

ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

**THE RISE OF FOOTBALL AGENCY AND ITS IMPACT ON FOOTBALL IN
GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:

Candidate's Name:

Date:.....

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by Ashesi University College.

Supervisor's Signature:

Supervisor's Name:

Date:

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the effect of the rise of football agency on Ghanaian football. This paper looks to highlight the different opinions on the activities of football agents and analyze its effect on football agency.

The objectives of this research are to investigate the reasons for the rise in football agency in Ghana, determine how this rise in football agency is affecting football in Ghana and to recommend ways to increase the positive and decrease the negative impact of football agency on football in Ghana.

The study involved research and critical analysis of literature available on football agency in Africa and the reasons for the rise in football agency. The principal-agent theory was also studied and serve as the theoretical framework for this research. The research involved qualitative data which was gathered through interviews with footballers, administrators, coaches, agents and members of the media from within and outside of the country.

This dissertation serves as the first major study on football agency in Ghana and Africa as a whole as other studies have studied migration of players from Africa and other topics within that discourse. This study provides an insight into the role of the football agent, the different ways he affects football and provides solutions to some of the problems.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Background of Study

The game of football is believed to be a fusion of many games played in different parts of the world. The Han dynasty, a large part of ancient China had their form of football which required them to put a leather ball filled with feather and hair into a net tied to bamboo cane amid tackles from other players. This game was known as Tsu' Chu (FIFA, 2012). There was also a Japanese game of Kemari which involved players standing in a circle and passing amongst each other without the ball touching the ground. The Greek also had a game, Episkyros, which consisted two teams kicking a ball within a rectangle with a center line. To score, one team had to take the ball past the boundary of the other team and the trademark of this game was the great use of trickery. The fusion of these games with others not mentioned and some not even documented on, has resulted in the creation of the game of football which a lot of people enjoy today. The governing body of football is the Federation Internationale de Football Association popularly known as FIFA. (FIFA, 2012)

The year 1866 would prove to be one of the most significant years in the history of football as the first governing body of football was formed in England. Hosting the first world cup in 1966 and having the first well-planned and structured official football league, England started the era of football that would see the hobby slowly evolve into a profession. This evolution could be attributed largely to the intense marketing, strategy, planning and investment into English football which has seen it become the benchmark in the now global game which attracts over 2 billion spectators every year. (Orejan, 2011)

The evolution of football has seen it open up well-diversified job opportunities for a large group of people. During the World Cup 2010 in South Africa alone, 150,000 jobs were created (Smith, 2010). Construction workers and architects to work on the construction of stadia, grounds men and horticulturists to work on pitch lawns, cleaners to work all around the stadia and people to do the administrative work in the stadia are all different job opportunities that exist in modern day football. There were also footballers, coaches and doctors amongst others who also got jobs from the game of football.

Once the game of football fully transformed into a profession, the business aspect of it started to become very important. More people began to invest billions into football every year. With the World Cup Brazil 2014 forthcoming, the estimated budget is 120% more than that of the previous World Cup held in South Africa. As rational investors, these people had to make sure they were making enough money to either equal or surpass their investments. Other employees of the now professional game of football were also looking to make enough money to cater for themselves and their families. This need of theirs was one that warranted the use of very good negotiation and guidance. Since negotiation is a skill that is not possessed by everyone, the relevance of agents became even greater. An agent is one who acts on behalf of another or represents another person (Laffont & Martimort, 2001). A football agent's job, though might mainly be negotiating contracts also covers areas of public relations, commercial endorsements.

In Ghana, football is not just a game but, a window to greatness and a way out of poverty for a lot of people. The youth spend a lot of time running on the stony rock-hard pitches hoping that one day, their dream of playing in the big stadia of Europe would come true. The

increasing number of youth who are able to make it to the bigger teams in Europe has also seen a lot of other people take up football agency as a profession. This is evident from the growing numbers of licensed FIFA agents in Ghana.

The development of Ghanaian football has slowed down drastically given its initial rate of development (Yeboah, 2012). This dip in the level of football is evident from the low performances of national teams and clubs on the international scene in recent years. Ghana has constantly supplied the football world with very good players but, has not channeled the returns well enough to develop football in the country. The development of football within the context of this study includes the availability of facilities, the quality of the local football teams and strategic talent development systems being used within the country. The aim of this study is to determine the growth of football agency and analyze the impact of the growth of football agency on Ghanaian football.

1.2: Problem Definition

Football agency is the business or process of representing a footballer or coach in negotiations with football clubs and other organizations. The business of football agency has been on a constant rise not just in Ghana, but in the rest of the world (Telegraph, 2012). Even though this rise comes with a lot of benefits to the entire footballing community of the nation, it has its own negative effects. There has been a surge in the number of cases of agents, several of whom are not licensed, trying to negotiate deals for footballers with the primary aim of financial gain. This has caused a lot of these deals to fall through, leaving a lot of these young footballers devastated and clueless of what the future holds for them. The president of the

Ghana Football Association, Kwesi Nyantakyi, highlighted the situation at a press conference where he said, *“We should always be looking at protecting the player from such unseen hands. Players are pushed into all sorts of deals and the next thing, you find them going before the Player Status Committee, seeking to be declared as free agents”* (Ghana Football Association, 2012).

He went on to state further that, the players’ careers are not safe in the hands of these people and teams should take responsibility in dealing with only legitimate football agents.

In many instances, agents have spotted talented players, promised them deals pending their families pay significant amounts of money and run away right after the family have made the payment, or after the first attempted deal falls through. This has left so many footballers and their families in misery as they usually use all their savings, and in severe instances, sell their property to pay the agents knowing they are making an investment worthwhile (Aaron, 2011). These acts have not helped in the development of the business of sports agency, but rather created an aura of distrust around the profession.

With the increased movement of players from Ghana to foreign leagues and the increase in the number of agents, one would expect a favorable impact on Ghanaian football. This has however not been the case as African football in general has been developing rather slowly and the local leagues receiving even less attention (Wandabwa, 2011) .

1.3: Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study are:

- Investigate the reasons for the rise in football agency in Ghana.
- Determine how this rise in football agency is affecting football in Ghana.
- Recommend ways to increase the positive and decrease the negative impact of football agency on football in Ghana.

1.4: Significance of study

With football agency growing rapidly with evidence of the growing numbers of the registered football agents in Ghana (Players' Agents List, 2012), this dissertation would be analyzing the reasons for this increase. On the face of it, it looks like the only reason for the rise of football agency is the financial gain involved. This is however not the case as there are other reasons for the rise in the football agent profession which would be elaborated on briefly.

The recent global attention the game of football is getting has created a lot to be desired in various ways. Fans want to see more entertaining football, clubs want to have the best players, and players want to be the centre of attraction by playing for the best clubs. There seem to be gaps between the needs of the fans, clubs and players in modern day football and the person capable of putting this jigsaw puzzle together is the football agent.

Media is one of the strongest factors of world football with television rights contributing massively to the high finances involved in world football today. In the year 2012, the English Premier League secured £3 billion for the next three years. (Sale, 2012) Media brings the game of football closer to the fan and now, one can watch a game being played in London in the comfort of his home anywhere in the world. There is live commentary on the radio and on the internet, match updates on the internet and player news available to you anytime you want it.

The media is in fact largely responsible for all the attention modern football is getting. All of this money being put into media adds up to the money available in the world of the sport making the job of the agent more crucial. Football agents also offer image rights services which is directly influenced by media investments.

With the higher literacy levels of football players today, it takes more than the mere presentation of a contract to earn their signatures. The modern day footballer is aware of the importance of the off-pitch part of the career and knows he cannot handle that part of his career very well. He therefore holds his representation in high importance thus the rise in the demand, thus the rise in the profession of football agency.

There are so many videos of young footballers on YouTube and websites on the internet. Statistics on players, player profiles and biographies are all available due to technology. Social media has played a massive role in information diffusion and with this tool, important information on contract or trial opportunities and potential player availability moves around quickly.

These different components all play a role in the rise of football agency and this dissertation will help determine their advantages and importance to the development of football. The research question of this dissertation is

“Is the rise of football agency affecting the development of football in Ghana?”

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Poli (2007) outlined the different ways through which the “muscle drain” of African football players occurs. First, European clubs employ recruiters to scout for talent in various countries. These recruiters are sometimes resident in the countries; a good example being Tom Vernon, a Manchester United scout resident in Ghana since 1999. Some European clubs partner with local academies to train players in exchange for giving them their best players for a fee. An example of this is Manchester City’s partnership with the right to dream academy of Ghana.

A few of the European clubs have gone a step further to create their own football academies. An example of such a club is Ajax Amsterdam who have set up the Ajax Cape Town football academy and football club. Local businessmen with football academies also send players out through partners who are settled in other countries.

Due to the limitation of literature on sports agency in Ghana, analysis made on articles from other parts of Africa and the world. There is also a gap in literature regarding the rise of football agency however, there is literature on the continuous increase in the transfer of football players from Africa to other continents and the implications that come with it. However, since the transfer of football players is the outcome of the job of mainly football agents, the increase in the number of transfers in Africa and Ghana in the case of this dissertation is as a result of the increase in football agent activity.

Football agency has formed the bridge between clubs and the potential players making the transition from amateur to professional football a little easier. However, the actions of some agents have tarnished the image of the occupation making it hard for people to trust them

especially in Africa. The reason why football agents have been able to take advantage of players is covered in the principal-agent theory as the lack of synchronization in the priorities and actions of the owner and the controller.

2.1: Principal-Agent Theory

The main premise of the principal-agent theory is that, the principal, due to how busy he is, hires an agent to do a certain job. The principal faces a problem of not being able to monitor the agent perfectly and thus has to motivate him to ensure that he works in the interest of him, the principal (Gibbons, 2010).

The principal-agent theory is an economic concept which has been found to be relevant in even the most complex organizational relations and applications of agents (Kassim & Menon, 2003). Early economists came up with this theory in their study of risk sharing amongst individuals and groups. The agency problem was a result of the study of the causes and effects of collaborating parties having different attitudes towards risk (Eisenhardt, 2006). The initial writers on this theory failed to recognize one major factor, which was incentive. Incentive plays a very important role in this theory as it is the most assured way of the principal ensuring that the agent is doing a good job on his behalf (Laffont & Martimort, 2001).

The principal-agent theory as captured by (Waterman & Meier, 2010) refers to the different priorities of owners (principals) and controllers (agents) of an organization. This is caused by the information asymmetry between the two parties and usually causes a clash between them as the controllers do not take decisions that necessarily favor the interests of the owners. Another problem the principal-agent theory emphasizes is the difficulty of the principal

to monitor or verify the actions of the agent. This process is either very costly or could ruin the relationship between the two parties, a problem known as the *moral hazard*. The solution to this problem is what is known as an *incentive contract*. An incentive contract is one which splits the controller's pay into two; one which is constant and the other which depends on his ability to achieve certain goals set by the owner (Gentile, 2009).

The agency or principal's problem according to Stephen Ross, is one of major significance to the agency theory (Ross, 1973). In the relationship between the principal and the agent, the main problem between the two parties is based on wages. The initial problem is the bargaining problem and the second is the further conditions that warrant the payment of the wages and additional bonuses. The use of wages and bonuses is the most popular way of curbing the agency problem of agents acting on their interests before that of the principal.

Relating this theory to football agency, the football agents would be the "agents" and the footballers whom they represent would be the "principals". The football agent just like in the instance of the principal and agent, is the employee of the footballer thus has to act in the benefit of his employer. The football player has the wish to play football under the best financial and social conditions and the agent has the ability to make this happen through his contacts and expertise. Since the agent would be representing the player, he has all the raw information concerning the players deal and therefore has control over how much information gets to the player. There are a lot of instances in which many agents have told stories and given out information that only favors themselves (Anderson, 2010). When a football agent is in negotiation with a club on behalf of a player, there is an information asymmetry as the agent does not tell the player all the necessary information. He could also negotiate a deal that does

not necessarily maximize the gain of the principal but rather, increases the commission he would receive from the club.

The measures aimed at controlling the effects of the principal-agent theory should be adopted by football players who employ football agents. These measures would compel the agents to take decisions that would benefit their clients rather than themselves. The difficulty of this application in Ghana would be that, many of the players rely too much on the agents and do not realize that the agents work for them and not the other way around. This situation of the agent being in control of the management and control of decision making creates an atmosphere for corruption (Mason, Thibault, & Misener, 2006).

The principal-agent theory is a theoretical framework that can help aid the output of football agents in favour of their principals; footballers. Research in this study in this area would include research to find out the growth trend of football agency in Ghana as there is no available research to prove this.

2.2: Sports agency

According to Weiss (1994), it is normal and true that sports agents are individuals who negotiate player contracts for athletes. This however does not cover the whole job definition of the sports agent. The job of a sports agent might include legal counseling, public relations, endorsement contract management, financial and investment advice amongst others. The job of a sports agent has existed since the beginning of the professionalism of sports. Its popularity and relevance was boosted by the establishment of player free agency. This is a state in which a player is not attached or affiliated to any club and is free to negotiate with anyone at all.

According to (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2009), the first modern breed of sports agents sprouted out of the United States. Their emergence is continually linked with the professionalism of sports which at the time was done independently of the government. The area of sport was left for individuals and private corporations. At the time, the main reason for sports agents was to create an aura of professionalism which would lead to the recognition of sport as a job. This initial objective of sports agency gradually faded away giving way to the job definition that is more common to us; securing high revenues for clients (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2009). With time, a variety of entrepreneurs ventured into the area of professional sport bringing the “real business” to the table of sport. With the increase in sponsorship and media coverage, the financial inflows begun to escalate, leading to an influx in the number of sports agents. With the consideration of the various points in the article, the authors defined a sports agent as

“Any natural or legal person occasionally or regularly engaging in one or more of the following activities in return for payment:

- Bringing together parties interested in concluding a contract relating to the performance of a sporting activity for remuneration;*
 - Negotiating and concluding different kinds of contracts on behalf of a professional sportsperson, such as image rights contracts, sponsoring contracts, advertising contracts, etc.;*
 - Managing the assets of a professional sportsperson.*
- Acting as an intermediary with a view to concluding a contract is the most typical role of a sports agent.” (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2009)*

2.3: The rise in football agency in Africa

Apart from the effort of football clubs, football agents who work in a more independent way with agencies, act as intermediaries between players and clubs. In the case of the agent not being resident in a country of interest, he employs scouts who organize competitions for the youth to showcase their skill and the best are picked. Once a player is picked, the agent goes through with the process of providing him with short-term travel documents on condition that the player signs a contract to the agent. The essence of this contract is to ensure that if any team wants to recruit the player, it is only the agent who is in position to negotiate on his behalf putting him in the position to demand for a commission.

(Darby, 2010) discusses the continuous increase in the number of foreigners playing in football leagues and more specifically, the number of Africans. The number of Africans in the various French leagues by the year 1938 was 140. Indeed between 1945 and 1962 the number of North Africans alone in the French leagues was 120. This growing number of Africans in the French leagues has also led to a lot of African representation of France on the international scene. Portugal also experienced the same trend in their leagues and national teams as many Africans represented clubs and national teams from Portugal (Murray, 1995).

With the French policy of “*Gallicisation*” or the assimilation of the local population into the citizenship of the motherland and the Portuguese policy of the “*Indigenous People’s Rule*” which granted assimilation status to Africans from Portugal’s colonies, it is clear that colonialism plays an important role in the movement of football players abroad (Darby, 2010).

Another reason for the increase in the number of African footballers leaving the shores of the continent to ply their trade in Europe is the growing reputation of African national teams. It was first believed that Africans possessed skill, speed and strength but lacked tactical maturity to be able to perform in the European game. However, the consistent good performances of African teams at international competitions has proved that perception wrong leading to an increased demand in the not only physically, but tactically gifted African players.

Professional players from Africa dream of playing in Europe not because of the huge stadia or the more developed cities but mainly because of the financial benefits that come with it. With majority of the money in the African leagues coming from European investors, it is logical, if not evident, that there is a lot more money to be earned playing for the European teams. Due to the bad financial structure of African football, teams are not able to hold onto their players for periods, long enough as the opportunity of earning more money elsewhere lurks. Some big African clubs especially those in north Africa have very good financial standings and for this reason are able to keep a lot of very talented players even though European teams try to buy them.

Darby (2007) also discusses the impact of corruption of the administration of the game within the sub-Saharan Africa. With the knowledge of these facts, young football players prefer to leave for Europe as they believe their development is going to be better in Europe where corruption would not sabotage any of their opportunities. With the contribution of African governments in football decreasing, the development of the game has reduced immensely. In 1970, the budget for the Cameroonian Ministry of Sports was 5.58 percent of the entire budget. However, this percentage reduced to 0.06 in 1996.

Darby, Akindes & Kirwin (2007) discusses the role of football academies in the migration of football labor to Europe. Even though the migration depletes the local game of its best talents, an argument is made that the competition amongst the rest of the players is enough to boost team performances. A good example is the ASEC Mimosasa academy which has still won local and continental honors in spite of the constant transfer of its players to European clubs. Some popular products of the ASEC academy are the Toure brothers and Salomon Kalou of the Ivory Coast.

Another argument made is that African teams are eventual beneficiaries of the migration of the young players as the training they get from the academies makes them better players who come back home to represent national teams.

Socio-economic benefits also come with the establishment of these academies as the players who successfully get transferred to European teams earn huge salaries which do not benefit just themselves but also their families. Some of these players use their money to establish businesses and charities which in the long run, help the society.

2.4: Agency in the Rest of the World

There are significant differences between football agency in Africa and the rest of the world. Sports agency begun in the United States of America and Europe and as a result, sports agency in these areas is more advanced in terms of structure and performance. In Europe, there are not many regulations on sports agents making them a threat to the ethical state of sports. The few regulations have given agents the opportunity to cheat footballers in many ways and not be held accountable to the law as they have not gone against the law. (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2009) The structure of sports agency in Europe is well

organized as agents usually have already established links to prospective clubs making their transactions more comprehensive. The agents themselves are well qualified for their jobs with some going up to the masters' level in education. In addition to the primary function of football agencies which is to represent footballers, they carry out other functions such as financial advice, endorsement deals and image consultancy (Poli, Rossi & Besson, 2012).

In Africa, sports agency is still developing and like a new organization, it exhibits traits of intensive marketing and a struggle to create a good impression in the minds of the people. There is very little regulation on sports agency and the structure of agencies is not well defined. They carry out the very basic functions of sports agency which is negotiating deals for the players.

Chapter 3- Methodology

The preceding chapters have established that football has evolved from the mere game that it was to the mammoth business field. With this evolution, has come the rise of football agency which is the representation of football players by individuals or agencies who act as intermediaries between footballers and potential clubs. This rise in football agency is evident from the literature available on the increase in agency activity on the African continent causing the number of Africans playing football in foreign leagues to increase significantly.

This chapter discusses the research methods to be applied to this dissertation. In addition, this chapter would contain a vivid contextualization of the key words of the research question of this dissertation which is

“How is the *rise* of *football agency* affecting the *development* of *local football*?”

3.1: Operationalization

In the context of this thesis, the word “rise” refers to the growth of football agency activity in terms of frequency of transfer or deals aided by agents. This is because the frequency of transfers aided by agents would be a good measure of agency activity as they are usually at the centre of these deals. Therefore, the higher the increase in frequency of transfers, the higher the rise of football agency.

Football agency is a field which does not only involve getting the players contracts with clubs but also, offering them financial advice, getting them endorsement deals and publicity

management. In this paper however, the term “football agency” refers to the representation of football players that secures them contracts with football clubs both within and outside Ghana.

Development is generally the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced or stronger. The entire development of football is a concept too large to be researched on in this thesis due to time constraints. For this reason, “development” in this paper refers to financial and general performance of the involved football teams. The relevance of the financial development is to be able to whether the impact of the transfers orchestrated by these football agents on their parent football clubs has been an adverse or good. The relevance of measuring the performance of their parent teams is to determine the performance levels attained by the football club after the departure of these players. The main indicator of general footballing performance of a team is their league position. In doing this therefore, the league positions of the clubs over the last five years would be considered to be able to determine a performance trend.

Ghana is a very passionate footballing nation known for its very talented and physically strong players and passionate football fans. The term “local” is relevant when referring to something belonging to or connected with the particular place or area that you are talking about or with the place where you live. In the context of this dissertation, the term local football refers to competitive football being played by professional teams within the boundaries of Ghana. References were also made to the performances of Ghanaian teams on the continental and international scenes.

In very simple terms, what the research question of this dissertation is looking to find is the impact on the growth of the financial and footballing performance of Ghanaian football teams by the increase in player transfers.

3.2: Research Design

In order to research the effect of the rise of football agency on the development of local football, opinions of various people was sought. The output of a football agent is not dependent on him alone but also, on his client, the rules he works with and other parties to be met in his line of work. For these reasons, the research looked to gather information on the general perceptions on football agency, how it is affecting local football, the ratio of certified agents to non-certified agents and how the certification affects the way they work. The responses to questions on these areas were very important to the research as they provided a core to the job and output of football agents in general. The target population of this research included football players, football coaches, football administrators, football agents and sports media men who have been involved with Ghanaian football for a while. The reason for choosing these specific people was their varying expertise and the different basis on which their relations to football agents are based.

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected in this research with the use of interviews. The qualitative data was used to describe the effect of player transfers and other forms of agency activity on the football and financial performances of the teams, the reasons are important because, this research is not being done with the assumption that everything is as a result of agency activity. The quantitative data was on the numbers of transfers, the league

positions over the past five years and the average percentage of transfer fees that is ploughed back into the club's activities.

The data collection method deemed suitable for the collection of quantitative and qualitative data for this particular study was interviews. This is due to the advantages of more detailed information, a more flexible research style and the detail of non-verbal communication. For the purpose of this research, the following would be interviewed:

- 5 football coaches
- 3 football administrators
- 5 football agents
- 3 members of the sports media
- 10 football players

The opinions of past football players and other opinion leaders and big names in the football community such as retired players and coaches would be sought.

The small numbers chosen for the various interviewee sections was influenced by how knowledgeable they are in their respective fields. Except for the footballers, the other interviewees were sampled using the snowballing method ensuring the people who were interviewed are well vested in their professions and provided information that is very relevant and credible. The time and money constraints also played a major role in the decisions.

The interviews were meant to gather information on opinions on football agency, what the role of football agency has been in local football development, rates of frequency in agency activity, the number of qualified agents worked with, and so on.

These groups of interviewees were selected because they are people knowledgeable enough on the areas relevant to the research which include but not limited to football administration, media and agency. The different types of interviewees give the researcher the advantage of getting the different opinions to the questions as all the interviewees contribute in different ways and capacities to the roles of football agency.

3.3: Sampling Methods & Data Analysis

For the interviews, the snowball sampling method was used as there would be a reference system. This is a method in which the researcher is referred to other people who are considered to be in better positions to give the relevant information. This system is cost effective and gets you very good information as the right people are asked the questions.

In the research, the sample of people was found via personal relationships with well networked people in the Ghana Football Association and the international football community.

Since the data analyzed was qualitative and was gathered by interviews, the appropriate data analysis method to use was thematic analysis. This is a method in which the researcher analyzes data to draw common patterns and themes which allow him to describe a phenomenon related to a particular topic (Boyatzis, 1998).

4: Findings and Interpretations

The data for this dissertation was gathered from 26 individuals through interviews from different parts of Ghana and these responses were used to answer the research question:

Is the rise of football agency affecting the development of football in Ghana?

These individuals as mentioned in the previous chapters, are key to this topic as their perceptions of football agency are different since their job specifications give them different paths of relation with football agents. These different people are football players, agents, coaches, administrators and media men.

4.1: Composition of population

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Administrators	3	12%
Coaches	5	19%
Players	10	38%
Media	3	12%
Agents	5	19%
Total	1	100%

From the table above, it is seen that the number of footballers is the greatest. The expertise and experience of the respondents was a major factor in the choice of number of the various respondents chosen. The research was not meant to lay emphasis on only professional players as football agency activity exists in the amateur and colts or academy levels. However, most of

these amateur players in these lower levels might not have experienced enough agency activity to make their opinions very strong thus the need for more footballers. In choosing the players, 2 were chosen from colts teams in Accra and Kumasi. Another 2 players were chosen from the second division league, another 2 from the first division league, 3 from the premier league and one player who plays for the reserve team of a major club in England.

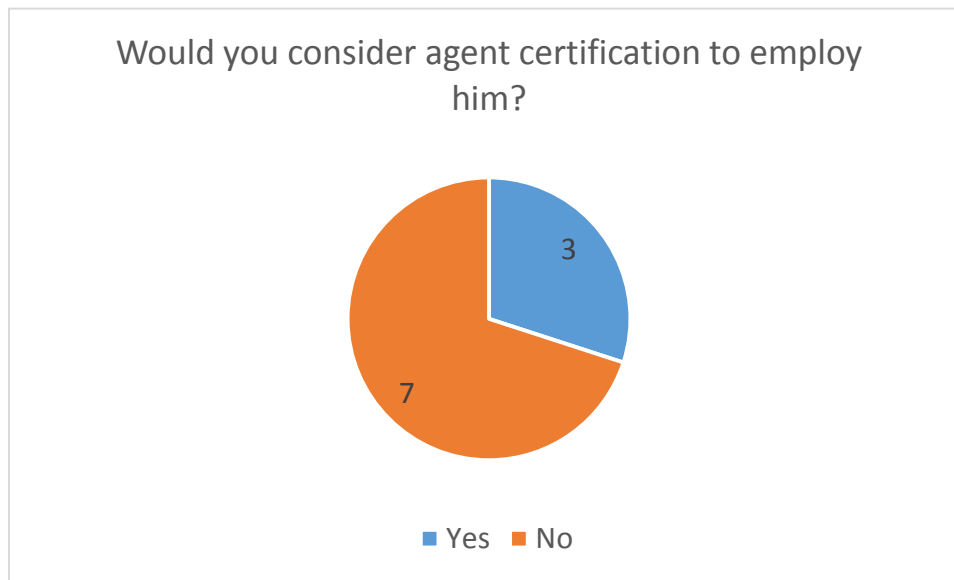
The number of agents was comprised of 2 non-FIFA certified and 3 FIFA certified agents. The coaches comprised lower division coaches and former premier league and national team coaches. The administrators that were interviewed were people who had worked as administrators for not less than 6 years and whose expertise is not limited to the borders of the country. All media men interviewed have affiliations to major media houses.

4.2: The interview with the footballers

From interviewing the footballers, it was noticed that their responses were guided by the level of experience they have had in professional football. The questions asked were aimed at determining their knowledge levels on a football agent's job and what they think about agent certification.

In analyzing all the interviews with the footballers, it was realized that even though a lot of the players had a fairly good idea of what a football agent does, it was common to find them using the term "manager". A personal manager is one who usually trains a player personally and acts as an advisor for the players. This is a major problem because this implied that most of the agents these players were working with were not certified agents but rather were people who have a personal relationship with the player and seek to help him reach other heights. The

players all believed that having an agent was key to having a successful professional career but 2 of them had been let down by some agents so when it came to whether they would consider agent certification before working with them, these 2 including another said yes.



Patterns from the interview with the players that would aid in the answering of the research question were:

1. Most of the players do not consider agents as their employees but rather their owners.
2. All the players except for one, got their agents through personal and not professional means.
3. All the players who had been cheated, suffered at the hands of non-licensed agents.

4.3: Interview with coaches

The interviews with coaches was aimed at getting the coaches to give their opinion on football agency based on their experience with them. They also had to talk about the impact of agents on the players and their opinion on the certification of agents. After these interviews however, the long lasting feud between agents and coaches was evident.

All the coaches interviewed, one of whom was Coach E.K. Afranie, a former coach of the Ghana Black Stars, have great regard for the role of football agents in the football. However, they have a problem with the way the agents go about their duties. In an interview with one of the coaches, he expressed his utter disgust for the manner in which agents influence players to act in a bad manner in order to push for more money or for a transfer. He laid emphasis on the problem of unlicensed agents as they are the usual culprits of these problems since their main aim is money. From the rest of the interviews, it was noticed that, the clubs do not play any role in the representation of the player and except in very rare cases, agents are not bound in the functions due to their not being licensed. All coaches thought they could easily switch professions to agency as the job has more to do with networks rather than licensing.

From the interviews with the coaches, the trends that were found that would help answer the research question were:

1. Football agents are very important to football, but unlicensed agents are ruining the profession
2. Football agents push players to act in unsporting ways
3. Agents are not exactly bound by certification.

4. An agent's primary goal is money.

4.4: Interview with administrators

In the interviews with the administrators, the aim was to gather data on the rise of football agency, the efficiency of the certification process, how well agents work without certification, transfer policies and agency fraud. Among the football administrators interviewed were Mr. Kurt E.S. Okraku, a football administrator and member of the Football Association Cup Committee, and Alhaji M.N.D. Jawula, former Ghana Football Administration boss and the current head of the F.A. Cup committee.

The job of an agent is very important to football the running of a sports organization which is the job of an administrator (AGCAS, 2011). From the interviews, it was obvious the respect the administrators have for the football agents. One of the administrators interviewed attributed the great evolution of the game to agents as they have greatly influenced the amount of money in football now. There is not any accurate number of agents in Ghana at the moment but information gathered from all the administrators is that there has been a great rise. There are more unlicensed agents than licensed ones and though the Football Association has made efforts to clamp down on unlicensed ones, their efforts have not yielded too much as it is still possible to operate without them. In an interview another football administrator, he expressed his disappointment in the actions of non-licensed agents and hailed that of licensed ones as they usually worked according to the ethics of the profession. The actions of agents do not affect teams as they are protected by the FIFA Transfer System which states what percentage should go to which party.

From the interviews with the football administrators, the responses that would aid in the answering of the research question are:

1. Football agency is rising very quickly, but mainly due to financial gain.
2. Agency activity does not affect teams badly as they gain financially.
3. There are more non-licensed agents than licensed ones and this certification does not affect their work.
4. This freedom of non-licensed agents has led to the growth in the occurrence of agency fraud.

4.5: Interviews with agents

Football agents are the core of this dissertation and the interview with them was aimed at investigating their reason for getting in the profession, their opinion on the entire profession and their opinion on the certification.

From the interviews, it was gathered that for all but one of the agents who had always wanted to have a job in football, the financial gain played a major role in their choice of profession. There were other reasons like personal relationships with footballers and an urge to save the upcoming footballers from the hands of unscrupulous agents. All the agents are fairly experienced, and in their general opinion, football agency has undergone a lot of evolution especially in the area of global coverage and networking. Apart from rare occasions of teams' administrative conflict, there haven't been occasions where transfers they have conducted have adversely affected teams. In an interview with FIFA licensed agent Yaw Amponsah, the CEO of

YAMVI Sports, he stated that teams usually get most of the money from transfers and make provisions for the voids left by these players. He also expressed his desire for more agents to be certified as it pushed them to work according to the ethics of the profession.

In another interview, William Scentchery, an unlicensed agent expressed his concern about how the reputation of the profession had been tainted by the activities of certain agents which he refused to limit unlicensed ones. He stated a number of occasions off record in which licensed agents had done some unethical deals which would normally be attributed to unlicensed agents. He however admitted the importance of the licensing processes as the occurrence of agency fraud has been rapidly increasing. There is no exact ratio of licensed to unlicensed ones as it is impossible to keep track of the unlicensed ones. Finally, on how the certification affected how well they work, it was gathered that FIFA prohibit clubs from working with unlicensed agents but this is very difficult as relatives, lawyers and other professionals do not need licenses to work. Moreover, when the club wants a player, they do not have much of a say in who to negotiate with as the player's representation depends on his choice.

From the interview with the agents, the responses that would help in answering the research questions for this dissertation are:

1. Financial gain is a major reason why people go into the profession of football agency.
2. Agency activity rarely affects a team adversely.
3. There are more unlicensed agents than licensed ones working in Ghana
4. FIFA's efforts to limit unlicensed agents is not working.

4.6: Interview with media

The media is deemed to be the objective party in this dissertation making their opinion very important. The questions asked them were aimed at getting their opinion on the trend of the profession and the causes. The interviews were also aimed at getting information on the effectiveness of the certification and the financial effect agency activity is having on football in Ghana.

From the interviews with the media men one of whom was Philip Lawer Alimo, an International Freelance Sports Journalist, it was said that agency fraud was a major headache for the Ghana Football Association (GFA) which has been going on for a long while. In the past, agents just took advantage of the ignorance of the players to either cheat them in deals or entirely leave them stranded in foreign countries after failed trials. However, in the modern day, these agents are capitalizing on a different weakness. Since football has now become a full time profession in which a successful player could make millions, a lot of the youth are so eager for a chance to go professional that they pay anyone who is able to convince them they can get them a professional deal.

In an interview with one of the media men, he stated that the number of licensed agents in Ghana has been on the constant increase with Ghana now having 27 licensed agents, one of the largest numbers in Africa. He stated that the reason for the growth in the number of agents in Ghana is mainly the depth of talent available in the country, coupled with the good administrative work done by the GFA and the FIFA development fund meant for football projects in Ghana. He finally commended agents for the good work they do in the area of

pushing for players' needs to be met, getting them to play in better clubs and making them happy enough to improve their performances which in the long run improves club finances and the economy as a whole.

In the interview with the other agents, it was said that as much as more people attempt being professional footballers increasing the need for more agents, the finances involved play a key role in the influx of agents. It was also gathered that, even though clubs have been advised against it, they still continue to negotiate with unlicensed agents as they are powerless in deciding who represents the player.

From the interview with the media men, the responses gathered that would contribute to answering the research question are:

1. The reasons for the cases of agency fraud are ignorance and the desperation of the players.
2. Football agency is growing due to the large pool of talent and the finances to be gained.
3. The lack of FIFA certification is supposed to limit unlicensed agents functionality but it is not working.
4. The activities of agents is improving the performances and financial conditions of players and teams.

Chapter 5: Discussion of findings, Technology in Football Agency, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1: Discussion of findings

This section takes into consideration all the information gathered from the interviews and their relevance to the research question and the topic as a whole. From the data, all the parties confirmed that football agency is rising and is doing that at a high rate. There are however different factors contributing to the rise of football agency which is primarily the financial benefit involved and the growth of the talent base within the country. This growth in the number of agents is not entirely good for the football industry even though the importance of the football agent is undisputed. Unlicensed agents who carry out a lot of unethical deals and are the main culprits in agency fraud. This is not to limit all bad deeds in football agency to unlicensed agents as licensed agents have gotten their hands dirty in this act. They are however less culpable as they are guided by the code of ethics of the profession.

The licensing process of agents was meant to help curb the occurrence of agency fraud as tracking of culprits would be easier. However, the eagerness of players to go professional and players not considering the certification of the agent before working with him makes them ready targets for these agents.

From the responses gathered, it was realized that in the long run football agency has a positive impact on the financial performance of the team as agency activity involves the selling of players for reasonable fees. In certain cases however, the agent could influence the player to play till his contract expires then free agency comes into play. In analyzing the impact of football

agency on the performance of a team also, it was realized that the team is supposed to make provisions for a replacement for the departing player through their back up players or purchasing with the transfer money. For this reason, a team's drop in performance cannot be attributed to the agent. There are however scenarios of when players are convinced to under-perform to push for certain administrative decisions.

5.2: Information Technology in Football Agency

The world today is a very different place from it was 20 years ago and this evolution of the world, the people and how they do things will continue forever. One of the main reasons for the rapid evolution of the world is technology. Technology has become a major part of our lives through phones, computers and cars and is present everywhere we go. Technology is basically the creation and innovation of things using scientific knowledge. Technology has had a major impact on every industry existent and football agency is no exception

Football agency has experienced a good amount of changes due to the application of technology. The initial football agent would have to travel all around the world to reach clients who may be footballers, coaches amongst others, meet up with interested business parties and would manually store client information. With the help of technology however, there are telephones to reach clients far away, televisions to watch client performance, websites and computers to watch videos of talented players and store information of clients.

This section looks to emphasize the importance of information technology in the area of football agency and would use two websites as reference. In the past, football agents did not have a basis for valuation of footballers, they did not have a platform to help them compare

players and know how well players have performed statistically in a season. Today however, websites have been built to facilitate the job of a football agent by providing platforms that do a lot of these things mentioned previously.

The websites to be used as references are www.soccerassociation.com and www.transfermarkt.com.

www.soccerassociation.com is a website meant for professional use by football agents, and soccer enthusiasts around the world. It provides the platform for you to track a player in any country with a recognized football league. There are two access levels to this website that is basic and professional. The basic level allows you to view the general statistics from the countries available on the website. The professional view however, allows the viewer, presumably an agent, to access to the following data:

- Player contract end dates
- Extended player playing records (one year rather than three months)
- League career records include bookings and substitute appearances (where available)
- Total games/goals for each club on league career record
- Date of birth and age stated rather than just age
- Date of last senior international cap and debut
- Agent name and contact details
- Indication of EU national
- Club results/statistics/transfers from previous seasons

In order to create the access levels, a user would have to make a payment to which his username and password (authentication details) are linked. With this done, once the user logs into the website, his access level is automatically passed and he is given the service he has paid for. The authentication also uses high level security with 128-bit encryption.

The other website, www.transfermarkt.com took a different approach to helping football agents. This website provides news and rumors from different sources, confirmed transfers, statistics of players and most importantly, a valuation of the player depending on earlier valuation and performances. It allows access to all leagues and individual players but in order to be able to access this information, you need to be a member. This website employs a similar encryption to the previous website.

Both websites have been created to make the job of a football agent easier and efficient and have proven how much of a benefit information technology can be to an industry. In this case, it has given a basis for valuation and a way to get almost all the information on a player, irrespective of the level of football he is playing on condition that it is a recognized league with FIFA.

5.3: Recommendations

In order to ensure that football agency is kept a clean profession and is relieved of problems such as; agency fraud, the ignorance of footballers, the ease of function of unlicensed agents.

Agency fraud happens in different ways like the total abandonment of players after paid fees and agents convincing players to take bad deals only because they would make more money personally. In order to deal with these problems, FIFA should not just prohibit clubs from negotiating with unlicensed agents, but also regard working as an unlicensed agent a crime. In collaboration with the security services and willing individuals, people would keep away from practicing football agency without a license and the unlicensed agents still practicing would be held by law.

Football players should be educated on the job of a football agent and the rules with which they work so as to be able to detect a suspicious deal before its completion. They should also be made aware of the dangers of working with unlicensed agents and why the certification of an agent is very important.

Lastly, using the principal-agency theory, the players should first of all know that the agent is an employee of theirs and not a superior. Given this, the agent is supposed to look out for the interest of the footballer before his personal interest. Furthermore, the primary solution to the agency problem should be exercised. This solution involves the salary of the agent being split into two part; one part fixed and the other dependent on his output which would be determined by the principal.

5.4: Conclusion

Football has grown from a hobby to a professional field and football agents are one of the reasons for this evolution. They facilitate the movement of players from club to club bringing in revenue and taking talent to the buyers. Aside player representation, they also carry out career

advice, financial advice and help players cash in on image right and endorsement deal opportunities.

This dissertation was aimed at finding evidence of the growth of football agency and investigate its impact on Ghanaian football. Football agency has been growing in Ghana as it has been all over the world and this growth can be attributed to the financial gain in the profession and the increase in the talent base as a lot more people attempt to be professional footballers now. However, there have been many cases of football agents defrauding and cheating clients in deals and these occurrences have been attributed primarily to agents who work without licenses. FIFA's efforts to stop these agents from working through policy making has proved futile as clubs still negotiate with unlicensed agents against the rules of the governing body of football.

In order to control the parts of football agency that seem to be the weak or bad spots of the profession, a change in legislation has been recommended. FIFA has set its rules on the clubs whereas legislation against the operations of an unlicensed agent would be more effective. Football players would have to be made aware of all the dangers involved in working with unlicensed agents and also, be educated on the roles of a football agent. Given the agency problem, players would have to be cautious of the payment structure of their agents as this has a major effect on the way they approach their job and look out for their client.

Appendix A: Interview Guide- Administrators

This thesis is a study on the growth of football agency and its effect on Ghanaian football.

1. What do you think about the role of sports agents in Ghana and Africa?
2. What has the growth trend been like in terms of agent/agency activity in Ghana over the last eight years?
3. How does the work of football agents affect the development of local football?
(in financial and footballing terms)
4. What qualifications are necessary for one to have as a football agent?
5. How qualified are Ghanaian agents generally?
6. What is the ratio of FIFA certified agents to non- FIFA certified agents?
7. Does the certification affect how well they are able to work?
8. What is the regular order of handling money from football transfers?
9. What are the reasons for the many cases of agent/agency fraud?

Appendix B: Interview Guide- Agents

This thesis is a study on the growth of football agency and its effect on Ghanaian football.

1. Why did you choose the profession of football agency?
2. For how long have you been working as a football agent?
3. How do you think football agency is developing today?
4. How many clients do you have and what exactly do you do for them?
5. When you arrange for a player to leave a club, how has it usually affected them in terms of finances and performance?
6. What is the ratio of FIFA certified agents to non-FIFA certified agents
7. How does this certification influence how well a football agent is able to work?
8. What type of technology has been introduced into the profession over the years?

Appendix C: Interview Guide- Coaches

This thesis is a study on the growth of football agency and its effect on Ghanaian football.

1. What is your opinion on the role football agents?
2. How do football agents affect a player's performance or character?
3. Does the club have a role in the getting agents for a player?
4. From experience, has FIFA certification of an agent affected his functionality? How?
5. From experience, what is the primary goal of a typical agent?

Appendix D: Interview Guide- Players

This thesis is a study on the growth of football agency and its effect on Ghanaian football.

1. Who is a football agent?
2. What is the job of a football agent?
3. How beneficial would a football agent be to you as a footballer?
4. Would you consider whether or not an agent is FIFA certified before working with him?

Appendix E: Interview Guide- Sports Media

This thesis is a study on the growth of football agency and its effect on Ghanaian football.

1. What is the job of a football agent?
2. What is the main reason for the numerous cases of agent fraud?
3. Do you think football agency is growing in Ghana (with respect to either foreign agents coming in or more Ghanaians taking up the profession?)
4. If yes, what would you attribute its growth to?
5. Does the FIFA certification affect the functionality of the agents?
6. How is football agency affecting local football financially?
7. How is football agency affecting local football in terms of performance?

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