

# Influence of Fan Behaviour on the Self-Esteem of Amateur Athletes in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

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#### Since the inception of organized sports, there have been fans or spectators cheering for their favorite athletes and teams in order to increase their confidence and improve their overall performance. This study examined the influence of fan behaviour on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. The variables investigated are fans' perception, violent reactions, and discrimination, feelings of disappointment. Descriptive research design of survey method was adopted for the study. The population for the study was amateur athletes from four sports (Football, Basketball, Volleyball, and Handball). Purposive and sample technique was used for the study. The sample for the study consists of 140 amateur athletes in Kwara State. The research instrument for this study was questionnaire developed by the researcher which was used for data collection. Frequency and percentage was used to analyze the demographic data of respondents while the hypotheses were tested using inferential statistic of Chi-square at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study revealed that; fans perception of athletes as a failure, discrimination, violent reactions, and feelings of disappointment influenced the self-esteem of amateur athletes. Based on the findings, the study recommends that stakeholders such as media, sports council and relevant agencies of government should conduct enlightenment programmes on management and control of fan behaviour in Kwara State.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

Sports cannot be enjoyed without fans and spectators, thus, fans are important social group of random people from various socio-cultural groups having different identity to a team or athlete (Atalay 1998). Therefore, fan, being an enthusiast or fanatic of a particular team or athlete would likely go to the extreme to contribute to the team success as well as that of the athlete. Fan behaviour in sports environment could be positive or negative, and can directly affect the outcome of sports events as a result of the consequences of their behaviour. This behaviour manifests itself in a number of different ways, depending on the venue.

Positive behaviour could be in form of singing, and cheering positive exclamations toward the field of play and ultimately using favorable objects. Likewise, negative behaviour such as booing, abuse, shouting and throwing of harmful object into the field. However, fans form parts of the group that contribute to the holistic experience within a sporting event having different motives or intentions as some cheer and motivate the team or their favorite athletes; while some choose to boo the opposing team or the athletes. Though it is usually accepted that cheering positively influences a team's performance, negative cheering has also shown to be a greater disadvantage mostly toward the athletes. Madison (2009) stated that fans' negative behaviour has shown to have influence on the performance of athletes which have caused them to perform below expectation and or perhaps even distract them completely off the competition as a result of certain behavioral characteristics exhibited by the fans.

Fan can be an enthusiast for a particular athlete, team, sport, or all of organized sports as a whole. Sports fans often attend sporting events in stadium, sports bars, or watch them at home on television, and follow news through newspapers, websites, and social media. According to Wann (1995), a sports fan is considered to be "one who is enthusiastic about a particular sport or athlete. Agas, et. al. (2012), perceived 'fan', as the shortened form of the word 'fanatic', expresses enthusiasm, passion and eagerness and even "moving beyond reason". The incontestable influence a large group of sport fans have directly translates to the electric atmosphere and excitement at largest sporting events. Dobel (2010), submitted that "fans matter so much that sports often have a 'home field advantage' largely created by the fans in the stands", because enthusiastic sports fans are able to support and uplift athletes and players by transferring their energy and emotional support to them through their positive behaviour such as cheering and chanting which serve as motivation to the athletes. Also, the opposite of this is true when sports fans display negative behaviour that affect the whole experience of sports events.

Behaviour could have an obvious influence on the game, particularly the hostile fan. Therefore, this study intends to investigate certain fan behaviour that may influence the self-esteem of athletes, determinants of fan behaviour, potential challenges or effects of unethical behaviour in sports events, causes of the problems of unsporting behaviour, on amateur athletes in Kwara State.

Self-esteem is now a household concept and high self-esteem is regarded as something that causes positive outcome in life, in general, and in specific situations. Self-esteem as a construct has had many varying definitions that explain the concept and ways of measuring its impact on oneself. (Rosenberg, 1979), it is a reflection of how one feels, think, and value his own skills, abilities, and social relationships (Coatsworth & Conroy, 2006). Self-esteem refers to person's overall sense of his or her worth. It is considered a sort of measure of how much a person think, feel, and believes about him or herself. According to self-esteem expert Morris Rosenberg, self-esteem is quite simply one's attitude toward oneself. As described by Rosenberg, it as a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self.

Furthermore, self-esteem encompasses beliefs about oneself, as well as emotional states, such as triumph, despair, pride, and shame. It is attractive as a social psychological construct because researchers conceptualized it as an influential predictor of certain outcomes, such as academic achievements, happiness, and satisfaction among others. (Peggy &Julia, 2003). But athletes are especially vulnerable to this problem of self-esteem as a result of the consequences of fan behaviour which can be led to lack of concentration and unstable mind. Therefore, this study examined the influence of fan behaviour on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State.

The researcher through interaction discovered that the performance of amateur athletes in Kwara State has a link with individual self-esteem. This is because certain behavioural factors could influence the self-esteem of the athletes to a greater extent as well as their experience of the game. Researched has proved that the fans' negative behaviour has proved to have influence on the performance of athletes which have caused them to perform below expectation during competition as a result of certain characters exhibited by fans (Madison, 2009).

The focus of this research was to examine fan behaviour ranging from violent reaction, discrimination and feelings of disappointment on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. Fan behaviour has directly affected the outcome of sports events, while violence, unethical behaviour among others have posed serious challenges to improving the self-esteem of athletes in sports events through character such as verbal (slangs, odd songs, boo, chants) and non-verbal cues such as writings, gesture, signs and posters among others.

# METHOD

The descriptive design of survey type was adopted for this study. The researcher described the processes, opinion and characteristics that exist in the population being studied. The population comprised amateur athletes selected from four (4) sports; football, basketball, volleyball, and handball in Ilorin, Kwara State. One hundred and forty (140) amateur athletes were sampled for this study. Random sampling technique was used to select four (4) sports, while proportionate sampling technique was used to select 20% from each sport, 55 amateur athletes from football, 35 from basketball, 25 from volleyball and 25 from handball.

The instrument that was used for this study is a researcher's developed structured questionnaire. The instrument elicited relevant information from the respondents on influence of fan behaviour on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. The instrument was tagged "Influence of fan behaviour on the self-esteem of amateur athletes" (IFBSAA). The Questionnaire comprised two sections, A and B. Section A focused on demographic data of the respondents such as gender, age and type of sport, while section B contained items on influence of fan behaviour on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. The 5-point Likert scale of

"Strongly Agree", "Agree", Moderately Agree and "Disagree and Strongly Disagree" responses were used for the items on the Questionnaire.

The validity of the instrument was ascertained with the help of three (3) lecturers from Department of Human Kinetics Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The comments, corrections and suggestions were incorporated in the instrument for administration. In order to ensure the reliability of the instrument, the researcher adopted test-retest method whereby 20 copies of the Questionnaire were administered on athletes from the following sports; Tabletennis, Athletics, Cricket and Tennis. The instrument was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic, a coefficient of 0.78 was obtained.

Permission was obtained from the management of the Kwara State Sports Council and the coaches prior to data collection. Three trained research assistants were employed for the study. The data collected for this study was subjected to appropriate statistical analysis. Section A which entails the demographic data of respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage, while inferential statistic of Chi- square was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

#### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### Result

1	able 1. If equelley Distribution	of the Respondents on	denuer, rype of	Sport and Deligtin of
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	S/N	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Condon	Male	114	81
	Gender	Female	26	19
	Total		140	100
		Football	61	44
	Tune of Sport	Basketball	30	21
	Type of Sport	Volleyball	26	19
		Handball	23	16
	Total		140	100
		< 5 years	96	69
	Length of Participantion	5-10 years	31	22
		10 years & above	13	9
	Total		140	100

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents on Gender, Type of Sport and Length of

Table 1 presents information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. 114 respondents (81%) were male while 26 respondents (19%) were female. Also, the type of sport of the respondents shows that 61 respondents (44%) played football, 30 respondents (21%) played basketball, 26 respondents (19%) played volleyball, while 23 respondents (16%) played handball. Also, the length of participation in sport revealed that 96 respondents (69%) were less than 5 years, 31 respondents (22%) were between 5-10 years, while 13 respondents (9%) were 10 years and above.

Table 2. Chi-square analysis on fans feelings of disappointment on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State

Item	SA	А	MA	D	SD	Row Total	df	Cal x <sup>2</sup> valu e	P- Valu e	Rem ark
When I make error during performance, fans perceive me as a failure.	14	30	60	33	3	140				
When I miss chancestoscore,perceivemyperformance as poor	21	58	45	13	3	140				
I become anxious of what fans might perceive about my performance.	35	63	34	6	2	140	16	85.1 50ª	.000	Ho Rejec ted
Fans sometimes perceive athletes as a failure if he/she performs below expectation.	37	66	29	7	1	140				
Fan perception of athletes sometimes determines the level of performance.	45	57	30	5	3	140				
Total	<b>152</b> (21.7%)	<b>274</b> (39.1%)	<b>198</b> (28.3%)	<b>64</b> (9.1%)	<b>12</b> (1.7%)	<b>700</b> (100%)				

@ 0.05 alpha level

Table 2 revealed that 21.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that fans feelings of disappointment have a significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State, 39.1% agreed, 28.3% moderately agreed, 9.1% disagreed, 1.7% strongly disagreed. Also, the calculated chi-square value was 85.150, table value was 34.267 at 16-degree of freedom while the P-value is .000 at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected which means there was significant influence of feelings of feelings of disappointment on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State.

Table 3. Chi-square analysis on influence of fans violent behaviour on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State

Item	SA	А	МА	D	SD	Row Total	Df	Cal x <sup>2</sup> Val ue	P- valu e	Rem ark
My self-esteem drops quickly when I experience discrimination from fans	21	49	39	25	6	140				
WhenIencounterdiscrimination,Istruggletoconcentrateasinterfereswithmyperformance.	27	72	29	11	1	140				
Experience of discrimination discourages me much and shake my self esteem	42	63	27	7	1	140	16	87.1 31ª	.000	Ho Reje cted

I struggle to control my emotion whenever I am assaulted by fans.	36	71	24	2	7	140	
I do not perform to my best as my attention flips back and forth when assaulted by fans.	47	63	24	2	4	140	
Total	<b>173</b> (24.7%)	<b>318</b> (45.4%)	<b>143</b> (20.4%)	<b>47</b> (6.7%)	<b>19</b> (2.7%)	<b>700</b> (100%)	

@ 0.05 alpha level

Table 3 revealed that 24.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that fans violent behaviour has a significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State, 45.4% agreed, 20.4% moderately agreed, 6.7% disagreed, 2.7% strongly disagreed. Also, the calculated chi-square value was 87.131, table value was 34.267 at 16-degree of freedom while the P-value was .000 at 0.05 alpha level. Based on the result, hypothesis two was rejected which means there was significant influence of fans violent behaviour on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State.

Table 4. Chi-square analysis on fans discrimination and self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara
State.

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Item	SA	Α	МА	D	SD	Row Total	Df	Cal x² Value	P- Valu e	Rema rk	
Most fans engaged in disorder and riot act.	33	49	35	18	5	140					
I seldom cope under fans verbal and gesturing violence reaction.	32	71	31	5	1	140					
Throwing of harmful objects affect my self- confidence.	54	57	19	6	4	140	20	66.261ª	.000	Ho Reject ed	
Fansviolentthreatsoftenmakemeperform poorly.	48	54	24	7	7	140					
Fan nature of hooliganism hinders me of using my full potential.	44	64	16	12	4	140					
Property destruction and physical challenge often affects my self-	58	54	21	6	1	140					
esteem.	269	349	146	54	22	840					
Total	(32%)	<b>(</b> 41.5%)	(17.4%)	(6.4%)	(3%)	(100%)					

@ 0.05 alpha level

Table 4 revealed that 32% of the respondents strongly agreed that fans discrimination has a significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State, 41.5% agreed, 17.4% moderately agreed, 6.4% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed. Also, the calculated chi-square value was 66.261, table value was 39.997 at 20-degree of freedom while P-value is .000 at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, hypothesis three was rejected, which means there was significant influence of fans discrimination on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State.

Item	SA	А	МА	D	Df	Row Total	Df	Cal x² Value	P- Valu e	Rem ark
I sometimes remember my past failure more than my success.	28	51	32	16	13	140				
I feel grossly disappointed when we lose a match which affects my subsequent performance.	43	73	20	2	2	140				
Athletes need the fans to stay confident even though one performs poorly.	64	56	18	2	-	140	12	44.896ª	.000	Ho rejec ted
I feel angry with myself for not contributing to the team success.	51	67	18	2	2	140				
Total	<b>186</b> (33.2%)	<b>247</b> (44.1%)	<b>88</b> (15.7%)	<b>22</b> (4%)	<b>17</b> (3.0%)	<b>560</b> (100%)				

Table 5. Chi-square analysis on fans perception of athlete as a failure and self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State

@ 0.05 alpha level

Table five revealed that 33.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that fans perception of athlete as a failure has a significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State, 44.1% agreed, 15.7% moderately agreed, 4% disagreed, while 3% strongly disagreed. Also, the calculated chi-square value was 44.896, table value was 32.910 at 12-degree of freedom while the P-value is .000 at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, hypothesis four was rejected, which means there is a significant influence of fans perception of athlete as a failure on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State.

#### **Discussion of Findings**

Based on the result, hypothesis one was rejected, this connotes that fans feelings of disappointment have a significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. Sports fans are considered as those who are enthusiastic about a particular sport or athlete. Agas, et al, (2012) affirmed that fans may be emotional and feel disappointed if their favorite athlete performs below expectations or their team lost a match. Research has also proved that there is a strong propensity for particular sporting event characteristics to contribute to the spectators' emotional states (Yoshida & James, 2010). Furthermore, it has been affirmed by scholars that feelings of enjoyment have a positive impact on spectators' satisfaction with the stadium (Kuenzel & Yasshimu, 2007), and feelings of excitement have a positive impact on spectators plans to watch future events (Sumino & Harada, 2004). In essence, spectators' emotions can be used to predict spectator behavior.

Hypothesis two was also rejected, this signifies that fans violent reaction significantly influence the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. This tallies with the research by Daniel, Wann et. al. (2004), they reported that between 1900 and the early 1940s, crowd violence was common: bottles and other objects were thrown at players and umpires, and World Series games were disrupted by fans angered by umpires' calls or the actions of opposing players (Scheinin, 1994).

Collins (2008) affirmed that spontaneous fan violence that occurs during a soccer match often appears to be a more direct result of events on the pitch. Fans are subject to the same rhythms of dramatic tension as players, they tend to express their emotions collectively as fans are attracted to attending a game in person. Archrivalry between opposing fans seemed to further increase the likelihood of violent reactions (Yusoff, 2015), such negative incidents can bleed from one game into the next, suggesting that sporting rivalries could potentially become increasingly intense over time.

Hypothesis three was rejected, this shows that discrimination from fans has a significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. Sports, which is known for housing careers of the most passionate and the aspiring youth, has shown to be major concern when it comes to the issue of discrimination that is gradually becoming a nightmare not only for participants but for others who took interest in the field of sports. Raced-based discrimination is one of the major challenges experienced in sports events till today with well-documented harmful impact on health and wellbeing, in particular mental health. Being a target of racism can reduce self-esteem and social support; increase stress, drug and alcohol use, self-harm, and have a detrimental effect on athlete performance. Racism can also reduce athlete's chance of getting decent performance.

Hypothesis four was rejected, this indicates that fans perception of athlete as a failure significantly influence the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. Fans perceive athletes as a failure if he/she fails to perform up to the expected standard overtime. This is in line with the submission of Wann, (2004) who affirmed that the perceptions and actions of fans depend on the extent to which they identify with teams and athletes. Highly identified fans are more likely than others to link their team's performance to their own emotions and identities. Fans usually placed so much expectation on athletes and on the team they whole heartedly support as they always expect them to produce high flying performances at all-time perhaps due to the pedigree of the athletes and the magnitude of the team. On the other hand, fans will perceive athletes as a failure, if they fail to meet up with the expected performance standard set by the fans he/she is assumed to be a failure in his/her area of sports.

# CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, following conclusions were drawn. Fans feelings of disappointment had significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes

in Kwara State. Fans violent behaviour had significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. Fans discrimination had significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State. Fans perception of athlete as a failure had significant influence on the self-esteem of amateur athletes in Kwara State.

Recommendations is Coaches should seek the assistance of sports psychologists to integrate psychological skills training to help the athletes maintain their self-confidence. Various sports clubs should set standard cautions and discourage their fans from the act of discrimination and use of racial abuse on the athletes. Government and sports council should make strict regulations and policies to control violent reactions of fans in sports events. Stakeholders such as media, sports council and relevant agencies of government should conduct enlightenment programmes on management and control of fan behaviour.

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