



GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE PRIZE MONEY OF SQUASH COMPETITIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This study is aimed at investigating the differences between male and female winner's prize money of squash competitions in Nigeria. Four major squash competitions that took place in Nigeria from 2014 to August, 2017 were used for the study. The competitions of interest are the Afren Open, 2014 (Ikoyi, Lagos), the 3RD PSPAN Open May, 2017 (APAPA Club, Lagos), the PSPAN Classics June, 2017 (Lagos Country Club, Lagos) and the Chamberlain Open August, 2017 (Lagos Country Club, Lagos). Finding from the study showed that there was a difference in prize money of male and female winners of N50, 000 amounting to 20% in the Afren Open, N50, 000 amounting to 26.4% in the PSPAN Classics and N431, 750 amounting to 52% difference in the Chamberlain Open. The study concluded that there was a gender gap of up to N531, 750 amounting to 36% difference in the winner's prize money of squash competitions in Nigeria. The study recommended that sponsors should make deliberate efforts to narrow the gap in prize money between male and female winners in squash competitions taking place in Nigeria.

Keywords: gender, squash competitions, prize money

1. Introduction

Sport has always been an important part of our culture as a nation, and in recent years, it received considerable attention by various governments and individuals. This

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increased attention is characterized by the greater investment on sports by government, increased coverage given to sports by various mass media, the increased interests of much philanthropy in sponsoring sports engagements and the increasing number of fans attending sports programmes. Sport is an industry of its own that create job for individuals who engage in it and it is very lucrative for all ages. Gone are the days when sport was looked upon as a mere exercise for people who have nothing to do or drop out from schools.

Sport is primarily a means of exercising ones physical body and it develops the individual physiologically, emotionally, psychologically and economically and it's globally accepted and recognized. Societies and culture have ways of showing by descriptive words that there is a sharp difference between the male child and their female counterparts. As the male and female organisms are biologically and physiologically distinct from birth so also exist how the society treat both sexes and sport is not exempted as attitudes and values are associated with sex-specific roles in societies. Gender roles are both cultural and personal and these roles determine how male and females think, speak, dress and interact within the context of the society. For girls and young women, participation in sport provides the opportunity to master new skills, to accept challenges, to experience the joy of movement. They can learn important life skills, such as discipline, dedication, determination, the pursuit of excellence, and setting and accomplishing goals. The central issues still face women in sport and physical activity result from cultural influences and legacy of traditional attitudes, opinions and beliefs.

In recent times, there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of male and female individuals who have become actively involved in sports in and out of school especially a sport such as squash which was considered an elite sport in the past.

In spite of Nigeria's ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, a constant theme seems to run through the society as regards the traditional place of women: her traditional place is the home. Her ideal role is associated with child bearing, rearing and housekeeping. Most traditional Nigerian societies are patriarchal in nature; Nigeria is therefore a society in which the experience and values of men predominate, women on the other hand are regularly denied gender equitable treatment in all sphere sports inclusive. Stemming from the general believes of sport been linked with male sex and the stereotyping nature of what the male and female should do and not do could be a factor promoting the disparity. Also, the environment, culture and genetic make-up, gender stereotypes, gender discrimination, gender differences, gender-based inequalities and biases and sex difference are major psycho-social factors promoting these differences in emoluments of players.

Sport development and activity promotion have in various ways, challenged the myth that girls and women do not 'want' to take part in sport and physical activity; and have shattered the myth that girls and women cannot succeed in sport. As women engage more actively in sport, they develop skills necessary for leadership, academic

performance, and success in all areas of life. Changing the image of women in sport will not only attract more women, it will attract public interest and private investment.

Squash is a racket sports played by two (singles) or four (doubles) players in an indoor four-walled court with a squash ball made of rubber. Sometimes the four walls are made of bricks, fibre glasses and most times, squash courts are made of brick with the back wall made of fibre glass to allow for better view by the spectators. Players alternate in striking the ball with the aim of returning the ball to the front wall without committing fouls or errors. The first player to get to 11 points (in the Point-A-Rally Scoring) wins a game. Squash is a moderate high intensity game that places a high demand on the aerobic system during play and recovery at any level (Ghosh, 2007). Players are active 50 – 70% of the playing time depending on the level resulting to rectal temperature exceeding 39C at the end of the match and a loss of about 1.9 litres of sweat per hour (Ghosh, 2007). There is an elevation of heart rate up to 170±12 bpm and energy requirements of 3000 – 5000 kcal per 24 hours during training and competition period in the game of squash (Sherman, 2004). To excel in the game of squash, players needs to pay attention to carefully structured training and dietary plan religiously. These high physiological demands of the game of squash explains why sometimes the winners in the game are the fitter and not necessarily the better players

Gender parity in sports and price money gap between male and female athletes has been an issue topping discussions across sports media all over the world. The disparity in pay is alarming despite the fact that both male and female play on the same surface, the same court sizes and with the same rules. Today, we live in a world with lots of clamour for gender equality in all sphere of life from politics to sports. Some sports such as tennis is beginning to narrow the gap tremendously with all four major grand slams having equal prize money for both male and female winners (Totalsportek, 2017). It was revealed by the BBC that a recent study carried out by Daryl Hammond into prize money levels in professional sports has shown that the gender gap in prize money winnings is closing. Squash has been highlighted as a sport with the greatest gender parity and is highlighted as a sport that is making incredible strides in equity between men and women pro players (www.squashrackets.net). The reason why squash is highlighted to be making incredible strides in gender parity is not farfetched. In 2016, two of the PSA major tournaments; Al Ahram International and Dubai World Series offered equal prize money of \$17,575 and \$25,600 respectively to both male and female winners (PSA, 2016).

This study is aimed at investigating the differences between male and female winner's prize money of squash competitions in Nigeria. Based on the available data, the study made use of four major squash competitions that took place in Nigeria from 2014 to August, 2017. The competitions of note are the Afren Open, 2014 (Ikoyi, Lagos), the 3RD PSPAN Open May, 2017 (APAPA Club, Lagos), the PSPAN Classics June, 2017 (Lagos Country Club, Lagos) and the Chamberlain Open August, 2017 (Lagos Country Club, Lagos).

Table 1: Presents the prize money for both male and female winners in squash competitions held in Nigeria from 2014 to August 2017

(Summary of the winners' prize money in squash competitions in Nigeria)

Competition	Men's prize money (N)	Women's prize money (N)	Total winners prize money (N)	Cash differences (N)	Percentage difference (%)
Afren Open, Ikoyi, 2014	150,000 (60%)	100,000 (40%)	250,000	50,000	20%
3 rd PSPAN Open Apapa, 2017	100,000 (50%)	100,000 (50%)	200,000	0	0
PSPAN Classics, Ikeja, 2017	120,000 (63.2%)	70,000 (36.8%)	190,000	50,000	26.4%
Chamberlain Open, Ikeja, 2017	631,750 (76%)	200,000 (24%)	831,750	431,750	52%

The prize money of male and female winners in squash competitions in Nigeria has been presented in table 1. Four major national competitions from 2014 to August, 2017 were presented. The Afren Open that took place in the Squash Section of Ikoyi Club, Ikoyi, Lagos gave a prize money of the sum of N150, 000 to the male winner and the sum of N100,000 to the female winner. This has a cash difference of N50, 000 naira amounting to 20% difference in prize money between male and female winners.

The 3rd PSPAN Open that took place in Apapa club, Lagos in 2017 had equal prize money of N100, 000 to both male and female winners. This is the first major squash tournament with such a good level of gender equity in the price money for winners.

The PSPAN Classics that took place in the Squash Section of the Lagos Country Club, Ikeja, Lagos in June, 2017 gave a prize money of N120, 000 to the male winner and the sum of N70, 000 to the female winner. This has a cash difference of N50, 000 amounting to 26.4% difference in the price money of between male and female winners.

The just concluded Chamberlain Open which took place in August, 2017 in the Squash Section of the Lagos Country Club, Ikeja, Lagos was the biggest and most lucrative squash tournament of the year 2017 gave a prize money of the sum of N631, 750 to the male winner and N 200,000 to the female winner. This has a cash difference of the sum of N431, 750 amounting to 52% difference in prize money of male and female winners.

Table 2: Sum of the prize money for winners in the four squash competitions

Total winnings (N)	Male winnings (N)	Female winnings (N)	Cash difference (N)	Percentage difference (%)
1,471,750	1,001,750	470,000	531,750	36%

Putting the winnings in all four competitions of interest together as presented in Table 2, the total prize money for winners will amount to N1, 471,750. The male winners got the larger sum of N1, 001,750 while the female winners got N470,00 with a cash

difference of N531,750 amounting to 36% difference in prize money of male and female winners.

2. Conclusion

From the analysis, it has been seen that there is a huge gap in the prize money of male and female winners with the male winners earning 36% more than the female winners in the competitions reviewed. If any country is talking about sustainable development, the issue of gender parity should be deliberately looked at in all aspects sports inclusive.

2.1 Recommendation

The efforts of private sector sponsorship in squash competitions and the development of the sports in Nigeria cannot be over emphasised and commended. However, sponsors should make deliberate efforts to narrow the gap in prize money between male and female winners in squash competitions taking place in Nigeria.

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