

PERCEIVED DETERMINANTS OF PERFORMANCE OF BENUE STATE ATHLETES IN THE NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVALS

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Abstract

The study assessed perceived determinants of performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports festival. The objective of this study was to find out if sports programming, sports personnel and sports funding determines the performance of Benue State athletes in the National sports festivals. Three objectives and corresponding research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the study. Three hypotheses were postulated and tested for the study. The research design used for this study was descriptive survey design. A total population of two hundred and seventy (270) respondents was sampled. Descriptive statistics of mean, frequency counts and standard deviation were used to describe the data while inferential statistics of chi-square (X^2) was used for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. From the data collected and analyzed the results revealed that, sports programming ($X^2 = 121.29, df=3, p>0.05$), sports personnel ($X^2 = 84.18, df=3, p>0.05$), sports funding ($X^2 = 75.412, d.f=3, p>0.05$), all determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the national sports festivals. Based on the conclusions it was recommended that both state and local government should ensure that the mentioned variables should be fully utilized to enhance improved participation and performance of Benue State athletes.

Key Words: Determinants, Performance, Athletes, Sports and Festivals

Introduction

In this contemporary world, sporting activities have been universally accepted as a unifying force for people of different races, tribes, cultures and religious backgrounds. Plays, games and sports have been part of all civilizations. Historical and anthropological research evidences indicate that plays, games and sports have been part of the fundamental aspects of all culture throughout the history of mankind (Huizinga, 2000; Fatile, 2002). They further asserted that as society increases in population, its physical activities become more complex. Kong (1998), observed that sports have gradually become one of the important ingredients of living for many people in the world, people involved in professional sports can earn a great deal of money at the highest levels.

In support of the statement above, Morakinyo and Aluko (2002), pointed out that sports is a social phenomenon that has grown from its humble beginning of being an entertainment and recreation pass time, to become a viable and prominent business or phenomenon that could no more be ignored in the social, political and economic environment of any nation. Given this trend, governments, private organizations and individuals have continued to invest huge sums of money in sporting events both in the area of facility development, training of coaches, sports administration and training of sports men and women so as to get qualified and qualitative sports men and women for better sports performance and credible representation in their various sports fields.

Sports is defined in different ways by different scholars and practitioners. Aminu and Tanglang (1998), defined sports as an activity or experience that gives enjoyment of recreation past time diversion, which requires rigorous bodily exertion and is carried out according to some traditional forms or set rules whether outdoor or indoor. In his opinion, Watt (2004), described sports as all forms of physical activity which through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical activity, fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competitions at all levels. Olajide (2007), observed that sports can be described as highly organized physical activities regulated by accepted rules and regulations, which require maximum physical and mental exertion. Ekeh (2003) defined sports as recreational and or competitive physical activity, utilizing specialized equipment and facilities, with unique dimensions of time and space that are guided by rules and regulations. Sports means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competitions at all levels. This definition incorporates informal sports (Recreation sports), organized sports (competitive sports), and corporate sports (professional sports) (Nwankwo, 2006).

Bucher (1997) reported that the primitive societies did not think of organization of sports as people do today. There were no organized physical education and sporting programmes from the physical point of view, but they did set aside a period, during which they could participate in various forms of physical activities such as during harvest, at the beginning of planting season and others. Physical activities were a part of their daily regiment, for example, a wide range of sports were already established by the time of ancient Greece, The military culture and the development of sports in Greece influenced one another considerably. Sports became such a prominent part of their culture that the Greeks introduced the Olympic Games, which in ancient times were held every four years in a small village in the Peloponnesus called Olympia. The Olympic festival, which was first organized and staged in the 776BC, marked the beginning of organized sports (Ityodugh, 2016).

The performance of athletes in sports activities must be put into programming. According to Uever (2004) a programme is the structural statement of intention based on a well-planned schedule to be executed. A programme is embedded in a plan and it shows the stepwise actions and activities expected of actors and executors of the programme and what the end or outcome should be in order for it to be adjudged a successful programme, therefore, it is a schematic expression of what is to be achieved and the process to get there.

In the field of sports, the term personnel refers to sports masters, coaches, sports directors, organizers, physical education masters, performing athletes and others. These personnel are specifically responsible for the organization and administration of sports at various levels. There is a general consensus among experts in the field of sports that no

meaningful progress can be achieved in the field of sports at the national, state and local government levels without a pragmatic and efficient organizational and administrative system manned by committed and knowledgeable sports managers. According to Kabido (1995), sports personnel help to influence and attract more athletes to participate in sports. The inspiration given by the coach to his athletes can ginger them into action and commitment. For any meaningful development to take place in sports, only qualified sports personnel should be employed to handle administration of sports in the country (Ajiduah, 2011).

The primary purpose of sports development is to provide comprehensive sports programme of service to sports. Slack (1997), defined programming as a plan of activities for an event or series of events in order to make good decisions. Every organization should have a clear-cut understanding of its sports programming, Onoja (2014) asserted that in programming sports Benue State Sports Council has a number of activities for each year which include; Benue State Sports Festival, Inter-local government Basketball championship, Benue State athletics championship, Benue State tennis championship, Benue State handball league, Benue State football league competition and Governors Cup among others In carrying out a comprehensive sports organization programmers like the Benue State Sports Council. Coaches and organizing secretaries are asked to put their heads together to fashion out the various sports programmes at the beginning of each year, but most times the year runs out without Benue State sports council executing most of the their programmes due to one problem or the other. Therefore, it affects the performance of Benue State athletes negatively, in addition to the non-execution of the local and state sports programmes.

Sports personnel are the people working as employees in a given sporting organization. Bucher and Krotee (2002) stated that those personnel involved in sports programming include the director of athletics, the coach, the athletic trainer and members of the sports council. They further stated that the following personnel are also involved in sports programming, assistant or senior associate athletic director, academic counsellor, sports information director, athletic business manager, facility director, travel coordinator, administrative assistant, fund raiser, physicians, sports psychologists or educators, equipment manager, game manager, ticket manager and coordinator of special events. They further observed that sports personnel should be selected very carefully. Experience, intelligence, character, personality, honesty, common sense, appearance, and ability should play important roles in the selection process. Oloruntoba and Achugu (2002) opined that office personnel must be well educated, experienced or at least exposed to a secretarial course of study, and possess a solid background in word processing, computer applications, bookkeeping, and English as well as the requisite psychosocial qualities for instance discretion, loyalty, and integrity and they must be adequate in their numbers. Akintunde (2001) also opined that for good management skills, training opportunities should be provided for sports personnel at regular intervals. They must be exposed to workshops, seminars and conferences in order to develop their technical skills and update their professional competence.

Inadequate manpower in the area of sports has been highlighted by many Nigeria Physical Education Scholars such as Onifade (1995), Ogu (2001) Oluountoba and Achugu, (2002). They maintained that sports require the use of highly qualified, efficient and competent personnel to be able to handle the different segments of sports programmes very well. Experts like coaches, sports organizers, sports psychologists, physiotherapists are needed but those in-charge of most of the sports are not trained to handle sports matters. Akintunde,

(2001), stated that there are inadequate personnel in sports organizations. He maintained that events in most of the sports organizations are handled by personnel who have no physical education/sports background in their life. In the same vein Ogu, (2001), reported that, sports are so delicate that they cannot be handled by any other person than the physical education/sports personnel who are trained for its conduct and operations. In sports athletes are very important as they form the end point of continuum. The coach like the sports organizer is very important in sporting process (Ikhioya & Gloria, 1999; Onifade, 1995), many coaches at the local level are not formally trained as coaches. They are usually athletes and in some cases with a degree in physical education. A degree in physical education or being a former sports star does not make one a professionally qualified coach since coaching has become a science, a profession and highly technical. Abubakar, (2000), maintained that many factors such as personality, interest in youth, knowledge of human growth and development, psychology, intelligence and sympathetic attitude are essential to coaching success.

The funding of sports varies from country to country. Funding of sports in Nigeria has been on an ad-hoc basis especially whenever the government was in financial crises; the government always resorted to contributions from the public to organize sports. Many countries now spend a good percentage of their annual budget on the development of sports. Over the years, the sports councils have experienced inadequate funds to execute their programmes, which include among others, organizing sports competitions at the local government and the state levels.

The National policy on sports emphasizes development of sports as well as the effective management of sports in Nigeria, with emphasis on making provision for mass participation and talent discovery. There is no doubt that Benue State Sport Council has been fulfilling these roles. The state has been involved in organizing sports festivals from the local government level to the state level. It also organizes the zonal sports competition which personnel are posted to the zones to oversee the activities and funds are provided to run the programme. Despite all these the performances of Benue State athletes in the national competitions have not been encouraging. It is in the light of these observations that the researchers have undertaken this study to find out the perceived determinants of performance of Benue State athletes in the National sports festivals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to ascertain the perceived determinants of performance of Benue State at the national Sports festival. Specifically the study sought to investigate if:

1. Sports programming determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival
2. Sports personnel determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival
3. Sports funding determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival

Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the research;

1. To what extent do sports programming determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sport Festival?

2. To what extent do sports personnel determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival?
3. To what extent do sports funding determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festivals?

Hypotheses

To achieve the purpose of this study, hypotheses were formulated for testing based on the research questions:

1. Sports programming will not significantly determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival.
2. Sports personnel will not significantly determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival.
3. Sports funding will not significantly determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival

Research Method

Design: The research design used for this study was descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design concerns itself with the present and attempts to determine the current status of the phenomena under investigation (Bichi, 2004). This design according to Akem (2011) is used to describe, interpret, access and analyze the existing conditions as at the time of study.

Sample and sampling: A total of two hundred and seventy (270) respondents were sampled for the study which was made up of 170 performing athletes, 42 organizing secretaries, 38 sports administrators and 20 sports coaches. The respondents sampled for this study were Benue State sports council staff. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to sample respondents for this study. Akem (2011), stated that stratified random sampling is appropriate when the population consists of subgroups which need to be represented in the sample. The researcher therefore used the strata in the department of organizing, coaching and training, administration and finance, stadium and Estate management which include performing athletes, organizing secretaries, sports administrators and coaches in Benue State Sports Council. In order to sample the respondents for the study in each stratum, random sampling technique of fish bowl, without replacement was adopted. The method gives individuals in the stratum equal opportunities of being sampled for the study.

Data analysis: Frequency counts, Percentages, Means, Standard Deviation (SD), and chi-square [χ^2] statistics were used for data analysis. Frequency counts and percentages were used for description of bio-data of the respondents; mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions. A mean of 2.50 was used as cut-off point for decision making for each item on the instrument. Any item that had a mean of 2.50 or above was considered a determinant, while any item with a mean below 2.50 was considered not a determinant. Chi-Square [χ^2] statistics was used to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. Chi-square was used because, it is a non-parametric statistics and is more appropriate for analyzing data obtained from different opinions, views, and observations by a large number of people (Nworgu, 1991). Since the data

was collected from a large number of respondents, Chi-square statistics was considered more appropriate for testing the research hypotheses.

Results:

In this section, descriptive analysis of bio-data, mean analysis of responses, results of hypotheses tested were presented and discussed.

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	153	58.2
Female	110	41.8
Total	263	100.00

Personal data of the respondents on gender, revealed that 153(58.2%) were males whereas 110(41.8%) were females. This implies that majority of the respondents were males.

Table 2: Mean Analysis of Responses of the Questionnaire

Variables	Mean(\bar{x})Scores	SD
Sports programming	2.61	0.86
Sports personnel	2.60	0.87
Sports funding Clustermean	2.57	0.87

The table above revealed that mean rating on sports programming was 2.61, which was above the cut-off point of 2.50. This signified that, sports programming determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the national sports festivals. The mean responses on sports personnel was 2.60, which was above the cut-off point of 2.50. This indicated that sports personnel determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the national sports festival.

On funding, the mean response was 2.57 which was above the cut-off point of 2.50 this indicated that sports funding determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the national sports festival.

Table 3: Summary of Chi-square Scores on Sports Programming as it Determined the Performance of Benue State Athletes' in the National Sports Festivals

Responses	Fo	Fe	χ^2_{cal}	χ^2_{tab}	df	@	Remark
SA	63	65.75					
A	137	65.75					
D	48	65.75	121.2	7.82	3	0.05	Significant
SD	15	65.75	9				
Total	263	263.00					

$\chi^2=121.29$, df 3, p>0.05

The table above showed the calculated chi square value of 121.29 was greater than the chi-square of critical value of 7.82 with df =3 at 0.05 alpha level. With this result the hypothesis which was stated that Sports programming did not significantly determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festivals was rejected. This implied that sports programming significantly determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festivals.

Table 4: Summary of Chi-square Scores on Sports Personnel as it Determined the Performance of Benue State Athletes' in the National Sports Festivals

Responses	Fo	Fe	χ^2_{cal}	χ^2_{tab}	df	@	Remark
SA	65	65.75					
A	125	65.75					
D	49	65.75	84.18	7.82	3	0.05	Significant
SD	24	65.75					
Total	263	263.00					

$\chi^2=84.18$, df 3, p>0.05

The table above showed that the calculated chi-square value of 84.18 was greater than the chi-square critical value of 7.82 with df =3 at 0.05 alpha level. This means that the hypothesis which was stated that Sports personnel did not significantly determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival was rejected. This implied that sports personnel determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival.

Table 5: Summary of Chi-square Scores on Sports Funding as it Determined the Performance of Benue State Athletes' in the National Sports Festivals

Responses	Fo	Fe	χ^2_{cal}	χ^2_{tab}	df	@	Remark
SA	65	65.75					
A	121	65.75					
D	53	65.75	75.412	7.82	3	0.05	Significant
SD	24	65.75					
Total	263	263.00					

$\chi^2=75.412$, df 3, p>0.05

The table above showed that the calculated chi-square value of 75.412 was greater than the chi-square critical value of 7.82 with a df -3 at 0.05 alpha level. It therefore means that the hypothesis which was stated that Sports funding did not significantly determine the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival was rejected. This implied that sports funding significantly determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the National Sports Festival.

Discussion of the Findings

In this section, the major findings of this research were discussed. The discussions were done in line with the results of the hypotheses tested. With regards to sports programming, the findings showed that sports programming determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the national sports festivals. In line with the findings above, Onoja (2014), asserted that in programming sports, Benue State Sports Council had a number of activities for each year which included Benue State Sports Festival, Inter-local government Basketball championship, Benue State athletics championship, Benue State tennis championship, Benue State handball league, Benue State football league competition and Governors Cup among others. In carrying out a comprehensive sports programming in Benue State Sports Council, Coaches and organizing secretaries are asked to put their heads together to fashion out the various sports programmes at the beginning of each year, but most times the year runs out without Benue State sports council executing most of these programmes due to one problem or the other. Therefore, it affects the performance of Benue State athletes negatively. In line with the discussion Aminu and Tanglang (1998), revealed that sports programming for athletes participation were grossly inadequate, therefore state government should provide sports programmes in all schools, community centre's and local government headquarters in the state to enable participants to partake in any sporting activities of their choice. Also Uever (2004), stated that sports programming should be diversified. He further stated that sports programming should attempt to meet the individual and group needs and desires of the peoples if needs are not met desires not fulfilled; the participants feel no inclination to return to the sports programmes.

In respect to sports personnel the findings revealed that, sports personnel determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the national sports festivals. In line with the above, inadequate manpower in the area of sports has been highlighted by many Nigeria physical education scholars such as Onifade (1995), Ogu (2001), Olountoba and Achughbu, (2002). They maintained that sports require the use of highly qualified, efficient and competent personnel to be able to handle the different segments of sports programmes very well. They further stated that experts like physical education teachers, coaches, organizers, sports psychologists and physiotherapists are needed, but those in-charge of most of the sports segments were not trained to handle sports. In agreement with the above Duru (2001), observed that there is nothing basically wrong with Nigeria or her athletes the problem is that we have administrators who are not professionally prepared for the job at the helm of affairs. Ajiduah (2001), confirmed the statement above when he revealed that people who are not professionals in the area of sports and who know nothing about sports development do maneuver themselves to the centre stage of sports organization and administration in Nigeria. In most cases, they were serving professionals or retired professionals from other discipline than sports. Oloruntoba and Achugu, (2002), opined that office personnel must be well educated, experienced or at least exposed to a secretarial course of study, and

possess a solid background in word processing, computer applications, bookkeeping, and English as well as the requisite psychosocial qualities for example, discretion, loyalty, and integrity and they must be adequate in their numbers.

In respect to sports funding, the findings revealed that sports funding determined the performance of Benue State athletes in the national sports festival. Similarly, Bucher and Krotee (2002) revealed that the crucial function of sports manager involves securing the funds necessary to provide sound sports programmes, adequate funding must be procured, budget planned and implemented and accountability for funds established. They further said that human resources, health services, insurance facilities, equipment and transportation are only few of the items that quickly amount to significant sums of money. They further explained that due to increase in massive participation in sports, gymnasiums, stadia, arenas, aquatic complexes, athletic training weight and exercise areas are being constructed and stocked with equipment at huge costs of the tax payer's money. In support of the above, Onifade (2000) said that government is also expected to provide funds as part of her role of sponsoring amateur sports. Funds would also come in the form of provision of financial support to assist in hosting and financing of sports events. Dogo (2000), stated that sports management as it is in Nigeria, is always having problems because organizers adopt the fire-brigade approach due to the late release of government funds either to the Ministry of Sports or to the sports councils. There is always complaint from the Sports Development Department that the funds come in late or not at all. When the funds are not forthcoming, the department has to look elsewhere for funds and to commence camping based on the little resource at hand. Dogo went on to say that funds were always released at the eleventh hour and the camping would have been overtaken by events.

Conclusions

Based on the findings from analysis of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Lack of proper sports programming affected the performance of Benue State athletes, at the national sports festivals.
2. Inadequate and unqualified personnel affected the performance of Benue State athletes at the national sports festivals in their numbers and qualification.
3. Non availability or inadequate funding affected the performance of Benue State athletes at the national sports festival.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study the following recommendations have been made:

1. Since lack of programming affected the performance of Benue State athletes, both state and local governments should provide proper sports programming for the development and improvement of performance of Benue State athletes in the national sports festivals.
2. Inadequate and unqualified personnel affected the performance of Benue State athletes therefore, adequate and qualified sports personnel should be employed in their numbers to carryout sports administration both at the local and state sports councils for effective and improved performance of Benue State athletes at the National Sports competitions.
3. Non availability or inadequate funding affect the performance of Benue State athletes, based on this assertion the state government should empower Benue State sports council with adequate funds in order to organize sports competitions at the local and the state levels. Government should appoint sports committees headed by specialists

in sports organization and administration to make sure the funds released for sports programmes are used judiciously.

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