

The Role of Motivations in the Consistently Good Performances of University of Cape Coast Cross Country Team in the Unilever Inter-University Cross Country Competitions

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out the role of motivation in the consistent good performances of the University of Cape Coast (UCCs) cross country teams since 2002. The population of the study was made up of students and staff of UCC while the accessible population was sports administrators, coaches, cross country athletes and sportsmen and women in other sporting disciplines. Two hundred and fifty respondents were purposely selected for the study. Sports administrators, coaches, cross country athletes and athletes in other sporting disciplines who were present since 2002 were used for the study. The questionnaire was used for data collection. Frequencies, percentages and means were used to analyze the data. The results of the study shown that, motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic) played a great role in the consistent good performances. It was recommended that the university should make more sponsorship packages available and increase allowances and other external rewards for university sportsmen and women.

Keywords; Cross Country Competition, Performance, Motivation, Athletes

Introduction

Cross country running is a running event in which teams of runners' race on open-air courses over natural terrain. The course mainly 4 – 12 kilometers long, include surfaces of grass and earth. Athletes pass through wood lands and open country which includes hills and flat lands. It is both an individual and a team sport. Runners are judged on individual basis and a point scoring method for teams. Both men and women of all ages compete in this event.

Cross country running is one of the disciplines under the umbrella sports of athletics in which athletes often compete in long distance track and road events. Although open-air running competitions are pre-historic, the rules and traditions of cross country emerged in England with a game called "hare and hounds" or the paper chase in the early 19th century. In this game, a runner or group of runners laid a trail by dropping pieces of paper or other markers while following a random course and a second set of runners then set out in pursuit, trying to follow the paper trail (International Amateur Athletic Federation [IAAF], 2005 – 2006).

The first formal competition was the Crick Run which was first held at Rugby School in 1937. Other schools including Oxford and Cambridge Universities followed suit. Later in 1876, the English National Cross Country association established competition runs. Two years later it was introduced to the United States by William C. Vosburgh of New York. In 1887, the National Cross-Country Association was formed and held its first championship event.

Later, City College of New York, Cornell University and University of Pennsylvania took part in the first intercollegiate meet in 1890. The sport became more popular at Cornell, which took the lead in organizing intercollegiate Cross-Country Association in 1998 when England and France met. Later, an annual championship meet involving England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales began in 1903 and became a true international event in 1907, when France sent a team to compete. By 1920s, other European countries had joined.

Cross country became an Olympic event in 1912, 1920 and 1924 but was later dropped because it was not suitable for summer competition. The International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), which governs track and field worldwide took over jurisdiction in 1962 and established rules for both men and women. The first women's world championship meeting was held in 1967. Since 1973 the foremost elite competition has been the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) World Cross-Country Championship (IAAF, 2005/2006).

World Championships

European dominated the early stages of the International Cross Country Championship. The first of its kind was held at the Hamilton Park Racecourse in Scotland on 28th March, 1903. England won the first 14 titles, and 43

out of 59 titles until the IAAF took over the competition in 1973. France was the next successful nation and won 12 championships between 1922 and 1956. Belgium also won titles in 1948, 1957, 1961 and 1963. On individual basis also England dominated with an Englishman winning the individual title 35 times including three wins by Jack Holden (1933 – 1935).

On the women front, the first international cross country championship was organized in 1931. By 1972 it has been organized thirteen times England again won 12 of these early championships losing only in 1968 and 1969 to the United States. Interestingly, Doris Brown won five consecutive individual titles between 1967 and 1971.

The championship was renamed as World Cross Country Championship when IAAF took over in 1973. During the 1975 competition, the men from New Zealand and the women from United States won the gold medals, respectively. That was the first time countries outside Europe won the championship. In 1981, however, an African Nation (Ethiopia) won the men's race for the first time and a decade later their women counterparts from Kenya also made Africa proud by winning the women's race for the first time. Either Ethiopia or Kenya has captured every man's title since 1981 and every women's title since 2001 (I.A.A.F., 2005/2006).

Organization of Inter-University Cross Country in Ghana

Cross-country as an event to test the endurance of athletes was part of the events competed in during Ghana University Sports Association (GUSA) meets until 1996 when it was separated from the main competition. This was the result of the importance attached to this event by the university authorities and stakeholders. The hosting of this competition therefore was made rotational among the five public universities we have in the country which coincidentally form the membership of GUSA. The event is held annually and it is aimed at selecting athletes to represent GUSA at both national and international levels. It is also aimed at producing long distance runners for the nation.

Unilever Ghana Limited which took over the sponsorship from Tractor and Equipment (CAT) in 1998 has since played their role effectively in the promotion and development of the sport in the universities and the country at large. This has been made possible by fulfilling their part of the agreement in the form of funds for organization and prizes every year (Nkpeh, 1998).

Since its inception in 1996, the competition has been hosted at least twice by each of the five public universities. The maiden one was hosted by University of Ghana – Legon, in 1996. The University of Science and Technology (UST) now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) took their turn the following year. This was followed by University of Cape Coast (UCC) in 1998 and then to the University College of Education – Winneba (UCEW), now University of Education – Winneba (UEW) in 1999. In 2000 it was the turn of University of Development Studies (IDS) in Tamale. The hosting followed the same trend with University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University hosting the 2006 and 2007 editions, respectively. (Nkpeh, 1996 – 2001; Buami, 2002 – 2007: Apaak, 2008).

The distance covered by female athletes was 8 kilometers while the males covered 12 kilometers. Since the inception of the competition various individuals from almost all the universities have won the first position in both male and female events before. Almost every university with the exception of UDS has also won gold in terms of team placement.

Competitions held from 1996 – 2008 and UCCs Performance:

After separating cross-country from other organized GUSA games, the University of Ghana was the first institution that was given the mandate to host. The entire programme was under the sponsorship of Tractor and Equipment (CAT). University of Cape Coast (UCC) was fairly represented. The following people represented the school and came out with an average performance. They were Seth Effah, Charles Nyame, Dery Ankrah, James Oblie, Alex Akomea and John Ofori just to mention but a few. The ladies were Shirley Hoffman, Comfort Dzivor, Janet Ampong, Christina E. Ameyaw and Naomi Poku. The men and the women placed 3rd and 4th, respectively (Nkpeh, 1996).

The following year – 1997 was the turn of University of Science and Technology (UST) to host. The UCC men in the persons of Seth Effah Ansah, James Oblie, P. Duah Boateng, C. N. Karmisah propelled their team to place second. The ladies on the other hand with the likes of Christiana E. Ameyaw, Comfort Dzivor and Mercy Ankomah placed third (Nkpeh, 1997).

The 1998 edition of the competition was held at the University of Cape Coast. It was the first time Unilever Ghana Limited took over sponsorship from Tractor and Equipment. This time round, the University of Development Studies (UDS) took part. Apart from University of Ghana (UG) and University College of Education – Winneba (UCEW) who presented 9 and 8 athletes respectively, the rest of the universities presented the required 10 athletes each for both divisions. After a keenly contested competition, the UCC men urged by the home support won the ultimate but the ladies placed third. Almost the same squad of 1998 represented both men and women (Nkpeh, 1998).

In 1999, it was the turn of University College of Education to welcome the rest of the universities to Winneba as host. At the end of another hot contest the men from UCC placed third in the men's division and fourth in the women's division (Nkpeh, 1999). University of Development Studies had the opportunity to host theirs in 2000. All the Universities down South moved up there to compete for laurels. Once again it was a keenly contested event which the men and the women from UCC did their best by placing 2nd and 3rd, respectively (Nkpeh, 2000). The 2001 edition was hosted, by University of Ghana (UG) for the second time. Once again, UCC was present and performed creditably in both divisions. The men and women both placed third (Nkpeh, 2001). Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology was the venue for the 2002 edition of the Inter-University Cross Country. Coincidentally, that marked the beginning of UCC teams' consistent good performance in Cross Country. UCC was represented by the likes of Issaka Mohadi, Christopher Yarkwah, Paul Owusu Badu, Modecai Wiredu, Michael Bruce Ennin, Kwadwo Agyeman, Kenneth Kanbilige and colleagues for the men. The females were Emefa Agbo, Fati Larley, Charlotte Adoma Diabour, Rita Ahengua, Beauty Esi-Doh Nani and the rest. The men won the ultimate and the women were first runners up (Buami, 2002).

During the 2003 edition of the competition that was hosted by University of Cape Coast, the host was represented by the same squad in the men's division with few new faces from the women's side. The UCC's team performances were par excellent as they retained the positions they won the previous years (Buami, 2003). The 2004 and 2005 editions were not different from the former as the UCC men and women led by Paul Owusu Boadu and Audrey Owusu Adjei, respectively, repeated the excellent performance by their predecessors. They were first and second once again (Buami, 2004/2005).

Though the 2006 and 2007 competitions hosted by Legon and KNUST, respectively, saw new faces like Prince Odoom, Francis Cudjoe, Clement Amartey, Betty Wiafe Akenteng, Sarah William, Sally Coffie and colleagues, they maintained the goodwill their leaders had established for the school. The previous positions were maintained, that is, the first and second positions (Buami, 2006/2007).

The 2008 edition hosted by University of Cape Coast was not an exception from the previous ones in terms of UCCs performance. Even with new faces like Matilda Ofori Boateng and Engman Gladys the ladies were able to maintain the second position while Veteran Prince Odoom led the men to win the ultimate (Apaak, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

Cross country running formed an integral part of the Ghana University Sports Association's organized sports festival until 1996 when it was separated from the main event. Different times and dates are agreed on and all public universities take part in this event.

Since the inception of this competition, interesting results have been produced by the various universities of which no one particular university could boast of dominating the event for even three consecutive years in both male and female division (Nkpeh, Buami, & Apaak, 1996 – 2008). Starting from 2002 to 2008, the University of Cape Coast Cross Country teams for both men and women have been able to win the gold medal, and the silver medals, respectively, in the Unilever Ghana Limited sponsored cross country organized for public universities every year. It is therefore prudent to consider and critically examine the variables responsible for such a consistently good performances. I would want to investigate the measures that have been put in place promoting such consistency.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the variables responsible for the consistently good performances of the University of Cape Coast's cross country teams.

Research Question

1. Will there be any association between motivations, whether extrinsic or intrinsic and the consistently good performances of UCC's cross country teams?
2. Will there be any association between recruitment and selection of competitors and the consistently good performances of UCC's cross country teams?
3. Will there be any association between technical attachment to the teams and the consistently good performances of UCC's cross country teams?
4. Will there be any association between sponsorship of the UCC teams and the consistently good performances of UCC's cross country teams?
5. Will there be any association between equipment and facilities and the consistently good performances of UCC's cross country teams?

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. This design according to Ary, Jacobs and Razavich, (2002) has the advantage of wide scope as well as great deal of information that can be obtained from moderately large

sample from a particular population. It also creates a good platform for accurate picture of events where inferences could be made about perceptions, characteristics and attitudes on basis of data gathered at a particular point in time.

The target population was 1,826 made up of 122 sports administrators 10 coaches 140 cross country runners and 1,554 other athletes. The accessible population was made up 49 sports administrators, 10 coaches from the Health, Physical Education and Recreation (HPER) Department 90 cross country runners and 104 other athletes (present and past) totaling 250.

A sample of 250 respondents was selected for the study made up of four sports and recreation committee chairmen and secretaries, three sports coaches from the sports coaches' office, four SRC sports presidents and 35 team captains. Others included 10 coaches or trainers, 90 cross country athletes made up of men and women and 104 athletes from other sporting disciplines (past and present athletes).

The multistage sampling technique was used which included purposive and quota sampling techniques. The purposive sampling technique was employed because it is these people who are directly involved with the cross country event and it is their views that are being sought after. The purposive sampling method was used to select sports committee chairmen and secretaries, chief sports coaches and their assistants. Quota sampling was also used so as to allocate specific numbers for the various disciplines so as to give equal representation. The above techniques were employed because the research responses were provided by experts or people who were knowledgeable in the various sports fields in general and cross country in particular.

A self-structured questionnaire with assistance from the principal supervisor and co-supervisor was used for data collection. The questionnaire was selected because the population sample could read, comprehend and write. They could therefore provide accurate information needed for the study

Results/ Discussions

Research question: Did motivation contribute to the good performances of the teams?

The table show the mean values regarding motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and its effects on the consistently good performances of UCCs cross country teams. Considering the first item on the table 1, 110 respondents representing 47.8% strongly agreed, 119 respondents representing 51.8% agreed, and 1 representing 0.4% disagreed. On item 2, 74 respondents representing 33% strongly agreed, 126 respondents representing 54.8% agreed, 22 respondents representing 9.6% disagreed and 6 respondents representing 2.6% strongly disagreed. On item 3, 63 respondents representing 27.4% strongly agreed, 155 respondents representing 67.4% agreed and 12 respondents representing 5.2% disagreed. On item 4, 62 respondents representing 27% strongly agreed, 145 respondents representing 63% agreed and 23 respondents representing 10% disagreed. On item 5, 57 respondents representing 24.8% strongly agreed, 55 respondents representing 23.9% agreed, 99 respondents representing 43% disagreed, and 19 respondents representing 8.3% strongly.

Table 1: Motivation and Cross Country Performance

Items	SA Freq. (%)	A Freq. (%)	D Freq. (%)	SD Freq. (%)	Mean
The good performance of the cross country teams was influenced by intrinsic motivation positive mental attitudes and inner drives	110 (47.8)	119 (51.8)	1 (0.4)	-	1.54
Extrinsic motivation such as cash prizes, certificates, medals, trophies and positive reinforcement and feedback from coaches influenced the good performance of the cross country teams	74 (33)	126 (54.8)	22 (9.6)	6 (2.6)	1.34
The good performance of the cross country teams could be attributed to the chain of successes chalked	63 (27.4)	155 (67.4)	12 (5.2)	-	1.96
Motivation or extrinsic and intrinsic forces caused cross country athletes to give off their best at competitions	62 (27)	145 (63)	23 (10)	-	1.40
Intrinsic motivation is greater than extrinsic motivation in university sports	57 (24.8)	55 (23.9)	99 (43)	19 (8.3)	1.93
Motivation in general is low in other sporting disciplines	55 (23.9)	99 (43)	65 (28.3)	11 (4.8)	1.60

Mean values less than or equals to 1 falls under strongly agree, mean values less than or equals to 2 falls under agree, mean values less than or equals to 4 falls under disagree, mean values less than or equals to 5 falls under strongly disagreed.

On item 6, 55 respondents representing 23.9% strongly agreed to the statement, 99 respondents representing 43% agreed to the statement, 65 respondents representing 28.3% disagreed to the statement, and 11 respondents representing 4.8% strongly disagreed to the statement.

Taking the responses under the various categories into consideration, greater number of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to positively statement on research question 1 while lesser number of respondents

either disagreed or strongly disagreed to positive statement on the same research question. All the mean value of fall under the scale of less or equals to 2 which represent agree. Therefore majority agreed that motivation is a factor that contributed to the good performance of the teams. Hence, for encouraging participation by University students in sport such as cross country, there is the need to whip up students' interest by increasing the level of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Results from table 1 indicated that an overwhelming majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that motivation in the form of external or internal forces has the potential of contributing to the consistently good performance of UCCs cross country teams for that period of time motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic causes athletes to behave in a certain way. Motivation causes people to make informed choices according to their needs. When these needs are satisfied it leads to feeling of self confidence, adequacy and capability of being useful and make positive contribution towards achieving goals. Motivation is very relevant in all sports participation and its usefulness cannot be overlooked especially in university sports where participation is not compulsory and students are to make a lot of sacrifices such as leaving the lecture halls for training and competition for weeks, missing of quizzes and presentations as well as going through tedious training sessions.

Along this line the results was in agreement with the assertion made by Vallarand, (2001) that motivation is necessary for developing and performing athletic skills. It is what drives the individual to successfully acquire skill through arduous practice to achieve higher levels of performance in any type of sports. In support, Wesson et al. (2005) reported that the underlying concept of motivation is 'needs' which act as a driving force within an individual by which attempt are made to fulfill the needs. There are two forms or types of motivation intrinsic and extrinsic and finding out from respondents as to how they individuality affected the performances of the cross country teams, responses were positive for both.

Therefore, in addressing intrinsic motivation as affecting sports performance, Pelletier et al. (2001) are of the view that not only are intrinsic motivation and identified regulations important for allowing athletes to experience satisfying participation in sports, but this self determination, full of motivation also leads to higher levels of achievement. Also, addressing extrinsic motivation as a means of enhancing performance, Wesson et al. said that extrinsic rewards are used extensively in sporting situation and that most major sports have achievement performance incentives linked to some form of tangible reward system. They further affirm that, reward can expedite learning and good performance to achieve good results. Given reward such as cash prizes, medals, shirts, trophies and certificates are serious morale boosters for people to engage in one sport or the other and perform extremely well. So whether extrinsic motivation is greater than intrinsic or vice versa both are seen as playing significant roles in bringing students on board to perform for their institutions and win laurels for themselves and their institution though in the universities the extrinsic motivation is a shade ahead of the intrinsic forces.

Research question 2: Did the recruitment and selection contribute to the good performances of the teams?

Table 2 provides the mean values regarding recruitment and selection as a factor responsible for the good performance of UCCs cross country teams. Considering the first item on the table 2, 150 respondents representing 50% strongly agreed, 112 respondents representing 48.7% agreed, 1 representing 0.4% disagreed and 2 representing 0.9%. On item 2, 113 respondents representing 49.1% strongly agreed, 107 respondents representing 46.7% agreed, representing 49.1% strongly agreed, 107 respondents representing 46.7% agreed, 7 respondents representing 3.0% disagreed and 3 respondents representing 1.3% strongly disagreed. On item 3, 36 respondents representing 15.7% strongly agreed, 94 respondents representing 40.9% agreed, 64 respondents representing 27.8% disagreed and 36 representing 15.7%. On item 4, 42 respondents representing 18.1% strongly agreed, 108 respondents representing 47% agreed, 73 respondents representing 31.7% disagreed and 7 representing 3%. On item 5, 53 respondents representing 23% strongly agreed, 144 respondents representing 62.6% agreed, 30 respondents representing 13% disagreed, and 3 respondents representing 1.3% strongly disagreed. Taking the responses under the various categories into consideration, greater number of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed positively to statement on research question 2 while lesser number of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to positive statement on the same research question. All the mean values fall under the scale of less or equals to 2 which represent agree. Therefore majority agreed that recruitment and selection were factors that contributed to the good performance of the teams.

Table 2: Recruitment and Selection UCC's Cross Country Teams

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	
Some athletes came to UCC as a result of recruitment and selection through experts recommendation	115 (50)	112 (48.7)	1 (0.4)	2 (0.9)	1.53
The selection was based on certain special traits or qualities exhibited during justifiers or performance at the various levels of education before university	113 (49.1)	107 (46.7)	7 (3.0)	3 (1.3)	1.63
Most athletes were not selected based on the level of experience and maturity	36 (15.7)	94 (40.9)	64 (27.8)	36 (15.7)	1.63
Recruitment and selection was more pronounced in cross-country than any other sport	42 (18.1)	108 (47)	73 (31.7)	7 (3)	1.87
Recruitment and selection in general had contributed to the continuous good performance of the cross country team	53 (23)	144 (62.6)	30 (13)	3 (1.3)	1.80

Mean values less than or equals to 1 falls under strongly agree, mean values less than or equals to 2 falls under agree, mean, mean values less than or equals to 4 falls under disagree, mean values less than or equals to 5 falls under strongly disagree.

In recent time s sports competitions at every level of education have become very competitive because most institutions have realized the importance of sports as a means of selling their institutions to the public. In an attempt to get good athletes to strengthen their teams, recruitment and selection have become one of the major ways through which schools including tertiary institutions such as polytechnic and the universities admit good athletes and players to their institutions. Some institutions have special coaches and agents who move through the length and breadth of their vicinity and outside to scout for these athletes and players to beef up their teams in order to perform creditably at all organized competitions.

Another reason why recruitment and selection have gained root in the current educational system is due to the fact that, university games have become very competitive at national and international levels. On a suggestive statement that recruitment and selection in general had contributed to the continuously good performance of the cross country teams majority of the respondents responded to strongly agreed and agreed. The findings confirmed studies by Armstrong (2003) who reviled that, the ability for one to perform creditably in a sporting activity does not depend on what the coach teaches at the training grounds only but also some inborn qualities the said athlete possesses. He further went on to say that without good hereditary traits which is normally transferred to athletes through their parents it will be difficult for athletes to perform well. In corroborating, Wesson et al. (2005) assert that, there are psychological, socio cultural, nutritional, and personal resource factors that can shape athletes to perform and produce good results but one must not lose site of the fact that no matter how these are made available to the athlete there is one important factor without which all other factors will fail to produce desired results and, that is, inborn qualities. Amuchie, (2003) observed that, talent is key to performance in every set up including sports. He was of the view that talented athletes tend to adapt to training fast and produce good results as compared to non talented athletes. For instance, someone who is a born marathoner needs just little directives from his coach to produce good results because he is naturally endowed with strong heart and lungs that can withstand long endurance work. Hence, the point stands that recruitment and selection can lead to consistency in good performance in any sport including cross country. Responses from respondents indicate clearly that quite a greater number either agreed or strongly agreed that some athletes came to UCC as a result of recruitment and selection which was carried out by experts from the Health, Physical Education and Recreation Department as well as sports coaches' office. This confirms what Daft, (2004) reported that recruitment and selection should be done by experts in a well planned manner to get the right people to fill vacancies to be able to achieve objective at the end of the exercise. He, therefore, suggested a selected board for the exercise.

Research question 3: Did the coaches' effort to the teams contribute to the good performances of the teams?

Table 3 shows the mean values regarding technical attachment to the teams and its effect in the consistently good performances of UCCs cross country teams. Considering the first item on the table 3, 97 respondents representing 42.2% strongly agreed, 117 respondents representing 50.9% agreed, 9 representing 3.9% disagreed and 7 representing 3.0%. On item 2, 29 respondents representing 12.6% strongly agreed, 16 respondents representing 7.0% agreed, 92 respondents representing 40.0% disagreed and 93 respondents representing

Table 3: Coaching and Performance of UCC Cross Country Teams

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	
Promotion of good rapport among members by coaches affects level of performance	97 (42.2)	117 (50.9)	9 (3.9)	7 (3.0)	1.47
Coaches did not encourage athletes or players to build high level of self-confidence before competitions	29 (12.6)	16 (7.0)	92 (40.0)	93 (40.4)	2.94
Attention given by the Coaches to every individual athletes contributed to the good performance of the teams	51 (22.1)	99 (43)	50 (21.7)	30 (13)	1.63
Cross country runners were psychologically and physiologically prepared before competitions	49 (21.3)	143 (62.2)	29 (12.6)	9 (3.9)	1.88
Coaches use a systematic and progressive training programme to prepare before competitions	66 (28.7)	133 (57.8)	27 (11.7)	4 (1.7)	1.75
Coaches teach the right strategies to be used in competitions	99 (43.0)	126 (54.8)	2 (0.9)		
Most athletes got injured before the competition	47 (20.5)	97 (42.2)	68 (29.6)	18 (7.8)	1.70
Good nutrition and required fluid replacement by athletes have no influence on sports performance	25 (10.8)	33 (14.3)	114 (49.6)	58 (25.2)	1.78

Mean values less than or equals to 1 falls under strongly agree, mean values less than or equals to 2 falls under agree, mean, mean values less than or equals to 4 falls under disagree, mean values less than or equals to 5 falls under strongly disagree. 40.4% strongly disagreed. On item 3, 51 respondents representing 22.1% strongly agreed, 99 respondents representing 43.0% agreed, 50 respondents representing 21.7% disagreed and 30 representing 13.0%. On item 4, 49 respondents representing 21.3% strongly agreed, 143 respondents representing 62.2% agreed, 29 respondents representing 12.6% disagreed and 9 representing 3.9%. On item 5, 66 respondents representing 28.7% strongly agreed, 133 respondents representing 57.8% agreed, 27 respondents representing 11.7% disagreed, and 4 respondents representing 1.7% strongly disagreed. On item 6, 99 respondents representing 43.0% strongly agreed to the statement, 126 respondents representing 54.8% agreed to the statement, 2 respondents representing 0.9% disagreed to the statement, and 3 respondents representing 1.3% strongly disagreed to the statement. On the item 7, 47 respondents representing 20.5% strongly agreed, 97 respondents representing 42.2% agreed, 68 representing 29.6% disagreed and 18 respondents representing 7.8%. On item 8, 25 respondents representing 10.8% strongly agreed, 33 respondents representing 14.3% agreed, 114 respondents representing 49.6% disagreed and 58 respondents representing 25.2% strongly disagreed. Taking the responses under the various categories into consideration, greater number of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed positively to statement on research question 3 while lesser number of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to positive statement on the same research question. All the mean values fall under the scale of less or equals to 2 which represent agree. Therefore majority agreed that coaches attached to teams were factors that contributed to the good performance of the teams.

Many athletes including professionals see coaches as idols when it comes to shaping them for competitions. Others see them as their compatriots of whom their absence usually causes a slur on their performance. Athletes in the universities are no exemption when it comes to the importance of a good coach attached to their teams to provide psychological and physical support to them. In a suggestive statement as to whether cross country runners were psychologically and physically prepared before competition, the response was overwhelmingly positive as most respondents strongly agreed and agreed to the statement. In a corroborative statement to this by Amuchie, (2003) and Weinberg and Gould, (2003) state that a coach can improve athletes' performance if he is able to develop the innate ability and what has been gained by the athlete through learning as skill acquisition is influenced by strength of correct athletic responses, ability to transfer these from practice to competition conditions and the ability to either eliminate or at least control incorrect responses. Hence for one to develop his skill level there is the need for good responses to training, maintain what he has learnt and use them during training. Azuka, (2006) in his contribution to this also stressed that there are physical, technical and technical components to sports performance as athletes need to develop better technique, explosive strength and follow a nutrition plan that will allow them to improve their performances in their respective sports.

However, there is a mental and emotional side of the competition as well and that is where the psychological assistance provided by the coach is relevant. On suggestion that coaches use systematic and progressive training programmes to prepare athletes for competitions respondents once again strongly agreed and agreed. Training to develop skills forms the technical aspect of coaching and as such training programmes need to be well planned to suit athletes' strength and skill level in order to achieve results. In line with this Wesson et

al. (2005) are of the view that any training undertaken should be relevant and appropriate to the sport or which the individual is training. For example, a cross country runner should not train on grass only. They further explained that the specificity rule does not govern just muscles fibre type and actions used but also the energy systems which are predominantly used in the event. Gensemer, (1998) in support said that in preparation for any athletic competition the coach must ensure that training is progressive. He advised that when training ceases or intensity decreases for an extended period of time there is the likelihood in deterioration in performance. It has been established that seven weeks of inactivity has been shown to have physiological effects such as significant decrease in oxygen uptake which reflects a fall in efficiency of the cardio respiration system. Newton and Henderson (1998) highlighted on this by saying that, cross country races will not be run at the same speed as track races and so the runner who is lacking in pace may be able to compensate by his style and run closer to maximum than the track runner who cannot adjust to special needs of cross country. Cross country running according to them requires a different stride length, a different leg action and a..

It has been established that skill, endurance and strength levels of athletes cannot be maintained if food and nutrition is left out. Wesson et al. (2005) backed this by saying that whatever the sport or activity, it has now become widely recognized that nutrition is of great importance. A well balanced diet is essential for optimum performance both during training and competition. According to them, athletes place greater demands on their bodies when competing at the highest level and to enable the body to function at its peak during daily training regimes, an adequate diet is needed. Not only should athletes diet be assigned to provide energy required during exercise or training but it should also provide the necessary nutrition for growth and repair and also those needed to keep the human machine functioning at its optimal level. Bar-or, (2006) in support, claims that, it is worthless to train an athlete employing all the good techniques and strategies and ignore the nutritional aspect that propels the athlete to perform. Once athletes expend energy at the highest level during training and completion, good diet which involves all the food groups in their right proportion is recommendable for the athlete. It is therefore imperative for a coach to have knowledge about nutrition in order to advice athletes on what to eat and at what time.

Research question 4: Did sponsorship of the teams contribute to the good performances of the teams?

Table 4 provides the mean values regarding sponsorship as a factor responsible for consistently good performances of UCCs cross country teams. Considering the first item on the table 4, 61 respondents representing 26.5% strongly agreed, 89 respondents representing 38.7% agreed, 48 representing 20.9% disagreed and 32 representing 13.9%. On item 2, 94 respondents representing 40.9% strongly agreed, 114 respondents representing 49.6% agreed and 22 respondents representing 9.6% disagreed. On item 3, 55 respondents representing 23.9% strongly agreed, 148 respondents representing 64.3% agreed, 25 respondents representing 10.9% disagreed and 2 representing 0.9%. On item 4, 32 respondents representing 13.9% strongly agreed, 109 respondents representing 47.4% agreed, 64 respondents representing 27.8% disagreed and 25 representing 10.9%. On item 5, 48 respondent representing 20.9% strongly agreed, 124 respondents representing 53.9% agreed, 37 respondents representing 16.1% disagreed, and 21 respondents representing 9.1% strongly disagreed. Taking the

Table 4: Sponsorship and Performances of UCC’s Cross Country Teams?

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	
The corporate sponsorship in the form of cash and other rewards urge athletes or players to give off their best	61 (26.5)	89 (38.7)	48 (20.9)	32 (13.9)	1.65
Sponsorship in the form of sports kits (jerseys, T-shirts, lacoste or shoes) by sponsors attracted athletes or players	94 (40.9)	114 (49.6)	22 (9.6)	-	1.78
Promoting athletes and players through the mass media as a sponsorship package encouraged athletes to perform	55 (23.9)	148 (64.3)	25 (10.9)	2 (0.9)	1.90
Donations to the university teams from individual philanthropist had no influence on the teams’ performance	32 (13.9)	109 (47.4)	64 (27.8)	25 (10.9)	1.80
The special sponsorship received by cross country athletes affected their performance positively	48 (20.9)	124 (53.9)	37 (16.1)	21 (9.1)	1.76

Mean values less than or equals to 1 falls under strongly agree, mean values less than or equals to 2 falls under agree, mean values less than or equals to 4 falls under disagree, mean values less than or equals to 5 falls under strongly disagree. Responses under the various categories into consideration, greater number of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed positively to statement on research question 4 while lesser number of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to positive statement on the same research question. All the mean values fall under the scale of less or equals to 2 which represent agree. Therefore majority agreed that sponsorship to teams was a factor that contributed to the good performance of the teams.

In recent past, firms or companies scarcely recognize the need to sponsor sporting activities and individual athletes but recently, sponsorship has gained root in almost all sporting areas ranging from games through track and field to cross country. People who are known in sporting circles as managers pick individual athletes and players, feed them, clothe them and provide other basic necessities of life. Other companies also take to the sponsorship of institution sports such as inter-hall, inter-department, inter faculty or inter-house sports competitions. Some also sponsor inter-schools, inter-colleges; inter polytechnics and inter-university sports competitions nationally and internationally. In Ghana, for instance, University cross country competitions have gained the necessary popularity and is being sponsored. Sponsorship in the form of cash prizes and other rewards is now common in university sports and has brought many athletes on board to perform.

Majority of the respondents agreed to the statement that the special sponsorship received by the cross country athletes influenced their performance positively. In view of this, Wesson et al. (2005) state that sponsorship which is now an integral part of sports funding, through the medium of television, radio and even the internet has drawn many athletes closer to sponsored completions. Through this medium, business sponsors of sports create the images they want, allowed identification with sports stars and introduce the masses to outstanding performance of athletes.

Douvis and Douvis, (2000) toeing the same line, reiterated that sponsorship to individual athletes in the form of kits has attracted many more others to the field of sports. The mere fact that one appears in the kit of a renowned sports company gives him a different level of self esteem and will always want to prepare well for competitions in order to continue enjoying that benefit. The cash and other prizes given to athletes and players at the end of competitions as sponsorship packages are a source of motivation to university students as Buami, (2002) pointed out that, Unilever Ghana Limited in the year 2002 alone gave out individual prizes made up of a package of Unilever products to the outstanding athletes in each category and also gave out cash prizes totaling ten million three hundred thousand cedis (10,300,000) currently a thousand three hundred Ghana cedis (1,300.00) as an incentive package. This and others such as free souvenirs or kits and media popularity, no doubt, encourage athletes to prepare well for competitions and go out there to give off their best to enjoy the lion's share of these packages.

Research question 5: Did equipment and facilities contribute to the good performances of the teams?

Table 5 provides the mean values regarding equipment and facilities as influencing the consistently good performances of UCCs cross country teams. Considering the first item on the table 5, 63 respondents representing 27.4% strongly agreed, 131 respondents representing 57.0% agreed, 18 representing 7.8% disagreed and 18 representing 7.8%. On item 2, 80 respondents representing

Table 5: Equipment and Facilities for UCC Cross Country Teams

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	
The availability of right and suitable equipment and facilities contributed to teams' performance	63 (27.4)	131 (57.0)	18 (7.8)	18 (7.8)	1.91
The equipment and facilities used for training matched with that of competition	80 (34.8)	139 (60.4)	11 (4.8)	-	1.81
Equipment and facilities used were of high quality and could stand all weather conditions	50 (21.7)	133 (57.8)	42 (18.3)	5 (2.2)	1.90
Closeness to facilities had no hand in athletes' performance	30 (13.1)	103 (44.8)	70 (30.4)	27 (11.7)	1.87
There is an appropriate supply and use of equipment during competitions	49 (21.3)	134 (58.3)	32 (13.9)	15 (6.5)	1.77

Mean values less than or equals to 1 falls under strongly agree, mean values less than or equals to 2 falls under agree, mean values less than or equals to 4 falls under disagree, mean values less than or equals to 5 falls under strongly disagree. 34.8% strongly agreed, 139 respondents representing 60.4% agreed and 11 respondents representing 4.8% disagreed. On item 3, 50 respondents representing 21.7% strongly agreed, 133 respondents representing 57.8% agreed, 42 respondents representing 18.3% disagreed and 5 representing 2.2%. On item 4, 30 respondents representing 13.1% strongly agreed, 103 respondents representing 44.8% agreed, 70 respondents 30.4% disagreed and 27 representing 11.7%. On item 5, 49 respondents representing 21.3% strongly agreed, 134 respondents representing 58.3% agreed, 32 respondents representing 13.9% disagreed and 15 respondents representing 6.5% strongly disagreed. Taking the responses under the various categories into consideration, greater number of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed positively to statement on research question 5 while lesser number of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to positive statement on the same research question. All the mean values fall under the scale of less or equals to 2 which represent agree. Therefore majority agreed that equipment and facilities to teams were factors that contributed to the good performance of

the teams.

Equipment which is seen as a tool machine or anything that one needs for a particular job or activity and a facility which is explained as a special place prepared for people to perform an activity, are two most important elements in sports without which sports organization and participation will be meaningless. Athletes need equipment such as footwear, jerseys, balls, protective tools, vest and the like to perform any sporting activity and excel. They also need facilities such athletic ovals, playing pitches and courts, cross country routes, gymnasium and the rest before they can train for competitions. These equipment and facilities should not be just available but should be of quality to stand any hardship and also be accessible to athletes so that they can make good use of them any time they want. Using inferior equipment and facilities do not only waste money but also hamper athletes performance and making athletes prone to injuries. Results from table 5 reveal that availability of the right equipment and facilities and how accessible they are could help improve athletes' performance in cross country. In line with this, Awosika (1996) opines that the availability of facilities and equipment provide opportunities for athletes and learners to practice skills they have already learnt which help them to improve upon performance at any point in time. He further stresses that equipment and facilities rather depend upon the number of participants, sex, skill level of the group, geographic location and available community facilities. Abubakar (2000) also declares that an institution with excellent and all round facilities and equipment is likely to produce good athletes who can perform well on any good platform. He went ahead to say that apart from the excellent nature of the facilities and equipment, they should be appropriate and very suitable for the sport one is partaking in. this, he said, brings about development of high skill level as well as provision of easy platform to compete and exhibit good skills during competitions. Jensen, (1992) in agreement also said that equipment and facility used at training should match that of competition because equipment might limit performance by failing to perform its appropriate function during competition. Athletes who do not use the appropriate safety equipment may limit their own performance through injury. He further stresses that with certain items such as footwear and performance implements, their quality and condition can influence performance results.

Conclusion

Based on the findings it is concluded that motivation was responsible for the consistently good performances of UCCs cross country teams from 2002 in the inter-university cross country competitions.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. University authorities should continue with the giving of attractive prizes to entice students to give off their best at competitions.
2. Stakeholders and University Authorities should continue to sponsor athletes. Athletes should be supported financially to partake in athletic meets even outside the country.
3. Authorities must make sure that equipment and facilities are always available, accessible and in good condition.
4. School authorities should continue to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to make funds available and released on time for use by athletes.

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