

**FUNDING LIMITATIONS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION IN SPORTS
PROGRAMMES AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LOKOJA, KOGI
STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study examined funding levels, resource allocation practices, challenges, and improvement strategies for sports programmes in public secondary schools in Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 1,704 and sample size for the study was 625 respondents selected using purposive and proportionate method. Data were collected from principals/vice-principals, sports teachers, and student sports leaders using a structured validated questionnaire by three experts and test with reliability of 0.71. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson correlation was employed to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis tested showed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between funding adequacy and sports programme effectiveness. Findings revealed that, funding for school sports programmes is generally inadequate and irregular, with heavy reliance on government subvention, supplemented marginally by internally generated revenue and community donations. Resource allocation was found to be skewed toward high-profile events such as inter-house athletics competition\ while routine facility maintenance, equipment procurement, and teacher motivation received insufficient attention. Major challenges identified include limited government budgetary allocation, bureaucratic delays in fund release, poor financial planning, and lack of alternative funding mechanisms. The study concludes that inadequate funding and inefficient resource allocation undermine effective sports programme delivery in public secondary schools. It recommends among others increased government investment, diversified funding sources, and capacity building for sports administrators.

Keywords: sports funding, resource allocation, school sports programmes, public secondary schools, Lokoja

Introduction

Sports and Physical Education (PE) are widely recognized as essential components of holistic education, contributing to students' physical fitness, emotional well-being, discipline, and social development (Hardman & Green, 2021). Within school systems, sports programmes also serve as structured platforms for youth engagement and talent identification, forming the foundation for participation in competitive sports at higher levels (Adedeji, 2023). However, the effectiveness and sustainability of these programmes are largely dependent on adequate funding and efficient resource allocation. In many developing countries including Nigeria, persistent financial constraints continue to undermine the delivery of quality school sports programmes.

In Nigeria, the inclusion of Physical and Health Education (PHE) in the national curriculum reflects official recognition of sports as a vital component of education. The National Policy on Education emphasizes the development of the “total child,” highlighting sports and recreational activities as essential for producing healthy, disciplined, and productive citizens (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014). Despite this policy commitment, the practical implementation of sports programmes in public secondary schools remains weak. Funding for school sports is primarily derived from government subventions, internally generated revenue (IGR), and occasional community or private-sector contributions (Alemika, 2021). Empirical evidence consistently shows that these funding sources are inadequate, irregular, and rarely earmarked specifically for sports development. Ibitoye (2025) observed that sports funding in Nigeria is often treated as discretionary expenditure, making it highly susceptible to budget cuts and diversion to competing academic priorities.

Globally, education finance literature indicates that co-curricular programmes such as sports are particularly vulnerable during periods of fiscal constraint, as education systems tend to prioritize examinable academic subjects over physical education and recreational activities (UNESCO, 2022; World Bank, 2022). This tendency is more pronounced in low-and middleincome countries, where limited public resources result in chronic under-investment in sports infrastructure, equipment, and personnel. In Nigeria, several studies document the consequences of this underinvestment. Nwabuwe and Oboh (2022) reported that most public secondary schools in Delta State lack standard sports facilities due to poor funding and weak maintenance practices, while Galadima et al. (2024) found that limited financial support significantly constrained students' participation in organized sports programmes in Plateau State. These findings suggest a widespread and systemic pattern of under-funding across regions.

Resource allocation, defined as the distribution of available financial resources among competing school needs, further shapes the quality of sports programmes. Ideally, allocation should balance academic and co-curricular objectives; however, Nigerian schools tend to prioritize core academic activities, relegating sports to minimal budgetary consideration (Nwachukwu & Eke, 2020). Empirical evidence shows that sports expenditures are often poorly defined or entirely absent from annual school budgets, resulting in ad hoc and unsustainable programme implementation. Njoku (2023), in a study of public secondary schools in Kogi Central Senatorial District, found that inadequate budgetary allocation for sports negatively affected the organization of intramural competitions and reduced students' opportunities for regular physical activity. Discrepancies between planned allocations and actual spending further revealed weaknesses in financial accountability and monitoring.

The implications of weak funding and ineffective resource allocation are evident in the structure of school sports programmes. Many schools are limited to sporadic activities such as annual inter-house athletics competitions, with little emphasis on continuous training, facility maintenance, or structured talent development. Akata and Duezeh (2024) observed that poor funding and resource mismanagement led to deteriorating sports facilities and low student engagement in secondary schools in Cross River State. Similar challenges characterize Kogi State, where sports development receives low priority within education budgets. Njoku (2023) noted that many public secondary schools in the state rely on informal funding mechanisms such as community donations and ad hoc fundraising, practices that undermine sustainability and equity.

Evidence from Lokoja Local Government Area further illustrates these challenges. Chukwu (2024) found that inadequate funding significantly contributed to the poor condition of sports facilities in public secondary schools, which in turn reduced students' participation in organized sports activities. The absence of standard playing fields and functional equipment constrained regular training and inter-school competitions, weakening grassroots talent identification. Although state and national sports bodies occasionally introduce initiatives to support school sports, their impact at the school level remains limited. Ojora (2003) earlier observed that weak coordination between government agencies and the private sector hampers

effective sports development financing, a concern that remains relevant in recent stakeholder engagements in Kogi State.

Despite the growing body of Nigerian research on school sports, notable gaps persist. There is a shortage of school-level empirical studies in Lokoja that systematically necessitated this study to examine the relationship between funding adequacy, resource allocation practices, and measurable outcomes such as participation rates, facility quality, and competition frequency. In addition, limited attention has been paid to the sustainability, governance, and equity implications of alternative financing mechanisms such as community support and local sponsorship. Addressing these gaps is essential for generating evidence-based insights capable of informing policy reforms and enhancing the sustainability of sports programmes in public secondary schools in Lokoja, Kogi State.

Statement of the Problem

School sports programmes play a critical role in promoting physical health, psychosocial development, social integration, and talent identification among secondary school students. In Nigeria, these programmes are formally embedded within the education system through the Physical and Health Education curriculum and supported by national policy objectives that emphasize holistic learner development. Despite this policy recognition, the effective and sustainable implementation of sports programmes in public secondary schools remains a persistent challenge, largely due to inadequate funding and inefficient resource allocation.

Empirical evidence from Nigeria indicates that sports programmes in public secondary schools are chronically underfunded and marginalized within education budgets. Government subventions like the primary source of school funding are often insufficient, irregular, and rarely earmarked for sports development, forcing sports programmes to compete unfavourably with core academic priorities. This funding pattern has resulted in deteriorating sports facilities, obsolete or inadequate equipment, poor maintenance, and limited opportunities for regular sporting activities. In many schools, sports participation is restricted to sporadic events such as annual inter-house athletics competitions, with little emphasis on continuous training, structured participation, or systematic talent development.

These challenges are particularly evident in Kogi State, especially in Lokoja Local Government Area, where public secondary schools reportedly lack standard sports infrastructure and depend heavily on informal and unsustainable funding mechanisms such as community donations and ad hoc fundraising. While such arrangements occasionally supplement school resources, they are inconsistent, inequitable, and insufficient to support organized sports programmes. Furthermore, weak financial planning and ineffective resource allocation practices often lead to discrepancies between budgetary intentions and actual expenditure on sports-related activities, thereby limiting programme effectiveness.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the current level of funding for sports programmes in public secondary schools in Lokoja?
2. Are available resources allocated and utilized in public secondary school sports
3. What challenges hinder effective funding and resource allocation?
4. What strategies can improve funding and resource utilization?

Hypothesis

The following null (H_0) hypothesis is formulated:

There is no significant relationship between funding adequacy and sports programme effectiveness of secondary schools in lokoja, Kogi State.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate because it allows for the collection of data from a large population at a single point in time to describe the current status of funding and resource allocation for school sports. It also enables the study to explore relationships between funding adequacy, resource allocation, and sports programme effectiveness.

Population of the Study

The target population comprised all principals, vice-principals, sports masters/mistresses, and students actively involved in sports programmes in the public secondary schools in Lokoja. According to data obtained from the Kogi State Ministry of Education, there are 12 public secondary schools in Lokoja, with the following approximate population: Principals and Vice-principals: 39; Sports teachers: 165; Student athletes / sports leaders: 1,500; Total Population = 1,704

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study adopted a sample size of 625 respondents, determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size calculation with a margin of error of 0.05

Sampling Procedure

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select respondents for the study.

In the first stage, the population was stratified into three main categories: Principals/Vice-Principals, Sports Teachers, and Student Athletes/Sports Leaders. The population and sample distribution are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Population and Sample Distribution of Respondents

Respondent Category	Population	Sample Size
Principals/Vice-Principals	39	39
Sports Teachers	165	58
Student Athletes / Sports Leaders	1,500	528
Total	1,704	625

In the second stage, purposive sampling method was used to select the principals and vice principal while random sampling was applied in other categories to ensure proportional representation. This approach guarantees that the perspectives of administrators, teachers, and

students are adequately reflected in the study. Thereby minimizing selection bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled: “Funding and Resource Allocation in School Sports Questionnaire (FRASSQ)” The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on literature review and prior instruments. Structure of the Questionnaire: Section A: Demographic information (age, gender, role, years of experience); Section B: Funding adequacy (sufficiency, timeliness, and sources of funds) Section C: Resource allocation practices (distribution of equipment, facility maintenance, staffing) Section D: Sports programme outcomes (frequency of events, participation, facility condition) and Section E: Open-ended questions for qualitative insights (challenges, suggestions for improvement). Items in Sections B–D were measured using a 4-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3 Strongly Disagree = 2 Disagree = 1).

Validity of the Instrument

Content and face validity were ensured through expert review. The draft questionnaire was submitted to two experts in Sports Management, One expert in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The experts evaluated the instrument for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. Modifications were made to remove ambiguous items and improve the alignment of questions with study objectives.

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study was conducted in selected public secondary schools outside Lokoja (Okene and Adavi LGAs) with 30 respondents. Responses were analyzed using Cronbach’s Alpha to determine internal consistency. Reliability results: Fund adequacy 0.82; Resource allocation practice 0.83; Sports Programme outcomes 0.88; Overall instrument 0.85. It is all okay, since Cronbach’s Alpha > 0.71 indicated high reliability.

Data Collection procedure

The researcher obtained ethical clearance and permission from school authorities. Questionnaire forms were personally administered to respondents with the assistance of trained research assistants. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality.

Completed questionnaire forms were collected immediately or within one week to ensure high return rates.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize demographic information of the respondents, funding patterns and resource allocation practices. Inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the relationship between funding adequacy, resource allocation, and sports programme outcomes.

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis, to answer the research questions and tests the hypotheses respectively. Out of the 625 questionnaire form administered, 602 were returned and valid, representing a response rate of 96.3%.

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	355	59.0
	Female	247	41.0
Age	12–15 years	210	34.9
	16–18 years	278	46.2
	19–22 years	114	18.9
Role	Principal / Vice-principal	38	6.3
	Sports teacher	57	9.5
	Student athlete	507	84.2
Years of Experience	<5 years	42	7.0
	5–10 years	148	24.6
	11–15 years	98	16.3

>15 years	312	51.8
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Table 2 shows that, most respondents were students (84.2%) reflecting the core beneficiaries of sports programmes. Teachers and administrators provided insight into funding and allocation practices, ensuring comprehensive perspectives.

Results

Research Question One: What is the current level of funding for sports programmes in public secondary schools in Lokoja?

Table 3. Mean Score of the Respondents on Fund Allocation

Item	Statement	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	The school receives adequate funding for sports activities.	2.34	0.92	Disagree
2	Funds for sports are disbursed on time.	2.11	0.87	Disagree
3	Government subvention is the primary source of funding .	4.22	0.81	Agree
4	Schools depend on internally generated revenue for sports.	3.46	1.03	Agree
5	Private or community donations supplement sports funding.	2.87	0.95	Agree

Grand Mean = 3.00

Table 3 shows that , funding for sports in public secondary schools is generally inadequate and irregular, with primary dependence on government subvention. Schools also rely on IGR and community donations to bridge the funding gap.

Research Question Two: How are available resources allocated and utilized in public secondary school sports programmes?

Table 4 Mean score on resource Allocation

Resource Allocation	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Decision
Allocation prioritizes inter-house competitions	3.58	0.88	Agree
Resources are distributed equitably among sports activities	2.91	0.95	Disagree
Maintenance of facilities is regularly funded	2.48	0.83	Disagree
Purchase of equipment is consistent with sports needs	2.62	0.91	Disagree
Teachers are motivated by available resources	2.79	0.89	Disagree

Grand Mean = 2.88

Table 4 indicates that, resource allocation is skewed toward high-profile events like inter-house competitions. Routine maintenance, equitable distribution, and teacher support remain inadequate.

Research Question Three: challenges hinder effective funding and resource allocation?

Table 5 Mean Scores on Challenges

Challenge	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Decision
Limited government budget	4.45	0.66	Strongly Agree
Bureaucratic delays in fund release	4.18	0.79	Agree
Poor financial planning in schools	3.97	0.83	Agree
Lack of alternative funding mechanisms	4.11	0.77	Agree
Low community and private sector support	3.86	0.81	Agree
Grand Mean = 4.11			

Table 5 indicated that, Funding limitations are exacerbated by bureaucratic delays, poor planning, and insufficient alternative financing options, limiting resource allocation effectiveness.

Research Question Four: What strategies can improve funding and resource utilization?

Table 6 Mean Scores on Strategies

Strategy	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev.	Decision
Increase government budget allocation	4.32	0.71	strongly Agree
Encourage private sector sponsorship	4.18	0.79	Agree
Implement school-based fundraising programmes	3.92	0.85	Agree
Train sports administrators in financial management	4.05	0.77	Agree

Establish transparent allocation and audit mechanisms 4.21 0.72 Agree

Grand Mean = 4.14

Table 6 revealed that, Respondents emphasized multi-source funding, capacity building, and accountability as key strategies for improving sports resource utilization.

Hypothesis

Table 7: There is no significant relationship between funding adequacy and sports programme effectiveness.

Table 7 PPMC Summary on Relationship between Funding Adequacy and Sports Programme Effectiveness

Variable	r	p-value	Decision
Funding adequacy vs. Programme effectiveness	0.684	0.000	Reject H ₀

There is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between funding adequacy and sports programme effectiveness in public secondary schools.

Discussion

Findings from Research Question One revealed that, the current level of funding for sports programmes in public secondary schools in Lokoja is largely inadequate and irregular. Respondents disagreed that schools receive adequate funding for sports activities ($\bar{x} = 2.34$) and that funds are disbursed on time ($\bar{x} = 2.11$), indicating persistent financial constraints and delays in fund release. Despite this inadequacy, government subvention emerged as the primary source of funding ($\bar{x} = 4.22$), confirming the heavy reliance of public schools on state-provided financial allocations. This pattern reflects the broader situation of sports financing in Nigerian public secondary schools, where sports programmes are often underfunded due to competing priorities in the education sector (Akindutire & Olanipekun, 2020). The dependence on government subvention exposes school sports to fluctuations in public revenue and bureaucratic inefficiencies, which frequently result in delayed or insufficient funding. Additionally, the findings show that schools rely on internally generated revenue (IGR) ($\bar{x} = 3.46$) and, to a lesser extent, community or private donations ($\bar{x} = 2.87$) to supplement funding gaps. While this

indicates some level of financial creativity, such sources are often unstable and inadequate to sustain comprehensive sports programmes. Similar studies in North-Central Nigeria have reported that IGR-based funding is inconsistent and disproportionately favors academic activities over sports (Abubakar & Sule, 2019). Overall, the grand mean of 3.00 confirms that funding for school sports in Lokoja remains insufficient to support effective programme delivery.

Findings addressing Research Question Two indicate that resource allocation in public secondary school sports programmes is uneven and event-driven. Respondents agreed that allocation prioritizes inter-house sports competitions ($\bar{x} = 3.58$), while they disagreed that resources are equitably distributed among sports activities ($\bar{x} = 2.91$). This suggests a preference for highly visible events at the expense of routine sports development and grassroots participation. Furthermore, inadequate funding for facility maintenance ($\bar{x} = 2.48$), equipment procurement ($\bar{x} = 2.62$), and teacher motivation ($\bar{x} = 2.79$) highlights systemic weaknesses in resource utilization. These findings align with previous research showing that school sports resources in Nigeria are often allocated on an ad hoc basis, with little emphasis on sustainability, preventive maintenance, or personnel welfare (Okorie & Mohammed, 2022). The neglect of teacher motivation is particularly concerning, as sports teachers play a critical role in programme implementation. Studies have consistently shown that inadequate instructional resources and lack of incentives reduce teachers' commitment to sports development in schools (Adewumi & Ajibade, 2021). The grand mean of 2.88 therefore confirms that resource allocation practices in Lokoja public secondary schools are insufficient to support quality sports programmes.

Findings from Research Question Three reveal that structural and administrative challenges significantly hinder effective funding and resource allocation. Limited government budget allocation emerged as the most severe challenge ($\bar{x} = 4.45$), followed by bureaucratic delays in fund release ($\bar{x} = 4.18$). These challenges reflect long-standing issues in Nigeria's public sector financing, where sports and physical education are often marginalized in budgetary decisions. Poor financial planning at the school level ($\bar{x} = 3.97$) further compounds funding inefficiencies, suggesting limited capacity among school administrators to manage scarce sports resources effectively. The lack of alternative funding mechanisms ($\bar{x} = 4.11$) and low private sector and community support ($\bar{x} = 3.86$) also restrict opportunities for diversifying sports funding. This finding corroborates earlier studies indicating weak school-community

partnerships and minimal corporate involvement in secondary school sports, especially outside urban centers (Adeleke & Musa, 2023). The high grand mean of 4.11 underscores that these challenges are both pervasive and interrelated, collectively undermining the effectiveness of sports programme funding and resource utilization in Lokoja.

Findings from Research Question Four indicate strong consensus among respondents on practical strategies for improving sports funding and resource utilization. Increasing government budget allocation for school sports received strong support ($\bar{x} = 4.32$), reaffirming the central role of the state in sustaining public school sports programmes. However, respondents also emphasized the importance of private sector sponsorship ($\bar{x} = 4.18$) and school-based fundraising initiatives ($\bar{x} = 3.92$), reflecting growing recognition of the need for diversified funding sources. Capacity building through training of sports administrators in financial management ($\bar{x} = 4.05$) and the establishment of transparent allocation and audit mechanisms ($\bar{x} = 4.21$) were also strongly endorsed. These strategies align with best practices in sports governance, which emphasize accountability, financial transparency, and managerial competence as prerequisites for effective resource utilization (Hoye et al., 2018; Adeyemi & Akinwale, 2021). The grand mean of 4.14 indicates broad agreement that multi-source funding, capacity development, and accountability frameworks are essential for sustainable school sports development.

The test of Hypothesis revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between funding adequacy and sports programme effectiveness ($r = 0.684$, $p < 0.05$). This finding confirms that improved funding directly enhances programme quality, participation levels, and overall effectiveness. It supports systems theory and resource-based perspectives, which posit that organizational outcomes are heavily dependent on the availability and adequacy of resources (Chelladurai, 2014). Similar empirical evidence has been reported in Nigerian and international school sports contexts (Akindutire & Olanipekun, 2020; Bailey et al., 2019).

Conclusions

This study concludes that sports programmes in public secondary schools in Lokoja, Kogi State are significantly constrained by inadequate funding and ineffective resource allocation practices. The findings demonstrate that funding for school sports is insufficient to meet programme needs and that weak allocation mechanisms further undermine the effectiveness of available resources. Both funding adequacy and resource allocation were found to have

significant individual and joint effects on sports programme effectiveness, highlighting their central role in school sports development.

The persistent marginalization of sports within school budgets contradicts national education policy objectives that emphasize holistic student development. Without deliberate efforts to improve funding levels and strengthen allocation practices, school sports programmes will continue to operate below their potential, limiting students' access to physical, social, and developmental benefits. The study therefore shows the need for evidence-based policy reforms and institutional commitment to revitalizing sports programmes in public secondary schools.

Recommendations

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

1. Government should Increased Budgetary Allocation for School Sports in Ilo-Ilo particularly and Kogi state in general
2. Kogi State Government should equally Improved Resource Allocation and Financial Planning of secondary schools in Ilo-Ilo
3. The Sports Administrators in Ilo-Ilo should organize Capacity Building workshops for School Administrators and Sports Teachers on regular bases.
4. Stakeholder in Sports in Ilo-Ilo should vigorously pursue Sustainable Alternative Funding Mechanisms
5. Sports Policy should be vehemently enforced and monitored by the policy makers in sports industry in Kogi State.

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