

Perspectives on the Utilisation of Football Facilities in Monze District

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Abstract: Football facilities are an essential component of any society as it provides open spaces that help people, both old and young, develop physically. In addition, it provides space for recreation and space for various other activities that people carry out to have a balanced way of life. The purpose of the study was to investigate the utilisation of football facilities in selected clubs of Monze district, Zambia. A sample of 3 coaches, three club managers, one council planning officer, and three chairpersons was chosen from the three clubs and 30 athletes, i.e. ten from each club in the Monze district. The homogeneous purposive sampling technique was used to select a small number of athletes of the same characteristics from the same clubs. The study employed a descriptive research design where the qualitative method was used. Data were collected via face-to-face interview guide, focus group discussion guide, phone interview, observation checklist, and open-ended questionnaires. Qualitative data were analysed thematically. The research found that football facilities were utilised for various activities in the selected clubs. Such activities included International Teachers' Day, International Nurse's Day, and AIDS day. At times, the facilities were used for political campaigns by various political parties during the by-elections and general elections. The study recommended a need for football club maintenance to optimise the utilisation of football facilities in the community.

Keywords: Football Facilities, Utilisation, Standard Facilities, Maintenance, Facilities

I. INTRODUCTION

The utilisation of sports facilities is widely a common goal of any government function (Iversen & Cuskelly, 2015). In this light, following Iversen and Cuskelly (2015)'s work, the study contended that football facilities' utilisation forms an important performance target for sports facilities. Similarly, Schwarz *et al.* (2007) gave an understanding that when determining physical infrastructure surrounding the football grounds, they should consider the functions, seating, equipment and office utilisation aspects to improve football performance. Football facilities utilisation plays an essential role in the development of players at the grassroots level

Football facilities are undeniably an essential component in any development agenda, and it is not any different when it comes to sports like football (Wesaala, 2015). This is vital for developing football talent, particularly when imparting necessary skills like ball control, passing, and many others. The importance of good football facilities utilisation helps the athletes to learn different skills during training and competitions. Additionally, good pitches also reduce the risk of injury, especially during the formative years of bone and

muscle development and the later stages (Wesaala, 2015). The construction of football facilities in Zambia stands at the centre of the government plan for sports development. The Ministry of Sports Youth and Child Development is premised on the rationale that sports and recreational activities form an integral part of its vision. However, there is insufficient funding for this area because it does not trickle down to the grassroots. Fried (2015:28) observed that "most countries or communities cannot afford to spend hundreds of millions of dollars for new, state-of-the-art facilities." Therefore, any responsible community should understand the essential elements required to utilise football facilities (Zivdar & Zivdar, 2014). Undoubtedly, the availability of football facilities is necessary because it enhances local people's involvement and contributes to the sport's development. In this respect, Siegfried and Zimbalist (2002) have noted that new football facilities utilisation has contributed to good performance in the English Premier League and other competitions in the region. There is also an improvement in the skills and health of the participants. The social, cultural, and economic values cannot be overemphasised (Mwale-Mkandawire, 2020). The availability of football facilities also contributes to the aesthetic beauty of a concerned area. The importance of football facilities has been stressed by

Football facilities create employment opportunities and contribute to creating a positive image of the country at an international level, thereby generating increased tourism to ensure revenue. Bharti (2018) indicates that football facilities bring people together from different towns and villages, increasing revenue because local businesses can conduct business during the events, creating cohesion as most people become satisfied. Odhiambo (2015) revealed that before 2010, no single African country could host a sports competition of international reputation in football due to inadequate facilities. Following the successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup by South Africa in 2010, many countries have embarked on ambitious programs of constructing standard football facilities of the world-class level.

Mwangi (2017) indicated that football facilities should be understood as available facilities such as changing rooms, toilets, showers, pitches, storerooms, and many others for football clubs to carry out their mission successfully. The stadia that the super division uses still leaves much to be desired. It is also evident that football facilities' utilisation is positively related to club performance (Bird, 1982 in Mwangi, 2017). According to Mwangi (2017), any team's performance

in the football industry is significantly connected to the availability of standard football facilities for any given club. However, there can be no proper improvement in football clubs' performance when there is no adequate availability and utilisation of football facilities (Goenka & Kalra, 2019). As the case in Monze district, there is unfavourable football facilities utilisation in clubs, which hinder talented athletes' future from representing the nation at a high level. Thus, the adverse football facilities utilisation in Monze district is not known. The consequence of unfavourable football facilities utilisation in clubs is of great concern. Therefore this research tries to address this problem to establish what has led to this poor utilisation of football facilities in selected clubs of Monze district.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The utilisation of sports facilities is the extent of football pitches, assembly grounds, volleyball fields. Much as utilisation is related to availability, Chakraborty *et al.* (2011) in Ugwuanyi (2013) aver that utilising sports facilities is a complex phenomenon. According to Horny (2004) (cited by Ugwuanyi, 2013), utilisation uses available services at the individual's disposal. Obi (2006, 2013) posits that the utilisation of football facilities where training is concerned constituted a sure way of learning the sport's football skills.

Pawar and Kumar (2019) assessed the utilisation of sports facilities parameters in sports equipment, sports infrastructure, sports personnel, sports events organisation, and participation in Government and Private Schools of Delhi. The study focused on comparing Government and Private schools of Delhi in terms of utilising various Sports facilities parameters concerning the frequency of use, quality, and level of satisfaction of beneficiaries towards one or other available sports facilities rather than just analysing availability non-availability of available resources. The data were analysed using the Mann-Whitney U test for assessing the difference between the means of Government and Private schools of Delhi. The study revealed significant differences between Government and Private schools of Delhi concerning the frequency of use, quality, and level of satisfaction towards selected sports facilities variables. The study further revealed that the impact of sports facilities was dependent on school type. From the study results, it may be concluded that out of all selected sports facilities variables for the study, only the quality of sports events organisation and participation significantly impacted sports promotion. The study compared two unmatching variables from two different classes, leading to the satisfaction of their apparent assumptions. On the contrary, the current research focuses on utilising football facilities in the three clubs.

The study by Ugwuanyi (2013) indicated that a central factor contributing to utilising sports facilities, equipment, and supplies in Nigerian secondary schools was the lack of maintenance culture of sports facilities, equipment, and collections. For any country to have sports development, there must be a political will to invest in sports facilities such as

football facilities. Harun, Salamudin and Hushin (2013) assert that public sports facilities or infrastructure in Malaysia are part of administration built with large land allocations because of each game discipline's nature and needs. Hallmanna *et al.* (2012) argue that adequate sports infrastructure differs from one sport because different sports do not have the exact requirements for the given facility. This means that the availability of facilities influences the chosen sport. Land space, for instance, for infrastructure, is also a consideration that challenges municipalities concerning urban planning. Therefore, it is vital to know which sports infrastructure should be built to increase sports participation. Sports facilities are also built-in each state and district to meet the government's aspiration to promote a healthy lifestyle to the public. Davydova *et al.* (2019) contend that the availability of sports infrastructure enables community members to participate in sports. This implies that once such infrastructure is provided in a community, there would be an increase in the citizens taking part in sports.

On the other hand, Goenka and Kalra (2019) confirm that challenges like land banks' availability and ineffective utilisation of already availability of infrastructure hinder sports development. Goenka and Kalra (2019) show a shortage of land to construct sports infrastructure in India's urban areas. There is not much initiative that has been taken to promote sports through specific infrastructure development by the provision of land parcels outside of metropolitan areas. Chipande (2016) asserts that infrastructure development is one of the core programmes that the government implements. This aims to increase access to current sports infrastructure and equipment at national, provincial, and district levels for enhanced participation in sports, physical fitness activities, and programmes that involve the construction and rehabilitation of sports facilities. Fried and Kastel (2020) contend that each facility constructed is based on any government's commitment and policies to promote the importance of unity through sports activities for the community and promote a healthy community. Chipande (2009) states that Copperbelt province's presence made a compelling sporting centre in the colony in the early days, and football became more popular than any other sport. Few locations internationally can boast of lavishly offered sporting facilities at the favourable cost of sportspeople (Sundowner, 1963).

A study carried out by Jacobs (2014) on assets and modes of identification and development talent student-athletes in selected sports disciplines in Kenyan Universities showed that facilities and equipment provided by the universities in Kenya were accessible but not enough, and below the reasonable standards and of low quality for training. Evidence shown by studies confirms that inadequate training facilities may harm athletes to drop out of sports (Bussmann, 1995 in Jacobs, 2014). Furthermore, some study sources showed that a lack of facilities or access to facilities was a restricting factor to sports development (Rodgers, 2005). Therefore, the provision of enough and having quality facilities enhance development.

The studies above only focused on the availability and inadequacy of facilities, despising the aspect of how to utilise the football facilities.

Goenka & Kalra (2019) conducted a study on Sports infrastructure: Transforming the Indian sports ecosystem. The finding shows that the challenges for the availability of land banks and ineffective utilisation of existing infrastructure hinder the growth of sports. Sports infrastructure should be considered an integral part of urban planning so that adequate resources are budgeted for development and sustenance. It should be designed to keep a large community in mind, increasing utilisation and ensuring steady income streams. The government's policy support will also profit investment into sports infrastructure through the public-private partnership (PPP) model. Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development (2015) alludes that preliminary research on investment in sport in Zambia has led too much of the sports industry in Zambia to remain untapped despite potential contribution to national Gross Domestic Product. There is no empirical evidence of the sport's contribution to national development. Davydova *et al.* (2019) state that the direction of the state policy in developing physical culture and mass sports provides opportunities that engage citizens to carry out their livelihoods on the principles of a healthy lifestyle. The study's finding shows that the ratio of sports facilities' availability in the Russian Federation territory is exceptionally heterogeneous. This implies that it is essential to achieve regulatory indicators of the provision of sports facilities in all constituent entities of the Russian Federation. However, people can strengthen their physical and intellectual development to reduce and smooth out regional differentiation in terms of sports and material culture.

Hadzik and Grabara (2014) showed the scope and financing of sports and recreational investments in Poland's selected spa municipalities. Their finding showed that the cities covered in this study declared recreational and sports infrastructure investments, especially football pitches. The highest number of investments conducted in Ko³obrzeg was on recreational and sports projects in which investing in cycling routes was more popular. Furthermore, the financing investments in recreational and sports infrastructure show that almost all municipalities declared using funds from their own generated income. Additionally, most of the analysed cities used resources from the European Union, and other financing sources were not that popular. Therefore, the study focused more on the generation of resources than the utilisation of football facilities.

According to Toriola (2001:10), "The objective of the Department of Sport and Recreation is to provide a conducive environment in which all Tsuanas, whether rural or urban, disabled or not, can participate in sports either for fun, health, fitness or recreation. It implies that promoting active living behaviours through sports and recreational programmes helps individuals gain appropriate skills. Harun, Salamudin and Hushin (2013) add that sports infrastructure contributes to

global class athletes and motivates the nation's youth. The study conducted by Diejomaoh, Akarah and Tayire (2015) establishes how sports facilities and equipment are provided for sports at the local government areas of Delta State, Nigeria. The findings indicate that local governments of Delta State provided facilities and equipment for football and the general playing field to a great extent.

In contrast, the extent of provision of facilities and equipment for the other sports was inadequate. For example, the study did not recognise the utilisation of the provided football facilities. Instead, it just emphasised the provision of facilities to the centres.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a descriptive design and targeted all the football clubs, coaches, chairpersons, managers, council planning officers, and athletes for selected clubs in the Monze district. This was suitable based on the relevance to the study topic and its flexibility besides allowing the researchers to mingle with the participants (Kombo & Tromp, 2018, Mbah, Johnson & Chipindi, 2021). This helped the researchers get complete information from the coaches, club managers, chairpersons, council planning officers, and athletes in the Monze district. The qualitative study is about what is occurring in the social setting to understand the social phenomenon (Mulenga, 2015). The qualitative method deals principally with outspoken words in the form of data which in this study assisted the researcher in comprehending the phenomenon from the participants' views, Thereby coming up with a deeper understanding as there was room to ask further and get more insights on the subject matter. The qualitative method was employed particularly for this study as it helped for a detailed analysis of the nature of the study. The study sample consisted of forty(40) participants as follows; 30 athletes, three coaches, three-team managers, three chairpersons from the three football clubs and one council planning officer from the local authority. Homogenous purposive and expert purposive sampling was utilised. Data were collected via interview guide, focus group discussion guide, phone interview, unstructured observation checklist, and open-ended questions. The collected qualitative data was analysed thematically.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to investigate the utilisation of football facilities in the Monze district's selected clubs. This was done to determine whether football facilities were utilised as planned. This was necessary because the utilisation of football facilities allows athletes and other users to acquire skills and knowledge from various activities.

When it is prudent of football facilities utilisation, there can be fruitful results in football clubs as it enhances and stimulates football players' sense of well-being. There can be motivation in them. Participants were asked how football facilities were utilised in selected clubs of the Monze district.

To solicit this information, participants were asked how often they used the football facilities, and the results of the study revealed that football facilities were used once per week. This could be attributed to the outbreak of COVID 19.

The Coaches, club managers, chairpersons from the three clubs, and council planning officers had similar sentiments concerning the utilisation of football facilities. For instance, one of the athletes from FGD-A2 from football club 2 indicated that:

"The football facilities at our club are used for various celebrations such as teachers' day, international nurse's day, and AIDS day."

The study showed that the football facilities were utilised for various activities and were not enough. Various responses from the football clubs confirmed this. In support of the idea, Team Managers from all the three football clubs contended that:

"Our football facilities have been used for Political Campaigns by various political parties whenever they dram up the support of their candidates during the by-election and general elections."

Considering the responses that participants shared was clear that football facilities were used for various activities in the district, which included church gatherings, political activities, training for drivers, and so on; however, it must be noted that the various activities which are done outside the realm of football activities contributed to lowering the standards of football facility in these football clubs.

4.1 Other activities in the utilisation of football facilities

It is generally assumed that football clubs' performance can be improved when adequate availability and prudent utilisation of football facilities. If football clubs are fully equipped with football facilities, there can be full utilisation of the football facilities leading to better results than when there are no adequate sports facilities. Participants were asked to indicate other activities used on football facilities, which indicated political campaigns, worshipping, celebrations, and *other activities*. It can be concluded that the community was lobbed off because of the people preparing for general elections slated for 12th August 2021.

4.2 Availability of football facilities

The availability of football facilities plays a crucial role in improving the performance of football players. However, the non-availability and adequacy of sports facilities could mean that there would be no football development in the area. Therefore, it becomes difficult to separate the performance of football players from the availability and adequacy of football facilities. In this section, the researcher wanted to find out from participants whether the district had enough football facilities or not. To solicit this information, the researcher asked participants about the availability of football facilities. The following were the responses when prompted to answer the question regarding the availability and adequacy of

football facilities in Monze Township; several participants gave varied responses. The availability of football facilities was assessed in terms of goalposts, toilets, playing fields, dressing rooms, and water sanitation. Most of the researcher interviewed participants indicated that they did not even own their grounds or football pitches. They indicated they solely depended on Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula and other school football pitches. They further intimated that their football club did not have toilets, dressing rooms, parking areas, wall and wire fences, and so on. Participants were asked whether football facilities were available and adequate in selected clubs of Monze district, and the following responses were elicited from them: The study results showed that the football facilities were not adequate in the clubs selected.

In this view, Coach 3 for football club 3 had this to say:

"We do not even own the ground or football pitch. So we are solely dependent on the same Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula and other school football pitches."

Also, FCD-A1 posited that:

"Our football club does not have toilets, dressing rooms, parking areas, wall and wire fences, and so on."

The clubs should apply to the local authority to put up their football pitches and all the required facilities.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the research study findings of this study, a conclusion can be drawn that the participants looked at that football facilities were utilised for various activities like celebrations such as teachers' day, international nurse's day, and AIDS day. In addition, our football facilities have been used for Political Campaigns by various political parties whenever they dram up the support of their candidates during the by-election and general elections. The study results indicated no sufficient football facilities in the three selected clubs. However, it was revealed that football grounds were being sold, and the trend had continued for residential and commercial entities. The local council also indicated that some pitches should be sold since they are located in the central business area. The political cadres turned what was supposed to be a parking area into illegal shops and bus stops. The study results indicated that the available parking space around the football pitches was not enough in comparison to the requirement of the viewership because football facilities were utilised for various activities in the selected football clubs in the Monze district. Based on the findings, it is recommended that there is a need for the football club maintenance to optimise the utilisation of the district's football facilities. Also, the available football facilities should be adequately utilised to promote sport at the clubs' level due to inadequate football facilities.

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