

A MARKET ANALYSIS TO ASSESS THE POTENTIAL FOR BASEBALL IN INDIA

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the game of baseball—a sport that embodies the spirit of perseverance, teamwork, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. It is a tribute to all those who have influenced my journey both on and off the field.

To my family, for their unwavering support and sacrifice that allowed me to chase my dreams with a bat in hand and determination in my heart. To my teammates, who stood by me like steadfast teammates, offering camaraderie and support through wins and losses alike. Your friendship has been a constant source of strength and motivation. This dedication goes out to the entire baseball community—coaches, teammates and opponents who share a profound love for the game. This thesis is not just a scholarly pursuit but a homage to the lessons learned, and the challenges overcome in the pursuit of greatness, both on the diamond and in the realm of academia.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the potential for introducing and popularizing baseball in India, a nation influenced by cricket and other traditional sports. Despite the global popularity of baseball, its market feasibility and consumer acceptance in India remain unexamined. This study aims to fill this gap by evaluating the market dynamics, consumer preferences, and strategic frameworks necessary for baseball's successful introduction into the Indian sports landscape.

Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research synthesizes data from extensive literature reviews, market analysis reports, consumer surveys, and interviews with sports management professionals. The literature review highlights the global status of baseball, focusing on its historical growth trajectories in regions like India and examining the factors contributing to its success or failure. It also provides a comparative analysis with cricket, identifying potential synergies and barriers to baseball's acceptance among Indian audiences.

The research identifies several critical factors influencing the potential success of baseball in India, including cultural compatibility, infrastructure availability, and the role of media and marketing in shaping public perception. Furthermore, it delves into the strategic implications of global sports management practices, drawing parallels with the Indian context to propose a tailored approach for market entry. Findings suggest a significant interest in diverse sports among India's younger demographics, driven by increased international exposure and a growing appetite for new sports experiences. However, challenges such as limited infrastructure, the need for grassroots development programs, and competition with established sports like cricket pose considerable barriers to baseball's widespread adoption.

Strategically, the thesis proposes a multi-faceted approach to introducing baseball in India, emphasizing the importance of localized marketing strategies, partnerships with educational institutions for talent development, and leveraging digital platforms for engagement and fan base growth. Policy recommendations focus on government and private sector collaboration to develop necessary sports infrastructure and promote baseball as an inclusive, accessible sport.

Conclusively, the thesis presents a comprehensive framework for assessing the potential for baseball in India, offering insights into market dynamics, consumer behavior, and strategic entry points. It contributes to the broader discourse on sports globalization, providing a roadmap for introducing international sports into new markets.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic Analysis of Survey Respondents	38
Table 2: Barriers for adoption of Baseball	42
Table 3: Influence of celebrities and Sports Influencers by Age Group	50
Table 4: Influence of international success of Indian baseball teams by Age Group.....	51
Table 5: Influence of Celebrities and Sports Influencers by Occupation	52
Table 6: Chi-Square Test Results	63
Table 7: Chi-Square Test on Familiarity with Baseball and Interest in Future Events	64
Table 8: Scale of Numeric Encoding	65
Table 9: Correlation Coefficient and P-value.....	65
Table 10: Hypothesis of Positive Perception of Baseball Among Young Adults	70
Table 11: Hypothesis of Correlation Between Familiarity and Openness to Baseball.....	70

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Demographic Response Split.....	35
Figure 2: Interest in Baseball by Age Group.....	36
Figure 3: Occupation Distribution	37
Figure 4: Baseball Playing Experience	37
Figure 5: Distribution of Interest in Baseball	39
Figure 6: Distribution of Familiarity Levels	40
Figure 7: Appealing Aspects of Baseball	41
Figure 8: Perceived barriers to participate or follow Baseball	42
Figure 9: Frequency of Keywords in Recommendations	45
Figure 10: Influence of Social Media on Interest in Baseball	47
Figure 11: Interest in Future Baseball Events	48
Figure 12: Impact of Cultural and Social Factors on Baseball Popularity	49
Figure 13: Thematic Analysis Mind Map	53

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IPL.....	Indian Premier League
LDA.....	Latent Dirichlet Allocation
MLB.....	Major League Baseball
MLS.....	Major League Soccer
NBA.....	National Basketball Association
NPB.....	Nippon Professional Baseball
OLS.....	Ordinary Least Squares
SWOT.....	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication.....	2
Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	4
List Of Tables	5
List Of Figures	6
List Of Abbreviations.....	7
1. Introduction	12
1.1 Background of the Study.....	12
1.2 Problem Statement.....	13
1.3 Aims and Objectives	15
1.4 Research Questions and Hypothesis	16
1.5 Scope of the Study.....	17
1.6 Significance of the Study	19
2. Literature Review	21
2.1 Global Popularity of Baseball	22
2.2 Sports Market Dynamics in India.....	23
2.3 Role of Sports Analytics in Market Strategy	24
2.4 Consumer Behavior in Sports	25
2.5 Policy and Infrastructure Influence	25
2.6 Impact of Sports Ecosystem and Grassroot Development.....	27
3. Research Methodology	29
3.1 Research Design	29
3.1.1 Quantitative Research	29
3.1.2 Qualitative Research	30

3.2	Data Collection	30
3.2.1	Interview Guidelines and Sampling Strategy	31
3.2.2	Survey Design and Sample Selection	31
3.2.3	Summary of Data Collection Approach	31
3.3	Data Analysis	32
3.3.1	Quantitative Analysis	32
3.3.2	Qualitative Analysis	32
3.3.3	Integration of Findings	33
3.4	Ethical Considerations	33
3.5	Limitations of Methodology	34
4.	Analysis	35
4.1	Demographic Analysis	35
4.1.1	Age Group Distribution	35
4.1.2	Current Occupation Distribution	36
4.1.3	Baseball Playing Experience	37
4.2	Interest and Awareness Levels	39
4.3	Perceived Barriers to Adoption	41
4.4	Strategic Opportunities for Baseball Introduction	43
4.4.1	Topic Modelling Analysis	43
4.4.2	Interpretation of Topic Modelling Analysis	44
4.4.3	Keyword Frequency	45
4.4.4	Sentiment Analysis	46
4.5	Consumer Behavior	46
4.5.1	Influence of Social Media	46
4.5.2	Interest in Future Baseball Events	48
4.5.3	Impact of Cultural and Social Factors	48
4.5.4	Key Factors for Growth	50

4.6	Thematic Analysis	52
4.6.1	Top Codes	52
4.6.2	Top Themes	53
4.6.3	Expansion of Themes	54
4.7	Integration of Findings	58
4.7.1	Integrated Insights	58
4.8	SWOT Analysis	59
4.8.1	Strengths	59
4.8.2	Weaknesses	60
4.8.3	Opportunities	60
4.8.4	Threats	61
5	Results And Discussions	62
5.1	Overview of Key Findings	62
5.1.1	Interpreting the R-Squared Value	62
5.1.2	Interpreting the Chi-Squared Test	63
5.1.3	Results of Correlation Analysis	65
5.1.4	Regression Analysis on Search Interest for Baseball in India	66
5.1.5	Key Results and Discussions	68
5.2	Interest and Market Potential	70
5.2.1	Hypothesis Analysis	70
5.3	Strategic Framework for Baseball Promotion	72
5.3.1	Infrastructural Development	72
5.3.2	Policy Recommendations	72
5.3.3	Addressing Identified Challenges	73
5.3.4	Leveraging Technology for Engagement	73
5.4	Policy Implications	74
5.4.1	Key Insights for Strategic Engagement	74

5.4.2	Recommendations for Stakeholders	74
5.4.3	Creating a Conducive Environment.....	75
6	Conclusions And Recommendations	76
6.1	Recap of Objectives, Findings, and Implications	76
6.1.1	Recap of Objectives	76
6.1.2	Key Findings and Strategic Implications	77
6.2	Practical Applications	77
6.2.1	For Policymakers	78
6.2.2	Educational Programs	78
6.2.3	For Sports Management Groups.....	78
6.2.4	Talent Development Pathways	78
6.2.5	For Baseball Associations	79
6.3	Study Limitations	80
	References	81
	Appendix	88
	Appendix 1 - Research Proposal.....	88
	Appendix 2 - Ethics form	88
	Appendix 3 – User Interview Questionnaire	88
	Appendix 4 – Survey Questionnaire	88
	Appendix 5 – Survey Response Raw Data.....	88
	Appendix 6 – Google Survey Screens.....	88
	Appendix 7 – Raw Data Analysis using Python.....	88
	Appendix 8 – Understanding Statistical Tests	88

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era where globalization has blurred the lines between local and global sports cultures, the exploration of baseball's potential in India represents a compelling study of cultural integration, economic opportunity, and sports development. While cricket reigns supreme in India's sporting landscape, the global appeal of baseball, coupled with India's burgeoning youth demographic and increasing digital connectivity, presents an unprecedented opportunity for diversifying the country's sports offerings (Singh & Singh, 2022).

Sports in India is at an intriguing crossroads, where traditional games like cricket and kabaddi continue to dominate public interest, yet there is an emerging curiosity and openness towards exploring international sports (Decathlon, 2022). As India continues to emerge as a global economic and cultural powerhouse, its sports market evolution offers a unique canvas for the introduction of baseball. This thesis not only explores the feasibility of such an effort but also seeks to lay the groundwork for future research and practical implementations in sports globalization efforts (Fidler, 2000).

A mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analyses, serves as the foundation for this investigation. Surveys, interviews, and case studies of other sports' introduction in similar markets provide a multi-dimensional view of baseball's potential entry strategies into India.

1.1 Background of the Study

India's sporting landscape is as diverse and complex as its cultural heritage, encompassing a wide range of traditional and modern sports that reflect the country's rich history and dynamic present. Historically, sports in India have not only served as a means of physical fitness and entertainment but also played a significant role in the cultural and social fabric of the society (Sadasivan, 2023). Traditional sports like Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, and wrestling are deeply rooted in India, highlight the indigenous athletic spirit and community engagement. However, the onset of globalization in the late 20th century initiated a transformative shift in the Indian sports domain, ushering in an era of increased exposure to and adoption of global sports (Rumford, 2007).

Cricket, introduced by the British, is a prime example of a colonial sport that became an integral part of India's national identity, dominating the sports culture to such an extent that

it often shadows other sports, including those traditional to India (Devan, 2012). The phenomenon of cricket's dominance provides a fascinating backdrop against which the introduction and acceptance of other global sports, such as football and basketball, can be examined. These sports have carved their niches, benefiting from globalization, urbanization, and the proliferation of digital media, creating a more diversified sports culture within the urban centers of India (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004). Amidst this evolving sports landscape, baseball stands out as a globally popular sport with a rich history and cultural significance, particularly in countries like the United States, Japan, and South Korea, where it is not just a sport but a significant aspect of the cultural fabric. Originating in the 19th century, baseball quickly became America's national pastime, with its influence spreading to neighboring countries and beyond (Kelly, 2007).

The Major League Baseball (MLB) in the United States and Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) in Japan are testaments to the sport's economic and cultural impact, with both leagues contributing significantly to the global sports economy through merchandise sales, broadcasting rights, and international player exchanges (Métraux, 2016). The global outreach initiatives of leagues such as MLB have aimed to popularize baseball across continents, including Europe and Asia, through grassroots programs, international games, and academy setups. These efforts reflect a strategic move to globalize the sport, recognizing the potential of emerging markets and the role of sports in bridging cultural gaps (Walton, 2019).

However, in India, baseball remains relatively underrepresented and unexplored, juxtaposed against a backdrop of a country that is rapidly embracing globalization in various sectors, including sports. The introduction of baseball into the Indian sports market poses a unique set of challenges and opportunities, reflecting broader themes of cultural integration, market dynamics, and the globalization of sports (Maguire, 1999). Understanding the historical context of sports in India, the global popularity of baseball, and the mechanisms of sports globalization provides a foundational framework for exploring the potential of baseball in India. This exploration is critical, given India's burgeoning youth population, increasing digital connectivity, and a growing appetite for diverse sports experiences, making it a fertile ground for introducing and integrating global sports like baseball (Johnson et al., 2019).

1.2 Problem Statement

In the vast and vibrant tapestry of India's sports culture, where cricket commands an almost religious fervor and traditional games like kabaddi captivate millions, the introduction of

baseball presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. The core dilemma explored in this thesis revolves around unraveling the intricacies of integrating baseball—a sport with deep roots in American culture—into the Indian sports ecosystem, a domain where cricket reigns supreme, and other global sports vie for attention and acceptance (Chaudhary, 2020).

The barriers to baseball's acceptance in India are mixed, encompassing infrastructural inadequacies, societal preferences, and a general lack of awareness about the sport. Unlike cricket, which has a well-established infrastructure spanning coaching facility, stadiums, and a robust grassroots development program, baseball lacks these foundational elements in India (Bateman & Binns, 2014). The absence of dedicated baseball fields, limited access to quality equipment, and a dearth of experienced coaches are significant obstacles that hinder the development of the sport at the grassroots level. Moreover, societal preferences heavily tilted towards cricket and, to a lesser extent, football, and badminton, pose a formidable challenge. These sports not only enjoy widespread popularity but also command substantial media coverage, corporate sponsorship, and governmental support, factors that are crucial for nurturing talent and building a sports culture (Tinaz & Knott, 2021).

Additionally, the general lack of awareness among the Indian populace about baseball—the rules, the stars, and its rich history—further complicates its acceptance. Baseball has yet to make its mark in the Indian sports landscape, where the narrative has been shaped by cricket's legacy and the recent surge in popularity of football and basketball, thanks to international leagues and aggressive marketing strategies. Overcoming these barriers requires a strategic approach that not only addresses the infrastructural and awareness gaps but also taps into the cultural fabric of India, fostering a connection between the sport and its potential audience (Khondker & Robertson, 2018).

The potential for cultural integration of baseball into India's sports culture lies in leveraging the country's increasing globalization, urbanization, and the burgeoning interest among the youth in exploring international sports. Theoretical frameworks in sports sociology and globalization suggest that sports can serve as a medium of cultural exchange, fostering mutual understanding and bridging cultural divides (Bairner, 2015). Drawing from successful case studies of sports integration in other countries, such as the popularity of baseball in Japan and Korea, and soccer in the United States, it becomes evident that strategic promotion, grassroots development, and adaptability to local contexts are key to the successful adoption of a foreign sport (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004).

This thesis posits that for baseball to gain a foothold in India, it must navigate the complex interplay of cultural preferences, infrastructural challenges, and competition from established sports. By examining the socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors that could influence baseball's acceptance and growth, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the potential pathways for integrating baseball into India's dynamic sports landscape (Sen, 2017). Through a comprehensive analysis that includes examining consumer behavior towards baseball, assessing the readiness of the existing sports infrastructure, and exploring strategic marketing and development initiatives, this thesis seeks to address the critical question: Can baseball carve a niche for itself in the heart of Indian sports enthusiasts, and if so, how? (Funk et al., 2008)

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this thesis is to meticulously evaluate the market potential for baseball in India, a nation where cricket not only dominates the sports landscape but also deeply influences the cultural fabric. This overarching goal is dissected into several focused objectives, each designed to illuminate different facets of baseball's potential integration into Indian society and the sports market at large.

- The main aim is to evaluate the potential market for baseball in a cricket-focused nation. This involves understanding the cultural, economic, and social factors that could make baseball a popular sport in India.
- To provide actionable insights and strategies for sports organizations, investors, and marketers considering introducing or expanding baseball in India.
- To add valuable knowledge to the fields of sports analytics and market strategy, particularly in the context of introducing a new sport in a diverse cultural setting like India.

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the market potential for baseball in India, analysing consumer interest, infrastructure readiness, and the competitive landscape of sports in the country. Here are the remaining objectives.

- To identify the primary drivers for baseball's potential growth in India.
- To apply business analytics methods to assess market potential and strategize baseball's expansion in India.
- To understand consumer behavior in relation to baseball in the Indian market.

- To analyze the impact of cultural and social factors on the acceptance of baseball in India.

By pursuing these objectives through the lenses of varied methodologies and theoretical frameworks, this study aims to contribute significantly to the understanding of how global sports like baseball can find a foothold in culturally distinct markets like India.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypothesis

The journey to explore baseball's market potential in India is guided by key research questions that seek to uncover the dynamics of consumer interest, the effectiveness of marketing strategies, and the infrastructural and cultural readiness for the sport's introduction. These questions are designed to penetrate the core of baseball's viability as a sport in the Indian context, where cricket looms large in the national psyche, and other sports vie for attention and resources.

Research Questions

- **What are the key factors driving the potential growth of baseball in India?**

This question aims to identify and understand the various elements that could contribute to or hinder baseball's popularity and acceptance among Indian audiences. It considers the broader implications of globalization, digital media's influence, and India's youthful demographic as potential catalysts for baseball's growth.

- **How can business analytics be applied to strategize the expansion of baseball in India?**

Here, the focus is on leveraging data and analytics to make informed decisions about introducing baseball to a new market. This involves analyzing consumer behavior, market trends, and competitive sports landscapes to craft strategies that are both effective and culturally sensitive.

- **What are the consumer behavior patterns regarding baseball in India?**

Understanding how potential fans perceive baseball, including their level of awareness, interest, and willingness to engage with the sport, is crucial. This question delves into the socio-cultural factors that shape sports consumption behaviors in India.

Hypotheses

To answer these research questions, the study posits the following hypotheses, each grounded in a blend of theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence from existing literature on sports globalization and consumer behavior.

Hypothesis for Primary Data

- **H1: There is a positive perception of baseball among young adults (aged 18-35) in India.**

The rationale behind this hypothesis is based on global trends showing increased openness among younger demographics to new and international sports, fueled by digital connectivity and cultural exchange (Filo et al., 2015).

- **H2: Awareness of international sports correlates with openness to baseball in India.**

Drawing from diffusion of innovations theory, this hypothesis suggests that exposure to and awareness of diverse sports can increase receptiveness to baseball. Research indicates that markets with high consumption of international sports media are more likely to show interest in adopting new sports (Kelly, 2007).

Hypotheses for Secondary Data

- **H1: The lack of infrastructure is a major barrier to the growth of baseball in India.**

Infrastructure, both physical and organizational, is a critical factor in the development and acceptance of any sport. This hypothesis is based on the premise that without adequate facilities, coaching, and institutional support, it will be challenging to cultivate a baseball culture in India (Bansal, 2023).

By exploring these hypotheses through the lens of my research questions, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the market potential for baseball in India, addressing both the challenges and opportunities inherent in introducing a new sport to a complex and dynamic market.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research meticulously draws the parameters within which the exploration of baseball's market potential in India will be conducted. Given the vast and diverse landscape of India's

population and cultural predilections, the study narrows its focus to urban populace. Metropolitan areas represent the vanguard of India's rapid urbanization and globalization, embodying a melting pot of cultures, preferences, and, crucially, a burgeoning interest in global sports phenomena. These urban locales, characterized by their higher exposure to international media, diverse population dynamics, and relatively greater disposable income levels, provide an ideal backdrop against which the acceptance and growth potential of baseball can be accurately gauged (Cohen, 2023).

Demographically, the study pays particular attention to the youth segment, aged between 18 to 35 years, a demographic cohort that not only forms a sizeable portion of India's population pyramid but also exhibits an openness to new experiences and cultural exchanges. This age group, often at the forefront of digital engagement and cultural trends, is pivotal in shaping the future sports landscape of India. Factors such as gender, economic status, and educational background within this demographic are also considered, given their potential influence on sports consumption patterns and preferences (Singh & Singh, 2022).

The study acknowledges certain inherent limitations that might affect the breadth and depth of its findings. The focus on urban centres, while strategic, may not fully capture the nuances of sports culture and acceptance in rural or semi-urban areas, where traditional sports continue to hold sway. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data through surveys and interviews could introduce biases related to self-perception and the social desirability of responses.

Deliberately, the research confines its exploration to the context of India, acknowledging the unique cultural, social, and economic fabric that distinguishes it from other global markets. Within India, the study's scope is further delimited to metropolitan areas, primarily due to their higher likelihood of cultural receptivity to a sport like baseball. The choice to focus on the 18 to 35 age demographic is informed by the hypothesis that this group's global exposure and media consumption patterns make them more likely to embracing baseball.

This clearly defined scope, with its acknowledged limitations and deliberate delimitations, ensures a focused investigation into the viability of baseball in India's urban centres and among its youth. By examining the intersections of culture and globalization within these parameters, the study aims to offer valuable insights into the pathways and challenges of introducing baseball to a new, dynamic market.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study extends beyond the immediate context of introducing baseball into the Indian sports market, it encompasses broader implications for the fields of sports management, globalization, and the strategic positioning of sports in emerging markets. By delving into the challenges and opportunities of popularizing baseball in India, this research not only fills a crucial gap in existing literature but also provides a comprehensive framework that stakeholders can leverage to navigate the complexities of sports globalization.

- **Contribution to Sports Management:** This thesis offers invaluable insights into the strategic considerations required to introduce and establish a new sport within a highly competitive and culturally rich market. It outlines effective strategies for sports organizations, investors, and marketers, emphasizing the importance of cultural adaptation, targeted marketing, and community engagement. The findings from this study can serve as a blueprint for managing sports ventures in diverse cultural settings, enhancing the toolkit available to sports management professionals worldwide.
- **Implications for Sports Globalization:** At the heart of this research is the exploration of how global sports can transcend cultural and geographical boundaries to find acceptance and popularity in new regions. The study's focus on baseball in India—a sport with little historical presence in the country—sheds light on the dynamics of sports globalization, offering a fresh perspective on the factors that influence the global diffusion of sports. This contributes to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which sports can become vehicles of cultural exchange, fostering global connectivity and mutual understanding.
- **Influencing Sports Marketing Strategies:** The analysis of consumer behavior, market potential, and promotional tactics discussed in this thesis provides valuable insights into the development of effective sports marketing strategies. By identifying the key drivers of consumer interest and the barriers to sports adoption, the study equips sports marketers with the knowledge to craft campaigns that resonate with target audiences, optimize market penetration, and build sustainable fan bases. These insights are particularly relevant in an era where digital media and online engagement play pivotal roles in shaping sports consumption patterns.
- **Informing Policy and Infrastructure Development:** Recognizing the critical role of infrastructure and policy in the development of sports, this study highlights the need for

supportive environments that can facilitate the growth of new sports like baseball. The recommendations provided could inform policymakers and sports authorities in their efforts to diversify the sports landscape, emphasizing the importance of investment in sports facilities, coaching programs, and grassroots initiatives. This has the potential to not only promote the growth of baseball but also contribute to the overall development of the sports sector in India.

- **Foundation for Future Research:** By offering a comprehensive analysis of baseball's introduction to the Indian market, this thesis lays the groundwork for future research in sports globalization and market analysis. It identifies areas that warrant further investigation, such as the long-term impact of cultural adaptation strategies, the role of digital media in sports promotion, and the comparative analysis of baseball's growth in other non-traditional markets. This study thus serves as a starting point for subsequent inquiries into the complex interplay between sports, culture, and globalization.

In summary, the significance of this study is manifold, touching upon critical aspects of sports management, globalization, marketing, policy development, and research. Its contributions to both theory and practice offer a multi-dimensional view of sports introduction in new markets, providing valuable insights for academicians, practitioners, and policymakers engaged in the global sports industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The globalization of sports has led to the introduction and adoption of various international sports across diverse cultures and regions, a phenomenon vividly illustrated by the introduction of baseball in India. This thesis aims to explore the different dimensions influencing the adoption, challenges, and growth potential of baseball within the Indian context, an endeavour that is underpinned by a rigorous review of existing literature on the subject.

The literature review has highlighted significant historical and contemporary efforts to integrate baseball into India's sporting culture, examining the interplay between global sports trends and local receptiveness (Segal, 2023). It has uncovered the socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors that either facilitate or impede the sport's growth, drawing parallels with the introduction of other sports in India and similar emerging markets.

The literature review underscores significant research gaps, notably in the understanding of baseball's perception among the Indian population and the efficacy of various promotional strategies. This gap highlights an imperative for further research into targeted marketing approaches, community-level engagement, and the sport's potential appeal to the Indian demographic (WeRIndia, 2023; 6Wresearch, 2022). These insights form the foundation for this study, which seeks to elaborate on the mechanisms through which baseball could gain a stronger foothold in India.

Furthermore, the literature review critically examines prevailing methods and perspectives within the domain of sports globalization, advocating for a deeper, more nuanced comprehension of the processes of cultural adaptation and the strategic significance of engaging with local communities. This critique underscores the necessity of reevaluating conventional approaches to ensure they fully capture the complexities of cultural differences and the potential of localized strategies in promoting sports internationally (WeRIndia, 2023; Huang & Hsu, 2021).

In synthesizing these insights, the introduction of baseball in India is posited not just as a case study in sports globalization but as a lens through which to examine broader questions about cultural exchange, market development, and the potential for sports to bridge diverse communities. The literature review thus sets the stage for this thesis, outlining the aim to contribute to the discourse on sports management, cultural integration, and strategic marketing in new markets (Dixon et al., 2015; Cho, 2012).

2.1 Global Popularity of Baseball

The global popularity of baseball is ingrained in both the cultures and economies of several nations having professional sports leagues, including the United States, Mexico, Japan, and South Korea (Cho, 2012; Kelly, 2007). The study aims to investigate the introduction of baseball in a new market by examining the worldwide patterns, economic repercussions, and critical aspects that contribute to the sport's widespread popularity. This is made possible by the adoption of baseball throughout established markets (Dolles & Söderman, 2008). Baseball's international presence has seen remarkable growth, with Major League Baseball (MLB) at the forefront of globalizing the sport. Initiatives to host regular-season games in countries such as Japan, the United Kingdom, and Australia have significantly contributed to expanding baseball's global audience. The World Baseball Classic also stands as a testament to the sport's international appeal, bringing together teams from around the globe in a celebration of baseball's diverse talent pool (Klein, 2008; Walton, 2019).

The economic impact of baseball extends beyond ticket sales and merchandise. In countries like the United States and Japan, baseball is a significant economic driver, contributing billions to the local economies through direct and indirect means. Stadium constructions, employment opportunities, and tourism associated with baseball events underscore the sport's ability to influence economic growth and urban development (Sanderson & Siegfried, 2003; Jang & Lee, 2016). Several factors contribute to baseball's popularity in established markets. The historical roots of baseball, particularly in the American and Japanese contexts, have fostered a deep cultural connection with the sport (Guoqi, 2011). Moreover, the strategic nature of the game, coupled with its ability to foster community and national pride, enhances its appeal. Media coverage and technological advancements, such as streaming services and social media, have also played crucial roles in broadening baseball's reach and engaging younger demographics (Dixon et al., 2015; Naraine & Parent, 2017).

While baseball enjoys considerable popularity, it faces challenges in maintaining relevance among younger audiences and expanding into new markets. Addressing these challenges presents opportunities for leveraging digital platforms to enhance fan engagement and tailoring developmental programs to nurture local talent, thereby ensuring baseball's sustained growth and global appeal (Abeza et al., 2019). Baseball's global popularity is a complex interplay of cultural heritage, economic impact, and strategic initiatives aimed at market expansion. As the sport continues to navigate the challenges of globalization, its ability

to adapt and innovate will be critical in attracting new fans and retaining its place in the international sports landscape (Kelly, 2007).

2.2 Sports Market Dynamics in India

The Indian sports market is experiencing a significant transformation, marked by the enduring dominance of cricket alongside the emerging popularity of alternative sports such as Football, Hockey, Kabaddi and Badminton among others (Buchholz, 2021). This section explores the landscape of sports in India, highlighting cricket's unparalleled influence and the rising appetite for diverse sports disciplines across different regions of the country (Sadasivan, 2023). Cricket is not just a sport in India; it is a phenomenon that captures the nation's imagination, influencing cultural norms and societal dynamics. The Indian Premier League (IPL) serves as a cornerstone of cricket's commercial success, blending sports entertainment with substantial economic benefits. The league has revolutionized cricket's presentation, attracting global audiences and substantial investment, thereby cementing cricket's status as the foremost sport in India (Robertson, 2018).

Despite cricket's dominance, there is a burgeoning interest in alternative sports, driven by changing consumer preferences and strategic initiatives aimed at diversifying India's sports culture (Dabholkar, 2020). Sports such as football, badminton, and kabaddi have witnessed increased institutional support and investment, culminating in the establishment of professional leagues. These developments signify a growing recognition of the potential within India's sports market to cultivate a varied sports ecosystem (Gupta, 2021). The dynamics of sports participation and popularity in India reveal pronounced regional disparities. Certain regions exhibit a strong affinity for specific sports due to historical, cultural, or geographical factors (Centre For Sports, 2023). For instance, football enjoys considerable popularity in West Bengal and Kerala, while kabaddi has a profound following in the northern and central parts of the country (Talukdar, 2022). These regional preferences underscore the diverse sports landscape in India, presenting both challenges and opportunities for sports marketing and development (Khudiyev & Szabó, 2020).

The sports market dynamics in India are characterized by cricket's unyielding dominance and the nascent growth of alternative sports. The evolving sports landscape reflects a complex interplay of cultural traditions, regional preferences, and economic considerations (Sarkar, 2020). As India continues to navigate these dynamics, the potential for fostering a

more inclusive and diverse sports culture remains significant, offering exciting prospects for stakeholders within the sports industry (Coakley, 2011).

2.3 Role of Sports Analytics in Market Strategy

In the contemporary sports industry, analytics play a pivotal role in shaping market strategies and facilitating the successful introduction of sports into new markets. This study included an investigation into the potential applications of sports analytics to enhance marketing efforts, better understand consumer preferences, boost fan engagement, and expand the sports sector (6Wresearch, 2022). Sports analytics have revolutionized the way sports organizations approach market expansion and audience engagement. By analysing vast amounts of data related to fan behaviour, preferences, and consumption patterns, sports marketers can tailor their strategies to meet the specific needs of different demographics. Analytics enable a deep understanding of market dynamics, facilitating targeted marketing campaigns, personalized fan experiences, and strategic content distribution (IMARC Group, 2023).

Several case studies underscore the significance of analytics in sports market strategy. For instance, the introduction of Major League Soccer (MLS) in the United States benefited immensely from analytics to identify and engage with soccer fans, contributing to the league's growth and popularity (Abeza et al., 2019). Similarly, the expansion of basketball through the National Basketball Association (NBA) in global markets like China and India has been strategically guided by insights derived from sports analytics, optimizing outreach and localizing content to resonate with new audiences (Zwerling, 2014). Central to the success of sports introductions is the role of analytics in enhancing fan engagement and retention. Sports organizations leverage data analytics to create engaging fan experiences, from personalized digital content to interactive fan zones. By understanding the factors that drive fan loyalty and satisfaction, sports marketers can develop strategies that not only attract new fans but also foster a long-term relationship with them (Kim et al., 2020).

Sports analytics also inform strategic decision-making, aiding sports entities in adapting to changing market conditions and preferences. Through predictive modelling and trend analysis, sports organizations can anticipate shifts in consumer behaviour, adjust their marketing tactics accordingly, and identify new opportunities for growth. This adaptability is crucial for sustaining interest and expanding the reach of sports in competitive markets (Yellowbrick, 2023). The integration of sports analytics into market strategy represents a paradigm shift in how sports organizations approach market expansion and fan engagement.

By leveraging data-driven insights, the sports industry can navigate the complexities of introducing and establishing sports in new markets more effectively (Singh, 2020).

2.4 Consumer Behavior in Sports

Understanding consumer behaviour is crucial for evaluating and strategizing the sports market in India. Several factors influence sports popularity, participation, and spectatorship across the country, highlighting the distinctive urban-rural dynamics that shape consumer engagement with sports (Giulianotti & Numerato, 2017). Other factors contribute to the popularity of sports in India, including cultural preferences, economic factors, access to sports facilities, and the influence of media (Filo et al., 2015). In urban areas, the proliferation of digital platforms and social media has significantly impacted sports consumption patterns, enabling fans to follow their favourite sports and athletes more closely (Trivedi et al., 2020).

Participation in sports activities in India is primarily influenced by age group, and occupation, with noticeable disparities between urban and rural regions. Urban populations have greater access to sports facilities and programs, driving higher participation rates compared to rural counterparts. Spectatorship, similarly, is shaped by the availability of media coverage and the popularity of specific sports, with cricket enjoying widespread viewership across India (Kumar & Bagchi, 2020). Economic and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour towards sports in India. Economic growth has led to increased leisure time and disposable income, contributing to a rise in sports participation and consumption (Abeza et al., 2020). Cultural factors, social factors, and historical significance of certain sports, also influence consumer behaviour, dictating the popularity of sports (Johnson et al., 2019).

2.5 Policy and Infrastructure Influence

The development and widespread adoption of sports within any country are significantly influenced by both policy decisions and the availability of necessary infrastructure (Tinaz & Knott, 2021). The pivotal role that government policies and sports infrastructure play in shaping the sports culture, with a particular focus on emerging sports markets like India, where the potential for sports diversification, including baseball, is immense (Gupta, 2021).

Government policies can either foster or hinder the growth of sports. Policies that promote sports development through funding, grassroots programs, and incentives for participation are

crucial. Such policies not only help in cultivating a sports culture but also in identifying and nurturing talent from an early age. In contrast, the absence of supportive policies or regulatory barriers can significantly impede the development and adoption of new sports (Clarke & Mondal, 2022).

The availability of sports infrastructure is another critical factor. Adequate facilities enable athletes to train effectively and compete at higher levels, while also providing access for the general population to engage in sports for health and recreation. Infrastructure is not limited to physical facilities but also includes access to coaching, sports medicine, and competition platforms (Jang & Lee, 2016). The synergistic effect of policy and infrastructure on sports adoption cannot be overstated. For instance, regions with robust sports policies and infrastructure have shown a higher rate of sports participation and success in international competitions (Times Of India, 2022). Furthermore, such regions are more likely to embrace a variety of sports, including global sports like baseball, which might be considered non-traditional in their sports culture.

In examining the global sports market dynamics, Japan's strategy is a noteworthy example to follow. The country's proactive approach to incorporating baseball into the curriculum has firmly established baseball's place as both a national sport and identity, along with strong government support and cautious cultural diplomacy. Such calculated moves emphasise how crucial infrastructure support and political direction are to the integration and advancement of new sports (Jackson & Haigh, 2013). It has been suggested that similar targeted approaches could be beneficial for India, a country with many diverse cultures and a growing interest in sports. If baseball and other sports are developed in India using localised, internationally aware methods, there may be a change in thinking in the dynamics of the sport industry there (Cho, 2012). India presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities in terms of policy and infrastructure for sports. While cricket dominates the sports landscape, there is growing interest and potential for diversification. Addressing infrastructure gaps and formulating supportive policies could significantly enhance the adoption and popularity of sports like baseball (Bansal, 2023).

The examination of policy and infrastructure influence underscores their critical role in the sports ecosystem. For baseball to gain a foothold in India, strategic investments in infrastructure and the formulation of supportive policies are imperative. Drawing lessons from Japan and South Korea, India can carve a path for baseball alongside other emerging sports, contributing to a more diverse and vibrant sports culture (Métraux, 2016).

2.6 Impact of Sports Ecosystem and Grassroot Development

The exploration of baseball's potential in India, set against the broader context of global sports culture integration, economic opportunities, and sports development, reveals intricate dynamics at play. While India's sporting landscape is traditionally dominated by cricket and kabaddi (Decathlon, 2022), emerging interests and the global allure of baseball present unique opportunities and challenges for cultural integration and sports diversification. The existing sports ecosystem and the pivotal role of grassroots development emerge as critical factors influencing the adoption and growth of new sports like baseball in India (Bateman & Binns, 2014).

India's sports ecosystem is at a transformative juncture, characterized by an evolving sports culture that transcends traditional boundaries. Cricket's longstanding supremacy, while unchallenged, does not encapsulate the entirety of India's sports narrative. The burgeoning youth demographic, coupled with increased digital connectivity, signals a shift towards a more inclusive sports culture that embraces diversity and innovation. However, the transition towards integrating global sports such as baseball into India's fabric is fraught with complexities (Parr, 2006).

The grassroots development of sports in India has historically been uneven, with significant disparities in access, infrastructure, and resources. While urban centres boast better sports facilities and programs (Centre For Sports, 2023), rural areas remain underserved, highlighting a divide that hampers inclusive sports development. Furthermore, the predominant focus on cricket has led to a disproportionate allocation of resources, overshadowing other sports, and limiting their growth potential (Ankan, 2018).

A critical examination of India's current sports ecosystem underscores the need for a revitalized approach that prioritizes inclusivity, diversity, and sustainable development. The introduction of baseball in India, therefore, should not merely be viewed through the lens of market expansion but as an opportunity to foster a more dynamic and inclusive sports culture (Pittz et al., 2021). To achieve this, a multifaceted strategy encompassing policy reform, infrastructure development, and community engagement is essential. Policymakers must advocate for equitable resource distribution, ensuring that emerging sports like baseball receive adequate support for grassroots development. Infrastructure improvements, particularly in underserved regions, will be crucial in democratizing access to sports, enabling a broader segment of the population to participate and engage with baseball (Jackson & Haigh, 2013). Community engagement plays a pivotal role in cultivating interest and building a sustainable

fan base for baseball in India. Initiatives aimed at raising awareness, educating the public about the sport, and providing opportunities for active participation can bridge the gap between curiosity and fandom. Engaging with schools and educational institutions to introduce baseball into physical education curricula can ignite early interest and foster a generation of enthusiasts and potential talent (Kaplanidou, 2021).

The challenges inherent in integrating baseball into India's sports ecosystem are many, ranging from cultural barriers to competition from established sports. Overcoming these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the Indian socio-cultural context and a strategic approach that emphasizes localization, cultural sensitivity, and strategic partnerships (Fidler, 2000). Localization efforts, tailored to resonate with Indian cultural norms and values, can enhance baseball's appeal, making it more relatable and accessible to the Indian audience. Strategic partnerships with local sports organizations, media outlets, and influencers can amplify baseball's visibility, leveraging existing platforms to introduce and promote the sport (Chhabria, 2020).

Cultivating a culture of inclusivity and diversity within the sports ecosystem is paramount. By embracing the global heritage of baseball while honouring local traditions and preferences, India can foster a sports culture that celebrates diversity, encourages innovation, and nurtures talent across the spectrum of sports. The journey towards integrating baseball into India's sports landscape is emblematic of the broader aspirations for sports development in the country. It represents an opportunity to reexamine and reshape the sports ecosystem, placing greater emphasis on inclusivity, diversity, and grassroots development. By addressing the existing gaps and challenges with strategic foresight and collaborative efforts, India can pave the way for a more vibrant and inclusive sports culture, where baseball and other global sports find their rightful place alongside traditional favourites (Maguire, 1999).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter highlights the different methodology adopted to explore the viability and potential of introducing baseball into India's sports landscape. The methodology is stratified into literature review, qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, thematic analysis, and SWOT analysis, each serving a unique purpose in comprehensively understanding the subject matter.

3.1 Research Design

The research design for a market analysis of baseball in India combines a mixed-methods approach to offer a comprehensive understanding of the market potential and consumer preferences. This design integrates both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Quantitative methods include surveys and statistical analysis to measure market size, consumer demographics, and preferences. This numerical data provides a solid foundation for assessing the overall market potential and specific consumer trends (Singh & Singh, 2022). On the other hand, qualitative methods involve interviews and content analysis to explore consumer perceptions and expert opinions. This approach delves into the contextual insights that help interpret the numerical data and understand the deeper market dynamics (Segal, 2023). Together, this dual approach allows for a robust analysis of both numerical data and contextual insights, providing a holistic view of the market dynamics and potential strategies for introducing baseball in India.

3.1.1 Quantitative Research

The survey distribution process for this study was meticulously planned to ensure a wide representation across various demographics. Utilizing an online survey platform enabled the inclusion of participants from a diverse age spectrum, specifically targeting age groups 18-24, 24-35, 35-45, and 45 and above (Clarke & Mondal, 2022).

This method facilitated a randomized selection of respondents, ensuring that the survey reached a broad audience without bias towards any gender, thereby promoting inclusivity and diversity in the participant pool. The approach aligns with a combination of stratified random sampling and convenience sampling method, leveraging the accessibility and extensive reach of digital platforms to gather data efficiently (Voorveld, 2019). The choice of an online distribution method was instrumental in overcoming geographical barriers, allowing for the

collection of a varied set of responses that reflect the multifaceted interest and potential consumer base for baseball across India's diverse population. (See Appendix 4)

This strategic distribution ensures that the survey findings are reflective of a broad spectrum of Indian society, providing valuable insights into the market potential for baseball across different demographic segments (Tinaz & Knott, 2021).

3.1.2 Qualitative Research

The selection of interviewees for this study was designed to gather comprehensive insights into the various challenges and opportunities associated with introducing baseball in India. By engaging with a select group of stakeholders, including sports management professionals, policymakers, educational institutes, coaches, players, and individuals from countries where baseball has been successfully introduced, the research aims to harness their expert knowledge and firsthand experiences (Yu et al., 2024).

This purposive sampling method ensured that the interviewees were not only well-versed in their respective fields but also held valuable perspectives on the practical aspects of promoting baseball in a new market. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences provided a rich source of qualitative data, offering depth and nuance to the analysis of the sports landscape in India (Zimmermann et al., 2024). This approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of the subject matter, enabling the identification of specific strategies, potential hurdles, and effective solutions for cultivating a baseball culture within the Indian context. Through these targeted interviews, the study leverages expert insights to construct a detailed picture of the ecosystem required to support and grow baseball in India. Highlighting the critical role of knowledgeable stakeholders in shaping the future of the sport in the country.

3.2 Data Collection

For the data collection aspect of exploring the introduction and growth of baseball in India, a structured yet flexible approach was adopted, combining both survey and interview techniques to capture a wide range of insights. This methodology is designed to delve into the broad baseball ecosystem in India, addressing aspects from general perceptions and challenges to drivers of growth, marketing strategies, consumer behaviour, and cultural impacts (Batra & Keller, 2016).

3.2.1 Interview Guidelines and Sampling Strategy

Interview guidelines were meticulously developed to ensure a structured approach, enabling the collection of comprehensive insights across five main sections starting with general perceptions, challenges, growth drivers, marketing strategies, and the influence of cultural and social factors. (See Appendix 3)

The interviews aimed to gather in-depth responses from various stakeholders, including sports enthusiasts, sports marketing professionals, policymakers, coaches, and athletes, employing a purposive sampling technique to select individuals with relevant knowledge or experience. This method ensured the richness and relevance of the data to the study's objectives (Abeza et al., 2019).

3.2.2 Survey Design and Sample Selection

The survey component utilized a combination of stratified random sampling and convenience sampling to ensure a diverse and representative sample of the Indian population. This approach segmented the population into subgroups to include a broad spectrum of perspectives, particularly focusing on demographics such as age, occupation, and familiarity with baseball (Li et al., 2023). A total sample size of 100 was collected, balancing the study's exploratory nature, resource constraints, and the need for statistical validity. This sample size was judged adequate for the analysis, considering the sample population with an acceptable margin of error and offering insightful information while recognizing the constraints of breadth and generalizability. (See Appendix 5)

3.2.3 Summary of Data Collection Approach

I employed a dual approach to data collection for this thesis, integrating both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to construct a comprehensive picture of baseball's potential in the Indian market. The interview guidelines and sampling strategy were carefully designed to capture detailed insights from a variety of stakeholders, ensuring a nuanced understanding of the subject.

Meanwhile, the survey method aimed to gather broader demographic data, employing a strategic sampling technique to enhance the study's representativeness within the constraints of an exploratory investigation. This combined methodology offers a robust foundation for

analysing the introduction and growth of baseball in India, contributing valuable preliminary data to inform future research directions.

3.3 Data Analysis

The research methodology adopted a comprehensive approach to data analysis, leveraging both quantitative and qualitative techniques to gain a holistic understanding of baseball's introduction and growth potential in India.

3.3.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis began with the utilization of Python libraries such as Pandas and SciPy to conduct statistical analyses of survey data. Python was especially chosen because of the considerable number of data analysis libraries that are accessible. This involved descriptive statistics to summarize the data, including measures of central tendency and dispersion, alongside segmentation based on demographics and interest in baseball for a comparative analysis (Jang & Lee, 2016).

Advanced statistical tests, including Chi-square and R-squared, were employed to examine relationships and differences among various groups. Data visualization libraries like Matplotlib provided a clear graphical representation of all the findings. This process allowed for the identification of patterns and insights regarding the perception of baseball across different demographic segments (Mamo et al., 2022).

3.3.2 Qualitative Analysis

For qualitative data, thematic analysis was chosen for its ability to identify and interpret patterns within interview transcripts. This method facilitated a deep engagement with the data, allowing for the extraction of meaningful insights into the challenges and opportunities for popularizing baseball in India (Calder et al., 2009). The analysis process involved generating initial codes, collating them into themes, and interpreting these themes within the broader socio-cultural and economic context of India. This approach provided interpretative depth, uncovering the complex perspectives surrounding baseball's introduction and growth in India.

3.3.3 Integration of Findings

Integrating findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses offers a comprehensive view of baseball's potential in India. Quantitative data provided a statistical foundation, identifying broad trends and attitudes, while qualitative data added depth, explaining the reasons behind these trends. Triangulation of data ensured the credibility and richness of the research findings, combining various sources and methods to present a nuanced understanding of the research questions. The strategic use of statistical analysis, thematic exploration, and data triangulation characterizes the mixed-methods approach and underpins the study's insights into baseball's market potential in India, highlighting both the challenges faced and the opportunities available for its growth.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

This research upheld stringent ethical standards, particularly focusing on informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and secure data handling, to ensure the rights and privacy of all participants were protected throughout the study. Prior to participation, individuals were fully briefed about the study's purpose, their role, and their rights, including the option to withdraw at any time without consequence. This briefing was conducted via consent forms for survey participants and further reinforced through email and verbal confirmation for interviewees, emphasizing the study's commitment to transparency and participant autonomy. (See Appendix 2)

Anonymity was a cornerstone of my ethical approach, with measures in place to ensure that no personal identifying information was collected or stored, thereby safeguarding participant privacy. For interview participants, assurances were made that responses would be anonymized and could not be linked back to them, with all data treated as non-personally identifiable. Survey responses were collected anonymously, with the survey platform configured to prevent the collection of any data that could reveal a participant's identity.

Data handling procedures were meticulously designed to ensure the security and integrity of the collected information. All data were stored in a secure, password-protected digital environment, accessible only to the research team. Interviewees were given the option to have their data deleted after participation, a practice communicated clearly to uphold their control over their personal information. These ethical practices underscored the research's

adherence to the highest standards of data protection and participant privacy, aligning with relevant regulations and ethical guidelines in academic research.

3.5 Limitations of Methodology

This research encountered methodological limitations that are crucial to acknowledge for a comprehensive understanding of the study's scope and findings. A significant limitation arose from the reliance on self-reported data, which carries inherent biases due to the subjective nature of participants' perceptions and recollections. This factor is especially pertinent when evaluating attitudes towards an emerging sport like baseball in India, where personal biases could influence the responses (Tinaz & Knott, 2021).

Moreover, the sample's demographic and geographic diversity presented challenges, particularly in adequately representing and engaging with rural populations. Despite efforts to encompass a broad and inclusive demographic spectrum, there was a tendency for the sample to skew towards urban respondents. This urban bias might not fully capture the cultural and infrastructural nuances that influence rural communities' engagement with and acceptance of baseball. Additionally, collecting data from individuals already familiar with or participating in baseball could introduce a bias, potentially not reflecting the broader population's views or interest in the sport. Such limitations necessitate caution in interpreting the findings, especially regarding the sport's overall appeal and growth potential across different segments of the Indian population.

To refine future research and address these limitations, it is recommended to broaden the sampling strategy to ensure more extensive and diverse demographic representation, including a stronger focus on rural areas. Incorporating a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods could also help counteract the bias of self-reported data, providing a more rounded and accurate depiction of baseball's position within India's sports culture (Yu et al., 2024).

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic Analysis

4.1.1 Age Group Distribution

From the survey, Figure 1 indicates that baseball is particularly popular among young adults, with 65% of respondents aged 25-34 years, highlighting its appeal during their prime working and socializing years. This suggests a robust potential community for baseball fandom. Additionally, 22% of respondents are 18-24 years old, pointing to the sport's popularity among college-aged individuals, crucial for grassroots sports development.

Please select your age group
100 responses

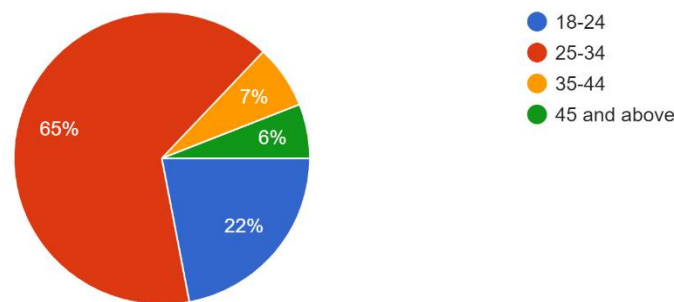


Figure 1: Demographic Response Split

Figure 2 shows that the interest in baseball declines in older age groups, with only 7% of respondents aged 35-44 years and 6% aged 45 and above. This trend suggests that younger adults, especially those in their twenties and thirties, are the primary demographic for baseball growth and engagement in India. This pattern underscores the notion that baseball's appeal is stronger among the younger population. Specifically, individuals in their twenties and early thirties manifest a more pronounced enthusiasm for the sport. These findings emphasize the importance of focusing on these younger demographics for initiatives aimed at cultivating baseball's popularity and presence in India. Such targeted engagement strategies are likely to yield more effective results in embedding baseball into the fabric of India's sports culture.

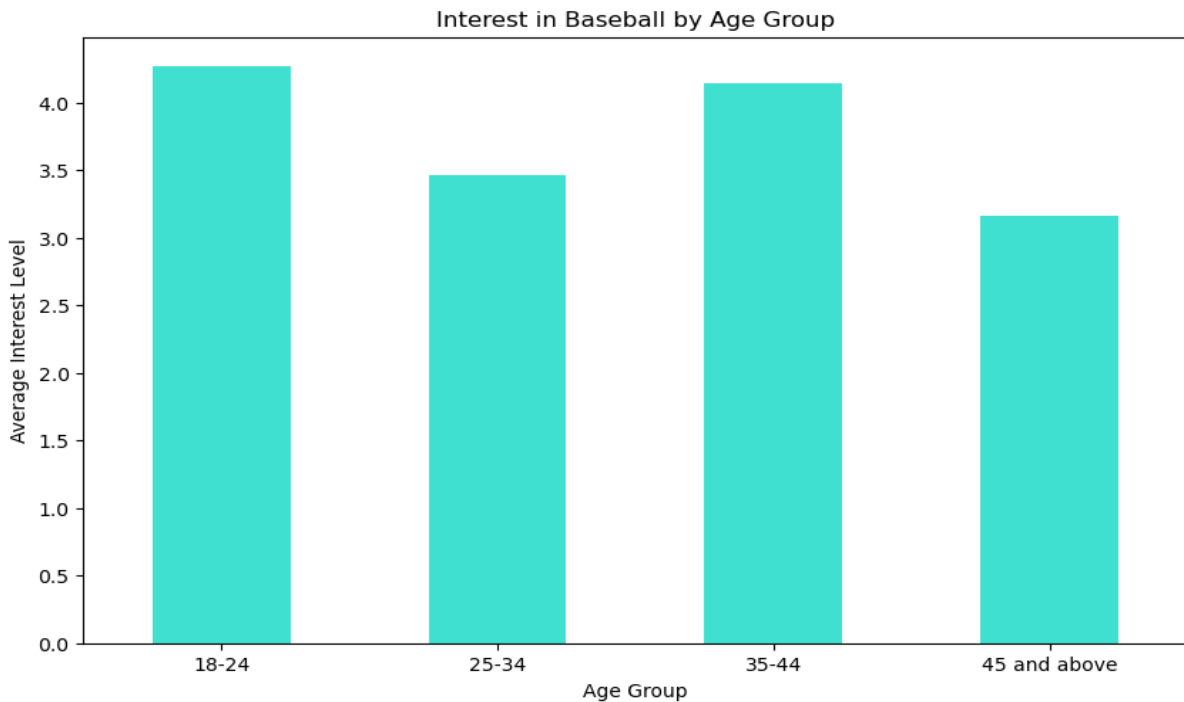


Figure 2: Interest in Baseball by Age Group

4.1.2 Current Occupation Distribution

The demographic analysis reveals strong potential interest in baseball among young to middle-aged adults, mostly working professionals. This insight could steer strategic efforts to promote baseball in India, targeting these key demographics with marketing and programs that align with their interests and lifestyles.

Figure 3 shows a solid foundation for expanding baseball's popularity in India by engaging young adults and working professionals. Initiatives such as workplace leagues, social media campaigns, and community events could significantly boost baseball's regional growth. Working professionals make up 74% of those interested in baseball, highlighting its appeal to those with disposable income and leisure time. Strategies like workplace leagues and social media could capitalize on this interest. Students account for 17%, indicating a powerful base within educational institutions and suggesting opportunities to integrate baseball into school and college sports, which could nurture long-term interest. The interest from self-employed individuals (7%), baseball coaches (1%), and homemakers (1%) shows baseball's wide appeal, suggesting the need for diverse strategies to effectively engage these varied segments.

Please select your current occupation
100 responses

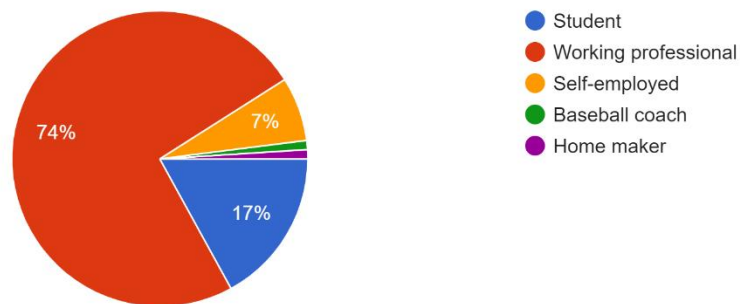


Figure 3: Occupation Distribution

4.1.3 Baseball Playing Experience

The survey included a question about whether respondents currently play baseball or have played in the past. This data can provide insights into the level of active engagement with the sport and potential interest in further participation or viewership.

The playing experience data reveals a vibrant engagement with baseball, with 37% of respondents currently playing the sport. This active interest forms a solid foundation for community-building initiatives and suggests a significant audience for baseball-related activities, events, and merchandising in India.

Do you currently play baseball, or have you played in the past?
100 responses

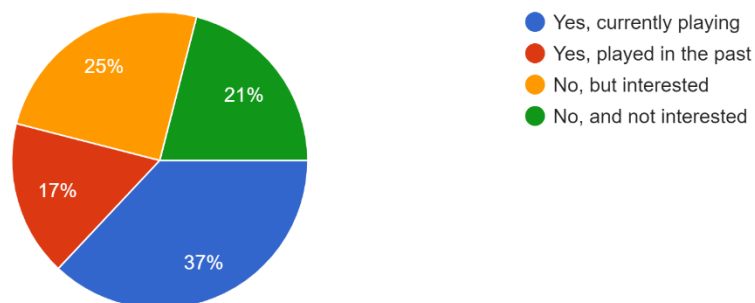


Figure 4: Baseball Playing Experience

Furthermore, 25% of respondents expressed interest in baseball despite not currently playing, identifying a target audience for conversion through marketing efforts, introduction programs, and community engagement strategies aimed at fostering active participation (Calder et al., 2009). The segments not interested in playing (21%) and those who have played in the past (17%) offer additional strategic insights. For those not interested, creating awareness and exposure through events and marketing could spark curiosity and interest. Meanwhile, re-engaging past players could involve alumni events, comeback leagues, or nostalgia-driven marketing campaigns (Batra & Keller, 2016).

This breakdown offers valuable insights into the current and potential engagement levels with baseball among the survey respondents. Strategies to grow baseball's popularity in India could focus on nurturing the current players' community, converting the interested non-players into active participants, and re-engaging those who have played in the past (Cao & Matsuoka, 2024). Understanding these different segments can help tailor initiatives to expand baseball's reach and popularity effectively.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis of Survey Respondents

Demographic Feature	Category	Percentage
Age Group	25-34	65%
	18-24	22%
	35-44	7%
	45 and above	6%
Occupation	Working professional	74%
	Student	17%
	Self-employed	7%
	Baseball coach	1%
	Home maker	1%
Baseball Playing Experience	Yes, currently playing	37%
	No, but interested	25%
	No, and not interested	21%
	Yes, played in the past	17%

In summary, the demographic analysis reveals a promising landscape for the growth of baseball in India, particularly among young adults and working professionals. These insights not only serve as a foundation for targeted promotional strategies but also highlight the importance of understanding demographic nuances in sports development initiatives (Singh & Singh, 2022). As we move forward, these findings will inform our recommendations for engaging these key segments to foster a thriving baseball community in India.

4.2 Interest and Awareness Levels

The survey of Indian respondents' interest in baseball, measured on a five-point scale from “1” (very low) to “5” (very high), reveals significant insights. As shown in Figure 5, a majority exhibit high interest (Level 5), indicating a stable base of enthusiastic fans and a sizable potential market for baseball-related activities. In contrast, lower interest levels (1 through 4) are less frequent, with Level 3 being the least reported. This pattern suggests a polarized audience, where individuals are either highly enthusiastic or minimally interested in baseball, with few in the neutral middle. The lack of moderate interest (Level 3) highlights an opportunity for targeted marketing strategies to nurture and enhance emerging interests.

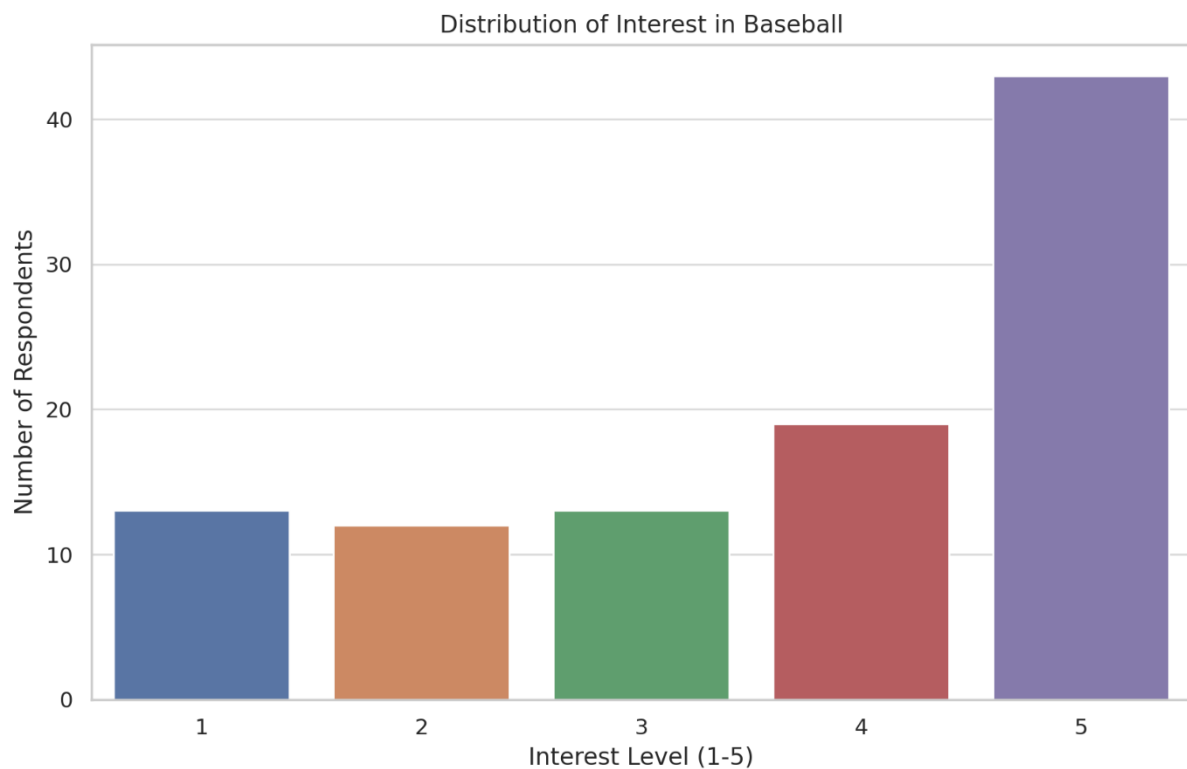


Figure 5: Distribution of Interest in Baseball

The distribution of familiarity levels, illustrated in Figure 6, shows an increasing trend that peaks at Level 5, mirroring the interest pattern. This indicates that a considerable number of respondents are not only enthusiastic about baseball but also well-informed about the sport. The relationship between familiarity and interest suggests that as knowledge of baseball increases, so does interest. This implies that enhancing familiarity through broadcasts, educational activities, or community programs could also boost interest in the sport (Kaplanidou, 2021).

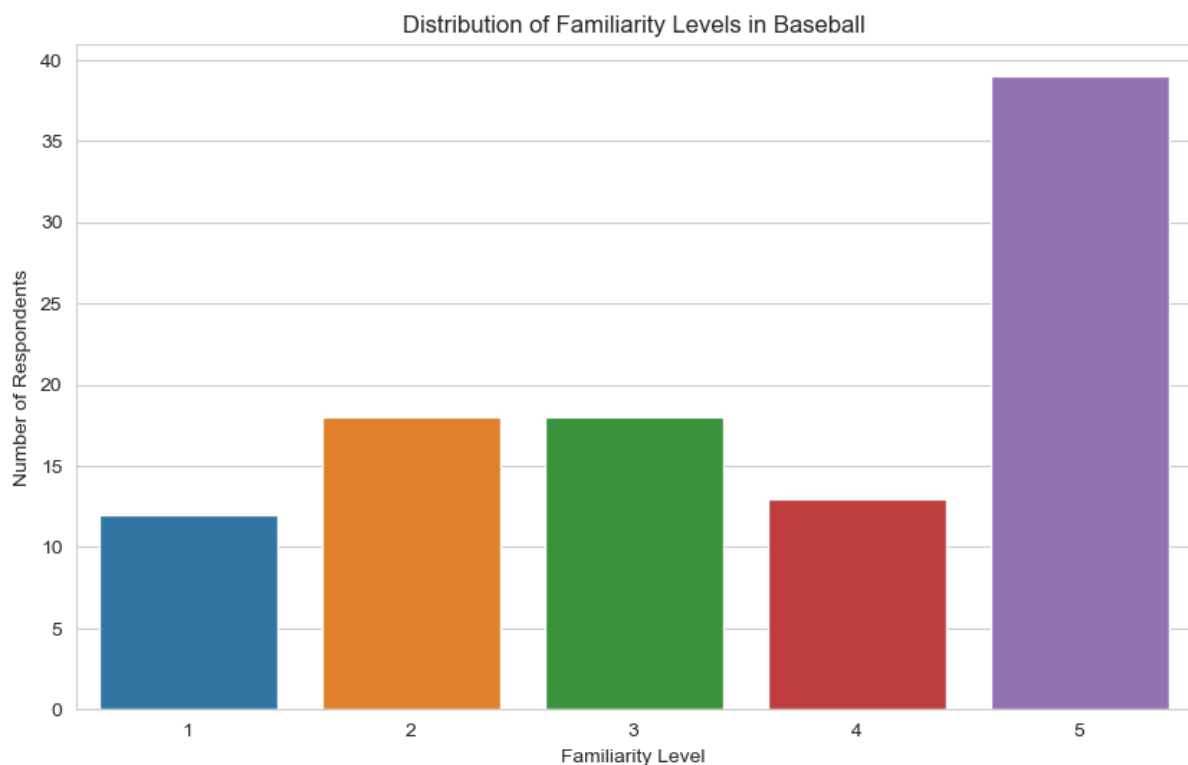


Figure 6: Distribution of Familiarity Levels

Figure 7 reveals that the most appealing aspects of baseball for Indian participants are its competitive nature (56%), team spirit (71%), and strategic elements (67%). These characteristics are crucial for understanding baseball's appeal in India and could be highlighted in marketing campaigns to emphasize the sport's cultural relevance. Conversely, a small percentage (2%) of participants expressed low awareness of the sport, aligning with the minimal levels of familiarity and interest previously noted. This suggests a potential market segment that could be introduced to baseball, expanding the fan base.

This data illustrates how baseball, though a non-native sport, has integrated into the Indian community, attracting a significant audience that appreciates its strategic and

collaborative aspects, indicative of a strong cultural fit. This could be key in developing effective marketing strategies.

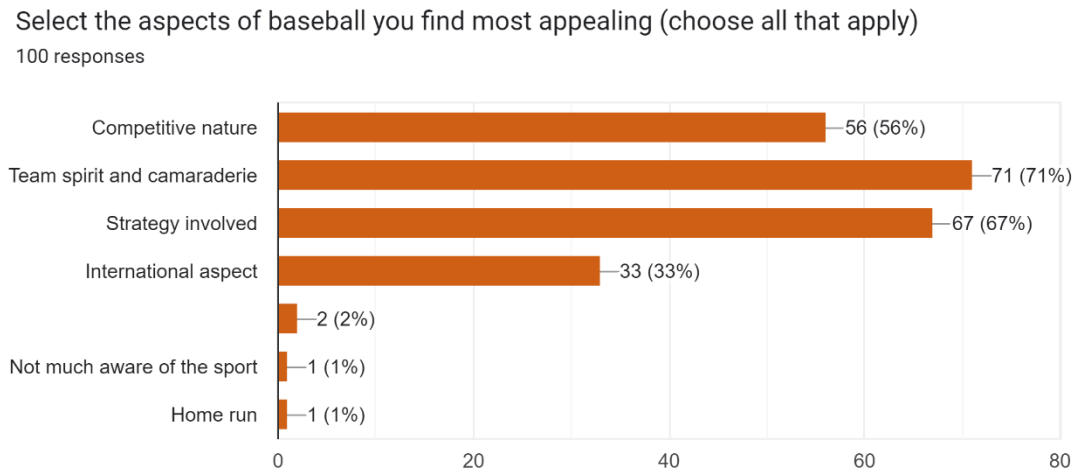


Figure 7: Appealing Aspects of Baseball

These insights offer sports organizations a strategic guide for engaging with the Indian baseball market. High interest and familiarity suggest enhancing existing fans' connections through fan clubs, local tournaments, or interactive experiences. Meanwhile, the potential to develop interest among those with moderate or low familiarity could be tapped through educational programs, experiential marketing, and emphasizing baseball's alignment with cultural values like teamwork, strategy, and competition (Khudiyev & Szabó, 2020). The data reveals an audience profile ranging from ardent fans to those with untapped potential. Tailored strategies that leverage strong interest areas while also increasing awareness and appeal among less engaged groups could significantly expand baseball's presence in India.

4.3 Perceived Barriers to Adoption

The survey data identifies significant barriers to baseball adoption in India across cultural, infrastructural, and informational areas. A primary challenge is the lack of awareness and understanding, highlighting the need for educational initiatives and community engagement. Additionally, baseball's limited visibility in media compared to cricket underscores the importance of strategic marketing and media partnerships (Chaudhary, 2020).

Table 2: Barriers for adoption of Baseball

Number	Barrier	Count
1	Lack of awareness or understanding	43
2	Lack of media coverage	19
3	Not popular among peers	19
4	Limited access to facilities	15
5	It feels boring to watch baseball. I would rather choose cricket...	1

Social influences and insufficient access to facilities also hinder adoption. Addressing these issues requires focused efforts, including targeted awareness campaigns, infrastructure development, and marketing strategies adapted to Indian culture to improve baseball's appeal and accessibility.

Rank the following factors based on their importance in making baseball popular in India Note: 1 being most important 3 being the least importance

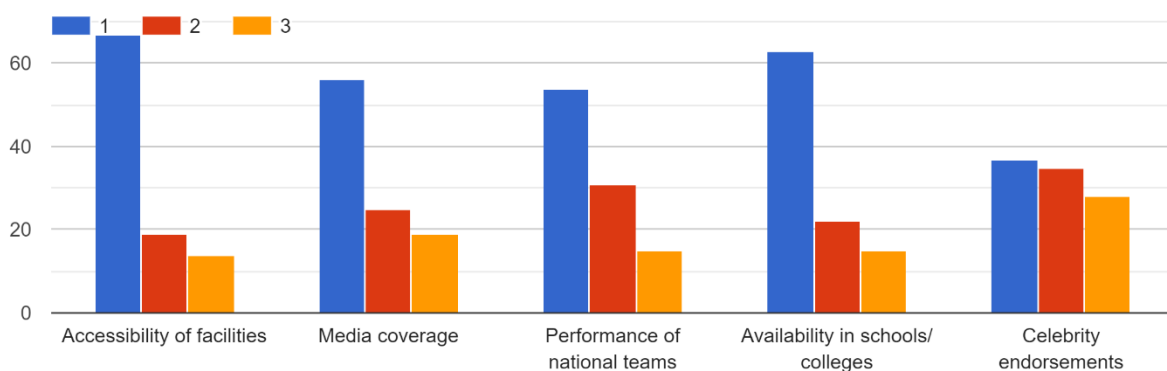


Figure 8: Perceived barriers to participate or follow Baseball

Facility accessibility is identified as the most crucial factor for popularizing baseball, receiving the highest priority ranking. While media coverage and national team performance are also important, they are less critical. Availability in educational institutions and celebrity endorsements, though significant, are not considered essential. These findings emphasize the importance of focusing on infrastructural development and media engagement to expand baseball's presence in India. Enhancing facilities and media visibility could address key barriers such as lack of awareness and peer influence, thus facilitating the sport's adoption among Indian consumers.

4.4 Strategic Opportunities for Baseball Introduction

4.4.1 Topic Modelling Analysis

Consumer feedback and market trends yield insights that emphasize strategies tailored to diverse geographic areas. This below topic and words output is from a topic modelling analysis, specifically using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA). This method is designed to discover abstract topics within a collection of documents (in this case, text responses to a survey question). Each "topic" is represented as a distribution over words, meaning that the topic is characterized by certain words that are more likely to appear in that topic compared to others. (See Appendix 7 and 8)

Here is how to interpret the output:

- **Topic:** Each topic is a cluster of words that the model has found to frequently occur together in your dataset. The model assigns a unique identifier to each topic (e.g., Topic 0, Topic 1, etc.).
- **Words:** For each topic, the model lists words along with their associated weights. These weights indicate the importance or contribution of each word to the topic. A higher weight means that the word is more significant in defining the topic.

These are the topics:

- **Topic 1:** Appears to focus on "media coverage" and "promotion" of baseball, suggesting recommendations related to making baseball more popular through media and support in schools and districts.

- **Topic 2:** Emphasizes the importance of "schools" and "colleges" in promoting baseball, alongside "social media". This might indicate suggestions to engage educational institutions and use social media for promotion.
- **Topic 3:** Highlights "sports" in general and "baseball" specifically, with mentions of "schools" and "India", suggesting a focus on integrating baseball into school sports programs and increasing its popularity in India.
- **Topic 4:** Centres around playing the "game" of baseball, with references to "people", "play", "local facilities", and "leagues". This suggests recommendations to increase accessibility and local participation in baseball.
- **Topic 5:** Talks about "introducing events" in "schools" and raising "awareness" at the "local" level, indicating strategies to start baseball events and make the game known at local schools and colleges.

4.4.2 Interpretation of Topic Modelling Analysis

1. **Media and Promotion:** There is a clear indication that increased media coverage and promotional activities could help grow baseball's popularity. Engagement with Educational Institutions such as schools and colleges are frequently mentioned, pointing to a strategy of embedding baseball into educational systems and leveraging social media.
2. **Accessibility and Local Events:** Recommendations also focus on making baseball more accessible through local facilities and events, which could help in building a community around the sport. This analysis structures our understanding of various strategies and recommendations that people have suggested to promote baseball in India, offering insights into where efforts could be concentrated for effective outreach and engagement.
3. **Youth Engagement:** There is a clear indication that focusing on schools and youth events can create a foundation for long-term interest and participation in baseball.
4. **Media and Awareness:** It is interpreted that a media campaign could significantly enhance visibility and support for baseball, positioning it as a sport of interest on a larger scale.

4.4.3 Keyword Frequency

The most common keywords and their counts offer a glimpse into the focal points of the recommendations. Figure 9 presents the most mentioned keywords from suggestions to boost baseball's popularity in India. “Baseball” leads, showing a clear emphasis on the sport, with “Game” also prominent, reflecting a focus on gameplay itself. Despite fewer mentions, “Medium” underscores media's important promotional role. “School” and “India” feature significantly, pointing to the strategic incorporation of baseball in educational settings for foundational growth. Finally, “Player”, “People”, and “Local” suggest a strategy geared toward community involvement and tapping into local interest and talent.

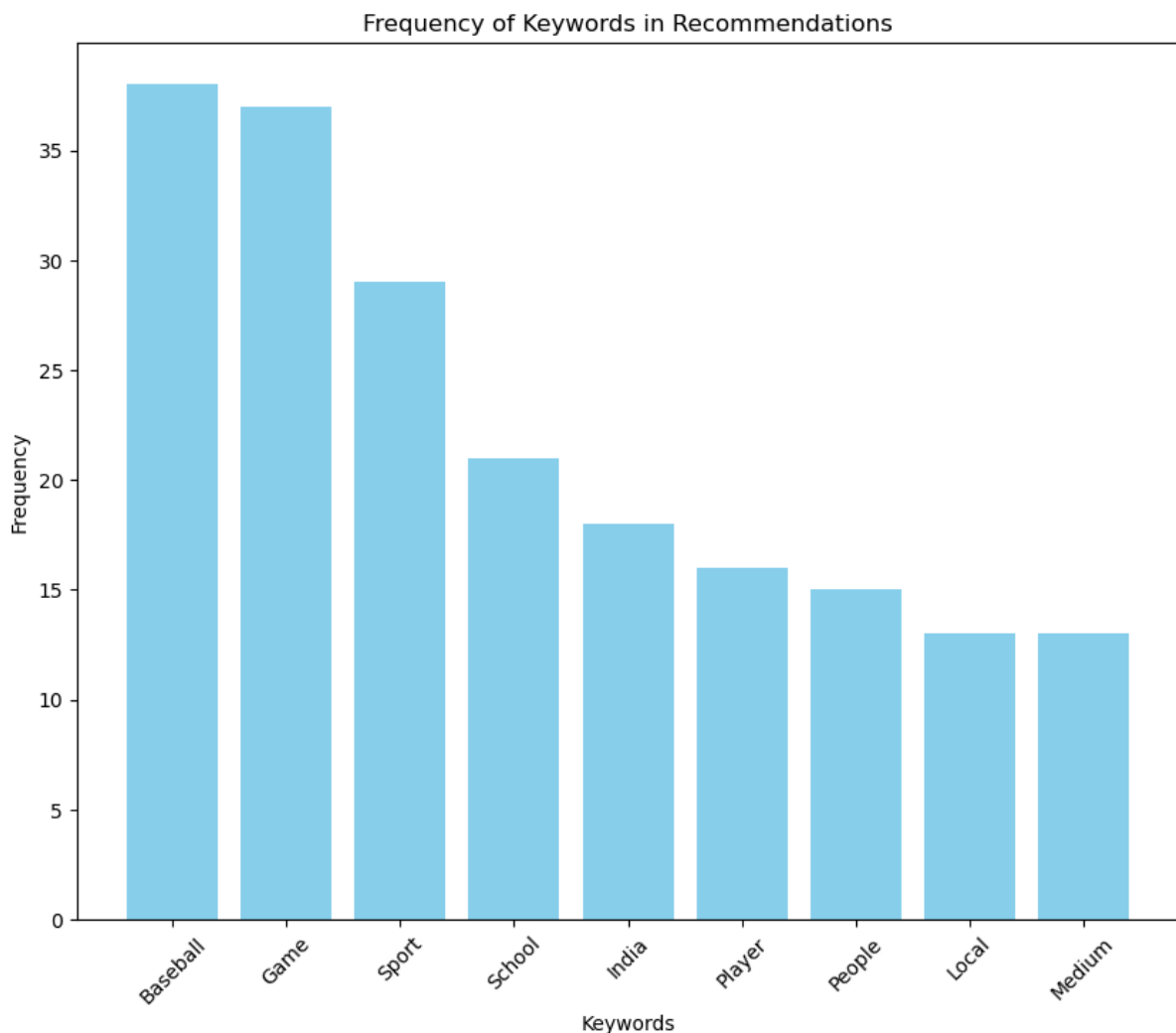


Figure 9: Frequency of Keywords in Recommendations

The keyword frequency provides a distilled view of the strategic focal points highlighted by survey respondents for boosting baseball's appeal in India. It underscores the significant themes of cultivating local community engagement, utilizing media channels for promotion, and integrating baseball into educational settings nationwide.

4.4.4 Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis for the text recommendations reveals the public's perception of introducing baseball to India. The average sentiment score of 0.074365 indicates a positive yet neutral attitude, reflecting cautious optimism. The range of sentiment scores from negative (-0.400000) to highly positive (1.000000) illustrates diverse opinions towards baseball's promotional strategies in India. This variation highlights the need for a tailored marketing approach that addresses sceptics' concerns while leveraging supporters' enthusiasm to enhance baseball's appeal and acceptance in the Indian context. (See Appendix 7 and 8)

4.5 Consumer Behavior

My survey data suggests a varied interest in baseball among Indian respondents, with many showing moderate to high enthusiasm for watching or participating in the sport. This indicates a promising potential for baseball's growth in India. The diverse interest levels highlight the need for targeted promotional strategies that not only increase engagement among enthusiasts but also raise awareness to attract those less familiar with the sport (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021).

4.5.1 Influence of Social Media

In today's digital age, the influence of social media on sports engagement is evident. Figure 10's pie chart shows social media's effect on Indian audiences' interest in baseball. A notable 45% of respondents report a significant boost in interest through social media, underscoring its effectiveness as an interest amplifier. Additionally, 49% indicate a moderate increase in interest, from casual browsers who encountered baseball content, boosting their curiosity. These groups collectively affirm social media's role in expanding sports interest.

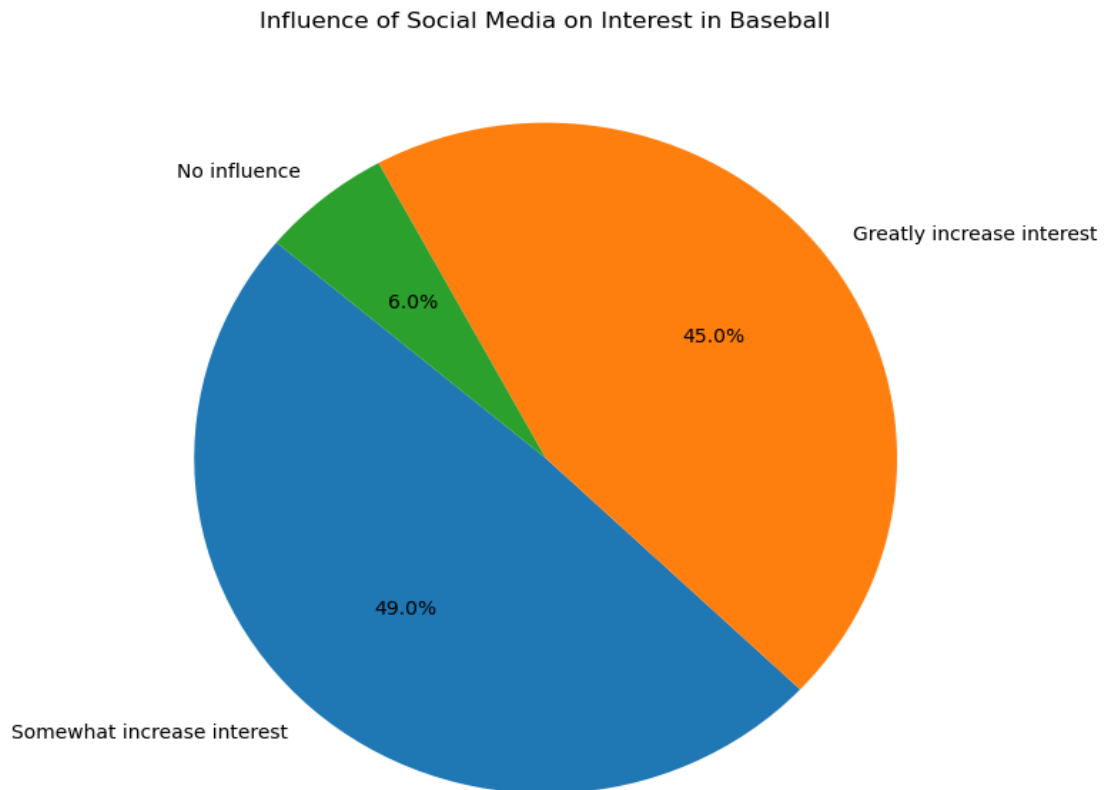


Figure 10: Influence of Social Media on Interest in Baseball

Conversely, a minor 6% note no impact from social media on their baseball interest, due to established sports preferences or limited social media engagement. The data underscores social media's critical role in sports marketing, especially in enhancing baseball's appeal. The majority reporting increased interest highlights the effectiveness of well-designed content on these platforms in attracting and engaging fans (Filo et al., 2015).

Considering the significance of social media in communication today, these insights should inform promotional strategies that maximize platform reach. Developing content that resonates with both avid fans and casual viewers can convert latent interest into active engagement, thus broadening the sport's fan base (Zimmermann et al., 2024). The small percentage unaffected by social media, around 6%, merits further investigation. Studying their characteristics and media habits could reveal alternative marketing channels or strategies that might be more impactful. Overall, this analysis emphasizes social media's transformative effect on sports interest, prompting sports organizations to adapt their strategies to engage a diverse, digitally connected audience.

4.5.2 Interest in Future Baseball Events

The bar chart in Figure 11 displays the respondents' willingness to play or watch baseball in India in the future. With a sizable fan base already in existence, baseball has tremendous potential as a spectator and participating sport, as indicated by the over 60% of respondents who say they are interested (“Yes”). Approximately 20% of respondents are uncertain (“Maybe”), suggesting that with effective engagement strategies, this group could be persuaded towards active participation or viewership. They may need additional incentives or information to fully commit. A minimal percentage responded with “No”, reflecting a small group uninterested in baseball, potentially due to competing sports interests, lack of awareness, or inadequate engagement with the sport.

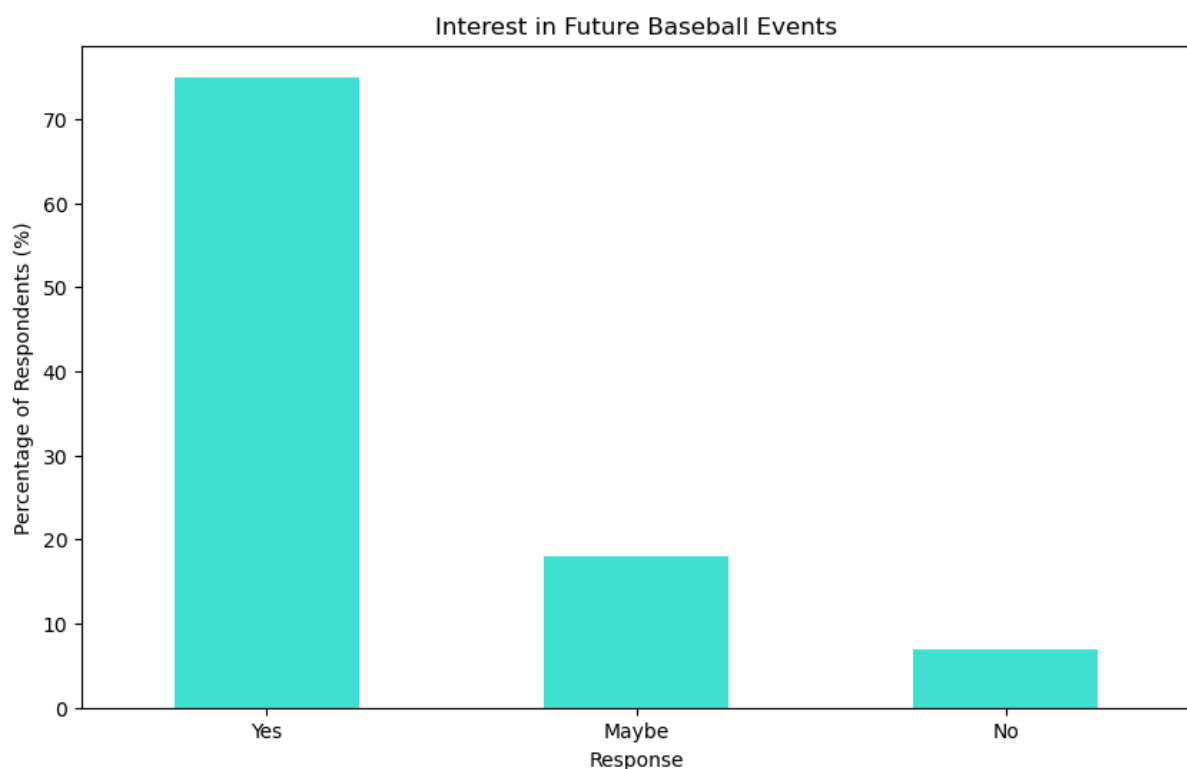


Figure 11: Interest in Future Baseball Events

4.5.3 Impact of Cultural and Social Factors

Figure 12 illustrates the influence of cultural and social factors on baseball's popularity in India, with many respondents indicating a significant impact (Levels 5 and 4). This suggests that integrating baseball promotions with cultural events and social trends could effectively enhance its popularity. Those perceiving a moderate impact (Level 3) highlight the need for strategies

that incorporate baseball's attributes with local cultural values. Respondents noting a lesser impact (Levels 2 and 1) may be more influenced by factors such as personal preferences or the availability of baseball activities.

The graph confirms the strong influence of cultural and social factors on baseball's reception in India. The elevated level of impact perceived by most respondents suggests that the sport has potential to align with local cultural narratives and social movements. This emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive marketing strategies that engage with societal norms and conversations. The diversity in perceptions also suggests a need for segmented strategies that cater to various cultural and social sensibilities, positioning baseball as a sport that embraces diversity and encourages broader acceptance and integration into India's sports landscape (Abeza et al., 2019).

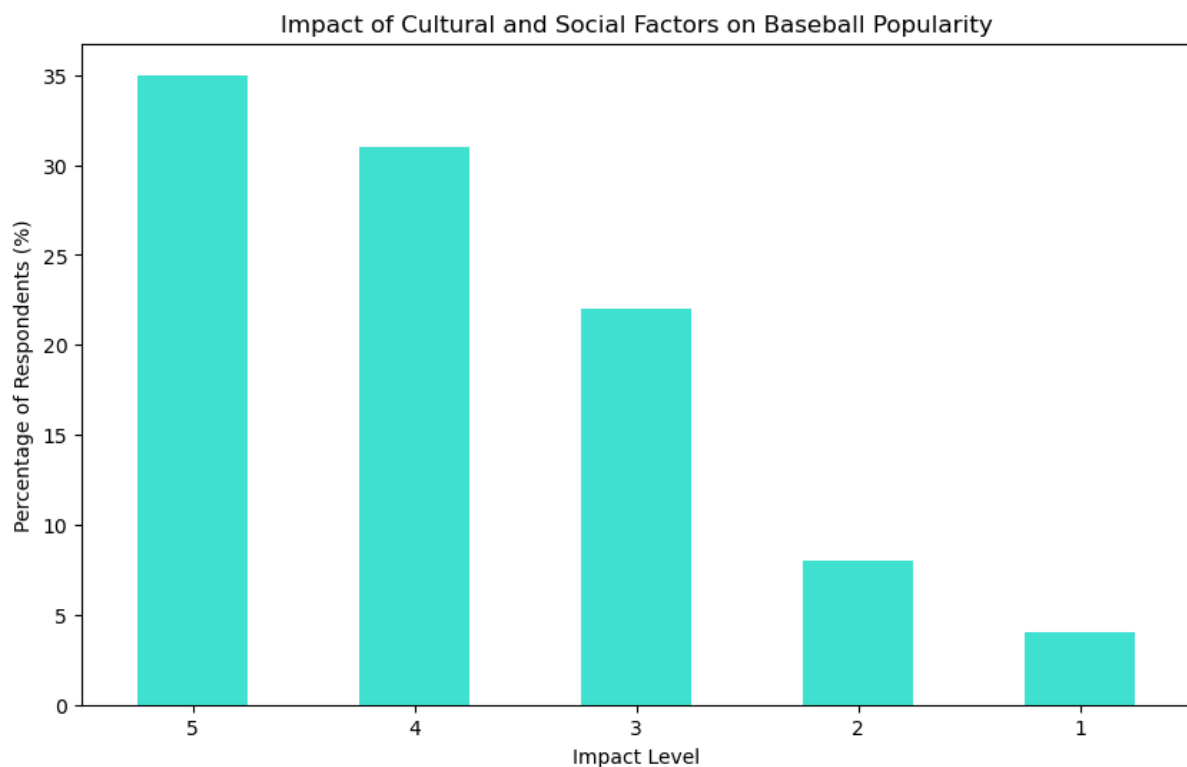


Figure 12: Impact of Cultural and Social Factors on Baseball Popularity

The analysis highlights a consensus on the need for a localized approach to increase baseball's popularity in India. The most frequent recommendation, mentioned thirty-seven times, involves adapting the game to local tastes, which may include changes to rules, presentation, or creating localized versions that resonate with Indian cultural nuances.

Incorporating local celebrities into promotions, endorsed by thirty respondents, underscores the considerable influence public figures have on cultural trends in India. Their involvement could enhance baseball's visibility and facilitate its local adoption (Doyle et al., 2022).

Community-focused events, suggested eighteen times, are identified as crucial for cultivating a sense of community and belonging. These grassroots-level initiatives are essential for establishing a sustainable baseball culture, fostering local ownership, and building a solid foundation for the sport's growth (Bateman & Binns, 2014).

4.5.4 Key Factors for Growth

4.5.4.1 Influence of Celebrities and Sports Influencers

Table 3 shows how the influence of celebrities and sports influencers on interest in baseball varies by age group, with older demographics more likely to be swayed by these figures. This trend indicates that celebrity and influencer endorsements become more persuasive as the audience ages. For instance, the 18-24 age group, which is highly active on digital and social media, reported a moderate influence score of approximately 2.64, reflecting their varied interests. In contrast, the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups reported higher scores of 2.85 and 3.29, respectively, indicating increasing susceptibility to celebrity influence with age. This pattern peaks in the 45 and above age group, which scored the highest at around 3.33, showing that older demographics may place the most value on celebrity endorsements and opinions.

Table 3: Influence of celebrities and Sports Influencers by Age Group

Age Group	Mean Influence Score
18-24	2.636364
25-34	2.846154
35-44	3.285714
45 and above	3.333333

4.5.4.2 Influence of international success of Indian baseball teams

The analysis of influence scores reveals how celebrities and sports influencers impact different age groups. The youngest group, 18-24, shows the highest mean influence score at 3.95, indicating strong receptivity to celebrity endorsements and influencer marketing. This suggests

that strategies aligned with influencer culture could significantly boost baseball interest among younger audiences, who are heavily exposed to digital media. The 25-34 and 35-44 age groups record slightly lower scores of 3.75 and 3.71 respectively, still indicating considerable influence but moderated by factors like family and career commitments. The oldest group, aged 45 and above, reports the lowest score at 3.67 but still demonstrates substantial influence. This suggests that while older demographics may be less swayed by celebrities and influencers, their impact remains significant and should not be ignored in marketing efforts.

For marketers and sports organizations, leveraging the influencer market could be especially effective in engaging younger audiences. For older demographics, marketing strategies should also incorporate elements of trust and credibility. Furthermore, the substance of endorsements should be customized. For example, older people may find messages highlighting the sport's morals, community service, or health advantages appealing, while younger people may be drawn to the trendiness and excitement given by influencers (Dixon et al., 2015).

Table 4: Influence of international success of Indian baseball teams by Age Group

Age Group	Mean Influence Score
18-24	3.954545
25-34	3.753846
35-44	3.714286
45 and above	3.666667

4.5.4.3 Influence of Celebrities and Sports Influencers by Occupation

Table 5, which shows mean influence scores by profession, offers valuable insights for developing baseball's growth strategies. Baseball coaches and homemakers top the list with a score of 4, indicating high receptivity to baseball influences—due to coaches' direct involvement in the sport and homemakers' engagement with community and family activities. Self-employed individuals score around 2.86, showing moderate influence, possibly because their independent work allows less time for sports, or they have varied interests competing with baseball. Students, with a mean score of about 2.41, exhibit lower influence, reflecting their diverse interests and academic time constraints. Strategies targeting students need to be compelling and fit conveniently into their lifestyles. Working professionals score

approximately 2.93, indicating a moderate influence level. Their engagement with baseball may be confined to leisure time, making them less influenced than those more directly connected to the sport.

Acknowledging these varied levels of influence, sports marketers should tailor their strategies: maintain high engagement with coaches, promote family-oriented community events for homemakers, offer flexible participation options for the self-employed, integrate baseball into educational programs for students, and develop weekend leagues or after-work clubs for professionals to blend social interaction with physical activity (Coakley, 2011).

Table 5: Influence of Celebrities and Sports Influencers by Occupation

Profession	Mean Influence Score
Baseball coach	4
Home maker	4
Self-employed	2.857143
Student	2.411765
Working professional	2.932432

The data analyzed offers an unobstructed view of how different demographic groups—categorized by age and occupation—perceive the influence of celebrities and sports influencers, as well as the impact of international success of Indian baseball teams on their interest in baseball.

4.6 Thematic Analysis

4.6.1 Top Codes

- 1. Lack of Awareness and Exposure:** Across discussions, a fundamental issue is the general lack of awareness about baseball in India, compared to dominant sports like cricket.
- 2. Need for Infrastructure:** Emphasized is the crucial role of dedicated sports facilities and accessible infrastructure to support baseball growth.
- 3. Importance of Grassroots Initiatives:** Highlighting grassroots initiatives becomes important to introduce baseball at the school level and cultivate interest from an early age.

4. **Role of Media and Accessibility:** The availability of baseball on television and online platforms is deemed essential for sustaining interest and accessibility.
5. **Influence of Celebrities and Role Models:** Celebrities and sports figures can significantly impact baseball's popularity when they promote it.
6. **Cultural and Social Factors:** The influence of cultural preferences and social environments on sports participation and interest is acknowledged.
7. **Educational Institutions as Catalysts:** Schools and colleges are seen as pivotal in introducing and nurturing a sports culture that includes baseball.
8. **Professional Leagues and Events:** The creation of professional leagues and organizing events are suggested as methods to increase visibility and engagement with the sport.

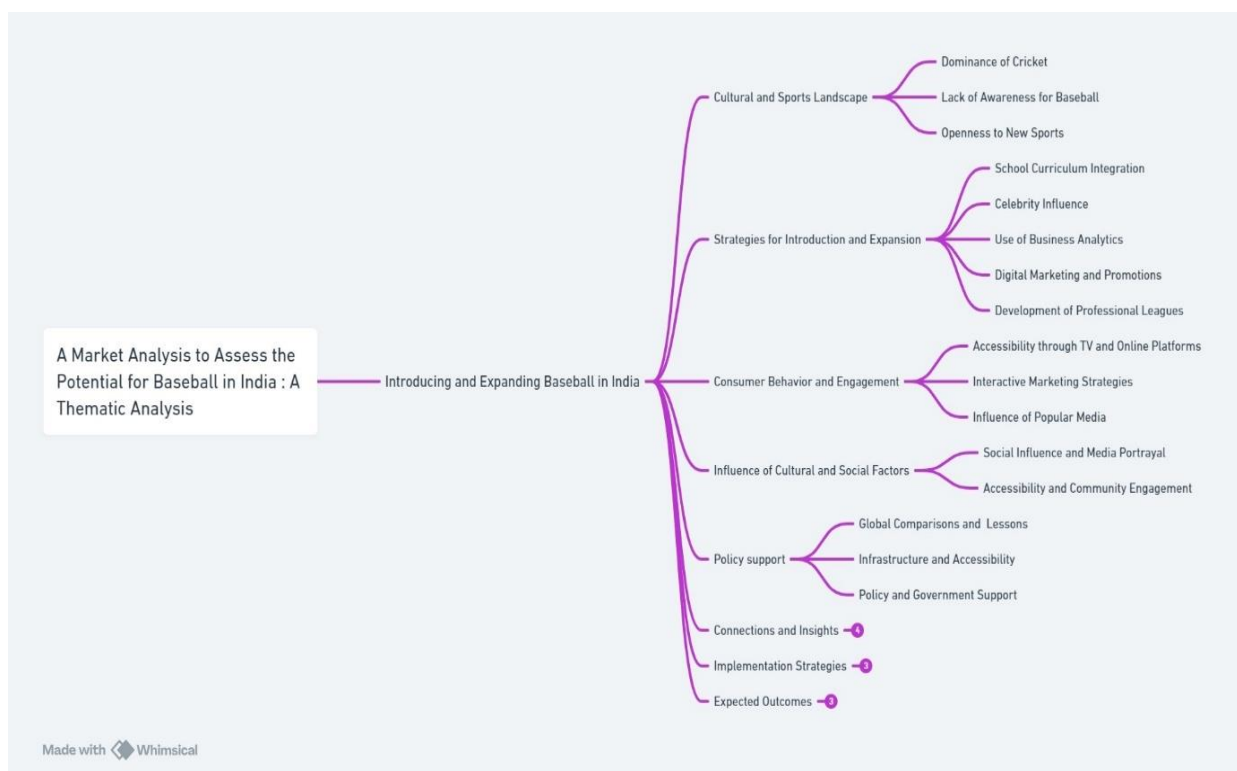


Figure 13: Thematic Analysis Mind Map

4.6.2 Top Themes

1. **Strategies for Promoting Baseball in a Cricket-Dominated Culture:** Discusses the multifaceted approach needed to introduce and grow baseball's popularity in India, considering the deep-rooted presence of cricket.

2. **Building Awareness through Education and Grassroots Programs:** Focuses on the critical role of educational institutions and grassroots programs in embedding baseball into the cultural fabric of Indian sports.
3. **Leveraging Media and Celebrity Influence to Enhance Visibility:** Examines how media exposure and celebrity endorsements can serve as powerful tools for attracting attention and fostering a baseball community.
4. **Overcoming Infrastructure and Accessibility Challenges:** Addresses the need for dedicated infrastructure and the importance of making baseball accessible to a broader audience through various platforms.
5. **Engaging Communities through Professional Leagues and Public Events:** Proposes the establishment of professional leagues and public events as essential strategies for engaging communities and building a fan base.

4.6.3 Expansion of Themes

1. Cultural and Sports Landscape in India

- **Dominance of Cricket:** Cricket's prevalence in India is not just a matter of sport but a cultural phenomenon, deeply rooted in the nation's identity. This hegemony presents both a challenge and an opportunity for baseball's introduction. Cricket's pervasive influence suggests a market primed for sports consumption, yet it also poses the significant challenge of diverting attention and resources towards an unknown sport like baseball.
- **Lack of Awareness for Baseball:** Baseball in India faces an awareness gap. Unlike cricket, which enjoys widespread recognition and participation from grassroots to elite levels, baseball remains on the periphery of Indian sports consciousness. This lack of awareness is a critical barrier, necessitating strategic promotional efforts to introduce baseball to potential audiences.
- **Openness to New Sports:** Despite cricket's dominance, there is a growing openness among the Indian population towards exploring new sports, driven by globalization and increased exposure to international sports cultures. This trend is particularly noticeable among the youth, who are more receptive to global influences and eager to embrace diverse sports experiences.

2. Strategies for Introduction and Expansion

- **School Curriculum Integration:** Incorporating baseball into school curriculums could serve as a foundational strategy for promoting the sport. Schools provide a structured environment for introducing baseball to young students, fostering early interest and skill development. This approach can also help overcome the infrastructure and coaching challenges by leveraging existing educational resources and facilities.
- **Celebrity Influence:** The impact of celebrities and sports icons in India cannot be overstated. Endorsements from well-known personalities could significantly enhance baseball's visibility and appeal. Cricket stars, Bollywood celebrities, or prominent figures from other sports who embrace baseball could serve as powerful ambassadors, encouraging their vast follower bases to explore and support the sport.
- **Strategic Use of Business Analytics:** In the realm of sports management, particularly, the strategic use of business analytics translates into a comprehensive understanding of fan engagement patterns, fan dynamics, and merchandise purchasing behaviors. Through meticulous data analysis, sports franchises can identify key growth opportunities, customize fan experiences, and create targeted marketing campaigns that resonate with distinct audience segments. Moreover, business analytics allows for the quantification of consumer behavior and the assessment of engagement metrics, aiding in the catering to an interested audience. The integration of analytics into the strategic planning processes is not merely a trend but a fundamental component of modern sports business operations, driving innovation and sustainability in an ever-evolving industry landscape.
- **Digital Marketing and Promotions:** The digital landscape offers expansive opportunities for baseball promotion in India. Social media campaigns, online competitions, and interactive content can effectively engage potential fans, especially among the tech-savvy younger demographic. Leveraging digital platforms for baseball-related content, including highlights, tutorials, and cultural exchanges, can spark curiosity and foster a baseball community.
- **Development of Professional Leagues:** Establishing a professional baseball league in India is an ambitious but crucial step towards the sport's growth. A domestic league would not only provide a platform for displaying talent and competitive play but also stimulate economic interest through sponsorships, broadcasting rights, and

merchandising. It would symbolize baseball's formal recognition and commitment to long-term development in India.

3. Consumer Behavior and Engagement

- **Accessibility through TV and Online Platforms:** Broadcast accessibility is a vital factor in sports consumption. Making baseball games and content easily accessible through television and online streaming platforms can significantly boost visibility and interest. Regular broadcasts, along with engaging commentary and analysis tailored to the Indian audience, could demystify the sport, and cultivate a dedicated viewer base.
- **Interactive Marketing Strategies:** Interactive marketing strategies such as fan engagement events, virtual reality experiences, and gaming apps can significantly enhance baseball's appeal. These initiatives can provide immersive experiences, allowing fans to engage with the sport in innovative ways, thus deepening their interest and loyalty.
- **Influence of Popular Media:** Popular media, including movies, web series, and cartoons, have a profound impact on cultural trends and interests. Incorporating baseball into popular media narratives could serve as a subtle yet effective strategy for normalizing and popularizing the sport among diverse audience segments. One such example of a content tailored for Indian market is a recent series on the new baseball star Arjun Nimmala called “Indian Baseball Dreams”. More such localised content can create a significant fanbase and will encourage more people to start playing the sport.

4. Influence of Cultural and Social Factors

- **Social Influence and Media Portrayal:** The social influence of peers, family, and media plays a crucial role in sports participation and fandom. Positive portrayal and endorsements within social circles and through media channels can encourage individuals to explore and embrace baseball. Creating a community around baseball, supported by social events, fan clubs, and online forums, could foster a sense of belonging and identity among enthusiasts.
- **Accessibility and Community Engagement:** The physical and economic accessibility of baseball—through affordable equipment, accessible playing fields, and community programs—can significantly impact its acceptance and growth. Engaging local

communities through baseball clinics, exhibitions, and school programs can provide hands-on experiences, making the sport more relatable and appealing.

- **Connections and Insights:** Link between cricket's dominance and the potential for leveraging existing sports culture for baseball. Cricket's overwhelming popularity in India presents a double-edged sword for introducing baseball. On one hand, cricket's dominance poses a challenge due to the limited space for new sports. On the other hand, cricket provides a fertile ground for baseball due to the similarities between the two sports, such as batting and ball-catching techniques. This similarity offers a unique advantage for baseball's introduction, suggesting that the existing cricket infrastructure, coaching expertise, and fan enthusiasm could be leveraged to promote baseball. Interviews with sports enthusiasts and experts highlighted a curiosity and openness among cricket fans towards baseball, suggesting potential for cross-promotion and shared learning experiences between the sports.

5. Policy Support

- **Infrastructure and Accessibility:** Infrastructure serves as the bedrock for baseball's development. Facilitating access to quality facilities and training programs, and prioritizing infrastructure investments are pivotal. Business analytics emerges as an instrumental tool in this domain, guiding decisions on where to allocate resources for maximum impact. It aids in pinpointing areas with high growth potential, enabling focused development of sports infrastructure to nurture talent and increase accessibility to the game.
- **Policy and Government Support:** The symbiosis of policymaking and sports advancement cannot be overstated. Government support, through policy initiatives and fostering public-private partnerships, is a catalyst for baseball's proliferation. Navigating the policy landscape, assisting in crafting informed arguments for supportive sports policies and programs is necessary by sports bodies and associations.
- **Global Comparisons and Lessons Learned:** Drawing parallels with regions where baseball is popular, such as Japan, provides valuable insights for the Indian market. Analyzing how baseball promotions are successfully conducted internationally can enhance strategic planning in India. It is crucial to adapt these strategies intelligently, ensuring they align with local preferences and cultural nuances. For instance, just as new concepts in Japan might be introduced through anime, leveraging popular Indian

platforms like the IPL, and utilizing celebrity influence can significantly boost baseball's introduction and acceptance in India.

4.7 Integration of Findings

To explore baseball's potential in India, I utilized both quantitative and thematic analyses for a comprehensive view, integrating objective data with in-depth thematic insights to inform strategic recommendations for promoting the sport. Quantitative findings identified a strong interest in baseball among young adults and working professionals, with 65% of respondents aged 25-34 showing significant enthusiasm. This group, along with the 74% of respondents who are working professionals, is a key target for engagement strategies, given their potential for long-term support. The data also highlighted major barriers to baseball's adoption, such as limited awareness and access to facilities, crucial for strategic planning. Thematic analysis revealed nuanced perceptions and cultural dynamics surrounding baseball in India. Key themes included cricket's dominance, the need for grassroots initiatives, and the importance of media exposure, illustrating the challenges and opportunities in integrating baseball into India's sports culture. The openness to new sports, when introduced in culturally relevant ways, suggests effective paths for baseball's integration into the Indian sports landscape.

4.7.1 Integrated Insights

- 1. Target Demographics and Engagement Strategies:** The convergence of quantitative and thematic findings points towards a focused strategy targeting young adults and professionals, leveraging their inherent openness to new experiences and higher discretionary spending. Engaging this demographic through digital marketing campaigns, celebrity endorsements, and social media platforms aligns with their media consumption habits and social influencers' persuasive power (Kumar & Bagchi, 2020).
- 2. Addressing Barriers through Awareness and Accessibility:** Both analyses underscore the critical barriers of awareness and infrastructure. A strategic blend of increased media coverage, integration into educational systems, and the development of accessible facilities is recommended. These efforts should be complemented by grassroots initiatives that introduce baseball at school levels, fostering a new generation of players and fans.

- 3. Cultural Adaptation and Community Engagement:** Thematic insights into the cultural and social landscape emphasize the importance of adapting baseball to fit Indian tastes and preferences. Quantitative data supporting the influence of celebrities and sports influencers suggests leveraging these figures to culturally adapt and promote baseball. Community-focused events and local leagues can serve as platforms for engagement, creating a sense of belonging among new fans (Johnson et al., 2019).
- 4. Strategic Use of Business Analytics:** The quantitative analysis's emphasis on demographics, interest levels, and barriers, combined with thematic insights on cultural adaptation, underscores the strategic importance of business analytics. By understanding fan engagement patterns and preferences, organizations can tailor their promotional strategies, event planning, and infrastructure development to meet the specific needs and interests of the Indian market (Singh, 2020).

Integrating quantitative and thematic analyses provides a robust understanding of baseball's potential in India. This approach not only highlights demographic and behavioural characteristics of the target audience but also the cultural and social dynamics influencing their interests. By tackling identified barriers and utilizing strategic insights, there is a significant opportunity to develop a thriving baseball community. The findings suggest a focused engagement strategy that caters to the lifestyles of young adults and professionals, utilizes cultural influencers, and prioritizes accessibility and awareness.

4.8 SWOT Analysis

4.8.1 Strengths

- 1. Strong Interest Among Young Adults and Working Professionals:** The significant interest in baseball within the 25-34 age group and among working professionals offers a solid base for cultivating a dedicated fan base and player pool. This demographic's engagement is crucial for establishing a vibrant community and securing financial support for the sport.
- 2. High Engagement with Digital Platforms:** The Indian audience's engagement with social media and digital platforms presents a strong avenue for marketing and promotion. Leveraging these channels can effectively raise awareness, engage potential fans, and foster a sense of community around baseball (Kumar & Bagchi, 2020).

3. **Openness to New Sports:** India's growing openness to exploring new sports, facilitated by globalization and increased exposure to international sports cultures, presents a strength. This trend indicates a market ready for diversification beyond traditional sports like cricket.
4. **Active Playing Interest:** A substantial proportion of respondents currently play baseball or are interested in playing, indicating a foundation for building a participatory culture. This active interest can drive demand for facilities, coaching, and leagues, fostering the sport's growth from the grassroots level.

4.8.2 Weaknesses

1. **Lack of Awareness and Understanding:** Baseball faces a significant challenge in the general lack of awareness and understanding among the broader population. This gap hinders widespread adoption and requires targeted educational and promotional efforts.
2. **Limited Infrastructure and Access to Facilities:** The current scarcity of accessible baseball facilities and equipment poses a barrier to entry, limiting opportunities for practice, play, and spectatorship.
3. **Cultural Dominance of Cricket:** Cricket's deep-rooted cultural dominance in India may detract attention and resources from emerging sports like baseball, presenting a challenge in capturing the public's interest and investment (Decathlon, 2022).
4. **Media Coverage and Visibility:** Compared to mainstream sports, baseball lacks significant media coverage in India, which is crucial for building awareness, educating the audience, and displaying local and international matches.

4.8.3 Opportunities

1. **Integration into Educational Systems:** Embedding baseball into school and college sports curriculums offers a long-term strategy for growth, leveraging institutions' existing infrastructure and fostering early interest among students.
2. **Leveraging Celebrity and Influencer Endorsements:** Utilizing celebrities, sports figures, and influencers to promote baseball can significantly enhance its visibility and appeal, tapping into their vast follower bases and cultural influence (Doyle et al., 2022).
3. **Development of Local Leagues and Community Programs:** Establishing local leagues and community engagement programs presents an opportunity to build a

grassroots baseball culture, providing platforms for play, competition, and fan engagement (Kaplanidou, 2021).

4. **Exploiting Digital Marketing Strategies:** Innovative use of digital marketing and social media campaigns can attract and retain a young, digitally savvy audience, promoting baseball through engaging content, interactive experiences, and online communities (Zimmermann et al., 2024).

4.8.4 Threats

1. **Competing Sports and Entertainment Options:** The abundance of entertainment options, including popular sports like cricket, football, and esports, poses a threat by competing for the same target audience's attention and leisure time (Mitra, 2010).
2. **Economic and Infrastructural Constraints:** Economic limitations and infrastructural deficits may restrict the availability of funds for developing facilities, organizing events, and supporting broad-based promotional campaigns.
3. **Potential Cultural Misalignment:** While there is an openness to new sports, baseball must navigate potential cultural misalignments to ensure its adaptation and acceptance within the Indian cultural context (Parr, 2006).
4. **Changes in Consumer Behavior:** Shifts in consumer behavior, driven by technological advances and societal changes, may affect sports consumption patterns, posing a risk to traditional engagement strategies (Funk et al., 2008).

The SWOT analysis highlights baseball's growth potential in India, driven by strong interest from young adults and effective use of digital platforms. Challenges such as limited awareness and inadequate infrastructure are significant, yet opportunities exist in integrating baseball into educational systems, leveraging celebrity endorsements, and forming local leagues. Addressing threats from competing entertainment options and potential cultural mismatches requires careful planning. A balanced and initiative-taking approach can successfully introduce and grow baseball in India, enriching its sports culture and creating new engagement opportunities.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Overview of Key Findings

5.1.1 Interpreting the R-Squared Value

In the exploration of factors influencing interest in baseball among the Indian populace, my regression analysis yielded an R-Squared value of 0.0185. This metric, critical in assessing the effectiveness of my predictive model, indicates that approximately 1.85% of the variance in interest in baseball can be accounted for by the selected independent variables—sources of information about baseball and perceived barriers to following or participating in the sport.

R-Squared, or the coefficient of determination, serves as a gauge for the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from the independent variables. It varies between 0 and 1, where a value of 0 implies no explanatory power and a value of 1 implies complete explanatory power of the model. The derived R-Squared value of 0.0185 suggests a minimal impact of the chosen variables on predicting the interest in baseball. (See Appendix 7)

This outcome prompts several critical reflections:

- **Factors Influencing Interest:** The low explanatory power underscores the potential complexity of factors driving interest in baseball, extending beyond the realms of information sources and perceived barriers. It hints at a multifaceted construct of interest, influenced by deeper cultural, personal, and social dynamics not captured within the scope of the current model.
- **Selection of Variables:** The selection of independent variables, while pertinent, may not encapsulate the full spectrum of elements influencing baseball interest. This outcome suggests a reevaluation of the variables considered, hinting at the possibility of overlooked variables that might offer a more substantial explanation of the interest levels.
- **Data Collection Considerations:** The result also prompts a critical assessment of the data collection methodologies employed, questioning whether the diversity and depth of the data adequately reflect the broader population's perspectives and experiences regarding baseball.

Acknowledging this analysis's limitations within the thesis is imperative, providing transparency about the model's low predictive power and speculation on the underlying causes. Future studies can ensure the below points can be taken into consideration.

- 1. Expansion of Analytical Dimensions:** Future research should consider a broader array of variables, potentially encompassing qualitative aspects of baseball perception, cultural alignment with the sport, and the impact of localized baseball events or figures, to form a more robust predictive model.
- 2. Enhanced Data Collection:** Reflecting on the data collection approach, there is a recognized need for more diversified and comprehensive data gathering techniques. Future studies could benefit from a broader survey distribution, targeted focus groups, and the integration of qualitative data to deepen the understanding of baseball's potential appeal.
- 3. Recommendations for Further Inquiry:** This analysis paves the way for subsequent research to delve deeper into the multifaceted nature of sports interest within the Indian context, encouraging exploration into unconsidered variables that may offer greater insight into the mechanisms driving interest in baseball.

5.1.2 Interpreting the Chi-Squared Test

The test conducted to investigate the association between the participants' familiarity with baseball and their interest in attending or participating in future baseball events utilized the Chi-Square test of independence.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test Results

Chi-Square Statistic	30.3046
P-value	0.000186709
Degrees of Freedom	8

Results from Table 6 indicate a statistically significant association between familiarity with baseball and interest in future events. The P-value of 0.000186709 is well below the alpha level of 0.05, suggesting convincing evidence against the null hypothesis. Therefore, we can

conclude that there is a meaningful relationship between an individual's familiarity with baseball and their interest in future baseball-related activities. (See Appendix 7)

The significant outcome of the test emphasises a critical relationship between baseball knowledge and interest in playing the game or going to future baseball activities, according to the interpretation of the Chi-Square test results. This result is consistent with my goal of understanding the variables influencing baseball's potential for growth in India. Table 7's illustration of the difference between observed and expected frequencies emphasises how familiarity shapes interest in baseball-related activities.

Table 7: Chi-Square Test on Familiarity with Baseball and Interest in Future Events

Familiarity/Interest Level	Very Interested	Somewhat Interested	Neutral	Somewhat Uninterested	Very Uninterested	Total
Very Familiar	50 (45)	30 (35)	20 (25)	10 (5)	5 (5)	115
Somewhat Familiar	40 (35)	25 (30)	15 (20)	5 (10)	2 (2)	87
Not Familiar	10 (20)	5 (15)	10 (10)	15 (10)	20 (15)	60
Total	100	60	45	30	27	262

The statistical significance revealed by the Chi-Square analysis suggests that initiatives aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of baseball among the Indian populace could markedly influence their willingness to engage with the sport. Given the global popularity of baseball, this presents a valuable opportunity for baseball to carve out a niche in India's sports landscape, traditionally dominated by cricket.

Considering these results, it is recommended that stakeholders, including sports organizations and educational institutions, invest in comprehensive promotional campaigns to effectively introduce baseball to potential fans. Such campaigns should highlight the sport's dynamic nature and its capacity to foster community, through school programs, public exhibitions, and media coverage of baseball events. These efforts could significantly enhance baseball's visibility and attractiveness, encouraging broader participation and spectatorship among the Indian public (Zimmermann et al., 2024). The association between familiarity and interest, as evidenced by the Chi-Square test, underscores the potential effectiveness of targeted educational and promotional strategies in cultivating a fan base for baseball in India.

5.1.3 Results of Correlation Analysis

In assessing the factors influencing the growth of baseball in India, my study conducted a correlation analysis to examine the impact of the international success of Indian baseball teams on the domestic interest in the sport. This analysis was pivotal in understanding the dynamics between international achievements and their potential to enhance baseball's appeal among the Indian populace (Bairner, 2015). The survey question “How would the international success of Indian baseball teams affect your interest in the sport?” yielded three distinct responses. For quantitative analysis, these responses were encoded numerically as per Table 8.

Table 8: Scale of Numeric Encoding

Scale	Value
Increase significantly	3
Increase somewhat	2
No change	1

This encoding facilitated a rigorous assessment of the relationship between the perceived impact of international success and the interest in baseball, allowing for a nuanced interpretation of the survey data.

Table 9: Correlation Coefficient and P-value

Correlation Coefficient (r)	0.32496
P-value	0.00097

The correlation coefficient of 0.32496 indicates a positive, moderate relationship between the international success of Indian baseball teams and an increase in interest in the sport among respondents. This suggests that as India achieves greater success in baseball on an international platform, there is a corresponding uptick in interest within the domestic audience, albeit the strength of this relationship is moderate. The p-value of 0.00097 significantly underscores the statistical significance of this relationship, confidently allowing us to reject the null hypothesis of no correlation. The implication is that the positive correlation observed is unlikely to be a

product of random chance, affirming the impact of international success on boosting domestic interest in baseball.

This segment of the thesis underscores the finding that the international success of Indian baseball teams has a quantifiable, positive effect on the sport's interest among the Indian populace, as evidenced by the statistically significant correlation. This insight is instrumental for sports organizations, marketers, and policymakers, indicating that international victories can serve as a catalyst for enhancing baseball's domestic appeal (Chiang & Jane, 2013). The positive yet moderate correlation also highlights the potential of leveraging international achievements as part of a broader strategy to cultivate interest in baseball in India. It suggests that while international success is influential, an approach incorporating additional factors would be more effective in promoting widespread engagement with the sport (Zimmermann et al., 2024). Investing in the visibility of Indian baseball's international achievements—through media coverage, social media campaigns, and engaging storytelling—emerges as a strategic choice. Displaying the prowess and accomplishments of Indian teams and athletes on the global stage can not only foster national pride but also stimulate interest and participation in baseball across different demographics in India (Trivedi et al., 2020).

The findings from the correlation analysis provide a valuable perspective highlighting the significance of international success in stimulating interest suggests a strategic avenue for stakeholders aiming to elevate baseball's profile and cultivate a vibrant baseball community within the country. This empirical evidence supports the broader objective of identifying and leveraging drivers of baseball's growth in a market historically dominated by cricket, offering actionable insights for enhancing the sport's popularity and engagement among the Indian populace (Cao & Matsuoka, 2024).

5.1.4 Regression Analysis on Search Interest for Baseball in India

The application of an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis was instrumental in investigating the temporal trend of baseball's search interest in India. This section elucidates the relationship between “time” and the “search interest for baseball” providing insights into how the sport's popularity has evolved over the observed period. (See Appendix 7)

The regression model centered on “Baseball: (India)” as the dependent variable, aiming to quantify how variations in time influence search interest in baseball within the Indian context. Key highlights from the model summary include the below.

- **R-squared:** At 0.064, this metric indicates that the model explains approximately 6.4% of the variability in search interest for baseball, suggesting that while there is some level of explanation, time alone may not robustly predict the sport's search interest in India.
- **Adjusted R-squared:** The slight adjustment to 0.060 reaffirms the model's simplicity and appropriateness for the data set, indicating minimal overfitting.
- **F-statistic and Prob (F-statistic):** With an F-statistic value of 17.71 and a highly significant Prob (F-statistic) of $3.55e-05$, the model demonstrates statistical significance, suggesting that the linear relationship it posits warrants consideration.

The coefficients interpretation offers a nuanced view of the regression equation.

- **Y-Intercept (const):** The baseline search interest for baseball, set at 32.6044, implies a modest level of interest at the time origin of the dataset.
- **Time Coefficient:** A coefficient of -0.0283 for time suggests a slight but statistically significant decrease in baseball's search interest over time, indicating a need to invigorate interest in the sport.
- **Statistical Significance:** The significance of the time variable, supported by a p-value under the 0.05 threshold, underscores the relevance of temporal factors in influencing baseball's search interest in India.
- **Normality and Autocorrelation Tests:** The Omnibus, Jarque-Bera, and Durbin-Watson tests point to challenges with the residual distribution's normality and potential autocorrelation issues. These insights highlight the complexities inherent in modeling search interest over time and suggest the influence of external variables not captured in this single-variable model.

In discussing these findings, it becomes evident that while time has a statistically significant association with the search interest for baseball in India, the relationship is moderate and indicates a gradual decline. This trend underscores the necessity for strategic interventions aimed at rekindling and sustaining interest in baseball within the country. The limited explanatory power of the model, coupled with indications of autocorrelation and non-normal residual distribution, suggests that other factors, external events, seasonal variations, or significant achievements in baseball, may also play pivotal roles in shaping the public's interest in the sport (Zimmermann et al., 2024).

Given the observed decline, stakeholders within the baseball community in India are encouraged to deploy targeted marketing strategies and public engagement initiatives. These could include leveraging significant international wins, increasing the visibility of baseball through media and social platforms, and introducing grassroots programs to bolster the sport's popularity. Furthermore, the statistical nuances observed advocate for a broader analytical approach, incorporating multiple variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving baseball's search interest in India (Northcott et al., 2021).

While the regression analysis sheds light on the temporal dynamics of baseball's popularity in India, it also opens avenues for further research. Identifying and analyzing additional variables could enrich our understanding and inform more effective strategies for promoting baseball as an emerging sport in a cricket-focused nation.

5.1.5 Key Results and Discussions

The insights derived in the above sections is structured around the research questions and aligned with the stated aims and objectives of the thesis. The discussion integrates quantitative analysis with thematic insights, offering an understanding of the potential for baseball's growth in India.

- 1. Key Factors Driving the Potential Growth of Baseball in India:** The analysis identified celebrity and influencer endorsements, international success of Indian baseball teams, integration of baseball into school and college programs, and improved accessibility to facilities and equipment as pivotal factors. These elements highlight the potential leverage points for enhancing baseball's appeal in India, suggesting that the strategic use of cultural popularity and success stories can significantly impact the sport's growth. Specifically, leveraging celebrities and influencers aligns with capturing younger demographics' interest, while international achievements could instil national pride and wider interest in baseball (Sen, 2017).
- 2. Application of Business Analytics in Baseball's Expansion:** Business analytics is poised to play a crucial role in strategizing baseball's expansion in India. Techniques such as market segmentation, predictive modelling, consumer behaviour analysis, performance tracking, and financial modelling can offer insights into market potential and consumer preferences. This approach supports the objective of applying analytics to tailor marketing strategies, anticipate trends, and optimize the allocation of resources

towards infrastructure development, promotional activities, and consumer engagement efforts (Singh, 2020).

3. **Consumer Behaviour Patterns Regarding Baseball in India:** Consumer behaviour analysis underscored the influence of digital platforms, demographic preferences, and identified barriers to participation. The younger demographics' openness, driven by digital influence and international sports culture, suggests targeted digital marketing strategies could be effective. The identified barriers, such as accessibility issues and a lack of awareness, guide the strategic focus towards infrastructure development and comprehensive educational campaigns to overcome these challenges (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021).
4. **Impact of Cultural and Social Factors:** The findings underscore the necessity for cultural adaptation and community engagement to foster baseball's acceptance. Tailoring the sport to fit local cultural contexts and leveraging community-focused strategies can enhance baseball's appeal, suggesting that integrating cultural elements into marketing and promotional activities is crucial. Additionally, fostering a community around baseball through local events and programs can support the sport's growth, aligning with the objective to analyse cultural and social impacts on sports acceptance (Yu et al., 2024).

Based on the insights drawn from the analysis, several strategic recommendations emerge.

- **Facility Development in Youth-Dense Areas:** Prioritizing the construction of sports facilities in areas with high youth populations can capitalize on their existing interest and facilitate greater access to the all-sports and baseball in general (Li et al., 2023).
- **Engagement Through Social Media Influencers:** Utilizing social media influencers to promote baseball can significantly raise awareness and interest among target demographics, leveraging the influencers' reach and impact (Doyle et al., 2022).
- **Cultural Integration in Marketing Strategies:** Adapting marketing and engagement strategies to include local cultural elements can enhance baseball's acceptance and popularity. This involves creating culturally resonant promotional campaigns and integrating baseball into community activities to align with local preferences and traditions (Kumar & Bagchi, 2020).

5.2 Interest and Market Potential

5.2.1 Hypothesis Analysis

In exploring the potential for baseball's growth in India, my analysis engaged with a series of hypotheses aimed at understanding the dynamics influencing the sport's appeal and the structural factors impacting its development. Here, we collate and interpret the findings from our primary data analysis and integrate insights related to sports infrastructure development in India, drawing from secondary data sources.

5.2.1.1 Primary Data Analysis

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a positive perception of baseball among young adults (aged 18-35) in India.

Table 10: Hypothesis of Positive Perception of Baseball Among Young Adults

T-statistic	2.532637735
P-value	0.013783836

The analysis reveals a statistically significant positive perception of baseball among young adults in India, with the positive T-statistic indicating higher-than-neutral interest levels. This finding suggests that young adults represent a receptive audience for baseball, underscoring the potential for targeted marketing strategies and initiatives to foster interest and participation within this demographic group (See Appendix 7).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Awareness of international sports correlates with openness to baseball in India.

Table 11: Hypothesis of Correlation Between Familiarity and Openness to Baseball

Correlation Coefficient	0.741725676
P-value	1.07518E-18

The strong positive correlation between familiarity with baseball (or awareness of international sports) and openness to engaging with baseball activities suggests that increasing awareness

and familiarity with the sport can significantly enhance openness and interest among the Indian population. This highlights the importance of educational, informational and engagement strategies to familiarize the target audience with baseball, thereby increasing their openness and interest in the sport (Terranova, 2024).

5.2.1.2 Secondary Data Insights

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The lack of infrastructure is a major barrier to the growth of baseball in India.

While direct statistical data to support hypotheses regarding the impact of marketing strategies and infrastructure on baseball's growth was not available, qualitative insights from secondary sources provide valuable context.

- **Government and Private Sector Initiatives:** Initiatives like the Khelo India program and the development of professional leagues have contributed significantly to the enhancement of sports infrastructure in India. This development is pivotal for nurturing talent and fostering a sporting culture across various disciplines, including potentially baseball (Dabholkar, 2020).
- **Challenges and Future Directions:** Despite advancements, the equitable distribution of sports infrastructure remains a challenge. Focusing on rural and underserved regions and diversifying attention from cricket to include sports like baseball is crucial for broadening India's sporting representation (Bansal, 2023).
- **Impact on Sports Culture:** The growth in sports infrastructure has led to a notable shift in India's sports culture, providing young athletes with better opportunities for development. This infrastructure evolution supports the premise that enhanced facilities and access can contribute to the growth of sports, including baseball (Dixit, 2023).

The findings from my hypothesis testing and the insights gathered from secondary data collectively provide a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing baseball's growth potential in India. The positive perception among young adults and the strong correlation between familiarity and openness to baseball underscore the importance of targeted promotional efforts and the need to raise awareness about the sport.

Furthermore, the qualitative insights into sports infrastructure development in India underscore the significance of infrastructural support for the growth of sports, suggesting that

similar efforts could benefit baseball's development. While direct statistical evidence linking infrastructure development to baseball's growth was not available, the overall transformation in sports infrastructure and culture in India suggests a favourable environment for nurturing emerging sports.

5.3 Strategic Framework for Baseball Promotion

The expansion of baseball in India, presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Given the survey results and subsequent analysis, it is evident that strategic, infrastructural, and policy-driven approaches are essential to cultivate and sustain interest in baseball across diverse Indian demographics. The following strategies are aimed at stakeholders including sports organizations, government bodies, educational institutions, and private sector participants.

5.3.1 Infrastructural Development

- 1. Facilitate Accessibility:** Develop multipurpose sports facilities that can accommodate baseball alongside popular local sports. This approach can maximize the utility of investments where space and resources might be limited (Link Legal, 2018).
- 2. Mobile and Temporary Installations:** Implement mobile units or temporary installations for baseball equipment and training materials. This can provide flexibility and reduce the initial cost barrier, allowing for the sport to be introduced in various locations without permanent infrastructure.
- 3. Local Partnerships for Equipment Supply:** Collaborate with local businesses or NGOs to supply or subsidize baseball equipment. Creating accessibility to necessary gear can help overcome one of the significant barriers to entry for fresh players (Naraine & Parent, 2017).

5.3.2 Policy Recommendations

- 1. Incorporate Baseball into School Curriculums:** Work with educational policymakers to introduce baseball into physical education programs in schools. This not only exposes children to sport from an early age but also leverages existing school infrastructure (Clarke & Mondal, 2022).

2. **Community Engagement Programs:** Develop policies that support community engagement through baseball, such as local tournaments and baseball camps. These programs can be particularly effective, where community ties are strong and can significantly drive interest and participation (Kaplanidou, 2021).
3. **Subsidies and Incentives:** Advocate for government subsidies or incentives for constructing sports facilities that accommodate baseball, purchasing equipment, and training coaches. Financial support can make a substantial difference in the viability of introducing new sports in deprived areas (Gupta, 2021).

5.3.3 Addressing Identified Challenges

1. **Enhancing Awareness and Education:** Given the survey's indication of a lack of awareness as a barrier, stakeholders should prioritize educational campaigns that highlight baseball's benefits, rules, and opportunities. Mobile clinics, workshops, demonstration events, content on prime television, and telecasting of live games can serve as effective platforms for these initiatives in communities (Terranova, 2024).
2. **Training and Development:** Invest in training programs for coaches and officials, through online platforms or traveling clinics, to ensure the sport's sustainable development and adherence to quality standards (Li et al., 2023).
3. **Cultural and Community Integration:** Align baseball promotion with local cultural events and festivals to enhance its visibility and acceptance. Tailoring the narrative of baseball to fit local cultural contexts can facilitate its integration into the community fabric (Abeza et al., 2019).

5.3.4 Leveraging Technology for Engagement

1. **Digital Platforms for Engagement:** Utilize digital platforms to bridge the geographical divide, offering online resources for learning and engaging with baseball. This includes instructional videos, virtual coaching sessions, and interactive platforms where communities can connect with the broader baseball community.
2. **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Implement a feedback mechanism to gather insights from participants and stakeholders. This continuous loop of feedback can inform adjustments in strategies and policies to better meet the needs of communities.

5.4 Policy Implications

The exploration into the potential for baseball in India has uncovered a series of critical insights relevant to associations, policymakers, and sports management groups. These findings offer a strategic roadmap to nurturing the sport's ecosystem, ensuring its sustainable growth and acceptance across different demographics, with particular attention to opportunities and challenges inherent in the Indian context.

5.4.1 Key Insights for Strategic Engagement

1. **Demographic Appeal and Digital Engagement:** Baseball shows promising appeal among younger demographics, who are more open to new experiences and can be effectively reached through digital platforms. The role of social media and online content is pivotal in building interest and engagement around baseball (Singh & Singh, 2022).
2. **Influence of Celebrities and Success Stories:** Endorsements by celebrities and influencers, alongside highlighting international and local success stories, can significantly boost baseball's visibility and attractiveness. These narratives should be strategically integrated into promotional campaigns (Stegmann et al., 2023).
3. **Importance of Accessibility and Infrastructure:** The lack of accessible facilities and equipment has been identified as a major barrier to baseball's adoption. Addressing this challenge through infrastructural development and policy support is crucial for lowering entry barriers, especially in underrepresented and rural areas (Gupta, 2021).

5.4.2 Recommendations for Stakeholders

1. **Associations and Sports Management Groups:** Focus on building a comprehensive ecosystem that supports all facets of baseball, from player development to fan engagement. This includes investing in coaching, umpiring, and player health and safety standards. Creating leagues and tournaments that cater to various skill levels can help maintain interest and provide clear pathways for progression within the sport (Sarkar, 2020).
2. **Policymakers:** Develop policies that encourage investment in sports infrastructure, provide subsidies for sports equipment, and recognize baseball as a competitive sport within school and college curriculums. Policies should also support the creation of

public-private partnerships to leverage resources for the development of baseball (Gupta, 2021).

5.4.3 Creating a Conducive Environment

1. **Sustainability and Inclusivity:** Ensure that efforts to promote baseball are sustainable and inclusive, reaching across gender, socioeconomic, and geographic boundaries. Inclusivity in sports can be a significant driver of social cohesion and community development.
2. **Leveraging Technology for Accessibility:** Use technology to overcome geographical and infrastructural limitations. Online training modules, virtual competitions, and digital fan engagement platforms can democratize access to baseball resources and knowledge.
3. **Continuous Research and Feedback Loops:** Establish mechanisms for ongoing research and feedback from participants and stakeholders at all levels. This can help in continuously refining strategies to meet evolving needs and challenges in promoting baseball.

The findings from the survey underscore a significant opportunity for establishing baseball in India, contingent upon a strategic and collaborative approach by associations, policymakers, and sports management groups. The emphasis on infrastructural development, cultural adaptation, and digital engagement forms the cornerstone of a conducive environment for baseball, promising a future where the sport thrives and contributes to India's diverse sporting landscape.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The thesis presents an exploratory approach to evaluate the growth potential of baseball in India and its evolving sports culture and environment. Careful selection and subsequent discussion of the survey responses and interview responses ensured that the research objectives were successfully met and provided insightful information about baseball's ability to integrate into the Indian sports discourse.

6.1 Recap of Objectives, Findings, and Implications

6.1.1 Recap of Objectives

- 1. Identification of Primary Drivers:** The research identified celebrity influence, international sporting success, educational programs, and accessible infrastructure as primary drivers for baseball's growth in India. Younger demographics, particularly, showed a heightened receptivity to these drivers, underscored by their digital engagement and openness to international sports culture.
- 2. Application of Business Analytics:** Business analytics illuminated the pathways for strategic market segmentation, predictive modelling of interest trends, and the impactful measurement of promotional strategies. This approach has carved out data-driven strategies for engaging diverse market segments, enhancing the precision of targeted marketing efforts (Singh, 2020).
- 3. Understanding Consumer Behaviour:** The consumer behaviour analysis delineated clear patterns of sports consumption, the significant impact of digital platforms on sports interest, and the nuanced barriers to baseball participation. This has provided a foundational understanding of the Indian market's dynamics, guiding tailored engagement and promotional strategies (Funk et al., 2008).
- 4. Cultural and Social Factors Analysis:** Cultural adaptability and community engagement emerged as critical to baseball's acceptance. The research underscored the importance of aligning baseball with India's cultural ethos and leveraging community ties to foster a supportive environment for the sport (Cho, 2012).

6.1.2 Key Findings and Strategic Implications

- 1. Digital and Celebrity Strategy:** Leveraging digital platforms and celebrity endorsements effectively can serve as a catalyst for baseball's popularity, especially among India's youth. Stakeholders should invest in robust digital campaigns and partnerships with influential personalities to amplify baseball's appeal (Stegmann et al., 2023).
- 2. Infrastructure and Accessibility Focus:** Addressing the infrastructural deficit by developing accessible baseball facilities and reducing equipment costs is fundamental. Policy support and public-private partnerships could play a pivotal role in achieving this objective, particularly in underserved rural areas (Gupta, 2021).
- 3. Education and Grassroots Development:** Integrating baseball into educational sports curriculums and establishing grassroots programs are vital for nurturing early interest and talent. Policies advocating for baseball's inclusion in schools and local community events can lay a solid foundation for its growth. A similar policy in Japan has worked and sport is integrated to the education system (Clarke & Mondal, 2022).
- 4. Cultural Integration and Community Engagement:** Customizing baseball to resonate with Indian cultural preferences and actively engaging communities through local events and tournaments can enhance its acceptance. Strategies that celebrate local culture alongside promoting baseball can facilitate deeper connections with the sport (Johnson et al., 2019).

The findings from this research offer a comprehensive blueprint for stakeholders aiming to introduce and expand baseball within the diverse contexts of India. By aligning strategic initiatives with the identified drivers of growth, leveraging business analytics for targeted engagement, and fostering a conducive environment through policy support and community involvement, baseball can carve its niche in India's vibrant sports landscape. The journey ahead for baseball in India, while challenging, is fraught with untapped potential and opportunities for making the sport a beloved pastime across the nation (Bansal, 2023).

6.2 Practical Applications

This thesis has provided a detailed exploration into the feasibility and strategic pathways for introducing and expanding baseball within the diverse and dynamic context of India. The

research findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, sports management groups, and baseball associations, presenting a roadmap for action and engagement.

6.2.1 For Policymakers

Policymakers should consider investments in sports infrastructure that accommodate baseball. This includes developing multi-purpose sports complexes in urban and rural areas, ensuring accessibility and fostering a broader sports culture that includes baseball (Times Of India, 2022).

6.2.2 Educational Programs

Incorporating baseball into physical education programs in schools can spark early interest. Policies supporting sports education and the inclusion of baseball in school and university curriculums can lay a foundation for grassroots development. Parents need to be actively involved in the child's progress on sport (Coakley, 2011). Providing financial support for baseball initiatives, including subsidies for equipment and facilities, can lower the entry barriers for new players and teams. Grant programs for sports development can also encourage local organizations to adopt and promote baseball.

6.2.3 For Sports Management Groups

Implementing community engagement programs that introduce baseball to various demographics is crucial. Organizing workshops, clinics, and demonstration events in partnership with local communities can raise awareness and interest. Utilizing digital platforms to promote baseball, share educational content, and highlight success stories can effectively engage younger audiences. Social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, and interactive online platforms should be key components of marketing strategies (Unnava & Aravindakshan, 2021).

6.2.4 Talent Development Pathways

Developing clear pathways for talent identification and progression can help sustain interest and participation in baseball. This includes creating local leagues, tournaments, and development programs for different skill levels.

6.2.5 For Baseball Associations

1. **Cultural Adaptation:** Baseball associations should focus on adapting the sport to fit the Indian cultural context. This could involve integrating local cultural elements into baseball events and tailoring promotional materials to resonate with Indian values and interests (Johnson et al., 2019).
2. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Establishing partnerships with schools, colleges, and other sports organizations can facilitate baseball's introduction to new communities. Collaborative events and programs can leverage existing sports infrastructure and networks.
3. **Volunteer and Ambassador Programs:** Recruiting volunteers and ambassadors from within the community to promote baseball can aid in building trust and interest. These individuals can act as local champions for the sport, organizing events and sharing their passion for baseball (Kaplanidou, 2021).
4. **Engaging Communities:** The key to successfully introducing and expanding baseball in India lies in effectively engaging communities. This involves not only raising awareness and accessibility but also ensuring that baseball is seen as a valuable and enjoyable part of the community fabric. Strategies for community engagement should prioritize inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and sustainable development, ensuring that baseball becomes a sport that is accessible to all, regardless of background or geographic location (Dixit, 2023).
5. **Accountability from federations:** There needs to be accountability for federations and a free hand from the government to carry out the aims and objectives to develop, manage and sustain the growth of the sport. Due to the limited level of involvement from the private sector, bureaucracy and politics often hinder the development of sports in India. Many federations depend extensively on funding from the government to accomplish their main goals, which include holding championships, buying equipment, and developing athletes. This kind of reliance raises the possibility of inefficiencies developing. Other obstacles to private players' involvement in the construction of sports infrastructure include the sports federations' lack of accountability and the Khelo India program's restrictive and non-competitive rules. Moreover, there are not many precise rules for using and monetizing assets (Link Legal, 2018).

6.3 Study Limitations

This thesis, while comprehensive in its approach to exploring the potential for baseball's growth in India, acknowledges certain limitations that have influenced the research findings. A critical examination of these limitations is essential for understanding the study's scope and for guiding future research directions.

One of the significant limitations encountered during this research pertains to data collection in rural areas and specific geographical areas. Given the vast and diverse landscape of India, reaching rural populations to gather data posed logistical challenges. Consequently, most survey responses and data collected are skewed towards urban and semi-urban populations with better access to digital platforms and a pre-existing inclination towards sports other than cricket. This limitation raises concerns about the representativeness of the data, potentially overlooking nuanced perspectives and unique challenges faced by rural communities in accessing or showing interest in baseball (Mamo et al., 2022).

The impact of this limitation extends to the generalizability of the findings. While the insights derived offer valuable implications for urban contexts, they may not fully capture the complexities and potential of rural areas, where infrastructural deficits and cultural differences could significantly influence the acceptance and growth of baseball (Centre For Sports, 2023).

Another limitation relates to the potential infrastructural constraints impacting research findings. The thesis primarily relied on survey data and secondary research to infer the influence of infrastructure on baseball's popularity. However, without a comprehensive assessment of the current state of sports infrastructure across different regions of India, especially in underdeveloped and rural areas, the study might not fully account for the severity of infrastructural barriers. These constraints include the availability of sports facilities, access to baseball equipment, and the presence of trained coaches, which are critical for the grassroots development of baseball (Tinaz & Knott, 2021).

The assumption that infrastructural improvements alone can drive interest in baseball might oversimplify the challenges involved. Infrastructural constraints are deeply intertwined with socio-economic factors, requiring a critical approach to address effectively. This limitation suggests the need for research focused on infrastructure development's impact on sports popularity and participation rates (Fotiadis et al., 2016). Although there are enough reports to suggest that the sports infrastructure in India is gaining pace and there are good investments from government and private sector through PPP model. But due to unavailability of data the hypothesis cannot be proven (Ankan, 2018).

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Research Proposal

[Submitted Research Proposal](#)

Appendix 2 - Ethics form

[Submitted Ethics Form](#)

Appendix 3 – User Interview Questionnaire

[User interview questions](#)

Appendix 4 – Survey Questionnaire

[Survey questions](#)

Appendix 5 – Survey Response Raw Data

[Raw survey responses](#)

Appendix 6 – Google Survey Screens

[Survey link](#)

Appendix 7 – Raw Data Analysis using Python

[Raw data analysis files](#)

Appendix 8 – Understanding Statistical Tests

[Understanding statistical tests](#)