

## Sports Marketing for Attaining Economic Growth in South-South Nigeria

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### Abstract.

Nigeria, as a nation, seems to have abysmally failed in her efforts, as spelt out in the economic blueprint tagged 'Vision 2020', to be among the top twenty economies in the world by the year 2020. Sports marketing has the potential of contributing meaningfully to the economic growth of the country. The extent to which sports marketing can stimulate Nigeria's economic growth has not been empirically established. This study was conducted to determine how sports marketing can be seen to be capable of boosting economic growth in South-South Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The researchers used the stratified random sampling technique to obtain a sample of two hundred and seventy-eight (278) from a target population of one thousand and fifteen (1,015) coaches, corporate organization workers, private organization workers, sports directors, and athletes. The instrument for the study is a twenty-one (21) item self-structured questionnaire scaled on a modified four (4) point Likert-type rating with reliability index (r) established at 0.78 using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The findings revealed that sports marketing efforts are perceived to stimulate economic growth in South-South Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Economic diversification, Sports goods manufacturers, Sports Marketing, Sports Development, Vision 20:2020.

### 1. Introduction

Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 is an economic blueprint that mapped out the country's economic growth and development plan of action for eleven years between 2009 and 2020. It is a long-term plan that seeks to stimulate economic growth and launch the country onto a path of sustained and rapid socio-economic development to become one of the top twenty economies in the world by the year 2020. Vision 20:2020 has an overarching growth target of \$900 billion in GDP and a per capita income of \$4000 per annum. The blueprint is desirous of achieving the following two broad objectives over the medium to long term:

1. Optimise her human and natural resources' potential to achieve rapid and sustained economic growth; and
2. Translate economic growth into equitable social development that guarantees a dignified and meaningful existence for all her citizens.

These objectives imply that the Nigerian economy was expected to grow at 13.8% per annum during the time horizon. This estimated growth would be driven by the agricultural and industrial sectors over the medium term, while a transition to a service-based economy is envisaged from 2018. The blueprint stresses economic diversification away from a mono-product (oil-dependent) economy to an industrial specialization. Nigeria will anchor its economic growth on six (6) industries in which comparative advantage can easily be achieved from primary resources and location advantages. The textile, wearing apparel, and leather are amongst these six (6) industries [1], [2].

The Vision 2020 blueprint recognised that sports and sporting events had become big business in most countries on the economic front. The prospect of turning sports into big business in Nigeria is attractive and feasible given the popularity of sports in the country and Nigerian sportsmen and women's outstanding performances. The consumption of sports goods and services in Nigeria is relatively high in sports goods users, spectators, and active participants [3]. This point was buttressed in Vision 20:2020 that promoting social integration, fostering tolerance, and helping to reduce tension, and generating dialogue, sports, and recreation can create business opportunities and employment that could enhance income and reduce the poverty level.

Sports marketing consists of all activities designed to meet the needs and wants of sports consumers through exchange processes, which could be the marketing of sports products and services directly to consumers of sports and marketing of other consumer and industrial products or services through sports promotions [4]. Sports marketing entails developing and implementing activities related to production, pricing, distribution, advertising, and publicizing a sports product with the goals and objectives of the company about their philosophy, mission, and vision [5]. It has been argued that corporate, private organizations, and individuals should be allowed to invest in Nigeria's sports market sector by building stadia and organising sports competitions [6]. The intention is to attract sports goods manufacturers who would set up and branch offices that would create employment opportunities to enhance the remittance of taxes and tariffs that would help boost the nation's economy.

The Nigeria Vision 20:2020 mainly aimed to cultivate an effective technology transfer programme to fast-track local sports, recreation, and entertainment equipment/facilities [1]. This vision should be of immense benefit to the sports goods manufacturers who belong to the realm of textile, wearing apparel, and leather industries. A conceptual model for effective sports marketing in Nigeria identified the role of sports goods manufacturers as part of the sports producers [2]. Meanwhile, it has been observed that the accessibility of sports as a product and its inclusion in the economic development mix would enable the Nigerian government to generate revenue that could boost the economy and assist in attaining Vision 20:2020 [6]. The vision seeks to encourage private sector partnership in the provision and maintenance of sports infrastructure and development.

Sports development is a continuous improvement of a sports structure, constitutions, and programmes [7]. In essence, it affords individuals the opportunity of having access to improved sports facilities as provided. Sports development should entail improvements in sports facilities to enable individuals to participate in sports either for fitness purposes or represent their institutions, state, or country [8]. Therefore, the federal, state, and local governments and the local communities are the principal agencies for sports development [9]. Vision 20:2020 emphasized the pursuit of local content initiatives for employment enhancement and revenue generation and in a bid to foster a culture of recreation and entertainment for enhanced productivity [1]. For this reason, sports marketing can be among the primary avenues for guaranteeing the wellbeing and productivity of Nigerians towards achieving economic growth.

South-South Nigeria comprises Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers States. Delta, Edo, and Rivers states in this geopolitical zone have over time been known for their outstanding sports performances, prominence, and dominance at the Nigeria sports festivals [10]. The South-South States in Nigeria are ardent sports product consumers due to their enthusiasm for sporting events. Sports marketing has huge success potential in that there is an abundance of sports consumers, so sports goods production industries located in the zone will enjoy colossal patronage.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The failure of Vision 20:2020 to foster a private sector-powered non-oil foundation for economic diversification can be attributable to several factors. Prominent among these factors is the awareness of persons who are to drive the process. It may not be possible to implement any vision if the persons in strategic areas and professions are unaware of the vision's tenets and their potential to create wealth. The chances are that persons engaged in textile, wearing apparel, and leather manufacturing in Nigeria may not be reasonably aware of sportswear and clothing business-enhancement potentials and may not find the need to invest in building their capacities in such enterprises. Worse still, sports practitioners, coaches, corporate organization workers, private organization workers, sports directors, and star athletes, who create much-needed awareness, may not be fully aware of such potentials and their roles.

Seasoned sports coaches, corporate organization workers, private organization workers, sports directors, and renowned athletes abound in South-South Nigeria. These people can drive the vision using sports marketing to influence the government and the private sector towards Vision 20:2020. This possible lack of awareness could have been partly responsible for the failure of the economic blueprint in this sector. Therefore, the extent to which sports marketing can stimulate Nigeria's economic growth is unknown because it has not been empirically established. Therefore, this study was conducted to ascertain the extent to which sports marketing can create economic growth in Nigeria by providing an answer to the research question, "To what extent is sports marketing capable of enhancing economic growth in South-South Nigeria?"

## **2. Methodology**

This research adopted the descriptive survey research design to study a target population that comprised of one thousand and fifteen (1,015) coaches, corporate organization workers, private organization workers, sports directors, and athletes in the six States (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers) that make up the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The stratified random sampling technique was used to sample two hundred and seventy-eight (278) coaches, corporate organization workers, private organization workers, sports directors, and athletes. A self-structured questionnaire scaled on a modified four (4) point Likert-type rating of

Very High Extent (VH = 4), High Extent (H = 3), Low Extent (L = 2), and Very Low Extent (VL = 1) was used to collect for the study. The questionnaire has its reliability index (r) established at 0.78 using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and a face and content validity ascertained by three experts in the Department of Human Kinetics, Recreation and Sports Science Education, Delta State University, Abraka.

### 3. Findings

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Extent to Which Sports Marketing is Capable of Enhancing Economic Growth in South-South Nigeria

S/N	Items on Extent to Which Sports Marketing is Capable of Enhancing Economic Growth in South-South Nigeria	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I am aware that Nigeria had an economic blueprint name Vision 20:2020 for stimulating economic growth to a ---- extent	3.36	0.99	High
2	Sports goods manufacturing industries, if available, could have helped in attaining the Nigeria Vision 20:2020 to a ---- extent	3.83	0.38	High
3	Federal government policies encourage establishing sports goods manufacturing industries to a ---- extent	1.77	0.42	Low
4	State government policies in South-South Nigeria encourage establishing sports goods manufacturing industries to a ---- extent	1.27	0.59	Very Low
5	States in South-South Nigeria have existing sports stadia that can be utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth to a --- extent	3.88	0.33	Very High
6	States in South-South Nigeria have recreational facilities that can be utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth to a ---- extent	3.12	0.55	High
7	States in South-South Nigeria organizes sporting events that can be utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth to a ---- extent	3.49	0.72	High
8	States in South-South Nigeria have the potential for establishing manufacturing industries that can be utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth to a ---- extent	3.85	0.36	Very High
9	States in South-South Nigeria have encouraged the establishment of manufacturing industries that can be utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth to a ---- extent	1.42	0.66	Very Low

Table 1 shows the extent to which the respondents were aware that Nigeria had an economic blueprint tagged Vision 20:2020 with a mean score of 3.36 with a standard deviation of 0.99. This mean score is above the criterion mean of 2.50 and so indicates that most of the respondents were highly aware that Nigeria had an economic blueprint that was meant to stimulate economic growth for the growth between 2009 and 2020.

Responses to the second item on how sports marketing could have helped stimulate economic growth through the availability of sports goods manufacturing industries had a mean score of 3.83 with a standard deviation of 0.38. This finding suggests that the respondents agreed to a very great extent that sports marketing, through the agency of available sports goods manufacturing industries, would have been very capable of helping to attain Vision 20:2020.

Item number three on the questionnaire had a very low mean response of 1.77 with a standard deviation of 0.42. Item number four also had a very low mean response score of 1.27 with a standard deviation of 0.59. These two findings indicate a very low extent to which Nigeria's federal and state governments had policies that encouraged the establishment of sports goods manufacturing industries by the private sector.

It was found that responses to item number five had a mean score of 3.88 with a standard deviation of 0.33. Similarly, answers to item number six had a mean score of 3.12 with a standard deviation of 0.55. These findings from item numbers five and six suggest that states in South-South Nigeria, to a large extent, have existing sports stadia and recreational facilities that can be utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth.

It was found that responses to item number seven had a mean score of 3.49 with a standard deviation of 0.72, which indicates that states in South-South Nigeria were, to a large extent, organizing sporting events that can have been utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth.

Responses to item number eight had a mean score of 3.85 with a standard deviation of 0.36, which indicates that the respondents, to a large extent, agreed that states in South-South Nigeria have the potential for establishing sports goods manufacturing industries that can be utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth. It was found from item number nine that the responses had a mean score of 1.42 with a standard deviation of 0.66. This finding indicates that states in South-South Nigeria, to a very large, have not encouraged the establishment of sports goods manufacturing industries that could have been utilised in sports marketing to stimulate economic growth.

#### **4. Discussion**

This study has shown great awareness of Nigeria's economic blueprint tagged Vision 20:2020 among the studied sports practitioners, persons in strategic areas and professions, in South-South Nigeria. Therefore, it could not have been a lack of awareness on the part of the persons in strategic areas and professions responsible for the failure of the Vision 20:2020 to stimulate the country's economic growth at the end of 2020 as was envisioned.

It has also been demonstrated by the findings of this study that sports marketing could have helped to attain Vision 20:2020 if there were functional and motivated sports goods manufacturing industries in the country. This finding appears to agree with previous results that identified the textile, wearing apparel, and leather industries that can be motivated to engage in sports goods manufacturing [2]. It had been reasoned that since there is an abundance of sports goods users, spectators, and active participants in South-South Nigeria, motivating the available textile, wearing apparel, and leather industries through the agency of sports marketing should be capable of stimulating economic growth and so help attain Nigeria's Vision 20:2020.

This study revealed that the studied sport's practitioners were hardly aware of any federal and state government policies to encourage the private sector's establishment of sports goods manufacturing industries. It is despite the insistence that there is an urgent need to strengthen government policies to accommodate corporatizations, and individuals to be allowed to invest in the Nigeria sports market sector in South-South Nigeria [6]. It had been stated that allowing the private sector to build stadia and organize sports competitions would attract sports goods manufacturers to set up several private companies' branch offices at the local, state, and national levels in the geopolitical zone [6]. In this manner, he had claimed that sports marketing would create employment opportunities and enhance the remittance of taxes and tariffs, which would invariably help boost Nigeria's economy towards attaining Vision 20:2020. The failure of the Vision 20:2020 could thus be attributable to a lack of policies that can encourage the establishment of sports goods manufacturing industries in South-South Nigeria.

It has been established in this study that states in South-South Nigeria, to a large extent, have existing sports stadia and recreational facilities that can be utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth. It was shown in this study that the states in the area were, to a considerable extent, organizing sporting events. These facilities and events can be packaged, promoted, priced, and promoted in a sports marketing mix capable of stimulating economic growth [5]. Thus, it is reasonable to deduce that the failure of Nigeria to its Vision 20:2020 could be attributable to inappropriate sports marketing strategies in South-South Nigeria.

Although it was found that states in South-South Nigeria have the potential for establishing sports goods manufacturing industries that can be utilised in sports marketing for stimulating economic growth, it was discovered that the states do not encourage the establishment of sports goods manufacturing industries. Even though South-South Nigeria is a geopolitical zone, there is a high level of consumption of sports in terms of sports goods users, spectators, and active sports participants [3]. It is therefore not surprising that Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 could not be attained in the zone.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Indeed, the problem with Nigeria's lack of economic growth is not with the development of feasible strategic plans. Instead, the inherent weaknesses in the implementation and execution are the debilitating factors militating against their realisation. Sports marketing can stimulate economic growth and has helped in attaining Nigeria's Vision 20:2020 in South-South Nigeria. This assertion is feasible given the sporting and sports market potentials in the zone and the fact that a significant focus of the Vision 20:2020 is economic diversification away from a mono-product (oil) dependent economy to the industrial specialization that is anchored on industries in which comparative advantage can easily be achieved due to the existence of primary resource and location advantages.

#### **6. Recommendations**

In light of the study's findings, it would be worthwhile for governments at the Federal and State levels to ensure that policies encourage sports marketing by establishing sports goods manufacturing industries. The existing sports facilities (stadia and recreational parks) and the sports events they organize would sport marketing help stimulate economic growth in South-South Nigeria.

It is also imperative that governments (Federal and States) engage more seriously and actively in the public-private partnership (PPP) scheme in the sports market sector to reap the gains and full benefits of sports marketing in the stimulation of economic growth on the part of the country where there is comparative advantage.

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