ACCESSIBILITY OF SELECTED STAKEHOLDERS TO SPORTS SCIENCE RESEARCH REPORTS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Research is described as a systematic process of searching for or finding solutions to puzzling questions. Reports of research findings need to be accessible by individuals and group of people that such reports are relevant to. This study investigated accessibility of selected stakeholders to sports science research reports in Lagos state Nigeria. 729 participants including sports administrators, coaches, athletes and fitness club managers responded to a self-developed questionnaire that has a reliability value of 0.88. The data collected were analyzed using percentage, chi square and contingency co-efficient; and inferences were made at 0.05 alpha level. Findings revealed that these stakeholders have less access to sports science research reports. This calls for the need to re-strategize, since accessibility precedes implementation and utilization.

INTRODUCTION

The global trend emerging in sports, both recreational and competitive is fast gaining ground in Nigeria (Dansu, 2004; & Onowhakpo, Eboh and Money, 1995). According to Musa and Arogbonlo (1996), there has been emphasis, especially on youth sports development in the nation since the excellent performance of the Nigeria youth football team (Golden Eaglets)

during the maiden world soccer championship (under 17) at China in 1985. The increase interest in sports in the present day Nigeria calls for the need to identify those characteristics that are role players in sports performance (Dansu, 2004).

Research is the most possible means by which characteristics that enhance performance or militate against it can be identified and established. According to Angus (2006), thereare many problems and questions in the field of sports and exercise sciences that are still to be resolved and answered. Research, will allow for investigation into these problems and involve resolving controversial issues, testing theories and try to improve current practices.

It is not enough, however, to carry out studies and give reports; implementation and utilization of findings of such researches complement the entire process. According to Centre de Researches Pour le Development International (CRDI, 2006), even the greatest research findings mean very little unless they are effectively utilized. For proper utilization and/or implementation of research findings, CRDI (2006) identifies three key steps. These include:

1) Developing and using a systematic dissemination and communication strategy for reaching different audiences of potential users;

2) Presenting the research results to all stakeholders and obtaining feedback on findings and recommendations; and

3) Developing a plan of action to promote the implementation of the recommendations that resulted from studies.

These steps show that accessibility to research reports is a key factor of implementation and utilization of findings and recommendations. This study was therefore designed to investigate accessibility of selected stakeholders to sports science research reports in Lagos State, Nigeria. Stakeholders as used in this study are sports administrators, coaches, athletes, fitness instructors and fitness club managers.

Answers were sought to the following research questions in this study.

1)   Do stakeholders attend conferences, workshops and seminars regularly?

2)   Do stakeholders have access to sports science research publications?

3)   To what extent do stakeholders access the Internet for sports science research reports?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

729 respondents that were selected using purposive sampling technique participated in the study. 68(9.3%) of the participants were sports administrators at local and state levels, while 176 (24.1%) of them were coaches of various sports. 424 (58.2%) were athletes and 61 (6.4%) fitness club instructors and managers. 478(65.6%) of the participants were males and 251(84.4%) females and their ages ranged between 18-51 years.

Instrumentation

The main instrument used for data collection in this study was a self-developed structured questionnaire that has two sections (i.e. section A and B) section A dealt with the demographic data of the participants which include job, status, sex and age. Section B that was constructed based on Yes and No options sought data on accessibility of the participants to sport science research reports.

The instrument was served to five colleagues for the purpose of validity, and their corrections and suggestions were considered in the final draft of the questionnaire. The instrument was further subjected to test-retest method of reliability test. The r-value was 0.88.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered within an interval of four weeks. The researchers and four trained research assistants visited the participants in their various offices, clubs and stadium, where copies of the questionnaire were administered.11 [1.5%] copies of the administered questionnaire were either not received or inappropriately filled.

Data Analysis

The data collected were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentage and pictorial analysis of component bar chart. Further analysis was carried out using chi square and contingency co-efficient with inferences made at 0.05 alpha level.

**Results Table 1: Percentage (%) chi square (X2) and contingency co-efficient (r) results on tested variables**

VARIABLES	Yes (%)	No (%)	X^2-Cal	X^2-cri	df	r
Attendants at conference workshops and seminars	176.3 (24.2)	552.7 (75.8)	*194.34	3.84	1	0.52
Access to publications journals, proceedings and books of abstracts	84.9 (11.7)	644.1 (88.3)	*420.95	3.84	1	0.77
Access to and extent of utilization of internet	214.6 (29.4)	514.4 (70.6)	*123.29	3.84	1	0.41

*= significant at 0.05

Results presented in table one show that the average response of 176.3 (24.2%) indicates stakeholders' regular attendance at sports conference workshops and seminars, while 552.7 (75.8%) indicates poor attendance. Chi Square and Contingency Co-efficient analyses of the data (*X2=194.34; r=0.52) show that stakeholders' attendance at sports conferences, seminars and workshops are significantly poor.

The table also shows that only 84.9 (11.7%) average response of the participants in this study indicates good access of stakeholders to publications such as sports journals, proceedings and books of abstracts.. 644.1 (88.3%) average response reveals poor access to these publications. Further analyses (*X2 = 428.95; r=0.77) show that the stakeholders have significantly poor access to sports science research publications.

Table one further shows that the average response of 214.6 (29.4%) reveals stakeholders' good access and utilization of Internet to search for current research reports in sports science. 514.4 (70.6%) average response shows very poor access to Internet for sports science research reports. Further analysis of the data (*X2=123.29; r=0.41) indicate that the stakeholders' access to the internet in search for current research reports in sports science is significantly poor. These results are further described in figure 1.
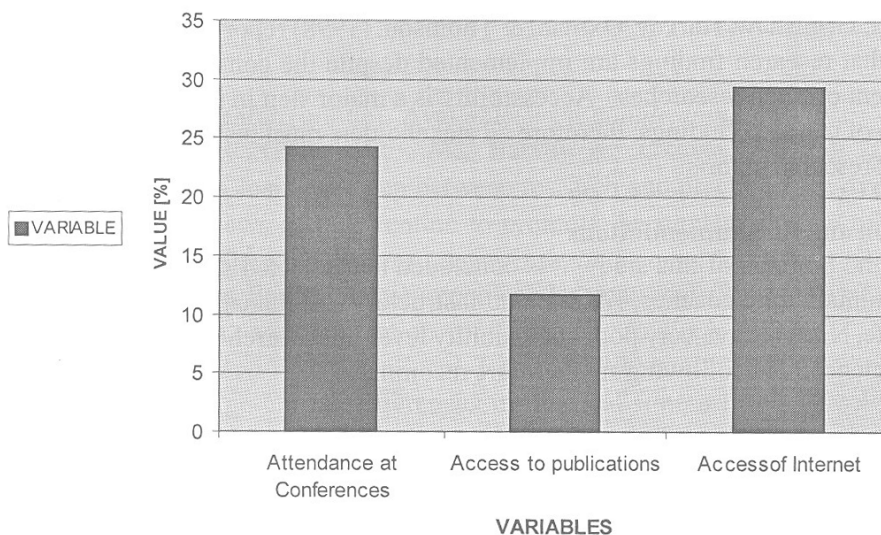
Figure 1: Component bar chart on access to sports science research reports

The above pictorial analysis shows that the stakeholders have very low access to all available means of getting research reports in sports science as less than 30% accessibility levels were recorded for all the means of getting research reports.

Discussion

Results of this study reveal poor attendance of stakeholders at conferences, workshops and seminars organized for issues in sports science. These, of course are avenue for useful information from current research findings. Attendance at such organized gathering should be expected to enrich participants with new knowledge in their field. Findings of this study also reveal poor access to relevant publications such as sports journals, proceedings and books of abstracts among stakeholders. Moreso, the Internet is poorly accessed by them for current research findings in sports science. It is obvious that poor access to research reports is a great barrier in implementation and/or utilization of findings and recommendations. According to CRDI [2006], the greatest research findings are almost meaningless if they are not effectively disseminated, communicated and used. CRDI (2006) stresses the need to promote and increase the utilization of research findings among all potential users.

Bero, Grill, Grimshaw, Harvey, Oxman, & Thomson, (1998) reported little attention to ensuring that research findings are implemented despite the considerable amount of money spent on such researches. Accessibility is a major step in implementation and utilization of research findings, therefore all stakeholders must be allowed easy access to relevant research reports.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that selected stakeholders such as sports administrators, coaches, fitness club instructors and managers, and athletes in Lagos State,

Nigeria have very poor accessibility levels to research reports and findings in sports science. The following are therefore recommended.

1. Government and employers should grant sponsorship and any other forms ofencouragement to stakeholders to attend relevant conferences, seminars and workshops.

2. Researchers, publishers and associations of sports sciences should ensure that alltheir publications such as journals, conference proceedings, books of abstracts and textbooks are regularly disseminated to appropriate quarters. Complimentary copies of such publications should be regularly sent to libraries of colleges, universities and sports organizations.

3. Stakeholders in sports should also be encouraged to purchase publications of current researches, in sports science, as this will enhance their knowledge about recent development in their areas of specialization; and this in turn will promote utilization of research findings.

4. Stakeholders in sports should also be encouraged to use the Internet effectively for acquiring current research findings and relevant information that will add value to their levels of performance.

5. Researchers, publishers and associations of sports should form partnership with local and international magazines and daily newspapers for publishing of summaries of sports science research reports in their publications since they are widely read.

6. Further studies should delve into other possible means and easier ways by which sports science researches can be disseminated and utilized.

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