

# [The benefits of mental toughness in sport](https://assignbuster.com/the-benefits-of-mental-toughness-in-sport/)

ABSTRACT

On the basis of advantages that a mental toughness can offer to a performer, the study was designed to develop the understanding of the components of mental toughness in sport. The purpose of this study was to identify the components of mental toughness as perceived by the researcher and was guided by the two questions, which are as follows:

1. What are the components of mental toughness and
2. To what degree those components of mental toughness are trainable or teachable to a particular player.

10 cricket players ageing from fourteen years of age to twenty years of age were selected for the research so that they have enough experience to answer the questions in the research.

The procedure of this was that the research is based on the questionnaire of mental toughness given by Sparkes in 1998. Each participant had to fill the questionnaire for the purpose of evaluating the importance and trainability of twenty different components of mental toughness.

INTRODUCTION

Cricket is one of the most popular games having a very high viewership and followers. Cricket is basically a mental game that requires a lot of psychological skills in addition to basic playing skills. These skills make player a champion and different from ordinary player. He (champion) is able to display his psychological as well as playing skills during the course of the game. Among the various psychological skills, mental toughness is an important psychological factor that effect’s player’s performance in matches. Sometimes, cricket teams despite their talents lose their matches. The researches on these poor performance lead to the finding that the players in these teams lack mental toughness and the ability to bounce back from the setback of losses. There is an evident to prove it when cricket’s great legend Sir Vivian Richards attributed the Indian cricket team’s loss in West Indies during the cricket world cup 2007 in the first round as the lack of mental toughness in Indian players.

Loehr (1986), he popularised the term mental toughness in sports performance and contested that at least half of superior performances can be due to mental toughness. Mental toughness is regarded as the most important factor in sports to achieve the goals and perform excellent.

Jones, Hanton and Connaughton (2002), they stated that mental toughness can be defined as having a natural or developed psychological edge that helps or enables a player to generally cope better than his opponents in many demands (competition, training) and specifically would be more consistent and better than the opponents in remaining focused and determined and goal oriented in his sport.

Attributes of mental toughness (Sparkes 1998), he talked about twelve different attributes that a player should have to be ideally mentally tough performer.

For further investigation of mental toughness, the following questions were developed to guide this research.

1. What are the essential components of mental toughness as perceived by the cricketers?
2. To what degree are these stated components of mental toughness are trainable or teachable?

On the basis of these two major criteria, the player was asked the following questions:

* I can bounce back from the from the set back as a result of increased determination to succeed.
* I have an unshakable self belief that i possess the unique qualities that make me better than my opponents.
* I have an insatiable desire and internalised motive to succeed.
* I remain fully focused on the task in hand in the face of competition- specific distractions.
* I am able to regain psychological control if facing uncontrollable situations.
* I can push back the boundaries of emotional and physical pain, while still maintaining techniques and effort in distress in training and competition.
* I accept that competition anxiety is inevitable and knowing that i can cope with it.
* I don’t get adversely affected by other’s good or the bad performances.
* I can thrive on the pressure of competition.
* I remain fully focused in the face of personal life distractions

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present study was undertaken to explore the physiological profile of the cricket players and to find to what degree their mental toughness, goal orientation actually helps them in their performances.

* The result showed that there is no significant correlation between mental toughness and different types of goal orientation i. e. task orientation and ego orientation. At the same time, the motivation dimension of mental toughness was found to be significantly related to both ego and goal orientation. (Duda and Hall, 2001)
* Moreover task orientation has been found to be positively associated with various indicators of motivation, including intrinsic motivation positive affect and the tendency to seek out the new and challenging experiences and to try hard in difficult situations. (Ntoumanis and Biddle, 1999)
* “ The general lack of clarity and precision surrounding the term mental toughness is unfortunate, since it ism arguably one of the most important physiological attributes in achieving performance excellence. (Jones, 2002)
* Another study conducted by researchers stated that mental toughness is an important physiological characteristic of the game. (Gould, 1987, 1993 and 2002); (Williams, 1998);( Jones, 2002)
* “ It appears therefore, that virtually any desirable positive psychological characteristic associated with sporting success has been labelled as mental toughness at one time or the other”. (Jones, 2002)

METHOD

This chapter will discuss the participants, procedure, analysis and instrument used in the study. This study involves both quantitative and qualitative measures of the components of the mental toughness of sportspersons.

PARTICIPANTS

This, study consisted of 10 male cricketers from the division 3 and 2 category of cricket teams in the city. A mix of different teams and players were chosen to increase the diversity of the group. Each participant was needed to have a minimum of three years of playing cricket so that they can answer the questions in their knowledgeable way.

INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument used in this study is the questionnaire comprised of twenty questions of mental toughness. These twenty questions comprised of twelve different components of mental toughness and eight components of preservance that were given by Sparkes in 1998.

Each component was assessed by participants based on their perception of:

* The importance of including each component in the construct of mental toughness.
* The degree to which each component is trainable.

The participants assessed both the importance and the degree to which the component is trainable, using a 5 point scale. Besides this two additional questions were also asked which are as follows:

* Are there other components of mental toughness that should be included which are not there in the questionnaire?
* Do you believe that there is any component that could be combined to form an individual, essential component of mental toughness?

PROCEDURE

When the questionnaire of mental toughness (Sparkes, 1998) was adopted by the researcher, he then approached 10 different cricketers and asked them to fill up the questionnaire. Researcher also made sure that the identity of the players will be kept confidential i. e. it would not be disclosed to anyone. Researcher sat down with the players and asked them the questions and marked the answers himself.

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