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The Role of Local Government Area Administrators in The Development of Football in Taraba State Nigeria

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Abstract

Objective: This research investigates the role of Local Government administrators in the development of football in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study aims to explore the contributions of local governments to football development, identify the factors hindering its progress, examine the relationship between local government administration and football development, and evaluate the standards of football facilities in the local government areas of Taraba State. **Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework is based on the concept of grassroots sports development, emphasizing the role of local governance in promoting sustainable sports growth. **Literature Review:** A review of the literature highlights a significant gap in the attention given to football development in rural areas of Nigeria, with existing studies primarily focusing on national-level football advancement. This neglect has adversely affected the growth of the sport in hinterlands such as Taraba State. **Methods:** The research adopts a descriptive survey design using an ex post facto approach. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire targeting local football players, coaches, teams, and officiating officials in Taraba State. A purposive sampling technique was employed, and a sample size of 300 respondents was selected. Data were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation, frequency, percentages, and a one-sample t-test at a 0.05 level of significance. **Results:** The findings reveal a lack of adequate involvement of local government administrators in football development, poor standards of football facilities, and several factors impeding growth, such as inadequate funding, lack of infrastructure, and insufficient training programs. The results underscore the critical relationship between effective local governance and grassroots sports development. **Implications:** This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the importance of local government intervention in fostering sports development at the grassroots level. It calls for strategic investments, policy formulation, and active collaboration between stakeholders to revitalize football in Taraba State. **Novelty:** The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the intersection of local governance and rural football development.

Keywords: local government, administrators, football, development, grassroots sports.

INTRODUCTION

Football has received attention in recent times to boost its development in Nigeria. When Nigeria shocked the world by winning the soccer gold in the Atlanta 1996 Olympics, there

was a euphoric moment that greeted this feat, and everyone thought Nigeria had arrived as far as the world of football was concerned [1]. There was a very strong emotional feeling towards the development of football in Nigeria which lasted for a short time. Youths also went into football enthusiastically, thinking that they were on the path to the land of victory as Nigerians thought it was time to create an indelible image of the country on the sand of history. There was a clarion call to develop football at national and local levels. Football became a significant game in all the nooks and crannies of Nigeria. However, the strength of this vision faded away with time [2].

Sports have grown globally in proportion to the extent that sports activities are deliberately encouraged within nations. In Nigeria, it is recognized as a tool for national mobilization, cultural reorientation, national integration, and unity [3], [4]. Sports in Nigeria have become important endeavours so much that their management and development have become the responsibilities of the three tiers of government (Federal, State, and Local Governments). Private sector involvement is being wooed and encouraged by the Federal Government [5].

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria's Sports Policy, it is the responsibility of the Local Government Councils to manage grassroots sports, which cover primary and secondary schools and community sports as well as recreation [5]. The Local Government provides facilities, equipment, and programs for the encouragement of sports. It establishes Local Government Sports Committees, Sports Associations, and Sports Clubs and coordinates sports activities at the grassroots level. The activities of the Local Governments cover the following minimum number of sports; Soccer, Volleyball, Athletics, Gymnastics, Swimming, Handball, Table Tennis, Cricket, Field hockey, Tennis, Badminton, Basketball, Sports for the disabled, and stadium development for Youth Centre Development [6]. These sporting activities are in line with the Federal Republic of Nigeria policy which aims at creating a social condition that is conducive to physical fitness for all, effective physical functioning of the individual that ensures self-actualization for the citizenry, and the development of sports to world-class status [7].

Today, most of the state governments in Nigeria have realized the need to train football teams on and off the competition field to create better performance in both national and international competitions [8]. To realize this vision, the state governments have been focusing on improving "football-for-all" policies and aiding local development of the game. These initiatives have been important in improving community health, physical activity levels, and youths' restiveness. According to Zimmerman, local sports such as football help to teach youths how to lead healthy lifestyles early in their life and how to continue participating in and maintaining professional football and recreational activities throughout their lives [9]. Also, Vanen says that grassroots football is the gateway to Nigeria's glory. He added that if football is developed in the hinterlands of Nigeria, the development will gradually and steeply transit to the national level. This is because the nation is a representation of the entire local area. However, local football seems to be neglected in Taraba State for a long time now, though the State has a great reservoir of youths who are eager and willing to play the game [10].

Today, Taraba State has been relegated to the background in terms of football participation. The state has not been well represented at national sports tournaments across various sports programs, especially in football. Even though Taraba State has put on record some geniuses in various sports over time, it has not recorded such a feat in football [11]. For instance, in previous years, Taraba State had performed wonders in sports such as Tennis and Badminton. The State had also produced the best African player in Badminton. This is an indication that there are various sports talents hidden on the shores of Taraba, yet key stakeholders have not paid attention to discovering these talents [12]. It has been discovered that most of the athletes who aspire to excel in football end up becoming local champions in Taraba State, owing to the unfortunate underdevelopment of football in the State. It is common to see football fields in every village across the State; yet rare to see the State's

team beat another team in the Nigerian premier league. To exacerbate the problem, local football which is important in discovering talents has been neglected for years now. Furthermore, athletes who struggle to keep football alive in the State do so in the absence of adequate facilities and equipment. It is on this ground that this research is set to investigate the role of local government administrators in the development of football in Taraba State [13].

The objectives of the research are: i. To find out the role of the Local Government in the development of football in Taraba State, ii. To find out factors that are militating against the development of football in Taraba State, iii. To find out the relationship between the development of football and local government administration in Taraba State. iv. To find out the standards of football facilities in the Local Government areas of Taraba State [14].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Local government is an extension of Government from the centre or an extension of Government to the local Communities aimed at ensuring the efficiency of Governance. According to Anikeze, it is a Government operating at the base level or rudimentary level of society [15]. Abba puts it as work at the grassroots level that is impacting on everyday life of the people [16]. Nworji sees local government as an organ of the state put in place to paddle the developmental activities of a particular place or district, with a view of making the impact of governance felt at the grassroots level [17]. According Okoli, defined it as a system of government at the local level exercised through locally elected representative councils enjoying substantial autonomy in the exercise of specific power over a given locality in the performance of a range of functions and responsibilities allotted to it by law [18].

On the other hand, Football is considered one of the most popular sports in the globe [19]. The popularity of football has united the world into one single football nation [20]. The globalization of different countries in the world about the perception of football has changed the dynamic nature of social interaction in many countries of the world. Moreover, this opportunity opened ways for social interaction which tends to bring the world very close to each other in positive forms of interaction. Also, a football club or team can travel from one country to another to play a friendly or competitive game [21].

Nigeria is considered one of the promising countries in the world that has benefitted positively from the impact associated with football [22]. The love associated with football sport is very high among Nigerians. Other than that, Nigerian youths are enthusiastic about soccer sport to the extent that they spend too much time discussing issues related to it than their academic studies [23]. This love of football sport among Nigerian youths is very interesting and encouraging due to the bond it creates among its patrons. Rojo-Labaien posits that football sport helps in creating understanding among group members. Similarly, football tends to create unity and solidarity among its enthusiastic supporters. Fans of different countries tend to celebrate when the club they are supporting wins a competition. This is done to show unity and solidarity to the club and supporters living within the country where the club or team is located [24].

Ali, sees football as the premier audience sport in the world, due to its growing popularity, as well as the amount of financial interest in the game, it is one of the most extensively researched intermittent team sports. Highlighting, there are plenty of subject areas that have taken advantage of scientific knowledge gained from football including the natural and physical sciences, medicine, and social sciences [25]. Another important aspect to add on a timeline perspective until now, Doidge, et al., show that football has been facing an economic transformation over this time and there has been a significant change in how football clubs are managed, with an increasing focus on commercial and media growth [26].

Adding new components to conceptualize football, regarding, the world governing body, since its birth, football has been part of our communities [27]. It is more than a game, more than a sport, it is a way of life that we all embrace, regardless of nationality, creed, ethnicity,

education, gender, or religion. It is about supporting the growth and development of football by promoting the integrity and quality of the game for everyone, and not just for today, but for generations to come [27].

METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive survey; an ex-post facto design was used in the research. The questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection because the research deals with variables that already exist in the environment under study. The population of the study includes all the local football players, coaches, teams, and officiating officials in Taraba State. The validity of the instrument was determined through the face validation approach. This was achieved using thorough scrutiny by experts in test construction and evaluation. A pilot study was then used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach Alpha was used in the determination of the reliability and the coefficient obtained was 0.70, which shows that the instrument was highly reliable. A total of three hundred (300) respondents were sampled for the study using a purposive sampling technique. But responses were obtained from 271 making a 90.3% response rate. Data collected were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), IBM version 26. Descriptive statistics consisting of frequencies and percentages were used for the demographic variables while mean and standard deviation were used for analyses of the responses given by the subjects on the role of local government administrators in the development of football. The null hypotheses were tested with a one-sample t-test procedure and the Pearson Product Moment correlation procedure at the alpha level of 0.05 ($p = 0.05$).

Theoretical Framework

There are several theoretical bases upon which this research could have been anchored. However, Herzberg's two-factor theory was chosen to explain the motivational needs of athletes. The factor theory, which is also known as the motivation-hygiene theory, was propounded by Fredrick Herzberg [28]. According to his theory, there are two different sets of factors that influence individuals (employees). The first set of factors is called hygiene factors and includes wages, working conditions, job security, etc. The presence of these factors ensures that the individuals aren't dissatisfied with their jobs. However, it doesn't mean that employees are satisfied with their job. To make the jobs satisfying for them (something that motivates them to do better), individuals should be provided with challenging opportunities that can give them recognition and growth. These factors are called motivation factors. By implication, it means that athletes must be motivated and provided with the necessary environment for them to perform well in sports [29]. Furthermore, Clavin suggested that athletes' performance is a function of motivation and the availability of good training grounds. This applies to football players irrespective of the level at which they operate [30].

The theory has faced several criticisms. The very first criticism is about the reliability of Herzberg's methodology. Secondly, there were concerns with the measurement of overall satisfaction. As a result, the theory didn't find much support, though it has been widely read and is still used in management and sports today.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concept of Football

Soccer, also known as association football, is a field game in which two opposing teams, each of 11 players, use any part of their bodies except their hands and arms, to manoeuvre the ball into the opposing team's goal. The game aims to skillfully manoeuvre the ball into the opponent's goalpost and prevent the opponents from doing the same to their own (attackers') goalpost. In this game, players are forbidden to touch the ball with their arms or hands. However, the goalkeeper is permitted to handle the ball and may do so provided he is

within the penalty area surrounding the goal. The team that scores more goals (at the end of a game) wins.

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, Football is the most popular ball game in the world both in numbers of participants and spectators. Because of the simplicity of its rules and essential equipment, the sport can be played almost anywhere, from official football playing fields (pitches) to gymnasiums, streets, school playgrounds, parks, or beaches [31]. It is everywhere across the globe. Most people play football at a very tender age and grow to love playing it or watching it.

Football Awareness in Nigeria

Football has become a global sport where spectators from around the world can enjoy many different leagues. The popularity of football is unique among the countries of the world in their attachment to the game which, brings to mind the fact that football contains characteristics particularly important in society [31]. In Nigeria, football has become popular and is played in major cities of the country. Nigeria also participates in international tournaments such as the World Cup, African Cup of Nations, Olympics, and Commonwealth Games. There are national football tournaments that are being played internally in Nigeria which make football well known and established in the country. For instance, there are tournaments such as the Nigerian Premier League, Nigerian sports festivals, Nigerian University games, Nigerian Colleges of Education games, etc. in which football completions are usually given a great priority. The game of football is very loved by the majority of Nigerians. Most of the citizens in the country are fans of one foreign football club or another. In the local government areas of Nigeria, it is evident that football is well-known and loved by both men and women, young and old. This is evident by the presence of local football fields in all the nooks and crannies of the country. However, despite the familiarity that people have with football, the game does not get the development it deserves and grassroots football which is the backbone of National football glory is neglected.

Role of the Local Government administrators in the development of football

Football in Nigeria over the years has been dominated by government funding [32]. This explains the overbearing control of football by the government since they are mostly responsible for the financing. As a result of this, the major football events at the local and national levels are largely controlled by the government. Unlike what is obtained in other climes, professional football teams in Nigeria are mainly owned by the federal and State Governments [33]. Similarly, most of the major sports facilities are owned and managed by the government. The participation of local government in the development of sports at the moment is very insignificant. This has led to the shabby state of football in the local government areas in Nigeria.

However, the role of local government is vital for motivating and supporting youths to play professional football, through which they can make their future and livelihood. Presently, the local governments have a lot of work to do to foster the development of football in their administrative jurisdictions [33]. These include the provision of opportunities by expanding access to football facilities and equipment, quality education and health services, facilitation of the transition into the labour market, and the world of football.

Data Presentation and Discussion

The respondents were made up of 69.7% males and 30.3% females. For the age range, 29.9% were less than 20 years old. Those between 20 and 24 years were 23.2% and 24.4% were within the age bracket of 25 to 29 years. Only 22.5% of the respondents were above 29 years old. The age distribution showed that the respondents were mostly within active age for effective participation in sporting activities.

Roles Of Local Government in The Development Of Football In Taraba State

The opinions of the respondents on the perceived roles of local government administration in the development of football were scores in means and standard deviations as summarized in Table 1. The scores for the roles were ranked in their order according to the opinions of the respondents.

Table 1. Mean Opinions of Respondents on the Role of Local Government Administration in the Development of Football Within Taraba State

Sn	Role of local government in the development of football.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
1	The Local Government should be responsible for hunting football talents	3.81	1.387	3
2	Development of grassroots football	3.07	1.005	5
3	Training of local officials	4.27	1.114	1
4	Development of local championships in football	3.76	1.369	4
5	Linking of local athletes to National and International Football Federations	4.11	1.078	2
	Aggregate mean	3.80	0.601	

(Decision mean = 3.00)

Opinions of the respondents on the roles of football as indicated in Table s1 revealed that the training of football local officials ranked first. The respondents were of the view that the administration should be responsible for the training of local officials for football in their respective local government areas. Next was the linking of in the hierarchy was the linking of local athletes with National and International Football Federations which would further motivate prospective athletes. This was followed by hunting for football talents which closely aligned with the training of local officials for football. Then comes the development of local championships in football through motivated competitions at the local government levels. These would lead to the development of grassroots football as indicated in the table. The overall mean (3.80) showed that all the respondents were of the view that the local government administration was perceived to play a vital role in the development of football in the state.

Factors militating against the development of football in Taraba State

The opinions of the respondents on factors militating against football development in the state were scored and ranked as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Opinions of Respondents on Factors Militating Against The Development of Football in the State

Sn	Factors militating against the development of football	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
1	Lack of funds	3.80	1.091	2
2	Lack of good facilities and equipment	4.02	1.132	1
3	Political instability	3.11	1.446	4
4	Poor organization of tournaments	3.23	1.419	3
5	Insecurity in the local areas	2.43	0.879	5
	Aggregate mean	3.32	0.466	

(Decision mean = 3.00)

Among the factors militating against the development of football in the state as indicated by mean scores of the respondents in Table 2, inadequate facilities and equipment ranked first. This was followed by inadequate funding of sports by the local government administrations in the state. Closely following were poor organizations of tournaments and

political instability. Insurgency and insecurity within the local government area were not perceived to militate against football development in the local government areas as the mean score of 2.43 was far lower than the decision mean indicated at the bottom of the table. The overall mean of 3.32 suggested that most of the respondents were of the view that the stated factors were militating against the development of football in the state's local government areas of the state.

Relationship Between Football Development and Local Government Administration in The State

The opinions of the respondents on the relationship between football development and local government administration in the state were scored in means and standard deviation and ranked in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean Opinions of Respondents on the Relationship Between Football Development and Local Government Administration in the State

Sn	Development of football and administration of local government	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
1	The Local Government is better positioned to understand the developmental needs of local footballers	3.60	0.814	3
2	The development of local football is directly proportional to the support of the Local Government	3.26	1.014	4
3	Football and the Local Government are bound by the same local area	4.45	0.947	1
4	Local football and Local Government are homogenous	3.02	1.264	5
5	The pace of development in football is enhanced under the administration of local government	3.80	1.386	2
	Aggregate mean	3.35	0.457	

(Decision mean = 3.00)

Uppermost in the relationship between local government administration and football development in the state is the notion of the bounding of both with a common area which was ranked first in Table 3. Another aspect of the relationship is that the pace of development in football is enhanced and could be proportional to efforts by the different administrative gestures of the local government administrations in the state. Apart from these the local government administration is better positioned to understand the developmental needs of local footballers which would encourage development in the sport. This could explain the 4th rank factor where the respondents agreed that the development of local football is directly proportional to the support of the Local Government administration. The respondents were therefore of the view that local football and local government administration were homogenous and therefore related. The overall mean of 3.35 supported the view that respondents agreed that there were strong relationships between football development and local government administration in the state.

Standards of football facilities in Local Government areas of Taraba State.

The respondents' opinions on the standard of available facilities and equipment for the development of football in the state local government areas were scored in means and standard deviation with ranking in Table 4.

Table 4. Mean Opinions of Respondents on Standards of Football Facilities in Local Government Areas of the State

Sn	Standards of football facilities in the local government areas	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
1	The standard of football facilities and equipment in the local areas of Taraba State is relatively poor	3.79	1.130	2
2	None of the local areas have a Local Government stadium	3.34	1.326	3
3	Where available, local football fields are open and susceptible to soil erosion	3.14	1.349	4
4	In cases where local tournaments are organized, substandard pitches, balls, boots, jerseys, etc. are used.	4.55	0.796	1
5	There are no modern football technological devices in the local areas of Taraba State	2.27	0.962	5
	Aggregate mean	3.42	0.500	

(Decision mean = 3.00)

The respondents were of the view that there were no adequate facilities and equipment for football development in the local government areas of the state. This is seen in the rating in Table 4 where respondents thought that in most cases where local tournaments were organized, substandard pitches, balls, boots, jerseys, and others were always used. This was lacking first in the table and was followed by the opinion that football facilities and equipment in the local government areas of the state were relatively poor. In this regard, respondents were of the view that none of the local areas have a Local Government stadium where football could easily take place. However, the respondents did not agree that there were no modern football technological devices in some of the local government areas of the state. The overall mean score implied that the respondents were of the view that there were no standard football facilities and equipment in the local government areas of the state.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated to determine the significance of opinions on the investigated variables relating to the roles of local government area administrators in the development of football were tested here at the fixed probability level of 0.05. The null hypotheses were tested with the one-sample t-test because of their univariate nature. The null hypotheses were tested as follows:

Hypotheses I: The Local Government administrators have no significant roles in the development of football in Taraba State.

To test this hypothesis, the mean opinion of the respondents on the roles of local government administration in the development of football was compared with the benchmark average of 3.00 used as the decision means for the measurement of the opinion. The result of the one-sample t-test is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. One Sample T-Test on the Roles of Local Government Administration in the Development of Football in Taraba State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	Df	p-value
Roles of LG Admin	271	3.80	0.601	0.037	22.010	270	0.000
Test mean	271	3.00	0.000	0.000			

(t-critical = 1.96, $p < 0.05$)

The test revealed that respondents were of the view that the local government administration has a significant role to play in the development of football in the state. The observed mean score (3.80) was significantly higher than the benchmark (3.00). This is indicated by an observed t-value of 22.010 and p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) obtained at 270,

degrees of freedom (df). The result implied that the null hypothesis is rejected and that the local government administrations have major roles in the development of football in the state.

Hypotheses II: There are no significant factors militating against the development of football in Taraba State.

To test the significance of the expressed opinions on the factors militating against the development of football in the local government areas of the state, the scores were subject to a one-sample t-test, and the result is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. One Sample T-Test on Factors Militating Against The Development of Football in the Local Government Areas of the State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	df	p-value
Militating Factors	271	3.32	0.466	0.028	11.257	270	0.000
Test mean	271	3.00	0.000	0.000			

(t-critical = 1.96, $p < 0.05$)

The factors militating against the development of football in the local government areas of the state were significant. The observed mean score (3.32) was significantly higher than the test mean score of 3.00. The observed t-value (11.267) for the test is higher than the critical value of 1.96. The p-value obtained at 270, degree of freedom (df) 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These observations provided sufficient evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis. In other words, there were major or significant factors militating against the development of football in the local government areas of the state.

Hypotheses III: There is no significant relationship between the development of football and local government administration in Taraba State.

The Pearson Product Moment correlation procedure was used to correlate the rating of the Local government administrations and the development of football by respondents in the study. The result of the test is summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Correlation Between Rated Local Government Administrations and The Development of Football in the State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	r-cal	df	p-value
Roles of LG Admin	271	3.80	0.601	0.037	.186	270	0.002
Development of football	271	3.35	0.457	0.028			

(r-critical = 0.113, $p < 0.05$)

The result in Table 7 revealed that the two variables were significantly and positively correlated. This is indicated with an observed correlation coefficient (r-cal.) of 0.186 obtained at 270, degrees of freedom (df). The p-value obtained for the test was 0.002 ($p < 0.05$). These observations implied a rejection of the null hypothesis. In other words, improvement in the roles of local government administration towards the game would likely enhance the development of football in the state.

Hypotheses IV: There is no significant problem with the of standards football facilities provisions in Local Government areas of Taraba State.

To carry out this test, the mean scores on available facilities and equipment for football in the local government areas of the state were subjected to one sample t-test using the decision mean of 3.00 as the benchmark. The result is summarized in Table 8.

Table 8. One Sample T-Test on Available Facilities and Equipment For Football in the Local Government Areas of the State

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	t-value	df	p-value
Standard Facilities	271	3.42	0.500	0.030	13.759	270	0.000
Test mean	271	3.00	0.000	0.000			

(t-critical = 1.96, $p < 0.05$)

The result revealed that the observed mean (3.42) was significantly higher than the benchmark (3.00) used as the test mean. This is indicated by an observed t-value of 13.759 and an observed p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) obtained at 270, degrees of freedom (df). These observations implied that the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The indications here are that there were problems with the available facilities and equipment required for the development of football in the local government areas of the state.

Discussion of Major Findings

This paper revealed that local government administration plays a significant role in the development of football in Taraba state. The study revealed that respondents expected the local government administration to be responsible for training football officials and linking local athletes with National and International Football Federations towards football development in the state [34]. Among others, the study revealed that respondents were of the view that the local government administration should be responsible for hunting football talents through the officials they have trained and be responsible for local championship competitions in football which will enhance football development in the state [35]. In the test of the extent of the significance of the expressed opinion, it was found to be significant. The finding here is in support of a previous report by Joshua, who stated that football in Nigeria over the years has been dominated by government funding and that major football events at the local and national levels are largely controlled by the government [36].

The study revealed that respondents were of the view that there were many factors significantly militating against the development of football in the state. Among such factors were a lack of standard facilities and equipment for the game, inadequate funding, poor organization of sports competitions, and political instability [37]. In the test of the related hypothesis, the expressed opinion was found to be significant. Respondents were of the view that these factors constituted significant constraints to the development of football in the state. The finding here agreed with the report of Timothy who stated that the local governments have a lot of work to do to foster the development of football in their administrative jurisdictions [33].

This study revealed a significant relationship between local government administrations and the development of football in the state. It was revealed that the bounded political administrations and the respective football organizations shared a common process in which the local government administrative authorities are the major sponsors of sports activities including football [38]. The relationship is such that the space of local government administrative development enhances the development of football in the state. Apart from these, respondents were of the view that the Local Government administrators were better positioned to understand the developmental needs of local football organizations within their enclaves in the state. In the test of the extent of the relation between the two variables, it was found that the relationship was significant. The finding here is consistent with Vanen who stated that grassroots football is the gateway to Nigeria's glory [36].

This study revealed that the available facilities and equipment for the development of football in the local government areas of the state were grossly inadequate. Respondents were of the view that the facilities and equipment available for organized competitions were poor [39]. Those included substandard football pitches, balls, boots, and jerseys among others required to motivate athletes' participation in competitive football. Respondents thought that,

where such facilities as pitches were available, the football fields were open and susceptible to soil erosion and that there were no stadiums for organized sports in the local government areas of the state [40]. The result of the related null hypothesis revealed that the expressed opinion was significant. The finding here is consistent with Clavin who suggested that athletes' performance is a function of motivation and the availability of good training grounds [30].

CONCLUSION

Local government administration has a significant role in the development of football in Taraba State. This role includes training football officials, liaising local athletes with national and international football federations, talent hunting, and organizing local championships. Respondents agreed that local government involvement can improve football development in the region. However, several main obstacles hinder the development of football, namely the lack of adequate facilities and equipment, insufficient funding, poor organization of competitions, and political instability. These factors significantly hinder the progress of football, demonstrating the need for more attention from local governments to address these obstacles. In addition, it was found that there was a significant relationship between local government administration and football development. The local government administration is considered to be able to understand the needs of local football organizations, so its role is very crucial in supporting the development of this sport. However, the standard of football facilities and equipment in the local government area is considered very low. The facilities available, such as football fields, sports equipment, and other infrastructure, often do not meet the standards required to support good competition. This indicates the need to increase investment in sports infrastructure in local government areas. Overall, the study confirms that the success of football development in Taraba State is highly dependent on the active role of the local government in providing adequate training, facilities, and financial support. With improvements in these aspects, football can develop more rapidly and contribute to the overall progress of the sport in the region.

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Author Contribution

Akawu Bitrus Kirim Ph.D: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – review & editing.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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