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Utilization of Sports Entrepreneurial Skills in the Improvement of Sustainable Economic Wellbeing of the Practitioners in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

Sports ideally have not benefited the human society only in the aspect of physical and physiological but contribute extensively to the economic improvement and wellbeing of the practitioners. This study focused on the assessment of the effect of utilization of sports entrepreneurial skills in the improvement of sustainable economic wellbeing of the practitioners in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The study utilized survey design approach. The population of the study consisted of all 46 Table Tennis and Snooker Board Owners. Census sampling technique was employed to sample all the 46 as respondents. Mixed method of data collection was adopted. The data was analysed using percentages and multivariate binary logistic regression model. Results showed that 100 percent of respondents were male; 43.3 percent had tertiary education. Results indicates that sports of Table Tennis and Snooker were significant in contributing to the improvement of economic status of the practitioners in the study area with coefficient regression of 1.891 and odd ratio of .151. It was concluded that sports practitioners should acquire requisite entrepreneurial skills before venturing into the business of sports. Therefore, it is recommended that state Government through it Ministry of Education, youth and Sports should incorporate into the training at secondary schools and tertiary education sports entrepreneurship to enlighten the students on the multi-dimensional effect of sports in improving sustainably the generality of human economic wellbeing.

Keywords: Sports entrepreneurial skills, Improvement of economic wellbeing, Sports practitioners

INTRODUCTION

Issues of populace sustainable economic wellbeing cannot be complete without proper consideration to their employment status, income generation base and health. In other words, sustainable economic wellbeing directly or indirectly relate to the level of satisfaction of an individual from consumption of goods and services. In Nigeria, these three cardinal areas have

been reported to be far below expectation. For instance, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria has risen to 33 percent in 2022 and projected at 45 percent in 2023 and Akwa Ibom State is regarded as the State with the highest unemployment rate in the South-South states of Nigeria with a rising percent of 52 percent (Ita & Basse, 2022). This status of unemployment has worsened the income generation strength of the people vis-à-vis constitute remarkable influence on the populace health. To uplift the populace from this menace of economic suffering (poverty) resulting from unemployment, government of Nigeria and the Akwa Ibom State have clamoured to diversify into agriculture, manufacturing, and exploitation of natural resources, but the status quo still continues to persist. Thus, continue compounding economic wellbeing challenges of the people.

It is worthy of note that poor economic wellbeing of an individual could have a sedentary implication on their health. This could add up to the rising anxiety for survival which in turn may result in cardiovascular challenges. To this effect, assessing the potentials of sport skills in the improvement of sustainable economic wellbeing becomes urgently critical.

Utilization of sports for the promotion of individual wellbeing cannot be overemphasized. Sports according to Okediji (2015), are various activities which promote the acquisition of mental, physical, spiritual, aesthetic, emotional and educational wellbeing to make the individual contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. The health benefits of sports transcend from providing a positive outlet for stress and aggression; enhancing self-confidence and improved self-image; improving concentration and mental functioning (Reimer, et al., 2018). It equally assists in weight control, strength building, increases flexibility, enhanced concentration and motor skills, improved cardiovascular health, and pain reduction (Pantelic, et al., 2013). Sports ideally have not only the physical and physiological benefits to human society, but could contribute extensively to the economic wellbeing of the practitioners/implementers. Since sport is an engagement involving labour, the expected growth in the sport industry likely could create employment. European Commission on the contribution of Sport in Davis et al (2020) reported that for the European Union as a whole, the contribution of sports related employment to total employment is 2.12% which in absolute terms equal to 4.46 million employees. This according to the reports is above the sport related share in gross value added (1.76%), which indicate that sport is labour-intensive. The reports concluded that sport industry with share in the national economies is comparable to agriculture, forestry, and fishing combined. However, whether this is the case in Nigeria is a concern for investigation, though it is believed that for sports to help specific niche sector to develop its entrepreneurial education must be improved.

The concept of entrepreneurship revolves around dynamic generative processes aimed at new innovation, willingness to respond to intuition as part of decision making processes; and development of mindset revolving around maximizing opportunities, enhancing creativity, and innovations. Atare (2021) emphasized that entrepreneurial process includes the following stages: discovery, concept development; resourcing, actualization; and harvesting. He further stated that achievement of best entrepreneurial dealings requires entrepreneurial skills which are related to

identifying business opportunities and receiving a sustainable income from these opportunities. To this end, sport entrepreneurship becomes essential. This is premised on the fact that sports required carefully designed objectives and plans that will lead to the fulfillment of these objectives; that they are cost effective; and that they adhere to the highest standards of development practice. Also, the knowledge of effectively designing the programs in sport is vital which the sports implementers must look for a way to help participants retain the benefits of their involvement and maintain healthy habits.

Sport entrepreneurship therefore, is education that taught individuals engaging in sports the need to react quickly to various dynamics existing in sport market conditions in order to stay competitive (Fayolle, et al., 2010), as well as behaves entrepreneurially in order to identify new opportunities and make these opportunities profitable in a long term. Examples of sports that can yield economic advantage to the sport practitioners/implementers are snooker and table tennis.

Acquisition of entrepreneurship skills in snooker can yield bountifully in terms of employment, economic impact, and direct spending as the benefits of the game tourism on a community (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005). Basically, snooker is a sport that may be played by two or more players, either independently or a side. The skills require to successfully play the game are ingenuity in calculating angles, exercising effective statistical judgment vis-à-vis mathematical addition to scoring, and energy required to accurately move the balls in a desired and specific direction. This sport according to Okediji (2015) has the potency to promote physical health and fitness, recreational activities, relaxation, prestige, economic status, identifies talents, abilities, imparts skills, and encourages sociocultural relationship, which enhances unity among the populace.

Table tennis is also another sport that could improve the wellbeing of the players as well as the economic base of the implementers socially, psychologically, and economically. This sport is fundamentally played on a flat table divided into two equal courts by a net fixed across its width at the middle. The game is played by hitting the ball so that it goes over the net and bounces on the opponent's court in such a way that the opponent cannot reach it or return it correctly.

Utilizing the two sports just like other sports can add values to individuals' implementers' wellbeing. Davis et al., (2020) revealed that for every £1 spent on these sports and other physical activity in England, an economic and social return on investment of £3.91 is generated. The report details exactly how the sports and physical activity add value from the prevention of 900,000 cases of diabetes and 30million fewer hospital visits due to improved health, as well as helping to deliver stronger and safer communities with fewer crime incidents, and the 285,000 jobs that community sport supports. Whether this is true in the case of Akwa Ibom State deserves critical assessment. However, while many studies promoted that the utilization of sport entrepreneurship potency of enhancing sustainable economic wellbeing of the sports implementers, especially in the areas of generating income and employment through manufacturing of sports equipment; serving as training grounds for a new workforce; and teaching skills that makes young people more employable and productive (Hollingsworth, 2020,

Davis, et al., 2020), some scholars argued that the sports industry in Nigeria is bedeviled with mismanagement of funds, inadequate personnel, dwindling infrastructural, sporting facilities, and inadequate training. Whether this impedes the efficiency of sports industry in the State in improving the sustainable economic wellbeing of the people in terms of generating income is a source of contemplation. Thus, this resulted in a question: does utilization of sports entrepreneurial skills predicts improvement of sustainable economic wellbeing of the implementer? If yes, what is the extent of prediction?

The study meant to determine the extent to which sport entrepreneurship skills predict improvement in the sustainable economic wellbeing of practitioners. The null hypothesis formulated for the study was the extent to which sports entrepreneurship skills predicts improvement in the sustainable economic wellbeing of practitioners is not significant.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Uyo metropolis since Uyo is the seat of Government where large number of people converged for entertainment and business operations. Uyo metropolis is located in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria with *Latitude: 60.00" N Longitude: 7° 55' 59 E*. *Descriptive* Survey research design was adopted. The population consisted of 31 snooker and 15 Table Tennis implementers (owners) in Uyo metropolis. All the respondents were sampled using census sampling techniques. Mixed approach of data collection was utilized combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. This was to get in-depth knowledge through the qualitative approach using interview while statistically organizing the interpretation of the improvement of sustainable economic wellbeing through quantitative approach using questionnaire. In essence, data were collected using researcher's designed instruments entitled: "Sport and Economic Wellbeing Scale (SEWS)" and "Semi-structured interview guide". SEWS was used to gather quantitative data from the respondents. This consisted of eight items which encompasses the gender, age, years of experience in the business of sports, cost of investment, income on the investment per annum, and educational level of the business practitioners. Other were business size and status of sport entrepreneurship skills before venturing into the sport business. Meanwhile, semi-structured interview guide was basically used to gather qualitative details from the respondents. This consisted of five questions eliciting details on the level of their customers' (players) enjoyment and satisfaction on the business of sports. Data collected were analysed using percentages and multivariate binary logistic regression models. A descriptive statistical tool such as frequencies, percentages and averages was used to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents in Uyo metropolis. To test the hypothesis on the effects of sport entrepreneurship skills on the improvement of sustainable economic wellbeing of the respondents, multivariate binary logistic regression model was adopted since the dependent variables were dichotomous.

Model Specification

The model used for the study is multivariate binary logistic regression model since the dependent variable is a dummy variable. The model is given as:

$$\ln\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right) = a_0 + a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + a_3X_3 + a_4X_4 + a_5X_5 \text{ Equation 1}$$

$$\ln\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right) = a_0 + a_1SEX + a_2AG + a_3EL + a_4YSBE + a_5ISPPA \text{ Equation 2}$$

Where p_i is the probability of having guinea worm and $1 - p_i$ the probability of not having guinea worm

a_0 is constant

$a_1 - a_5$ are the regression coefficients

EL is the educational level

YSBE is the year of the sport business experience

ISPPA is the income of sport practitioner/implementer per annum

Model 2

$$\ln\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right) = a_0 + a_1YSBE + a_2BS + a_3SBEK \text{ Equation 3}$$

Where p_i is the probability of making gains and $1 - p_i$ the probability of not making gain (loss)

YSBE is the Year of Sport Business Experience

BS is the Business Size

SBEK is the Sport Business Entrepreneurship Skill

RESULTS

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	41	89.1
Female	5	10.9
Total	46	100
Age (years)		
18-38	2	4.3
39-58	11	23.9
59 and above	33	71.7
Total	46	100
Educational Level		
No formal education	-	-
Primary education	7	15.2
Secondary education	19	41.3
Tertiary education	20	43.4
Total	46	100
Years of Sport Business Experience		
1-5	16	34.8
6-10	22	47.8
11 and above	8	13.4
Total	46	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The Table 1 indicates that the sport practitioners in the study area were mostly male (89.1%), majority within the ages of 59 years and above. Most of these sports practitioners has tertiary education (43.4%), has been in the business for a period of 6 to 10 years.

Table 2: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Frequency (%)	Percentage (%)
Income of sport implementer per annum		
51,000-100,000	2	4.3
101,000-150,000	2	4.3
151,000-200,000	18	39.2
201,000 and above	24	52.2
Total	46	100
Business Size (No. of Board/Table)		
Less than 2	32	69.6

2 and above	14	30.4
Total	46	100
Cost of the sport equipment procured		
Below 300,000	18	39.2
Above 300,000	28	60.8
Total	46	100
Having requisite sport entrepreneurship skill before venturing into the business		
Yes	29	63.0
No	17	37.0
Total	46	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 2 indicates that 52.2% of the respondents yearly income from the sport business ranged between ₦201, 000.00 (52.2%) and above. In terms of business size, the table further revealed that majority had only (69.6%). Regarding the investment in the sport business, majorly ranged from ₦300, 000.00 and above. Of these respondents, majority (63.0%) agreed that they had requisite entrepreneurship skills before venturing into the business of the sports. Deducing from the table, it could be stated that though the sports practitioners did not venture into the business of sport in a large scale, they were able to make profits from the venture. This perhaps may be because of their requisite sports entrepreneurial skills.

Table 3: Results of binary logistic regression (odd ratio) for the effect of sport entrepreneurship skills on the improvement of sustainable economic wellbeing of the practitioners (sport business owners) in the study area

Variables	Economic Wellbeing		B	Odd Ratio	P-Value	95% Interval	Confidence
	Gain	Loss					
Years of Sport Business Experience							
1-5 (RC)	7	10					
6-10	11	13	.854	2.348	.442	.226	20.746
11 and above	10	27	1.094	2.987	.003	3.797	668.785
Business Size							
Less than 2(RC)	21	4	-2.311	.038			
2 and above	5	22	3.266	.611	.002	.005	.313
Having requisite sport entrepreneurship skills before venturing into the business.							
No(RC)	7	10	-1.004		.004		
Yes	23	6	1.891	.151	.05	.042	.545

*RC = Reference Category, *Significant at .05 error level.*

Source: Field Survey, 2023

In Table 3 the result shows the economic wellbeing level of the sport business owners (sport practitioners), years of sport business, business size, and having requisite sport skills before venturing into the business were considered in the economic wellbeing model. Here, the dependent variable, economic wellbeing was measured in two levels (gain or loss). The result gives the odd ratio of 2.348 for sports practitioner with 6 to 10 years of experience, implying that sport practitioner with 6 to 10 years of sport business experience were 2.348times more likely to make gains compared to those with 1 to 5 years of experience. The odd ratio for sport practitioners with 11 and above years of business experience is 2.987; this means that respondents with 11 and above years of experience were 2.987 times more likely to make gains compared to those with 1 to 5 years of experience, and this was statistically significant since $P=.003<.05$ (level of significance).

The odds ratio of .038 and .611 respectively for sport business size less than 2 and 2 and above. Since the odds ratios of those practitioners with business size of 2 and above is approximately 1 as compared to those less than 2 which is less than 1, it implies that sports business practitioners with business size of 2 and above were more likely to make gains compared to those with less than 2. These were all statistically significant since their respective P-values were all less than .05(level of significance). The coefficients of the regression parameters of those practitioners with 2 and above was positive as compared to those with less than 2, signifying that sport business practitioners' business size had a significant predictor of the economic wellbeing of the practitioners.

The odd ratio for practitioners having requisite sports entrepreneurship skills before venturing into the business in relation to those without the skills was.151 which implies that the practitioners with requisite entrepreneurship skills before venturing into the business of sport were more likely to be sustainably productive with better economic wellbeing compared to the sports business practitioners without the requisite skills. The coefficient of regression was 1.891 implying that a unit change in the acquisition of requisite sport entrepreneurship skill in the business will lead proportionately to a change in the economic wellbeing of the sport practitioner and this was statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

Arising from the research question raised and stated hypothesis, it was revealed sports contribute to the improvement of sustainable economic wellbeing of the respondents. This aligned with the position of Davis et al., (2020) that for every £1 spent on these sports and other physical activity in England, an economic and social return on investment of £3.91 is generated. The implication is that sports business is a profitable economic venture that can generate enormous income on investment. On the stated hypothesis tested, it was revealed that a unit change in the acquisition of requisite sport entrepreneurship skill in the business may lead proportionately to a change in the economic wellbeing of the sport practitioner and this was statistically significant. This connote that acquisition of sports entrepreneurship skills has the potency of improving the

planning, organization, evaluation, and the general management of sports business. On the whole, it can be deduced that sports entrepreneurship has positive effects on the improvement of sports business practitioners in the study area. The findings however reject null hypothesis. The findings corroborate with the assertion of Kurtzman & Zauhar (2005) that acquisition of entrepreneurship skills in snooker can yield bountifully in terms of employment, economic impact, and direct spending as the benefits of the game tourism on a community. Therefore, it is essential to acquire requisite entrepreneurship skills in sports that create know-how for effectiveness and efficiency in the management of sports. Against the backdrop of the findings, it is recommended that sports education planners should incorporate sports entrepreneurship in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools with emphasis on the economic benefits of sports. This would enhance pupils and students' interest in Physical and Health Education, as well as assist in creation of employment for quality sustainable economic wellbeing.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, it is recommended that;

The Akwa Ibom State Government through the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports should incorporate sports entrepreneurship training in secondary schools and tertiary education to enlighten the students on the multidimensional effects of sports in improving sustainably the generality of human economic wellbeing.

Conclusion

The conclusion on the light of the analysis conducted is that the practitioners with the requisite entrepreneurship skills before venturing into the business of sports were more likely to be sustainably productive with better economic wellbeing compared to the sports business practitioners without the requisite skills. This according to the result entail that a change in the acquisition of requisite sports entrepreneurship skills in the business may lead to a change in economic wellbeing of the sports practitioners.

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