

Assessing Management Practices of Sport Facilities and Equipment by the Municipality Council

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The main purpose of this study was to assess the strategies adapted in managing sports facilities and equipment at the Kwekwe city council. Important conditions under discussion were the use of space, facilities and standard equipment that is based on international standards and laws passed in every field of sports federations.

Method: This descriptive survey involved 80 participants who were purposively sampled. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied. Survey questionnaires and structured interview were used for data collection. Research reliability was measured by Cronbach's alpha test; $\alpha = 0.87$ Statistical analysis were done using SPSS v20.0 at $p \leq 0.05$.

Results: The study showed that the facilities and equipment are not being properly maintained. There are no enough storage facilities for the movable before and after equipment which results in them being damaged. The study revealed sub-standard management of sports facilities and equipment, irregular inspections and maintenance of the facilities and equipment prior to competitions, thereby exposing participants to dangers of injuries and infections.

Conclusion: Kwekwe city council through the department of community services together with the ministries of sports and local government should appoint an appropriately qualified facilities and equipment manager.

Key words: Assessment, sports facilities, equipment, Kwekwe city council

and objectives of City Council require the provision, maximum utilization and appropriate management of the facilities and equipment. Any responsible organisation should make sure that they understand the basic elements of managing sports facilities and equipment (Zivdar Z & Zivdar B. 2014). Furthermore, advances in science and technology, necessitate that the facilities and equipment managers should adopt modern methods of facilities management, hence, the sports facilities and equipment managers in municipality council should be aware of the standard of care they owe to participants. City council and sport organisations are expected to provide a high level and standard of care for the safety and security of their community members and patrons.

Sports facilities are referred to as mainly the immovable structures for sport practice, maintenance, repair and health, in which safety issues should be considered by authorities. Equipment refers to mainly movable items that last a minimum number of years, which are non-consumable, but are used for a period of time (Simpson and Anderson (1981). It is the sports manager's main responsibility to make sure that facilities and equipment which are available and purchased will support the overall programs of an organisation. From the time Zimbabwe was hit by the introduction of economic sanctions that extended to sporting facilities, public sports facilities are rated less than desired in terms of operational efficiency and financial performance hence not considered

INTRODUCTION

Facilities management is an integral part of the overall management of an organisation. The actualisation of the goals

satisfactory for the community. Many sports facilities completely owned by the government are affected by face budget deficits, hence most of them are dilapidated (Matthews, 1999, Ahmadi et al., 2006; Farsi, (2007).

Sports facilities and equipment should meet program needs, acquired, properly accounted for and be of good quality and maintained for future use (Matthews, 1999, Zivdar Z & Zivdar B. 2014). Good sporting facilities and equipment care ensures longevity and safety. An organization that involves sport programs that are competitive or non-competitive should have the facilities and equipment that are adequate and properly managed in order for the programs to run efficiently. On the other hand, equipment that is not being properly managed and not up to standard will negatively affect the performance of the individuals or teams (Walker, 2001). Knezevich (1975) and Slack (2004) emphasise that the physical needs are met through provision of safe structure, adequate sanitary facilities, a balanced visual environment, appropriate thermal environment, and sufficient shelter space for a sports person's work and play. His emotional needs are met by creating pleasant surrounding, a friendly atmosphere, and an inspiring environment. Facilities and equipment should be of the highest quality and should accommodate the specific needs of participants; both able-bodied and physically challenged persons. Any activity may find the meaning and being achieved when it develops in a safe environment with standard equipment. Note that the main purpose of physical activities is to maintain good health; and it will lose its value if the activity put the main procedure of physical education and sport at risk (Matthews, 1999, Lhotsky, 2006, Zivdar Z & Zivdar B. 2014). Sports facilities can provide good opportunities for emotional, cognitive, perceptual, and social growth of different groups within the community.

It is important that all sports managers and facility managers in any

institution or organisation understand the basic elements of sports facilities and equipments. If the basic elements of managing sports are understood then the facility and equipment management process should be more efficient, requires less manpower and be easier for person(s) directly controlling equipment (Appenzeller, 2003). Participants and spectators should be educated and made aware of the rules, organizations and safety requirements of the specific sport environment and recreational facilities.

Safety in sports facilities has been taken into consideration by sports science experts, sports medicine and health authorities. The expression of "Safety at Work" must be put in the agenda of sports coaches and plan designer in sports facilities (Slack, 2004, Zivdar Z & Zivdar B. 2014). In particular, it has been challenged sports experts and health authorities. The major problems sports facilities may face include: inappropriate equipment purchased, poor design, lack of safety and technical standards and principles, supervision, construction and exploitation phases; application of improper equipment; shortage of planning and scheduling for the maintenance and protection of sports facilities and equipment; non-standard and exhausted materials. These problems can be because of corrupt sporting administrators and incompetent facility and equipment managers, hence may result in legal suits, sports injuries, economic losses, and athletic deficiency (Appenzeller, 2003, Esmaeili, 2011).

The major task of sports facilities management is to create safe and health environments for sporting users (Fiyozat, 2003, Singh, 2006, Zivdar Z & Zivdar B. 2014). Emergency procedures should be reinforced and practiced whenever possible. If there is a need to adopt a specific safety code, then its benefit should be explained and people always reminded of its importance. Facilities and equipment that are well maintained and managed are one of the best public consumer relation tools. City

council and sport organisations are therefore expected to provide a reasonable standard of care, safety and security of users of their facilities and equipment. If the standard of care which is expected from a coach, physical educator, instructor and spectator for ensuring safety and security and proper equipment is not taken care of, they will be inviting harm or injuries and litigations. The risk of unsafe equipment, hazardous play spaces, fields and courts that have not been maintained and inspected regularly cannot be assumed (Singh, 2006).

Given there is not been a great number of studies on the management and safety issues in government, it is necessary to suggest sustainable strategies that can be employed to ensure effective care of sport facilities and equipment by the ministries of sports, local government and town councils. The current paper seeks to assess the management of sports facilities and equipment in municipality council focusing on the procedures and strategies used to manage sports facilities and equipment. Also, to examine the strategies adapted by the Kwekwe City council in managing sports facilities and equipment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS (METHODOLOGY)

Research Paradigm

The sample chosen for this study comprised of 80 participants from the Kwekwe City council, the sample distributions were as follows:

- a) Administrative (Department of community and social welfare)
- b) Maintenance staff (Department of works), caretakers, etc
- c) Spectators (sports spectators- supporters of sports clubs that use the facilities)
- d) Special needs athletes (people who need special adapted facilities and equipment in different sports)
- e) Coaches of different sports disciplines who frequently use the sports facilities and equipment to train their teams

- f) Athletes from different sport disciplines as users of the facilities and equipment leased to their clubs by the city council.
- g) Physical education teachers who frequently use the facilities and equipment.

Research design

This study utilised a descriptive survey research design. Both qualitative and quantitative research approach were implemented for data collection. A purposive sampling technique was used. Statistical population includes all sports facilities of city council located in Kwekwe district composed of 5 sports complexes. Research hypotheses were analysed by using descriptive statistical methods and SPSS v20.0 software.

Research instruments

A validated, self-developed, structured questionnaire and a facility checklist were used to generate data for the study. A facility safety inspection checklist was applied. Research reliability was measured by Cronbach's alpha test; $\alpha = 0.87$. The questionnaire was made up of two sections; A and B. Section A contained items designed to elicit demographic information from the respondents and section B contained items designed in a modified Likert Scale format with response options in three scales viz: Yes, Undecided, and No.

Ethical Issues

Carrying out observation of physical education, sport and recreational facilities and equipment was a sensitive venture that could have revealed inadequacies in the Kwekwe City council under study and the researcher's intentions might have been misconstrued for 'inspection'. The researcher requested for the permission to conduct the research in selected study areas from; the Town Mayor and the Director of Housing for Kwekwe city council. The respondents were made fully aware of the nature, objectives, purpose and methods of

data collection of the research. Informed consent was included in the study to ensure that all data collected from the respondents was coded to protect their identity. They were also guaranteed of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses as well as their rights to participate in the study.

Data analysis and Interpretation

After gathering all the completed questionnaires from the respondents, total responses for each item were tabulated and given as pie charts. Data were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed using descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Sport facilities and equipment

Results: Distribution of respondents' view	Yes	Undecided	No
Does the Kwekwe City council have enough storage room to store all available sports equipment?	16 (20%)	24 (30%)	40 (50%)
Does the Kwekwe City council replace or repair damaged facility and equipment?	16 (20%)	20 (20%)	34 (68%)
Are there people who are in charge of the facilities and equipment in every sporting code?	46 (57.5%)	12(15%)	22 (27.5%)
Are all sporting facilities and equipment insured against any risk?	20 (25%)	8 (10%)	52 (65%)
Are there any incidents which resulted to injuries to participants due to improper sports facilities and equipment condition?	42(52.5%)	8(10%)	30(37.5%)
Does the Kwekwe City council have a proper record of all available sports facilities and equipment?	43 (86%)	7(14%)	-
Is there any action taken against participant who misuses or damages sports facilities and equipment which belongs to the Kwekwe City council?	16 (20%)	20 (25%)	44 (55%)
Are people who are responsible for cleaning and maintaining sports equipment?	-	30(37.5%)	50(62.5%)
How often do sports managers supervise all sports equipment	10(12.5%)	30(37.5%)	40(50%)

Table 2: General safety in Sports facilities and Equipment

Variable	n = 5	Anova
	Mean ± SD	p-value
Sports facilities	13.45 ± 4.31	0.063
Equipment	36.89 ± 10.72	0.076

*Significant level at P<0.05. NS - Not significant

There is no significant difference in safety of sports facilities and equipment. Some of the sporting facilities are very risk to the Kwekwe community, forced the city council to close such areas.

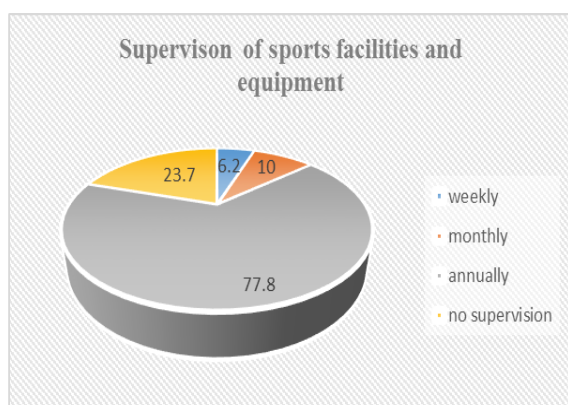


Figure 1: Supervision of Sports Facilities and Equipment

The majority (77.8%) of the population reported that all sports facilities and equipment was supervised once a year. However 23.7% reported that there was no special supervision of all sports equipment at the Kwekwe City council.

DISCUSSION

The results show that safety in sports facilities of Kwekwe city council is at risk across sporting disciplines. Sports fields in sports facilities should have proper safety (Farsi 2006, Finch et al. 2000, Bay 2008) In contrast, the present result is consistent with the findings of Consumer Union of America (2000, 2002) showed that current sports fields did not have protective floor and surface (Bay, 2008; Farsi, 2006). Although the standards for each athletic course within sports fields are very expensive and difficult to maintain; it is necessary to offer minimum requirements of safety.

The findings in this study portray that there was no enough storage facilities to store all sports equipment. Appenzeller (2003) alluded to this when he stated that due to the shortage of storage spaces, it is virtually impossible to maintain all sports equipment.

It should be a common practice for managers to create reasonable storage spaces in order to properly maintain those equipments. It also reflected in the findings that sports equipment managers do not supervise all equipment regularly. This resulted in managers not being aware of how they should replace or repair damaged equipments as they may not be aware of

material damages to sports equipment. The results of study also showed that there were people in charge of sports equipment in every sporting code. Practically, all sports activities require the use of equipment. It is the responsibility of the manager to make sure that there is at least a person responsible for sports equipment in every sporting code.

Youell (1995) mentioned that it is responsibility of all sports managers to make sure that all sports equipment is insured against any potential risk. However, the current findings are inconsistent with the results of (Sayah et al., 2005, Petrido, 2002) who found that using non-standard and exhausted equipment were the most important reason for sports injuries (Sayah, 2004; Farsi, 2006). This shows negligence from sports equipment managers as the health and safety of participants must never be compromised or sacrificed. Insuring all sports equipment makes it possible to reduce risk, injuries and the probabilities of major litigation.

From the study, it was also deduced that the Kwekwe City council did not have a proper record of all sports equipment available. This makes it difficult for sports managers to recognize what must be bought or replaced. This also makes it difficult for sports managers at the Kwekwe City council to provide enough storage spaces as they may not have a clear record of all sports equipment. This makes it difficult to lease equipment and facilities to clubs and sports people if there is no inventory.

It was also deduced that there was no action taken against any participant who misuses or damages sports equipment which belonged to the Kwekwe City council. Consequently, participants do not take necessary responsibility in maintaining and taking care sports equipment. A security deposit for use of facilities and equipment should be charged for any hire. The Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture has edged the city councils to reduce the hiring charges, but does not rule charging for use of sports facilities and equipment by city councils.

City councils should therefore take advantage of this recommendation from the minister and ensure they collect reasonable revenue from the hiring facilities and equipment enables the city councils to carry audits of the facilities and equipment and come up with reasonable and acceptable budgets by the residents.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that managing sports facilities and equipment is negligible at the Kwekwe City council. It further shows that there is no regular inspection and supervision of sports facilities and equipment available at the Kwekwe City council. The city council should abandon the use of old and exhausted equipment. Maintenance and repair are inappropriate to the extent that the equipment would be possible to re-use; otherwise, leaving such equipment is the best way to follow safety rules. Though there are managers of sport facilities and equipment at the Kwekwe City council, they do not replace or repair damaged sports facilities and equipment. Furthermore, there are no disciplinary committee which is instituted to probe the misuse of sports facilities and equipment at the Kwekwe City council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Equipment and facility areas that are not in use should be securely locked. Even when participants are not supposed to be in a certain area or use certain equipment, they can be attracted to use them by the nature of the equipment or facility setting, for example a trampoline left unsupervised is likely to attract passer-by to jump onto it, people are likely to have free access to a swimming pool or a stadium that is left unlocked.

A clear record of all sports facilities and equipment available must be kept in order to maintain and control them. This will also provide a brief direction of sports equipment areas that need to be developed.

Conflict of interest: There is no conflict of interest declared.

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