

CHALLENGES OF THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA ON UNIVERSITY SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION IN SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed challenges of mass media role on university sports development and promotion in South-South geopolitical zone Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was used in the study. The sample for the study was 1,474 respondents (university sports organizers, athletes and mass media professionals) made up the sample for the study. It comprised of 134 university sports organizers, 464 university sports athletes and 876 mass media professionals. A 63-item questionnaire tagged "Mass Media Role on University Sports Development and Promotion Questionnaire (MMRUSDPQ)" was used for the collection of data. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test retest method, with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.73. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the data for research question, while the z-test was used to test the hypothesis at a significance level of 0.05. It was discovered that mass media does not significantly contribute to the promotion of university sports because it fails to provide live coverage of university sports events in the region. Based on the findings the researcher recommended among others that establishment of a media friendly university sports environment for the media practitioners and sports athletes; sufficient funds should be made available to organizers and media outlets for coverage of university sports. Most importantly, the provision of stable electricity supply should be given priority assertion because the use of media facilities during university sports events is hinged on it.

Key words: Mass Media, University Sports Development and Promotion

Introduction

There is no doubt that people all over the world get involved in sporting activities as a form of recreation, exercise and as a means of livelihood, however all with the aim of winning or coming out victorious. Sports refers to all forms of physical activities which are competitive in nature, embarked upon by unplanned or planned participants for the

purpose of retaining or improving physical ability, skills and providing entertainment to both contestants, and audiences alike. This is a combination of an athletic agility and competitive spirit of individuals or teams with skill or bodily dexterity (Choochoo, 2011). Sports activities are usually regulated by rules and laws which govern each sporting event, some of these rules and laws determine the duration, number of players, location, nature of the event, disciplinary actions in order to ensure fair competition and allow the process of selecting a reliable winner.

The Sport Accord (2013) defined sport based on certain criteria namely; having some form of competition, not destructive to any living creature, not dependent kit, gear or equipment provided by a single manufacturer (except trademarked games such as arena football), not dependent on a specifically designed "luck" component in the sport. Thus, sport events can be predominantly physical (rugby, football, basketball or boxing), primarily mind based (such as chess, scrabble or go), motor based (Formula 1 car racing, bike racing or boat racing), co-ordination based (billiard sports), or animal-supported (horseracing sport).

On the other hand sports can also be defined based on the type of sport namely; public sport, professional sport, championship sport and educational sport. Public sport means physical education activities and sport of the whole society which is done regularly by individuals, formal or informal groups to meet physical and mental needs. This may include improving health, morale and social relationships in an informed way. While professional sport refers organisational activities which are done in a targeted and ranked manner to gain outcome and develop economic and social values. One of the features of professional sport is prosperity (Ojeme, 2010).

Ojeme (2010) further stated that championship sport refers to organized competitive sports which are done considering particular rules and regulations to promote sport records and achieve medals or ranking. He went on to state that education sport is defined as a situation when an individual learns sport skills in certain courses in the family or formal training institutions (schools and tertiary institutions) and understands their roles or values in physical and mental health and for success in life. The main feature of this type of sport is growth development and this includes student sports.

Internationally, the role of sports on politics, economy, institutions, international relationships, unity, peace, progress and infrastructural development is evident for all to see. Yet, these advances would not have been witnessed without the important role played by mass

media coverage and presentation of sporting events to people all around the world (Kofi, 2002). Through mass media coverage, broadcast and presentation of sporting activities people who are not able to watch or witness sporting events at venues as part of the audience are able to join hundreds of millions and in some cases billions of viewers via television, radio, internet and other devices anywhere in the world.

According to Elendu (2012) sports development can be seen as a proactive improvement and transformation in the condition of sports resources. It is multidimensional in nature because it includes enhancements in sports equipment, administration, organisation, sports welfare, personnel improvement, official welfare and the welfare of supporters regardless of gender, age, religion, race, ethnic status and economic background towards the realisation of the objectives of sports in a particular society. Developments in sports can only take place when material and human resources are coordinated in manner that ensures a safe environment for all sports participants can enjoy sports for entertainment or on a professionally competitive basis.

These developments in sports also require a level maintenance of existing sports facilities and in some cases the construction of new sports facilities that may be absent in a given location.

Mass media according to Marwat, Wasem Khattak, Abbas and Bi (2014) means the interaction of communication taking place at a wider scale, encircling vast population and wide territorial jurisdiction. Media is spreading abroad means of coverage of different types of news and information to the public at large through print and electronic sources. The use of mass media as a veritable tool for the expansion, growth, coverage, broadcast, presentation, development and promotion of sports all over the universe has only been possible as a result of advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) devices such as radio, television, computers, print media, smart phones and other portable handheld devices which are used to watch and listen to sports more than ever before in human history (Kourdi, 2008).

This is because most sporting events are played in stadia, arenas, theatres and courses with a limited number of audience capacity, but as a result of these mass media devices people are able to join as spectators from their homes, offices or places of recreation. The transmission of sports through mass media passages has become a common occurrence in cities, towns and villages in Nigeria. It is a regular phenomenon to see people gathered around the television or radio watching and listening to a

live sporting event being broadcast from one part of the country or world to another.

Since 1966, university sports competition in the country has been a structured event of sporting activities between various universities in the country under the supervision of the Nigerian University Games Association (NUGA) with about 36 universities as members. According to Ifedili and Omiunu (2011), NUGA puts together sporting events and competitions in Nigeria strictly for universities in the country. These sporting activities feature 15 different events namely; athletics, badminton, basketball, chess, cricket, handball, hockey, judo, soccer, squash, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, and volleyball. The universities games, is a bi-annual interuniversity sports competition hosted by different universities in and across the country. University of Ibadan hosted the first edition of the university games in 1966, after hosting the West African Universities Games in 1965 a year earlier.

There is no doubt that in the development of university sports in Nigeria, mass media had several roles to play such as informative, entertaining, supporting the law, supervising obedience of the law, cultural transmission, promoting growth of the sports in the society and constructing sponsorship and partnership between companies and universities game organisers. However, in Nigeria organisers of university sporting events, participants and the general public are not yet fully aware of the actual possibilities mass media can proffer in the development of university sports in the country. It is this lack of awareness means that mass media facilities are not fully tapped into and utilized during the process of staging and organising university sporting events in the country.

Mass media cannot play a role on university sport development in Nigeria, for as long as managers of university games, participants, sponsors and mass media operators fail to collaborate on several levels (coverage expertise and experience) to ensure the success of these events. The absence of these collaborative efforts is evident in Nigerian university sport programs where there is no clear strategy and policy framework with mass media organisations to guide the development, coordination and supervision of university sporting events. Regrettably though, not much has been documented about the qualitative and quantitative role of mass media on university sports development and promotion in South South Nigeria.

Explicitly not much is known about the level of university sports development and promotion in terms of mass media coverage. Not enough

empirical research to examine the extent to which universities sport events are showcased on mass media platforms; the role of mass media coverage of these events on university sports development and promotion, the service inputs for mass media coverage of university sport facilities, the level of university sporting outcomes as a result of mass media coverage and the level of service outputs due to mass media coverage of university sport events. These are the issues bothering the researcher in this study, and hence form the purpose of the study.

The aim of this study was to assess the mass media roles on university sports development and promotion, in South South geopolitical zone, Nigeria. Precisely, the study was designed to examine the challenges of mass media roles on university sports development and promotion in South South geopolitical zone Nigeria

The following research question was addressed in the study: What are the challenges of mass media roles in university sports development and promotion in South South geopolitical zone, Nigeria?

The study was guided by the the hypothesis tested at 0.05 alpha level: there is no significant difference in the challenges to the role of mass media in university sports development/promotion among mass media professionals and universities sports organizers and athletes South South geopolitical zone, Nigeria.

Method

This study is on the assessment of the role of mass media on university sports development and promotion in South South geopolitical zone, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was used for the study research, which requires the collection of data from a sample drawn from a given population to enable the researcher examine and describe an existing on-going phenomenon regarding the role of mass media in university sports development and promotion.

The population of the study comprised of all mass media organizations with sports writers, sports presenters, sports journalist, universities of the South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria with university athletes, university sports organizers from public universities. The process of stratification were applied also to the 52 mass media organizations with types and selected randomly.

In the following South South states of Nigeria: Cross Rivers State, Akwa Ibom State, Rivers State, Bayelsa State, Delta State and Edo State. The population consisted of all these sports writers, sports presenters, sports journalist, university athletes and university sports organizers from

the states listed above. At the time of this study, in the South South states of Nigeria there are; 12 public universities and 52 mass media organisations. With a total population of 2320 university athletes, 670 university sports organizers and 4378 mass media professionals in states of the South South region of Nigeria (Wikipedia Encyclopaedia, 2015).

The sampled size was 464 university sports athletes, 134 university sports organisers and 876 mass media professionals were selected. A combination of simple random sampling, stratified sampling and accidental sampling was used in the process of sample selection. Also to ensure that there is an approximate representation of mass media companies and universities in South South Nigeria. The composition of the sample took into consideration the relative number of sports personnel from various media companies in states of South South Nigeria and the various universities that are located in this geopolitical region. The researcher wrote the names of all the universities and mass media companies in South South Nigeria, and then through a process of stratified sampling the universities and mass media companies were separated into their respective types and locations. After which, the researcher adopted a process of simple random sampling to select nine universities from the list of all the federal and state universities in South South Nigeria. Then the researcher through the adoption of sample faction technique used 20% of respondents from each category of the population this led to a sampled total of 464 university sports athletes, 134 university sports organisers and 876 mass media professionals were selected. The sampled respondents had a combined total of 1,474 respondents. However, both mass media professionals and university sports participants were required to meet the following standards;

- Must have successfully has functioned as a mass media sports journalist, sports presenter, and university sports organizer or university athletes for more than two years.
- Should have Involved in the coverage and participation of university sports as a mass media professional or university sports athlete or university sports organizer from 2011 – 2015.

The instrument used for data collection in this study was self-developed fixed response questionnaire, titled “Mass Media Role on University Sports Development and Promotion Questionnaire (MMRUSDPQ)”. The questionnaire was designed specifically for three different groups of respondents namely; mass media personnel, university sports athletes and university sports organizers. It has two sections,

section A – B. Section A contained items 1 – 4 and was used to elicit information on personal information or biodata of the respondents [such as, university, state, gender and occupation]. Lastly, section B focused on the challenges of mass media in the development of university sports.

Content and face validity of the instrument, the research questions and hypotheses were used to cross-check the items on the Mass Media Role on University Sports Development and Promotion Questionnaire (MMRUSDPQ). The content assessment was ensured and suitable through scrutinizing by some lecturers who are experts in Human Kinetics Education as well as the comments and corrections of the researcher's supervisors. The comments were used to validate the instrument.

Test-re-test method was used to assess the reliability of the instrument. Fifteen copies of the questionnaire were administered on some mass media professionals, university athletes and university sports organizers outside the sample of study – Ernest Ikoli Press, Town, Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpolu, Port Harcourt. After 2 weeks, fresh copies of the questionnaire were re-administered to the same persons. Scores on the two sets of questionnaire were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics. The result correlated of 0.75 indicating high reliability. Based on this, the instrument was considered highly reliable and therefore suitable for the study.

A total of 1,474 copies of the questionnaire were administered with the help of some eleven research assistants plus the researcher who were trained in the allocation and retrieval of research questionnaires. This ensured that the questionnaires were properly circulated, and made available to the correct respondents in the above stated states and retrieved in an appropriate manner. Eleven research assistants were used and they were chosen from four of the South South States in Nigeria except Bayelsa State and Rivers State. They assisted the researcher to administer and retrieve the questionnaire from the respondents after filling.

A four (4) point modified Likert rating scale was adopted for responses on the role of mass media in university sports development and promotion.

The data obtained was analysed using mean and standard deviation on a criterion mean of mean (\bar{x}) 2.5. This was used to compare the mean of each item to accept or reject outcomes. Mean (\bar{x}) is greater than x ($>$) 2.50; it is agreed, accepted and if mean is lesser than x ($<$), it is reject the

items. The hypotheses were tested using z-test at a significance level of 0.05

Result

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Challenges of Mass Media Role in University Development and Promotion

S/ N	Items	Mass Professionals (n=876)	Media Decision	University Sports Organizers/ Athletes (n=598)	Decision		
1.	Mass media destroys the promotion of local university sports by promoting foreign sports.	2.06	0.90	Disagreed	2.44	0.96	Disagreed
2.	Mass media commentaries on university sports can instigate riots, fanaticism, and hooliganism in fans.	2.02	0.88	Disagreed	1.87	0.87	Disagreed
3.	Unqualified sports media personnel is a challenge to university sports coverage.	3.21	0.85	Agreed	2.87	0.86	Agreed
4.	As a result of the influence of mass media the struggle for victory can lead to high levels of corruption and fraud in university sports.	2.21	0.93	Disagreed	3.68	0.56	Agreed
5.	Poor and outdated mass media facilities affect the quality of broadcast of university sports events.	2.67	0.92	Disagreed	2.88	0.85	Agreed
6.	Inaccurate Reporting of university sports events may affect university sports development promotion.	2.75	0.95	Disagreed	2.11	0.91	Disagreed
7.	Mass media can create exaggerations and scandals in university sports and athletes, thus affect its development and promotion.	2.30	0.95	Disagreed	3.05	0.80	Agreed
8.	Poor electricity affects coverage and broadcast hence affecting university sports development and promotion.	3.49	0.60	Agreed	3.69	0.55	Agreed
9.	Poor funding and finance hinder mass media's ability to promote and develop university sports.	3.80	0.62	Agreed	3.85	0.39	Agreed
10.	Media ownership and consolidation can affect university sports presentation.	2.15	0.94	Disagreed	2.04	0.88	Disagreed
Aggregate Mean		2.67		Agreed	2.85		Agreed

Table 2: z-test of the difference between Mass media professional and University Sports organizers/athletes on the Challenges to the role of mass media on university sports development and promotion among Mass media professionals and Universities sports organizer/athletes in South South geopolitical zone, Nigeria

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	z-cal.	z-crit.	Df	Alpha level	p-value (Sign)	Decision
Mass media professionals	876	2.67	0.53	7.49	1.960	1,472	0.05	.000	Ho
University Sport Organizer/Athletes	578	2.85	0.40						Rejected

Table 2 revealed that the z-calculated value (7.49) is greater than z-critical value (1.960) at degree of freedom (df.) 1,472 at .05 level of significance. Moreso, the p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance of 0.05; hence the null hypothesis was rejected, which implies that there is a significant difference in the challenges of mass media on university sports development/promotion in South South geopolitical zone, Nigeria.

Discussion

Considering the challenges of mass media role in university sports development and promotion in South South Nigeria; based on the analysed result, it is apparent that poor funding and finance as a major challenge that hinders mass media's ability to promote and develop university sports has the highest mean. This can be attested to by the mean for media professionals and university sports organizers/athletes respectively with a mean, which is higher than the criterion mean. In support of this finding Chiakaan and Santas, (2007) stated that in order for the mass media to perform its rightful function in the promotion and development of the country and its institutions such as university sports then it is vital that infrastructural challenges poor electricity supply, funding, insecurity, among others are addressed. These problems act as a hindrance to the effective and efficient contribution of mass media to the development and promotion of university sports in the South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Also based on the findings discovered on the null hypothesis which stated that, there is no significant difference in the challenges of mass media in university sports development/promotion in South South geopolitical zone, Nigeria was rejected. The findings seem to agree with this claim, since the challenges of mass media are believed to

play major roles the development and promotion of university sports in South South Nigeria.

The researcher is of the opinion that the role of media in university sports and sports in general is persuasive in nature, it is capable of mobilizing people to rally round university sports programmes and participate directly or indirectly in these events. Nevertheless, in spite of this role played by media there are various challenges which hinder its ability to accomplish this, such as insufficient instruments, poor electricity supply, reduced broadcast to rural communities, poor funding as factors that discourage its ability to actually contribute to university sports development and promotion. However, in order for true development and promotion of university sports to take place in Nigeria these challenges experienced must be solved in order for university sports to benefit fully from the contributions of mass media.

Furthermore, Nwokoro (2010) found out that since 1970 when the publication industry (especially print media) pulled their resources together to cover the Olympic games there has been increasing number of sports publications in Nigeria. Despite the challenges, almost all the print media in Nigeria carry sports story and this have developed sports. The researcher reiterated that journal publications, magazines, monographs, research works, conferencing, seminars, workshops, etc. are all areas that help the media in disseminating vital information about government public opinion on such policies.

Generally, the study had some salient points brought out on the role of mass media on university sports development and promotion. These two areas are influential to one another. There has been a parallel development in universities. The market growth of sports has aroused a lot of interest in turn bringing in revenue-paying spectators. Sports now has insight and understanding for capturing audiences for advertisers, sports events are used for declaring support for national culture and support to prop up patriotism.

Conclusion

The challenges of mass media role in university sports development and promotion in South-South Nigeria was also agreed on. In support of this finding Chiakaan and Santas, (2007) stated that in order for the mass media to perform its rightful function in the promotion and development of the country and its institutions such as university sports then it is vital that infrastructural challenges poor electricity supply, funding, insecurity, among others are

addressed. These problems act as a hindrance to the effective and efficient contribution of mass media to the development of university sports.

There is a need for regular training and retraining of media workers and university sports organizers and athletes on the role of the mass media in university sports development and promotion. Such trainings will promote the acquisition of skills and strategies in coverage and broadcast of university sports, which will in turn lead to its development and promotion in South-South geopolitical zone Nigeria.

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