Various studies have reported on the psychological antecedents of skilled batting in cricket (Brenchaw & Fairweather, 2000; Stogrove, Potgieter & Foxcroft, 2003; Pyke & Davis, 2010). However, hardly any studies have attempted to discern the psychological differences within the batting line-up. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between psychological skills and batting order among cricket players competing in the one-day format (50 overs) of cricket. Evidence of a significant relationship between psychological skills and batting order in cricket could provide useful insights into the psychological demands placed on batsmen who are prompted to bat at different stages during an innings. Knowledge relating to this could facilitate player optimisation about developing individualised psychological skills training programmes with the intent and for the purpose of fulfilling batting-specific roles. What is more, coaches / captains could more effectively strategise their team’s batting line-up to contest demanding match situations imposed by limited-overs cricket.

Methodology

A non-probability quota sampling process was used to select participants in the Pretoria, Gauteng region of South Africa. The subjects consisted of 127 A-side male cricketers playing one-day cricket across three progressive levels of competition recognised by the Northern Cricket Union (NCU) of Cricket South Africa (CSA), ranging from amateur to professional level. 

Figure 1: Level of Participation

Figure 2: Distribution of Batting Order

The order of batsmen is only significantly differentiated by the psychological characteristics of motivation and coachability, in which high levels of motivation are associated with skilled batting. The essential conclusion to be drawn is that there is no particular psychological skills profile for classifying batsmen into batting order and that the skill of batting in one-day cricket tends to be largely dependent on a combination of other perceptual motor, physical, and technical qualities. Future research should explore the exposure to and extent of psychological skills training among South African cricket players, and should determine the psychological skills differences in the batting order of homogenous groups to generate a broader understanding of the relationship between psychological skills and batting order in one-day cricket.