

# Sportsmanship Development Strategies for Coaches of University Athletes in South-South of Nigeria

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## Abstract

Sportsmanship has become an important aspect of the sport through which individuals can mirror the moral life of athletes. Studies show that most University athletes do not possess the right sportsmanship spirit in sports. This study was set forth to determine sportsmanship development strategies that can be utilized by sports coaches for improvement of athlete's sportsmanship in the south – south region of Nigeria. Forty-six university coaches constituted population and were all used for the study. The Research & Development design was adapted to identify strategies for developing sportsmanship of university athletes' in the Niger Delta. Two instruments were self-designed: one for identification of unsportsmanlike traits and sportsmanship strategies and the other for matching strategies against unsportsmanlike traits identified among athletes. The Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability index of the UASDSQ instruments. The sportsmanship improvement strategies yielded a reliability index of 0.85. The item mean was computed and used to select character development strategies. The simple percentage was used to determine the result of cross-matched items. University coaches completed the questionnaires which were done on two different occasions separately. The results show that coaches identified the following strategies amongst others: circulation of sportsmanship guidelines to athletes, athletes should watch sportsmanship training videos, use of sportsmanship rating scales to determine athlete's sportsmanship, and university sports councils should organize campus-wide campaigns to demonstrate acceptable play spirit in the sport. It was concluded that sportsmanship strategies were needed to stem poor sportsmanship in university sports. Amongst others, it is recommended that sportsmanship should be an important issue in University sport and sportsmanship of university athletes should be determined by sports councils.

**Keywords:** Sportsmanship, Athletes, Development.

## 1. Introduction

Sportsmanship and the development of positive character have long been explicit goals of schools sports (Jennifer, 2002). A strong belief exists that sports programmes have the power to promote the development of sportsmanlike behaviour, ethical decision-making skills and character building (Stoll & Beller, 2000). Sports provide a social environment to acquire personal social values and behaviour contributing to good character and good citizenship (Arnold 1984; & Sage, 1998). These promote sportsmanship and the development of sportsmanship in a sport which is essential to character development. Sport subjects its participants to the deliberate and intentional activity of cultivating moral judgement and fair play through compliance with the rules of the game. One of the goals of this process is for individuals to build sportsmanlike behaviour. Moral values, which are cultivated through sportsmanship, include honesty, fairness, fair play, justice and responsibility (Lumpkin, Stoll & Beller, 2002). The sports and physical activity setting provides opportunities to athletes to learn skills, strategies, sportsmanship, commitment, respect and disciplines. (Omar-Fauzee, Nazarudin, Saputra, Sutresna, Taweesuk, Chansem, Latif, Geok, 2012). Thus, with proper strategies, it is in line with the six pillars of character; trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship (Arizona Sports Summit accord, 1999). However, this sportsmanship and disciplines in sports cannot positively influence character development especially if 'winning' is being emphasized (Barez, 2008).

Gough (1997) defined sportsmanship as striving for success while maintaining a commitment to being fair, honest and respectful. It equally involves following the rules which are synonymous with being ethical or moral. Sportsmanship means playing a good sport and following the moral values of honesty and justice (Stoll & Beller, 2000). The player plays by the rules. He is also fair and honest to his/her opponents. In other words, it is the intention to compete within the framework of the rules and the intended spirit of the rules (Galligan, Maskeys, Spence, Hose, Barys, Ruston & Crowfords 2000).

A true sportsman or woman must be willing to lose rather than sacrifice ethical principles. It seems in the sports of today that the concept of good sportsmanship has been lost. In a study conducted by Dodge and Robertson (2004) on the justification for unethical behaviour in sports, the percentage of males (59%) who justified unethical behaviour in sports was higher than their female counterparts (41%). The reasons for males justifying unsportsmanlike behaviour ranged from "if you do not get caught, it is justified, and "you can cheat since others do the same". These findings indicated deviation from the objective of sportsmanship development through sport.

Hoffman (1999), Laughlin (2005) believe that sport is a vehicle for education, health, leadership and

sportsmanship. The fact is that these values are not automatically or necessarily transmitted through sport. Others believe that sport is failing to achieve its potential to positively influence the moral and personal development of youth and strengthen communities (Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, 2003). Antisocial behaviour that constitutes unacceptable behavioural patterns or indiscipline in sports abound. In recent times, mass media reports have availed us with unprecedented news of deviant behaviour in sports. These are perpetuated either by athletes, fans or even officials on and off the field of play. The jury reports on the 21st NUGA of the University of Maiduguri from 15-24th February 2007 further reveals the character of University athletes in Nigeria and the Niger Delta particularly. The appeals and protests showed that even many athletes felt cheated in university sports. The protests and appeals include inconsistencies on admission letters and registration procedures manipulated to engage non-university athletes. Impersonation and the use of mercenaries in the competition were identified. The jury after adjudication disqualified thirty-eight athletes who were not bona fide student athletes. In addition, the entire handball and cricket teams of two Universities were mercenaries. The panel further observed a decline in moral standards of the game as athletes and university sports officials engage in illegal and unsportsmanlike practices to win medals. In a study that was conducted by Dada (2015) to determine the sportsmanship level of University athletes in Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the findings showed that athletes displayed low level of and poor sportsmanship. Amongst the findings were: athletes make negative comments about officials; players argue with opponents, win by all means, and are rude to opponents when offended. All these manifestations indicate poor sportsmanship in sports that needs strategies for improvement.

Sportsmanship development is engaging in activities that produce a change in the individual which is synonymous with sportsmanship education. Sportsmanship education refers to the deliberate and intentional activity of cultivating, modelling and teaching moral growth and moral development (Stoll, 2000). The goal of this process is for an individual to build moral habits with a disposition to act upon a moral judgment which is synonymous with sportsmanship (Kohlberg 1981). It involves teaching young people the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, skills and behaviour to be fair, kind and good. Sport teaches the value of practice and personal development besides providing a pseudo-environment that allows for correction and modification within the bounds of real life. Choices are easier made through proper concentration and practice. Sport psychological and social research has shown that positive moral skills and sportsmanship development does not result from mere participation in sport (Shields and Bredemeier 1995; Weinberg and Gould, 1995). Sportsmanship is not caught but taught in a sport. Hence, sportsmanship development must be systematically taught to players.

Several theories and conceptual approaches highlight the strategies by which coaches may foster sportsmanship development among university athletes. Social learning theory (Bandura 1986, 1991) proposes that individuals learn sportsmanship through observational learning and social reinforcement. This implies that coaches can serve as role models and distribute rewards for desirable sportsmanlike traits in sports. Structural development theory (e.g. Haan, Aerts & Cooper, 1965; Kohlberg, 1969) propose that individuals reach more mature levels of moral reasoning by experiencing moral dilemmas and finding balance among their own and others interest through discussion. Coaches can take advantage of such situations in the sport by engaging athletes in meaningful dialogue that challenges them to consider others wellbeing. Positive sportsmanship development can be fostered by participating in activities that provide opportunities for skill building and engaging in interactions with supportive adults such as the coach (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Coaches who set expectations for sportsmanship can build supportive relationships and create an empowering environment that positively influence personal responsibility, caring for others, fair, honest and respectful and contribute to society. To promote sportsmanship among athletes, four strategies identified (i.e., strategies for athletes, coaches, moral reasoning, and six pillars of characters) were adopted from literatures (Arizona Sports Summit, 1999, Heart of Illinois Conference, 2007, Lumpkin, 2009, Lumpkin & Stokowski, 2011).

Clifford & Feezell (2010) also suggested amongst others the following strategies: Be a good role model because actions speak louder than words; A coach should seek to embody sportsmanship and respect for opponents, officials, team members; emphasize sportsmanship from the beginning; and explain your expectations, what sportsmanship is, and why you value this trait. By doing so, the urgent needs of interest towards building character in sports are to continuously remind coaches and athletes. The structural and social learning theorists provide insight on how coaches might influence university's sportsmanship and moral character development. These theories and conceptual approaches provide insight on how coaches might develop university athlete sportsmanship and moral character development.

Coaches and administrators seem not to give adequate attention to sportsmanship simply because they do not envision sportsmanship from a moral perspective. Rudd & Mondello (2006) believes that a more sportsmanlike atmosphere will not be established until coaches, parents and administrators develop an understanding and appreciation for a moral side of sportsmanship. Among those closely involved with University athletes, coaches are in the best position to impact their players'. University coaches, in particular, spend an extensive amount of time with their players when considering practices, road trips, team meetings and so forth.

Furthermore, studies (Guivernau & Duda 2002; Stephens & Bredemeier 1996) have shown that

athletes point to their coach as having a heavy influence on their decision to “win- at- all cost”. Theory-driven research suggests that coaches can make an impact on athletes’ character, in particular, sportsmanship, in at least four ways—modeling, social approval, motivational climate, and dialogue about and resolution of moral dilemmas. First, modeling is a powerful strategy by which youth learn about sportsmanship from watching coaches desirable or undesirable behaviors (e.g., Mugno & Feltz, 1985; Smith, 1978). In line with social learning theory, coaches modeling of morally appropriate or inappropriate behaviors will likely influence players to own moral actions. Second, the degree to which youth perceive that coaches approve or disapprove of sportsmanlike and unsportsmanlike behaviors affect their own attitudes and character (e.g., Guivernau & Duda, 2002; Stuart & Ebbeck, 1995). A third way in which coaches can influence athletes’ sportsmanship is through shaping the motivational climate ( Kavussanu, 2007). Higher performance climates that define success as outperforming others have been associated with players who endorse unsportsmanlike attitudes and behaviors, while higher mastery climates that emphasize personal improvement consistently relate to displays of good sportsmanship ( Gano-Overway, Guivernau, Magyar, Waldron, & Ewing, 2005; Miller, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2005). Fourth, coaches use of dialogue and balance surrounding moral dilemmas can enhance sportsmanship outcomes for youth (Gibbons & Ebbeck, 1997; Gibbons, Ebbeck, & Weiss, 1995; Romance, Weiss, & Bockoven, 1986). Consistent with structural developmental theory, intervention studies show that instructors who addressed morally-arousing situations through meaningful discussion helped youth adopt mature moral reasoning and display pro-social behaviours. Collectively, these studies suggest that coaches influence youth sportsmanship and character development through numerous social strategies.

Strategies are defined as planned means to achieve change. It is an elaborate and systematic plan of action to bring about change (Wordnet, 2015). Strategy in this study means a scheme of activities and skills that should be espoused to University athletes to bring about positive sportsmanship development through sport participation. These activities should be focused on developing sportsmanship among males and females within the various sports. It has been observed that sport and physical activity may not promote or facilitate sportsmanship and its unique virtues unless appropriate and efficiently designed strategies are introduced to enhance character development (Lidor 1997). If the goal of the coach is to stress the concept of sportsmanship development, he/she has to adopt or design a plan that is based on this goal. Weinberg and Gould (1995) emphasized the need to develop strategies that will positively influence sportsmanship development. Similarly, Beller (2000) affirms that to “affect sportsmanship positively, environmental character education strategies should be introduced to shape athletes thinking and behavior”.

## 2.1. Statement of Problem

The nature and rate of unsportsmanlike character in sport leave one in doubt about its potential to develop athletes’ sportsmanship. University athletes and coaches have always complained of unsportsmanlike character manifestations that include the use of mercenaries, questioning the authority of officials and other forms of sharp practices. These reports indicate that coaches instead of fostering sportsmanship development connive with athletes to encourage unsportsmanlike character and engage in other win- at-all-cost practices. Unfortunately, today’s sport culture, especially the model of professional sports, has influenced other amateurs such that it enhances this view of competition and thereby undermines the development of sportsmanship in young athletes. These reports negate the societal expectation of the outcome of University sports participation. The society expects that university athletes should act as good role models, win in a fair manner and play not only by the rules of the game but in an environment untainted by cheating, abuse and other unacceptable practices. Coaches and sport administrators seem not to pay attention to moral and sportsmanship developments of university athletes but focus more on motivational climate that enhances optimum performance to boost the image of their institutions. Theory driven research suggests that coaches can make impact on athletes’ sportsmanship in many ways: modeling social approval, motivational climate and dialogue about resolution of moral dilemmas. Despite theoretical frameworks and empirical studies that point to coaches as important sources for fostering sportsmanship development of athletes less research has focused on strategies they adopt to build sportsmanship. A limitation that necessitates development of sportsmanship is that theory and research has not guided any study on strategies coaches use to develop sportsmanship of University athletes in Nigeria The finding that show low sportsmanship level necessitates that strategies are needed the improvement sportsmanship of athletes in the South- South of Nigeria . Therefore the purpose of this study is to empirically develop coaches’ sportsmanship development strategies for university athletes in Nigeria. The study provides theory-driven strategies that will be utilized by coaches to enhance sportsmanship development of university athletes.

## 2.1 Research question

What are the sportsmanship development strategies appropriate for university athletes in the Niger Delta?

### 3. Method

The Research & Development design was adapted to identify strategies for developing sportsmanship of university athletes' in the Niger Delta. Research & Development design was considered appropriate because it enabled a proper field testing and validation of strategies for developing the character of university athletes (Borg & Gall 1989). Borg and Gall opined that in using this design for small scale research requires scaling down of the procedure to just a few steps of the Rand D cycle. The successful application of this design by Njoku (2003) and Ugwueze (2010) who modified and scaled down their research procedure to only six and seven steps respectively, to develop Healthy Ageing Intervention Model (HAIM) and Crisis Management Model for Soccer Clubs in South Eastern States of Nigeria (CMMSCQ) respectively, necessitated its use for sportsmanship Development Strategies for coaches of University Athletes in the Niger Delta. Six steps of the design were adapted in this present study which includes the following:

#### **Step I:** Research reports and information collection

This involved an assessment of the current situation of the character of university athletes in the Niger Delta. A review of the literature on the state of university athletes character in the world and in Nigeria. Reports from WISCONSIN intercollegiate athletic council (WIAC, 2002), Australian coaching council and Nigerian university Games association report of Jury appeal for the 21st games were consulted. This was followed by a baseline study using descriptive survey design to ascertain the current status of the university athletes sportsmanship was conducted in the Niger Delta. The table below shows negative sportsmanship traits manifested by university athletes in south-South of Nigeria as reported by Dada (2015).

1. Players make negative comments about officials who rule against them
2. Players applaud good plays by opponents
3. Players argue with their opponents over controversial ruling
4. Athletes win by disguised cheating
5. The only important thing in sport is to win
6. A true sportsman must win by all means
7. Players are rude to opponents when offended
8. Players reply opponents spectators who jeer at them.

Source: sportsmanship survey report by Dada (2015)

#### **Step II:** Planning

This involved identification of skills values and activities that are essential for sportsmanship development such as moral dialogue, discussions, fair play, responsibility, respect, care, sports fairs, league competitions and lots more were identified with methods of application.

#### **Step III:** Validation of sportsmanship development strategies

A preliminary draft of the skills and activities for inclusion was subjected to face validation by a team of experts in the field of sport, sociology, measurement and evaluation. This resulted in modification of proposed strategies based on the recommendation of the experts.

#### **Step IV:** Preliminary field testing

The instrument was used to generate data from coaches from areas far away from the where the study was conducted.

#### **Step V:** Main field testing

The validated version of the instrument was sent to the universities sampled in the South-South region for data collection. The data collected were used for statistical analysis to answer research questions for the study.

#### **Step VI:** A final draft of the strategies identified by coaches in the South-South.

The draft of strategies embodies the sportsmanship scenarios, which was cross-matched with the targeted traits and strategies that were identified to address sportsmanship development.

For sportsmanship development strategies, coaches within the university sports councils that handle the designated sports in universities in South-south were considered adequate because they are familiar with situations in sport and they know character traits exhibited by athletes. Forty-six coaches constitute the population for sportsmanship strategies study, two questionnaires captioned university athletes' sportsmanship development strategies questionnaires (UASDSQ) coaches sportsmanship traits matching questionnaire were designed. Ten questions on sportsmanship improvement strategies were constructed. It has a 4 point rating scale question of very appropriate, (VA) appropriate (A) not appropriate (NA) not very appropriate (NVP). The second questionnaire was designed to cross match the strategies with unsportsmanlike traits.

The content and construct validity of the instrument were estimated using factor analysis. The varimax with Kaiser normalization methods principal components analysis (PCA) and the extraction method were used in extracting the content and construct validity. To extract the valid items on the sportsmanship development strategies, with eleven items they were subjected to factor analysis. Eight items extracted and yielded, rotated components score matrix ranging from 0.60 to 0.82 which indicates fairly good content validity. The rotated

sum of squares had a cumulative percentage of 65.49% and evidence of good construct validity. The Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability index of the UASDSQ instruments. The sportsmanship improvement strategies yielded 0.85. The item mean was computed and used to select character development strategies. Any item above a mean score of 2.50 was considered appropriate. The simple percentage was used to determine the result of cross-matched items

#### 4. Results

##### Research question

What are the sportsmanship development strategies appropriate for university athletes in the South-South region of Nigeria.

**Table 1: Mean scores of Sportsmanship improvement Strategies of Coaches**

S/N		COACH N=46 $\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1.	Sportsmanship guidelines concerning player and officials relationship should be circulated to athletes at the commencement of sport seasons	3.52	.59	A
2.	Sportsmanship training videos should be viewed by athletes and coaches to highlight fair play scenarios	3.39	.54	A
3.	Coaches should determine the sportsmanship level of athletes before recruitment into the team.	4.11	.41	A
4.	University sport coaches in the Niger Delta should develop and enforce a written code of conduct that stresses the importance of sportsmanship.	3.46	.59	A
5.	Organize campus wide educational campaign on promoting the positive aspects of sports competition.	3.48	.51	A
6.	Organize campus wide sport league competitions to promote cherished sportsmanship values in sport such as winning with honour.	3.41	.49	A
7.	Establish and routinely practice rituals and tradition that reinforce principles of sportsmanship during training sessions	3.35	.62	A
8.	Coaches should acknowledge good character in public through the use of rewards and incentives.	3.41	.58	A
Grand mean =3.52, SD = .54				

Criterion = 2.50 Appropriate =A (> 2.50) Not Appropriate =NA (< 2.50) .

As shown in the table above, all the mean scores are higher than the set criterion mean (2.50) indicating that coaches accepted them as adequate for improving sportsmanship.



**Table 2:** Coaches matching of development strategies against sportsmanship traits of university athletes

S/N	Sportsmanship traits manifested by university athletes	Sportsmanship improvement strategies			
		Item no of strategy	Frequency	Relative frequency	
1	Players make negative comments about officials who rule against them	1	32	80%	(1) sportsmanship guidelines concerning player and officials should be circulated to athletes at the commencement of every sport season
		2	3	7.5%	
		3	1	2.5%	
		4	3	7.5%	
		6	1	2.5%	
	Total	40	100%		
2	Athletes do not applaud good plays by opponents	1	3	7.5%	(2) Sportsmanship training video on courtesy should be played for athletes to view for peer discussions.
		2	28	70%	
		3	6	15%	
		4	3	7.5%	
		Total	40	100%	
3	Players argue with their opponents over controversial ruling of officials.	1	6	15%	(3) Positive culture of accepting defeat with honour should be inculcated through story-telling session by athletes.
		2	2	5%	
		4	27	67.5%	
		8	2	5%	
		Total	3	7.5%	
	Total	40	100%		
4	Athletes win by disguised cheating	2	2	5%	(4) Sportsmanship rating scale should be developed and used to assess athletes' sportsmanship level.
		3	6	15%	
		4	26	65%	
		6	4	10%	
		7	2	5%	
	Total	40	100%		
5	Believe that the only important thing in sport is to win	4	5	12.5%	(5) University sport councils should organize campus wide campaigns to demonstrate acceptable play spirit in sport.
		5	31	77.5%	
		6	4	10%	
		Total	40	100%	
6	Athletes believe that a true sportsman must win by all means	3	4	10%	(6) Coaches should teach and demonstrate fairness in sport using fair play video sport scenarios.
		4	4	10%	
		6	28	70%	
		7	2	5%	
		8	2	5%	
	Total	40	100%		
7	Players are rude to opponents when offended	5	5	12.5%	(7) Organize campus wide sport league competition to promote cherished character values specifying attitude to opponent teams during sports.
		7	35	87.5%	
		Total	40	100%	
8	Players reply opponent spectators who jeer at them	20	6	15%	(8) Coaches should praise good character after competition in the public through the use of awards and incentives.
		21	2	5%	
		24	2	7.5%	
		25	29	72.5%	
		Total	40	100%	

The data in table 2 reveal that 32 (80%) coaches matched item 1 (sportsmanship guidelines concerning player and officials should be circulated to athletes every new sports season) to players make negative comments about officials who rule against them. Twenty-eight coaches (70%) matched item 2 (sportsmanship training video on courtesy should be played for athletes to view for peer discussions) to athletes do not applaud good plays by opponents as a strategy.

Twenty-seven coaches (67.5%) matched item 20 (positive culture of accepting defeat with honour should be inculcated through story-telling sessions by athletes) to players argue with their opponents over the controversial ruling of officials as a strategy. Twenty-six coaches (65%) matched sportsmanship rating scales

should be developed and used to assess athletes sportsmanship level to athletes win by disguised cheating as the strategy. On athletes who believe that the only important thing in sport is winning, thirty –one (31) coaches (77.5%) accepted that university sports councils should organize campus-wide campaigns to demonstrate acceptable play spirit in the sport as a strategy. Twenty-eight coaches (70%) matched item 23 (coaches should teach and demonstrate fairness in sport using fair play video sports scenarios to athletes who believe that a true sportsman must win by all means as the strategy. On athletes are rude to opponents when offended thirty-five (35) coaches (85.5%) accepted that organizing campus-wide sports league competition to promote cherished character values specifying attitude to an opponent team should be a matching strategy. Twenty-nine coaches (72.5) matched item 25 (coaches should praise good character after competition in the public through the use of awards and incentives) to players reply opponent team spectators who fear at them.

#### **4.1 Discussion**

It is reported that players make negative comments about officials who rule against them during sports. Coaches accepted the use of sportsmanship guidelines stipulating players and officials' relationship should be circulated to athletes at the onset of each sports season. Gano-Overway (1995) proposed that published code of conduct which are read to athletes enables them to exercise restraint in their utterances towards officials. Burnett (2005) stated that sportsmanship entails refusing to argue with a tennis official after an incorrect call. The result also indicated that athletes do not applaud good plays by opponents. To improve this trait coaches adopted the playing of sportsmanship training video on courtesy and other pleasant characters for athletes. Hansen, Stoll and Beller (2002) who used this strategy previously attested to the efficacy of fair play everyday video which utilizes common sports scenarios that feature model athletes in sports action.

On players arguing with opponents over the controversial ruling, it is accepted that positive sportsmanship culture of accepting defeat with honour should be inculcated through story-telling sessions. Success and failure stories are narrated after which athletes dialogue and athletes brainstorm on their observations (Lange, 2002). Storey-telling according to Lange feature role models from which athletes make their choice of characters that reflect what is desired. Coaches also approved the use of sportsmanship rating scales to assess athlete's sportsmanship level as a strategy for who have the tendency to win by disguised cheating. Ariss (2000) explained that when athletes are aware that their sportsmanship disposition is a requirement for recruitment and fielding them for competition, they have no option but to do what is acceptable in sport. Coaches endorsed the organization of campus-wide campaigns to demonstrate acceptable play spirit in the sport. During such campaigns, posters, billboards, and handbills bear the message. The results also show that athletes believe that a good athlete must win by all means.

Coaches proposed a strategy of coaches demonstrating fairness in sport and use of fair play video with sports scenarios as the background. Role modeling demands that coaches demonstrate fair play and integrity before the athletes. The coach should use teachable moments to communicate the message of sportsmanship to athletes. The viewing of everyday sportsmanship scenarios challenges athletes to answer questions of right conduct when addressing fair play on the field of play (Hansen Stoll, & Beller 2000). The strategy of organizing campus-wide sports league to promote cherished character was adopted as a medium for athletes who are rude to opponents when offended. Sports leagues have the potential of gathering a large number of students and sports messages on tolerance can be disseminated there (Docheff, 1997). Officials record no of rule flaggerations by each athlete which is used to determine the best-behaved athlete for awards. On players replying spectators who jeer at them, coaches adopted the strategy of praising good character after competition in the public by giving awards and other incentives to motivate good character among athletes.

#### **5. Conclusion**

From the findings of this study, it is concluded that strategies are needed for improvement of sportsmanship in South-South of Nigeria and university coaches endorsed and validated the strategies. Ten sportsmanship development strategies identified by university coaches were considered appropriate for development of university athletes in the Niger Delta. University coaches equally cross matched the validated strategies with identified sportsmanship problems in an earlier study. These strategies when adopted and utilized by university coaches, it is hoped that sportsmanship might improve in South-South of Nigeria universities.

#### **5.1 Recommendations**

- (1) University sports council should take sportsmanship as a serious issue in sport.
- (2) Sportsmanship levels of athletes should be determined by coaches and team managers annually before fielding them for competitions.
- (3) The culture of rewarding athletes who demonstrate good sportsmanship in University sports.

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