

Influence of Club Facilities and Equipment on Talent Identification for Players in Rugby Clubs in Kenya

American Journal of Creative Education
Vol. 2, No. 4, 195-201, 2019
e-ISSN: 2706-6088



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of club facilities and equipment on talent identification for players in rugby clubs in Kenya. The club facilities and equipment included rugby pitch, gymnasium, scrum machine, tackle bags, tackle suits, hit shields, balls and marker cones. Data were collected using Questionnaires and interviews from rugby players (n= 125) and coaches (n=15) during the 2017/2018 Kenya Rugby Union league competition. Data were analyzed through both descriptive and inferential statistics of Chi- square test of independent measures. A null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the mean rugby talent identification index when the influence of the rugby players' club facilities and equipment is classified as high or low was tested. Despite the coaches view that availability of facilities and equipment has an influence on the talent identification process, the findings indicate that there is no evidence that rugby club facilities and equipment plays a significant role in talent identification for rugby players in rugby clubs in Kenya. The study however recommends that the rugby clubs should invest in good facilities and equipment as this would go a long way in ensuring player safety and minimizing the risk of injury during the talent identification process. Other studies involving the rest of the socio-cultural attributes that are likely to impact on talent identification like family, coaches, schools, peers, need to be conducted.

Keywords: Rugby, Players, Coaches, Facilities, Equipmen, Clubs, Talent.

DOI: 10.20448/815.24.195.201

Citation | Michael D. Otieno; Jacob Nteere; Vincent Onywera; Winston Akala (2019). Influence of Club Facilities and Equipment on Talent Identification for Players in Rugby Clubs in Kenya. *American Journal of Creative Education*, 2(4): 195-201.

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Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

History: Received: 6 September 2019/ Revised: 15 October 2019/ Accepted: 19 November 2019/ Published: 2 January 2020

Publisher: Online Science Publishing

Highlights of this paper

- Purpose was to investigate the influence of club facilities and equipment on talent identification for players in rugby clubs in Kenya.
- Findings indicate the facilities and equipment have no significant influence on talent identification for players in rugby clubs in Kenya.
- The study however recommends that investment in good facilities and equipment should be made for other purposes like minimizing the risk of injuries.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gore (2004) through a study which sought to reach a better understanding of how access to particular services, facilities and team mate roles affect athletic talent development, indicated that access to facilities was important to all athletes. Rosandish (2008) further suggests that the application of information technology to sports management has dramatically changed the way business is done in the field of sports. This kind of equipment and tools can be widely used to enhance outcomes. He emphasizes that the tools are briskly becoming a prerequisite for the sports administrator at whatever level and that they are a compelling force for social inclusion in sport and recreational occupation and for the profession as a whole.

Sportsmen and women must have a conducive environment in which to train and compete; conducive in terms of adequate, well prepared and well kept facilities and equipment. Without these essentials, the enthusiasm, dedication and the will to win, characteristic of the seasoned athletes will not be there. Adequate physical facilities and equipments are necessary for talent identification leading to effective sports performance. Is it then possible that investment in adequate facilities and equipment could impact on the development of rugby in Kenya through the talent identification process? Kenya has asserted her authority at playing the rugby sevens version of the game. Since 2004, Kenya has been a core member of the World Rugby sevens series and has also played in 3 successive sevens world cup tournaments the highest ranking being when they played in the the semi finals of the 2009 sevens world cup held in Dubai. They almost repeated the feat again at the 2013 sevens world cup held in Moscow where they attained fourth position. The peak of their performance was when they won the world rugby series Singapore leg in April 2016. However Kenya, like other third world countries, continues to lag light years behind the top rugby playing nations such as South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and England in the fifteens version of the game. One of the reasons could be due to lack of adequate facilities and equipment for training in the rugby clubs. Could this therefore have had an influence on the talent identification process hence not attracting quality players?

Indeed as it appears facilities and equipment has an impact on physical activity. Moreover for success to be achieved in the sport in Kenya, investment in facilities and equipment is of utmost importance. It is in this line that the study investigated the influence of facilities and equipment on talent identification for rugby clubs in Kenya. The study was guided by the following objectives:

- 1) What is the impact of club facilities and equipment on talent identification in rugby clubs in Kenya?

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean rugby talent identification index when the influence of the rugby players' clubs' facilities and equipment is classified as high or low

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Adeyeye and Kehinde (2013) sought to examine the influence of motivation and availability of facilities on athletes' performance in Nigeria University Games with the aim of finding the areas of success and failure. Questionnaires were administered to 210 participants from 6 Nigerian universities in south western Nigeria. The participants included sports administrators, male and female athletes. The findings of the data showed that equipment and facilities were not adequate and funds were not enough while athletes were not well motivated in

Nigeria University Games. Robert (2012) carried out a research on the impact of Campus Recreational Sports Facilities and Programs on Recruitment and Retention among African American Students. The study aimed to assess the impact of campus recreational sports facilities and programs on student recruitment and retention among male and female African American students. It was determined that 60% of the male students reported that the availability of recreational sports was important/very important in deciding to attend the college and 68% of the men reported that the availability of recreational sports was important/very important in deciding to continue attending the college. Men scored higher than women when it came to importance of the availability of recreational facilities and programs in deciding to attend the school, the importance of the availability of recreational facilities and programs in deciding to continue at the school and how important sports and fitness activities will be to them after graduation. Barghchi *et al.* (2010) conducted a research study on sports facilities construction in Malaysia. They observed that sports and sports facilities development have improved rapidly over the past years in Malaysia but feel that such improvement is inadequate compared to the overall development of sports at international level. Their study used the expert opinions of town planners, as key players in decision making in the Malaysian context. The findings from the research revealed that although, in Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) emphasis is placed on creating a sports culture among Malaysian, sports facilities have not gained new role as the global trends, yet. The researchers feel that there is still a need for a new perspective and a new approach to improve the existing sports facilities and for future development.

In the study conducted by Oketch (2012) whose aim was to investigate the psychological satisfaction of male Kenya Rugby Union registered university rugby players with technical and institutional managerial support, it was revealed that universities need to invest more on equipment, facilities, incentives and financial support. This therefore supports the need for a study on how club facilities and equipment influences talent identification for sports in Kenya and specifically for rugby clubs in Kenya.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

A descriptive survey design was used to collect data.

3.2. Sample

Data was collected from 95 rugby players and 15 rugby coaches from 25 rugby clubs who competed in the 2017/2018 Kenya Rugby Union league competitions. The study targeted 125 players and 25 coaches but only 95 players' responded and 15 coaches were available for interviews representing response rates of 76% and 60% respectively.

3.3. Research Instruments

A self administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the rugby players. Section A of the questionnaire included demographics like age, playing experience, academic qualifications and occupation. Section B focused on the availability of rugby facilities and equipment in the clubs and a ranking of the level of influence of this equipment on talent identification was also indicated in this section.

The interview schedule that was used to collect data from the rugby coaches had the first part consisting of demographic information on the interviewee such as age, educational background, coaching certification level and coaching experience. The second part focused on the coaches' perception on the influence of the club facilities and equipment on the talent identification process for rugby players in Kenya. In both test instruments, items on the

influence of talent identification had a ranking response scale of very influential, influential, fairly influential and not influential. For the rest of the items both open-ended and close ended questions were used.

Table-1. Cross tabulation on the influence of club facilities and equipment on talent identification.

		Club facilities and equipment and talent identification process			
		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%
Rugby pitch	Most influential	29	50.0	17	60.7
	Influential	17	29.3	10	35.7
	Fairly influential	8	13.8	0	0.0
	Not influential	4	6.9	1	3.6
					100.0
	Total	58	67.4	37	32.6
Gymnasium	Most influential	19	33.3	12	42.9
	Influential	14	24.6	11	39.3
	Fairly influential	6	10.5	3	10.7
	Not influential	18	31.6	2	7.1
					100.0
	Total	58	67.4	37	32.6
Scrum machine	Most influential	8	15.7	6	25.0
	Influential	7	13.7	8	33.3
	Fairly influential	14	27.5	4	16.7
	Not influential	22	43.1	6	25.0
					100.0
	Total	58	67.4	37	32.6
Tackle bags	Most influential	8	15.1	7	30.4
	Influential	15	28.3	6	26.2
	Fairly influential	9	17.0	5	21.7
	Not influential	21	39.6	5	21.7
					100.0
	Total	58	67.4	37	32.6
Tackle suits	Most influential	4	7.5	6	26.1
	Influential	9	17.0	5	21.7
	Fairly influential	8	15.1	2	8.7
	Least influential	32	60.4	10	43.5
					100.0
	Total	58	67.4	37	32.6
Hit shields	Most influential	4	7.8	5	22.7
	Influential	10	19.6	6	27.3
	Fairly influential	7	13.7	4	18.2
	Least influential	30	58.8	7	31.8
					100.0
	Total	58	67.4	37	32.6
Balls	Most influential	31	55.4	17	58.6
	Influential	16	28.6	6	20.7
	Fairly influential	5	8.9	4	13.8
	Least influential	4	7.1	2	6.9
					100.0
	Total	58	67.4	37	32.6
Marker cones	Most influential	13	23.2	6	26.1
	Influential	21	37.5	9	39.2
	Fairly influential	7	12.5	3	13.0
	Least influential	15	26.8	5	21.7
					100.0
	Total	58	67.4	37	32.6

The instruments were validated by a team of lecturers from the school of education at the University of Nairobi who were specialists in research methodology and the draft test instruments were modified based on their

recommendations. The test instruments were also piloted using 15 players and 3 coaches from 3 clubs who did not participate in the study. A test-re-test technique was subsequently used to test for reliability and the Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation (r) formula was used to correlate the pre-test and post-test results in order to determine the coefficient of reliability. The test was re-administered after 2 weeks.

The reliability coefficients were 0.78 for the questionnaires. The responses were coded and analyzed using both descriptive (percentages and frequencies) and inferential statistics (Chi-square test).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Players Response to Influence of Club Facilities and Equipment on Talent Identification

The researcher used 8 items in the rugby players' questionnaire to examine the influence of club facilities and equipment on talent identification through cross tabulation using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences(S.P.S.S). The results are presented in Table 1.

The findings in Table 1 show that 50 % of the players reported that rugby pitch was the most influential facility on the talent identification process while 3.6 % of the players indicated that rugby pitch was the least influential facility on talent identification. 33.3 % of the players however revealed that the gymnasium was the most influential facility on the talent identification process while 7.1 % of the players pointed out that this was the least influential facility on talent identification.

A proportion of 43.1 % of the players specified that the scrum machine was the least influential equipment on the talent identification process while 16.7% of the respondents indicated that the scrum machine was fairly influential equipment on the talent identification process. Additionally 39.6% respondents indicated that tackle bags were fairly influential on the talent identification process.

60.4% of the players indicated that tackle suits were least influential on the talent identification process while 58.8% of the respondents indicated that hit shields were least influential on the talent identification process. 55.4% of the players indicated that the rugby balls were most influential on the talent identification process while 37.5% of the players indicated that marker cones were influential on the talent identification process.

4.2. Coaches Response on the Influence of Club Facilities and Equipment on Talent Identification

The coaches were required to indicate whether the availability of equipment in their clubs influenced the talent identification process in their clubs. The findings are presented in Figure 1.

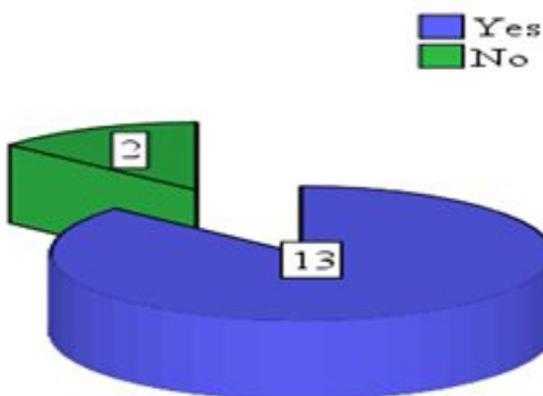


Figure-1. Coaches' responses on the influence of club facilities and equipment on talent identification.

The findings in Figure 1 show that majority 87 % of the coaches indicated that availability of facilities in their club influenced the talent identification process while only 13 % of the coaches indicated that this did not influence the talent identification process.

The Chi-square test was done to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the mean rugby talent identification index and when the rugby players' club facilities and equipment is classified as high or low. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table-2. Chi-Square tests on the influence of club facilities and equipment on talent identification for rugby clubs in Kenya.

	Value	Df	p-value
Rugby pitch	4.873	3	.181
Gymnasium	6.617	3	.085
Scrum machine	6.125	3	.106
Tackle bags	3.638	3	.303
Tackle suits	5.715	3	.126
Hit shields	5.588	3	.133
Balls	.923	3	.820
Marker cones	.235	3	.972

Note: P < 0.05 Reject the null hypothesis.
 P > 0.05 Accept the null hypothesis.

From Table 2 the p-value 0.181, 0.085, 0.106, 0.303, 0.126, 0.133, 0.820 and 0.972 > 0.05 gives an average p-value of 0.341. The P value (0.341) is less than the significance level (0.05). The conclusion was therefore to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the mean rugby talent identification index when the influence of the rugby players' club facilities and equipment is classified as high or low. The findings consequently suggest that there is no evidence that the clubs' facilities and equipment plays a significant role in talent identification for rugby players in rugby clubs in Kenya.

The attribute however under club facilities and equipment with the highest p-value is marker cones with a p-value of 0.972. The attribute with the least p-value is gymnasium with a p-value of 0.085. This is an interesting finding as the gymnasium is expected to have the highest p value since the players had pointed out the gymnasium as the most important attribute.

5. DISCUSSION

Despite the coaches view that availability of facilities and equipment has an influence on the talent identification process, the findings indicate that there is no evidence that rugby players' clubs' facilities and equipment plays a significant role in talent identification for rugby players in rugby clubs in Kenya. This does not agree with views Gore (2004) who has clearly pointed out that quality and accessible training facilities and equipment create a positive environment that encourages proper training. Oketch (2012) has even identified a need to invest in facilities and equipment to improve the club facilities and equipment. The situation in Kenya however suggests that the club facilities and equipment has no significant influence on talent identification as illustrated by a club like Mwamba Rugby Club which has remained very competitive in the league competitions despite being a self supporting club with even no permanent grounds for training. Indeed they have even managed to attract some of the best players in Kenya. Access to good facilities and equipment will however always act as a powerful force for inclusion in sport and recreational activity as indicated by Rosandish (2008). It is therefore an area that requires investment by the rugby clubs in Kenya not necessarily to influence the talent identification process but to motivate the players and also assure safety when training

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established that club facilities and equipment infrastructure has no significant influence on talent identification for rugby players in rugby clubs in Kenya. Based on the study findings, the following were recommended.

1. Despite the findings indicating no evidence of a relationship between the influence of the rugby players' clubs' infrastructure and talent identification for rugby players in rugby clubs in Kenya, It is the feeling of the researcher that the rugby clubs should invest in good facilities and equipment his would go a long way in ensuring player safety and minimizing the risk of injury during the talent identification process.
2. Other socio-cultural attributes like family, peers, schools and coaches be included in other studies on how they impact on talent identification on rugby players in Kenya.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The research was conducted based on a sample from the rugby clubs in Kenya. We thank the players and the coaches who participated in the study and the clubs' management for having initiated access to the respondents

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