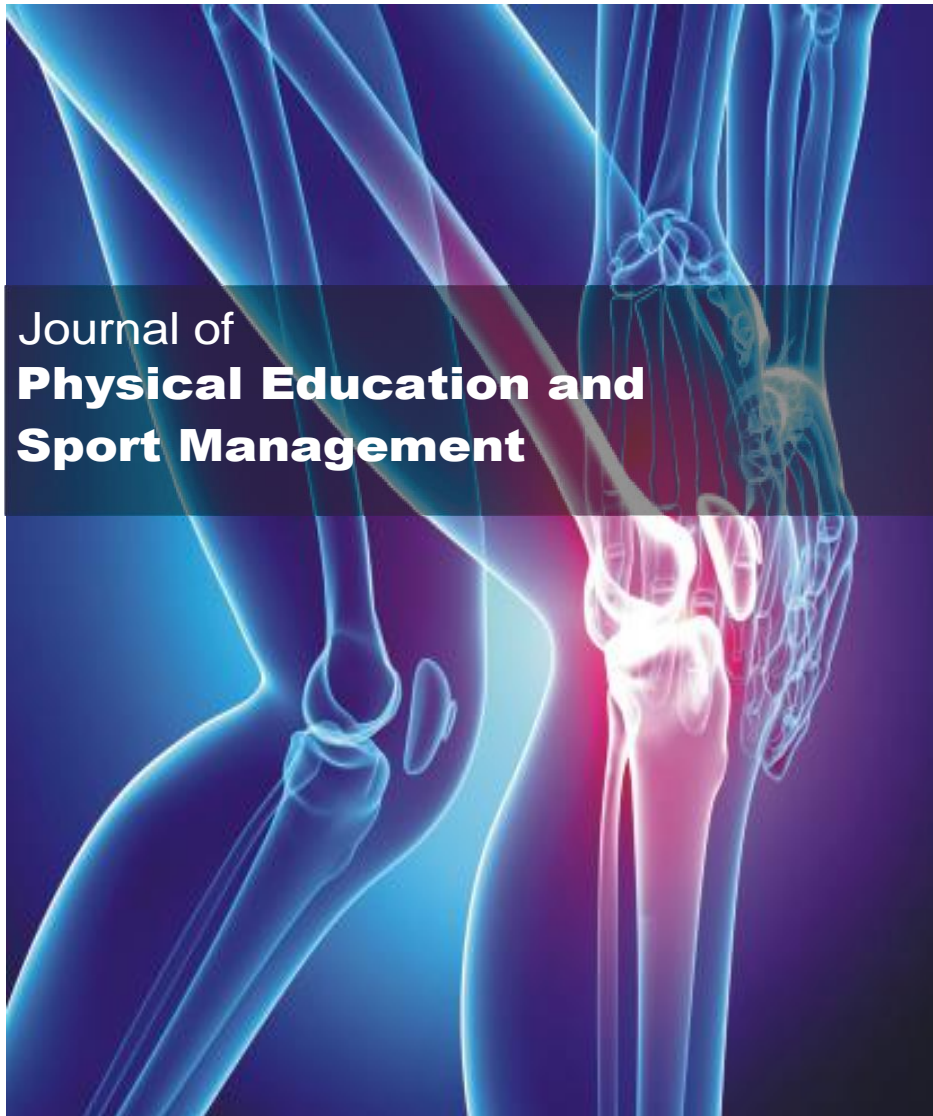


OPEN ACCESS



Journal of  
**Physical Education and  
Sport Management**

January-June 2022

1996-0794 ISSN:

10.5897/JPEM

[www.academicjournals.org](http://www.academicjournals.org)



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## Table of Content

<b>Determinants of corporate sponsorship award opportunities for Soccer Premier League clubs in Kenya</b>	1
Thomas Mboya Kisaka*, Joseph Mwisukha Andanje and Elijah Gitonga Rintaugu	
<b>Insights on the process of athletes' development in Nigeria</b>	15
Adeboye Israel Elumaro	
<b>Experience that matters – community based learning and sport Management</b>	24
Kristi Sweeney* and Megan Schramm-Possinger	
<b>Management practices and academic performance of government-aided secondary schools in Uganda</b>	31
Galukande-Kiganda Michael	

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Determinants of corporate sponsorship award opportunities for Soccer Premier League clubs in Kenya**

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Received Date 27 August 2020; Accepted date 18 November 2020

**Corporate sponsorship is a common phenomenon in major soccer leagues worldwide. Studies in the area of sports sponsorship decision-making have been done from a global context but lack focus on a particular sport or a major soccer league. Little empirical evidence has emerged in the area of sport sponsorship decision-making factors. The purpose of this study is to determine the factors considered by corporate organizations in availing sponsorship to clubs in the Kenya Premier League. The study determined the influence of team-based, country-based and environmental-based characteristics on corporate organizations' decisions to sponsor, the first of its kind to be done on the Kenya Premier League. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from six corporate sponsors of community-based, privately-owned and military-based clubs in the Kenya Premier League 2018/2019 season, as well as club chairmen and treasurers. Interviews were also conducted on the managers and assistants of marketing/sales departments of the corporate sponsors. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics to rank the sponsorship factors in their order of importance. Regressions were done to test the hypotheses. The data obtained through interviews were sorted out according to the objectives and presented in a narrative form. The study revealed that team-based factors had the highest significant effect on sponsorship decisions, followed by country-based then environmental-based factors.**

**Key words:** Determinants, corporate sponsorship, soccer, premier league clubs, Kenya Premier League, Kenya.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Worldwide, corporate sponsorship is common in major soccer leagues. In Europe, most clubs have a number of sponsors and sponsorship opportunities, for example, the

world record shirt sponsorship deal worth 559 million pounds signed between General Motors (Chevrolet) and Manchester United Football Club at the beginning of the

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2014/2015 league season, the biggest in recent times (Deloitte, 2014). Arshad, cited in Almeida and Amorim (2015), stated that the highest paid soccer sponsorship kit deals in the world were: Manchester United and Chevrolet, US\$ 80 million, Barcelona and Qatar Airways, US\$ 45 million, Bayern Munich and Deutsche Telekom, US\$ 40 million, Real Madrid and Fly Emirates, US\$ 39 million and, Liverpool and Standard Chartered, US \$ 39 million. Bello (2016) observed that all English Premier League clubs had an official shirt sponsor in the 2015/2016 season while the entire 18 clubs of the German Bundesliga had shirt sponsors. Further, Manchester United Football Club signed an 8-year training kit sponsorship deal with Aon Plc while kit suppliers Beko had a deal with Spanish club Barcelona. The acquisition of numerous sponsorship opportunities by soccer clubs in Europe was further reported in a study by Armstrong cited in Bello (2016) whereby Atletico Madrid Football Club had Plus 500 in front of its jersey and Azerbaijan at the back of its jersey. Furthermore, World Football (2014) averred that German companies invested 135 million dollars in soccer sponsorship in the year 2014; the biggest sponsorship market since the year 2005.

In Africa, financial sponsorships from corporate organizations cushioned clubs from financial shortfalls. For instance, in South Africa Premier Soccer League, it is most successful premiership club, the Kaizer Chiefs Football Club, boasted of different sponsors and partners. Its sponsorship revenue grew from US\$ 6,240 million in 2010 to US \$ 10,320 in the financial year 2011/2012, when it acquired Vodacom sponsorship (Mosola, 2017).

In the Kenyan situation, the League body was known as the Kenya Premier League (KPL), a private company incorporated in October 2003, under the companies' Act 486 of Kenya (Lwangu, 2013). The clubs participating in this league relied heavily on corporate sponsorship to cater for their needs as discovered by Thiga (2014), in a study which revealed that sponsorship from parent organizations accounted for between 60 and 100% of revenues of 57.1% corporate-based clubs, and the revenues of 55.6% of community -based clubs. Furthermore, the lion's share of sports sponsorship of soccer clubs is in the form of branded shirts which come from the private sector (Kiraguri, 2007).

As reported in studies, the sponsorship of the Kenya Premier League was majorly led by foreign companies. Lwangu (2013) reported that five years after the formation of the KPL, the South African company Super Sport International became its broadcasting rights holder and source of revenue, in a three-year deal worth 263 million Kenya Shillings. The KPL first injected 38 million Kenya shillings (49.11% of total revenue) out of 77.37 million to clubs, for their sustainability. Further, in the year 2013, Tusker which was also known as Kenya Breweries Limited signed a three year deal worth 270 million Kenya shillings (Mukasa Football Diary, 2018, May 25), while

the gambling giant Sport Pesa signed a four and half year deal with KPL worth 450 million Kenya shillings in the year 2015 (Nelson, 2015 August 7). These funds were channelled to the administrative costs for running the competition, facilitation, and payments to referees and match commissioners (Kenyan Premier League, 2019). The gambling giant further entered into a fresh 3-year sponsorship package with Gor Mahia, AFC leopards, the KPL and the Football Kenya Federation (Wanja, 2018, April 23).

On a sad note, Kenyan soccer clubs have endured financial difficulties majorly as a result of termination of sponsorship deals by league sponsors. Rintaugu et al. (2012) averred that football clubs in Kenya relied majorly on team registration fees to participate in competitions. Securing of sponsors by clubs had been erratic due to misappropriation of funds. Consequently, East African teams performed poorly in the African Cup of Nations competition and none had qualified to participate in the FIFA World Cup or the Olympics competitions. Mutua (2018, August 29) noted that under the four and a half year deal with Sport pesa, most clubs still struggled to finance their operations, as each club got only 3.4 million Kenya Shillings per season. Moreover, in 2017, Sport Pesa cancelled all sponsorship deals in Kenya following a prolonged fight with the Kenyan Government over 35% corporate tax imposed on gaming income. The move left such clubs as Gor Mahia and AFC Leopards with less than 35 days to source for an alternative sponsor before continental games in February 2018. Other affected entities included the KPL, the National soccer team's coach and technical director whose wages came from the gaming giant's coffers (Joshua, 2018 February 1). During the KPL 2018/2019, tales of soccer players going several months without pay due to clubs' lack of sponsorship abounded. For example, Nzoia Sugar Soccer Club staged a go-slow over unpaid salaries and allowances as the club sponsor, the Nzoia Sugar Company was in financial crisis (Teya, 2018 June 18). Worse still, in August 2019, Sport Pesa closed its operations in Kenya leaving the KPL, Gor Mahia and AFC Leopards football clubs in a dire financial state. The AFC Leopards club needed 20 million to sort out salary and rent arrears for three houses (office of the coach, club office and houses for two players) as reported by its then club chairman Mr. Dan Shikanda (Eshitemi, 2019, December). Even graver, at Gor Mahia, some players demanded to be handed release letters over unpaid salaries of up to four months while Sony Sugar Football club had to be relegated from the top flight league for failing to honour three league matches due to financial difficulties.

Studies revealed that companies were motivated to sponsor soccer to achieve certain corporate objectives. As reported by Tinderet (2018), sponsorship had a positive effect on performance of manufacturing companies such as East Africa Breweries Limited and Tuzo Limited, Bidco Africa and Menengai Oil. Sports



sponsorship produced brand exposure, generated strong leads which could be converted into sales, provided reconnection with customers, increased market share, increased revenues and motivated organizations to produce more products. A number of studies were also found to have been done with emphasis on corporate sponsors' objectives (Bühler, 2006; Malin and Therese, 2006; Berkes, 2008). Andre (2006) argued that companies pursued three objectives in soccer: passion and image, wide audiences and different target groups and opportunities to reach business objectives on a national or multinational level. On the other hand, Malin and Therese (2006) highlighted several companies' objectives of sports sponsorship. These included: to increase brand awareness, to obtain public relation opportunities and to increase sales. Berkes (2008) found out that companies pursued sales objective as the most important sponsorship objective.

In addition, companies based their decisions to sponsor teams on some criteria. Two outstanding criteria for sponsorship selection were image association, that is whether the image of the sponsor and the team were similar, and popularity of the sport (Faed, 2007). Other factors that guided sponsorship decisions included whether the sponsorship offered correct positioning, connection to the brand, the right audience, fit into current corporate goals and hospitality opportunity. Lee and Ross (2012) grouped the criteria for awarding sports sponsorship into three categories: team-based, environmentally-based and country-based.

Sports team-factors are media exposure opportunity, sponsorship fit, team image, fan base strength, star player/ coach, team on-field performance, hospitality opportunity and facility average attendance (Lee and Ross, 2012). According to Mickle as cited in Lee (2008), David Beckham's signing with major league soccer increased the level of public interest in soccer within the United States of America thus rapidly increased ticket and sponsorship sales. Moreover, Ngan et al. (2011) argued that sponsors should pay attention to the perceived performance of any team they sponsor. Team performance was linked to consumers' purchase intentions for the sponsors' products. A winning team with a star generated the strongest purchase intention, while a losing team with a star produced the lowest purchase intentions.

Hospitality opportunity was concerned with the opportunity to demonstrate appreciation to customers and to meet face to face with the targeted audience (Faed, 2007). Rodgers, as cited in Henseler et al. (2007) asserted that it was important to have a good fit between the sponsor and the sponsored object, so as to attract consumers to purchase the sponsors' products. In a related study, Musante (2006) opined that sponsors associated with sports with an intention of transferring the image of the sport to their brand. Fan base strength was echoed by Ngan et al. (2011). They observed that consumers' intentions to purchase sponsors' products were more pronounced for casual (those who did not

know much about the team they supported and were a bit laid back) than for avid fans (those that had a keen interest in supporting a team). Sponsors preferred sponsoring a team that had a strong avid fan base.

Interest level in sport was closely linked to the level of interest that fans had for a team. For instance, Coakley as cited in Lee (2008) averred that interest level in sport could be measured by average attendance for a game. Moreover, match day attendance by club supporters should be enhanced to enable clubs to expand their sources of revenue (Kinyairo et al., 2017). Country-based factors are interest level in sport, political and economic state of a country. For instance, Jensen and Cornwell (2017) opined that in an inflationary economy, the prices of all goods and services including marketing expenditures and costs within the sponsor's country rise. Therefore, a sponsor's ability to sponsor becomes limited or constrained.

Environmentally- Centered factors are competitors, ambush marketers and League authority over sponsorship deals. Ambush marketing was defined as a planned effort by an organization to associate itself indirectly with an event, in order to gain some of the recognition and benefits that are associated with the official sponsor (Sandler and Shani as cited in Ellis et al., 2011). On the other hand, studies cited competition as a major factor that posed sponsorship risks to corporate sponsors (Lee and Ross, 2012; Jensen and Cornwell, 2017). Further, a governing body of each league, such as KPL, had uniform rules regarding sponsorship activities which encouraged or hindered a sponsor to get involved in sponsorship (Lee, 2008).

Notably, majority of studies on sports sponsorship focused on topics such as the measurement of sponsorship effects, sponsorship evaluation, sponsorship objectives, the renewal of sponsorships, management of sponsorships and investigation of sponsorship strategies and counter strategies (Malin and Therese, 2006; Ellis et al., 2011; Tomas, 2014; Jensen and Cornwell, 2017; Tinderet, 2018). Within the studies, sports sponsorship selection criteria were scantily mentioned. Moreover, most studies were conducted from a global context and lacked focus on a particular sport or a major league, with little empirical evidence emerging in the area of sport sponsorship selection criteria. Glaring exceptions were studies on sports sponsorship decision making focusing on criteria used by corporate organizations to award sponsorship to teams (Lee and Ross, 2012; Singh and Bhatia, 2015). Hardly has any research been done on factors considered by corporate organizations in availing sponsorship to clubs in the Kenya Premier League.

### **Problem statement**

From the foregoing introductory literature, soccer clubs in the Kenya Premier League do not attract many sponsors in comparison to their counterparts in Europe and other

parts of Africa such as South Africa. Securing sponsors has been erratic due to misappropriation of funds (Rintaugu et al., 2012).

Due to termination of sponsorship contracts by corporate sponsors, clubs in the Kenya Premier League have had to endure sponsorship shortfalls, an issue that bedevils Kenyan soccer. Mutua (2018, August 29) reported that under the deal with Sport Pesa, each club got 3.4 million per season, a drop in the ocean in the light of money required for an entire season. In 2017, Sport Pesa cancelled all sponsorship deals in Kenya, following a tussle with the government over a 35% corporate tax that the government had imposed on gaming income. This left the Kenya Premier League in a precarious state, with many clubs being unable to pay their players. Nzoia Sugar Soccer Club staged a go-slow over unpaid salaries and allowances because the club sponsor was in financial crisis. Further still, KPL, Gor Mahia and AFC Leopards soccer clubs were left without an official financial sponsor after Sport Pesa stopped its operations in Kenya.

Due to the withdrawal of major sponsors and acquisition of limited sponsorship opportunities, KPL clubs would require new or additional sponsorships, such as shirt sponsors, kit suppliers and commercial partners. Consequently, an in-depth knowledge on how to meet corporate organizations' sponsorship requirements was required. Available academic research from other countries depicted an attempt to understand sponsorship selection criteria. However, a study that focused on the Kenya Premier League was lacking. Furthermore, there was little empirical evidence in the area of sponsorship decision making factors, a gap which the current study sought to fill. This study, therefore, purposed to find out the determinants of corporate sponsorship award opportunities for soccer Premier League clubs in Kenya.

### Significance of the study

The study findings are significant in that they contribute to the body of knowledge on soccer sponsorship and this has implications on soccer stakeholders in Kenya such as the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Heritage, clubs' officials and soccer players. As clubs gain awareness on sponsorship requirements, the corporate sector in Kenya might benefit in terms of increased business resulting from increased sponsorship deals. Moreover, for KPL clubs seeking new or additional sponsorship, it would provide knowledge to officials and players on corporate organizations' sponsorship requirements. Further, the study would serve as reference material for future researchers.

### Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

(i) To determine the influence of the following team-centered factors on corporate organizations decisions to sponsor KPL clubs:

- (a) Fan base strength
- (b) Star player/ coach
- (c) Media exposure opportunity
- (d) Facility average attendance
- (e) Team image
- (f) Team on field performance
- (g) Hospitality opportunity
- (h) Sponsorship fit

(ii) To appraise the influence of the following country-based characteristics on corporate organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs:

- (a) Political state of Kenya
- (b) Economic state of Kenya
- (c) Perceived interest level in Kenya Premier League soccer

(iii) To establish whether decisions made by corporate organizations to avail sports sponsorships to KPL clubs were influenced by environmentally-centered factors which include:

- (a) Ambush marketing
- (b) Sponsorship opportunities
- (c) KPL authority over sponsorship
- (d) To determine whether team-centered, country-based and environmentally-centered characteristics differed significantly to the extent to which they influenced decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs.

### Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following null hypotheses:

H<sub>01</sub> – The extent to which team-centered factors influenced corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions did not differ significantly.

H<sub>02</sub> – There was no significant difference in the magnitude to which various country-based factors influenced corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions.

H<sub>03</sub> – The extent to which various environmental factors influenced corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions did not differ significantly.

H<sub>04</sub> – There was no significant difference in the extent to which team-centered, country-based and environmentally-based factors influenced decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study utilized a modified concept of sports

sponsorship decision-making factors adapted from the study by Lee and Ross (2012). Sport sponsorship decision-making is dependent on the importance ascribed by the corporate organization to factors grouped in three categories: sport team-based, country-based and environmentally-centered factors. Therefore, in the current study the corporate organizations' willingness to avail sponsorship to a KPL soccer club was the dependent variable. The independent variables were in the three aforementioned categories which do not influence each other. These include team-based factors, country-based and environmental-based factors.

As highlighted in various studies, team-based factors are media exposure opportunity, sponsorship fit, team image, facility average attendance, hospitality opportunity, team performance on the field, star player/coach and fan base strength (Transparency International Kenya, 2004; Breuer and Rumpf, 2011; Lee and Ross, 2012; Wishart, Lee and Cornwell, 2012; Tomas, 2014; Singh and Bhatia, 2015; Bello, 2016; Wanjiku, 2016; Kinyairo et al., 2017; Origi and Deya, 2019). Media exposure refers to the exposure time that the team gets from the media (Berkes, 2008; Wishart et al., 2012). Some of these factors are found to be related. For example, competition between sponsors happens through the media and not just on field of play. The effect is that, if many sponsorship competitors are on the screen, it becomes difficult for consumers to memorize a particular brand (Breuer and Rumpf, 2011). Further, team image and fan base strength are found to be related in that image transfer in sponsorship deals is stronger for fans who highly identified with the sponsored than for casual fans (Gwinner et al., 2009). Further, sponsorship fit is the similarity between the sponsors and the sponsored aimed at attracting customers to purchase the sponsor's products (Rodgers, as cited in Henseler et al., 2007). Moreover, team image is described by Wang as cited in Coelho et al., 2019) as the opportunity of transferring the positive characteristics of the club to the sponsor's brand. Facility average attendance is referred to as the average number of fans who attend a game in terms of whether the stadium is packed or empty (Coakley as cited in Lee, 2008; Origi and Deya, 2019). Hospitality, on the other hand, is the opportunity to demonstrate appreciation to customers and meet face to face with the target audience (Faed, 2007; Wishart et al., 2012). According to Ngan et al. (2011), team on field performance is the performance of the team as perceived by sponsors. Sponsors are attracted to teams that have won some titles as this increases exposure to the team, players and the sponsor's brand (Tomas, 2014). Star player/coach refers to the celebrity status of a player or coach in a team (Charbonneau as cited in Lee, 2008) while fan base strength refers to whether the team has avid or casual fans (Ngan et al., 2011).

Country-based factors include interest level in sport, the political and economic states of a country. Jensen and Cornwell (2017) reported that during economic

inflation, the prices of all goods and services, including marketing expenditures and costs within the sponsor's country, rise. Thus, it is likely that a sponsor's ability to sponsor becomes limited.

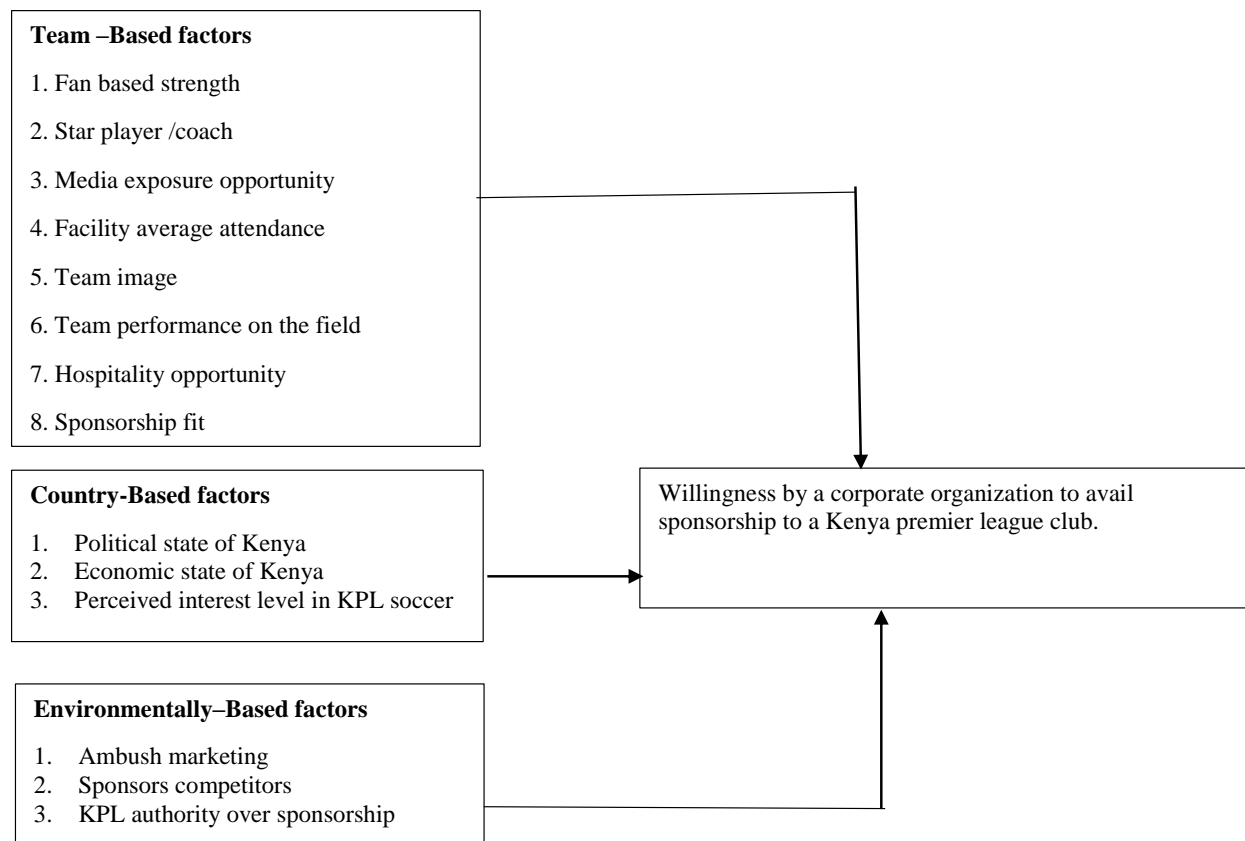
Environmentally-based factors include competitors, ambush marketers and League authority over sponsorship deals. For instance, Sandler and Shani, as cited in by Ellis et al. (2011) define ambush marketing as a planned effort by an organization to associate themselves indirectly with an event in order to gain some of the recognition and benefits that were associated with the official sponsor. The presence of sponsorship competitors poses sponsorship risks to corporates (Jensen and Cornwell, 2017). Separately, league authority over sponsorship is a crucial factor, in that a governing body of each league has uniform rules regarding sponsorship activities, which encourages or hinders a sponsor to get involved in sponsorship activities (Lee, 2008; Lee and Ross, 2012). The three categories of factors discussed above are summarized in the model (Figure 1).

## METHODOLOGY

A letter authorizing the study was obtained from the Graduate School of Kenyatta University. A letter of ethical approval clearance was obtained from Kenyatta University. A research permit was obtained from the National Council for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before conducting the study. Consent forms were also given to respondents before administering the questionnaire. Participants' confidentiality was assured by advising respondents to neither indicate their names nor the names of their organizations and clubs in the questionnaires and interview schedules.

The descriptive survey research design was used in the study. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), a study concerned with finding out who, what, which and how of a phenomenon is referred to as a descriptive design. The design was apt for the present study because it sought to find out how team-based, country-based and environmental-based factors influenced corporate organizations' willingness to avail sponsorships to clubs in the Kenya Premier League. Related studies had used company officials responsible for sponsorship activities. These included marketing managers, sponsorship managers, finance managers or any designated officials (Berkes, 2008; Lee and Ross, 2012; Singh and Bhatia, 2015). The current study targeted personnel in sponsorship, sales and marketing departments in corporate organizations that sponsored community-based, private and military-owned clubs during KPL 2018/19. The six corporate organizations were Sport Pesa, Betika, Elite Bet, Odi bets, Teke Taxi and Brookside Dairies. Responses were also obtained from club chairmen and club treasurers of community-based, private and military owned KPL clubs. These clubs were AFC Leopards, Gor Mahia, Sofapaka, Ulinzi, Mathare, Kariobangi Sharks and Thika United Football Clubs. Thus, 7 club chairmen and 7 club treasurers were targeted.

Purposive sampling was used. According to Kumar (2011), the primary consideration in this type of sampling is the researcher's judgment as to who can provide the best information to achieve the study objectives. In the present study, out of the 13 corporate organizations that sponsored the KPL clubs, a total of six (46%) which sponsored community-based, private-owned and military-owned clubs were selected. The six corporate organizations were:

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLES****DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

**Figure 1.** Modified conceptual framework for sports sponsorship decision- making factors.  
Source: Adapted from Lee and Ross (2012).

Sport Pesa, Betika, Elite Bet, Odi bets company, Teke taxi and Brookside dairies. The number of questionnaires that was administered were 60. Moreover, questionnaires were administered to a total of 14 purposively selected club chairmen treasurers from AFC Leopards, Gor Mahia, Sofapaka, Ulinzi, Mathare, Kariobangi Sharks and Thika United Football Clubs. Thus, the total number of questionnaires administered in the study was 74. The researcher purposively interviewed two personnel; the manager and the assistant of sponsorship/marketing department in the six corporate organizations, thus a total of 12 participants. Some participants responded to questionnaires and also took part in the interviews.

Self-administered questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher based on the relevant content, the model espoused by Lee and Ross (2012). Section A of the questionnaire sought to obtain demographic information such as gender, age, duration worked. Section B of the questionnaire sought to obtain the criteria of awarding sponsorship which were scored using a 5-point type Likert scale (very important, important, non-committal, unimportant, very unimportant). Sports team factors had eight items while country-based and environmentally based factors had three items each. Finally, the question on how willing the corporate sponsors were to award sponsorship was posed using a 5-point type Likert scale (very very willing, very willing, willing, moderately willing, unwilling). The interview schedule was constructed by the researcher and had four questions for personal information, team-Based factors, country-Based factors and environmentally-

centered factors, respectively.

The questionnaire and interview schedule were validated by the two supervisors of the study who are experts in research methodology and sports marketing. Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Kimberlin and Almut, 2008). The experts identified weaknesses in the instruments which were adjusted, or amended, accordingly. On the other hand, reliability is concerned with the stability of measures and internal consistency of instrument (Kimberlin and Almut, 2008). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) propose the test-retest technique for reliability testing by administering the same instrument twice to the same group of subjects. Test-retest technique was utilized whereby the questionnaires were administered twice to the 10 Posta Kenya respondents of the pre-test, within two weeks' interval, to allow for reliability testing. A Cronbach alpha of 0.78 was obtained from the team -based factors, 0.70 from country -based factors whereas Cronbach alpha of 0.71 was obtained from environmental –based factors. This was in line with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who considered a correlation coefficient of 0.7 and above as reliable and adequate for data analysis and reporting. The interview guide was given to the two supervisors of the study to check if they were reliable. No mistakes were raised; hence the researcher proceeded to the field. Reliability results are presented in Table 1.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was utilized to code and organize the data for analysis. The analysis used descriptive statistics of means, standard deviations and regressions. Multiple regressions were done to determine the

**Table 1.** Reliability results.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items	Comment
Team based factors	0.78	8	Reliable
Country based factors	0.70	3	Reliable
Environmental based factors	0.71	3	Reliable

**Table 2.** Questionnaire response from organizations and clubs.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Organizations</b>		
Returned	44	73.3
Unreturned	16	26.6
Total	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Clubs</b>		
Returned	14	100
Unreturned	0	0
Total	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>
Total questionnaires administered	<b>74</b>	
Total questionnaires returned	<b>58</b>	<b>78.4</b>

**Table 3.** Influence of team-centered factors on corporate organizations decisions to sponsor KPL Clubs.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation(SD)
Fan Base strength	4.67	0.57
Team on-field performance	4.38	0.83
Stadium attendance	4.34	0.89
Media exposure opportunity	4.29	0.82
Team image	4.28	0.81
Hospitality opportunity	4.26	1.00
Presence of a star player or coach within a club	4.22	1.03
Sponsorship fit	4.02	0.96

influence of decision-making factors on corporate sponsors' sponsorship decisions and to test the null hypothesis. The 0.05 level of significance was used in testing the hypotheses. The data obtained through interviews was sorted out according to the objectives and presented in a narrative form.

## RESULTS

Out of the 74 questionnaires administered to organizations and clubs, a total of 58 (78.4%) were properly filled and returned and, thus, the response rate was acceptable. This agrees with Babbie (2004) who asserts that return rates of 50% are acceptable to analyse and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good. Based on these observations, 78.4% response rate was very good for the study. This is presented in Table 2. The first objective of the study was to determine the influence

of team-centered factors on corporate organizations decisions to sponsor KPL clubs. The influence was measured through eight items. The respondents were required to state whether the items were very important, important, whether they were non-committal about them, and whether they were unimportant or very unimportant. The results are presented in Table 3.

The statement with the highest mean score was fan base strength (Mean=4.67, SD= 0.57). This implied that the respondents perceived fan base strength as the important team-based factor in sponsorship decision making. They perceived that team on-field performance is the second most important team-based factor in making decisions on awarding sponsorship to a soccer club in the K.P. L (Mean=4.38, SD=0.83). They identified stadium attendance as the third most important factor (Mean=4.34, SD=0.89). This was followed by media

**Table 4.** Influence of the country-based characteristics on corporate organizations willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs.

	Mean	Standard deviation
Economical state of Kenya (current GDP)	3.90	1.04
Political state of Kenya	3.83	1.05
Interest Level in KPL soccer (average attendance for a game)	3.83	1.09

**Table 5.** Influence of the environmental-based characteristics on corporate organizations willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs.

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
KPL authority over sponsorship (favorable rules and regulations guiding sponsorship activities)	8.83	1.03
Ambush marketing (protection from other sponsors)	3.78	1.16
Presence of sponsorship competitors	3.67	1.16

exposure opportunity (Mean=4.29, SD=0.82) and team image (Mean=4.28, SD=0.81). On the other hand, hospitality opportunity was found to be the third least important factor in corporate sponsorship decision for KPL clubs (Mean=4.26, SD=1.00). Presence of a star player or coach within a club was the second least important factor (Mean=4.22, SD=1.03), while sponsorship fit was ranked lowest (Mean=4.02, SD=0.96). The second objective was to determine the influence of country based factors on corporate organizations decisions to sponsor KPL clubs. The influence was measured through three items where respondents were required to state whether they were very important, important, were non-committal about it, or whether it was unimportant or very unimportant. Results are presented in Table 4.

All the three statements had a mean score above 3.5. This implies that all the three were important factors on corporate organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs. The statement with the highest mean score was the economic state of Kenya (current GDP), with a mean of 3.90, and SD of 1.04. This implies that it was the most important country-based factor on corporate organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs. Second was the political state of Kenya (Mean=3.83, SD =1.05), while interest Level in KPL soccer was third with a mean of 3.83 and SD of 1.09. The third objective is to determine the influence of environmental-based factors on corporate organizations' decisions to sponsor KPL clubs. The influence was measured through three items. Respondents were required to rate them as very important, important, non-committal, unimportant or very unimportant. The results are presented in Table 5. The results in Table 5 show all the three statements got a mean score above 3.5. This implies that all the three were important factors on corporate organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs. The most important factor is KPL authority over sponsorship (favourable rules and regulations guiding

sponsorship activities) (mean=3.83, SD=1.03). This is followed by ambush marketing (protection from other sponsors) (mean=3.78, SD=1.16). The least important factor is the presence of sponsorship competitors (mean=3.67, SD=1.23).

Further, the respondents were asked to indicate how they would rate the level of willingness of corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs. Majority of the respondents 29 (50%) indicated that corporate sponsors were very willing, 15 (25.9 %) were very, very willing, 13 (22.4%) were willing while only 1 (1.7 %) were moderately willing. This is presented in Table 6. The results in Table 6 reveal that corporate organizations were willing to sponsor clubs in KPL. No company was unwilling to sponsor KPL clubs.

The fourth objective was to determine whether team-centered factors, country-based characteristics and environmentally-centered characteristics differed significantly in the extent to which they influenced decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs. To achieve this objective, regression was done on the data obtained through questionnaires. The results are presented in Table 7. The results in Table 7 show that R squared was 54.6% implying that the independent variables that were studied explained 54.6% of the decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs. This implies that team-based, country-based and environmentally-centered characteristics were satisfactory in explaining the decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs.

The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant as supported by a p value of 0.000 which was lesser than the critical p value of 0.05. This was supported by an F statistic of 21.64 which implies that team-centered, country-based and environmentally-centered characteristics were good predictors of decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs. The results further reveal that team-based

**Table 6.** Willingness by corporate organizations to sponsor kpl clubs.

	Frequency	Percent
Moderately willing	1	1.7
Willing	13	22.4
Very willing	29	50
Very very willing	15	25.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 7.** Regression results.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate		
1	0.739a	0.546	0.521	0.473		
	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	
Regression	14.497	3	4.832	21.644	.000	
Residual	12.056	54	0.223			
Total	26.554	57				
	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta	t	p	
(Constant)	-0.875	0.717		-1.221	0.228	
team based factors	0.592	0.148	0.369	3.987	0.000	
country based factors	0.562	0.09	0.611	6.266	0.000	
Environmental based factors	0.320	0.86	0.372	0.372	0.011	

characteristics had a positive and significant relationship with decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs ( $\beta=0.592$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The results further reveal that country-based characteristics had a positive and significant relationship with decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs ( $\beta=0.562$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). In addition, the results reveal that environmentally-based characteristics had a positive and significant relationship with decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs ( $\beta=0.320$ ,  $p=0.011$ ). The Beta value is a measure of how strongly each predictor variable influences the dependent variable. From the above beta values ( $\beta$ ), it was deduced that team-based characteristics had the strongest influence on willingness by corporate organizations to award sponsorship to KPL clubs, followed by country-based factors then environmentally-based factors.

The first null hypothesis stated:

H<sub>01</sub> – The extent to which team-centered factors influence corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions did not differ significantly.

The results in Table 7 reveal that team based characteristics had a significant effect on decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs ( $p=0.000$ ). This implies that the null hypothesis was rejected at  $p<0.05$ . Therefore, the findings from the study

are that the extent to which various team-based factors affect corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions differ significantly.

The second null hypothesis stated:

H<sub>02</sub> – There was no significant difference in the magnitude to which various country-based factors influence corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions.

The results in Table 7 reveal that country-based factors had a significant effect on decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs ( $p=0.000$ ). This implies that the null hypothesis was rejected at  $p<0.05$ . Therefore, the study found out that the extent to which various country-based factors influenced corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions differed significantly.

The third null hypothesis was that:

H<sub>03</sub> – The extent to which various environmental factors influence corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions differ significantly.

The results in Table 7 reveal that environmental-based factors had a significant effect on decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs ( $p=0.000$ ).

This implies that the null hypothesis was rejected at  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, the study found out that the extent to which various environmental factors influenced corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions differed significantly.

The fourth hypothesis stated:

H<sub>04</sub> – There was no significant difference in the extent to which team-centered, country-based and environmentally-based factors influenced decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs.

Results in Table 7 show that team-based factors had the highest positive and significant effect on decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs ( $\beta = 0.592$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This was followed by country based characteristics ( $\beta = 0.562$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The last factor was environmental based characteristics ( $\beta = 0.320$ ,  $p = 0.011$ ). This implies that the three factors contributed differently to decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs. The most critical team -based factor was fan base strength, followed by team performance on the field, stadium attendance, media exposure opportunity, team image, hospitality opportunity, presence of a star player or coach and lastly sponsorship fit (Table 3). The most important country -based factor was the economic state of Kenya, followed by the political state of Kenya and interest level in KPL soccer (Table 4). Further, the most critical environmental-based factor was Kenya Premier League authority over sponsorship, followed by ambush marketing and, lastly, the presence of sponsorship competitors (Table 5). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The study, therefore, concluded that the extent to which team-centered, country-based and environmentally-centered characteristics influenced decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs differed significantly.

## DISCUSSION

### Team-based characteristics

Fan base strength was the most important factor for making decisions on awarding sponsorship to a soccer club in the K.P.L. This implies that teams that had more fans got more funds as compared to teams with few fans. These findings agreed with those of Ngan et al. (2011) who observed that sponsors preferred to sponsor a team that has a strong avid fan base. Furthermore, the study findings also agreed with those of Tomas (2014) who asserted that the number of fans was an important factor to sponsors because sponsorships were meant to turn customers into spokespersons for sponsors' products. Further, these findings agreed with those of Hinson as cited in Schoop (2016) who observed that a strong fan loyalty towards their soccer clubs had a positive effect on

the company because the fans purchased products of the club's sponsor. Moreover, the findings concurred with the Kenyan Premier League (2019) that the improved level of competition and attention given to the Kenya Premier League by fans, led to an inflow of corporate sponsors such as Super Sport, Umbro, Puma and Sport Pesa.

Team performance on the pitch (if the team succeeds in competition) was also an important factor in making decisions on awarding sponsorship to a soccer club in the K.P.L. This implies that the sponsors of the soccer clubs looked at the teams that recorded better performance so as to give their funds. These findings build on those of earlier scholars, such as Tomas (2014), who observed that sponsors wanted teams that won some titles as this increased exposure to the team, players and the sponsor's brand. The findings also concur with those of Ngan et al. (2011) that team performance had a positive effect on consumers' purchase intentions for sponsors' products. They also support Kinyairo et al. (2017) who asserted that stable performance in the field of play led to more match attendance and more match revenues. Increased match attendances implied that corporate sponsors would come on board to partner with the clubs. On the contrary, the findings differed with those of Lee and Ross (2012) who found team performance to be the third least important factor considered by corporate sponsors due to its unpredictability on a daily basis.

In addition, it was revealed that stadium attendance (average number of fans who attended clubs matches) was an important factor in making decisions on awarding sponsorship to a soccer club in the K.P.L. The findings supported those obtained in the interview responses where the majority responded that they preferred teams with many fans since they gave them a wider marketing opportunity. The findings agreed with recommendations by Origi and Deya (2019) who noted that packed stadia would attract sponsors and increase revenue to clubs. Further, it concurred with Schoop (2016), that fan attendance is an important factor for companies to sponsor clubs, although fans do not take place in the sponsorship decision making process.

With regard to media exposure opportunity (how much time the media attends to a club), the results found that this was an important factor in making decisions on awarding sponsorship to a soccer club in the K.P.L. The findings echoed those in the interviews where most respondents indicated that they preferred to sponsor clubs which received with more media attention. The attention of the club's followers would translate to their company and products. This implied that clubs that had more media attention attracted more sponsorship as compared to those that received occasional or no media attention. The findings of the study endorsed those by Wishart and Lee (2012) that media exposure was the primary objective of sponsorship and the most influential variable that determined the sponsored property price or how much the sponsored received from the sponsor. It



concluded with Breuer and Rumpf (2011) concerning the importance of media to sponsors. The longer a sponsor's logo was presented on screen, the more likely the consumer would have a lasting memory of the sponsor. On the contrary, the findings of the study differed with those of previous studies, such as Wishart et al. (2012), Lee and Ross (2012); Singh and Bhatia (2015), which found media exposure to be the most critical decision making factor for award of sports sponsorships. The current study revealed that fan base strength was the most important team-based factor in decisions to award sponsorship.

The results further revealed that team image (if the team has positive characteristics that can be transferred to your brand) was an important factor in making decisions on awarding sponsorship to a soccer club in the K.P.L. These findings supported Chien et al. (2016) who observed that sponsors shied away from clubs that were damaged by scandals, as this translated to the sponsor, and might cause the sponsor to terminate sponsorship agreement. The findings further agreed with those of other scholars who expressed that the image of the club was a critical factor in the eyes of potential sponsors (Berkes, 2008; Gwinner et al., 2009; Singh and Bhatia, 2015)

The presence of a star player or coach within a club was also found to be an important factor in making decisions on awarding sponsorship to a soccer club in the K.P.L. These findings concurred with those of the interviews where the majority of the respondents indicated that clubs with a star player helped them to market their products and, thus, they sponsored them. These findings were consistent with that of Tomas (2014) who found that the celebrity status of coaches or players increased brand awareness for sponsors by transferring their positive image and increasing the sale of their goods and services. They were also consistent with those of other studies which observed that soccer fans might notice the brand of clothing or shoes which their favourite players wore, the kind of sports equipment they used, and the kind of beverage they took. The sports star influenced the consumer to reach his status or to adapt to his behaviour patterns (Breuer and Rumpf, 2011; Hoek, as cited in Breuer and Rumpf, 2011).

In addition, it was revealed that sponsorship fit (if there is similarity between sponsor's product and the team) was an important factor in making sponsorship decisions (Table 4). These findings were inconsistent with the findings in the interview where majority of the respondents indicated that sponsorship fit was not an important factor. These findings built on those by Henseler et al. (2007) who asserted that it was important to have a good fit between the sponsor and the sponsored object so as to attract consumers to purchase the sponsors' products. Further, the findings agreed with those of other scholars who observed that congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored party

reduced the chances of sponsorship dissolution and helped to strengthen the relationship between the sponsored and the sponsor (Jensen and Cornwell, 2017; Wang, as cited in Coelho et al., 2019).

Conclusively, team-centered factors significantly influenced corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions. This implies that better team characteristics, such as good team image, good performance and presence of a star player would enhance the decision made by the corporate organization to sponsor the KPL to give more support to such a team.

### Country-based characteristics

The study findings revealed that the political state of Kenya was an important factor in corporate organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs. The findings were inconsistent with the findings in the interviews where majority of the respondents indicated this was not an important factor to consider and thus had no effect on sponsoring decisions. These findings (the political state is important) endorsed those of Lee and Ross (2012) who opined that during political instability, people could not truly enjoy sports and corporate sponsors too could not achieve their marketing objectives via sponsorship.

It was also revealed that the economic state of Kenya (current GDP) was an important factor on corporate organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs. These findings agreed with those from the interviews in which majority of the respondents indicated that when the economic state is poor, the government imposed high taxes on sponsors which affected their level of sponsorship. The following were some of the responses; *'when economy is not growing, the government imposes higher taxes on us to raise more revenue, this hampers our ability to sponsor clubs', 'recently we have incurred much taxation as the government tries to raise more revenue, and this hampers our sponsorship ability'. 'Steady economic growth will give us more sales hence we have more ability to sponsor clubs. It will also give us more profits hence we have money for sponsorship and advertising.'*

The findings agreed with those of Jensen and Cornwell (2017) that in an inflationary economy, the prices of goods and services within the sponsor's country rise and might constrain a sponsor's ability to pay. During inflation in the sponsor's country, the sponsor might not be able to justify large budgetary allocations, such as allocations for sports sponsorships. Moreover, the current study endorsed the report by the Business Today (2015, March 26) which reported that economic hardships affected both country and companies in the country. In view of this observation, Kenyan sugar millers, the Mumias Sugar Company had to suspend its sponsorship to AFC Leopards Football Club due to financial constraints.

In addition, interest level in KPL soccer was also an important factor on corporate organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs. These findings collaborated with those in the interviews which stated that Clubs with high match attendance attract more sponsorship since it gave them a wide market. The followings were some of the responses; *'many people attending matches gives as an avenue to advertise through branded shirt sponsorships', 'low attendance, we do not engage in sponsorship. We need masses to sell and advertise', 'high attendance gives us the platform to pass message to our customers and potential customers.'* The findings of this study therefore supported the report by Onyango (2019, September 9) which noted that due to Gor Mahia Football Club's loyal fan base, it was able to attract sponsors such as Tuzo and Sport Pesa.

In conclusion, country-based characteristics had a positive and significant relationship with decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs. This implies that favourable country-based factors would enhance the decisions made by the corporate organizations to sponsor the KPL.

### **Environmental-based characteristics**

The findings revealed that KPL authority over sponsorship deals (favorable rules and regulations guiding sponsorship activities) was an important factor on corporate organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs. The findings collaborated with those of the interviews where most of the respondents affirmed that rules hinder them from sponsoring the clubs. The following were some of the responses; *'some rules keep us off when the governing body wants a share of the sponsorship money', 'if the rules are favourable to us then we sponsor clubs', 'we do not want league body to usurp their authority upon sponsors as this keeps us away.'* These study findings confirmed the report by Shabik (2013, January 9) the chairman of the league body demanded a percentage of sponsorship money before allowing a corporate sponsor to sponsor a club. The conduct kept away corporate sponsors from sponsoring soccer clubs in Kenya.

The results also revealed that ambush marketing was an important factor on corporate organizations willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs. The findings disagreed with the results from the interview guide where most of the respondents indicated that they were not concerned with other sponsors. The followings were some of the responses; *'we do not mind other sponsors for the same club, so long as our name appears boldly on the shirts of the club', 'it doesn't matter, we just want our name to appear in the club shirts', 'many sponsors already sponsoring the club keeps us away from sponsoring the same club. We do not see the gain.'* These findings supported those by other scholars (Ellis et

al., 2011; Nufer, 2013; Tomanek, 2020) who observed that protection from other sponsors was an important factor guiding sponsorship activities.

In addition, sponsorship competitors were an important factor on corporate organizations' willingness to offer sponsorship to KPL clubs. These findings agreed with those of other scholars (McCook, as cited in Malin and Therese 2006; Jensen and Cornwell, 2017) who noted that sponsors were opposed to the involvement of more sponsoring organizations because it reduced customers' attention to the brand and minimized success in building brand awareness. In contrast, the findings differed with those of Thrassou and Vrontis as cited in Tinderet (2018) who attested that companies were attracted to sponsor, so long as the sport was popular, regardless of the presence of competing firms.

Conclusively, environmental-based characteristics had a positive and significant relationship with decisions made by corporate organizations to sponsor KPL clubs. This implies that better environmentally-based characteristics such as absence of other competitors would enhance the decision made by the corporate organization to sponsor the KPL to give more support to such a team.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations for practice**

- (i) Clubs should enhance their training so that they win more matches. This will attract corporate sponsors
- (ii) Clubs should strive to have packed stadia during their matches. To achieve this, they must win more matches which will, in turn, attract corporate sponsors.
- (iii) Clubs should maintain a good image devoid of hooliganism or scandals by players or coaches.
- (iv) Clubs should offer sponsors with opportunities for hospitality during matches, such as the opportunity to interact with fans or star players, and a chance to sell products after the match.
- (v) Clubs should strive to recruit star players or coaches because these celebrities will attract corporate sponsors.

### **Recommendations for policy**

- (i) The government through the ministries of sports, culture and heritage, and finance should reduce the amount of taxes on the sponsors of soccer clubs, so that they are able to avail more sponsorship.
- (ii) The ministry of sports, culture and heritage should set rules and regulations that favor the corporate organizations' sponsorship decisions. Such rules include those to eliminate cartels and federation officials prying on sponsorship money at the expense of clubs. This will ensure that more money reaches the clubs.
- (iii) The Kenya Premier League should develop

legislations that protect corporate sponsors from extortion by the leagues' officials.

(iv) The league body should not limit the size of a sponsor's logo presented on uniforms or charge sponsors who wish to sponsor clubs. The main sponsor of the league should also be protected from other sponsors or ambushers.

(v) The Kenyan Government and political leaders must always strive to have political stability regardless of their differences. In a stable political environment, corporates are able to achieve their marketing objectives and are willing to sponsor clubs.

(vi) Media houses should develop a policy to broadcast and televise live KPL matches every week because in so doing, they will help to attract more fans to the stadia. More fans will appeal to more corporate sponsors because they can access a wider market for their products.

### Recommendations for further study

There are other determinants that affect corporate sponsorship opportunities for soccer clubs which were not addressed by the study. They include length of sponsorship impact, the ease of planning the sponsorship, appeal to target audience lifestyle, and the relevance of the sponsorship. These factors can be studied by future researchers. Future research should address gaps such as the factors which make sponsors to pull out/ terminate sponsorships, and ambush marketing in Kenyan sports sponsorship.

### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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*Full Length Research Paper*

# Insights on the process of athletes' development in Nigeria

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Received 3 November, 2021; Accepted 8 December, 2021

The process of talent development in sports requires an environment that encourages early identification of inherent sporting potentials in youngsters and provides the necessary support to grow such potentials into refined talents. Across cultures, athletic development is achieved through a synergy between athletes, their coaches, family, school, the community as well as other significant persons and social institutions. Judging by Nigeria's rankings in global competitive sports, the country is yet to evolve an effective template for successful athletic development process. This study adopted a qualitative approach to examine the process of athletes' development in Nigeria. Seven elite Nigerian coaches were interviewed. Inductive analysis of the data indicated certain contextual impediments to athletes' development in Nigeria including organizational and culture specific barriers to talent development, and two drivers of successful development were equally revealed. It was suggested that stakeholders in sport development should collaborate to evolve a template for successful athletes' development where the entire development environment provides the necessary support for athletic development.

**Keywords:** Athletes' development, talent identification, culture specific barriers, drivers of success.

## INTRODUCTION

Elumaro et al. (2016) made some profound revelations about the unique context of Talent Development (TD) in Nigeria. More than their counterparts elsewhere across other cultures, Nigerian athletes reportedly faced many socio-cultural barriers to sports development that made TD a difficult process for athletes. For instance, while previous research (Martindale et al., 2007) proposed that an effective talent development environment required a network of consistent and coherent supports from all the relevant stakeholders (such as parents, coaches, teachers, siblings and friends). Talent development environments in Nigeria were revealed to be lacking support from significant individuals and organisations.

Though it is anticipated from the literature that there would be environment-related limitations to Talent Identification and Development (TID) in Nigeria (Adesanjo, 1997; Toriola et al., 2000; Aibueku and Ogbouma, 2013), beyond the limitations of the environment, Elumaro et al. (2016) revealed a widespread opposition to sports participation among children in the Nigerian population. Starting from the family to the school, the government and the entire society, there were very little support for sport development (Ajiduah, 2001).

However, there seems to be one consistent source of support for talent development in Nigeria, which is the

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coach. Previous research indicated that Nigerian coaches play a significant role in the TID process in the Nigerian context far beyond what the responsibilities of a coach are in other cultures. In fact, Elumaro (2016) found that coaching was an important factor of TID success among Nigerian athletes. For example, athletes relied on the coach for both moral and financial assistance due to lack of support from the family. Nigerian coaches do not only help their athletes financially or morally, but in some instances, they also provided accommodation and feeding. Thus the coach is seen as a father figure by athletes and not just a coach. This complex role played by Nigerian coaches is not common across other cultures.

Early studies of the contribution of coaches to talent development outlined the role of the coach to include knowing, observing, diagnosing, and assessing the process of talent development to set targets and draw the strategies to achieve them (Worthington, 1984; Fairs, 1987). The role of the coach in the Nigerian context seemed to transcend the above role classification. Other issues relating to coaching have been studied such as the relationship between coaching behaviour and TID (Smith et al., 1977), mentorship (Duckworth and Maxwell, 2015), coaching and coach education (Panfil et al., 2015), coach-athletes' relationship (Baron and Morin, 2009), Quality coaching and coach development (Mallett, 2011). As vast as coaching research is, very little has been done in the Nigerian context. With previous evidences of the cultural specificity of TID and the need to exercise caution in the cross-cultural application of TID research (Saltapidas and Ponsford, 2007; Collins and Bailey, 2013), as well as the extra roles associated with coaching by Nigerian athletes, it is imperative to investigate the perception(s) of Nigerian coaches on the nature of talent development in sports in the Nigerian context in order to further strengthen the understanding of the nature of TID in the country. This is important because previous studies in talent identification and development have used the triangulation method to investigate issues relating to effective TID (Wolfenden and Holt, 2005; Gould et al., 2002; Martindale et al., 2007; Black and Holt, 2009), when taken into consideration, the perceptions of the other key stakeholders in sport talent development have made valuable contributions to the understanding of the subject. To set off the process of creating the synergy among the opinions of other stakeholders such as the family, coach, siblings, peers, and friends (Black and Holt, 2009), the current study is planned to investigate the perception of the coach on TID process in the Nigerian context.

## METHOD

### Participants

The essence of this study was to explore the perception of coaches

on the process of athletes' development in Nigeria, to further strengthen the extant knowledge of the context of TID in Nigerian. To achieve this aim, it is necessary that participants were recruited from among coaches who have personal experiences of assisting athletes to progress from the developmental stages to the elite stage of sport performance. This high bar set for inclusion was to ensure that participants have personal experiences of the challenges faced by athletes at the various stages of development. For the sake of clarity, the participants included coaches whose athlete(s) have competed for Nigeria at either the Commonwealth Games or the Olympic Games or both. Therefore, participants included 7 Nigerian male coaches, between the ages of 39 and 52 years.

### Procedure

After obtaining the ethical approval for the study from the researcher's University Research Ethics Committee, the aims, objectives, and procedure of the study were explained to participants, with the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. Then, the main interview questions were given to participants one week prior to the interview so that they could familiarize themselves with the questions (Martindale et al., 2007; Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992). All interviews were conducted by the researcher; at the actual interview, interviewees were asked the same questions in the same sequence, however, while and when necessary, the interviewer asked probing questions (Patton, 1990) to create an in-depth understanding of responses, and to capture a true representation of the socio-cultural context of TID in Nigeria. All interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and were tape recorded for later transcription.

### Data analysis

Data analysis followed the three stages outlined by Côté and Hay (2002) including coding experience; inductive inference; and similarity processes. The emerging themes and general themes were constantly compared until the data was saturated. Themes and categories were presented hierarchically to represent their order of emergence (Patton, 1990) and were supported by quotes in the result section.

## RESULTS

The section presents the results from the data collection and analysis, which show the views of the seven participating coaches on the nature and challenges of athletes' development in Nigeria. The findings identify two categories of barriers (that is sport-organisational specific barriers, and culture specific barriers), and the two main drivers of TID success (including Coaches' commitment, and athletes' psychology).

### Sport-organizational specific barriers to TID

#### *Development is poorly valued*

All participants observed organisational specific barriers to TID in sports in the Nigerian context. For instance, though the government and the entire society celebrate sporting success, there was no support for TD in sports.

Elite coaches believed the government (in particular) did not give sport development the appropriate attention, thus, TID in sports was poorly valued by every section of the society. Similarly, athletes were seen as people who were not serious about their future. The quotes below indicate that athletes lacked encouragement due to the poor for TID:

*“Athletes go through a lot of challenges in Nigeria because there is no supports and encouragement for development. The society will only celebrate them if and when they succeed in their sports, so the major question is what happens before they succeed?” (C3)*

*“You know whatever happens to the head happens to the whole body, since Nigeria as a country is not giving the deserved attention to sport development, everywhere in the nation we have athletes and their coaches having to swim against the tide of several barriers to development in the environment” (C7)*

*“...Athletes are looked down on by the society as unserious people instead of encouraging them” (C1)*

### **Corruption and administrative incompetence**

There appeared to be some ‘sharp practices’ in the management of sports in Nigeria. To begin with, the responses from the elite coaches showed that sport administrative positions were not given based on knowledge and competence, instead, people who had connections in government got sport administrative jobs without necessarily having a background in sport management or administration. As a result, athletes and their coaches suffered from poor administration and incompetence in sport management. In the quotes below, participants expressed the need to engage professionals, with the right background and experience in sport management to oversee the affairs of sport:

*“Coaches and their athletes have not been very lucky with the type of sport administrators we have in the country. It has been rough to say the least” (C4)*

*“Our sport administration is very bad, in fact, most of the sports administrators are politicians who do not have any knowledge of sport development and they never care about the ordeal of the athletes and their coaches because their main priority is to enrich themselves” (C6)*

*“There is the need to have good administrators who would develop good policies and programmes to guide sports development. People holding sport administrative positions must be those that have the enabling background for sport development. Because one of the problems of sports development in Nigeria is that*

*politicians who have little or no knowledge of sport are appointed to oversee sports ministries and departments” (C2)*

### **Lack of investment**

The data revealed a need for investments across many areas of sports development. For example, there were acute shortages of sporting facilities in communities thereby making training more difficult for coaches and their athletes. Elite coaches believed that access to facility is a necessary motivation for sport participation; they lamented the lack of interest from the government to invest in the development of sporting infrastructure to encourage TID in sports. According to the participants, there were States where athletes have no tracks for training, and instead, training sessions were done on the streets. The quotes below demonstrate the need for facilities to encourage sport development:

*“Administrators need to invest in facilities because most people build their interest in sports based on the facility they see and would like to enjoy. This is one of the major problems of track and field in Nigeria” (C6)*

*“There are no facilities and equipment for sport development, access to good facilities will motivate children to take part in sporting activities regularly, and therefore enhance the chance that children would pick interest in developing a sporting career. Without money, most of the things we have spoken about will be impossible. Facility, equipment, nutrition, transportation, training kits are all factored by finance; talent development therefore is capital intensive, and as such, the government and other stakeholders must be willing to make the necessary investments” (C2)*

*“There are States that don’t have any synthetic tracks so where will the motivation come from? This problem is more obvious now than ever before, because in those days there were open space around where the children can go to play but now all those pieces of land have been development except the roads, so children no longer have the luxury of playing on the street because the space are not there anymore. This is reason sports are dying gradually in Nigeria” (C6)*

### **Poor policy implementation**

It is apparent that poor implementation, and in many cases, failure to implement sport development policies contributed to the pitiable state of sport development in Nigeria. Though the Nigerian government has established several policy documents on sport development (Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports, 1989; National Sports Policy

of Nigeria, 2009), the current data indicate that sport development policies were often poorly implemented, or not implemented at all. The quote below demonstrates that the national policy on sports development clearly identified the need for a structure for talent identification and development; however the policy was never implemented:

*“The last national policy on sport development stipulates that every state should have standard stadia, there should be community sports centres in all the Local Government Areas in Nigeria, the policy also States that there should be inter-school competitions at the primary school level, inter-Local Government competition, Zonal competitions, State competitions, and National competitions. But this has never been implemented. If a structure has been put in place to facilitate the implementation of the policy, that is when we could develop national pathways based on such national structure, but at the moment there is no structural architecture to support national pathways for sport development” (C4)*

## **Culture specific barriers to TID**

### **Family opposes sports development**

The current findings disclosed some culture-specific barriers to sports and athletes' development. Though Nigeria is a multi-cultural society, with over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups and over four hundred languages spoken, there are some socio-cultural elements that unite the Nigerian communities across the various cultural divides. To an average Nigerian family, education is regarded as the best legacy parents can give to their children (Okeke, 2009; Ayling, 2015); education is perceived to be the only way to overcome poverty, which of course is a common enemy to Nigerian families and communities.

Therefore, every other form of engagement for the child that does not lead to high educational qualifications is regarded as a distraction. Unfortunately, sports development is considered as one of such distractions (Adeyeye et al., 2013; Yakubu et al., 2019). The reasons behind the poor value for sport development among Nigerian families are not difficult to understand, there is rare access to organised sport in Nigeria, the club structure is non-existent, and sports have little potential for income generation. Sport participation at the grassroots level (that is local communities) is mainly for recreation and play, only those who get to participate at the high-elite level are rewarded. Also, the probability that the average child will develop to the high-elite level is elusive since there is no pathway for TID and there are no structures to support athletes' development.

Consequently, children who get involved in sporting activities were seen as playing away their valuable time.

The fear that sport development may distract the child's commitment towards education is founded on the fear that TID in sports is time consuming, hence, parents' fright that their children waste the time they ought to spend on their studies for playing sports. The quotes below demonstrate that parents are against TID in sports mainly because it is perceived to interfere with the education of the child:

*“Parents want their children to go to school and be fully committed to their studies, therefore, parents refuse to allow their children get involved in sports/training, because they believe this would be a form of distraction for the child. So, the task of the coach is to convince parents that their children can still go to school and be focused on their studies as well as going to training to develop their athletic talents” (C3)*

*“...No parent is willing to support the child to do sports training, they believe doing so will distract the child from his studies, so parents need to allow their children do sports and also support them both financially and emotionally” (C5)*

*“In a normal condition, parents should provide encouragement to their children but rather; Nigerian parents see sport as a kind of distraction to the education of their children and would do anything to prevent their children from playing any sport” (C4)*

*“...Parents also prevent their children from taking part in sports because they believe it is a barrier to the children' academic development. But I told them that there are many athletes who are doing very well in their studies” (C7)*

### **School environment is hostile to TID**

As with the families, participants observed that every other section of the community was not favourably disposed towards sport development for the child. For example, the school did not encourage TID in sports, teachers were opposed to athletic development because they believe that developing a sporting career will prevent their pupils/students from devoting enough time for academic development. Athletes therefore did not only face discouragement from the family but were also exposed to a hostile school environment. Some school principals and teachers alike, treated students who were athletes as though they were not serious with their education, and punished students for sport participation just to discourage others from getting involved. The quotes below demonstrate the hostility of the school environment towards athletes' development:

*“Even the teachers who should collaborate with the coach and the parents in supporting the development of*



*the athletes are not encouraging, they consider athletes as unserious students who waste their time on sports” (C1)*

*“When you do sports as a student in Nigeria you are seen as ‘a cast away’. Teachers and lecturers would see you as unserious with your studies because they see you playing sports; while in a real sense, they are supposed to be supportive of your development” (C3)*

*“There is a lot of discouragement from the schools. In a case where a school principal takes sports participation as a crime for the students, he would oppose sports openly and go as far as punishing students for playing sports, this makes it difficult for the children to develop interest in training” (C7)*

## **Drivers of TD success**

### **Athletes’ psychology**

Though, the many challenges to sports and athletes’ development in Nigeria make the dream of TID in sports very difficult to achieve, this data suggest that athletes who were committed to their development, even in the face of all the barriers, moved on to achieve success in their athletic career. There seemed to be a unique psychology common to successful Nigerian athletes. For instance, while previous studies have reported the importance of support and encouragement to TID in sports, Nigerian athletes saw the absence of support as a normal feature of the TID process. In the absence of effective environments for development, athletes relied on psychological strength to follow through their development. According to the elite coaches, the athletes’ mind set is the most important factor of success. Successful development required athletes to take full responsibility and control of their own progress, athletes worked harder to compensate for the poor environment and was determined to overcome the hostility from the society. Athletes did not blame failure on the family, the school, the government and the entire community, which were not supportive of sport development. Rather, the athletes put themselves at the centre of their development and developed a strong resilience to the barriers may face within the society.

*“Nigerian athletes struggle against a lot of odds; there are no facilities, there are no sponsors, there are no supports, these are the challenges of sports development that athletes have to confront in Nigeria. Hence, each athlete has to find the way through and build up himself. That is why I told you earlier “I have seen miracles”, I have seen the most unexpected happen because a particular athlete has developed a personal (internal) motivation to succeed” (C4)*

*“Athletes’ progress depends solely on their efforts because there is no programme in place. Therefore, the phases an athlete goes through to become an elite athlete in Nigeria is entirely based on the decision of the athlete, we have seen athletes who broke through within one year, and those who worked for years without any outstanding success, so it depends on the athletes and their trainers” (C5)*

*“The engine room of success in sport in Nigeria is determination, because in this part of the world we don’t have the facilities, there are no good sport programmes, food and nutrition is poor, the financial backing is not there. With all these barriers and many more that we face in the Nigerian sport development environment, it takes determination for an athlete to navigate through the problems and make it to the international stage” (C6)*

*“The mind of the athlete is important, some people are very determined and whatever they set up to achieve they can achieve, with this type of mindset, nothing is impossible. If an athlete decides to train and become the best, he/she can be, he would do it with joy and a sense of fulfilment, they will never complain about challenges or contemplate dropping out” (C1)*

### **Coaches’ support**

The role of the coach in the Nigerian context goes beyond organising and supervising training activities for athletes. Coaches reportedly develop closer relationship with athletes so that the progress in development is seen as the collective responsibility of both the coach and the athletes. The coach is also a role model to athletes, as earlier mentioned, parents were against their children taking part in TID and thus do not offer any support for athletic development. In fact, athletes concealed their involvement in sport from the knowledge of their parents and instead look up to the coach as a father figure and a model. The coach is thus a father to his athletes and provides the emotional as well as financial support that athletes would not get from home. This close relationship between athletes and their coaches fostered a deeper understanding and trust between the two, which ultimately enhance the possibility of successful development. Also, because majority of the coaches were formally athletes who themselves have experienced the hostility of the social culture to sport development, their stories were points of encouragement to athletes.

*“Also, beyond being a coach, I see myself as a father to the children. I am concerned about their emotional well-being, I make sure am aware of whatever problem they have even those that are not sport related, and do anything I can to help them solve it to make sure that they are comfortable, because if athletes are not comfortable, they will not improve as much as you want, no matter the training you give them” (C6)*

*“You have to get the children closer to you because it is only under close relationship between athletes and the coach that the inner talent can be revealed” (C7)*

*“I have athletes that I can say they are where they are because of God’s support, because at the time of need and problem everyone will desert them, they will have to depend on themselves or their coach for whatever help and support they need” (C7)*

## DISCUSSION

The objectives of this study were to examine the perceptions of coaches on the nature of sports development in Nigeria, and to gain insight into how coaches assisted top elite athletes to achieve success in sport. The data revealed several key themes. Specifically, sport-organizational specific barriers and culture specific barriers were the two categories of barriers to TID in the Nigerian context. The results also identified success factors of athletes’ development including athletes’ psychology and the role of the coach. Many of the sport-organizational specific barriers to TID identified in this study are supportive of previous literature, and such barriers include: lack of formal pathways to sports development (Ojeme, 1985); lack of sporting facilities (Omobowale, 2009); corruption (Osoba, 1999; Marquette, 2012; Adefila, 2012; Elendu, 2012); poor implementation of government policies (Ewah and Ekeng, 2009; Makinde, 2005); administrative failures (Ikejiofor, 1999); lack of funds for sport development (Ifeka, 2000). The culture specific barriers are related to the larger societal problems of poverty (Shola, 2010; Awotide, 2012; Kolawole et al., 2015), and unemployment (Uyanga, 1979; Uwakwe, 2005; Innocent, 2014; Okpanachi and Andow, 2013; Iwu, 2015).

The data showed that many families were opposed to TID; there were conflicts between TID in sports and family priorities (Senbanjo and Oshikoya, 2010; Kimm et al., 2002). Parents resisted their children’s involvement in sport because education was seen as the only means of defeating poverty (Obadan, 2001), while sports development was seen as a distraction to academic development of the child. These socio-cultural factors combined to create a society-wide hostility against TID in sports (Saavedra, 2003). Contrary to the recommendation of Martindale et al. (2007), the home (parents and siblings), school, government and the entire society constituted functional barriers to athletes’ and sports development (Elendu, 2012). Similarly, the school environment was not conducive for TID. It is good to stress that Nigerian national policy on sport development identified the school among the mechanisms for athletic development. Educational as well as sports development were seen as important elements of the general development of the child (Federal Ministry of Youth and Sport, 1989). However, the current result shows that the

school lacked the clout to encourage TID.

Another clear message from this investigation is the widespread corruption and incompetence in sport administration in Nigeria. Participants reported that administrators were appointed without due considerations to the prerequisite knowledge and experience in sports administration and thus sports administration in Nigeria was characterised by incompetence on the part of the administrators (Onifade, 1985; Bogopa, 2001; Jeroh, 2012). In simple terms, many administrators don’t know what to do. Similarly, administrators were alleged to mismanage funds meant for the development and maintenance of sporting facilities and therefore have left most of the sports facilities in Nigeria in a state of total neglect and disrepair (Toriola et al., 2000; Omobowale, 2009; Asiyai, 2012). Previous studies have suggested that sports development in Nigeria requires sound policy decisions to engage qualified and seasoned sports administrators who can plan and implement effective agenda for sport development (Mgbor, 2006; Aluko and Adodo, 2011), the current findings lend voice to this suggestion.

Severe as these barriers were, successful Nigerian athletes defied all the challenges posed by the hostile social culture to achieve top elite success in their athletic career. One of such major drivers of success in TID was athletes’ psychology (Nia and Bessharat, 2010). Successful elites shared unique psychology of resilience (Smith et al., 1995; Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013) against all the levels of barriers to sport development. In fact, success or otherwise was mainly determined by the mind set of athletes. And as such, elite coaches reported that athletes’ psychology was a major factor of successful talent identification and development. Also, the results revealed that the support coaches gave to their developing athletes made significant contributions towards successful development. This finding provides further evidence for earlier studies that suggest a relationship exist between quality of coaching and successful development (Bloom, 1985; Saavedra, 2003; Short and Short, 2005; Bouwer, 2010; Schlatter and McDowall, 2014).

Furthermore, the data revealed that the problem of poor implementation of government policies constituted a barrier to sports development in Nigeria. Though previous studies (Crosby, 1996; Mambula, 2002; Soludo et al., 2004; Makinde, 2005; Olukunle, 2008) have reported in the wider national economic sense that Nigeria’s growth and development is hampered by lack of policy implementation, the current finding brings to bear the impact of policy implementation failure on sports development.

## CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATION

This investigation has made contributions to the TID

discuss. To begin with, the nature of talent development in a Nigerian context has not been popular in the literature, thus the introduction of coaching in the Nigerian context to the TID discuss is the first achievement of the study. Also, the current results added more weight to the argument on the influence of socio-cultural factors on TID in sports (Maguire and Pearton, 2000; Henriksen et al., 2010; Shen, 2014). While previous studies have nurtured the idea that the cultural contexts of sports development are important to the design or adoption of TID models for a given society (Collins and Bailey, 2013), the current data suggest that socio-cultural factors can in fact determine the effectiveness or otherwise of TID models. The revelations about the strong influences of social culture on TID in Nigeria also enriched the debate about the dynamic nature of TID in sports (Abbott and Collins, 2004; Vaeyens et al., 2008; Phillips et al., 2010; Collins and MacNamara, 2011), such that the factors of successful development in a culture might become barriers in another. For example, Martindale et al. (2007) promoted the role of support from the family (parents, siblings), the community (peers) the school (teachers, friends, class and school mates) and the government in providing consistent and coherent support for TID, but in the Nigerian case, all the supports gears were reported to constitute functional barriers to TID. Nonetheless, through their resilient psychology (Martin-Krumm et al., 2003; Fletcher and Sarkar, 2012), elite athletes overcame all the barriers to become successful in their sports, hence, the model of athletes' development in Nigeria supports previous suggestion (Collins and MacNamara, 2011) that developing athletes may have to face some challenges to facilitate success at the elite level of sport performance.

Finally, it is important to highlight some limitations of the current findings so that readers would have sufficient guidance in the application of the result. Firstly, the characteristic limitations of qualitative research methods must be considered before attempting to generalise the result. For example, the sample size was relatively small ( $n=7$ ) and thus, the possibility of variations in opinions and themes within a larger sample should not be ruled out. Secondly, all participants in this study coached same sport (athletics), it is also possible that coaches in other sports might add other experiences to the study that would enrich the findings. However, the current study was a follow up to the previous one and thus interviewing the coaches of participants in the athletes' study would help to monitor the consistency or otherwise of the reported nature of TID in Nigeria. Furthermore, the coaches and athletes' perceptions alone would not create a complete picture of the nature of sports development in Nigeria because other stakeholders (family, sports administrators, and the government) have all been identified among the influencing factors of TID. Therefore, it is recommended that further studies are required to

investigate the perceptions of these other stakeholders on the subject.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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(2019). Social Factors Influencing Sport Participation Among Secondary School Students in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Physical Education and Health* 8(13):15-24.

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Experience that matters – community based learning and sport management**

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Received 11 June, 2018; Accepted 22 May, 2021

Described in this article is how sport management curricula can offer unique, real-world learning experiences and corresponding student learning gains, when grounded in community based learning (CBL). To achieve these ends, this study was designed to explore how to best execute CBL in sport management, informed, in part, by analyzing the lived experiences of students who were required to develop their understanding of community needs and resources, as well as devise and execute plans to meet these needs, in order to successfully complete the course. Students' structured reflections of their discipline-specific CBL course and changes-in-self were assessed using rigorous qualitative analysis to detect emergent themes. Results indicated students' self-reported professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal gains in relation to how the course was taught/specific pedagogical practices. Competencies subsumed within these categories included learning how to effectively fund raise, learning to negotiate the challenges of group work and team dynamics, cultivating critical thinking and leadership skills, and cultivating self-as-professional. These data inform how to derive the unique impacts of service learning in sport, including the opportunities it presents for students to cultivate professional skills often reported to be under cultivated among recent graduates. Thus, results of this study fill a gap in the literature regarding how to foster student preparedness for "real world" experiences, and serve as model of how faculty and administrators can successfully integrate CBL in experiential sport management coursework.

**Key words:** Community-based learning (CBL), sport management, high-impact practices, fundraising, cultivating pre- professional skills in CBL coursework.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Community based learning (CBL) is a pedagogical practice that, in the context of this study, was integrated with sport management curricula, providing undergraduate students with opportunities for engagement in service learning through both volunteer efforts and internships.

As noted in the literature, internships require a collaborative effort between student, institution, and agency for academic credit; perhaps not surprisingly, research indicates that volunteerism through CBL is no less valuable in its ability for students to bridge theory

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and practice (Mooney and Edwards, 2001). Required of all CBL courses is the explicit integration of student learning outcomes and pedagogical practices likely to foster students' ability to make reasoned decisions, address civic concerns, and operate according to higher stages of moral development (Eppler et al., 2011). Given these benefits to students, as well as the value of contributing university students' time and talents towards meeting community needs, recommendations for the expansion of CBL have been cited since the late 1960s (Corey, 1972).

As alluded to above, the rewards derived from CBL coursework to both faculty and cooperating agencies are equally impactful. As faculty attempts to create an environment ideal to students' learning, partnering community organizations are often the beneficiaries of substantial human resource needs such as labor, support, and consultation (Swanson, 2001). For example, over the course of their six-year partnership, students from a midsized public university in the Southeast have raised over \$200,000 for local families affected by neuromuscular disease. Given the quantifiable outcomes of the community partner, the focus of this study, to be described in detail below, is to explore the perceived benefits of the CBL approach in an attempt to better assess student-learning outcomes and add to the literature base by better understanding of CBL pedagogy.

More specifically, the benefits of CBL have been reported broadly, ranging from civic engagement to the cultivation of more sophisticated moral reasoning. In addition, suggested course-based projects have been reported (Lee et al., 2016); however, the student participants' perceived learning gains associated with participation in those projects remain unclear. Thus, this study fills a void in the literature by providing clear directions and parameters for the enactment of CBL project-based learning in sport management, empirical evidence regarding the specific competencies and benefits reported by student participants, and structured reflections that can be used as both pedagogical tools and assessments.

### **Workplace-relevant student learning outcomes**

Sport management academic programs have long emphasized the value and significance of experiential learning within the curriculum (Sauder and Mudrick, 2017; Eagleman and McNary, 2010; Parkhouse, 1987). Recent evaluation of sport management students' preparedness indicates the need for opportunities for practical experiences, embedded into sport management curricula prior to pre-professional experiences (DeLuca and Braunstein-Minkove, 2016). In addition, site supervisors generally noted that interns – who did not participate in CBL -- from the university where this study was conducted, lacked professional skills such as

adaptability, resourcefulness, and accountability. In addition, supervisors of interns, again from the university where this study was executed, cited students' general lack of leadership qualities, which are experiential competencies oft developed through practical applied learning.

For these reasons, participants in this study were required to work in communities, assess the needs of their non-profit partners, evaluate different ways to solve a variety novel, "real-world" issues, adapt their approaches by engaging in "reflection-in-action," and work effectively in groups (Schön, 1983; Furco, 2003). That is, students were provided with the opportunity to practice learned skills and theories in one or more authentic setting/s. As per research on CBL, the researcher conducting this study also expected that students involvement in this project would foster their critical thinking, communication and problem-solving skills (Conway et al., 2009) – all central learning outcomes in the author's university. It was the researchers hope that additional student learning gains to participants of this study – of relevancy to post-baccalaureate job placement -- would include an enhanced sense of social responsibility, increased awareness of career opportunities, and industry work experience that will fortify students' resumes/portfolios (Melaville et al., 2006; Conway et al., 2009).

### **Theories that undergird pedagogical practices in experiential sport management learning**

Due to the centrality of experiential learning in Sport Management, Dodds and Bochicchio (2011) explained the key variables that affect the degree to which internships learning is of value to student participants. These include a) the intern; b) the internship coordinator (in this case the course instructor); c) the host organization; and d) the sport management program, as well as e) the university in which the program is housed. Specifically, levels of cooperation between the sport management student/intern with his/her community partner, facilitated by his/her course instructor is associated with interns' ability to meet, and potentially exceed, class-based student learning outcomes.

Of equivalent relevancy is anchoring experiential learning in corresponding theories of learning and teaching. Brown et al. (2018) have advanced this research, as it pertains to applied learning in Sport Management, by drawing upon the epistemic beliefs and corresponding practices defined by Dewey (1933), a theorist whose seminal work on experiential learning remains markedly pertinent today. Emblematic of his endorsement of authentic learning is a quote by Dewey (1933):

*First, in reference to material already learned, questions should require the student to use it in dealing with a new*

*problem rather than to reproduce it literally and directly. For the former operation demands the exercise of judgment by the pupil and cultivates originality even in dealing with things already well known by others. (p. 266)*

In addition, salient to experiential learning, according to Dewey (1933), is:

1. for students to answer questions germane to the issue at hand, not their teachers' a priori objective/s;
2. to facilitate students' learning by immersing them in "real world" situations that necessitate their continuous re-examination of ideas;
3. to foster student reflection through the provision of structured prompts that require students to re-conceptualize what they know and are able to do; and,
4. for students to explain what they have learned as well as how these new ways of perceiving the world inform their pursuit of new, yet conceptually congruent endeavors.

The pedagogical principles enumerated above guided the execution of this CBL experience in Sport Management. Also of tremendous benefit, in the context of this class, was that in order for students to actualize their fundraising goals they had to observe and attend to important, yet sometimes discomfiting aspects of their fundraising efforts (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). There was simply no other way for them to construct alternatives that were more likely to yield success. As such, Sport Management students' inquiry was not divorced from learning – a problem emergent, some of the time, among students learning content didactically --, rather it was intrinsic to the process of learning and continual adaptation (Huitt and Hummel, 2003). As a result, the cultivation of creativity, and habits of mind associated with nimble thinking/capacity when confronted with problems, were likely to have been associated with the intentional structuring of the experiential learning opportunity that will be described in this paper.

### **CBL in sport management**

As alluded to above, sport management is a discipline well suited to achieve real world applicability combined with CBL (Jones et al., 2008). As such, the integration of experiential, community-based learning (CBL) courses in sport management has increased due to theorists emergent understanding of the uniquely rewarding nature of these curricula in fostering students' commitment to service, perspective-taking ability, professional dispositions, and civic engagement (Cairney and Breen, 2017; Kolb, 2015). Research indicates that cultivating these competencies is important, not only due to the salience of students' engagement in civic activities, but also due to their often under cultivated "soft skills" such as adaptability, resourcefulness, leadership and accountability – all required for success in the workplace

and beyond (DeLuca and Braunstein-Minkove, 2016).

In summary, students' philanthropy, through CBL, is one of the most modern forms of experiential education (Kane and Author, 2013; Ahmed and Olberding, 2008). If graduates lack the practical skills that will equip them to contribute meaningfully in the workplace, then understanding the exact nature of what students learn through CBL experiences and how this occurs -- particularly in sport management -- is important. Thus, the aim of this study was to examine aspects of a sport management CBL course wherein student teams created, implemented, and executed fundraising plans for a local nonprofit's annual fund – more specifically a special event within the organization's larger annual campaign. As a mechanism for modeling this course as closely as possible to the rigors of "real life," student fundraising plans had to include at least five fundraising strategies and execution required strategies and methods for approaching various markets (that is, individuals, corporations), timelines, financial (budget) and human resources.

### **METHOD**

A qualitative content analysis design employing secondary data from a sport management course informed the findings. As a requisite of the sport management major, *Development and Fundraising in Sport (SPM4516)* is designed to provide a comprehensive overview for fundraising, donor relations, non-profit, and sport-related sales professions. The course provides broad exposure to the nonprofit sector, with specific focus within the sport context. Students develop an understanding of fundraising operations and cover topics including but not limited to: fundraising models, donor motivation, donor relations and retention; digital fundraising; event management, and donor research and analytics.

The introduction of CBL component to the SPM4516 was twofold: (1) the author is employed emphasizing service learning, evidenced by their status as a Carnegie-Foundation institution, and (2) given the growing popularity of sport focused fundraising events, the CBL project requires students to execute an annual fundraising initiative for a local nonprofit.

### **CBL fundraising project**

To execute this fundraising initiative, students were asked to create, implement, execute, and evaluate a resource development plan for a local non-profit organization. As noted previously, students were required to execute a minimum of five fundraising strategies learned through anchored instruction. Due to the experiential, authentic nature of this project, it was expected to offer numerous learning benefits to the students including specific subject matter knowledge, career development and job skills, leadership skills, networking opportunities, critical thinking skills, and real world hands-on experience.

Over the course of two consecutive spring semesters, students in the course formed six member teams and were assigned an eight-week CBL project. All teams worked with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) in a large, urban city located in the southeastern United States. The partner organization provided an overview of expected student outcomes during the semester, including implementing, executing, and evaluating a resource development plan for the MDA's annual Muscle Walk.



As part of the course, students were asked to reflect on their experiences as well as their own personal growth and professional development. Final reflection papers totaling 300 pages of text served as the content for this research. All participants provided signed consent for sharing their final reflection paper. The final reflection prompt asked students to reflect on the totality of the CBL experience, how they integrated their subject matter knowledge into the fundraising experience, and what they learned about themselves in terms of both personal and professional growth. The final reflection prompt provided students with the opportunity to make connections between the course content and their CBL experience.

Importantly, the theoretical basis for the project adhered to the principles of good practice in CBL. These include providing students with multiple means for demonstrating competence; providing students with opportunities to condense and describe what they learned; and, offering students frequent feedback on their progress – both formally and informally (Melville et al., 2006).

### Participants

In total, 146 students enrolled and completed the course over two consecutive academic years. Eighty-two percent of sample participants were males and eighteen percent were females. All respondents were sport management majors, and of these 79% were in their junior year of study and 21% were seniors. While it may appear that male students were overrepresented in this sample the distribution is representative of sport management enrollment nationally – with female undergraduate enrollment at or below 20% (Hancock and Hums, 2011; Jones et al., 2008).

### Data analysis

This study employed rigorous qualitative research methods to uncover the nature of participants'—in this case, juniors and seniors in higher education – experiences with a community-based learning course within the realm of sport management. To assess students' learning, the authors and two additional coders retrospectively evaluated the reflection papers. We applied grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) to the reflection paper data and believe it is important to note that unlike quantitative work which often tests existing theory grounded theory is driven by the data. As Patton (2002) points out, "in-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich;" further, the "validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness... than with sample size" (p. 244-245).

To that end, four evaluators trained in the use of constant comparative analysis independently reviewed students' reflections. Constant comparative method is an inductive data coding process used for categorizing and comparing qualitative data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Utilizing the open coding process, each evaluator identified global themes, and then further refined thematic data by identifying emergent subthemes therein (Corbin and Strauss 1990). After the initial analysis, all four evaluators met to discuss levels of commonality across broad categories; this allowed for fruitful discussion, analysis and cross-comparison of emergent themes among raters. After sustained deliberation, raters constructed definitions of emergent categories to ensure inter-rater commonality of understanding regarding what constituted specific categorizations. Raters then independently coded transcripts and cited specific exemplars of each category. Cross comparisons of coded data indicated almost complete agreement (that is, 95%), and areas of disagreement were addressed through further discussion. A grounded theory of both what students' gained from the CBL course, as well as what aspects of the course facilitated

this growth, emerged and will be described in the results below (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

## FINDINGS

### Recurrent themes

From our analysis, two overarching themes emerged. The first pertains to the value of "real world" experience and the second pertains to how the course was taught. Subsumed within "real world experience" were four subthemes focused on: a) skills cultivated in the "real world"; b) the challenges of working in a group; c) personal growth; and, d) vocational exploration. There was some overlap, in that group work was associated with specific kinds of personal growth, enabling passages to be "double coded" in some instances.

Within subtheme number one, skills cultivated in the "real world" were students' increased sense of efficacy, their commitment to their community, their increased preparation for eventual careers, and the ways the knowledge they cultivated in this course will be transferrable to multiple contexts. Within subtheme number two, working in a group, was students' description of the unknown challenges of working with a group, as well as the new strategies they developed to address those challenges, such as building rapport with team members and learning how to delegate tasks. Within subtheme number three, personal growth, was students' newly cultivated emphasis on "giving back," working outside of one's comfort zone, persisting in the face of uncertainty, learning how to fundraise, and learning how to serve as a leader. Within subtheme number four, vocational exploration, was students awareness of their strengths, the types of work they may wish to do upon graduation, and their newly emergent interest in working for a non-profit.

Embedded within was an appreciation for how the course was taught. Repeatedly emphasized by student participants was the value of learning by doing – sometimes characterized as "learning by experiencing it." Thus, the class was deemed by these students to be uniquely rewarding, teaching them skills that they will remember and use in the future.

Explicated in Table 1 are exemplars that illustrate the unique rewards of this CBL course in their voices. Many contain data that span across more than one theme. These multi-thematic data were included intentionally, so the richness and authenticity of their reflections are available to the reader.

In summary, conducting the work of resource development and fundraising was an eye-opening experience, replete with challenges, rewards, professional preparation, and a greater appreciation for non-profit work. Students often used the following phrases:

*This project was challenging...*

**Table 1.** Overarching themes.

<b>Real world experience</b>
<p><b>Skills cultivated in the “real world”</b></p> <p>The “hands-on” experience instilled in me a sense of ownership in the project, allowed me to experience problems and difficulties and find solutions and allowed me to develop skills necessary for the real world. I believe other students would benefit greatly from this type experience and more professors should incorporate these types of assignments into their courses to enhance their academic curriculum.</p> <p>Based on conversations with employers and professionals, it is clear that real experience has value when it comes to employment and success in the work place. Many job postings list experience as a requirement for the advertised position. When employers are looking for people to fill a position, each candidate may have the same degree, but not every candidate will have the “hands-on” experience and skills necessary to actually do the tasks required in their career choice. Giving students the opportunity to gain “hands-on” experience and develop skills that are directly transferrable to the real world plays a vital role in preparing them for their career choices.</p> <p>I will be able to fall back on this experience to show that I am capable of being an effective and successful fundraiser, but more importantly that I am capable of helping others and I’m committed to making my community better.</p>
<p><b>Challenges of teamwork</b></p> <p>The responsibility, challenge, and success of our team’s efforts far surpassed what we would have learned through a textbook. It wasn’t always easy – we certainly didn’t always agree -- but in the end it was more than worth it.</p> <p>Working with a team is complicated and never without problems whether you choose your team or they are chosen for you...In groups, you quickly learn who likes to take charge, who likes to sit back, who likes to do both depending on the day... Naturally, I have always been a leader, whether in a classroom or on an athletic field...this experience was challenged my leadership ability. I tried to keep us on task, while allowing everyone to ideas to be considered... I feel as though this was my test run, and if I encounter this type of work in my professional career, I will know how to make things run more smoothly...While it was challenging, in the end everyone wanted to accomplish the same goal and no one gave up.</p> <p>I need to work on delegating responsibility since I find myself just doing the tasks instead of delegating responsibility to other team members. I think this experience has made me a better team member and team leader.</p>
<p><b>Personal growth</b></p> <p>I did not expect to get so emotionally involved. It was extremely rewarding knowing that I was not only completing a class assignment, but I was putting others needs before myself and giving back in every way I could.</p> <p>This project was unlike any other assignment that I have been a part of. I learned so much more by taking part in this project because it forced me to go outside of my comfort zone and try things that I would never have tried otherwise.</p> <p>The CBL project was not just another group assignment, but a learning experience about myself.</p> <p>I need to develop skills in giving others feedback on personal performance in a way that will be constructive, rather than destructive, and find ways to encourage everyone to work together as a team to reach a common goal.</p> <p>This project has helped me realize my passion for helping others through their journey. It is a blessing to be part of Brandon’s journey and I hope to inspire and encourage others to help change someone’s life to make their fight a little bit easier.</p>
<p><b>Critical thinking and leadership skills</b></p> <p>The CBL project provided me with insight about myself – specifically, how I can improve my leadership skills. As captain of my fundraising team, I gained experience working with a diverse group where individual goals, and/or expectations were different. Working with team members I didn’t know well, and whose goals and motivation varied was the most challenging aspect of the project. I, now, realize the need to build rapport and develop a positive one-on-one relationship with each team member.</p> <p>While completing this community based learning project, I learned job skills, leadership skills, critical thinking skills, and real-world skills...Critical thinking is important in any project, but in this particular one it was vital because none of us had ever done a project like this before. As for myself, I learned new ways to raise money, I learned that I had to find different ways to appeal to individual donor interests, and I learned that rejection and a “no” aren’t the end of the world.</p>
<p><b>Vocational exploration</b></p> <p>Over the course of the semester, I discovered that I am interested in pursuing a career in the non-profit sector.</p> <p>Working for a non-profit company had never crossed my mind until I took this class. Being able to run my own online giving campaign and putting on a successful fundraising event has shown me that doing this as a career is something I want to do explore.</p> <p>This class affected me in a way that I never thought it would. I have recently been contemplating on a future job with a non-profit organization. I can see the opportunities that are available in the non-profit sector. I’m grateful that UNF is such a huge supporter of the CBL. With this encouragement, professors and students to get to make a difference in someone’s life and make a difference in our city.</p>

Table 1. Cont'd.

**Appreciation for pedagogy (learning by doing)**

The CBL project is my favorite assignment since beginning my college education. It is a unique and rewarding method of teaching and learning. The knowledge I gained will remain with me longer than if I had just passively read, or been taught from, a textbook. I was able to directly observe and understand what was happening and what had to be done which is sometimes difficult to properly understand if you have never experienced it.

Doing a CBL project for class has been the most rewarding experience I have had in a college class. It was completely hands-on rather than just reading a textbook and taking a test. We learned, we failed, but in the end we were successful in helping a great cause for our community while adding to our resumes.

I enjoyed coming to class each day and focusing on our project because I was always aware of what was going on, rather than coming to a normal class and just listening to the teacher lecture about non-profits.

This semester, the development and fundraising course, has provided me with a unique experience like none other during my time at UNF. This experience forced us to step into an unfamiliar pedagogical setting, while allowing us to better understand CBL, and learn by doing.

*This project made me realize the how challenging nonprofit work is...*

*My appreciation for the work of nonprofits has changed because of this class...*

*It was rewarding...*

*I can use (skills) in my future career...*

**DISCUSSION**

The results of this exploratory study, designed to assess the unique benefits of an authentic problem-based experiential learning, provide important theoretical and practical takeaways on how to best utilize the high impact practice of community-based learning to enhance career preparedness and personal growth of students. Specifically, the findings explicated above indicate that students who partake in community-based experiential learning are provided with unique opportunities to cultivate pre-professional skills (including critical thinking), explore vocational possibilities, and grow intra and interpersonally. These findings are important, particularly in light of the reported discrepancy between the competencies required of those in post-baccalaureate jobs and those learned through undergraduate study in the academy. Specifically, Caplan (2018) reports that students' undergraduate degree/s are merely a "signal" of characteristics of appeal to employers, yet in no way actually equip students with skills of relevancy for jobs. In essence, he asserts the value of undergraduate education is overrated. Our findings suggest that this does not have to be the case. That is, high impact experiential CBL practices cultivate skills that are transferrable to the workplace and of benefit to communities.

The indictment of the academy's growing irrelevancy in preparing professionals, reported by Caplan (2018), does not just pertain to philosophy and sociology majors – it also pertains to sport management. Specifically, sport management educators are increasingly cognizant of the gap between traditional curricula and sport industry

needs, made all the more concerning given the growing number of programs in the field and the highly, competitive nature of the industry. Researchers (Petersen and Pierce, 2009; Stier and Schneider, 2000) and sport industry reports suggest that professionals are also cognizant of the incongruence of students' undergraduate training in sport management and the skills required of them in the workplace. Notably, *The Sports Business Journal*, a leading industry publication, found that 47% of senior-level sport industry executives identified, *opportunities for students to work on real-life projects*, as the single most important element for the success of a sport management program (Dolich, 2016). Additionally, although 70% of industry executives would encourage his/her child to pursue a career in sports, less than half (43%) would encourage him/her to pursue a degree in sport management. These results led Dolich (2016) to evaluate a number of leading U.S. sport management programs and their faculty. His findings indicated a need for more depth and breadth in instruction – specifically in areas that enhance students' orientations toward life-long learning, teamwork, self-management, career exploration, and communication. Carefully designed and well-executed CBL projects, such as the one outline in our work, provide students a chance to learn and discover the aforementioned skills.

In closing, our work serves as an example of how community based experiential learning can offer a promising means for providing the rigor at which student's will be expected to perform during internships and throughout their careers. In their own voices, students who completed this course articulated having cultivated transferrable professional skills, self-efficacy, persistence, and awareness of the "real world." Likewise, community partners perceived the CBL project as not only beneficial but critical to their annual fundraising efforts and in meeting the needs of those they serve. They are eager to continue the project with future sections of the course.

The practical implications of our work also speak to the importance of addressing students' preparedness for the

workplace before they commence upon final internships or entry-level positions. In addition, if community based experiential learning projects within sport management curricula address and meet student, community and sport industry needs, then our work serves as an example of how academics (students and faculty) and practitioners can successfully bridge the gap between theory and practice, again, prior to students' final internship. This will afford students an opportunity to solve real problems and build tangible skills along a more substantive developmental continuum.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

No study is without limitations and this study is no different. Given the small sample size, it is impossible to assert that these findings are reliable and replicable. Notwithstanding, we assert that it is likely that these results will emerge from the implementation of similar learning experiences. To verify this, the authors suggest subsequent validation studies be conducted, as well as studies assessing the efficacy of these approaches through the use of mixed methods – which may entail evaluating student gains by collecting both survey and qualitative data. In addition, it would be worthwhile to conduct studies on the external validity of these learning approaches in contexts throughout the country to determine the degree to which these gains are applicable in a variety of geographic locales with different demographic groups.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Management practices and academic performance of government-aided secondary schools in Uganda**

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Received 23 January, 2018; Accepted 21 July, 2021

**This paper presents findings from a study carried out to examine how management practices affected academic performance of public secondary schools in Yumbe District in Northern Uganda. The study was premised on the prevailing poor and declining academic performance of public secondary schools despite increased funding and capitation by the government. The primary objective of the study was to examine the effect of different management practices on academic performance of these schools. The specific objectives were to determine the effect of planning and organisation on academic performance as well as establishing the relationship between control and performance in public secondary schools based. A mixed cross sectional survey design was used where questionnaires and interviews were conducted on selected respondents. Findings indicated that planning was a critical managerial requirement for improved academic performance, most of the school organisational structures were dysfunctional and there was absence of internal policies to manage, monitor and supervise academic performances, finances, welfare, health and safety. The study concluded that there existed a strong positive relationship between planning, organizing, controlling, and academic performance in public secondary schools. The study recommends more stakeholder involvement, resources, and financial support to step up academic performance in public secondary schools.**

**Key words:** Management practices, academic performance, public secondary schools, Uganda.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is an important determinant of economic and social development of a nation for the quality of education in a country indicates the quality of its human resource (Iqbal, 2012). Educators have for long been interested in exploring the variables contributing effectively to quality of performance of learners (Farooq and Berhanu, 2011). Today, more than ever, schools are facing the need to work efficiently and improve their educational work. In this context, the role of school

administration is considered to be rather significant since the educational outcomes are strongly influenced by the specific organizational characteristics of each school leadership, school climate, and the organizational development plan which as a whole, arrange and define the process of school management (Argyriou and Iordanidis, 2014). Government-aided secondary schools in Yumbe District have for long grappled with the challenge of poor academic performance yet reports

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reveal that these schools enjoy quite a lot of government support in form of capitation grant, recruitment and deployment of staff, payment of staff salaries, construction of school facilities and provision of scholastic materials such as text books, science apparatus and laboratory chemicals (Yumbe District Education, 2015). Since no mention is made of the management practices and their effectiveness in these schools, researchers wondered whether this was the factor contributing to the poor Academic performance in the region prompting this study.

Expenditure on education is considered as an investment in the human resource enrichment (Iqbal, 2012). In Africa, the challenge for governments is not just to expand secondary education, but also to enhance the quality of education and hence; Africa has gradually increased public spending on education to address these challenges (Kajunju, 2015). Amidst this commitment to improve quality and access to education, there is a deeper learning crisis at play in Africa as compared to other continents as many students are not gaining basic skills while attending school. In fact, some students are not much better off than those who missed school in terms of skills. Consequently, the quality of education in Africa is in a perilous state (Kajunju, 2015). Since no mention is made of the management practices employed in the schools in Africa, one wonders whether this deep learning crisis is not attributed to the management practices in place and their effectiveness on academic performance.

In Uganda, one of the objectives of the education sector is to increase and improve equitable access to quality education (Government of Uganda, 1992). Over the years, government of Uganda has continuously invested in the secondary education sector (World Bank Report, 2015). Despite these efforts, the general performance of public schools in the country has not been impressive more especially the up-country secondary schools.

Uganda National Education Board -UNEB has implemented the National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE) for secondary education since 2008 with the objective of monitoring effectiveness of the education process in the country. Hardly any improvement was observed in results for biology, English and Mathematics in the period between 2008 and 2010. Contrary, impressive results were observed in non-government aided secondary schools, wondering the causes of poor performances in government-aided schools.

Theoretically, the study was driven by the Systems Theory as was first postulated by Bertalanffy in 1960 and later developed by other theorists like Henderson, Scott, Katz, Kahn, Buckley and Thompson (Chand, 2015). According to the theory an organization is an organized whole, made up of sub-systems integrated into a unity or orderly totality or a system being

composed of related and dependent elements which when in interaction, form a unitary whole.

In this study, management was seen as a system with components which are interrelated, interdependent and must work together supporting each other for efficiency and effectiveness of an institution. This theory helps to understand the relationship between the different components of an organization for better management. Since secondary schools were seen as a systems composed of subsystems which present complex interdependence of relationships between people, tasks or responsibilities and its environment, their success may not come as easily as the theory tends to suggest. Instead, success depend on the better understanding and development of individual subsystem, the general environment and the coordination between the different subsystems in order to make a contribution to the entire whole.

This therefore implies that the collective contribution of management practices namely planning, organizing and controlling in the Yumbe District government aided Secondary Schools results in good Academic performance if each sub variable is well developed and all work together. None of them works alone. Failure in one results in failure of the school system and hence poor academic performance.

The study was conceptualized on the conviction that good management practices lead to improved academic performance in government aided secondary schools. Management itself is the process of attaining organisational goals by effectively leading and controlling the organization's human, physical, financial and informational resources (Ogunbameru, 2004). Management practices refer to the administrative activities executed in the school for the attainment of the school goals and objectives (Makuto, 2014). Educational management is the application of management principles in designing, developing and effecting resources towards achievement of educational goals, judged by the extent to which schools generally meet the expectations of the society (Nzoka and Orodho, 2014). Performance is the task or operation seen in terms of how successfully it is undertaken (Santos et al., 2014).

## **Problem**

Government of the Republic of Uganda in its efforts to ensure quality secondary education in the country, put policy interventions to improve teaching and learning in public secondary schools by providing capitation grants, undertaking infrastructural development, recruitment and deployment of substantive head teachers and school staff, supply of scholastic materials. Besides, several other efforts were put in place by the schools' communities to facilitate improvement in academic

**Table 1.** Showing the correlation coefficients between planning and academic performance.

Variable		Planning	Academic performance
Planning	Pearson correlation	1	0.345*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002
	N	75	75
Academic performance	Pearson correlation	0.345*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	
	N	75	75

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.51 level (2-tailed).  
Source: Researcher (2018).

performance. Despite all these interventions, academic performance of public secondary schools in Yumbe District remained relatively low compared to private schools and to schools in other districts. In the recent examinations release by the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) only nine students passed in Grade 1 in the entire district and the failure rates ranged between 50-54%. Consequently, completion rates remained incredibly low, causing doubts in the management practices adopted in these schools and loss of trust in the entire education system in the district prompting this study.

## METHODOLOGY

This was a mixed cross-sectional study conducted in May 2018 in the selected secondary schools in Yumbe district Guided by GD (2013). Several respondents were interviewed and questionnaires administered to establish how management practices affected academic performance in selected schools. Two-hundred and two (202) questionnaires were randomly administered to teachers, and members of school boards of governors. Besides six (6) interviews were administered to purposively selected district based education sector administrators; four group discussions were held with student leaders; and district several education sector performance reports were reviewed. Data were analysed using statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) and qualitative data was theorized around propositions of the Systems Theory that guided this study.

## FINDINGS

The study came up with the following findings aligned to the study objectives.

### Planning and academic performance

The 1st objective of the study was to establish whether poor planning was responsible for the poor performance of students in secondary schools, 45% of the respondents agreed while 39% disagreed and 7% were undecided. A hypothesis was tested to establish whether planning affected performance of these schools using

Pearson's Product-Moment. The results are presented in the Table 1 showed a significant positive relationship between planning and academic performance.

The correlation coefficient of 0.345 implies that a significant positive relationship between planning and academic performance, given that Sig (P-value) is less than 0.050 (=0.002). Findings were in agreement with earlier studies of Ndegwah (2014); Kahavizakiriza et al. (2015) and who also urged that good planning provides a good starting point for financial management in public secondary schools. Basheka and Nabwire (2013) had also similar findings that there was a positive relationship between budget planning and the quality of educational services delivered at Kyambogo University. Indeed, planning was positively correlated to performance in public secondary schools, although it may not be the sole indicator of performance as Damary (2013) had also established. But in any case strategic planning in secondary schools provided significantly better performance than unplanned, opportunistic approach. Planning in public secondary school was facilitated mainly by income from school fees and government grants and as Burckbuchler (2009) earlier revealed performance based budgeting had a positive correlation to student performance resulting in better education quality to students. A participant in one of the group discussions commented that:

*"...the performance of my school is not that interesting for the reason that the time table the way it is organized has a lot of free spaces for the candidates and the semi candidates. Lessons begin at 8:00am and yet in other schools' lessons begin at 6:00am and here lessons begin at 8:00am and end at 4:00pm. Students have a lot of free time to relax making them not to concentrate on their book leading to failure".*

Since scholars such as Cobb-Clark and Jhay (2013); and Lee and Polachek (2014) are not in agreement that good planning and budgeting enhances academic performance in secondary schools. Indeed, they urge that it is not just increased budget that matters in improvement of students learning

**Table 2.** Showing the model summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.345 <sup>a</sup>	0.119	0.107

<sup>a</sup>Predictors: (Constant), planning.  
Source: Researcher (2018).

**Table 3.** Showing the correlation matrix for school organization and academic performance.

Variable		Organizing	Academic performance
Organizing	Pearson correlation	1	0.337*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.003
	N	75	75
Academic performance	Pearson correlation	0.337*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	
	N	75	75

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
Source: Researcher (2018).

achievements but the specific areas in which the expenditure is increased that may increase academic performance. To mitigate this intellectual disagreement, a regression analysis was conducted to establish the extent to which planning affected academic performance. The coefficient of determination (R Square) was used and the results presented in the Table 2.

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square) is 0.107 implying that planning accounted for up to 10.7% of the variance in academic performance and the other percentages attributed to other factors. This implied a modest and positive between the two variables.

### Organization and academic performance

The 2nd objective of the study was to invest how school organisation was a contributing factor to academic performance. Organizing was hypothesized as the process of arranging human and material elements appropriately to specific functions and positions (Fasasi, 2011). Organisation also implied identification of jobs within an educational organization, classification of jobs and assignment of employee to specific jobs. Neal and Mullarkey (2012), in their study, emphasized that organizational structures defined relationships, roles and the systems through which goals and priorities were established, decisions made, resources allocated, power wielded and plans accomplished. The study was limited to board of governors, school administration and school culture as sub variables of the school organization.

Findings indicated that 85% of the respondents were in strong agreement that good school organization improves

academic performance while 8% were in disagreement and 7% undecided. The 2nd hypothesis that there was significant relationship between school organization and academic performance was tested using Pearson's Product-Moment and results are presented in Table 3.

The correlation coefficient of 0.337 means that there was a significant positive relationship between school organization and academic performance, given that Sig. (P-value) is less than 0.050 (=0.003) implying that improvement in school organization is likely to result in improved academic performance.

The study further established that members of school boards of governors of secondary schools were appointed by the Minister responsible for education. It is these board members who closely monitor school performance, supervising non-academic staff and providing motivation incentives to academic staff as Kindiki (2009) also pointed out. The same board also helps in the effective implementation of the school curriculum and the general operations all of which impact improved academic performance.

However, Onderi and Makori (2012) were skeptical about exaggerating the role played by boards of governors. They were keen to point out that in some evidenced cases; boards of governors actually fail to execute their mandate due to accountability challenges and levels of commitment, skills, and knowledge gaps. Indeed, Mohiemang (2008) as cited in Onderi and Makori (2012) reported that the wide-ranging responsibilities transferred to members of school boards governors were burdensome and many times impossible to achieve since they are un-salaried volunteers, part-timers, lay, without interest and without relevant knowledge and governance skills in the



**Table 4.** Showing the regression analysis model summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.337 <sup>a</sup>	0.114	0.102

<sup>a</sup>Predictors: (Constant), organizing  
Source: Researcher (2018).

**Table 5.** Showing the analysis of variables (ANOVA).

Model	Df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	9.369	0.003 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Dependent variable: Academic performance; <sup>b</sup>Predictors: (Constant), Organizing  
Source: Researcher (2018).

education system. Therefore, participation of board of governors in decision making in schools may not always achieve the anticipated academic success. Nadeem and Mudasir (2012) had similar sentiments that school boards of governors may fail to provide good performance more especially because they exclude teachers and non-teaching staff in decision making and just accept proposals from the head teachers rather than taking lead roles in shaping decisions. Actually, when asked about the effectiveness of school boards of governors in the district, the District Inspector of schools said;

*“Most schools in the district have well constituted BOG, PTA. However, they are less functional in overseeing implementation of the measures for performance improvement. Most teachers do not embark on reflective practice to improve teaching and learning processes. Most teachers do not willingly accept to try new interventions to improve teaching and learning”.*

To allay this fear, the study conducted a regression analysis was conducted to establish the extent to which school organization affected academic performance. The coefficient of determination (R Square) was used and the results are presented in the Table 4.

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square) is 0.102 implying that school organization accounts for up to 10.2% of the variance in academic performance and the other percentage attributed to other factors. In order to assess the overall significance of the model, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was spawned and the results are presented in the Table 5.

The conventional rule in determining the significance of a regression model of the calculated p-value being less than or equal to 0.05 was followed. The calculated p-value was 0.003 and less than 0.05, showing that the regression model was statistically significant ( $F=9.369$ ,

degree of freedom ( $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.05 (=0.003)$ ). This further confirmed and also contradicted fears raised by Perry (2011), that school organization has significant effect on academic performance of students. Indeed, the District Education Officer (DEO) also noted that:

*“Most schools have moderately good and accepted structures that are appropriate to administer schools well”.*

### School control and academic performance

Domnisoru et al. (2010) explained school control as a systematic effort made by school management to compare performance to predetermined standards and to undertake necessary corrective actions to see that human and other school resources are being used in the most effective and efficient way. Olum (2004) pointed out that school control ensures performance measures in place against goals and plans, and shows where negative deviations exist and puts in place actions to correct deviations as well as ensuring accomplishment of plans. This study looked at three elements of control namely medium of control, risk control and supervision but emphasized supervision as the primary control measure in public secondary schools.

Orenaiya et al. (2014) advised that school supervision should include the various activities engaged in by administration for the purpose of achievement of planned goals and objectives. Supervision focuses on providing guidance, support and continuous assessment to teachers and students for their professional development and improvement in teaching and learning process. Indeed, the study conducted by Habib (2015) discovered that supervision of schools had one of the strongest impacts on teacher attendance compared to other school inputs. Timilehin

**Table 6.** Showing the correlation coefficients between controlling and academic performance.

Variable		Controlling	Academic performance
Controlling	Pearson correlation	1	0.600*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	75	75
Academic performance	Pearson correlation	0.600*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	75	75

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
Source: Researcher (2018).

**Table 7.** Showing the model summary.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square
1	0.600 <sup>a</sup>	0.360	0.351

<sup>a</sup>Predictors: (Constant), controlling.  
Source: Researchers, (2018).

**Table 8.** Showing the Analysis of Variables (ANOVA).

Model	df	F	Sig.
Regression	1	41.100	0.000 <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Dependent Variable: Academic performance. <sup>b</sup>Predictors: (Constant), controlling.  
Source: Researcher (2018).

(2010); Dangara (2015); Okendu (2012); and Mohammed (2014), also urges that effective instructional delivery and maintenance of standards in schools is enhanced through regular supervision. It is no doubt that regular instructional supervision has a significant bearing on students' performance. School supervision includes checking students' notebooks, classroom inspections, checking teachers' lesson plans or notes and inspection of teachers' record keeping.

The 3rd objective of the study was to determine the effect of controlling as a management practice on academic performance in government aided secondary schools. Overall, 78% of the respondents were in agreement, 12% were undecided, while 10% in disagreement. The hypothesis 3 that *there is significant relationship between control as a management practice and academic performance* was tested still using Pearson's Correlation Moment at 95% level of significance (two-tailed) and findings are presented in Table 6.

The correlation coefficient of 0.600 implies that there is a significant positive relationship between controlling and academic performance, given that the significance P-value is less than 0.050 (=0.000) means that improved controlling in schools most likely results into improved

academic performance.

To further establish the extent to which controlling in schools affect academic performance, the coefficient of determination (R Square) was used and the results are presented in Table 7.

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square) is 0.351 implying that controlling in schools account for up to 35.1% of the variance in academic performance and the other percentage attributed to other factors. To further assess the overall significance of the model, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was generated and the results are presented in the Table 8.

To determine the significance of the regression model, the conventional rule of the calculated p-value (level of significance) being be less than or equal to 0.05 was followed. The calculated p-value was 0.000 and less than 0.05, the regression model was statistically significant (F=41.100, degree of freedom (df) = 1, p<0.05 (=0.000)) meaning that controlling in schools had a significant effect academic performance.

## Conclusion

The primary conclusion from the study is that management

styles, as analysed in the dimensions of planning, organising and controlling, positively affected academic performance of secondary schools in Yumbe District. The specific conclusions are that:

- i) Proper planning through participatory budgeting is important for improved academic performance of government-aided secondary schools.
- ii) Well-functioning school boards of governors are avenues of improving school organization by effectively managing school resources and activities.
- iii) Good control measures are prerequisite for better academic performance of students and vice versa. Control in public secondary schools should be effected by establishing and enforcing performance standards, strong internal policies and control measures in teaching and learning, welfare, safety and security, financial management, monitoring and supervision, providing feedback to staff among others.

## Recommendation

The study makes the following recommendations:

- 1) The study recommends that public secondary schools should present their strategic plans, annual work plans, termly budgets and activity plans to the district sectoral committee responsible for education for scrutiny and approval.
- 2) Secondary school activities should be organised in time tables and work schedules which should be regularly submitted to the district sectoral committee responsible for education for scrutiny and approval.
- 3) For members of school boards of governors to be able to execute their functions, government through Ministry of Education and Sports should provide standard facilitation allowances as part of the capitation grants.
- 4) School boards of governors should establish strong internal policies to manage, control and direct resources towards improving academic performance.
- 5) Boards of governors should intensify monitoring and supervision in schools so as to improve academic performance in government-aided secondary schools.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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