

YOUTH AWARENESS AND EMPLOYMENT POTENTIALS OF SPORTS IN EBUTE METTA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

Sports has proved to be an appropriate means to profitably engage the growing population of the unemployed youth as it provides variety of job opportunities. Hence, this paper examined youth awareness and employment potentials of sports in Ebute Mette Local Government Area of Lagos State. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 150 respondents from three geographical zones Ebute Mette Local Government Area. Stratified sampling technique was adopted to select sample for the study. A structured questionnaire drawn on a 4-point Likert scale was used to collect data from the respondents. The result showed that awareness of the youth of employment potentials of sports will reduce unemployment in Ebute Metta and that employment potentials in sports industries will significantly reduce unemployment in Ebute Metta. It was further established that professional sports career has substantial financial gain to influence the reduction of unemployment in Ebute Metta. Based on the findings, the study, it was concluded that a significant relationship exists between employment opportunity in sports industry and unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State. Also, there is a significant relationship between employment opportunity in sports industry and unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State. Therefore, the study recommended first, that sports career opportunities should be made accessible to the unemployed youth through community-based programmes. Secondly, the study recommended that the government, through the national and state association, should properly and objectively promote and market sports so as to lure private sectors to sponsor sporting events at grassroot. Finally, the study recommended that the government and all sporting bodies should identify strategies of engaging and empowering the unemployed through sports opportunities being made available to the youth.

Keywords: Sports, employment potentials, government, youth awareness

Introduction

In the present world, sports is more like work than play as it provides numerous career opportunities such as sports marketing, sponsorship, officiating, sports media and communication, coaching/ management, exercise instructor and sport facilities manager. Asaju, Arome, and Anyio (2014) stated that the incidence of unemployment in Nigeria in the 21st century is alarming; it keeps rising without any appreciable effort to cushion the effects. The enormous employment potentials of sports in Nigeria are yet to be appreciated and explored by the millions of unemployed youths, all levels of government and society at large. According to

Olubiyi (2021), sports will create more job opportunities and commercialization on the continent for companies, investors, talent scouts, agents, coaches, referees, trainers, sports analysts, media companies, facilities management companies, sport wears companies, and merchandisers when the channels are well established holistically.

According to the United Nations (2011), sports have become a world language, a common denominator that breaks down all walls and barriers. It is a worldwide industry whose practices can have a widespread impact on societies, most of all; it is a powerful tool for progress and development. Kienka (2008) reported that 'after food and sex, usually in that order man's greatest appetite is involvement in an organized physical activity. In the early days sports was only for the bull fighters of Spain, Portugal, Southern France and Latin America or the mountain runners and swimmers of Greece, but it has become a means of acquiring wider economic wealth. People now get paid for being able to run faster, super flexible, riding a bicycle and just about anything for which physical prowess, endurance and talent can be measured. Meanwhile, sport has no doubt moved from being a mere social and recreational activity to being an avenue for demonstrating physical ability and getting exercises.

Nigeria is the most populous black country in the world. Arguments are rife whether her ever-growing population is the sole factor responsible also for her continuous growth of unemployment (Adekola, 2016). According to National Bureau of Statistics (2015), the unemployment rate in Nigeria is a measure of the number of people actively looking for a job and when compare to the percentage of the labour, it is very frightening. One verifiable figure which gives a fairly good idea of the situation of Nigerian youth is that each year, an estimated 60 million unemployed persons representing nearly one-third of the country's population, human capacity development is being seriously endangered (Emmanuel, 2012). This affirms the statement of Kienka (2008) that nations world over are overwhelmed with the problem of what to do with the teeming population of vibrant youths in and out of school, some in employment, most of them jobless. As such, how to keep young men and women engaged remains a major problem of all levels of leadership world-wide.

Olubiyi (2021) expressed that there is the need to take advantage of sport as a business in Africa, especially in Nigeria being singled out in Africa as the country with the largest number of unemployed youths in order to promote healthy and promising citizens. Olubiyi explained further that sport is one of the easiest avenues for young men to quit the poverty lane and unemployment and become athletes and be gainfully employed. In Nigeria, a very large number of youths roam the street with no clue as to where the next meal would come from. In the first quarter of 2015, unemployment rate climbed to 7.5% compared to 6.4% in the fourth quarter of 2014. That is, the number of unemployed in the labour force increased by 18.43%

to 861,110 persons between fourth quarter in 2014 and first quarter of 2015. The labour force population increased from 72.9 million to 73.4 million in the fourth quarter of 2014, representing an increase in the labour force by 0.69% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015). The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) observed that the unemployment rate within the review period was highest for those within the ages of 15 and 34. In most of the developed countries, the leadership has turned to sports to engage and empower the 'young and restless' generation. According to Kayode (2014), the incidence of unemployment in Nigeria in this 21st century is alarming. The rates keep on rising without any appreciable effort to cushion the effects. He further stated that widespread poverty, youth restiveness, high rates of social vices and criminal activities are prevalent because of joblessness.

Ovoko (2016) gave examples of successful Nigerian youths that have become wealthy through sports. Mikel Obi in the 2016 season moves from third position to second in the rank of the highest paid Nigerian player in the world with a weekly salary of \$94,000, while Kelechi Iheanacho is now the highest earning Nigerian Footballer in England and Europe after signing a new contract with Manchester City which will see him pocket over \$100,000 weekly and Obafemi Martins move to Chinese super league side, Shanghai Shenhua saw his income double from what he was earning at the Seattle Sounders of the MLS. This made him the highest earning Nigerian player with a weekly salary of \$125,000. Likewise, in the Nigeria Professional League (NPFL), the highest paid player in 2017 season Godwin Obaje of FC Ifeanyi Ubah earn 500,000 Naira weekly (Alaka, 2017). Similarly, various national and international marathon event take place in different part of the country annually where winners earn handsome rewards. Likewise, so many young Nigerian are flourishing in the game of table tennis both in African and international scenes with the likes of Aruna Quadri, Torila Segun, Abiodun Bode, Funke Oshonaike and Offiong Edem and not mention other sport like basketball, volleyball, handball, tennis, badminton, athletics and so forth.

Perhaps, information on the amounts earned by some of these athletes in major professional sports should drive home the point to our youths and those with the capacity to empower them that sport is a worthy source of employment. Many African youngsters dream of becoming wealthy soccer stars, but as a new report shows, Africa is a hard place to make that dream a reality. Koukiaadaki and Pearson (2016) stated that, the annual employment report by the International Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPro), a global soccer player union, reveals African-based professional soccer stars often play under dire conditions. FIFPro's Global Employment Report is compiled from responses to anonymous surveys of professional soccer club players across the world. The union found that delayed pay was a common problem across the 13 African countries surveyed. Player safety is also a concern, players said they had been threatened by fans, and players reported being the victims of fan violence. Players are often uninsured, and when injured,

are often left to fend for themselves and cover their medical bills. The poor conditions have even motivated some players to illegally make their way to Europe, without a club and at great personal risk on by the journey.

In Nigeria, home to the Nigerian Professional Football League (NPFL), one of the continent's most popular leagues, soccer players are regularly owed many months' pay. With majority of the top flight clubs owned and run by government, the players' livelihoods are subject to the whims of state government officials (Yomi, 2016). Therefore, there is need to pay more attention to sports than to other kinds of empowerment projects government officials are currently running, which obviously are not getting much attention from those for whom they are targeted. The beauty of professional sports careers is that there are no boundaries because any talented athlete cannot be prevented from getting to the top regardless of where they come from. To this end, Coakley (2009) pointed out that sport can provide employment opportunity through its multilevel economic ventures such as, sport media personnel, sport coaching, sport officiating, sport athlete agent, sport event management, sales of sport equipment and facilities.

Youths are at the prime of their lives and so should be the leaders of the society. They are meant to be found operating their skills in different employment settings. Unfortunately, with the poor economic state of the country, gross unemployment is found among youths in the country who have failed to seek for other means of employment but hope on the government to provide them with one. However, through campaigns and educative programmes, the youth may be able to realize that employment could be gotten from sports. Therefore, this study seeks to determine youth awareness and employment potentials of sports in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to determine the:

1. relationship between the awareness of sports employment potential and the reduction of unemployment among youths in Ebute Metta Local Government Area;
2. relationship between employment opportunity in sports industry and unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State; and
3. relationship between professional sports career and employment potentials in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population was 150 unemployed youths in Ebute Metta Local government area. Stratified sampling technique was used to group the unemployed youths into the three geographical zones in Ebute Metta LGA of Lagos State. Simple random sampling technique was then used to select fifty (50) individuals each in the three geographical zones (West, East and South) which gave a total of 150 unemployed

youths used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled “Youth Awareness of Sports Potential in the Reduction of Unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area”. The questionnaire was divided into sections A and B. Section A dealt with demographic data of the respondents, while section B consisted of closed ended items rated on modified 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD). The instrument was validated by experts from the Department of Human Kinetics Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. The spilt-half reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents personally within the selected area and with the help of five (5) research assistants and prompt retrieval of the completed questionnaire was ensured. The completed questionnaires were collected on the spot. The information from copies of the questionnaire were coded and analysed using Internal Business Machine Statistical Package for Social Sciences, IBM-SPSS (version 20 statistics for windows). Demographic data of the respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage, while of chi-square statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER		
Male	141	94
Female	9	6
TOTAL	150	100
AGE		
15 -19 years	36	24
20 – 24 years	42	28
25-29 years	33	22
30 and above	39	26
TOTAL	150	100
RELIGION		
Christianity	123	82
Islam	27	18
TOTAL	150	100
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	120	80
Married	30	20
TOTAL	150	100
OCCUPATION		
Student	69	46
Employed	51	34
Unemployed	30	20
TOTAL	150	100

YEAR OF UNEMPLOYMENT		
1-5 years	30	20
6-10 years	3	2
10years and above	6	4
TOTAL	39	26
Missing System	111	74
FINANANCIAL REWARD		
Yes	102	68
No	48	32
TOTAL	150	100

Table 1 above shows that the majority of respondents 141 (94%) are males and 9(6%) are female. Regarding the age of the respondents, 36(24%) are between 15 to 19 years old, 42(28%) of the respondents are below the age of 20-24 years old, and 33(22%) are between 25 to 29 years of age respectively and the remaining 39(26%) are above 30 years of age. Also, as regarding the religion of the respondents majority {123(82%)} are Christian and 27(18%) are Muslim. For marital status, 120(80%) are single and 30(20%) are married. Also, for occupation, 69(46%) are student, 51(34%) are employed and the remaining 30(20%) are unemployed. While, for years of unemployment, 30(20%) are between 1-5years, 3(2%) were from 6-10 years and the remaining 6(4%) above10 years old. Also, for financial reward, 102(68%) has paid for sports goods and services and 48(28%) has not paid for sports goods and service.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the awareness of sports employment potential and the reduction of unemployment among youths in Ebute Metta Local Government Area.

Table 1: Chi-square statistics of no Significant Relationship between the Awareness of Sports Employment Potential and the Reduction of Unemployment among Youths in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Cal χ^2	Df	Critical Value	Decision
1	Sports reduces unemployment rate.	60 (40.0%)	69 (46.0%)	9 (6.0%)	12 (8.0%)	228.212	9	16.919	H ₀ Rejected
2	There are several job opportunities in sports.	60 (40.0%)	75 (50.0%)	6 (4.0%)	9 (6.0%)				
3	Sports is capable of creating job opportunities only in developed countries.	42 (28.0%)	51 (34.0%)	15 (10.0%)	42 (28.0%)				
4	Sport does not produce employment.	12 (8.0%)	15 (10.0%)	63 (42.0%)	60 (40.0%)				

Table 1 shows the overall calculated chi-square value with corresponding critical-value for hypothesis of no significant relationship between the awareness of sports employment potential and the reduction of unemployment among youths in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State. (cal $\chi^2=228.212$, critical value= 16.919). Since the calculated χ^2 was greater than the critical value, the hypothesis of no significant relationship was therefore rejected. This implies that a significant relationship exists between the awareness of sports employment potential and the reduction of unemployment among youths in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between employment opportunity in sports industry and unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 2: Chi-Square Statistics of no Significant Relationship between Employment Opportunity in Sports Industry and Unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Cal χ^2	Df	Crit. Value	Decision
1	Sport industries have created link that eases job opportunities in sports.	39 (26.0%)	72 (48.0%)	18 (12.0%)	21 (14.0%)				
2	Sport industries were created to reduce the rate of unemployment.	51 (34.0%)	54 (36.0%)	21 (14.0%)	24 (16.0%)	33.674	9	16.919	H ₀ Rejected
3	The employment opportunities in the sports industries are limited.	30 (20.0%)	96 (64.0%)	9 (6.0%)	15 (10.0%)				
4	The sport industries are one of the industries that have the largest capacity of employment.	45 (30.0%)	54 (36.0%)	24 (16.0%)	27 (18.0%)				

Table 2 shows the overall calculated chi-square value with corresponding critical-value for hypothesis of no significant relationship between employment opportunity in sports industry and unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State. (cal $\chi^2=33.674$, critical value= 16.919). Since the

calculated χ^2 was greater than the critical value, the hypothesis of no significant relationship was therefore rejected. This implies that a significant relationship exists between employment opportunity in sports industry and unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between professional sports career and employment potentials in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 3: Chi-square statistics of no Significant Relationship Between Professional Sports Career and Employment Potentials in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Cal χ^2	Df	Critical Value	Decision
1	Finance is essential in professional sports career.	93 (62.0%)	51 (34.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (4.0%)	179.269	9	16.919	H ₀ Rejected
2	Professional sports athletes are overpaid.	45 (30.0%)	39 (26.0%)	36 (24.0%)	30 (20.0%)				
3	Inadequate funding has made it difficult for sports industry to create job opportunities.	51 (34.0%)	57 (38.0%)	24 (16.0%)	18 (12.0%)				
4	Financial gain in sport industries are unreliable for earning a living.	18 (12.0%)	21 (14.0%)	54 (36.0%)	57 (38.0%)				

Table 3 shows the overall calculated chi-square value with corresponding critical-value for hypothesis of no significant relationship between professional sports career and employment potentials in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State. (cal χ^2 =179.269, critical value= 16.919). Since the calculated χ^2 was greater than the critical value, the hypothesis of no significant relationship was therefore rejected. This implies that a significant relationship exists between professional sports career and employment potentials in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that a significant relationship exists between the awareness of sports employment potential and the reduction of unemployment among youths in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State. This is supported by Kienka (2008), who argued that sports provide a wide-range of employment opportunity to engage the Nigeria youth. There is need to encourage the youth to take advantage of these opportunities through participation. The study also demonstrated that a significant relationship exists between employment opportunity in sports industry and unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State. These findings justified the words of Ban Kin Moon (2011), affirmed that sports have become a world language, a common denominator that breaks down all the walls and barriers. It is a worldwide industry whose practices can have a widespread impact. Most of all, sports is a powerful tool for progress and development. Therefore, the recent idea and sport business policy is in right direction if it is properly implemented backed by political and manpower wills without selfish ambitions to drive it.

Furthermore, the study revealed that a significant relationship exists between professional sports career and employment potentials in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State. This result complements the view of Kienka (2008), who said that, when we talk about money in sports, it sometimes appears that, here in Nigeria and Africa generally, the enormity of the sums is not appreciated enough to instigate desperate actions from parents, business concerns, organizations and governments especially given the context of the pervading, and in a country like Nigeria, inflicted poverty of the masses. There are also the youth unrest and activities of militants in the Niger Delta. Yet several examples are right here with us, John Obi Mikel who played for Tianjin Teia, China earns over 8.4 Million GBD annually as wage, also Odion Ighalo who played for Changchun Yatai of China earns 12.1 GBD annually as wage. Likewise, Ahmed Musa who played for Leicester City of England earns 4.2 Million GBD (Ifeanyi 2017).

Consequent upon the findings of the study, there is a need to drive the career opportunities from all dimensions including academic, social, grassroot long-term athlete recruitment and development, multisport academies, philanthropic drives among others. These need to be embedded in training and performance goals from basic schools and recruitment drive from the streets.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Awareness of Employment opportunity potentials in sports industry will reduce unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.
2. Employment opportunity in sports industry is associated with reduced unemployment in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

3. There is a significant relationship exists between professional sports career and employment potentials in Ebute Metta Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this paper, the following recommendation are made:

- i. Sports career opportunities should be made accessible to the unemployed youth through community based programmes.
- ii. The government through the national and state association should properly promote and market sports with honesty of heart so as to lure private sectors to sponsor sporting events at grass root.
- iii. The government and all sporting bodies should identify strategies of engaging and empowering the unemployed through sports opportunities being made available to the youth.

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