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Developing a Proposed Integrated Whistleblower Framework for Addressing Bribery in the Officiating of Elite Football Matches in Zimbabwe.

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN SPORTS SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT.

JUNE 2026

Declaration

I, Tadiwanashe Musikavanhu, declare that this dissertation, titled “Developing a Proposed Integrated Whistleblower Framework for Addressing Bribery in the Officiating of Elite Football Matches in Zimbabwe,” is entirely my own original work. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for any degree or examination at this or any other university, and all sources used have been duly acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Abstract

This research was motivated by ongoing rumours of bribery, match fixing, unfair refereeing, and the lack of reporting and protection for whistleblowers in the governance of Zimbabwean football. The study focused on the possible impact whistleblower setups might have had to reduce bribery in the match officiating of elite football in Zimbabwe.

The sampling frame for this study was about 1,500 participants of the Zimbabwean elite football sector. Referees/match officials' players, coaches, football administrators, supporters/fans, and sports journalists were all included. The researchers used a mix of methods. 13 semi-structured interviews with key informants who made the respondents to the qualitative phase of the study were selected purposively from the target population. Meanwhile, randomly selected from the same population, 168 respondents who were respondents to the quantitative phase were given structured questionnaires. Thematic analysis of qualitative data was done using NVivo (Version 14), whereas descriptive and inferential statistics of quantitative data were carried out in IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). To see if there were any significant differences in the opinions of the stakeholders, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.926 was reached for the entire questionnaire, demonstrating outstanding internal consistency.

The results indicated that despite whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms were in place in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe, their efficacy was greatly compromised due to the low level of awareness among the stakeholders, limited accessibility, and poor enforcement. There were significant differences between stakeholder groups for the formal reporting procedures ($F = 248.998$, $p < .001$), accessibility of reporting systems ($F = 309.050$, $p < .001$), and institutional commitment to addressing corruption ($F = 697.753$, $p < .001$). Among the major barriers to whistleblowing were identified fear of retaliation victimisation loss of match appointments, career stagnation, social stigma, and political and administrative interference. Correlation analysis indicated that 32 of 54 respondents who disagreed that whistleblowers were adequately protected also agreed that political and administrative interference discouraged reporting. From

this, the study concluded that there is a strong correlation between poor whistleblower protection and under-reporting of bribery.

The study became an important addition to sports governance and anti-corruption literature by offering an Africa-specific 3D Integrated Whistleblower System model for sporting environments where resources are limited. It is a thorough set of measures for accountability, transparency, and integrity in the refereeing of elite football in Zimbabwe. ZIFA, the Sports and Recreation Commission, and other football governing bodies are advised, among other things, to fortify legal safeguards, set up independent integrity units, create anonymous digital reporting channels, and regularly provide anti-corruption training to stakeholders.
Keywords: whistleblower systems bribery football officiating corruption governance, accountability, Zimbabwe

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

Abbreviation Full Form

ANOVA…… Analysis of Variance

AU……..African Union

BUSE …… Bindura University of Science Education

CAF…….. Confederation of African Football

COSAFA…… Council of Southern Africa Football Associations

EFCC ……. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Nigeria)

EU……. European Union

FIFA…… Fédération Internationale de Football Association

FIU ……Financial Intelligence Unit

ICPC…..... Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (Nigeria)

n……. Sample size / frequency count

NVivo ……Qualitative data analysis software

p ……Probability value (significance level)

SRC ……..Sports and Recreation Commission

SPSS ……..Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UNCAC…… United Nations Convention against Corruption

ZACC…… Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission

ZIFA……. Zimbabwe Football Association

ZPSL…….. Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League

3D……. Three-Dimensional

F…… F-statistic (ANOVA test value)

%..... Percentage

& ……...And

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the integration of whistleblower frameworks, defined as confidential reporting systems enabling individuals to disclose wrongdoing, into elite football governance to address bribery in Zimbabwean match officiating. The chapter outlined the background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance, delimitations, and structure of the study. It defined corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for personal gain within football officiating and underscored the role of whistleblower systems in promoting accountability, transparency, and integrity in Zimbabwean football governance.

1.2 Background to the Study

Bribery, corruption and match manipulation are recognised integrity risks in football, but the present study distinguishes verified incidents from stakeholder allegations and disputed officiating decisions in the Zimbabwean context (Transparency International, 2020; Adeyemi, 2021). While the commercial side of the game has led to more sponsorships, the sale of media rights, and the betting industry growing, this has at the same time created new channels for corrupt activities like fixing matches, bribing, and exerting unfair influence over the results (FIFA, 2022; Kapardis & Levi, 2023). Match-fixing, bribery, and officiating scandals have become a common feature of the football scene in Zimbabwe. The football body in Zimbabwe ZIFA which manages football governance, referee appointments, disciplinary hearings, and integrity, has faced governance and integrity concerns that require documentary assessment (Chitimira, Moyo, & Dube, 2024). Cases like the Asiagate have exposed the flaws in the governance systems of Zimbabwean football and shown how susceptible the sport in Zimbabwe is to corruption and manipulation (Maennig & Porsche, 2014).

Several contextual factors contribute to the persistence of these challenges. In line with the report on several African countries, including Zimbabwe, Zimbabwean football has a perceived

weaknesses in institutional accountability, which is essentially achieved through weak institutional capacity, lack of enforcement of disciplinary measures as well as non-existence of accessible and clearly documented reporting mechanisms (Adeyemi, 2021; Mantzaris & Saruchera, 2024). People who are involved in the game such as referees, players, and administrators are often reluctant to report unethical behavior for fear of reprisals, lack of confidentiality, and mistrust of the current reporting structures (Nkosi, 2019; Chitimira et al. 2024). The literature and stakeholder accounts suggest that reliance on informal reporting routes and perceived weaknesses in independent investigation may discourage formal reporting and compromise accountability (Maennig & Porsche, 2014; Chitimira et al. 2024).

Although ZIFA and the Sports and Recreation Commission (SRC) have put in place ethics codes and anti-corruption programs, the extent and effectiveness of whistleblower protection require documentary audit against applicable law and football governance instruments (Chitimira et al. 2024; Mantzaris & Saruchera, 2024). The inadequacies of the current arrangements are highlighted by stakeholder complaints and concerns about disputed officiating decisions, secretive disciplinary procedures, as well as ineffective anti-corruption activities (FIFA, 2022). Per internationally accepted standards football governance should have whistleblower schemes which offer protection in the form of confidentiality, immunity from retribution, and investigation by an independent authority, as these tools help to bring about transparency and integrity (FIFA, 2022; Ataide, Mbimbi, & Ncube, 2025). Still, to align the Zimbabwean settings with such systems it is critical to deal with governance problems, boost institutional capacity, and nurture a culture that promotes ethical behavior and safeguards whistleblowers (Mantzaris & Saruchera, 2024; Maolani, 2024).

Given these problems, the focus of this paper is to highlight the use of whistleblower systems as a potential intervention to address bribery risks in football refereeing at the highest level in Zimbabwe. The study will look at the obstacles to whistleblowing, the inadequacy of protective measures for whistleblowers, and the requirements of the various players in Zimbabwean football to come up with anti-corruption mechanisms that are locally feasible and at the same time internationally recognized.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Bribing elite football officials in Zimbabwe is a major concern in the governance of the game because it undermines the credibility, transparency and fairness of football matches. relevant FIFA integrity and governance materials worldwide indicate that match manipulation and corruption are among the most serious threats to football integrity. Like most countries in Africa, Zimbabwe has been no stranger to corruption scandals in football governance with the Asiagate match-fixing scandal recently coming to light being just one of the examples. In fact, there have been numerous instances where controversial match officiating in the Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League matches has led to complaints from various quarters. Over the last decade stakeholders supporters as well as the media in Zimbabwe have exposed issues of referee bias and lack of transparency in disciplinary proceedings quite regularly. Still, the number of cases of corruption that have been formally reported and investigated remains very low, accounting for a considerable gap in accountability

The reasons why corruption appears so rife in Zimbabwean football include; lack of full reporting mechanisms, inadequate whistleblowers' protection, football arrangements are flawed. Reporting mechanisms at present are inadequate and do not, among other things, provide for whistleblower protection, independent reporting systems, or adequate confidentiality protections at ZIFA (Zimbabwe Football Association). This situation may sometimes make referees players coaches and football administrators reluctant to report misconduct in case they fear victimization, a hindered career, loss of image or even losing the job opportunity. So the cases of bribery and unethical behavior may be very limited exactly because of non-reporting.

Studies in the areas of corporate governance, public administration, and international sport governance have provided that whistleblower systems influence accountability and corruption But there is very little empirical evidence on whistleblowers in football officiating in Zimbabwe. Present studies focus mainly on general anti-corruption measures and on sport governance issues; few have examined the design, implementation and institutionalization of whistleblower systems when talking about ZIFA and elite football officiating. So, there is great uncertainty on the suitability, effectiveness and implementation requirements of whistleblower systems in fighting bribery in Zimbabwean football officiating.

The study therefore addresses a contextual evidence gap by examining existing reporting arrangements, barriers to whistleblowing, perceived protection, and the requirements for a feasible integrated framework in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is intended to provide evidence that can inform discussions among football governance bodies, referee structures, clubs and other relevant stakeholders about the design, accessibility and safeguards of whistleblower systems. The immediate contribution is therefore informational and developmental rather than evidence that corruption has been reduced.

The study also contributes conceptually by linking whistleblowing, institutional governance and stakeholder perspectives within the context of elite football in Zimbabwe. Its theoretical contribution should be interpreted as a contextual application of established perspectives rather than as proof that the proposed framework changes behaviour.

The findings may be useful for developing more transparent reporting procedures, clearer accountability arrangements and safer channels for raising integrity concerns. Any future gains in trust, participation or sponsorship would require implementation and longitudinal evaluation and are not outcomes demonstrated by this study.

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 Primary Research Question

1. How can an integrated whistleblower framework be designed to address bribery risks in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe?

1.5.2 Subsidiary Research Questions

- 2. What whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms currently exist in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe?
- 3. What factors discourage match officials and stakeholders from reporting bribery in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe?
- 4. How adequate and implemented are existing whistleblower protection measures in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe?

- 5. What measures can strengthen whistleblower frameworks to address bribery risks in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe?

1.6 Research Objectives

1.6.1 Primary Objective

1. To examine how an integrated whistleblower framework could be designed to address bribery risks in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe.

1.6.2 Subsidiary Objectives

- 2. To identify the existing whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe.
- 3. To examine the factors that discourage match officials and stakeholders from reporting bribery in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe.
- 4. To assess stakeholders' perceptions of the adequacy and implementation of existing whistleblower protection measures in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe.
- 5. To develop a proposed integrated whistleblower framework based on the study findings and relevant literature.

  Remove bullets and replace them with numbers on both research questions and objectives

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study focused on elite football officiating and related governance stakeholders in Zimbabwe, with particular attention to the Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League and national cup competitions. The final geographic coverage, recruitment sites, seasons and participant distribution are reported only where supported by the verified recruitment records; claims of coverage across all ten provinces should not be made unless the records demonstrate such coverage.

The key actors are referees, assistant referees, football administrators and governance stakeholders who are in football and within the integrity systems of football. There may also be some selected players and other relevant football stakeholders included. This study examines whistleblower activities and corruption issues between the years 2015 and 2025, in order to gain insight into the patterns of bribery, the reaction of governance and the functioning of reporting

systems. The study focuses on whistleblower mechanisms and the bribing of football referees in a general way; corruption in the governance of the sport at the very highest level has not been addressed.

1.8 Study Outline

The paper consists of five parts. The first chapter is a brief introduction to the research presenting the background, problem statement, research questions aims significance, limitations, and main context of the study. Chapter two reviews the literature on corruption in sports governance, whistleblower systems, accountability theories, and governance issues in African football. Chapter Three outlines the research methods including research design, population and sampling methods, data collection techniques, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four displays the findings and their interpretation data questions, and objectives. The fifth chapter summarizes the main findings, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations for improving whistleblower systems and enhancing accountability in football governance in Zimbabwe.

1.9 Chapter Summary

The piece began with the chapter breaking down the challenge of bribing the elite football match officials in Zimbabwe while at the same time highlighting the function of the whistleblower systems in the promotion of the accountability and transparency. It was made up of the background of the study by the author who raised the issues of football corruption at the world and local levels. Besides, the chapter gave the problem connotation, research questions purposes the significance of the study, constraints, and the paper's setup. It was acknowledged that the main causes of bribery and the non-reporting of football referees in Zimbabwe are poor reporting channels, the absence of whistleblower protections, and the weak football governance structures. Because of this, the present research intends to examine whether football whistleblowing mechanisms can form part of football governance to bring about integrity, fairness, and accountability in the top football competitions of Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.2.1 Whistleblowing and Corruption Reporting

Whistleblowing refers to the disclosure of perceived wrongdoing by a person who has access to relevant information, commonly through an internal authority, an external oversight body, or, in some circumstances, a public channel (Anvari et al., 2019). For this study, whistleblowing is distinguished from an ordinary complaint, routine intelligence, and witness evidence. A complaint may raise dissatisfaction or an allegation; intelligence may provide information for assessment; and witness evidence may later be used in an investigation or legal process. Whistleblowing is concerned specifically with protected disclosure of wrongdoing and therefore requires clear reporting channels, confidentiality or anonymity arrangements, retaliation safeguards, fair investigation and due-process protections.

Although Anvari et al. (2019) provide a useful integrated model, the review is not specific to elite football in Zimbabwe. The study therefore narrows the literature gap to the limited

contextual evidence on how reporting channels, retaliation risks, institutional capacity and stakeholder relationships interact in elite football officiating. The final dissertation should report the actual databases, search strings, date range, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and screening process used by the researcher; these details are not available in the present marked document and have not been invented here.

2.2.2 Bribery and Match-Fixing

Bribery involves offering, giving, requesting or accepting a benefit to improperly influence a decision or action. In football, bribery may involve attempts to influence officiating decisions, appointments or other integrity-relevant processes. Match-fixing is related but conceptually distinct: it generally involves coordinated manipulation of a sporting event or an element of its outcome, often for betting or other illicit gain. The distinction is important because a disputed decision or poor performance does not, by itself, establish bribery or match-fixing (Kapardis & Levi, 2023).

According to Kapardis and Levi (2023), there are generally two ways this could be done with referees and other match officials: via “bribery in football officiating” (financial and non-financial). The study is comprehensive in the documentation of the mechanisms of corruption in football, but is primarily based on Europe, where football governance is more effective than in most African countries. While the definition of match-fixing as organised corruption by Nastas et al. (2025) mainly examines the betting component, the authors' discussion of weak governance and the facilitation of bribery within the football match-officiant system is only mentioned briefly. As a result, there is little literature that explains how institutional weaknesses lead to corruption in the administration of football in Africa.
The panel will discuss problems of capacity building of institutions and enhancing governance mechanisms.

Institutional capacity is the structural, functional and human resource capacities that allow organisations to effectively implement policies, enforce regulations and achieve their goals and

targets (Maolani, 2024). In regards to anti-corruption, institutional capacity should be clearly defined procedures and punishments, investigation units with technical knowledge and sufficient budgets, independent supervision units which are not influenced by politics and political commitment to enforcement of rules (Sukare & Abdullahi, 2026). Governance is defined as systems, procedures and mechanisms of accountability that organisations and States use to exercise authority, to make decisions and allocate resources. Transparency, accountability, participation and rule of law (Ngcetane-Vika & Pule, 2025) are among the elements of good governance. Governance in football is the institutional structure that national associations, confederations (CAF) and regional associations (COSAFA) use to make rules, investigate rule violations, and apply sanctions.

Maolani (2024) argues that without the institutions that can help them, there are no effective measures that can be implemented to combat corruption. The study places importance on legal and administrative considerations but it does not take them into account in its analysis of the effects of institutional capacities on whistleblower protection systems comprehensively. Likewise, Ngcetane-Vika and Pule (2025) describe transparency and accountability as good governance, but these are very normative and don't delve into the extent of the implementation of these governance mechanisms in financial and administrative limited football institutions. In essence, it is important to clearly determine the link between governance and protection of whistleblowing and undertake an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of this relation in the football governance.

2.2.4 Whistleblower Protection

Samadzada-Aliyeva (2026) describes whistleblower protection as consisting of three components: legal protection, institutional protection, and material protection that are aimed at preventing retaliation, discrimination, and economic loss against whistleblowers. To ensure the confidentiality of the identity of the reporter, the reporters themselves are not subject to prosecution, confidentiality of disclosure, recovery of damages in case of harm due to disclosure, as well as protections against retaliation in the workplace, multiple interrelated elements must be in place (Shulhan & Buchynska, 2026). The implementation of legal norms for whistleblowers in institutional practices and their enforcement is a key factor in ensuring the protection of

whistleblowers (Mantzaris & Saruchera, 2024). Many jurisdictions have adopted formal laws that protect whistleblowers which, however, lack adequate institutional capacity, funding, and political commitment to effectively protect whistleblowers from strong interests (Mantzaris & Saruchera, 2024).

Work to date aimed to provide whistleblower protection systems has been around the idea of the basis of focusing. The general and confidentiality protection and protection against retaliation are offered by whistleblower protection laws. However, the majority of literature that has been written focuses on the legal and procedural aspects of implementation and few on practical issues encountered during implementation. In many cases, formal whistleblower reporting systems have failed to meet their objectives, stemming from weak oniofformal procedures, lack of organisational ability, low awareness of stakeholders on whistleblowing and weak organisational commitment.

Football referees represent football associations and match principals, and are empowered to make decisions that can make a significant difference in football competitions. Rational choice calculus may result in greater likelihood for corrupt behavior if referees have insufficient supervision or too few penalties for misconduct, or if referees believe that there are easy opportunities for them to accept bribes. According to the theory there are three mechanisms which reduce principal-agent corruption, namely ‘monitoring' (the ability of the principal to observe the actions or behaviours of the agent), ‘incentive alignment' (ensuring that the agent's interests are aligned with the principal's interests), and ‘institutional accountability' (making it clear what the penalties are for the agent to act in a manner that conflicts with the principal's best interests) (Mkhize & Nel-Sanders, 2025). Good anti-corruption practices in football officiating include effective monitoring systems, including video review and audits of officials' performance, better financial incentives and awards for integrity, and clear guidelines and trustworthy sanctions for corruption.

2.3.2 Institutional Theory and effectiveness of Governance

According to Manyika and Marima (2025), Institutional Theory focuses on the influence of formal rules, informal norms and enforcement mechanisms on the behaviour of organizations. Its theory suggests that the rules, norms and procedures set in institutions in organisations are fundamental elements of their incentive systems and limit individual actions. Effective institutions create specific rules banning corruption, norms reinforcing ethical behavior, and sanctions to punish violations in the context of combating corruption. The Institutional Theory is used to provide an understanding of why formal legal structures are often inadequate for reducing corruption. Formal rules are ineffective when they exist alongside other informal norms which are mutually competing, such as those of patronage, loyalty to connected individuals or tolerance for corruption (Lauwo, 2025). Informal governance systems, largely based on kinship and/or personal relationships and networks, may in many African contexts be more effective than formal institutional systems, especially if the anti-corruption laws are poorly enforced (Yusuf & Hassan, 2026).

2.3.3 Stakeholder Theory and Multi-Level Governance

Manyika and Marima (2025) state that, according to Stakeholder Theory, business entities are not only required to attend to the needs of one principal or shareholder, but also satisfy the needs of various other stakeholders, such as employees, owners, customers, regulators and communities. Stakeholders in football governance are players, clubs, fans, broadcasting organisations, betting interests, national association, region organisation (CAF, COSAFA) and the public at large. To build effective governance against corruption, these stakeholders must be brought together through participatory mechanisms, allowing the diversity of interests to have an impact on governance.

This theoretical approach provides a basis for the integration of multi level governance, in which national whistleblower systems are linked to regional systems (CAF, COSAFA) and international systems (FIFA), thus providing accountability chains at several institutional levels (Reyes-Gonzalez et al., 2024). Research on multi-stakeholder anti-corruption partnerships has found that the more partners feel that they have influence over one another, the more information is shared, and the more partners participate in institutional committees, the more easy it is to

share information, and the more the institutional committees deliberate on how to share information and how to write recommendations, the more information is shared (Reyes-Gonzalez et al., 2024).

This is the second part of the second lesson and aims to examine the social identity theory and whistleblowing behaviour.

According to Social Identity Theory, people's behaviour is shaped by the group identity they belong to (Anvari et al., 2019). Research on whistleblowing that combines this theory shows that attitudes towards whistleblowing are influenced by the degree of identity alignment between individuals and organisational and/or professional communities, and therefore whether identification with these communities reinforces or challenges individuals' whistleblowing. If the referees have a strong sense of being “in” football communities and their perceptions of whistleblowing as a betrayal of community loyalty are greater than their moral concerns, they will not report. According to the theory, the establishment of a culture for whistleblowers involves changing the organisational identity to prioritise integrity-based values, and redefining whistleblowing as "professional responsibility" rather than "betrayal" (Anvari et al., 2019). It means that the legal safeguards are not enough, unless they are supplemented by some cultural change that puts integrity and the legitimacy of whistleblowers before the company.

In this lesson, we will investigate the Expectancy Theory and Reporting Motivation.

According to Manyika and Marima (2025), Expectancy Theory is a theory that states that people will act when they think that their actions will lead to a positive outcome (Motivation × expectancy × valence). The theory has been applied to whistle-blowing, and it suggests that people will blow a whistle when they believe that: bad things will turn out positive (they will be vindicated for the wrong they did); they will not be punished for their whistle-blowing; and they will be punished for the perpetrators' actions. On the other hand, people don't report when they think they will get in trouble, the identity cannot be kept confidential, or when they feel the organisation will not respond. The study on Thai government agencies' whistleblowing reward systems revealed that a positive relationship exists between reward expectancy and external whistleblowing intention with moderating factors of public service motivation, the severity of the misconduct and whistleblowing protection mechanisms (Potipiroon, 2024). This indicates that

the use of suitable protection mechanisms, combined with material incentives (rewards for reporting) and organisational credibility can improve reporting behaviour.

2.3.6 Integrated Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows the interplay between the institutional governance systems, whistleblower protection mechanisms, whistleblowing and the decrease in bribery of elite football officials. The framework recognizes that strong governance and whistleblower protection foster the reporting of corruption and enhance detection and accountability. Better reporting will lead to a decrease in bribery and match manipulation and thus better integrity, transparency and public confidence in the conduct of football officials. The relationship is affected by factors based on the theoretical approaches that underpin the study such as stakeholder involvement, organisational culture, institutional capacity, incentive structures and accountability mechanisms.

2.4 THEMATIC REVIEW

The current whistleblower protections and international standards are outlined below.
The international instruments in the field of combating corruption, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the European Union Whistleblower Protection Directive (EU Directive 2019/1937), provide principles for whistleblower protection (Samadzada-Aliyeva, 2026). These tools highlight the importance of robust legal protections, independent reporting mechanisms and awareness-raising efforts as integral parts of good anti-corruption practices. The implementation of these commitments in African jurisdictions is however not uniform and many countries are facing difficulties to give shape to international agreements in the domestic agenda and practice (Sahri, 2025). The European Union's Whistleblower Protection Directive from 2019 introduced a three-tiered reporting system – internal, external and public disclosure – with varying procedures and levels of protection for each (Criminal Law Response to Corruption Crimes, 2024). This "multi-layered" system provides a compromise between the interests of organisations (to be able to correct wrongdoings within the organisation) and the rights to whistleblowing (to allow for external reporting in case of failure or harm of the internal reporting systems). A comparative study of jurisdictions with whistleblower systems shows that countries with clear procedures for whistleblower reporting

have much higher rates of whistleblower reports and more effective detection of corruption than jurisdictions without whistleblowers systems (Criminal Law Response to Corruption Crimes, 2024).

The UNCAC and the European Union Whistleblower Protection Directive offer significant guidance on whistleblower protection. However, literature tends to be more focused on public sector institutions and developed countries. Understanding of how to adapt and apply these standards in football governance, especially in developing countries like Zimbabwe, is limited. The majority of studies are based on legal examination, comparative policy analysis, and document analysis, while only a few studies gather empirical data from football stakeholders who are engaged in the reporting of corruption.

2.4.2 Institutional Capacity Gaps in African Anti-Corruption Systems covers the institutional shortcomings of African anti-corruption systems.

Although there are many anti-corruption institutions in Africa, implementation gaps are still apparent. There is limited progress on indicators of anti-corruption efforts in accordance with Agenda 2063 reviews. Progress has been made in only a few countries: notably Benin and Tanzania, while other countries – Botswana, South Africa and Ethiopia – have failed to make significant progress, primarily because of political interference, impunity of elites and weak enforcement (Gebrihet, 2025). This trend mirrors broader institutional issues, which are also impacting whistleblower protection systems throughout the continent.

The Nigerian government has mounted sustained fight against corruption through agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), but the fight has been beset with challenges (Sukare & Abdullahi, 2026). While these agencies have seen some successes in asset recovery and prosecutions, corruption is deeply rooted because of patronage systems, lack of institutional independence, and poor enforcement. The major limitations are not the lack of institutions, but the lack of capacity to convert investigations and findings to tangible and enforceable outcomes (Botchwey & Cunningham, 2025).

It is obvious from the literature that institutional weaknesses are one of the major challenges the fight against corruption is facing in Africa. Little is known, however, about the impact of these institutional gaps on whistle-blowing and reporting within the governance industry of football. The literature predominantly uses a descriptive or case-study approach in public-sector institutions, and a few studies examine corruption reporting systems in sports administration from an empirical perspective.

2.4.3 Weak Political Will and Selective Law Application

Zimbabwe has instituted a variety of bodies to fight corruption such as the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and anti-money laundering enforcement agencies (Chitimira et al., 2024). However, these institutions are frequently part of a context of limited independence, insufficient funding and weak coordination of stakeholders. Above all, laws are enacted and enforced in an arbitrary manner, favoring political allies over others, compromising institutional legitimacy (Chitimira et al., 2024).
A qualitative study on whistleblower protection in Zimbabwe's public service revealed that, although it had legal protection, whistleblowers were not effectively protected because the national institutions lacked political will to protect them (Mantzaris & Saruchera, 2024). The study revealed through grounded theory and 8 interviews the following significant gaps: (1) weak organisational capacity, (2) inadequate operationalisation of whistleblower protection, (3) absence of creative intervention strategies, (4) lack of financial incentives and (5) limited compensation opportunities (Mantzaris & Saruchera, 2024).

The results indicate that there is a need for institutional arrangements in addition to laws and policies, and for a strong political will. Although there has been some existing work on the anti-corruption institutions and governance issues in Zimbabwe, the influence of these institutions and governance issues on whistleblowing in elite football officiating has been largely neglected. Current literature centres primarily on corruption and public-sector governance and there is a lack of empirical studies on corruption reporting in sports. While there is evidence of football

corruption including bribery, match-fixing and governance failures, the subject is under-researched in the field of football officiating.

The second dimension of the corruption in sports officiating is explored through its forms and enablers:

The study of sports corruption has identified various types, with some of the most common and harmful being match-fixing and bribing sports officials (Nastas et al., 2025). Match fixing is when the athlete, official or other individuals agree to rig a game's results, typically for personal profit through wagering. (Nastas et al., 2025) The annual impact of corruption on the global sports sector is estimated to range from $1.7 to $2.6 trillion, while corruption by sports officials is thought to be a major component of the cost of sports corruption (McLaren et al., 2024).

Corruption has observable effects, as captured in the empirical evidence. Betting data from the German Bundesliga, for instance, revealed higher volumes of wagers than others for specific referees, statistically demonstrating match manipulation (Deutscher et al., 2025). Match-fixing is a widespread phenomenon in Ukraine, affecting all sport disciplines with 75% of the illegal influence on the result cases being bribery (Leheza, 2022). In Cyprus, financial gain was reported as the primary motive for match-fixing and internal pressure from fellow players and club officials as the second most important (Kapardis & Levi, 2023).

Football is especially susceptible to corruption and the reasons are intertwined. Referees are often tasked with making crucial decisions under time constraints, with little room for deliberation, and with ethical considerations in mind (Petracovschi et al., 2025). Financial pressures from betting networks, the lack of transparency and oversight, and pressure from criminal networks and club officials are all conducive to corruption (Petracovschi et al., 2025).

Refereeing communities are tight-knit and this not only creates accountability, but also vulnerability. The social networks created through regular interactions can both bolster the reputation and pressure the lines where corruption can take root or where those reporting it are at risk of being ostracized by those they associate with the corrupt (Petracovschi et al., 2025). Many referees admitted to accepting bribes in Cyprus—two-thirds of the referees surveyed made a financial gain one of the factors that influenced their decisions—and internal pressure was also an issue (Kapardis & Levi, 2023).

Although the literature shows the shapes, catalysts, and impacts of corrupt actions of sports officials, there is limited understanding about the effectiveness of whistleblowing systems in detecting bribery among football officials. The majority of studies are quantitative and tend to look at trends and statistics, and there is not much qualitative research conducted on reporting experiences and anti-corruption interventions.

The complexity of stakeholders in the football institution is explored in the following section.The following section examines the complexity of institutional stakeholders in football.

The football context is complex and dynamic and has become a huge industry with multistakeholder interests (Yiapanas et al., 2023). The results of the stakeholder analysis indicate that governance issues span various institutional layers and are experienced both positively and negatively by the stakeholders depending on financial, sporting, cultural and social contexts (Yiapanas et al., 2023). Such dynamics leave room for vulnerabilities in governance, ranging from competing interests, lack of coordination, to lack of transparency, which can all lead to corruption. Despite scarce literature on sports governance in Africa, studies in the broader context point to the existence of a number of shortcomings. Jurisdictions that place greater emphasis on transparency, accountability, and participation perform better on anti-corruption outcomes than jurisdictions that do not have as strong of governance (Maolani, 2024).

Although football governance and stakeholder relationships are acknowledged to be complex, there is limited understanding of the impact of these relationships on the protection of whistleblowers and corruption reporting. Conceptually, most studies are based on structure and organization, not on perceptions and experiences of stakeholders. Moreover, the research is focused on systems in developed football with a lack of focus on the challenges of governance structures in Zimbabwean football.

2.4.6 Barriers to Whistleblowing: Institutional, Cultural, and Personal Factors

Research into auditors' willingness to report unethical conduct has produced paradoxical findings: However, sometimes the fear of potential career harm (Jácome et al., 2025) may prevent reports from being submitted. A study of 561 auditors showed that a focus on legal protections increased their perceptions of risk and decreased their intentions to report. Poor reporting mechanisms, lack of independence in investigating authorities, unclear reporting

procedures, and no follow up also deters whistleblowing (Chakraborty, 2025). In many African contexts these weaknesses are extreme and if there is no credible evidence that reporting will result in action, individuals rationally don't report.

Cultural Disincentives and Social Ostracism.

Whistle-blowing is influenced by culture, particularly in relation to informal governance systems. Patronage networks and clan systems can offer informal accountability and can act as anchors of impunity in Africa, particularly to those who hold political and/or social connections (Yusuf & Hassan, 2026).

Another major factor that hinders whistleblowing is social ostracism, where whistleblowers are seen as traitors and face isolation (Lee, 2024). This is particularly so in football where referees have concerns about their reputation and future relationships. Retaliation is prevalent, even when there are legal protections (Wright, 2025). Football communities are often insular, which increases the risk because people can expect to interact with the people they may report on going forward.

Economic Vulnerability and Precarity

Economic insecurity causes people to be even less likely to report wrongdoing. In less developed countries, where formal employment is limited, sports officials are concerned about their economic status and that they would be targeted or lose their job for reporting (Koni et al., 2025). Weak anti-corruption enforcement, and selective law application, also deters whistleblowing in Zimbabwe (Chitimira et al., 2024).

Although the literature has identified several factors which may hinder whistleblowing, little is known about the exact challenges confronting football referees and match officials in Zimbabwe. The majority of the studies are conducted in the corporate sector, providing limited information on experiences of sports officials. The theory and practice of football refereeing is the least researched field compared to other areas such as the corporate and public sectors.

In Zimbabwe, the legal position must be distinguished between enacted law and proposed legislation. The Cyber and Data Protection Act, 2021 (Chapter 12:07) establishes a statutory data-protection framework, while the Whistle-Blowers and Witness Protection Bill, H.B. 4, 2026 is a Bill and should not be described as enacted law. The Bill proposes protections relating to public-interest disclosures and retaliation, but its legal force depends on enactment and commencement. The study should therefore identify which protections were legally available during the data-collection period and separately discuss proposed reforms (Cyber and Data Protection Act, 2021; Whistle-Blowers and Witness Protection Bill, 2026).

2.4.7 Gaps in Legal and Institutional Whistleblower Protections

Legal protection against retrospective, confidentiality protection, material support for those losing or suffering losses, independent investigative bodies and compensation mechanisms are all required for effective whistleblower protection (Shulhan & Buchynska, 2026). The legislative developments are encouraging, but there is still a lot to be done in terms of implementation. For example, Ukraine has a well-developed legal framework on paper, but challenges include low level of anti-repression mechanisms, low compensation, poor digitalisation and coordination (Shulhan & Buchynska, 2026). The problems may be greater in Zimbabwe and other African nations where the formal legislation falls short of implementation.

Identification and Anonymity mechanisms

One of the most important technical methods for protecting whistleblowers is pseudonymization, which is unfortunately often insufficient (Kutyłowski & Wechta, 2025). The vast majority of countries do not allow anonymous reporting, which is an important safeguard for people at risk of threats, harassment, or violence. Football would be especially valuable with anonymous channels because the communities involved in football are very close-knit and the referee's role is very close to the action.

The next phase entails the study of compensation mechanisms, and material support.

Whistleblowers are frequently hurt when not compensated. Mechanisms for whistleblowers to recover from retaliatory actions should be put in place by professional societies and sports organizations (Lee, 2024). In most African jurisdictions, no such measures are in place and reports are not encouraged in spite of the legal protection. Zimbabwe has very limited compensation and victim supports. Whistleblower laws have developed in other parts of the

world but there is limited information on the impact of whistleblower laws in football governance in Africa.

2.4.8 Effective action to strengthen the whistleblower provisions

Integrated frameworks are essential for effective frameworks. Regarding exchange of information, a comparative study of anti-corruption partnerships revealed that those partnerships that share information in a mutually useful way are those that have influential partners, joint committees, and partners who share information and recommendations (Reyes-Gonzalez et al., 2024). It is to make clubs coordinate, match administration, disciplinary committees, integrity units, national football associations and sports authorities for Zimbabwean football. Effectiveness would be improved by having established protocols for information sharing, confidentiality and accountability.

Digital Governance and Technological Innovation

Digital Tools to enhance whistleblower protection and corruption detection. The use of e-governance systems that allow anonymous reporting, encrypted communication, and evidence storage on a blockchain can help ensure anonymity and evidence integrity (Mbimbi et al., 2025). While investments are required for these systems, they have several benefits over traditional systems like rapid case management, audit trails, evidence tampering prevention, and data analytics to identify the evidence of patterns of corruption (Ataide et al., 2025).

Three-Level Reporting Channels with Differentiated Protections

The EU Directive 2019/1937 established a three-level reporting framework: internal channels, external authority channels, and public disclosure, each with specific procedures and protections (Criminal Law Response to Corruption Crimes, 2024). Adapting this to Zimbabwean football would mean creating:

- Internal reporting withing clubs/ administration
- External channels through independent bodies
- Provision for public disclosure when other mechanisms are inadequate

This approach balances organizational interests and whistleblower protection (Criminal Law Response to Corruption Crimes, 2024).

Institutional Capacity Building and Resource Enhancement

Effective implementation requires stronger institutional capacity. Nigeria's experience shows that corruption persists without independent agencies, strong enforcement, and adequate funding (Sukare & Abdullahi, 2026). For football, this means dedicated integrity bodies, sufficient resources, trained personnel, and independence from political interference. Capacity building should include investigator training, standard protocols, secure evidence management, and accountability mechanisms.

Cultural Transformation and Ethics Education

Long-term change requires embedding integrity in institutional culture, not just relying on punishment (Maolani, 2024). Ethics education should start early in officials' careers, with codes of conduct, recognition for ethical officiating, and rewards for integrity (Zhang & Yoon, 2023). Addressing moral disengagement through education can prevent rationalization of wrongdoing (Nakonechna, 2025).

While the literature suggests practical measures like digital reporting, institutional coordination, and ethics education, there is little empirical evidence about their effectiveness in football governance in developing countries. Most recommendations are based on policy analyses, not direct input from football stakeholders.

2.4.9 Regional Governance Integration: CAF, COSAFA, and International Coordination

The African Union has promoted anti-corruption initiatives through various frameworks, but implementation remains weak (Ayodeji et al., 2023). The AU's anti-corruption efforts are hampered by inconsistent democratic practices, legitimization of autocratic regimes, and member states' failure to uphold obligations (Ayodeji et al., 2023). Establishing whistleblower frameworks through CAF and COSAFA requires addressing these broader challenges. Effective

regional governance depends on a credible commitment to investigate and sanction corruption, regardless of political status, while avoiding political persecution.

Regional Whistleblower Framework and Jurisdictional Integration

National whistleblower frameworks must integrate with regional structures to prevent jurisdictional evasion and protect against cross-border corruption. Corruption networks exploit legal differences to evade accountability (Yusuf & Hassan, 2026). Regional frameworks

CHAPTER 3

Materials and Methods

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the methodological procedures used to examine stakeholder perceptions of whistleblowing, bribery risks and protection arrangements in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe. The study used a mixed-method approach to combine qualitative accounts with quantitative survey evidence. Because the dissertation describes the qualitative phase as informing the questionnaire, the design is reported here as exploratory sequential; this sequence must be retained only if the original instrument-development records confirm that the qualitative findings informed the questionnaire.

An exploratory sequential mixed-methods design was used. The qualitative phase preceded the quantitative phase, with qualitative findings intended to inform the development or refinement of the structured questionnaire. Before final submission, the actual dates of both phases, the

recruitment and response records, and the documentary trail showing how qualitative findings informed questionnaire items must be provided from the original research records. No focus-group findings are reported unless complete participant, consent, procedural and analytic records are available.

The research adopted pragmatism as its philosophical foundation, bringing together interpretive and post-positivist perspectives to address the research problem using both qualitative and quantitative evidence. The study treated corruption and bribery as the subject of inquiry while recognising that much of the available evidence concerns stakeholder perceptions and reported experiences rather than independently verified incidents. The qualitative and quantitative strands were intended to be integrated at the interpretation stage. Because the study was cross-sectional, it was designed to examine perceptions and reported experiences at a particular point in time and not to establish causal effects or changes in bribery incidence.

This cross sectional research design enabled us to gather data in a transparent manner in the small duration of time available for our study and reduced the disturbance of the stakeholders in elite match officiating of football in Zimbabwe. A cross sectional study can be used to study issues, perceptions, and behaviors of the population at one time, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018). Thus, this design is suitable to assess an existing whistleblower system, whistleblowing and perception of bribery in elite football officials. The design also enabled the comparison of perceptions and experiences of various stakeholder groups with regard to whistleblower protection, reporting behaviour, institutional trust and anti-corruption effectiveness in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe. Cross sectional studies are low in cost and are easy to conduct to provide a snapshot of the situation at a single time point and are suggested by Kumar (2018). Although this type of design has some restrictions in establishing causal relationship, the research uses a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative data which can resolve this. Per Yin (2018) states that multiple sources of evidence enriches the interpretation and also widens understanding of complex social events. That means, the mixed-methods strategy employed in this research contributes to the credibility and richness of the results related to the investigation of the role of whistleblower systems in combating bribery in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe.

3.3 Time Horizons

The research in this study is a cross sectional research with data was collected at one time. Bryman (2016) states that studies that aim to explore relationships among variables within a well delineated population and do not control the study environment could be conducted using a cross-sectional design. The design is appropriate because the study's goal is to include a whistleblower mechanism to help prevent the bribing of top football matches in Zimbabwe.

The cross sectional research design was used to collect the data in the specified time frame of the study, and minimising disruption of football stakeholders in elite match officiance in Zimbabwe. Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicates that cross section studies can be used to investigate issues, perceptions and practices about a population at a given time. The design is thus suitable for the present study which is to assess the existing whistleblower systems, reporting process and whistleblower perception of bribery in elite football officiating.

Moreover, the design permits studying the relationship between major variables like whistleblower protection, willingness to report, institutional trust, and the effectiveness in anti-corruption. Cross sectional studies are useful when the study aims to record the situation as it is at a given time, rather than changes over time, and are cost-effective compared to longitudinal studies (Kumar, 2019).

A mixed-methods approach was intended to provide complementary perspectives on the research problem. Combining qualitative accounts with questionnaire data can deepen interpretation of complex governance issues; however, triangulation does not remove the limitations of a cross-sectional design and does not by itself establish causality or prevalence.

3.4 Research Strategy

This study used an exploratory sequential research strategy which involved qualitative data collection at first and then quantitative analysis. Creswell and Creswell (2018) mention that exploratory sequential strategies are good when the literature on the occurrence under study is quite small. The strategy used in this current study was the first to explore the issues of bribery, whistleblowing and reporting systems in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe; a larger quantitative study was then carried out.

The qualitative phase was designed to explore the experiences of match officials and other key players in the sport in terms of bribery, whistleblower protection, challenges in reporting, and

institutional actions to combat corruption in elite football officiating. From this phase, the findings were used as a basis to develop the questionnaires for the quantitative phase. Saunders et al. (2019) argue that instruments can be created in the context in which they are used, drawing upon the participants' experience instead of relying on scales developed from outside the context. The use of this method was also beneficial in validating the quantitative instrument which was based on participants' responses and thematic findings.

This meant that the study could also consider the realities of Zimbabwe, such as weak reporting systems, fear of victimisation, lack of trust in institutions and governance challenges, that are the drivers of the effectiveness of whistleblower systems to respond to bribery in elite football officiating.

3.5 Population and Sampling

3.5.1 Population Definition

The population in the study comprised of a sample of 1500 key stakeholders in the Zimbabwean elite football system. These stakeholders comprised referees/match officials, players, coaches, football administrators, supporters/fans, sport journalists and other stakeholders in the football governance and integrity system. The referees/match officials in the population target were included based on their involvement in the previous or current season as referees/match officials. Players and coaches were included as they are directly involved in the officiating action as well as experiencing and participating in unethical behavior during the competitions they officiate. The population consisted of Football administrators as well as those in charge of their administration, disciplinary systems and anti-corruption systems. It involved supporters/fans and sport journalists, so that they could gain insight into their reporting and views of bribery and whistleblower practices.

The distribution of the population is summarised in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Target Population Distribution

Stakeholder/Participant Group	Present/Target Population (Frame)	Basis of Inclusion
Referees/Match Officials	Approximately 400 referees and match officials involved in elite	Active involvement in officiating elite football matches during the

	football competitions in Zimbabwe	current or previous season
Players	Approximately 500 players from Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League clubs	Direct interaction with officiating processes and exposure to football governance practices
Coaches	Approximately 200 coaches from elite football clubs	Active involvement in elite football competitions and interaction with match officials
Football Administrators	Approximately 150 football administrators from football governing bodies and clubs	Responsibility for governance, disciplinary procedures, and anti-corruption initiatives
Supporters/Fans	Approximately 200 supporters and fans of elite football clubs	Exposure to football operations and perceptions regarding corruption and accountability
Sports Journalists	Approximately 40 sports journalists covering elite football	Direct experience in reporting and investigating football-related issues
Other Stakeholders	Approximately 10 stakeholders involved in football integrity systems	Involvement in football governance, ethics, or anti-corruption activities
Total	Approximately 1,500 participants	

3.5.2 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Qualitative Sample Size

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to identify participants with direct knowledge of football officiating, governance, integrity or reporting processes. The planned categories and proposed numbers are retained only as planned values; the achieved sample must be reported from the recruitment, consent, interview and coding records rather than inferred from inconsistent tables.

Quantitative Sample Size

For the quantitative component, stratified random sampling was intended to provide each eligible member within a defined stratum a known chance of selection, where a complete sampling frame existed. The final dissertation must state the actual frame available for each stratum, the randomisation procedure used, the target allocation, the returned questionnaires and the analysis sample after missing or excluded cases were handled.

The proposed sample sizes are summarised below.

Table 3.2 Qualitative Sample and Quantitative Sample

Stakeholder/Participant Group	Qualitative Sample (n)	Quantitative Sample (n)
Referees/Match Officials	4	60
Players	2	70
Coaches	2	40
Football Administrators	3	30
Supporters/Fans	0	5
Sports Journalists	2	3
Total	13	208

3.5.3 Sample Size Determination and Sampling Procedure

3.5.3.1 Qualitative Sampling (Purposive Sampling and Determination)

At the qualitative phase, the researchers used purposive sampling method. It involved selecting the participants intentionally based on their familiarity and direct experience with bribery, whistleblowing, and football officiating in Zimbabwe. After a thorough review of the first interview transcripts, major themes and categories were identified. From then on, the researcher focused

3.5.3.2 Quantitative Sampling (Random Sampling and Determination)

Figure 3.1 Quantitative Sampling and Sample-Size Determination

For the quantitative phase, sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, which provides scientifically validated sample sizes for a given population to ensure representativeness and statistical reliability. This approach is widely used in social science research because it eliminates subjective estimation of sample size and ensures adequate statistical power for analysis.

Based on the estimated population of stakeholders involved in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe (including referees, players, coaches, administrators, supporters, and sports journalists), the corresponding sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's formula:

Figure 3.5

The sampling procedure was intended to support balanced representation across the defined football-stakeholder strata. It did not justify generalisation to the wider Zimbabwean population or to non-football stakeholders. Inference must therefore be restricted to the verified eligible sample and the achieved coverage demonstrated by the recruitment records.

The mixed-method approach was intended to provide complementary qualitative and quantitative evidence. Claims about representativeness, reduced bias or statistical strength should be made only to the extent supported by the verified sampling frame, response rates and analysis assumptions.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires were the principal data-collection instruments. Interviews were used to explore perceptions and experiences relating to reporting mechanisms, barriers, protection and governance. The questionnaire translated the study constructs into standardised items. The final methods chapter should report the actual data-collection dates, sites or online modes, interview duration, language, recording and transcription arrangements, questionnaire distribution and return procedures, missing-data rules, and the sequence linking the two strands.

In the quantitative phase, a questionnaire was used to collect standardized data from referees, players, coaches, football administrators, supporters and other stakeholders of elite football. Most of the questions on the questionnaire were closed-ended questions based on the findings of the qualitative phase. Questionnaires are a good fit as they allow collecting data from a fairly large sample in a short time while at the same time enhancing the consistency of the responses (Bryman, 2016).

Questionnaires were administered by the researcher, with assistance from trained research assistants where applicable. The final submission should state the number of assistants, their training and supervision, the standardised administration procedure, and the steps taken to minimise coercion, disclosure of identities and privacy risks in this sensitive research setting.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation: Break down and present data to convey a message.

Qualitative data from interviews was analysed through thematic analysis with the aid of NVivo software. Thematic analyses as used by Braun & Clarke (2006) was a methodologically flexible approach for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns or themes in qualitative data, with the verbal recordings of the interviews being transcribed word-for-word and then coded and grouped as they created their themes of whistleblower protection, bribery practices, barriers to reporting, institutional trust, and anti-corruption measures in elite football officiating.

The steps of the analysis involved familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, revisiting themes, refining themes and drawing conclusions. Thematic analysis was a suitable approach as it facilitated the identification of the experiences and perceptions of participants' within meaningful sets of themes that aligned with the study's objectives. NVivo software helped to manage data code retrieve, and organise themes. The data obtained from the questionnaire, which is quantitative data, was analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 26). The demographic variables of the respondents' gender, age, educational level, employment status, and nationality were also summarized using descriptive statistics, while frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations played an important role in summarizing the respondents' perceptions on whistleblower structures and bribery in elite football officiating.

Where assumptions were satisfied and the grouping factor had the required structure, one-way ANOVA was used to test whether mean responses differed across the defined stakeholder groups or other prespecified factors. The final analysis must name the factor and its levels, state the dependent variable or scale, report group n, mean and standard deviation, test assumptions, effect size and appropriate post-hoc comparisons. Statistical significance indicates evidence of a mean difference; it does not demonstrate effectiveness, agreement or a reduction in bribery. Exact p values should be reported, using $p < .001$ where the software output rounds below .001.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Creswell & Creswell (2018) define validity as the ability of a research instrument to measure that which it is designed to measure. The face and content validity of the questionnaire was determined by careful reading by the supervisors and other experts in the areas of sports management, governance and corruption studies. It is very valuable to get the questionnaire examined by experts to make changes and improve the questions for clarity, relevance and consistency with the overall purpose of the study.

A pilot study was conducted before the main survey only if documented by the original records. The final submission must report pilot sample size, participant categories, date, procedure, findings, instrument changes, and whether pilot cases were excluded from the main analytic dataset.

Reliability means the extent to which research instruments yield the same results upon repeating the procedures. Internal consistency of the questionnaire items was determined using Cronbach's alpha. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), if the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.70 or more, it means that the research instrument used is reliable for social science research. Enhancement of the trustworthiness of the qualitative data collection was done through techniques like member checking, triangulation, and keeping comprehensive field notes. By citing their procedures, it is Lincoln and Guba (1985) who suggest how they can increase the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of qualitative findings and how they can increase the transferability of these findings.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures were designed to protect participants in a sensitive study involving alleged bribery and possible retaliation. The final submission must state the ethics committee name, approval or reference number, approval date, and the signed permissions obtained from organisational gatekeepers. Consent must be method-specific and must explain voluntary participation, foreseeable professional and social risks, recording and transcription, confidentiality limits, possible re-identification in a small professional network, secure storage, access controls, retention and destruction, complaints, and the deadline after which withdrawal or deletion may no longer be possible.

The participants were provided with detailed information about the purpose of the study, the data collection procedure and that they have the right to not participate in the study, or to withdraw from it at any time without facing consequences. Consent forms were handed out before taking part in the study. Resnik (2020) stated that informed consent as a tool for protecting the autonomy of participants and their ethical engagement in research.

Throughout the research, confidentiality and anonymity were upheld. The names, identities, and affiliations of participants will not be released in the final report, and all data gathered will be kept confidential. Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that confidentiality is a key safeguard to protect participants from any social, professional or institutional consequences, especially when the research involves sensitive issues, such as bribery and corruption.

This research refrained from inflicting any physical, emotional, or psychological distress on the participants. As far as possible the participants' own working times and places were taken into account in our interaction sessions. All data collected was well secured and only the researcher could have access to it.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter explained the methods employed to gather information on how whistleblower systems could be integrated to tackle bribery issues in the officiating of top-tier football games in Zimbabwe. The study used descriptive statistical analysis, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and thematic analysis using NVivo. This chapter also provided details about target

population, sampling methods, decision of sampling size, data collection procedures, data analysis, validity check, reliability check, and ethical principles that the study was based on. The process of decision making was facilitated with reference to scholarly works that were relevant both from a scientific and a contextual point of view. The next chapter showcases the results obtained from the field research. Study limitations suggest areas for further research and the results of this study should be interpreted in light of the study limitations.

In-depth implementation of comprehensive whistle-blowing policies by ZIFA and other related authorities, establishment of independent integrity units, strengthening legal protection, investing in the technology infrastructure for whistle-blowing, and continuing education and a shift in culture. Theoretically, the study builds upon the application of the Principal-Agent Theory, Institutional Theory, Social Identity Theory and Expectancy Theory in sports governance and anti-corruption studies. As regards further research longitudinal comparative, and technology-oriented studies are suggested for the enhancement of knowledge in this area. In general, the research provides a theoretical understanding and an empirical insight into whistleblower systems in football governance in Africa. The study's results and recommendations provide practical, direct assistance to football stakeholders, football authorities and policy makers in their quest to improve the environment of integrity, accountability and transparency in the management of top-tier football in Zimbabwe and other similar environments.

DATA QUALITY NOTE: The source records available for this revision contain conflicting qualitative and quantitative denominators, ANOVA degrees of freedom and duplicated statistical tables. The numerical tables and statistical values retained in this working draft must therefore be treated as provisional until the person-level participant flow, questionnaire IDs, raw SPSS output, qualitative records and exclusion decisions have been reconciled. No numerical result should be interpreted as evidence that bribery was reduced, that a whistleblower system was effective, or that the proposed framework has been validated.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the response rate and demographic data. It also outlines findings linked to the research objectives.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE

Table 4.1 (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Qualitative Response rate

This section reports the response rate for the qualitative strand. Because the marked dissertation contains conflicting qualitative totals, the figures in the retained table are provisional working values only. The final response rate must be recalculated directly from the recruitment, consent and interview records and must state the planned number, approached number, consented number, completed number and analysed number for each stakeholder group.

Stakeholder / participant group	Qualitative sample (n)	Interviewed	%
Players	3	3	100
Coaches	3	2	67
Football Administrators	2	1	50
Referees	4	3	75
Supporters/Fans	1	1	100

Total	13	10	76

The qualitative response figures shown below are provisional. The source material contains conflicting totals across the response, demographic and thematic sections. The final response-rate narrative should be regenerated from a participant-level audit and should explain every exclusion, duplicate, non-response and incomplete case.

Table 4.2 (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Quantitative Response Rate

This section reports the quantitative questionnaire response rate. The original manuscript contains inconsistent targets, returns and analysis Ns. The response rate must therefore be recalculated from the questionnaire distribution log and questionnaire IDs before submission. The revised narrative should report the number distributed, returned, eligible, excluded and analysed, with reasons for all exclusions.

Stakeholder / participant group	Quantitative sample (n)	Questionnaires	%
Players	80	71	89
Coaches	40	28	70
Football Administrators	15	9	60
Supporters/Fans	5	5	100
Others	8	6	75
Total	208	168	81

The quantitative counts currently displayed in the retained working table are not final. They must be reconciled against the original questionnaire distribution record and the analysis dataset before any response-rate percentage is reported.

The coach's response rate was 70% (28/40), the football administrator's response rate was the lowest at 60% (9/15) and "other" returned 75% (6/8) of the questionnaires. 4.

4.3 Demographic Data

4.3.1 Gender of participants

The demographic tables should describe the achieved sample only. Because the qualitative sample totals conflict across sections of the marked dissertation, the final gender counts and percentages must be regenerated from the verified interview and consent records.

Table 4.3 Gender of Interview Participants (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Stakeholder/Participant group	**Female**	**Male**
Referees/Match Officials	1	3
Players	1	2
Coaches	1	2
Football Administrators	1	1
Supporters/Fans	0	1
Totals	4	8

The qualitative gender breakdown should be regenerated from the reconciled participant-level records. The current manuscript contains inconsistent qualitative denominators, so the retained values must not be presented as final.

4.3.2 Gender of Questionnaire Respondents

Table 4.4 Gender of Questionnaire Respondents (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Stakeholder/Participant group	Female	Male
Referees/Match Officials	19	30
Players	16	55
Coaches	8	20
Football Administrators	2	7
Supporters/Fans	2	6
Total	47	118

The questionnaire gender composition should be reported only after the quantitative denominator and missing-data rules have been reconciled. The current manuscript contains conflicting totals, so the percentages are provisional.

4.3.3 Age of participants

4.3.3.1 Age of interview participants

Age influences experience, attitude, and involvement in football governance structures. This subsection shows which age groups are most represented and how generational differences may shape perceptions of governance practices.

Table 4.5 Age of interview participants (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Age of Interview Participants	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 20 years	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
21–30 years	2	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%
31–40 years	3	25.0%	25.0%	41.7%
41–50 years	4	33.3%	33.3%	75.0%
51 years and above	3	25.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total (Valid)	12	100.0%	100.0%	
Total	12	100.0%		

The interview age distribution shown in the table should be retained only after the qualitative denominator has been reconciled against the interview and consent records. The current document reports different qualitative totals in different sections.

4.3.4 Experience of participants

Years of experience in football enhance familiarity with governance processes and strengthen stakeholder credibility. This subsection analyses participant distribution and experience to assess the depth of practical knowledge in the interview data.

Table 4.6 Experience of interview participants (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 5 years	1	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%
5–10 years	3	25.0%	25.0%	33.3%
11–15 years	4	33.3%	33.3%	66.6%
16–20 years	2	16.7%	16.7%	83.3%
Above 20 years	2	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Total	12	100.0%	100.0%	

The interview experience profile should likewise be reported from the reconciled participant-level records. Until the qualitative denominator is verified, descriptive percentages are provisional and should not be interpreted as evidence of representativeness.

Table 4.7 Experience of Questionnaire Responses (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 5 years	28	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%
5–10 years	52	31.0%	31.0%	47.7%
11–15 years	46	27.4%	27.4%	75.1%
16–20 years	24	14.3%	14.3%	89.4%
Above 20 years	18	10.6%	10.6%	100.0%
Total	168	100.0%	100.0%	

The questionnaire experience profile can be described once the quantitative analysis sample has been reconciled with the questionnaire IDs and missing-data rules. The present file contains conflicting totals and therefore the denominator must be verified before the percentages are treated as final.

4.3.5 Age of Questionnaire Respondents

Table 4.8: Age of Questionnaire Respondents (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

This section gives the age distribution of questionnaire respondents. The age profile helps show the demographic characteristics of the sample. It also indicates how well participants' views represent those from different age groups in football governance.

Age Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below 20 years	6	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%
21–30 years	54	32.1%	32.1%	35.7%
31–40 years	48	28.6%	28.6%	64.3%
41–50 years	37	22.0%	22.0%	86.3%
51 years and above	23	13.7%	13.7%	100.0%
Total	168	100.0%	100.0%	

The questionnaire age distribution should be reported from the reconciled analysis dataset. The current draft contains inconsistent total Ns elsewhere in Chapter Four, so these percentages require final verification.

4.3.6 Participant validation

The quality of the study was considered through instrument review, reliability assessment and qualitative quality procedures. Participant demographics should be described as characteristics of the achieved sample, not as proof of representativeness or ecological validity unless supported by the sampling frame and relevant population evidence.

The response-rate and thematic percentages currently appearing in this section are provisional and should be removed or recalculated after the person-level audit. Response rate does not by itself establish representativeness, and participation from a sensitive stakeholder group should not be interpreted as evidence of institutional resistance without supporting evidence.

The crosstabulation is a descriptive presentation of the distribution of responses to two categorical items. It is not a correlation test. Before any association is reported, the complete contingency table, valid N, expected counts, chi-square result and effect size such as Cramér's V must be calculated from the reconciled dataset. If those requirements are not met, report the table descriptively only.

The qualitative material indicates recurring concerns about retaliation, victimisation, loss of match appointments, career stagnation, social stigma and uncertainty about protection. These themes should be reported as participants' perceptions and experiences; they should not be presented as evidence of the prevalence of bribery or as proof that under-reporting caused corruption to spread.

The study is limited by the sensitive topic, possible social desirability bias, the cross-sectional design and the focus on elite football. The proposed framework should be presented as a context-specific conceptual output requiring feasibility and stakeholder validation rather than as an implemented or validated intervention.

4.4 Reliability Analysis

Reliability of the questionnaire should be reported only after the analysis dataset has been reconciled. Cronbach's alpha may be used to assess internal consistency of multi-item scales, but the final report should state the valid N, number of items, item-total evidence where appropriate, and the basis for retaining or removing items. The marked manuscript contains reliability values, but these should be rechecked against the final SPSS output before being presented as final findings.

The marked manuscript reports alpha values for Sections B–E and the full questionnaire. These values are retained only as working values and must be regenerated from the reconciled dataset; they must not be described as definitive reliability evidence until the valid N, item counts and exact output have been verified.

Until that reanalysis is completed, no inference should be drawn from the provisional alpha values about the dependability of the final instrument.

The questionnaire may be described as having undergone a reliability assessment. A final claim of satisfactory internal consistency requires verified SPSS output and transparent reporting of the sample used in the calculation.

4.5 Normality Test

Before performing inferential statistical analyses, it is essential to determine whether the data satisfy the assumption of normality. This assumption is fundamental to the validity of parametric tests such as ANOVA, which require the data to be approximately normally distributed (Field, 2018).

The Shapiro–Wilk procedure is appropriate for assessing distributional assumptions, but the final analysis must state the exact analysis sample, variables or composite scores tested, and the corresponding statistics. The marked manuscript contains an unexplained degrees-of-freedom value, so the normality conclusion must be regenerated from the reconciled dataset rather than assumed.

The normality table and any histogram or Q-Q plot interpretation must be rechecked against the final analysis dataset. The current degrees of freedom and significance values cannot be treated as verified.

The decision to use parametric tests should be based on the verified distributional assessment and the assumptions of the specific ANOVA model. This decision should be documented in the final analysis output.

4.6 Presentation and analysis of data linked to the research objectives

Objective 1: To identify the existing whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe

Table 4.9 (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

ANOVA analysis on the existing whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe

ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Elite football in Zimbabwe has formal procedures for reporting bribery and corruption.	Between Groups	102.241	7	14.606	248.998	VERIFY
Elite football in Zimbabwe has formal procedures for reporting bribery and corruption.	Within Groups	8.212	140	.059		
Elite football in Zimbabwe has formal procedures for reporting bribery and corruption.	Total	110.453	147			

Match officials are aware of the available whistleblowing channels in football administration.	Between Groups	63.799	7	9.114	19.929	VERIFY
Match officials are aware of the available whistleblowing channels in football administration.	Within Groups	64.483	141	.457		
Match officials are aware of the available whistleblowing channels in football administration.	Total	128.282	148			

Football authorities regularly educate stakeholders about anti-corruption policies.	Between Groups	128.954	7	18.422	25.516	VERIFY
Football authorities regularly educate stakeholders about anti-corruption policies.	Within Groups	102.519	142	.722		
Football authorities regularly educate stakeholders about anti-corruption policies.	Total	231.473	149			
Reporting systems for bribery cases are accessible to football	Between Groups	222.396	7	31.771	309.050	VERIFY

stakeholders.						
Reporting systems for bribery cases are accessible to football stakeholders.	Within Groups	14.598	142	.103		
Reporting systems for bribery cases are accessible to football stakeholders.	Total	236.993	149			
Highest Educational Qualification	Between Groups	206.448	7	29.493	9.280	VERIFY
Highest Educational Qualification	Within Groups	451.292	142	3.178		
Highest Educational Qualification	Total	657.740	149			

Football governing bodies take corruption allegations seriously.	Between Groups	499.537	7	71.362	697.753	VERIFY
Football governing bodies take corruption allegations seriously.	Within Groups	14.523	142	.102		
Football governing bodies take corruption allegations seriously.	Total	514.060	149			

The ANOVA narrative has been removed from final interpretation pending data reconciliation. The marked manuscript reports several large F statistics with p values shown as .000, but the source records supplied for this revision do not resolve the sample Ns, degrees of freedom or factor definitions. These figures must therefore be rerun from the raw SPSS dataset. The final analysis should report the factor and its levels, outcome variable, group n/mean/SD, assumption checks, exact p values, effect sizes and post-hoc comparisons where applicable. Statistical significance must not be described as evidence that whistleblowing mechanisms address or reduce bribery.

QUALITATIVE DATA

NVIvo analysis of the existing whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms in elite football officiating in ZimbabweTable 4.10

Formal Governance and Reporting Structures (Reporting procedures, ethics committees, disciplinary bodies, and integrity policies)	Institutional mechanisms established by football authorities to report, investigate, and sanction corruption-related behaviour, including reporting channels, ethics committees, disciplinary structures, and integrity regulations.	"There are procedures for reporting suspected bribery, but many referees are not fully aware of how the process works." (Referee) ; "The football association has ethics committees and disciplinary procedures to deal with corruption allegations." (Football Administrator) ; "There are governance policies that prohibit bribery and match manipulation." (Football Administrator) ; "There are disciplinary structures in football, but most players do not know how to lodge formal complaints." (Player) ; "The association has integrity regulations, but they are rarely discussed during training sessions." (Referee)	11
Informal and Unstructured Reporting Practices	Reliance on unofficial communication channels, personal networks, or internal discussions instead of formal whistleblowing	"Most reports are handled internally through football administrators." (Coach) ; "Stakeholders often rely on informal channels." (Coach) ; "The media often uncovers corruption cases before official reporting systems become active." (Sports Journalist)	4

	systems for reporting corruption.		
Limited Awareness and Accessibility of Mechanisms	Lack of knowledge, visibility, and understanding of existing whistleblowing and anti-corruption systems among stakeholders, leading to underutilisation of formal mechanisms.	"Most players do not know how to lodge formal complaints." (Player) ; "As supporters, we do not know where to report suspected corruption involving referees." (Supporter) ; "There is little public information about anti-corruption mechanisms in football." (Supporter) ; "We have reporting channels available, but stakeholder awareness remains low." (Football Administrator) ; "Many stakeholders lack confidence in them." (Sports Journalist)	9

The qualitative themes retained in this table should be verified against the original transcripts, codebook and participant-level coding records. Theme frequencies should not be presented as population prevalence.

The close-knit nature of the football network was described by participants as a potential barrier to anonymity. This should be presented as a qualitative perception and contextual finding, not as a generalised claim about the entire football sector.

The qualitative findings suggest recurring concerns about negative consequences, trust in reporting channels and anonymity. They indicate factors that participants perceived as discouraging reporting; they do not establish the incidence of bribery or prove that these factors caused under-reporting.

POINT OF CONVERGENCE

The mixed-method integration should compare verified qualitative themes with verified quantitative results using a joint display. Because the current Ns and statistical outputs conflict, this section should remain provisional until both strands have been reconciled and the integration matrix has been completed.

Once the data audit is complete, the integrated interpretation should identify which qualitative themes converge with, complement or diverge from the quantitative findings. It should then connect those verified findings to the components of the proposed framework without claiming that the framework has been validated.

OBJECTIVE 2: To analyse the deterrents to match officials and stakeholders reporting on match official bribery in elite football in Zimbabwe.

Analysis of the factors that hinder match officials and stakeholders from reporting on match officials' corruption in elite football in Zimbabwe using ANOVA.. (Crosstabulation of Existing Whistleblower Protection Measures and Anonymous Reporting Systems Effectiveness)

Table 4.11 (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating. * Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating. * Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating. * Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating. * Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating. * Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating. * Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating. * Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating. * Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing. Crosstabulation
Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count

		Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing.	Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing.	Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing.	Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing.	Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing.	Total
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Nuetral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating.	Strongly Disagree	6	0	0	0	0	6

Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating.	Disagree	7	0	0	0	0	7
Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating.	Nuetral	11	11	0	0	0	22

Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating.	Agree	0	22	6	0	0	28
Existing whistleblower protection measures help address bribery risks in football officiating.	Strongly Agree	0	0	12	44	31	87
Total	Total	24	33	18	44	31	150

Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities. * Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities. * Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities. * Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities. * Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities. * Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities. * Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities. * Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities. * Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing. Crosstabulation	Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities. * Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing. Crosstabulation
Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count

		Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing.	Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing.	Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing.	Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing.	Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing.	Total	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Nuetral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	
Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities.	Strongly Disagree	7	13	20	8	0	48	

Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities.	Disagree	0	0	0	32	22	54	
Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities.	Nuetral	0	0	0	0	32	32	

Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities.	Agree	0	0	0	0	7	7	
Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities.	Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0	9	9	
Total	Total	7	13	20	40	70	150	

Analysis of the Crosstabulation Results

The first crosstabulation presents a descriptive distribution of responses to two categorical items. The counts currently shown in the marked manuscript should be verified against the final dataset.

No correlation or effectiveness claim should be made from a crosstab alone. Any association should be tested with the full contingency table, chi-square assumptions, exact p value and an appropriate effect size.

The second crosstabulation should likewise be interpreted descriptively unless an inferential test has been correctly calculated from the reconciled dataset. The reported cell count may illustrate a pattern of responses, but it cannot by itself establish a statistically significant relationship or causal effect.

The cautious interpretation is that participants expressed concern about political or administrative interference. Any broader claim about reporting behaviour should be supported by a verified inferential test and should remain framed as an association rather than causation.

QUALITATIVE DATA

NVivo analysis to examine the factors that discourage match officials and stakeholders from reporting bribery in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe

Table 4.12 (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Fear-Related Barriers (Retaliation, Victimisation, Career Consequences, and Social Stigma)	Concerns that reporting bribery may lead to retaliation, exclusion, intimidation, loss of career opportunities, or negative labelling within the football environment.	"Many officials fear losing match appointments if they report influential individuals." (Referee) ; "Some referees remain silent because they fear victimisation." (Referee) ; "There is fear of retaliation from powerful people within football structures." (Coach) ; "Players are afraid of damaging relationships with coaches or club officials." (Player) ; "Some stakeholders fear losing employment or promotion opportunities." (Football Administrator) ; "People often worry about being labelled troublemakers."	12

		(Football Administrator) ; "Most supporters fear becoming involved in conflicts with football authorities." (Supporter/Fan)	
Lack of Trust, Confidentiality, and Anonymity in Reporting Systems	Perceptions that whistleblowing systems are ineffective, unsafe, or unable to protect identities, resulting in fear of exposure and lack of confidence in reporting outcomes.	"There is always concern that your identity will be exposed." (Referee) ; "Most people do not believe anything will happen after reporting corruption." (Player) ; "The lack of trust in reporting systems discourages whistleblowing." (Football Administrator) ; "Individuals with information prefer anonymity because of potential professional consequences." (Sports Journalist)	9

Close-Knit and Interconnected Football Networks	The small, highly connected nature of football communities makes anonymity difficult and increases the risk of identification and retaliation after reporting.	"The football community is very small, making it difficult to remain anonymous." (Coach) ; "Players are afraid of damaging relationships with coaches or club officials." (Player) ; "There is fear of retaliation from powerful people within football structures." (Coach)	5

The qualitative analysis identified fear-related barriers, including retaliation, victimisation, loss of match appointments, career consequences and social stigma. Theme counts should be verified against the final coding record and should not be interpreted as population frequencies.

Participants also raised concerns about trust, confidentiality and anonymity in reporting systems. These are qualitative perceptions that may help explain reporting reluctance within the study context.

Participants described the small and interdependent nature of football networks as a potential difficulty for anonymity. This should be presented as a contextual perception rather than a universal fact.

Taken together, the qualitative findings identify perceived barriers to reporting. They do not demonstrate the hidden incidence of bribery or establish that any specific barrier caused under-reporting.

POINT OF CONVERGENCE

The provisional integration suggests that perceived fear, limited protection and lack of trust appear in both strands. Final convergence claims should be made only after the quantitative and qualitative denominators and outputs have been reconciled and jointly displayed.

OBJECTIVE 3: To assess stakeholders' perceptions of the adequacy and implementation of existing whistleblower protection measures in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe

Table 4.13 (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

Analysis of stakeholders' perceptions of the adequacy and implementation of existing whistleblower protection measures in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe

QUANTITATIVE DATA

ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA	ANOVA
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Stronger legal protection would encourage more people to report bribery.	Between Groups	283.253	4	70.813	617.787	VERIFY
Stronger legal protection would encourage more people to report bribery.	Within Groups	16.620	145	.115		
Stronger legal protection would encourage more people to	Total	299.873	149			

report bribery.						
Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football officiating.	Between Groups	218.167	4	54.542	372.576	VERIFY
Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football officiating.	Within Groups	21.227	145	.146		
Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football officiating.	Total	239.393	149			
Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football	Between Groups	208.567	4	52.142	377.524	VERIFY

officiating.						
Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football officiating.	Within Groups	20.027	145	.138		
Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football officiating.	Total	228.593	149			
Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football officiating.	Between Groups	199.233	4	49.808	390.249	VERIFY
Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football	Within Groups	18.507	145	.128		

officiating.						
Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football officiating.	Total	217.740	149			
Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing.	Between Groups	283.331	4	70.833	1080.854	VERIFY
Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing.	Within Groups	9.502	145	.066		

Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing.	Total	292.833	149			

Analysis of ANOVA Results

The ANOVA narrative must be regenerated only after the analysis dataset, factor structure and degrees of freedom have been verified. The marked manuscript reports p values and differing stakeholder perceptions, but the source records do not currently reconcile the Ns and duplicated or non-estimable rows. The final interpretation should report verified group differences in perceptions without treating statistical significance as evidence that any intervention is effective.

The item "Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing" had the largest F-value ($F = 1080.854$), which is a sign of the highest level of agreement and the largest difference among the groups. Meaning the respondents in their great majority consider anonymous reporting systems to be the main instrument for facilitating the disclosure of bribery and corruption in football officiating.

Same here, stronger legal protection for whistleblowers yielded a very high F-value ($F = 617.787$, $p < 0.001$), which still shows the great support for the enhancement of legal safeguards among them. They agreed that effective protection from retaliation, victimisation, and other career-related consequences will lead to increased reporting of corrupt practices among stakeholders.

The numerical ANOVA values in the working table require reanalysis because the source records do not currently reconcile sample denominators, degrees of freedom and table identity. Where verified, the analysis should describe differences in stakeholder perceptions of proposed measures and report effect sizes; it should not infer that the measures will reduce bribery.

In a nutshell, the outcomes of the ANOVA analysis corroborate the idea that the stakeholders are highly in favour of the reform of whistleblower mechanisms. The data indicate that in the eyes of the respondents the anonymous reporting, the stronger legal protections and the independent anti-corruption agencies are the main measures that would raise the level of the whistleblowing and the reduction of bribery in the top level football officiating in Zimbabwe. These changes will most probably motivate the stakeholders to have more trust in the reporting systems and help to the promotion of transparency and integrity in the sport.

Table 4.14 (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)
Qualitative analysis of stakeholders' perceptions of the adequacy and implementation of existing whistleblower protection measures in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe

Weak and Ineffective Whistleblower Protection Framework	The existing whistleblower protection system is perceived as poorly designed, weakly enforced, and limited in its ability to protect whistleblowers or reduce corruption.	"The current protections are weak because whistleblowers can still be identified." (Referee) ; "Whistleblower policies exist, but implementation is inconsistent." (Coach) ; "There are some protection measures in place, but enforcement remains a challenge." (Football Administrator) ; "Protection mechanisms are not yet robust enough." (Football Administrator) ; "The measures have not significantly reduced corruption in football." (Coach) ; "The existing measures do not encourage many officials to come forward." (Referee)	11
Lack of Confidence	Stakeholders lack confidence	"Players generally lack confidence in existing protection mechanisms."	9

and Trust in Protection Systems	in whistleblower protection systems due to doubts about their reliability, credibility, and ability to ensure safety and fair outcomes.	(Player) ; "The framework requires strengthening if stakeholders are to trust it." (Football Administrator) ; "The lack of visible outcomes reduces confidence in existing protections." (Sports Journalist) ; "Most people still fear reporting corruption despite the existence of policies." (Supporter/Fan)	
Limited Evidence of Successful Protection Outcomes	Few visible or well-known cases exist where whistleblowers have been effectively protected, reducing stakeholder belief in the system’s effectiveness.	"I have never seen anyone adequately protected after exposing corruption." (Player) ; "There are very few examples showing that whistleblowers are protected." (Supporter/Fan) ; "Successful whistleblower cases are rarely publicised." (Sports Journalist)	6
Continued Fear and Reluctance to Report	Despite existing protection measures, stakeholders remain hesitant to report corruption due to perceived risks	"There is no guarantee that a whistleblower will be protected from retaliation." (Referee) ; "Most people still fear reporting corruption despite the existence of policies." (Supporter/Fan) ; "The existing measures do not encourage many officials to come forward." (Referee)	8

	and uncertainty about safety.		

The results indicated that the current regulatory system to protect whistleblowers in elite football officials in Zimbabwe has failed to significantly address bribery risks. The most prevalent theme was the weak and ineffective whistleblower protection framework (n=11), where participants noted that although there were policies and whistleblower protection measures in place, they are poorly implemented and poorly enforced. There was a general view from stakeholders that there is a lack of the framework to adequately safeguard whistleblowing and a lack of the framework to significantly reduce corruption in football officiating.

Lack of confidence and trust in protection systems (n=9) was also a significant issue. However, participants were sceptical about its reliability and credibility, as they felt that there was little to see from the mechanisms, and were not certain whether it would ensure whistleblowers safety and fair treatment. This mistrust dampens the willingness of stakeholders to use existing reporting avenues.

Limited evidence of successful protection outcomes (n=6) was also found in the study. Few respondents reported instances of successful whistleblower protection for whistleblowers who have reported corruption. Poor levels of success make it hard for people to trust the effectiveness of current protection and make it less likely that people will complain about wrong doing.

Whistleblowing policies exist and there is continued fear and reluctance to report corruption (n=8). Some participants noted ongoing concerns about potential retaliation, victimisation, and doubt about personal safety remain as disincentives for reporting. The overall results show that the whistleblower protection mechanisms in Zimbabwe are still not perceived as adequate, trusted and effective in facilitating whistleblowers to report on bribery in elite football officiating in the country.

POINT OF CONVERGENCE

The quantitative and qualitative results are seen to coalesce to show that current whistleblower protection rules seem to be ineffective in combating bribery in elite match officials in Zimbabwe. The ANOVA results highlighted a statistically significant difference between all the measures proposed to improve whistleblowing with good support for strengthened legal measures, anonymous whistleblowing reporting and independent anti-corruption oversight bodies. The qualitative themes indicated some problems with the current whistleblower system, a lack of trust in whistleblower protection systems, few successful whistleblower cases visible, and continued fear of retaliation which are consistent with these findings. Consistent concerns raised by participants were that protections are currently not being fully enforced and are not adequate to ensure the safety of whistleblowers. As a whole, the results indicate that greater protection, anonymity and independent credible oversight mechanisms are vital to boosting the confidence of stakeholders and promotion of whistleblowing within elite football officiating.

OBJECTIVE 4: To recommend measures for strengthening whistleblower frameworks to address bribery risks in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe

Table 4.15 (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

ANOVA Analysis to recommend measures for strengthening whistleblower frameworks to address bribery risks in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe.

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Independent whistleblower reporting channels should be established for match officials.					
Between Groups	4.218	1	4.218	5.372	VERIFY FROM SPSS

Within Groups	81.667	104	.785		
Total	85.885	105			
ZIFA should introduce stronger legal protection for whistleblowers in football officiating.					
Between Groups	VERIFY	1	VERIFY	VERIFY	VERIFY FROM SPSS
Within Groups	VERIFY	104	VERIFY		
Total	VERIFY	105			
Anonymous reporting systems would encourage referees to report bribery and match manipulation.					
Between Groups	2.941	1	2.941	4.826	VERIFY FROM SPSS
Within Groups	63.377	104	.609		
Total	66.318	105			

Regular anti-corruption and whistleblower awareness training should be mandatory for referees and match officials.					
Between Groups	VERIFY	1	VERIFY	VERIFY	VERIFY FROM SPSS
Within Groups	VERIFY	104	VERIFY		
Total	VERIFY	105			

Analysis of ANOVA Results

The ANOVA output currently includes statistically significant values for some proposed measures, but the source records do not resolve the denominator and table-identity problems. After reanalysis, report the exact factor, levels, outcome, group descriptives, assumptions, effect size and post-hoc results. Do not describe statistical significance as evidence that a measure is effective or that bribery would be reduced.

Then again, participants unanimously acknowledged the importance of stronger legal protection of whistleblowers and further mandatory anti-corruption and whistleblower awareness training. Since the responses for these two items do not show any variability, that means the respondents, without any exception, agreed that having more legal protection as well as periodical education of all stakeholders is a good idea. This near perfect agreement shows that the main actors in the field deem legal protection and awareness education as two of the most important ways to encourage people to report corruption and to diminish bribery in football officiating. As a final point, results of ANOVA analysis showed that mostly stakeholders favour the strengthening of whistleblower protection systems through measures legally protected, training programmes that create awareness, independent reporting structures, and anonymous reporting mechanisms.

Although stakeholders seem to differ the most on which particuliar reporting systems are to be implemented, the data suggest a general recognition that provision of the right protection measures and increasing anti-corruption education on a continuous basis are powerful ways to motivate reporting behaviour, raise accountability and uphold integrity in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe.

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Independent whistleblower reporting channels should be established for match officials.					
Between Groups	4.218	1	4.218	5.372	VERIFY FROM SPSS
Within Groups	81.667	104	.785		
Total	85.885	105			
ZIFA should introduce stronger legal protection for whistleblowers in football officiating.					
Between Groups	VERIFY	1	VERIFY	VERIFY	VERIFY FROM SPSS

Within Groups	VERIFY	104	VERIFY		
Total	VERIFY	105			
Anonymous reporting systems would encourage referees to report bribery and match manipulation.					
Between Groups	2.941	1	2.941	4.826	VERIFY FROM SPSS
Within Groups	63.377	104	.609		
Total	66.318	105			
Regular anti-corruption and whistleblower awareness training should be mandatory for referees and match officials.					
Between Groups	VERIFY	1	VERIFY	VERIFY	VERIFY FROM SPSS
Within Groups	VERIFY	104	VERIFY		
Total	VERIFY	105			

Analysis of ANOVA Results

The current narrative has been revised to avoid interpreting the reported F values as proof of effectiveness. Any verified group differences should be reported as differences in perceptions of proposed measures, not as evidence that those measures work in practice.

The zero-variance rows in the marked ANOVA table require verification from the raw data and may not support a conventional F test. Where an outcome has no variance, report that the statistic is not estimable rather than interpreting it as consensus or effectiveness.

Though people expressed different views as to how reporting mechanisms ought to be rolled out, all of them concurred that legal protection and continuous awareness programs are the only two means through which the obstruction to whistleblowing can be effectively dealt with. This four-elements combination of secure complaint channels anonymity legal protection, and training and awareness is what will not only change the reporting culture, but also strengthen accountability and promote integrity at the highest level of football officiating. Besides, it will be an effective whistleblowing system in which everyone can participate without fear of any consequences.

Table 4.16 (PROVISIONAL - REGENERATE FROM VERIFIED DATA)

NVivo analysis to recommend measures for strengthening whistleblower frameworks to address bribery risks in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe

Strengthened Whistleblower Protection and Reporting Mechanisms	The need for secure, anonymous, and accessible reporting systems supported by legal safeguards that protect whistleblowers from retaliation, victimisation, and career-related consequences. This includes both	"Anonymous reporting systems would encourage more officials to report bribery." (Referee); "There should be legal protection for whistleblowers." (Referee); "Digital reporting platforms would make reporting easier and safer." (Football Administrator)	19

	anonymous and digital reporting channels.		
Independent Investigations and Accountability Measures	The need for corruption allegations to be handled by independent bodies, supported by transparent investigations, regular feedback to whistleblowers, and strong sanctions against offenders to promote trust and accountability.	"Independent bodies should investigate corruption allegations." (Referee); "Strong sanctions should be imposed on individuals involved in bribery." (Coach); "Whistleblowers should receive feedback on the outcome of investigations." (Sports Journalist)	14
Awareness and Capacity Building	The importance of educating stakeholders on whistleblowing procedures, ethical standards, reporting channels, and available protections to encourage reporting and strengthen integrity within football.	"Stakeholders need training on how and where to report corruption." (Player); "There should be regular awareness campaigns on whistleblowing." (Football Administrator)	5

Results show that the respondents stressed the vital role of enhanced whistleblower protection and reporting mechanisms in the fight against bribery in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe. The most common topics of discussion were the creation of safe, anonymous reporting systems, legal protections, and digital systems for reporting. The participants noted that it is extremely important that whistleblowers are well protected from any form of retribution, victimization, or career repercussions, and assured of complete confidentiality when they come forward to report corruption.

The review also pointed out that there is a general desire for third parties to carry out investigations and for accountability measures to be initiated (n=14). Participants recommended that the handling of corruption allegations should be delegated to the independent bodies as it will give an added level of credibility to the reporting process which will help build trust. Participants see the reporting of investigation findings, whistleblower briefings and increased punishments for wrongdoers as significant factors that can help to promote accountability and deter dishonest behaviour.

A significant part of the stakeholders' focus was in raising awareness as well as improving skills (n=5). Respondents stressed that Consider have ongoing training as well as awareness campaigns to keep stakeholders up to speed with whistleblowing procedures, ethical standards, protections, and reporting channels. A boost in awareness was deemed necessary to motivate people to report and at the same time help establish a new culture of integrity amongst football officials.

In sum, the research implies that a well-performing whistleblower system must feature protective measures, the work of independent and open accountability hearings, as well as constant stakeholder education to increase reporting and address bribery risks in Zimbabwe's elite football officiating.

POINT OF CONVERGENCE

The quantitative and qualitative material can be integrated after the data audit to identify the provisions that participants perceive as important for a stronger whistleblower system. The present document should not claim that the proposed measures have been empirically proven to increase reporting or reduce bribery.

4.7 Study Novelty: 3D Integrated Whistleblower Framework

The study proposes a three-dimensional integrated whistleblower framework as a conceptual output of the research. The framework brings together governance, protection and reporting dimensions, informed by the literature and the study's stated findings. It is a proposed framework rather than an implemented or validated intervention and should undergo transparent feasibility assessment and stakeholder or expert validation before implementation.

Figure 4.1 Proposed Integrated Whistleblower Framework (PROVISIONAL - REQUIRES FEASIBILITY VALIDATION)

Fig 3

Theoretical background of the proposed 3D Integrated Whistleblower Framework.

The 3D Integrated Whistleblower Framework was also created in this study, which was founded on Principal-Agent Theory, Institutional Theory, Stakeholder Theory, Social Identity Theory and Expectancy Theory. The framework developed will be used to address the inadequacies of football officiating in Zimbabwe such as lack of knowledge on reporting mechanism, fear of retaliation, lack of a robust whistleblower protection mechanism, lack of trust in the reporting mechanism, and lack of institutional accountability that will benefit the elite football referees and assistants from Zimbabwe. Based on the theorisation and the empirical results, we created an integrated framework that can be used as a comprehensive framework to enhance whistleblower systems and mitigate bribery in football officiating.

The first facet, Institutional Governance Systems, is mainly influenced by the Principal-Agent Theory and the Institutional Theory. According to the Principal Agent theory, referees, like any other agent, will behave corruptly, according to their self-interest, as there are no monitoring or accountability in place. Results show that despite the presence of ethics committees, disciplinary systems and reporting mechanisms, there is a lack of clarity regarding how these are effectively implemented among many stakeholders. According to Institutional Theory, formal rules and policies are not enough, if they are not effectively enforced and there is no dedication from the organisation being studied. Consequently, the framework sets up new integrity units to investigate cases independently and independent ethics and disciplinary systems and accountability systems, which guarantee the effective investigation of corruption allegations.

Protection and Reporting Mechanisms - the second dimension are mainly inspired by Expectancy Theory and Institutional Theory. According to Expectancy Theory, people would be more likely to perform a certain behaviour if they expect a greater benefit than a risk orloss. It has been found that the fear of retaliation and victimisation, loss of career opportunities and lack of confidence in the whistleblowing system are the main obstacles that impede whistleblowing in the football sector. Participants pointed out unceasingly the confidentiality, anonymity and lack of safeguard measures. To these challenges, the frame work put in place has anonymous reporting systems, electronic reporting systems, legal protection systems, witness protection systems as well feedback systems. These are designed to build stakeholder trust in reports and their security, as well as to safeguard whistleblowers from reprisals.

The third dimension, Cultural and Stakeholder Empowerment, is based on two theories: the Stakeholder Theory and Social Identity Theory. According to Stakeholder Theory, stakeholders are required for an effective and successful governance in a business. The limited awareness of whistleblowing and of the lack of trainings and stakeholder engagement are among the causes of underutilisation of whistleblowing mechanisms. The Social Identity Theory suggests that social exclusion or fear of not feeling part of the profession can hinder individuals from reporting corruption. Based on the results of this study, harming relationships in the intimate sports (football) community was an issue that was raised. In order to tackle these challenges, the framework should include awareness campaigns and ethics education, as well as stakeholder participation, promotion of a culture of integrity and building public trust. These measures aim to help shift the attitude toward whistleblowing from being perceived as a betrayal to being a professional responsibility that is in the best interests of fair play and integrity in football.

The proposed framework adds an integrated perspective by combining governance, protection, reporting, stakeholder involvement and technology within a context-specific model. These features are design propositions informed by literature and participant perceptions; their effectiveness would need to be evaluated after implementation.

The framework's enabling environment indicates that an institutional approach is needed to support whistleblowing systems. Potential requirements include political commitment, applicable

legislation, adequate resources, technological infrastructure, transparency, institutional independence and safeguards against retaliation. These requirements are proposed design conditions and were not tested as an intervention in the present study.

Finally, the framework fills the identified gaps in the literature and data. Implementation proved to be weak, the institutional independence was limited, as well as the protection system, and stakeholder's trust was low as per the literature. Similarly, the research found that the current mechanisms to get in to Zimbabwean football are constrained by fears of getting it back on them, lack of knowledge, inadequate protection measures, and low confidence in reporting mechanisms. The proposed 3D Framework for an Integrated Whistleblower attempts to address these topics on the institutional governance aspects, in the protection aspects and in the cultural transformation aspects. This approach embraces models that are specific to the context, such as the Football Association of Zimbabwe (FAZ), where they can boost whistleblowing, build accountability, lower bribery and improve integrity..

4.8 Theoretical Validation

4.8.1 Introduction

The theoretical interpretation has been reframed as contextual application rather than empirical validation. The findings may illustrate how the selected theories help interpret perceptions of oversight, institutional norms, stakeholder relations, social identity and reporting expectations, but they do not by themselves validate the theories or establish causal effects.

4.8.2 Principal-Agent Theory: Application to perceived oversight and accountability gaps

Risks of corruption are strongly linked to lowering of monitoring mechanisms, accountability structures and sanctions which are the main tools of checking and penalizing defaulters. It is revealed by the statistical study that respondents differed a lot in the view of the existence of reporting procedures, availability of reporting mechanisms and level of trust in the actions of football governing bodies in the face of corruption allegations. So, when agents are not supervised and controlled, they will most likely do what's best for them, not the principals.

Besides, the qualitative results also supported this notion as the participants pointed out that, even if abound anti-corruption agencies are in place, their. A. weak enforcement and lack of.

Investigative independence will weigh down the efficacy of these agencies. That means broadens the scope of Principal-Agent Theory, by highlighting the importance of formal monitoring structures and their actual implementation in the football governance context.

4.8.3 Institutional Theory: Application to formal–informal institutional tensions

The findings lend support to Institutional Theory which states that formal organizations without effective policies and governance structures don't necessarily lead to effective whistleblowing in practice. Even though football authorities set up ethics committees, have disciplinary procedures, and offer reporting mechanisms, these are hampered by low levels of awareness, poor implementation and informal practices.

Qualitative data showed that professional relationships, loyalty ties and fear of institutional repercussions are factors that affect the behavior of reporting a case. This is consistent with the Institutional Theory which states that informal norms, in addition to the formal ones, can shape the behavior in an organization.

The research contributes to the theory because it demonstrates that there is a group of institutional pressures that are present in football governance but not in other realms, and these include, above all, officials' reliance on appointments, which may further hinder their willingness to report corrupt practices.

4.8.4 Stakeholder Theory: Validation through Differentiated Stakeholder Experiences

This is further supported by the notion that whistleblowers and other stakeholders are likely to have different roles, levels of influence and access to information, and therefore experience whistleblowing systems differently. Referees, players, administrators, journalists and fans have varying levels of understanding of reporting systems and confidence in instutional responses.The results show that good governance cannot be obtained by having only a few authorities in its fold but requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders. The research also advances the research to the Stakeholder theory by demonstrating that stakeholders' motivation to join an anti-corruption programme can be influenced by their power position, their sense of responsibility and their feeling of being exposed in the football governance system.

Valuation of the Social Identity Theory based on Network Influence and Fear of Social Consequences, 4.8.5

Research undertaken within the field of Social Identity Theory is congruent with that of whistleblowing and its relationship to strong bonding within football communities. Whistleblowers reported that one of the primary reasons they choose not to blow the whistle is fear of losing good professional relationships, receiving the wrong label and fear of not being accepted by their peers in the football community. This is proof that people will refrain from doing anything that would result in losing the belonging to their significant social groups. The research also investigates Social Identity Theory from a new perspective: the social consequences may be more important in the highly interconnected sporting worlds, as the social actors often meet and operate within the same professional networks.

4.8.6: Validation with Reporting Outcomes and Protection Expectations (Expectancy Theory)

Expectancy Theory may help interpret participants' expectations concerning protection, confidentiality and institutional response. This is theoretical interpretation rather than empirical validation or a demonstrated causal effect.

4.8.7 Overall Theoretical Contribution

The study uses multiple theoretical perspectives to interpret the reporting environment. The theoretical contribution is therefore an integrated conceptual interpretation of governance, institutional, stakeholder, social-identity and expectancy factors. The proposed framework remains subject to external feasibility assessment and validation before it can be treated as an implemented model.

4.9 DISCUSSION

4.9.1 Objective 1: Existing whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms

Participants reported that formal whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms exist within elite football governance, although perceptions of awareness, access and institutional response varied. The quantitative results should be interpreted only after the analysis dataset has been reconciled. The qualitative findings also indicate reported awareness and accessibility concerns

among stakeholders. Any discussion of ethics committees, disciplinary systems, reporting processes or integrity rules should be grounded in documentary evidence where available.

This indicates that there is no clear knowledge of how to ensure that reporting mechanisms work well in football governance settings where informal networks, relationships with colleagues, and fear of retribution can impact stakeholders' willingness to report corruption. Similarly, Mantzaris and Saruchera (2024) have noted that Zimbabwe has put in place policies and strategies against corruption but they lack enforcement and participation of key actors. The results revealed that the European Union Whistleblower Protection Directive emphasises the importance of awareness, accessibility, and trust in the reporting process for effective whistleblowing (Criminal Law Response to Corruption Crimes 2024). In this regard, results are consistent with the literature, indicating the existence of institutional mechanisms to address corruption but a concern for implementation. Whistleblowers from other sources tend to report formally because of institutional support.

This study, however, demonstrates that the informal reporting system has been prevalent among football stakeholders in Zimbabwe. The disparity between the policies and the practices in the Zimbabwean football environment may appear to be larger than that of some developed footballing environments. A possible factor to this is that football might not have put enough structures in place, but not necessarily invested in education and awareness programmes for stakeholders. Stakeholders might know about anti-corruption systems, but may not understand how to access or use them. Furthermore, weak communication systems, lack of formal training systems and institutional distrust may result in the informal reporting system being used instead of formal reporting systems. The complex reporting process may also mean that people don't use such a programme because they are not sufficiently informed about how to report.The results of this research are important to football governance and anti-corruption policy. It's not reasonable to expect soccer's governing bodies to only establish reporting lines. These stakeholders must be aware of these reporting relationships. Greater awareness awareness and simpler reporting procedures can help to reduce the misuse of existing mechanisms via regular integrity training. In other words, our research lends support to institutional theory in that having institutions is not enough, but they need to be accepted and used by the stakeholders if they are going to be

effective. Therefore, the whistleblowing mechanisms will be much better in Zimbabwe football, by making them more accessible and raising awareness.

4.9.2 Objective 2: Factors discouraging reporting of bribery

The findings suggest that participants perceived fear of retaliation, confidentiality concerns, institutional uncertainty and possible political or administrative interference as barriers to reporting. Any quantitative association must be verified from the reconciled dataset before it is discussed as an inferential result. The qualitative findings are best interpreted as perceptions within the achieved sample.

In the developing world, Yusufs and Hassans (2026) found that the nature of patronage networks and political influence and informal power often erodes formal accountability systems. Petracovschi et al. (2025) also pointed out that the social and professional nature of football environments creates close relationships that increase difficulties of anonymous communication and the fear of retaliation. The results are therefore largely consistent with the existing literature on the barriers to whistleblowing. However, the discovery indicates that the problem in Zimbabwean football could be more entrenched given the extent of the football governance structures' interconnections. Furthermore, there does not seem to be trust in current protection measures. Moderate confidence in legal jurisdiction with stronger protection system; participants in this study had a wide-spread level of scepticism about the current protection system's capacity to protect those who report corruption. This could have several reasons. To begin with, the system of football officiating is marked by closely-knit professional networks where individuals are in regular contact. Once reports are submitted, it is difficult to keep anything confidential, so. Moreover, stakeholders may not report wrongdoing due to past or perceived ineffective investigations.

Third, if there is no visible case of effective protected whistleblowing, this could help further convince employees that there are significant personal and professional costs to coming forward with allegations of corruption. However, this may have been exacerbated by a culture of non-reporting.

The discussion indicates that reporting safeguards need to be perceived as credible, confidential and independent. These are implications for system design, not evidence that particular reforms will increase reporting or reduce bribery.

4.9.3 Objective 3: Perceived adequacy and implementation of whistleblower protection measures

Participants expressed concerns about the adequacy and implementation of whistleblower protections. The quantitative tables should be reanalysed before any statistical interpretation is retained. The present study does not provide outcome evidence that current protections do or do not reduce bribery.

The most prevalent themes found were poor whistleblowers' rights, low levels of trust in whistleblowers' protection systems, concerns about the risk of victimisation and the lack of successful whistleblowing. This research was similar to studies that have been undertaken on whistleblowing mechanisms; Mantzaris & Saruchera (2024), discovered that whistleblowing legislation to combat corruption was in existence in Zimbabwe but it was weak in terms of its effect as there was lack of institutional and institutional capacity to ensure that the legislation is consistently implemented; while, Shulhan & Buchynska (2026) found that in order for whistleblowing protection mechanisms to be effective, they should be accompanied by strong safeguards, timely investigation, confidentiality, a prohibition on victimisation and other forms of retaliation, and appropriate institutional measures or sanctions. Additionally, Chakraborty (2025) argue that it can be concluded that whistleblowing programmes fail where the stakeholders do not believe their report will elicit a response of substantive investigation, accountability of offenders or sanctions, or remedial measures to put an end to the violations. In general, the results are consistent with the literature, but further emphasize that the issue of poor enforcement is as important, if not more important, than actual gaps in the law. Even under the protection provisions, with the legal framework in place, stakeholders might be hesitant to report on corruption because of their lack of confidence that the provisions are actually being enforced in practice.

One possible interpretation is that perceptions of protection may depend on confidence in independence, funding, confidentiality and enforcement. This interpretation should be distinguished from claims about actual institutional performance.

Considering theory, the results add to the deterrence and institutional theories. People engage in a behaviour if they have reasonable belief and expectation that certain actions by the institutions can lead to consequences, either on themselves or on those who infringe their rights. Accountability procedures, combined with effective implementation and enforcement, are important in this process.

4.9.4 Objective 4: Development of a proposed integrated whistleblower framework

Zimbabwean football stakeholders were very supportive of the Whistleblower Reform. Other literature also found similar results and these results indicated that some mechanisms could support these reforms such as independent reporting channels, anonymous reporting channels, effective legal protections, awareness-raising initiatives with relevant stakeholders, etc. (Samadzada-Aliyeva, 2026; Criminal Law Response to Corruption Crimes, 2024; Reyes-Gonzalez et al., 2024; Mbimbi et al. 2025; Zhang and Yoon, 2023). The key issues raised were safe systems for whistleblowing; they mentioned that concerns of personal safety and confidentiality would prevent whistleblowing and this would need to be addressed (qualitative study findings).

The vast amount of literature in the anti-corruption governance and whistleblower protection literature confirmed this. These findings seemed to come from us, with several possible explanations. Fighting corruption issues in the football ecosystem through single interventions was not likely to solve the problem, as it is a complex issue that needs integrated solutions.

The relatively high number of players who seemed to endorse the aspects of digital reporting and anonymity in the reporting tools, can be attributed to concerns of retribution and confidentiality, discussed in our work and elsewhere (Fick and Mbimbi, 2024) in relation to whistleblowing and victim support in Zimbabwean football.

The same applies to those who have taken sides with the educational component of such interventions, which could be linked with our Objective 1 finding on awareness-raising about corruption. The immediate and tangible outcomes of this study would be the creation and enactment of a comprehensive approach that sees improvements in legislation and policy; the

formation of bodies to investigate Football matters; the use of innovative Football reporting technologies and the regularisation of awareness training for everyone involved in Public policymaking. This can lead to more reports and promote integrity in the Zimbabwean football.

4.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter compares the qualitative and quantitative strands and develops a proposed framework, but the quantitative evidence remains subject to the data audit. The final chapter should therefore use only verified statistics and reconciled participant totals.

Besides, the paper also found non-whistleblowing elements among stakeholders as including a) fear of victimization and retaliation; b) career-related impact resulting from whistling; c) distrust of whistle-blowing mechanisms; and d) a very close-knit network operating within the football structures and circles. The data collected pointed out that the methods available for whistleblowing and the protection of whistleblowers in football, in general, were judged as not only very inadequate but also ineffective in ensuring that whistleblowers are safe when they expose fraud or dishonesty issues.

Based on the study, the stakeholders felt there was a major trust issue with the protection systems presently available in the area, and no example was found in which a person who exposed corruption was sufficiently assured of their safety. What is more, the statistical data revealed that respondents were in a very strong agreement on aspects like strengthened legal protection, anonymized whistleblower reporting, setting up of independent oversight, and stakeholders being made more accountable. Besides, the paper has brought to the surface tons of valuable suggestions, for instance secure confidential and anonymous channels should be set up to make complaints; investigations must be impartial; whistleblowers should have legal protection; and a digital platform should be developed to enable and facilitate reporting of corruption, coupled with on-going training and awareness to resist bribery in football. Because of all the points raised, the 3D Integrated Whistleblower Structure was designed by the paper with its three pillars: institutional Governance, Protection and Reporting Mechanisms and Cultural and Stakeholder empowerment to not only fight bribing but also enhance whistle-blowing practice in the football sector. Ultimately, the results imply that whistle-blowing systems have the

opportunity to go beyond written policies and be put into practice by combining effective institutional governance, Stakeholder trust, legal protections, technological innovations in reporting, and solid training programs to build capacity for combating corruption in football. In the forthcoming chapter, the author(s) will present the conclusions recommendations the research's limitations, and its future directions.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations and implications derived from the study on developing a proposed integrated whistleblower framework for addressing bribery risks in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe. It addresses the four subsidiary objectives, the study limitations, and implications for practice, theory and further research.

The study examined stakeholders' perceptions of existing reporting and protection arrangements, factors that may discourage reporting, and measures that could strengthen a whistleblower framework. The conclusions in this chapter are limited to evidence that can be supported after the participant and statistical data audit.

5.2 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The findings are organised around the four subsidiary objectives. Because the participant totals and statistical outputs require reconciliation, only verified qualitative themes and cautious interpretations should be retained in the final submission.

5.2.1 Existing whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms

The final summary of Objective One should state only verified findings. At present, the most defensible formulation is that participants reported awareness and accessibility concerns regarding formal reporting and anti-corruption arrangements. The unresolved statistical values have therefore been removed from the prose until the analysis dataset is verified.

Stakeholders are not sure whether there is a reporting system in place that is confidential and anonymous or whether there would be investigations as a result.

The close nature of networks in football circles and in small referee community poses challenges to effective anonymous reporting.

Factors that deter reporting of bribery:

Participants described fear of retaliation, loss of appointments, career consequences, confidentiality concerns and social stigma as barriers to reporting. The study does not estimate the prevalence of bribery and cannot infer a causal relationship between these perceptions and reporting rates.

Another major obstacle was a lack of trust, confidentiality and anonymity in the existing reporting system. Unique concerns were raised about the feasibility of existing mechanisms to safeguard participants' identities, and many participants felt that reporting would not result in any meaningful investigations or consequences for perpetrators. These worries were exacerbated by the close-knit and interdependent nature of the football networks, with the small size of the football officiating community making anonymity especially challenging.

5.2.3 Perceived adequacy and implementation of whistleblower protection measures

Participants described concerns about the adequacy, implementation and credibility of whistleblower protection arrangements. These concerns should be reported as perceptions within the study context. The study does not provide outcome evidence that current protections reduce bribery.

The qualitative and quantitative strands may be compared after the statistical and participant-flow audit. Until then, claims of corroboration should be framed as provisional convergence rather than confirmed corroboration.

The marked ANOVA values for legal protection, independent bodies and related measures must be rerun. The study may report stakeholder support for proposed reforms only after the analysis dataset and test specifications have been verified.

5.2.4 Measures for strengthening the proposed whistleblower framework

The recommendations emerging from the study focus on stronger protection, secure reporting channels, independent handling of allegations, clearer procedures, training and awareness. They should be presented as proposed measures requiring feasibility assessment, authorisation, resources, safeguards and measurable implementation indicators.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

5.3.1 Objective One conclusion:

The findings suggest that participants perceived formal reporting and anti-corruption arrangements to exist within elite football governance, while awareness, accessibility and confidence in those arrangements were uneven. These findings should be interpreted as perceptions within the verified sample rather than proof that the institutional mechanisms are ineffective in all settings.

5.3.2 Conclusion on Objective Two

Participants described fear of retaliation, confidentiality concerns, uncertainty about institutional response and perceived weaknesses in protection as barriers to reporting. These findings identify reporting-risk perceptions that may discourage disclosure; they do not estimate the hidden incidence of bribery.

5.3.3 Objective Three conclusion

5.3.3 Objective Three conclusion

The study cannot conclude from the current evidence that existing protections are ineffective in reducing bribery. It can conclude more cautiously that participants perceived gaps in adequacy, implementation and confidence in protection arrangements within the study context.

5.3.4 Conclusion on Objective Four

The study findings and literature support a proposed framework centred on stronger legal and institutional safeguards, secure reporting channels, independent handling of allegations, awareness and capacity building, and clear accountability. These are proposed measures for future implementation and evaluation, not outcomes demonstrated by the present study.

5.3.5 Overall Conclusion

Overall, the findings indicate that stakeholders perceive reporting arrangements to be constrained by awareness gaps, protection concerns and fear of adverse consequences. The study therefore proposes an integrated framework for further stakeholder review, feasibility assessment and future implementation research. It does not claim that the proposed framework has reduced bribery.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study had several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design captured perceptions at one point in time and therefore could not establish trends or causal effects on bribery. Second, the sensitivity of the topic created a risk of social-desirability bias and under-disclosure. Third, the dissertation contains unresolved differences in qualitative and quantitative sample denominators, which affect the auditability of descriptive and inferential results until the raw data are reconciled. Fourth, the quantitative ANOVA tables contain changing analysis Ns, unnamed factors and duplicated or non-estimable rows that require re-analysis. Fifth, the documented ethics and organisational permission record is incomplete in the present submission. Sixth, the literature and institutional source base requires a full verification audit. Seventh, the study does not provide sufficient evidence of empirical validation of the proposed framework.

Secondly, it is possible that the nature of the topic under study could have affected some of the research participants' responses to the issues of bribery, corruption and whistleblowing in the football governance.

Football governance is a sensitive professional environment, and some participants may have moderated their responses because of fear of identification, reputational harm or professional consequences. This potential social-desirability and re-identification risk limits the strength of claims that can be made from self-reported data.

Third, there was variation in response rates among the different stakeholders, with the lowest rates of response among football administrators (50% qualitative questionnaires, 60% quantitative questionnaires). Administrators have potentially higher institutional legitimacy and authority and may have been held back by the fear of exposing institutional governance gaps, consequences or perhaps even penalties. This difference in participation rates may be a limitation that hinders the generalizability of administrative perspective results on whistleblower system.

The study focused on elite football competitions and therefore should not be generalised to lower divisions, amateur football, other sports or the Zimbabwean population as a whole. Geographic coverage and stakeholder representation also depend on the verified recruitment records.

Accordingly, transferability beyond the achieved eligible sample is limited and should be supported by clear description of the study context rather than population-wide claims.

The proposed framework should be treated as a development output pending transparent stakeholder or expert feasibility validation. A final implementation-ready version should specify reporting entry points, independent triage and investigation, evidence handling, due process, confidentiality and information-security controls, retaliation response, governance authority, resources, implementation stages and measurable indicators such as awareness, uptake, response time, protection actions and case-resolution reporting.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings have significant implications for practice, theory, and future research. These implications are discussed in the following subsections.

5.5.1 Recommendations to ZIFA

ZIFA should consider establishing or strengthening an independent integrity function with a documented mandate for receiving, triaging and referring integrity reports. Any new mechanism should be authorised under the applicable governance framework, include confidentiality and retaliation safeguards, define escalation routes, and publish measurable service standards such as acknowledgement time, triage time, case-status communication and annual integrity reporting.

Before implementation, ZIFA and relevant referee structures should introduce role-specific integrity and whistleblowing training, with completion rates and post-training knowledge checks used as measurable indicators. The programme should be reviewed annually and revised using documented evidence.

5.5.2 Recommendations to the Sports and Recreation Commission (SRC).

The Sports and Recreation Commission should clarify the minimum integrity and reporting standards expected of national sport organisations, subject to its statutory mandate. Governance audits should record whether reporting channels, safeguarding procedures, training and case-management controls are present and functioning, rather than assuming that a policy document alone demonstrates effectiveness.

Where authorised and resourced, the SRC could consider an independent sport-integrity oversight arrangement with clear terms of reference, conflict-of-interest controls, reporting lines, and a defined review timetable.

The SRC should work in conjunction with Parliament and other involved parties to improve whistleblowing rights in sport and football governance in Zimbabwe. The SRC may allocate funds for such programs; they must establish whistleblower protection mechanisms and anti-corruption awareness initiatives at various national sport associations.

5.5.3 Recommendations to the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC)

ZACC and relevant football authorities may consider a formal cooperation arrangement, subject to their respective legal mandates, to clarify referral, evidence-sharing and investigation procedures for substantiated corruption allegations.

ZACC needs to tailor training seminars on anti-corruption issues at least on an annual basis for football administrators, integrity officers and referees. For improved management of these offenses, ZACC ought to designate a special reporting classification for sports-related corruption in the present reporting frameworks. 5.5.4 Recommendations to the Ministry of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture.

This ministry ought to team up with Parliament and other relevant organizations to upgrade the legal framework on whistleblowing rights for football and sport governance, particularly The Ministry could secure financial allocations to support activities aimed at implementing and

strengthening integrity management, enhancing anti-corruption awareness, and setting up effective whistleblower protections within national sport bodies in Zimbabwe.

The Ministry responsible for sport could consider developing a national sport-integrity guideline, subject to consultation, legal authority and budget. Any such policy should specify responsible actors, implementation phases, minimum safeguards, resource requirements and measurable indicators.

5.5.6 Recommendations to Football Clubs

Football clubs could designate an integrity focal point or officer, subject to their governance capacity, to provide information on reporting routes and safeguards. Clubs should record training coverage, awareness levels, reported concerns and case-referral activity while protecting the identities of reporters.

Players should receive role-appropriate integrity education covering corruption risks, reporting routes and available safeguards during onboarding and pre-season training. Clubs should adopt a clear non-retaliation policy for good-faith reports, define prohibited retaliation, and provide a documented route for escalating concerns. Implementation should be supported by training records, safeguarding controls and periodic review.

5.5.7 Recommendations for Future Research.

Future research should evaluate the implementation and feasibility of secure whistleblowing channels, including uptake, response times, protection outcomes and user trust. Longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs would be needed to assess whether implementation is associated with changes in reporting patterns or verified integrity outcomes.

In parallel studies comparing football associations of various African nations would identify the most successful practices in preventing bribery, protecting whistleblowers and ensuring good governance.

For long-term evaluations, it is advisable to conduct time-series or panel analysis that links any changes to whistleblowing protections with resulting trends in both corruption reporting and general integrity in Zimbabwean football.

This chapter summarised the study's objective-linked conclusions and recommendations. Because the evidence trail requires further reconciliation, the final submission should be regenerated from verified participant records and statistical output. No conclusion should claim that the proposed framework reduced bribery or that existing protections were causally effective.

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APPENDICES

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCES

1 June 2026

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST FOR ORGANISATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY

This letter confirms that [Student Name] (Student Number: [Insert Number]) is a registered Bachelor of Science Honours in Sports Science and Management student in the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences at Bindura University of Science Education.

The student is conducting a research project entitled: “[Insert Title of Study]” under the supervision of the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences. The study is an essential requirement for completing the degree programme.

We kindly request your organisation’s cooperation in facilitating the collection of data relevant to the study. Your participation will contribute significantly to the successful completion of this

academic research and to the generation of knowledge that may benefit the sport industry and related sectors.

Participation is voluntary, and all information obtained will be treated as strictly confidential. Organisations and participants will remain anonymous in all reports and publications unless explicit written consent is granted.

A copy or summary of the completed study may be made available to participating organisations upon request.

For any clarification, please contact:
Dr. Lysias Tapiwanashe Charumbira
Chairperson, Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences
Email: lcharumbira@buse.ac.zw
Tel: +263 772 916 712

Thank you for your valued support and cooperation.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. Lysias Tapiwanashe Charumbira
Chairperson
Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Likert Scale Questionnaire

Title of the Study

Integrating Whistleblower Frameworks to Curb Bribery in the Officiating of Elite Football Matches in Zimbabwe

Instructions to Respondents

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by ticking the appropriate response.

Scale	Meaning
1	Strongly Disagree (SD)
2	Disagree (D)
3	Neutral (N)
4	Agree (A)
5	Strongly Agree (SA)

Section A: Demographic Information

Gender

Age Group

Role in Football (Referee, Assistant Referee, Match Commissioner, Administrator, Coach, Player, Supporter, Other)

Years of Experience in Elite Football

Highest Educational Qualification

Section B: Existing Whistleblowing and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Elite football in Zimbabwe has formal procedures for reporting bribery and corruption.					
2	Match officials are aware of the available whistleblowing channels in					

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
	football administration.					
3	Football authorities regularly educate stakeholders about anti-corruption policies.					
4	Reporting systems for bribery cases are accessible to football stakeholders.					
5	Football governing bodies take corruption allegations seriously.					
6	Existing anti-corruption mechanisms are clearly communicated to match officials.					

Section C: Factors Discouraging Reporting of Bribery

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
7	Fear of victimisation discourages officials from reporting bribery.					
8	Match officials fear losing their jobs or assignments after reporting corruption.					
9	Lack of confidentiality discourages whistleblowing in elite football.					
10	Some stakeholders believe reporting bribery will not lead to meaningful action.					
11	Political and administrative interference discourages whistleblowing.					
12	Personal relationships within football structures discourage reporting corruption.					

Section D: Effectiveness of Existing Whistleblower Protection Measures

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
13	Existing whistleblower protection measures help reduce bribery in football officiating.					
14	Individuals who report corruption are adequately protected by football authorities.					
15	Anonymous reporting systems are effective in encouraging whistleblowing.					
16	Investigations into reported bribery cases are conducted fairly and professionally.					

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
17	Sanctions against corrupt officials deter future bribery in football officiating.					
18	Existing whistleblower policies have improved accountability in elite football.					

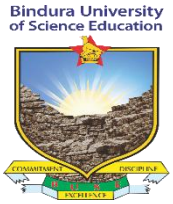
Section E: Strengthening Whistleblower Frameworks

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
19	Stronger legal protection would encourage more people to report bribery.					
20	Independent anti-corruption bodies should oversee football officiating.					
21	Regular ethics training can reduce bribery in football officiating.					
22	Confidential digital reporting platforms would improve whistleblowing practices.					
23	Whistleblowers should receive institutional support after reporting corruption.					
24	Integrating stronger whistleblower frameworks can significantly curb bribery in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe.					

Optional Open-Ended Question

What additional measures would you recommend to strengthen whistleblower systems and reduce bribery in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE



BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCES

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Topic

Integrating Whistleblower Frameworks to Curb Bribery in the Officiating of Elite Football Matches in Zimbabwe

Good day.

My name is, BSc2641a student pursuing a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree (HBScSSM). I am conducting a research study titled:

Integrating Whistleblower Frameworks to Curb Bribery in the Officiating of Elite Football Matches in Zimbabwe.

The purpose of this interview is to gather information and views on bribery in football officiating, whistleblower systems, and measures that can strengthen transparency and accountability in Zimbabwean football.

Your participation is voluntary, and all responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and used strictly for academic purposes only.

Consent

1. Do you consent to participate in this interview?

Yes
No

2. Do you consent to the recording of this interview for academic purposes only?

Yes
No

Section A: Background Information

1. What is your role in football?

2. How long have you been involved in football activities?

Section B: Existing Whistleblowing and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms

(Research Question 1: What whistleblowing and anti-corruption mechanisms currently exist in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe?)

3. What whistleblowing or anti-corruption mechanisms currently exist in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe?

4. How aware are football stakeholders of these whistleblowing systems?

5. How accessible are the current reporting systems to referees and other football stakeholders?

6. In your opinion, how effective are the existing anti-corruption mechanisms in football officiating?

Section C: Factors Discouraging Reporting of Bribery

(Research Question 2: What factors discourage match officials and stakeholders from reporting bribery in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe?)

7. What factors discourage match officials and stakeholders from reporting bribery in football officiating?

8. How does fear of victimization or intimidation affect reporting of corruption in football?

9. To what extent does lack of confidentiality discourage whistleblowing?

10. How do cultural attitudes toward authority influence the reporting of bribery in football?

11. Do football stakeholders trust authorities to handle bribery reports fairly and confidentially? Please explain.

Section D: Effectiveness of Existing Whistleblower Protection Measures

(Research Question 3: How effective are existing whistleblower protection measures in curbing bribery in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe?)

12. How effective are the current whistleblower protection measures in Zimbabwean football?

13. Are individuals who report corruption adequately protected from retaliation? Please explain.

14. What weaknesses exist within the current whistleblower protection systems?

15. Have current whistleblower measures helped reduce bribery in football officiating? Why or why not?

Section E: Measures to Strengthen Whistleblower Frameworks

(Research Question 4: What measures can strengthen whistleblower frameworks to curb bribery in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe?)

16. What measures can strengthen whistleblower frameworks in Zimbabwean football?

17. How can football governing bodies improve transparency and accountability in officiating?

18. What role should legal protection play in encouraging whistleblowing?

19. Would anonymous reporting systems improve reporting of bribery cases? Please explain.

20. What recommendations would you give to football authorities regarding anti-corruption efforts in football officiating?

Primary Research Question

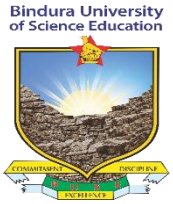
(How can integrating whistleblower frameworks curb bribery in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe?)

21. In your opinion, how can integrating whistleblower frameworks help curb bribery in elite football officiating in Zimbabwe?

Closing Question

22. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding bribery, whistleblowing, or football officiating in Zimbabwe?

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWS



BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCES

Research Title:

Integrating whistleblower framework to curb bribery in the officiating of elite football matches in Zimbabwe,

Researcher: BSc2641

Institution: Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE)

You are invited to participate in this research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate barriers to reporting bribery and the effectiveness of whistleblower protection mechanisms in Zimbabwe.

Your participation involves taking part in an interview lasting approximately 20–30 minutes. Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You may also choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable.

All information provided will be treated confidentially and used for academic purposes only. Your identity will not be disclosed in any reports or publications arising from this study.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researcher.

Consent Statement

I have read and understood the information above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Date: _____

☐ I agree to participate in this interview.

☐ I consent to the interview being audio-recorded. (Optional)