



THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN THE SPORT PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

What does it mean to be motivated? This question has been a subject of interest for psychologists and researchers studying human behavior. However, it is not only a question that intrigues managers and coaches but also has a significant impact on sports performance at all levels. The objective of this study is to analyze the influence and support of actions related to athletes' motivation undertaken by sports organizations to enhance performance. To achieve this, we conducted a literature review, administered a questionnaire, and performed data analysis and processing. Our research involved 177 athletes from different regions of India. Interestingly, the desire to achieve high performance emerged as a more crucial motivator for athletes than financial considerations. Motivation during training fluctuates due to various sports-related factors as well as the stability of material conditions, both of which significantly affect athletes' mental well-being. The levels of evaluation, communication, and rewards play essential roles as motivational factors with direct impacts on athletes' results in both competition and training

Key words: motivation, sport, performance, sport management, leadership.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the role of motivation in sports and its fundamental significance in achieving superior performance at all levels of athletic activity.

Given the frequent changes occurring in the economic, social, and sports domains, as well as the well-established importance of motivation, it holds a special place in both theoretical and practical approaches.

The aim of this paper is to provide a modest contribution to the analysis of motivation, which has become a critically important factor in high-performance sports.

Etymologically, the term "motivation" originates from the Latin word "movere," meaning movement. According to the Romanian Language Dictionary, motivation is defined as the combination of conscious or unconscious reasons or motives that drive someone to take action or achieve specific goals.

Various scholars have offered their definitions of motivation. Zlate describes it as an individual's state of necessity, which guides and directs behavior towards fulfillment and satisfaction. Jones defines motivation as the degree of persistent effort directed toward reaching a goal. Lewin explains motivation in terms of stimuli that influence the body and trigger responsive behavior, while Nuttin emphasizes the dynamic and directional aspects of motivation. Many authors associate motivation with attitudes. Newcomb suggests that attitudes are accompanied by reasons and that their intensity varies based on intrinsic motivation. Motivation is thus both a prerequisite for and a product of attitude.

In the domain of high-performance sports, motivation has been predominantly linked to activating functions rather than directing functions. Vanek, in his study on athletes' motivation dynamics, presents four stages:

- Generalization stage: Children or teenagers are motivated by the tendency to move and succeed.
- Differentiating stage: Athletes choose a specific sports discipline.
- Specialized preferences stage: Athletes strive for performance in their chosen discipline, following various motivational paths.

- Motivational involution stage: Athletes may experience setbacks due to primary or secondary motivations, such as material advantages, failures, injuries, or lack of cohesion within the group.

High-performance sports demand tremendous efforts and sacrifices that are often difficult to comprehend, including pushing biological and mental limits, enduring repetitive stressful situations, and temporarily sacrificing certain natural needs. This raises the question: What does performance sport offer in compensation for these inconveniences?

Based on the belief that strong motivation and proper physical training can compensate for the value difference between teams or athletes, this research focuses on the following themes:

- Evaluating the application level of methods and approaches mentioned in the specialized literature.
- Conducting an inventory of motivational indicators among the subjects using appropriate procedures and techniques.
- Identifying internal and external factors that can stimulate performance.
- Analyzing the motivation policies required to achieve high performance.

Materials and methods:

The research methods and techniques were chosen to align with the objectives, hypotheses, and the phenomena under study, allowing for an understanding of current theories, practices, and realities. The selected methods and techniques include:

- Reviewing specialized literature.
- Conducting a questionnaire.

To carry out the study, a sample of 200 athletes from various sports clubs was selected. Due to reservations from some potential respondents and errors in questionnaire completion, a total of 177 correctly filled questionnaires were collected.

The sampling method employed was mixed, incorporating both random and directed selection for the following reasons:

- Consideration of sports organizations of various sizes and statuses.
- Selection of subjects based on their availability to complete the questionnaire.

The collected data was analyzed based on the following criteria:

- Type of sport: Football (29%), handball (20%), volleyball (12%), basketball (10%), tennis and karate (6%), judo and athletics (5%), boxing (4%), and gymnastics (3%).
- Performance level: Level IV (beginners), Level III (transitioning to performance sport), Level II (performance athletes), and Level I (high-performance athletes).
- Educational level: High school (68%), academic studies (17%), post-graduate studies (11%), and coaching courses (4%).
- Gender: Males (63%), females (37%).

Data interpretation involved analyzing relevant aspects related to the subjects' motivation levels, including stability within the club, the significance and importance of their activities, material and financial conditions, status within the team or group, aspiration levels, and acknowledgment of achievements.

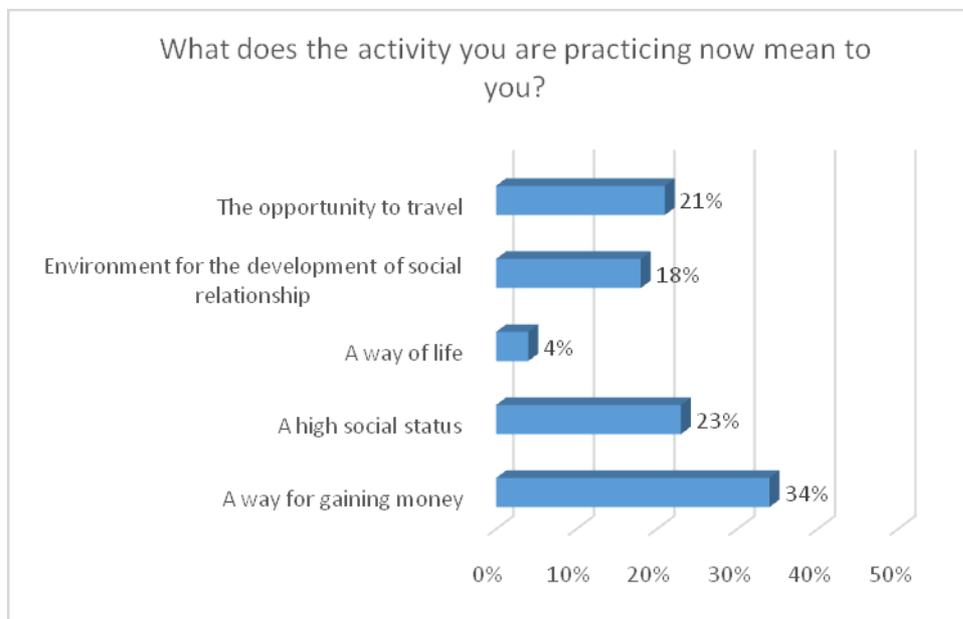


Fig. 1. The significance of the activity

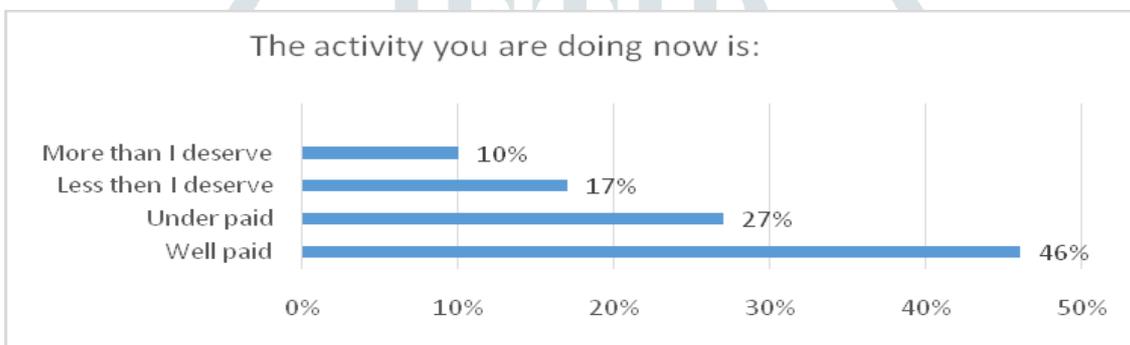


Fig. 2. The level of financial reward

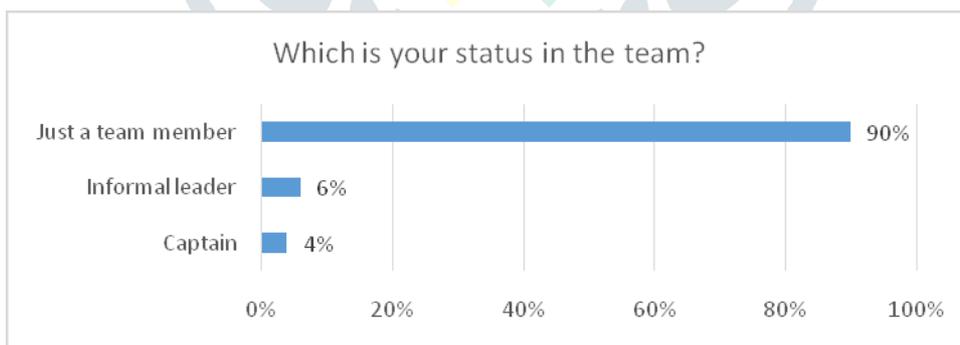


Fig. 3. The status in the team

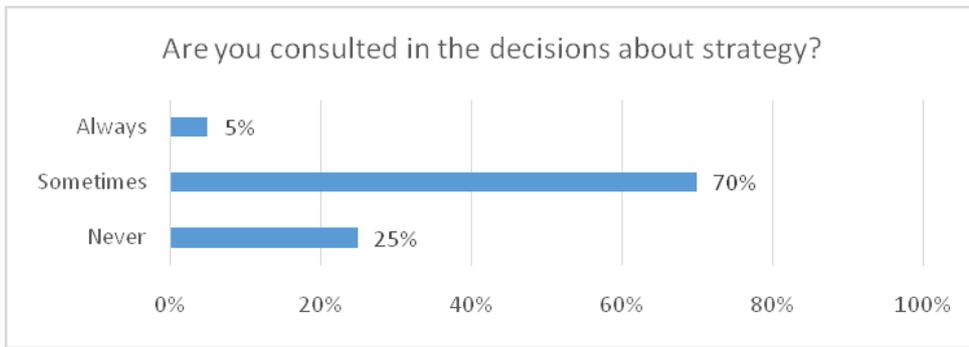


Fig. 4. The importance within the group

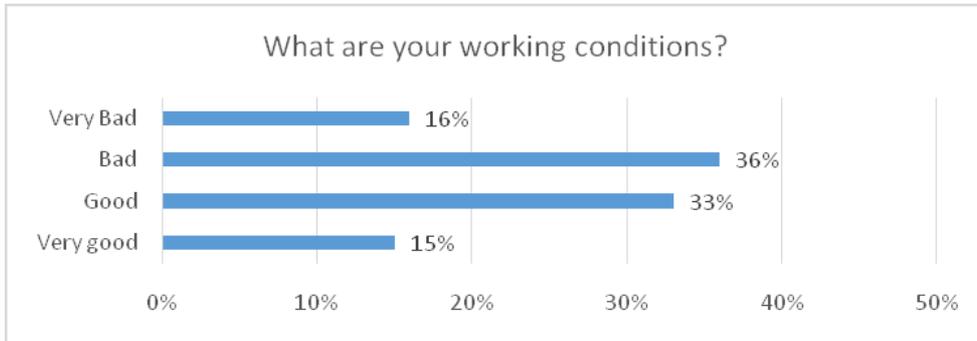


Fig. 5. Working conditions

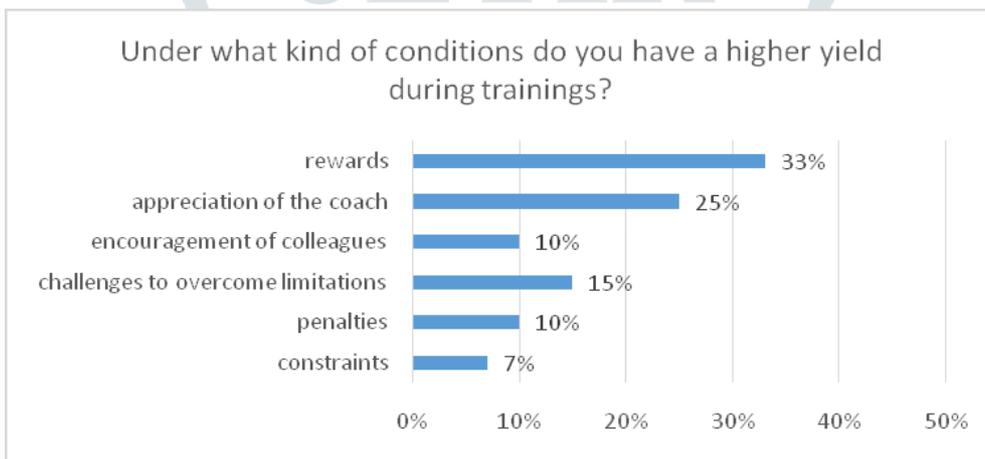


Fig. 6. Motivation in training

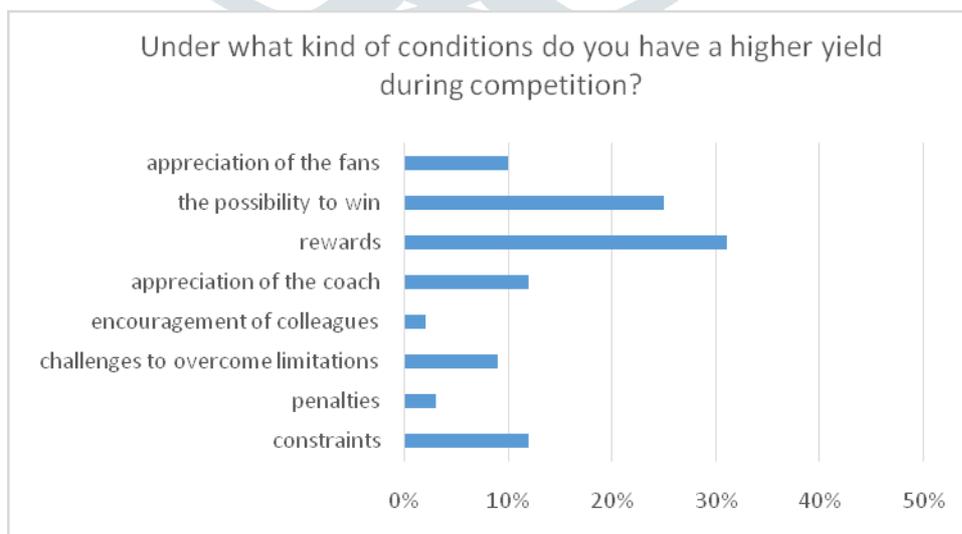


Fig. 7. Motivation in competitions

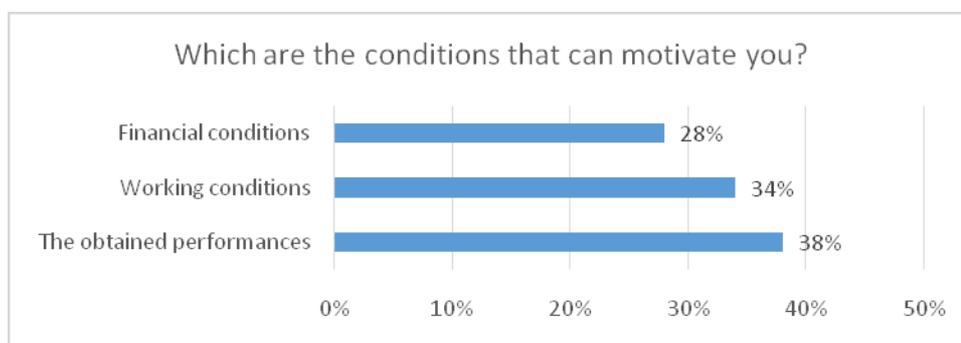


Fig. 8. Motivating factors

Discussions

Stability within a sports club is a significant factor in athletes' motivation. The decision to transfer high-performance athletes from one club to another is typically based on objective reasons related to the specific circumstances at the time of the transfer.

Similar to how working conditions serve as a crucial motivating factor for employees, athletes are also more motivated when they have access to favorable training conditions. It is evident that providing quality conditions enhances their enjoyment and effectiveness.

The athletes' position within the team or group can contribute additional motivation for themselves and their teammates. Team captains, in particular, should take on the responsibility of motivating the team, especially during challenging times. Experienced or influential athletes within the group can serve as strong morale and motivation boosters.

Encouraging each athlete in the group to express their opinions, even if they differ from the majority, as long as they are supported by valid reasons, is essential. Athletes should feel empowered to express themselves openly to the group, without seeking undue attention. It is also important for athletes to communicate their expectations for the team, fostering effective communication.

The aspirations of athletes engaged in high-performance activities indicate their level of motivation during training and competitions. If athletes do not have high aspirations, it is unrealistic to have high expectations of them.

Material incentives cannot be overlooked when it comes to athletes' performance. However, it is important to note that greater emphasis should be placed on intrinsic motivation rather than solely relying on external rewards tied to achieving exceptional athletic performance.

Conclusions

In addition to material motivating methods and means, non-material approaches should also be employed, complementing or even replacing material incentives.

The possibility of achieving superior performance serves as a motivating factor, which, in most cases, outweighs the allure of financial gain. In this regard, a statement by a renowned football player is relevant: "You can buy players, but not history. I prefer the glory of Liverpool over the money at Manchester City. I am proud to wear the Liverpool shirt."

A clear relationship exists between motivation and individual performance: those who are strongly motivated tend to be efficient, succeed in their endeavors, and develop into true professionals, regardless of their field of activity. The more motivated they are, the sooner they achieve success, and the better they become, all without apparent effort.

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