



Vol. 5, Iss. 1 (2024), pp 436 – 446, October 1, 2024. www.reviewedjournals.com, ©Reviewed Journals

EFFECT OF SPORTS OFFICIALS' LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IN SPORTS FEDERATIONS IN KENYA

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Accepted: September 15, 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61426/business.v5i1.243>

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the determinants of implementation of corporate governance practices (CGP) in sports, with a focus on selected sports federations in Kenya. This paper presents the findings on how sports officials' level of knowledge affects the implementation of CGP in sports federations in Kenya. The research was theoretically underpinned by the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) Model anchored on the Cognitive-Affective-Behavior theory of social psychology, which holds that what one knows (knowledge), believes (attitudes) determines actions/ practice in regards to a given phenomenon. The study population consisted of 120 sports federation officials in Football Kenya Federation and Kenya Basketball Federation in 10 selected counties in Kenya. Through multi-stage sampling, participants for the study were obtained, with online questionnaires being utilized to gather data. The data was first analyzed descriptively by frequencies and percentages, and presented using charts, tables and figures. Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma Coefficient was then used to determine the ordinal association between knowledge level and the implementation of CGP in sports. Further, a multiple linear regression was undertaken to determine how officials' knowledge and attitudes predicted corporate governance practice. The study revealed that sports officials' level of knowledge of corporate governance was low. The Gamma correlation showed a strong positive association between the level of knowledge and the extent of implementation of corporate governance practices ($\gamma = 0.794$, $p < 0.05$ at $\alpha = 0.05$). The study therefore concluded that sports officials' level of knowledge was an important determinant of implementation of corporate governance in sports. From the results obtained, the study recommends that sports federations should design and implement appropriate training programs for sports managers and officials to enhance corporate governance knowledge in sports. While this study focused on football and basketball federations, future studies should replicate this research in other sports federations.

Key Words: Perceptions, Training, Sports, Knowledge

CITATION: Okoti, D., & Njihia, D. T. (2024). Effect of sports officials' level of knowledge on implementation of corporate governance in sports federations in Kenya. *Reviewed Journal International of Business Management*, 5 (1), 436 – 446. <https://doi.org/10.61426/business.v5i1.243>

INTRODUCTION

Globally, sport plays a crucial role in society. It is an avenue for instilling such values as discipline, teamwork and perseverance as well as promoting the socioeconomic development of individuals and the nations. But in spite of this, sport has from time to time suffered various corporate governance concerns that weaken the effectiveness and efficiency of its practice. As Ferkins et al. (2018) observed, governance in sports has been affected by leadership concerns all over the world, a situation that necessitates a radical turn-around to enable sports to yield maximum returns.

The international sports federations are guided and guarded by a concept of “sports autonomy” for governance in both Olympic and non-Olympic sports. This fundamental concept has been championed primarily by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as being one of the fundamental principles of Olympism. As outlined in the Olympic Charter, sports federations “have the rights and obligations of autonomy, which include freely establishing and controlling the rules of sports, determining the structure and governance of their organizations, enjoying the right of elections free from any outside influence, and ensuring good governance” (International Olympic Committee [IOC], 2023, p. 8).

It is worth noting that the Olympic Charter mentions “autonomy” and “good governance” in the same context. This may appear contradictory, like in cases where good governance is lacking because, by virtue of the very autonomy, no external party (including government) can question what is happening in the federation. The charter further provides that “Subject to the foregoing, each International Federation maintains its independence and autonomy in the governance of its sport” (p. 56). It is thus plain that federations are self-governing and do not condone any manner of external interference, including from government. For instance, when the Kenyan government suspended the FKF executive committee to pave way for investigations into the federation’s finances, it was construed as interference, which led to the banning of FKF by FIFA from participation in its activities (Pavitt, 2021). This concept of autonomy and non-interference thus creates a possible loophole that can smother accountability and corporate governance practice in the sports federations. While reviewing the extent of good governance in sport federations, Cabello-Manrique and Puga-González (2021) asserted that cases of corruption and mismanagement by leaders had been unearthed in main sporting organizations.

In most African countries, sports governance has had challenges. While examining corruption in African sport, Tsuma (2016) raised various governance concerns in sports federations in Africa, a situation which, with the passing of time, has not significantly changed for any better. For instance, Idiong and Udonquak (2022) held that in Nigeria, football had many alleged and confirmed cases of corruption, financial mismanagement, discrimination and murky sports politics. Similarly, Ayuk (2022) in Cameroon maintained that the Cameroonian football federation (Fédération Camarounaise de Football, FECAFOOT) was fighting cases of corruption and mismanagement of allocated funds. Such practice may hinder the growth of the sport and keep off potential investment partners. In Tanzania, despite there being over forty registered sports federations (Saria, 2022), sports development is still very low evidenced by poor performance of clubs and national teams in international sports competitions (Ungruhe & Schmidt, 2020).

Basketball has faced a range of governance concerns both on an international and local level. In the United States (US), research by Yin (2019) revealed instances of severe verbal aggression against female athletes during basketball games. This indicated absence (or weak enforcement) of rules governing conduct of sports technical personnel towards athletes. In the Philippines, the Sport’s governing body struggled to address underlying racial prejudices and stereotypes within basketball, particularly evident in media portrayals of African sportspersons (Rehal, 2020). While some issues receive attention, others persist without resolution. In Hawaii, for example, a basketball coach accused of sexually abusing minors faced no charges, as the lawsuits against the coach were settled out of court with no significant action taken by the federation (Ancheta, 2022).

Corporate governance as well as effective and efficient administration of public sector bodies is a fundamental concern (Mulili & Wong, 2011). The implementation of corporate governance practice is widely viewed within the corporate sphere as being crucial for elevating company performance (Economist, 2010). Scholars have offered various definitions of corporate governance, generally encompassing the procedures, structure, and processes involved in managing and directing an organization's affairs and businesses (Khan, 2011). According to agency theory, corporate governance entails ensuring that an organization is accountable, fair, and transparent in conduct of its affairs (Gouiaa, 2019). Furthermore, the Australian Standard (2003) defines corporate governance as the process of directing, controlling, and holding an organization accountable. These definitions highlight elements such as leadership, accountability, stewardship, direction, and control inherent in organizational management. Additionally, there is recognition of the necessity for checks and balances in organizational management processes. Waweru (2014) argues that high-quality corporate governance is critical for promoting good governance practice, reducing corporate failures, and safeguarding the interests of shareholders.

Statement of the Problem

Kenyan sports federations face various governance hurdles that must be addressed to ensure the effective execution of their responsibilities and operations. For instance, the Football Kenya Federation (FKF) has been rocked with diverse governance issues including financial mismanagement (Pavitt, 2021). Similarly, the World Aquatics (WA) federation also suspended Kenya from international competition since 2021 due to governance deficiencies and the inability to conduct elections in the Kenya Swimming Federation (George, 2023). Within Kenyan basketball, instances of financial exploitation and sexual misconduct involving athletes have been widely reported (Kimutai, 2021). This underscores the need to investigate why sports federations in Kenya are struggling to realize corporate governance practices.

According to Liao et al. (2022), the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice (KAP) model provides that the process of behavioral change towards adopting specific attributes involves acquiring knowledge, fostering attitudes, and implementing practices. Additionally, according to Bano et al. (2013), one's knowledge, beliefs (attitudes), and actions (practices) determine the extent of implementation of a given subject matter. Consequently, questions arise: Do officials of sports federation possess the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and practices for adopting corporate governance practices in sports? How might the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of sports federation officials influence the implementation of corporate governance within federations?

While numerous studies have scrutinized the implementation of corporate governance practices in various business firms and organizations (Cheffins, 2013; Munisi & Randøy, 2013; Obradovich & Gill, 2013; Aytakin et al., 2013; Waweru, 2014; Mateus, 2016; Gouiaa, 2019), there remains a scarcity of research specifically examining the implementation of corporate governance practices in sports, and particularly within sports federations. The three factors of the implementation process (knowledge, attitudes, and practice) have not been thoroughly investigated in terms of their role on the implementation of corporate governance practices in sports. Therefore, this study explored how sports officials' level of knowledge affects the implementation of corporate governance in sports federations in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

This study investigated how sports officials' level of knowledge affects the implementation of corporate governance in sports federations in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sports Officials' Knowledge of Corporate Governance

In the sports industry, management that implements corporate governance practices can ultimately lead to success not only in the boardroom but also on the playing field (Kartakoullis et al., 2015). These practices

include transparency, accountability, record keeping, responsibility, frequent internal audits, performance evaluation among others.

Managers' knowledge and understanding of corporate governance practices is critical for implementation of the concept. Knowing how to perform a desired behavior is a necessary precursor to behavior change (Conroy et al., 2014). This implies that sports managers' level of knowledge/ information in regard to corporate governance has a bearing on its implementation. Brakhas et al. (2022) examined the effects of sports managers' literacy on the performance of football clubs in Iranian leagues. The study used a descriptive-correlational design, and targeted all managers of football clubs in Iran leagues, and collected data using questionnaires. The study found that media literacy, technology literacy, managerial literacy and financial literacy had significant effects on the performance of football clubs. It was thus clear that sports managers need to have knowledge in different areas of managerial decision-making to solidify ground for better governance. While this study was undertaken in Iran and narrowed down to football, the current study was conducted in Kenya, and involved both football and basketball federations.

In varying contexts, knowledge has been investigated as a factor that influences implementation of good practices. Lawrence and Tar (2018) investigated the factors that influenced teachers' implementation of ICT in teaching and learning process. The study was based on diffusion theory (DT) and the technology acceptance model (TAM). Through in-depth case studies, the study generated descriptive and explanatory data in regards to the phenomenon. Among other findings, the study showed that teachers who had ICT knowledge found it easy to adopt and integrate ICT in teaching and learning process. While Lawrence and Tar (2018) based their study on DT and TAM theoretical models, the researcher will underpin the current study on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) model in the context of corporate governance in sports.

In China, Lien and Cao (2014) conducted an investigation into the motivations, trust, attitudes, and positive verbal expressions of users of *WeChat*, a mobile social media platform. The data was randomly collected from the database of *Sojump*, raising 264 valid observations. Structural equation modeling was utilized in verifying and validating the research model. Among the findings, it was revealed that information and trust positively influenced attitudes of *WeChat* users. Those with information about use of the platform had better attitudes and willingness to use the platform. This clearly indicated that knowledge/ information builds one's capacity to act as required. As earlier argued by Argyris (1993), "knowledge for action" is imperative to overcoming hindrances to organizational change.

Peña-García et al. (2020) examined the key factors that determined implementation of e-commerce based on fundamentals of social psychology, like attitudes, behavior control, perceived usefulness and ease of use. The study used a sample of 584 online consumers in Colombia and Spain. Quantitative data obtained was used to test the model by among others structural equations and measures of invariance. The study revealed that self-efficacy, that is, an individual's belief that they know and have capacity to execute actions needed to result in specific performance attainments, was a key factor in adopting electronic commerce. It thus meant that those who believed they did not know how-to had least propensity to engage in e-commerce.

Corporate governance is a fundamental governance topic which all persons in management need to have knowledge of. Vinten (2000) argued that there was need to have it incorporated into industrial and commercial training courses. This raises the question of the extent to which management training institutions have embedded corporate governance as a unit in their curriculum. Undebatable, relevant education can equip sports managers with requisite business skills for successful corporate governance. Mašala et al. (2013) investigated the effect of sports managers education on business success in basketball, volleyball and handball in Bosnian and Herzegovinian clubs. The used a stratified sample of 35 sport clubs with 525 participants. The results showed that business success in sport clubs was influenced by level of sports education of managers. This agrees with Manolachi (2017) who maintained that development of managerial skills was key for the

future of sports management. Thus, this study aimed to assess sports managers' understanding of corporate governance and its impact on the implementation of effective corporate governance within sports federations.

In Germany, Korcaj et al. (2015) investigated intentions to adopt and purchase photovoltaic (PV) systems. The study employed an online survey sample constituted of 200 homeowners who did not own a PV system participated in an online-survey. The study showed that behavior and expectations of peers, as well as attitude towards PV were strong predictors of purchase intention. It was concluded that through marketing and user information, implementation of PV systems needed would be enhanced. Having relevant knowledge through training therefore, can enhance behavioral intentions towards implementation. This study sought to establish the extent of training of managers of sports federations in corporate governance practices, and how it relates to implementation/ implementation.

Kartakoullis et al. (2015) investigated the perspectives of administrators of National Sport Federations in Cyprus on good governance and management practices. Specifically, the study looked into perceptions of good governance and management in national sports federations and the challenges experienced in introducing good governance and superior practices of management in the sports system. The results showed that there was a positive perception towards the need to consider good governance as a management practice by national sport federation administrators. Results also revealed that there was a limited understanding as well as a skill set for the application of good governance and management practice. How then can sports managers apply what they do not know? Is there any training that corporate managers undertake to enhance their capacity to adopt corporate governance practices? If so, how frequently do managers attend these training programmes. The current study inquired into these concerns among managers of FKF and KBF.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine how sports officials' level of knowledge affected the implementation of corporate governance in a case of selected sports federations in Kenya. The target population consisted of 120 officials of FKF and KBF in the 10 selected counties. The sampling frame comprised the list of all FKF and KBF officials of the 10 selected counties as provided by the respective FKF and KBF registries. The researcher used multi-stage sampling to obtain participants for the study. Yamane's formula was used to determine the sample size of 92 as the target population (Yamane, 1967).

Primary data was collected using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher to obtain data from the selected FKF and KBF officials. The questionnaire was structured into four major sections: Section I sought for demographic information of participants, and generated data on nominal scale; Section II had ordinal and interval scale questions on sports officials' perceptions of implementation of CGP in sports federations; Section III items were on ordinal scale, examining participants' knowledge and how it affects implementation of corporate governance practices; Section IV contained items on ordinal scale on attitudes of sports managers, and how they affect implementation of corporate governance practices. Questionnaires were preferred on account of their affordability and suitability for the extraction of quantitative data (Phellas et al. 2011).

Before analysing the data obtained, editing, coding, entering and data cleaning was done for completed questionnaires. All information having been collected and collated, instruments were cross-checked to isolate wrong, non-complete, or invalid data. Detected errors and omissions were corrected to improve the quality. This was followed by data coding as per the objectives of the study of the study. The data was then captured for analysis using SPSS Version 27. The data was first analyzed descriptively by frequencies and percentages and presented using tables and figures. Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma Coefficient was then used to determine the ordinal association between the knowledge of CGP and practice of CGP in sports federations.

Finally, regression analysis was undertaken to determine how the various factors under investigation predicted implementation of CGP in sports.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Response Rate

A total of 92 online questionnaires were sent to the sampled participants. The response rate was as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rate

Item	Number	%
Distributed questionnaires	92	100.0%
Returned questionnaires	56	60.9%

Feedback was received from 56 sports federation officials, which translated to a response rate of 60.9%. This was considered adequate and representative of the target population (Lindemann, 2021; Pandya, 2019).

Sports Federation Officials' Knowledge of Corporate governance practices

The study investigated how the knowledge of sports managers affected the implementation of corporate governance practices in sports federations. To achieve this, participants were asked various questions ranging from their understanding of corporate governance to their rating of sports federation officials' level of knowledge of corporate governance practices.

Extent of Sports Officials' Knowledge of the Various Aspects of CGP

The study sought to determine perceptions of respondents on the extent of sports officials' knowledge of the cardinal aspects of CGP. Their responses were as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Perceptions on Extent of Officials' Knowledge of Key Aspects of CGP

	<i>To a very large extent</i>	<i>To a large extent</i>	<i>To some extent</i>	<i>To a very little extent</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
Transparency	1 (1.8%)	4 (7.1%)	14 (25.0%)	23 (41.1%)	13 (23.2%)
Accountability	2 (3.6%)	3 (5.4%)	14 (25.0%)	17 (30.4%)	19 (33.9%)
Record keeping	2 (3.6%)	7 (12.5%)	15 (26.8%)	20 (35.7%)	11 (19.6%)
Responsibility	3 (5.4%)	6 (10.7%)	14 (25.0%)	22 (39.3%)	10 (17.9%)
Audit	1 (1.8%)	3 (5.4%)	11 (19.6%)	20 (35.7%)	20 (35.7%)
Performance evaluation	3 (5.4%)	4 (7.1%)	11 (19.6%)	19 (33.9%)	18 (32.1%)

On the question of sports officials' knowledge of what transparency, record keeping, responsibility and performance evaluation in CGP entails, majority indicated that sports officials had knowledge to very little extent. Concerning sports officials' knowledge of accountability and internal audit, majority had no knowledge at all. Analysis of the results of respondents rating of sports federation officials' knowledge of CGP showed that majority of respondents rated sports federation officials' knowledge of CGP as very low. This low level of knowledge and understanding of CGP is symptomatic of poor practice of the same, since knowing how to perform a desired behavior is a necessary precursor to behavior change (Conroy et al., 2014). As earlier maintained by Argyris (1993), "knowledge for action" is imperative to spark appropriate practice into motion.

Training in Corporate Governance Practices

The respondents were asked if officials in their federation had received any training in corporate governance practice. Their responses were as summarized in Figure 1.

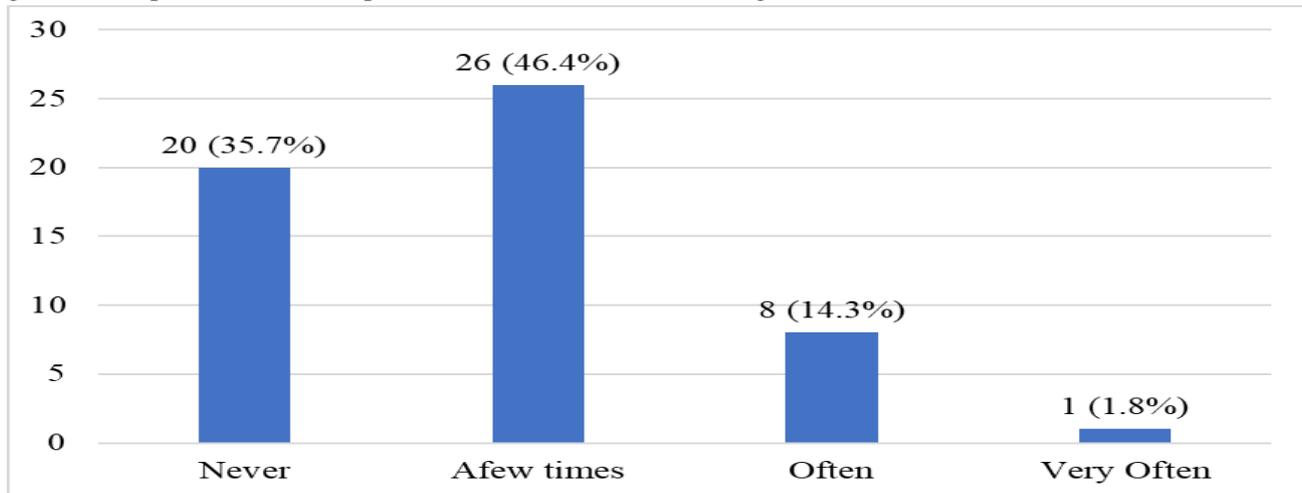


Figure 1: Training of Federation Officials in CGP.

The results showed that 20 (35.7%) of the respondents indicated that federation officials had never received training in CGP while 26 (46.4%) had been trained only a few times. Eight (14.3%) had been trained often while 1 (1.8%) had been trained very often.

Perceptions on Why Sports Officials May Fail to Implement CGP

Further, the officials were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with some explanations about why sports officials may fail to implement corporate governance practices in sports federations in relation to knowledge. Their responses were as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Perceptions on Why Sports Officials May Fail to Implement CGP

	SD (1)	D (2)	U (3)	A (4)	SA (5)
They don't know what corporate governance entails.	7 (12.5%)	12 (21.4%)	10 (17.9%)	1 (1.8%)	26 (46.4%)
They don't know how to implement corporate governance practices in their federation.	10 (17.9%)	15 (26.8%)	1 (1.8%)	7 (12.5%)	23 (41.1%)

SD=Strongly disagree; D= Disagree; U= Undecided; SA= Strongly agree

The results showed that 7 (12.5%) strongly disagreed, 12 (21.4%) disagreed, 10 (17.9%) were undecided, 1 (1.8%) agreed and 26 (46.4%) strongly agreed that sports officials may fail to implement CGP because they don't know what corporate governance practices entails. On the other hand, 10 (17.9%) strongly disagreed, 15 (26.8%) disagreed, 1 (1.8%) were undecided, 7 (12.5%) agreed, and 23 (41.1%) strongly agreed that sports officials may fail to implement CGP because they don't know how to implement it in their sports federation.

Respondents' Rating of Sports Officials' Knowledge of CGP

Finally, respondents were asked on a scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high) to rate sports officials' level of knowledge of corporate governance practices. Results were as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Respondents Rating of Sports Federation Officials' Knowledge of CGP

Very low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High (4)	Very high (5)	Mean \bar{X}
19 (33.9%)	15 (26.8%)	15 (26.8%)	5 (8.9%)	2 (3.6%)	2.2143

Figure 2 further illustrates the respondents rating of sports federation officials' knowledge of CGP.

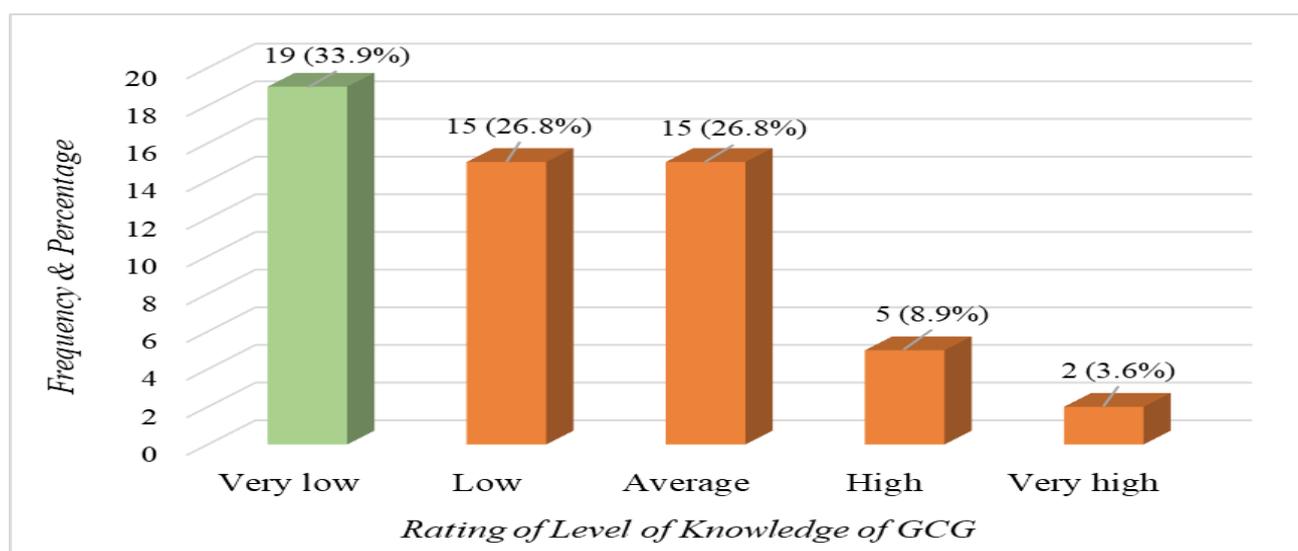


Figure 2: Respondents Rating of Sports Federation Officials' Knowledge of CGP

Analysis of the results showed that 19 (33.9%) of respondents rated sports federation officials' knowledge of CGP as very low, 15 (26.8%) as low, 15 (26.8%) as moderate, 5 (8.9%) as high and 2 (3.6%) as very high, with a mean rating of 2.2143 on a scale of 5.

Relationship Between Sports Officials' Knowledge of CGP and Implementation of CGP in Sports

Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma Correlation was performed to determine the relationship between sports officials' knowledge of CGP and extent of implementation of CGP in sports federations. The test results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Gamma Correlation for Officials' Knowledge of CGP and Extent of Implementation of CGP

		Extent of Implementation of CGP					Total
		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	
Knowledge of CGP	Very Low	16	2	1	0	0	19
	Low	3	10	2	0	0	15
	Moderate	2	4	8	0	1	15
	High	0	1	2	2	0	5
	Very High	0	1	0	1	0	2
Total		21	18	13	3	1	56
Symmetric Measures							
		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance		
Ordinal by Ordinal	Gamma	.794	.076	7.894	.000		
N of Valid Cases		56					

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The study found that there was a strong positive correlation between the sports officials' level of knowledge of CGP and the extent of implementation of CGP in the sports federation, which was statistically significant ($\gamma = 0.794$, $p < 0.001$ at $\alpha = 0.05$). The null hypothesis that "there is no statistically significant

relationship between sports officials' knowledge of CGP and extent of implementation of CGP in sports federations in Kenya" was thus rejected.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that sports officials' knowledge of CGP including transparency, record keeping, responsibility accountability and internal audit and performance evaluation was low. It was also concluded that there was inadequate training of sports federation officials in CGP, hence were ill-equipped for its implementation. Finally, from the Gamma Correlation, it was concluded that there was a strong positive correlation between the sports officials' level of knowledge of CGP and the extent of implementation of CGP, meaning that increasing sports officials' level of knowledge of CGP would enhance CGP practice in the sports federation.

The study recommends that the government in collaboration with sports federations should design and implement appropriate CGP training programmes for sports officials to enhance sports governance. Further, sports federations should organize frequent seminars/ workshops for capacity-building of their officials in sports governance knowledge. The international federations FIBA and FIFA need to provide regular sports governance training to their respective national bodies to enhance knowledge and practice of CGP.

Recommendations for Further Studies

While this study focused on football and basketball federations, future studies should replicate this research in other sports federations. Expanding the scope outside FKF and KBF would create a broader view of the phenomenon, hence provide an all-inclusive interpretation of the determinants of CGP implementation in sports federations.

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