
Influence of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Benin City Sports Coverage on the Development of Sports in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The influence of NTA's sports coverage on the development of sports in Nigeria was investigated in this research. The study's objectives were to determine the extent of sporting event coverage provided by the Nigerian Television Authority in Benin City; identify the categories of sporting events that NTA, Benin City covers most frequently and to examine the impact of NTA's sports coverage on the growth of sports in Nigeria. The study used the framing theory as theoretical framework and a survey as its research design. The study's findings showed that NTA, Benin City often covers sports stories, particularly football and that the stations sports coverage helps develop sports in Nigeria. Football was also the most frequently covered sports on NTA, Benin City. Based on the study's findings, the researcher recommended that NTA, Benin City should devote more time to sports and athletes in Nigeria rather than foreign athletes and sports programmes, as indigenous sports coverage will support indigenous sports and increase interest among sportsmen and women in participating in sports in Nigeria. Additionally, it was suggested that the federal government make aggressive efforts to promote more sports media coverage by liberalising the media to attract more investors and support the establishment of sports-focused media outlets.

Keywords: *Sports; Sports development; Media coverage; Sportsmanship, Nigerian Television Authority*

INTRODUCTION

A sport is an organised physical activity that combines leisure with assistance to people and material resources in the achievement of fundamental values. Internationally, sports are recognised as potential tools for societal and economic advancement. In addition, Nigeria, like many other nations throughout the world, is attempting to fully realise its sports potential in order to meet its development objectives. Nwanne (2010) defines sports as physical activity with well defined rules and limitations. The fact that winners are produced by the set of rules and are rewarded by both the private and public sectors shows how valuable and satisfying sport is. Sports also encourage social engagement, unity and racial cohesion in addition to long-term physical fitness and great health. Additionally, it provides entertainment, boosts a nation's reputation abroad, creates employment opportunities, enhances education and encourages tourism and culture (Recours, Pappous, Dantin & Griffet, 2011).

Given how important sports are to society as a whole, it would be odd for the media to jettison its coverage. In other words, the media's frequent interest in, coverage of, and

elevation of sports is a result of sports' high esteem in Nigeria and elsewhere. Every year, hundreds of sports programmes are aired by local television and radio stations to millions of people across the world. Mass media is a significant factor in the formation of our attitudes, beliefs, and values toward both ourselves and others (Koivula, 2019). The most important change in the sports industry, according to Nwanne (2010) is the significant role that the media are playing in the expansion of sports all over the world. The media has enhanced money production in addition to raising public awareness of, and attendance at athletic events, which is advantageous to many sports stakeholders.

Alimi (2013) avowed that finding and disseminating knowledge, information and awareness about various sports and athletic potential in many nations has been made possible in large part because to the media. Due to the fact that sports appear to be prevalent everywhere, sports and the media have been a popular topic in recent years. Billions of viewers tune in from all around the world to witness big events like the Olympics and world championships in soccer, rugby and cricket. Reports and study on media sport institutions, media sport audiences, media sport texts, and sport journalism are prevalent in the academic connection between sports and the mass media in society.

Given the nature of media ownership and the high cost of media production, industry observers concur that practitioners have shifted their focus away from local sporting events and activities, which are underfunded, ill-equipped and lack proper promotion, administration, management, branding, and packaging, toward profit maximisation, which finds fertile ground in foreign sport portrayal on Nigerian media and the massive ad revenue it generates for the media. The predilection of Nigerians for foreign influence in the media, particularly sports, is another concern. In other words, rather than spending money or tuning in to see their local athletes or sporting events, Nigerians would choose to stay at work with their friends and family and chat or even follow the outcomes of international sporting events.

With a focus on Benin City, it is crucial to investigate how well sports journalists and the media understand their role in the development of sports in Nigeria as well as the effects of sports coverage on Nigerians. In light of this, this study looked at how the Nigerian Television Authority's sports coverage has influenced the development of sports in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Trends across several Nigerian media outlets, including NTA has shown lack of attention and coverage given to sporting issues and events and even when it is, more stories about international sporting stars and talents are projected than about our own home-grown professionals. This has an adverse effect on the reputation of Nigerian athletes and sports in Nigeria as well as investors interests.

Nigerian athletes are additionally hampered by a lack of funding and the country's sport administration is in turmoil. The difficulties in developing sports in Nigeria may be attributed to both sports authorities and players training in subpar facilities. The nation's athletic performance in the 2017 World Cup game and its inability to make it to Qatar 2022 is clear evidence of how much its sports development has declined. On the other side, the Nigerian media has the ability to help resolve these challenges, but observations show that they are not.

Sports journalism in Nigeria has been accused of preferring foreign competitions and players over the development of local potential in certain instances by promoting foreign sports organisations and events over domestic ones. The context of this study suggests that covering and informing the public about sporting events in society is one of the media's social obligations. However, critics of the media have called for a thorough re-evaluation of the obligations and responsibilities of sports journalists and media via self-regulation since they have over-emphasised European athletic sports and culture at the detriment of indigenous games and skills. In spite of this, only a few researches have been carried out on the contributions of the broadcast media to sports development while none, to the best of knowledge of the researcher have examined NTA's contribution to the growth of sports in Nigeria. This research gap is what this study therefore intends to cover.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. Find out the level of coverage given to sporting events in the Nigerian Television Authority, Benin City
2. Identify the type of sporting activities mostly covered by the Nigerian Television Authority, Benin City
3. X-ray the effects of Nigerian Television Authority's coverage of sports on sports development in Nigeria

The Concept of Sports

Sport is a competitive activity played in accordance with established guidelines and won or lost depending on physical prowess. In other words, a sport is a disciplined physical activity designed to be enjoyed for leisure and to provide people and resources for the development of important ideas. Koivula (2019) notes that sports are physical and social activities that adhere to rules and guidelines that govern athletic activity, competition and pleasure. Rules or customs regulate everything in sports.

Sports also include non-competitive activities like jogging, running, working out, swimming, and other leisure pursuits. It alludes to the utilisation of time for the human body's physical, mental and health advantages. Whannel (2011) affirms that sport is a social-cultural system with significant room for development. He adds that in the first decades of the twenty-first century, sports, especially group sports like football, basketball, hockey, volley ball, baseball, even tennis and athletics, have risen to the top of the most attractive sectors in the world socioeconomic sphere in symbiosis with tourism and show business. According to Nwanne (2010), who expands on the term provided above, "sports" refers to any physical activity that is subject to clearly laid out rules and regulations that ensure fairness and discipline among participants. The fact that winners are produced by the set of rules and are rewarded by both the private and public sectors shows how valuable and satisfying sport is.

Sports also encourage social engagement, unity and racial cohesion in addition to long-term physical fitness and great health. Additionally, it provides entertainment, boosts a nation's reputation abroad, creates employment opportunities, enhances education and encourages tourism and culture (Morakinyo, 2010). According to Nigeria's National Sports Policy (2019), sport is an organised physical and social activity that is done for fun, exercise, or competition. Communities and ethnic groups are the beginnings of informal competitive

sports. This humble beginning as a past time or form of amusement developed into a significant phenomenon that had to be taken seriously in the socio-political and economic life of the country. Formal sports were introduced to Nigeria by missionaries and through time, both formal and traditional sports developed to the point that they were governed by organisations like sports federations, sports councils and, at the highest level, the National Sports Commission.

NTA Sports Coverage in Benin City

NTA is owned and operated by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The government also contributes to the running of this business via budgetary appropriations, which are complemented by minimal internal earnings. The Ministry of information serves as the organisation's overseeing ministry, which was founded by Act of Parliament. Essentially, NTA was established to provide public service broadcasting and in doing so, it promotes government programmes and policies, as well as sports, particularly football (Osaremen, 2017).

On Saturdays, from 10.30 a.m. to 11 a.m. NTA discusses athletic events on its channel. Sports stories are thoroughly discussed from 9.30am to 10.00am on Tuesdays on one of their programmes titled "Sports Reel," while news items are featured at the conclusion of each news show on weekdays. NTA also airs sports programmes on Sport 24 on Startimes TV, and sports updates are tweeted on the medium's account, @SportsNTA, on Instagram, and NTA Sports on Facebook. NTA, Benin covers worldwide, national and local sports news; however, the majority of its international sports stories are acquired from wire services, whilst national and local sports stories are sometimes covered live or reports collected after the conclusion of events. Most local sports reports are supplied from Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin City, which hosts the majority of athletic events.

The Effects of NTA Sports Coverage in Nigeria

Sports coverage in the mass media has a significant impact on sports. This is due to the media's power, which may influence sports' popularity, offer free exposure for local teams, display player personalities and foster fan loyalty to teams and individual players, and media firms pay for the rights to broadcast athletic events. Television sports, such as NTA, may also produce additional sponsorship. The reason for this is because individuals learn the rules of the sport by watching it on television and by seeing outstanding athletes on television, they become role models for other adolescents and children. Again, NTA's coverage of sports among Nigerians might offer sports to those who would not otherwise have access to them, encouraging them to participate. Furthermore, watching pros on NTA may assist sports enthusiasts in Nigeria understand how to practice a skill, which can improve their performance.

According to Mariadass (2005), college and professional sports became increasingly popular as more American households had access to sports programming on television. In the Nigerian context, Johnson (2014) observed that the growth of the digital media and internet promoted sports development in Nigeria. Even those who had no interest in sports were unable to avoid catching glimpses of games while surfing the channels. Sports spectatorship became more popular because of the media, which made it more accessible, enjoyable, and easy for everyone. Furthermore, according to Mariadass (2005), all media channels, whether print and electronic, contribute significantly to free exposure for the local professional team.

This indicates that NTA's sports coverage might help professionalise local sports in Nigeria and elevate athletes to the status of professionals, even on a local level. Local businesses also assist advertise sport by publicizing their support of local teams in the aim of recruiting clients who are fans (Teach, 2015). Youths in sports in Nigeria rely heavily on the media for exposure because celebrity athletes are given a public face in their communities and when the celebrity athlete's lifestyle is investigated, committed family athletes are commended and held up as role models.

In addition, NTA's sports discussion programmes sometimes urge viewers to write comments about their favorite teams on social media sites or send text messages to specific phone lines. NTA's interviews with coaches and top players assist local fans in Nigeria understand a team's mindset before, during, and after a game. The media, NTA Benin emphatically, may have a detrimental impact on sports by altering how they are portrayed to the public. This occurs when only the most popular sports, like football, get significant coverage on NTA and other broadcast media stations, as well as in newspapers, and this does not serve to inspire Nigerians to participate in less popular sports like badminton, shot put and swimming. Traditionalists often resist any change in sports, believing that such changes jeopardize the game's integrity, as Woods (2016) points out.

2.3.6 The Societal Roles of Sports

There is no denying the cultural relevance of sports due to the many roles they perform. Lack of physical activity is associated with an increased risk of becoming overweight or obese, which in turn increases the risk of developing other chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Sport is more influential than any other activity in getting people to engage in health-promoting physical activity. People are drawn to sports because of its positive reputation. Yet despite sports' widely acknowledged ability to enhance healthy physical activity, this benefit is typically neglected. Daily physical activity (including but not limited to sports) of at least 30 minutes in duration is recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) for people of all ages (WHO, 2012 cited in Yakubu, 2012). However, recent studies show that enough progress is not being reached in using sports to enhance public health; this may be addressed by the media encouraging active living via national education and training systems, including teacher training.

Apostolis & Giles (2011) argue that doping and other forms of drug abuse pose a threat to the integrity of sports worldwide, including in Nigeria. It undermines the value of competition, dampens enthusiasm for sports as a whole, and puts an undue amount of stress on elite athletes. Furthermore, Johnson (2014) argues that drug misuse or doping damages the sport's reputation and poses a serious threat to athletes' health. That is why doping in sports is strictly monitored by officials and anybody caught using banned drugs is immediately kicked out of competition. Use and abuse of heavy drugs decline. Through its role in both formal and non-formal education, sports promote individual effort and health. As a result, sports contribute to the development of insight, drive, competence and willingness to put out initiative.

Accordingly, engaging in sports has positive effects on academic instruction. The structure of amateur sports as non-profit organisations and volunteers, as well as the concepts of fair play, respect for the rules of the game, courtesy to opponents, teamwork, and discipline, all inspire engaged citizenry (Yvonne, 2014). It is important to recognise and enhance the many

informal learning opportunities that arise from volunteer work with sports clubs. There are new trends in the way individuals, particularly young people, engage in sport, yet sport provides tempting chances for young people's participation and involvement in society and may help them avoid criminality. There has been a recent fall in volunteer support for amateur sports organisations as more individuals want to engage in sports on an individual basis rather than as part of a team or league (Pedersen, 2016). As a result of its potential to foster economic and social cohesion, increased community connections, and a shared sense of belonging and participation, sport has been proposed as a crucial tool for facilitating the integration of new populations and improving international relations (Johnson, 2014).

Providing immigrant and local communities with easy access to sports facilities and encouraging participation in sports-related activities is crucial in this setting. Non-profit athletic events that foster social cohesion and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups are thus social services of broad interest since they provide employment possibilities and boost economic development and revitalisation, especially in neglected regions (Johnson, 2014). There is a disturbing problem that may take various forms at athletic events, especially football stadiums, where violence has recently increased. Several other types of sporting arenas have also seen an increase in violence as a result of stadium violence. Why? Because competition in sports unites people of all sexes, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, sexual orientations, ages, and physical capacities, all bound by the common goal of triumph. Sports, on the other hand, include games and tournaments between countries and clubs of all origins, ethnicities, and tribes, and penalise players who turn aggressive, all of which assist to reduce and condemn racism, tribalism, violence, and xenophobia.

Benefits of Sports Media Coverage in Society

There is no denying that sports and media coverage have symbiotic connection. Athletes, sports teams, fans, and the business sector are all affected by the media in some way (Beck & Bosshart, 2013). The media enhances and provides entertainment for the general public, allowing individuals to experience the thrills of sporting events regardless of where they are (Kösebalaban 2004). Furthermore, the media serves as a vehicle for disseminating various sports information as well as a means for shaping viewers' perspectives on gender roles and relationships.

For example, the media divides sports into male and female categories based on the idea of hegemonic masculinity (Pedersen, 2013). Furthermore, prominent sportsmen often serve as role models in society, which explains why excellent players like John Okocha, Kylian Mbappe and Kanu Nwankwo are frequently adored by young children who desire to emulate their football accomplishments. In terms of economics, media aids in the promotion of big sporting events and the sports sector, which is considered a booming company in the marketing world (Beck & Bosshart, 2013). Indeed, sports sponsorship and ownership of live broadcasting rights for big sporting events such as the Olympic Games generate significant cash for media firms (Beck & Bosshart, 2013). On the one hand, covering sports games improves the media and brings more people into the realm of sports.

Furthermore, media is an efficient teaching instrument that teaches audiences the rules of various sports and instills the virtue of sportsmanship, and watching sports events may provide an escape from reality, particularly ones that are painful and distressing. This is

because viewers are transported to another world filled with excitement, enjoyment and a feeling of accomplishment.

Aside from the beneficial influence indicated above, several researches suggest that sports coverage is used to convey national identity (Kösebalaban, 2004). National teams develop their feeling of belonging to their country and differentiate between "us" and "them" during international sporting competitions. Kösebalaban (2004) examined articles produced by Turkish columnists and journalists during the 2012 FIFA World Cup and discovered that the newspaper remarks expressed patriotism and defined the limits between Islamic and Turkish culture. To put it another way, media coverage contributes to the formation of national identity and the strengthening of national unity.

Media has an impact on one's social identity in addition to their national identity. In conclusion, sports and the media are inextricably linked in our contemporary lives. While sports coverage is not always fair, it aids the expansion of the sports and marketing industries, as well as public engagement in sports and patriotism (Kösebalaban, 2004). Furthermore, sports games may be both fun and informative (Beck & Bosshart, 2013). Although media bias contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypes and gender inequality in society, it also emphasizes important cultural values and social challenges.

Empirical Review

Various writers have written extensively about sports coverage in the media. Oshani (2015) investigated the impact of the media on sports in Abeokuta in a study titled "Media and its Impact on Sports". The researcher looked at everything from free exposure for teams and sportsmen to how they influence the popularity of certain sports or individuals. The population of the study was 449, 000 people, and the sample size was 150 people.

The theoretical underpinning was the Agenda Setting Theory while methodology and instrument were survey and questionnaire respectively. The study's findings revealed that the media has influenced how sports are presented and perceived by people, notably on television, and thus media projection of sports profits professional sports in Nigeria by making more people interested in sports and as such willing to financially support it through sponsorship, buying of tickets to watch the event, etc. According to the study, the interaction between sports, media and the advertising business is mutually reliant and synergistic. This implies that all aspects of the system receive a fair portion, a share that everyone can only earn by assisting others. One may also argue that the above-mentioned partners' collaboration is critical to the three of them surviving.

The study's other results revealed that sports produce both news and entertainment value. As a result, both print and electronic media have turned to sports as a certain way to generate attention and income. While print media has the disadvantage of timing, they compensate by having time to set the angle, tenor, and facts of their story before delivery, according to the study. In addition, sports and sports media have the potential to influence a society's ideology through the way they present key values. As a consequence, the research concluded that sports tales should always be reported in ways that contribute to societal growth while also producing money for media outlets.

Another research, "Sport and the Media Handbook of Sports Studies", done in London by Whannel (2015), determined the impact of sports coverage on media viewers. The research

also looked at the impact of spectatorship on participation rates, gender attitudes, sexuality and racial and ethnic groupings, and discovered that gender disparity exists in sports, despite the fact that sports primarily offer amusement for the general population. The social responsibility theory served as the study's theoretical underpinning.

The study used a mixed research technique, using survey and interview as research designs. The study discovered that both print and electronic media had an impact on sports fans by improving their knowledge, enthusiasm, and interest in sports at all levels, especially professional sport in London. The study also showed that the media and big-time sports interrelationships are intrinsically linked and interconnected. As a consequence of the results, it was suggested that the media continue to record athletic events, as sports development is influenced by media reports.

“Effects of Media on Sport: A Case Study of Nigerian Television Authority's Sports Programmes in Enugu State” was conducted by Isibor (2021). The study's objectives were to determine how often NTA Enugu State covers sports, investigate the extent of NTA, Enugu sports coverage, and determine the impact of NTA, Enugu sports coverage on sports development in Nigeria. The framing and social responsibility theories served as theoretical foundations for the research. The study design was a survey, and the research instrument was a questionnaire. According to the study's findings, sports and the media have a global and local scope of activity and are linked in a complex network of relationships. According to the research, media coverage of sports fosters national development, creates revenue for a country, boosts the economy, provides a source of money for athletes, and acts as a form of enjoyment and escape for sport enthusiasts and the public. It goes on to say that the influence of a small number of large media organizations presents critical questions of access and fairness, particularly as pay-to-view sports events rise in popularity. This demonstrates that, although the media has shown a significant ability to influence the character and evolution of sports, there is no indication of opposition to commercialization from sports organisations or players.

Cunningham (2004) undertook a research titled "Media Coverage of Women's Sport: A New Look at an Old Problem" to determine the importance of coverage provided to women in sports in Nigeria in contrast to their male counterparts. The study used a content analysis research design, with the coding sheet serving as the research instrument. The framing theory was applied in this research. However, when comparing the coverage of women's sport events to men's athletic events by the Nigerian media, the study found that coverage of both sexes was more equitable during major athletic events that receive worldwide coverage, such as the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup, but outside of these, there are often high inequalities. According to the study, the 1992 Olympic's men's sports received 56 percent of total media attention, while women's athletics received 44 percent. The survey also discovered that during the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics, men's coverage fell to 53 percent, while women's coverage fell to 47 percent. The study showed that the coverage of females in the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta and the 2015 Olympics in Sydney decreased by 2.6 percent when it ought to increase. It was thus recommended based on the study's results that the media should continue to increase the exposure of women in sports since it promotes gender equality and social growth. It was also suggested that the media be more aware of its own prejudice and more inclusive in its coverage of sporting events. They argued that female and male athletes are entitled to the same amount of media attention and publicity. In terms

of future research, the author suggested that researchers should look into the relationship between the media and athletes from minority groups such as women and the physically incapacitated ones such as deaf and dumb people.

The findings of the previous empirical research are consistent with those of the present study. Previous research, on the other hand, focused primarily on gender imbalance in sports coverage in the media, rather than on the socio-developmental consequences of media sports coverage on the masses, as well as the faults and virtues of media sports coverage, as this study did.

Theoretical Framework

The framing theory was propounded by McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997). The concept is based on the assumption that how an issue is portrayed in the media may impact how others perceive it. When the way events are reported in the media has an influence on how the audience understands them, this is known as framing. The choice of language, visuals, placement, and content type employed by mass media content creators determine where and what to emphasize in a tale. The framing theory examines how the news media chooses which subjects or concerns to report. It examines the many methods in which such topics are presented.

According to Nwaoboli (2021), professional journalists shape experiences for the public, by filtering out many of the intricacies of the environment and providing a polished, possibly even poetic version in which a few items and chosen attributes are emphasised. As a result, the media are split between objectivity and persuasion via presenting style, which is underlined throughout the story filtering process. The media's framing of events helps them to organise socio-economic, political and other realities for their audiences. According to Adams & Tuggle (2004) quoting Lippman (1922), the media creates the majority of the mental images that individuals have. In essence, we experience events via the lens of the media. For example, NTA's presentation of athletic events has a significant impact on the public and influences how people see sports.

Framing is also based on Scheufele's (1991) "prospect theory," which states that the words used to depict events generally influence how receivers or audiences interpret the substance or news. Over the years, researchers such as Scheufele (2019) cited in Yusuf (2021) have characterised framing and its consequences in a variety of ways. The media occasionally selects or publishes news in such a manner that readers and viewers are led to believe that reality is as it is portrayed by the media. According to Nelson and Kinder (1996) cited in Yusuf (2021), frames impact opinion by emphasising certain values, facts and other factors, endowing them with more significance to the problem than they may seem to have under a different frame. To put it another way, frames relate to the principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation utilized by the media, politicians, and other players in an issue to interpret reality. According to numerous study definitions like Beck and Bosshart (2013), framing implies that the media not only tells the public what to believe, but also how to think about them because the media is majorly where most people get information about public events.

As a result of the attention put on the news, they also learn how much value to assign to a story. This theory applies to this research because it explains how the framing of sports stories in the media, such as NTA, may influence audience interest, engagement and involvement in such activities.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was used in this study because it helps to standardise research questions, provide as much consistency of responses as possible and enable data processing using simple coding. The population of this study is Benin City which according to the National Population Census (2016) Enumeration Area Demarcation (EAD) Data cited in Arijenwa, Nwaoboli, Ajimokunola.& Uwuoruya (2022) has a population of 1,496,000. The sample size for the study was 384. It was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size formular which is $S = \frac{X^2 NP}{(1-P) d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$. The participants for this research were chosen using a simple random selection procedure and the research instrument was questionnaire.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Frequency of viewership of NTA, Benin sports programmes

Response	Frequency	%
Very Frequent	72	19.8
Frequent	97	26.6
Not Frequent	195	53.6
Total	364	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 1 showed that 19.8% of the respondents view NTA, Benin sports programmes very frequently, 26.6% of them view it frequently and 53.6% of the respondents do not frequently view them. This connotes that most people who watch NTA sports programme do not watch the programme often.

Table 2: Level of coverage given to sports programmes on NTA, Benin City

Response	Frequency	%
Very High	164	45.1
High	172	47.3
Low	15	4.1
Very Low	13	3.6
Total	364	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 2 showed that 164(45.1%) of the respondents believe the level of coverage given to sports programmes on NTA, Benin City is very high, 172(47.3%) respondents said it is high, 15(4.1%) respondents said it is low while 13(3.6%) respondents said it is very low. This suggests that NTA give high prominence to coverage of sports programmes in Benin City.

Table 3: Most frequently covered sports by NTA, Benin City

Response	Frequency	%
Football	332	91.2
Tennis	17	4.7
Cricket	1	0.3
Volleyball	5	1.4
Others	9	2.5
Total	364	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Football is the sports NTA, Benin City covers the most. As seen on table 3, 91.2% of the respondents said football is the most covered sports in NTA, Benin City, 4.75 of the respondents said its Tennis, 0.3% of the respondents said it was cricket, 1.4% of the respondents said it was volleyball and 2.5% of the respondents said other sports aside the aforementioned were the most covered sports.

Table 4: NTA, Benin promotes foreign sports and athletes over the indigenous ones

Response	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	184	50.5
Agree	169	46.4
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	7	1.9
Strongly Disagree	4	1.1
Total	364	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 4 showed that 184(50.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed NTA, Benin promotes foreign sports and athletes over the indigenous ones, 169(46.5%) of the respondents agreed, 7(1.9%) of the respondents disagreed and 4(1.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This avows that NTA, Benin promotes foreign sports and athletes over the indigenous ones.

Table 5: Ways NTA sports coverage enhances sports in Nigeria

Response	Frequency	%
Enhancing sports participation interest among Nigerians	98	26.9
Wooing sponsors and partners in the Nigerian sports sector	47	12.9

Promoting Nigerian athletes in foreign countries	85	23.4
Promoting local sports	38	10.4
Promoting women visibility and reducing gender inequality in sports participation and coverage	30	8.2
Making sports in Nigeria more viable and lucrative	66	18.1
Total	364	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Data on table 15 showed that 26.9% of the respondents said that the way NTA, Benin sports reportage and analysis has enhanced sports development in Nigeria is by enhancing sports participation interest among Nigerians, 12.9% of the respondents said it is by wooing sponsors and partners in the Nigerian sports sector, 23.4% of the respondents said it is through promoting Nigerian athletes in foreign countries, 10.4% of the respondents said it is through promoting women visibility and reducing gender inequality in sports participation and coverage and 18.1% of the respondents said it is through making sports in Nigeria more viable and lucrative.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the effect of Nigerian Television Authority Sports' Coverage on sports development in Benin City, Edo State and in the course of the research, various findings were made. For instance, the study found that there was high viewership of sports on NTA Benin City. Thus is not surprising considering the high interest of people on sports especially football. It was further found that that was a high frequency of coverage of sports by NTA, Benin City. There is thus no denying that sports and media coverage have a symbiotic connection. Athletes, sports teams, fans, and the business sector are all affected by the media in some way. The media enhances and provides entertainment for the general public, allowing individuals to experience the thrills of sporting events regardless of where they are (Marwat, Waseem, Khattak, Abbas & Bi Bi, 2014). Furthermore, the media serves as a vehicle for disseminating various sports information as well as a means for shaping viewers' perspectives on gender roles and relationships.

Another finding of the study was that although there are several sporting activities, Benin residents watched more of football same way NTA, Benin City covers football more than any other sports. Furthermore, the study found that NTA Benin can improve its coverage of sports in Benin City by adequately financing and orientating sports journalists on the need for the coverage of sports in Benin City; making strict regulatory policies and legislative frameworks against under-reportage of sports; and comprehensively analyzing sports events and also appropriating higher time to sports programmes in Benin City.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the influence of NTA sports programme on the development of sports in Nigeria. The study concludes that NTA, Benin City covers sport stories often especially football and that sports coverage by the station in various ways help develop sporting activities in Nigeria. It is also established that without the media constantly beaming its spotlight on sporting events and athletes in Nigeria, neither their exceptional talents nor the entertainment and commercial value of sports in Nigeria would be realised.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. NTA, Benin City should allocate more time to the coverage of sports and athletes in Nigeria rather than foreign athletes and sports programmes as indigenous sports coverage will promote indigenous sports and enhance the interest of sports men and women towards participating and investing on sports in Nigeria
2. Aside football, NTA Benin should give more coverage to other sports in their programmes in order to make Nigerians also interested in other sports programme
3. Concerted efforts should be put in place by the federal government to encourage greater media coverage of sports by liberalising the media to encourage more investors to come on board and establish sports-specialised media outfits in Nigeria.
4. Adequate funding of the media and sports in Nigeria is also another critical factor in sports development. Thus, the federal and state government should evolve ways of generating, appropriating and utilizing funds for sports development in Nigeria.

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