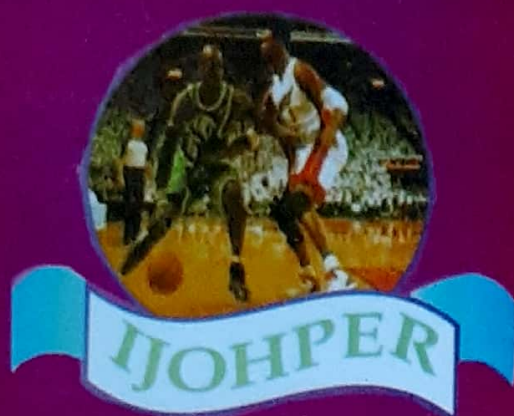


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# **ILORIN JOURNAL OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION (IJOHPER)**

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# CHALLENGES OF SPONSORSHIP OF COMMUNITY SPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN KWARA STATE

\*AINA, Michael Gbemisola, ABDULRAHEEM, Yunusa O., IBRAHEEM, Musa O., ORIMOLOYE, Adesoji & OBIYEMI Olawale Olanakanmi

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## Abstract

*Support for sports events and sports organizations by corporate bodies for the mutual benefit of both parties describes sports sponsorship. This study examined the challenges of sponsorship of community sport development programmes in Kwara State. A descriptive research design of survey method was adopted for the study. The population consisted of sports stakeholders in Kwara State Sports Council. Random sampling technique was used to select 150 respondents which included coaches, managers, trainers, athletes and director of sports. A validated and reliability tested questionnaire was used to collect data. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed that: there is significant relationship between ambush marketing and challenges of sponsorship of community sport development programmes in Kwara State, with the calculated  $r$ -value of  $0.73 > \text{critical } r\text{-value of } 0.111$  at 148 degree of freedom @ 0.05 alpha level; relationship exists between bad publicity and sports sponsorship (cal.  $r$ -value  $0.35 > \text{crit. } r\text{-value of } 0.111$ ); relationship exists between corruption and sports sponsorship (cal.  $r$ -value  $0.28 > \text{cri. } r\text{-value } 0.111$ ); The study concluded that ambush marketing, bad publicity and corruption have negative influence on sports sponsorship. It implies that if these variables decrease the tendency of getting better sponsorship deals increase. It was therefore recommended that all measures should be taken by sports stakeholders to ensure that these challenges are curbed so that sports will be greatly developed.*

**Keywords:** Sport Marketing, Sponsorship, Ambush Marketing, Publicity, Corruption, Community sport

## Introduction

Sport is no more a mere leisure activity in its conventional sense. Rather, it has evolved into an organized commercial activity. The sport enterprise has been professionalized and commercialized thereby gaining the status of a full-fledged independent industry (Jovanovic, 2011). Sports activities are now undertaken at the organizational, national and global levels. The globalization of sports has led to the formation of international sport markets, where sports teams and organizations collaborate with corporate sponsors to create opportunities not only for the athletes, but also for the businesses and organizations (Goldman & Johns, 2009). Sport financing in developed nations no longer rests exclusively in the hands of governments (Abubakar, 2015). Today, it is estimated that global sports' industry is worth billions of dollars (Zygband, Collignon, Sultan, Santander & Valensi, 2011).

Sponsorship originated as an inexpensive addition to the marketing mix and was perceived as a charitable endeavour. In other words, corporations classified sponsorship as a donation and it was not considered a 'marketing expense'. A shift in attitude with regard to sponsorship occurred when corporations began searching for a return on investment from donations made to various organizations (Wilkinson, 1993). This was followed by a

substantial increase in resources allocated to sponsorship, meaning that sponsorship became increasingly recognized as a valid promotional tool, a business expense that needed justification in the form of Return-On-Investment (ROI). Today, sport sponsorship represents an exchange process for corporations (Rui, Abel, Joao, Antonio & Stephen, 2013).

The term Sponsorship is a marketing tool that has been in existence for many years and has now been greatly improved upon. A couple of years ago, sponsorship could be regarded as charitable or philanthropic, but that has changed significantly in recent years. Hardly can organizers of major events expect to receive some funds without expecting to give something back in return (Oladunni, 2011). By understanding the benefits a sponsor seeks, the sponsee is in a better position to sell the idea of the sponsor and ensure that they can provide what the sponsor needs. What was regarded as philanthropic gesture by sponsors in the past has now become a commercial venture, with companies realizing the potential powers of sponsorship as a veritable communication tool, hence as part of the marketing mix. On the other hand, professional sports will not survive without revenues generated through sponsorships (Tsordia, Papadimitriou & Parganas, 2018).

Sports sponsorship is a marketing tool that is frequently used by companies to reach a wide audience on a global basis so as to be placed higher than their competitors and to create awareness as well as make a higher profit margin. Through this platform, specific target audience, with potential customers is reached, as it is able to penetrate through quite effectively in the promotional mix. According to Pope and Voges (2000), sports sponsorship is used to support marketing and corporate objectives, such as improving a company or brand image and increasing consumers' intention to purchase a company's product or service.

Sport plays a significant role in the life of many people. People all over the world spend their time and money doing different kinds of sports for different purposes. While some are for pleasure and recreation others are for the health benefits obtainable through sports. These purposes, especially the health benefits are better achieved when adequate funds can be raised through different means including sponsorship. For instance, the Nestlé Milo Secondary Schools Basketball Championship was sponsored by Nestle Milo Nigeria Plc. In line with its commitments to promote an active lifestyle, Nestlé Milo also launched the Milo Champ Train for mothers and child. This provides an opportunity for mothers to tie with their kids whilst participating in basketball within the neighborhood. In this programme, a medical section is provided to give mothers the opportunity to receive basic health checks such as Body Mass Index (BMI) and blood pressure. Nutritionists are also available to offer relevant nutrition advice such as guidance on healthy meals for the family (Milo, 2016). However, sport is also the way of doing business for lots of people. By winning the games or competitions, sportsmen and coaches get some kind of profit which sometimes cannot cover all the costs. For instance, sportsmen need places for training, equipment, coaches, and abilities to go to the tournaments. A lot of money is needed for all these, which is why the need for sponsorship arises in various sports. Sport as a universal phenomenon will thrive better in an environment where there is a good financial base to execute programmes,

develop athletes and build facilities. However, the growth of sport and sport markets with the global economy makes it impossible for the government alone to provide the fund needed for its development.

Sponsorship is the provision of funds or other forms of support to an individual or organization in return for a commercial return (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2013). Sports sponsorship could come from either individuals or organization. It is an aid or assistance given to a particular sport or game in order to achieve an objective or goal while at the same time projecting or promoting the events of the aided sport or sports. Sports sponsorship serves purposes other than the set activities to be actualized. Sports sponsorship entails the exhibition of the worth of the events of the sport or sports or the quality of the events of the sports. In sports sponsorship, it is hoped that both the sponsor and the sports sponsored would benefit from set ventures as this is needed for continuity in partnership. From this explanation, it can be deduced that corporate organizations on one hand and sports organizations as well as individual sport persons on the other hand can have a symbiotic relationship through sponsorship. This relationship is based on the fact that sports organizations and individuals can rely on corporate organizations for financial and material support, while the corporate organizations can also rely on sports organizations for economic benefit.

In recent years, finding the right sponsors is becoming very difficult because of some challenges associated with it. In a case when the benefit derived from sponsorship relationship is perceived to be one sided then negative outcomes might be recorded. There are two types of potentially negative outcomes for properties that may be associated with sponsorship: operational risk and reputational risk. Operational risk occurs when sponsors insist on changing the rules or format of the event, or when they exercise undue influence on its content, timing, location or participants. Reputational risk also may emanate from over-commercialization of an event, since this may erode "fan equity" (John, 2014).

One of the major challenges associated with sport sponsorship is ambush marketing. A situation where a company seeks to associate herself with a sponsored event without paying the requisite fee is described as ambush marketing. It is regarded as a marketing drive that takes place around an event but does not involve payment of a sponsorship fee to the event. The ambush consists of making an impression to customers that the ambush brand or company is an actual sponsor or is in a way connected with the event (Gratton & Taylor 2000). The incidence of ambush marketing is growing at alarming rate and coming in different faces. It poses real danger for companies involved in staging major sport events. For most important events, one brand will pay to become the exclusive and official sponsor of the event in a particular category or categories, and this exclusive right creates a problem for other brands. Those other brands then find ways to promote themselves in connection with the same event, without paying the sponsorship fee and without breaking laws.

Another visible drawback to sponsorship is poor publicity. Low or poor publicity of sponsoring organization has on many occasions proved to be the major reason for poor

sponsorship. This is because the image of the company is either under-expressed or not well presented in such a way as to reach out to the consumers of the sponsors. Sponsorship relations without well-defined images and a natural connection between them would result into negativity if the sponsor or the sponsored event is subject to negative association. These could include incidents of private affairs or allegations of the use of banned drug which will cause a damaging effect through image transfer and associations to the sponsor.

Another challenge is in the area of corruption. The huge sums of money in sport in recent time from transfer fees, sponsorship contracts, buying and selling of sports teams and the construction sport facilities, present several opportunities not only for lucrative business deals, but also for corruption, (Kochan & Goodyear, 2011). Sport has a history of corruption; such as athletes taking performance enhancing drugs, executives in some of sport's governing bodies selling votes; players taking payments to lose or perform in certain games, referees betting on the games they were officiating, fixing matches or selling information to gamblers and fixers and many other illicit actions. This will result in unpredictable outcome of events. The "Crashgate" in Formula One, Bloodgate in Rugby and the sport fixing scandal involving three members of the Pakistan cricket team, just to mention a few (Westerbeek & Smith, 2003). Another disturbing case has been the exposure of the 'live-baiting' practice in greyhound racing in Australia. Live baiting involves the use of live rabbits strapped to the mechanical lures, the dogs chasing them down and tearing them apart. In Australia live-baiting has extended beyond the traditional use of rabbits to include possums and piglets (Meldrum-Hanna, 2015). This has led to the suspension of several dog trainers in three Australian states and a series of government inquiries in Queensland (MacSporran, 2015). The perceived lack of competitive balance, will lead to spectators losing interest in the competition (Szymanski, 2001) and, as a result, revenue generation through media coverage and sponsorship will also decline in these sports as there will be no target audience to promote the products to.

It must be understood that the impact of sports incorporates social and personal development, health and wellbeing, culture, education, economic development as well as prosperity. Hence, sports play a paramount role in the society and it is essentially important that the private sectors contributing to the development of sports should not be discouraged through the aforementioned challenges such as bad publicity, ambush marketing, corruption just to mention a few.

### **Statement of the Problem**

One of the problems in sports marketing is the fact that sponsorship deals tend to be short-lived. This is the case with most of the Kwara State Sports council's organised championships. Virtually all the Sports Associations in the state have fallen victim of this problem one time or the other. The Tennis Association had more than five sponsors within the last two decades among which were Rebalat, Bulletine, Optiweb, PSP Cup and a host of others with none of them lasting up to five years. Ankuri Hospital and Helbank sponsored the game of Volleyball at different times but have both pulled out of the relationship. Dan

Musa's sponsorship of the game of Basketball did not last more than five years despite the huge achievement recorded by lifting the state team (Kwara Falcons) from National Division Two League to the Premier League apart from representing the nation at the continental championships within that short span of time. Some years ago, Okin Biscuit Factory, Offa was into symbiotic relationship with Kwara State Badminton Association, a union that gave birth to many male and female national and international champions no longer exist. Just to mention a few. This study investigated the challenges of sponsorship where the relationship between corporate business organisations and Kwara State sport Associations are short-lived thereby hindering rapid and consistent development of sports in the State. .

## Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The population comprised the stakeholders in Kwara State Sports Council. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 150 respondents which include 16 coaches, 4 managers, 8 trainers, 121 athletes and a Director of Sports. Informed consent was sought from the respondents. Structured questionnaire of a 4-point likert scale of responses was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to content and face validity and test re-test method was adopted for the reliability. A coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance

## Results

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between ambush marketing and challenges of sponsorship of community sport development programmes in Kwara State,

**Table 1: Relationship between Ambush Marketing and Sports Sponsorship**

| Variable          | n   | X    | O    | df  | Cal.r-val. | r-Crit. | Decision       |
|-------------------|-----|------|------|-----|------------|---------|----------------|
| Ambush Marketing  | 150 | 2.06 | 0.71 | 148 | 0.73       | 0.111   | H0<br>Rejected |
| Sport Sponsorship | 150 | 2.03 | 0.81 |     |            |         |                |

$p \leq 0.05$

Table 1 indicated a calculated r-value of 0.73 and the critical r-value of 0.111 with 148 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level. Ho1 stated that there will not be a significant relationship between ambush marketing and challenges of sponsorship of community sport development programmes in Kwara State. The hypothesis was rejected, meaning that ambush marketing will affect sponsorship relationship negatively.

**Hypothesis 2:** There will not be a significant relationship between bad publicity and challenges of sponsorship of community sport development programmes in Kwara State.

**Table 2: Relationship between Bad Publicity and Sports Sponsorship**

| Variable          | n   | X    | o    | df  | Cal.r-value | r-Crit | Decision       |
|-------------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------------|--------|----------------|
| Bad Publicity     | 150 | 1.97 | 1.04 | 148 | 0.35        | 0.111  | H0<br>Rejected |
| Sport Sponsorship | 150 | 2.02 | 0.47 |     |             |        |                |

$p \leq 0.05$

Table 2 indicated the calculated r-value of 0.35 and the critical r-value of 0.111 with 148 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated r-value is greater than the critical r-value the null hypothesis was rejected. This revealed that there is a significant Relationship between bad publicity and sports sponsorship.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between corruption and challenges of sponsorship of community sport development programmes in Kwara State.

**Table 3: Relationship between Corruption and Sports Sponsorship**

| Variable          | n   | X    | o    | df  | Cal.r-value | r-Crit | Decision       |
|-------------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------------|--------|----------------|
| Corruption        | 150 | 1.91 | 0.92 | 148 | 0.28        | 0.111  | H0<br>Rejected |
| Sport Sponsorship | 150 | 2.24 | 0.92 |     |             |        |                |

$p \leq 0.05$

Table three indicated that the calculated r-value of 0.28 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.111 with 148 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level, therefore, the hypothesis was rejected. This signifies that corruption have damaging effects on building very strong sponsorship relationship with sport entities.

### Discussion of the Finding

Table 1 explains the relationship between ambush marketing and sponsorship of sporting events. The result of hypothesis one showed that ambush marketing has negative impact on the sustenance of sponsorship relationship. This is in line with Gratton et al, (2000) who opined that over any estimates of the value of the sports sponsorship, ambush marketing creates a further uncertainty. Ambush marketing activity is not connected to the sports sponsorship so that the higher the presence of ambush marketing in sport, the greater the under estimation of the real value of the sports sponsorship would be coming from the fees of the contract. Also, Neil, (2010) asserted that by taking advantage of the goodwill attached

to the event, an ambusher can create brand recognition which can cause significant loss and damage to sponsors and commercial partners of the event host who invest substantial amounts of money in return for exclusivity.

Hypothesis two stated that there will not be a significant relationship between bad publicity and challenges of sponsorship of community sport development programmes in Kwara State. The result on table two confirmed that bad publicity impact sport sponsorship negatively. This is in line with Cliffe and Motion, (2005) who asserted that an elementary drawback to sponsorship is the transfer of control required of the brand name from the sponsoring company to the sponsored resource, and thus an uncertainty of irrational action or negative publicity. Low or poor publicity of sponsoring organization has often times proven to be the major reason for poor sponsorship overtime as the image of the company is either under-expressed or not well presented in such a way as to reach out to the consumers of the sponsoring company. Poor or bad publicity goes beyond advertisement or media presentation; these could include incidents of private affairs or allegations of the use of banned drug which will cause a damaging effect through image transfer and associations to the sponsor. If spectators engage in violence, or if players fight on the field, abuse officials, or engage in other disreputable behaviours, it may damage a sponsoring brand's image (Crompton, 2015). He also stated that the emerging publicity on the devastating effects of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) on brain tissue, which is prevalent in contact sports may lead to negative transfers to sponsors and cause them to withdraw. Most sponsors don't want to get involved in bad news

Hypothesis three stated that there is no significant relationship between corruption and challenges of sponsorship of community sport development programmes in Kwara State. The result on table 3 revealed a significant relationship between the two variables. This is in line with the opinion of Kochan et al, (2011) that the huge sums of money in sport today, from footballers' transfer fees to fiercely contested sponsorship contracts, the buying and selling of sports teams and the construction of stadium, present opportunities for corruption. The inability of sport entities to account for funds made available in sponsorship deals discourages sponsors for continuity. This might also involve undue influence by sponsors which on most occasions are discouraged by sports organisers. Take for instance when Nike invested \$160 million in a five-year sponsorship of the Brazil national football team, which many consider the leading national soccer team in the world, the company was allowed to specify where, when and against whom the national team would play twice per year (Berrett, 1993).

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