

## **COACHES' PERCEPTION OF THEIR MOTIVATION AND MENTORING SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Leaders typically flounder not because they lack technical skills or knowledge of the job, but rather because they have a competence deficit. Competencies work best when they become deeply ingrained in both the values of the organisation and in the performance that is expected of individuals. Motivating athletes is considered an important competency in coaching practice. There is a strong need for research on the role of mentoring and coaching in supporting the holistic well-being and ongoing development of athletes. This study examined coaches' perception of their motivation and mentoring skills for professional practice in Benue State. The research design that was adopted for this study was survey research design. The Population of the study consisted of all the coaches of Benue State Sports Council Makurdi. The sample comprised one hundred and sixty two (162) coaches of Benue State Sports Council who were purposively selected for the study. The questionnaire titled (EAGCPCRSPP) developed by the researcher was used for data collection in this study. The independent sample t-test was used to find out gender, and work experience differences in motivation and mentoring skills among coaches. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse age and level of education differences in motivation and mentoring skills among coaches. All the analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) at 0.05 level of significance. Coaches were competent in motivating athletes and possessed good mentoring skills. There was no significant difference in the mean ratings of coach's competences in Benue State relating to motivation as perceived by gender, age, education and years of experience ( $p > 0.05$ ). There was no significant difference in the mean ratings by gender, age and years of experience of coaches in Benue State on training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, coaches differed significantly on their mentoring skills based on their level of education. Coaches perceived themselves as competent in motivating athletes. Coaches also possessed adequate coaching and mentoring skills for professional practice in Benue State.

**Key Word:** Motivation, Mentoring, Coach, Professional Practice, Perception.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Leaders typically flounder not because they lack technical skills or knowledge of the job, but rather because they have a competence deficit. Competency is a personal characteristic, motive, behaviour, skill or knowledge that is proven to drive superior job performance (Mesquita, Santos & Rosado 2010). Furthermore, Aswathappa (2008) defined competency as the integration of knowledge, skills and value orientation, demonstrated to a defined standard in a specific context. Alberts (2003) described coaching as a competency made up of a process, techniques, mind-sets and skills that one can learn, just like any other competency that one can acquire throughout a career; one's ability to coach others successfully is something that can be developed. Competencies can be acquired through classroom training or on-the-job experiences. Competencies work best when they become deeply ingrained in both the values of the organization and in the performance that is expected of individuals.

Likar (2016) asserted that motivating athletes is considered an important competency in coaching practice. He stated further that coaches typically encourage athletes to work hard to achieve success and use specific strategies to "motivate" their athletes because they believe that motivated athletes are more likely to succeed. In an attempt to understand how coaches positively or negatively influence athletes' motivation we might consider some related key questions: How do coaches attempt to get the best from their athletes? How might research inform coaches about appropriate coaching practices that promote adaptive player engagement? In this section, the theoretical framework of self-determination theory will be used to inform adaptive coaching practices that lead to promoting motivationally adaptive player engagement. Motivation therefore, is a key competency that every coach interested in development should think carefully about.

A training need is a desire for human performance improvement that can best be met through training of some kind. This need must be spelt out in clear and behaviourally oriented terms (Cascio, 2014). There are different types of training needs. Brinkerhoff and Roberts, (2010) was of the view that focusing only on performance deficiency in needs analysis is too restrictive and proposed three other possible ways of looking at training needs. These, according to him, are democratic needs, diagnostic needs and analytic needs. Democratic needs are options for training that are preferred, selected, or voted for by employees or managers or both. Diagnostic needs focus on the factors that lead to effective performance and prevent performance problems, rather than emphasizing on existing problems. Diagnostic needs are identified by studying the different factors that may affect performance. The goal for training need is how effective performance can be obtained. Analytic needs identify new and better ways to perform a task. These needs are generally discovered by intuition, insight or expert consideration. To this list Broodryk (2006) added a fourth need, namely compliance need. Compliance needs are those mandated by law.

There is a strong need for research on the role of mentoring and coaching in supporting the holistic well-being and ongoing development of athletes. According to Erasmus and VanDyk (2004), supporting the well-being of mentees and protégés is an essential part of the mentor's role. Mentoring thus becomes a relationship between less experienced colleagues (mentees) and more experienced colleagues (mentors), where the latter aim to support the mentee's learning, development and well-being, and their integration into the cultures of both the organisation in which they are employed and the wider profession. Coaching, whether used interchangeably with mentoring, seen as one of the aspects of mentoring, or used as a standalone term, also focuses on

COACHES' PERCEPTION OF THEIR MOTIVATION AND MENTORING SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA...Terkimbi Victor Ikpató and Leonard Ananomo

the relationship between coach and athlete to help with the skill development, psychological well-being and social circumstances of the latter (Clutterbuck, 2003).

The potential impact of mentoring and coaching on the well-being of coaches and athletes transcends the sports levels and contexts. Beginning coaches need support to not only survive but also thrive, grow professionally, and build their capacity to maintain and sustain their well-being personal and of others, including through support systems such as coach induction and mentoring programs (Fourie, 2006; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004). Coaching and mentoring are not only limited to early career stages but also instrumental for experienced coaches and team leaders (Campbell & Sullivan, 2005). Experienced coaches who no longer have the formal supports through induction can benefit from peer coaching and informal mentoring. Sports managers and leaders, likewise, value professional and institutional structures and supports in the form of mentoring and coaching aimed at leadership development (Davies, 2006). Beyond the K-12 sports system, university faculty members also appreciate supportive structures to help them with orientation, socialization and acculturation to the new workplace (Fourie, 2006). Similarly, youth taught by sport coaches at these various sports institutions increasingly find mentoring and coaching practices beneficial for their overall development and learning (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004).

Mentoring and coaching in sports often have the dual aims of personal support and professional learning because the protégés are being helped to assimilate into new roles or responsibilities as well as to develop employment-related skills. The primary intended beneficiaries of the mentorship and coaching may be athletes, recently qualified or more experienced coaches, and instructors in club/team settings. However, there is limited research on the role of mentoring and coaching in supporting holistic well-being and ongoing development of coaches at these various levels. Therefore, we endeavored to seek out research that explores the role that mentoring and coaching practices play in helping sports professionals attune to the importance of maintaining their own well-being and fostering the well-being among those they serve and with whom they work. Of particular interest for us was to learn how mentorship and coaching can serve as a training need in demanding conditions, often in complex and stressful environments, and how their well-being capacity can contribute to the well-being of their mentees/protégés/athletes, students and colleagues. Furthermore, learning how sport coach well-being is supported through coaching and mentoring in different locales and diverse settings would help with understanding the specific, contextualized factors conducive to flourishing in sports institutions.

The impact of coaches on the performance of athletes cannot be easily downplayed nor over emphasized since they have the responsibility of training athletes by applying various training methods, principles, tactics and strategies as well as adopting leadership style that are aimed at improving the skills and overall performances of Benue state athletes. Therefore, based on these factors and the recent dwindling performances of Benue State athletes, the researcher became motivated to investigate coaches' perception of motivation and mentoring skills for professional practice in Benue state to ascertain if the poor performance of the Benue state athletes can be attributed to lack of motivation and/or mentoring skills from the coaches.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

**Study Design:** The research design that was used for this study was survey research design. Survey research design concerns itself with the present and attempts to determine the current status of the phenomena under investigation. Brinkerhoff and Robert (2010) stated that survey

research design is used to describe, interpret, access and analyze the existing conditions as at the time of the study.

**Study Location:** There was a sports council in Makurdi which is a parastatal under the Benue State Government. It is known as the Benue State Sports Council, Makurdi.

**Study Duration:** February 2018 to February 2019.

**Sample size:** One hundred and sixty two (162) coaches of Benue State Sports Council.

**Subjects & selection method:** The population for this study consisted of all the one hundred and sixty two (162) coaches of the Benue State Sports Council (BSSC) Makurdi. Purposive sampling technique was used to select all the coaches because the coaches in the sports council are not too many to be sampled. By using all the coaches for the study, the responses obtained from the coaches will represent their ideal perception of their motivation and mentoring skills for professional practice rather than making generalizations from a few coaches' perceptions.

**Subjects & selection method:** Data for this study was obtained through the administration of the questionnaire to respondents. This was done with the aid of four research assistants who were instructed on the administration of the questionnaire. These research assistants underwent a trial version of the data collection before the actual data collection process. The questionnaire was given to the coaches prior to their training sessions after they have been briefed about the essence of the exercise. The coaches were allowed a meaningful time to completed the questionnaire and return to the researcher on the spot to ensure high return rate.

### **Procedure methodology**

Data for this study was obtained through the administration of the questionnaire to respondents. This was done with the aid of four research assistants who were instructed on the administration of the questionnaire. These research assistants underwent a trial version of the data collection before the actual data collection process. The questionnaire was given to the coaches prior to their training sessions after they have been briefed about the essence of the exercise. The coaches were allowed a meaningful time to completed the questionnaire and return to the researcher on the spot to ensure high return rate.

### **Statistical analysis**

Data in this study was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

Answering the research questions was based on the following criteria

For competency, it is as follows

Response	Real Limits
Very Competent	3.5-4.0
Competent	2.5-3.49
Incompetent	1.5-2.49
Very Incompetent	0-1.49

COACHES' PERCEPTION OF THEIR MOTIVATION AND MENTORING SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA...Terkimbi Victor Ikpato and Leonard Ananomo

For training needs, it is as follows

Response	Real Limits
Strongly Agree	3.5-4.0
Agree	2.5-3.49
Disagree	1.5-2.49
Strongly Disagree	0-1.49

The independent sample t-test was used to find out gender differences in coaches level of education as a coaching competency and communication skills as a training need. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse differences in level of education as a coaching competency as well as communication skills as a training need of coaches based on gender, age, and years of experience. All the analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) at 0.05 level of significance. In testing the hypotheses using t-test, p-value was used to test for significance. The hypotheses were rejected if p value is < 0.05 and vice versa.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1:** Coaches' Mean Ratings of their training needs Relating to Motivation for their Professional Practice

	N=162		
Competences Related to Motivation	Mean	SD	Remark
Creating a climate of positive reinforcement`	3.06	.65	C
Encouraging and manipulating the feeling of the athletes	2.90	.55	C
Giving open recognition of improvement effort and accomplishment to deserving athletes	2.99	.61	C
Participating in sports for pure enjoyment and satisfaction derived from participating in the activity	2.93	.67	C
Accommodating athletes in a conducive camping environment in preparation for competition	3.01	.68	C
Making provision for training incentives, match incentives, welfare benefits as a way of motivating the athletes.	3.01	.68	C
Providing adequate and effective medical services for athletes during training and competition.	3.04	.74	C
Encouraging sports administrators to give athletes educational scholarship when they win gold medals during competition	2.95	.69	C
Mean of Means	<b>2.99</b>	<b>.66</b>	C

Results displayed in Table 1 shows that the mean ratings by coaches on their competence rating to motivation range between 2.90 and 3.06. These ratings indicate that the coaches perceived themselves as competent in all the 8 areas relating to motivation for their professional practice. The overall mean rating of 2.99 also shows this level of overall competence.

**Table 2:** Coaches' Mean Ratings of Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills for their professional practice

COACHES' PERCEPTION OF THEIR MOTIVATION AND MENTORING SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA...Terkimbi Victor Ikpato and Leonard Ananomo

N=162			
<b>Coaching and Mentoring Skills as Training Need</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Understanding how to communicate a vision that generate enthusiasm and commitment among the athletes	3.00	.61	A
Knowing how to articulate the team's strategy and objectives	2.96	.60	A
Understanding how to influence, inspire and motivate the athletes.	2.93	.61	A
Knowing how to act as an inspirational role model for other members of the team	2.96	.63	A
Understanding how to take responsibility and be accountable for the team loss more than its successes.	2.87	.66	A
Knowing how to inspire and instill accountability within the team.	2.97	.61	A
Understanding how to coach others	2.91	.59	A
Knowing how to mentor others.	2.78	.65	A
<b>Mean of Means</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>.62</b>	<b>A</b>

The results in table 2 shows the mean rating by coaches on their training needs which ranged between 2.78 and 3.00. The mean ratings shows that, although the coaches identified all the skills relating to coaching and mentoring as areas they need training, "Understanding how to communicate a vision that generate enthusiasm and commitment among the athletes" (Mean = 3.00) was the highest area of training need while "Knowing how to mentor others." (Mean = 2.78) was the area of least training need relating to coaching and mentoring skills.

**Table 3:** t-test Comparison of Mean Rating of Competences Relating to Motivation by Male and Female Coaches

<b>Source of variation</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>t-cal</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Male	128	2.98	.38	160	-.30	.77	NS*
Female	34	3.00	.44				

The results in the table 3 show that the female coaches' mean rating of the competences relating to motivation (M=3.00, SD=.44) was not significantly greater than the mean rating by male coaches (M=2.98, SD=.38);  $t(160) .30, p=.77$ . The null hypothesis which posited no significance between the two groups was not rejected since the  $p$ -value was greater than 0.05.

**Table 4:** Analysis of Variance on the Mean Ratings of Coach's Competences Rating to Motivation by Coaches of Different Age Range

<b>Source of Variation</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P-value</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Between Groups	.37	3	.12	.80	.50	NS
Within Groups	24.35	158	.15			
Total	24.72	161				

The results in table 4 show that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of competences relating to motivation by coaches of different age range,  $F(3/158) = .80, p = .50$ .

COACHES' PERCEPTION OF THEIR MOTIVATION AND MENTORING SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA... Terkimbi Victor Ikpato and Leonard Ananomo

Since the *p*-value was greater than the stipulated 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Table 5:** Analysis of Variance on the Mean Ratings of Coaches's Competences Relating to Motivation by Coaches of Different Educational Levels

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
Between Groups	.20	3	.07	.45	.73	NS
Within Groups	24.52	158	.16			
Total	24.72	161				

The ANOVA result displayed in table 5 shows that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of competences relating to motivation by coaches of different educational levels  $F(3/158) = .45, p = .73$ . Since the *p*-value was greater than the stipulated 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Table 6:** t-test Comparison of Mean Rating of Competences Relating to Motivation By Coaches of Different Years of Experience

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
Beginning coach 1-5years	73	2.96	.40	160	-.70	.49	NS
Experienced coach 6 years and above	89	3.01	.39				

The results in the table 6 show that the mean rating of the competences relating to motivation by experienced coaches (M=3.01, SD=.39) was not significantly greater than the mean rating by beginning coaches (M=2.96, SD=.40);  $t(160) .70, p=.49$ , hence the null hypothesis was not rejected since the *p* of .49 was greater than 0.05.

**Table 7:** t-test Comparison of Mean Rating of Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills by Male and Female Coaches

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
Male	128	2.53	.31	160	-1.78	.08	NS
Female	34	2.65	.38				

The results in the table 7 shows that the female coaches' mean rating of the training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills (M=2.65, SD=.38) was not significantly greater than the mean rating by male coaches (M=2.53, SD=.31);  $t(160) =.06, p=.08$ . Since the *p* was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Table 8:** Analysis of Variance on the Mean Ratings of Coaches' Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills by Coaches of Age Range

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
Between Groups	.37	3	.12	1.13	.34	NS
Within Groups	17.07	158	.11			
Total	17.44	161				

The ANOVA result displayed in table 8 shows that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of coaches' training needs relating to coaching and mentoring by coaches of

COACHES' PERCEPTION OF THEIR MOTIVATION AND MENTORING SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA...Terkimbi Victor Ikpató and Leonard Ananomo

different age range  $F(3/158) = 1.13$ ,  $p = .34$ . Since the  $p$ -value was greater than the stipulated 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected

**Table 9:** Analysis of Variance on the Mean Ratings of Coaches' Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills by Coaches of Different Educational Levels

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	$p$ -value	Decision
Between Groups	.84	3	.28	2.66	.05	S
Within Groups	16.60	158	.11			
Total	17.44	161				

The ANOVA result displayed in table 9 shows that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of coaches' training needs relating to coaching and mentoring by coaches of different educational levels,  $F(3/158) = 2.66$ ,  $p = .05$ . Since the  $p$ -value was equal to the stipulated 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected. Since, the ANOVA test was significant, a post-test was conducted to ascertain the group that was significantly different from the other.

However, the scheffe post-hoc analysis displayed in table 10 failed to identify the source of the variation, hence none of the group mean was significantly different from the other. This could be due to the small group sample size.

**Table 10:** Scheffe Multiple Comparison of Coaches' Mean Rating to Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills by Educational Levels

(I) Educational Qualifications	(J) Educational Qualifications	Mean Difference (I-J)	$p$ -value
SSC	NCE/ND	-.01	1.00
	HND/First Degree	-.16	.30
	M.Sc	-.14	.61
NCE/ND	SSC	.01	1.00
	HND/First Degree	-.15	.11
	M.Sc	-.13	.54
HND/First Drgree	SSC	.16	.30
	NCE/ND	.15	.11
	M.Sc	.01	1.00

**Table 11:** t-test Comparison of Mean Rating of Coaches' Training Needs Relating to Coaching and Mentoring Skills by Coaches of Different Years of Experience

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	$p$ -value	Decision
Beginning coach 1-5years	73	2.54	.33	160	-.54	.59	NS
Experienced coach 6 years and above	89	2.57	.33				

The results in the table 11 shows that the mean rating of training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills by experienced coaches ( $M=2.57$ ,  $SD=.33$ ) was not significantly greater than the

mean rating by beginning coaches ( $M=2.54$ ,  $SD=.33$ );  $t(160) = .54$ ,  $p=.59$ . The null hypothesis was not rejected since the  $p$ -value of .59 was greater than 0.05.

## DISCUSSION

### **Perception of coaches on competences relating to motivation for their professional practice**

This study indicated that coaches perceived themselves as competent in all the 8 areas relating to motivation for their professional practice. The overall mean rating of 2.99 also shows this level of overall competence (table 4). The analysis further showed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of coach's competences in Benue State relating to motivation as perceived by male and female coaches ( $p>0.05$ ). The same result was documented for age that,

there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of coach's competences in Benue State relating to motivation as perceived by age of coaches ( $p>0.05$ ) as well as educational

level ( $p>0.05$ ) and years of experience of coaches ( $p>0.05$ ). The result of the study in respect to age and gender was in line with Likar (2016) who conducted a research on age and gender differences in motivational manifestations of the Big Five from age 16 to 60 and reported that, no significant differences were observed between the subsamples and the total sample with regard to motivational manifestations of the Big Five, and age and gender distribution. The finding was however at variance with a study by Miller and Jarman (2008) in Kuala Lumpur who revealed a positive and significant correlation between monetary motivation and job performance ( $r=.33$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Spenser and Spenser (2003) suggested that employees who are satisfied with their job are more likely to improve their job performance. Thus, these outcomes validated the theory of Rest (2006), who advocated that job satisfaction leads to performance enhancement most especially one resulting from extrinsic rewards such as monetary rewards.

### **Training needs of coaches relating to coaching and mentoring skills for their professional practice**

The findings of the study showed that the mean rating by coaches on their training needs ranged between 2.78 and 3.00 as presented in table 8. The mean ratings show that, although the coaches identified all the skills relating to coaching and mentoring as areas they need training, "Understanding how to communicate a vision that generate enthusiasm and commitment among the athletes" (Mean = 3.00) was the highest area of training need while "Knowing how to mentor others." (Mean = 2.78) was the area of least training need relating to coaching and mentoring skills (Alberts, 2003). The result of the study corroborated Likona (2001) who conducted a study on strategies for mentoring and coaching through sports participation in University Utara Malaysia and results revealed a significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents on coaches being mentors of their athletes. Gender differences indicated that, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female coaches in Benue State on training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills ( $p>0.05$ ). There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of age of coaches in Benue State on training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills ( $p>0.05$ ). The analysis further indicated that, there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of educational level of coaches in Benue State on training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills ( $p<0.05$ ). Conversely, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of

years of experience of coaches in Benue State on training needs relating to coaching and mentoring skills ( $p>0.05$ ).

### Conclusion

The study examined coaches' perception of their motivation and mentoring skills for professional practice in Benue State. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that coaches perceived themselves as competent in motivating athletes. Coaches also possessed adequate coaching and mentoring skills for professional practice in Benue State.

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