

Original Article

Analysis of factors that affect the standard of soccer in africa: the case of east african countries.

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Published online: March 31, 2012

(Accepted for publication March 25, 2012)

Abstract

The performance of East African soccer teams in the continental competitions has been low in comparison to other regions in Africa. Therefore, the study analyzed factors that are perceived to have affected the standards of soccer in East Africa. The study hypothesized that there will be no significant difference in the influence of facilities, equipment, funding, technical-personnel and incentives in the development of soccer in East Africa. Data was collected through questionnaires from soccer stakeholders (n=639) who included soccer coaches, referees, sports officers and officials of sports councils of the three East African countries, i.e. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (KUT). Data was analyzed through one way ANOVA and post hoc tests of Tukey HSD. Results revealed that Uganda was perceived to be more adequate in terms of soccer facilities, equipment, technical personnel, funding and incentive provision, while Kenya and Tanzania were perceived to follow respectively. The differences between the three countries were significant ($p < .05$) in all the factors which were investigated. It is recommended that soccer federations and the three governments embrace a paradigm shift in the management, administration and training of soccer personnel in East Africa. This revolves around improvement of soccer facilities, zero-rating imported soccer equipment, technical cooperation with friendly countries to train personnel and the diversification of incentives offered to soccer stakeholders.

Key words: Soccer, Standards, East Africa, Stakeholders

Introduction

Soccer or *association football* is the world's most popular sport being played in every nation without exception (Reilly, 1996). The sport is played by millions of people and has billions of fans and supporters all over the world including 205 playing nations and members of Federation of International Football Association (FIFA). Indeed, the game is rated Africa's best sport with 53 countries affiliated to Confederation of African Football (CAF) and the Federation of International Football Association (FIFA). Efforts directed towards development of soccer in Africa have seen several management and administrative structures of the sport being setup at continental, regional and national levels. Further more, due to the popularity of the sport, most of the African countries have invested heavily in it, so as to bring about success. Indeed Kgathi (2003) noted that achievements of national teams at International competitions often bring glory and stirs nationalistic sentiments to both the leadership and citizenry. However, there has been limited success by most African countries in international tournaments especially at World Cup. Aptly, it is only soccer teams from Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana which have reached the quarter finals of the World Cup.

The performance at the continental level of the three East African countries is dismal. This is more so as none of East African countries has ever reached the World Cup finals, Olympics or even won the African Cup of Nations that is held every two years since 1957 (Njororai 2000, 2003). For example, Nyanjom (2010), observed that football in Kenya has suffered through the years from corruption, mismanagement and political intrigue resulting in the countries failure to make any significant impact in regional, continental or global competitions.

The unimpressive performance of African teams at the World Cup and the FIFA/Coca-Cola world rankings have consistently shown that the standard of football in Africa is very low. Specifically, the standards of soccer in East Africa are even lower compared to North West and South African Countries. It is against this background that it was necessary to establish factors that affect the standard of the sport in East African region. Sport administration in Kenya suffers from multiple problems including weak financial management and leadership, poor governance and failure to invest in youth programmes.

Schnabel in Singh (1982) defined sports performance as the unity of process and results of a sports motor action or of a complex sequence of action measured or evaluated according to agreed socially determined norms. Such evaluations lead to the eventual ranking of teams. On the basis of ranking, African teams are way behind other continents such as South America and Europe. The countries that have excelled in international

soccer competitions also have better political, economic, social and cultural conditions which are indispensable for producing outstanding players (Singh, 1982). However isolated cases exist where countries such as Brazil and Argentina with not so elaborate economies have dominated soccer at the global scene for a long period of time. The prevailing conditions in a country serve as a medium in which sports training can be effectively carried out. The current study therefore emphasized on how a personnel (environmental) factors influence soccer development in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. It is acknowledged that sports performance is a complete matrix of a combination of both a personnel and personal factors such as physiological, biochemical, biomechanical, skill traits, body composition and somatypes (Salmela, 1992). Therefore, the personnel factors investigated in this study include facilities, equipment, funding, incentives and quality of technically trained personnel. Studies done in East Africa on soccer have pointed out the technical and tactical inadequacies of the teams especially in Kenya (Njororai, 2000) and the organizational weakness of soccer in Uganda (Waiswa, 2005). Waiswa (2005) identified the problems in Uganda as poor preparation for international competition, lack of international visits to gain experience and financial constraints. Other problems included haphazard residential training, lack of professional players in top class European leagues and the poor state of soccer administration.

Thus, it is evident that soccer standards cannot be uplifted in an environment characterized by poor administration, amidst other factors such as lack of coaching programmes, lack of investment in facilities and youth programmes, and a lack of coherent sports policy in the East African countries. As a matter of fact, the epitome of poor soccer administration in East Africa had always led to on and off sanctioning of the three federations by FIFA due to political squabbles and government interference. Musonye, (2010) opined that too many associations are failing African football. He observed that *we cannot have strong national teams without strong leagues but we do not have strong leagues because too often the associations are run by wrong people, people who get involved for politics or money not for football. Until we sort ourselves out, we will have the same old circus.* Soccer in the East African countries requires decisive interventions and in order to facilitate appropriate intervention resources, an appraisal of the existing situation was necessary. That is why the current study was out to establish the factors that affect the standard of the sport in the East African region. The major objective of the study was to investigate the influence of equipment, facilities, personnel (manpower), funding and incentives provision to the various stakeholders in the development of the game in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Along side the objectives, it was hypothesized that the factors under investigation are not significantly different in influencing the development of soccer in KUT.

Materials and methods

Location of study

The study area was delimited to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania due to the fact that these countries have had soccer competitions together since 1926. The three countries have strong cultural, economic, social and political ties at regional level. Indeed, the three countries have been continually working towards the revival of a politico-economic block or the East African Community. The study was further delimited to FIFA recognized institutions in the three countries, including soccer federations (and their affiliates), Olympic committees, sports councils and government sports departments.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Stratified and simple random sampling was used to select respondents for the study. These included soccer players, coaches, referees, sports officers and officials of sports councils in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. These included the principle stakeholders in the playing, management and the development of the game of soccer in K.U.T. A total of 639 respondents participated in the study with 291, 165 and 183 coming from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania respectively.

Instrument for Data Collection

A questionnaire developed and validated by a team of University lecturers in the field of Physical Education and Sports Science at Kenyatta University was utilized for data collection. The questionnaire comprised two sections. Section A sought demographic data of each respondent while Section B sought information on soccer specific issues/factors in coaching as well as management of soccer facilities, equipment, funding, coaching and incentive provision and how these have affected the standards of soccer in East Africa. Items in this section were weighted on a 4 point Likert type scale which was scored as 4, 3, 2 and 1 for Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree respectively. The split-half method was utilized to check the reliability of the questionnaire. A reliability index of 0.82 was realized and this indicated a temporal stability of the items of the questionnaire and was considered adequate for the study.

Data presentation and analysis

Descriptive statistical analyses of means, percentages and standard deviations were carried out. Data was presented in tables and figures. One way analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis at 05 level of significance. Resulting significant differences were taken through post hoc tests of Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (HSD).

Results and discussion

Demographic information of respondents

Demographic data showed that 246 (38.5%) of the respondents were national team soccer players followed by coaches 127 (19.9%), referees 79(12.4%), spectators 55(8.6%) and government sports officers 28 (4.4%). The others who responded included federation officials, officials of national Olympic committees, teachers and university students specializing in physical education and sport. These cumulatively accounted for 104 (16.2%) of the respondents. Thus, it is affirmed that the data generated from the coaches, players and referees could be utilized as a good measure of issues on soccer development in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Gender of the respondents showed that 560 (87.6%) were male, 73(11.4%) were female and 6 (1%) did not indicate their gender. This is not surprising as soccer has always been a male dominated sport in terms of active participation, spectatorship and leadership. This finding is also constant with female under-representation in sports in Africa and specifically in Kenya (Achola & Njororai, 1999).

Soccer facilities

Uganda had a higher mean and standard deviation of 66.14 ± 29.39 on the adequacy of soccer facilities as compared to the means on the same for Kenya, 51.96 ± 26.73 and 20.18 ± 29.75 for Tanzania. The one way ANOVA realized a significant $F(2,635) = 119.66$ $p < 0.05$ indicating significant differences in the adequacy of soccer facilities in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Post hoc tests of Tukey HSD showed that adequacies of soccer facilities for Kenya were significantly different from Tanzania and also the differences between Uganda and Tanzania differed significantly. However, the adequacy of soccer facilities did not differ significantly between Kenya and Uganda. That is why Bennett, Howell and Simri (1983) observed that improvement of sports facilities contributes to improvement of sporting or athletics achievements. Further, UNESCO (1980) proclamation that adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment should be installed to meet the needs of intense participation in both in-school and out-of school programmes concerning physical education and sport. An improvement of soccer facilities should be looked upon in terms of quality, number and size. This should be improved in East Africa through a tremendous and robust investment and policy formulation to bring facilities to the required standards. Nyanjom (2010) reiterates that modern sport facilities should be established in each of the countries provincial headquarters to help in identifying and nurturing talent. Existing sport facilities should be gazetted as national heritage sites (to help preserve them from land grabbers) and their accessibility to the youth guaranteed.

Soccer Equipment

The means and standard deviation revealed that Uganda ($m=65:11 \pm 27.84$) had the highest adequacy of soccer equipment followed by Kenya ($m=51.2 \pm 29.8$) and Tanzania trailed with $m=33.15 \pm 28.2$. ANOVA results indicated significant difference ($F(2,635)=14.75$ $p < 0.05$) in the adequacy of soccer equipment provided in KUT post hoc Tukey HSD revealed differences between Tanzania and Kenya and also between Tanzania and Uganda. This necessitated the acceptance of the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the way equipment influence the development of soccer in KUT. According to Lees (1996) in all codes of football, the equipment used has a major effect on the way the game is played. The use of standard balls, suitable footwear and protective equipment such as shin guards has tremendous impact on the evolution of young talent into an elite player. In East Africa playing bare-feet and bare-chested is still evident (Njororai, 2003). It is recommended that deliberate effort be made to educate coaches, team managers and administrators on the value of using standard equipment in sufficient quantities. As a matter of fact, the Kenyans national development plan for 1994-1996, had appreciated the fact that inadequate facilities and equipment was a major constraint towards sports development. Therefore through the 1990's, the problem of soccer equipment is yet to be addressed not only in Kenya but in Uganda and Tanzania. Indeed, numerous scholars in Africa have opined that sport facilities and equipment are hard to come by due to a host of factors with the greatest being poverty (Njororai & Gathua, 1997, Amusa, 1999, Kgathi 2003).

Technical Personnel

The responses on the adequacy of technically trained personnel in KUT are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations adequacy of technically trained personnel in KUT.

Country	N	X	SD
Kenya	288	42.54	29.87
Uganda	163	57.56	32.21
Tanzania	182	28.36	23.23
Total	*633	42.33	30.69

*6 entries missing.

Table 1 above shows that Uganda leads in the adequacy of technically trained personnel followed by Kenya and Tanzania. It is also evident that the gap between Tanzania and the other two countries is quite big. Results after the ANOVA were significant $F(2,630) = 44.26$ $p < 0.05$ showing significant differences in the adequacy of qualified technical officials in KUT. Post hoc tests of Tukey HSD showed differences between Uganda and Tanzania were statistically significant. The technically trained personnel included referees, coaches,

sports psychologists, nutritionists, sports medicine personnel, physiotherapists, administrators and masseurs. These personnel play a fundamental role in the development of any sport including soccer in East Africa. The results reveal a major inadequacy that needs to be addressed. As countries strive to professionalize their leagues, it is imperative that there be concomitant emphasis on training personnel who can create an ideal atmosphere for professional soccer players to excel. Improvement of technical coaching capacities would be sought through sub-national coaching networks. It is in this vein that Waiswa (2005:132) captured the state of administration in soccer in East Africa when *“he stated there are still too many structural weaknesses in the system and the organization”*. Thus the performance of teams in East Africa particularly in Tanzania was attributed to poor leadership at national and club level. Even, in the low area of “refereeing”, East Africa hardly produces people with competencies to officiate at the World Cup and Africa Cup of Nations except Uganda. Consequently, soccer federations in East Africa in liaison with CAF and FIFA need to invest in training the supportive experts in officiating, sports psychology and even administrators at national, institution, club, branch and sub-branch levels. Nyanjom (2010) advises that the exorbitant salaries paid to foreign coaches should instead be used as incentives to players and local coaches and would go along way in making the national teams more competitive.

Funding

The means and standard deviations on the adequacy of funding for soccer programmers indicated that Uganda ($m=56.4\pm 29.2$) was the highest in comparison to Kenya ($m=43.06\pm 29.92$) and Tanzania ($m=29.18\pm 25.2$). One way ANOVA revealed significant differences $F(2,627) = 39.41, p < 0.05$ on the adequacy of funds allocated to soccer activities in KUT. Post hoc tests of Tukey HSD showed that adequacy of funds allocated to soccer differ significantly between Uganda and Tanzania. Further investigations revealed that soccer funding was inadequate for national women’s teams, district teams, primary schools and secondary schools. This clearly illustrates why East African teams, particularly the youth teams, particularly the youth teams are yet to register any successes in various competitions at continental and international level. Until brought to a level where they can compete in international tournaments beyond Africa, women’s soccer teams will continue to struggle. And considering the rampant corruption that plagues our continent, it might take a century to see more soccer teams managed and funded sufficiently (Torome, 2010).

It is important to point out that the football federations in East Africa rely basically on team registration fees for participation in various competitions. Securing of sponsors has been erratic given the persistent misappropriation of funds. According to Njororai (2003), football administrators in East Africa are consistently being accused of embezzling funds, large chunks of money go missing and the infighting for powerful positions in the soccer hierarchy is often motivated more by greed than a desire to work for football development; for Tanzania, Oludayo (2003) observes that;

“It was partly the result of a protracted and bitter struggle for financial gains with the players fighting their clubs, clubs fighting the administration and the administration fighting among themselves that Tanzania soccer began to decline so rapidly (p.325)”. Thus it is imperative that the administration of soccer should be well structured to improve the credibility of the games so as to bring on board funds from the corporate world. This would be the only way is the only time that soccer in the region will benefit from television rights, broadcasting rights, serious merchandising and branding of teams.

Incentives

The means and standard deviations on the adequacy of incentives provided to soccer players in KUT presented in Table II below.

Table II: Means and standard deviations on the adequacy of incentives provided in KUT

Country	N	X	SD
Kenya	286	40.71	28.65
Uganda	160	57.12	25.22
Tanzania	183	33.92	22.69
Total	629	42.91	27.56

*10 entries missing.

From the above table, it is evident that Uganda $m=57.12\pm 25.2$ leads in the adequacy of incentives provided to soccer players followed by Kenya $m=40.71\pm 28.65$ and Tanzania trails with $m=33.92\pm 22.69$. The ANOVA results were significant $F(2,626) = 35.36, p < 0.05$ in the adequacy of incentives provided to soccer players in the three East African countries. Post hoc test of Tukey HSD showed that adequacy of incentives in Kenya differed from Uganda and Uganda also differed from Tanzania.

However, the overall average of 42.71% for all the East African countries reveals the poor treatment that is extended to the soccer players and coaches. The nature of incentives provided indicated that cash awards, public recognition, vehicles, houses, land, presidential awards and promotion and retirement packages are provided as incentives. It was also notable that some of the incentives are promised and not given due to persistent stand-offs between soccer administrators and players during international matches. Nyanjom (2010) observed that talented players mostly from poor families get little opportunity to exploit their full potential and escape poverty due to mismanagement and corruption at the Kenya Football Federation (KFF) which undermines investment in youth and women’s football. The findings of the study reveal that the major factors

that have negatively affected the development of soccer in East Africa are inadequate funding, lack of transparency, inadequacy of soccer facilities and equipment, inadequacy of incentives and inadequately trained personnel. Among the many KFF failures, the saddest is the failure to invest in youth and women's football. The funds largely disappeared from KFF youth and women's football levies at every KFF match as well as the funds sent by FIFA. The officials stole the future of our youth.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made: As the three countries are in the process of legislating the East African cultural and sport commission, it is apparent that the factors which contribute to low standard of soccer in the region be captured and squarely addressed in the commission. The governments of the three countries need to improve on soccer facilities and the inadequacy of soccer equipment can be addressed by either lowering taxes or zero-rating soccer equipment. A *fit and proper persons test* should be adopted and stringently carried out to ensure that soccer offices are run by people who want to see football succeed and espouse values aimed at promoting the greater interests of the game. Training institutions like universities, CAF and FIFA need to facilitate the respective federations to formulate and implement relevant curricular for the training of soccer personnel locally. At the same time, the three governments can encourage technical cooperation with friendly countries and international sports federations to second qualified personnel to assist in uplifting the technical and soccer educational levels of the sports personnel in East Africa. The three federations need to embrace different methods for financing soccer activities and to provide more structured and diverse incentives to soccer players and technical staff. Bringing on board support from the corporate world is long overdue. More government investments should be directed towards the organization and follow-up programmes of both primary and secondary school sports to enhance positive exploitation of identified talents in those games. Further studies done by sports researchers in Africa to unearth political and economic factors which militate against the development of soccer in East Africa.

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