

Growing the Nigeria Sport Market through Audience Participation at Sports Competitions

Emmanuel O. Akarah

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria
dedonspino@yahoo.co.ukchild

Abstract

Audience at sports competitions which comprise of spectators and fans imply the situation where persons attend sports venues (stadia) to watch sporting activities as passive participants/supporters was hypothesized to help grow the Nigeria sport market and established as a veritable tool of economic development in Nigeria. The target population comprised of all employed coaches, athletes, sports psychologists, sports journalists, workers in corporate and private organizations with sport concerns and educational institutions and departments involved in educating persons in sports disciplines were studied using the descriptive survey research design. The purposive multi-stage random sampling method was used to select a sample size of 674 respondents from the target population of 3,372. The instrument for the study is a 47-item questionnaire which construct validity was determined using the factor analysis and a reliability index of 0.87 at $P < 0.05$ established with the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha. The data analysed with multiple regression showed that audience participation at sports competitions would indeed grow the sport market in Nigeria. The study concluded that, government should establish policies governing the sports sector, specify the roles expected of sports producers/marketers as well as taxes and tariffs to be paid to enable corporate, private organizations and individuals invest in the sports market by building stadia and organizing competitions so as to grow the economy and boost the sports market sector.

Keywords: Sport Market; Audience participation; Sports competitions, Economic

development

Introduction

Nigeria governments' monetary commitments towards the organization and administration of sports have always been very high (Kienka, 1990). Despite these commitments, Akarah (2007) espoused that the returns to government in terms of profits have not been commensurate. Aiyejuyo and Ayoade (2002) noted that managing sport has become a true replica of what obtains in the larger society (managing business enterprises and ventures) and as a result, persons now have interest for sports for social value, economic gains and its contribution to health and longevity while the interest of government in sports borders on unity, self-reliance, image laundering and politics. Coakley (2001) asserted that, sports are institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants usually motivated by personal enjoyment and external rewards. Van and Van (1992), observed that the sport market comprise of activities of consumer and industrial product and service marketers who increasingly use sport as a promotional vehicle for their (non-sports related) products or services. In essence, this becomes the marketing of a company's image or products/services through sports. Pitts and Stotlar (2002) defined sport marketing as the process of designing and implementing activities for the production, pricing, promotion and distribution of a sport product or sport business product to satisfy the needs or desires of consumers and to achieve the company's objectives. Research findings indicated that an effective sport market strategy if put in place in Nigeria, would make monetary contributions that would boost the

economy (Akarah, 2007). This would justify why Chalip and Leyns' (2002) observed that, an array of cities throughout the world have incorporated sporting events into their economic development mix.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to ascertain if audience participation at sports competitions would grow the Nigeria sport market, with a view to helping generate awareness on the need to use sports as an avenue of creating a more robust economy for Nigeria.

Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study and was carried out in six states selected from the six geo-political zones namely; Delta (South South), Lagos (South West), Enugu (South East), Kaduna (North West), Borno (North East), Niger (North Central) and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) which was purposively sampled to viability of growth in the sport market index being the Federal Capital of Nigeria. A target population of 3,372 persons comprised of respondents from corporate and private organizations workers, sports journalists, sports psychologists, sports directors, coaches and athletes in universities (sourced from the Ministry of Sports in the study areas in 2007). A sample size of 674 made up of 44 coaches, 295 athletes, 11 sports psychologists, 44 sports journalists, 84 corporate organization workers, 84 private organization workers and 112 respondents from educational institutions were used for the study. The respondents in corporate and private organizations (general manager, assistant general manager, marketing/business manager and head of operations) as well as director of sports in the educational institutions were purposively sampled. While coaches, athletes, sports psychologists, sports journalists and other respondents in educational institutions were selected using the simple random sampling method of balloting.

The instrument for the study is a 47-item questionnaire rated on a 4-point Likert type scale and extracted using the factor analysis to establish the construct validity. The reliability index was established at 0.87 using the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha on a pre-tested sample of 30 sports stakeholders. The face and content validity of the instrument were determined by experts in educational research and statistics, and other experts in Human Kinetics Education. The data collected was analysed using multiple regression analysis to verify the hypothesis formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Hypothesis

Audience participation at sports competitions would not significantly grow the Nigeria sport market. The table contains the correlations, regression coefficients and Beta-standardized regression coefficients between audience participation at sports competitions and Nigeria sport market. The results indicated that there was significant association between audience participation at sports competitions and Nigeria sport market $F 32.36, P < 0.05, r = 0.30, r^2 = 0.09$ which accounted for 10% of audience participation variance in Nigeria sport market. Therefore the hypothesis which states that audience participation at sports competitions would not significantly grow the Nigeria sport market was rejected at $P < 0.05$. This finding indicated that audience participation at sports competitions would significantly grow the Nigeria sport market.

Table 1: Multiple regression analysis of audience participation at sports competitions and Nigeria sport market

Model	R	R ²	R ² Adjusted	Student Error of the Estimate
1	0.30	0.09	0.09	0.52204
ANOVA				
	df	ss	ms	F
Regression	1	17.64	8.82	32.36**
Residual	673	182.86	0.27	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient
		B	SEB	B
Constant		3.05	0.14	
Audience participation at sports competitions		0.21	0.03	0.23
				t
				21.58**
				6.01**

Note: B - Regression Coefficient, SE - Standard Error of B, ** - Sig. 2-tailed

Discussion

From the findings obtained in the table, the study has shown that audience participation at sports competitions would significantly grow the Nigeria sport market. Wann *et al.* (2001) identified eight core motives why people attend sport events viz; diversion from everyday life, entertainment value, self-esteem enhancement, eustress, economic gain, aesthetic value, need for affiliation and family ties. The spectators are part of the revenue generating unit for the sport marketer; the proceeds from gate takings all add up to generating part of the marketers' revenue. Adedipe (2005) supported this view when he reported that fans in their hundred trooped to the National Stadium, Lagos to catch a glimpse of the contest which took place between August 6th and 10th, 2006.

John (2007) did not however support this trend in Nigeria as he reported that the big headache football and indeed every other sport in the country has is spectators apathy to the local stadiums. He further highlighted that the problem of spectators withdrawal from the stadium became noticeable precisely in 1992 when satellite communication started coming into the homes of ordinary Nigerians. Through this means, they were now able to see pictures of well packaged matches in Europe and other places in the world where such pictures exposed the poor side of the local matches in the areas of bad pitches, lack of technical depth of club handlers, very terrible officiating, lack of seriousness amongst players and so on which consequently led to spectators withdrawal from the stadiums since there was little or nothing to cheer anymore. Similarly, sports journalists equally retreated to their offices with the coming of the internet, rather than spare effort to search for stories on the streets, they resorted to downloading stories and pictures of foreign events and publish on their papers. It would also be note worthy to mention that, bad and poorly maintained roads to the stadiums also became a contributing factor.

Conclusion

It will be apt to observe that the average Nigerian has a positive inclination towards sports and participating in it either as recreation, competitor or spectator. It is also a fact that there is awareness to some extent of the sport market attributes because corporate and private organizations as well as individuals have over the years used sports as a medium of advertising their goods and services through sponsoring sports activities. Government could allow the sport producers take charge of the sports sector like it has done through its reforms in some of the other sectors and establish the policies governing the sports sector as well as specifying the roles expected of the producers and taxes and tariffs expected to be paid by the producers/marketers. In this regard, government does not any longer expend money on the sports sector but instead make profit from it.

Recommendation

The Nigerian Government could stop the funding and administration of the sports sector and in place play supervisory roles by establishing and implementing the policies which will govern the organization of sports as a private sector. Corporate, private organizations and individuals as well should be allowed to invest in the sport market by allowing them build stadia and organize sport competitions. If this is done, perhaps, lots of traditional and indigenous sports would be infused into the total sports package which could again attract spectators and increase the audience participation at sports competitions especially, if greater emphasis is placed on organizing sports at the grass-roots with a view to boosting the sport market sector.

References

- Adedipe, A. (2005, July 31). National stadium comes alive for vmobile challenge. *The Guardian Newspaper*, 18.
- Aiyejuyo, L. and Ayoade, S. (2002). Politics in sports leadership: an inherent danger to sports development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sports Management and Educational Research*, 1 (1), 147.
- Akara, E.O. (2007). Psychosocial and economic factors as predictors of effective sport marketing in Nigeria. *Unpublished Ph. D dissertation*, Delta State University, Abraka.
- Chalip, L. and Leyns, A. (2002). Local business leveraging of a sport event: managing an event for economic benefit. *Journal of Sport Management*, 16, 132.
- Coakley, J.J. (2001). *Sport in society: Issues and controversies* (7th Ed.). St. Louis, C. V. Mosby.
- John, S. (2007, May 12). Bringing back crowd to the stadiums: experts point the way forward. *Vanguard Newspaper*, 43.
- Kienka, G. (1990). *Sport administration in Nigeria*. Lagos International Tennis Academy.
- Pitts, B.G. and Stotlar, D.K. (2002). *Fundamentals of sport marketing* (2nd Ed.). Morgantown Fitness Information Technology.
- Van, A. and Van, R. (1992). *New marketing success stories*. Half Way House, South Africa. Southern Book Publishers.
- Wann, D.L., Melnick, M.J., Rusell, G.W. and Pease, D.G. (2001). *Sport fans: The psychology and social impact of spectators*. New York, Roulledge.