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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS, COACHES AND PLAYERS PERCEPTION OF POLICIES AS PROBLEMS INFLUENCING THE NIGERIA PREMIER LEAGUE

Abstract

The study was to investigate whether policies were perceived by sports administrators, coaches and players as political problems influencing the Nigeria Premier League. To facilitate the realization of this objective, six research questions and one hypothesis were raised. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The participants for the study were 559. The proportional stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the participants. The instrument used was a guided self constructed questionnaire. A jury of 5 experts drawn from the Department of Human kinetics and Health Education and the National institute of sports validated the instrument, while the reliability was established using the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.91 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while the one way analysis of variance ANOVA was used for testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant. The result revealed that sports administrators, coaches and players mean perception was above criterion mean of 2.50. It implies that policies influence the Nigeria premier league. The hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that players and coaches should be carried along when policies are to be formulated and changed. Also, only policies that will be implemented should be formulated.

Key Words: *Formulation, implementation, adherence, abrupt changes, policy.*

Introduction

Football has become increasingly an important part of Nigerian culture. In Nigeria it is the most popular and most cherished sports among youths and sports fans. Musa (2007) states that the tremendous followership and financial gain in soccer throughout the world, makes it the number one sport of the world. Football has been identified by researchers such as Abone (1990), Coakley (1993), Eboh (1994), Omoruan (1996), Onowhakpor (1996), Boye(2004), Erhinyodavwe and Boye (2007), Boye, Money and Eboh (2008) as a strong social force that is capable of bringing unity, solidarity and peaceful coexistence among individuals and groups when properly managed and administered. Based on the assertion that football is capable of unifying people of all races, and bringing solidarity and peaceful coexistence, it is imperative to improve the Nigerian Premier League to attract more followership and raise a better national team.

Despite the acclaimed fact that sports like football is capable of bringing unity, solidarity, and peaceful coexistence, individuals, groups and Nigerians, particularly football fans still show less concern and interest in the Nigeria premier leagues, unlike the European and other foreign leagues (Musa, 2007). Anibeze (2008) observed that football management in some African countries and Nigeria in particular is faced with unwholesome practices and delay in policy implementation.

Considering the role and influence of policies in sports development, the aim of the present study therefore, is to finding out if sports administrators, coaches and players perceived policy formulation, implementation, changes, and adherence as a problem influencing the Nigeria Premier League that need urgent resurgence.

Literature Review

The formulation of sports policy is one of the functions of sports administration. Policy according to Ikhioya (2001) is an aspect of planning which indicates the existence of rules or laws that guide the operations of an organization in decision making. Uwa and Ogu (2007) reiterated that policy portrays a formalized and established path based on guidelines that must be followed. Policy is a guide to action that reflects procedures when adhered to; fulfil the best interest of the organization and the purpose for which it exists (Caribbean Community secretariat, 2007).

Policy is a plan for expressing the organizational intended behaviour relative to its human resources. It is a written statement of the general aims and intentions that are intended to prevail in the system. Policy is a predetermine course of action so as to maximize their effectiveness in producing anticipated result. It is one of the plans in hierarchy, ranging from broad goals, through policies, programmes, process and procedures to specific goals.

Policy according to Koonts, Donnel and Weihrich (1980) is a plan for expressing the organizational intended behaviour relative to its human resources. It is a written statement of the general aims and intentions that are intended to prevail in the system. Olu and Setonji (2007) see policy as a predetermine course of action so as to maximize their effectiveness in producing anticipated result. It is one of the plans in hierarchy, ranging from broad goals, through policies, programmes, process and procedures to specific goals.

According to Morakinyo (2007), government policies all over the world have the capacity of enhancing or endangering the status of sports. Morakinyo (2007) further admits that the first public federal government acknowledged sports development policy for Nigeria was released in 1989. This policy came in a handbook titled; "Guidelines for implementation of sports development policy for Nigeria". The preamble is stated as follows:

The Federal Government, After careful review of the development, past and present status, impact and potential of sports development sector, has come to the conclusion that much more need to be done to streamline and strengthen the organization, resources and operations of the sector in order to maximize its contribution towards the attainment of the relevant national objectives...pp2

Despite the lofty ideas and promises imbedded in the handbook little or no success has been achieved in the implementation (Morankinyo, 2007). Ojeme (2000), states that the non implementation of sports policy in Nigeria is a serious problem confronting the growth and development of sports. Similarly, Onifade (2000) and Uwa and Ogu (2007) are all of the view that non implementation of the various national sports policies has not enhanced sports growth and development in Nigeria.

Ikhioya (2001) advocates some strategies for effective implementation of sports development policy in Nigeria. They include:

1. Encouragement of decentralization of sports development agencies to ensure mass participation.
2. Enhancing physical education and sports in schools
3. Upholding national honour and glory
4. Mobilizing the youth
5. popularizing traditional games
6. Promoting sports irrespective of age

Based on the above premises the following five research questions and one hypothesis guided the study

1. Do sports administrators, coaches and player perceive formulation of sports policies as problem influencing the Nigeria Premier league?
2. Do sports administrators, coaches and player perceive non implementation of sports policies as a problem influencing the Nigeria Premier league?
3. Do sports administrators, coaches and player perceive delay in implementation of sports policies as problem influencing the Nigeria Premier league?
4. Do sports administrators, coaches and player perceive abrupt changes of policies as problem influencing the Nigeria Premier league?
5. Do sports administrators, coaches and player perceive non adherence to sports policies as problem influencing the Nigeria Premier league?

The hypothesis formulated is stated thus: There will be no significant differences in the perception of sports administrators, coaches and players in the perceived sports policy variables as a problem influencing the Nigeria Premier League.

Method

Survey research design was adopted in conducting this study. The participants of the study comprise of 211 administrators, 45 coaches and 274 players in the twenty clubs in the Nigeria Premier League. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the participants for the study. Each of the three categories of respondents (administrators, coaches and players) for the study formed a stratum from where participants are drawn.

The research instrument used for the study was a guided self constructed questionnaire on the perceived sports policy variables influencing the Nigeria premier league as perceived by sports administrators, coaches and players. A jury of 5 experts drawn from the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education and the National institute of sports validated the instrument, while the reliability was established using the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.91 was obtained.

Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while graphs were used to illustrate the various responses of respondents. The one way analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant. The Duncan multiple comparisons were used to ascertain were difference exists among the sample group of sports administrators, coaches and players.

Results

Table 1. Mean Perceptions of sports administrators, coaches, and players on policies variables as problems influencing the Nigerian premier league

SN	Sports policies variables	Government Control					
		Coaches		Administrators		Players	
		N	X	N	X	N	X
1	Formulation of sports policies.	45	3.42	211	3.60	271	3.34
2	Non implementation of sports policies.	45	3.31	211	3.66	272	3.26
3	Delay in implementation of sports policies.	45	3.00	211	3.51	273	3.15
4	Abrupt changes of policies	45	2.76	211	3.56	272	2.93
5	Non adherence to sports policies	45	3.00	211	3.64	270	3.31

Criterion mean at 2.5

All results reveal mean perception to be above criterion mean. Hence respondents perceived variables as problems influencing the Nigerian premier league.

Graphical Representation of Responses of Perceived Sports Policy Variables Influencing the Nigeria Premier League

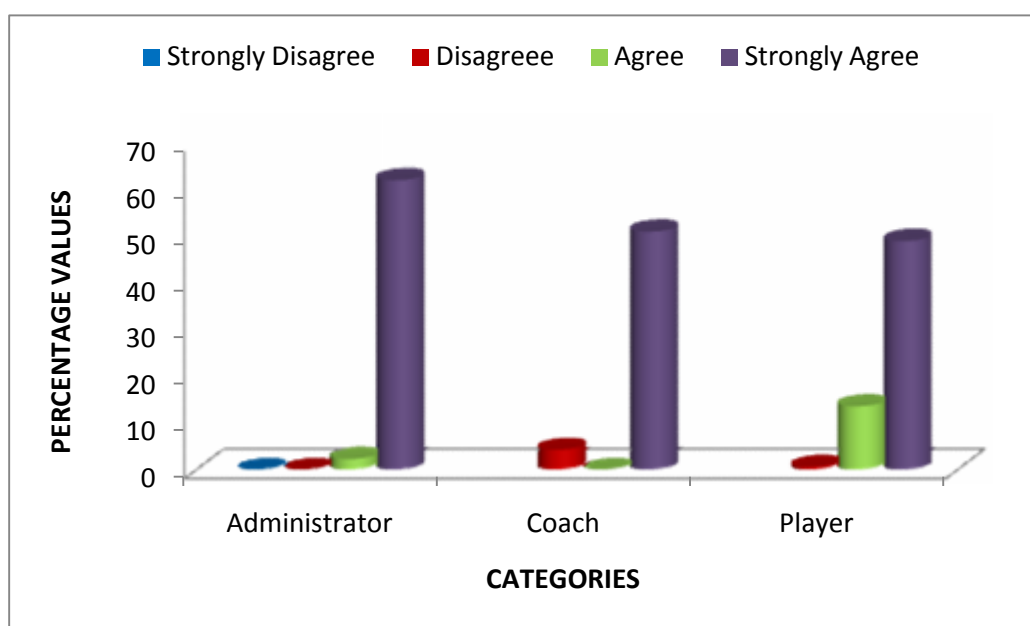


Figure 1. Perceived responses on formulation of sports policies as a problem influencing the NPL

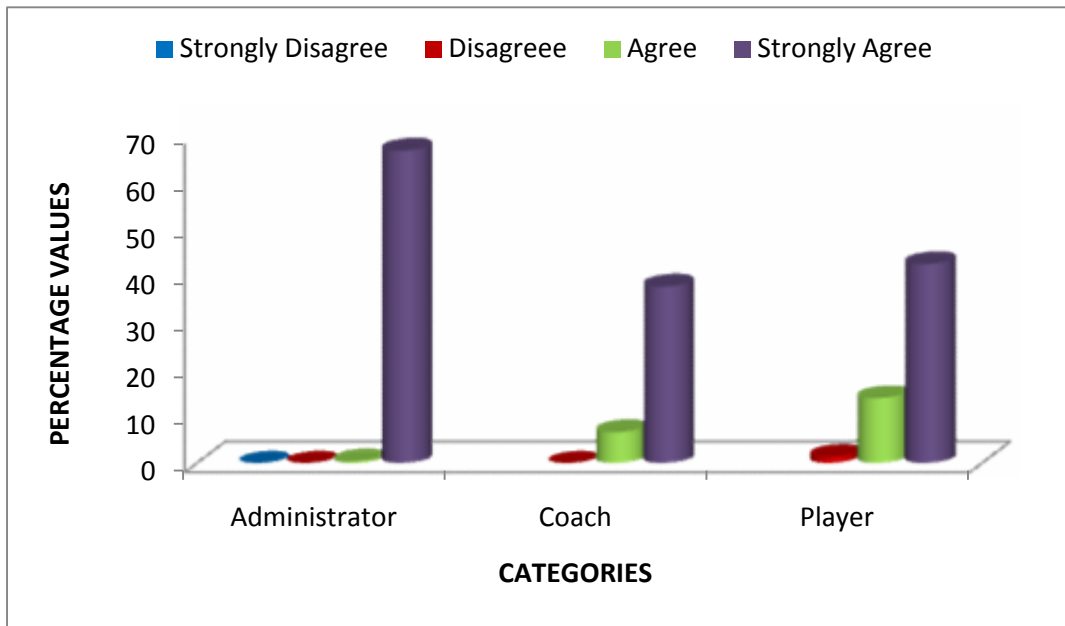


Figure 2. Perceived responses on non implementation of sports policies as a problem influencing the NPL

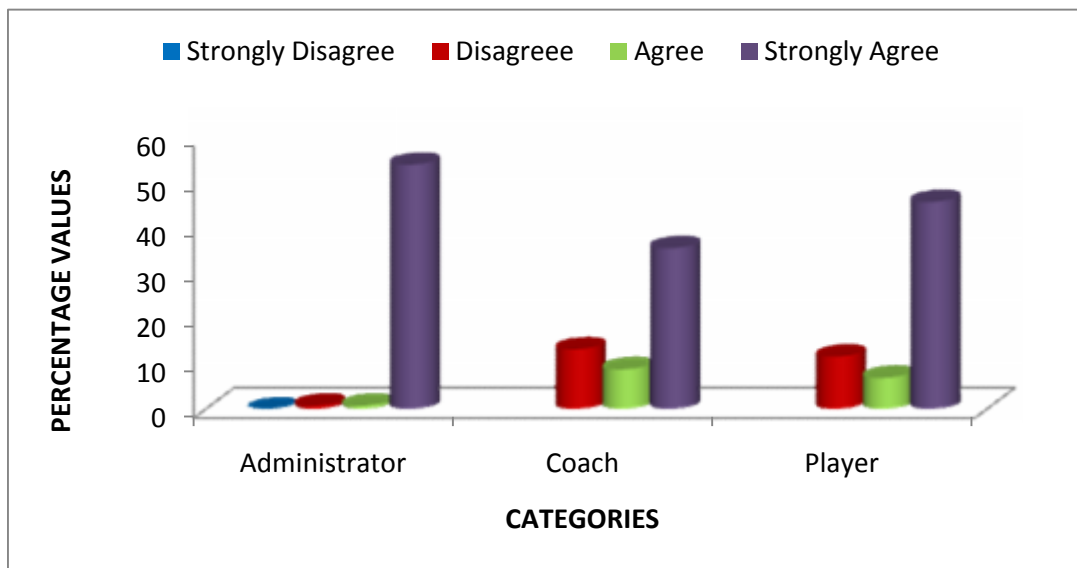


Figure 3. Perceived responses on delay in implementation of sports policies as a problem influencing the NPL

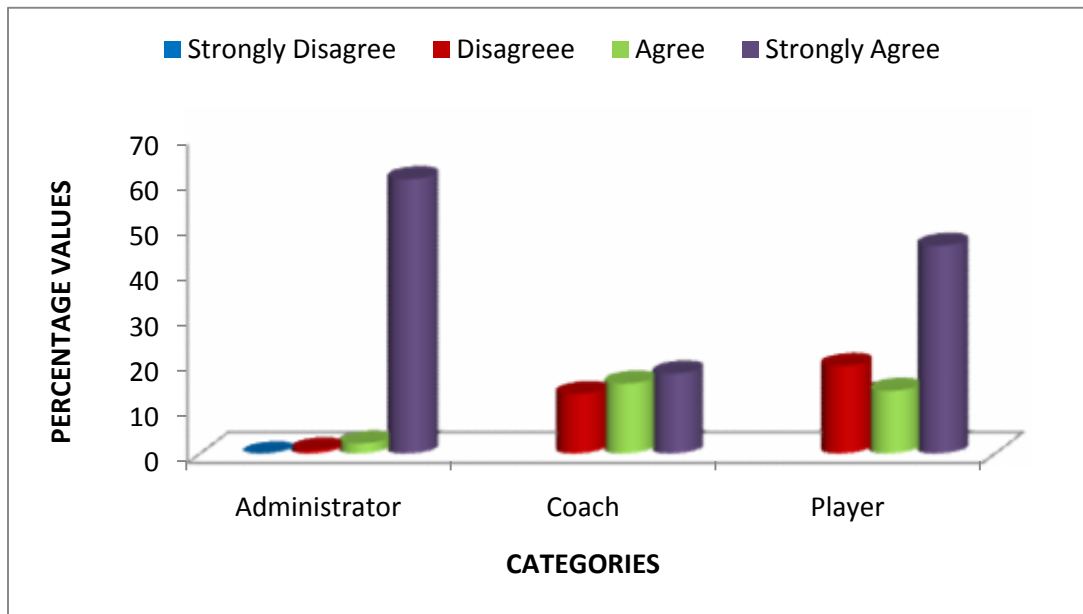


Figure 4. Perceived responses on abrupt changes of sports policies as a problem influencing the NPL

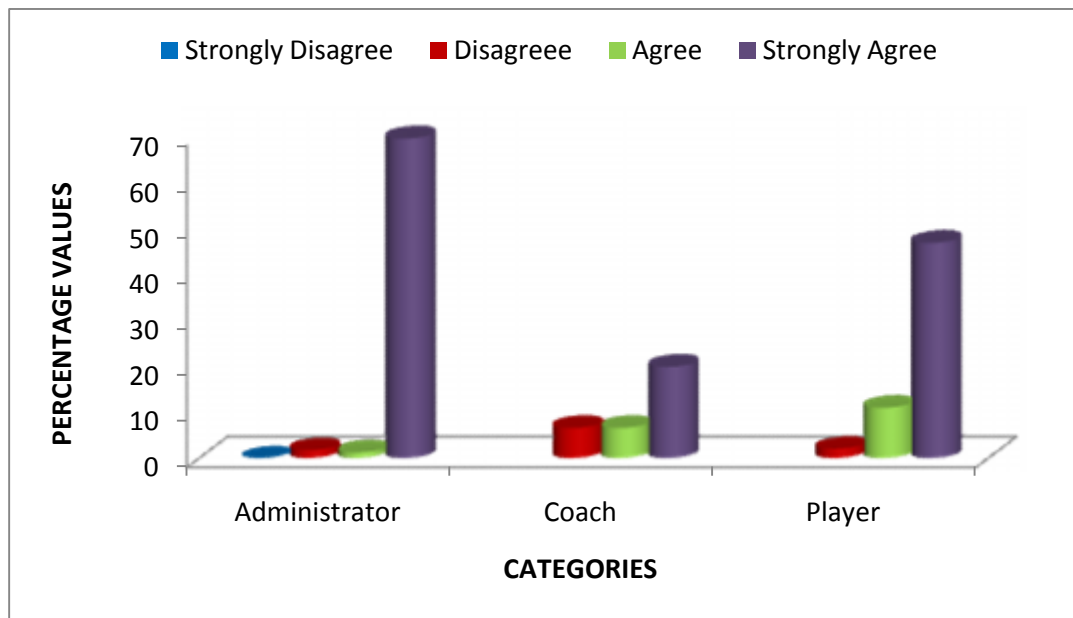


Figure 5. Perceived responses non adherence to sports policies as a problem influencing the NPL

Table 2. ANOVA Summary table for Perception of Sports Administrators, Coaches and Players on policies as a political Variable influencing the Nigeria Premier League

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21.151	2	10.575		
Within Groups	136.902	526	.260	40.633	.000*
Total	158.053	528			

* $p < 0.05$ Significant

Table 2 presents the ANOVA table of perception of sports administrators, coaches and players on policies as variables influencing the Nigeria Premier League. It was observed that the mean square of 10.575 and .260 was significant at P-value of .000. It implies that the hypothesis of no significant difference was significant. The hypothesis is thereby rejected.

Table 3. Post Hoc Test for Hypothesis using Duncan multiple comparison to ascertain were differences occurred

Duncan Category coded	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Coach	45	3.1296	
Player	273	3.2236	
Administrator	211		3.6153
Sig.		.198	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Duncan post hoc test for multiple comparisons indicated coaches and player have similar perceptions. While administrator different have perception on the. The different perception of administrators could be the fact that they are the policy makers in the Nigerian Premier League.

Discussion

The findings from the study revealed that there was a significant difference in the perception of administrators, coaches and players on policies as a variable influencing the Nigeria Premier League. The results of study shows that the mean perception of coaches and players are not significantly different on formulation of sports polices, non implementation of sports policies, delay in the implementation of sport policies, and abrupt changes of sports policies, as problems influencing the Nigeria Premier League,

while that of administrators is significantly different. The difference in the perception of coaches and players from the administrators is not farfetched from the fact that administrators are the policy makers in the Nigeria Premier League and sports in general. According to Ikhioya (2001) the formulation and implementation of sports policies rest on the sport administrators. The result of the findings shows that policies formulation and implementation are problem influencing the Nigeria Premier League. Mean perception of respondents revealed that they are problems as all mean perceptions were above criterion mean of 2.50.

The findings of this study is in consonance with Morankiyo (2007) which stated that despite the lofty ideas and promises embedded in the policy handbook of sports, little or no success have been achieved in the implementation. The findings from this study is further corroborated with the observation of Ojeme (2005) who stated that non implementation of sports policies in Nigeria is a serious problem influencing the growth and development of sports. In addition Onifade (2000), and Uwa and Ogu (2007) reported that non implementation of the various national sports policies has not enhanced sports growth and development in Nigeria.

The result of this study is further in line with the study of Alla, Inegite and Asagba (2007) who reported that sports policy makers do not carry coaches and player along when policies are initiated and changed. Similarly, Olu and Setonji (2007) reported that lack of thorough implementation, continuity and de-formative implementation structure hampers effective policy implementation thereby influencing the growth and development of sports in Nigeria. The non adherence to sports policies was also perceived as a problem influencing the Nigeria premier League.

Conclusion and Recommendations

When Policies are formulated and not properly carried out, it is capable of distorting the free flow of any organization or institution. Sport is not left out. Situations in Nigeria where sports policies are not adequately adhered to and changes are abruptly made without the major actors, been carried along is a serious setback for her sports development. It is time for meaningful and spirited Nigerians to rise up to these challenges so that the Nigeria premier league can be attractive like the English premier league. Football in modern society has been known to be a strong social vehicle for peaceful coexistence and harmonious living.

Based on the finding of this study the following suggestions are proffered to help improve the Nigeria premier league.

- i. Only policies that would be implemented should be formulated
- ii. All parties involved in the Nigeria premier league should be adequately carried along during policy changes
- iii. Policies that will not be adhered to should not be formulated.
- iv. Policies formulated should not be abruptly changed without due process
- v. The Nigeria sports policy document should be strictly adhered to
- vi. The board of the NPL should be given free hands to initiate policy programmes that will favour the League

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