

Sports Facilities and Equipment Management: Implications for Young

Athletes Sports Participation in Nigeria

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Abstract

Studies have indicated that management of sports facilities and equipment are imperative for young athletes' sports participation. Sports facilities are those immobile infrastructures for sports training, competitions and events. While, sports equipment are items that are movable and are utilized for a period of time. Sports facilities and equipment management are referred to the process of planning, purchasing, administering, coordinating and evaluating the day-to-day procedure of facilities and equipment utilization. This paper explored the role of sports facilities and equipment management on young athletes' sports participation in Nigeria. The concepts of sports facilities and equipment management were critical reviewed. Related issues were also discussed, such as; sports facilities and equipment maintenance cost, standard sport facilities, modernization in sports facilities and equipment management and safety in sports facilities and equipment usage. It concluded among others that sports facilities and equipment management create a safe and healthy environment for sports participation among young athletes, which in turn set the tone for promising great future athletic performance. It was recommended among others that personnel that will be responsible for the management of sports facilities and equipment should be experience.

Keywords: Sports facilities, sports equipment, sports facilities and equipment management, young athletes, sports participation, sport development

Introduction

Sport is an essential part of the life of most youth, because they are the

principal participants and they participate in sports for various motives such as socialization, health benefits

and professionalism. [Moronkola, Azubuiké, Odior, Jimmy, Ajala, & Airebamen \(2021\)](#) stated sport is any physical activities which normally involves exertion and demonstration of acquired skills in a competitive manner directed by rules and regulations. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([U.N.E.S.C.O., \(2005\)](#)) identified sports as any physical activity which has the features of play and involves a strife with oneself or others, or an opposition with natural elements. Sport is a significant phenomenon in Nigerian society, which interest and reputation has impacted all social spheres of the nation ([Mohammed, 2017](#)). Sports is now a big industry and it is consider as work than play because it provides numerous jobs opportunities and many youths participate in sports today with the dream of becoming professional athletes to achieve success and riches ([Joel & Dominic, 2021; Moronkola, et al. 2021](#)).

Accomplishment in any human enterprise rely on the interaction of several components. To succeed in

sports, management of sports facilities and equipment is paramount. [Federal Republic of Nigeria's Sports Policy \(2009\)](#) sated that, it is the duty of the third tier of Government to supervised grassroots sports, which include primary and secondary schools, community sports and recreation activities within the communities. The third tier of Government provides programmes, facilities and equipment to motivate young athletes' sports participation. It forms Sports Committees, Sports Associations, Sports Clubs and manages sport programmes and events at the grassroots level.

It is observed that at the grassroots level such as primary and secondary schools and tertiary institutions where many young athletes are eager to participation in sports, sports facilities and equipment (SFE) are inadequate or in bad condition as a result of poor management of the facilities and equipment. [Awoyinfa and Adeyeye \(2007\)](#) affirmed that sports facilities are laboratories hubs where athletes are produced and as such their provision

and maintenance should be prioritize and taken seriously. While, [Ademola \(2015\)](#) asserted that facilities and equipment are crucial in improving sporting activities among students' athletes. In developed countries, the provision and management of excellent facilities and equipment are not treated with levity on like in the developing countries and they demand exceptional performance from their athletes in global championship ([Ojeme, 2013](#)). If sports facilities and equipment are not well managed it cannot fulfill the role of encouraging participation or enhance participant's performance.

It is against this background that this study seeks to carry out a critically reviewed on sports facilities and equipment management and its implications on young athletes' sports participation in Nigeria.

Sports Facilities and Equipment Management

The importance of sports facilities and equipment management cannot be overemphasized, if the sport programmes wish to achieve her desire objectives and goals.

Sports facilities are fixed immobile or permanent long-life constructions that are utilized for sports purposes directly or indirectly, such as pitches/ fields, running tracks, sports hall, spectators stand, volleyball court, handball court, basketball court, swimming pool, badminton court, gymnasiums, stadiums, among others. While, sports equipment refers to moveable items/ objects used in sports engagement, which are disposable in most cases, such as balls, whistles, shuttlecocks, jerseys, among others ([Awoyinfa, 2008](#)). Sports equipment can further be classified into the following;

1. Athletes/ players equipment: These are items that the athletes/player put on for safety and to reduce injuries, which includes; chin guide, footwear, mouth guard, helmets, arm guards, padded gloves, cup and shoulder and rib pads, safety pads and guards, among others.
2. Games equipment: These are items use by athletes or match/game official to execute the actual sport event, such as, shuttlecocks, balls, nets, bat, sticks, rackets, discus, wickets and

bases, goal posts, match official flags, among others.

3. Mobile sports equipment: These are sophisticated items needed in auto race events, such as bicycle, motorcycle, automobile, motorboats and power aircraft

4. Vehicles: These are items used for special purposes before or during a sports activity such as transportation for sporting events, golf carts, and cart to transport injured athletes off the field of play.

Sports facilities and equipment management (SFEM) is referred as the process of planning, purchasing, administering, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the day-to-day procedure of facilities and equipment utilization (Parks, Jerome, & Lucie, 2007). If sports programme must achieve meaningful result, effective management of SFE is crucial as it render an important function in the organization of any sports programme. Onifade (2002) concluded that for any sports programmes to be successful, facilities and equipment should be available and accessible in good

condition. While, Bucher, (2003) stated that facilities and equipment are imperative in the organization and administration of sports activities because they make athletes training pleasurable and also stimulate participant interest regardless of their age or gender.

The existence of SFE in good condition serves as a booster for achieving results in sports performance. According to Ojeme (2013), the significance of sufficient supply and maintenance of equipment in the smooth running of sports programmes is important to the excellent performance of school sports. While, Ademola (2015) reported that facilities are crucial in improving sporting programmes among secondary school students. Ngwoke, Ogbona and Joel (2021) further reported that access to facilities and equipment plays a crucial function in the success of any physical education (PE) programmes in secondary schools. And it should be observed that PE programmes in secondary school is important in grooming sports talent who may become national athlete in the future.

Poor and inadequate facilities and equipment have been recognized as a critical challenge befalling Nigeria athlete, because they display excellent performance with facilities overseas (Adamu, 2002).

The availability of SFE is imperative in organizing of PE, intramural sports and other sports programmes and it determine the type of sports programme that can be carried out. When SFE are in good condition as a result of maintenance, sports administrators and coaches would achieve their goals, including success in sports competitions through effective training. Sports administrators and SFE managers should imbibe good maintenance practice of SFE and not wait until facilities and equipment becomes deplorable before repairs and maintenance services would be done. As sports facilities and equipment are being utilized, necessary repairs and maintenance should be done to improve the work rate of the facilities and equipment (Nwadiani and Oriakhi, 2018).

Standard Sports Facilities and Equipment

The availability of standard sports facilities and equipment for training can distinguish an athlete performance from other athletes. Ekpe (2011) observed that it is a challenge to detached the standard of sports in any nation from the standard of facilities and equipment accessible for athletes' practice. While, Talabi (1998) opined that the accomplishment of international status in sports is a reflexion of the accessibility of standard equipment and facilities. He further stated that most developing nations and Nigeria, desire to attain the level of the developed nations sports performance spontaneously, meanwhile the developed nations are prioritizing construction of world class sports facilities and providing excellent equipment as well as creating the appropriate atmospheres for their sports men and women, developing nations seem to trail behind in the supply of standard SFE.

Standard SFE are important per-requisites for organizing a successful

sport programme at all level of sports administration. According to [Awosika \(2009\)](#), it will be difficulty to accomplish set goals from athletes whose training equipment and facilities are inferior. While, [Nwadiani and Oriakhi \(2018\)](#); [Oseghale and Ikpo \(2018\)](#) and [Jeroh \(2012\)](#) stated that the university where young athletes should be groom to become national athletes, ought to have standard and up to date SFE for preparation of students athletes for peak sports performance. However, it was observed that most SFE in Nigeria universities are in deplorable condition. Similarly, [Oseghale \(2021\)](#) reported that the total average facility condition index (FCI) for sports facilities in the pioneer universities in Southwest Nigeria (University of Ibadan, University of Lagos and Obafemi Awolowo University) was 8.84% and which was located in the limit of facilities in a fairly good condition. This implies that the stakeholders in the universities should upgrade sports facilities to current standard to meet the demand of sports participation of students. [Nwadiani and](#)

[Oriakhi \(2018\)](#), further noted that one of the reasons for the state of SFE in the universities is because government, universities administrators and directors of sport have no documented maintenance responsibilities to observed by schools and no tangible provision in their budget for maintenance of SFE in the universities and this has made quality control difficult.

The availability of standard facilities should be prioritized for grooming potential athletes and sport development at all level ([Oseghale, Ikpo, Oseghle, & Adetooto, 2016](#); [Edirin, Oghenebrorien & Okagbare, 2018](#)). While, [Diejomaoh, Akarah, and Tayire \(2015\)](#) reported that sports programme can only be organized successfully with the availability of sports facilities that met the required standards of the governing bodies. However, SFE which are inappropriately managed and sub-standard will adversely affect the performance of athletes ([Walker, 2001](#)). According to the study of [Ekuri \(2018\)](#) on Cross River State, Nigeria, it was

concluded that the standard of SFE are very low and it substantial impacted the outcomes of the State athletes at National Sports Festivals in Nigeria. [Ojeme \(2000\)](#) stated that in the developed countries, standard SFE are accessible to enhance athlete's outcomes and it is imperative for sports stakeholders at all level to prioritize standard SFE.

Sports Facilities and Equipment Maintenance Cost

Availability of appropriate facilities and equipment is as essential as providing appropriate incentives for athletes ([Awoma, 2005](#)). However, the maintenance of such appropriate facilities and equipment oftentimes becomes a managerial issue. According to [Orunaboka and Nwachukwu \(2012\)](#), facilities and equipment management has historically been the responsibility of the individuals overseeing the sports schedules. They oversees the following facilities: sport courts, arenas, outdoor facilities include playgrounds, pools, courts, and fields, indoor and outdoor locker and shower rooms, weight and exercise rooms, gymnasiums, and their

equipment ([Orunaboka & Nwachukwu, 2012](#)). In addition to efficiently organizing, running, and maintaining these facilities and equipment, facilities and equipment management occasionally entails constructing new buildings to keep up with the demand for sports participation.

Determining, allocating, and developing funds for the success of sports programs is essential to their efficient operation, and it costs a significant sum of money annually to do so. [Bucher and Krotee \(2002\)](#), stated that in the designs and building of facilities, future projection should be accommodated. Frequently, buildings are built and then quickly outgrow their intended usage. Today's society is characterized by a growing population, urban living, spatial constraints, and rapidly rising labour and material prices, all of which are changing the pattern in constructing sports facilities and equipment. [Awosika \(2009\)](#) asserts that athletes with subpar or insufficient training facilities and equipment may not be able to produce results that meet expectations. One of the main factors

preventing effective sports administration, organization, and management in Nigeria is the lack of sports facilities and equipment. [Dauda, Obiyemi, Olaoye, Odesola and Joel \(2019\)](#) reported that finance constitute a limitation to planning, purchase, and supplies of SFE in Nigeria. If Nigerian athletes had access to half of the resources and tools that athletes in the West countries enjoy, they would perform better ([Getu, 2023](#)). It has been observed that a significant portion of Nigeria athletes do not have access to contemporary, high-tech sports facilities and training equipment. Lack of facilities or insufficient equipment has hindered many athletes of adequate training ([Igbanugo, 2004](#)).

Some Nigerian citizens do not give much thought to maintaining the majority of public properties that belong to no one in particular. The sports administrator should instill a maintenance culture that includes regular maintenance of sports facilities and equipment. According to [Bucher and Krotee \(2002\)](#), facilities and equipment should be maintained and

store in usable state. It is important to establish routines for maintaining buildings and equipment so that repairs can be made when needed. [Hanak, Hrstka, Tuscher, and Biolek \(2020\)](#) opined that every utilized piece of equipment has to be inspected, and any necessary repairs, replacements, or services should be performed. The used equipment need to be stored carefully. Appropriate colour and pattern should be used to make facilities and equipment visually appealing and pleasing. Buildings and equipment should be long-lasting and inexpensive to maintain ([Hanak, Hrstka, Tuscher, & Biolek, 2020](#)). The following health facility planning should be taken into consideration while designing, building, and using facilities for young athletes' sports programs: validity, utility, accessibility, departmentalization, isolation, safety, management, durability and maintenance, appearance, flexibility and expansion, and economy are the factors that are listed in order of importance ([Orunaboka & Nwachukwu, 2012](#)).

One may argue that a facility that receives regular maintenance will endure longer, offer a safer and healthier atmosphere, be less expensive, and give user groups a more fulfilling experience. In sports, building and planning facilities require teamwork. If appropriate design, construction, and material selection are made, maintenance ought to be simpler (Hanak, Hrstka, Tuscher, & Biolek, 2020). It is shameful for a newly built structure to become a maintenance challenge due to bad management choices made during the planning, design, and construction period of the process, not to mention the hiring, scheduling, and equipment purchases. When provided with a suitable facility, the management of the recreational sports, athletes, and other user, as well as the facility staff, must collaborate to take pride in their establishment and make extra efforts to keep it in good condition as possible (Orunaboka & Nwachukwu, 2012).

Modernisation in Sports Facilities and Equipment Management

According to Keys (2013), modern sports seem to be essentially different from those of the past since they are far more structured, regulated, and organized than they were in the past. Sports have also gotten more specialized and sophisticated. Building cutting-edge sporting facilities that can capitalize on the changing interests and preferences of potential customers, partners, and lessees in existing or new markets is a crucial part of using sport as an entertainment product (Shubert, 2016; Tutka & Seifried, 2015). Sport facilities and equipment management can benefit greatly from modernization because the idea clarifies how societal and cultural shifts are influenced by economic factors (Seifried & Novicevic, 2017). Sport organizations decide whether to build new facilities or remodel old ones in order to make money in response to shifting consumer expectations (Seifried & Pastore, 2010).

Sport facilities and the sports sector are not isolated entities. Instead, in order for their organizations to continue operating profitably, sport managers

need to adapt to changes in the political, social, economic, and technological spheres. The agency of sport managers in adapting to changes in their environment is highlighted by modernization theory (Downs & Seifried, 2019). Professional baseball and football stadiums, as well as basketball and hockey arenas (Downs & Seifried, 2021), were designed, built, and renovated in response to the factors that moulded the sociocultural realities of the preceding 70 years (Seifried & Pastore, 2010). Sport facility design, building, and renovation will be impacted by short- and long-term societal changes, which will require the application of reflexive and ecological modernization, according to sport managers looking to the future of their facilities. With the opportunity available through technological advancements and modernization, facility managers can now design precise and comprehensive facility with capital investments using software. Technology also makes it feasible to remotely track and monitor facility systems and equipment, allowing for

pre-emptive maintenance and a reduction in downtime.

Ensuring the safety, cleanliness, and effective management of facilities is crucial in the ever-evolving realm of sports and entertainment, as varied activities and sizable people come together (Shubert, 2016). It can be quite demanding to oversee daily operations, evaluate project delivery requirements, and make long-term plans for athletic complexes, entertainment stadiums, and sports arenas. Technology helps to expedite the process at this point. The benefits of modernization of sports facilities and equipment management include: increasing the life of physical assets, monitoring maintenance expenses and defects, avoiding and forecasting equipment failures, increasing workforce productivity, reducing inventory expenses, and reducing the overall maintenance cost: over time, it saves money (Downs & Seifried, 2021).

Safe Sports Facilities and Equipment

Sports facilities must ensure the safety of players as well as spectators. Sports safety gear and equipment can

occasionally look a little strange or out of style, but [Elizabeth \(2019\)](#) said that wearing the proper protective safety gear when engaging in sports is essential for the avoidance of major injuries or decreasing the severity of an injury. Sports safety equipment utilization significantly decreased the severity of sports-related injuries, as demonstrated by sports history. According to [Gordon and Partners \(2013\)](#), young athletes generally dislike donning protective gear. Although wearing any safety equipment makes these athletes feel uneasy or "uncool," authorities in charge of these activities must urge that safety gear be worn ([Gordon & Partners, 2013](#)). Sports safety equipment refers to any equipment or implement an athlete or sports officials put on to protect them from injuries when participating in sport activities.

The use of safety equipment is crucial in predicting athlete involvement in extracurricular activities. To excel in sports greatly rely on the proper supply and upkeep of facilities and equipment for the seamless running of sports.

According to [Owoeye and Yara \(2011\)](#), amenities play a crucial role in how well an organization operates. This is true because they have a significant impact on how well any social organization or system, including health programs, operates. Efficiency and high production are influenced by its accessibility, sufficiency, and relevancy. Sports facilities and safety gear are essential for achieving the objectives of sports since they serve as labs for physical activities where games are played or performed ([Rintaugu & Nteere, 2011](#)).

Youth Sports Participation

It is observed that prevalence of youths in sports participation is higher than any other age categories globally. [Bolarinwa \(2021\)](#) observed that young people develop strength, co-ordination and co-operation through sports participation and it help to prevent non-communicable diseases and improve mental health. Sports participation helps an individual to develop the physical, social, moral, and intellectual component of human life and participation in sports will pave way for

healthy lifestyle (Alhassan, Mohammed & Yaranchi, 2020; Momoh, 2017; Grosper, 2016). While, Varela (2011) affirmed that students participate in sports for the benefit of health and wellness and to improve their body shape.

Studies has revealed that the single most cited sports participation motivation among young people towards achieving their personal goals is the availability and accessibility of SFE in good conditions. The availability and management of SFE are imperative for young athletes' sports participation. According to Bolarinwa (2021) incentives is largely accepted as a vital requisite in sport to help athletes fulfill their potentiality and this can be influenced by SFE. This substantiates the findings of Adedeji (2000), who noted that there must be adequate motivation in the form of attractive SFE to fascinate athletes' delight to engage in sports. He further mentioned that SFE in Nigeria are in deplorable state and are impediment to PE and sport development. In their studies, Leo, Jun, Nan, Kyn-Tore, & Eun-Cheol (2016);

Cortés, Correa-Diaz, Benjumea-Arias, Valencia-Ariasa, & Bran-Piedrahita (2016); Robert (2012); Khan, Shah and Khan (2011); Good & Brophy (2000) asserted that SFE is the most essential factor that motivate sports participation among individuals, than any other factors and it helps participates to achieve their personal goals. While, Gould and Petlichkoff (2013) observed that many young athletes' dropout from sports participation due to poor organization, management skills and deficient sport facilities.

SFE is an essential pre-requisite in sports participation in all sports programmes and it has proved to serve as a form of motivation for participants, particularly among young athletes. According to Elumaro (2021), Fatai & Peter-Ajayi (2020), Okoro, Nayawo, Mohammed, & Musa (2016), Adeyeye and Kehinde (2013), Adeyeye, Vipene and Asak (2013) and Chukwu (2001) SFE are the necessary motivation needed for sports participation and it can encourage competitive sports participation. Also, it can lead to optimum sports performance. While,

Mgbor and Gbonna (2010) indicated that SFE provides individuals with the opportunities to acquire skills, develop mentally and improve socially. Similarly, Ominu (2011) revealed that participation in sports through the influence of sports equipment will improve the social life of Nigerian youths through social inclusion, team spirit and sense of belonging. Thus, SFE should be provided and managed effectively for the use of participants.

Conclusion

Based on the reviewed studies, it was concluded that SFE in Nigeria is not effectively managed to attract young athletes' sports participation. Also, the availability of SFE in good condition will motivate young athletes' sports participation and improve their performance towards achieving personal goals. Further, Sports facilities and equipment management create a safe and healthy environment for sports participation among young athletes, which in turn set the tone for promising great future athletic performance.

Recommendations

Based on evidence from the reviewed literature, the researchers recommended that concerted efforts should be made by all sports stakeholder in the country by ensuring that the SFE available are effectively managed by experienced personnel. This can be achieved by ensuring that all those concerned should be involved in day- day inspection of SFE, which will help to reduce breakdown of facilities and equipment, therefore, reducing cost, also injuries and death among users of the SFE.

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