

**INFLUENCE OF SPORTS FACILITIES ON PERFORMANCE OF TRACK
AND FIELD ATHLETES OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ILORIN
METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE.**

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of sports facilities on performance in athletics among athletes in tertiary institutions' in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. A descriptive research survey design was used for this study. The population of the study comprised male and female athletes in four (4) tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis. A multistage sampling technique was used for the study. 200 respondents were selected using stratified sampling technique and simple random sampling technique. A validated researchers' developed questionnaire which was found reliable (.67r) was used for the study. The data collected were analysed using Chi – square (X^2) statistical method. The results showed that, availability of sports facilities; standard of existing sports facilities and maintenance of sports facilities in tertiary institutions' in Ilorin Metropolis significantly influenced athletes' performance in athletics. Based on these findings, the study recommended that, adequate sports facilities must be constructed while standard of such sports facilities must not be compromised during planning, implementation and execution of constructing such sports facilities in tertiary institutions. This will improve the performance of school athletes both at state, national and international meets and also inculcate sports culture in tertiary institutions.

Key words: Sports, Athletes, Facilities, Performance, Tertiary institution, Track and Field Athletics.

Introduction

Sport is commonly defined as an organized, competitive and skilful physical activity requiring commitment and fair play (Craig, 1999). Sports have very significant roles to play in the development of the body and mind. People get involved in sports for one or more reasons. Such as to relieve stress, get fit, make friendship or compete with others. Involvement in sports, for many, is a career. Sports are governed by a set of rules or customs. Sports exist in various forms and comprise unorganized children play at home, participation in sports championships, sports participation for healthy lifestyle and involvement in sports as a recreation (Richard, Kathryn, Craig & Lynn, 1999).

Sport strengthens and improves the immune system of people participating in one sporting event or another on the long run. In the course of engaging in regular exercises, body chemistry becomes energized and the blood stream works efficiently. By this process, sports is credited in concert with other acclaimed factors increase life span of the participants and enhance fitness (Downs & Mejia, 2005).

Individuals who do sedentary duties on a daily basis and do not set out time for exercise may be vulnerable to diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and other coronary heart diseases. In order to stay healthy and avoid health problems, people find time to engage in sports. This position was buttressed by UNESCO, (2005) & World Health Organization, (2002), which also noted that the involvement in sporting programmes, leads to a healthy society, with citizens who are physically and mentally healthy.

Coalter, (2000) explained that sports is significant in diverting young people away from social vices, or rehabilitating them in a way that the degree of crimes are reduced to the barest minimum at school levels. Sports are found to be the most appropriate devices when combined with activities in addressing social issues.

According to Talabi (1998) and Olajide (2007), sports facilities are the physical structures constructed for use of sports. In other words, physical structures are generally the immovable structures, like tartan tracks, pitches, swimming pools, courts, halls, and gymnasias. Different sports require different facilities and the level of performance of athletes also depend largely on the levels of quality and quantity of facilities. Sports facilities are grouped into outdoor and indoor facilities, depending on whether they are open-air or closed facilities. Outdoor sports facilities are the most common in Nigeria and where they exist, young and old

alike, who want to stay healthy can engage in competitive sports and recreation by making use of them.

Sports facilities are important to athletes since without facilities, sports cannot take place. Facilities are however not the only requirements necessary for sports participation; there are other essentials. equipment, supplies, finance are also indispensable complements to sports facilities. Onifade, (2005) observed that to achieve the ideal of providing adequate and standard sports facilities, government in Nigeria should make available substantial amounts of money to build, renovate and upgrade the existing ones.

Presently, there are new dynamics of building facilities for indoor and outdoor sporting activities to facilitate the performance of athletes in school sports and sporting activities. With improved technology, there are artificial grass (turf), and tartan tracks (Okunrotifa, 2002). Awosika, (2000) stated that outstanding performance may not be achieved by athletes whose practice facilities and equipment are grossly inadequate. The world of artificial turf has evolved significantly to give the same performance as natural turf, but offers many additional benefits.

Generally, modern sports facilities take cognizance of details, such as versatility, a multi-purpose design, noise levels, low up-keep for indoor facilities. For outdoor facilities, practicality, durability, resistance to heavy wear, extreme climate changes and duration must be catered for (Salinero, 2009).

The new technology-driven sports facilities have led to improved performance of athletes. For instance, tartan tracks have shortened the time taking to run races today. The average athletes who train on tartan track may be a couple of seconds faster on tartan track than on tracks of other textures. Lower heights were jumped by pole – vault jumpers in the olden

days, when bamboo sticks were used; presently, the era of fibre glass has increased the height jumped by one meter (Okunrotifa, 2002). Modern indoor sports facilities allow teams to play and train year-round, despite the unpredictability and inconvenience of weather.

It is obvious that availability of adequate and standard facilities plays a major role in facilitating effective performance of athletes. Meanwhile inadequate, sub-standard, obsolete and poorly maintained facilities have continually undermined the performance of athletes in Nigeria's tertiary institutions (Babatunde, 2002).

Craig, (1999) opined that there is a relationship between adequate provision of standard sports facilities and athletes' outstanding performance. The researchers observed that in some states or communities where the athletes domicile, there are no sports facilities, and this makes some of the athletes to travel from one location to another in search of standard sports facilities. Sometimes, this search ends up in futility. In view of this, athletes sustain permanent injuries in accidents aAlong the line this leads to physical handicap of athletes from actualizing his dreams in Athletics. In this context, the researcher is therefore interested in investigating the influence of facilities on athletes' performance in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study.

- 1: Does the availability of sports facilities influence the performance of track and field athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis?**
- 2: Does the standard of existing sports facilities influence the performance of track and field athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis?**
- 3: Does the maintenance of sports facilities influence the performance of track and field athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis?**

Research Hypotheses

In order to answer the research questions, the following research hypotheses were formulated by the researchers.

1. Availability of sports facilities has no significant influence on the performance of track and field athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis.
2. The standard of existing sports facilities has no significant influence on the performance of track and field athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis.
3. Maintenance of sports facilities has no significant influence on the performance of track and field athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for this study. The target population comprised all the athletes in four selected tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis. A multi – stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample for the study and this consisted of stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques. The schools used were stratified into 4 groups, 50 respondents were sampled from each school which consisted of 30 males and 20 females who were randomly selected from each school. Two Hundred (200) respondents were selected for the conduct of this study and this comprised of 120 males and 80 females. The instrument used was Likert scale format questionnaire which was well validated by experts and tested for reliability with the use of test – re test method and a Correlation Coefficient of .67 was obtained. The instrument was administered by the researcher and three research assistants and retrieved immediately to avoid loss. Chi – square (χ^2) statistics was employed to analyse the data and test the hypotheses formulated for the study at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Presented below are the results of the three research questions and the three hypotheses set for the study.

Research Question 1: Does the availability of sports facilities influence the performance of track and field athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 1:**Contingency Table of Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents on Influence of Availability of facilities on Track and Field Athletes' Performance**

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Existing athletics sports facilities in the school require repairs to improve athletes' performance.	40 20%	35 17.5%	60 30.0%	65 32.5%	200 100%
2	Existing athletics sports facilities in the school require upgrading	32 16%	48 24%	70 35%	50 25%	200 100%
3	The major challenge of athletics performance is basically that of equipment.	30 15%	40 20%	80 40%	50 25%	200 100%
4	Dilapidated athletics sports facilities in the school often discourage athletes to participate in sports generally.	75 37.5%	35 17.5%	25 12.5%	65 32.5%	200 100%
5	Non – availability of athletics sports facilities in the school often mar athletes' performance.	50 25%	28 14%	72 36%	50 25%	200 100%
		277 22.7%	186 18.6%	307 30.7%	280 28%	1000 100%

In table 1, items 1, 2, 3 and 5 show that the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that existing athletics sports facilities in the school require repairs to improve athletes' performance; demand upgrading to improve athletes' performance; and that challenge of athletics performance is basically that of equipment and that non – availability of athletics sports facilities in the school often mar athletes' performance respectively. While to item 4, the majority disagreed and strongly disagreed that dilapidated athletics sports facilities in the school often discourage athletes to participate in sports generally (see table 1).

Research Question 2: Does the standard of existing sports facilities influence the performance of track and field athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 2:

Contingency Table of Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents on Influence of standard of existing facilities on Track and Field Athletes' Performance

SN	Variables	SA %	A%	D%	SD%	Total
1	The quality of the service at the athletics sport facility determines the level of athletes' performance in athletics.	42 21.0	58 29.0	65 32.5	35 17.5	200 100.0
2	Athlete's performance is affected by the quality of the service offered by the athletics handlers.	35 17.5	45 22.5	70 35.0	50 25.0	200 100.0
3	The quality of the service received from athletics coaches cannot take school athletes to greater heights.	30 15.0	60 30.0	75 37.5	35 17.5	200 100.0
4	The quality of the service from our athletics instructors is rich and can definitely take us to the promise land.	20 10.0	60 30.0	90 45.0	30 15.0	200 100.0
		177 17.7	261 26.1	362 36.2	200 20.0	1000 100.0

In table 2, except item 1 where 50% of the respondents supported and 50% also disapproved that the quality of the service at the athletics sport facility significantly determines the level of athletes' performance in athletics; items 2, 3, 4 , revealed that majority of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that: Athlete's performance is affected by the quality of the service offered by the athletics handlers; The quality of the service received from athletics coaches cannot take school athletes to greater height and that the quality of the service rendered by the athletics instructors is rich and can definitely take them to the promise land (see table 2).

Research Question 3: Does the maintenance of sports facilities influence the performance of track and field athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 3:

Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents on Influence of maintenance of facilities on Track and Field Athletes' Performance

S/N	Variables	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	Total
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1	The present condition of athletics sports facilities in the school have the ability to produce world class athletes.	65 32.5	45 22.5	60 30.0	30 15.0	200 100.0
2	Promising athletes are invited to choose my institution as a result of the presence of world class athletics sports facilities.	40 20.0	50 25.0	70 35.0	40 20.0	200 100.0
3	I am proud of the condition of athletics sports facilities in the school.	44 22.0	56 28.0	65 32.5	35 17.5	200 100.0
4	I can boast of the condition of athletics facilities in my school.	75 37.5	40 20.0	33 16.5	52 26.0	200 100.0
5	The present condition of athletic facility has the ability to groom athletes from grass to grace	55 27.5	62 31.0	38 19.0	45 22.5	200 100.0
		279 27.9	252 25.2	266 26.6	202 20.2	1000 100.0

To research question 3 in table 3, it was revealed that majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed to items 1, 4 and 5 that: the present conditions of athletics sports facilities in the school have the ability to produce world class athletes; they can boast of the condition of athletics facilities in their school and that the present condition of athletic facility has the ability to groom athletes from grass to grace. Whereas they disagreed and strongly disagreed to item 2 that promising athletes are invited to choose their choice of institution as a result of the presence of world class athletics sports facilities. To item 3 however, the respondents agreed and disagreed (50%) respectively that they are proud of the condition of athletics sports facilities in the school (see table 3).

Table 4: Chi-square (X^2) Results of the Hypotheses tested.

SN	HYPOTHESES	Df	Cal. X^2 val.	Crit- X^2 val.	Decision
1.	Availability of facilities has no significant Influence on track and field athletes' performance.	12	48.54	21.03	Rejected
2.	Standard existing facilities have no significant Influence on Track and Field athletes' performance.	12	42.49	21.03	Rejected
3.	Maintenance of facilities has no significant Influence on track and field athletes' performance	12	62.66	21.03	Rejected

Sig@0.05

The findings from table 4, hypothesis 1 shows the calculated X^2 of 48.54 against critical value of 21.03, 12 degree of freedom at 0, 0 5 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than critical value the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This implies that availability of sports facilities in schools significantly influence the athletes' performance in athletics.

The findings from table 4 hypothesis 2 showed the calculated X^2 of 42.49 against critical value of 21.03 of 12 degree, freedom at 0,05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than critical table value, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This implies that Standard of existing sports facilities in schools significantly influence the athletes' performance in athletics.

The findings from table 4, hypothesis 3 revealed the calculated chi – square of 62.66 against critical value of 21.03, 12 degree of freedom at 0,05 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than critical value the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This implies that Maintenance of sports facilities in schools significantly influence the athletes' performance in athletics.

Discussion

Table 1 shows the Chi – square analysis of the availability of sports facilities on the performance of athletes in athletics.

The findings revealed that availability of sports facilities in schools significantly influence the performance of athletes in track and field athletics in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis (see table 1) or ($Calx^2 = 48.54 > Critx^2 = 21.03$). This result complement the view of Awosika (2000), who argued that outstanding performance, may not be visible to achieve from school athletes whose practice facilities and equipment are grossly inadequate.

Table 2 shows the Chi – square analysis of the standard of existing sports facilities on the performance of athletes in athletics.

The finding showed that the standard of existing sports facilities on the performance of athletes in track and field athletics in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis. It found that the standard of existing sports facilities significantly influence the performance of athletes in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis (see table 2) or ($\text{Calx}^2 = 42.49 > \text{Critx}^2 = 21.03$). The result was in line with the view of Babatunde (2002), who affirmed that availability of adequate and standard facilities play a major role in facilitating effective performance of athletes.

Furthermore, inadequate, sub-standard, obsolete and poorly maintained facilities have continually undermined the performance of athletes in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. This could be one of the reasons why Nigeria Tertiary Institutions perform poorly in International competitions such like, FISU, FASU or dwindling performance of runners of tertiary institutions like NUGA, NICEGA and NIPOGA.

Table 3 shows the chi – square analysis of the Maintenance of sports facilities on the performance of athletes in athletics.

The findings revealed significant influence of maintenance of sports facilities on the performance of athletes in track and field athletics in tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis (see table 3) or ($\text{Calx}^2 = 62.66 > \text{Critx}^2 = 21.03$). This was supported by Onifade, (2005) who enthused that to achieve the ideal in athletic performance, the provision of adequate standard and adoption of necessary maintenance culture of sports facilities is sacrosanct. Government should make available substantial amounts of resources to build, renovate and upgrade the existing ones. Salinero, (2009) stated that practicability, durability, resistance to heavy wear, extreme climate changes and duration must be catered for if facilities will enhance the performance of athletes.

The findings of this study also revealed that, in some of the tertiary institutions, athletes were not having access to standard sports facilities and where sports facilities are available, the existing sports facilities are not up to date and are poorly maintained. Therefore, the athletes, when further taxed responded that they make use of government owned sports facilities located in Ilorin metropolis . It was also observed that some of the tertiary institution students who are representing one state or the other take advantage of using Kwara State Sports Facilities in order to improve on their performance in athletics competitions.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions were drawn.

- Availability of sports facilities, standard of existing sports facilities and maintenance of sports facilities significantly influenced the performance of track and field athletes of tertiary institutions in Ilorin metropolis.
- , Athletes not having access to standard sports facilities in their institutions because the existing sports facilities are not up to the standard and where sports facilities are not in existence, make use of government owned sports facilities located at Ilorin township. It is observed that some of the tertiary institution students representing Kwara State, use their sports facilities in order to improve their performance in athletics competitions.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following were recommended:

- Adequate sports facilities must be constructed in tertiary institutions in Ilorin Metropolis to enhance the performance of athletes in athletics urgently.
- Standard of sports facilities must not be compromised in tertiary institutions in Ilorin Metropolis during planning, implementation and execution of building sports facilities so as to improve the performance of athletes in athletics sports competitions.
- Maintenance culture must be inculcated in tertiary institutions in Ilorin Metropolis to aid the life span of the existing sports facilities and athletes' performance in athletics sports championships.

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