



SPORTS PROMOTION AS DETERMINANT OF BASKETBALL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Michael G. Aina

Department of Human Kinetics Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

Sports federations in Nigeria have seen a steady decline in state funding while sport all over the world has become a more capital-intensive enterprise. The role of sport promotion in generating funds for grass-root sport programmes in the country is vital. This study investigates sports promotion as a determinant of basketball development in Nigeria. The key objective of this study is to examine stakeholders' perceptions of the influence of the media, advertising and sponsorship on basketball development in Nigeria. This study has adopted a descriptive design of survey type with a population of 512 stakeholders in the Nigerian Basketball Premier League, who were all purposively selected as participants. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. The study employed a structured questionnaire. Out of the total of 512 copies distributed, 436 were completed and analyzed. The hypotheses were tested using a Chi-square test at alpha 0.05. The findings of this study indicate that the stakeholders perceive sport advertising (Cal. $\chi^2 118.450 > 16.129$), sport media (Cal. $\chi^2 78.633 > \text{Crit. } \chi^2 16.129$), and sport sponsorship (Cal. $\chi^2 57.225 > \text{Crit. } \chi^2 16.129$) as significant determinants of basketball development in Nigeria. The study concluded that sport promotion indices largely determine the development of basketball in Nigeria. The implication is that increased public and private funding into basketball fosters its development in Nigeria. The study recommends more research into effective communication with target markets and active encouragement of corporate organizations; generous sponsorship promotes sports and enhances their business product image.

Key words: *sport marketing, sports promotion, sports media, sports advertising, sports sponsorship*

Introduction

The motive behind all business is to make profit, which is only possible by finding and keeping customers. A proper way of achieving these objectives is to create a competitive advantage through promotion of business products. Potential buyers should be convinced that what is offered for purchase can meet a particular need or want at that point in time, and that this advantage will be sustained so that the customer will no longer consider other substitutes. The specific role of marketing is to help identify, satisfy and retain customers. Marketing pays particular attention to the development of a product, its pricing, distribution or place, and promotion [1].

The ways in which sport advertisers appeal to consumers in order to impact and enlighten them and highlight the features and benefits of a sport product defines promotion. This covers interrelated activities expected to attract the thought and awareness of customers and urge them to purchase a sport product [2]. The purpose of sport promotion is to make buyers build up a positive notion of a sport product, and thereafter to encourage customers to purchase the product. Promotion centers on presenting sport products such as events, facilities, equipment, and coaching to consumers in an attractive manner through advertising, media, sponsorship, and public relations [3].

The media coverage that an organization pays for is called advertising, whereas publicity is free. By means of advertising concepts of sport programmes, activities and services are transferred to the public for better understanding and support. Sports advertising is an actual activity in a marketing process, and every sports advertisement is meant to influence the consumer to receive the product advertised well. Advertisements play a significant role in persuading customers who cannot tell the difference between brands [4]. The media provide information or knowledge which may influence the behaviour of consumers, thus enabling sponsors, corporate donors, organizers, manufacturers, athletes and others involved in sport programmes to make uninformed decisions and desirable contributions to sports development [5].

The media and sports are closely connected with two other areas of human activity. Sport is a scene of action and entertainment while the media provide convenient channels for reaching the public in both urban and remote areas [6]. People are exposed to information and advertisements through various communication channels, including newspapers, television, radio, films, handbills, posters, computer and the internet. In order to attract a customer's attention, it is important to develop marketing communications that inform, influence and remind customers of the brands represented. Such communication may also be provided directly or indirectly to build relationships with customers and develop brand awareness [7].

Another factor in sport promotion is sponsorship, seen as an aid or assistance given to a particular sport or game so as to achieve an objective or goal combined with projecting or promoting events. Building a strong brand through associations with the passion, excitement, spirit, emotions, and excellence associated with the values of sport is a popular strategy [8]. It is expected that both the sponsor and the sponsored will benefit and enjoy a lasting partnership. The concept that Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is needed to further ensure sports development is well grounded: the government alone cannot afford to continue to fund sports [9] and the private sector is

willing to support developing sports through marketing strategies [10]. Sponsorship is a business relationship between corporate bodies and leisure business, not a philanthropic gesture. The two essential targets for sponsors are upgrading their brand image and expanding brand awareness. For the sponsored, the obvious objective is to attract financial support, which in turn helps them meet other administrative and developmental goals. While these may be the most common, the objectives of sponsorship can vary greatly, depending on the size of the partners, the nature of the sponsorship relationship and the type of sports facility being supported. For these reasons, it is essential that both the owner of the facility and the sponsor have shared goals [11]. Sports sponsorship relies on the strengths of the parties involved and provides each with a handsome reward. All over the world, sports thrive on sponsorship from corporate organizations and wealthy individuals.

Grass-root sports, like any other sport, require publicity, advertising, effective media coverage and adequate funding in order to thrive. Basketball as one of favourite sports in Nigeria especially when assessed against the backdrop of its ranking at the international level, is a good example. The Federation of International Basketball Association (FIBA) ranked Nigeria basketball team 16th in 2016 and 23rd in 2019 in the world, and 1st in Africa in both years [12]. This may have been uplifting news but for the fact that all this international success is owed entirely to US-based players with little to no ancestry in Nigeria [3]. The absence of home-based players in those achievements point to the fact that there are a major problems with the promotion of basketball training programmes in Nigeria. Indeed, obtaining and sustaining big time sponsors for local and national schemes has been a challenge for years. This study was therefore designed to investigate the influence of sports promotion as a determinant of basketball development in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to determine the influence of promotional activities (advertising, media coverage and

sponsorship) on basketball development in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study aims to provide answers to the research question: Will promotional activities, such as advertising, media coverage and sponsorship, influence the development of basketball in Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis tested is whether advertising, media coverage and sponsorship are significant for basketball development in Nigeria.

Methodology

A descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for this study. The population of 512 participants selected for this study consisted entirely of stakeholders in the Nigerian Basketball Premier League, i.e., the players, coaches, technical officials, and the Nigeria Basketball Federations Board (NBBF) members. The NBBF Board is made up of 6

representatives of the six geo-political zones, representatives of the two sponsors (male and female league sponsors), a representative of the players, a representative of the basketball community and the General Secretary of the Federation [13]. The entire sample was selected purposively, bearing in mind the unique characteristics of the respondents, especially the players, whose level of cooperation frequently depends on the outcomes of their matches. The research tool employed was a self-structured questionnaire. The content and construct validity of the instrument were ascertained by experts in relevant fields. Remarks and suggestions arising from the mistakes were carefully examined, incorporated and used to improve research validity. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. Research hypotheses were tested using Chi-square analysis at alpha 0.05.

Results

The results of sports promotion indices tested in the study are presented as follows:

Table 1. Chi-square analysis result showing sports promotion categorical variables (advertising, media coverage and sponsorship) as determinants of basketball development in Nigeria

SN.	Row Total	Cal. (x2)	Sig.	Remark
1	436	118.450	0.003	Ho1 Rejected
2	436	78.633	0.002	Ho2 Rejected
3	436	57.225	0.001	Ho3 Rejected

The results show that the calculated Chi-square values of 118.450, 78.633 and 57.225 with 9 degrees of freedom are greater than the critical value of 16.129 at $\alpha = 0.05$. The 0.05 alpha is higher than 0.003, 0.002 and 0.001 significant levels, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis which states that Sport promotion variables of advertising, media coverage and sponsorship are not significant determinants of basketball development. This implies that all three sports promotion categorical variables are strong determinants of basketball development in Nigeria.

Findings and discussion

There are three main sources of income available to sports leagues: broadcasting (sales of media rights), commercial (sponsorship and

advertising partnerships), and match day revenue (ticketing and hospitality) [14]. These revenue streams constitute the variables of sport promotion taken into account in this study.

The figures obtained and presented in Tab. 1 seem to indicate that sport advertising, as a determinant of basketball development, is seen as an essential factor determining the popularity and development of basketball in Nigeria. This finding corroborates the assertion by Hall [14] that the global value of the sports industry was estimated to have increased advertising by 45% since 2011. Even if the statistics cited by Hall describe the pre-pandemic trends, overall television advertising and viewing are known to have vastly increased the revenues of popular sports in the

world. A related effect is the enhancement of player salaries, with the improved financial status of teams as TV broadcasting rights revenues and benefits from international sporting events have tightened the relationship between sports performance and the revenue [15]. All these invariably improve the standards of facilities, equipment, human capital development, organization of local, national and international sports competitions, which will bring about improved human performance.

The table also provides results for the media as perceived determinant of basketball development, which show the media as having a direct influence with the aggregate score in mind. This is in conformity with the findings of Young and Joon-Ho [16] on the Boston Bruins' use of the social media to engage fans in sport promotions, which - according to William and Susan [17] as cited by Vale and Fernandes [18] - helped to increase attendance as well as generate more overall revenue from the additional purchased concessions and merchandise items. This suggests that there is a statistically significant influence of the sport media on basketball development. Fans are more motivated to interact on social media sites if they are able to form a positive relationship with their favourite sport or team. The media has come to play a fundamental role in the consumption, ownership and delivery of sport. Kassing [19] aptly notes that the social media and sports communication relationships are vital for the success of each individual team. Sports organizations have access to multiple media to cultivate these relationships via the Internet, television, radio and print publications. Hambrick et al. [20] report that the mass media are becoming more meaningful to sport celebrities for creating and strengthening relationships with fans. This study has also considered previous research conducted on the rise of the media and their strong impact on professional sports teams. The findings reveal that teams which connect and identify with their fans on social media are more likely to gain positive feedback and attention, especially now that live attendance at sporting events is no longer safe due to the ravaging effects of Covid-19. Increased television exposure has filled up

the gap in live attendance at matches and has also brought an increase in other sources of revenue. Therefore, the use of the whole range of the mass media provides the ability to communicate with the target markets.

Sport sponsorship is perceived as a strong determinant for basketball development as shown in the table. This result is consistent with the conclusions reached by Asim and Shahid [21], who note that sports sponsorship is an effective tool in building associations between a brand and sports, and thus creating emotional links in consumers. The implication is that sponsoring sports leads to a higher level of performance. From a corporate perspective, companies can successfully use sports sponsorship as a tool for promotion of their business image and create awareness among consumers. Though companies can capture a large audience by sponsoring a sport event, the sports industry has been negatively influenced by the Covid-19 crisis which discouraged live participation. The sports-event industry has been negatively affected; disruption to sporting events has resulted in a decrease in sponsorship. It can only be hoped that the sports venue premises will soon be filled with enthusiastic spectators.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions has been drawn:

- the media have a significant impact on basketball development in Nigeria;
- sport advertising contributes to basketball development in Nigeria;
- sport sponsorship is a strong determinant of basketball development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

- Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made:
- the opportunities presented by the media should be further explored by basketball event organisers in Nigeria to effectively communicate with the target markets;
- corporate organisations should be encouraged to increase sports

sponsorship as a tool for promotion of their products and enhancing the company image as well as creating awareness among consumers. Companies can capture a large audience by sponsoring sports events;

- increased exposure of players, teams, events and championships through paid advertising will spur growth in live attendance at matches, which will attract the available sources of revenue.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Michael Gbemisola Aina

Department of Human Kinetics Education, University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria
E-mail: mikegbemiaina@mail.com

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