confidence. Coaches, sports psychologists, and researchers employ observation to witness an athlete's behaviours, expressions, and reactions during training and competition. It offers a direct means of assessing an athlete's mental state in real-time, providing valuable insights into how self-confidence is manifested⁹². A key aspect of observation is the examination of an athlete's body language and nonverbal cues. Recent research has demonstrated that an athlete's posture, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact can reveal important information about their self-confidence levels. For example, an athlete who maintains strong, assertive body language may be expressing a high level of self-confidence, while signs of slumped shoulders or averted gaze can suggest a lack of belief in one's abilities⁹⁵.

Behavioural assessments involve the systematic observation and analysis of an athlete's actions and behaviours within a sporting context. Researchers and practitioners employ these assessments to evaluate how self-confidence influences an athlete's actions and decisions during training and competition. By focusing on observable behaviours, behavioural assessments offer an objective and quantifiable means of studying self-confidence⁹⁶. Performance data analysis is a key aspect of behavioural assessments. Researchers often explore how an athlete's self-confidence influences their actual

performance. Recent studies have shown that performance data can reveal patterns in an athlete's performance that correlate with fluctuations in self-confidence. For instance, an athlete with high self-confidence may exhibit more consistent and successful performances, while a decline in self-confidence may lead to erratic or subpar results⁹³. Behavioural assessments also encompass an athlete's decision-making processes and risk-taking behaviours. Recent research has indicated that self-confidence can influence an athlete's willingness to take risks during competition. Athletes with high self-confidence may be more inclined to take calculated risks to secure victory, while those with lower self-confidence may opt for conservative strategies to avoid mistakes⁹².

One of the critical aspects of behavioural assessments is examining how an athlete responds to performance pressure and adversity. Recent research has shown that an athlete's self-confidence can influence their reaction to high-pressure situations. For example, athletes with strong self-confidence may remain resilient and focused in the face of adversity, while those with low self-confidence may experience a loss of composure and reduced performance⁹⁵. While observation and behavioural assessments in self-confidence are invaluable, they present specific challenges and considerations. These assessments often rely on the subjective interpretation of observers and require specialized training to ensure consistency and reliability. Additionally, an athlete's awareness of being observed can influence their behaviour, potentially leading to altered or self-conscious actions. Researchers must also consider the potential impact of cultural background and gender on the interpretation of observed behaviors⁹⁴. Recent technological advancements have significantly enhanced the precision and objectivity of observation and behavioural assessments. High-speed cameras, motion capture systems, and wearable devices now allow researchers to collect and analyse vast amounts of data related to an athlete's movements and behaviours. These technologies provide a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of an athlete's

self-confidence dynamics during performance⁹⁶.

The involvement of expert observers, such as sports psychologists and coaches, is essential in ensuring the reliability and validity of observations and behavioural assessments. These individuals are trained to interpret an athlete's behaviour in the context of their unique sport and performance demands, offering valuable insights into the relationship between self-confidence and performance⁹³. The future of observation and behavioural assessments in self-confidence in sports holds immense promise. Advances in technology, coupled with increased collaboration between experts and researchers, will likely lead to more sophisticated and accurate methods for assessing self-confidence. Integrating observation and behavioural assessments with other assessment approaches, such as self-report measures and physiological measures, will provide a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of self-confidence in sports.

2.1.2.21 Physiological Markers of Self-Confidence in Sports

Physiological markers of self-confidence in sports offer a bridge between an athlete's mental state and their physical performance. Recent research has illuminated the intricate relationship between self-confidence and physiological responses, encompassing heart rate variability, cortisol levels, respiration rate, emotional expression, and more. The insights gained from these markers have profound implications for athletes, coaches, and sports psychologists seeking to optimize self-confidence and enhance athletic performance. As the understanding of these physiological markers continues to evolve, so does the potential for developing targeted interventions and strategies to harness the mind-body connection in sports. In the realm of sports, the mind-body connection is undeniable. An athlete's mental state and physical performance are intimately linked. Recent studies have demonstrated that self-confidence, a crucial mental factor, can significantly impact an athlete's physiology during competition. Understanding these physiological markers allows researchers, coaches,

and athletes to gain deeper insights into how self-confidence translates into physical outcomes.

Heart Rate and Autonomic Nervous System Activity: Heart rate variability (HRV) is a key physiological marker associated with self-confidence in sports. HRV provides insights into the autonomic nervous system, specifically the balance between sympathetic (fight-or-flight) and parasympathetic (rest and digest) activity. Recent research has shown that self-confident athletes often exhibit greater HRV, reflecting a balanced autonomic nervous system response. This balance is associated with enhanced emotional regulation and the ability to perform under pressure⁹⁹.

Cortisol Levels and Stress Responses: Cortisol, often referred to as the stress hormone, is another physiological marker influenced by self-confidence. Studies conducted in the last few years have highlighted that self-confident athletes tend to have more stable cortisol levels during competition. In contrast, athletes with low self-confidence may experience heightened cortisol levels, indicating a greater stress response. Elevated cortisol can impair decision-making, motor skills, and overall performance¹⁰⁰.

Respiration Rate and Oxygen Uptake: Physiological markers also extend to an athlete's respiration rate and oxygen uptake. Recent research has unveiled the impact of self-confidence on an athlete's breathing patterns and oxygen consumption. Self-confident athletes often display more efficient respiration and oxygen utilization. This efficiency can lead to improved endurance and overall performance, especially in sports that require sustained effort⁹².

Psychological Resilience and Inflammatory Responses: The relationship between self-confidence and an athlete's psychological resilience is another area of interest. Recent studies have shown that athletes with higher self-confidence often exhibit lower levels of inflammatory markers, such as interleukin-6 and C-reactive protein. This reduced

inflammatory response is associated with greater psychological resilience, allowing athletes to cope with adversity and maintain their performance¹⁰¹.

Emotional Expression and Facial Muscle Activity: Physiological markers also encompass an athlete's emotional expression through facial muscle activity. Recent research has explored the connection between self-confidence and facial expressions during competition. Self-confident athletes tend to display more positive and assertive facial expressions, which can influence how they are perceived by opponents, teammates, and even referees. These expressions can also have a reciprocal effect, enhancing the athlete's self-confidence⁹³.

Interpreting physiological markers in the context of self-confidence presents challenges and considerations. The relationship between physiological responses and self-confidence is complex, influenced by various factors such as an athlete's individual differences, the specific sport, and the competitive environment. Moreover, physiological responses can be dynamic, varying between individuals and situations. Researchers and practitioners must consider these variables when using physiological markers to assess self-confidence¹⁰⁰. One promising avenue in sports psychology is the use of biofeedback to manipulate physiological markers associated with self-confidence. Biofeedback allows athletes to gain real-time awareness and control over their physiological responses, potentially influencing their self-confidence and performance. Recent research has explored biofeedback interventions designed to enhance self-confidence by modulating heart rate, cortisol levels, and respiration patterns⁹⁹.

Understanding the mind-body connection through physiological markers has significant implications for performance enhancement in sports. Recent research has underscored the potential for interventions targeting these markers to boost an athlete's self-confidence and overall performance. By addressing stress responses, enhancing emotional

regulation, and optimizing physiological efficiency, athletes can better leverage their self-confidence to achieve their competitive goals.

2.1.2.22 Interventions and Enhancement of Self-Confidence in Sports

Self-confidence, a foundational psychological construct in sports, plays a pivotal role in determining an athlete's success and well-being. Recent studies have shed light on the dynamic nature of self-confidence and the various interventions and enhancement strategies that can empower athletes to harness its potential. Recent studies have emphasized the importance of recognizing and addressing these dimensions to develop targeted interventions that cater to an athlete's specific self-confidence needs⁹². By understanding the multifaceted nature of self-confidence, interventions can be designed to enhance the athlete's overall mental state and, subsequently, their performance.

Psychological interventions are at the forefront of enhancing self-confidence in sports. Recent research has highlighted the efficacy of cognitive-behavioral techniques, including goal-setting, imagery, and self-talk, in boosting an athlete's self-confidence⁹⁹. These interventions aim to modify an athlete's cognitive processes, ultimately enabling them to maintain a positive and confident mindset during training and competition. The integration of psychological interventions with self-confidence assessments allows for a more targeted and personalized approach⁹³. Recent technological advancements have paved the way for innovative interventions involving biofeedback. Athletes can now use wearable devices and mobile apps to monitor and regulate physiological responses related to self-confidence, such as heart rate variability and respiration patterns⁹⁶. These interventions offer real-time insights into an athlete's mental and physical state, enabling them to make immediate adjustments and enhance their self-confidence on the go.

Motivational and social support interventions have gained prominence in recent years as critical contributors to self-confidence enhancement. Coaches, teammates, and sports

psychologists play a vital role in fostering a supportive and motivating environment for athletes⁹¹. Encouragement, constructive feedback, and mentorship are essential components of these interventions, bolstering an athlete's self-confidence and overall mental well-being. The future of interventions and enhancement of self-confidence in sports is an evolving landscape. Researchers and practitioners are continually exploring novel approaches, integrating a holistic understanding of self-confidence with emerging technologies and individualized interventions. As self-confidence continues to be a cornerstone of athlete performance and well-being, these interventions serve as a crucial avenue for optimizing an athlete's potential and promoting their mental resilience in the face of competitive challenges.

2.1.2.23 Psychological Strategies for Improving Self-Confidence in Sports

Self-confidence stands as a linchpin in the realm of sports psychology, significantly influencing an athlete's performance, motivation, and overall well-being.

1. Cognitive Restructuring and Self-Talk

Cognitive restructuring techniques have gained prominence in recent years as powerful tools for enhancing self-confidence. They involve challenging and altering negative thought patterns and self-doubt through positive self-talk and affirmations. Recent research has demonstrated that cognitive restructuring effectively empowers athletes to replace self-limiting beliefs with empowering ones, ultimately boosting self-confidence⁹⁹.

2. Cognitive-Behavioural Techniques

Cognitive-behavioural techniques (CBT) represent a powerful and widely used approach in psychology for addressing a range of emotional and behavioural issues. Over the past few years, CBT has continued to evolve and find applications in various domains. This essay explores the principles, methods, and recent advancements in CBT, highlighting its effectiveness in promoting positive change and well-being. At its core, CBT is grounded in the idea that our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are interconnected. It posits that by

modifying our thought patterns and behaviours, we can influence our emotional responses and improve our psychological well-being. Recent research within the realm of CBT has reaffirmed its fundamental principles¹⁰².

Cognitive restructuring is a key component of CBT. This technique involves identifying and challenging irrational or distorted thought patterns. Recent studies have shown that cognitive restructuring can be particularly effective in addressing conditions like anxiety disorders and depression¹⁰³. By examining and modifying these thought patterns, individuals can reduce negative emotions and promote more positive thinking.

Behavioural interventions are another essential element of CBT. Recent advancements in CBT have emphasized the importance of behaviour modification techniques. These include exposure therapy, systematic desensitization, and operant conditioning, among others. These methods have proven effective in treating conditions such as phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addiction¹⁰⁴. By altering behavioural responses, individuals can gradually change their emotional reactions to various stimuli. Recent years have seen the integration of mindfulness and acceptance-based strategies within the CBT framework. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) and dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) are two such examples. These approaches focus on cultivating awareness and acceptance of one's thoughts and emotions, leading to improved emotional regulation and overall well-being¹⁰⁴.

CBT has a robust presence in clinical psychology, with applications across various mental health disorders. Recent research in the field has expanded the use of CBT to target conditions such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, and eating disorders¹⁰⁵. The adaptability of CBT principles and techniques makes it a versatile tool for mental health professionals.

CBT's reach extends beyond clinical applications. Recent advancements in positive

psychology have integrated CBT techniques to enhance well-being and personal growth. These applications focus on resilience, happiness, and flourishing. By employing CBT-based interventions, individuals can proactively promote their psychological well-being and overall life satisfaction¹⁰⁶.

In recent years, technology has intersected with CBT, opening up new possibilities for interventions. Virtual reality (VR) and smartphone applications are now being used to deliver CBT-based therapies. Recent studies have explored the effectiveness of VR in treating phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder, and social anxiety¹⁰⁷. The immersive nature of VR provides a novel platform for exposure therapy.

While CBT is highly effective, it is not without its challenges. Recent research has acknowledged that it may not be equally effective for everyone, and its success may be influenced by individual factors. Therapist competence and the need for specialized training in CBT have been identified as critical considerations¹⁰⁴.

Cultural considerations and the need for culturally adapted CBT interventions have gained attention. Recent studies have explored the necessity of tailoring CBT techniques to different cultural contexts to ensure their effectiveness and accessibility. The cultural competence of therapists and the incorporation of cultural factors in CBT interventions are vital to their success¹⁰⁴.

The future of CBT appears promising, with a focus on personalized and targeted interventions. Recent advancements in precision medicine and personalized therapy have implications for CBT. These developments seek to match individuals with the most effective CBT strategies based on their unique characteristics and needs¹⁰⁵. The integration of technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence, can facilitate the development of more personalized CBT approaches.

2.1.2.24 Goal Setting and Self-Efficacy

Setting specific, challenging, and achievable goals is another psychological strategy for improving self-confidence. Recent studies have highlighted the symbiotic relationship between goal setting and self-efficacy, an individual's belief in their ability to achieve those goals. Athletes who establish and pursue well-structured goals tend to experience increased self-efficacy, which, in turn, bolsters their self-confidence⁹⁹.

Goal-setting and imagery are two psychological techniques that have gained substantial recognition for their impact on performance enhancement and achievement in various domains. Recent research has delved into the intricacies of these techniques, highlighting their effectiveness in shaping individual and collective success. Setting goals is a fundamental process in human achievement, and it forms the cornerstone of personal and professional development. Recent research underscores the power of goal-setting in clarifying objectives, fostering motivation, and driving progress¹⁰⁸.

The S.M.A.R.T. framework has gained prominence in recent years as a systematic approach to goal-setting. This framework emphasizes that goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Recent studies have highlighted the effectiveness of S.M.A.R.T. goals in enhancing goal attainment, as they provide clear guidelines for action and evaluation¹⁰⁸. Recent advancements in goal-setting research have highlighted the importance of feedback and continuous monitoring. Athletes, students, and professionals can benefit from ongoing assessments of their progress toward their goals. Real-time feedback allows individuals to adjust their strategies and maintain motivation¹⁰⁹.

Imagery, or mental rehearsal, is a cognitive technique that involves vividly imagining a specific scenario or action. Recent research within the field of imagery has shed light on the efficacy of this technique in enhancing performance, improving skill acquisition, and reducing anxiety⁶⁷.

1. Types of Imagery: Internal and External

Recent studies have explored the distinctions between internal and external imagery. Internal imagery involves mentally visualizing the execution of a skill from one's own perspective, while external imagery involves observing oneself from a third-person perspective. Research has shown that both types of imagery can be effective, and individuals may have preferences for one over the other⁶⁷.

Imagery can significantly impact an individual's self-efficacy, their belief in their ability to accomplish a specific task. Recent research has found that positive imagery, where individuals visualize themselves successfully completing a task, can enhance self-efficacy and, subsequently, goal attainment¹¹⁰. The relationship between goal-setting and imagery is not coincidental; these two techniques complement each other. Recent research has emphasized how goal-setting provides the destination while imagery outlines the journey. Goal-setting helps individuals identify what they want to achieve, and imagery allows them to mentally rehearse the steps required to reach their goals¹¹¹.

Process goals, a subset of goals that focus on the actions and strategies needed to achieve an outcome, play a vital role in the synergy between goal-setting and imagery. Recent advancements in sports psychology have highlighted how process goals, when combined with imagery, can enhance skill development and performance. Athletes who set process goals, such as perfecting a specific technique, can use imagery to mentally rehearse each step, thus enhancing their mastery⁶⁷.

Recent studies have explored the concept of imagery scripts that combine goal-setting with vivid mental rehearsal. Athletes, in particular, use imagery scripts to create a mental blueprint of their performance, from setting specific goals to imagining each step of their competition. Research has demonstrated that athletes who employ imagery scripts achieve higher levels of performance and goal attainment¹¹².

the substantial benefits of goal-setting and imagery, recent research recognizes the need

for individualization and cultural adaptation. What works for one person or group may not be effective for another. Cultural differences, personal preferences, and variations in goal-setting styles should be considered when implementing these techniques¹¹¹. The future of goal-setting and imagery is dynamic and promising. Recent advancements in technology, such as virtual reality and augmented reality, offer new platforms for enhancing the integration of goal-setting and imagery. These technologies provide immersive environments for individuals to set and visualize their goals, creating a more interactive and engaging experience¹¹².

2. Imagery and Visualization

The power of imagery and visualization in improving self-confidence cannot be overstated. Recent research has elucidated how athletes can harness the benefits of mental rehearsal by vividly imagining themselves successfully executing specific skills and achieving desired outcomes. This mental practice cultivates a sense of self-belief and positive anticipation, contributing to heightened self-confidence⁹².

3. Positive Reinforcement and Social Support

The role of positive reinforcement from coaches, teammates, and sports psychologists is integral in an athlete's self-confidence journey. Recent studies have emphasized the influence of external feedback and support in affirming an athlete's self-worth and capabilities⁸⁷. A nurturing and supportive environment fosters an athlete's self-belief and, subsequently, enhances their self-confidence.

Positive self-talk, the practice of using constructive and encouraging language to influence one's thoughts and emotions, has emerged as a crucial component of mental well-being and personal growth. Recent research between has delved into the mechanisms and applications of positive self-talk, shedding light on its effectiveness in promoting optimism, resilience, and improved performance. Positive self-talk encompasses a range of verbal and mental

affirmations that individuals use to manage their internal dialogue. It involves replacing negative or self-limiting thoughts with constructive, supportive, and optimistic ones. Recent studies have underscored the significance of this practice in shaping emotional experiences and overall psychological well-being¹¹³.

Positive self-talk is deeply intertwined with optimism and resilience. Optimism, the tendency to view events and experiences in a positive light, is closely associated with positive self-talk. Recent research has affirmed the role of optimistic self-talk in fostering a hopeful and positive outlook¹¹³. Resilience, the capacity to bounce back from adversity, also relies on positive self-talk. Studies conducted in the last few years have explored the role of self-compassion and encouraging self-talk in enhancing resilience. By practicing self-compassion and reframing challenges as opportunities, individuals can bolster their resilience and mental fortitude¹¹⁴.

Recent advancements in the realm of sports psychology have highlighted the role of positive self-talk in performance enhancement. Athletes who employ positive self-talk during training and competition tend to experience improved focus, motivation, and confidence¹¹⁵. Positive self-talk can take on various forms. Recent research has identified three primary categories of positive self-talk: instructional, motivational, and thought-stopping. Instructional self-talk involves providing oneself with guidance or cues to perform a task effectively. Motivational self-talk aims to boost motivation and persistence. Thought-stopping self-talk is employed to halt and replace negative or distracting thoughts with positive ones¹¹⁶.

Positive affirmations, a subset of positive self-talk, are concise, encouraging statements designed to boost self-esteem and confidence. Recent studies have demonstrated that regular use of affirmations can enhance self-belief and promote a positive self-concept. Individuals often use affirmations to instill a sense of optimism, motivation, and self-worth¹¹⁷. Cultural

and societal factors play a pivotal role in shaping an individual's self-talk patterns. Recent research has emphasized the need to consider cultural perspectives when examining positive self-talk. Different cultures may have distinct approaches to self-talk and may attribute unique meanings to certain words or phrases¹¹⁸.

Positive self-talk has found extensive applications in clinical psychology. Recent studies have explored its use in various therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). Therapists often guide individuals to reframe negative self-talk patterns and replace them with constructive and self-compassionate language¹¹⁹.

Positive self-talk is increasingly recognized in the realm of education. Recent advancements have explored the benefits of positive self-talk among students, particularly in fostering a growth mindset and enhancing academic performance. Students who engage in self-encouragement and use positive affirmations tend to experience increased motivation and improved learning outcomes¹²⁰.

While positive self-talk is a powerful tool for personal growth and well-being, it is not without its challenges. Recent research has noted that individuals may initially struggle to adopt and maintain positive self-talk patterns. Overcoming deeply ingrained negative self-talk can be a complex process, and professional guidance may be required¹¹⁰. The future of positive self-talk is promising, with a focus on the development of technology-based interventions and mobile applications. Recent studies have explored the use of digital platforms to deliver personalized positive self-talk programs. These technologies aim to offer individuals tailored and accessible support for cultivating optimistic self-talk patterns¹²¹.

2.1.2.25 The Role of Coaches and Support Staff in Building Self-Confidence

Coaches and support staff in sports play a pivotal role in shaping athletes' self-confidence, a psychological attribute that can significantly impact performance and well-

being. The dynamics of the coach-athlete relationship, has shown the importance of having a supportive and empowering environment. Coaches and support staff have a role to play in building self-confidence of athletes. Coaches' serve as mentors and guides for athletes, contributing significantly to their self-confidence. The coach-athlete relationship, when built on trust and effective communication, can be transformative. Recent research has reinforced the idea that this partnership is not solely focused on performance but also on the athlete's psychological well-being¹²².

One of the key responsibilities of coaches is to provide constructive feedback to athletes. Recent studies have highlighted the impact of feedback on an athlete's self-confidence. Constructive feedback, which includes praise for effort and specific guidance for improvement, can enhance an athlete's belief in their abilities¹²³. Coaches often work with athletes to set performance and training goals. The process of setting and achieving these goals can significantly influence an athlete's self-confidence. Research conducted in the last few years has emphasized the importance of setting S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals. Coaches who assist athletes in setting and tracking these goals foster a sense of competence and confidence¹⁰⁸.

Coaches play a critical role in establishing a supportive team environment. Recent research has acknowledged the significance of team cohesion and a positive team culture in shaping athletes' self-confidence. Coaches who foster a sense of belonging and provide social support can enhance their athletes' self-esteem¹²⁴. Recent advancements in sports psychology have highlighted the importance of focusing on the process rather than solely on the outcome. Coaches who encourage athletes to concentrate on improving their skills and mastering the fundamentals can help build self-confidence. The process-oriented approach reduces the pressure associated with performance outcomes and allows athletes to take pride in their progress¹¹⁶.

Coaches are not the sole influencers of an athlete's self-confidence. Support staff, including sports psychologists, physiotherapists, and nutritionists, contribute to a multidisciplinary approach. Recent studies have recognized the value of collaboration among support staff to address the holistic needs of athletes. Sports psychologists, in particular, are instrumental in helping athletes develop mental resilience and self-belief¹²⁵. Support staff, including sports psychologists, provide athletes with mental skills training. Recent research has demonstrated the effectiveness of interventions such as visualization, relaxation techniques, and self-talk in enhancing an athlete's self-confidence. Athletes who learn to manage their anxiety and self-doubt through mental skills training are better equipped to perform under pressure¹²⁵.

Coaches and support staff face various challenges in building self-confidence. Recent studies have highlighted ethical considerations, such as the potential for undue pressure or overemphasis on winning. Coaches must strike a balance between pushing athletes to reach their potential and preserving their mental well-being. Ethical coaching practices are essential to maintain a healthy coach-athlete relationship¹²².

In the context of an increasingly diverse and globalized sports community, cultural sensitivity and inclusivity are paramount. Recent research has emphasized the need for coaches and support staff to understand and respect the cultural backgrounds and beliefs of their athletes. Culturally competent coaching practices ensure that athletes from various backgrounds can build self-confidence within the sporting environment¹²⁶. The future of coaching and support staff in building self-confidence holds exciting prospects. Recent advancements in technology, such as virtual reality and mobile applications, offer new avenues for mental skills training and performance enhancement. Coaches and support staff can leverage these tools to provide personalized and innovative interventions to athletes¹²⁷.

2.1.2.26 Implications for Sports Psychology and Diversity

The field of sports psychology has been evolving to recognize the vital importance of diversity in its principles, practices, and applications. Recent research conducted has highlighted the implications of diversity for sports psychology. Diversity in sports psychology involves recognizing and addressing the unique needs and experiences of athletes from diverse backgrounds. This encompasses a broad spectrum of diversity, including but not limited to racial and ethnic diversity, gender diversity, cultural diversity, and diversity in sexual orientation and physical abilities. Recent studies emphasize the importance of adopting an inclusive approach in sports psychology that respects and values this diversity¹²⁸. Cultural competence is a fundamental aspect of diversity in sports psychology. Recent research underscores the necessity of cultural competence training for sports psychologists and practitioners. Understanding the cultural norms, values, and expectations of athletes from diverse backgrounds is essential for effective communication and intervention. Culturally competent sports psychology practices ensure that athletes receive personalized and meaningful support¹²⁹.

Bias and stereotyping can hinder the progress of athletes from diverse backgrounds. Recent studies have shown that stereotypes related to race, gender, or other aspects of diversity can affect the way athletes are perceived and treated by coaches, peers, and even sports psychologists. Sports psychologists must actively work to challenge and overcome these biases to ensure that all athletes receive equitable support¹³⁰. The concept of intersectionality, which recognizes that individuals may possess multiple aspects of diverse identities, is gaining prominence in sports psychology. Recent research acknowledges the unique experiences and challenges faced by individuals at the intersections of various identities. For instance, an athlete may identify as both a woman and a member of an ethnic minority, leading to distinct psychological needs. Understanding and respecting the intersectionality of athlete identities is crucial in providing effective support¹³¹.

Inclusivity and a sense of belonging are essential for athletes from diverse backgrounds. Recent studies have highlighted the benefits of creating inclusive team environments that value diversity. Sports psychologists can play a central role in fostering a culture of inclusivity by working with coaches and team leaders to implement practices that promote a sense of belonging for all athletes¹³². Effective communication is at the core of sports psychology. Recent research emphasizes the significance of enhancing communication skills to address the diverse needs of athletes. This includes not only language proficiency but also the ability to navigate cultural nuances and understand the unique communication styles of athletes from different backgrounds. Sports psychologists who possess these skills can build stronger and more trusting relationships with their clients¹³³.

Athletes from diverse backgrounds may face distinct challenges related to their identity. Recent studies have shown that providing a platform for athletes to share their experiences and concerns can be empowering. This may involve creating support groups, offering confidential counselling, or conducting anonymous surveys to gather feedback. Such initiatives can help sports psychologists tailor their interventions to address the specific needs of diverse athletes¹³⁴. Psychological safety, the assurance that one can express their thoughts, emotions, and concerns without fear of judgment or retaliation, is crucial for athletes' mental well-being. Recent research highlights the importance of fostering psychological safety in the sports environment. When athletes feel safe to discuss their experiences and concerns, they are more likely to seek the support of sports psychologists and other mental health professionals¹³⁵.

Diversity in sports psychology also encompasses mental health disparities. Recent studies have revealed that athletes from marginalized communities may face greater mental health challenges due to societal and systemic factors. Sports psychologists must be attuned to these disparities and work to bridge the gap in access to mental health support. This may involve

providing low-cost or pro bono services, collaborating with community organizations, and advocating for greater mental health awareness¹³⁶.

2.1.2.27 The Connection between Self-Confidence and Mental Toughness

The interplay between self-confidence and mental toughness is a dynamic and intricate relationship that has gained considerable attention in recent research. To grasp the connection between self-confidence and mental toughness, it is crucial to define each concept. Self-confidence pertains to an individual's belief in their capabilities and competence. It represents the assurance in one's ability to perform, regardless of the challenges that may arise. On the other hand, mental toughness encompasses an individual's ability to persist, perform at their best, and remain resilient in the face of adversity and stress¹³⁷.

Recent research highlights the significant impact of self-confidence on the development and manifestation of mental toughness:

1. **Resilience in Adversity:** Self-confident individuals tend to perceive challenges and setbacks as opportunities for growth rather than as threats. This perspective fosters mental toughness, allowing them to persist and emerge stronger from challenging situations¹³⁸.
2. **Positive Self-Talk:** Self-confidence can be a source of positive self-talk, a key component of mental toughness. Self-confident individuals are more likely to employ constructive, motivating self-talk during difficult times, which bolsters their mental resilience¹³⁹.
3. **Task Mastery:** Self-confident individuals often achieve mastery experiences, where they successfully overcome challenges, leading to increased self-belief. These mastery experiences contribute to mental toughness, as individuals who believe in their abilities are more likely to persevere in the face of adversity¹⁴⁰.
4. **Confidence in Uncertainty:** Mental toughness often thrives in uncertain and high-pressure situations. Self-confidence can serve as an anchor, providing a sense of control and assurance

even in ambiguous circumstances. This confidence in uncertainty is a hallmark of mentally tough individuals¹⁴¹.

While self-confidence lays the foundation for mental toughness, recent research also highlights the reciprocal relationship, where mental toughness, in turn, enhances self-confidence:

1. Increased Self-Belief: Mentally tough individuals tend to believe in their ability to navigate adversity and perform under pressure. This heightened self-belief bolsters their self-confidence in their capacity to face challenges head-on¹⁴².

2. Enhanced Coping Mechanisms: Mental toughness equips individuals with better coping mechanisms to manage stress, setbacks, and pressure. These effective coping strategies contribute to a sense of self-assuredness and, consequently, greater self-confidence¹⁴³.

3. Goal Achievement: Mentally tough individuals are more likely to set and achieve ambitious goals. Their ability to persevere and remain committed to their objectives reinforces their self-confidence in their capacity to succeed¹⁴⁴.

4. Positive Feedback Loop: The interaction between mental toughness and self-confidence often creates a positive feedback loop. Mentally tough individuals are more likely to set themselves up for success, and the achievement of their goals further enhances their self-confidence, creating a continuous cycle of improvement¹⁴⁵.

While the relationship between self-confidence and mental toughness is generally positive, there can be challenges. Overconfidence, for instance, can lead to unrealistic goal-setting and can potentially hinder the development of mental toughness. Similarly, excessive self-confidence can result in complacency, as individuals may believe they do not need to develop mental toughness skills¹⁴⁶. Achieving a balance between self-confidence and mental toughness is essential to optimize performance and resilience.

Understanding the dynamic interplay between self-confidence and mental toughness has

practical implications in various domains. Coaches, educators, and individuals can employ strategies to cultivate these attributes:

1. Goal Setting: Setting and achieving progressively more challenging goals can foster mental toughness and enhance self-confidence. The process of accomplishing goals reinforces the belief in one's capabilities¹⁴³.
2. Visualization: Visualization techniques that encourage individuals to see themselves successfully overcoming obstacles and challenges can enhance both mental toughness and self-confidence¹⁴⁷.
3. Positive Self-Talk: Training individuals to engage in positive self-talk, especially during stressful situations, can boost mental toughness and subsequently self-confidence¹⁴⁸.
4. Resilience Training: Programs designed to build resilience and mental toughness can indirectly boost self-confidence by providing individuals with the tools to cope with adversity effectively¹⁴⁹.

1. Long-term Implications for an Athlete's Career

The life of an athlete is an intricate and multifaceted journey, with numerous decisions and experiences that can have long-term implications for their career. Recent research conducted has shed light on the various factors, challenges, and choices that can shape an athlete's career trajectory. The transition from active competition to retirement is a critical juncture in an athlete's career, one that can have profound long-term implications. Recent studies underscore the challenges and opportunities during this transition:

Identity Crisis: Retirement often triggers an identity crisis for athletes who have defined themselves through their sport. The shift from being an athlete to life after sports can be emotionally taxing, affecting mental health and self-esteem¹⁵⁰.

Career Planning: Long-term career planning is essential. Athletes who start planning their

post-sport careers early are better prepared for the transition. Education, skill development, and networking are crucial factors for success¹⁵¹.

Mental Health: Athletes often face mental health challenges during the transition. Coping with a loss of structure, camaraderie, and purpose requires psychological support. Seeking professional help can mitigate long-term emotional consequences¹⁵².

Injuries are an inherent part of an athlete's life and can have far-reaching implications for their career:

Rehabilitation: Adequate rehabilitation is critical to minimizing the long-term effects of injuries. Athletes who prioritize recovery and rehabilitation are more likely to return to peak performance levels¹⁵³.

Resilience: Coping with injuries fosters resilience. Athletes who view injuries as challenges to overcome often emerge stronger and more determined in their careers, as the experience equips them with mental fortitude¹⁵⁴.

Retirement Considerations: Injuries can accelerate the transition to retirement. Athletes who sustain career-ending injuries often face decisions about their long-term health and well-being¹⁵⁵.

Mental health has become a central concern for athletes with profound long-term implications:

Stigma Reduction: Recent research emphasizes the importance of destigmatizing mental health issues in sports. Athletes who seek mental health support during their careers are better prepared for life's challenges post-retirement¹⁵⁶.

Resilience Training: Mental health programs that enhance resilience are beneficial. These programs equip athletes with the psychological skills to navigate life's ups and downs long after their competitive years¹⁵⁷.

Holistic Well-being: Prioritizing mental well-being alongside physical health is crucial.

Athletes who engage in holistic self-care are more likely to enjoy fulfilling lives and successful careers after sports¹⁵⁸.

2.1.3 Concept of Group Cohesion in Sports.

Group cohesion in sports is a fundamental concept in the field of sports psychology, playing a pivotal role in the success and performance of sports teams. The term "group cohesion" refers to the degree to which individuals within a group or team work together, experience a sense of unity, and are committed to common goals and objectives. In the context of sports, this concept has been widely studied, and researchers have sought to define and understand the various dimensions of group cohesion, its impact on team dynamics, and how it can be effectively fostered. Group cohesion in sports encompasses a multifaceted concept involving the social, emotional, and task-related dimensions of team dynamics. Recent studies provide an enriched understanding of this concept. Scholars¹⁵⁹ describe group cohesion as "a dynamic process that reflects the tendency for a group to remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and for its members to remain in the group." This definition emphasizes both the unity and the instrumental aspect of group cohesion, highlighting the importance of shared goals and the maintenance of the group's integrity.

To comprehensively define group cohesion in sports, it is essential to consider its dimensions. Recent research delves into the various facets of group cohesion. Scholars have¹⁶⁰ proposed a two-dimensional model: task cohesion and social cohesion. Task cohesion refers to the degree to which team members work together to achieve common goals related to performance, strategy, and winning, while social cohesion pertains to the interpersonal relationships and social bonds among team members. Task cohesion is crucial for achieving success in sports, as it relates to the team's ability to execute strategies effectively, maintain high performance standards, and compete at their best. On the other hand, social cohesion enhances the overall team experience, fostering camaraderie, trust, and mutual support

among athletes.

The concept of group cohesion in sports is significant for several reasons. First and foremost, it is associated with improved team performance. Recent research¹⁶¹ demonstrates a positive link between high levels of group cohesion and enhanced team performance. When team members are united in their pursuit of shared objectives, they are more likely to work cohesively on the field, resulting in better outcomes. Additionally, group cohesion contributes to the psychological well-being of athletes. A study found that athletes who perceive a higher level of group cohesion report lower levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout¹⁶². This indicates that a strong sense of belonging and support within a team can alleviate the mental and emotional pressures that athletes often experience.

The sense of belonging that group cohesion fosters also leads to increased team satisfaction and motivation. When athletes feel connected to their team and believe in the team's goals, they are more motivated to give their best effort. Recent studies emphasize the role of group cohesion in maintaining athletes' motivation throughout the season¹⁶³. Furthermore, group cohesion is crucial for the long-term success and stability of sports teams. Research found that teams with higher levels of group cohesion are more likely to retain their members and continue to perform well over multiple seasons¹⁶⁴. This demonstrates that group cohesion is not only essential for immediate success but also for the sustained excellence of sports teams.

To delve deeper into the definition of group cohesion in sports, it is essential to examine recent studies and their findings in more detail. Several studies provide valuable insights into this concept. Scholars have investigated the relationship between group cohesion and team performance in collegiate athletes¹⁶³. They found that task cohesion, in particular, significantly predicted team performance. Teams that displayed strong task cohesion were more likely to achieve their goals and outperform their competitors. This highlights the

instrumental aspect of group cohesion in sports, where shared performance goals play a pivotal role. Scholars have also focused on the impact of group cohesion on athlete well-being¹⁶⁵. Their study revealed that athletes who perceived higher levels of social cohesion reported lower levels of psychological distress. Social cohesion provided a supportive environment where athletes could share their concerns, seek help, and find solace in their teammates. This demonstrates that group cohesion not only enhances performance but also contributes to the psychological health of athletes.

Also, scholars have conducted a longitudinal study on group cohesion in professional sports teams¹⁶³. They discovered that teams with high group cohesion levels in one season were more likely to retain their members and maintain performance excellence in subsequent seasons. This underscores the long-term significance of group cohesion in sports, as it contributes to team stability and sustained success.

While the definition of group cohesion in sports is well-established, there are still challenges and potential future directions that warrant attention. Recent research has identified some of these issues. One challenge lies in measuring group cohesion effectively. Validity and reliability issues persist in the assessment of group cohesion. Researchers must continue to develop and refine measurement instruments to obtain accurate data on team cohesion¹⁵⁹.

2.1.3.1 The Importance of Group Cohesion in Sports

Group cohesion is a fundamental concept in sports, with a profound impact on team dynamics, performance, and athlete well-being. It refers to the degree of unity, cooperation, and commitment among team members in pursuit of common goals. The importance of group cohesion in sports cannot be overstated, as it influences various aspects of team functioning and success. Group cohesion is a multifaceted concept with immense importance in sports. Recent research has shed light on its significance, emphasizing its positive impact on team performance, the psychological well-being of athletes, team satisfaction, motivation, and

long-term success. High levels of group cohesion lead to better communication, collaboration, and coordination among team members, resulting in improved performance. Athletes who experience a strong sense of belonging and support are likely to suffer less psychological distress and stress. The satisfaction and motivation derived from group cohesion contribute to the athletes' commitment and enthusiasm. Furthermore, group cohesion is essential for the long-term success and stability of sports teams. It ensures the retention of key players and contributes to sustained excellence. In summary, the importance of group cohesion in sports cannot be overstated, as it is a cornerstone of team success and athlete well-being.

Enhanced Performance: One of the most significant aspects of group cohesion in sports is its positive effect on team performance. Recent research¹⁶⁶, has consistently shown a strong link between high levels of group cohesion and improved team performance. When athletes within a team share a strong sense of unity and commitment to a common goal, they are more likely to collaborate effectively, communicate efficiently, and coordinate their efforts on the field. This leads to enhanced team performance, which is the ultimate goal in competitive sports.

Scholars have corroborates the positive impact of group cohesion on performance¹⁶¹. Teams with a high degree of cohesion tend to set and achieve performance goals more effectively, leading to better results and higher chances of success. This demonstrates the instrumental value of group cohesion in sports, where shared objectives drive the team to excel.

Psychological Well-being of Athletes: The significance of group cohesion extends beyond the field of play to the mental and emotional well-being of athletes. Scholars have conducted a study on the relationship between group cohesion and athlete well-being, finding a notable connection¹⁶⁷. Athletes who perceive a higher level of group cohesion tend to report lower levels of psychological distress, stress, and burnout. This suggests that strong social

bonds and support within the team create a nurturing environment that can alleviate the psychological pressures that athletes often experience. Furthermore, group cohesion fosters a sense of belonging and identity within the team, which is vital for an athlete's self-esteem and overall psychological well-being. When athletes feel valued and integrated into the team, they are more likely to experience higher levels of self-worth and confidence, which positively impacts their performance¹⁶¹.

Team Satisfaction and Motivation: Group cohesion plays a crucial role in enhancing team satisfaction and motivation. Recent studies have demonstrated the impact of group cohesion on athlete motivation, emphasizing its role in maintaining athletes' commitment and enthusiasm throughout a season¹⁶⁵. Athletes who are part of a cohesive team are more likely to derive satisfaction from the team experience. The support, camaraderie, and mutual trust that group cohesion fosters create an environment in which athletes find joy and fulfillment in their participation. This satisfaction not only contributes to their overall well-being but also fuels their motivation to put forth their best effort in training and competition.

Furthermore, group cohesion can act as a powerful motivator. When athletes are part of a team with a strong sense of unity and shared objectives, they are more driven to perform at their best to meet the team's expectations. The fear of letting down their teammates can be a powerful incentive that propels athletes to excel in their performance¹⁶⁸.

Long-term Success and Team Stability: The importance of group cohesion in sports is not limited to short-term success but extends to long-term team stability and excellence. A study investigated group cohesion in professional sports teams over multiple seasons¹⁶⁹. Their findings highlighted that teams with high levels of group cohesion in one season were more likely to retain their members and maintain their performance standards in subsequent seasons. This underscores the long-term significance of group cohesion in sports, as it contributes to team stability and sustained success.

Teams that foster and maintain a strong sense of cohesion are more likely to keep their core players, which, in turn, enhances team stability. A stable team, with a consistent roster of players, can build on its past successes, refine its strategies, and continue to perform at a high level. This long-term success is often the hallmark of sports dynasties, and group cohesion plays a central role in their sustained excellence.

2.1.3.2 Group Dynamics in Sports

Early studies on group dynamics in sports laid the foundation for the field of sports psychology as we know it today. Pioneers like Kurt Lewis, Coleman Griffith, Bruce Ogilvie, and others made significant contributions to understanding how individuals come together to form cohesive teams and how these dynamics influence athletic performance. The enduring relevance of their work is evident in contemporary sports psychology research. Concepts such as group cohesion, task cohesion, social cohesion, and effective communication continue to be central to the understanding of sports team dynamics. Recent studies have built upon these early findings, incorporating new technologies and examining evolving team dynamics. As a result, the study of group dynamics in sports remains a dynamic and evolving field with continued significance in the modern sports landscape.

The study of group dynamics in sports has a rich history that dates back several decades. Understanding how individuals come together to form cohesive teams and how these dynamics influence athletic performance has been a subject of great interest. One of the pioneers in the study of group dynamics was Kurt Lewis, a psychologist who made significant contributions to understanding the behaviour of individuals within groups. While his work primarily focused on general group dynamics, many of his principles are highly applicable to the context of sports teams. Lewis's field theory, which emphasizes the importance of the environment and the dynamic interplay between individual and group processes, remains relevant in contemporary sports psychology. Recent research highlights

the continued application of Lewis's ideas in analysing the role of the sports environment in shaping team dynamics and individual performance¹⁷⁰.

In the early 20th century, Coleman Griffith emerged as a pioneer in the field of sport psychology, particularly in the context of group dynamics within sports teams. His work at the University of Illinois established one of the first sport psychology laboratories and paved the way for the systematic study of sports behaviour. Griffith's research on group dynamics in sports laid the foundation for understanding the psychological factors that influence team performance. His work on athlete motivation, leadership, and group cohesiveness remains influential. Recent studies, have continued to explore the relationship between leadership styles and group cohesion, echoing Griffith's early contributions¹⁶³.

Bruce Ogilvie is another prominent figure in the early history of sport psychology. His work on mental training and the psychological preparation of athletes had a profound impact on understanding group dynamics in sports teams. Ogilvie's emphasis on enhancing team morale, motivation, and the mental toughness of athletes has enduring significance. Modern research in sports psychology continues to draw from Ogilvie's ideas, particularly in areas related to team motivation and mental resilience. For instance, explore the influence of group cohesion on athlete well-being and mental health, highlighting the importance of psychological preparation in sports¹⁶⁷.

Early studies in group dynamics in sports, introduced the concept of group cohesion¹⁶⁶. They categorized group cohesion into two dimensions: task cohesion and social cohesion. Task cohesion pertains to the team's commitment to achieving its goals related to performance and strategy, while social cohesion relates to the interpersonal relationships and social bonds among team members. These early studies laid the groundwork for understanding the importance of these dimensions in sports. Recent research, continues to investigate the role of both task and social cohesion in team dynamics and their influence on

performance and athlete well-being¹⁶¹.

Early studies on group dynamics in sports also recognized the significance of communication within sports teams. Researchers explored the role of communication patterns in team success¹⁷¹. Effective communication, they argued, was essential for coordinating efforts, sharing information, and making collective decisions.

Recent research, has continued to examine communication within sports teams¹⁷². The advent of new communication technologies and the impact of social media on team dynamics are areas of growing interest in contemporary research, highlighting the evolving nature of this field.

2.1.3.3 Instruments and Tools for Assessing Group Cohesion in Sports

Assessing group cohesion in sports is essential for enhancing team dynamics and performance. Several instruments and tools have been developed to measure cohesion, focusing on various dimensions such as social and task cohesion, social identity, and team environment. The Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ), Team Environment Questionnaire (TEQ), and Sport Cohesion Questionnaire (SCQ) provide valuable insights into team dynamics. The cohesion-performance relationship framework helps analyze the impact of cohesion on team success, while social identity mapping offers a deeper understanding of identity dynamics within teams. Emerging technology tools are also transforming the assessment of group cohesion, providing real-time data for interventions. Recent research, underscores the enduring relevance of these instruments and tools in contemporary sports psychology. As the field continues to evolve, these tools remain essential for sports psychologists, coaches, and researchers in assessing and enhancing group cohesion, ultimately contributing to improved team performance and satisfaction.

Group cohesion is a critical aspect of team dynamics in sports, influencing performance, satisfaction, and overall success. To assess and understand group cohesion in

sports, various instruments and tools have been developed. These tools are essential for sports psychologists, coaches, and researchers to evaluate and enhance team dynamics.

Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ): The Group Environment Questionnaire¹⁷³ is one of the earliest and most widely used instruments for assessing group cohesion in sports. It measures two dimensions of cohesion: social cohesion (the level of camaraderie and interpersonal relationships) and task cohesion (the commitment to group goals and performance).

Recent research emphasized the continued relevance of the GEQ in measuring cohesion in sport teams¹⁷². The GEQ is considered a valuable tool for assessing the team environment's impact on group cohesion, making it a foundational instrument in sports psychology.

Team Environment Questionnaire (TEQ): The Team Environment Questionnaire¹⁷⁴ is an extension of the GEQ. It provides a comprehensive assessment of the team environment, examining dimensions such as leadership, social support, and social identity in addition to cohesion. The TEQ's multifaceted approach allows researchers and practitioners to gain deeper insights into the factors influencing group cohesion.

Recent studies, have utilized the TEQ to investigate the interplay between social identity, stress perceptions, and cohesion in youth sports¹⁷⁵. This demonstrates the TEQ's value in understanding the complex relationships within sports teams.

Sport Cohesion Questionnaire (SCQ): The Sport Cohesion Questionnaire¹⁷⁶ is designed specifically for assessing cohesion in sport teams. It distinguishes between four dimensions of cohesion: task cohesion, social cohesion, attraction to group-task, and attraction to group-social. This comprehensive approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the team dynamics in sports.

Bruner and his colleagues' research highlights the SCQ's utility in assessing various facets of

group cohesion, making it a valuable addition to the arsenal of tools for sports psychologists and researchers.

The Cohesion-Performance Relationship: The cohesion-performance relationship¹⁷⁷ is a theoretical framework that helps assess the influence of cohesion on team performance. It emphasizes the impact of both social and task cohesion on team outcomes. Researchers employ this framework to analyse the role of cohesion in team success and to develop interventions that enhance cohesion. Recent research, continues to investigate the cohesion-performance relationship, emphasizing the enduring importance of this theoretical model in sports psychology¹⁷⁸.

Social Identity Mapping: Social identity mapping is a relatively new tool in sports psychology that assesses the social identity dimensions within a team. By understanding the identity dynamics, sports psychologists and coaches can tailor their strategies to strengthen team cohesion and identity.

These studies study on the mediating role of social identity in the association of cohesion with mental health in youth sport demonstrates the contemporary application of social identity mapping in understanding group cohesion in sports¹⁷⁵.

In the digital age, emerging technology tools are transforming the assessment of group cohesion in sports. Apps and software are being developed to collect and analyse data related to team dynamics, communication patterns, and social interactions. These tools provide real-time insights into team cohesion and offer opportunities for immediate interventions. While specific tools vary, emerging technologies are changing the way team cohesion is assessed and managed in sports.

2.1.3.4 Challenges in Measuring Group Cohesion

Measuring group cohesion in sports is essential for understanding team dynamics, enhancing performance, and promoting successful teamwork. However, this task is riddled

with challenges due to the multifaceted nature of cohesion, temporal variability, subjective assessments, the interplay with team performance, cultural and contextual differences, and the integration of emerging technology. The evolving landscape of these challenges and the ongoing efforts to address them. Researchers and practitioners in sports psychology must continue to adapt their measurement tools and methodologies to navigate these complexities and ensure that assessments accurately capture the intricate dynamics of group cohesion in the ever-evolving world of sports.

Measuring group cohesion in sports is crucial for understanding team dynamics, enhancing performance, and fostering successful teamwork. However, assessing group cohesion is not without its challenges. One of the foremost challenges in measuring group cohesion is the multifaceted nature of the construct. Group cohesion comprises both social and task-related dimensions, making it a complex concept to assess¹⁷⁷. Researchers must grapple with how to capture the intricacies of interpersonal relationships, shared goals, and group identity in a single assessment tool. Recent studies, exploration of the mediating role of social identity in the association of cohesion with mental health in youth sport, underscore the complexity of measuring these intertwined dimensions¹⁷⁵. The challenge lies in developing comprehensive measurement tools that capture both aspects of cohesion effectively.

Group cohesion is not a static phenomenon; it can change over time due to various factors, including team performance, leadership dynamics, and external stressors¹⁷⁸. This temporal variability presents challenges in measurement. A snapshot measurement of group cohesion may not accurately represent the cohesion level over the course of a sports season. Recent research, work on the Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF) model in sports and performance psychology, highlights the need to account for the dynamic nature of cohesion¹⁷⁹. Longitudinal studies and repeated measurements are necessary to capture the fluctuations in group cohesion over time accurately.

Measuring group cohesion often relies on self-report assessments from athletes or team members. While these assessments provide valuable insights, they are inherently subjective and can be influenced by various biases, including social desirability and mood states¹⁸⁰. To address this challenge, researchers must develop tools that minimize bias and provide objective insights into group cohesion. Recent research explores the relationship between cohesion and collective efficacy in basketball teams, emphasizing the need for robust assessment tools that yield reliable data¹⁸¹.

Group cohesion and team performance are intricately connected, making it challenging to disentangle their influences. Successful teams often have higher cohesion levels, but it is challenging to determine whether cohesion leads to better performance or if successful performance enhances cohesion¹⁷⁷. This challenge is not only theoretical but also methodological. Recent research, exploration of group cohesion in sport teams, highlights the need to employ advanced analytical techniques to better understand the dynamic interplay between cohesion and performance¹⁷². Studies employing structural equation modelling (SEM) and hierarchical linear modelling (HLM) provide insights into these complex relationships.

Measuring group cohesion in sports becomes more challenging when considering cultural and contextual differences. What may be considered a cohesive team in one cultural setting might not align with the cohesion norms in another. Furthermore, team dynamics and the factors influencing cohesion can vary based on the specific sport, age group, and level of competition¹⁸⁰. Researchers must adapt their assessment tools to account for these differences. Recent research, on the mediating role of social identity in the association of cohesion with mental health in youth sport, emphasizes the importance of considering cultural and contextual variations in the measurement of group cohesion¹⁷⁵.

The integration of emerging technology in group cohesion assessment introduces both

opportunities and challenges. Smartphone apps and digital survey platforms are increasingly used for data collection, offering efficient ways to collect real-time data. However, the reliability and validity of digital assessments must be rigorously evaluated to ensure their accuracy¹⁸². The challenge lies in developing and validating digital tools that can accurately capture the nuanced aspects of group cohesion while leveraging the benefits of technology. Ongoing research is necessary to address these challenges and develop reliable digital assessment methods.

2.1.3.5 Factors Influencing Group Cohesion

Group cohesion is a dynamic and multifaceted construct that plays a pivotal role in the world of sports. Understanding the factors that influence group cohesion is essential for coaches, athletes, and sports psychologists as they strive to foster a sense of togetherness and unity within teams.

One of the central factors influencing group cohesion is leadership. Leadership within a sports team can emanate from both formal positions, such as a captain or coach, and informal roles assumed by influential team members. Effective leaders set the tone for team dynamics, facilitate communication, and establish a shared vision. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of leadership in shaping group cohesion¹⁷⁸. Strong and supportive leadership has been shown to positively impact team bonding and performance.

The shared goals and objectives of a team are another significant factor in group cohesion. When team members collectively commit to achieving specific goals, it fosters a sense of purpose and unity. Recent literature, study in 2021, underscores the link between shared goals and cohesion¹⁷⁵. Teams that define their objectives clearly and work together to accomplish them are more likely to experience high levels of cohesion. Another influential factor is communication. Effective and open communication among team members is vital for building trust and camaraderie. Recent research, emphasizes the role of communication in

group dynamics¹⁸². Teams that encourage transparent and constructive communication tend to have stronger cohesion as members feel heard and understood.

Individual personalities and characteristics contribute significantly to group cohesion. The diversity of personalities within a team can either enhance or hinder cohesion. Recent studies, explore the relationship between individual characteristics and cohesion. Teams with members who share common values, respect differences, and demonstrate empathy tend to develop stronger bonds.

In addition to individual personalities, team culture and norms play a pivotal role in influencing cohesion. The culture of a team encompasses its shared values, traditions, and accepted behaviors. Recent literature, delves into the importance of team culture¹⁷². Teams that establish positive norms, where members support each other, celebrate successes, and learn from failures, tend to experience higher cohesion.

External factors, such as the competitive environment and the presence of external stressors, also impact group cohesion. The level of competition and the pressure to perform can either unite or divide a team. Recent research, on stress perceptions in youth sport, highlights the influence of external factors¹⁷⁵. Teams that manage external stressors effectively and use competition as a unifying force can maintain high cohesion even in challenging situations.

Social identity, both within the team and in relation to external groups, is a factor that shapes group cohesion. A strong sense of identity and belonging within the team can enhance cohesion. Recent research, underscores the role of social identity¹⁸⁰. Teams that foster a strong team identity and a sense of belonging tend to experience higher levels of cohesion.

The composition of the team, including its size and the diversity of its members, can influence cohesion. Recent literature, on the Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF) model in sports, emphasizes the importance of team composition¹⁷⁹. Teams with an optimal

size that allows for effective communication and a balance between experienced and novice members often exhibit higher cohesion. Group cohesion in sports is shaped by a complex interplay of factors. Leadership, shared goals, communication, individual personalities, team culture, external factors, social identity, and team composition all contribute to the cohesiveness of a sports team. Recognizing and addressing these factors can enable coaches and athletes to cultivate stronger and more cohesive teams, ultimately enhancing performance and satisfaction.

2.1.3.6 Team Size and Composition in Sports

Team size and composition are crucial factors that influence group cohesion, communication, and overall team dynamics in sports. The configuration of a team, including the number of members and the diversity of their characteristics, can have a profound impact on performance and cohesion. Determining the ideal team size is a fundamental consideration for coaches and sports managers. Larger teams provide depth, diverse skills, and options for substitutions, while smaller teams can foster stronger interpersonal relationships and effective communication. Recent studies, emphasize the need to strike the right balance. The optimal team size may vary depending on the sport and its specific demands¹⁷⁹.

Different sports may require distinct team sizes to optimize performance. For instance, team sports like basketball or soccer often involve larger squads to accommodate various positions and playing styles. In contrast, individual sports such as tennis or golf rely on smaller, more focused teams, often involving a player and a coach. Recent research highlights the sport-specific considerations in team size, indicating that the nature of the sport should inform decisions about team composition¹⁶⁹. Team composition is not solely about headcount; it also involves the distribution of roles and positions within the team. The diversity of roles can enhance the team's ability to adapt to different situations. For instance, in soccer, a balanced composition of defenders, midfielders, and forwards provides tactical

flexibility. Recent studies, explore the implications of role diversity. A well-structured mix of roles can promote cohesion and improve team performance.

The composition of a team can include a mix of experienced athletes and novice members. The presence of seasoned athletes can provide leadership and guidance, while newcomers may inject fresh energy and enthusiasm. Recent literature, highlights the importance of achieving a balanced composition¹⁷⁵. Teams that effectively integrate both experienced and novice members can create an environment that fosters learning and growth while maintaining cohesion. Team composition influences social dynamics and the development of group cohesion. A diverse team with various backgrounds and characteristics can enhance creativity and problem-solving. Recent research, underscores the significance of social dynamics¹⁸⁰. Effective team composition involves considering the social identity and bonding potential among team members to promote cohesion.

Team size and composition have direct implications for both team performance and cohesion. The wrong team size or an imbalanced composition can lead to conflicts, inefficiencies, and suboptimal performance. Coaches and team managers must make deliberate decisions to optimize these factors for improved performance and cohesion¹⁷².

Coaches and team managers play a pivotal role in shaping team size and composition. Their decisions influence the roster and the allocation of roles within the team. Recent literature, like Taylor and Francis's¹⁸¹ work on validity and reliability in social and personality assessment, underscores the importance of data-driven decisions. Coaches and managers should consider the research and consult with sports psychologists to make informed choices regarding team size and composition. While finding the right team size and composition is crucial, flexibility is also essential. Teams may need to adapt their composition based on factors such as injuries, performance, or changing goals. Recent research highlights the dynamic nature of team composition¹⁸³. Teams that remain open to adjustments and maintain

a culture of adaptability can navigate challenges and changes more effectively.

2.1.3.7 Leadership and Coaching Styles in Sports

Leadership and coaching styles play a pivotal role in the success and development of sports teams and individual athletes. Effective leadership, coupled with the right coaching style, can inspire and motivate athletes, foster team cohesion, and lead to improved performance. Leadership in sports takes on various styles, each with its unique characteristics and impacts. Recent studies emphasize the significance of different leadership styles in the athletic context¹⁸⁴. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiring and motivating team members, has been associated with increased athlete satisfaction and performance.

Coaches are often the primary leaders within sports teams, responsible for setting the tone, creating a vision, and fostering a positive team environment. Their leadership styles can have a profound influence on athlete development and team success. In today's dynamic sports environment, adaptive leadership has gained prominence. Adaptive leaders can adjust their leadership style to suit the changing needs and challenges that arise in sports. Coaches who can flexibly transition between different leadership styles can effectively address diverse situations within sports teams¹⁷⁵.

The Athlete-Centered Approach: An athlete-centered coaching style is focused on individual athlete development, considering their unique needs and abilities. Coaches who prioritize the development and well-being of each athlete can create a supportive and growth-oriented team environment.

Task-Oriented Coaching Styles: Task-oriented coaching styles emphasize structured training, skill development, and goal attainment. Coaches who adopt this style can instill discipline and drive for success in their athletes¹⁷².

The coaching style employed by a coach can significantly impact athlete performance.

Coaches who apply appropriate coaching styles that align with their athletes' needs and the team's goals tend to experience improved performance¹⁶⁹. Effective leadership and coaching styles contribute to the creation of a positive team culture. Coaches who exhibit strong leadership skills and apply suitable coaching styles can establish a culture of respect, trust, and open communication. Recent literature, underscores the importance of fostering a healthy team culture to enhance cohesion and performance¹⁸⁰.

Effective leadership and coaching styles not only impact current athlete performance but also play a role in developing future leaders. Athletes who experience positive leadership and coaching are more likely to carry forward these qualities when they transition to leadership roles. Recent research, highlights the long-term implications of leadership and coaching on athlete development and future leadership in sports¹⁸⁴.

2.1.3.8 Communication and Interpersonal Relationships in Sports

Communication and interpersonal relationships are at the heart of successful sports teams and athlete-coach dynamics. Effective communication fosters understanding, trust, and a sense of cohesion among team members, while strong interpersonal relationships enhance motivation, morale, and overall team performance. Communication serves as the backbone of team dynamics in sports. The way information is exchanged, whether verbally, non-verbally, or through gestures, significantly impacts the team's ability to coordinate actions and make strategic decisions. Recent studies, highlight the importance of communication in building a sense of identity and belonging within the team¹⁷⁵.

Effective communication involves both verbal and non-verbal elements. Verbal communication includes spoken words, instructions, and discussions, while non-verbal communication encompasses body language, facial expressions, and gestures. Scholars have underscored the significance of both forms of communication in conveying messages, emotions, and intentions effectively¹⁶⁹. Communication is not a one-way process; it also

involves active listening and providing feedback. Athletes and coaches must be attentive to each other's needs and concerns, actively processing information and responding constructively. Recent literature, highlights the importance of feedback in promoting understanding and growth in sports relationships¹⁸⁴.

Communication styles can vary across cultures and contexts. Coaches and athletes often come from diverse backgrounds, and it's crucial to consider cultural and contextual differences when communicating. Recent research, underscores the need to adapt communication to align with the values and norms of the team's culture and the broader context of sports¹⁸¹. Interpersonal relationships in sports encompass the connections and interactions between athletes, coaches, and other team members. These relationships influence trust, motivation, and overall team dynamics.

Interpersonal relationships play a central role in building trust and cohesion within sports teams. Team members who trust and respect each other are more likely to work together cohesively, contributing to team success. Effective interpersonal relationships also aid in conflict resolution and maintaining team morale¹⁷². Conflicts are inevitable in sports, and how they are managed can significantly impact team dynamics. Interpersonal relationships plays an important role in resolving conflicts and ensuring that team morale remains high.

Coaches have a pivotal role in fostering effective communication and strong interpersonal relationships within sports teams. Coaches who lead by example, promote open dialogue, and create an environment of trust can significantly impact team dynamics. Recent literature¹⁸⁵ on team cohesion in sports, underscores the influence of coaching in building positive relationships within teams.

2.1.3.9 Task Cohesion vs. Social Cohesion in Sports

Cohesion is a fundamental concept in sports that influences team dynamics,

performance, and overall success. Task cohesion and social cohesion are two interrelated but distinct aspects of cohesion, each with its unique impact on sports teams.

Task cohesion, often referred to as instrumental cohesion, relates to the degree to which team members work together to achieve shared goals and objectives¹⁷². Task cohesion is evident when team members collectively commit to achieving specific outcomes, be it winning a game, achieving a time in a race, or attaining a particular score. Task cohesion plays a vital role in setting the team's direction and promoting goal attainment¹⁷⁵. Task cohesion has a direct impact on team performance. When team members are committed to achieving shared goals, they are more likely to work cohesively and coordinate their actions effectively. Thus it is safe to say that there is a connection between task cohesion and performance outcomes especially among teams. Teams with high task cohesion tend to exhibit improved performance, as their shared commitment and cooperation drive them toward achieving their objectives.

While task cohesion is crucial for goal attainment and performance, an overemphasis on task cohesion can have potential drawbacks. A relentless focus on outcomes at the expense of social aspects can lead to an unhealthy team environment. Recent studies, point out that excessive emphasis on task cohesion may result in team members feeling like mere contributors to a goal, rather than valued individuals within a team¹⁷⁴.

Social cohesion, also known as relational cohesion, refers to the degree of interpersonal relationships and the emotional bonds between team members¹⁷⁷. Social cohesion is evident when team members feel a sense of belonging, trust, and camaraderie with their teammates. Social cohesion is an important factor in promoting a positive team environment and fostering interpersonal bonds. Social cohesion plays a crucial role in fostering team unity and a positive team culture¹⁷⁴. When team members have strong interpersonal relationships and trust each other, they are more likely to work cohesively and support one another. Recent

studies, have highlighted the connection between social cohesion and team unity¹⁷⁶. Teams with high social cohesion often exhibit improved team dynamics, reduced conflict, and increased morale. While social cohesion is essential for team unity and a positive team culture, an overemphasis on social cohesion can also present challenges. Teams that prioritize social cohesion exclusively may risk losing sight of their shared goals and objectives. As scholars have come to suggest that excessive focus on social cohesion can lead to a lack of commitment to achieving team objectives¹⁸⁴.

Achieving success in sports necessitates a careful balance between task cohesion and social cohesion. Both are essential components for building a winning team, and coaches and team leaders must recognize the importance of both aspects. Recent research emphasizes the need to integrate task and social cohesion within sports teams to create an environment where athletes are committed to shared goals and have strong interpersonal bonds¹⁸². To foster synergy between task cohesion and social cohesion, coaches and team leaders can implement strategies that strike a balance between these two aspects. This may involve team-building activities, open communication about shared goals, and creating an environment where athletes feel valued as both contributors to a goal and as individuals within a team. Recent studies, suggest that by fostering an environment where athletes feel both committed to achieving shared goals and connected through interpersonal relationships, teams can achieve a harmonious balance that leads to success and team unity¹⁷⁵.

2.1.3.10 Environmental and Situational Factors in Sports

In the world of sports, success is often influenced not only by individual talent and training but also by the environment and situational factors in which athletes and teams compete. Environmental factors, such as weather and playing surface, can significantly impact performance, while situational factors, like game conditions and the presence of an audience, play a role in determining the outcome of competitions.

Environmental factors encompass the physical conditions and surroundings in which sports take place. These factors can have a profound impact on athletes' abilities and performance.

Weather Conditions: Weather, such as rain, wind, heat, or cold, can affect an athlete's performance. Recent studies, highlight how adverse weather conditions can lead to reduced physical and mental performance in athletes¹⁸⁶.

Playing Surface: The type of playing surface, whether grass, turf, or indoor flooring, can influence the biomechanics and injury risks for athletes. Recent research, emphasizes the role of playing surface in the physical demands placed on athletes¹⁸⁷.

Altitude: Altitude is another environmental factor that can impact an athlete's endurance and performance. Research highlights the need for athletes to acclimatize and adjust their training and strategies when competing at high altitudes¹⁸⁷.

Situational factors involve the specific conditions and context of a sporting event, which can vary from one competition to another.

Game Conditions: Game conditions, such as the time of day, lighting, and field or court dimensions, can affect athletes' performance. Recent literature, underscores the importance of considering these situational factors when preparing for and competing in sports¹⁸⁹.

Opponent Strength: The strength and tactics of opponents can influence a team's strategy and individual athlete performance. Recent studies, highlight how situational factors, including the quality of opponents, can affect athlete psychological responses¹⁹⁰.

Audience Presence: The presence or absence of an audience can have psychological effects on athletes. Scholars have demonstrates how the behavior of spectators can influence athlete actions and reactions during competitions¹⁹¹.

Athletes often experience psychological responses to environmental and situational factors, which can impact their performance and decision-making.

Stress and Anxiety: Adverse weather conditions, unfavorable playing surfaces, or

high-stakes game situations can lead to increased stress and anxiety among athletes. Recent research, emphasizes the need to address the psychological responses to situational factors in sports¹⁹².

Motivation and Focus: Situational factors, such as the presence of a crowd or playing against a formidable opponent, can also influence athlete motivation and focus. Studies have highlighted how athlete motivation can be affected by situational factors¹⁹³.

Adaptation and Coping Strategies: Athletes often develop adaptation and coping strategies to deal with environmental and situational challenges. Recent research, demonstrates the importance of developing effective strategies to mitigate the impact of environmental factors on performance¹⁹⁴.

Coaches and athletes need to prepare for and adapt to environmental and situational factors to optimize performance.

Environmental Preparation: Coaches and athletes can engage in weather-specific training and adapt training conditions to replicate the environmental challenges they may face in competition. Research, such underscores the importance of environmental preparation¹⁹⁵.

Mental Conditioning: Mental conditioning can help athletes manage stress, anxiety, and the psychological responses to situational factors. Recent studies, highlight the role of mental conditioning in optimizing performance under varying situational conditions¹⁹⁶.

Scouting and Tactical Planning: Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of opponents and considering situational factors in tactical planning can help athletes and teams adapt to the competition context. Research, has emphasized the importance of scouting and tactical planning for situational factors¹⁹⁷.

2.1.3.11 Strategies to Enhance Group Cohesion in Sports

In the world of sports, interventions and strategies represent a dynamic and ever-evolving domain that encompasses a wide array of methods, techniques, and tactics. These

factors play a central role in enhancing athlete performance, team dynamics, and overall success. Interventions refer to deliberate actions or measures taken to influence, modify, or optimize various aspects of sports performance. These can encompass a broad spectrum of activities, from physical conditioning and injury prevention to psychological support and skill development. Interventions are underpinned by scientific research and are continually refined to align with the evolving demands of sports.

Strategies, on the other hand, pertain to the calculated plans and approaches devised to achieve specific objectives within sports. These can range from tactical maneuvers on the field or court to broader team management and game planning. Strategies are not only about winning in the moment but also about long-term success and the cultivation of a winning culture within teams. The efficacy of interventions and strategies in sports lies in their adaptability and context-specific nature. Recent studies have highlighted the need for personalized approaches that consider individual athlete characteristics, team dynamics, and the evolving landscape of sports. Furthermore, they underscore the role of coaches, sports scientists, and athletes themselves in collaboratively designing and implementing interventions and strategies that lead to optimal performance outcomes. By staying informed about the latest research and embracing innovation, athletes and teams can leverage the power of interventions and strategies to gain a competitive edge and pursue excellence in the world of sports.

Group cohesion, the sense of belonging, trust, and unity within a sports team, is a fundamental determinant of success. Teams with high levels of cohesion often exhibit improved performance, communication, and overall satisfaction. Open and effective communication is a cornerstone of group cohesion. Recent studies emphasize the importance of clear and frequent communication¹⁷⁵. Coaches and team leaders should encourage athletes to express themselves, actively listen, and provide constructive feedback. This fosters an

environment where team members feel heard and valued. A shared sense of purpose is vital for group cohesion. Athletes must have a clear understanding of team goals and individual roles within those goals. When athletes perceive a collective commitment to achieving shared goals, it strengthens the team's sense of unity.

Team Building Activities: Team building activities outside of regular training can enhance group cohesion. These activities, ranging from trust falls to problem-solving challenges, help team members bond, develop trust, and learn to work cohesively.

Promoting Social Interaction: Encouraging social interaction among team members is essential. Recent studies, such as Gershgoren, Shrira, and Radomislensky's¹⁸⁴ research on transformational leadership in sports, emphasize the role of leaders in promoting social connections. Team leaders can organize social events, team dinners, or casual gatherings to create opportunities for athletes to form personal relationships beyond the playing field¹⁸⁴.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

Conflicts are inevitable within any team, but how they are managed impacts group cohesion. Developing conflict resolution strategies and creating an environment where athletes feel safe to voice concerns can help maintain unity within the team¹⁷².

Positive Leadership: Positive leadership sets the tone for group cohesion. Coaches and team captains should exhibit positive leadership behaviors, including optimism, support, and a commitment to team goals¹⁷⁴. Athletes are more likely to follow leaders who set a positive example.

Inclusivity and Diversity: Inclusivity and diversity contribute to group cohesion. Encouraging inclusivity and respecting individual differences creates a team environment where every member feels valued, contributing to a stronger sense of unity¹⁷⁰.

Recognizing and celebrating achievements and milestones reinforces group cohesion. Recent studies, emphasize the importance of acknowledging and appreciating the efforts of

each team member¹⁸⁵. Whether it's a small victory or a major accomplishment, celebrating together strengthens the bonds within the team.

Establishing regular feedback mechanisms enables athletes to provide input on team dynamics and strategies. Recent research, underscores the value of athlete feedback¹⁹⁸. Coaches can hold regular team meetings where athletes are encouraged to express their thoughts and suggest improvements, giving them a sense of ownership and contributing to cohesion.

Continuous skill development and training opportunities foster group cohesion. Recent studies, highlight the role of ongoing development¹⁹⁹. Training together not only improves performance but also reinforces the sense of a collective journey toward success.

2.1.3.12 The Role of Team-Building Activities in Sports

Team-building activities, often seen as recreational diversions, play a pivotal role in enhancing the cohesion and performance of sports teams. Recent research has shed light on the multifaceted and nuanced impact of these activities in the world of sports. Team-building exercises extend beyond mere bonding; they foster unity, trust, and effective communication, ultimately contributing to improved performance and team satisfaction. Team-building activities provide a unique platform for athletes to interact in an informal and relaxed setting¹⁷⁵. These activities break down barriers, allowing team members to get to know one another as individuals, not just as teammates. Trust is the foundation upon which cohesion is built, and team-building activities create a supportive environment for trust to flourish.

Effective communication is paramount in sports, and team-building activities can help athletes develop their communication skills. Team-building exercises require participants to convey ideas, collaborate, and listen actively. These skills are directly transferable to the playing field, where clear and efficient communication is essential. Conflict is an inevitable part of team dynamics. Team-building activities, designed to present challenges and

obstacles, encourage athletes to work together to find solutions. These activities help team members understand how to handle conflicts constructively, an essential skill when dealing with high-pressure situations in sports.

Team-building activities often require participants to assume different roles and responsibilities. By participating in activities that demand specific roles, athletes gain a better understanding of their individual strengths and how they contribute to the team's success¹⁹⁹. This clarity fosters a sense of purpose and unity within the team. Team-building activities can simulate challenging and adverse situations. Facing adversity and overcoming it as a team builds mental fortitude and instils a sense of collective determination¹⁸⁸. This resilience carries over to the sports arena, where athletes are better prepared to tackle adversity with a unified front. Team-building activities often involve shared experiences that create lasting memories. These positive memories become a part of the team's history and culture, strengthening the bond among team members¹⁷⁹. Athletes often draw motivation and inspiration from these shared experiences during competitions.

Inclusivity is a key aspect of team cohesion. Team-building activities create an inclusive environment where all athletes have the opportunity to participate and contribute. Every athlete feels like a valued part of the team, contributing to a sense of belonging and unity¹⁸⁵. Sports are meant to be enjoyable, and team-building activities inject an element of fun and enjoyment into the team dynamic. Recent studies, emphasize the role of enjoyment in sports¹⁹⁸. When athletes engage in enjoyable and light-hearted activities, they develop a positive attitude and a sense of camaraderie that transcends into their competitive endeavours.

Coaching Techniques for Promoting Cohesion in Sports Teams

Effective coaching goes beyond just developing an athlete's skills and strategies; it also involves fostering team cohesion. Studies highlights various coaching techniques that play a crucial role in promoting cohesion within sports teams. Team cohesion is a significant

predictor of team success, and coaches serve as the architects of this essential aspect of sports performance.

Communication is at the core of team cohesion, and coaches must model and promote open and effective communication. Coaches should encourage athletes to express themselves, actively listen to one another, and provide constructive feedback¹⁷⁴. Effective communication creates a collaborative atmosphere where team members feel valued and heard.

Coaches should set clear expectations and goals for their teams. When athletes understand the coach's expectations and the team's goals, it fosters a shared sense of purpose and unity¹⁸². Clear expectations provide athletes with a roadmap for success and create a common direction for the team.

Trust is fundamental to team cohesion, and coaches can actively work to build trust and rapport among team members. Coaches can facilitate trust-building exercises, encourage team members to get to know each other on a personal level, and model trustworthiness in their own actions¹⁷⁵. When athletes trust one another and their coach, it strengthens the team's cohesion.

Role clarity is vital for team cohesion as it helps athletes understand their individual responsibilities within the team's structure. Coaches should be explicit about each athlete's role and responsibilities, ensuring that everyone knows their unique contribution to the team's success. Role clarity reduces confusion and conflict, promoting unity within the team¹⁸⁹.

Coaches serve as leaders and role models for their teams, and their leadership style significantly influences team cohesion. Coaches should exhibit positive leadership behaviors, including optimism, support, and a commitment to team goals¹⁷⁴. Athletes are more likely to follow leaders who set a positive example, which can greatly enhance cohesion.

Coaches should establish regular feedback mechanisms to promote open dialogue between athletes and coaching staff. Coaches can hold regular team meetings where athletes

are encouraged to express their thoughts and suggest improvements¹⁹⁶. Athletes who feel that their opinions are valued are more likely to be invested in the team's success.

A positive team culture is the bedrock of cohesion. Coaches should actively cultivate a culture of respect, support, and inclusivity. Coaches can model and reinforce positive behaviors, and they should not tolerate actions that undermine team unity¹⁹⁰.

Every athlete is unique, and coaches should provide individualized support and attention when necessary. Coaches should recognize when an athlete requires additional support or motivation and provide it as needed¹⁸⁸. Acknowledging and addressing individual differences contributes to a sense of belonging and cohesion.

2.1.3.13 Cultural Influences on Group Cohesion Dynamics in Sports

The world of sports is a global tapestry, encompassing diverse cultures, backgrounds, and belief systems. The cultural mosaic within sports teams can significantly influence group cohesion dynamics. Cultural values and norms set the foundation for group cohesion dynamics. In some cultures, individualism may be highly prized, leading to a focus on personal success, while in others, collectivism may be the norm, emphasizing the importance of team unity and mutual support¹⁰⁹. These underlying values influence how athletes perceive and prioritize group cohesion. Cultural backgrounds often shape communication styles within teams. Direct communication may be preferred in some cultures, while indirect or non-verbal communication may be more prevalent in others²⁰⁰. These differences in communication styles can affect how information is shared, misunderstandings are resolved, and team members interact.

Cultural influences also extend to conflict resolution and decision-making processes within sports teams. Some cultures may prioritize hierarchical decision-making, where authority figures make decisions for the team, while others may encourage participatory decision-making, where all team members have a say²⁰¹. The cultural approach to conflict resolution

and decision-making can influence group cohesion dynamics. Cultural belief systems and superstitions can play a role in group cohesion. Athletes from different cultural backgrounds may hold unique superstitions or engage in culturally specific rituals²⁰². These practices can become a source of unity or tension within the team, impacting cohesion dynamics.

Cultural diversity within a team can affect perceptions of inclusivity. Athletes from minority cultures may experience feelings of isolation or discrimination within predominantly homogenous teams²⁰³. In contrast, efforts to embrace cultural diversity and foster inclusivity can enhance group cohesion. Cultural influences are not limited to athletes but extend to coaching and leadership styles. A study on gender diversity in sport organizations highlights the need for cultural sensitivity²⁰⁴. Coaches from different cultural backgrounds may have varying coaching philosophies and approaches. Understanding and respecting these differences can have a profound impact on group cohesion.

In multicultural teams, language differences can be a significant factor. Effective communication is essential for group cohesion, and language differences can pose challenges²⁰⁵. Coaches and athletes need to find strategies to bridge these barriers and foster effective communication. In some sports, athletes may move to different countries or regions to pursue their careers. Adapting to new cultural environments can be a challenging process. Research on team identification and cohesion in sports underscores the importance of cultural adjustment²⁰⁶. Athletes who struggle to adapt to new cultures may experience difficulties in building cohesion with teammates from different backgrounds.

2.1.4 Overview of Team Sports

Team sports are an integral part of our lives and have been for centuries. They provide a platform for individuals to collaborate, compete, and engage in physical activity collectively. In recent years, the significance of team sports in promoting health, social cohesion, and personal development has gained greater recognition. Team sports, broadly

speaking, refer to organized athletic activities in which individuals collaborate and compete as part of a group or team. These sports encompass a wide range of activities, from the widely recognized football, basketball, and soccer to less conventional sports like curling and rowing. The essence of team sports lies in the synergy and interdependence among team members, each playing a specific role to achieve a common goal. One key defining element of team sports is teamwork. Teamwork involves the collaboration of individuals to attain a shared objective. In team sports, this collaboration extends to various aspects, such as coordinating plays, defending against opponents, and strategizing to win. Teamwork in sports requires a collective effort, and success is not solely dependent on the skills of a single player²⁰⁹. The ability to work together effectively, communicate, and understand one another's strengths and weaknesses is paramount.

Team sports offer a wide array of social and health benefits, making them a popular choice for individuals of all ages. Team sports provide opportunities for social interaction, fostering a sense of belonging and community²¹⁰. They create an environment where people can build friendships, share experiences, and establish social connections. Furthermore, team sports contribute to physical fitness and well-being, promoting cardiovascular health, muscle strength, and coordination²¹¹. Engaging in team sports can also combat issues related to a sedentary lifestyle and obesity, which have become prevalent concerns in contemporary society. Understanding the psychology behind team sports is essential to grasp their definition fully. The psychology of team sports encompasses various elements, such as team dynamics, motivation, and mental toughness.

Team dynamics are crucial in team sports, as they influence the overall performance and success of a team. Team cohesion is a key factor that can either enhance or hinder team performance²¹². When team members feel a strong sense of togetherness and camaraderie, it positively affects their motivation and performance. Effective communication, trust, and

shared goals are essential components of team dynamics. Motivation plays a significant role in the performance of individuals and teams in sports. Coaches, team leaders, and athletes themselves play vital roles in fostering motivation. As noted, motivation in team sports can be both intrinsic (driven by personal satisfaction and love for the sport) and extrinsic (driven by external rewards or recognition)²¹³. Understanding and harnessing motivation is essential to keep the team engaged and striving toward their goals.

In the world of team sports, mental toughness and resilience are indispensable. Athletes often face adversity, setbacks, and high-pressure situations. Developing the ability to stay focused, remain composed, and rebound from failures is essential. As highlighted mental toughness can be cultivated through training and psychological support²¹⁴. Athletes who possess mental toughness are better equipped to handle the challenges that team sports present.

Team sports are a ubiquitous and cherished category of physical activities that bring individuals together to compete and collaborate towards a shared objective. These sports are defined by a set of characteristics that distinguish them from individual sports and other forms of physical activities. Team sports are physical activities in which participants, organized into two or more opposing teams, engage in structured competition using a set of rules and objectives. These sports emphasize collaboration, communication, and mutual effort to achieve a common goal, which typically involves outscoring the opposing team. In team sports, individuals work in concert with their teammates to strategize, execute plays, and, ultimately, attain victory.

2.1.4.1 Characteristics of Team Sports

Teamwork and Collaboration: The hallmark of team sports is teamwork and collaboration. Players must work together to achieve their objectives. Effective communication and trust among teammates are essential to success, as each player's actions

can significantly impact the team's performance. This characteristic fosters interpersonal skills and encourages a sense of unity.

Competition and Adversarial Nature: Team sports are inherently competitive, featuring adversarial interactions between opposing teams. The element of competition adds excitement and challenge to the sport, motivating participants to push their limits and strive for victory. These competitive experiences can be translated into life skills related to goal setting and perseverance.

Structured Rules and Regulations: Team sports are governed by structured rules and regulations that define the parameters of the game. These rules establish how the sport is played, the roles and responsibilities of participants, and the conditions for scoring. Rule adherence ensures a level playing field and the fair resolution of conflicts.

Shared Objectives: In team sports, the shared objective is central to the game. Teams aim to outscore their opponents while adhering to the rules and regulations. The shared objective encourages players to focus on team success rather than individual accomplishments, promoting camaraderie and sportsmanship.

Diversity of Roles: Team sports involve a diversity of roles, each contributing to the team's performance. Different positions and responsibilities create opportunities for individuals with varying skills and attributes to contribute to the team's success. This diversity is akin to the multifaceted nature of society, where people with various talents and roles collectively work towards common goals.

Leadership and Decision-Making: Leadership and decision-making are integral components of team sports. Captains and team leaders provide guidance, motivation, and strategic direction to their teammates. These roles instill leadership qualities and decision-making skills that can be applied in various life situations.

Strategy and Tactics: Team sports often require the implementation of strategy and tactics.

Coaches and players devise plans to exploit the strengths of their team while countering the opponent's advantages. Strategic thinking, adaptability, and the ability to execute tactics are critical for success in team sports.

Sportsmanship and Ethical Conduct: Sportsmanship and ethical conduct are fundamental aspects of team sports. Players are expected to compete with integrity, showing respect for opponents and officials. These values instilled in team sports extend to daily life, reinforcing the importance of ethical behaviour, fair play, and mutual respect.

Sense of Community and Belonging: Participation in team sports fosters a sense of community and belonging. Team members often develop strong bonds and friendships through their shared experiences. The team becomes a microcosm of society, where individuals from diverse backgrounds come together in pursuit of common objectives.

Emotional Resilience: The nature of team sports involves ups and downs, including victories and losses. Players learn to cope with adversity, overcome setbacks, and remain emotionally resilient. These experiences build mental toughness, a quality that can be transferred to various aspects of life.

2.1.4.2 The Significance of Team Sports in Society

Team sports have played an essential role in human societies for centuries, fostering a sense of community, promoting physical fitness, and contributing to individual development. In recent years, the significance of team sports in society has grown as they continue to bring people together, both in physical and virtual spaces, and address numerous social and health-related challenges. Team sports have a unique ability to bring people together, transcending differences in age, gender, race, and social status. They provide a common ground for individuals to connect, share experiences, and build social bonds. By participating in team sports, individuals develop a sense of belonging and become part of a larger community, which can be especially important in an increasingly fragmented and digital world²¹⁵. Team

sports play a pivotal role in the personal development of young people. They offer opportunities for children and adolescents to learn vital life skills and values such as teamwork, leadership, discipline, and sportsmanship. These qualities extend beyond the playing field, influencing their behavior and character in everyday life. A study emphasizes how participation in team sports can instill values of respect, fair play, and resilience in young individuals, ultimately preparing them for the challenges of adulthood²¹⁶.

In an era where sedentary lifestyles and obesity are prevalent concerns, team sports contribute significantly to promoting physical fitness and overall health. Participation in sports such as soccer, basketball, and hockey provides a means for individuals to engage in regular physical activity. Research underscores that team sports encourage people to exercise in a fun and social setting, making it more likely for individuals to maintain an active lifestyle²¹⁷. The cardiovascular benefits, muscle development, and enhanced coordination derived from team sports have a profound impact on long-term health. Team sports offer a platform for social inclusion, breaking down barriers and promoting diversity. Recent studies emphasize the importance of inclusivity in team sports, particularly in addressing gender equality and diversity issues²¹⁸. The rise of women's sports and the increasing recognition of LGBTQ+ athletes reflect the evolving landscape of team sports. By embracing diversity and inclusion, these sports encourage a more equitable and accepting society. The significance of team sports in society extends to mental health and well-being. Engaging in physical activity within a team setting has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. Scholars have been able to demonstrate that the camaraderie and support within teams can create a sense of purpose and belonging, contributing to mental well-being²¹⁹. Team sports offer individuals a sense of structure, routine, and a positive outlet for stress, helping to combat the growing mental health crisis in many societies.

Team sports often serve as sources of identity and national pride, particularly during

international competitions like the Olympics or FIFA World Cup. Wearing national colours and rallying behind a team fosters a sense of unity and belonging to a larger community. Scholars have highlighted the role of team sports in enhancing national identity, reinforcing the notion that participation in sports can extend beyond individual and local significance to have a profound impact on a nation's self-image and global standing²²⁰. Team sports have substantial economic and cultural significance. In terms of economics, they generate substantial revenue through ticket sales, merchandise, broadcasting rights, and sponsorships. The sports industry creates jobs and supports local economies, making it a vital contributor to economic growth. Furthermore, team sports often serve as cultural touchstones, influencing art, music, and popular culture. Scholars have underlined how team sports shape cultural narratives, generate traditions, and become symbols of identity in society²²¹. The digital age has transformed the way society engages with team sports. Social media, online streaming, and digital platforms provide new avenues for fans to connect, share their passion, and become part of a global community. The significance of digital engagement, allowing fans to access sports content, participate in discussions, and support their team's remotely²²². This digital dimension has expanded the reach of team sports, making them more inclusive and accessible.

2.1.4.3 The Essence of Team Sports

Team sports hold a unique place in the world of physical activity and competition. Whether it's football, basketball, soccer, or any other team-based endeavour, these sports embody a set of fundamental principles that go beyond mere physical exertion. Team sports are not just games; they are a microcosm of life itself, offering valuable lessons and insights that extend far beyond the field of play. One of the central elements that define team sports is the emphasis on teamwork and collaboration. Successful teams are built on the foundation of effective communication, trust, and cooperation among members. As highlighted, team sports

teach participants how to work together, coordinate their efforts, and utilize each member's strengths to achieve a common goal²²³. This aspect extends to life outside the sports arena, where the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively is invaluable in various social and professional settings.

Team sports often provide a platform for individuals to develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility. Captains and team leaders are expected to guide and motivate their teammates, make strategic decisions, and lead by example. These experiences nurture qualities such as leadership, decision-making, and accountability. Such attributes are transferable to various life situations, helping individuals become better leaders and responsible citizens in their communities. The essence of team sports also encompasses resilience and adaptability. Success is rarely a linear path, and setbacks are an integral part of the journey. Players in team sports learn to cope with losses, recover from injuries, and adapt to changing circumstances during a match. These experiences build resilience and mental toughness²²⁴. In life, resilience is a valuable trait that helps individuals confront adversity, bounce back from failures, and continue to strive for success.

Team sports offer a controlled environment for conflict resolution and the development of sportsmanship. Disagreements, arguments, and disputes are not uncommon on the field, and players learn how to manage conflicts constructively. Sportsmanship, encompassing fair play, respect for opponents, and integrity, is a core component of team sports. Such values extend to daily life, reinforcing the importance of ethical conduct and respect for others. Team sports often bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and walks of life. These sports foster a sense of inclusion and belonging, where individuals are valued for their contributions to the team rather than their differences. As outlined, this aspect of team sports aligns with the broader societal movement towards inclusivity and diversity, teaching participants the significance of acceptance and

appreciation of diversity²²⁵.

Team sports are inherently goal-oriented. Whether it's winning a game, capturing a championship, or achieving personal milestones, participants learn to set goals, create plans, and work tirelessly to accomplish them. These experiences in goal setting and achievement translate into the world outside sports, influencing educational, professional, and personal endeavours.

2.1.4.4 The Role of Teamwork in Team Sports

Team sports are not merely about individual talent and physical prowess; they are a reflection of the collective effort, coordination, and synergy among team members. The role of teamwork in team sports is pivotal, as it underpins the very essence of these sports. Teamwork involves the harmonious cooperation and collaboration of athletes working towards a common goal. One of the most apparent roles of teamwork in team sports is its direct impact on performance. Effective teamwork is the key to unlocking a team's full potential. When team members cooperate seamlessly, they can execute plays, strategies, and tactics with precision. As highlighted, collaborative efforts often lead to better decision-making, faster ball movement, and more successful outcomes²²⁶. In football, for example, a well-coordinated attack involving passes, runs, and crosses requires players to work together in unison, creating opportunities for goals and victories.

Team sports encompass a diversity of roles and positions, each requiring specific skills and attributes. Teamwork enables the balanced utilization of these skills. When players work together, they can capitalize on individual strengths, whether it be a forward's goal-scoring ability, a midfielder's playmaking skills, or a defender's defensive prowess. This diversity is crucial for adapting to various situations in a match. The balanced skill utilization enhances the team's overall effectiveness. Effective communication is at the core of teamwork in team sports. Players must convey information, make quick decisions, and

coordinate actions on the field. Communication ensures that everyone is on the same page, understanding their roles and responsibilities. As noted, communication includes verbal and non-verbal cues, such as eye contact, gestures, and positioning, that facilitate effective interactions²²⁷. Clear and efficient communication enhances the flow of the game and minimizes misunderstandings.

Teamwork fosters trust among team members. Trust is essential for the smooth functioning of a team, as it empowers individuals to rely on one another. Trust is developed through shared experiences, mutual support, and the consistent fulfillment of responsibilities. When players trust their teammates to perform their roles, they can focus on their own tasks with confidence. Trust forms the foundation of effective teamwork and cooperation. Team sports are dynamic, and situations can change rapidly during a match. Effective teamwork enables teams to adapt and be flexible in response to changing circumstances. Whether it's adjusting to the opponent's tactics, dealing with unexpected challenges, or capitalizing on opportunities, adaptability is essential. Team members who communicate and collaborate can make real-time decisions and adjustments to optimize performance.

Team sports create a unique environment for building camaraderie and fostering a positive atmosphere. When individuals work together towards a shared goal, they often form strong bonds and friendships. Positive relationships among teammates contribute to a sense of unity and belonging. As emphasized²²⁸, the social support and friendships developed through teamwork enhance the overall experience of participating in team sports. Team sports provide opportunities for leadership development. Leaders, often designated as captains or senior players, play a pivotal role in guiding and motivating their teammates. Leadership experiences in team sports include decision-making, communication, conflict resolution, and strategic thinking. These qualities are transferable to various life situations, where effective leadership is valued. Teamwork instils a sense of mutual accountability

among team members. When individuals understand that their actions directly impact the team's success, they are more likely to take their responsibilities seriously. Players are accountable for their performance and their contributions to the team's goals. This accountability ensures that everyone is committed to giving their best effort.

2.1.4.5 Social and Health Benefits of Participating in Team Sports

Participating in team sports goes beyond the thrill of competition and the pursuit of victory. These activities offer a wide array of social and health benefits that contribute to the overall well-being of individuals.

1. Physical Fitness and Health Benefits

Improved Physical Health: Participating in team sports is a highly effective way to maintain physical fitness. Team sports typically involve activities that promote cardiovascular health, muscle strength, and overall physical well-being. The regular engagement in sports such as soccer, basketball, or rugby contributes to enhanced endurance, agility, and coordination²²⁹. These sports can also help individuals manage their weight and reduce the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

Cardiovascular Health: Many team sports, including soccer, basketball, and field hockey, involve continuous movement and aerobic exercise. These activities lead to an increase in heart rate and oxygen consumption, which is beneficial for cardiovascular health²²⁷. Regular participation in team sports can help individuals improve their heart and lung function, reducing the risk of heart-related diseases.

Muscle Strength and Endurance: Team sports require the use of various muscle groups, promoting muscle strength and endurance. For instance, sports like rugby and American football demand players to engage in strength training to tackle opponents and carry the ball. As players continue to practice and compete, they build and maintain muscular strength, which is essential for overall physical health.

Weight Management: Team sports provide an effective means of weight management. The physical demands of these activities often lead to increased calorie expenditure, helping individuals maintain or achieve a healthy body weight. In addition, the social and competitive aspects of team sports can motivate individuals to stay physically active consistently, contributing to weight control.

2. Mental and Emotional Well-Being

Participation in team sports can significantly reduce stress levels. Engaging in physical activities triggers the release of endorphins, natural mood-enhancing chemicals in the brain. These endorphins help reduce stress, anxiety, and depression. The social support and camaraderie within a team also provide a network of emotional assistance, further alleviating stress²³⁰.

Improved Mental Health: Team sports have been associated with improved mental health. The structured nature of these activities, including regular training sessions and competitive matches, helps individuals establish routines and maintain a sense of purpose. Being part of a team also offers a sense of belonging and support, which is beneficial for mental well-being.

Enhanced Self-Confidence: Participating in team sports can boost self-confidence and self-esteem. The sense of accomplishment derived from personal and team achievements can have a positive impact on an individual's self-image. Overcoming challenges and setbacks in a team setting can help individuals develop resilience and confidence in their abilities.

3. Social Interaction and Personal Development

Team sports provide numerous opportunities for social interaction. The shared experiences, cooperation, and competition foster the development of strong social bonds among teammates. Individuals often form friendships and connections that extend beyond the field of play. These social interactions enhance a person's social network and contribute to a sense of belonging²²⁶. Participating in team sports promotes communication and leadership skills.

Effective communication is essential for conveying strategies, instructions, and support among team members. Leadership positions within a team, such as captains or coaches, offer opportunities for individuals to develop leadership qualities and decision-making abilities. Team sports can lead to personal development and growth. The experiences of setting and achieving goals, overcoming challenges, and working together with others can contribute to an individual's personal development. Team members often learn valuable life skills, including teamwork, time management, and conflict resolution, which can be applied in various aspects of life.

2.1.4.6 Football as a Popular Team Sport

Football, known as soccer in some parts of the world, stands as one of the most popular team sports globally, transcending geographical, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. Football's history is rich and diverse, with origins tracing back over two millennia. It has evolved from various forms of ball games played across different cultures, including the Ancient Chinese, Greeks, and Romans. The modern version of football, as we know it, found its home in England during the 19th century. Early football games were highly localized and lacked standardized rules²³¹. The formation of official regulations by the Football Association (FA) in 1863 marked a turning point, leading to the emergence of the global football we recognize today. Football's simplicity is one of the reasons behind its widespread popularity. The game is played with two teams of eleven players each, with the objective of scoring goals by getting the ball into the opposing team's net. The rules are straightforward, and there are few equipment requirements. A recent rule change, is the introduction of Video Assistant Referees (VAR), which allows officials to review and make more accurate decisions during matches²³². VAR has been met with mixed reactions from fans and players but showcases football's commitment to maintaining fairness and accuracy.

Football has left an indelible mark on cultures worldwide. It is not just a sport; it is a

shared language, a way of life, and a source of identity. International tournaments, such as the FIFA World Cup and UEFA European Championship, provide a stage for nations to showcase their national identity and heritage²³³. Football anthems, like "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "La Marseillaise," are sung with fervor, exemplifying the emotional resonance of the sport. The business of football is booming. Recent research shows that the top football clubs worldwide generate substantial revenue through sponsorships, broadcasting rights, merchandise sales, and match day income²³⁴. The emergence of global superstars like Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi has elevated football's profile, attracting commercial interests and investments. The sport has also created numerous job opportunities, from coaching and administration to sports journalism and event management.

Football boasts an unparalleled global fan base. It is estimated that over half of the world's population identifies as football fans. The growth of digital media and online platforms has amplified football's reach, making it easier for fans to connect with their favorite teams, players, and fellow supporters. Social media, in particular, has become a virtual stadium for fans to discuss matches, share their views, and follow their teams. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook have transformed the way fans engage with the sport and become an essential part of the football experience²³⁵. Football's popularity has led to the development of extensive grassroots programs in various countries. These programs aim to identify and nurture young talent, providing opportunities for aspiring footballers to grow and excel. National football federations, academies, and scouting networks play a critical role in talent development. The success of youth academies, such as La Masia (FC Barcelona) and the Ajax Youth Academy, underlines the importance of investing in young talent. Research delves into the effectiveness of these development pathways and their impact on the overall quality of the sport²³⁶.

While men's football has traditionally dominated the spotlight, women's football is on

the rise. Recent years have witnessed tremendous growth in the women's game, with increased recognition, investment, and viewership. The success of international events, like the FIFA Women's World Cup, has brought women's football to the forefront. Research discusses the challenges and opportunities facing women's football, emphasizing the need for continued support and investment to unlock its full potential²³⁷.

2.1.4.7 The Historical Background of Football

The historical background of football is a captivating journey through time, tracing the origins of this beloved sport and its evolution into the global phenomenon it is today. Football, known as soccer in some regions, has a history that spans over two thousand years and is deeply interwoven with various cultures. It is a story of diverse forms of play, local traditions, and a gradual standardization that culminated in the birth of modern football. The roots of football can be traced back to ancient civilizations. The earliest forms of the game involved kicking a ball made of animal bladders or other materials in various cultures, including the Chinese, Greeks, and Romans. In ancient China, the game of cuju involved using the feet to kick a ball into a net. Meanwhile, the Greeks played a sport called episkyros, which was similar in nature. Roman soldiers also played a version of football called harpastum, emphasizing physical prowess and strategy.

As football continued to evolve, regional variations emerged, each with its own unique rules and characteristics. These regional variations often reflected the culture and values of the communities where they were played. In medieval Europe, the game of mob football was particularly popular. It was a violent and chaotic game played between rival villages, with little regard for standardized rules. The process of standardizing the rules and regulations of football began in the 19th century, primarily in the United Kingdom. The formation of the Football Association (FA) in 1863 marked a significant milestone in the history of football. The FA introduced a standardized set of rules that included the prohibition

of using hands (except for the goalkeeper) and the definition of a goal as a ball crossing the goal line. These rules laid the foundation for modern football and are still in use today.

In addition to the FA's efforts, the Cambridge Rules, established in 1848 at Cambridge University, played a pivotal role in shaping the early development of football. These rules influenced many aspects of the game, including the use of hands, the offside rule, and the handling of the ball. While the Cambridge Rules are no longer in use, they were instrumental in advancing the standardization of football. With the standardization of rules, football began to spread beyond the borders of the United Kingdom. The game quickly gained popularity in other European countries, South America, and beyond. Notably, British sailors, traders, and workers played a crucial role in introducing and popularizing football in various parts of the world. The first international football match took place between England and Scotland in 1872, marking the beginning of international competition.

The development and evolution of football, known as soccer in some regions, is a fascinating journey that spans centuries. This globally beloved sport has a rich history marked by significant milestones, including changes in rules, the emergence of organized competitions, and the globalization of the game. Football has evolved from its early origins into the modern spectacle we witness today. Football's early development can be traced back to ancient civilizations, as discussed in previous sections. Various cultures played early versions of the game, each with unique rules and playing styles. The common thread among these variations was the use of the feet to manipulate a ball. These early forms of football served as a foundation for the sport's development, showcasing its enduring appeal. One of the most critical turning points in the development of football was the standardization of rules. During the 19th century, football was played with a wide range of local rules and variations. The need for standardization became evident, leading to the formation of the Football Association (FA) in England in 1863. The FA introduced a unified set of rules that

emphasized the use of the feet to manipulate the ball, with the exception of the goalkeeper. These rules laid the groundwork for the modern game of football.

With the establishment of standardized rules, football gained popularity both in the United Kingdom and abroad. The desire to determine the best teams and players from different regions led to the emergence of international competitions. The first international football match took place between England and Scotland in 1872, setting the stage for a tradition of international football that continues to this day. The Football Association Challenge Cup, known as the FA Cup, began in 1871 and quickly grew to become one of the most prestigious domestic competitions in the world. The late 19th century saw the founding of many football clubs, which played a pivotal role in the sport's development. These clubs, often representing local communities, were at the forefront of competitive football. The creation of the Football League in 1888 marked a significant step in organizing club competitions. The league system allowed clubs to compete regularly and was a precursor to the modern league structure we see today. Football's development and evolution had a profound impact on culture and society. The sport became a unifying force that brought people from diverse backgrounds together. Football matches served as social events, with fans gathering to support their teams and share a common passion. Iconic stadiums, such as Old Trafford, the Camp Nou, and the Maracanã, have become symbols of the sport's cultural significance.

The 20th century marked a period of global expansion for football. The sport spread to different continents, with South America, Europe, and Africa emerging as strongholds of the game. The FIFA World Cup, established in 1930, played a crucial role in fostering international competition and promoting the globalization of football. The World Cup's ability to unite nations and create a global spectacle is a testament to football's universal appeal. The evolution of football has not been limited to its historical development but has

also included significant rule changes and technological advancements. In recent years, the introduction of Video Assistant Referees (VAR) has been one of the most notable developments. VAR allows officials to review critical decisions during matches, including goals, penalties, and red card incidents. This technology aims to enhance the accuracy of refereeing decisions and reduce controversies, improving the overall quality of the game.

The world of football, known as soccer in some regions, is not only a sport but also a complex psychological arena where the mental aspects of players, coaches, and fans play a crucial role in shaping the outcome of the game. Beyond the physical prowess displayed on the field, the psychology of football delves into the intricate web of emotions, motivation, decision-making, and performance under pressure. Emotions run deep in football, both on and off the field. Players often experience a rollercoaster of emotions, from the euphoria of scoring a goal to the frustration of missing a crucial chance. Managing these emotions is a vital aspect of football psychology. Scholars emphasize the importance of emotional regulation among players, as heightened emotions can impair decision-making and performance²³⁸. Understanding the ebb and flow of emotions and how to harness them effectively can be a significant determinant of success in the game. Motivation is another psychological factor that influences football players. Intrinsic motivation, stemming from personal enjoyment and satisfaction, often drives players to perform at their best. On the other hand, extrinsic factors such as financial rewards or external recognition can also impact motivation. Coaches and managers play a key role in understanding players' motivations and using them to improve performance.

Football is a sport that demands rapid decision-making and cognitive processing. Players must analyse the game situation, assess their options, and execute precise actions under time pressure. Studies highlight the cognitive demands of football, including visual scanning, pattern recognition, and decision-making²³⁹. These processes are essential for

successfully navigating the complex and dynamic environment of a football match. Pressure is an inherent part of football, especially in high-stakes situations like penalty shootouts, crucial matches, or tournaments. The psychology of football explores how players perform under pressure. Pressure can lead to a phenomenon known as "choking," where players underperform in high-pressure situations due to anxiety and heightened self-awareness. On the other hand, some players thrive under pressure, elevating their performance to new heights. Understanding how to manage pressure and perform optimally is a crucial aspect of football psychology.

Football is a team sport, and effective communication and team dynamics are paramount to success. The psychology of football delves into how players communicate on the field, both verbally and non-verbally. Effective communication among teammates is essential for coordinating movements, strategies, and tactics. Coaches and leaders play a vital role in fostering positive team dynamics and creating an environment where players can trust and support each other. The psychology of football extends beyond the players and coaches to include the fans and supporters. Football fans are known for their fervent loyalty and emotional investment in their teams. The psychology of supporters explores the identity and self-esteem attached to being a fan of a particular club or national team. Scholars have shed light on the role of fan psychology, highlighting how fan support can influence a team's performance and the emotional well-being of fans²⁴⁰.

Team dynamics represent the ever-evolving and intricate interplay of interactions, relationships, and processes within a group of individuals working collectively toward a shared goal. Whether in the context of sports, business, or any collaborative endeavour, understanding team dynamics is crucial for achieving cohesion, synergy, and peak performance. Interpersonal relationships are at the heart of team dynamics. How team members connect with each other, build trust, and communicate effectively significantly

influences the group's overall performance. Research underscores the importance of these relationships, as it directly impacts the level of cohesion and mutual support within the team²⁴¹. Understanding one another's personalities, preferences, and working styles is vital for fostering positive and productive relationships. Team dynamics revolve around the distribution of roles and responsibilities among team members. Every individual brings a unique set of skills and expertise to the group, and the allocation of roles should reflect this diversity. Role clarity, defined goals, and a shared understanding of who is responsible for what are essential for efficient team functioning²⁴². Team members need to know their roles and the roles of their peers to work cohesively toward the team's objectives.

Effective communication is the lifeblood of team dynamics. How team members exchange information, provide feedback, and share ideas can either propel the team forward or hinder progress. In a study, it was noted that open and transparent communication fosters trust and understanding within the team²⁴³. Encouraging active listening, promoting healthy debate, and creating a culture where diverse perspectives are valued are central to productive team communication. Conflict is an inherent aspect of group dynamics, and how teams handle it can determine their success or failure. Conflicts may arise from differences in opinions, goals, or working styles. Effective conflict resolution involves addressing issues in a constructive and respectful manner²⁴⁴. Teams must be equipped with strategies for managing conflicts, turning them into opportunities for growth and improvement.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping team dynamics. A leader's influence can either inspire and motivate the team or lead to discord and dissatisfaction. Leadership styles vary, and leaders should adapt their approaches to suit the needs and personalities of their team members. Research scholars highlight the importance of transformational leadership, which focuses on motivating and empowering team members, fostering innovation, and creating a shared vision for success²⁴⁵. The establishment of group norms and culture is

instrumental in shaping team dynamics. Group norms are the informal rules and expectations that guide behaviour within the team. A positive team culture promotes collaboration, accountability, and a shared sense of purpose²⁴⁶. Teams that foster a culture of trust, respect, and continuous improvement tend to achieve higher levels of performance and satisfaction. Teams often face challenges and unexpected obstacles that require adaptability and resilience. The ability to adapt to changing circumstances, learn from failures, and remain resilient in the face of setbacks is a testament to strong team dynamics²⁴⁷. Teams that can rebound from adversity and continue working cohesively tend to thrive in the long run.

Leadership and team captaincy play a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of any team, whether in sports, business, or any collaborative endeavour. The leaders and captains within a team are responsible for guiding, motivating, and influencing team members to work cohesively towards a common goal. Leadership is the art of influencing and inspiring others to achieve a shared objective. In the context of team dynamics, effective leadership serves as a catalyst for success. Leaders set the tone, create a vision, and foster an environment where team members can flourish. Scholars highlight that leadership is not confined to a single person; it can be distributed among team members, leading to shared leadership²⁴⁸. Effective leadership can significantly impact the performance and satisfaction of team members. Effective leaders possess a combination of traits and qualities that set them apart. Recent studies emphasize that leaders exhibit authenticity, self-awareness, and empathy²⁴⁹. They are capable of understanding their own strengths and weaknesses and can relate to the needs and emotions of their team members. Furthermore, leaders display adaptability, resilience, and problem-solving skills, enabling them to guide their teams through challenges.

A team captain holds a unique position within a team, often acting as a formal or informal leader. The role of a team captain goes beyond on-field responsibilities; they are also responsible for creating a positive team culture, promoting unity, and motivating team

members. Team captains are expected to lead by example, demonstrating the qualities and behaviours that reflect the team's values and objectives. Effective team captains exhibit a distinct set of qualities. Recent research underscores the importance of leading by example, both in attitude and performance²⁵⁰. They are often selfless, putting the team's needs before their own, and are excellent communicators. Team captains must possess strong communication skills to foster understanding and provide support to their teammates. Additionally, they exhibit resilience, confidence, and decision-making abilities under pressure. Leadership and team captaincy significantly impact team dynamics. A team with a strong and effective leader tends to be more cohesive, motivated, and goal-oriented. Leaders set expectations, create a sense of purpose, and inspire their team members to excel. Scholars have found that teams with effective captains experienced higher levels of cohesion and improved performance²⁴⁸. The captain's influence is not limited to their own performance but extends to the entire team's mindset and behavior²⁴⁸.

Shared leadership is an emerging concept in team dynamics, suggesting that leadership is not the sole responsibility of one individual but can be distributed among team members. Recent research highlights the advantages of shared leadership, where various team members contribute their leadership skills and expertise²⁵¹. In teams with shared leadership, each member's unique strengths are harnessed to achieve collective goals. Leaders and team captains face various challenges and responsibilities. They must maintain a delicate balance between leading by example and promoting unity among team members. Leadership requires decision-making, often under pressure, which can be daunting. Effective leaders must be adept at conflict resolution, motivation, and communication. Team captains are responsible for not only their own performance but also for building a team culture that values collaboration, respect, and accountability.

2.1.4.8 Motivation and Goal Setting in Football

Motivation and goal setting are critical elements in football, driving players, coaches, and teams to achieve their full potential. Motivation is the fuel that propels athletes to strive for excellence, while goal setting provides the roadmap to reach desired outcomes. Motivation is the psychological force that compels individuals to take action and persist in their efforts. In football, motivation is the driving factor behind players' commitment to training, performance on the field, and the pursuit of success. Research emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation, stemming from the personal enjoyment and satisfaction derived from playing, as a powerful driver in football²⁵². Players who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to display greater effort, dedication, and resilience. External motivators, such as financial rewards or recognition, can also play a role in football. Coaches and managers often employ external motivators to incentivize players. However, intrinsic motivation is considered more sustainable and beneficial in the long term, as players driven by personal passion tend to have higher levels of commitment and a deeper connection to the sport.

Goal setting is the process of defining specific objectives and creating a plan to achieve them. In football, goal setting provides players and teams with a clear sense of direction and purpose. Studies have also highlighted the benefits of setting both short-term and long-term goals²⁵³. Short-term goals, such as improving specific skills or fitness levels, help players stay focused and motivated in the present. Long-term goals, such as winning a championship or achieving a certain performance milestone, provide a sense of purpose and drive over the course of a season or career. The SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goal-setting framework is widely used in football to ensure that goals are well-defined and realistic. Players and coaches often collaborate to establish individual and team goals that align with overall objectives, providing a clear roadmap for improvement and success²⁵¹.

Motivation in football can be both individual and collective. Individual motivation refers to a player's personal drive to improve and excel. Individual goals often revolve around performance metrics, such as scoring a certain number of goals, achieving a specific assist tally, or increasing physical fitness. Research emphasizes the importance of aligning individual and team goals, as it fosters greater motivation and commitment²⁵⁴. When individual goals are in harmony with the team's objectives, players are more likely to work together cohesively to achieve success. Team motivation is the shared drive that fuels the collective pursuit of victory. Team goals often revolve around winning matches, securing championships, or achieving specific rankings. The psychological aspect of motivation in a team context is highly significant, as it influences team morale, cohesion, and the ability to overcome adversity. Coaches and captains play key roles in fostering team motivation, creating a supportive environment where players are motivated not only by personal success but by the desire to contribute to the team's triumph.

In football, as in any sport, challenges and setbacks are inevitable. Players and teams may face defeat, injuries, and performance slumps. Motivation and goal setting are essential tools for overcoming these challenges. Research suggests that during difficult times, players and teams should reevaluate their goals, adjust their strategies, and maintain their intrinsic motivation²⁵⁵. Resilience and determination are crucial in football, as they help players persevere through adversity, adapt to changing circumstances, and stay focused on their long-term objectives. Coaches and team leaders are responsible for creating a motivational climate that fosters excellence in football. Recent research highlights the role of transformational leadership, where coaches inspire and empower players to achieve their full potential. Transformational leaders create a positive and motivational atmosphere, providing feedback, encouragement, and support to their teams.

The interplay between cohesion, communication, and team performance is a complex

and dynamic relationship that is highly relevant in the context of football. Cohesion in football pertains to the strength of emotional bonds among team members, both on and off the field. In the football context, social cohesion involves the quality of relationships and trust among players. When football players trust and respect each other, they are more likely to communicate openly and work collaboratively during matches, training sessions, and team activities. Team members who have a strong sense of belonging and camaraderie tend to support each other, both in success and adversity, creating a positive and motivating team environment. Communication is the lifeblood of football teamwork. Effective communication involves the exchange of information, ideas, and feedback, and it is crucial for coordinating movements on the field, making quick decisions, and responding to the dynamics of a match. In football, communication takes various forms, including verbal communication, non-verbal cues, and tactical signals. Football players need to communicate not only with their words but also through their body language and positioning.

Trust and Openness: Trust and openness are fundamental to both cohesion and communication. In a cohesive football team, players trust each other's abilities and decisions. This trust, in turn, fosters open and honest communication. Players feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, ideas, and concerns, which contributes to effective communication on the field. When football players trust their teammates, they are more likely to pass the ball, share tactics, and work together seamlessly.

Rapport and Camaraderie: In a cohesive football team, there is a strong sense of camaraderie, which is often built through shared experiences, training sessions, and social interactions. This camaraderie translates into rapport and comfort, which can enhance communication. When players have a positive relationship off the field, it is easier for them to communicate on the field, fostering understanding and cooperation.

Task Cohesion and Tactical Communication: Task cohesion in football is related to the

shared commitment to achieving specific goals, which often involves the tactical aspects of the game. Effective tactical communication is essential for coordinating movements, executing set plays, and responding to the changing dynamics of a match. In a cohesive team, players are more likely to commit to a common tactical approach and communicate their intentions clearly on the field.

Feedback and Problem-Solving: Constructive feedback is an integral part of communication in football. In cohesive teams, providing and receiving feedback is more effective because players respect and trust each other. Constructive feedback contributes to problem-solving during matches and training sessions. Team members are open to suggestions and solutions, which can lead to adjustments and improvements in performance.

The interplay between cohesion and communication has a profound impact on the performance of a football team. Teams that exhibit high levels of cohesion and effective communication tend to excel on the field in several ways:

Better Coordination: When football players trust each other and communicate effectively, they can coordinate their movements and actions more efficiently during matches. This leads to improved ball control, positioning, and overall gameplay.

Greater Motivation: Cohesive teams often experience higher levels of motivation. Team members are driven to support each other and work collectively toward their goals. This motivation translates into increased effort and determination on the field.

Improved Problem-Solving: Effective communication within a cohesive team facilitates problem-solving during matches. Players can quickly adapt to changing situations, make tactical adjustments, and address challenges as a unit.

Enhanced Team Morale: The positive relationships, camaraderie, and trust within a cohesive team contribute to high team morale. Players enjoy their time on and off the field, which can boost their confidence and overall satisfaction.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Goal Setting Theory

Goal-setting theory is a theory based on the idea that setting specific and measurable goals is more effective than setting unclear goals. Edwin A. Locke developed this theory in his article, "Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentive"²⁵⁶. In this article, Locke showed how employees are more motivated by well-defined goals and constructive feedback and are more likely to accomplish these goals when they are specific and measurable. According to Locke's goal-setting theory, there are five main principles of setting effective goals:

Clarity: Goals must be clear and specific. When employees understand project objectives and deadlines, there is much less risk for misunderstandings.

Challenge: Goals should be sufficiently challenging to keep employees engaged and focused while performing the tasks needed to reach each goal. Goals that are too tedious or easy have a demotivating effect and will, therefore, result in less achievement satisfaction.

Commitment: Employees need to understand and support the goal they are being assigned from the beginning. If employees don't feel committed to the goal, they are less likely to enjoy the process and ultimately achieve the goal.

Feedback: Feedback is an important component of the goal-setting theory. Regular feedback should be provided throughout the goal-achieving process to ensure tasks stay on track to reach the goal.

Task complexity: Goals should be broken down into smaller goals. Once each smaller goal is reached, a review should be performed to update the employee on the overall progress towards the larger goal.

Implication for the Study

Since this study set out to investigate the effects of eight-week Psychological Skills Training on self-confidence, goal setting and group cohesion among male football players, it is important to mention that this theory will help to understand how equipped prepared players are to achieving a particular goal. This theory will thus shine light on the equipment, time and resources needed to by player to accomplish the goal and ultimately improve the performance of players.

2.2.2 Theory of Self-Confidence

The Theory of Self-Confidence, rooted in Albert Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory*, explains how individuals' beliefs in their capabilities influence motivation, behaviour, and performance²⁵⁷. Bandura introduced the concept of self-efficacy to describe people's perceptions of their ability to execute specific tasks successfully, emphasizing that these beliefs shape their persistence, effort, and emotional regulation. Over time, the concept became central to sports psychology and formed the foundation of the Self-Confidence Theory²⁵⁸.

The theory posits that confidence precedes competenceathletes who believe in their ability to succeed are more likely to train harder, stay focused, and recover quickly from setbacks²⁵⁹. Bandura identified four primary sources of self-efficacy: (1) *Mastery experiences*, which build confidence through successful performance; (2) *Vicarious experiences*, where observing others' success enhances belief in one's own ability; (3) *Verbal persuasion*, through encouragement from coaches or peers; and (4) *Physiological and emotional states*, where interpreting arousal as readiness rather than anxiety promotes optimal performance.

Vealey extended this model through her Multidimensional Model of Sport Confidence (MMSC), differentiating between *trait sport confidence* (stable belief) and *state sport*

confidence (situational belief)²⁵⁸. She argued that confidence affects athletes' affective, behavioural, and cognitive responses, thus influencing performance outcomes. This highlights that psychological readiness, not just physical preparation, is vital in competitive sports.

Implications for the Present Study

The Self-Confidence Theory holds significant implications for understanding athletic performance, especially within Nigerian football academies. The theory suggests that athletes' beliefs about their own competence directly influence how they train, respond to feedback, and perform under pressure. For instance, a football player with strong self-confidence is likely to remain calm during penalty shootouts, take decisive actions, and recover quickly from mistakesbehaviours that directly enhance performance outcomes²⁶⁰.

In the Nigerian context, however, socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors may moderate this relationship. Limited access to professional coaching, poor infrastructure, and minimal psychological support may weaken the development of self-efficacy, even among talented players. According to Bandura, supportive social environments are crucial for building and maintaining self-confidence²⁵⁸. When athletes lack positive reinforcement or consistent mastery experiences, their belief in their abilities may erode, leading to performance anxiety or fear of failure.

Therefore, this theory emphasizes the need for football academies to incorporate psychological skills training (PST)including goal setting, imagery, self-talk, and feedbackto strengthen athletes' confidence levels. Coaches should also employ motivational communication and provide opportunities for success through incremental skill development. By creating mastery experiences and supportive environments, self-confidence can be cultivated systematically, translating into improved performance and resilience.

2.2.3 Theory of Cohesion

This theory was propounded by Leon Festinger in the year 1950. The multidimensional nature of cohesion has been considered by some of the earliest theorists and researchers. It is proposed that cohesion is composed of three factors²⁶¹:

- (1) Attraction to the group (analogous to interpersonal attraction or social cohesion), which is essentially a liking for the group or the group members,
- (2) Commitment to the task (analogous to task commitment or task cohesion), which is the extent to which individual member goals are shared with or enabled by the group, and
- (3) Group pride, which is the extent to which group members experience positive affect from being associated with what the group represents or the status of the group²⁶².

Others have supported Festinger's original conceptualization, describing his three factors as either individual components of cohesion or as a complete description of their model⁴.

Although theories of cohesion generally support the existence of specific components, the degree of support varies. These components include, but are certainly not limited to, attraction to the group (analogous to interpersonal attraction); group pride; task commitment; sense of belonging; morale; and bonding.

The theory thus adopts an applied conceptualization of cohesion which is a four-factor model⁵. This model is conceptually based on the group dynamics literature and is developed through the study of cohesion exhibited in sports teams. In this model, cohesion comprises both individual and group factors and these factors of cohesion manifest as task and social components.

Implication for the Study

While this study seeks to investigate the effects of eight-week Psychological Skills Training on self-confidence, goal setting and group cohesion among male football players, the cohesion theory will help to highlight both the individual and group factors that promotes

group cohesion in a team. This will also go further to also highlight the factors of cohesion that manifest as task and social components. Ultimately, this theory will point out the importance of group cohesion to a football team and how this can affect the team's achievement.

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.3.1 Goal-Setting and Sports Performance

Empirical evidence suggests that process and performance goals tend to be more effective than outcome goals in enhancing football players' performance. A study found that football players who set process goals, such as focusing on specific defensive tactics, demonstrated higher levels of in-game performance compared to those focused solely on winning the game²⁷³. This study highlights the effectiveness of process goals in helping players concentrate on controllable aspects of the game, thus improving their technical abilities and decision-making.

Structured goal-setting interventions have proven effective in enhancing performance in football. A meta-analysis reviewed 20 studies examining the impact of goal-setting interventions in team sports, finding that structured interventions improved athletes' motivation, self-efficacy, and performance by 25% on average²⁷⁶. Football players participating in these interventions reported increased clarity in their objectives, a sense of accountability, and greater confidence in achieving their goals.

Furthermore, an experimental study with youth football teams, introducing a goal-setting program where players set weekly performance goals aligned with their skill development. The study found that players who engaged in goal-setting exercises demonstrated higher levels of performance improvement, especially in skills like ball control and defensive coordination, than those who did not participate in goal-setting²⁷⁷. This study

highlights the importance of structured and frequent goal-setting as a tool to maintain focus and track progress over time.

Feedback is integral to effective goal-setting, as it allows athletes to evaluate their progress and make necessary adjustments to achieve their goals. Studies show that goal-setting combined with feedback can significantly enhance football performance, particularly in areas requiring rapid improvement and adaptation. A study examined football players who received weekly performance feedback aligned with their goals and found that they demonstrated higher levels of self-regulation, leading to measurable performance improvements²⁷⁸.

Feedback also plays a crucial role in maintaining motivation, as it reinforces players' sense of accomplishment and helps them stay committed to their objectives. In a study, feedback was shown to be particularly effective when it was specific, timely, and related to the players' personal goals²⁷⁹. For instance, a player focusing on improving passing accuracy received detailed feedback on pass precision and technique, which helped reinforce their progress and motivated them to continue refining their skill.

Goal-setting has a positive impact on self-regulation and psychological resilience, which are vital for consistent performance in competitive sports like football. Self-regulation refers to an athlete's ability to control thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in pursuit of their goals. Resilience, on the other hand, involves the capacity to overcome setbacks and remain committed to achieving long-term objectives. In football, where challenges are frequent, goal-setting helps players develop self-regulation skills that enable them to manage pressure and stay focused.

Research found that football players with well-defined goals exhibited stronger self-regulation and resilience, allowing them to stay composed and effective even in high-stress

scenarios. Players who were able to set process-oriented goals reported greater confidence in their abilities, which led to improved performance during critical moments in the game³⁰⁰.

In addition, another study examined the impact of goal-setting on resilience in young football players, finding that those who set specific goals related to skill improvement were more likely to persist in the face of failure or setbacks³⁰¹. This study underscores the psychological benefits of goal-setting, as athletes who actively pursue their goals are more capable of dealing with adversity, an essential quality for long-term success in football.

While individual goal-setting is essential, team-based goal-setting has also been shown to enhance performance in football. Team goals align individual efforts with collective objectives, fostering cohesion and a shared sense of purpose. In football, where team dynamics and coordination are critical, setting team goals can create a sense of unity and improve collaboration.

A study revealed that football teams that set shared goals displayed better team cohesion, which translated into higher collective performance³⁰². Players in cohesive teams were more likely to support each other, communicate effectively, and remain motivated to achieve shared objectives. This finding is consistent with social identity theory, which suggests that team goals foster a sense of belonging and commitment among players, leading to improved performance³⁰³.

Another study explored team goal-setting in elite football teams, concluding that teams with clear collective goals were more successful in implementing complex strategies and achieving desired outcomes³⁰⁴. The researchers highlighted that coaches who facilitated team goal-setting sessions observed improved tactical alignment and team spirit, which proved instrumental in high-stakes matches.

Despite its numerous benefits, goal-setting in football presents several challenges. One challenge is the risk of setting overly ambitious or unrealistic goals, which can lead to

frustration and decreased motivation if the goals are not achieved. For example, scholars found that football players who set excessively high outcome goals, such as winning every game, experienced higher levels of anxiety and performance pressure, which ultimately hindered their performance³⁰⁵.

Another challenge is the potential for goal-setting to create an excessive focus on individual achievements rather than team objectives, which can disrupt team dynamics. Another study found that players who prioritized personal goals over team goals showed a decline in cooperation and cohesion, underscoring the importance of balancing individual and team goal-setting practices³⁰⁶.

The empirical evidence suggests that goal-setting can enhance sports performance in football if implemented correctly. Coaches can help players set realistic, achievable goals, focusing on a balance between individual performance and team objectives. By promoting process-oriented and performance goals rather than solely outcome goals, coaches can help players concentrate on actions within their control, thus reducing anxiety and increasing motivation³⁰⁷.

2.3.2 Self-confidence and Sports Performance

Self-confidence is widely regarded as a predictor of sports performance across various domains, including football. Athletes with high self-confidence are generally found to perform better due to their resilience under pressure, positive mental outlook, and enhanced focus²⁶³. For instance, self-efficacy an athlete's belief in their capabilities to execute specific tasks has been empirically linked to improved performance outcomes.

In a study focused on football players, it was discovered that self-confidence was a moderate predictor of performance outcomes, specifically in high-stakes matches where mental resilience was crucial¹⁹⁸. This finding aligns with previous work, which demonstrated that athletes with high self-efficacy tend to set more challenging goals and pursue them

persistently, often resulting in improved performance¹⁴⁵. These studies collectively underscore the notion that self-confidence acts as a psychological buffer in competitive sports, enhancing athletes' ability to navigate stressful situations.

Self-belief, a core component of self-confidence, has also been explored extensively in relation to football performance. Self-belief enables athletes to maintain focus and motivation, which is crucial during competitive matches. Another study among elite football players, finding that those with high levels of self-belief performed better in games and were more resilient after mistakes, suggesting that self-belief supports effective response mechanisms under pressure²⁶⁴. This resilience is especially valuable in football, where success can often hinge on quick recovery after a failed attempt or error on the field.

Despite its positive role, research has also indicated that self-belief alone may be insufficient to guarantee success. Another scholar argued that self-belief must be combined with physical preparedness and skills to impact performance meaningfully⁹⁸. They found that although football players with high self-belief performed well, those who had both high self-belief and high competency in football-specific skills consistently outperformed their peers. This finding emphasizes that while self-belief supports performance, it must be balanced with skill development to produce optimal outcomes.

Self-efficacy specifically addresses an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in particular tasks, making it highly relevant to football performance. Studies have shown that self-efficacy can impact football players' motivation, goal-setting, and overall performance quality. In a study of collegiate football players, it was discovered that Jackson et al found a positive relationship between self-efficacy and performance, with higher self-efficacy associated with increased goal achievement, consistent training, and better performance metrics during games²⁶⁵. Self-efficacy also influenced the athletes' ability to handle pressure

and persevere in the face of adversity, underscoring its centrality in competitive sports settings.

Additionally, it has been demonstrated that football players with high self-efficacy tended to adopt more adaptive coping strategies and performed better under stress²⁶⁶. Their study revealed that self-efficacy helped players regulate emotions, maintain focus, and execute skills effectively during high-stakes matches. This finding aligns with Bandura's argument that self-efficacy enables individuals to set challenging goals and exert greater effort towards goal achievement. By facilitating goal orientation and persistence, self-efficacy in football has been shown to positively impact both individual and team performance.

However, some studies suggest that the influence of self-efficacy on performance may be context-dependent. For instance, a study found that while self-efficacy generally enhances performance, its effect may vary depending on the level of competition and situational stress²⁶⁷. In high-pressure situations, self-efficacy alone may not suffice, as physical skill and teamwork also play crucial roles. This finding highlights the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to self-confidence in football, where self-efficacy is one of several factors contributing to successful performance.

In team sports like football, the role of self-confidence extends beyond individual traits, influencing and being influenced by group dynamics. It was also discovered that football teams with strong social cohesion exhibited higher levels of collective confidence, which positively impacted their performance in competitive matches²⁶². They argued that group cohesion cultivates a supportive environment where athletes feel empowered, which in turn strengthens their individual self-confidence.

A recent study by Cotterill et al. further highlighted the connection between group dynamics and individual confidence in football²⁶⁸. Their findings indicated that players in teams with strong task cohesion, characterized by shared goals and mutual support,

experienced increased confidence during matches. These athletes reported feeling more motivated and engaged, translating into better on-field performance. This suggests that collective self-confidence within a team can reinforce individual confidence, creating a positive feedback loop that benefits the overall team performance.

Additionally, social interactions and relationships within the team can boost individual self-confidence, as athletes feel validated by their peers and coaches. It was observed that football players who experienced positive reinforcement from teammates were more likely to exhibit high self-confidence levels during games¹²⁸. The study emphasized that team-based confidence-building strategies, such as collaborative goal-setting and peer feedback, can effectively enhance both individual and team performance.

Self-confidence is not only about internal beliefs but also about external reinforcement and validation. Research suggests that contextual factors, such as coaching style and feedback, play an essential role in shaping athletes' self-confidence. Another study among junior football players found that supportive coaching, where feedback emphasized effort and skill development, led to higher self-confidence levels compared to coaching that focused solely on results²⁶⁹. This finding suggests that the development of self-confidence may be best supported through a developmental approach that combines skill reinforcement with psychological support.

Moreover, cross-cultural studies indicate that cultural context significantly impacts self-confidence in sports. Hatzigeorgiadis et al. In another study conducted a study comparing self-confidence levels among football players from different cultural backgrounds and found variations in self-confidence perceptions and their impact on performance²⁷⁰. This highlights the importance of culturally adapting self-confidence training in football, recognizing that beliefs about self-confidence may vary across contexts and thus require tailored approaches to maximize performance.

2.3.3 Group Cohesion and Sports Performance

A study on professional football teams demonstrated that higher levels of task cohesion led to improved team coordination, communication, and execution of game strategies, all of which contribute to winning matches²⁷¹. This study highlighted that when players are committed to the team's goals, they are more willing to cooperate, fulfil roles, and adapt to dynamic game situations. This finding aligns with the assertion that work, which noted that task cohesion is particularly critical in high-stakes environments like competitive football, where alignment on team objectives is essential⁶⁷.

Social cohesion, although distinct from task cohesion, is equally important in shaping a football team's performance. Social cohesion fosters a sense of belonging, trust, and mutual support among teammates, enabling them to work together effectively. In an empirical study, the scholars found that football teams with high levels of social cohesion demonstrated better resilience and were able to support each other during challenging moments in games²⁷². This collective psychological resilience contributed to improved performance under pressure, suggesting that social cohesion helps players maintain focus and motivation even in adverse conditions.

Moreover, studies have found that social cohesion was a significant predictor of team morale and player satisfaction, with cohesive teams exhibiting higher motivation levels and a reduced likelihood of player burnout²⁶⁶. Football teams that encourage positive social interactions off the field, such as team-building exercises or social gatherings, often see strengthened on-field performance. Such findings emphasize that fostering friendships and supportive relationships within a team can enhance a player's sense of responsibility toward their teammates, motivating them to perform better as part of the group.

However, not all studies have demonstrated an unequivocal positive relationship between social cohesion and performance. Some research suggests that social cohesion can

occasionally detract from performance if it leads to favouritism, lack of accountability, or overly relaxed team dynamics. For example, it has been argued that high social cohesion without a balanced focus on task cohesion could create environments where players prioritize friendships over performance goals¹⁷². This underscores the need for coaches to strike a balance between fostering social bonds and maintaining a performance-oriented mindset.

Task cohesion, characterized by team members' commitment to achieving shared goals, has been widely recognized as crucial for performance in football. It was observed that task cohesion enhances strategic alignment, allowing players to coordinate effectively during high-pressure situations⁶⁵. This study analysed professional football teams and concluded that when players share a clear understanding of their roles, team strategies, and game objectives, they are more likely to deliver strong performances consistently. Task cohesion thus appears to play a critical role in promoting efficient teamwork, reducing misunderstandings, and facilitating effective in-game adjustments.

In addition, a meta-analysis synthesized findings from multiple studies, indicating that task cohesion has a stronger and more direct impact on performance than social cohesion¹⁶⁵. The authors argued that, in a football setting, task cohesion enables players to make cohesive tactical decisions and execute coordinated plays more effectively. This insight reinforces the importance of goal-oriented team cohesion, particularly in sports like football, where a high degree of synchronization and role clarity is required to succeed on the field.

Effective communication within a football team is both a product of and a contributor to group cohesion. Teams with high levels of cohesion often communicate more openly, supporting faster information flow, greater clarity in expectations, and improved coordination during matches. A study demonstrated that cohesive football teams tend to have more effective communication patterns, which contribute directly to performance outcomes²⁶⁴. The researchers found that teams with both high task and social cohesion were more likely to

engage in positive communication, with teammates offering encouragement, tactical advice, and constructive feedback during games.

Furthermore, the link between cohesion and communication was explored, emphasizing that in football, effective communication enhances situational awareness, enabling teams to respond promptly to opponents' tactics²⁶⁵. They concluded that cohesive teams display higher levels of adaptive communication, allowing them to perform better under varying game pressures. This adaptive communication is essential in football, where in-game adjustments based on real-time feedback are critical to maintaining a competitive edge.

Leadership plays an essential role in fostering group cohesion and aligning team goals with individual roles. Effective leaders whether coaches or team captains promote both social and task cohesion by encouraging teamwork, goal commitment, and constructive communication. Studies suggest that leaders in football teams can create a cohesive environment by setting clear goals, defining team values, and facilitating positive interpersonal dynamics²⁷³. This approach promotes trust, respect, and responsibility among players, which are crucial for team cohesion.

Studies have shown that strong leadership correlates positively with higher levels of both task and social cohesion²⁷⁴. In teams with effective leadership, players are more likely to feel accountable to each other and the team, enhancing their commitment to collective goals. This suggests that coaches who prioritize building a cohesive culture, through team discussions, goal-setting exercises, and inclusive decision-making, can foster an environment that promotes group cohesion and performance enhancement.

2.3.4 Age and Sports Performance

Physical attributes such as speed, strength, and endurance are pivotal in football performance, and these are closely linked to age. Younger players tend to excel in physical

aspects like sprinting speed and stamina, with peak performance in these domains typically occurring between the ages of 20 and 30³⁰⁸. Studies indicate that physical performance metrics, especially those related to cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength, peak around the mid-20s. For instance, it was discovered that players between 20 and 25 years exhibited higher maximal sprinting speeds and better endurance compared to older players, indicating that younger players are often more physically capable of handling high-intensity matches³⁰⁹.

As players age, certain physical capacities begin to decline, including muscle strength and aerobic endurance. Another scholar investigated the effects of aging on physical attributes in professional football players and found that after age 30, players experience a gradual decline in sprinting speed and aerobic performance, affecting their ability to maintain high-intensity activities over a prolonged period³¹⁰. Despite these declines, however, many players compensate with improved game sense, experience, and strategic positioning, underscoring the complexity of age-related performance effects.

While physical abilities may decline with age, cognitive skills often improve, allowing older players to excel in areas requiring game intelligence and decision-making. Cognitive aspects, including anticipation, spatial awareness, and strategic planning, are essential in football, where split-second decisions can alter the outcome of the game. Research by Vigne et al. demonstrates that footballers over 30 generally exhibit superior tactical understanding, positioning, and anticipation compared to younger players³¹¹. This cognitive edge allows older players to maintain competitive performance despite physical declines, often by adopting less physically demanding roles on the field.

Performance metrics across different football leagues also support the notion of an optimal age range. In a comprehensive analysis, the ages of top-performing players across European leagues and found that players within the 25–30 age range demonstrated the best

overall performance metrics, including scoring rates, successful passes, and interceptions³¹². This peak period reflects a balance between physical prowess and tactical maturity, providing players in this age range with a competitive advantage over both younger and older athletes. With increasing age, players encounter physical limitations that necessitate adjustments in their playstyle. Age-related declines, particularly in explosiveness, are typically observable after 30, with visible reductions in sprint speed, agility, and endurance. However, players often adjust by refining technical skills and adopting roles that emphasize tactical intelligence and leadership³¹³. For instance, many older footballers shift from highly physical positions, such as forward, to less demanding roles, such as central midfielder or defender, where they can rely more on game reading than on physical capabilities.

Career longevity in football is often determined by a player's ability to adapt to age-related changes and manage injuries effectively. While some players experience sharp performance declines and retire in their early 30s, others extend their careers well into their late 30s through careful physical management and role adaptation³¹⁴. A study on professional football careers revealed that players with robust injury prevention strategies and adaptable play styles often achieve longer careers compared to those who rely heavily on physical attributes³¹⁵.

Psychosocial factors also play a role in career longevity and the timing of retirement. Players with higher levels of intrinsic motivation and adaptability are more likely to sustain their careers, even in less prominent roles or lower leagues³¹⁶. The study suggests that career satisfaction and mental resilience are critical for players as they age, allowing them to transition smoothly from peak performance to support roles within a team.

Recognizing the impact of age on performance is essential for coaches and training staff, who must tailor their approaches to players' specific needs based on their age and physical conditions. For younger players, the emphasis is often on developing speed,

strength, and tactical skills, while older players may benefit more from strategic training, injury prevention, and mental resilience exercises³¹⁷.

Additionally, psychological support becomes more important as players age. Older players often face pressures related to performance decline and career transition, and coaching strategies that incorporate mental health support and career planning can facilitate a smoother progression to retirement or alternative roles within football³¹⁸. By emphasizing both physical and mental readiness, coaches can help older players maintain their contributions to the team, whether in active play or mentoring capacities.

2.3.5 Playing Experience and Sports Performance

Playing experience has a significant impact on a player's technical skills, which are essential in football. Studies show that players with greater experience demonstrate higher levels of proficiency in essential skills such as passing accuracy, ball control, and shooting precision. Scholars found that players with more than five years of professional experience were more accurate in both short and long passes compared to less experienced players³¹⁹. This improvement is attributed to repeated practice and real-game exposure, allowing players to refine their techniques under varying levels of pressure and game situations.

Technical skills, such as dribbling and shooting, also tend to improve with experience due to the muscle memory and cognitive conditioning developed over years of practice. In another study, players with over eight years of playing experience were found to perform significantly better in shooting accuracy and dribbling speed tests compared to those with less experience³²⁰. This finding supports the notion that experience enhances both the motor and cognitive aspects of technical skill development, as seasoned players demonstrate greater coordination and confidence during high-stakes moments.

Playing experience also enhances players' tactical decision-making abilities, which are critical for success in football. Experienced players generally exhibit higher levels of

game intelligence, which includes anticipating opponents' movements, positioning themselves strategically, and making quick decisions that benefit the team³²¹.

Research indicates that decision-making skills develop over time as players gain exposure to diverse game situations, allowing them to recognize patterns and adapt strategies accordingly. For example, a study found that experienced players demonstrated better spatial awareness and reaction times when defending, a skill attributed to repeated exposure to similar scenarios over time³²². Additionally, experienced players can effectively read the intentions of opponents, allowing them to preempt and counter movements on the field, which provides a strategic advantage that less experienced players often lack.

Experience in high-stakes games contributes significantly to a player's psychological resilience, enabling them to manage stress, maintain focus, and perform well under pressure. Football players encounter various forms of pressure, including competition, audience expectations, and personal performance standards. Psychological resilience, developed through prolonged exposure to these pressures, helps experienced players maintain composure in challenging situations, such as penalty kicks or close-score matches.

2.4 Conceptual Model

Independent Variables

Goal Setting

- Process Goal
- Performance Goal
- Outcome Goal

Ho1(Df_(3, 116) = 1.273
p > 0.05) & Ho2(β = -
0.150, p = 0.126)

Group Cohesion

- Attraction to the Group-Social (ATG-S)
- Attraction to the Group-Task (ATG-T)
- Group Integration-Social (GI-S)
- Group Integration-Task (GI-T)

Ho5 (df_(4, 115) = 2.512,
p > 0.05) & Ho6(β = 0.238, p
= .045)

Moderating Variables

Age

- 10-17 Years
- 18-25 Years

Playing Experience

Ho7(t = -0.464,
df = 118, p =
.643) & Ho8(t =
-1.363, df = 88,
p = .176)

Dependent Variable

Sports Performance

- Technical Performance

- Physical Performance

Ho3 &

$$\text{Ho3 (F}_{(3, 116)}=1.604, \\ p<0.05) \& \text{ Ho4}(\beta = 0.019, p \\ = .908)$$

Fig. 2.1: Conceptual model on Self-confidence, Group Cohesion and Goal Setting as Predictor of Sports Performed among Football Academy Trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria

Source: Researcher, 2025

2.5 Summary of the Gaps in Literature Reviewed

A review of literature on playing experience and sports performance in football reveals several gaps. First, while there is evidence supporting the link between experience and enhanced technical and tactical skills, research often overlooks variations in these effects across different playing positions. Additionally, studies frequently emphasize the benefits of experience for individual performance but rarely consider its impact on long-term team dynamics or cohesion. Research on psychological resilience largely centers on experienced players' ability to handle stress, yet limited attention is given to how resilience may evolve or diminish over a player's career.

Moreover, while experience is shown to enhance situational awareness and adaptability, there is limited examination of how these skills interact with age-related physical declines, particularly in older players. Finally, while experienced players are often

noted as informal mentors within teams, few studies investigate structured mentoring programs that leverage experienced players' insights in player development. Addressing these gaps would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how playing experience influences various aspects of sports performance and offer actionable insights for coaching and training approaches tailored to different stages of a player's career.

Endnotes

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Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology. Thus the methods and procedures are discussed under the sub-headings which include research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, description of research instrument, validity of research instrument, reliability of research instruments, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design to gather quantitative data on the perceptions, experiences, and characteristics of participants related to the phenomenon under investigation. Structured surveys were administered to a sample of participants at a single point in time to capture a snapshot of their views, attitudes, and behaviours regarding the research topic.

3.2 Population

The population for this study comprised all twenty (20) registered football academies within Ibadan Metropolis. These academies were registered with the National Sports Commission (See Appendix III).

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size consisted of one hundred and twenty (120) male academy football trainees. The Multistage sampling technique was used for this study. For the first stage, the stratified sampling technique was used to divide Ibadan metropolis into the Local Government Areas that make up this geographical location. It is imperative to state that eleven (11) local governments make up Ibadan Metropolis and thus eleven (11) strata were derived. The twenty football academies for this study were thus divided into strata based on their local government location within the Metropolis. The second stage used the simple random sampling technique of fish bowl without replacement method to select five out of twenty registered football academies within the Metropolis. For the third stage, purposive sampling technique was employed to select trainees from the chosen academies.

This technique allows for the deliberate selection of respondent who meet specific criteria, such as age range and playing experience, thereby ensuring that the sample comprises individuals who are most relevant to the objectives of the study. Five football academies were chosen for this study and they include Triple 444 Academy Ibadan, Lead City Football Academy Ibadan, M/N Football Academy Ibadan, Marvelous Football Academy Ibadan and Kareem Adeyemi Football Academy Ibadan. A total of twenty-four (24) academy trainees were chosen from each football academy. This meant that an entire football team plus 1 player was chosen from both the junior team and the senior team. The academies chosen for this study were the ones registered with the National Sports Commission. The inclusion criteria for this study encompass football academy trainees aged between 10 to 25 years, currently enrolled in programmes within the Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. Respondents must have a minimum of one year of playing experience in organised football.

Table 3.1: Table of Sample of Selected Academy Trainees

S/N	Name of Academy	Total Number of Trainees Per Academy		Number of Trainees Selected		Total Selected
		Junior	Senior	Junior	Senior	Total
1	Triple 444 Academy Ibadan	21	25	12	12	24
2	Lead City Football Academy, Lead City University, Ibadan	20	25	12	12	24
3	M/N Football Academy, Ibadan	21	22	12	12	24
4	Marvelous Football Academy Ibadan	24	23	12	12	24
5	Kareem Adeyemi Football Academy Ibadan	22	25	12	12	24
Total		108	120	60	60	120

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The exclusion criteria for this study include individuals outside the age range of 10 to 25 years, football academy trainees not currently enrolled in programs within the Ibadan Metropolis, and those with less than one year of playing experience in organized football.

Additionally, individuals unwilling or unable to provide informed consent for participation were excluded from the study as only voluntary players were involved in the study.

3.4 Description of the Research Instruments

Questionnaires were used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. Section A was on demographic characteristics of the respondents, Section B was Trait Sport-Confidence Inventory (TSCI)¹ was used to test self-confidence of respondent, Section C Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ)² was used to gather information on cohesion, Section D will elicit information on goal-setting and in Section E, Perceived Sports Performance Scale (PSPS) was used to gather information on sports performance. They are discussed as follows:

Self-confidence (Trait Sport-Confidence Inventory): The Trait Sport Confidence Inventory, a standardised questionnaire was adopted and used to assess how confident athletes generally feel, when they compete in sport¹. Items on the inventory ask the participants to compare themselves to the “most confident athlete you know”. The inventory consisted of 13 items, with no subscale components, utilizing a 3-point Likert scale anchored by 1 “Low”, 2 “Moderate” and 3 “High. Trait sport confidence scores were obtained through a mean score or a summed score by adding up scores for the 13 items. Previous Cronbach alpha coefficient was measured as .93 for the TSCI, with test-retest reliability in two studies of .83 and .86, respectively¹.

Group Environment Cohesion

Group environment questionnaire (GEQ)². A standardised questionnaire was adopted in the study and used to assess team cohesion level of footballers. The 18-item GEQ assessed four dimensions of cohesion: individual attractions to the group–social (ATG-S; five items); individual attractions to the group–task (ATG-T; four items); group integration– task (GI-T; five items) and group integration–social (GI-S; four items). Respondents responded to each

of the 18 statements on a 4-point Likert scale anchored at 1 by strongly disagree and 4 by strongly agree. The original Cronbach's alpha values of the four scales were 0.70 for (ATG-T/S) and 0.73 for (GI-T/S)². The reliability and validity of the Turkish version of the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) was determined and the Cronbach alpha which ranged from 0.79 to 0.69 were obtained for total scores and subscales³. Likewise, internal consistency values for another study showed acceptable values of the four scales were ranged between 0.67 (ATG-T-S) and 0.78 (GI-T-S)⁴.

Goal Setting Questionnaire (GSQ): This is another standardised questionnaire designed to measure an individual's ability to set, plan, and achieve goals⁵. This questionnaire assessed key components of goal setting, such as specificity, measurability, and achievability. The questionnaire provided valuable insights into personal goal-setting practices, aiding in the development of targeted interventions to enhance goal-setting skills and improve overall performance and motivation in various settings. The instrument was modified for the study. The original questionnaire scale ranges from 1 (Not very like me) to 5 (Very like me) while it was modified from 1 (Not very likely me) to 4 (Very likely me) in this study. The questionnaire has a reported reliability score of 0.91. This indicates a high level of internal consistency and reliability.

Perceived Sport Performance Scale (PSPS). This is a self-developed and validated questionnaire on sports performance. It will be rated on scales on 4-point Likert scale of 4 (More Frequently), 3 (Frequently), 2 (Sometimes) and 1 (Never).

3.5 Validity of the Instruments

A draft of the questionnaire was presented to the researcher's supervisor, some experts in the researcher's department and other experts outside the Department of Kinesiology, Sports Science and Health Education for content and construct validity. All necessary adjustments were made to enhance the quality of the questionnaire.

3.6 Reliability of the Research Instruments

In order to find the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaires was administered on twenty football players on a local field who were not among those meant for actual study but who possessed the same characteristics as the respondents. The data collected from these respondents was analysed with Cronbach alpha method of reliability to validate the internal consistency of the instrument. Trait Sport-Confidence Inventory (TSCI) Cronbach alpha coefficient was measured as .93, Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.79, Goal Setting Questionnaire had a co-efficient of 0.91, while Perceived Sports Performance Scale (PSPS) yielded a reliability co-efficient of 0.91.

3.7 Data Collection

A letter of introduction was collected from the researcher's department and presented to the management of the football academies. The researcher contacted football academies within the Ibadan Metropolis to explain the study's purpose and seek permission to conduct the research. Upon obtaining consent, the researchers scheduled visits to the selected academies. Clear instructions were provided to ensure accurate and honest responses. Additionally, the participants provided informed consent for participation in the research, ensuring their willingness and ability to engage in study procedures. Respondents completed the questionnaires under the supervision of the research team to address any queries and ensure proper completion. The anonymity and confidentiality of responses were maintained throughout the process. Respondents were not coerced to participate in the study and retained the right to withdraw at any stage if they wished to do so. The research assistants were trained by the researcher before engaging their services. Full consent was obtained from all respondents prior to the commencement of the study, and a copy of the consent form was completed by each individual respondent (See Appendix).

3.8 Data Analysis

The administered copies of the questionnaire were collated, coded, and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Bar charts were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while multiple regression analysis was used to test all hypotheses 1-6. A t-test was used to test hypothesis 7, and ANOVA was used to test hypothesis 8. All the hypotheses were set at a 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Endnotes

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Chapter Four

Result and Discussion of Findings

This chapter reveals results and discussion of findings based on the analyzed data. The results and discussion of findings are presented based on demographic characteristics of the respondents, research question and hypotheses as follow:

4.1 Demographic Data Analysis

The following are the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 4.1.1: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Variable	Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	10-17 years	60	50.0
	18-25 years	60	50.0
Total		120	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1.1 shows that 60 (50%) of respondents were between 10-17 years old, while 60 (50%) were also between 18-25 years old. This means that both age range used for this study were equally represented.

Table 4.1.2: Distribution of Respondents by Years of Experience

Variable	Year of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Years of Experience	1-4 years	40	33.3
	5-8 years	50	41.7
Total	9-12 years	30	25.0
		120	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1.2 reveals that 40 (33.3%) of respondents had 1-5 years of experience, 50 (41.7%) had 5-8 years of experience, while 30 (25.0%) of the respondents had 9-12 years of experience. This implies that most of the trainees had between 5-8 years of experience.

Table 4.1.3: Distribution of Respondents by Position

Variable	Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Position	Defender	22	18.3
	Midfielder	64	53.3
	Attacker	34	28.4
Total		120	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1.3 reveals that 22 (18.3%) of respondents were defenders, 64 (53.3%) were midfielders, while 34 (28.4%) of the respondents were attackers. This implies that most of the trainees were midfielders.

4.2 Presentation of Data

Research Question: What is the level of performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 4.2.1a: Descriptive Analysis on Level of Performance among Football Academy Trainees

S/n	Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always	Means	Std. Dev
1	I recognize that I have a primary sport.	4 (3.3%)	12 (10%)	55 (45.8%)	49 (40.8%)	3.239	0.762
2	I take my training seriously	-	8 (6.7%)	58 (48.3%)	54 (45%)	3.383	0.609
3	I complete training that is event or position specific	6 (5%)	9 (7.5%)	60 (50%)	45 (37.5%)	3.200	0.781
4	I complete all of my training	4 (3.3%)	12 (10%)	55 (45.8%)	49 (40.8%)	3.239	0.762
5	When I am training I am focused on improving my sport specific skills	-	8 (6.7%)	58 (48.3%)	54 (45%)	3.383	0.609
6	I am more interested in improving in my sport than winning	6 (5%)	9 (7.5%)	65 (54.2%)	40 (33.3%)	3.158	0.764
7	I eat food that helps me train and compete well in my sport	5 (4.2%)	9 (7.5%)	73 (60.8%)	33 (27.5%)	3.116	0.710
8	I feel confident in my sport specific skills in training situations	5 (4.2%)	8 (6.7%)	54 (45%)	53 (44.2%)	3.294	0.770
9	I feel confident in my sport specific skills in competition situations	3 (2.5%)	15 (12.5%)	67 (55.8%)	35 (29.2%)	3.117	0.709
10	I feel like I can manage my emotions in my training	2 (1.6%)	12 (10%)	68 (56.7%)	38 (31.7%)	3.185	0.668
11	I feel like I can manage my emotions in competition	-	13 (10.8%)	34 (28.4%)	73 (60.8%)	3.500	0.683
12	I am able to stay focused when I am training	3 (2.5%)	9 (7.5%)	77 (64.2%)	31 (25.8%)	3.133	0.644
13	I am able to stay focused when I am competing	3 (2.5%)	18 (15.0%)	55 (45.8%)	44 (36.7%)	3.167	0.768
14	I feel confident in my level of fitness when training for my sport	4 (3.3%)	12 (10.0%)	64 (53.3%)	40 (33.4%)	3.168	0.733
15	In my training I always try to do my best	3 (2.5%)	14 (11.7%)	68 (56.7%)	35 (29.2%)	3.128	0.702
16	I am able to accurately identify areas for growth in my sport	3 (2.5%)	18 (15%)	56 (46.7%)	43 (35.8%)	3.158	0.764
17	I am able to take feedback	-	16	44	60 (50%)	3.367	0.706

	from coaches and other athletes constructively		(13.3%)	(36.7%)			
18	When training I recognize when I can help other athletes/teammates with their training.	-	17 (14.2%)	33 (27.5%)	70 (58.3%)	3.441	0.728
19	I recognize situations in training when I should think strategically.	4 (3.3%)	5 (4.2%)	62 (51.7%)	49 (40.8%)	3.300	0.701
							Weighted Mean = 3.25

Decision rule: Low= ≤ 2.49 ; Average= 2.50-2.99; High= 3.00-3.49; Very High= ≥ 3.50
Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2 revealed that most athletes indicated that they had a primary sport. A total of **40.8%** responded always and **45.8%** responded Sometimes, while only **3.3%** selected never. This shows that the majority of respondents have a clearly identified sport focus. Similarly, about **45%** selected always and **48.3%** selected sometimes. Only **6.7%** responded on rarely, and none selected never. This reflects a high level of seriousness among the athletes. Moreover, half of the respondents (**50%**) reported sometimes completing event or position specific training, while **37.5%** selected always, 7.5% rarely complete it, while 5% involved in the completion of training that was event or position specific. Additionally, 40.8% respondents always complete all their training, 45.8% involved in it, 10% rarely complete it, while 3.3% involved in it.

Moreover, 45% of the respondents always focused on improving their sport specific skills when they were training, 48.3% sometimes had the focus, while 6.7% rarely had such focus. Furthermore, 33.3% respondents were always more interested in improving in their sport than winning, 54.2% sometimes involved in that, 7.5% interested, while 5% never engaged in it. Moreover, 27.5% respondents always eat food that helps them train and compete well in their sport, 7.5% sometimes interested, while 4.2% never engaged in it. Besides 44.2% respondents always feel confident in their sport specific skills in training

situations, 45% sometimes feel confident, 6.7% rarely feel confident, while 4.2% never felt so. Also 29.2% respondents always feel confident in their sport specific skills in competition situations, 55.8% sometimes interested, 12.5% rarely interested, while 2.5% never felt so.

Table 4.2.1 revealed that 31.7% respondents always feel like they could manage their emotions in their training, 56.7% sometimes managed it, 10% rarely involved in the management, while 1.6% never managed it. Also, 60.8% respondents always feel like they could manage their emotions in competition, 28.4% sometimes managed it, while 10.8% rarely involved in the management. Furthermore, 25.8% respondents always able to stay focused when they were in training, 64.2% sometimes had the focused, 7.5% rarely focus on it, while 2.5% never had such focus. Additionally, 36.7% respondents always able to stay focused when they were in competition, 45.8% sometimes focus on it, 15.0% rarely had such focus, while 2.5% never have focus. Moreover, 33.4% respondents always feel confident in their level of fitness when training for their sport, 53.3% sometimes feel confident, 10.0% rarely have such confidence, while 3.3% never feel confident. Additionally, 29.2% respondents always tried to do their best, 56.7% sometimes tried, 11.7% rarely tried, while 2.5% never tried.

In addition, 35.8% respondents always able to accurately identify areas for growth in their sport, 46.7% sometimes identified it, 15% rarely have identification, while 2.5% never identified. Beside, 50% respondents always able to take feedback from coaches and other athletes constructively, 36.7% sometimes have feedback it, 13.3% rarely have the feedback, while 2.5% never experience that. Furthermore, 58.3% respondents always recognize when they could help other athletes/teammates with their training, 27.5% sometimes recognize, while 14.2% rarely recognized. In addition, 40.8% respondents always recognize situations in training when they should think strategically, 51.7% sometimes the recognize situations, 4.2% rarely recognize it, while 3.3% never recognized situations. It was further revealed that,

on the average, the respondents' responses on level of performance had a weighted mean of 3.25 indicating that it was high. This implied that the level of performance was high among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Hypothesis One: There is no significant joint prediction of self-confidence (self-assurance, self-belief and self-efficacy) on sports performance among football academy trainees within Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 4.2.2: Regression Analysis of Joint Prediction of Self-confidence on Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees

R=0.200						
R ² =0.040						
Adj. R ² =0.015						
Std. Error=.77840						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (pvalue)	Remark
Regression	2.915	3	0.972	1.604	0.192	Not
Sig. Residual	70.285	116	0.606			
Total	73.200	119				

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.2 reveals that the linear combination of self-confidence (self-assurance, self-efficacy, and self-belief) was not significant on performance among football academy trainees ($F_{(3,116)}=1.604$, $p<0.05$). The R² value of 0.200 indicates a weak positive correlation between these predictors and the outcome variable. The R Square value of 0.040 suggests that only 4.0% of the variance in the outcome is explained by self-assurance, self-efficacy and self-belief combined, indicating a limited predictive power. The Adjusted R Square of 0.015 further confirms this, accounting for the slight adjustment in variance explained when adding more predictors. This indicates that self-confidence (self-assurance, self-efficacy and self-belief) did not have significant prediction on sports performance among football academy trainees. Therefore, the hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relative prediction of self-confidence of self-assurance, self-belief and self-efficacy on sports performance among football academy trainees within the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 4.2.3: Regression Analysis of Relative Prediction of Self-Confidence on Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T		
(Constant)	4.041	0.525		7.697	.000	
Self-Belief	-0.287	0.154	-0.197	-1.863	0.065	
Self-Efficacy						Not sig.
Self-Assurance	-0.052	0.121	-0.039	-0.427	0.670	
	0.019	0.168	0.012	0.115	0.908	Not sig.

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.2.3 presents the relative prediction of self-confidence on sports performance among football academy trainees. The unstandardized regression coefficient (β), standard error of estimate, and standardized beta values are shown. None of the self-confidence components significantly predicted performance at the 0.05 level. Self-belief (unstandardized β =-0.287, standardized beta=-0.197, p =0.065) shows a negative but marginally insignificant relationship with performance, suggesting that increased self-belief may not always translate to improved performance. Similarly, self-efficacy (unstandardized β =-0.052, standardized beta=-0.039, p =0.670) and self-assurance (unstandardized β =0.019, standardized beta=0.012, p =0.908) exhibit weak and statistically insignificant relationships with performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant joint prediction of team cohesion (attraction to group-social, attraction to group-task, group integration-social and group integration- task) on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 4.2.4: Regression Analysis of Joint Prediction of Team Cohesion on Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees

R=0.283

R²=0.080

Adj. R²=0.048

Std. Error=0.76509

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	5.882	4	1.471	2.512	0.045	Significant
Residual	67.318	115	.585			
Total	73.200	119				

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.4 reveals that the linear combination of team cohesion (attraction to group-social, attraction to group-task, group integration-social and group integration- task) was significant on performance ($df_{(4, 115)}=2.512, p<0.05$). The R value of 0.283 indicates a moderate correlation between the predictors and the outcome. The R Square value of 0.080 suggests that approximately 8.0% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the model, while the Adjusted R Square of 0.048 accounts for the number of predictors, providing a more conservative estimate of explained variance. The standard error of the estimate (0.76509) indicates the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. The change statistics reveal that the introduction of the predictors resulted in a significant change in the model ($F=2.512, p=0.045$), suggesting that the predictors collectively have a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant relative prediction of attraction to group-social, attraction to group-task, group integration-social and group integration-task on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 4.2.5: Regression Analysis of Relative Prediction of Attraction to Group Cohesion on Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Remarks
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		
(Constant)	2.659	0.201		13.235.00	0.000	
Attraction to Group-Social	0.238	0.118	0.226	2.025	0.045	Sig.
Attraction to Group-Task	-0.052	0.139	-0.052	-0.373	0.709	Not Sig.
Group Integration-Social	-0.042	0.110	-0.046	-0.379	0.705	Not Sig.
GroupIntegration-Task	0.160	0.120	0.173	1.326	0.187	Not Sig.

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.5 presents the relative prediction of group-related factors of Attraction to Group-Social (AGS), Attraction to Group-Task (AGT), Group Integration-Social (GIS), and Group Integration-Task (GIT) on sports performance among football academy trainees. The regression model shows a significant constant (unstandardized $B=2.659$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a baseline level of sports performance independent of the predictors. Among the group cohesion predictors, Attraction to Group-Social (unstandardized $B=0.238$, standardized $Beta = 0.226$, $p=0.045$) significantly predicted performance. This suggests that trainees who feel socially connected to their team tend to perform better.

The finding emphasised the importance of social bonding in fostering a supportive and cohesive team environment that enhances individual motivation and overall performance.

However, Attraction to Group-Task (unstandardized $B=-0.052$, $Beta=-0.052$, $p=0.709$), Group Integration-Social (unstandardized $B=-0.042$, $Beta=-0.046$, $p=0.705$) and Group Integration-Task (unstandardized $B=0.160$, $Beta=0.173$, $p=0.187$) did not significantly predicted performance. The null hypothesis which stated that there was significant relative prediction of attraction to group-social on sports performance among football academy trainees.

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant joint prediction of goal setting (process goals, performance goals and outcome goals) on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 4.2.6: Regression Analysis of Joint Prediction of Goal Setting on Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees

R=0.179						
R ² =0.032						
Adj. R ² =0.007						
Std. Error=0.78161						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	2.333	3	0.778	1.273	0.287	Not Significant
Residual	70.867	116	0.611			
Total	73.200	119				

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 4.2.6 presents the joint prediction of goal-setting types (process, performance and outcome goals) on sports performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis (df (3, 116)=1.273 p>0.05). The correlation coefficient (R=0.179) revealed a joint weak relationship between goal-setting and sports performance. The coefficient of determination (R²=0.032) indicates that only 3.2% of the variance in sports performance is explained by goal-setting. The adjusted R² (0.007) further highlights the minimal explanatory power after accounting for model complexity. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the model is not statistically significant, indicating that process, performance and outcome goals collectively did not significantly predict sports performance among the trainees. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Six: There is no significant relative prediction of process goals, performance goals and outcome goals on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 4.2.7: Regression Analysis of Relative Prediction of Process Goals, Performance Goals and Outcome Goals on Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	3.671	0.415			8.852	.000	
Process Goals	-0.124	0.081	-0.150		-1.541	0.126	Not sig.
Performance Goals	-0.065	0.111	-0.057		-0.583	0.561	Not sig.
Outcome Goals	0.025	0.092	0.025		0.270	0.788	Not sig.

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.7 evaluates the relative prediction of process, performance and outcome goals on sports performance among football academy trainees. The hypothesis states that there is no significant relative prediction of process goal, performance goal and outcome goal on sports performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis. Based on the regression analysis in Table 4.2.7, all predictor variables of process goals ($\beta=-0.150$, $p=0.126$), performance goals ($\beta=-0.057$, $p=0.561$), and outcome goals ($\beta=0.025$, $p=0.788$) showed no significant influence on sports performance as their p-values exceed the 0.05 threshold. Since none of the goal-setting variables significantly predicted sports performance, the null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Seven: There is no significant difference in sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria based on age.

Table 4.2.8: t-test Analysis of Difference in Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees Based on Age

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t-test value	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Sports Performance	10-17 years	60	61.55	3.78				

18-25 years	60	60.27	8.73	118	1.045	0.298	Not Significant
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Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.8 reveals that there was no significant difference in sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis based on age ($t=-1.045$, $df=118$, $p>0.05$). This means that there was no significant difference in sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis in spite of their age differences. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted. Table 4.2.8 further reveals that trainees that are between 10-17 years had a greater mean of 61.55, than those between 18-25 years with a mean score of 60.27. It implies that, those trainees between 10-17 years had a better sports performance than their counterparts within the age range of 18-25 years.

Hypothesis Eight: There is no significant difference on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria based on playing experience.

Table 4.2.9: Analysis of Variance of Difference in Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees Based on Playing Experience

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	109.810	2	54.905	1.217	0.300	Not Sig.
Within Groups	5278.182	117	45.113			
Total	5387.992	119				

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.9 presents the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results examining the difference between groups (based on playing experience) on the variable of interest. The results indicate that there was no statistically significant difference among the groups, $F(2, 117)=1.217$, $p= 0.300$. Specifically, the between-group sum of squares was 109.810 with a mean square of 54.905, while the within-group sum of squares was 5278.182 with a mean square of 45.113. The calculated F-value of 1.217 did not reach the level of statistical

significance ($p > 0.05$). This finding implies that the mean scores of the groups did not differ significantly, suggesting that variations observed among the groups could be attributed to random chance rather than actual group differences. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between the groups, is accepted.

Table 4.2.10: Descriptive Analysis of Difference in Sports Performance among Football Academy Trainees Based on Playing Experience

Playing Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1-4 years	40	61.5750	3.96062	0.62623
5-8 years	52	59.8269	8.55598	1.18650
9-12 years	28	61.9643	5.87828	1.11089
Total	120	60.9083	6.72884	0.61426

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.10 presents the mean scores, standard deviations, and standard errors of participants' responses according to their years of experience. The result reveals that respondents with 1–4 years of experience had a mean score of 61.58, while those with 5–8 years of experience recorded a mean of 59.83. In comparison, participants with 9–12 years of experience had the highest mean score of 61.96. These findings suggest that the mean scores are relatively consistent across the different experience groups, with only slight variations. Specifically, respondents with 9–12 years of experience demonstrated slightly higher mean values, indicating a modest increase in performance (or perception, depending on the variable measured) with longer years of experience. However, the relatively close mean values across the groups imply that years of experience did not exert a strong differential effect on the measured construct.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Self-confidence has been widely regarded as an influential factor in sports performance, contributing to athletes' motivation, focus, and ability to cope with competitive pressures^{1,2}. However, the current study's results reveal a limited impact of self-confidence components on performance among these young athletes, challenging some conventional perspectives. While prior research has established a strong link between psychological resilience and sports performance, the findings of this study reveal that none of the three factors significantly predict a trainee's focus on skill improvement over competition^{3,4}. In this context, we explore the implications of each result and the limitations that may have influenced the findings.

The study results indicate that self-belief had the most substantial, albeit non-significant, effect among the three predictors. Self-belief generally refers to an athlete's confidence in their ability to succeed, and it has been linked to positive sports outcomes across various studies⁵. However, the negative beta in this study suggests that higher self-belief could correlate with a reduced focus on improvement, potentially indicating that trainees who already have strong self-belief may feel less compelled to prioritize improvement over winning. This finding aligns with previous studies showing that athletes with high self-belief sometimes experience complacency, feeling that they do not need additional training to succeed⁷. Coaches might benefit from fostering a culture that balances self-belief with continuous skill development, as athletes with high self-belief might not see improvement as an immediate priority unless encouraged by their environment⁸.

Self-efficacy, the belief in one's capacity to execute specific actions required to achieve a goal, is widely regarded as a critical factor in sports psychology. In this study, however, self-efficacy did not significantly predict a trainee's orientation toward improvement over competition. This finding contrasts with several studies in which self-efficacy has shown a positive relationship with both athletic performance and motivation for

skill development^{9, 10}. One possible explanation for the non-significance of self-efficacy in this study could be the narrow focus on football trainees within a specific metropolis. Self-efficacy's effect on performance often varies depending on factors such as competition level, athlete age, and environmental support¹¹. Additionally, football trainees in Ibadan might rely more on external motivators, such as competitive outcomes or rewards, rather than intrinsic beliefs in their abilities. This outcome suggests that trainers might consider integrating specific self-efficacy-building activities tailored to the football context, possibly by setting incremental, skills-based goals that gradually strengthen trainees' self-efficacy and support performance improvement.

Self-assurance also did not emerge as a significant predictor of focus on improvement over winning in this study. Self-assurance, which is slightly distinct from self-efficacy and self-belief in its emphasis on an athlete's general confidence without a direct tie to specific skills, may have less relevance to sports performance than more targeted forms of confidence¹². Research suggests that while self-assurance can foster resilience, it may lack the task-specific utility required to drive ongoing improvement in sports¹³. This aligns with the present findings, where self-assurance showed minimal impact on trainees' focus on skill development.

The findings from this study emphasized the complexities of psychological factors in sports performance and point to the importance of contextual variables, such as training environment and individual motivation, in moderating the effects of self-belief, self-efficacy, and self-assurance. The findings align with some of the raised perspectives in the literature regarding confidence types in sports. For instance, it was found that while generalized self-confidence is valuable, specific self-efficacy tied to concrete skills often correlates more strongly with sustained performance improvements¹⁰. Moreover, in team sports such as football, studies suggest that group dynamics and external feedback play a significant role in

shaping individual confidence and performance focus¹⁴. In this study, however, the trainees' focused on improvement did not significantly correlate with any confidence measures, which may suggest that their improvement orientations are more influenced by team culture or external feedback rather than intrinsic confidence alone. While surprising, these findings are not entirely unique and echo research highlighting that excessive self-belief can sometimes contribute to overconfidence, which may negatively impact performance^{15,16}.

For young athletes, high self-belief may not always align with actual skill levels, leading to overestimation of abilities and a potential reduction in effort or focus during training and competition¹⁷. Self-belief played a complex role in sports performance, where moderate levels are beneficial, but very high levels without corresponding competence can create gaps in performance. This aligns with Bandura's self-efficacy theory, which emphasizes that confidence should be realistically aligned with skill level and goals¹⁸. It is possible that, in the context of this study, young football trainees may possess a level of self-belief that overshadows their current capabilities, potentially resulting in decreased performance.

Self-efficacy and self-assurance were both found to have weak, non-significant correlations with performance. These findings indicate that, in this context, these traits do not predict or contribute significantly to performance outcomes. In contrast, many studies have reported positive links between self-efficacy and sports performance, often emphasizing that self-efficacy enhances an athlete's resilience and persistence in face of challenges^{19, 20}. A plausible explanation for this divergence could be the developmental stage of the trainees, who may still be in the process of building the skills and experiences needed for self-efficacy and self-assurance to translate into measurable performance outcomes.

Recent studies have highlighted that while self-belief and self-assurance are related, they may have distinct roles in shaping how athletes approach challenges and perceive their

capabilities²¹. The findings from this study suggest that self-belief may influence self-assurance but may not be enough on its own to enhance performance without the structured support of training and skill acquisition. This relationship between self-belief and self-assurance highlights the interconnected nature of self-confidence traits, suggesting that a balanced combination of these attributes is likely more beneficial than reliance on one alone. Research on Nigerian athletes indicates that cultural factors, including collectivist values, may play a role in how self-assurance is expressed, with athletes potentially downplaying their individual capabilities in favor of team success²². Thus, while self-belief and self-assurance are mutually supportive, the degree to which they translate into individual performance may depend on cultural dynamics and training focus. The findings point to important cultural factors that may moderate the relationships between self-confidence traits and sports performance in this context.

In Nigerian culture, traits such as humility and team-oriented perspectives are highly valued, and athletes may not openly express individual self-assurance or prioritize individual achievement over team success²³. This cultural orientation might reduce the impact of self-confidence traits on personal performance, as athletes could be more attuned to collective goals than individual accolades. Additionally, young athletes in the study may prioritize team harmony and respect for authority over assertive displays of confidence, which could explain the weak correlations between self-confidence traits and individual performance.

Given the weak or non-significant relationships between self-confidence components and performance, it may be beneficial for coaches and trainers to focus on skills training and experiential learning alongside self-confidence development. In settings where self-confidence does not directly predict performance, training programs could incorporate cognitive-behavioral techniques to help athletes calibrate their confidence levels to reflect their true abilities and improve self-regulation under pressure². This approach would enable

athletes to build confidence through skill mastery rather than through general self-assurance alone, supporting a more stable development of performance.

The results also support the multidimensional approach to sport-confidence, which posits that confidence must be developed in specific domains relevant to performance¹. This study adds to this perspective by indicating that, among young athletes in Ibadan, self-confidence traits alone do not strongly predict performance outcomes. The findings call for an expanded view of sports psychology that considers the cultural and developmental nuances that shape the expression and impact of self-confidence traits in sports.

The study established the impact of group dynamics specifically Group Interaction Task, Attraction to the Group Social, Group Integration Social, and Attraction to the Group Task on sports performance among football trainees. Group dynamics have long been acknowledged as critical to understanding team-based sports, where individual performance is influenced by interaction and cohesion within the group^{24,25}. These factors enhance the quality of interaction among players, fostering a supportive environment that allows individuals to thrive and contribute effectively to the team's success²⁵. These predictors together provide a meaningful explanation of variance in sports performance, lending support to theories that underscore the importance of social cohesion and interaction for athletic success²⁶. Each predictor represents a distinct aspect of group dynamics, providing insight into how different components of team interaction and integration contribute to performance. Understanding these relationships is particularly relevant for coaches and team managers who seek to enhance performance by fostering a positive group environment. Each predictor of group interaction task, attraction to the group social, group integration social, and attraction to the group task plays a role in influencing the performance outcomes in team sports. These dimensions collectively contribute to team cohesion, with each aspect facilitating interpersonal relationships, communication, and a shared focus on team goals²⁴.

Similarly, the study revealed that **group interaction task** focuses on the functionality of task-related interaction within the team. Effective communication and cooperation during gameplay can enhance team performance by enabling members to respond quickly to challenges and opportunities on the field²⁷. This predictor underlines the importance of synchronizing efforts toward a common objective, a factor that is central to achieving peak performance in team settings²⁵. Additionally, **attraction to the group social** encompasses the social aspects of team membership, which may influence motivation and commitment to the team. Players who enjoy social interactions within the team are likely to be more committed to group success, potentially leading to improved individual and collective performance²⁸. Social connections foster a sense of belonging, motivating players to maintain high standards not only for personal achievement but also for group cohesion.

Furthermore, group integration social reflects the team's collective perception of unity and social integration, essential for building trust and ensuring smooth communication. When team members perceive themselves as socially integrated, they may be more willing to support each other during high-pressure situations²⁹. This predictor's impact on performance aligns with findings from other studies, who emphasized that group integration plays a central role in creating an atmosphere conducive to success in team-based sports²⁴. Moreover, **attraction to the group task** pertains to the motivation derived from task-related goals within the team. Players who are attracted to the task aspect of the team are likely to be more focused on achieving collective goals, fostering a sense of responsibility that can elevate performance levels²⁵. This dimension reinforces the idea that team cohesion is not merely about social satisfaction but also about a shared commitment to achieving high-performance outcomes.

This finding implies that the quality of task-based interactions within the group may enhance individual performance by fostering better communication, trust and a sense of

interdependence among team members³⁰. Effective task-related interactions are essential in sports because they enable members to work synergistically, which is crucial in high-stakes, real-time decision-making scenarios inherent in team sports. This finding is corroborated by scholars, who argue that cohesive task interactions allow athletes to coordinate and communicate effectively, making it easier to achieve group goals²⁴. These results align with previous findings that emphasize the multifaceted nature of sports performance, where psychological, physical and environmental factors interact³¹. This aligns with Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory, which emphasizes that the specificity and difficulty of goals, as well as individual commitment to them, influence their effectiveness. It is possible that the trainees' goal-setting strategies lacked these critical elements, thereby reducing their impact on performance outcomes³².

This finding supports the notion that focusing on specific actions or routines during training and competition allows athletes to refine their techniques and reduce performance anxiety, ultimately improving outcomes³³. Process goals might have been more impactful because they encourage the trainees to concentrate on controllable aspects of their performance rather than external results. Outcome goals, often focused on winning or achieving a specific rank, can lead to pressure and distractions, undermining performance³⁴. Similarly, performance goals that prioritize measurable outputs over skill development may fail to address the foundational aspects of athletic performance.

The variability in goal-setting approaches, as reflected in the means and standard deviations, also highlights differences in individual preferences and orientations toward goal-setting. Research has shown that as individuals' progress through developmental stages, they develop higher levels of commitment to their personal and group goals, which aligns with the trend observed in this study. Similar trends are evident in Goal Orientation, with the older group showing a higher mean, suggesting a more mature approach toward achieving

objectives within group settings³⁵. Goal Orientation Theory posits that individuals' approaches to goal setting and achievement can significantly impact their motivation and performance outcomes³⁶. The trend of older individuals scoring higher on goal orientation may reflect developmental differences, as maturity often aligns with a greater focus on achievement and strategic planning.

Developmental psychology research suggests that certain traits, such as consistency, may be relatively stable across adolescence and young adulthood, which might explain why the means across the two groups do not differ significantly³⁷. These findings suggest that, while performance perceptions may slightly increase with age, they are not drastically different, indicating that factors other than age, such as training and feedback, may play a more significant role in determining performance levels. This lack of significant difference may imply that commitment, as a psychological construct, is influenced by factors other than age, such as individual personality traits or external motivations³⁹. The findings imply that performance levels may be influenced more by context-specific factors, such as training quality, feedback, and environmental support⁴⁰. This finding may indicate that strategy development, much like performance, depends more on external factors such as training and feedback rather than intrinsic age-related differences⁴¹.

The result of this study reinforces previous findings, suggesting that age may not significantly influence these constructs. While age-related development can impact certain psychological and behavioral factors, the minimal explanatory power of the model implies that age alone is insufficient to explain differences in group dynamics and individual traits within the sample. This finding resonates with existing literature indicating that group dynamics are influenced by a variety of factors, including personality, social context, and team-specific conditions⁴². This aligns with findings from other scholars, who highlight that commitment can contribute to long-term organizational tenure⁴³. The study found that a

higher focus may be inversely related to experience, potentially indicating that early-career individuals prioritize focused task completion, while experienced individuals diversify their attention⁴⁴. Thus, while some predictors show tentative associations, further research is necessary to establish definitive relationships.

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Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study examined self-confidence traits, group cohesion factors, goal-setting approaches, as predictors of and sports performance among football trainees in Ibadan Metropolis. Findings revealed that self-confidence traits, including self-belief, self-efficacy, and self-assurance, had limited predictive power for sports performance. While a weak correlation was observed between self-belief and self-assurance, their direct influence on performance was not statistically significant. This suggests that self-confidence traits alone may not be sufficient to enhance performance, highlighting the importance of integrating skill development with confidence-building programmes.

Group cohesion emerged as a significant predictor of sports performance. The results indicated that task and social cohesion factors, such as group interaction task and attraction to the group social, strongly influenced performance. Specifically, athletes who demonstrated strong social bonds and a shared commitment to team goals performed better, underscoring the critical role of balanced task-focused and socially cohesive dynamics in team sports. Goal-setting was shown to positively impact sports performance, albeit marginally. The findings suggest that trainees with higher goal orientation and structured approaches to setting and achieving objectives tend to perform better. However, the results were not strong enough to conclusively affirm the relationship, pointing to the need for more focused goal-setting strategies in training programmes.

The analysis of age differences revealed that age did not play a significant role in influencing constructs such as commitment, consistency, and goal orientation. While older participants reported marginally higher means in some traits, the differences were not statistically significant. This finding indicates that training and development strategies may be effectively applied universally across different age groups, without requiring substantial customization based on age alone. Playing experience, on the other hand, demonstrated a moderate positive relationship with sports performance. Players with more years of experience displayed better tactical and technical skills as well as improved decision-making and adaptability. However, the extent to which experience influenced performance was not uniform across constructs, suggesting that other factors such as situational and contextual variables may also play a role. Overall, the findings emphasised the multifaceted nature of sports performance, emphasizing the importance of integrating psychological, social and experiential factors into training and development programs to optimize individual and team outcomes.

5.2 Conclusion

It was concluded in this study that the level of performance was high among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. This study affirmed that there was no significant joint prediction of self-confidence of self-assurance, self-belief and self-efficacy on sports performance. It was established that there was no significant relative prediction of self-confidence of self-assurance, self-belief and self-efficacy on sports performance among the respondents. It was confirmed that there was a significant joint prediction of team cohesion of attraction to group-social, attraction to group-task, group integration-social and group integration- task on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis.

Conclusion was made in this study that there was significant relative prediction of attraction to group-social on sports performance among football academy trainees; while attraction to group-task, group integration-social and group integration-task did not. It was established that there was no significant joint prediction of goal setting of process goals, performance goals and outcome goals on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis. There was no significant relative prediction of process goals, performance goals and outcome goals on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. It was affirmed that there was no significant difference in sports performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis based on age. However, those trainees between 10-17 years had a better sports performance than their counterparts within the age range of 18-25 years. Additionally, there was no significant difference on sports performance among football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria based on playing experience.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made to enhance sports performance among young football trainees:

1. The football academies and relevant stakeholders (such as State Football Association, coaches and technical staff, sports **administrators**) in Ibadan Metropolis should sustain and enhance existing training programs and support systems to maintain the high level of performance observed among football academy trainees.
2. The coaches and sports psychologists should design targeted interventions that specifically address self-confidence components individually, rather than jointly, to enhance sports performance among athletes.
3. The coaches and sports development professionals (such as talent scouts, sports psychologists, officials from Sports Federations) should focus on other psychological

or contextual factors (training facilities and equipment, coaching quality and style, socio-economic environment) that may have greater influence on sports performance, while still providing individualized support to enhance self-assurance, self-belief and self-efficacy among athletes.

4. The football academy coaches and administrators should strengthen team cohesion by promoting social bonding and task-oriented activities, as these collectively enhance sports performance among trainees.
5. The football academy coaches should prioritize strategies that enhance attraction to group-social interactions, while reviewing and restructuring task-related and group integration approaches to better support sports performance.
6. Coaches should reassess goal-setting approaches by emphasizing individualized and context-specific goals, while integrating other performance enhancing strategies to improve sports performance among football academy trainees.
7. The coaches and sports psychologists should place less emphasis on isolated goal types and instead adopt a holistic performance development approach that incorporates technical, physical and psychological training to enhance sports performance.
8. The football academy training programmes should be designed coaches and technical staff so as to be inclusive and uniform across age groups, focusing on skill development and performance rather than age-based differentiation.
9. The football academy coaches should provide equal training opportunities and performance expectations for trainees regardless of playing experience, while emphasizing continuous skill development for all athletes.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributed to knowledge in the following ways:

1. This study contributes to knowledge by providing empirical evidence that football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis demonstrate a high level of sports performance. It highlights the effectiveness of existing training programmes and support systems within these academies, offering insight into factors that sustain high performance among youth athletes.
2. The study confirms that self-confidence traits (self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy) do not significantly predict sports performance among football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis. This challenges dominant psychological theories emphasizing confidence as a primary performance driver. Instead, the findings highlight the need for culturally relevant training programs that integrate confidence-building with skill acquisition and tactical development. By demonstrating the limited predictive power of confidence alone, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of psychological factors in sports performance.
3. Empirical evidence from this study establishes that both task-related and social cohesion significantly predict sports performance, reinforcing theories like Task Cohesion Theory and Social Identity Theory. The findings emphasize the dual role of social bonds and teamwork-focused interactions in enhancing individual and team success. By demonstrating the substantial influence of group cohesion, the study provides a theoretical and practical framework for coaches to foster team-building strategies that improve performance and create a supportive sports environment.
4. The study finds that structured goal-setting frameworks (process, performance, and outcome goals) play a significant role in improving sports performance. However, existing goal-setting strategies may lack robustness in achieving optimal results. This contribution expands knowledge on how goal-setting mechanisms should be tailored to align with athletes' developmental stages. By emphasizing clear, measurable, and

realistic objectives, the study provides insights into enhancing motivation, discipline, and overall performance among football trainees.

5. Findings reveal no significant difference in sports performance based on age among football trainees. This challenges conventional assumptions that age determines commitment, goal orientation, and skill development. Instead, the study underscores the role of training quality and contextual factors in shaping performance. This insight supports the adoption of universal, age-inclusive training methodologies that prioritize psychological and behavioral competencies over age-based differentiation in sports development programs.
6. Playing experience positively impacts sports performance, its effect varies across different constructs, emphasizing the need for quality over quantity in training. The study highlights that merely accumulating experience does not guarantee superior performance; rather, structured, high-quality gameplay opportunities and decision-making scenarios are crucial. These findings provide a refined perspective on experience-based learning, advocating for training programs that focus on the strategic application of experience in skill enhancement and performance optimization.
7. By identifying key psychological and social determinants of sports performance, this study offers a practical framework for coaches, clubs, and sports organizations. The findings stress the need for balanced training programs that integrate confidence-building, teamwork, and structured goal-setting. Additionally, the study provides actionable recommendations for developing training methodologies that enhance player development holistically. These contributions bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical applications, helping stakeholders refine coaching strategies for optimal athlete performance.

8. The study highlights the necessity of contextualizing sports psychology principles within cultural and environmental realities. Findings suggest that Western-based models of confidence and goal-setting may not fully apply to football trainees in Ibadan Metropolis. This contribution reinforces the importance of developing culturally adaptive training programs that align with local psychological, social, and experiential factors. It also calls for further research into how cultural influences shape sports performance in African contexts.
9. By testing multiple hypotheses related to self-confidence, group cohesion, goal-setting, age, and playing experience, the study provides empirical validation for sports psychology theories. The findings refine existing models by demonstrating the interplay of psychological, social, and experiential factors in performance outcomes. This study expands theoretical perspectives in sports science, offering new insights into the complex determinants of success in football training. It lays a foundation for further research into culturally relevant performance enhancement strategies.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following areas are recommended for further research:

1. Future research should investigate the specific factors such as coaching methods, training facilities or psychological support that contribute most to the high performance of football academy trainees in Ibadan Metropolis.
2. Further studies should investigate other psychological or environmental factors that may influence sports performance, and examine the individual roles of self-assurance, self-belief, and self-efficacy in athlete development.

3. Future longitudinal studies should examine how changes in team cohesion over time impact athletes' performance, providing insight into the causal direction of these relationships.
4. Further research should assess the role of coaching strategies and leadership styles in enhancing the specific dimensions of team cohesion that most strongly predict sports performance.
5. Future studies should examine the impact of goal-setting on sports performance in other sports or at different levels of competition to determine whether the lack of significance is specific to football academy trainees in the Ibadan Metropolis.
6. Further studies should investigate additional psychological or environmental factors that might interact with goal-setting (such as motivation, coaching style or team dynamics) to influence sports performance.
7. Future studies could explore whether other factors, such as training intensity or psychological skills, have a stronger influence on sports performance than age among football academy trainees.
8. Future research should investigate how other variables, such as skill level, coaching quality or physical conditioning, may influence sports performance, given that playing experience alone did not show a significant effect among football academy trainees.

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Appendix I

Lead City University, Ibadan

Faculty of Education

Department of Kinesiology, Sports Science and Health Education

Consent Form

Dear Respondent,

You are being asked to participate in research which will be conducted by postgraduate student in the above-named department. The purpose of the study is to obtain your perceptions on the current research. If you agree to be a respondent, please, complete a questionnaire that has four separate sections. Section A is about demographic data, and Sections B and C are on personality and sports performance, while Section D presents questions on athlete branding respectively. Kindly note that your participation in the research is strictly voluntary and you have every right to decline participation. To make sure your participation is confidential, please do not put any personal identifying information on the questionnaire. Signing below indicates your voluntary participation in our research.

Thank you.

.....
Signature of Respondent

.....
Date

Appendix II
Lead City University
Department of Kinesiology, Sports Science and Health Education
Questionnaire

Dear Respondents,

The researcher is a postgraduate student of Lead City University, Ibadan. Your sincere response to the items of the questionnaire co-operation by responding sincerely to the items

in each section of the questionnaire is hereby solicited for. The information supplied will be for the purpose of this study only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanking you for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Thank you very much.

Researcher

Section A: Demographic Data of the Respondents

Instructions: Please tick (✓) your choice of the responses in the spaces provided.

1. **Age:** 10-17 years () 18-25 years ()
2. **Years of Experience:** 1-4 () 5-8 () 9- 12 ()
3. **Positions:** Defender () Midfielder () Attacker ()

Section B

Trait Sport-Confidence Inventory (TSCI)

Think about how self-confident you are when you compete in sport. Respond to the statements based on how confident you generally feel when you compete in football. Compare your self-confidence to the most self-confidence athletes you know.

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate column that best represent your opinion in each statement.

The following are the response format of statements: **Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)**

S/N	Statements	L	M	H
	When you compete how confident you generally feel?			
1.	Compare your confidence in your ability to execute the skills necessary to be successful to the most confident athlete you know.			
2.	Compare your confidence in your ability to make critical decisions during competition to the most confident athlete you know.			
3.	Compare your confidence in your ability to perform under pressure to the most confident athlete you know			
4	Compare your confidence in your ability to execute successful strategy to the most confident athlete you know			
5	Compare your confidence in your ability to concentrate well enough to be successful to the most confident athlete you know			
6	Compare your confidence in your ability to adapt to different game situations and still be successful to the most confident athlete you know			
7	Compare your confidence in your ability to achieve your competitive goals to the most confident athlete you know.			
8	Compare your confidence in your ability to be successful to the most confident athlete you know.			
9	Compare your confidence in your ability to consistently be successful to the most confident athlete you know.			
10	Compare your confidence in your ability to think and respond successfully during competition to the most confident athlete you know			
11	Compare your confidence in your ability to meet the challenge of competition to the most confident athlete you know.			
12	Compare your confidence in your ability to be successful even when the odds are against you to the most confident athlete you know.			
13	Compare your confidence in your ability to bounce back from performing poorly and be successful to the most confident athlete you know.			

Section C

Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ)

This questionnaire is designed to assess your perceptions of your team. There are no wrong or right answers, so please give your immediate reaction. Some of the questions may seem repetitive. Please tick (✓) in the appropriate column that best represent your opinion in each statement. The following are the response format of statements: **Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)**

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
	Attraction to the Group- Social				
1.	I do not enjoy being a part of the social activities of this team				
2.	I am not going to miss the members of this team when the season ends				
3.	Some of my best friends are on this team				
4	I enjoy other parties rather than team parties				
5	For me, this team is one of the most important social groups to which I belong				
	Attraction to the Group- Task				
6	I'm not happy with the amount of playing time I get.				
7	I'm unhappy with my team's level of desire to win				
8	This team does not give me enough opportunities to improve my personal Performance				
9	I do not like the style of play on this team				
	Group Integration-Social				
10	Members of our team would rather go out on their own than get together as a team				
11	Our team members rarely party together				
12	Our team would like to spend time together in the off season				
13	Members of our team do not stick together outside of practice and games				
	Group Interaction-Task				
14	Our team is united in trying to reach its goals for performance				
15	We all take responsibility for any loss or poor performance by our team.				
16	Our team members have conflicting aspirations for the team's performance				
17	If members of our team have problems in practice, everyone wants to help them so we can get back together again				
18	Our team members do not communicate freely about each athlete's responsibilities during competition or practice.				

Section D

Goal-setting Questionnaire

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate column that best represent your opinion in each statement.

The following are the response format of statements:

Not Very Likely Me (VNLM)

Unlikely Me (UM)

Likely me (LM)

Very Likely me (VLM)

S/N	Statements	VNLM	UM	LM	VLM
1.	I set short-term goals for myself				
2.	I set long-term goals for myself such as becoming a better player				
3.	I set goals to achieve what I think is important.				
4	I imagine what my performance will be like when I reach my goal				
5	My goals are meaningful to me				
6	My goals are based on my own performance and plan for the future.				
7	I set goals to help me improve my performance.				
8	I set goals to help me be more successful on the field of play.				
9	I set goals to help me do my personal best.				
10	When I want to learn something, I make small goals to track my progress				
11	I focus on my own improvement instead of worrying about whether other people are doing better than me.				
12	Even if I lose a competition, I am pleased if I have improved.				
13	Based on everything I know about myself, I believe I can achieve my goals.				
14	When I set goals, I think about barriers that might get in my way.				
15	When I am struggling, I set goals to help me improve.				
16	I set goals that are challenging but achievable				
17	I set short-term goals to help me achieve my long-term goals.				
18	When setting a goal, I think about my past successes and failures				
19	When I set a goal, I am confident that I can meet it.				

Section E

Sport Performance Perceptions Scale (SPPS)

Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the right of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner in your primary sport. Choose from 1-4 the response which best suits your answer. 1 Never, 2 Rarely, 3 Sometimes, 4 Always.

Appendix III

Pictures

from Field Work

S/N	Statement	N	R	S	A
1	I recognize that I have a primary sport.				
2	I take my training seriously				
3	I complete training that is event or position specific				
4	I complete all of my training.				
5	When I am training I am focused on improving my sport specific skills.				
6	I am more interested in improving in my sport than winning.				
7	I eat food that helps me train and compete well in my sport				
8	I feel confident in my sport specific skills in training situations				
9	I feel confident in my sport specific skills in competition situations.				
10	I feel like I can manage my emotions in my training.				
11	I feel like I can manage my emotions in competition.				
12	I am able to stay focused when I am training				
13	I am able to stay focused when I am competing.				
14	I feel confident in my level of fitness when training for my sport.				
15	In my training I always try to do my best.				
16	I am able to accurately identify areas for growth in my sport.				
17	I am able to take feedback from coaches and other athletes constructively.				
18	When training I recognize when I can help other athletes/teammates with their training.				
19	I recognize situations in training when I should think strategically.				



Fig 3.1: Researcher with the respondents



Fig 3.2: Marvellous Football Academy players filling the questionnaire

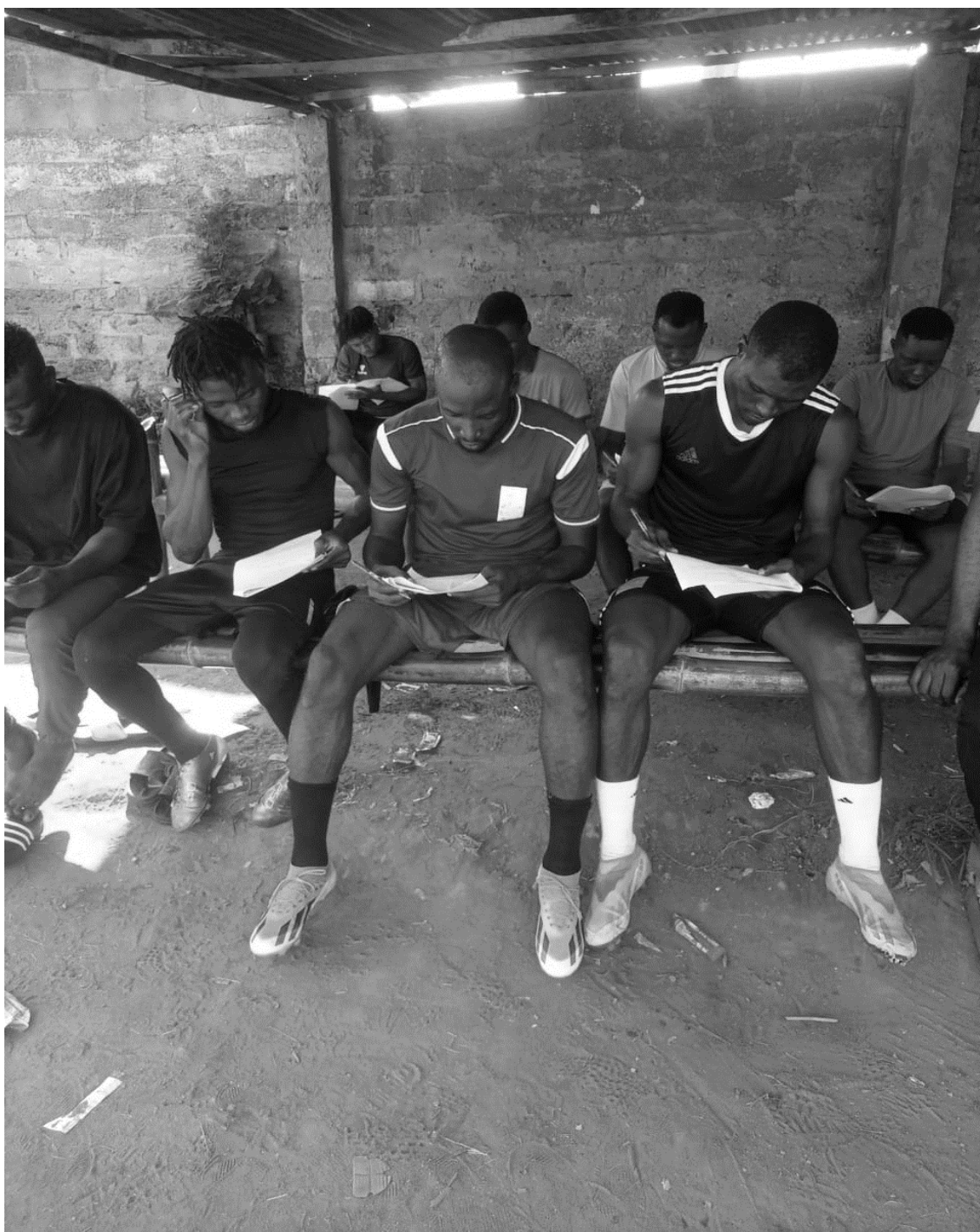


Fig 3.3. M&N Football Academy filling the questionnaire

Students Bio-data

Personal Data

Full Names: Adeoye Obaseyi Onigbinde
Address: 1 Adegbeye Onigbinde Crescent Felele Rab Ibadan
Date and Place of Birth: 23rd March 1970 Ilorin Kwara State
Nationality: Nigerian
Next of Kin: Mrs Folakemi Onigbinde
Address: 2 Fagbile Street Oke Otubu Modakeke Osun State

Educational Background:

S/N	Institution	Qualification Obtained	Date
1	Obafemi Awolowo University Ile Ife Osun State	B.A Educ. (Physical Educ.)	1993
2	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	Master of Education (Sociology and Psychology of Sports.	1998

Working Experience

S/N	Name	Role	date
	Ambassador College Ile Ife	Physical Education Teacher	1994
	Joe Public Football Club Trinidad and Tobago.	Sports Psychologist	1999-2001
	Lead City Football Academy	Chief Coach	2014-2017
	Lead City University	Senior Coach/Assistant Registrar	2017-2022
	Lead city University	Senior Assistant Registrar/Principal Coach	

Signature.....

Date:.....

The University Compliance Certification

This is to certify that this Thesis written by Adeoye Obaseyi ONIGBINDE with matriculation number LCU/PG/20/001729 in the Department of Kinesiology, Sports Science and Education, Faculty of Education, Lead City University, Ibadan is in full compliance with the approved University format and style.

Signature

Date

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