



Influence of Sports Administrator's Demographic Variables in Grassroots Sports Development in Abia North Senatorial Zone in Abia State

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of sports administrator's demographic variables on grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey design was employed in this study. The participants for the study consists of 340 (196 males and 144 females) sports administrators randomly selected from five (5) Local Government Areas in Abia North Senatorial Zone. A self-developed, validated and reliable questionnaire (Reliability of 0.68) was used to collect data. It was found that ($\chi^2 cal 0.76$) $\chi^2 crit. (3.84)$ at df of 1, $p > 0.05$ was not significant on the influence of sports administrator's demographic variables on the management of fund for grassroots, sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. While ($\chi^2 cal = 4.68$; $\chi^2 crit = 3.84$; at $df 1, p > 0.05$) significantly influence sports administrator's year of experience for the management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended that the appointment of sports administrators should be based on years of experience and the ability to manage resources for the effective development of grassroots sports in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

Keywords: Influence, Sports, Administrators, Grassroots, Development.

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INTRODUCTION

Sports nowadays is popular than ever before, the number of sports competitions is increasing and are capturing the attention of every one of all ages among which are grassroots sports. Sports is any activity that is competitive in nature and must have recorded history of development, rules and regulation involving physical exertions and organized association (Ogundario, 2001). Most leading sports nations of the world utilize the experts of sports administrators in all the area of sports and then always and consistently achieve results in terms of organization of sports or even at competition (Ikulayo, 2009). Sports development in Nigeria has witnessed a lot of metamorphosis from the colonial, pre-independence to independence eras. However, those at the helm of affairs in the sports industry had been non-professionals and this had negatively affected the fortunes of sports development in Nigeria (Mora Kinyo & Aluko, 2008; Ajiduah, 2001; Onifade, 2000; Oyewusi, 1996).

In addition, the vision 2010 committee revealed that some of the problems affecting sports development in Nigeria include poor administration of sports at the grassroots, frequent changes in the administrative structure of sports as well as in the leadership of the governing bodies.

Administration is the methods and strategies adopted by individuals towards policy attainment (Hernandez, 2002). It involves the activities and processes adopted by a group of individual towards attainments of set goals. Sports administration involves the manipulation of essential elements in an administrative environment for the purpose of ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the running of a sporting organization so that a set policy could be achieved (Ikhioya, 2001). Sports administration is handled by sports personnel called sports administrators. Sports administrators according to Olajide (2007) is that person male or female that is charged with the responsibility of harnessing human and material resources available for sports patron, development and excellence. A sports administrators is anybody at any level of sports organization who directs efforts of the people towards the achievement of organization goal as applied to sports (Awuyinfa, 2011). Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Service (2011) reported that sports administrators among other things help to ensure the smooth running of sports organization which may range from reception work at local sports club to marketing or human resources at major club. In support of this assertion, Inerigite and Ajibua (2014), opined that sports administrators has created series of impacts on grassroots sports which has led to development of grassroots sports ranging from proper management and organization of human and material resources, going for talents hunting, involvement of mass media and media coverage in grassroots sports which has help to promote grassroots sports to attain a high level of development.

Grassroots development is the process by which the people living in the rural area organized themselves to overcome the obstacles to their social, cultural and economic wellbeing including sporting activities (Ladani, 2008). Grassroots sports are were future athletes begins their sporting journey and through proper organization and administration of sporting event, by sports administrators, most of the athletes are brought to lime light which has brought to the development of grassroots sports (Ladani, 2008). No one can deny the fact that most of our Olympic medalists and athletes representing our country today, are discovered from grassroots sports among which are Blessing Okagbare, Jay-Jay Okocha, Emmanuel Amonike Kanu Nwankwo, Yobo Joseph among others.

Anyanwu (1999), stated that grassroots approach is the most appropriate measure to sports development in Nigeria as well as any nation struggling to find its way in the world of sports. Grassroots approach places emphasis on the youth sports development effort (Jeroh, 2012). The National Sports Policy (1989) and Vision 2010 clarified that grassroots sports must be given proper attention if sports objectives are to be achieved. Unfortunately, sports

development at the grassroots levels is the most neglected. Anyanwu (1999) reiterated that it is good to have the Olympic Games as a target in the effort towards sports development but it should be realized that nobody begins to build a house from the roof. A building is started from the foundation and in sports, the foundation is the grassroots. The grassroots approach to sports development includes, institutional sports, clubs/association sports and community based sports. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the impact of sports administrators on grassroots sports developments in Abia North Senatorial Zone of Abia State.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is gradually growing in fame in view of her performance in national and international competitions especially in soccer, track and field athletics, boxing and wrestling, despite this encouragement trend, not very much is being done in sports development particularly at the grassroots levels to lay a solid foundation for development in Nigeria. Most state sports councils/commissions and non-profit organizations have not been living up to their responsibilities and functions. They exist in names without any visible sports programmes on ground (Jeroh, 2012). In the time past, many athletes who has done us proud today were discovered through grassroots sports development. Grassroots sports covers all areas of sports discipline practiced by non-professionals and on a national level through national sports ranging from inter-house sports competition, inter-collegiate and community sports competitions (Ekpenyong, 2008). Trace of this poor performance has been linked to sports administrators vested with the responsibilities of administering and ensuring sports development at all levels. Despite the above benefits and role expected of sports administrators as regards to sports development, it seems presently that nothing is happening to sports at the grassroots levels. No meaningful trace of organization of sports competitions, improvement and maintenance of sports facilities and equipment, funding or management of funds, motivation of athletes, sports officiating officials, fans and supporters of local clubs and teams at the grassroots levels. These and more observations have necessitated this study particularly in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

Objectives of the Study

- Find out the influence of gender of sports administrators on the management of fund for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial zone, Abia State;
- Ascertain the influence of working experience of sports administrators on the management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What influence has gender of sports administrators on the demographic variables in grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State?
- What influence has years of working experience of sports administrators on demographic variables in grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at an alpha level of 0.05 confidence:

- There is no significant difference between male and female sports administrators influence on management of funds for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.
- There is no significant difference of years of working experience of sports administrators influence on the management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study consisted of 1,027 sports administrators in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. (Abia State Ministry of Sports, 2007). The sample size for the study was 340 (196 males and 144 females) sports administrators randomly selected from 5 Local Government Areas in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. Questionnaire titled “Influence of Sports Administrator’s Demographic Variables on Grassroots Sports Development (QISADVGSD) was used for data collection for the study. The questionnaire was validated by experts, using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation yielded an index of 0.68. Administration of the instrument took a period of two weeks, and 340 copies were completely filled and returned for data analysis. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while chi-square was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha significant level.

RESULTS

Answer to the Research Questions

Research Question 1

What influence has gender of sports administrators on the demographic variables in grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State?

Table 1: Percentage analysis of influence of sports administrators’ gender on the management of fund for grassroots sports development

S/N	Items	Agreed	%	Disagreed	%
1.	Male sports administrators ensure judicious use of fund for the development of grassroots sports in my local government than female ones.	178	(52%)	162	(48%)
2.	Money allocated to sports in my area is used by male sports administrators to acquire the needed sports facilities and equipment than their female counterparts	184	(54%)	156	(46%)
3	Female sports administrators know how to help generate fund for grassroots sports programme than their male counterparts.	144	(42%)	196	(58%)
4	Most female sports administrators used the money meant for sports development for their personal interest than males.	30	(9%)	310	(91%)
5	Most male sports administrators don’t plan for the money donated for grassroots sports development.	70	(21%)	270	(79%)

The table above shows the percentage analysis of sports of gender influence on the management of fund for grassroots sports development among sports administrators in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. From the percentage analysis of the respondents to the various items statement, it was observed in item 1 of the table that out of the 340 respondents, 178(52%) of the respondents agreed to the statement that male sports administrators ensure judicious use of fund meant for the development of grassroots sports in their local government than female ones do while 162 (48%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. in item 2 of the table, it was revealed that 184(54%) of the respondents agreed to the statement that the money allocated to sports in their area is used by male sports administrators to acquire the needed sports facilities and equipment than their female counterparts while 156(46%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. In item 3, the analysis revealed that 144 (42%) of the respondents agreed that female sports administrators know how to help/generate fund for grassroots sports programme than their male counterparts, while 196(58%) of the respondents which was higher indicated disagreed to the statement. In item 4, 30(9%) of the respondents agreed to the statement. It was found that most female sports administrators don't used the money meant for grassroots sports development for their personal interest than their males counterparts as indicated by 310(91%) of the respondents who disagreed to the statement. In item 5, 70(21%) of the respondents which is less agreed to the statement that most male sports administrators don't plan for the money donated for grassroots sports development, while 270(79%) of the respondents which is higher disagreed to the statement meaning that most male sports administrators plan for the money donated for grassroots sports development.

From the above items analysis, it was found that the percentage of the respondents who responded affirmatively in favour of male sports administrators is higher than the percentage of them that responded negatively. This means that gender of sports administrators have influence on the management of fund for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

Research Question 2

What influence has years of working experience of sports administrators' on management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State?

Table 2: Percentage analysis on influence of sports administrator's years of working experience on management of athletes for grassroots sports development

S/N	Items	Agreed	%	Disagreed	%
1.	Experienced sports administrators motivate athletes for active participation in grassroots sports than inexperienced ones.	184	(54.1%)	156	(45.8%)
2.	Experienced sports administrators help to identify young talented athletes at the grassroots level than inexperienced ones.	220	(64.7%)	120	(35.2%)
3	Experienced sports administrators help to conduct training session for young athletes in different schools and community compared to inexperienced ones.	198	(58.2%)	142	(41.8%)
4	Experienced sports administrators know how to plan for effective mobilization of athletes for inter house, school, communal, and local competitions than inexperienced ones.	208	(61.2%)	132	(38.8%)
5	Experienced sports administrators announce sports programmes and activities through various channels to popularize sports for athletes, fans and spectators as compared to inexperienced ones.	196	(57.7%)	144	(42.3%)

The table above shows analysis of influence of sports administrators years of working experienced on management of athletes for grassroots sports development. From the analysis, it was found that in item 1, 184 (54.1%) of the respondents agreed that experienced sports administrators motivate athletes for active participation in grassroots sports than inexperienced ones, while 156 (45.8%) of the respondents which was less disagreed to the statement.

In item 2, it was 220 (64.7%) of the respondents agreed that experienced sports administrators help to identify young talented athletes at the grassroots level than inexperienced ones, while 120 (35.2%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. In item 3, 198 (58.2%) of the respondents indicated that sports administrators help to conduct training session for young athletes in different schools and communities as compared to inexperienced ones, while 14 (41.8%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. In item 4, it was revealed that experienced sports administrators don't properly monitor available sports facilities and equipment, while 296 (87%) of the respondents indicated false to the statement. In item 4, 208 (61.2%) of the respondents indicated that experienced sports administrators know how to planned for effective mobilization of athletes for inter house, school, communal, and local competitions than inexperienced ones, while 132 (38.8%) of the respondents disagreed. In item 5, 196 (57.7%) of the respondents indicated that experienced sports administrators announce sports programmes and activities through various channels to popularize sports for athletes, fan and spectators as compared to inexperienced ones while 144 (42.3%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

From the above analysis, it was found that the percentage of the respondents who responded positively in favour of the experienced sports administrators is higher than the percentage of them that responded against them. This shows that the years of working experience of sports administrators' on management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. The analysis revealed that the experienced sports administrators have more influenced on the management of athletes than inexperienced ones.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between male and female sports administrators influence on management of fund for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis of difference between male and female sports administrators' influence on management of fund for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State

Gender	Agreed (Exp)	Disagreed (Exp)	Total	χ^2_{cal}	$\chi^2_{Crit.}$	Df.	Sig.	Decision
Male	66 (69.8)	130 (126.2)	196	0.76	3.84	1	0.05	Accepted
Female	55(51.2)	89 (92.8)	144					
Total	121	219	340					

From the chi-square (χ^2) analysis in the table above, it was found that the χ^2 calculate value observed was 0.76, while the χ^2 critical value was 3.84 at 0.05 level of significant under degree of freedom (df) = 1. Thus the null hypothesis stated was accepted since the calculated value (0.76) was less than the χ^2 critical value (3.84). This means that there is no significant difference between male and female administrators' influence on management of fund for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

Hypothesis 2: The years of working experienced of sports administrators will have no significant influence on management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis of significant influence of sports administrators' year of working experienced on management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State

Years of working experienced	Agreed (Exp)	Disagreed (Exp)	Total	χ^2 cal	χ^2 crit.	Df	Sig.	Decision
Less than 10 years	90 (84.2)	46 (55.6)	136	4.68	3.84	1	0.05	Rejected
Above 10 years	111(120.6)	93 (83.4)	204					
Total	201	139	340					

From Chi-square (χ^2) analysis in the table above, it was found that the χ^2 critical value was 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance under degree of freedom (df) 1. Thus the null hypothesis stated was rejected since the calculated value (4.68) was higher than the χ^2 critical value (3.84). This means that the years of working experience of sports administrators have significant influence on management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

Summary of Findings

From the various findings of the study above, it was found that:

- Gender of sports administrators have influence on the management of fund for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State;
- Years of working experience of sports administrators have influence on the management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Finding from the study reveals that Gender of sports administrators have influence on the management of fund for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. This finding is in line with Igbokwe (2017), findings which states that one major problem faced by most sports administrators or managers especially at the grassroots levels is the problem of inadequate fund and lack of proper utilization of little available or released fund. The interview conducted with staff in a study conducted by Igbokwe (2017). The findings from this study also review the years of working experience of sports administrators on management of athletes for grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. This finding is in line with Aluko (1999), findings which stated that athletes are key stakeholders to the development of sports. No meaningful sports programmes can occur without the involvement and managements of athletes. The findings is also in line with Igbokwe (2017), which highlighted that the supporters club not properly managed can also cause problems to sports growth and development as the attitude and behaviour can ginger up violence in sports. This group of people however need to be guided, oriented and manage for peace, growth and development expected for sports to occur. Study has shown that there is a link between sports councils (administrators) and supporters club, he further noted that they

contributed both morally and financially to activities of grassroots sports and have some influence on the performance of the athletes.

CONCLUSION

This study attempted to investigate influence of sports administrators' demographic variables in grassroots sports development in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State. Two hypotheses were tested out of which one was rejected while the remaining one was accepted. Based on the findings of the study, it was hereby concluded that sports administrator's demographic variables influence sports administrator's management of grassroots sports development.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn above, the researcher recommends that sports administrator's demographic variables such as gender (male and female) should be considered to manage grassroots sports development most especially in handling and utilization of funds. Qualified administrators with consideration years of experience should be recruited to manage grassroots sports in Abia North Senatorial Zone, Abia State.

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