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# **INFLUENCE OF SPORTS FACILITIES AND THEIR MAINTENANCE ON TRAINING AND COMPETITION OF NIGERIA NATIONAL ATHLETES.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Overcrowded sports arena as found in some stadium and the poor state of facilities continue to result in serious injuries and fatalities, which sports Federations found unacceptable (FIFA, 2012). This has far reaching implication for the performance of athletes at both training and competition phases. This study was therefore conducted to evaluate the availability and maintenance of standard facilities for training and competition of Nigeria, national athletes.

The research design was a descriptive survey. The sample was made up of eighty national athletes and twenty national coaches who were randomly selected from ten events among those in training camps at the national stadium, Abuja in preparation for the All Africa Games scheduled to hold in Congo Brazzaville, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September 2015. Researchers validated questionnaire was used to collect data. For analysis, frequency and percentage were used to describe the data, while the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) inferential statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

The findings revealed that facilities provided met international standards for the national athletes in training and for competitions (cal. Val. of 315.495  $\geq$  crit. val. 21.03), but were poorly maintained (cal. Val. 315.495  $\geq$  crit. Val. 16.59). This study recommended that maintenance culture should be put in place by sports organizations in order to reduce the exposure of athletes to injuries and impede performance. Sports arena where athletes train should, therefore, simulate the proper competition environment in order to optimize performance.

## INTRODUCTION

Sports is an organized, competitive and skillful physical activity requiring commitment and fair play( Dauda, Dominic, & Adesoye, 2015). Sports facilities are permanently constructed, fixed or immovable indoor or outdoor structures that are used for sports.(Olabanji, 2014). The resources at the disposal of management in every organization are the yardstick for measuring the success and effectiveness of all her programmes. As it is in every organization, so it is in sports organizations. The success of any sports programme depends largely on the functional and innovative facilities to meet the needs of the users, (Ibraheem & Ojo 2014). Facilities and equipment are fundamental instruments for the effective performance of athletes while the provisions, utilization as well as the maintenance of facilities are vital factors in achieving desirable results in sports organization(Oyeniya, 2003). Dauda, et al. (2015) opined that there is a relationship between adequate provision of standard sports facilities and athletics outstanding performance. Athletes who are disposed to standard facilities will be psychologically boosted at any meet around the world.

Ekpeyoung (1986) as cited by Olajide (2007) described facilities as the buildings which enable organizations to execute their daily business programmes without any difficulty. He identified the facilities in sports organizations as sports halls, main bowl of a stadium, lawn tennis court and many others in relation to sports.

Iheanacho (2011) stated that the most important factor for consideration in planning any sports programme is a facility. For athletes to participate in competitive sports provision of facilities is essential and in any organization, the planned programme will be accomplished with the availability of necessary facilities. Therefore, provision of facilities is not only for the present but future needs for accomplishing local, national or international goals. The size of a business organization would also determine the size of facilities to be provided. In sports organization, provision of facilities depends largely on the type of sports, nature and need (Daugherty & Woods, 1979 as cited by Ogeter, 2002).

An athlete is highly encouraged for optimum performance through certain incentives and motivation. Most of these are derived from facilities, adequate provision of quality equipment and their maintenance (Awosika, 2009). It has been observed in the recent time by Iheabacho (2011) that athletes who had performed or competed to win laurels for Nigeria were those residents abroad where there are better facilities and quality equipment. Oyeniya, (2002)



explained that facilities and equipment are a powerhouse of sports, hence, participation is encouraged.

The quality of a sports arena for training and competition has been observed to have implications for health and performance. Accurately assessing the maximum safe capacity of a stadium is crucial to establishing a safe and secure environment. Overcrowded sports arena as a result of poor and inadequate facilities continues to result in serious injuries and fatalities which sports federations find unacceptable. Federation of International Football Association (FIFA, 2012).

Udoh, (1986) as cited by Oyeniyi, (2003) raised an alarm on the worse state of the existing facilities in most of the nation's stadia by saying that, "Electricity gadgets are unpredictable; cable system of facilities are at times done haphazardly thereby breaking athletes' concentration during competition and distorting their improved performance".

The objective of this study is to evaluate the influence of adequate provision, and maintenance of sports facilities for training and competition of Nigerian national athletes who were at the national camp in preparation for the 11<sup>th</sup> All Africa Games scheduled to hold in Congo Brazzaville in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Games which started in 1965 at the same venue (The Vanguard, 2015). The All Africa Games has been renamed "African Games". A decision was taken during the Executive Council Meeting of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2012 (The Guardian, 2015). Therefore, the study sought to ask the following questions:

Is there an adequate provision of facilities for the performing athletes in Nigeria?

Are the facilities provided well maintained?

## **HYPOTHESES**

The study tested the following hypotheses

- (1) There is no adequate provision of facilities at sports venues of the National Stadium Complex, Abuja for training and competition.
- (2) There is no significant maintenance of available facilities at sports venues of the National Stadium Complex, Abuja.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey. The instrument was a researcher's designed questionnaire which was subjected to both item and content validation.



The questionnaire was administered to eighty national athletes and twenty national coaches who were at the Nigeria National Camp in preparation for the 11<sup>th</sup> All African Games of 4<sup>th</sup>. 19<sup>th</sup>. September 2015 in Republic of Congo Brazzaville, through a stratified random sampling technique at the ratio of one coach to four athletes. Ten sporting events were randomly selected, these include Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Handball, Soccer, Squash, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, and Volleyball. A total of One Hundred questionnaires were distributed and collected on the spot with the help of four Research Assistants.

For data analysis, frequency and percentage were used to describe the data while the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There will be no adequate provision of facilities for athletes at the National Stadium Complex, Abuja for training and competition.

**TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE AND CHI-SQUARE( $\chi^2$ ) RESULTS ON THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE FACILITIES IN THE NATIONAL STADIUM COMPLEX.**

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Calculated $\chi^2$ value	Df	Critical $\chi^2$ value	Decision
1.	Fields and courts are available for use within the Stadium Complex	45 (45%)	47 (47%)	8 (8%)	- (0%)	315.495	9	21.03	Hypothesis Rejected
2.	The floor surface of the facility is made of high quality.	35 (35%)	51 (51%)	10 (10%)	4 (4%)				
3.	Lighting is provided on and around sport facility	38 (38%)	50 (50%)	8 (8%)	4 (4%)				
4.	There is the provision of	25 (25%)	56 (56%)	12 (12%)	7 (7%)				

changing room, shower and toilet facilities around sports facility.								
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$p < 0.05$

Table 1 shows that about 92% of all the athletes and coaches agreed that facilities for their sports, such as field and courts are adequately available for use within the stadium complex and the floor of the facilities are made up of high-quality materials (86%). They further ascertained that there is provision made for changing rooms, shower and toilet facilities within their sports facilities (81%) and that lightings are adequate (88%). The table shows that the calculated chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 315.495 is greater than the critical value of 21.03 at 0.05 alpha, thus making for the rejection of the hypothesis. This implies that there is adequate provision of facilities for training and preparation towards competitions.

Hypothesis 2: There is no proper maintenance of available facilities at the sports venue at the national sports complex.

**TABLE 2: FREQUENCY, PERCENTAGE AND CHI-SQUARE RESULTS ON THE MAINTENANCE OF AVAILABLE FACILITIES AT NATIONAL STADIUM COMPLEX**

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Calculated $\chi^2$ value	df	Critical $\chi^2$ value	Decision
1.	Court/Pitch/field/Hall arena is well maintained	7 (7%)	21 (21%)	61 (61%)	11 (11%)	315.495	6	16.59	Hypothesis Rejected
2.	Lighting is adequate and properly maintained	12 (12%)	31 (31%)	53 (53%)	4 (4%)				
3.	The changing rooms, shower and toilet facilities around the event facility are	4 (4%)	8 (8%)	48 (48%)	40 (40%)				



functioning effectively									
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$P < 0.05$

Table 2 revealed that about 72% of the Respondents disagreed that fields, courts, and pitches were well maintained. Lighting was not properly maintained (57%); and changing rooms, shower, and toilet facilities were not effectively functional (88%). The calculated  $\chi^2$  value of 315.495 which is greater than the critical  $\chi^2$  value of 16.59 at 0.05 alphalevel indicates a rejection of the hypothesis. This means that the available facilities at the various sports venue of the national stadium complex are not appropriately maintained.

## DISCUSSION

The result from hypothesis 1 revealed that facilities are significantly available for training and competition in the national stadium complex, Abuja ( $P < .05$ ). Obiyemi (1987) as cited by Ajayi, (2007) corroborated this study that availability of facilities will not only increase practical acquisition of skills but will also encourage mass participation in sporting programmes. For athletes preparing towards national and international competitions, availability of good and adequate facilities will further improve their skills, promote resource and time management for optimal performance. Babatunde, (2002) as cited by Dauda, et al, (2015) affirmed that availability of adequate and standard facilities play a major role in facilitating effective performance of athletes. Awosika, (2009) reported that it might be impossible to achieve satisfactory results from athletes whose training facilities and equipment are inadequate and substandard. Igbanugo (2004) also opined that athletes have been known to even drop-out or skipped training because facilities are inadequate or non-existent. Therefore even when available facilities are not maintained, they could become inadequate and may predispose poor performance as well as exposed athletes to injuries.

The findings of tested hypothesis 2 revealed that the available facilities were not well maintained, cal,  $X^2$  of 315.495 > crit.  $X^2$  of 16.59 at .05 level of significance. The finding was buttressed by Alabi, (2009) who believed that the poor state of the Nigeria sports arena led to the poor performance of her sportsmen and women who failed to perform excellently during great competitions. Balir (2005) said that the great progress in sports performance does not only depend on the provision of the existing facilities but also on how they are taken care of for future competition and training. Iheanacho, Charles, and Saba, (2011) explained that

management has to do with control and maintenance of available facilities, and to put this in place cost a fortune, therefore Sports Administrators should endeavour to take cognisance of this even in budget planning as well put measure in place to control and protect them from being damaged or destroyed. Dauda, et al, (2015) stressed that inadequate, substandard, obsolete and poorly maintained facilities undermined the performance of athletes in Nigeria's athletes who were invited to represent the country at international competitions.

Sports Administrators should be responsible for ensuring that maintenance of developed facilities is guaranteed, since maintenance is an important move in reducing the rate and intensity of depreciation of most sports facilities, and thus promoting the improvement of athletes' skill acquisition, integration and optimal performance at all levels of competition. As a provision of standard and adequate facilities is crucial to optimal performance, so also maintenance culture (Abayomi, 2002). Such facilities are imperative to promote continuity of availability, optimal training, and performance, prevention of injuries and cost-effectiveness of programmes.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings revealed that the facilities provided at the various sports venue of the national stadium complex met international standards for the national athletes in training and for competitions, but were poorly maintained, thus exposing athletes to injuries. Sports-related injuries on poorly maintained facilities today constitute an important public Health problem. This consequently leads to poor performance in competitions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- \* The Government should sustain her effort in the provision of sports facilities at the different sports centre.
- \* Professional sports Managers/Administrators should be engaged to manage sports facilities in order to avoid wastes resulting from the gradual depreciation of facilities.
- \* The Government might require the services of private facility managers who will generate fund for the proper maintenance of such facilities when there is a need for government agencies to reduce expenses on maintenance of public facilities.



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