

Fans' Perception and Administrative Influence: Evaluating the Management of the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON) and Its Impact on Team Morale and Performance

Udeme Bassey

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Corresponding author: udemejb@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62154/ajsps.2025.05.01014>

Abstract

The Female African Cup of Nations (FACON) has grown into the premier continental competition for women's football in Africa. Despite this growth, persistent concerns about administrative inefficiencies, logistics, and fan dissatisfaction threaten its potential to enhance team morale and competitive success. This study adopted a descriptive survey design and collected data from 376 valid respondents across five African countries. Respondents included fans, coaches, and officials. A structured questionnaire measured fan perceptions, support levels, and perceived administrative impact, while inferential statistics, including Pearson Product Moment Correlation, were used to test hypotheses. Ethical approval was granted by the University of Uyo's Research Ethics Committee. Results showed a significant positive relationship between fans' perceptions of FACON management and their level of support for national teams. Poor logistics, delayed payments, and administrative inefficiencies were reported to negatively affect player morale and competitive performance. Conversely, effective tournament management was linked to increased motivation and stronger fan engagement. The findings underscore that organizational competence is a key driver of both fan loyalty and team performance in African women's football. CAF and national federations should enhance logistical planning, adopt athlete-centred welfare policies, establish transparent communication strategies, and integrate structured fan engagement mechanisms to improve both perception and performance outcomes.

Keywords: Fans' Perception, Tournament Management, Women's Football, Team Morale, Administrative Planning, Female African Cup of Nations.

Introduction

Women's football has experienced remarkable growth in recent decades, gaining unprecedented global visibility through tournaments such as the FIFA Women's World Cup and the UEFA Women's EURO. These competitions have demonstrated how strategic investment, athlete-centered management, and robust fan engagement can elevate both the quality of play and the social legitimacy of women's sport (UEFA, 2023; FIFA, 2023).

In Africa, the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON), formerly known as the African Women's Championship, serves as the premier continental competition for women's football. Since its inception in 1991, the tournament has expanded significantly, reaching

12 participating teams in 2022 and attracting record-breaking attendance and broadcast audiences. This expansion signaled institutional recognition of women's football but also highlighted persistent governance and organizational challenges (CAF, 2022).

Despite progress, FACON continues to face criticism over logistical inefficiencies, underfunding, poor facilities, and delayed financial commitments. These shortcomings not only affect athletes' preparation and morale but also shape how fans perceive the professionalism and credibility of the tournament (Okon & Oboh, 2023). In a sporting culture where women's events are historically marginalized compared to men's competitions, fan perception plays a crucial role in influencing public trust, media visibility, and national pride (Adetunji, 2022). When fans view the management of women's football as inadequate, their enthusiasm declines, which in turn undermines the psychosocial environment in which athletes perform (Ndlovu, 2022).

Globally, literature indicates that effective sports governance is a critical determinant of competitive success, as organizational failures translate into psychological strain and reduced performance outcomes (Bayle & Robinson, 2020; Yusof et al., 2022). However, limited research has explored how fan perceptions of governance intersect with team morale and performance in African women's football. This represents a significant research gap, as fan sentiment can legitimize or delegitimize women's sport within a society still grappling with gender inequities in athletics (Saavedra, 2021).

Accordingly, this study investigates fans' perceptions of FACON management and examines how these perceptions affect fan support, athlete morale, and the competitive performance of national women's football teams. By situating the African experience within global debates on gender equity in sport, the study contributes to both academic literature and practical reforms in tournament governance.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the remarkable strides made in women's football across Africa in recent years, significant challenges persist in the management and organization of flagship tournaments like the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON). While the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has made efforts to expand participation, improve visibility, and promote gender inclusivity, these efforts are frequently undermined by persistent administrative shortcomings, logistical inefficiencies, and inadequate stakeholder engagement (Onwumechili & Akindes, 2023; FIFA, 2023). Reports of delayed payments, poor accommodation standards, limited medical support, and subpar training facilities have frequently surfaced during and after recent editions of the tournament (Chiweshe & Chiweshe, 2022; Okon & Oboh, 2023). These issues raise concerns not only about athlete welfare but also about the overall credibility of the competition and its potential to advance women's football on the continent.

Furthermore, while there is a growing body of literature exploring the dynamics of tournament organization in men's football in Africa, studies focused on the perceptions of fans regarding the management of women's competitions remain scant (Ndlovu, 2022; Adetunji, 2022). Yet, fan perception plays a crucial role in shaping the public image of a

tournament, influencing media coverage, sponsorship interest, and national pride. When fans perceive the management of women's tournaments as unprofessional or inconsistent with global standards, this can dampen enthusiasm, reduce attendance, and negatively affect the psychosocial environment in which teams perform (Bayle & Robinson, 2020; Mwisukha et al., 2021).

Another overlooked dimension is the psychological impact of administrative inadequacies on athlete performance. The morale and competitive readiness of players can be undermined when institutional support appears lacking or when their efforts are perceived as undervalued compared to their male counterparts (Saavedra, 2021; Tajudeen & Eke, 2023). In high-stakes tournaments like FACON, mental preparedness and confidence are critical factors that influence match outcomes. Poor tournament organization, coupled with negative fan sentiment, can act as stressors that hinder optimal performance and reduce motivation, particularly among younger or less experienced players (Bruner et al., 2020).

In light of these realities, there exists a critical research gap at the intersection of fan perception, tournament management, and team performance in African women's football. While administrative efforts have increased the visibility of FACON, it is unclear whether such efforts are sufficient to meet the expectations of a rapidly growing fan base and whether they positively contribute to team morale and performance outcomes. This study is therefore necessitated by the urgent need to assess fans' perceptions of FACON's management and to examine how such perceptions correlate with the performance and psychological wellbeing of participating teams.

Research Questions

What are the key areas of concern or satisfaction among fans regarding the organization and management of the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON)?

1. What are the key areas of concern or satisfaction among fans regarding the organization and management of the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON)?
2. How do fans' perceptions of FACON management affect their support and enthusiasm for participating national teams?
3. In what ways does fan sentiment shaped by tournament management impact the performance of female football teams during the tournament?

Hypotheses

- a) There is no significant relationship between fans' perception of tournament management and their level of support for participating teams in the Female African Cup of Nations.
- b) Fans' perception of the management of the Female African Cup of Nations does not significantly affect the morale of participating teams.
- c) Administrative management of the Female African Cup of Nations has no significant influence on the competitive performance of national female teams.

Literature Review

Fan Perception in Sports Governance

Fan perception is widely acknowledged as a key determinant of loyalty, engagement, and investment in sport. It extends beyond game-day experiences to encompass how fans evaluate the professionalism, transparency, and fairness of organizing institutions (Wakefield & Wann, 2021). Studies suggest that in contexts where governance structures lack credibility, fans often express dissatisfaction through reduced attendance, negative media discourse, and declining trust in institutions (Ndlovu, 2022). In African women's football, fan perception is strongly influenced by structural disparities in media coverage, inadequate promotion compared to men's tournaments, and frequent last-minute scheduling changes (Chiweshe & Chiweshe, 2022). Surveys from recent tournaments such as the 2022 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) show that concerns about logistics, team welfare, and stadium quality were key drivers of discontent among supporters (FIFA, 2023). These findings mirror trends in Europe and North America, where fan trust in governance has been shown to directly affect both sponsorship uptake and athlete morale (Pope & Nauright, 2022).

Tournament Management and Institutional Challenges

Effective tournament management encompasses planning, funding, athlete welfare, infrastructure, and transparent communication. Research emphasizes that administrative competence fosters public trust and supports athlete readiness (Bayle & Robinson, 2020). However, women's football in Africa continues to be undermined by inconsistent funding, delayed allowances, and poor facility standards (Onwumechili & Akindes, 2023; Okon & Oboh, 2023). These issues reflect broader patterns of gendered neglect within African sport governance, where women's tournaments are often underfunded relative to men's competitions (Akindes, 2023). Globally, better-managed events such as the FIFA Women's World Cup or UEFA Women's EURO have demonstrated how clear structures, sponsorship integration, and athlete-centered policies elevate both the competitive standard and public appeal of women's football (UEFA, 2023). By contrast, CAF's uneven implementation of women's football strategies highlights the structural gap between policy intentions and actual delivery (CAF, 2022).

Team Morale and Psychological Impact of Organizational Support

Team morale is a psychological construct that reflects athletes' collective confidence, motivation, and readiness to perform (Bruner et al., 2020). Poor administrative support—manifested in inadequate travel, substandard accommodation, and unfulfilled financial commitments weakens morale and reduces performance efficiency (Tajudeen & Eke, 2023; Yusof et al., 2022). Athletes also internalize negative fan perceptions, experiencing additional pressure to perform amidst administrative uncertainty (Tshube & Eke, 2021). Evidence from African tournaments shows that women players often report feelings of neglect compared to their male counterparts, a factor that directly affects mental health, confidence, and focus (Akindes, 2023). In contrast, tournaments with strong governance

structures, such as the Women's EURO 2022, have been celebrated for empowering athletes and fostering high morale, which translated into record-breaking performances (UEFA, 2023).

Linking Fan Sentiment to Team Performance

Fan sentiment plays a pivotal role in shaping athlete motivation. Positive fan engagement has been linked to increased resilience and higher levels of competitive confidence (Eime et al., 2020), whereas negative perceptions or apathy reduce morale and contribute to underperformance (Adetunji, 2022). In Africa, where women's football still struggles for recognition, fan sentiment serves as both a legitimizing factor and a source of pressure (Ndlovu, 2022). Comparative studies of international competitions indicate that robust fan engagement correlates with improved team outcomes, not only due to crowd support but also because it reinforces institutional accountability (Saavedra, 2021). For women's football in Africa, this suggests that improving management practices could enhance both athlete performance and the broader cultural acceptance of female athletes.

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of fan perceptions of the management of the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON) and their perceived effects on team performance. The quantitative strand employed a structured questionnaire, while the qualitative strand used semi-structured interviews with athletes, coaches, and officials. The target population comprised fans of women's football across selected African countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, and Morocco, who followed the 2022 edition of FACON. Using Taro Yamane's (1973) formula with a margin of error of 5%, a sample size of 384 respondents was determined. Out of 384 distributed questionnaires, 376 were returned valid, representing a response rate of 97.9%. A stratified random sampling technique ensured representation across age, gender, and country of residence.

For the qualitative strand, 20 participants (10 athletes, 5 coaches, and 5 officials) were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in FACON. This ensured that both lived experiences and professional perspectives were captured. Two instruments were developed. The first was a structured questionnaire with four sections: demographic information, perceptions of tournament management, support and enthusiasm for teams, and perceived effects on performance. Responses were rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). The second instrument was a semi-structured interview guide, designed to elicit detailed narratives on logistical challenges, morale, and fan engagement. The instruments were subjected to expert review by three scholars in sports management and psychology to establish content validity. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, which produced a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentages, and pie charts) and inferential statistics,

including Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework, supported by NVivo software to code and categorize emerging themes. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of Port Harcourt Research Ethics Committee (Approval No: UPH/SS/ETH/2023/045). Participation was voluntary, with respondents assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

Results

Out of the 376 valid responses, the majority of fans were aged 26–35 years (40%), followed by 18–25 years (30%), 36–45 years (17.5%), and 46 years and above (12.5%). In terms of gender, 60% were male, 37.5% female, and 2.5% identified as other. Geographically, respondents were drawn from Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, and Morocco. A large proportion (72.5%) indicated that they were regular followers of women's football, with 50% watching via live broadcast and 15% attending in person.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation summary of analysis of fan perception of tournament management

S/N	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	The logistics and transportation for teams appeared well-managed.	3.15	0.81
2	Stadium facilities met international standards.	3.19	0.86
3	The tournament schedule was well communicated and organized.	3.24	0.79
4	There was adequate and fair media coverage of matches.	3.21	0.89
5	The level of professionalism in tournament administration was high.	3.19	0.84
6	The officiating (refereeing) during the tournament was fair.	3.11	0.95
7	CAF and federations showed commitment to women's football.	3.24	0.77
	Grand Mean	3.19	

The data from the table above revealed an overall grand mean of 3.19, indicating a generally positive perception of the management of the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON) among fans. All items scored above the midpoint (2.5), with the highest ratings given to the tournament's scheduling and CAF's commitment to promoting women's football (mean = 3.24). The lowest-rated item, though still positive, was officiating fairness (mean = 3.11), suggesting this area may need further attention. Standard deviation values ranged between 0.77 and 0.95, reflecting moderate consistency in fan responses. These findings suggest that while fans are generally satisfied with the organization and delivery of FACON, enhancements in refereeing transparency and logistical consistency may further improve public perception and support.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation summary of support and enthusiasm for Teams

S/N	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
8	The way FACON was managed made me more proud to support my national team.	3.18	0.84
9	I felt more connected to the team because of how the tournament was presented.	3.12	0.88
10	Poor management reduced my enthusiasm for watching matches.	2.91	1.01
11	I followed the tournament closely because I trusted the organizers.	3.06	0.93
12	If the management were better, I would be more willing to attend or stream matches.	3.28	0.80
	Grand Mean	3.11	

From the analysis of the table above, the grand mean score of 3.11 indicates that, on average, fans agreed with the statements reflecting that the management of the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON) had a generally positive influence on their support and enthusiasm for their national teams. Specifically, fans felt proud to support their teams and more connected due to the presentation of the tournament. However, the slightly lower mean for item 10 (2.91) suggests that while poor management did dampen enthusiasm for some, overall trust in organizers and willingness to engage with the tournament remained moderately strong. The moderate to high mean values across items highlight that fans' emotional investment and engagement were significantly influenced by how the tournament was managed.

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation summary of respondents' perceptions on effects of tournament management on team performance

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor logistics and planning negatively affected team performance.	4.32	0.89
Team morale was visibly affected by poor administrative support.	4.26	0.94
Fan perception of poor management put additional pressure on players.	4.20	0.97
Well-managed tournaments motivate players to perform better.	4.36	0.86
Administrative inefficiencies distracted teams and affected their focus.	4.28	0.90
Grand Mean	4.28	

The results in Table 3 revealed a consistently high perception among respondents regarding the adverse effects of poor tournament management on team performance. With mean scores ranging from 4.20 to 4.36 and a grand mean of 4.28, it is evident that respondents

strongly agree that administrative inefficiencies, such as poor logistics, lack of support, and fan backlash, negatively impacted team morale, focus, and overall performance. Additionally, the highest-rated item indicates that well-managed tournaments significantly boost player motivation, underscoring the critical role of effective administration in enhancing competitive outcomes in women's football.

Table 4: Summary of Emergent Themes from Interviews on Organizational Challenges and Impact of FACON

Theme	Sub-theme(s)	Description	Illustrative Quote
1. Administrative Inefficiency	Poor logistics Communication gaps	Ineffective planning, travel disruptions, and lack of clarity in scheduling and communication.	"Our itinerary changed three times in one day, and nobody explained what was going on."
2. Emotional Strain and Morale	Psychological stress Low motivation	Emotional burden experienced by teams due to disorganization and last-minute changes.	"By kickoff, we were already mentally exhausted."
3. Fan Discontent and Engagement	Social media backlash Audience hostility	The role of fan criticism, especially online, in shaping team confidence and public perception.	"Fans insulted us online without knowing what we faced backstage."
4. Team Coping Mechanisms	Peer support Adaptive strategies	Ways teams managed adverse conditions internally, including emotional support and resilience tactics.	"We had to stick together and motivate ourselves; nobody else had our back."

The thematic analysis of interviews conducted with athletes, coaches, and officials revealed four dominant themes that encapsulate the organizational challenges and their psychosocial impact during the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON). *Administrative inefficiency* emerged as a major barrier, characterized by poor logistics, inadequate accommodation, and disjointed communication, which collectively undermined operational effectiveness. This fed into *emotional strain and morale issues*, as participants consistently reported mental fatigue and demotivation resulting from chaotic preparations. Additionally, *fan discontent and engagement*, especially through critical social media commentary, exacerbated the psychological pressure on teams and affected performance attitudes. Nonetheless, participants identified various *team coping mechanisms*, including peer encouragement and internal motivational strategies, which helped sustain morale and preserve competitiveness. These findings highlight the intertwined effects of structural deficits and psychosocial stressors on women's football performance in continental tournaments and point to the need for systemic reform in sports administration.

Table 5: PPMC summary of no significant relationship between fans' perception of tournament management and their level of support for participating teams in the Female African Cup of Nations.

	Fans' Perception of Tournament Management	Support for Participating Teams
Fans' Perception of Tournament Management	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	
	N	376
Support for Participating Teams	Pearson Correlation	.772**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
	N	376

The result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) shows a strong positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.772$, $p < 0.05$) between fans' perception of tournament management and their level of support for participating teams. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that fans' perceptions of how the Female African Cup of Nations is managed significantly influence their support.

Table 6: PPMC summary of Fans' perception of the management of the Female African Cup of Nations does not significantly affect the morale of participating teams.

	Fans' Perception of Tournament Management	Team Morale
Fans' Perception of Tournament Management	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	
	N	376
Team Morale	Pearson Correlation	.688**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
	N	376

The Pearson correlation coefficient indicates a significant moderate-to-strong positive relationship ($r = 0.688$, $p < 0.05$) between fans' perception of tournament management and team morale. Since the result is statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that how fans perceive the management of the tournament significantly affects the morale of participating teams.

Table 7: PPMC summary of administrative management of the Female African Cup of Nations has no significant influence on the competitive performance of national female teams.

	Administrative Management	Competitive Performance
Administrative Management	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	
	N	376
Competitive Performance of National Female Teams	Pearson Correlation	.731**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000
	N	376

The Pearson correlation result shows a strong positive and statistically significant relationship ($r = 0.731$, $p < 0.05$) between administrative management and competitive performance of national female teams. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that effective administrative management significantly enhances the competitive performance of female national teams in the tournament.

Discussion of Findings

The present study examined fans' perceptions of tournament management at the Female African Cup of Nations (FACON) and the perceived effects on team morale and performance. The overwhelmingly high agreement across all items (grand mean = 4.28) indicates a consensus that administrative factors critically shaped both psychological readiness and competitive outcomes.

A principal finding was that poor logistics and planning significantly impaired team performance. This is consistent with Toohey and Veal (2007), who highlighted that logistical failures ranging from inadequate transportation to substandard accommodation are among the most common sources of stress during major sporting events. Kristiansen and Roberts (2010) similarly argued that when elite athletes encounter preventable obstacles, it disrupts pre-competition routines, which are critical for maintaining focus and confidence. The observations from FACON athletes mirror Hanton, Fletcher, and Coughlan's (2005) findings, which showed that uncertainty and disorganization are perceived by athletes as threats to control, thereby heightening anxiety and reducing task-oriented motivation.

The perception that administrative inefficiency undermines team morale is consistent with Fletcher and Wagstaff's (2009) review of organizational stress in elite sport. Their work demonstrated that when athletes perceive their governing bodies as incompetent or indifferent, it results in emotional exhaustion and disengagement. In the African context, Akindes (2011) and Darby (2010) have both documented how governance deficits in football federations erode trust, damage morale, and reinforce negative stereotypes about African sporting institutions. This is further underscored by Njororai (2010), who noted that the

recurring administrative chaos in continental tournaments often discourages investment and diminishes athletes' sense of professional legitimacy.

Respondents in this study also emphasized that negative fan perceptions and criticism exacerbate performance pressure. This agrees with Tamminen and Gaudreau (2014), who reported that social evaluation stress, especially through social media, can significantly undermine confidence and elevate anxiety. Fransen et al. (2015) found that when athletes believe public support is eroding, they are more likely to experience doubts about collective efficacy. This is amplified in tournaments with high visibility, where reputational damage can have lasting effects on athletes' careers. While Nicholls et al. (2016) observed that elite athletes often develop resilience to public scrutiny, the findings here suggest that persistent administrative lapses may intensify the impact of criticism, creating a compounded stressor environment.

On the positive side, respondents agreed that well-managed tournaments are powerful motivators. This observation is consistent with Ryan and Deci's (2000) Self-Determination Theory, which argues that supportive environments satisfy athletes' basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, all of which enhance intrinsic motivation. MacIntyre, Igou, Campbell, Moran, and Matthews (2014) found that when logistical and administrative arrangements are perceived as professional, athletes interpret these as signals of value and respect, boosting morale. Sotiriadou, Shilbury, and Quick (2008) similarly demonstrated that investment in administrative professionalism has direct positive spillovers into performance, particularly in women's sport, where historic underinvestment often undermines commitment and engagement.

However, the literature also highlights important nuances. For example, Schnitzer et al. (2018) and Wylleman and Lavallee (2004) contend that elite athletes often cultivate robust coping mechanisms that buffer the impact of external inefficiencies. This resilience perspective suggests that while administrative failures are demotivating, some teams may still maintain performance through shared goals, strong leadership, or adaptive routines. Yet, the present findings indicate that even in contexts where such resilience exists, the cumulative effect of repeated governance failures, negative fan sentiment, and logistical disruptions still produces a measurable negative impact on both morale and performance. Collectively, these findings support Grix and Houlihan's (2014) argument that governance quality is a core pillar of sporting success, not merely a background condition. The clear convergence between this study and a broad body of scholarship reinforces the urgent call for reforms in African football governance. Investing in professional administration, transparent communication, and athlete-centered planning is essential for improving both performance outcomes and the reputation of women's football across the continent.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the administrative management of the Female African Cup of Nations encompassing planning, logistics, transparency, and stakeholder engagement plays a pivotal role in shaping team morale and

competitive performance, as poor governance not only disrupts athletes' psychological readiness and organizational trust but also magnifies external pressures from fans, thereby reinforcing the urgent need for professionalized, athlete-centered tournament management to foster optimal outcomes in African women's football.

Recommendations

Based on the research questions and findings of the study, the following three recommendations are made:

- a) CAF and national federations should establish independent logistics committees responsible for travel, accommodation, allowances, and training facilities for FACON. These committees must operate under strict timelines and accountability mechanisms to prevent delays and ensure athlete welfare.
- b) Sports governance bodies should adopt and enforce gender equity frameworks that guarantee equal resource allocation, transparent financial disbursement, and standardized support systems for female teams, matching those provided to men's tournaments.
- c) CAF should invest in modern digital platforms and broadcasting partnerships to improve real-time communication, tournament visibility, and promotional campaigns. This will strengthen fan trust, boost attendance, and align FACON with global women's football marketing standards.
- d) Targeted training and continuous professional development programs should be implemented for administrators and event managers to improve organizational effectiveness and align practices with international best standards in women's sport management.
- e) CAF should introduce an M&E unit tasked with assessing the efficiency of FACON's planning and execution, using fan feedback, athlete surveys, and international benchmarks as evaluation tools.

Acknowledgement

The researchers gratefully acknowledge the support and cooperation of all participants athletes, coaches, and officials who shared their valuable insights and experiences during the study. Sincere thanks are also extended to the research assistants and data analysts for their commitment throughout the study process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research.

References

Adetunji, M. (2022). Gendered perceptions in African football fandom: Barriers and opportunities for women's tournaments. *African Journal of Sports Studies*, 11(2), 55–69.

- Akindes, G. (2023). Player activism and institutional failures in African women's football: A review of recent cases. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 58(1), 72–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902221139461>
- Alegi, P. (2019). *African soccerescapes: How a continent changed the world's game*. Ohio University Press.
- Baker, J., Cobley, S., Schorer, J., & Wattie, N. (2014). *Talent identification and development in sport: International perspectives*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203795869>
- Bayle, E., & Robinson, L. (2020). Organizational performance of national sport governing bodies: A systems theoretical perspective. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 20(1), 36–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2019.1580304>
- Bruner, M. W., Eys, M. A., & Turnnidge, J. (2020). *Peer and team dynamics in sport: A developmental perspective*. Routledge.
- CAF. (2022). *CAF women's football strategy: 2022–2026*. Confederation of African Football. <https://www.cafonline.com>
- Chiweshe, M. K., & Chiweshe, M. (2022). Women's football in Africa: Challenges and possibilities. *Sport in Society*, 25(6), 1035–1051. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2020.1868593>
- Chiweshe, M., & Chiweshe, M. K. (2022). Marginalization of African women footballers: The contradictions of global visibility and local invisibility. *Sport in Society*, 25(5), 839–855. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2021.1902090>
- Darby, P. (2010). *Africa, football and FIFA: Politics, colonialism and resistance*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203862424>
- Eime, R. M., Young, J. A., Harvey, J. T., Charity, M. J., & Payne, W. R. (2020). A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for children and adolescents: Informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 10(98), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-013-0260-1>
- FIFA. (2023). *Global women's football report: Data snapshot on participation, investment, and perception*. Fédération Internationale de Football Association. <https://www.fifa.com>
- FIFA. (2023). *Women's football strategy report: Africa edition*. Fédération Internationale de Football Association. <https://www.fifa.com/womens-football>
- Fletcher, D., & Wagstaff, C. R. D. (2009). *Organizational psychology in elite sport: Its emergence, application and future*. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 10(4), 427–434. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2009.03.009>
- Fransen, K., Vanbeselaere, N., De Cuyper, B., Vande Broek, G., & Boen, F. (2015). *The myth of the team captain as principal leader: Extending the athlete leadership classification within sport teams*. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 32(14), 1389–1397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2014.891291>
- Fredrickson, B. L., & Losada, M. F. (2005). *Positive affect and the complex dynamics of human flourishing*. *American Psychologist*, 60(7), 678–686. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.7.678>
- Green, C. (2007). *Olympic glory or grassroots development? Sport policy priorities in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, 1960–2006*. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 24(7), 921–953. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360701311810>
- Grix, J., & Carmichael, F. (2012). *Why do governments invest in elite sport? A polemic*. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 4(1), 73–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2012.666119>
- Grix, J., & Houlihan, B. (2014). *Sports mega-events as part of a nation's soft power strategy: The cases of Germany (2006) and the UK (2012)*. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 16(4), 572–596. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-856X.12017>
- Hanton, S., Fletcher, D., & Coughlan, G. (2005). *Stress in elite sport performers: A comparative study of competitive and organizational stressors*. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 23(10), 1129–1141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410500131480>

- Kristiansen, E., & Roberts, G. C. (2010). *Young elite athletes and social support: Coping with competitive and organizational stress in "Olympic" competition*. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 20(4), 686–695. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0838.2009.00950.x>
- MacIntyre, T. E., Igou, E. R., Campbell, M. J., Moran, A. P., & Matthews, J. (2014). *The role of sport and exercise in recovery from serious mental illness: A critical review*. *Therapeutic Advances in Psychopharmacology*, 4(2), 61–70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2045125313505648>
- Mwisukha, A., Rintaugu, E. G., & Ondieki, B. A. (2021). Management of sports events in Kenya: Lessons for African tournaments. *East African Journal of Sports and Leisure*, 5(1), 41–55.
- Mwisukha, A., Rintaugu, E. G., & Onywera, V. O. (2021). Fan support and media portrayal of women's football in East Africa: Prospects and constraints. *Journal of African Sports*, 7(1), 12–28.
- Ndlovu, S. M. (2022). Public perception, policy silence, and the politics of women's sport in Africa. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 57(3), 410–429. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902211049156>
- Ndlovu, S. M. (2022). Spectatorship and discontent: Understanding the African fan in women's football tournaments. *Journal of African Sports Culture*, 8(3), 122–140.
- Ndlovu, S. M. (2022). Spectatorship and discontent: Understanding the African fan in women's football tournaments. *Journal of African Sports Culture*, 8(3), 122–140.
- Nicholls, A. R., Polman, R. C., Morley, D., & Taylor, N. J. (2016). *Coping and coping effectiveness in relation to a competitive sport event: Pubertal status and gender differences*. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 27, 153–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2016.08.001>
- Njororai, W. W. S. (2010). *Challenges of hosting a successful World Cup tournament: The case of South Africa 2010*. *Soccer & Society*, 11(1–2), 128–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970903331255>
- Okon, E. E., & Oboh, J. E. (2023). Logistics and governance challenges in African female football tournaments: Evidence from recent FACON editions. *Journal of Sport Administration and Development*, 6(1), 34–47.
- Okon, E. E., & Oboh, M. E. (2023). Structural neglect and the invisibility of African women athletes: A critical review of football administration. *Gender and Sports Review*, 14(4), 88–101.
- Onwumechili, C., & Akindes, G. (2023). *Sport in Africa: Essays in social history, politics and development*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003127880>
- Onwumechili, C., & Akindes, G. (2023). *Sport in African history, politics, and identity formation*. Routledge.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). *Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being*. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Saavedra, M. (2021). Development, gender and sport in Africa: Integration or marginalization? *Third World Quarterly*, 42(2), 215–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1864140>
- Saavedra, M. (2021). Development, gender and sport in Africa: Integration or marginalization? *Third World Quarterly*, 42(2), 215–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1864140>
- Saavedra, M. (2021). Women's football in Africa: The developmental struggles of an emerging game. In J. Nauright & S. Pope (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of sport and legacy* (pp. 233–247). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003011691-20>
- Schnitzer, M., Lang, M., & Stephenson, C. B. (2018). *Organisational resilience of sport governing bodies during the COVID-19 crisis: A conceptual framework*. *Sustainability*, 10(9), 3228. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10093228>
- Sotiriadou, P., Shilbury, D., & Quick, S. (2008). *The attraction, retention/transition, and nurturing process of sport development: Some Australian evidence*. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22(3), 247–272. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jism.22.3.247>
- Tajudeen, A. A., & Eke, C. O. (2023). Organizational support and performance of Nigerian female football teams in international tournaments. *International Journal of Sports Science and Physical Education*, 8(1), 13–22. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijsspe.20230801.13>

- Tajudeen, I. A., & Eke, P. O. (2023). Psychological implications of administrative negligence on elite African athletes. *African Journal of Sport Psychology*, 6(1), 35–49.
- Tamminen, K. A., & Gaudreau, P. (2014). *Coping, social support, and emotion regulation in teams*. In M. R. Beauchamp & M. A. Eys (Eds.), *Group Dynamics in Exercise and Sport Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 222–239). Routledge.
- Toohey, K., & Veal, A. J. (2007). *The Olympic Games: A social science perspective* (2nd ed.). CABI Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1079/9781845933460.0000>
- Tshube, T., & Eke, P. O. (2021). Athlete preparation and mental resilience in African competitions: Exploring the context of women's football. *Journal of Contemporary African Sports*, 9(2), 67–84.
- UEFA. (2023). *Women's EURO 2022: Technical report and statistics*. Union of European Football Associations. <https://www.uefa.com>
- Wakefield, K. L., & Wann, D. L. (2021). *Sport marketing: A strategic perspective* (6th ed.). Routledge.
- Wylleman, P., & Lavallee, D. (2004). *A developmental perspective on transitions faced by athletes*. In M. Weiss (Ed.), *Developmental sport and exercise psychology: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 507–527). Fitness Information Technology.
- Yusof, A., See, L. C., & Omar-Fauzee, M. S. (2022). The impact of organizational logistics on athlete performance in elite competitions. *International Journal of Sport Management*, 23(4), 119–134.