

# Uncovering the Hidden Variable: Corruption and the Underperformance of Zimbabwean Soccer Teams

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## Abstract

This study investigates the factors contributing to the underperformance of Zimbabwean soccer teams, with a specific focus on the often-overlooked variable of corruption. Through a mixed-methods approach, combining statistical analysis and qualitative interviews, we identify the determinants of soccer success and propose strategies to address maladministration. Our findings suggest that corruption, alongside economic performance, talent pool size, experience, culture, and political factors, plays a significant role in national soccer team performance. However, the literature lacks exploration of these factors in the African context. Our research reveals a lack of clear strategic planning processes, inadequate governance structures, and limited financial incentives in Zimbabwean soccer clubs. We recommend education and training, business coaching, ethical leadership, transparency, accountability, and punitive measures for corruption to improve soccer development in Zimbabwe. This study contributes to the understanding of soccer development in Africa and highlights the need for urgent reforms to address corruption and maladministration in sports management.

**Keywords:** Maladministration, Corruption, Soccer, Sports Administration, Performance.

## Introduction

Soccer, the world's most popular sport, reflects and impacts a nation's political and social structures. In Africa, soccer has become an integral part of the continent's culture and identity. However, despite its popularity, Zimbabwean soccer teams have consistently underperformed in regional and international competitions. Existing studies on international soccer performance have highlighted factors such as wealth, talent pool, and soccer culture as determinants of success. However, these studies have often overlooked Zimbabwe due to data limitations, and the impact of corruption on soccer performance has been largely unexplored.

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This study aims to address these gaps by providing essential data and insights into the historical context and early stages of soccer development in Zimbabwe. By examining the determinants of Zimbabwean soccer teams' success, with a specific focus on corruption, this research seeks to identify the specific challenges and factors influencing the country's soccer performance. The study's findings will contribute to existing global studies and address the gaps related to Zimbabwe's context, providing recommendations for stakeholders to improve soccer performance in the country.

This paper examines the complex dynamics of soccer administration in Zimbabwe, focusing on the root causes of maladministration. The first part of the paper introduces the research question and objectives. This is followed by a review relevant literature. Then we outline the methodology and research design. We then proceed to analyze the findings and their implications for soccer administration. The discussion of the findings then follows, together with recommendations for addressing maladministration and improving governance. We conclude with key findings and recommendations for future research.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Despite soccer's popularity in Zimbabwe, its teams consistently underperform in regional and international competitions, and existing studies have overlooked Zimbabwe due to data limitations, failing to explore the impact of corruption on soccer performance.

## **Research Objectives**

The primary objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the factors contributing to maladministration in Zimbabwean association soccer, with a specific focus on corruption, and to identify effective strategies for addressing these challenges.

## **Specific Objectives:**

- i. To conduct a historical analysis of soccer development in Zimbabwe, tracing the origins and evolution of maladministration in the sport.
- ii. To investigate the determinants of association soccer success in Zimbabwe, examining their impact on the overall development of the sport in the country.
- iii. To identify, evaluate, and recommend best practices for mitigating maladministration in Zimbabwean soccer, aligned with the determinants of soccer success.

## **Research Questions**

- i. What are the historical roots and developmental phases of maladministration in Zimbabwean soccer, and how have they impacted the sport's growth and performance?
- ii. Which determinants have a significant impact on the success of association soccer in Zimbabwe, and how do they influence the overall development of the sport in the country?

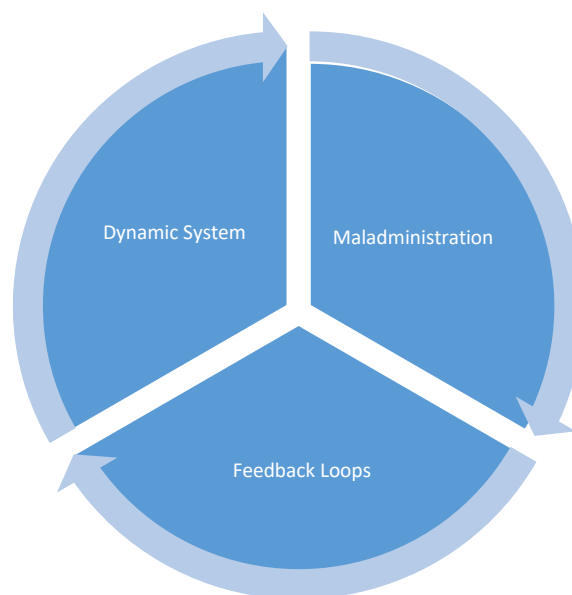
- iii. What effective strategies and best practices can be implemented to address maladministration in Zimbabwean soccer, and how can they be integrated into the existing framework of determinants influencing soccer success?

### Significance of the Study

This research is significant because it provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges facing Zimbabwean soccer teams, with a specific focus on corruption. By exploring the historical context, identifying determinants of success, and proposing strategies to address maladministration, this study contributes to the development of physical education and sports management in Zimbabwe. The findings and recommendations of this research may inform policy decisions and improve governance structures in Zimbabwean soccer. They may also help to enhance strategic planning and ethical leadership in soccer clubs. Furthermore, the findings could be used to benefit footballers, administrators, the Zimbabwean football association, and various stakeholders involved in the sport. Finally, the study may contribute to positive developments in Zimbabwe's soccer landscape, aligning with the sport's cultural and economic significance in the country.

### Theoretical Framework

This research employs a multi-theoretical approach, integrating Institutional Theory and Systems Theory to investigate the complex relationships between maladministration, determinants of soccer success, and best practices in the context of association football in Zimbabwe. Institutional Theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) provides insights into how institutional pressures shape organizational behavior, highlighting the role of legitimacy, isomorphism, and external pressures in conforming to established norms.



Systems Theory (Bertalanffy, 1968; Katz & Kahn, 1966) offers a holistic understanding of complex systems, examining the interdependence of components and feedback loops to identify potential areas where maladministration may emerge or persist.



### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationships between historical maladministration, determinants of soccer success, and best practices in the context of association football in Zimbabwe. Historical maladministration (independent variable) encompasses the evolution and phases of mismanagement, including corruption, administrative inefficiencies, and other challenges. Determinants of soccer success (independent variables) include infrastructure, financial management, player development, governance, and community engagement, all significantly impacting the performance and development of association soccer in Zimbabwe.

The overall development of soccer in Zimbabwe (dependent variable) reflects the broader picture, considering competitive performance, talent pool strength, and grassroots participation. Best practices (mediating variable) serve as interventions, strategies, or policies addressing historical challenges and enhancing the positive impact of determinants, influencing the relationship between independent and dependent variables. This framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between historical maladministration, determinants of soccer success, and best practices, offering insights into addressing maladministration and enhancing soccer development in Zimbabwe.

### Literature Review

The literature review delves into the historical maladministration of soccer in Zimbabwe, exploring the impact of mismanagement and corruption on the sport's development. Global perspectives on maladministration in soccer highlight factors such as financial mismanagement, political interference, and weak governance frameworks (Jennings, 2011). African studies reveal similar challenges faced by countries like Nigeria and South Africa, where corruption and poor governance have hindered soccer development (Akindes, 2013).

Local studies focus on Zimbabwe, highlighting financial irregularities, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure as impediments to soccer success (Chiweshe, 2018). The historical context of Zimbabwean soccer administration reveals a persistent tale of mismanagement and maladministration, hindering the sport's development and potential (Mukonza, 2013). Key figures like Peter Nyama and Cuthbert Dube have been implicated in corruption and mismanagement, damaging the sport's reputation and hindering progress (Ndakaripa, 2021).

African countries face unique challenges in soccer administration, exacerbating maladministration. Research by Akindes (2013) highlights the impact of corruption, political interference, and weak governance frameworks on soccer development in Africa. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has faced numerous corruption scandals, undermining the sport's credibility and hindering development (Mukonza, 2013).

In Nigeria, political interference and corruption have plagued soccer administration, leading to a decline in the national team's performance and limited opportunities for grassroots development (Akindes, 2013). Similarly, in South Africa, maladministration and corruption have hindered soccer progress, despite the country's potential and resources (Mokoena, 2016).

In Zimbabwe, maladministration has severely impacted soccer development. Research by Chiweshe (2018) and Ndakaripa (2021) highlights financial mismanagement, corruption, and political interference as significant obstacles to soccer success. The lack of transparent governance structures and accountability mechanisms has perpetuated maladministration, hindering grassroots development and national team performance (Mukonza, 2013).

The literature review demonstrates that maladministration is a pervasive issue affecting soccer development globally, with African countries and Zimbabwe facing unique challenges. The identified factors - corruption, political interference, weak governance frameworks, financial mismanagement, and lack of transparency and accountability - hinder soccer success and development. Addressing these challenges is crucial for promoting good governance and ensuring the sport's growth and success in Zimbabwe and globally.

In the context of Zimbabwean soccer, mitigating measures against maladministration can be applied to address the challenges facing the sport. Transparency and accountability in the governance of soccer organizations can be enhanced through independent oversight bodies and strengthened civil society involvement (Moyo & Phulu, 2021). Merit-based recruitment and promotion within soccer administrations can ensure competence and dedication (Mukonza, 2013). A culture of ethics and integrity among soccer officials can be fostered through comprehensive codes of conduct and training programs (Ndakaripa, 2021). Access to justice for those affected by maladministration in soccer can be improved through independent ombudsman offices and robust institutional systems (Mukonza, 2013). Citizen empowerment and engagement in soccer governance can be promoted through participatory mechanisms and feedback channels (Ndakaripa, 2021).

Implementing these measures can help address the root causes of maladministration in Zimbabwean soccer, paving the way for a more prosperous future for the sport. By prioritizing transparency, accountability, ethics, and citizen engagement, Zimbabwe can harness its potential and develop a vibrant soccer culture that benefits all stakeholders.

In conclusion, the literature review has provided a comprehensive overview of the historical maladministration in Zimbabwean soccer, highlighting the detrimental impact on the sport's development. While recent efforts have shown promise, a significant research gap remains in exploring mitigating measures and best practices to address maladministration in soccer governance. The literature review reveals a plethora of studies examining maladministration in soccer, particularly in Africa and Zimbabwe. However, a critical analysis of the existing literature exposes several gaps. First, there is a lack of empirical research as many studies rely on anecdotal evidence, case studies, or theoretical frameworks without robust empirical data to support their claims. Second, there is limited scope. The research tends to focus on specific aspects of maladministration, such as corruption or financial mismanagement, without considering the interplay between these factors. The studies also place emphasis on symptoms rather than root causes. These studies often address the manifestations of maladministration without exploring the underlying structural, political, and socio-economic factors that perpetuate it. In addition, the voices and experiences of local stakeholders, including players, coaches, and fans, are often overlooked in favour of elite-level perspectives. The reviewed research has frequently proposed generic solutions without accounting for the unique cultural, historical, and political contexts of Zimbabwean soccer.

Finally, the studies inadequately explore intersections with broader social issues. The studies have rarely examined the intersections between maladministration in soccer and broader social issues, such as poverty, inequality, and political instability.

By acknowledging these gaps, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of maladministration in Zimbabwean soccer, exploring the root causes, interplay between factors, and context-specific solutions to address this pervasive issue. This study investigates the historical maladministration, determinants of soccer success, and evaluating best practices to alleviate maladministration. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights and recommendations for stakeholders, policymakers, and soccer administrators in Zimbabwe, contributing to a more transparent, accountable, and successful soccer environment in the country. By addressing the research gap, this study will help develop a roadmap for reform, ensuring that Zimbabwean soccer realizes its full potential and regains its rightful place in the global soccer community.

The literature review has demonstrated that maladministration is a pervasive issue in Zimbabwean soccer, perpetuating a cycle of corruption, mismanagement, and underdevelopment. However, by exploring mitigating measures and best practices, this study will provide a framework for reform, enabling the sport to break free from the shackles of maladministration and unleash its full potential. The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to the development of a vibrant soccer culture in Zimbabwe, fostering transparency, accountability, and good governance. By addressing

the research gap, this study will help create a roadmap for reform, ensuring that Zimbabwean soccer realizes its full potential and regains its rightful place in the global soccer community.

### **Methodology**

This section outlines the research design, methods, and procedures used to investigate the determinants of soccer success and address corruption challenges among Premier Soccer League (PSL) teams in Zimbabwe (Mukonza, 2013).

### **Research Paradigm**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014). The mixed-methods design enabled the researchers to explore the complexities of soccer administration and corruption while also quantifying the magnitude of the problem (Moyo & Phulu, 2021).

### **Research Design**

The study used a descriptive case-study design, focusing on PSL teams to explore the determinants of soccer success and address corruption challenges (Yin, 2018). The design aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing soccer success and the challenges faced by PSL teams in Zimbabwe (Ndakaripa, 2021).

### **Population and Sample**

The population consisted of club chairpersons, secretaries, and treasurers from all PSL clubs (Mukonza, 2013). The sample size comprised 60 retired athletes, including men and women, selected using a purposive sampling system (Patton, 2015). The sample represented the 16 PSL teams, with respondents selected disproportionately but systematically from each team. The study's sample size and selection criteria are justified by a representative and diverse sample of 60 retired athletes and officials, including Club Chairpersons, Secretaries, and Treasurers from all PSL clubs, with a mix of men and women, varying years of experience, and different club levels. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with relevant experiences and knowledge, and respondents were randomly and systematically selected from each team, ensuring equal representation and minimizing bias. This approach ensures that the findings are representative of the population and can be generalized to the broader context of PSL clubs in Zimbabwe, with 16 teams represented, covering a significant portion of the population.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The researchers used semi-structured interviews, telephone interviews, and questionnaires to collect data from respondents (Creswell, 2014). The instruments contained both open-

ended and closed questions to extract qualitative and quantitative data (Moyo & Phulu, 2021).

## Data Collection Procedure

The researchers contacted the selected participants, obtained their consent, and conducted face-to-face or telephone interviews and administered questionnaires (Yin, 2018). The interviews and questionnaires contained both open-ended and closed questions to obtain qualitative and quantitative data.

## Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with three club chairmen to test the reliability of the research instruments and determine the best approach for the main study (Creswell, 2014).

## Data Analysis

The researchers used a research interview table to organize and analyze the data, compiling responses from respondents to identify trends and patterns (Mukonza, 2013).

## Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted ethically, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity for respondents (Moyo & Phulu, 2021). Participants were informed about the research objectives and provided consent before participating (Ndakaripa, 2021).

## Findings

This section presents the study's findings, which are organized into themes that emerged from the data analysis.

### Soccer Background in Zimbabwe: An Overview

The findings reveal a lack of managerial experience and qualifications among most participants, with only a few having managerial qualifications. The experience ranged from 20 years to two years, with some hesitancy in disclosing qualification levels. Most participants valued education and training, but few had managerial qualifications.

### Managerial Experience and Qualifications

Table 4.1 summarizes the participants' experience and qualifications, showing a lack of formal qualifications and managerial experience among most participants. Participant 8 had the most experience (7 years) and qualifications, followed by Participant 3 (6 years). Most participants had technical qualifications, such as coaching and first aid courses, which were not relevant to administrative tasks.



**Table 4.1" Summary of participant's experience and qualifications**

Participant	Industry experience	Managerial experience	Qualifications
1	Five years	Five years	No formal qualifications were acquired
2	One year	One year	Officiating and coaching science diploma (still studying)
3	Six years	Six years	B.Ed. in Physical Education; Advanced management program Level 2 PSL coaching certificate; Level B coaching license with FIFA
4	Five years	Four years	Sports administration course; Child tune athletics course, 5 coaching certificates
5	Five years	One year	Coaching courses; Life skills training; First aid course
6	Nine years	Three years	Coaching course; Life skills training; First aid course
7	15 years	Two years	Coaching course (still studying)
8	14 years	Seven years	Coaching course; First aid course

Source: Authors' own compilation (2022)

### **Maladministration Factors for Successful Soccer Development**

This section presents the findings on the factors that contribute to maladministration in successful soccer development in Zimbabwe, based on the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

#### **The Administration and Soccer Planning Exercise**

The participants in the study shared their views on how planning affects the development of soccer in Zimbabwe. The findings are presented below, divided into logistical and content-related information, and tabulated in Table 4.2.

#### **Logistical Information:**

- i. Lack of clear goals and objectives in soccer development planning
- ii. Inadequate resources (financial, human, and material) for effective planning and implementation
- iii. Poor communication and coordination among stakeholders
- iv. Inefficient use of technology in planning and management

#### **Content-Related Information:**

- i. Lack of expertise and knowledge in soccer administration and management
- ii. Inadequate training and development programs for soccer administrators
- iii. Poor leadership and governance structures
- iv. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of soccer development programs

The findings indicate that the majority of participants (87.5%) cited lack of clear goals and objectives as a major factor affecting soccer development planning in Zimbabwe. This was followed by inadequate resources (75%), lack of expertise and knowledge (75%), poor communication and coordination (62.5%), and inadequate training and development programs (62.5%).

These findings are consistent with the literature review, which highlighted the importance of effective planning, resource management, and leadership in successful soccer development. The findings also suggest that maladministration in soccer development in Zimbabwe is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to address.

**Table 4.2:** Factors Affecting Soccer Development Planning in Zimbabwe

Participant	Number occasions per year/ month/week	Stated attendees
C1	2 times per week	Management team (including the participant) and coaching staff
C2	Daily	Not clearly stated
C3	Daily	Not clearly stated
C4	Once a week	Managing director (the participant), coaching staff and the board.
C5	2 times a month	Football manager, team manager (the participant), logistics manager and coaching staff
C6	4 times a year	Football manager (the participant), 2 x team managers and coaching staff
C7	Once a week	CEO/manager (participant), management team and coaching staff
C8	Once a year	Management team (including the participant), coaching staff and the board.

**Source:** Authors' Compilation

The table above lists the administrative sessions attended by club managers and their colleagues. The findings indicate that Club 2 and 3 reported the most frequent administrative sessions, claiming daily sessions, which the researcher deemed unrealistic. Club 8 reported the least frequent sessions, with only one session per year. Participants 1 and 6 reported two and four sessions, respectively. Most participants did not provide clear information on the number of attendees per session. More than half of the participants indicated that their administrative sessions involved more than three persons but did not specify their capacities. Some participants, like Participant 5, demonstrated confusion between administrative and operational issues. Participant 3 and 8 mentioned the involvement of the board in administrative planning sessions. Participant 5 listed the personnel involved in their administrative planning sessions, including the head of sports, coaches, manager, and logistics manager.

The findings suggest that there is a lack of clarity on what constitutes administrative sessions and decision-making processes. Some clubs may be confusing operational and technical issues with administrative matters. There is a lack of formalized structures to address administrative issues. The board's participation in administrative issues is limited. The focus is on short-term goals, rather than long-term planning (3-5 years).

### **Members Involved in the Administration Planning Process and Number of Planning Sessions**

While it is widely acknowledged that there were challenges in terms of the administration implementation due to the gap between the executors and administrators, nearly all of the participants indicated that they employ a hands-on approach throughout the clubs' administration planning processes. This was a probable response in that the majority of such participants were fulltime in the employ of the soccer clubs.

The "hands-on" approach may be a good thing for the soccer club manager to have, however this does not necessarily mean that these managers spent sufficient time on administration planning issues. Participant 1 indicated that he was in the full-time service of his soccer club. When asked about his level of involvement in the administration planning processes of his soccer club this is what he had to say: *"Every day I am working with coaches, players. Coaching the players."*

Participant 1 seemed to be the link between the management team, coaches and players. Also, not different from what Participant 1 indicated, Participant 6 was quick to mention his hands-on approach in the service of his club. *"I am hands-on. Each and every day I am there. Every time, even when players need me they know where to find me and contact me. Each and every player has my number."*

Participant 3 also seemed to be involved in the activities of his club on a daily basis. What is not clear was which of the activities he was involved in and whether these were actually part of the administration planning processes. Participant 8 indicated an everyday involvement with his club. *"I am hands-on in the day-to-day running of the club"*

It can be acknowledged that some participants may go about their daily activities without ever thinking about the future. It is however an encouraging sign to have hands-on managers since administration is often hampered by poor execution due to lack of initial involvement of participants. In this instance the researcher considered the time which participants took to attend to their administration planning processes. The degree of involvement in a particular course of action is often proportionate to the degree of one's interest in an organization.

For instance, with regard to time allocated for administration sessions, Participant 1 was quoted as follows:

*"Because like sometimes you don't like get enough time. Sometimes we can say four months because once we plan something, we don't even often have like many meetings. We like have once a month for planning."*

Participants claimed to have little time set aside for administration sessions. This is despite having indicated that they have a hands-on involvement in the issues of the clubs. There is thus a strong possibility that the major part of their involvements is rather operational and technical in nature and very little focus is given to administration issues.

This is consistent with what various research studies stated to Jansen van Ransburg, (et al., 2013). Moreover, Alm (2013) alludes to many instances where governance and administration come together in terms of time allocated to deal with administration issues and in instances where accountability for such administration issues is required (during the administration evaluation stage). This challenge was particularly highlighted in the corporate context; however, this seems to be also applicable in sports organizations such as soccer clubs.

Regarding administration sessions Participant 5 was quoted as follows:

*"We meet once a quarter to discuss the annual plan. Every Friday we meet just to check how far we are with activity reports on what each of us is doing, and the challenges also. So we meet four (4) times a year but we make sure that every Friday or every second week, we meet to check the progress reports. So we meet as sports team and we meet individually with managers discussing administration issues".*

This indicates some relatively reasonable time given to administration issues.

However, there were some participants who only managed to hold administration sessions once a year. Even though this was less regular, it cannot be concluded if that could be deemed as ineffective. However, since this study was not about measuring effectiveness, this could be deemed a major concern on the participants' part.

For example, Participant 8, when asked regarding the frequency of their administration sessions was quoted as follows:

*"We do have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) that takes place at the beginning of the year so that we go through the plans of the year. And we also have monthly meetings for the committee to be able to deal with short term issues that always arise.*

*It depends now on what type of meeting we have because an AGM includes everyone that is involved in the club. And then you divide, say on a weekly basis a technical meeting where coaches meet to discuss coaching issues. You also have a time to deal with stakeholders meeting where we meet with the parents; football authorities to try resolving other issues. So there are different gatherings that we have. Sometimes we have workshops where we educate ourselves in terms of saying this is what we've seen happen in other areas and how we can incorporate it within our place."*

In this section, it became apparent that many of the participants merely focused on the day-to-day issues even though these were registered as a matter of an administration nature. Very few participants seem to focus on the 3-to-5-year term in terms of their planning processes and planning cycles. Of noteworthy, some participants seem to plan ahead for one year while utilizing their interim tactical sessions to keep track of progress. Barrows (2009) also warns of clearly setting apart time allocated to administration matters as opposed to the time required for day-to-day activities. Moreover, it was not always clear to ascertain which people were involved in these administration sessions. The next section

considers the few instances where those who were involved in administration sessions were indicated.

### **The Involvement of Participants in Administration Planning Processes**

Participants also explained how they are involved and whom they involve in sessions or meetings of administrative in nature. The managers indicated that they frequently engaged in these administration sessions with their colleagues and in some instances categorically stated the number of persons who were involved to that effect. The frequency of such sessions ranged from once a year, which was obviously inadequate, to daily, which appeared to be unrealistic.

As already alluded to, most clubs' managers assumed multiple roles, which were operational, administrative and technical in nature. Participant 4 was one of the few who was able to indicate the management structure, and who is also involved in the administrative planning process of his soccer football club.

Participant 4 mentioned the following:

*"We have structure that runs the team so we set up our management committee where we have the chairperson of the club and the deputy. We have the secretary that deals with paper work and secretarial issues. We have the treasurer that leads the finance committee. We have the team manager that manages the whole team."*

The above, as well as other participants shared their experiences in terms of their sessions of an administrative in nature. Of interest is how some of the participants mentioned how little time they had to spend on administrative sessions. This is in line with literature, that little time is dedicated to administrative that focuses on the administrative planning processes for non-profit organizations (Nieboer, 2011).

Only a few of the participants appeared knowledgeable and relevant in dealing with issues of administrative in nature. One of these participants was Participant 1.

*"We meet once a quarter to discuss the annual plan. Every Friday we meet just to check how far we are with activity reports on what each of us is doing, and the challenges also. So we meet 4 times a year but we make sure that every Friday or every second week, we meet to check the progress reports. So we meet as sports and we meet individually with managers discussing administrative in issues."*

Participant 2 clearly separated what was administration and what was not.

These findings raise questions about the participants' perceptions of the administrative planning process and highlight the need for clarity and formalized structures in soccer club management.

### **Participants' Perceptions about the Administrative Planning Process**

The findings indicate that participants had different perceptions about the administrative planning process, with some confusing operational and tactical activities with administrative ones. They also highlighted changes in their internal and external

environments, which they perceived as challenges and threats or opportunities for their clubs.

## **Environmental Changes**

Participants noted changes in their internal and external environments, including dwindling resources (Participant 7) and delays in the league kick-off due to unresolved challenges from the previous season (Participant 8).

## **Potential Improvements**

Participants proposed improvements to their administrative management processes, including:

- i. Involving knowledgeable people in running Zimbabwe soccer associations (Participant 6)
- ii. Educating those running soccer clubs (Participant 8)
- iii. Telepathy and more training for the team (Participant 3)

These proposed improvements require efforts from both internal and external stakeholders, consistent with the literature on stakeholder involvement in administrative planning processes (Hassan, 2010; King Committee on Corporate Governance, 2009).

## **Mitigating Measures Against Maladministration in Zimbabwe**

This section involved some measures that the soccer could implement to improve soccer in Zimbabwe. The section was divided into different sub-titles based the objective number three. The findings from the participants were presented as follows.

### **Administrative direction tools**

According to literature, administrative direction involves the vision, mission and administrative intent. While this was not entirely required, some of the participants were very keen to disclose their vision, mission and long-term goals and how they planned to realise them.

For instance, Participant 7 took time to outline the vision of his club as follows:

*"But our vision is educating, raising a child that is aware of the surroundings. "*

While Participant 4 mentioned categorically which administrative planning process components his soccer club utilized.

*"The vision of the team, the mission, long term goals."*

For example, Participant 7 demonstrated categorically the achievement of the club's vision through the long-term goals on youth development which produced top class players which benefitted both the club and the Zimbabwe national team.

*"From 2015 we had a vision for 2021. By that time we told ourselves that we need to reach that point that at that time we'll have Grassroots properly run. We have the following football age groups as from under 13,15,17,19 and 21. We'll be also having a first team that will be playing in PSL. We'll be having legends that played at PSL before because now we have players that*

*come from Grassroots and our development that are playing at PSL. We have about 3 of them."*

While the latter specifics do not supersede details regarding the soccer clubs' administrative planning process components, they however provided the researcher with an indication of how well the managers could interpret the respective administrative planning process components of their clubs, particularly the vision, mission and long-term goals.

### **Long-term goals**

As a sub-theme, the long-term goals enjoyed the highest mentioning of all the administrative planning process components. However, it was not clear if some of the participants were actually referring to long-term goals in terms of their long-term nature of between 3 to five years. For instance, Participant 5 was not clear when explaining the long-term goals of her soccer club.

*"I work with short term most of my time because it helps me plan on a weekly plan. But I also look at the long-term where we want to head to looking at what is our vision for the team?"*

This provided more questions than answers. On the other end, Participant 6 was able to extricate and also provided a link between the mission and vision statements, as well as the administrative objectives of his soccer club.

This participant clearly accentuated the clubs future targets while also attempting to divulge the process of attaining such.

Participant 6 explained his understanding of the long-term goals.

*"And you do have your vision which is the bigger picture. Which is at the end of the day, what do you want to achieve on a bigger scale? And then when you set up your goals, your vision will now guide how you set up your goals."*

More on his quotations to that effect will be included in the next section.

In this section, the various administrative planning process components were considered. Noteworthy, the administrative direction component and its tools, as well as long-term goals were predominantly mentioned. This is taking into account all the interviews with all 8 participants. The following table indicates the word and phrase count according to the administrative direction tools as well as the long-term goals.

### **Transparency and Accountability**

Respondent further brought suggestions about transparency and accountability. The following were revealed.

Participant 10 revealed:

*"To me, I think transparency can be improved by regularly disclosing financial reports and decisions to the public. Implementing an independent oversight body can ensure accountability and investigate potential corruption. Further, establishing a code of conduct for soccer management, outlining ethical standards and consequences for non-compliance, is crucial. This will foster a culture of integrity and deter maladministration practices."*

Participant 16 added his voice and mentioned;

*Engaging in regular audits of soccer management operations can enhance transparency. Providing clear communication channels for stakeholders to raise concerns will contribute to overall accountability.*

In terms of measures to be implemented to ensure merit-based recruitment and promotion within soccer management, reducing the influence of cronyism and nepotism, the participants revealed the following;

*The soccer team needs to institute a standardized, competitive recruitment process based on qualifications and merit is essential. This ensures that individuals are selected for their skills and dedication to the sport. In fact, implementing a transparent system for promotions, where achievements and qualifications are the primary criteria, can help eradicate cronyism. Regularly reviewing and updating these processes will maintain fairness. Aaaaah ..... in fact there is need to provide training programs on fair recruitment practices and creating awareness about the detrimental effects of cronyism can help instill a culture of meritocracy within soccer management."*

Participants further were asked how soccer management in Zimbabwe can build robust institutions and systems to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. Participant 23 had to say this;

*"I think, investing in modern technologies and streamlining bureaucratic processes can enhance efficiency. Regular evaluations and audits will identify areas for improvement, ensuring continuous development. Also, establishing performance-based management systems will create accountability. Strengthening internal controls and regularly assessing the effectiveness of governance structures contribute to overall institutional robustness. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is important to encouraging collaboration with international soccer management bodies can provide insights into global best practices. This cross-cultural exchange can help Zimbabwean soccer institutions adopt efficient and effective systems."*

The participants were also asked how citizen empowerment and engagement can be promoted to ensure a more participatory governance in soccer management. There respondents were similar ad one participants 48 mentioned;

*That question is interesting, according to my thought, there is need to conduct regular town hall meetings and public consultations to allows citizens to voice their concerns. Establishing online platforms for feedback ensures accessibility and inclusivity in decision-making. In fact, creating awareness campaigns to inform citizens about their rights and the importance of their involvement in soccer governance is crucial. Actively seeking public input in decision-making processes fosters a sense of ownership. Implementing mechanisms for citizens to directly engage with soccer management through surveys and feedback forms encourages active participation. This inclusivity can strengthen the bond between the community and soccer institution.*

## **Summary of Findings**

The study investigated the administrative planning processes of Zimbabwe PSL soccer clubs, revealing varied managerial experience and qualifications among club managers. While some possess significant industry experience and relevant qualifications, others lack



formal education for their roles. The study contributes to the body of knowledge by exploring administrative planning processes in a sports context, an area previously understudied. The findings provide insights for improving administrative planning processes in Zimbabwean PSL soccer clubs and offer opportunities for future research in sports organizations.

The findings suggest that participants' perceptions of administrative planning differ, and that there is a need for clarity on what constitutes administrative activities. Additionally, the findings highlight the importance of environmental scanning and stakeholder involvement in the administrative planning process.

### **Implications**

This section interprets the findings in relation to the research objectives and literature review, highlighting gaps and informing recommendations. The status quo of Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League clubs' strategic planning processes is discussed, and findings are compared with literature to identify areas for improvement. The findings suggest a need for improved education and training in soccer administration and management. Participants acknowledged the importance of education and sought to acquire more knowledge and skills to benefit their clubs and community. However, the majority of qualifications were technical in nature, indicating a gap in administrative skills. This highlights the need for soccer administrators to prioritize education and training in administration and management to effectively carry out their duties.

The findings also indicate a lack of evidence linking participants' level of education and industry experience to their ability to carry out administrative planning processes. Most participants confused operational and technical issues with administrative matters, highlighting a need for clarity on administrative roles and responsibilities.

Managerial experience and qualifications in Zimbabwean soccer administration align with literature emphasizing competent leadership in sports organizations (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). While participants had varying experiences and qualifications, some lacked formal education, echoing literature highlighting the importance of education in sports management (Chalip, 2006). Historical maladministration in Zimbabwean soccer provides context for participants' emphasis on education and training, with literature outlining challenges and detrimental effects of corruption and mismanagement (Chiweshe, 2018; Moyo & Phulu, 2021). Findings suggest a positive trend towards recognizing the significance of managerial qualifications, but also reveal existing gaps in education and training (Chalip, 2006).

Literature on historical maladministration and political interference aligns with findings, emphasizing the need for transparency and accountability measures (Mukonza, 2013). Findings on managerial incentives and commitment resonate with literature highlighting challenges in motivating individuals in sports management (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). Participants' commitment to soccer despite limited rewards underscores their passion for the sport (Chalip, 2006).

The findings of this study highlight critical factors contributing to the maladministration of successful soccer development in Zimbabwe. Inconsistent administrative planning, lack of clarity in roles, and inadequate distinction between operational and administrative issues hinder effective planning. Environmental changes, such as dwindling resources and delayed kick-offs, pose significant challenges. Participants emphasize the need for education, involvement of knowledgeable individuals, and stakeholder involvement in administrative planning. Long-term goals and vision receive significant attention, but there is ambiguity regarding their understanding. Transparency and accountability measures, merit-based recruitment, and citizen engagement are suggested to mitigate maladministration. The study reveals a commitment to soccer despite limited incentives, challenging traditional assumptions on remuneration and commitment. The findings contribute to the body of knowledge by highlighting the complexities of soccer administration in Zimbabwe and the need for a comprehensive approach to address historical issues and improve administrative planning processes.

Gaps between findings and literature highlight the need for improved education and training, transparency, and accountability in Zimbabwean soccer administration. Recommendations target soccer clubs, emphasizing the importance of addressing historical issues, implementing measures for fair and transparent administration, and understanding incentives' impact on commitment. Overall, the findings suggest that improving education and training in soccer administration and management is crucial for effective administrative planning processes in Zimbabwean soccer clubs.

The study's findings align with the literature on the importance of competent leadership, transparent practices, and accountability in sports organizations (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). The analysis reveals inconsistencies and challenges in administrative planning processes, echoing literature on the impact of corruption and mismanagement on soccer development in Zimbabwe (Chiweshe, 2018; Moyo & Phulu, 2021). The study identifies key factors contributing to maladministration, including inadequate administrative direction, lack of transparency, and external influences (Mukonza, 2013).

The findings also highlight the importance of mitigating measures, such as the clear vision and long-term goals (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Pearce & David, 1987); transparency and accountability (Heald, 2006; Braiotta Jr et al., 2015); ethical standards and consequences for non-compliance (Ndakaripa, 2021); merit-based recruitment and promotion (Bardhan, 1997; Lewis, 2008); robust institutions and systems (Ndakaripa, 2021; Weimer & Vining, 2017), and citizen empowerment and engagement (Bovens, 2007; Nabatchi et al., 2012). These measures align with existing literature emphasizing the need for effective governance, accountability, and citizen involvement in soccer management.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion, this research highlights the challenges faced by Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League clubs in strategic planning, managerial experience, and qualifications, contributing to maladministration in soccer development. The study recommends a holistic approach to soccer administration, incorporating education, training, business coaching, mentoring,

ethical and responsible leadership, transparency, accountability, stakeholder engagement, and monetary incentives. The Ministry of Sport and Recreation should intervene in infrastructure development and monitor progress. Future research should conduct an impact study of these recommendations and explore strategy implementation and evaluation.

### Recommendations

For Zimbabwe PSL soccer clubs:

- i. Education and training in strategic planning and management
- ii. Business coaching and mentoring
- iii. Transparency and accountability measures
- iv. Stakeholder engagement
- v. Monetary incentives for players and staff

For Zimbabwe PSL and ZIFA:

- i. Ethical and responsible leadership
- ii. Transparency and accountability measures
- iii. Punitive measures to curb corruption
- iv. Stakeholder engagement

For the Ministry of Sport and Recreation:

- i. Interventions in infrastructure development
- ii. Monitoring progress and impact of recommendations

### Limitations

The study is limited to Zimbabwe PSL regions in the Harare province, which may not accurately reflect the situation in other regions or sporting codes (Chiweshe, 2018). The snapshot perspective employed during data collection may also yield different findings under different circumstances (Mukonza, 2013). Additionally, some participants made accusatory inferences against Zimbabwe PSL, which may impact the generalizability of the findings.

Future research should monitor the progress made and conduct an impact study of the recommended interventions, including education, training, business coaching, and mentoring (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). A follow-up study could explore strategy implementation, strategic evaluation, and control of the strategic planning processes of soccer clubs, informing policy and decision-makers to advance Zimbabwe's soccer and sports development (Ndakaripa, 2021).

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