

IMPACT OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND SPORTS COMPETITION ON SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF GRASSROOT SPORTS IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study focused on the impact of strategic management and sports competition on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria. Descriptive research method was adopted for this study. The population of this study comprised all grassroots sports personnel of the States Sports Commission/Council and amateur athletes in Southwest, Nigeria. Four hundred and sixty-three ($n = 463$) respondents were selected from four (4) State Sports Commissions/Councils; Lagos, Ogun, Osun and Oyo States of Southwest Nigeria, using Multistage sampling technique. The instrument used were adapted Strategic Planning and Management Questionnaire ($r = 0.82$) and Sports Development Scale ($r = 0.75$). The data collected was analyzed using Multiple Regression to determine the level of significance between the two hypotheses and observed values at 0.05 alpha level. The two null hypotheses generated for the study were rejected while the alternate hypotheses were accepted. The result of the study revealed that strategic management and sports competition have significant impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria. The study recommended that strategic management and sports competition approach should be adopted by grassroots sports managers to bring about sustainable sports development and ensure productive grassroots sports management practices.

Keywords: Strategic management, Sports competition, Grassroots Sports, Sustainable Growth and Sports Development.

Introduction

The Southwest geopolitical region of Nigeria has produced national and international athletes through the grassroots sports in past years of our national history. Then, during this period, the grassroots sports development of school sports and community-based sports were given prominent attention and attracted a lot of ardent spectators and followership. History has it that massive identification, nurturing and maximization of sports talents were witnessed and many of these athletes represented their different schools, local governments, states and the nation at

international sports competitions. It can be deduced that majority of the athletes that represented the nation were products of grassroots sports (Atuko, 2011). However, based on the current trend in grassroots sports development programme in Nigeria, the standard seems to have reduced. Literature reveals that any nation across the globe, that have to celebrate victory in any sports, is traceable to the support they have been given to the management of grassroots sports development such as school sports and community-based sports (Bakari, 2016).

Over the years in Nigeria, the defunct National Sports Commission then, got nearly all their athletes from the State Sports Councils through strategically-managed, organised and coordinated grassroots sports development programme without depending on foreign based athletes. However, sports associations allow coaches to invite as many foreign based athletes/players as they want, when the need arises. It has also been observed that some of the national coaches have flair for foreign based athletes because of their high qualities and performances if compared to home-based athletes who are the products of grassroots sports.

Strategy involves determining of goals, taking actions to achieve the goals, and mobilizing resources to carry out the actions. It refers to the process of formulating series of actions implementing them and evaluation of the entire process. Strategy can be seen as a pattern of actions employed by sports managers to position their teams for competitive advantage through proactive and reactive means (Omolaja & Eriolola, 2011). Strategic management is an importance concept of long-term planning programme. Fasan (2004) sees strategic management as a project of strategy with clear objectives, creating clear plans as to how these objectives will be achieved, aligning project activities to support the objectives, and allocating the resources needed to achieve the objectives. According to Shilbury (2012) strategic management means the process of policy formulation and taking actions to implement the policy.

Grassroots sports in Nigeria also have some policies and level of implementation but a deliberate approach to creating a clear plan and vision for the achievement of its objectives seems to be challenging. After ensuring effective implementation of plans and strategy towards sports development, constant evaluation and re-evaluation of the process is of paramount importance to determine the success and failure of the whole event (Awoyinfa, 2015). Sporting activity is

synonymous with physical and social activities that are carried out based on rules especially during competition (National sports policy, 2009). Competition in sports is central to tactics, strategy formulation and implementation for the purpose of achieving positive outcome in such competition. At present in Southwest Nigeria, the level of well-organised sports competitions has drastically reduced in most local government areas, communities and schools through intramural and extramural sports competitions, when compared to what it used to be some years back.

Presently, nearly all the periods on the school time-table have been allocated to various subjects; including new subjects in order to strive for academic excellence, without any meaningful consideration for sports growth and development. Most of Physical Education teachers have now resorted to classroom teachings, including swimming, hockey with little or no time for the practical class. This challenge has made it difficult for Physical educators and grassroots coaches to identify talents, let alone of nurturing them. Having observed the present situation of sports management in the country, grassroots sports seem no longer retain the platform for producing young talented athletes as it was before now (Ojeme, 2010). Therefore, these perceived observations seem to have reduced the expected growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria.

Some management strategies to develop grassroots sports in Southwest Nigeria have been employed by grassroots sports managers in order to meet up with sustainable sports development in Nigeria and world at large. However, it seems that there are some challenges in the strategies adopted for managing grassroots sports towards sports development. Some of these strategies might be partially implemented while others might not be properly executed. Other reasons were attributed to non-workable sports policy, lack of qualified and untrained grassroots sports coaches and poor implementation of strategies. (Bakari, 2016). The strategies might also be affected by poor planning, and improper evaluation of sports programmes at grassroots level. All these challenges might be the reason why grassroots sports potentials have remained scarcely untapped and the hidden talents are yet to be discovered (Benson, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The researcher has observed the challenges of managing grassroots sports programmes in Southwest, Nigeria towards sustaining the growth and development of grassroots sports. Grassroots sports development programme is at variance with the reality. The level of implementation and evaluation of the sports programmes are not strategically executed. Most of the grassroots sports competitions staged by sports organisations are not always productive as this act has affected the sustainability of growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

1. Strategic management of sports will have no significant impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria.
2. Competition based strategy will have no significant impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The study would assist managers of grassroots sports to explore, implement and evaluate strategic management and competition based strategy in sustaining growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest Nigeria. It would also help grassroots sports managers to continually identify, develop and sustain talented athletes that are capable of representing the country in future through sports competitions.

Methodology

The descriptive research method was used in carrying out the study. The population of this study comprised all grassroots sports personnel of the States Sports Commission/Council and amateur athletes in Southwest, Nigeria. The respondents include sports directors, administrative officers, sports officers, coaches, facility managers and amateur athletes and were selected from Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States of Southwest, Nigeria. A sample size of five hundred and forty-six (546) respondents were drawn from four (4) State Sports Commissions/Councils (Lagos, Ogun, Osun and Oyo) in the Southwest, Nigeria. The simple random sampling technique was used to select four (4) out of six (6) State Sports Commissions/Councils (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo) using fish bowl technique without replacement. The sampling technique

was adopted because any of the six states could be part of study samples, as all are actively involved in grassroots sports both at State and National Youth Games. The four (4) State Sports Commissions/Councils selected are Lagos, Ogun, Osun and Oyo. The second stage involved random selection of staff of State Sports Commission/Council, sports directors, administrative officers, sports officers, coaches and amateur athletes of the selected four (4) States of Southwest, Nigeria. Five hundred and forty-six (546) respondents were totally selected, however, four hundred and six-three (463) were actually used for the study.

Table 1: Sample distribution of respondents by State

State	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Lagos	165	30.2	30.2
Ogun	133	24.4	54.6
Osun	111	20.3	74.9
Oyo	137	25.1	100.0
Total	546	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Procedure for Data Analysis

The completed copies of questionnaire were collated, coded and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data were processed and analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25.0 version. The descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the Demographic Data while inferential statistics of Multiple Regression (MR) was used for data analysis. The two formulated research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Four hundred and ninety-eight (498) copies of questionnaire were retrieved from five hundred and forty-six (546) copies of questionnaire that were administered. Although, four hundred and six-three (463) were found good, representing 84.8% return rate and used for the analysis.

Analysis of Respondents' Socio-demographic Characteristics

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by State

State	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Lagos	141	30.7	30.7
Ogun	118	25.5	56.2
Osun	84	18.1	74.3
Oyo	119	25.7	100
Total	463	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents representing 30.7% of the total sample that participated in the study were drawn from Lagos State. 25.5% of them were drawn from Ogun State, 18.1% were selected from Osun State while 25.7% of the total respondents were drawn from Oyo State.

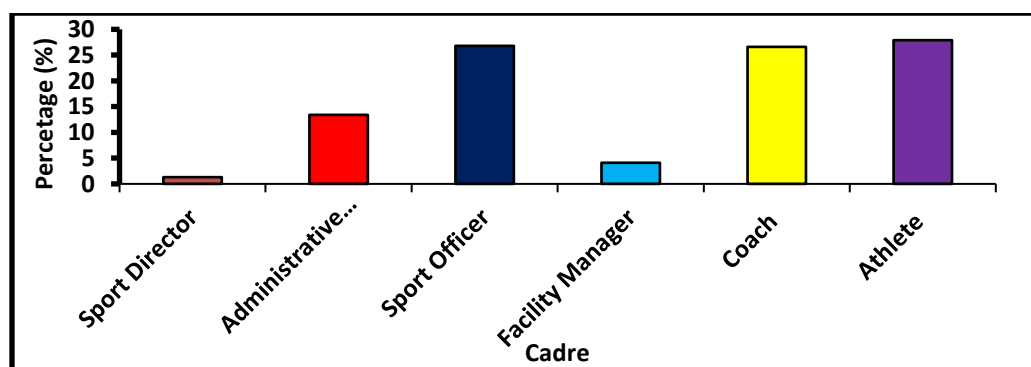


Figure 1: Distribution of Study Participants by Cadre

Figure 1 shows that 13.4% of the total respondents were Administrative Officer, 27.9% of them, being the majority, were Athletes, 4.1% were Facility Mangers, 26.6% were Coaches, 26.8% were Administrative Officer while the remaining 1.3%, being the minority, were Sport Directors.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
11-15	31	6.7	6.7
16-20	62	13.4	20.1
21-25	30	6.5	26.6

26-30	30	6.5	33.1
31-35	11	2.4	35.5
36-40	100	21.6	57.1
41-45	98	21.2	78.3
46-50	56	12.1	90.4
51-55	41	8.9	99.3
56 and above	4	0.9	100.2
Total	463	100.2	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From Table 3, it could be observed from the distribution of respondents by age that 0.9% of the total respondents were of age range 56 years and above, 21.6% of them being the majority were of age range 36–40 years, 6.7% of them were of age range 11–15 years, 13.4% respondents were aged 16–20 years; 2.4%, 21.2%, 12.1%, and 8.9% were aged 31–35 years, 41–45 years, 46–50 years, 51–55 years while 6.5% of them were within 21–25 years and 26–30 years in each case.

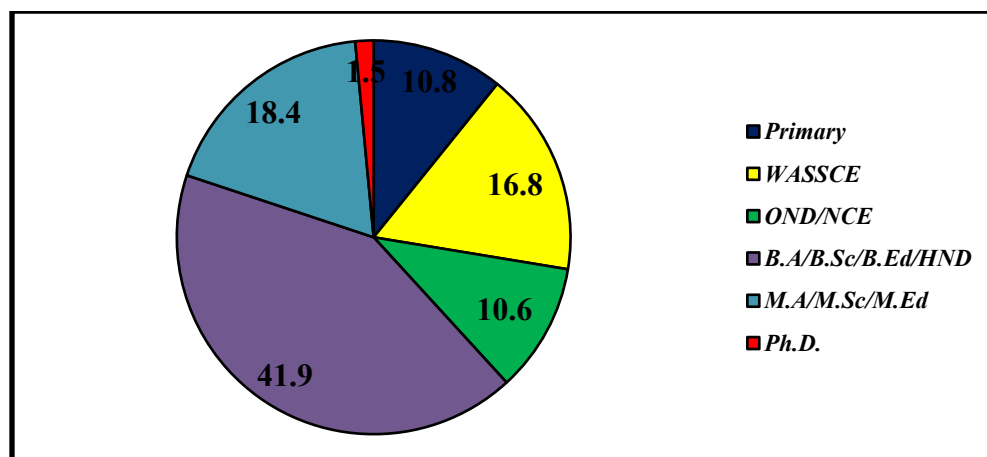


Figure 2: Distribution of Study Participants by Academic Qualification

Figure 2 shows that 10.8% of the total respondents had primary certificate, 41.9% of them, being the majority, were holders of B.A/B.Sc/B.Ed/HND, 16.8% of them had WASSCE, 10.6% had OND/NCE certificates while 18.4% and 1.5% had M.A/M.Sc/M.Ed and Ph.D. respectively.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 postulates that "Strategic management of sports has no significant impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria." The above stated hypothesis was tested using the Multiple Regression with level of significance set at 0.05. The result is presented on the table 6.

Table 4: Regression analysis showing the impact of strategic management of sports on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	38.438	2.017		19.058	.000
Strategic Management-Based Approach	.630	.159	.181	3.955	.000
Multiple R = 0.181, Multiple $R^2 = 0.033$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.031$, $F_{1,461} = 15.646$					

* $p < 0.05$

Table 6 shows that strategic management of sports has significant impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria ($F_{1,461} = 15.646$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. The result shows that there is significant very low but positive multiple correlation between the predictor variable (strategic management of sports) and sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria ($R = 0.181$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that the predictor variable is a factor that can exert influence on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.033$) indicates that the variable of strategic management of sports accounted for about 3.3% of the observed variance in the sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria while the remaining 96.7% unexplained variance can be attributed largely to other factors outside the regression model other than strategic management of sports.

Hypothesis 2 postulates that “Competition based strategy will have no significant impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria.” The above stated hypothesis was tested using the Simple Linear Regression with level of significance set at 0.05. The result is presented on the table 7.

Table 5: Regression analysis showing the impact of competition-based strategy on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
(Constant)	34.759	1.764		19.700	.000
Competition Based Approach	.932	.140	.296	6.647	.000
Multiple R = 0.296, Multiple $R^2 = 0.087$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.085$, $F_{1,461} = 44.180$					

* $p < 0.05$

Table 7 shows that competition-based strategy has significant impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria ($F_{1,461} = 44.180$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. The result shows that there is significant, low but positive multiple correlation between the predictor variable (competition-based strategy) and sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria ($R = 0.296$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that the predictor variable is a factor that can exert influence on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.087$) indicates that the variable of competition-based strategy accounted for about 8.7% of the observed variance in the sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria while the remaining 91.3% unexplained variance can be attributed largely to other factors outside the regression model other than competition-based strategy.

Discussion of Findings

This study revealed that strategic management of sports has significant impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria. This assertion was confirmed by Alvarez (2019) who stated that strategic management has provoked high level of sports development and sports performance at grassroots level. This was corroborated by Masahiro and Jorge (2022) in a study conducted in Japan, it was established that application of strategy in managing grassroots sports will enhance sports development better, by solving problems and providing effective implementation of programmes.

This research finding showed that competition-based strategy has significant impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria. The result was established by the finding of Green (2005) who established that sports competition improves the competitive standard of young athletes and also enhances national team prestige. Dobbs (2010) affirmed that competitive behaviours through sports programmes in athletes can be transformed to strategic decision-making required to maintain competitive balance and consequently the strategies sports managers can embark on for sports development. This was corroborated by Alvarez (2019) who posited that sports competition has proven to be an effective tool in developing grassroots sports in the society.

Conclusion

This research bridges the existing gap between the application management strategies by sports managers and sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria. The study explores the identified management strategies; strategic management based and competition based approach in order to facilitate sustainability in growth and development of grassroots sports. The two predictor variables are factors that can exert impact on sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria. Management of grassroots sports has the tendency to build a winning system that is capable of producing consistent result, if the outcome of the research is put into practice. The findings of this study, if adopted and implemented, would assist in resolving the challenges of sports development and serving as a platform for sustainable growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest Nigeria.

Recommendations

Managers of grassroots sports should adopt and combine the two identified management strategies in order to sustain growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, Nigeria. All the grassroots sports activities of the State Sports council/commission should be deliberately and consistently carried out with reference to grassroots sports objectives.

Managers of grassroots sports should continually identifying and developing talents which are parts of indices of grassroots sports' growth and development through sports competitions.

Ministry of Youths and Sports Development should provide leadership for the State Sports Councils/Commissions to thoroughly implement the identified management strategies in order to continually sustain the growth and development of grassroots sports in Southwest, and other geo-political zones in Nigeria.

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