



ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE TRAINING ADEQUACY OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SPORTS (NIS) ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TACTICAL ABILITY OF COACHES IN THE NORTH-WEST ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed the impact of the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the development of tactical ability of coaches in State Sports Organizations in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 450 coaches drawn from football, basketball, taekwondo, tennis, athletics, and swimming who were trained by NIS between 2019 and 2023. Using multi-stage sampling procedures, a sample of 269 coaches was selected. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire validated by experts, with a reliability coefficient of 0.857 obtained through Cronbach's Alpha. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question, while chi-square (χ^2) was employed to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed an aggregate mean score of 3.22, indicating that NIS training programmes positively influence coaches' tactical abilities in areas such as game strategy development, opponent analysis, tactical decision-making, situational adaptation, and implementation of advanced formations. The chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 127.145$, $p = 0.000$) showed a significant impact of training adequacy of NIS on the development of tactical ability of coaches, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The study concluded that the training programmes of the National Institute for Sports are adequate and significantly contribute to enhancing the tactical competence of coaches in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. It was recommended that NIS should continually review and update its tactical curriculum and strengthen practical components of training to align with contemporary coaching demands and global best practices.

Keywords: Training Adequacy, Tactical Ability, National Institute for Sports, Coach Education, Sports Coaching, Nigeria

Introduction

Sports occupy a prominent place in Nigerian society, serving as a major avenue for youth engagement, national integration, and international representation. The increasing interest and participation in sports have led to a growing demand for competent and well-trained coaches capable of guiding athletes toward optimal performance. Coaching remains central to stimulating participation, enhancing performance, and ensuring sustainable sports development, as coaches are responsible for developing athletes' physical, technical, mental, and tactical competencies (Abubakar, 2018). Among these competencies, tactical ability is particularly crucial, as it determines a coach's capacity to plan strategies, make informed decisions, and effectively manage game situations.

Tactical ability in coaching involves the understanding and application of game principles, opponent analysis, decision-making, situational adjustments, and strategic deployment of players and resources during training and competition. Coaches who possess strong tactical competence are better positioned to anticipate game dynamics, respond to emerging challenges, and exploit opponents' weaknesses, thereby enhancing athletes' performance outcomes (Atkinson et al., 2023). Consequently, the quality of tactical knowledge and skills possessed by coaches is largely dependent on the adequacy of their professional training.

Coaching, like teaching, is a specialised profession that requires formal preparation, continuous learning, and systematic development. Effective coaching places responsibility for learning on the athlete while providing

structured environments for practice, feedback, and mastery of skills (Adedeji, 2019). Coaches are also expected to demonstrate mastery of subject matter, leadership qualities, and instructional competence to command the respect of athletes and guide them successfully. This underscores the necessity for coaches to undergo rigorous training programmes that emphasise both theoretical and practical aspects of sports, particularly tactical instruction.

In recognition of the need for structured coach education, Nigeria established the National Institute for Sports (NIS) as a specialised institution for the training and development of coaches, sports administrators, and other sports personnel. The institute provides professional courses and certification programmes designed to equip coaches with the knowledge and skills required for effective coaching practice, including technical, tactical, psychological, and managerial competencies (Abubakar, 2018). The establishment of the NIS was intended to harmonise coaching education in Nigeria and align it with international best practices following Nigeria's exposure to global sporting events such as the Olympic Games (Adedeji, 2019).

The NIS is expected to serve as a springboard for coaching development by providing quality training, modern curriculum content, qualified instructors, and adequate facilities that collectively enhance coaches' competence. Adequate training, in this context, refers to the extent to which NIS programmes sufficiently cover relevant tactical concepts, provide practical learning experiences, and prepare coaches to apply tactical knowledge effectively in real competition settings (Adesoye, 2017). When training is adequate, coaches are more likely to demonstrate confidence in tactical planning, adaptability during games, and sound strategic judgment.

Despite the existence of the NIS and its training programmes, concerns persist regarding the tactical effectiveness of many coaches operating within state sports organisations, particularly in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. Observations suggest that some coaches struggle with tactical planning, in-game decision-making, opponent analysis, and situational adjustments during competitions. Such deficiencies may reflect gaps in the content, delivery, or practical orientation of the training received from the NIS, raising questions about the adequacy of the institute's training in developing coaches' tactical abilities.

Furthermore, the recruitment of individuals into coaching positions based primarily on prior playing experience or personal connections, rather than formal training, remains a challenge in Nigeria. This practice undermines professional standards and may contribute to the persistence of tactically deficient coaching practices (Akinboye, 2014). Since tactical competence is not automatically acquired through playing experience alone, formal and well-structured training becomes indispensable.

Given the strategic importance of tactical ability to coaching effectiveness and sports performance, it is essential to empirically examine whether the training provided by the National Institute for Sports is adequate in developing this aspect of coaching competence. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the impact of the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the development of tactical ability of coaches in State Sports Organizations in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North-West Zone, Nigeria.

Research Questions

To what extent does the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) impact the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North-West Zone, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

There is no significant impact of the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North-West Zone, Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the impact of the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the development of tactical ability of coaches in State Sports Organizations in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it allows

for the systematic collection of data from a large and defined population with the purpose of describing existing conditions, opinions, and relationships as they naturally occur, without manipulation of variables. The design is particularly suitable for studies that focus on assessing perceptions and practices across diverse groups at a single point in time, thereby providing a realistic representation of the phenomenon under investigation (Akorede et al., 2022).

The population of the study comprised four hundred and fifty (450) coaches, including football, basketball, taekwondo, tennis, athletics, and swimming coaches who were trained by the National Institute for Sports (NIS) between 2019 and 2023 and are currently working within State Sports Organizations in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. These coaches were drawn from Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara States (States' Sports Organizations in North-West Zone, Nigeria, 2023).

A sample size of two hundred and sixty-nine (269) coaches was selected for the study. The sample size was determined in line with the recommendation of Adam (2020), who suggested that a sample of 269 is adequate for a population of 450 at a 99% confidence level and a margin of error of 0.05. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in selecting the respondents. In the first stage, the seven states in the North-West Zone were treated as strata. In the second stage, the purposive sampling technique was used to select football, basketball, taekwondo, tennis, athletics, and swimming coaches who had undergone NIS training within the specified period. In the third stage, a proportionate sampling technique was used to allocate the sample size across states and sports based on their respective population sizes to ensure fair representation. The proportionate allocation was computed using the formula: population of subgroup divided by total population multiplied by the overall sample size. For instance, in Jigawa State, 12 football coaches out of the population of 450 were proportionately represented as $12/450 \times 269 = 7$ coaches. This procedure was repeated for all sports and states. In the final stage, the convenience sampling technique was adopted to reach the respondents within their respective State Sports Organizations.

The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed, closed-ended questionnaire consisting of two sections. Section A elicited information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while Section B contained eight items designed to measure the tactical ability of coaches as influenced by the adequacy of NIS training. Responses were rated using a modified four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). A decision benchmark of 2.50 was adopted by computing the average of the scale values $(1+2+3+4)/4$. Mean scores of 2.50 and above were interpreted as positive, while mean scores below 2.50 were regarded as negative.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by five experts in sports management. Their comments, corrections, and suggestions were carefully incorporated into the final version of the instrument before it was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study conducted in Bauchi and Gombe State Sports Organizations, which possess similar characteristics to those in the North-West Zone. Fifty (50) copies of the questionnaire were administered to coaches from the selected sports who had been trained by the NIS between 2019 and 2023. Data obtained from the pilot study were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.857. This value was considered adequate, as Razavipour and Raji (2022) affirmed that reliability coefficients ranging from 0.70 to 1.00 indicate acceptable internal consistency.

For data collection, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Head of Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The administration and retrieval of the instruments were completed within a period of two weeks, after which the duly completed questionnaires were collated for analysis. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 30. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse demographic information. The research question was answered using mean and standard deviation, while the formulated hypothesis was tested using the chi-square (χ^2) statistic at the 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Demographic characteristics of the respondents selected for the study are presented in frequencies and percentages in Table 1:

Table 1: Analysis of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Variable Options	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	244	92.1
	Female	21	7.9
	Total	265	100.0
Age	18 - 25 years	13	4.9
	26 - 33 years	42	15.8
	34 - 41 years	127	47.9
	42 years & above	83	31.3
	Total	265	100.0
Highest Educational Qualification	Diploma/NCE	127	47.9
	Bachelor's degree/HND	86	32.5
	Master's degree/PGD	40	15.1
	Ph.D	12	4.5
	Total	265	100.0
Years of Coaching Experience	Less than 5 years	11	4.2
	5-9 years	48	18.1
	10-14 years	51	19.2
	15- 19 years	97	36.6
	20 years and more	58	21.9
	Total	265	100.0
Sport Coaching	Football	83	31.3
	Taekwando	60	22.6
	Tennis	38	14.3
	Basketball	35	13.2
	Athletics	32	12.1
	Swimming	17	6.4
	Total	265	100.0

The males, as indicated in Table 1 above, were 244 (92.1%) while the females were 21 (7.9%) of the total number (265) of respondents involved in the study. For age distribution, the table indicated that 13 (4.9%) of the respondents were between 18 and 25 years of age. Those who were between 26 and 33 years were 42 (15.8%), and 127 (47.9%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 34 and 41 years. Those above 41 years were 83 (31.3%) of the total number of respondents involved in the study. The educational qualification of the respondents shows that 127 (47.9%) had a Diploma/NCE, 86 (32.5%) had a Bachelor's Degree/HND, 40 (15.1%) had Master's Degree/PGD, and 12 (4.5%) had PhD.

In terms of years of experience, 11 (4.2%) of the respondents have been involved in sports coaching for less than 5 years. Those with 5 to 9 years of experience were 48 (18.1%), 51 (19.2%) have between 10 and 14 years of experience, 97 (36.6%) have between 15 and 19 years of experience, and 58 (21.9%) of the respondents have been in sports coaching for more than 19 years. With these years of experience in sports coaching, the respondents have the requisite knowledge and information on the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the development of coaches in state sports organisations in the North-West Zone, Nigeria. By sports preference, 83 (31.3%) of the respondents were football coaches, 60 (22.6%) were Taekwondo coaches, 38 (14.3%) were Tennis coaches, 35 (13.2%) were Basketball coaches, 32 (12.1%) were athletics coaches, and 17 (6.4%) were swimming coaches.

Research Question: To what extent does the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) impact the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Impact of Training Adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the Tactical Ability of Coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	The training programmes offered by NIS have significantly improved my ability to develop game strategies.	3.24	0.81
2	NIS has provided me with a deeper understanding of modern coaching tactics.	3.27	0.87
3	The courses offered by NIS have enhanced my ability to analyse opponents' strategies effectively.	3.23	0.79
4	My decision-making skills in sport tactics during competitive matches have improved due to my training at NIS.	3.19	0.86
5	NIS has helped me integrate data analytics and performance metrics into my tactical coaching approach.	3.25	0.79
6	The tactical knowledge gained from NIS has positively impacted my team's overall performance.	3.09	0.85
7	NIS training has equipped me with the skills to adapt tactics based on different game situations.	3.35	0.83
8	My confidence in implementing advanced tactical formations has increased after attending NIS programmes.	3.13	0.82
Aggregate mean		3.22	0.83

(Benchmark = 2.50)

Table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of responses on the impact of training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the tactical ability of coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria. The analysis revealed a mean aggregate of 3.22, which is greater than the benchmark of 2.50. This implies that training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) have impact on the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria.

Hypothesis: There is no significant impact of the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-square (χ^2) Analysis on the Impact of Training Adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the Tactical Ability of Coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria.

Variable	N	df	Cal. χ^2 value	p-value	Decision
Tactical Ability of Coaches	265	21	127.145	0.000	Rejected

$X^2 \text{ Crit} = 32.7, (df = 21) \quad P < 0.05$

Results in Table 3 show that there is significant impact of the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria. Reason being that the p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, while the chi-square (χ^2) Cal. value of 127.145 is greater than the chi-square critical value of 32.7 ($X^2 \text{ Cal} (127.145) > X^2 \text{ Crit} (32.7), P < 0.05$) at df 21. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that 'there is no significant impact of the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) on the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria', is hereby rejected. Hence, the result implies that training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) have significant impact on the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria.

Discussion

The findings revealed that the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) impacts the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria. The finding lends credence to Adegbesan and Oluwatoyin (2017), who reported that NIS-certified football coaches demonstrated significantly higher tactical knowledge, especially in game reading and strategic planning, compared to their non-certified counterparts. Similarly, Onwumere and Icheku (2018) found that NIS-trained basketball coaches outperformed non-certified coaches in tactical decision-making and adaptive strategy use during competitions. These studies support the

present finding by affirming that NIS training equips coaches with advanced analytical and tactical thinking skills essential for high-level performance.

In the same vein, Oladipo and Adeleke (2016) established a strong positive correlation between NIS certification and effective tactical periodisation among athletics coaches, emphasising that the institute's curriculum enhances the ability to plan and implement progressive tactical programs. Likewise, Ajiduah and Mohammed (2019) confirmed that volleyball coaches trained at the NIS exhibited superior tactical analysis and opponent assessment skills, demonstrating the institute's effectiveness in developing tactical acumen across diverse sports disciplines. These outcomes resonate with the current finding, underscoring the adequacy of NIS training in fostering tactical sophistication among coaches.

Moreover, Ikulayo and Adewunmi (2015) observed that NIS certification significantly improved coaches' tactical innovation and adaptability over time, while Adebayo and Kehinde (2017) found that the NIS curriculum promoted the adoption of modern coaching methodologies, including advanced tactical approaches. The convergence of these findings with the present result indicates a consistent pattern across studies showing that the adequacy of NIS training not only strengthens coaches' tactical foundations but also enhances their creative and adaptive capacities during competitive situations.

In contrast, few studies have questioned aspects of NIS training adequacy, suggesting that while it significantly improves theoretical understanding, practical exposure may still require enhancement. For example, Akinwunmi and Oladimeji (2013) acknowledged that although NIS programs develop well-rounded coaches, there is still a need to strengthen practical applications of tactical knowledge during real game contexts. However, even these critiques do not refute the consensus that NIS training has a positive and substantial impact on tactical development; they rather suggest areas for continuous improvement.

Based on the findings of the present study and in line with the overwhelming evidence from previous research, the researcher affirms that the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) has a significant and positive impact on the tactical ability development of coaches in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The NIS curriculum, through its structured blend of theoretical and practical components, effectively enhances coaches' tactical reasoning, strategic planning, and adaptability during competitive engagements. Therefore, the researcher supports the conclusion that continuous investment in and improvement of NIS training programs are vital for sustaining and advancing the tactical competence of Nigerian coaches.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it was concluded that the training adequacy of the National Institute for Sports (NIS) impacts the development of tactical ability of coaches in the North West Zone of Nigeria.

Recommendations

The study recommended that the National Institute for Sports (NIS) should continuously update its tactical training curriculum to align with modern strategies and improve coaches' decision-making during competitions.

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