

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN THE NIGERIA PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE CLUBS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

¹Obukadeta, E. Daniel; ²Eboh Lucky and ³Emmanuel Akareh

Department of Human Kinetics, Recreation and Sports Science Education Delta State University, Abraka

Abstract

Professional football leagues in Nigeria have inspired some scholarly works, especially, the enthusiasm of football lovers during competitions. Extant studies have acknowledged the organizational structure of such leagues but little or no attention has been paid to the management of human personnel which constitutes a significant structural component of the league. This study adopted the descriptive survey of the ex-post-facto design. The population of the study comprises clubs' administrators and players. A representative sample size of 385 was used for the study. The proportional stratified and random sampling techniques were adopted to select the sample size, and a validated and reliable Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.70 was deployed. With the aid of six research assistants, copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents. Data were collected through the use of questionnaire. The data were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. The analysis revealed high level of indiscipline and poor remuneration as challenges to the human resources management of the Nigeria professional football league clubs in the South-South, Nigeria. Conclusion was drawn based on the findings and recommendations were made amongst others that club management should instill discipline in the club by counselling and meting out punishments to people who flout the rules of the club; club members should always be encouraged and be well remunerated to serve as motivation which will help boost their morale towards ensuring effective and efficient services to their clubs.

Introduction

Football, as a competitive sport started in Nigeria in the early part of the 20th century, its emergence is traced to the Britain's who organized weekly matches between European and Nigerian Youths in Lagos. Today, we have football league that focuses on football performance efficiency and effectiveness. The football league system is contested by several clubs, while, operate on a system of promotion and relegation of football clubs. All the clubs that compete in a football league system can qualify to play. In Nigeria, there are two main leagues, the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) and the Nigeria National league

(NNL). Football is probably the single most influential means of communications in the world today. It is a strong instrument of national integration. In recent times, it has undergone a radical change and has become a big industry globally. It is no longer a game for mere entertainment of the public but has become a lucrative commercialized business that creates job opportunities.

Nigerian Professional Football League is a corporation in which clubs act as shareholders (Complete Sports, 2018). The winner of the Nigerian Professional Football League is expected to represent the country at the continental league football competition. This is an indicator that the clubs could be

facing some related human resource management challenges (Eboh 2019). League football clubs in Nigeria must respond to the globalization of football /effectiveness and efficiency in performance as it is the use in advanced nations of the world, where technological innovation, administrative and managerial skills have witnessed over weighted influences on management challenges. One of the most important human activities in any organization such as football league club, is effective management that come on with challenges.

For any football league based clubs to survive in a global socioeconomic sporting activity, they need to exploit all the available human and material resources as a means of achieving competitive advantage. In the words of Orunaloka (2016), one resource in soccer, recently recognized as providing a source of competitive advantage, is the human resource of the football clubs, and it is widely accepted that stakeholders in football clubs are important source of competitive advantage for their clubs (Iwuala, 2016).

Human resource Management {HRM} is a function in organizations designed to maximize employee performance of an employers' strategic objectives (Johnson, 2009) In the sporting industry of sport organization, human resource management has four essential resource which can make or mar the organization. These include human, financial, materials and physical. The human resources are so essential in that, it can manipulate and direct other resources towards achieving the football organization goal (Eboh, 2010) Fasan (2009) listed activities in human resources management of sports to include wages and salaries, training and development, career opportunities, discipline, division of rules, tasks and function loyalty, distribution of power, communication, use of technology industrial

relation and knowledge of management and so on.

Garba and Njidda (2009) stated that People significantly affect the success of an organization, depending on how they are chosen, required and maintain, which may bring few or many problems to covers the broad spectrum of the life of the chairmen, team managers, technical advisers, coaches players and supporters of professional football clubs at the beginning of new season to the end of season, Nwosu and Ugwreua (2015), observed that human resource management is concerned with the people dimension in management. According to Eboh (2010), the importance of human resource management in professional league includes competitive advantage and social responsibility towards employee literature.

Fasan, (2009); Iwuala (2016) and Erhinyodavwa (2018); have stated that the cause of low productivity in professional football clubs sides in Nigeria include; poor management and ineffective supervision, low level of skill and negative attitude of player insufficient and poor quality equipment and facilities and misplaced value, while human resource is conceived with the management of people and material while Human resource management practice, according to Johnson (2009) and Ikhioya (2001) include practice or activities such as employment, security, extensive , training, office arrangement, wages difference across levels, discipline, sharing of financial status, language, sharing of performance information, exhibition of administrative skills of global best practices and so on

Statement of the Problem

The winner of the Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) is expected to represents the country at the continent's premier league football competition. In the past ten years, of the

professional football league clubs, only Akwa United and Warri wolves of the South-South geo-political zone have been competed at the continental premier league football competition. For the 2019 session, out of the 20 Football clubs (FC) playing in the professional football league clubs, only three are from the South-South (Akwa United and Bendel Insurance, and Warri Wolves). This is an indication that the football clubs may be facing some related human resource challenges

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to ascertain the human resource management challenges in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs in South – South Nigeria. Specifically, this paper seeks to:

1. ascertain the extent to which there are human resource management challenges in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs in south-South Nigeria;
2. establish the extent to which indiscipline would constitute a human resource management challenge in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs in South – South Nigeria;
3. determine the extent to which poor remuneration would constitute a human resource management challenge in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs in South – South Nigeria;

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does indiscipline constitute a human resource management challenge in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs in South-South Nigeria?

2. To what extent does poor remuneration constitute a human resource management challenge in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs in South – South Nigeria?

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design of the ex-post-facto design. It helps the researcher to elicit information on the extent to which the human resource management challenges on the professional football League clubs in south-south Nigeria. The target population for the study, was one thousand, one hundred and nine (1,109) comprised of proprietors, administrators, coaches, officially registered players, standby players as well as recognized supporters/fans that have been considered as stakeholders of the Nigeria professional football league clubs in the 2019 season in South-South Nigeria. The sample size for the study is Three hundred and eighty - five (385) respondents in the professional football league clubs of the South – South geo-political zone.

Target population is 385. The stratified convenient and random sampling techniques were adopted for the selection of the respondents for the study. Questionnaire Titled, Human Resource Management Questionnaire (HRMQ) was used as the instrument to collect data for the study. The questionnaire is divided into four sections “A – D”. Section A which contains eight items, seeks information on the demographic data of respondents, section ‘B’ contains twenty-six (26) items, seek information on the identification of the challenges of human Resource Management in a Football Club. Section ‘C’ contains twenty-nine (29) items seek information on the Perceived status of Human Resource Management Practices of Nigeria professional football league. Section ‘D’ contained thirty-three (33) items seeks

information on the Human Resource Management Challenges of Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs. The instrument is structured on a four point Likert type scale of measurement with point to be attached ranging from very high (4 points) to very low (1 point). Each of the items will have four alternative responses with point to be attached thus, VH – Very High 4points; H – High 3points; L – Low 2points and VL- Very Low 1point.

Respondents were requested to tick the response suitable to the items. The face and content validity of the questionnaire were established by the three other experts, two in the Human Kinetics, Recreation and Sports Science and Health safety Education Departments of the Delta State University, Abraka and one in the Heartland football club, Owerri, Imo State for scrutiny.

The instrument was administered to thirty (30) respondents (officials and players) of the Heartland Football Club, Owerri, Imo State, who were deemed to be similar to the group of respondents to be used for this study. This was done so as to avoid response contamination. Responses from respondents were used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability had a cronbach alpha value of 0.85 and a cronbach alpha based on standardized items value of 0.91 with 88 items from the initial 96 items

indicating that the research instrument was very reliable. Also it shows that the developed instrument has a high intra-class correlation coefficient ($icc = 0.96$ for single measures and 0.85 for average measures). The administration of the instrument was carried out by the researcher and six research assistants that have been trained for the purpose. Completed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved on the spot and where it not possible, a repeat visit was made so as to retrieve same. Data generated from the responses, were analyzed, using frequency count percentage, mean and standard deviation, and t- test statistics. The demographic variable was analyzed with simple percentage, the stated research questions were answered with mean and standard deviation, mean benchmark, the cut-off mark is 2.50. Any mean and standard deviation value that is below 2.50 were rejected while value ranges from 2.50 was accepted. While the hypotheses were tested using t – test statistics at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

Research question 1: To what extent does indiscipline constitute a human resource management challenge on the Nigeria Professional Football League clubs in south-south Nigeria?

Table 1: Indiscipline and human resource management in Nigeria Professional Football Clubs (N = 385)

Indiscipline Items	Responses to Items on Low Morale				Mean	Std. Dev.
	Very Low	Low	High	Very High		
Disobedience to constituted authority	1 (0.3%)	237 (61.6%)	35 (9.1%)	112 (29.1%)	2.70	0.90
Disobedience to rules and regulations of the football club (FC)	18 (4.7%)	148 (38.4%)	218 (56.6%)	1 (0.3%)	2.55	0.59
Financial embezzlement	129(33.5%)	219 (56.9%)	1 (0.3%)	36 (9.4%)	1.89	0.83
Encouragement of football human resource management personnel of drug use by players	106 (27.5%)	1 (0.3%)	18 (4.7%)	260 (67.5%)	3.16	1.33
Encouragement of football club human resource management personnel of lateness to training and practice	1 (0.3%)	18 (4.7%)	148(38.4%)	218 (56.6%)	3.56	0.60
Grand Mean	51 (13.2%)	125 (32.4%)	84 (21.8%)	125 (32.6%)	2.77	0.85

Table 1 shows the responses on extent to which indiscipline constitutes a human resource management challenge on the Nigeria professional football league clubs in South-South, Nigeria. The table shows that 51 (13.2%) respondents responded a very low extent to which indiscipline constitutes a human resource management challenge on the Nigeria professional football league clubs in South-South, Nigeria, 125 (32.4%) responded a low extent, 84 (21.8%) responded a high extent while 125 (32.6%) responded a very high extent with a grand

mean response value of 2.77 and a grand standard deviation of 0.85. Since this grand mean value of 2.77 is higher than the criterion mean value of 2.50. It implies that indiscipline in human resource management is a challenge to the Nigeria professional football league clubs in South-South Nigeria.

Research question 2: To what extent does poor remuneration constitute a human resource management challenge on the Nigeria professional football league clubs in south – south Nigeria?

Table2: Poor Remuneration and human resource management in the Nigeria professional football league club.

(N = 385)

Poor Remuneration Items	Responses to Items on Low Morale				Mean	Std. Dev.
	Very Low	Low	High	Very High		
Poor incentive schemes	5 (1.3%)	55 (14.3%)	225 (58.4%)	100 (25.9%)	3.09	0.64
Poor wages to human resources	6 (1.6%)	54 (14.0%)	236 (61.3%)	89 (23.1%)	3.06	0.66
Poor fringe benefits	3 (0.8%)	55 (14.3%)	226 (58.7%)	101 (26.2%)	3.10	1.08
Inadequate fringe benefits	28 (7.3%)	56 (14.5%)	174 (45.2%)	127 (33.0%)	3.38	0.87
Grand Mean	11 (2.9%)	55 (14.3%)	215 (55.8%)	104 (27.0%)	3.16	0.81

Table 2 shows the responses on extent to which poor remuneration constitutes a human resource management challenge in the Nigeria professional football league clubs in south – south Nigeria. The table shows that 11 (2.9%) of the respondents responded a very low extent to which poor remuneration constitutes a human resource management challenge in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs in South – South Nigeria, 55 (14.3%) responded a low extent, 215 (55.8%) responded a high extent while 104 (27.0%) responded a very high extent with a grand mean response value of 3.16 and a grand standard deviation of 0.81. Since this grand mean value of 3.16 is higher than the criterion mean value of 2.50. This implies that poor remuneration in human resource management is a challenge to the Nigeria professional football league clubs in south – south Nigeria.

Discussion

The findings revealed a high level of indiscipline in human resource management in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs. This finding is in line with that of Abubaka's (2010) who asserted that indiscipline is a serious human resource management challenge in Nigeria sports. He added that indiscipline has negatively

affected football performances worldwide. According to him, poor attitudes to human resource management practices have negative impact on football productivity in Nigeria. Similarly, the finding also corroborated the assertion of Marho (2010) who found that in footballing and other sporting activities, acts of carelessness and disobedience to rules and regulation, engender poor productivity, as it is the case in developing nations of the world. It equally confirms that of Erhinyodavwe (2018) who maintained that any unsuccessful football performance is hindered by indiscipline on the part of the football managers when they fail to instill discipline on players during training, practices and competition.

Another key findings revealed a high level of poor remuneration of human resource management in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs. This finding is in line with that of McNamara (2008) who asserted that poor remuneration is a challenge in the area of compensation and benefits of human resource personnel. He stated that, since football is a lucrative business in the United States, sports managers and players are highly remunerated and this gives the owners of clubs serious problems. Similarly, the finding also corroborated the assertion of Fasan (2004)

who stated that poor remuneration of football technical officials has serious impact on their tactical and technical competency in the football clubs in the under-developed and developing nations. He added that poor remuneration posed a big challenge to human resource personnel in football clubs. It is obvious that poor remuneration is a human resource management challenge on the professional football league clubs in South – South, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is hereby concluded that indiscipline and poor remuneration of the human resource management are challenges to the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs in South South, Nigeria

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

The study has shown that it is exigent and imperative for the Nigeria Football Federation to curb the human resource management challenges in the Nigeria Professional Football League Clubs by putting in place disciplinary mechanisms to appropriately sanction erring members.

The human resources management of the Nigeria football clubs should be given adequate remuneration and funded to help motivate and boost their morale as well as to create enabling and healthy environment for improving on the day to day running of the clubs.

It is therefore envisaged that proper implementation of the above will eliminate or effectively reduce issues of absenteeism and tardiness by club members.

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