

## Dynamism of Sports Diplomacy and Foreign Policy as Correlate of Sports Development in North-Central State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The central focus of this study was to articulate a better image of Nigeria's sports diplomacy and foreign policy on the development of sports in North – Central state Nigeria. A descriptive research design of survey types was employed for this study. The population for this study comprises all sports administration in the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 588 respondents for the study. A researcher-structured questionnaire was used to gather information from the respondents. Three experts validated the instrument and tested for reliability through the test re-test method using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. A correlation coefficient of 0.75"  $r$  ' was obtained. The researchers administered the instrument, and the data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlations (PPMC) to test the formulated hypotheses set for the study at 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed a significant relationship between politics in sports and the development of sports, and there was a significant relationship between management practice and sports development in North-Central State, Nigeria. Based on the study's findings, it was recommended that politics in sports should not be allowed to discourage the private sector from sponsoring sports programmes that can bring about sports development in society. Also, sports administrators are encouraged to adopt best management practices that would bring about sports development.

**Keywords:** dynamism sport diplomacy; foreign policy; sport development

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## INTRODUCTION

The conservative nature and posture of successive governments towards other countries provide the basis for maintaining the status quo in Nigeria's sports policies. The National Sports Commission, National Sports Federations, and State Sports Associations are all responsible for harmonizing policies on sports for higher standards. The latest sports policy in Nigeria was the 2009 National Sports Policy. The policy had different components, such as sports in education, finance and sponsorship. There is also a place for sports tourism. According to the policy document, the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) and the National Sports Commission (NSC) shall develop a blueprint to promote sport tourism as a viable tool for economic and national development (NTDC 2011). However, there is no linkage and connection between the national policy and its effect on foreign countries.



Despite the huge investment Nigeria has committed into the African continent, especially in the areas of setting up continental and regional institutions to facilitate the rapid development of the continent and also in peacekeeping missions, she is yet to truly derive any commensurate dividends from these huge investments that can help her promote her core national interests. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nigerian State are constantly under threat from internal secessionist movements that have sympathizers and financiers outside the country. Nigeria is still considered one of the poorest states in the World (Ade-Ibijola, 2013). Nigeria has an image deficit all over the World (Chidozie, Ibietan&Ujara, 2014), and her leadership status in Africa remains a subject of debate as some other African countries, including Egypt and South Africa, also lay claim to the status of the leader of the African continent (Adenuga & Hassan, 2011).

Even many countries Nigeria has invested in heavily at her detriment continually treat her with disdain. Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, whom Nigeria heavily financed in their bids for independence from internal and external colonialism, show her utter disregard. It is on record that in 2009 when Nigeria was bidding for a nonpermanent seat on the UN's Security Council, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where many Nigerians died and where billions of naira were spent all in a bid to ensure that peace and security obtained for their citizens, refused to support Nigeria (Lamido, 2012; Lawal&Aluko, 2016). Thus, it has become necessary to sit back and reconsider our foreign policy objectives and the strategies being used to strengthen them and make them realistic. Certain factors determine a country's foreign policy on sports. The study observes that Nigeria's foreign policy framework is only potent in Africa and not active outside the continent of Africa. They pronounced Africa as the centrepiece of Nigeria's foreign policy. Nigeria's major interest is to play a leading role in Africa, especially with its size, population, and military.

The study observed that a country's ideology goes a long way in determining the potency of foreign policy. It is observed that since independence, the posture of Nigeria's foreign policy has been pro-west. Nigerian economic relations with countries in the West cut across economic, social, educational and political spheres. According to Ade-Ibijola (2013), at independence, Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and principles included The protection of the sovereign and territorial integrity of the Nigerian State, the promotion of economic and social well-being of Nigerians; the enhancement of Nigeria's image and status in the World at large; the promotion of unity as well as the total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of our country and Africa; the promotion of the rights of the black people and others under colonial domination; the promotion of international cooperation, conducive to the consolidation of world peace and security; promoting mutual respect and friendship among all peoples among the State; redressing the imbalance in the international power structures that has tended to frustrate the legitimate aspirations of developing countries; and the promotion of world peace based on the principles of freedom, mutual respect and equality of all persons of the World.

A critical analysis of the above objectives will reveal that the first four objectives listed above can be regarded as Nigeria's primary and permanent foreign policy objectives. In contrast, the others are secondary objectives which may vary with changes in government. The four objectives are non-negotiable; every government must do everything possible to protect and promote them. Every policy of successive Nigerian governments must be channelled towards protecting the Nigerian State's

sovereignty and preserving its territorial integrity. It is a non-contestable fact that the promotion of the welfare of its citizenry is a major if not the major, assignment of every government and in this wise, the promotion of the economic and social well-being of Nigerians should form a major premise for the interaction of Nigeria with other states. Every individual and, by extension, every State desires to be accorded a status of prestige, and Nigeria is no exception. Finally, Africa, as the centrepiece of Nigeria's foreign policy, has been a major and constant objective since its independence in 1960 (FRN Constitution 1999 as amended).

The notion that these four core objectives are interrelated and the belief that the attainment of these objectives is not mutually exclusive has made successive Nigerian governments, more often than not, employ the same set of strategies to achieve these objectives. An analysis of the foreign policy actions of successive Nigerian governments will reveal the general notion that if their policies are targeted towards making Nigeria the acclaimed champion of the African continent, the sovereignty of Nigeria would be guaranteed, her security will be assured through the principle of good neighbourliness and that the attendant prestige that accompanies a continental champion will translate into welfare benefits for her citizenry. To this end, therefore, right from the first republic to this present fourth republic, Nigeria has invested heavily in the African continent. Nigeria played leading roles in the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the African Union (AU), the African Development Bank (ADB), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) (Wogu, Sholarin&Chidozie, 2015). She was also at the forefront of the anti-colonialism movement that helped many African States, including Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, to throw off the heavy yoke of external and internal colonialism (Wogu et al., 2015).

It was, however, in the area of peacekeeping in conflict areas all over the World, especially in the African continent, that Nigeria towered head and shoulder above all other African states. As Ade-Ibijola (2013) notes, Nigeria is ranked fourth on the list of participants in UN peacekeeping missions all over the World. In the African continent, Nigeria has helped to resolve the crisis and restore peace and order to crisis-ridden States, including Congo, Guinea Bissau, Chad, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali and Sudan (Ashaver, 2014; Lawal&Aluko, 2016); Ade-Ibijola(2013).

### ***Statement of the Problem***

It was also observed that Nigeria did not play its politics right world affairs due to local issues such as militancy, Boko Haram, Shiite, secessionist struggle and other occurrences, giving the international community a bad impression, thus missing out on the hosting right of some international events which could have been a platform to advance Nigeria'sNigeria's interest. Nigeria's foreign policy dynamics have remained the same within the purview of sports diplomacy. Even in other areas aside from sports, President Jonathan and President Buhari's administrations have been conservative and pro-west in their approach to international politics.

As a global governance force, the IOC shows itself as an able norm carrier, capable of helping spread norms of importance across sectors. While pushing China to implement intellectual property legislative protections is an example of the transnational power that the IOC can bring to bear in effecting change for desired law and policy, these processes do not entirely support a total global governance thesis - an absent or totally withered state thesis. Even as this is an important example of a

non-state actor capable of agenda setting, there is an advert pressuring a state to erect law and policy measures more in harmony with an international legal landscape. China's implementation of IP protections happens through internal and national protections vis-à-vis the national IP registry rather than any adoption, acceptance, or membership in an international IP legal regime or network of transnational governance.

### **Objective of the study**

The objective of this study was specifically meant to:

1. examine the relationship between sports policies and development in North Central State Nigeria
2. investigate the relationship between management practice and development in North Central State Nigeria
3. evaluate the relationship between the implementation of sports policy and development in North Central State Nigeria

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested for this study

1. There is no significant relationship between politics in sports and the development of sports in the North-Central States of Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between management practice and sports development in the North Central States of Nigeria.
3. There is no significant relationship between government policy and sports development in North Central States, Nigeria.

## **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

A descriptive research design of survey type was employed for the study. This study's population comprises all sports council staff across the seven North Central states. A Multistage sampling procedure of stratified and purposive sampling techniques was used to select the sample size for the study. The respondents were stratified into two groups, namely the administrative staff, with 49 respondents, and technical staff, comprising coaches and association secretaries, with 537 respondents. All the 588 respondents were purposely sampled for the study.

A structured questionnaire was used for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts in the Department of Human Kinetics Education, University of Ilorin and two in the Department of Political Science, Federal University of Oye Ekiti, Nigeria. The reliability level of the instrument was established through the test re-test method using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). A correlation coefficient of 0.75 "r" was obtained. The researchers did the administration of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using inferential Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics to test the formulated hypotheses set for the study at 0.05 alpha level.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

H01: There is no significant relationship between politics in sports and development of sports in North Central States, Nigeria.

**Table 1.** Revealed the Pearson Analysis "r" of the relationship between politics in sports and the development of sports.

Variables	N	Mean	Std.	Df	Cal r-value	Critical p-value	Sig.	Remark
Politics in Sports	537	28.96	8.960	535	0.3862	0.195	0.000	Rejected
Development of sports		14.23	4.480					

P < 0.05

Table 1 indicates the calculated r-value of 0.3862 against the critical p-value of 0.195 with a degree of 535 at 0.05 alpha level since the calculated r-value is greater than the critical p-value. Hence, the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant relationship between politics in sports and the development of sports in the North-Central States was rejected at this moment. This means there was a significant relationship between politics in sports and the development of sports in the North-Central states of Nigeria.

Ho2: there is no significant relationship between management practices and development of sport in North central states Nigeria.

**Table 2.** Shows the Pearson analysis of relationship between management practices and development of sports

Variable	N	Mean	std	df	cal r-value	critical p-value	Decision
Management practices	537	25.28	7.896	535	0.5817	0.195	Rejected
Development of sport		36.89	12.62				

Table 2 indicates the calculated r-value of 0.5817 against the critical p-value of 0.195 with 535 degrees of freedom at 0.05 alpha level since the calculated r-value is greater than the p-value. Hence, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between management practices and the development of sport was rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between management practices and the development of sports in the North-Central states of Nigeria.

There is no significant relationship between implementation of sports policy and development of sports in North-Central states, Nigeria.

**Table 3.** Indicated the Pearson Analysis "r" of relationship between sports policy implementation and development of sports..

Variables	N	Mean	Std.	Df	Calr-value	Critical p-value	Remark
Implementation of sports policy	537	22.61	6.821	535	0.4986	0.195	Rejected
Development of sports		36.89	12.62				

Table 3 revealed the calculated r-value of 0.4986 and critical p-value of 0.195 with 535 degrees of freedom at 0.05 alpha level since the calculated p-value is greater than the critical r-value, hence the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant relationship between implementation of sports policy and development of sports in North-Central states, Nigeria. This implies a significant relationship between the implantation of sports policies and sports development in North Central State, Nigeria.

## **DISCUSSION**

The finding from tested hypothesis one revealed a significant relationship between sports policies and the development of sports in the North-central state in the study. This result is in line with the view of (Chidozie, Ibieton & Uharu 2014), who affirmed that Nigeria's foreign policy objective and principles include the politics in sports in the area of appointment by giving people the appointment to coordinate the affairs of sports in the country. When the right person is appointed to administer sports, it would enhance sports development. Similarly, Lamido (2012) stressed that policies in sports are about the government's interest in implementing sports policy that should be used to drive sports forward. The finding from tested hypothesis two shows a significant relationship between management practice and sports development in North Central State, Nigeria. This result supported the National Sports Policy (2009) finding that observing the sports management practice of any sports commission would go a long way to determining the sport's development in such an environment. The policy also stressed that management practices differ based on the calibre of people in charge of sports; more so, management practice entails adopting global best practices to direct the affairs of sports programs in any organization. The finding from tested hypothesis three indicated a significant relationship between the implementation of sports policy and the development of sports in the North-central states of Nigeria. This result is in line with the finding of the National Sports Commission that the implementation of sports policy often determines the rate at which development occurs in a community. Sports policy is a document or blueprint of sports events that would transform how sport, both in principles and practices, would be implemented in such a way that it would bring about sports development.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made: there was a significant relationship between politics in sport and the development of sport in North central states, Nigeria; there was a significant relationship between management practices and the development of sport in North central states, Nigeria; there was a significant relationship between the implementation of sports in Northcentral states Nigeria. Therefore, this study recommends that the government should also allow the private sector to partner with them in sponsoring sports events that would bring about sports development in society. Sports policies should not discourage private leaders from sponsoring sports programs in society.

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## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

All authors declare that this manuscript has no conflict of interest with any party.

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