

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF ATHLETES' WELFARE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASKETBALL PREMIER LEAGUE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper assessed the impact of athlete's welfare on the development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis were established. The population consisted of three hundred and sixty-eight (368) players, coaches, club officials and the sponsors drawn from the Nigeria Basketball federation and the premier league clubs. All the population were used as sample for this study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled Basketball Sponsorship Questionnaire (BSQ). Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages were used for the demography variables of the respondents, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while one sample t-test was used to analyze the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that players' welfare has significant impact on the development of Basketball Premier League in the country. With these observations, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The researchers concluded that Players' welfare has positively impacted on the development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria. It is recommended that there is need for stakeholders to keep encouraging players by ensuring that their welfare is enhanced for the development of the league.

Key words: Players, Sponsorship, Welfare, Basketball Premier League

Introduction

In contemporary times, sponsorship is pervasive across the sporting landscape. It extends to individual athletes, amateur and professional teams, group coaching programs, major sports championships, international tournaments, and more. Companies allocate substantial budgets to sponsor individuals of exceptional skill, hoping to associate their products with excellence. This financial support not only benefits top athletes but also aids emerging players by providing resources for equipment, tournament participation, and training (Mills, 2022).

Concurrently, sports development refers to an on-going process aimed at enhancing sports-related structures, institutions, and programs to create an environment conducive to overall physical fitness and self-actualization. This involves implementing pyramid-like sports development programs, training dedicated coaches, providing functional facilities, organizing seminars and workshops for public awareness, and ensuring competent sports management (Emetc, 2022). Patel (2022) defines sport sponsorship as financial or material assistance provided by an organization to an independent activity like sports, which may not be directly related to the organization's core business but is expected to yield benefits. This concept has historical roots dating back to 590 BC when Greek athletes competing in the Olympic Games received financial rewards from the state (Buser, 2022). Sponsorship represents a distinctive business-to-business transaction that mutually benefits both parties. The sponsoring entity offers cash or other benefits in exchange for affiliation with the recipient entity. Sponsorship is an exceptional business to business transaction which encourages two parties for their benefit.

Sponsorship is often described as a crucial element in identifying the needs of others and then fulfilling those needs. It encompasses all efforts involved in conveying goods and services from sponsors to the general public, making it an endeavour by corporate entities, individuals, and others to create, promote, plan, and price goods (products) through sports or by sponsoring sporting activities (Cai, 2023); As Chadwick (2022) noted, with the growing prominence of sports in society, the business world has sought ways to connect with it. Sponsorship has emerged as a successful means for companies to reach large audiences. In essence, sport sponsorship involves commercial organizations providing financial assistance to individuals, teams, or sports in general, in exchange for publicity of their products. In contemporary times, sponsorship is pervasive across the sporting landscape. It extends to individual athletes, amateur and professional teams, group coaching programs, major sports championships, international tournaments, and more. Companies allocate substantial budgets to sponsor individuals of exceptional skill, hoping to associate their products with excellence. This financial support not only benefits top athletes but also aids emerging players by providing resources for equipment, tournament participation, and training (Mills, 2022).

The welfare of players is ensured in several key areas aimed at placing a strong emphasis on both player well-being and the growth of the sport. This includes comprehensive medical support, injury prevention, and strict concussion protocols. The league also adapts rules to minimize physical contact and protect players. Player Assistance: The NBA provides assistance programs for players facing personal, financial, or post-career challenges. This support includes financial planning, career transition, and education opportunities. Salary and Benefits are also important areas, the NBA offers competitive salaries and benefits for players, including healthcare, retirement plans, and various incentives. The players' union (NBPA - National Basketball Players Association) negotiates on behalf of players to ensure fair compensation.

European Basketball has made significant strides with a focus on player well-being and the overall development of the sport. These key areas are not fully obtainable in Nigeria Basketball Federation thus posing a challenge to smooth running of Nigeria Basketball Premier League. It is against this backdrop that the researchers undertook this study aimed at finding out the impact of players' welfare on the development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria.

Research Question

To what extent would players' welfare impact on the development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between players' welfare and the development of basketball premier league in Nigeria.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, Ex-post facto research design was used. This was because the study is by nature non-experimental. The population of the study comprises three hundred and sixty-eight (368) respondents which consists of: two hundred and forty (240) league players, forty-eight (48) coaches, and sixty-four (64) club officials from the sixteen premier league Basketball teams in Nigeria, sixteen (16) personnel (four each from four companies: 7UP Bottling Company Plc, Airtel (formerly V-Mobile), DSTV, and Kwese) which includes: the CEO, Director, marketing sport manager and company secretary that sponsor the Nigeria Premier Basketball League. Therefore, all the population of 368 was used as sample for this

study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled Basketball Sponsorship Questionnaire (BSQ) which was made of two (2) sections (A & B). The responses were scored as follows: Strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Undecided = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was carried out involving Kada Stars, a Basketball club in Kaduna State, and the Jigawa States Basketball clubs. A total of forty-four (44) copies of the questionnaires were administered to the two clubs, along with league sponsorship from Total Petroleum Nigeria Limited. These two 2 clubs were part of the study. Cronbach’s alpha was computed, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.709. This value was deemed satisfactory for the internal consistency of the instrument. To collect data for the study, the researchers administered three hundred and sixty-eight (368) copies of the questionnaire and collected it back which lasted for three weeks. The data collected were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), IBM version 26. Statistical procedure used included descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages for the analysis of demographic characteristics, mean, standard deviation and standard error were used to answer the research question. The hypothesis was tested using a non-parametric statistic of one sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Of the 368 respondents whom were served the questionnaire, 5 copies were not returned. Thus, the total respondent used for the data analysis in this study was 363 which represents 98.6% response rate.

Research Question 1: To what extent would welfare of players impacted on the development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean score on the impact of welfare of players on the development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria.

Sn	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Players’ welfare was not maintained throughout the season this creating an obstacle to the good performance of the players	3.38	1.366
2	Players’ welfare did not conform to the needs of the players in which hinders their performances.	3.89	1.331
3	Players’ welfare did not meet the standard required. This hinders their motivation.	3.61	1.273
4	Match bonus and other allowances are usually inadequate not to conformity of the players.	3.65	1.243
5	Camps and hostels of the players are not suitable for the player needs.	4.34	0.943
6	Transportation vehicles of players to the away matchers and home match venues are not commendable	3.84	1.076
7	Medical personal at matches venue are not adequate in cases of injury and illness	3.37	1.335
8	Environment for players competing and training for the game are not conducive.	3.26	1.344
9	Proactive action to protect players from harm or abuse from the fans is adequately taking care.	4.18	1.108
10	Prizes and other souvenirs of league champions is well commendable	2.37	1.136

Aggregate mean	3.59	0.360
<i>(Decision mean = 3.50)</i>		

The expressed opinion of respondents in table 1 revealed that they were of the view that players’ welfare has major impact on development of Basketball Premier League in the country. In the table, respondents were of the opinion that the players’ welfare did not conform to their needs which hinders their performances and that their welfare was not maintained throughout the season thereby creating obstacles to their good performances. Though respondents did not agree that prizes and other souvenirs of league champions won by players were well commendable but they agreed that welfare provided did not meet the standard required and that it hinders their motivation. The respondents did not agree that medical personal at matches’ venue were not adequate in cases of injury and illness and that environment for players competing and training for the game were not conducive. The respondents were of the opinion that matches bonuses and other allowances were usually inadequate and that camps and hostels for accommodating players were usually not suitable along with provided transportation vehicles for conveying players to home venues and away matches were not commendable. But the respondents agreed that proactive actions to protect players from harm or abuse from the fans were adequately taken during such competitions. The aggregate mean score of 3.59 with a standard deviation of 0.360 for the table clearly support the notion that players’ welfare has major impact on development of Basketball Premier League in the country.

Hypothesis

There is no significant impact of welfare of players on the development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria.

Table 2: One sample t-test on impact of players’ welfare as a sponsorship variable on development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Std. Error	t-value	Df	p-value	Decision
Players’ welfare	363	3.59	0.360	0.019	4.729	362	0.000	Retained
Test mean	363	3.50	0.000	0.000				

T-critical = 1.96, p < 0.05

Table 2 shows the one sample t-test analysis on welfare of players as a form of sponsorship on the development of Basketball premier league in Nigeria. The analysis shows a calculated t-value of 4.729 which is greater than the t-critical value of 1.96. (4.729 >1.96) while the p – value of 0.000 less than 0.05. This result implies that the welfare of players has a significant impact on the development of Basketball premier league in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which state that the welfare of players has no significant impact on the development of Basketball premier league in Nigeria, was therefore rejected.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 stated that there is no significant impact of welfare as a sponsorship variable for the development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria. This study found that players’ welfare as a sponsorship variable had significant impact on development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria which led to rejection of the hypothesis. The study revealed that respondents were of the view that players’ welfare has major impact on development of Basketball Premier League in the country. The finding here corroborate with that of Tunrayo (2022) in his work titled; Influence of Management Structure on Performance of Kwara United Football Club in Nigeria Premier League who enumerated among others from a previous study that the major

challenges faced by the Nigerian Professional Basketball League were inadequate welfare services and stated that well-being services, such as players salaries, are frequently neglected, match bonuses were delayed medical supports were inadequate coupled with lack of infrastructural facilities that could encourage coaches and players in the game.

The finding is however is not in line with that of Buser (2022) who affirmed that NBA offers competitive salaries and benefits for players, including healthcare, retirement plans, and various incentives. The players' union (NBPA - National Basketball Players Association) negotiates on behalf of players to ensure fair compensation. Also, the NBA has implemented measures to reduce player fatigue, such as scheduling fewer back-to-back games and promoting adequate rest during the season.

Conclusion

The researcher concluded that Players' welfare has positively impacted on development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria. This was because offering competitive salaries and benefits for players, including healthcare, retirement plans, and various incentives motivate players and invariably boost athletes' performance.

Recommendation

It was recommended that there is need for stakeholders running the Basketball Premier League in the country to keep encouraging players by ensuring that their welfare is catered for, for the development of Basketball Premier League in Nigeria.

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