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## ROLES OF NIGERIAN AIR FORCE PERSONNELS' INVOLVEMENT IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SPORTS CHAMPIONSHIPS ON ENHANCING SPORTS DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examined the roles of Nigerian air force personnel's involvement in national and international sports championships on enhancing sports development in Nigeria. Ex-post facto research design was used. The population of this study comprised all the Nigeria Air Force personnel. Stratified random sampling and purposive sample technique were used to select the respondents from the population. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Out of four hundred (400) copies of questionnaires administered, three hundred and eighty (380) copies of questionnaires were valid and used for the analyses. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and one sample t-test statistics. All the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The results obtained revealed that there is significant role of Nigerian Air Force personnel's involvement in National and International sports competitions on sports development in Nigeria. It was recommended that there is need to improve the recruitment of sportsmen and women into the Nigerian Air Force in order to promote sports development in Nigeria.

### INTRODUCTION

The armed forces of a nation constitute an effective instrument of national power. The Nigerian Air Force as a component of the Nigeria Armed Forces is one of the instruments by which the nation can apply that power. The Nigerian Air Force has the responsibility of defending the Nigeria airspace by the use of air power and ensuring that other sister services derive maximum benefits from air power in their respective areas of operation (The airman magazine October 2011). Historically, the idea of establishing an Air Force for Nigeria was first mooted in 1961 following the nations' participation in peace-keeping operations in Congo and Tanganyika (now Tanzania). During these peace-keeping operations, foreign air forces aircraft were employed to airlift the Nigerian Army regiment to and from the theatres of operation. The Nigerian Government at the time, no doubt, recognized the urgent need

to establish an air force to enhance the nation's military posture. Early in 1962, the Government agreed in principle that the Nigerian Air force (NAF) be established. The Nigerian parliament, therefore, approved the establishment of the NAF and recruitment of cadets commenced in June 1962 (Habibu, 2014)

Armed forces worldwide organize games for military personnel which takes place annually. Kabear (2009) stated that during the Second World War, Canada trained the allied air force under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). The plan brought air force training schools to all parts of Canada, this exercise brought the military closer to civilians than before. As military and civilians communities began to interact and build relationships, sports became a bond through which civilians and military personnel found common interest with young men and women leaving the war to join sports leagues especially the senior leagues which were the main sports entertainment. Aibueku (2002), lamented that with the attainment of independence in 1960, sports became the main focus and under government direct control at the ministerial level. The post civil war Nigeria values sports, led to the upgrading of the National Sport Council in early 1970s to the National Sports Commission with a measure of executive responsibilities for sport development, management and organization throughout the country. Omo-Osagie (1987), reported that the creation of the twelve (12) state structures by the Yakubu Gowon administration facilitated the growth of sports in the country. Furthermore, the presence of the American Peace Corps Volunteers in most of the nation's educational institutions witnessed the introduction of basketball and volleyball in the country with recognition of roles of sport in bringing government at all levels started investing huge sums in the organization of sports festival, school sports, funding of international sporting events as well as engagement in capital intensive construction of sports facilities like stadium, gymnasium, swimming pools, court for various ball and racket games (Aibueku, 2002).

Sporting activities to military personnel is very important as it is a well known fact that military duties are physically tasking and rigorous in nature. Therefore, for military personnel to function effectively, they must



be physically fit while maintaining high state of mental and emotional fitness (McPerson, 2002). Nigerian Air Force on its part has not kept any written record that shows its commitment or participation in any sporting competitions organized nationally or internationally. Based on the above reasons, the researcher developed interest to conduct this study with the aim of assessing the role of personnel's involvement in national and international championships on enhancing sport development in Nigerian to ensure sustainable sport development in Nigeria by finding answer to the question that Do Nigerian Air Force personnel's involvement in National and International sports championships enhanced sports development in Nigeria?

## METHODOLOGY

Ex-post facto research design was considered suitable for this study. The population of this study comprised all Nigerian Air Force with the population of 15,000 Air Force personnel as at 2014 (NAF record 2014). The commands are Logistics command with its Headquarters in Lagos, Training Command with its Headquarters in Kaduna, Tactical Command with its Headquarters at Benue (Makurdi) and the mobility command with its Headquarters at Bayelsa.

**Table 1: Population**

S/N	Commands	Population
1	Logistics (Lagos)	5314
2.	Training (Kaduna)	4453
3.	Tactical (Benue)	3061
4	Mobility (Bayelsa)	2172
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15000</b>

Source: NAF record (2014)

For the purpose of this study, stratified random sampling was used. This is to ensure that relevant characteristics of the respondents are not ignored in the sample. The sample size used in this study was 400 Air Force Personnel's using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), table for obtaining sample size from a given population. The instrument for this study was close-ended questionnaire. All items were measured using five (5) point Likert scale. The researcher administered questionnaire to the respective

command officer of the selected commands in order to obtain data for the study. Questionnaire was given to the Nigeria Air Force personnel's at the four (4) commands and they were guided on how to fill the questionnaire for the purpose of data collection. Data collected for this study were subjected to statistical analysis of one sample t-test to test the hypothesis.

## RESULT

**Research Question:** Do Nigerian Air Force personnel's involve in National and International sports championships enhanced sports development in Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Means Score of Responses for the roles of Nigerian Air Force Personnel's involvement in national and international sports championships enhanced sports development in Nigeria.

S/N	Items	Mean	STD.
1	Nigerian Air Force provide some athletes that represent Nigeria in International sports competitions	4.6895	.52725
2	Nigerian Air Force have athletes in national teams of major Sports for national and international sports competitions, like, football, basketball, athletics, and tennis.	4.2263	.48876
3	Nigerian Air Force provides substantial medalist in various national sports festivals in Nigeria.	4.5184	.62674
4	Nigerian Air Force athletes who took part in the international sports competitions won medals.	4.2053	.59013
<b>Aggregate mean</b>		<b>4.4099</b>	

Constant mean= 3.5

Table 2 above showed that Nigerian Air Force personnel's engaged in National and International sports championships. The aggregate mean of responses 4.4099 was found to be higher than the decision mean of 3.5. To answer the research question, since the aggregate mean is higher than the constant mean, it can be concluded that Nigerian Air Force personnel's involve in national and international sports championships enhanced sports development in Nigeria.



**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant role of Nigerian Air Force personnel's involvement in national and international sports championships on sports development in Nigeria.

**Table 3: One sample t-test analysis of Nigerian Air Force personnel's involvement in national and international sports championships on sports development in Nigeria.**

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	P-value
Actual mean	4.4099	.55822	3.170	379	0.031
Constant mean	3.5	0.00			

**t (379) = 1.972, P value < 0.05**

From the above result of analysis presented, it shows that the probability value is less than 0.05 level of significance. The t-value value 3.170 is greater than the t-critical is 1.972 at degree of freedom 379 using two tailed significant level. The null hypothesis which states that "There is no significant role of Nigerian Air Force personnel's involvement in National and International sports championships on sports development in Nigeria" is therefore rejected.

## DISCUSSION

The result of this study revealed that there is significant role of Nigerian Air Force personnel's involvement in National and International sports competitions on sports development in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with Mason and Riedi (2010) who stressed the development of modern organized sport and the importance of civilian-military interaction in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Military attitudes toward civilian sport were initially hostile, but sporting activities could improve these working relations, as seen in the example of association football and the figure of Reginald John Kentish. Playing with civilian athletes helped raise military sporting standards, and the military sport control boards' affiliation with their associated civilian governing bodies encouraged the development and organization of service sport. As the authors demonstrate, the importance of improving civilian-military interaction during the years before the Second World War was crucial in resolving

tensions inherent in the debate over professionalism in the services while also strengthening the role of sport in the military.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that recruitment of sportsmen and women (as personnel involved) into the Nigerian Air Force has significant impact on sports development in Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher therefore recommends that there is need to improve the recruitment of sportsmen and women who will serve as personnel required into the Nigerian Air Force in order to promote sports development in Nigeria.

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