

**PERCIEVED MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING SPECIAL-  
NEEDS PERSONS' SPORT INCLUSIVENESS IN TERTIARY  
INSTITUTIONS, KWARA STATE**

**OLUWASEUN YANMIFE AYODELE**

University of Medical Sciences, Ondo, Ondo State

**Mail: yayodele@unimed.edu.ng**

**OLUWATOSIN ADEJARE SANGODEYI,**

Department of Human Kinetics Education, Faculty of Education,

University of Ilorin, Ilorin

**Mail: siroluwatosin15@gmail.com**

**HALIMAT I'YA ISMAIL-ORIRE**

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education,

Kwara State University, Malete, Ilorin

**Email: halimat.orire13@kwasu.edu.ng**

**&**

**Habibat Opeyemi AROWOSAYE**

Department of Human Kinetics Education, Faculty of Education,

University of Ilorin, Ilorin

**Mail: arowosayehabibat@gmail.com**

**Abstract**

*The study examined management strategies for promoting inclusiveness in sports among special-needs persons in University of Ilorin.*

*Descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for the study. Sample comprised of 52 special-needs persons in University of Ilorin selected using purposive sampling technique. A validated researcher-structured questionnaire with .86r was used as instrument for data collection. Frequency counts, percentage, and Chi-square were used to analyse the data collected.*

*The study found that situation analysis ( $\chi^2 = 200.020$ ,  $df\ 9$ ,  $p\ .000 < .05$ ); strategy formulation ( $\chi^2 = 198.111$ ,  $df\ 9$ ,  $p\ .000 < .05$ ); strategy implementation ( $\chi^2 = 138.44$ ,  $df\ 9$ ,  $p\ .000 < .05$ ); and evaluation ( $\chi^2 = 314.100$ ,  $df\ 9$ ,  $p\ .000 < .05$ ) significantly promote inclusiveness in sports among special-needs persons in University of Ilorin. Based on the findings, it was concluded that; situational analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and evaluation are management strategies for promoting inclusiveness in sports among special-needs persons in University of Ilorin. Therefore, University of Ilorin authority should create a supportive environment for special-needs persons by addressing their needs, increase their sports participation and enhance their overall sporting experiences.*

## **Introduction**

The most valuable resource in every country on the planet is her people. Neglecting millions of special-needs persons in Nigeria could result in economic stagnation, social exclusion, or restrictions. A necessary precondition for just, sustainable, and equitable development is the inclusion of people with special needs. McClain-Nhlapo, Cortez, Duchicela and Lord (2019) estimated that over one billion people globally will encounter impairment at some point in their lives. Approximately 25% of those individuals will have a handicap that significantly impacts their ability to perform daily tasks. This is equivalent to nearly 15% of the global population, with up to 190 million (3.8%) adults over the age of 15 reporting significant functional difficulties and frequent medical needs (World Health Organization, WHO, 2021). Competitive sports can help people with impairment of disability have better access to community-appropriate activities.

Due to social barriers and the nature of their disability, people with physical disabilities do not appear to be able to participate in social activities like sports (Aliberti, Rago, D'Elia & Raiola, 2022). To allow for equal participation in such activities, it is a basic necessity to recognize athletes with disabilities as athletes as well (Dominic, 2020). Even though inclusion is essential to how learning is processed, its applicability to people with special needs has been questioned. For people with disability, sports can offer a range of mainstream and disability-specific opportunities throughout the inclusion spectrum. Sports activities may not be accessible to 15% of the world's disabled population (Harada, 2011). People with disabilities face additional emotional challenges in the form of equipment, media, coaching, perceptual barriers, accessibility issues, and other obstacles. This is frequently the result of obstacles that keep people from participating, like a lack of equipment that is specifically designed for sports and prejudice based on social and cultural norms. The World Health Organization (2010) has established that aerobic physical activity, with a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise, has a profound impact on people's health and well-being at all ages, including those with special needs.

Interaction between sports administrators, individuals or athletes and other important stakeholders is a crucial part of management strategies for promoting sports participation and development. Babatunde and Ajibola (2017) viewed that management in sports is in charge of organizing, planning, and funding all necessary inputs for sports in order to ensure that they function smoothly. The onus of ensuring that all of the previously mentioned components are included in order to facilitate the smooth operation of sporting events falls on sports administrators. Sports management is the cornerstone of development in almost every country due to the significance and relevance of sports (Oladuni, 2011). Sports managers in charge have the power to achieve success in their respective fields through their decisions and actions. Sports administrators may need to modify some of the established management strategies in order to meet the stated goals, specifically regarding the inclusion of individuals with special needs.

Schaap (2012) emphasizes the growing necessity for organizations, particularly in the sports industry, to develop and implement effective strategies that foster growth and leverage competitive advantages while making innovative decisions. As the sports sector becomes a significant global player focused on profitability and entertainment for fans, the success of various stakeholders (including players, coaches, officials,

sponsors, and administrators) play crucial roles in its expansion. Organizers face the challenge of effectively utilizing available resources in a fast-paced, competitive environment, necessitating the identification of optimal management practices. Among these, strategic planning, hiring, and budgeting are highlighted as essential management strategies. Abdalkrim (2013) notes that strategic planning is a complex process requiring teamwork and perseverance to realize the organization's vision and objectives, while Williams (2012) underscores that the insights gained from strategic planning are vital for the success or failure of executives in executing these strategies.

Iravo, Ongori, and Munene (2013) viewed that one of the key questions in business is why certain organizations succeed while others failed. This has affected research on the factors that affect administrators' or organizers' performance. Performance is a scorecard used to evaluate how well an organization is performing in relation to specific criteria, including situation analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, evaluation, and control. The process of creating long-term plans for the efficient management of environmental opportunities and threats while taking corporate strengths and weaknesses into consideration is known as strategy formulation (Shapiro & Martin, 2017). To conduct and assess various formulation processes, it is imperative that practitioners and researchers alike assess strategy formulation processes. Implementing a strategy entails organizing the company's resources and inspiring employees to meet goals. The surroundings that many businesses operate in have rapidly changed. The global competitive landscape of today is dynamic, complex, and mostly unpredictable. The best way to formulate strategies has been a topic of much thought in response to this unprecedented level of change. The goal of strategic management is to manage the future. A well-formulated strategy is essential because it guides an organization's focus and actions, even though the actual strategy that is implemented occasionally deviates greatly from the original plan, idea, or intention.

Strategic evaluation necessitates an efficient computerized information system that can give sports manager's timely feedback so they can act on the data, (Lawrence, Jauch & William, 2018). In actuality, a control system is needed for both strategic evaluation during and after implementation; these are essential components of the organization's monitoring system. The sports managers can track the implementation of a strategic plan with the aid of both systems. The goal of strategic evaluation and control is to reveal any limitations encountered during the implementation of a strategy and/or to spot any deviations. The next task for sports managers is to evaluate the strategy after all requirements for its implementation have been met. The strategic management process includes an evaluation phase where managers attempt to ensure that the strategic decision is appropriately executed and achieving the goals of the enterprise (organization) (Sahlin & Lexell, 2015).

Sports participation significantly enhances quality of life, especially for individuals with disabilities, by fostering social relationships and improving psychological well-being. Research indicates that active individuals tend to have better emotional regulation, body image, and self-esteem (Biagini, Bastiani & Sebatiani, 2022). Engaging in sports helps individuals focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities, improving their resilience and coping skills. Competitive sports also facilitate access to community activities, although individuals with disabilities often face social barriers that hinder their participation (Aliberti et al., 2022). Physical activity contributes to better health outcomes, including weight management and improved

cardiovascular efficiency, while also promoting mood enhancement and social bonding (Piercy et al., 2018). Regular participation in sports has been linked to improved life satisfaction and community reintegration for people with disabilities (Sahlin & Lexell, 2015). However, many individuals with disabilities remain physically inactive, increasing their risk of chronic health issues (Goryakin et al., 2019). Factors contributing to this inactivity include poor urban planning, lack of accessible facilities, and inadequate support systems for engaging in physical activities. Overall, while sports offer substantial benefits, addressing barriers to participation is crucial for enhancing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

In the quest to ameliorate the conditions of special-needs persons in tertiary institutions; centres for supporting services were created to cater for the needs of special-needs person who are spread across all faculties and departments in the universities (Ambali, Usman & Adesina, 2018). Basically, the services provided by this unit is to give support to special-needs persons in the acquisition of knowledge such as interpreting for the deaf in the classroom; pushing of wheelchairs; and holding of hands of the blind persons among others. It is worthy of note that little or nothing has been done towards facilitating the participation of special-needs persons in sports. Therefore, this study examined perceived management strategies for promoting special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Special needs persons faced challenges with discrimination and segregation which most times, separate them from involvement in sporting activities alongside mainstream population (Gaskin et al., 2017). However, special-needs persons have been side-lined for long when examining the policy of 'sport for all'. This could be attributed to barriers such as lack of qualified coaches, limited availability of equipment, inadequate or lack of facilities and lack of financial resources which are major determinants of sports participation or non-participation for this vulnerable group, of which policies geared towards the inclusion of such persons has also been observed to be non-existent, in terms of implementation within the context of the Nigerian society.

It has been observed that tertiary institutions in Kwara State have has enabling environment that promote teaching and learning activities among special-needs persons. Students with special needs are being provided with the required physically challenged-friendly infrastructures that make learning much easier but nothing seems to be done as regards their involvement in sports. This situation has directly discouraged the active participation of special-needs persons as no provision has been seemingly made for them. Numerous challenges faced by special-needs persons in sports participation have been highlighted (Lape, 2018; Stocchetti & Zanier, 2016). These challenges are orchestrated by human, structural, physical factors and so on. In this modern society, it is imperative to promote physical activeness of every individual irrespective of their abilities. Therefore, this study investigated perceived management strategies for promoting special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State.

### **Methodology**

Descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 52 stakeholders (coaches and sports administrators) in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. A sample of 52 respondents were

selected for this study through Purposive sampling technique. A validated researcher-structured questionnaire with .86r was used as instrument for data collection. Descriptive statistics of percentage was used to analyse demographic characteristics of the respondents. Inferential statistics of Chi-square was used to test the formulated hypotheses at .05 alpha level.

## Results

### Hypotheses Testing

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Management strategies (situation analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and evaluation) will not significantly promote special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State.

**Table 6:** Chi-Square analysis on perceived management strategies for promoting special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State

S/N	Variables	N	Crit. Value	df	$\chi^2$	Sig.	Decision
1.	Situation Analysis				200.020	.000	
2.	Strategy Formulation	52	16.92	9	198.111	.000	H <sub>0</sub> Rejected
3.	Strategy Implementation				110.891	.000	
4.	Evaluation				314.100	.000	

p < 0.05

The results show the chi-square analysis on perceived management strategies for promoting special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State. The result of the null hypothesis one tested on situation analysis as a management strategy resulted in a statistical significance  $\chi^2 (9) = 200.020^a$ ,  $p < .000$ . This implies that situation analysis as a management strategy promotes special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State. Therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. The table six also shows the chi-square analysis on strategy formulation as a management strategy for promoting special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness resulted in a statistical significance  $\chi^2 (9) = 198.111^a$ ,  $p < .000$ . This implies that strategy formulation as a management strategy promotes special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State. Therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

The table six shows that the chi-square analysis on strategy implementation as a management strategy for promoting inclusiveness in sports among special-needs persons resulted in a statistical significance  $\chi^2 (9) = 138.44^a$ ,  $p < .000$ . This implies that strategy implementation as a management strategy promotes special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State. Therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. The table six shows the chi-square analysis on evaluation as a management strategy for promoting special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State. resulted in a statistical significance  $\chi^2 (9) = 314.100^a$ ,  $p < .000$ . This implies that evaluation promotes special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State. Therefore, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The discussion of findings is based on management strategies for promoting special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State. The situation analysis on promoting inclusiveness in sports among special-needs persons highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to address the barriers and challenges faced by this population. The analysis is expected to pin-point some of the underlining factors hindering sports participation of special-needs persons such as limited accessibility; lack of trained personnel; inadequate policies and procedures; social stigma and stereotypes; limited opportunities; funding constraints; and lack of awareness and education (Shapiro & Martin, 2017; Hums & MacLean, 2017; Kowalski & Rizzo, 2017). The findings highlighted the need for a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to address these barriers and promote inclusiveness. One of the primary findings is the lack of accessibility in sports facilities and equipment. This physical barrier prevents special-needs persons from participating in sports and highlights the need for adaptive facilities and equipment. Furthermore, the lack of trained personnel and inadequate policies and procedures exacerbate the issue as well as the available financial aid promotes inclusive sports competitions for special-needs persons.

Strategy formulation on the other hand is a management strategy for promoting inclusiveness in sports competitions among special-needs persons. Inclusive sports programmes can positively impact special-needs persons' physical and psychological well-being (DePauw & Gavron, 2017). Adequate sports competitions for special-needs persons have been effectively organized through placing appropriate people at the helm of affairs. Organization of sports tournament for special-needs persons involve a lot of thinking concerning the formation of best strategies. Trained personnel and accessible facilities are crucial for successful inclusive sports programmes (Hums & MacLean, 2017). Mismanagement of resources hinders the promotion of Inclusiveness in Sport Competitions. Policy development and implementation can help address systemic barriers to inclusiveness. Education and awareness-raising initiatives can promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards special-needs persons. Funding and resource allocation can support the development of inclusive sports programmes and facilities needed for such programmes. Special-needs athletes, coaches, officials, and families must be involved in the strategy formulation process (Hums & MacLean, 2017) to ensure it full implementation.

Strategy implementation for promoting inclusiveness in sports competitions among special-needs persons is a critical area of sports management. Effective implementation strategies include stakeholder engagement and collaboration (Shapiro & Martin, 2017); training and education for coaches and officials (Hums & MacLean, 2017); accessible facilities and equipment (DePauw & Gavron, 2017); and monitoring and evaluation (Kowalski & Rizzo, 2017). Harmonization of the available resources is required in promoting inclusiveness of special-needs in Sports. For effective implementation of strategies, motivation is important to personnel in-charge and the special-needs persons. Motivation of the coaches to enhance the objectives of special-needs persons' inclusiveness in sports; adequate remuneration for coaches and special/need persons during sports participation; good health insurance scheme for maximum health care provision for special-needs persons in case of injury. Inclusive sports programmes can positively impact special-needs persons' physical and psychological well-being. However, implementation challenges such as lack of

resources, inadequate training, and insufficient support can hinder the success of inclusive sports programmes (Bullough & Giles, 2017).

Evaluation is a crucial component of promoting inclusiveness in sports competitions among special-needs persons. Studies have highlighted the importance of evaluating inclusive sports programmes to ensure they meet the needs of special-needs persons (DePauw & Gavron, 2017). Effective evaluation strategies include monitoring and assessing program outcomes, conducting participant feedback and surveys, and assessing program accessibility and inclusivity (Shapiro & Martin, 2017). Challenges are bound to be encountered in organization of sports competitions for special-needs persons. Strategic evaluation assures that the best choice is properly implemented and is meeting the objectives of the organisers of sports competitions for special-needs persons. The need for ongoing evaluation and monitoring to ensure inclusive sports programmes remain effective and adaptable to changing needs (Bullough & Giles, 2017). Constant monitoring of sports competitions for special-needs persons aids its' effectiveness. Organization of sports competitions for special-needs persons requires effective computerized information system to provide timely feedback to organisers.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that; situational analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and evaluation are management strategies for promoting special-needs persons' sport inclusiveness in tertiary institutions, Kwara State.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made: tertiary institutions in Kwara State should conduct regular situational analyses to inform inclusivity efforts as well as stakeholder engagement and multiple perspectives should be considered in the analysis; tertiary institutions in Kwara State should prioritize strategy formulation to promote inclusiveness by involving stakeholder engagement and multiple perspectives should be considered in the strategy formulation process; tertiary institutions in Kwara State should create a supportive environment for special-needs athletes, address the needs of special-needs athletes, increase participation and engagement and enhance the overall sporting experience; and sports stakeholder engagement, participant feedback, and programme outcome assessments should be used to inform evaluation efforts.

### **References**

- Abdalkrim, G. M. (2013). The Impact of Strategic Planning Activities on Private Sector Organizations Performance in Sudan: An Empirical Research. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 8(10), 134-143. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v8n10p134.
- Aliberti, S., Rago, V., D'Elia, F., & Raiola, G. (2022). Questionnaire of inclusion in Paralympic dance: validation and pilot study. *Sport Sciences for Health*, 1(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11332-022-00905-4>
- Ambali, O. Z; Usman, A. S. & Adesina, O. F. (2018). "An Assessment of the Resources and Services Provision for the Disabled Library Users in University of Ilorin and Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo." *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal). 1818.<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1818>

- Babatunde, S. O. & Ajibola, G. S. (2017). Corporate promotional strategies as correlates of sport development in Nigeria. *NkumbaBusinessJournal*, 16(1), 139-151. <http://www.nkumbauniversity.ac.ug/>
- Biagini, A., Bastiani, L. & Sebatiani, L. (2022). The impact of physical activity on the quality of life of a sample of Italian people with physical disability. *Movement Science and Sport Psychology*, 4(2), 202-245. | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2022.884074>.
- Bullough, S., & Giles, A. (2017). Funding inclusive sport programs. *Journal of Sport Management*, 31(2), 147-158.
- DePauw, K., & Gavron, S. (2017). *Disability sport and physical activity*. Human Kinetics.
- Dominic, O. L. (2020). *Institutionalizing physical activity programme for people with disabilities: Perspective from Nigeria*. <https://www.sportanddev.org/en/article/news/institutionalizing-physical-activity-programmes-people-disabilities-perspectives>. Retrieved on 11/02/2024.
- Gaskin, C. J., Taylor, D., Kinnear, S., Mann, J., Hillman, W. & Moran, M. (2017). Factors associated with the climate change vulnerability and the adaptive capacity of people with disability: a systematic review. *Weather Clim Soc*, 9(1), 801-814.
- Goryakin, Y., Aldea, A., Lerouge, A., Romano, S. V., Nante, N. & Vuik, S., et al. (2019). Promoting sport and physical activity in Italy: a cost-effectiveness analysis of seven innovative public health policies. *Ann Ig.*, 31(1), 614-625. doi: 10.7416/ai.2019.2321
- Harada, K. (2011). Socialization into Physical and Sporting Activity in International and Cross-Cultural Perspective. Reflection on past, Present and Future Concepts and Contexts. *Journal of Comparative Physical Education and sport*, 19(1), 25-43.
- Hums, M., & MacLean, J. (2017). Inclusive coaching practices. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 35(12), 1245-1253.
- Kowalski, E., & Rizzo, T. (2017). Disability sport policy. *Journal of Disability and Society*, 32(1), 34-47.
- Lape, E. C. (2018). Participant-reported benefits of involvement in an adaptive sports program: a qualitative. *P. M. & R.*, 10(1), 507-615. doi: 10.1016/j.pmrj.2017.10.008.
- McClain-Nhlapo, C. V., Cortez, C. J., Duchicela, L. F., & Lord, J. E. (2019). *Equity and Inclusion in Education in World Bank Projects: Persons with Disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and Sexual and Gender Minorities (English)*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group. Disclosure. Retrieved on 12/03/2024.
- Oladuni, R. A. (2011). *The significance of sponsorship as a marketing tool in sport events*. Degree Thesis, International Business School.
- Sahlin, K. B., & Lexell, J. (2015). Impact of organized sports on activity, participation, and quality of life in people with neurologic disabilities. *P.M & R.*, 7(1), 1081-1095. doi: 10.1016/j.pmrj.2015.03.019
- Schaap, J. I. (2012). Strategy Implementations – Can Organizations Attain Outstanding Performance? *Strategic Management Review*, 6(1), 98-121
- Shapiro, D., & Martin, J. (2017). Inclusive physical education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance*, 88(5), 8-13.



- Stocchetti, N. & Zanier, E. R. (2016). Chronic impact of traumatic brain injury on outcome and quality of life: a narrative review. Critical Care, 20(1), 148-160. doi: 10.1186/s13054-016-1318-1.*
- World Health Organisation (2010). Framework for Action on inter-professional Education and Collaborative practice. *World Health Organisation*, Geneva.