EFFECTIVENESS OF RESOURCE ALLOCATION ON LOCAL SPORTS MANAGEMENT IN MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Grassroots sports are critical for encouraging physical exercise, community participation, and social cohesion at the local level. However, the impact of grassroots sports organizations is not known. This research aimed at evaluating these aspects within local sports management in Makueni County. Grassroots sports offered powerful avenues to engage communities and promote meaningful transformation. The research sought to fill these gaps by evaluating the effect of resource allocation on local sports management in Makueni County. The research was informed by social capital theory, which emphasized the role of social networks, trust, and community engagement in supporting collective action. The target population comprised 330 elected council officials, 300 coaches, 300 referees, 5,250 athletes, 30 ward administrators, managers in county assembly offices, 12 government officials in sports and county planning, 72 federation officials, and 3,600 community members or fans, totaling 9,894 individuals. From this group, the sample of respondents included 120 elected council officials, 50 coaches, 34 referees, 90 athletes, 12 ward administrators and managers from county offices, 9 government officials, 20 federation officials, and 50 community members/fans, resulting in a total of 385 participants. The study used a descriptive design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to members of grassroots sports organizations in Makueni County. Validity and reliability were achieved through expert evaluation and preliminary testing. Data interpretation included descriptive statistics, multiple regression modelling, and theme analysis of qualitative replies. Data were displayed using tables and graphical charts. The findings revealed that resource allocation had a positive and statistically significant effect on local sports management in Makueni County. The study concluded that accountability, and decision-making within grassroots sports programs. Adequate resource allocation improves the availability of financial, human, and physical resources necessary for successful sports management. The study recommended that the County Government of Makueni strengthen grassroots sports governance structures, increase investment in sports resources and infrastructure, and enhance community participation in planning, implementation, and monitoring of sports programs to improve the effectiveness of local sports management.

Keywords: Resource Allocation and Local Sports Management.

INTRODUCTION

Sport has the capacity to reinforce and challenge existing inequalities, many of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and other global events. Although the growth of the sport for development and peace (SDP) movement and the larger use of sport to advance sustainable development is positive, fundamental difficulties remain that limit sports ability to create a meaningful and long-term change *(Palgrave, 2021).* Grassroots sports play a vital role in promoting physical activity, community engagement, and social cohesion. However, the effectiveness of grassroots sports organizations largely depends on their structural organization, resource allocation, and community involvement. This proposal outlines a research study aimed at evaluating these aspects within local sports management.

Grassroots sports play a crucial role in local sports management by engaging communities, nurturing talent, and promoting health and social benefits. Research indicates that investing in grassroots sports is one of the best bets for sustainable development Sanders & Sportanddev (2022). Grassroots sports provide effective mechanisms to connect with communities and drive positive change at the local level. Sport regulating bodies are organizations that promote and develop sports at all levels within a certain country or discipline. Their tasks include managing and regulating the sport, as well as ensuring regular competitions at both national and international levels (from grassroots to elite, amateur to professional). They are also responsible for overseeing the sport's administration, establishing the rules of play, and preserving the principles promoted by the Olympic Movement. Research on these groups frequently focuses on the difficulties they confront in attempting to professionalize both their structures and impact.

According to the United Nations (2022), when sport is structured and implemented with historical and contemporary local contexts in mind, it may be an effective tool for positive social transformation. Although sports have limitations and are influenced by a variety of circumstances, they are nonetheless widely recognized cultural traditions capable of rallying communities for social, political, and economic improvement. Sport may serve as a forum for launching social and political initiatives to address issues that transcend national borders. It can also increase awareness about inequality, oppression, and the significance of defending human rights, particularly in health, education, and sustainable development. Furthermore, the extensive cultural significance and visibility of major sporting events can be used to motivate measures that reflect and support the needs of local communities. As a result, the continued expansion of the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) movement, as well as the strategic use of sport to advance sustainable development, peace, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is appositive development particularly when it emphasizes equity and inclusivity for all.

Grassroots sports are increasingly recognized as a powerful tool for social change and community development across Africa. They provide a platform for youth engagement, health promotion, and social cohesion. Programs designed around grassroots sports can address critical issues such as gender equality, education, and community empowerment, aligning with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2022). Empowering Future Leaders in Grassroots Sport is an inclusive sports programming effort that aligns with UN Agenda 2030, which identifies education as a critical sustainable development goal. The project and its supporting toolbox seek to build leadership via education, with a specific focus on gender equality. Its foundation is based on numerous United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), and the Africa Union's Agenda 2063. These frameworks influenced the toolkit's creation as well as the online symposium training courses (Nana et al., 2022).

Statement of the problem

The majority of grassroots sports organizations are volunteer-run and function in underserved regions, particularly those that are not affiliated with national or international regulatory bodies. These groups frequently rely mostly on unpaid work, lack facility ownership, and are susceptible to interruptions because of volunteer turnover (Ata et al., 2023; Samanta & Ghosh, 2024). Their internal dynamics, such as leadership structures, operational sustainability, and coordination, are still poorly understood, despite the fact that they are essential in promoting physical exercise, social inclusion, and community bonding, especially in counties like Makueni (Yu et al., 2023). Although grassroots sports organizations are essential to the growth of local sports in Makueni County, little is known about their organizational structure or decision-making process. Concerns regarding efficiency and equity are also raised by the dearth of documentation regarding the distribution of resources, including funds, buildings, and equipment (Hurt et al., 2022). It is unknown how much community engagement affects grassroots sports programming, despite the Makueni County Government's encouragement of citizen participation through public venues like barazas (Government of Makueni County, 2022). Additionally, there has been no assessment of the effectiveness of the county's 2024 Sports Policy, which was created to assist these groups (Government of Makueni County, 2024).

This study aimed to address these knowledge gaps by examining the structural, operational, and participatory dimensions of grassroots sports organizations in Makueni County. By generating evidence on how these organizations function and engage with the community, the research provided actionable insights for improving local sports governance, policy effectiveness, and equitable resource distribution.

Objective of the Study

i. To establish the effectiveness of resource allocation on Local Sports Management in Makueni County

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section examines the theories providing anchorage for the study together with empirical and conceptual frameworks. They are elaborated below:

Theoretical framework

This research was guided by social capital theory. The concept of social capital dates back to the early twentieth century, but was the work of Bourdieu, Coleman, Putman, and others in the 1980s and 1990s that cemented it as a significant theory in the social sciences. Social capital theory emphasizes the role of social networks, trust, and community involvement in supporting collective action. In grassroots sports, strong social capital can enhance participation, volunteerism, and community support for sports initiatives. This theory suggests that grassroots sports structures that foster relationships among community members can lead to increased collaboration, resource sharing, and overall effectiveness in local sports management.

Social capital theory is vital for understanding how grassroots sports structures function, especially in local sports management settings like Makueni County, Kenya. This theory emphasizes the importance of social networks, trust, and community involvement, suggesting that these factors are crucial for the collective success and efficient management of shared activities (Putnam, 2000). In the realm of grassroots sports, social capital is often evident in the connections and networks established among community members, athletes, local leaders, and stakeholders. These networks promote collaboration, resource sharing, and the joint management of sports initiatives (Woolcock, 2001).

Furthermore, social capital can serve as a bridging and bonding mechanism within communities, according to Portes (1998). While bridging social capital connects diverse groups like community leaders, government officials, and grassroots sports participants, bonding social capital reinforces relationships among uniform groups like athletes or sports officials within the same league. This bridging aspect is especially pertinent to the grassroots sports structures in Makueni County because it facilitates greater cooperation between different stakeholders, such as sports federations and local council officials, thereby improving the overall efficacy of local sports management.

Coleman (1988) expands on the idea of social capital by highlighting the importance of shared norms and trust in a community, both of which can promote cooperation and coordinated action. Trust amongst stakeholders in grassroots sports management, including athletes, officials, referees, and the local community, can improve coordination, lessen conflict, and lead to more efficient utilization of resources. Fair competition, the continuation of the sports league, and the preservation of a positive atmosphere for all players depend on this group's mutual trust.

Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as the assets that people or groups have access to because of their social networks and relationships. These resources could include information, technical skills, facilities, and support systems that improve local sports management in the context of grassroots sports. For example, Makueni County's coaches, community members, and sports administrators could use their connections to get funding, training, and other resources needed for efficient sports management.

It is thus possible to assess the efficacy of grassroots sports structures by looking at how these networks of cooperation and trust are established and maintained, using the framework of social capital theory. Assessing community engagement, resource distribution among stakeholders, and social network support for local sports management organizational structures are all part of Makueni County's Ligi Mashinani initiative. A theoretical framework for comprehending the dynamics of local sports management and its potential for long-term success and community development is provided by this emphasis on social capital.

Empirical Review

Effect of Resource Allocation on Local Sports Management

Globally, resource allocation has been identified as a foundational element in the development and management of sports systems. Financial, human, and infrastructural resources are crucial for facilitating athlete training, maintaining facilities, and fostering participation across diverse groups (Misener & Mason, 2021). Proper resource distribution enhances governance, improves operational efficiency, and promotes inclusivity in sports particularly at the grassroots level.

At the community level, human resources such as volunteers, coaches, and referees play a central role in delivering quality sports programs. Taylor (2019) highlights that the presence and competence of these personnel influence participation, organizational effectiveness, and the sustainability of local leagues. Fahlen (2020) warns that underinvestment in human capital often leads to poorly managed sports events and reduced community involvement. Likewise, inadequate infrastructure restricts opportunities for talent development and dissuades participation, especially in rural areas (García & Llopis-Goig, 2019).

In Sub Saharan Africa, resource scarcity remains a major barrier to effective sports management. Many counties, including those in Kenya, face limitations in funding, facility development, and trained personnel (Kitumu, 2016). While strategic plans acknowledge the role of sports in youth empowerment and social cohesion, implementation often falls short due to constrained budgets and limited monitoring systems.

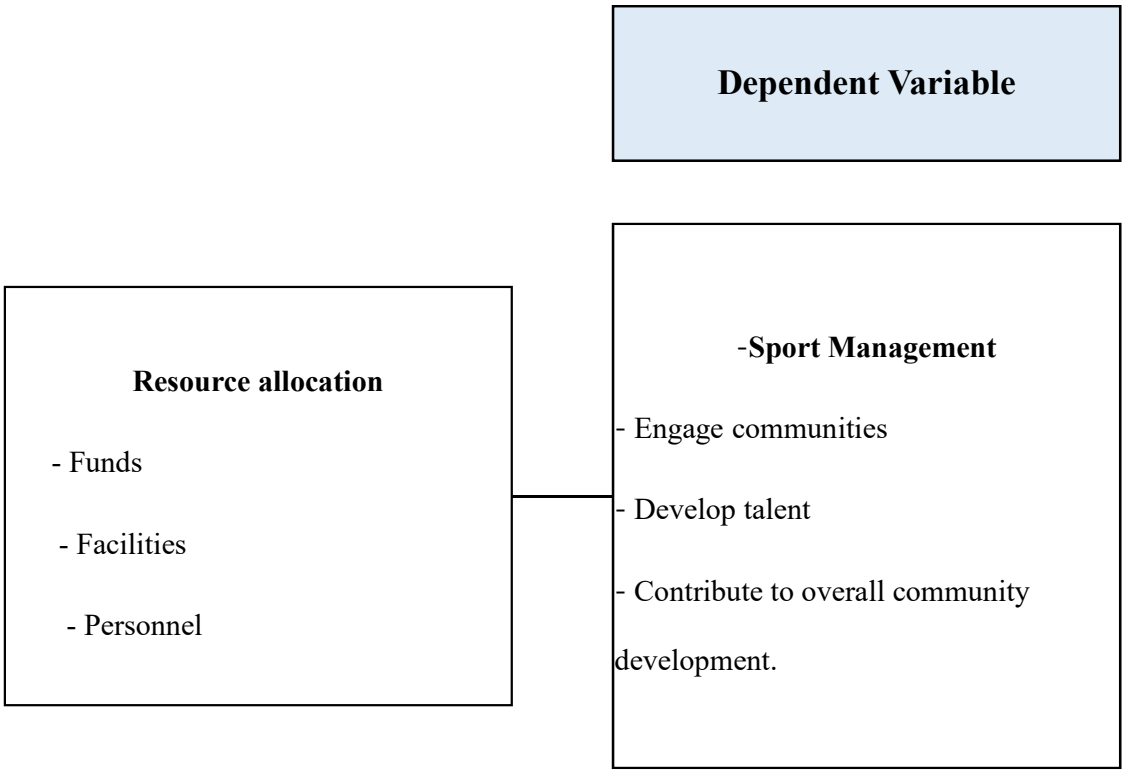
Focusing on Kenya, and specifically Makueni County, recent development plans prioritize investments in sports infrastructure and talent promotion (Makueni County Government, 2023). However, there is a considerable gap in empirical research that investigates how the distribution of financial, human, and physical resources affects county-level sports

management outcomes. Most existing studies concentrate on better resourced environments, overlooking the contextual realities of developing, rural counties.

This study fills this gap by looking into the specific effects of resource allocation on local sports management in Makueni County. It employs a mixed method approach to evaluate how available resources are distributed and this influences program execution, participation, and infrastructure use. In doing so, the study contributes to context specific knowledge and offers practical recommendations for optimizing grassroots sports governance in resource constrained settings

Conceptual framework

This study posits that organizational structure, resource allocation, and community involvement are interdependent factors that collectively influence the effectiveness of sports management. A well-defined organizational structure provides the framework for efficient decision-making and coordination, while resource allocation ensures the availability and strategic use of financial, human, and material assets to support sports programs. Community involvement fosters local engagement, ownership, and participation, which are essential for the sustainability and success of sports initiatives. The interplay of these elements creates a dynamic system where each component reinforces the others, leading to improved management, greater participation, and long-term success in grassroots sports development. The conceptual frame work is shown in figure 2.1.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research used a descriptive research design to analyse how grassroots sports structures affect local sports management within Makueni County, Kenya. The methodology proves suitable for recognizing patterns and connections in real-world settings according to Saunders et al. (2020). The study was conducted in Makueni County, one of the Kenya's forty-seven counties located in the country's south east. It shares boundaries with Machakos in the north, Kitui in the east, Kajiado in the west, and Taita Taveta in the South. The county is located between Latitude 1º 35′ south and Longitude 37º10′ east and 38º 30′. It has an area of 8,176.7 KM^2 and a population density of 121 people per square kilometre (km^2). The county headquarters are located at Wote which is 135km from Nairobi. The study was done in Makueni because it's one of the counties with an organized grassroots sports structure and a community driven program dubbed *Ligi Mashinani*. Ligi Mashinani Programme is an umbrella sports development initiative which is geared towards continuous talent identification, nurturing and monetization. It was noted despite efforts by sports federations and associations to drive the agenda of sports development at the grassroots, there was a disconnect due to the limited community participation, limited resources and inadequate structures to manage talent development at the grassroot. Since there is no known study on this topic in this region, this motivated me to carry out the research

This study targeted athletes, community members (fans), elected sports council officials from the 30 wards, referees, coaches, Youth and Sports Development Officers, Ward Administrators, Managers in the Office of the member of County Assembly, Federation Officials and Director Sports in Makueni. The respondents were drawn from the various indoor and outdoor games in Makueni County. There were 5,250 athletes, 3,600 community members or fans, 330 elected council officials, 300 coaches, 300 referees, 72 federation officials, 30 ward administrators and managers in the offices of county assembly members, and 12 government officials involved in sports and county planning. This totals 9,894 individuals. The target population was drawn from the above because they are directly involved in sports management at the grassroots.

The research employed Yamane (1967) formulae to determine the sample size of the 9,894 respondents and sample size of 385. The sample of respondents consisted of 120 elected council officials, 90 athletes, 50 coaches, 50 community members/fans, 34 referees, 20 federation officials, 12 ward administrators and county office managers, and 9 government officials, totalling 385 participants.

This study used semi-structured questionnaire to collect the data. SPSS version 21 was used to analyse quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were summarized using descriptive statistics like percentages and frequencies. Multiple regression analysis was investigated the association between local sports management and grassroots sports structures (community involvement, resource distribution, and organizational structure).

Using NVivo software, qualitative data were thematically evaluated through coding to identify relevant themes from open-ended responses.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The researcher distributed 385 questionnaires to all categories of participants including elected council officials, athletes, coaches, community members/fans, referees, federation officials, ward administrators, county office managers, and government officials. Out of these, 364 questionnaires were duly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 94.5%. Only 21 questionnaires, accounting for 5.5%, were not returned. This response rate is considered exceptionally high. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 70% and above is considered excellent and ensures adequate representation of the target population.

A review of demographic information revealed that on gender distribution, majority of participants were male (335, representing 92.0%), while females accounted for 25 participants (6.9%), and 4 participants (1.1%) preferred not to disclose their gender. This pronounced gender disparity reflects broader systemic inequalities in sports governance structures in Kenya. Data on disability status indicated that 351 participants (96.4%) reported not living with a disability, while 13 (3.6%) identified as persons living with a disability. This low representation of persons with disabilities in the study echoes the limited participation of this group in sports governance across many African contexts. Data on age distribution indicated that the largest proportion of participants (158, or 43.4%) were aged 45 years and above, followed by those aged 40–44 years (65, or 17.9%) and 15–29 years (57, or 15.7%). This age distribution indicates that sports management in Makueni County is predominantly driven by experienced middle-aged and older individuals. Data on sub-county distribution of respondents indicated that the Makueni Sub-County had the highest representation with 204 participants (56.0%), followed by Mbooni with 40 (11.0%). The remaining four sub-counties Kaiti, Kilome, Kibwezi East, and Kibwezi West each contributed approximately 30 participants (8.2% each). The higher representation from Makueni Sub-County is consistent with the higher concentration of sports management bodies, council officials, and government sports officers in the county headquarters. Data on academic qualifications indicated that the majority of participants (268, or 73.6%) held university-level qualifications, while 80 (22.0%) had tertiary/college education, and 16 (4.4%) had secondary education. The high proportion of university-educated participants among sports management stakeholders is consistent with the growing professionalization of sports administration in Kenya.

Resource Allocation and Local Sports Management

The second objective examined how resource allocation influences local sports management in Makueni County. The following subsections analyze funding sources, equity of distribution, timeliness of disbursement, infrastructure adequacy, and community needs consideration.

Primary Source of Funding

Participants were asked to identify the primary source of funding for grassroots sports in Makueni County. Table 1 presents the findings.

Table 1 Primary Source of Funding for Grassroots Sports

Funding Source	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government Funding	228	62.6
Community Fundraising	72	19.8
Private Sponsorships	44	12.1
Donor Agencies/Other	20	5.5
Total	**364**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2026)

As shown in Table 1, government funding was identified as the primary source by 228 participants (62.6%), underscoring the heavy dependence of grassroots sports on public resources. Community fundraising accounted for 72 responses (19.8%), private sponsorships for 44 (12.1%), and donor agencies or other sources for 20 (5.5%). The over-reliance on government funding creates significant vulnerabilities in the sustainability of sports programmes, particularly given budget constraints and bureaucratic delays common in county governments. Kamau and Njoroge (2021) observed that when government allocations are the primary revenue stream for grassroots sports, any disruptions in public budgets immediately translate to operational paralysis at the club and council levels. Diversifying funding streams is therefore essential for the resilience of sports management in Makueni County. The findings also agree with the report by the Government of Kenya (2025) on the financing challenges facing the sports sector. The Draft National Sports Policy notes that many sportspersons remain dependent on unpredictable government stipends and one-off donations because structured commercial support systems remain underdeveloped. It further observes that counties have limited capacity to finance sports initiatives and often depend almost entirely on exchequer allocations.

Consideration of Community Needs in Resource Allocation

Participants rated the extent to which community needs are considered in resource allocation for grassroots sports, on a scale from 1 (Not at All) to 5 (To a Very Great Extent). Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2 Consideration of Community Needs in Resource Allocation

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Not at All	23	6.3
2 – To a Limited Extent	41	11.3
3 – To a Moderate Extent	76	20.9
4 –To Great Extent	105	28.8
5 – To a Very Great Extent	119	32.7
Total	**364**	**100.0**
Mean Score	**3.70**	**—**

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 2 shows a mean score of 3.70, indicating that community needs are considered to a moderate-to-high extent in resource allocation. The largest clusters of responses were at rating 5 (119, 32.7%) and rating 4 (105, 28.8%), suggesting that many respondents feel community voices are heard in allocation decisions. However, 17.6% of respondents rated this dimension at 1 or 2, signaling that a significant minority perceive community needs as inadequately reflected in resource distribution. Otieno and Wekesa (2022) argued that participatory budgeting mechanisms in grassroots sports can bridge the gap between community expectations and actual resource deployment. In Makueni County, establishing formalized community consultative processes could further enhance the responsiveness of resource allocation.

Equity of Resource Distribution

Participants indicated their level of agreement that financial resources allocated for grassroots sports are equitably distributed across different areas of Makueni County, on a scale from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). Table 3 presents the findings.

Table 3 Equity of Resource Distribution

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Strongly Agree	99	27.2
2 – Agree	70	19.2
3 – Neutral	64	17.6
4 – Disagree	72	19.8
5 – Strongly Disagree	59	16.2
Total	**364**	**100.0**
Mean Score	**2.78**	**—**

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 3 shows a mean score of 2.78, indicating a moderate level of perceived equity in resource distribution. While 46.4% of respondents agreed to some extent that resources are equitably distributed (scores 1 and 2), 36.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed (scores 4 and 5). This polarization suggests that equity in resource allocation remains a contested issue in Makueni County. Muriithi and Kariuki (2022) found that geographic remoteness and political considerations often distort resource distribution in county sports programmes,

with peripheral sub-counties frequently receiving less than their proportional share. Transparent allocation formulas anchored in objective criteria such as population and sports participation rates could help address these disparities.

Timeliness of Resource Disbursement

Participants rated the timeliness of resource disbursement from the county government, on a scale from 1 (Very Timely) to 5 (Not Timely at All). Table 4 presents the findings.

Table 4 Timeliness of Resource Disbursement

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Very Timely	23	6.3
2 – Timely	82	22.5
3 – Moderately Timely	93	25.5
4 – Rarely Timely	99	27.2
5 – Not Timely at All	67	18.4
Total	**364**	**100.0**
Mean Score	**3.29**	**—**

Source: Field Data (2026)

The mean score of 3.29 presented in Table 4 indicates that timeliness of disbursement tends towards the negative end of the scale, suggesting that resource delivery is generally perceived as delayed. Only 28.8% of respondents rated disbursements as timely (scores 1 and 2), while 45.6% rated them as mostly untimely or not timely at all (scores 4 and 5). Ndung'u and Mwangi (2023) documented widespread delays in county sports fund disbursements across Kenya, attributing these delays to slow procurement processes, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and cash flow constraints at county treasury levels. The consequences of delayed disbursements for Makueni County include disrupted training schedules, cancelled competitions, and low stakeholder morale. Ministry of Sports (2025) indicated that delays in funding to sports federations could arise from non-compliance with registration and other requirements. The Ministry consequently announced measures intended to accelerate funding for compliant federations. This is important in interpreting the present results because delayed disbursement may not solely reflect inadequate government commitment; it may also result from institutional compliance gaps, incomplete documentation, approval procedures and coordination problems between funding agencies and recipient organizations.

Adequacy of Financial Resources

Participants rated the adequacy of financial resources allocated by the county government for local sports development, on a scale from 1 (Very Adequate) to 4 (Very Inadequate). Table 5 presents the results.

Table 5 Adequacy of Financial Resources

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Very Adequate	35	9.6
2 – Somewhat Adequate	93	25.5
3 – Somewhat Inadequate	105	28.8
4 – Very Inadequate	131	36.0
Total	**364**	**100.0**
Mean Score	**2.91**	—

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 5 shows a mean score of 2.91, indicating that financial resources are broadly perceived as inadequate. While 35.1% of respondents rated resources as very adequate or adequate (scores 1 and 2), 64.8% rated them as mostly or very inadequate (scores 3 and 4). This finding aligns with Ochieng and Auma (2021), who reported that underfunding of grassroots sports is a systemic challenge across Kenyan counties, where sports often rank low in budget priority relative to health, education, and infrastructure. In Makueni County, inadequate funding constrains the ability of sports councils and clubs to organize competitions, train athletes, and maintain facilities, ultimately limiting the developmental impact of grassroots structures.

Availability of Sports Infrastructure

Participants rated the availability of sports infrastructure such as fields, courts, and equipment in their areas, on a scale from 1 (Very High) to 5 (Very Low). Table 6 presents the findings.

Table 6 Availability of Sports Infrastructure

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Very High	6	1.6
2 – High	41	11.3
3 – Moderate	99	27.2
4 - Low	105	28.8
5 – Very Low	113	31.0
Total	**364**	**100.0**
Mean Score	**3.76**	—

Source: Field Data (2026)

The mean score of 3.76 in Table 6 indicates poor infrastructure availability across Makueni County, with 59.8% of respondents rating availability at level 4 or 5 (low to very low). Only 12.9% rated availability positively (levels 1 and 2). This critical infrastructure deficit is one of the most pressing constraints on grassroots sports development. Wanjiku and Mwangi (2022) found that the lack of basic sports facilities in rural Kenyan counties significantly reduces sports participation rates, particularly among youth. In Makueni County, the absence of adequate playing fields and training equipment means that many promising athletes cannot be identified or developed, limiting the talent pipeline for competitive sports.

Qualitative responses reinforced the quantitative findings on resource challenges. One participant stated:

> *"Inadequate funds to run sports affairs is the biggest challenge. We cannot organize tournaments, pay referees, or buy equipment for our athletes. The little government support that comes is often insufficient and comes very late in the financial year."*

Another respondent commented on resource equity:

> *"Ensuring enough funds to motivate community members and keeping off cartels that divert resources meant for sports would greatly improve the situation. Currently, some areas receive more resources than others based on political connections rather than need."*

These perspectives underscore the structural and governance challenges in resource allocation that limit the effectiveness of grassroots sports management in Makueni County. Kamau and Mwangi (2020) noted that political patronage in resource distribution erodes trust in sports governance and discourages sustained community engagement. The results are also comparable with Muluyha's (2024) study of the Vihiga County Cricket Development Project. The study noted that grassroots sports development initiatives in Kenya have frequently been affected by inadequate funding and weaknesses in planning, which can compromise their sustainability. Since sports infrastructure requires substantial resources for construction, maintenance, equipment and rehabilitation, inadequate and inconsistent financing can contribute directly to the infrastructure shortages reported by respondents in the present study.

Effectiveness and Outcomes of Grassroots Sports Structures

This section presents findings on the overall effectiveness of grassroots sports structures, their impact on key sports outcomes, and stakeholder awareness of relevant policies.

Overall Effectiveness of Grassroots Sports Structures

Participants rated the overall effectiveness of grassroots sports structures in managing sports in Makueni County, on a scale from 1 (Very Effective) to 4 (Very Ineffective). Table 7 presents the results.

Table 7 Overall Effectiveness of Grassroots Sports Structures

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Very Effective	105	28.8
2 – Effective	122	33.5
3 – Ineffective	93	25.5
4 – Very Ineffective	44	12.1
Total	364	100.0
Mean Score	2.21	—

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 7 reveals a mean score of 2.21, indicating a moderate level of overall effectiveness. While 62.3% of respondents rated grassroots structures as very effective or mostly effective (scores 1 and 2), 37.6% rated them as moderately to very ineffective (scores 3 and 4). This mixed assessment reflects the uneven performance of sports structures across sub-counties and management levels. Omolo and Otieno (2022) observed that in counties where grassroots sports structures are supported by adequate funding, trained leadership, and clear governance frameworks, overall effectiveness ratings tend to be significantly higher. The findings from Makueni County suggest that while the structural foundations are largely in place, their full potential is constrained by resource inadequacy, governance challenges, and capacity gaps.

Impact on Sports Outcomes

Participants assessed the extent to which grassroots sports structures in Makueni County have improved specific sports outcomes. Table 8 presents the findings.

Table 8 Extent of Improvement in Sports Outcomes

Outcome Area	Great Extent (%)	Some Extent (%)	Limited Extent (%)	None (%)
Talent Identification and Development	57.7	29.1	12.1	1.1
Sports Participation Rates	53.8	40.4	5.8	0.0
Performance in Competitions	63.5	36.5	0.0	0.0
Inclusivity (gender, disability, marginalized)	55.8	38.5	5.8	0.0

Source: Field Data (2026)

As shown in Table 8, the most positive impact was recorded in performance in competitions, where 63.5% of respondents reported improvement to a great extent, and 36.5% to some extent yielding a 100% positive rating with no respondents citing limited or no improvement. Talent identification and development also received strong positive ratings, with 57.7% indicating improvement to a great extent. Sports participation rates and inclusivity also received predominantly positive assessments. These findings suggest that grassroots sports structures in Makueni County have been most effective in improving competitive performance outcomes and talent pipelines, while also making meaningful strides in increasing participation and inclusivity. Ouma and Ogola (2021) found that community-based sports structures in Kenyan counties that prioritize systematic talent identification programs tend to produce stronger national competition representations over time.

Awareness of Sports Policies and Guidelines

The study examined the level of awareness among participants of official sports policies or guidelines governing grassroots sports in Makueni County. Table 9 presents the results.

Table 9 Awareness of Sports Policies and Guidelines

Level of Awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, Fully Aware	203	55.8
Aware but Limited Details	81	22.3
Heard About Them but Not Familiar with Content	58	15.9
Not Aware	22	6.0
Total	**364**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 9 shows that 203 participants (55.8%) were fully aware of sports policies, while 81 (22.3%) had awareness but limited knowledge of details. Approximately 21.9% of respondents had limited or no awareness of governing policies. The relatively high rate of policy awareness among the majority is encouraging, though the significant minority with limited awareness points to gaps in policy dissemination and stakeholder education. Mwenda and Kiprotich (2021) argued that effective sports governance requires universal policy literacy among all management tiers, as lack of awareness at lower levels can lead to non-compliance, inconsistent implementation, and missed opportunities for resource access.

Sustainability of Grassroots Sports without External Funding

Participants rated the sustainability of grassroots sports activities in Makueni County without external funding, on a scale from 1 (Not Sustainable at All) to 4 (Highly Sustainable). Table 10 presents the findings.

Table 10 Sustainability of Grassroots Sports without External Funding

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – Not Sustainable at All	70	19.2
2 – Slightly Sustainable	87	23.9
3 – Moderately Sustainable	134	36.8
4 – Highly Sustainable	73	20.1
Total	**364**	**100.0**
Mean Score	**2.58**	**—**

Source: Field Data (2026)

The mean score of 2.58 presented in Table 10 indicates moderate-to-low sustainability of grassroots sports without external funding. The findings show that 56.9% of respondents rated sustainability at level 3 or 4 (suggesting some capacity to sustain activities independently), 43.1% rated it at level 1 or 2, indicating significant vulnerability to funding disruptions. Njuguna and Waweru (2023) observed that most grassroots sports programmes in Kenya are structurally dependent on government and donor funds, with minimal capacity to generate independent revenue. Building financial self-sufficiency through sports enterprise development, corporate partnerships, and community-based fundraising mechanisms is critical for the long-term viability of sports management structures in Makueni County.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

Resource allocation is the most significant determinant of grassroots sports management effectiveness in Makueni County. Chronic underfunding, infrastructure deficits, inequitable distribution, and delayed disbursements collectively undermine the operational capacity of sports councils, clubs, and federations. The over-reliance on government funding without complementary private sector engagement or community revenue generation exposes the sports ecosystem to financial fragility. Addressing the resource gap requires both increased public investment in sports and structural reforms in how resources are allocated and accounted for at the grassroots level.

Recommendations

Based on the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

The Makueni County Government should significantly increase the budget allocation for grassroots sports in line with national sports development priorities. A transparent, criteria-based resource allocation formula should be developed, incorporating variables such as sub-county population, sports participation rates, and infrastructure gaps to ensure equitable distribution. The county should establish a Sports Development Fund with clear disbursement timelines to address the chronic delays identified in the study. Additionally, the county should actively pursue public-private partnerships with corporate organizations, media houses, and development organizations to diversify the funding base for grassroots sports. Community-based income-generating activities such as sports tournaments, sports tourism, and merchandise should be explored as sustainable revenue streams.

The county government should develop and gazette a County Sports Policy that provides a legal framework for grassroots sports management, clearly articulating the roles of different stakeholders, funding mechanisms, monitoring frameworks, and accountability standards. The policy should incorporate provisions for gender equity, youth inclusion, and disability mainstreaming in all sports management activities. Sports management bodies should develop internal sustainability plans that outline strategies for generating revenue, building organizational reserves, and reducing dependence on government funding over time. The county should also establish a sports data management system to track participation rates, talent development outcomes, and resource utilization, enabling evidence-based planning and reporting.

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