

IMPACT OF CROWD MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP SUSTAINABILITY OF ORGANIZED SPORTS COMPETITIONS IN LAGOS STATE

BY

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to assess the impact of crowd management strategies on corporate sponsorship sustainability of organized sports competitions in Lagos state. The cross-sectional research method was adopted for this study. The population for this study included sports administrators, facility managers, sports media houses and corporate organizations in Lagos state. The study comprised a sample of four hundred and eighty-nine (489) respondents comprising of 348 sports administrators, 63 facility managers and 78 sports media houses in Lagos state. The multistage sampling technique was used to select respondents for this study. The sampled sports and corporate organizations are those that are established on a well-structured administrative set up. A self-developed research questionnaire named "Crowd Management Impact and Sponsorship Sustainability Questionnaire" (CMISSQ) was used for this study. The questionnaire had a reliability coefficient of 0.87. The descriptive statistics of bar chart was used to present the demographic data. The inferential statistics of multiple regressions was used to test the stated null hypothesis at a 0.05 alpha level using the statistical tool for Social Sciences (SPSS). Results indicated that ticketing strategy, seating arrangement has significant impact on corporate sponsorship sustainability of organized sports competitions in Lagos state. Entry and exit points also significantly affect corporate sponsorship sustainability of organized sports competitions in Lagos state. The study recommended that advance selling of tickets should be employed as this saves times and ensures that overcrowding of fans and spectators at ticket selling booths. This reduces congestion in the interior area in the search for the correct seat. For high-risk matches, opposing fans should be strictly separated by allocating sectors other than those indicated on the match tickets (enforced segregation), or by creating and reserving empty stadium sectors between 'dangerous' spectator sectors. Reserved seating should be strongly considered as the only seating allowed for those events that attract excitable and competitive crowds.

Keywords: Crowd Management Strategies, Ticketing Strategy, Seating Arrangement, Corporate Sponsorship Sustainability, Organized Sports Competitions.

Introduction The popularity of sports events is on the rise. The numerous attendees and the diversity of these spectators has made crowd management an important aspect of sports events planning process. The management of crowd at sports events is a major concern to sports events organisers, administrators and facility managers. In view of the large crowds that attend sports events, the potential of crowd trouble is often high. A crowd is a large number of people attending a particular event at a specific venue for a finite period of time (Memish, Stephens, Steffen & Ahmed, 2012). A crowd is a large group of people that may be defined through a common purpose or set of emotions such as at political rallies and sports events. Crowds are defined by their shared emotional experiences such as those witnessed during sports events (Price, 2003).

According to Reicher (2001), crowds give rise to a sense of power which allows members to express their identity even in the face of external opposition. In view of the large crowds that attend football events, the potential of crowd trouble is often high (Powell, 2004). Football violence can be traced back to the 14th century in England when King Edward 11 reportedly banned football activities because he believed the disorder surrounding matches might lead to social unrest (Kwalimwa, 2014). Crowd management is the organised and substantiated planning and the direction given to the orderly progress of events where large groups of people gather together. Crowd and security management involves planning and directing the manner in which the public gathers together at an event and moves at and around the event terrain.

The primary objectives of primary crowd management objectives are the avoidance of critical crowd densities and the triggering of rapid group movement (Young, 2002). Crowd management must take into account all the elements of an event especially the type of event, characteristic of the facility, size of the crowd, methods of entrance, communications, crowd control and queuing (Wann, 2006). Most major crowd disasters can be prevented by simple crowd management strategies such as imposing of stricter rules and legal provisions which prevent trouble-makers from entering the

stadium for a period of time, contraband screening, public education (or sensitizing fans), queuing, constant monitoring of crowd behaviour, security enforcements, effective emergency response and foreseeability (Garland & Rowe, 2000; Wann, 2006). Having a properly trained staff, sufficient signage, an effective and efficient communication system, an effective ejection policy and a proper alcohol management policy in place, the risk of aggression, injuries and deaths can be reduced (Powell, 2004).

Crowd management includes components such as the event, design of the stadium and protection of the patrons from unforeseeable risk of harm (Marsden, 2008). Crowd management plans should be adjusted to meet the needs of the event and the potential crowd in terms of sociological behaviour, sitting arrangements, transportation, time, parking, weather conditions, demographics and size (Berlonghi, 2004). Crowds or spectators during football events can be managed based on three elements: venue, event and personnel. Sports fans are forced to walk long distances to arrive at their destination may engage in destructive behaviours along the way and if there is little management along the route to destination. Multiple entry and exit points that lead spectators directly to their vehicles or other public transportation will help to reduce the likelihood of aggressive behaviour. Contraband screening or security checks of spectators' bags, pockets and jackets reduce the likelihood that potential weapons, drugs, alcohol and other undesirable objects and substances will be brought into the stadiums (MacDonald, 2004).

Dispersal process of the crowd after the game should be controlled to avoid mass exodus from the venue (Talalay, 2007). Mass exodus from a venue sets the stage for crowded conditions and spectator violence. Postgame events such as autograph signings help to stagger the dispersal process. Strategic dispersal process should not be carried out during rush hour in order

to prevent traffic congestion and related accidents (Talalay, 2007). Sectional and personal seating can further reduce violence if the seating is segregated into well-defined areas. It is necessary to prevent spectators from gaining access to seating areas to which they are not assigned, and prevent entrance of those who do not have tickets to the event. Simple physical barriers (such as gates and fences) and social ones that include ushers and security are usually sufficient to prevent access to restricted areas (Russell, 2004). Having barriers or fences to separate fans from the field and players, as well as separate seating areas for fans of opposing teams can help control the crowd (Young, 2002).

Breaking crowds into smaller groups helps to facilitate crowd control. This seating arrangement can facilitate quick isolation and removal of violent spectators with minimal disruption to other spectators (Brindley, 2002). Properly placed and visible signs should be used to inform, warn, instruct and guide people to reduce conflict due to frustration and confusion (Abbott & Geddie, 2001). According to Young (2002), barriers or fences can be used to separate opposing fans, field and players. However, an inappropriately placed barrier may encourage people to climb or sit on the railings or use it as a weapon if not properly secured.

In the past few decades, sponsorships have evolved away from short-term, philanthropic activities into long-term strategic partnerships. In this sense, a sponsorship is a long-term investment, demanding time and effort from the sponsor to achieve consumer awareness of the sponsorship link, and to convince the target audience of its sincerity and goodwill (Amis, Slack, & Berrett, 1999). Cornwell et al. (2001) find that sponsorship managers tend to agree that longer sponsorship duration strengthens brand equity effects. Sponsorships tend to involve long-term contracts (i.e., three–five years on average). Yet difficult economic conditions bring sponsorship investments under increased scrutiny, such that companies that are signing new or re-signing deals are showing reluctance to sign long-term contracts. Sponsors withdraw from most grassroots organized competitions because of violence, hooliganism, disrupt of

matches by the unmanaged crowd, pitch encroachment and spectators beating up officials in a match which creates the bad image and does not represent the integrity of sponsors. Most corporate bodies abandon their sponsorship deals because of insecurity at match venues. Considering this setting, this study is hereby carried out to investigate the impact of crowd management strategies on corporate sponsorship sustainability of organized sports competitions in Lagos state. The following research hypotheses guided the study:

1. Ticketing strategy has no significant impact on corporate sponsorship sustainability of organized sports competitions in Lagos state.
2. There is no significant impact of seating arrangement on corporate sponsorship sustainability of organized sports competitions in Lagos state.
3. Entry and exit points does not significantly affect corporate sponsorship sustainability of organized sports competitions in Lagos state.

Methodology

The cross-sectional research method was adopted for this study. A cross-sectional survey research design was found to be more suitable because the study entailed data collection from different groups of target population at liberty to respond to questions on ticketing strategies during football events. The population for this study included sports administrators, facility managers, coaches, sports media houses, sports officials and corporate organizations in Lagos state. The study comprised a sample of four hundred and eighty-nine (489) respondents comprising of sports administrators, facility managers, coaches, sports media houses, sports officials and corporate organizations in Lagos state. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the group of respondents. The sampled sports and corporate organizations are those that are established on a well-structured administrative set up.

A self-developed research questionnaire named "Crowd Management

Impact and Sponsorship Sustainability Questionnaire" (CMISSQ) was used for this study. The questionnaire was structured and developed in a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD). The construct and content validity of the research instrument (CSRCMQ) was determined by experts in Sports Administration and Management. The construct and the content validity of the instrument were assured. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study which were carried out with 20 respondents.

The instrument was administered through a test-retest method within the interval of two weeks to the same group of respondents. The results were coded and analysed using the statistical tool of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-

efficiency to establish the reliability coefficient of 0.87 which was high enough for the study.

After validity and reliability of the questionnaire has been achieved, copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher.

The three trained research assistants explained, distributed and monitored the filling and collection of the questionnaire back from the respondents in designated recreational centres. Retrieval of the questionnaire were made on the spot. The descriptive statistics of pie chart was used to present the demographic data. The inferential statistics of multiple regressions was used to test the stated null hypotheses at a 0.05 alpha level using the statistical tool for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

Demographic Data Presentation

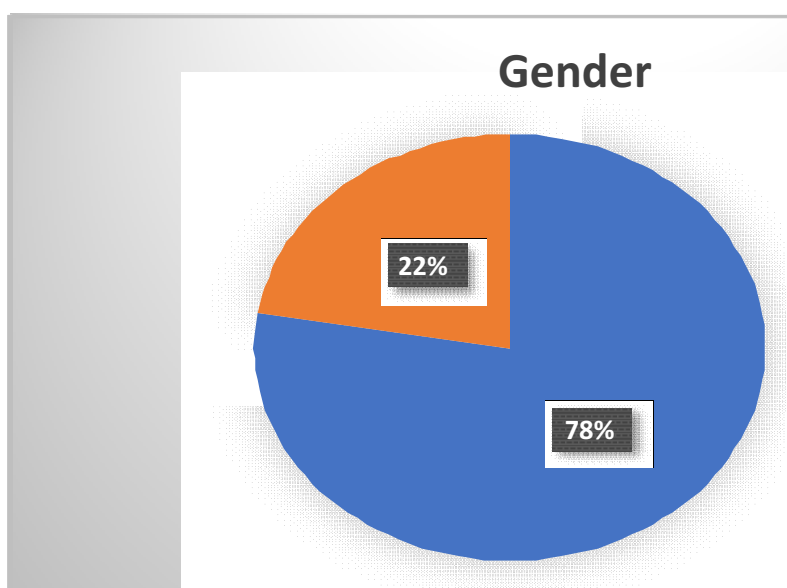


Figure 1: Pie chart representation of respondents by gender

Figure 1 showed the distribution of respondents by gender. Of the sampled population, 22% (n = 108) are females and 78% (n = 381)

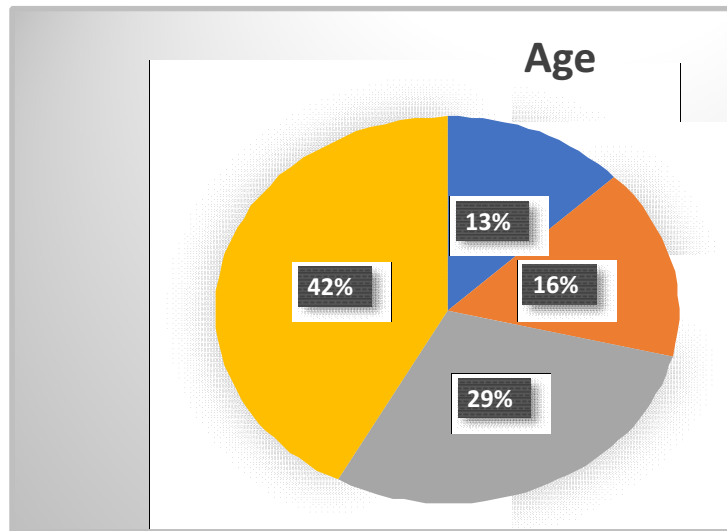


Figure 2: Pie Chart representation of respondents by age

Figure 2 presented the distribution of respondents by age. The highest respondent (n=206; 42.13%) were above 45 years old, while the lowest number of respondents (n=63; 12.88%) were between 18 -25 years .

Distribution of respondents by Designation

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Sports Administrators	348	71.17%
Facility Managers	63	12.88%
Sports Media Houses	78	15.95%
Total	489	100

Table 1 showed the distribution of respondents according to their designation. 71.17% (n = 348) are sports administrators, 12.88% (n = 63) are facility managers and 15.95% (n = 78) are from media houses. Hence sports administrators dominated the sampled respondents.

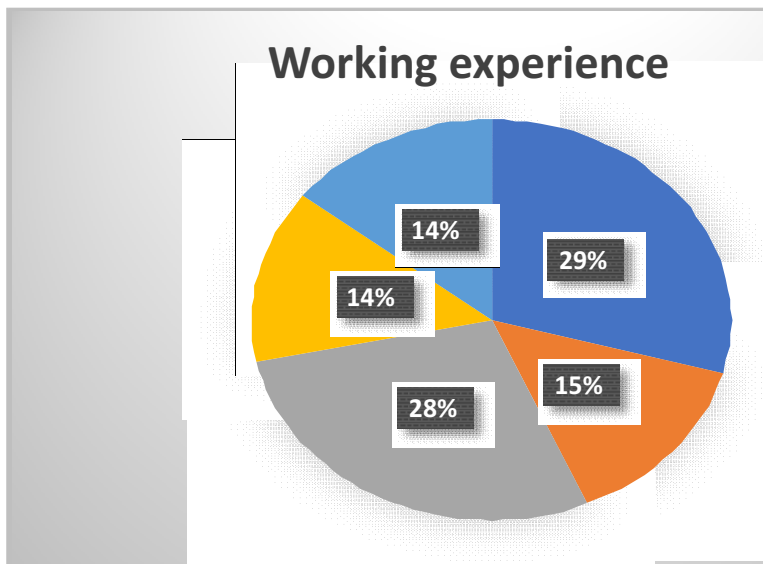


Figure 3: Pie chart representation of respondents by years of working experience

Figure 3 presents the distribution of respondents by age. The highest respondent (n=206; 42.13%) were above 45 years old, while the lowest number of respondents (n=63; 12.88%) were between 18 -25 years

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one states that ticketing strategy has no significant impact on corporate sponsorship sustainability of organized sports competitions in Lagos state.