

Corporate Promotional Strategies as Correlates of Sport Development in Nigeria

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Abstract. *This study was carried out to examine corporate promotional strategies as correlates of sports development in Nigeria. The strategies examined included advertisement and public relations. Two hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level. Descriptive survey research method was applied. Data was collected from 4441 respondents classified into sport council officials, corporate organisations' personnel and sport fans. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Three instruments, namely, Corporate Promotional Strategy Questionnaire (CPSQ), Sport Organization Questionnaire (SOQ) and Sport Fans Questionnaire (SFQ) were used. Multiple Regression Analysis was adopted to analyse the data. The findings revealed that advertisement and public relations promotional strategies have significant correlation with sport development. Therefore, it is recommended that sport managers be enlightened of avalanche opportunities available to their organizations by establishing partnership with corporate bodies and take advantage of such for sport development in all ramifications. Policies that will encourage corporate organizations to earmark a portion of their annual profits for sport promotion are also recommended.*

Keywords: Sports development, Advertising, Public relations.

Introduction

Sports have permeated the Nigerian society just as it was in many other societies globally. Many media organisations compete for coverage of sports programme as a testimony to the extent to which Nigeria love sports. Morakinyo (2000) noted that sports is a social phenomenon that has grown from its humble beginning of being an entertainment and recreation pastime to become a visible and prominent business focus that can no longer be ignored in the social, political and economic space of any nation. The relevance and importance of sports make sports management the bedrock for development in virtually all nations (Oladuni, 2011). This is the aspect that is responsible for the smooth-running of various sports in terms of planning, organizing, directing and controlling all essential inputs in sports. Sports succeed or fail in direct proportion to the decisions and actions of those responsible for managing them (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2004). Management involves the interaction between those who administer and those who participate in sporting process.

The sports industry has experienced tremendous growth on earnings and income in the last decade (Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2007). Shank

(2009) revealed that sports business industry has been capable of generating more than 210 billion dollars per year in the United States. In order to keep up with various sports competitions at different levels, organisations are forced to think globally and to expand their businesses across borders. Adesanya (2009) stressed that national boundaries are falling and multi-national companies are increasing in number. The focus on international efforts and development of global strategies tends to fall on manufacturing companies as alternative approach. Today, services are the fastest-growing part of the world's trade and account for the largest share of gross domestic product in almost every country (Albers-Miller & Straughan, 2000). Going by global outlook, services are assumed to be encountering larger risks than manufactured goods, since service providers often immediately have to establish their operations abroad and cannot gradually export the goods (Valinkangas & Lehtinen, 2004). One of the sectors within the service industry that has been influenced by the changes in the globalization process, and at the same time highly internationalized, is the sporting sector (Sanchez-Peinado, 2003).

In sales profession, according to Alessandra (2013), two potent ways to secure business are either to go out to get it or to have it come. While the first can be done by engaging in prospecting for customers, the second can be realized through the introduction of certain promotional strategies. Most sales people agree is more pleasant and less time consuming when prospects come to them. The beauty of promotional strategies is that they plant a seed in prospect's mind. In effect, a reservation has been made for consideration of business. If prospect has had positive exposure in advance, it will easily establish the relationship, make the appointment and complete the sale. Promotion can give the name that recognition needs.

Sports promotion focuses both on the marketing of sports events and teams as well as the promotion of other products and services through sporting events and sports teams. It is a service in which the element promoted can be a physical product or a brand name. Lovelock, Reynoso, Andrea and Huete (2004) averred that the goal of sports promotion is to provide the client with strategies that promote sport or to promote something other than sport through sports. Sport promotion is also designed to meet the needs and wants of the consumer through exchange processes. Sponsorship, athlete endorsements, stadium naming rights, Television advertising, TV network deals, signage, are ways clubs can employ to monetize the goodwill of their brand. All of these represent indirect revenue sources funded from advertisers who are seeking one thing - reaching a specific, targeted audience. Without

audience - the fan base - however, none of these indirect streams would be possible (Beech & Chadwick, 2006).

Harold and Crissy (2012) posited that the objectives of promotional strategy vary among organizations. Some use promotion to expand their markets, others to hold their current positions, while others use it to present a corporate viewpoint on a public issue. Promotional strategies can also be used to reach selected markets. Most sources identify the specific promotional objectives or goals of providing information, differentiating the product, increasing sales, stabilizing sales, and accentuating the product's value. All promotional efforts are geared towards increasing sales. While advertising and sales promotion do this directly, publicity and public relations influence sales indirectly by encouraging the buyer to think highly of customers, the company, and products. Most people would rather buy from a person or company they like even if they don't know them personally (Alessandra, 2013). Grankvist, Kollberg and Persson (2004), quoting Czinkota and Ronkainen (2004), assert that promotion is the direct way an organisation tries to reach its public. This is performed through the five elements of promotion mix advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing. In a similar study, Alessandra (2013) postulated four principal types of promotional strategies: advertising, sales promotion, public relations and publicity. The role of promotion, according to Dawes and Brown (2000), has been redefined into managing long-term relationships with carefully selected customers, including construction of a learning relationship where the marketer maintains a dialogue with an individual customer.

Belch and Belch (2003) opined that almost everyone in the modern world is influenced to some degree, by advertising and other forms of promotion. Organizations in both the private and public sectors have realized that the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with their target audiences is critical to their success. Jalley, Donovan, Giles-Corti, Arcy and Holman (2002) affirmed that sponsorship is similar to advertising in that both are used to communicate an organization's message and image for a product, brand, or service to the target market. Both advertising and sponsorship aim to increase the salience of the organization or message. However, the process by which advertising and sponsorship achieve these communication objectives may be quite different.

Globally, sports events have been an avenue for promotion where products of corporate organization are advertised for customers to purchase and patronize on regular basis. In Nigeria, corporate organizations have shown keen interest in the sponsorship of sports

events that can promote their products. In turn, the money realized from promotional strategies by these organisations are utilized in the development of sports. For example, Cadbury Nigeria Plc. was involved in the sponsorship of the Nigeria National Football League in the 1980's. Similarly, Mobil Oil was the sole sponsor in the promotion of Athletics in Nigeria. The company's effort has been an avenue for organizing athletics championships in Nigeria where budding talents were discovered and developed.

The Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) adopted Athletics and Soccer as the sports of their choice. In the same vein, MTN as a corporate body, promoted and developed street soccer and the Football League in Nigeria. The same was done by the Nigeria Bottling Company, for many years, who promoted the Coca Cola drinks while sponsoring the Nigeria Challenge Cup Football Competition and exposing their products to Nigerians and assisting organisational performance through funding. The Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB), through her products, revived the Principals' cup for secondary schools in Lagos State. In essence, the promotional strategies adopted by various corporate bodies support affiliated sports which is used as promotional tools.

The important role sports plays in the consciousness of all and sundry in all spheres of life cannot be underestimated. The ability of the sports sector to affect physical activity levels still often tends to be underutilized, and it is recommended that support be provided to local authorities and non-governmental organizations that promote and organise sports. They should be encouraged to create motivating local environments and to develop a broader set of activities to reach different groups of the population (World Health Organisation, 2011). Andersson, Arvidsson and Lindström (2006) clearly illustrate the growing importance of sports in our society. Not only will sports sponsorship continue to be a popular and growing form of marketing, but according to Gwinner and Eaton (1999), sports generates fans that are more intense, more obtrusive, and more enduring than it is for other forms of social entertainments without direct participation in the events.

Events across the globe especially in business circles have underscored the need for changes in tactics and management approach to survive in the 21st - century. Change, according to Fasan (2002), has become a prevailing culture which every organisation, be it private or public, cannot overlook. The philosophy behind change hinges on the fact that managerial approaches and strategies of the 20th century may not be able to sustain the trends in the 21st century, sports industry inclusive.

Sports have become a big business involving colossal amount for funding which cannot be effectively borne by government alone. Although corporate private organisations have been participating in funding sports in Nigeria through promotional mix. cursory observations reveal particularly that their promotional strategies cannot be compared with the practice in the Western World like Europe and America. There is need for sports organisations and private corporate organisations to collaborate in their marketing strategies for the benefits of the two parties.

The mission of Nigeria sports, as enshrined in the National Sports Policy (2009), is to develop the sports sector to a world class level where it would provide continuous improvement of quality of life for the entire citizenry. The country will be recognized as one of the leading sporting nations in the world if the policy is well implemented. This has however not been attained due to various challenges affecting the organisation of sports in the country vis-a-vis corporate organisation support for sports development. Evidently, with countless areas which governments at all levels have to fund, it becomes obvious and apparent to devise other means of funding sports for its sustainability and holistic development. Involvement of corporate organisations in sport promotion via their promotional strategies has a double barrel effort which is often reflected in marketing of their products and development of sports itself.

Corporate organisations in the history of sports development in Nigeria have contributed immensely through the ownership of most prominent sports clubs in Nigeria. The likes of Stationery Stores (Adebajo Babes) Football Club of Lagos; Railway Football Club of Lagos; Abiola Babes Football Club of Abeokuta; Leventis United, Ibadan; Iwuayanwu Nationale Football Club; Owerri, and ICC Shooting Stars, Ibadan, were dominant forces in Nigeria Sports. These organisations produced stars, owned stadia, constructed lodging camps and sponsored teams to participate and won trophies at the continental level.

The corporate organisations adopt various marketing strategies to promote their products through advertising, endorsement of players to boost corporate image, sponsorship of competitions and building courts to enhance sports participation. These promotional strategies have influenced sports development vis-à-vis the development of corporate organisations product through community patronage and sports management. These therefore provided a platform for these corporate organisations to survive in a competitive market.

Some organisations get involved in sports in order to promote their products and get involve in social responsibility. Recent development however, has indicated that corporate organisations employ different strategies in their intention to improve their products. The withdrawal of these organisations from Nigerian sports scene has adversely affected sports development programmes, construction of sports facilities, talent identification and maximization of raw potentials. Government has solely taken over funding of sports at various states sports councils in Nigeria with less participation of private organisations. This has drastically affected the discovery of fresh talented athletes to replacement of old ones.

The apathy of private corporate organisations towards sports development through their promotional strategies has made sports facilities underutilized, abandoned and dilapidated as witnessed by lack of mass patronage by athletes and community residents. Emphasis on sports in Nigeria is based on competitive participation rather than developmental programmes. The dearth of athletes in athletics, basketball, table-tennis and football which has been the nations' strong force in international competitions has now suffered dwindling performance. Sports development programmes become more attractive when promotional strategies by private corporate organisations become a tool for supporting sports development. Therefore, it was on this premise that this study investigated corporate promotional strategies as correlate of sports development in Nigeria.

Hypotheses

1. There was no significant relationship between the advertisement strategy of corporate organizations and sports development in Nigeria.
2. There was no significant relationship between public relations strategy of corporate organizations and sports development in Nigeria.

Methods and Materials

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The design was considered most appropriate because of its merit in providing wide scope for obtaining information for the purpose of the study. It is also a method that embraces both qualitative and quantitative methods which help to develop an understanding of events in their natural state (Chelladurai, 2003).

The population comprised all state sports councils, corporate organisations and sports fans in Nigeria which are categorized into five individuals - athletes, coaches, sports council officials, staff of corporate organisations and sports fans. The sample for this study was made up of 2441 participants across the five categories of the population. A total of 1123 Sports Council Officials from 12 States were drawn from three geo-political zones of South-South, South-West and North-Central, Five corporate organisations (N =1078) and Sports Fans (N =240). The states were: South-South: Bayelsa, Edo, Delta, and Rivers, South-West: Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, and Ekiti, North-Central: Kogi, Benue, Kwara, and Plateau. The four states from each geo-political zone were selected based on the participation of corporate organisations in their sports programmes and events. The corporate organizations were selected based on their constant promotion of sports programmes. The five corporate organisations were: Nestle Plc., DSTV, Globacom, Guaranty Trust Bank and MTN. Twenty (20) percent of the state sports council participants were selected from the population, while participants of corporate organisations were all individuals whose duty involved promotional activities. Also, sports fans were 20 participants from each selected states. Stratified sampling technique was used to select three geo-political zones for the study. The simple random sampling technique using fish bowl method with replacement was adopted for selecting four states each from the selected geo-political zones. Also, the simple random technique using fish bowl method without replacement was adopted for selecting respondents from the selected states. The corporate organisations were, however, selected purposively on the premise of their preference for sports. Purposive method was also used to select the sports fans because they were not part of developmental programme of the sports council but came around occasionally to witness training and competition.

Three self-structured instruments were used for data collection in this study. These are: Corporate Promotional Strategies Questionnaire (CPSQ), Sports Organisation Questionnaire (SOQ) and Sports Fans Questionnaire (SFQ).

1. Corporate Promotional Strategies Questionnaire (CPSQ): This questionnaire was administered on staff of corporate organisations. The instrument has three main sections. Section one asked for basic information on the respondent's gender, age, department and educational qualification. Section two measures the objectives an organisation's involvement in sports promotion activities. The most prioritized objectives were ranked based on given numbers. Section three is made up of 42 items and measures perceived effectiveness of

promotional strategies. It is based on a 4-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

2. Sports Organisation Questionnaire (SOQ): This questionnaire was designed to measure how promotional strategies determine sports development in specific areas such as athlete development, sports facility, organising competition, sports equipment, and mass sports participation. The 25-item questionnaire section was organised in a 4-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.
3. Sports Fans Questionnaire (SFQ): This questionnaire was designed to measure views of sports fans on how promotional strategies influence sports development. The 20-item questionnaire was organised in a 4-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The construct and content validity of the research instruments of CPSQ, SOQ and SFQ designed for the study was ascertained by sports administration and management experts from Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Lagos in which proper corrections and modifications were made. The reliability of instruments was established through a pilot study. The instruments were administered on 20 staff of Anambra state sports council, 20 sports fans in Anambra state and 20 staff of Etisalat Nigeria Limited twice within an interval of two weeks. The results were coded and analysed using Statistical Tool for Social Sciences (SPSS) to establish the reliability. The result yielded a reliability of 0.85 for Corporate Promotional Strategies Questionnaire (CPSQ), 0.79 for Sports Organisation Questionnaire (SOQ) and 0.86 for Sports Fans Questionnaire (SFQ).

Copies of the validated questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher along with three trained research assistants in the 12 States. Some respondents at sports councils such as chairmen of sports council and chairmen of sports associations were not on ground in most states. The researcher and his assistants were scheduled to meet the aforementioned personalities by their secretaries on specific dates which were met. The head of unit of some corporate organisations in charge of promotional unit requested the researcher to drop the questionnaire for the staff and check back within two weeks while others promptly completed the questionnaire. The sports fans were met during sports training and programmes of various sports council. The researcher introduced the questionnaire to them, guided them in filling and ensured quick retrieval. Administration of copies of the questionnaire lasted over a period of six months.

The data collected and collated were used to develop a frequency distribution table for analysis. Descriptive statistics of percentage, pie and bar charts were used in presenting the data for the study. The inferential statistics of multiple regression using Statistical Tool for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. The stated hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Multiple regression was considered appropriate for this study because it estimates the conditional expectation of the dependent variable given the independent variable.

Results

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis one postulates that “there is no significant relationship between the advertisement strategy of corporate organizations and sports development in Nigeria”. The above stated hypothesis was tested using Regression analysis, with level of significance set at 0.05. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Advertisement strategy on sports development in Nigeria

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.t	R	R ²	F
Constant	12.488	0.106		117.442	0.000			
Advertisement	0.091	0.020	0.097	4.563*	0.000	0.097	0.009	20.825*

P<0.05

Table 1 shows that there is significant relationship between the advertisement strategy and sports development in Nigeria ($t = 4.563$, $P<0.05$). The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies there was significant relationship between the advertisement strategy of corporate organizations and sports development in Nigeria. The effect of advertisement strategy accounted for about less than 1% ($r^2=0.009$) in the variance of sports development in Nigeria. The relationship between sports development in Nigeria and advertisement strategies is low but statistically significant at 0.05 level ($r = 0.097$, $P<0.05$). The F value (20.825) for the regression is highly significant at $P<0.05$.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis two postulates that “there is no significant relationship between public relations strategy of corporate organizations and sports development in Nigeria”. The above stated hypothesis was tested using

the Regression analysis, with level of significance set at 0.05. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Public relations strategy on sports development in Nigeria

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.t	R	R ²	F
Constant	12.406	0.113		109.988	0.000			
Public relations	0.099	0.029	0.074	3.468*	0.001	0.074	0.005	12.029*

* $P < 0.05$

Table 2 reveals that public relations strategy had significant influence on sports development in Nigeria ($t = 3.468, P < 0.05$). The null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, public relations strategy had a significant correlation with sports development in Nigeria. The linear regression of public relations strategy with sports development in Nigeria accounted for a significant but very low amount of variance in sports development ($r^2 = 0.005^*, F_{1,2199} = 12.029; p < 0.05$).

Discussion

The significant F-value (20.825) obtained at 0.05 confidence level while testing hypothesis one established the basis for its rejection. Thus, it was discovered that there was a significant relationship between the advertisement strategy of corporate organisations and sports development in Nigeria. It was also observed that advertising strategy exerted varied significant individual influences on all sports development components. The influence of advertising strategy was noted to be more on sports facility development when compared with other sports development components. This finding agrees with that of Omolawon (2014) who opines that aggressive advertisement ensures sustainability of public participation in sport mix. One element that advertising takes advantage of is that, athletes tend to be brand loyal and fans tend to be loyal to their favourites athletes and teams. This can be recognized through the contract players and athletes who sign with sports companies in which they get paid to wear or use their products in each game or sporting event. By so doing, the players and athletes and also their fans which make up the public develop a loyalty to the product over a long time. Similarly, advertising strategy provides massive fund which can ensure rapid sports growth if judiciously utilized. Aran (1992) and Grankvist, Kollberg & Persson (2004) reported that advertising companies are willing to pay top dollar in order to hire celebrities to represent their brands. From Star Trek actors advertising cheap travel for Priceline.com to Michael Jordan drinking Gatorade

while sweating neon colours, celebrities are part of an advertising message and campaign.

In respect of hypothesis two, the significant F-value (12.029) obtained at 0.05 confidence level while testing the hypothesis brought about its rejection. Thus, public relations strategy was adjudged to have a significant relationship with sports development in Nigeria. Furthermore, public relations strategy was observed to have had a varied significant individual influence on all sports development components which was more pronounced on sports facility development than any other sports development component. This finding agrees with that Harold and Crissy (2012) who postulate public relations strategy as a symbiotic relationship which give comparative advantage to the brand initiating it and through its channel (sport organisation) to target audience. In giving support to this, Omolawon (2014) noted that Gillet Match used public relation strategy to promote its personal hygiene products through representative figures of each sport on television during broadcast sports events. Gillette uses for this issue, players from football teams such as Thierry Henry; from tennis, Roger Federer; and from golf, Tiger Woods. In the commercial, these celebrities appeared to be using the products of the company by showing the results in order to demonstrate that, if successful people use the products, you should use them too. It is obvious from the aforementioned examples that the company using this strategy is not related to sports but through important personalities of each sport it has the possibility of getting to its target audience.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the outcomes of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. There was significant relationship between advertisement strategy of corporate organizations and sport development.
2. The findings further obviously unveil that public relations exert tremendous influence on sport growth and development.

Based on the premise of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. There an urgent need to embark on continuous aggressive marketing in terms of functional advertisement strategies, as development of any business of life among others is dependent upon appropriate advertisement techniques, sport inclusive.
2. Sport managers, having aware of the incontestable role of human relations in sport development should be well grounded in

procedures for efficient human relations to sell out their product which is sport.

3. Policy to make corporate organizations earmark certain percent of their profit annually is long overdue as obtained in advanced countries.

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