

Factors Influencing High Sports Performance among Cross River State Athletes at National Sports Festival

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Abstract: This investigated factors influencing high sports performance among Cross River State Athletes at National Sports Festival. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample for the study consisted of 344 sports personnel and athletes. questionnaire was the main instrument used to elicit information from the respondents. The data collected were analysed using frequency count, percentages table and chi-square (χ^2) analysis tested at .05 level of significance with the aid of SPSS Version 21. The findings revealed that scholarship was the most preferred incentive by the athletes as majority of the athletes were students of different levels. Also promotion was the most preferred incentive by the sports personnel. The study revealed that lack of scholarship for athletes and lack of promotion for sports personnel have no significant influence on the performance of Cross River State athletes at National Sports Festival. It was recommended among others that incentives and award schemes may be reviewed to actually introduce material incentive as part of honouring our heroes such as scholarship etc. Top management should articulate and authenticate a welfare package in order to be able to meet up with organizational obligations.

Key words: Incentives, sport performance, National sports, sports festival, Cross River State

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I. Introduction:

Sports are, by nature structured activities with certain rules of engagement. These do of course vary by sport, which can be individual or team oriented and require different skills and competencies to perform effectively (strength, speed, dexterity, teamwork). However, there is generally a Coach/Instructor or some skilled individual in the sports who is 'in charge' and responsible for management of the game and players. Participants follow directions and are expected to execute the skills taught and trained as needed to compete. There is a commitment involved in playing and it is done voluntarily by participants, which contributes to higher levels of motivation or incentives and cognitive engagement (Theokas, 2019).

Most sports researchers agree that incentives arouse the behaviour of an individual and that incentives of all types may influence behaviour and attitude of a person to work. According to Ogunjimi (2007) an athlete may have the abilities and those abilities may be employed as a tool to fulfil his ambition, but it is the incentives that determines the extent to which the individuals gets motivated to work.

According to McQuerrey (2016) incentives are approaches to offering recognition and reward to employees for meeting pre-established goals or objectives. He went further to state that incentives may include cash bonuses, profit sharing, additional paid vacation time or range of prizes such as gifts etc.. To be effective, incentives must be clearly defined and considered as viable, valuable reward or the associated workload. However, the innocence and morality of sports has been altered because of financial incentives placed on athletes. The passion and drive behind playing the game is not the same as it was over fifty years ago. Now, instead of playing for the love of the game, players are driven by money and other rewards (Ogunjimi, 2007). Incentives have manipulated the minds of players and have caused a shift in the direction of athletes, players are being psychologically driven by these incentives.

The use of incentives in sports dates back to the origin of sports in early Greek history. The most coveted award was the crown of olive branches placed upon the head of an Olympic Victor that signified vitality. Competing was for the glory of human achievement; the winners were honoured and respected in the ancient world. The noblemen and royalty sought honours at Olympia competing side-by-side with the commoners hoping to be awarded the coveted olive wreath, (Ongalo, 2014). In addition, Theokas (2010) stated that the fourth and fifth century's (AD) saw professionalism creeping in as the winners of the Olympia were no longer interested in the olive wreath and these saw the advent of other tangible rewards as incentives such as recruitment in the military camps, allocation of pieces of land and naming villages after the victors names (Ongalo, 2014). In the first Olympics at Athens, a Greek shepherd won the marathon race with much jubilation

of the home cheering crowd. For his victory, a Greek barber promised him shaving services for life (Sunde, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

The ultimate goal of athletes preparing for competition is to attain peak performance for excellence. It has been observed that one of the psychological factors which may serve as barrier, blocking Cross River State (CRS) athletes from getting to this zone of optimal functional includes incentives. This is as a results of obligations that are not meted out of sports athletes and their personnel's emanating from several complaints that incentives were not appropriately given such as money, promotion, scholarship, opportunities, to travel abroad, allowances not paid regularly, winning and tournament bonuses are not given for outstanding performance. In addition, it is on record that the performance of Cross River State athletes at the National Sports Festival is not befitting for a sports-loving state such as Cross River as it is evident that the state has never placed among the first three (3) overall in the medals table since the inception of National Sports Festival in 1973 (CRS Sports Commission). However, there is no doubt that other factors such as, facilities, equipment, lack of qualified coaches etc may contribute to this poor performance. Therefore, in other to find out if incentives influences the poor performance of CRS athletes at National Sports Festival, necessitated the study.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the incentives given to Cross River State athletes for high performance at National Sports Festival?
- 2) What are the incentives given to sports personnel for high performance of Cross River State athletes at National Sports Festival?

Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant influence of lack of incentives on high sports performance of Cross River State athletes at National Sports Festival.
- 2) Lack of incentives for sports personnel will not significantly influence high sports performance of Cross River State athletes at National Sports Festival.

II. Literature review

There are relatively few research studies in sports with regard to incentive value rating of monetary rewards. The majority of empirical evidence using sports data supports the positive impact of monetary incentives on sporting performance. Studies on sports data where performance can relatively be measured are from disciplines like golfing (Melton and Zorn, 2000; Orszag, 1994), horse racing (Ferne and Metcalf, 1999; Lynch and Zax, 2000), tennis (Sunde, 2003), running (Maloney and McCormick, 2000) in order to test the incentive value rating of material and monetary rewards. Ehrenberg (1990) studied golf data from the US senior players golf tour (PGA) in 1984 and found that the amount of prize money had a positive influence on the player's performance. The observed effect occurs primarily in the later rounds of a tournament due to the marginal returns on efforts. Players with larger marginal returns achieve better scores.

Orszag (1994) found no significant link between the amount of total prize money and golfer's performance using data from the United States senior golf tour of 1992. For instance, using 1994 and 1995 data, and trying to eliminate any possible survival biases, Melton and Zorn (2000) found support for their theory that the amount of prize money in senior PGA tournaments affected player's performance. Sunde (2003) as cited in (Ongalo, 2014) used data from the final two rounds of the most important tennis tournament for professionals from the men's ATP tour. The results indicated that the amount of prize money positively affects a players performance if you count the number of games won and the total number of games played. Lynch and Zax (1998) examined the role that prizes played in Arabian horse races in the United States and Canada from 1991 to 1995 and found support for a positive relationship between the prize spread and the absolute level of performance.

Tshube, Akpata, and Irwin, (2012) as cited in (Ongalo, 2014) studied the use of non-monetary incentives as a motivational tool in sports. This study examined the extent to which athletes are motivated by social and tangible non-monetary incentives. Junior (ages 13–18) and elite (19 and above) athletes (190 males and 180 females) from different clubs in Botswana responded to a questionnaire assessing their perceptions of and the extent to which they were motivated by tangible (cars and scholarships) and social (media coverage and praise from leaders) non-monetary incentives. Results showed that Botswana athletes placed significant value ($p < 0.001$) on both tangible and social non-monetary incentives regardless of gender and age. Also, results indicated that the level of importance on both tangible and social non-monetary incentives varied by sport. Boxing reported the least value ($M = 1.85$) on the importance of social non-monetary incentives while volleyball reported the highest value ($M = 2.80$). Netball reported the least value ($M = 2.33$) on tangible non-monetary incentives while basketball reported the highest mean ($M = 3.21$). Results suggest that nonmonetary incentives

may be a useful supplement to monetary incentives in motivating athletes to win medals, particularly in Africa where economies are struggling.

Oworu and Ipinmoroti, (2011) as cited in (Ongalo, 2014) studied the factors influencing the choice of athletic events among university athletes in south-western Nigeria. The study investigated the factors influencing the choice of athletic events among university athletes in South –Western Nigerian. One hundred and twenty (120) randomly selected athletes from three (3) different Universities in South-Western Nigerian were used for the study. University of Ibadan, University of Lagos and Obafemi Awolowo University were studied. Four (4) hypotheses on influence of financial incentive, scholarship award, becoming a professional athlete and socialization were formulated and investigated with validated questionnaire administered on all subjects, the statistical analyses of chi-square was used to analyse the data at 0.05 alpha level of significance. It was however found from the findings that, financial incentive, scholarship award, desire to become a professional athlete and socialization motivated university athletes to choose athletic events.

Senchi, (2000) studied the preference for incentives among Kebbi state sportsmen and women in Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to investigate the preferences of athletes for incentives among Kebbi State sportsmen and women. To achieve this purpose, a questionnaire was developed and standardized. The questionnaire thus developed was administered to 120 athletes selected at random from athletics, volleyball, basketball, handball and football associations. One hundred and fourteen (114) questionnaires out of 120 questionnaires were filled and returned. The information thus collected was statistically analysed to test the hypothesis generated for this study. Analysis of variance was used to find out the significant differences between the selected athletic groups in their preferences for incentives to improve performance during competition and motivational level of the athletes.

The major findings of the study were as follows: There was no significant difference between the selected athletic groups in their preference for job offer. It was discovered that no significant differences were observed in the preference of athletes for monetary reward. There was no observable difference between the selected athletic groups in their preference for scholarship award. There were significant differences between the athletes in their preference for medals and certificates. No significant differences were seen between the athletes in their preference for admission into higher institutions of learning. There was no significant difference in the preference of athletes for promotion. No significant difference was observed between the selected athletic groups in their preference for adequate facilities and equipment. No difference in preference of athletes for efficient coaching services was revealed in the study. The findings of the above mentioned study by Senchi, (2000) showed that scholarship award was ranked highest, followed by employment opportunity, monetary reward, admission for higher education, promotion, while the least ranked incentive was in-service training.

Ongalo (2014) cited Adesoye (1996), he investigated the incentives enjoyed by officials and players in public and private sports clubs in two states, Kwara and Niger. The study population consisted of 92 and 100 registered public and private sports clubs in Kwara and Niger states respectively. The study involved eighty-five percent (85%) sample selected by stratified random sampling technique; i.e. 78 and 85 sports clubs were involved in the study. The incentives in this study were: promotion, accommodation, rent subsidy, car loan, transport allowance, camp allowance, playing allowance, winning allowance, feeding allowance, fee medical service, yearly bonus award, insurance during competition and academic scholarship.

Findings indicated that no significant differences existed in the incentives enjoyed by officials in public and private sports clubs in Kwara and Niger states in Nigeria. Apart from “Playing” and “winning” allowances where significant differences were obtained in favour of private sports clubs, no significant differences existed in all the other incentives purportedly given to players in both public and private sport clubs in the two states.

However, Ikhioya (2001), McQuerrey (2016) and Venkateswarlu (2007) identified some functions of incentives in enhancing high performance in sports to include; raising of morale, promotion of teamwork, inculcation of competitive spirit, setting of goals/target, development of leadership skills, improvement in performance, development of self confidence, sense of belonging, etc.

- (i) Raising of morale: When the sport manager does not only know his staff by name but also extends to athletes within his jurisdiction, he is indirectly giving recognition and a sense of belonging to his coaches and athletes. This helps to motivate the staff and athletes to put in their best and work to impress their manager or even try not to disappoint the manager. Hence, the sport manager should be able to identify his athletes by their first name, socialise effectively with them and show genuine concern for each of them at all times. This is a long yielding maximum results overtime.
- (ii) Promotion of teamwork: When incentives are tied down to teamwork or group initiative and achievement, it can help promote collaborative effort in the team or club or establishment. When players collectively rely on each others or the team to receive a bonus or award it may support and encourage each of them to perform at top level. Peer pressure may also encourage additional degree of performance from underperforming players who don't want to let their team members down. The sports manager should be able to work with the coach to enhance team friendship among athletes. Both manager and the coach should

ensure that there is positive interaction among players during practices and games and that this interaction is cultivated even outside the camp arena. The sports manager should realise that positive social relationship and belongingness are important in the life of an athlete.

- (iii) Inculcation of competition spirit: When coaches and athletes win and are praised, given awards or cash bonuses, they find out that the only way to get such incentives is through winning in competition. This spurs up the athletes and coaches to put in their best. The coaches will even introduce new skills and techniques through innovation to win more while the athletes will be willing to endure and train more and improve on their performances to participate in more competitions so as to win more laurels.
- (iv) Setting goals/ targets: By setting rewards and awards in categories of victories/achievements in sport the athletes and coaches set their goals and target on what they want to achieve and work toward that. This will motivate them to set their minds on which target/goal they want to achieve and at what time so they can be where they want to be.
- (v) Development of leadership skills: When the sports manager is able to understand the strengths and weakness of each worker, coach and player, skilled in behavioural management he will know how to manage them individually and collectively. This implies that he appears organised and in control at all times and also enhance mutual respect between the coach and athlete. This inculcates in the athletes leadership skills that help the athlete to be discipline, live by example and aspire to leadership position. Hence they try to exhibit this in their position as team captain, etc. The sports manager should be able to work out a programme with the coach on system of developing and enhancing leadership skills amongst athletes. In the sports camp, there are periods where rotational leadership should be encouraged so that athletes have a taste of what it means to serve (Ikhioya, 2001). However, choice of picking a leader for a team could be done with athletes having an active role. Participatory approach to decision-making should be introduced but with the manager stipulating the criteria and indices for selection and also the limits for operation.
- (vi) Improvement in performance: The sports manager should realise that athletes are always knowledgeable about incentives concerning them. Therefore, the sports manager must pay athletes the agreed remuneration and provide athletes with necessary standardised material incentives and bonuses at the appropriate time.
- (vii) Development of self Confidence: The sports manager should recognise that each athlete is different and thus, posses unique features and behavioural attributes. He should treat differently within set guidelines and standards so as to develop the potentials of each and everyone. When incentive is introduced they assist the athlete to have a feeling of achievement, thus promoting self confidence.
- (viii) Sense of belonging: Sports managers should set standards of performance with coaches and other technical crew. When athletes achieve or meet up with set standards, they should be acknowledged and recognised. According to Fuoss and Troppmann (1981) the need for prestige, status, dominance, attention, importance, appreciation and recognition are firmly based in human nature and they underline human motivation. This gesture is a long way to impress in the athlete giving him a sense of belonging. This will spur them to work to success of the sports institution he belongs.

III. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research which includes the Causal-comparative (Ex-post-Facto) method type. The targeted population of this study consists of 344 sports personnel in the six (6) local government headquarters hosting the six zonal sports offices of the state. A total of 344 questionnaire were administered, 270 were retrieved which is (78.5%) of the total population of sports personnel using total enumeration technique. A questionnaire was the instrument for data collection, it consist questions on athlete's statuses, incentives given to athletes for high sports performance, incentives given to sports personnel for high sports performance. It also tests for significant influence of inadequate incentives for athletes on their performance and inadequate sports personnel incentives on performance at 0.05 level of significance of Cross River State athletes at National Sports Festivals. The questionnaire was pre-tested using 30 personnel in Oyo State Sports Council in Ibadan Metropolis. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha method. The reliability for the whole questionnaire was 0.88 alpha levels. Data collected were subjected to various statistical analyses using SPSS version 21. Descriptive and inferential statistics were adopted for data analysis. Simple percentages, tables and chi-square were used in analyzing data.

IV. Results and Discussions

Table 1 Athletes ranking of incentives No = 156

Incentives	Total possible points	Scores	Percentage	Rank
Money	780	595	76.3	4
Scholarship	780	720	92.3	1
Appointment opportunities	780	610	78.2	3

Promotion	780	184	23.6	5
Travelling abroad	780	655	84	2

Research Question 1: What are the incentives given to Cross River State athletes for high performance at National Sports Festival?

In trying to know the types of incentives given to athletes for high sports performance in their various zone in Cross River State, athletes were asked to rate the types of incentives given to them. Athletes ranking shows that the total possible ranking scores for each incentive is 780. Scholarship ranked the highest and the most preferred by the athletes with 720 points (92.3%). This is not surprising as table 1 shows that 46%, that is 72 of the 156 athletes are students and 50 to them a scholarship will be attractive. Travelling abroad was ranked 2nd while appointment opportunity was ranked 3rd, and table 1 also shows that 29 of 156 athletes are unemployed, so an appointment will enhance their status. Their least preferred incentive was promotion with 184 points accounting for 23.6%. This finding is supported with the study of Senchi, (2000) studied the preference for incentives among Kebbi state sportsmen and women in Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to investigate the preferences of athletes for incentives among Kebbi State sportsmen and women. To achieve this purpose, a questionnaire was developed and standardized. The questionnaire thus developed was administered to 120 athletes selected at random from athletics, volleyball, basketball, handball and football associations. The findings by Senchi, (2000) showed that scholarship award was ranked highest, followed by employment opportunity, monetary reward, admission for higher education, promotion, while the least ranked incentive was in-service training.

Table 2
Personnel ranking of incentives
No = 144

	Total possible score	Score	%	Rank
Promotion	570	486	85.3	1
Refresher courses	570	250	43.9	5
Incremental credits	570	463	81.2	2
Financial reward	570	390	68.4	3
In-service	570	370	66.3	4

Research Question 2: What are the incentives given to sports personnel for high performance of Cross River State athletes at National Sports Festival?

Investigation on the types of incentives given to sports personnel for high sports performance in their various zone in Cross River State revealed that promotion was ranked highest with 486 points (85.3%) out of a total 570 points. Incremental credits was 2nd with 463 points which is 81.2%. The least preferred was refresher courses with 250 points representing 43.9%. Since the 114 respondents are all workers, promotion and incremental credits enhance their status amongst other workers. This is in line with the study of Ongalo (2014) cited Adesoye (1996), he investigated the incentives enjoyed by officials and players in public and private sports clubs in two states, Kwara and Niger. The study population consisted of 92 and 100 registered public and private sports clubs in Kwara and Niger states respectively. The study involved eighty-five percent (85%) sample selected by stratified random sampling technique; i.e. 78 and 85 sports clubs were involved in the study. The incentives in this study were: promotion, accommodation, rent subsidy, car loan, transport allowance, camp allowance, playing allowance, winning allowance, feeding allowance, fee medical service, yearly bonus award, insurance during competition and academic scholarship.

Table 3
Responses of athletes on incentives
No = 156

Variables	A	%	UD	%	D	%	Total
	Fre		Fre		Fre		
Personnel are hardly sent for refresher courses	135	86.5	16	10.3	5	3.2	156
Athletes' allowances are paid regularly	78	50	8	5.1	70	44.9	156
Incentives given for outstanding performance	37	23.7	33	21.1	86	55.1	156

Df⁴ 0.05 ≥ 9.488 – Critical value

Obtained value – 143.89 – Null hypothesis rejected.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of lack of incentives on high performance of Cross River State athletes at National Sports Festivals.

In table 4, 70 of the 156 respondents representing 44.9 said that athletes allowances are not paid regularly, only 78, that is 50% agreed that athletes allowances are paid regularly. On whether incentives are given for outstanding performances, 86 of the 156 athletes, that is 55.1% disagreed with the statement while 37(23.7%) agreed. This corroborate with the study of Oworu and Ipinmoroti, (2011) as cited in (Ongalo, 2014), they studied the factors influencing the choice of athletic events among university athletes in south-western Nigeria. The study investigated the factors influencing the choice of athletic events among university athletes in South-Western Nigerian. One hundred and twenty (120) randomly selected athletes from three (3) different Universities in South-Western Nigerian were used for the study. Four (4) hypotheses on influence of financial incentive, scholarship award, becoming a professional athlete and socialization were formulated and investigated with validated questionnaire administered on all subjects, the statistical analyses of chi-square was used to analyses the data at 0.05 alpha level of significance. It was however found from the findings that, financial incentive, scholarship award, desire to become a professional athlete and socialization motivated university athletes to choose athletic events (Oworu and Ipinmoroti, 2011).

Table 4 Personnel responses on incentives
No = 114

Variables	A		UD		D		Total
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	
Personnel are hardly sent for refresher courses	75	65.8	29	25.4	10	8.8	114
Athletes' allowances are paid regularly	9	7.9	37	32.5	68	59.6	114
Incremental credits given regularly	15	13.2	29	25.4	70	61.40	114
Salaries are paid regularly	98	86	12	10.5	4	3.5	114

Df⁴ 0.05 ≥ 12.592– Critical value

Obtained value – 205.55, Null hypothesis rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Lack of incentives for sports personnel will not significantly influence high performance of Cross River State athletes at National Sports Festivals.

In table 4, 75 respondents accounting for 65.5% agreed that personnel are hardly sent for refresher courses while 10(8.8%) disagreed with the statement, 29 respondents which is 25.4% were undecided. 68 respondents (59.6%) out of 114 disagreed to the statement that personnel are promoted regularly, 9 accounting for 7.9% agreed while 37(32.5%) were indifferent. On incremental credits, 15 respondents, that is, 13.2% said that incremental credits are given regularly while 70 (61.4%) disagreed. 98 personnel, which is 86% gave positive response that salaries are paid regularly, while 4(3.5%) disagreed to the statement and 12 representing 10.5% were undecided. This commensurate with the findings of Ongalo (2014) cited Adesoye (1996), he investigated the incentives enjoyed by officials and players in public and private sports clubs in two states, Kwara and Niger. The incentives in this study were: promotion, accommodation, rent subsidy, car loan, transport allowance, camp allowance, playing allowance, winning allowance, feeding allowance, fee medical service, yearly bonus award, insurance during competition and academic scholarship. Findings indicated that no significant differences existed in the incentives enjoyed by officials in public and private sports clubs in Kwara and Niger states in Nigeria. Apart from “Playing” and “winning” allowances where significant differences were obtained in favour of private sports clubs, no significant differences existed in all the other incentives purportedly given to players in both public and private sport clubs in the two states (Ongalo, 2014).

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is the view of the writer that while these incentives and awards scheme is innovative and important as a source of motivation at Amateur Sports levels, little is done to educate and inform athletes on the existence of these awards and incentives by the government and its agents. If there have been award ceremonies, the approach adopted has been piece meal and may not have included the above categories. There is also the fact in Amateur sports, motivational package in the form of scheme of incentives and awards, now attract monetary benefits; as the modern/current world wide idea/practices of amateur sport means less monetary incentive as motivation not at the scale as could be expected in professional sport.

It is therefore recommended that;

- i) The incentives and awards scheme may be reviewed to actually introduce materials incentive as part of honouring our heroes; - i.e. issuing out of houses, cars, scholarships, etc.

- ii) Top management should articulate and authenticate a welfare package so as to be able to meet up with organisational obligations.
- iii) Sound motivational package should be a part of organisational policy, motivational incentives and allowance should be based on a strategy that is systematic, flexible and adaptable.
- iv) Management should ensure that bonus and award schemes reflect competence, skill, effort and long service of employee.

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