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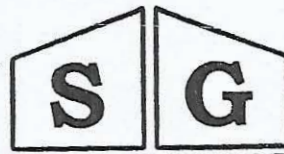
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PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIP AMONG AGE DETERMINATION SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PEAK ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

There is no doubt that determination and self confidence have relationship with high athletic performance. However the focus of this study is to determine whether the birthdate of the athlete and the duration of club membership will influence the two dependent variables. Descriptive survey research design was used. Subjects comprised 100 male football players from four clubs that registered for 2007/2008 NFF cup competition. Tutko and Richards Motivational Rating Scale (1980) was used to collect the data. The chi-square analysis that was used did not reject the four hypotheses. The study concluded that at any age and no matter the duration of a player in the club, determination with self confidence to win, is a significant factor.

Introduction

Determination is defined as "firmness of purpose". Also determination can be seen as the quality that makes you continue trying to do something even when it is difficult. Determination to an individual is just like fuel to an automatic engine. It is the will to succeed (<http://article.directory.com/sports-stories-9854625.html>). Without determination, one's performance will fall below the expected result. Determination and drive constitute a critical factor in how far an athlete will develop. With this characteristic added to an athlete's

make-up, an athlete strives relentlessly towards his to her potential.

Determination and drive are two concepts that an athlete must use to motivate him or herself. Therefore determination and drive are two vital concepts to athletic performance and they play the role of charging the athlete to peak performance (<http://www.performance.media.com-16052008>). Determination is what an athlete makes of talents and how he/she applies them. It dictates to some degree how far an athlete can go in a chosen field, hence determination will steer pursuit in the right way (<http://www.article.directorym.com/sports-stories-16052008>).

An athlete with determination will work with intense effort. If he or she is determined and will work tirelessly to achieve desired goal despite odds like fatigue, poor weather condition, lack of complete kits and other circumstances. Intense drive and determination are what coaches used to chose players whose futures are promising and enterprising. It is also used to distinguish serious players from those that are not serious.

Any promising athlete must set out goals to be achieved. Goal setting is a key to motivation and once an athlete does this and sticks to it, then determination will pilot him/her to a greater heights. Setting such goals and applying belief modification will be a plus. Belief modification involves the athlete's ability to manage his/her self concept in the performance of the task ahead.

Self-confidence is commonly defined as the sureness of feeling that you are equal to the task at hand. This sureness is characterized by absolute belief in ability. When athletes feel confident, they are more readily able to turn sporting potential into superior performance. Conversely, when they feel unsure of themselves, the slightest setback or smallest hurdle can have an inordinate effect on their performance (Karageorghis, 2008).

Self-confidence towards an event shows how far the person will go. It is quite understandable that people with low self-confidence towards any event come out with low performance while people with high self-confidence come out with high performance. George (1994) stated that over the past three decades, the construction of self-confidence has received a lot of attention from sport science researchers. He stated also that self-confidence is one of the most frequently cited psychological factor thought to affect athletic performance and it has also been called the most critical factor in sports.

Edward and Hardy (1996) highlighted self-confidence as an important predictor of performance that is at least partially independent of cognitive anxiety. Karageorghis (2008) observed that, although confidence is a desirable characteristic, arrogance - or a sureness of feeling not well founded in ones ability is undesirable. He warned that if self-confidence is perhaps the guardian

angel of sports performance then arrogance is their nemesis.

However, Karageorghis (2008) citing Feltz (1984) and Bandura (1977) identified six sources of self-confidence to include:

- (a) Performance accomplishments.
- (b) Being involved with the success of others.
- (c) Verbal persuasion.
- (d) Imagery experiences.
- (e) Physiological states and
- (f) Emotional states.

Likewise, Krueger (2008) outlined the following strategies that coaches can use to help players gain more control over their level of self-confidence during matches:

- (a) Teach players that they are in control of their self-confidence. Note that if self-confidence goes away during a match it is because the opponent took it away.
- (b) Help players create realistic progresses. e.g. fantastic warm-ups.
- (c) Challenge your player's assumptions regarding an opponent or a match situation.
- (d) Teach the players to continually look for ways to win a match.
- (e) Develop playing style and pattern that fit each player's ability, strength and personality.
- (f) Help players remember why they are playing. Revisit the joy and passion regularly so that players keep a perspective on the game and their relationship to it.
- (g) Help players to separate their personal identity from their result while playing.
- (h) Teach players to think about where they are going not where they are now or where they were in the past.
- (i) Emphasize who your players should believe in.
- (j) Tell players to surround themselves with people who have great attitudes. Let them look for inspirations every where.
- (k) Encourage players to watch the professionals and notice how they handle adverse situations and losses in self-confidence.

An athlete that wants to beat a champion needs both determination and self-confidence to overcome the champion. It is possible for athlete A to be better than athlete B but with determination and self-confidence on the part of athlete B, he can increase his possibility of carrying day. These two traits are what world champions possess that made them to become champions.

Therefore an athlete without these two strong propelling factors may not come out the best.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to find out if birthdate of players and duration of club membership will influence development of determination, also whether any of these independent variables can assist players to generate self-confidence.

Research Hypotheses

Four (4) research hypotheses were tested and they are:

- (1) There is no significant relationship between birthdates and determination of players.
- (2) There is no significant relationship between birthdates and self-confidence of players.
- (3) There is no significant relationship between duration of club membership and determination of player or players.
- (4) There is no significant relationship between duration of club membership and self-confidence of players.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used in this study. It is descriptive because no treatment was given but it aimed at finding out how chronological age of players and the length of club membership influence level of determination and self-confidence during high athletic performance.

Population

The population of this study is all football clubs that registered for 2007/2008 Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) cup.

Sample and sampling technique

Convenient sampling technique was used to select the four out of sixteen clubs that played at round 16th of the 2007/2008 edition of NFF cup. The four clubs were:

- (a) Kano Pillars F/C Kano State, Nigeria.
- (b) Bayelsa United F/C Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
- (c) Warri Wolves F/C Delta State, Nigeria.
- (d) Elcruzzero F/C Kaduna State, Nigeria.

A total of one hundred (100) questionnaires forms were administered to the players in the four clubs (twenty five to each club).

Instrumentation

The instrument used for collection of data is a modified form of Tutko and Richard's motivational rating scale (1980). The questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section A dealt with the demographic data of the respondents while section B of the questionnaire had twelve items used to test the stated hypotheses. The instrument recorded a validity coefficient of $r=0.86$

The questionnaire forms was administered to the players through their coaches at their camp during the off-day of the competition. The questionnaires were collected immediately by the researchers.

The collected data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages for the demographic data of the respondents while the variables tested in the hypotheses were subjected to non-parametric statistics of chi-square (χ^2) at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Table 1: Chi-square Table Showing the Association between Birthdates and Determination.

| Age | Determination | | df | χ^2 | Sig. | Remarks |
|-------------|---------------|------|----|----------|-------|---------|
| | Low | High | | | | |
| 15-19 years | 10 | 1 | 4 | 3.388 | 0.495 | N S |
| 20-24 years | 9 | 2 | | | | |
| 25-29 years | 3 | - | | | | |
| 30-34 years | 2 | - | | | | |
| 35- Above | 1 | 1 | | | | |

χ^2 , $df_4=3.388$ ($p>0.05$). Not significant.

Table 2: Chi-square Table Showing the Association between Birthdates and Self-confidence of Players.

| Age | Self-confidence | | df | χ^2 | Sig. | Remarks |
|-------------|-----------------|------|----|----------|------|---------|
| | Low | High | | | | |
| 15-19 years | 10 | 1 | 4 | 2.984 | 0.56 | N S |
| 20-24 years | 9 | 2 | | | | |
| 25-29 years | 2 | 1 | | | | |
| 30-34 years | 2 | - | | | | |
| 35- Above | 1 | 1 | | | | |

χ^2 , $df_4=2.984$ ($p>0.05$). Not significant.

Table 3: Chi-square Table Showing the Association between Duration of Club Membership and Determination of Players.

| Year of club membership | Determination | | df | χ^2 | Sig. | Remarks |
|-------------------------|---------------|------|----|----------|-------|---------|
| | Low | High | | | | |
| 0 - 2 years | 21 | 4 | 1 | 0.742 | 0.389 | NS |
| 3 - 5 years | 4 | - | | | | |

$\chi^2, df 4 = 0.742 (p > 0.05)$. Not significant.

Table 4: Chi-square Table Showing the Association between Duration of Club Membership and Self-confidence of Players

| Year of club membership | Determination | | df | χ^2 | Sig. | Remarks |
|-------------------------|---------------|------|----|----------|-------|---------|
| | Low | High | | | | |
| 0 - 2 years | 20 | 5 | 1 | 0.967 | 0.326 | NS |
| 3 - 5 years | 4 | - | | | | |

$\chi^2, df 1 = 0.967 (p > 0.05)$. Not significant.

Discussion

In the analysis, the level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$. All the four groups demonstrated similarities in most of the variables.

The low level of determination displayed by majority of the players was attributed to the short duration of the competition low prize award, and welfare packages of the NFF Cup Competition when compared with the Nigeria Premier and National League Competitions. Likewise, the few high level of self-confidence was recorded among few players who are playing in the competition for the third time and above.

However, this study revealed that birthdates of players and the length of club membership have little or no influence on level of determination and self confidence of players. It should be noted that the findings of this study are reported and discussed without reference to possible gender differences; since all the four clubs involved in were male clubs.

When birthdates and duration of club membership were associated to determination and self-confidence, the values were not significant. The study also proved that birthdates and duration of club member have little or nothing to do with determination. This is in agreement with Dalloway (2008) who

stated that drive and determination are referred as desire or as passionate commitment that constitute a critical factor in how far an athlete will develop. This is actually proved in the findings of tested hypothesis 1 and 3.

Birthdates and length of club membership were also associated with self-confidence of players as stated in the hypotheses 2 and 4. The results obtained show that the self-confidence a player displays is not connected to birthdates and duration of stay in the club, rather it correlates with the submission of Johns (2007) that self-confidence is an attitude that is characterized by a positive belief that one can take control of one's life plan. The author further stated that people who are self-confident are those who acknowledge their capacity to do something and they proceed to do these things. They do not rely on the approval of other people in order to do these things. They do not rely on the approval of other people in order to affirm their existence but they have the capacity and the potential to do something, and the guts to do it no matter what others may say. People who are self-confident take advantage of opportunities that come their way.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Determination and self-confidence are correlates of high athletic performance. Athletes, who are determined to achieve something and go ahead in achieving them with self-confidence, are always winners and they also come out with flying colours. The implication of this study therefore is that; determination and self-confidence are two important factors across age groups that an athlete must possess to achieve peak performance. Coaches should train athletes to build self-confidence at any age and have determination not withstanding the length of years they have stayed in a particular club.

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