Perceived Influence of Management Practices on Sports Development: A Case Study of Kwara State Sports Commission, Nigeria

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Abstract: Background: Over the years, sport development has progressed rapidly in various climes, with attribution of this growth being accorded to proper management practices. Management practices encompass a range of activities and strategies employed to achieve organizational goals efficiently. However, the researcher observed that the rate of sports development in Kwara State is relatively below expectations due to a gross inadequacy in areas of funding, personnel, equipment, facilities as well as inappropriate training, which may be attributed to poor management practices. **Aims and Objectives:** Therefore, the aim of this study was to assess the perceived influence of management practices on sport development in the Kwara State Sports Commission. **Methodology:** Descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The population of the study comprised all 140 Kwara Sports Commission stakeholders. 100 respondents were chosen using the random sampling technique. A researcher-structured questionnaire was employed for this study, with a reliability coefficient of 0.73 obtained using the test-retest method of reliability. Collected data was analyzed using inferential statistics of chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. **Results:** The findings revealed that management practices (funding, personnel, facilities and equipment) have a significant influence on sports development. **Conclusion:** Based on these premises, it was concluded that the variables altogether, play a distinct role in sport development. The study therefore recommends that funding for grassroots sports programmes should be increased to enhance overall sport participation and development. Furthermore, investment should be made into areas of coach development programmes to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Keywords: management practices, funding, personnel, facilities, equipment, sport development, stakeholders, sport organizations, Kwara state sport commission, Nigeria

Introduction

In recent years, the realm of sports development has undergone a profound paradigm shift. There is growing global acknowledgment of the pivotal role played by effective management practices in fostering sustainable growth, excellence, and inclusivity within the sporting ecosystem. The modern sporting arena has evolved into a highly complex, competitive, and commercialized domain, demanding sophisticated strategies for administration, organization, resource allocation, stakeholder coordination, and performance optimization. What was once viewed primarily as recreational or cultural activity has transformed into a multifaceted industry with significant economic, social, political, and health implications. Scholars have increasingly underscored the critical interplay between management practices and sports development, highlighting its far-reaching effects across grassroots participation, elite performance, community cohesion, and national development (Raw et al., 2021; Khokhryakova & Svensson, 2025).

This evolution reflects broader trends in the global sports industry, valued at hundreds of billions of dollars annually. Professional leagues, international events, and grassroots programs drive job creation, tourism, infrastructure development, and youth empowerment. In both developed and developing nations, successful sports systems rely on robust management frameworks that integrate strategic planning, financial stewardship, human resource development, marketing, and operational efficiency. In emerging economies like Nigeria, where sports hold immense potential for addressing unemployment, promoting national unity, and enhancing public health, the quality of management often determines whether this potential is realized or remains untapped.

Management constitutes a central organizational activity concerned with the efficient utilization of time, resources, and human capital. It encompasses key functional areas such as human resources, marketing, finance, and operations, with each area employing specific practices and skills that collectively contribute to overall success (Olson et al., 2018). Management practices refer to the systematic approaches organizations use to plan, organize, lead, and control resources in pursuit of defined goals. Nurhikmah (2024) described management practices as methodical frameworks for coordinating activities and optimizing performance within an organisation. In the sports context, Dowling and Harris (2025) portray management practices as key influencing factors that drive the attainment of organizational objectives in sports bodies, ranging from talent identification and athlete development to facility management and sponsorship acquisition.

Ademola (2014) conceptualized sports as a structured form of competition that showcases physical and mental skills aimed at enhancing individual wellbeing. Saunders (2020) further defines sport as an institutionalized physical activity involving the demonstration of prowess under predefined rules, whether between individuals or teams. This institutionalization distinguishes sports from casual play, embedding it within

regulatory frameworks, governing bodies, and cultural norms. Sports development, according to Yazid (2014), involves the incremental progression of sporting activities from basic grassroots levels to high-performance elite stages. It incorporates multiple contributory indices, including infrastructure, funding, coaching expertise, policy support, and community engagement.

Management of sports organizations in this age and time requires the possession of skills and infusion of approaches, majorly observed in new age businesses and organizations. Sports managers are saddled with the responsibility of planning, handling human resources allocation as well as athlete welfarism and collaborating with federations, agencies, media houses and sponsors on a regular basis towards growth (Vagh, 2019). The place of effective leadership is indispensable in any organization. Nandasinghe (2020) emphasizes that organizational form and structure must guide the selection of leaders capable of steering daily functions toward strategic goals. Jones and Shideh (2020) further reinforced that personnel quality and visionary leadership serve as foundational elements, around which societal attributes, such as; cultural values, ethical standards, and community support can be leveraged for success.

Ajadi et al., (2023) stated that, the presence and adequacy of sport facilities would bolster success and growth in the field of sports while its absence would spell a downturn in sport programmers, most especially in Kwara State. This aligns with Ibraheem et al. (2021), who identified a strong positive correlation between facility availability and the overall effectiveness of sports management. Ekuri (2018) elaborates that sports facilities function as physical structures and enablers, that support diverse activities, from competitive tournaments to recreational programs. Well-maintained stadia, training centers, gyms, and specialized venues not only facilitate skill development but also enhance safety, accessibility, and appeal to participants and spectators alike.

Beyond facilities, other critical indices of sports development include sustainable funding mechanisms, qualified personnel (coaches, administrators, medical staff), modern equipment, and structured training programs. When these elements are adequately addressed, sports emerge as a powerful tool for fostering unity, driving social progress, promoting healthy lifestyles, and catalyzing economic change. In many societies, sports serve as a platform for talent discovery, social mobility, conflict resolution, and national branding on the global stage. In Kwara State, Nigeria, sports have become deeply embedded in the cultural fabric. They intersect with political, social, economic, and educational spheres. Located in North-Central Nigeria with Ilorin as its capital, Kwara State spans approximately 36,825 square kilometers and has an estimated population exceeding 3.2 million. The state hosts notable teams such as Kwara United Football Club and maintains the Kwara State Stadium Complex as a key venue. The Kwara State Sports Commission, operating under the Ministry of Sports and Youth

Development, oversees sporting activities and has seen recent board reconstitutions and infrastructural pushes under the current administration.

Government efforts in recent years include substantial investments in facility upgrades such as an indoor sports hall, refurbished tennis and squash courts and football fields. These initiatives have reportedly improved the state's performance in national competitions. Rankings in the National Sports Festival have risen from lower positions to more competitive placements, signaling progress in grassroots development and elite preparation. Initiatives also extend to disability sports, youth games, and broader community programs, with recognition of sports' role in economic empowerment, tourism, and youth engagement.

Despite these advancements, sports development in Kwara State faces persistent threats. Key challenges include chronic underfunding, shortages of qualified personnel, inadequate or poorly maintained equipment, insufficient modern facilities in many localities, and suboptimal training methodologies. Stakeholders have criticized aspects of development as "ceremonial," with newly upgraded facilities sometimes remaining underutilized due to limited programming or maintenance issues. At the national level, similar issues persist: bureaucratic delays in fund releases, fragmented financing, corruption risks, and over-reliance on government funding rather than diversified sources like private sponsorships or public-private partnerships (PPPs).

The researcher observed that the pace of sports management and development in Kwara State is relatively below expectations due to the identified management factors. This might be attributed to poor management practices in terms of funding, personnel, as well as the scarcity of sporting facilities and equipment, which constitutes a big cog in the wheel of successful administration of sports in Kwara State. Sports has become an integral part of Kwara State culture, with the level of invested interest spanning across the political, social, economic and educational spheres of the country. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse and to uncover insights that can inform strategic decision-making and policy formulation in the dynamic field of sports management by assessing the perceived influence of management practices on sports development, in Kwara State Sports Commission.

Objectives of the study

The following objectives are intended to be accomplished through this study:

i. Assess the perceived influence of funding on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.
ii. Assess the perceived influence of personnel on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.
iii. Assess the perceived influence of sports facilities on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.
iv. Assess the perceived influence of sports equipment on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design served as the foundation upon which the methodology was designed, affording the researcher an avenue to describe management variables as they affect sports development in Kwara State. The stakeholders (sports administrators, coaches, sports managers, stadium managers and organizing secretaries) of the Kwara State Sports Commission, totaling 140 respondents made up the total population of the study. Random sampling technique was employed in selecting 100 respondents from the aforementioned population above.

A researcher-structured questionnaire was used in eliciting information from the respondents for the study, using the Likert Scale rating of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) to rate respondents' opinion of each item on the questionnaire. Test-retest reliability method, involving the distribution of 20 copies of the questionnaire to the Sport Stakeholders in University of llorin twice within the interval of two weeks, with a reliability coefficient of.73r recorded following the usage of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), indicating high internal consistency of the instrument.

The researcher with the help of two trained research assistants administered the questionnaires to the respondents and was retrieved immediately for onward analysis. The data collected was subjected todescriptive analysis (frequencies and percentage) with respect to the demographic characteristics and research questions while inferential statistics of Chi-Square was employed in testing the stated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis on demographic data of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	61	61.0
Female	39	39.0
Total	**100**	**100%**
Age-Range		
20-29yrs	35	35.0
30-39yrs	29	29.0
40-49yrs	25	25.0
50yrs & Above	11	11.0
Total	**100**	**100%**
Experience		
1-5yrs	22	22.0
6-10yrs	35	35.0
11-15yrs	30	30.0
16yrs & Above	13	13.0
Total	**100**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents 61 (61.0%) are male, while 39 (39.0%) of the respondents are female. Majority of the respondents 35 (35.0%) are within the age range of 20-29 years; 29 (29.0%) of the respondents are within the age range of 30-39 years; and 25 (25%) are within the age range of 40-49 years; and 11 (11.0%) of the respondents are within the age-range of 50 years and above. The table also shows that, majority of the respondents 35 (35.0%) of the respondents had 6-10 years of experience; 30 (30.0%) had 11-15 years of experience; 22 (22.0%) had 1-5 years of experience; and 13 (13.0%) had 16 years and above experience.

Answers to research questions

Research question one: Will funding influence sports development withinKwara State Sports Commission?

Table 2: Descriptive analysis on influence of funding on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	FR	D	SD	UR
1	Funding of sports should be increased.	22 (22.0%)	51 (51.0%)	73 (73.0%)	19 (19.0%)	8 (8.0%)	27 (27.0%)
2	Inadequate funding of sports is a major problem in sports development.	20 (20.0%)	50 (50.0%)	70 (70.0%)	22 (22.0%)	8 (8.0%)	30 (30.0%)
3	Lack of financing causes backwardness in sport performance.	16 (16.0%)	43 (43.0%)	59 (59.0%)	35 (35.0%)	6 (6.0%)	41 (41.0%)
4	Funding committee should be set up to suggest ways of fund raising.	17 (17.0%)	46 (46.0%)	63 (63.0%)	32 (32.0%)	5 (5.0%)	37 (37.0%)
	Total			**265 (66.2%)**			**135 (33.8%)**

Key: FR- Favourable Responses,UR- Unfavourable Responses

Table 2 shows descriptive analysis on perceived influence of funding on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. The table reveals that majority of the respondents 51 (51.0%) agreed that funding of sports should be increased. Also, majority of the respondents 50 (50.0%) agreed that inadequate funding of sports is a

major problem in sports development. Also, 43 (43.0%) of the respondents agreed that lack of financing causes backwardness in sport performance. Also, 46 (46.0%) of the respondents agreed that funding committee should be set up to suggest ways of fund raising. The overall results of the items analysis presented in table 3 shows that 265 (66.2%) of the responses supported that funding influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

Research question two: Will personnel influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission?

Table 3: Descriptive analysis on influence of personnel on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	FR	D	SD	UR
1	Officials should be recruited for competitive sport programs	14 (14.0%)	41 (41.0%)	55 (55.0%)	32 (32.0%)	13 (13.0%)	45 (45.0%)
2	Harmonious working relationship among personnel promote better performance	21 (21.0%)	28 (28.0%)	49 (49.0%)	38 (38.0%)	13 (13.0%)	51 (51.0%)
3	Appointed personnel must have social qualifications and knowledge	17 (17.0%)	44 (44.0%)	61 (61.0%)	28 (28.0%)	11 (11.0%)	39 (39.0%)
4	Sport personnel must possess competence in handling organisation programs	16 (16.0%)	44 (44.0%)	60 (60.0%)	29 (29.0%)	11 (11.0%)	40 (40.0%)
	Total			**225 (55.2%)**			**175 (43.8%)**

Key: FR- Favourable Responses,UR- Unfavourable Responses

Table 3 shows descriptive analysis on perceived influence of personnel on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. The table reveals that majority of the respondents 41 (41.0%) agreed to the recruitment of officials for competitive events. Furthermore, majority of the respondents 38 (38.0%) disagreed to harmonious working

relationship amidst resulting in better performance. A greater fraction of the respondents (44.0%)agreed to the need for appointed personnel to possess social qualification and knowledge while44 (44.0%) of the respondents agreed to the need for display of competence by a sport personnel The overall results of the items analysis presented in table 3 shows that 225 (55.2%) of the responses supported that personnel influences sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

Research question three: Will sports facilities influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission?

Table 4: Descriptive analysis on influence of sports facilities on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	FR	D	SD	UR
1	Standard facilities are necessary for excellent performance	11 (11.0%)	44 (44.0%)	55 (55.0%)	32 (32.0%)	13 (13.0%)	45 (45.0%)
2	Lack of standard facilities hinders better performance	18 (18.0%)	35 (35.0%)	53 (53.0%)	29 (29.0%)	18 (18.0%)	47 (47.0%)
3	Sport facilities are vital for physical activities and sports programs	15 (15.0%)	27 (27.0%)	42 (42.0%)	38 (38.0%)	20 (11.0%)	58 (58.0%)
4	Adequate sports facilities lead to increase participation and performance	40 (40.0%)	20 (20.0%)	60 (60.0%)	10 (10.0%)	30 (30.0%)	40 (40.0%)
	Total			**210 (52.5%)**			**190 (47.5%)**

Key: FR- Favourable Responses,UR- Unfavourable Responses

Table 4 shows descriptive analysis on influence of sports facilities on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. The table reveals that majority of the respondents 44 (44.0%) agreed that funding of sports should be increased. Also, majority of the respondents 35 (35.0%) agreed that lack of standard facilities hinders better performance. Also, 38 (38.0%) of the respondents disagreed that sport facilities are vital for physical activities and sports programs. Also, 40 (40.0%) of the respondents

agreed that adequate sports facilities lead to increase participation and performance. The overall results of the items analysis presented in table 4 shows that 210 (52.5%) of the responses supported that sports facilities influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

Research question four: Will sports equipment influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission?

Table 5: Descriptive analysis on influence of sports equipment on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	FR	D	SD	UR
1	Equipment is important for sports development	16 (16.0%)	49 (49.0%)	65 (65.0%)	25 (25.0%)	10 (10.0%)	35 (35.0%)
2	Good sports programs require sufficient equipment in good condition	18 (18.0%)	44 (44.0%)	62 (62.0%)	28 (28.0%)	10 (10.0%)	38 (38.0%)
3	Provision and maintenance of equipment enhance sports development	16 (16.0%)	45 (45.0%)	61 (61.0%)	26 (26.0%)	13 (13.0%)	39 (39.0%)
4	Sports equipment should meet regulated standards	13 (13.0%)	55 (55.0%)	68 (68.0%)	19 (19.0%)	13 (13.0%)	32 (32.0%)
	Total			**256 (64.0%)**			**144 (36.0%)**

Key: FR- Favourable Responses,UR- Unfavourable Responses

Table 5 shows descriptive analysis on influence of sports equipment on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. The table reveals that majority of the respondents 49 (49.0%) agreed that equipment is important for sports development. Also, majority of the respondents 44 (44.0%) agreed that good sports programs require sufficient equipment in good condition. Furthermore, 45 (45.0%) of the respondents agreed that provision and maintenance of equipment enhance sports development with55 (55.0%) of the respondents agreeing that; provision and maintenance of equipment

enhance sports development. The overall results of the items analysis presented in table 5 shows that 256 (64.0%) of the responses supported that sports equipment influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

H_0: There is no significant influence of management practices on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

Table 7: Chi-Square analysis on influence of management practices on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission

S/N	Variables	N	Df	χ2	Sig.
1.	Funding	100	9	74.00	0.000
2.	Personnel			35.40	0.000
3.	Sports Facilities			62.24	0.000
4.	Sports Equipment			72.48	0.000

< 0.05

Table 7 shows chi-square analysis on perceived influence of management practices on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. The result of the null hypothesis tested on influence of funding, indicated that n = 100, χ2 = 74.00, df = 9, p= .000 < .05. Since the calculated p-value is less than significant level of .05, hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This implies that funding influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

The table also shows the chi-square analysis on perceived influence of personnel on sports development in Kwara State Sports Commission. The result indicated that n= 100, χ2 = 35.40, df = 9, p = .000 < .05. Since the calculated p-value is less than significant level of .05, hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This implies that personnel influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

The table also shows the chi-square analysis on perceived influence ofsports facilities on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. The result indicated that n= 100, χ2 = 62.24, df=9, p = .000 < .05. Since the calculated p-value is less than significant level of .05, hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This implies that sports facilities influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

The table also shows the chi-square analysis on perceived influence ofsports equipment on sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. The result indicated that n= 100, $\chi 2$ = 72.48, df = 9, p=.000 < .05. Since the calculated p-value is less than significant level of .05, hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This implies that sports equipment influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission.

Discussion of findings

The findings reported from this study pointedHo_1 as shown in table 7, that funding influences sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. Funding plays a crucial role in sports development, as it enables the construction of modern sports facilities and provision of other resources. This finding is in line with the study of Szymanski (2015) that adequate funding attracts talented athletes and coaches while also supporting research and development in sports technology. Funding influences sports development by providing resources for talent identification and development programs (Sotiriadou, 2015). It also supports the development of coaches and officials thus, proving effective for sports development (Hoye, 2015).

Ho_2 as shown in table 7 indicated that personnel influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. Personnel play a crucial role in sports development, as they provide expertise and guidance (Hoye, 2015). Coaches, in particular, have a significant impact on athlete development (Sotiriadou, 2017). In 2010, a study found that coaches' leadership styles influenced team cohesion and performance (Côté, 2010). Personnel influence sports development by providing role models and mentors for athletes (Szymanski, 2015).

Ho_3 as shown in table 7 indicated that availability of sporting facilities influence sports development in Kwara State Sports Commission. Sports facilities have proven crucial to the development of professional athletes, highlighting its distinct role in sports development. Inadequate funding and substandard sports facilities have also been reported to be risk predictors related to the organization of Nigeria sport leagues (Nwankwo & Ekechukwu, 2017).Sports facilities influence sports development by providing a conducive environment for athlete training and development while also influencing athlete motivation and enjoyment. However, sports facility costs have been noted to be a barrier to sports development (Collins, 2012).

H_{04} as shown in table 7 indicated that sports equipment influence sports development within Kwara State Sports Commission. The grooming of professional athletes requires a competitive edge which possession of optimal equipment would afford. A study by Leech et al. (2017) assessed the place of equipment quality in the grooming of professional athletes, reporting on the need for usage of standard equipment in improving overall sports development.

Conclusion

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

- Funding plays a key role in sports development, as it enables the construction of modern sports facilities while also attracting talented athletes and coaches.
- Personnel play a crucial role in sports development, providing expertise, guidance, and support for athletes, programs, and services.
- Sports facilities have a profound impact on sports development, providing a platform for training, competition, and innovation.
- Sports equipment plays a vital role in sports development, enhancing athlete performance, safety, and overall sports experience.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Funding for grassroots sports programmes should be increased to enhance participation at the community level and to encourage investing in sports infrastructure.
- Investment should be made in coaching development programmes to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- Investment should be made into modernization and expansion of sports facilities to increase accessibility and full inclusiveness for all athletes, regardless of ability or gender.
- Investment should be made into sports equipment meeting safety standards and regulations to prevent injuries.

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