

COMPARING TEAM NIGERIA PERFORMANCE AT THE 2012 AND 2016 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

Gbenga S. Ajibola
samgbenga001@yahoo.com

&

Habeeb L. Owolabi
hablad@yahoo.com

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education
University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to carryout comparative analysis between team Nigeria Performance at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics and Paralympics Games. The population for the study included all Nigeria's athletes that participated in Olympics and Paralympics game in the year 2012 and 2016. The sample for the study is 130 Nigeria's Olympics athletes and 52 Paralympics athletes that participated in 18 and 6 Sports respectively. The descriptive survey was utilized for this study involving case study of athletes that participated in the 2012 and 2016 Olympics and Paralympics game. Descriptive statistics of bar chart was used for data analysis using SPSS version 20. The result showed that in 2012 and 2016, Nigeria's Paralympians have a better performance than Nigeria's Olympians. It has been noticed that Nigeria Paralympians won most of their medals at the powerlifting events. The study recommended that Nigeria should increase funding in powerlifting for Olympians. Funding for Paralympics should also be increased in other to encourage athletes and hence have an improved performance at the Paralympic games. The government should increase its grassroot sports programme in order to foster sports development

Keywords: Olympics, Paralympics, Athlete, Performance, Powerlifting

Introduction

The modern Olympic Games or Olympics are the leading international sporting event featuring summer and winter sports competitions in which thousands of athletes from around the world participate in a variety of competitions. The

Olympic Games are considered the world's foremost sports competition with more than 200 nations participating. The Olympic Games are held every four years, with the Summer and Winter Games alternating by occurring every four years but two years apart. Their creation was inspired by the ancient Olympic Games, which were held in Olympia, Greece, from the 8th century BC to the 4th century AD. Baron Pierre de Coubertin founded the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894. The IOC is the governing body of the Olympic Movement, with the Olympic Charter defining its structure and authority (Chamonix, 2009).

Correia (2008) explained that the Paralympic Games is a major international multi-sport event involving athletes with a range of disabilities including impaired muscle power (e.g. paraplegia and quadriplegia, muscular dystrophy, post-polio syndrome, spina bifida), impaired passive range of movement, limb deficiency (e.g. amputation or dysmelia), leg length difference, short stature, hypertonia, ataxia, athetosis, vision impairment and intellectual impairment. There are Winter and Summer Paralympic Games, which since the 1988 Summer Games in Seoul, South Korea, are held almost immediately following the respective Olympic Games. All Paralympic Games are governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

Gaffey (2016) explained that the achievements of Nigeria's Paralympians have cast those of their able-bodied counterparts into the shadows. Nigeria's Olympic team brought back just a single bronze medal from Rio won by the men's football team captained by Chelsea midfielder Mikel John Obi in a disappointing tournament that was a marginal improvement on the London 2012 Olympics, where the country won no medals. Nigeria's performance so far at the Paralympics means that they are currently the highest-ranked nation in sub-Saharan Africa, positioned 12th in the overall medals table between New Zealand in 11th and Mexico in 13th. (Tunisia is the highest-positioned African nation, with nine medals and sitting in 10th place). Much of the country's success has been down to their dominance on the powerlifting benches. Nigerian athletes have won six of their seven medals so far in powerlifting, which sees athletes within a certain weight category bench press as much as they can. Team Nigeria's captain at the Games, Lucy Ejike, won gold in the 61kg women's category on Sunday by setting a new world record, lifting 142kg.

Nigeria at the Olympic Games

Nigeria first participated in the Olympic Games in 1952, and sent athletes to compete in every Summer Olympic Games since then, except for the boycotted 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal. The nation has never participated in the Winter Olympic Games. Nigerian athletes have won a total of 24 medals, mostly in athletics and boxing. Chioma Ajunwa won the country's first Olympic gold medal in the women's Long Jump event in 1996 at Atlanta. The national football team

also won the gold medal in 1996, silver medal in 2008 and bronze medal in 2016. In 2008, following the International Olympic Committee's decision to strip the American 4 × 400 metre relay team of their medals after Antonio Pettigrew confessed to using performance-enhancing drugs, their Nigerian rivals were awarded the gold medal. Nigeria also won a medal in the heavyweight division of taekwondo at the 1992 Summer Olympics; as this was only a demonstration sport, Emmanuel Oghenejobo's silver did not count as an official win. The Nigeria Olympic Committee, the National Olympic Committee for Nigeria, was created in 1951 (Wikipedia, 2016).

Research Hypothesis

There will be no significant difference between Team Nigeria Performance at the 2012 and 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Material and methods

The population for the study included all Nigeria's athletes that participated in Olympics and Paralympics game in the year 2012 and 2016. The sample for the study is 130 Nigeria's Olympics athletes and 52 Paralympics athletes that participated in 18 and 6 Sports respectively. The descriptive survey was utilized for this study involving case study of athletes that participated in the 2012 and 2016 Olympics and Paralympics game. Information was gotten from primary sources. Descriptive statistics of bar chart was used for data analysis using SPSS version 20. The participants and their achievement are represented below:

Table 1: Team Nigeria Medals by Games at All Olympic Games

Games	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1952 Helsinki	0	0	0	0
1956 Melbourne	0	0	0	0
1960 Rome	0	0	0	0
1964 Tokyo	0	0	1	1
1968 Mexico City	0	0	0	0
1972 Munich	0	0	1	1
1976 Montreal	<i>did not participate</i>			
1980 Moscow	0	0	0	0
1984 Los Angeles	0	1	1	2
1988 Seoul	0	0	0	0
1992 Barcelona	0	3	1	4
1996 Atlanta	2	1	3	6
2000 Sydney	1	2	0	3
2004 Athens	0	0	2	2
2008 Beijing	0	1	3	4
2012 London	0	0	0	0
2016 Rio de Janeiro	0	0	1	1
Total	3	8	13	24

Source: Makcit (2016).

Table 2: Nigeria Medalist at the Rio 2016 Olympics

Athletes	Sport	Bronze
Shehu Abdullahi, Junior Ajayi, Daniel Akpeyi, Stanley Amuzie, Emmanuel Daniel, William Troost-Ekong, Saturday Erimuya, Oghenekaro Etebo, Imoh Ezekiel, Kingsley Madu, John Obi Mikel, Muenfuh Sincere, Azubuike Okechukwu, Popoola Saliu, Umar Sadiq, Ndifreke Udo, Aminu Umar, Usman Mohammed	Male Under 23 Football	1

Source: Makcit (2016).

Nigeria at the Paralympic Games

Nigeria made its Paralympic Games debut at the 1992 Summer Paralympics in Barcelona. It sent a delegation of six male athletes to compete in track & field, powerlifting and table tennis. Adeoye Ajibola won two gold medals in sprint, while Monday Emoghawve obtained one in powerlifting. Nigeria has participated in every subsequent edition of the Summer Paralympics, though it has never taken part in the Winter Paralympics. Nigerians have won a total of 36 gold medals, 18 silver, and 16 bronze.

Nigeria at the 2012 Paralympic Games

Table 3: Nigeria Medals Table at All Paralympic Games

Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Total	36	18	16	59
2016	8	2	2	11
2012	6	5	2	13
2008	4	4	1	9
2004	5	4	3	12
2000	7	1	5	13
1996	3	2	3	8
1992	3	0	0	3

Source: Paralympics (2016) and BBC (2016).

Table 4: Nigeria Gold Medalist at the London 2012 Olympics

Athlete	Sport	Gold
Adesokan Yakubu	Powerlifting	1
Esther Oyema	Powerlifting	1
Grace Anozie	Powerlifting	1
Joy Ganiyat Onaolapo	Powerlifting	1
Loveline Adaure Obiji	Powerlifting	1
Oduenyi Nwokorie	Powerlifting	1

Source: Makcit (2016).

Table 5: Nigeria Gold Medalist at the Rio 2016 Olympics

Athlete	Sport	Gold
Roland Ezuruike	Powerlifting	1
Paul Kehinde	Powerlifting	1
Lauritta Onye	Athletics	1
Ugwunwa Flora	Athletics	1
Lucy Ejike	Powerlifting	1
Ndidi Nwosu	Powerlifting	1
Bose Omolayo	Powerlifting	1
Josephine Orji	Powerlifting	1

Source: Makcit (2016).

Results

Comparing Team Nigeria Performance at the 2012 and 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Figure 1: Medals Won in London 2012 Olympics/Paralympic Games by Team Nigeria

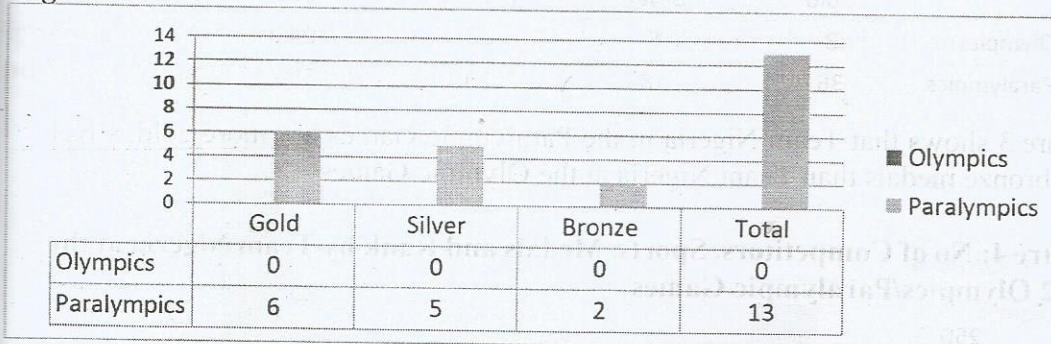


Figure 1 shows that Team Nigeria in the Paralympic Games has more gold, silver and bronze medals than Team Nigeria at the Olympic Games.

Figure 2: Medals Won in Rio 2016 Olympics/Paralympic Games by Team Nigeria

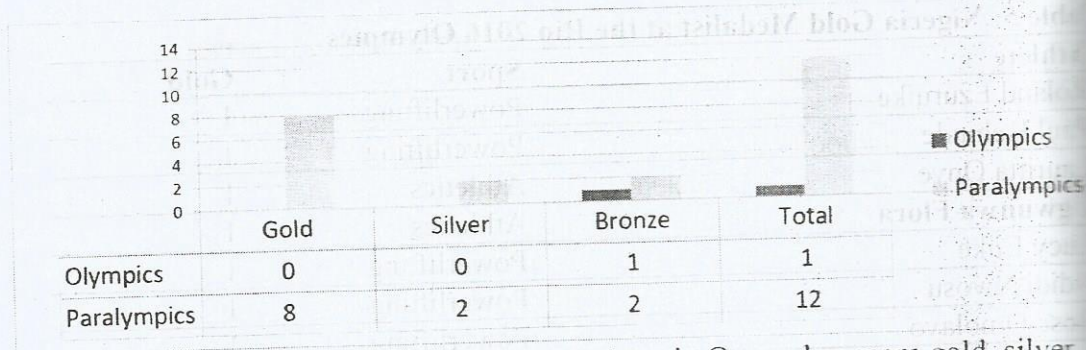


Figure 2 shows that Team Nigeria in the Paralympic Games has more gold, silver and bronze medals than Team Nigeria at the Olympic Games.

Figure 3: Total Medals Won in Olympics/Paralympic Games by Team Nigeria

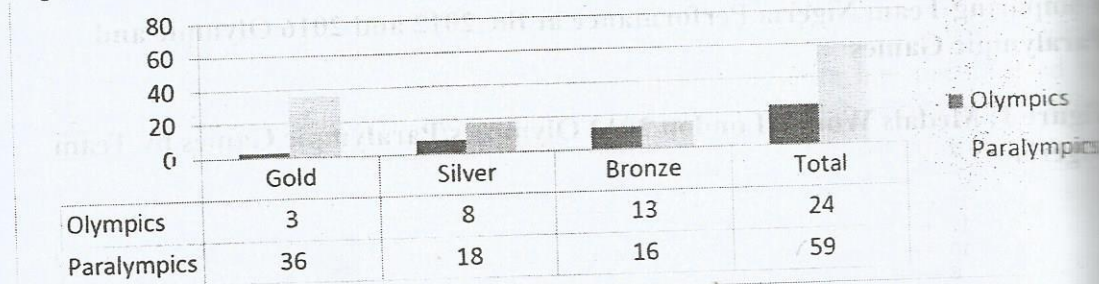


Figure 3 shows that Team Nigeria in the Paralympic Games has more gold, silver and bronze medals than Team Nigeria at the Olympic Games.

Figure 4: No of Competitors, Sports, Medals and Rank by Team Nigeria at the 2012 Olympics/Paralympic Games

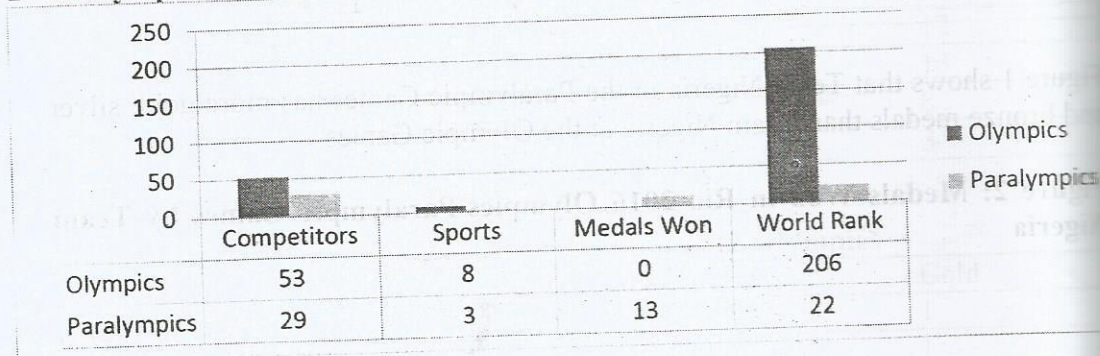


Figure 4 shows that Team Nigeria at the Olympic Games has more competitors but won no medal while Team Nigeria at the 2012 Paralympic Games has fewer competitors and sports but won 13 medals.

Figure 5: No. of Competitors, Sports, Medals and Rank by Team Nigeria at the 2016 Olympics/Paralympic Games

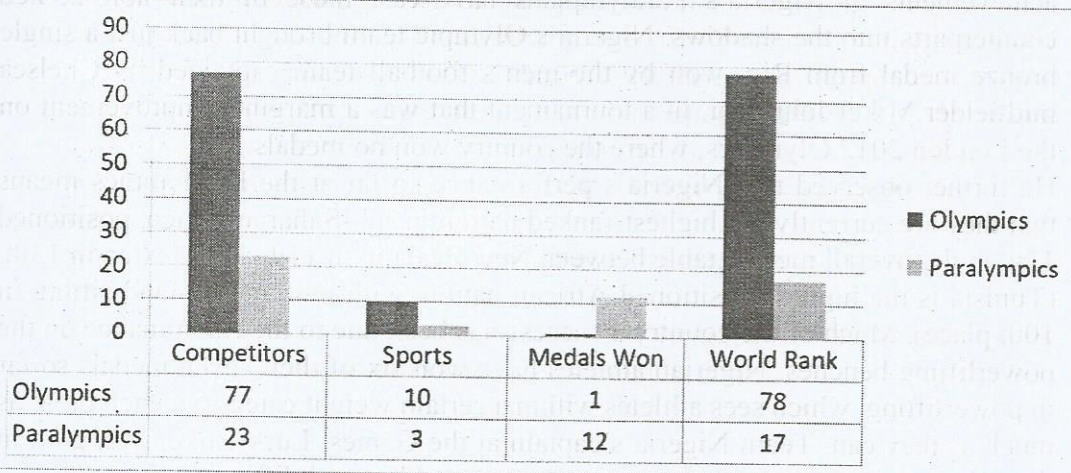


Figure 5 shows that Team Nigeria at the Olympic Games has more competitors but won just one medal while Team Nigeria at the 2016 Paralympic Games has fewer competitors and sports but won 12 medals.

Figure 6: No of Competitors, Sports and Medals by Team Nigeria at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics/Paralympic Games

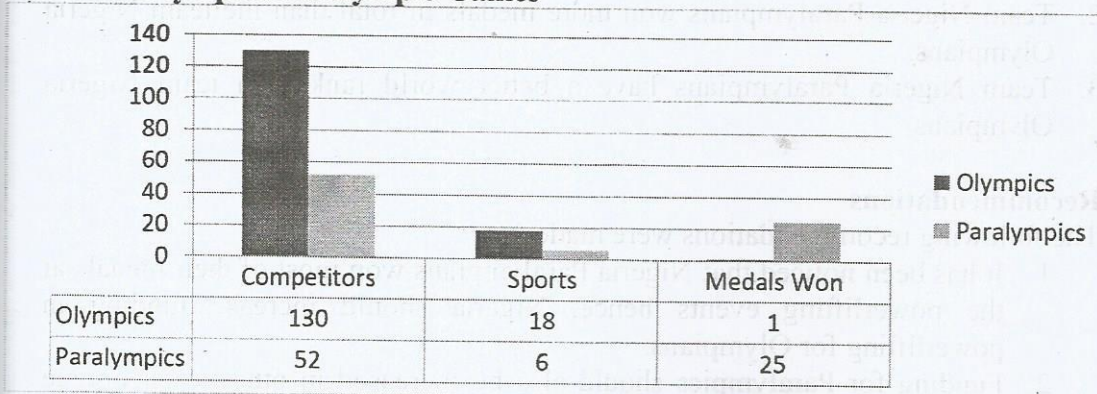


Figure 6 shows that Team Nigeria at the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games has more competitors but won just one medal while Team Nigeria at the 2012 and 2016 Paralympic Games has fewer competitors and sports but won a total of 25 medals.

Discussion

The results in all the figures show that in 2012 and 2016, Nigeria's Paralympians have a better performance than Nigeria's Olympians. The Paralympic team won a total of 25 medals within this period while the Olympic team won one medal in 2016.

This finding is in line with Gaffey (2016) who observed that more significantly, the achievements of Nigeria's Paralympians have cast those of their able-bodied counterparts into the shadows. Nigeria's Olympic team brought back just a single bronze medal from Rio, won by the men's football team captained by Chelsea midfielder Mikel John Obi, in a tournament that was a marginal improvement on the London 2012 Olympics, where the country won no medals. He further observed that Nigeria's performance so far at the Paralympics means that they are currently the highest-ranked nation in sub-Saharan Africa, positioned 12th in the overall medals table between New Zealand in 11th and Mexico in 13th (Tunisia is the highest-positioned African nation, with nine medals and sitting in 10th place). Much of the country's success has been due to their dominance on the powerlifting benches. Nigerian athletes have won six of their seven medals so far in powerlifting, which sees athletes within a certain weight category bench press as much as they can. Team Nigeria's captain at the Games, Lucy Ejike, won gold in the 61kg women's category by setting a new world record, lifting 142kg.

Conclusion

1. Most of medals won by team Nigeria at the Paralympics was in powerlifting and athletics while the Nigerian Olympians won most of their medals in athletics, boxing and football.
2. Team Nigeria Paralympians won more medals in total than the team Nigeria Olympians.
3. Team Nigeria Paralympians have a better world rank than team Nigeria Olympians.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made;

1. It has been noticed that Nigeria Paralympians won most of their medals at the powerlifting events hence; Nigeria should increase funding in powerlifting for Olympians.
2. Funding for Paralympics should also be increased in other to encourage athletes and hence have an improved performance at the Paralympic games.
3. The government should increase its grassroot sports programme in other to foster sports development.

References

- BBC Sports (2016). *Medals Table- Rio 2016 Paralympics*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/sport/paralympics/rio-2016/medals/countries/nigeria#nigeria>;
- Chamonix L. (2009). *International Olympic Committee*. Retrieved from <https://www.olympic.org/the-ioc>

- Correia S. (2008). Paralympics History.; *Accessible Portugal Online Magazine*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter_Paralympic_Games
- Gaffey C. (2016). How Nigeria's Paralympians Are Outshining Their Olympic Counterparts. Retrieved from <http://www.newsweek.com/how-nigerias-paralympians-are-outshining-their-olympic-counterparts-497487>
- Makcit R. (2016). Meet the 8 gold medalists for Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://www.kapital929.fm/paralympics-2016-meet-the-8-gold-medalists-for-nigeria/>
- Paralympics (2016). Nigeria at Rio 2016 Paralympics. Retrieved from <https://www.paralympic.org/rio-2016/nigeria>
- Wikipedia (2016). Nigeria at the Olympics. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria_at_the_Olympics