



THE EFFECT OF DEBASED NIGERIAN VALUE SYSTEM ON EDUCATION SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

A lack of integrity in the sports industry may endanger sport's most essential elements and core values: fair play, ethics, mutual respect and trust in the rules of the game. Therefore, this paper studies the effect of debased values system on sports development in Nigerian. The behaviors and actions of individuals in any nation, such as Nigeria, are greatly impacted by their values system. This study extensively reviewed literature and highlighted how Nigeria values have debased greatly, to the extent that individual behaviors and actions continue to impact a concern negative effect in every sphere of national sports development. Cheating and other forms of corrupt practices, such as age falsification, lack of time consciousness, excessive quest for materialism, lack of patriotism, and mediocrity syndrome, have been exhibited and displayed in the recruitment of staff, election of sports associations, provision of sports facilities and equipment, selection of players for competition, organization of sports competitions and sports officiating. For Nigeria's sport integrity to be positively restored, the paper recommends the restoration of positive value system through a reorientation of Nigerians on moral values and respect for due process in the award of contracts for sports facilities/ equipment, due process in recruitment of staff and elections into Sports Association to ensure compliance with the specifications and standard. All forms of corrupt practices must be frowned upon with adequate and proportionate responses in all potential cases in Nigeria.

Keywords: Debased values system, Corrupt Practices, National Sports Development.

Introduction

Sports development means a progressive change in the quality and quantity of manpower that can effectively conduct the management of affairs in sports organizations, sports federations and associations, construction, expansion and maintenance of standard sports facilities and provision of equipment for all games, well organized sports competitions, where rules, regulations and standards are maintained to enhance high performance by both athletes and officiating officials. It encourages public-private partnership in the promotion, sponsorship and ownership of sports clubs. Sports stand as important societal institutions and are considered as important in relaying ideals, norms and values



to those who participate or spectate. The concept of fair play is always mentioned here and refers to athletes competing in an honest manner, not seeking to break rules and win by unfair practice. A lack of integrity in the sports industry may endanger sport's most essential elements and core values: fair play, ethics, mutual respect and trust in the rules of the game (Atuona, 2012).

The study of Nigeria's value system and sports corruption has been “multi-disciplinary” and dispersed, gross disrespect for public trust to single systemic corruption scandals that are so pervasive and resulted in political, economic, cultural or moral under-development. The complex nature of corruption has made most observers agree that it pervades many societies and that there are no quick-fix solutions to it (UNCAC, 2013). Corruption in sports involves any illegal, immoral, or unethical activity that attempts to deliberately distort the result of a Sports contest for the personal material gain of one or more parties involved in that activity (Chadwick & Gorse, 2010). Organization of large-scale events (such as Sports) involves complex logistics, tight timeframes and substantial public funds, these therefore presents opportunities and risks of corruption, since whenever there is money, competition or power involved, corruption is a constant threat, as the organization structure may not support practices that would be considered accountable and transparent (Maening, 2005). In many instances, excessive responsibility, power and money have been given to individuals whose main credentials may be their status as former athletes or club leaders (Adu, 2009).

The behaviors and actions of individuals in any nation, such as Nigeria, are greatly impacted by their values system. These values have positive or negative effects on the society's social- economic, political, and cultural lives. Some of traditional Nigeria's value systems have debased in the modern era. The Nigeria's debased values are exemplified in cheating and falsification of age, over-dependency on foreign goods, products and service delivery, un-patriotism, ethno -tribalistic sentiments and inclination, lack of time consciousness, the excessive quest for materialism and worship of money who do one know and mediocrity syndrome, among others (Adegoju, 2003, Ngwodo, 2007).

Maennig (2005) described three major categories of corruption in sports; within the cases of competition, judges and other officials are increasingly becoming involved in corruption. There is also the tendency towards an increased number of cases of management corruption in sports, and the third category the athletes and trainers that are now directly involved. The Nigeria's debased value system is not good for the development of Sports at the local, State, national, and international levels. Discussion on Corrupt practices in sports cannot be exhausted in a paper of this nature in view of the fact that there are so many forms, including the major, minor, direct and indirect corrupt practices in sports.

Corruption prone areas in sports

Over the years the United Nation (UN) agencies and international organizations, the media, the general public and young people are increasingly interested in the potential of sports to reach personal, community, national and international development objectives. They are also interested in how sports can be used to address some of the challenges that arise from humanitarian crises and in conflict and post-conflict settings. As sports becomes increasingly part of humanitarian and development work and part of the corporate social responsibility practices of some private sector actors, interested parties are anxious to explore the potential and limitations of sports in their work



(United Nations, 2012). These trends have resulted in more and people and organizations' involvement in sports in order to achieve one objective or the other. However, Transparency International (TI) (2008) observed that sports attract money. With money commercialization of sports grows. This leads to contradictory trends: On the one hand possibility of the development of sports, building new sports arenas, transmitting sports games to TV screens of billions of spectators, and generating funds for providing sports opportunities for youngsters. On the other hand, it leads to alienations with all its adverse reactions like sports spectators violence. It opens a possibility to corruption which always goes hand in hand with huge money. It attracts doping, trade of athletes or political abuse of sports.

Roger (1969) asserts that “the rise of spectator Sports to their present importance coincides historically with the rise of mass production, which intensifies the needs sports satisfies while at the same time creating the technical capacity to promote and market athletic contests to a vast audience. But according to a common criticism of modern sports, these . Commercialized play has turned into work, subordinated the athlete’s pleasure to the spectator’s, and reduced the spectator himself to a State of passivity, the very antithesis of the health and vigor sports ideally promotes. The mania for winning has encouraged an exaggerated emphasis on the competitive side of sports, excluding the more modest but more satisfying experiences of cooperation and competence. The cult of victory, loudly proclaimed by such football coaches as Vince Lombardi and George Allen, has made savages of the players and rabid chauvinists of their followers. The violence and partisanship of modern Sports lead some critics to insist that athletics impart militaristic values to the young, irrationally inculcate local and national pride in the spectator, and serve as one of the strongest bastions of male chauvinism”.

According to Maleeva (2013), modern games and Sports have been ruined by a “fatal shift toward over seriousness.” At the same time, he maintained that play had lost its element of ritual, had become “profane,” and consequently had ceased to have any “organic connection whatever with the structure of society.” The masses now crave “trivial recreation and crude sensationalism” and throw themselves into these pursuits with an intensity far beyond their intrinsic merit. Instead of playing with the freedom and intensity of children, they play with the “blend of adolescence and barbarity” that Maleeva calls pluralism, investing games with patriotic and martial fervor while treating serious pursuits as if they were games. “A far-reaching contamination of play and serious activity has taken place.”

Transparency International (2013) notes how the close-knit relationship among Sports officials, politicians, business people, sponsors and the media can create a high-risk context for corruption to occur. The low levels of managerial, organizational, financial and marketing skills create an environment where risks and abuses are more likely. These problems are most apparent when it comes to how the industry deals with match-fixing, the impact of organized crime, governance, infrastructure construction, sponsorships, and the media (UNCC, 2013).

Some of the typical characteristics of a major sports event may increase corruption risks during its organization and delivery. The authority responsible for sports events may become particularly vulnerable to corruption, given the number and potential magnitude of the risk factors at play. Some of these risk factors may simply result from the unique opportunities created by the organization of such events, the significant sums of money and often huge resources involved, the large number of



contracts to be issued, or the special sources of revenue, such as royalties, sponsorship contracts, branding and marketing opportunities, and broadcasting rights. Other risk factors may result from the “unique character” of major events and the fact that their organization must complete all the necessary preparations under difficult conditions, unusual constraints and pressing timelines (UNCC 2013).

Major Sports events usually require the recruitment and management of numerous staff. This not only renders the authority vulnerable to certain forms of corruption, but also to recruiting undesirable or corrupt staff, nepotism, and conflicts of interest. Merit, equity, and aptitude should continue to govern all human resource decisions and adequate selection and promotion procedures should be in place and respected. Certain individuals represent a greater degree of risk of corruption. This is the case, for example, with politically exposed persons (PEPs) who may be involved with the organization of a major event. Politically exposed persons, who have been entrusted with prominent public functions, represent a higher risk because they are in a position to exert undue impact on decisions regarding the major events or its personnel, procurement or financial management. They may have a higher risk of corruption due to their access to State accounts or funds. The authority must identify such persons and take appropriate risk mitigating measures (UNCC, 2013).

Given the significant amounts of public funds usually required to organize a major international event, it is usual to plan for the eventual transfer of venues and infrastructure to public authorities for public use. The transition to legacy use of the venues, equipment and infrastructure offers countless opportunities for fraud and corruption. The risk is often accentuated by the fact that the transition is often poorly planned and often managed by a different organization than the Authority authority which was responsible for the event.

Public-private partnerships normally involve the granting of various concessions and advantages. That process creates additional risks of corruption Procurement involves discretionary decision-making on behalf of the organization. Individuals having this discretionary authority fall within the high-risk group of members vulnerable to corruption. This function requires a higher level of assurance against abuse and it is important to identify specific vulnerabilities (UNCC, 2013). The sale of broadcasting rights is often a major source of revenue for the organizers of major events. Given the enormous revenues associated with the sale of broadcasting rights for many major events, particularly Sports events, it is necessary to have a strong, fair, and well-managed process for allocating and selling these rights and obtaining fair value for them. The competitive and contract negotiation processes are both complex and vulnerable to corruption (UNCC, 2013).

Falsification of Age

Swearing and use of court affidavits as official and legal documents have aided falsification of age by most Nigerians, including sports participants. Cheating and falsification of age have been synonymous with Nigeria's moral decadence. Nigeria was once banned from participating in under-age tournaments (Adegoju, 2003). In the same vein, Ngwodo (2007) reported that the perennial syndrome of age cheating, which continues to dog age-grade football in African countries, cast a pall over the golden eagles. In 1989, Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) placed a two-year ban on Nigeria from participating in FIFA age-grade tournaments and also withdrew the country's right to host the 1991 World Youth Championship. This is a big blow to the



image of the country. The withdrawal of the hosting right has also denied Nigeria all the economic, political and social benefits derived from hosting such a big tournament.

Lack of Time Consciousness

Harshman (2011) observed that lack of time consciousness, popularly known as "African time" as used by most Nigerians, is the tendency to be relaxed, show an indifferent attitude towards time and fail to start events or arrive at events or programmes at their scheduled time. It is the acceptance that nothing will start at the absolute time indicated on the schedule. Athletic teams in Nigeria have often been worked over for coming late for a competition. Sports competitions that are slated for 4 O'clock in the evening sometimes start behind schedule, and spectators do not arrive before the announced or fixed time due to the average Nigerian mentality of "African time," meaning that the game will not start at exactly 4 p.m. Despite knowing the standing rules, any team failing to show up at the appropriate time will be worked over. In this regard, many sports teams have been penalized; this does not, however serve as deterrent to others.

Excessive Quest for Materialism

According to Nwabuisi (2000), money is capable of buying anything and everything and everything else is a means of obtaining money including human life. Okolo (1993) noted that Nigerians are largely drawn to things of immediate material gain, advantage or pleasure. She further noted that an average Nigerian strongly believes that money is almighty and can achieve anything and everything. This excessive quest for materialism often exposes Sports administrators to misappropriation or embezzlement of Sports funds thereby retarding the growth and development of Sports in the country. Some Sports equipment is vandalized by Nigerians, leaving the athletes with little or nothing to train with for competitions. Lack of these Sports equipment due to vandalization, misappropriation and embezzlement seriously effective organization and administration of sports competitions (Nwabuisi, 2000, Bello, 2005)

Lack of patriotism

Nwabuisi (2000) stated that Nigerians are very unpatriotic. Most Nigerian elite athletes, especially football players, are more patriotic, dedicated, and committed when it comes to playing for their foreign football clubs than playing for their country in international competitions. The unpatriotism of most Nigerians could be seen in sports spectatorship and fanship, where most Nigerians support English Premier Leagues or clubs (Chelsea FC, Manchester United FC, Barcelona FC, Arsenal FC, etc.) than Nigerian leagues or clubs like Enyimba FC, Dolphin FC, Sharks FC, Sunshine Stars FC, Kano Pillars FC, etc.). Stadia are always close to being empty when Nigerian football clubs are playing with little publicity. This attitude makes sports clubs poorer because the greatest source of sport revenue comes from spectators.

Mediocrity Syndrome

Due to favouratism, nepotism and general mediocrity, meritocracy has almost been sacrificed to mediocrity because of "who one knows" popularly known in the Nigerian context as "IM". Access to certain facilities, positions and services has been associated with who one knows in the society, irrespective of his or her qualifications. If one is looking for an appointment, it is no longer surprising that some employers in Nigeria expect and respect complimentary cards of personalities



such as political leaders and wealthy individuals. This encourages mediocrity which affects the sectors of society, including sports. Some sports administrators at the local, state and national levels are appointed based on who they know in the society. The use of mediocrity in sports industry affects sports administration and development in Nigeria (Adegoju, 2007). Okolo (1993) relates the problem to Ethno-tribalistic sentiments and inclination; he said that a Nigerian in the position of power or who has some material advantage usually means a material life-line to his families, relatives, or friends. The roots of Nigeria's unpatriotism can be traced to ethnocentrism and ethno-nationalism, which account for the development of Nigeria's gross neglect of merit and equity which are reflected in "appointment to offices, promotions, provision of infrastructure and general development." Most Nigerians are still interested in the ethnic group, tribe or religion of who becomes the sports minister, sports commissioner, or sports association president than in the capability of the individual to service delivery.

Recruiting and Retaining Sports Personnel

Recruiting and retaining sports personnel, including athletes and officials, is a vital component in maintaining and increasing levels of sports development. Abuse and harassment may not be the only reasons that the number of sports personnel is declining. Corruption in sports in Nigeria is not just in the financial aspect, it is even in the selection of players. According to Chiagozie (2012), recruitment and management of Sports personnel today is prone to corrupt practices. Corrupt practices are eminent in recruiting and selecting sports personnel; many lack relevant professional qualification and academic experience." Audu (2009) further pointed out that there are precedents already of unprofessionals holding professional key positions. One cannot imagine a teacher being made the chairperson of the medical profession. In medicine, a pharmacist will not be allowed to be a doctor of medical services. The reason is simple, there are professional causes in law, medicine and accounting. There are also professional courses in physical education and sports management. But Nigerian people feel that participation in sports in whatever form, as athletes' stewards or even spectators is a sufficient criterion for holding key post-management or coaching.

Management of Sports Association

According to Jeroh (2012), part of the administrative malady in Nigeria is the constant power tussle between the Ministry of Sports/Commission and the Sports Associations. Elections into the various Associations are allegedly manipulated by Ministry officials to enthrone members loyal to them. A classic example is the tussle between the Nigerian Football Association (NFA) and the Nigerian Football League (NFL) on who should control the appointment of referees for football matches. There is no unity in the football house, making it difficult for policy formulation and implementation. Further, more some men and women who manage these bodies have questionable integrity. Many see their position as an avenue for personal enrichment at the detriment of goals' achievements (Jeroh, 2012). Umoru and Shaibu (2012) explained that recently Nigerian Government wanted Maigari to account for N2.6 billion released to him for the 2014 World Cup, the N2.8 billion left in the Federation coffers by his predecessor, Sani Lulu Abdullahi, as well as hundreds of millions naira he receives as monthly allocation from government. This could be the main reason why the Senate President, David Mark, has described the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF) as the most corrupt government agency in the country. Mark made the claims in which it was revealed that the NFF embezzled over N2.16 billion proceeds given to Nigeria by the Federation of International Football



Association (FIFA).

Provision of sports facilities

One other flaw in our sports administration is the crazy urge to host competitions (national and international) by governments. It is not bad craving to host competitions because of the economic, political and social benefits of such competitions. However, our administrators tend to mislead government into asking for hosting rights because of vested interests, which are not short of crude enrichment. Imagine the efforts put in to secure the hosting right of the Commonwealth Games in 2014, which Scotland eventually won. We did not show interest in whether it would be possible for the country to produce teams for a competition of this magnitude. Nigerias sports administrators are aware that the National Stadia in Abuja and Lagos are yawning for repairs. After colossal sums of money had been used to construct them, our administrators neglected their maintenance. A way out is to garner support for the hosting of competitions so that government can release money for the refurbishment and construction of facilities. It was obvious that these monies went into private pockets (Jeroh, 2012)

Conclusion

In view of many sports events that occur every day throughout the world, the number of proven cases of corruption in sports can be put into perspective, even if a considerable percentage of unknown cases are taken into account. Corrupt practices have been the order of the day. Such debasement of value systems in sports affects how Nigerians make some sacrifices for their fatherland. The attitude of many Nigerians to national service is quite undesirable. The value systems have been debased in such a way that it is difficult to have any trust and confidence in anyone. Nigerian at the head of any phenomenon tends to draw maximum personal benefit at all cost. The effect of this can be seen and felt in the poor image, dilapidated sports facilities, poor personnel management, inability to sponsor athletes to sports competitions, and general lack of support for sports clubs.

Corruption has become an issue of major political and economic significance, and this has led to a resurgence of interest in analyzing the phenomenon and the diverse forms that it assumes in developing countries, with an expectation that democratization and economic liberalization offer potential routes to dealing with the problem. An Anti-corruption strategy ranges from institutional reforms through concerted efforts at the international level. The efficacy of these approaches has not been subjected to careful empirical research. The study of corruption has been “multi-disciplinary” and dispersed, ranging from universal theoretical modeling to detailed descriptions of a single corruption scandal. It has been studied as a problem of political, economic, cultural or moral under-development. The complex nature of corruption has made most observers agree that it pervades many societies and that there are no quick-fix solutions to it (UNCAC, 2013).

However, there should be a zero-tolerance approach against corruption in sports with adequate and proportionate responses in all potential cases to show that corruption is not welcome in sports in Nigeria. There should be due process in awarding contracts for sports facilities/ equipment, recruitment of staff, elections into the sports associations to ensure compliance with the specifications and standards.

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