

Problems Accentuating Effective Sports Development among Youths in the Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria

Moses Ejukwa Edim, Femedein Timipre Okou, Edmond Asu Odok and Pauline Ekun Ekuri

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Calabar, Calabar PMB1115, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study assessed some problems affecting sports development among youths in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. Survey design was utilized for this study: The population comprised of youths in the Niger-Delta region. Samples of 200 youths were studied. Four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Data were collated using a structured validated and reliability certified questionnaire. Data generated revealed that poor funding, mode of organization, poor incentives and parental approach have significant influence with sports development among youths in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. Some recommendations made include: the need for the government to increase the budgetary allocations for sports in the region, provision of adequate sports facilities and equipment and of course making physical education and sports as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum for primary and secondary schools in the region.

Key words: Accentuating sports development, youths, Niger Delta region.

1. Introduction

The term sports mean different things to many people. Terms such as sports, play, games and physical activities are often used by people to mean the same thing. Cookley [1] sees sports as any form of institutionalized competitive activity that involves physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of the intrinsic satisfaction associated with the activity itself, and the external reward that participation in such activities offer.

Adeniyi [2] noted that sports is a programme which makes use of a wide variety of planned human physical activities called games which may be recreational, competitive, or therapeutic. From these and other definitions of sports, it may be important to point out that sports is a potential tool for physical, emotional and social development of man.

Bonchard and Lortis [3] posited among the various values an individual or the society at large can derive from sports to include reduction in school dropouts, creation of environment conducive for human growth and development, and the development of better citizens. Onifade [4] noted that sports as a social institution teaches and reinforces social beliefs, norms, and values thereby assisting in socializing participants into major cultural and social behaviour patterns of various societies. Sports also serve as a safety value to dissipate excess tension and possible expression of hostility in the society. Sports helps in shaping the behaviors of participants, including other health values such as decrease in the risk of coronary heart diseases, prevention of obesity and excess weight, and increase in body flexibility which reduces the chances of accidents [5, 6].

Despite the multi-various benefits and values of sports, it is evident that many youths do not devote time for it and do not harness the numerous benefits and values derivable. The spate of militancy in the Niger Delta is worrisome, especially in recent time.

Corresponding author: Moses Ejukwa Edim, Ph.D.,
research field: sports administration. E-mail:
edimmoses@yahoo.com.

Youths appear to have substituted gainful activities such as sports with its great intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to arms carrying and hostage-taking. The researchers wonder if sports could not have assisted in reducing this trend as many scholars have posited. Could it be that sports have not been properly developed to attract the participation of youths in the Niger Delta region?

Sports development requires a conscientious planning and financing. Weinberg and Gould [7] observed factors that can impede sports development and participation to include situational factors such as social support, time, and climate of the region and convenience of exercise facilities. Also included is the personal factors like exercise history, knowledge of and belief in health benefits of exercise. The behavioral factors are smoking, occupation, and income; while the pragmatic factors have to do with exercise intensity, group or individual programme, and qualities of the exercise leaders.

Bucher [8] identified the following as the negative economic effects of inadequate funding on sports to include:

- Poor performance of both athletes and coaches;
- Poor assessment of both trainers and trainees;
- Inefficient and ineffective coaching or inability of players to play well;
- Exposure of both athletes and coaches to unsafe conditions (hazards, risk and dangers);
- Lack of research in the field of sports;
- Reduction in the popularity of some of the events, especially sports that have insufficient allocations;
- Withdrawal from participation in sports due to poor maintenance of athletes;
- Deterioration of the health of athletes after withdrawal or reduction in level of participation.

According to Agbu [9], Adeyemi [10] and Ntui [6], it is concluded that the growth and development of sports in Nigeria has been greatly hampered by poor financial planning, inadequate and poor facilities and equipment, poor training and coaching among others.

They went further to advice that for a nation to be proud and maintain her place on the global map, it must be able to improve upon her facilities both in the area of sports and other aspects of infrastructural development.

2. Methodology

This study utilized the survey research design. The assessable population which the researchers used represents the target population which consists of all the youths in Niger Delta region, which is one of the sixth geo-political regions in Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 youths for the study.

The research instrument, which was a structured questionnaire, comprised of 16 items, all on a four point Likert-type scale. In terms of validity some experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation, and Human Kinetics and Health Education affirmed with 90% agreement that the entire instrument was suitable for measuring what it purported to measure. Using the split-half reliability method and the associated Spearman Brown prophesy formula, the reliability index of the entire instrument was found to be 0.86. Face-to-face hand delivery method was used during the data collection procedure.

All the 200 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and thus giving 100% return rate. The following four hypotheses were tested in the study:

- Poor funding by governments does have any significant relationship with sports development in the Niger Delta region;
- There is no significant relationship between mode of organization of sporting programmes and sports development in the Nigeria Delta region;
- Poor incentives/rewards do not significantly relate with sports development among youths in the Niger Delta region;
- Parental approval does not have any significant relationship with sports development among youths in the Niger Delta region.

3. Results

The presentation of result of the analysis was done hypothesis by hypothesis below.

3.1 Hypothesis 1

Poor funding by government does have any significant relationship with sports development in the Niger Delta region. The statistical analysis technique used to test this hypothesis was Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

The result in Table 1 shows that the calculated r -value of 0.69 is higher than the critical r -value of 0.138 at 0.05 level of significant with 198 degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that poor funding by government has significant relationship with sports development in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria.

3.2 Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between mode of organization of sporting programmes and sports

development in the Niger Delta region. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was deployed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

The result of the analysis revealed that the calculated r -value of 0.63 is higher than the critical r -value of 0.138 at 0.05 level of significant with 198 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore means that mode of organization of sporting programmes significantly relates with sports development in Niger-Delta region of Nigeria.

3.3 Hypothesis 3

Poor incentives/rewards do not significantly relate with sports development among youths in the Niger Delta region. The statistical analysis technique considered appropriate to test this hypothesis was Pearson Moment Correlation analysis. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that the calculated r -value of 0.59 is higher than the critical r -value of 0.138 at 0.05 level of significant. With this result, the null hypothesis

Table 1 Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between poor funding by governments and sports development in Niger Delta region ($N = 200$).

Variables	$\frac{\sum X}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	$\sum xy$	r -value
Poor funding by government	3,668	6,779	98,767	0.69*
Sports development	3,334	6,466		

* Significant at 0.05 level; critical $r = 0.138$; df (degree of freedom) = 198.

Table 2 Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between mode of organization of sporting programmes and sports development in Niger Delta region ($N = 200$).

Variables	$\frac{\sum X}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	$\sum xy$	r -value
Mode of organization of sporting programmes	3,788	7,539	98,553	0.63*
Sports development	3,334	6,466		

* Significant at 0.05 level; critical $r = 0.138$; $df = 198$.

Table 3 Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between poor incentives/reward and sports development in the Niger Delta region ($N = 200$).

Variables	$\frac{\sum X}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	$\sum xy$	r -value
Poor incentives/reward	3,866	6,878	98,637	0.59*
Sports development	3,334	6,466		

* Significant at 0.05 level; critical $r = 0.138$; $df = 198$.

was ejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between poor incentives/reward and sports development in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria.

3.4 Hypothesis 4

Parental approval does not have any significant relationship with sports development among youths in the Niger Delta region. Pearson Moment Correlation analysis was used to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 4.

The result in Table 4 indicates that the calculated r -value of 0.66 is higher than the critical r -value of 0.138 at 0.05 level of significant with 198 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that parental approval has significant relationship with sports development in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria.

4. Discussion of Findings

The results from the testing of four null hypotheses of the study are quite revealing. The first finding of the study revealed that poor funding by governments significantly militates against sports development in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. Poor funding ranged from inadequate financial allocation for sports, untimely release of available funds to coaches and athletes, to even starving athletes of funds meant for them. Bucher [8] among other scholars observed that such condition can result to poor performance of both athletes and coaches, poor assessment of trainers and trainees, ineffective coaching, inability of players to play well, and withdrawal from participation in sports due to poor maintenance of athletes, among others.

The result of the second hypothesis showed that

mode of organization of sports programmes in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is poor and significantly militates against sports development. From the study, poor organization of sports in the region manifested in poor training approaches and poor organization of training programmes, poor accommodation arrangement during sports outings, poor coordination and selection procedure of athletes by coaches/trainers, among others. It is noted that the growth and development of sports on Nigeria has been greatly hampered by poor training and coaching, among other factors [6, 9, 10]. The finding of Bucher [8] also corroborated the findings of this study. Bucher observed that poor assessment of trainees and trainers, and ineffective and inefficient coaching and organization have negative effects on sports development [8].

The third hypothesis tested revealed that poor incentives/reward significantly militate against sports development. The finding corroborated the assertion of Cookley [1], Bonchard and Lortis [3] that sports participation is motivated by extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. When athletes come into sports with such unsatisfied expectations, they will definitely opt for a more rewarding venture. This may be the reasons for which militancy had pledged so much instead of sports among youths in the region.

The study also revealed that parental approval significantly militates against sports participation and development. It is observed that the average family in the Niger Delta region is a poor peasant farmer or fisherman. Such parents need the assistance of their children in the farms. Cookley [1] noted that people with lower income, lower education, and lower economic status are likely to participate or engage in

Table 4 Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between parental approval and sports development in the Niger Delta region ($N = 200$).

Variables	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum xy$	r -value
Parental approval	3,732	7,692	98,388	0.66*
Sports development	3,334	6,466		

* Significant at 0.05 level; critical $r = 0.138$; $df = 198$.

leisure activities. From the result of the study, it was concluded that poverty in the region greatly influences the disposition of parents to allowing their children take part in sports, even the disposition of youths themselves in participation. This study also gave another insight that parents are afraid to release their wards for sports due to fear of injury and its cost implications.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings made in this study, it was concluded that poor funding, mode of organization, poor incentives, and parental approval significantly militate against sports development among youths in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. Based on these findings, some recommendations were proffered:

- Government should increase the funding of sports programmes in the Niger Delta region;
- Sport should be developed to endear participation of youths. This should be consciously planned and promoted by government to provide avenue for meaningful engagement of the teeming youths in the region that are resorting to arms and militancy;
- Seasoned professionals should be engaged in sports management and coaching in the region. This may assist in reducing the engagement of quacks in coaching and training positions;
- Government and philanthropists should engage in

assive investment and provision of adequate sports facilities and equipment across the region to improve on sports development;

- Rewards and incentives to athletes should be greatly improved upon, where possible to encourage professionalism.

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