



**ASHESI UNIVERSITY**

**THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF THE GHANAIAN FOOTBALL  
LEAGUE: A FOCUS ON THE ORGANISATION OF GRASSROOTS  
FOOTBALL.**

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## IMPROVING THE ORGANISATION OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

**Declaration**

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

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## IMPROVING THE ORGANISATION OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

**Abstract**

Grassroots football is a key component in developing young talents for a professional career. Over the years, the performance of Ghana's premier league has been declining as most young talented football players prefer to play in top-flight European leagues that pay well. To improve the organisation of grassroots for the premier league's benefit, this study examined how grassroots football can improve the performance of the league, and how practices from topflight leagues that can be inculcated in improving the Ghanaian premier league.

Using the mixed method, interviews were conducted and secondary data on the average salaries of players were collated. 23 individuals involving football journalists, grassroots football players, grassroots football coaches, personnel from the GFA and retired football players and coaches were interviewed.

Results showed that, the GDP per capita (PPP) of a country does not have a direct influence on the average salaries of players, rather the demand for football matches does. Hence, a way to generate revenue for the league teams is to increase the demand of the league by creating a link between the league teams and their communities. A fundamental way to do this, is to improve the organisation of grassroots football. As established by literature, investing in grassroots football can help create a system for developing young talents that can contribute to improving the performance of the league. The study showed that, adopting the academy system as practiced by many footballing nations is a step to improving the organisation of grassroot football.

**Keywords:** organisational structure, grassroots football, Ghana premier league, talent development

## IMPROVING THE ORGANISATION OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

### **Definition of Terms and Abbreviations**

AFC- Asian Football Confederation

AFCON- African Cup of Nations

CAF- Confederation of African Football (CAF)

CIES- International Centre for Sports Studies

CONCACAF- Confederation of North Central American and Caribbean Association  
Football

FA- Football Association

FC- Football Club

FIFA- Fédération Internationale de Football Association

GFA- Ghana Football Association

NGB- National Governing Bodies of Sport

TQM- Total Quality Management

UEFA- Union of European Football Associations

UN- United Nations

**Grassroots football**- football played at non-professional levels by football players between the ages of 12 and 23 which seeks to develop young talents.

**U-17** – a team of players aged 17 and below, participating in sport competitions.

**U-20** – a team of players aged 20 and below, participating in sport competitions.

**U-23** – a team of players aged 23 and below, participating in sport competitions.

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## IMPROVING THE ORGANISATION OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Overview and Background:

With the increasing focus on scouting the best young talents, the development of gifted young football players is paramount on the agenda for national football governing bodies that desire to excel (Mills, Butt, Maynard & Harwood, 2014).

Training young players is essential for the future of national and international football (FIFA, 2016). Member associations and their clubs therefore have a huge responsibility to develop football in their regions, by creating a training philosophy that is adapted to the characteristics of each country (FIFA, 2016). Hence, talent development in football is important and should be emphasised as it sets the player up for a professional career. For the purposes of this paper, grassroots football (colts football) is defined as football played at non-professional levels by football players between the ages of 12-23 (FIFA, 2016).

According to Laryea (2017), there is stagnation in the level of football in Ghana, in both the national teams and the premier league. The absence of consistent development in building young talented footballers is affecting the country today (Quansah 2005). In this chapter, the progress of Ghanaian football and evidence of the stunted growth of grassroots football and the Ghanaian football league will be discussed.

Over the past 17 years, effective identification and development of sporting talent has increased rapidly (Abbott, Collins, Martindale, & Sowerby, 2002). For instance, in 1994, Australia launched the Talent Search scheme to identify and develop talent within a working time frame for the Sydney Olympics 2000 (Martindale, Collins & Daubney, 2005). In 2002, a 5-year development plan led by Ben Koufie (Late

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Former Chairman of the Ghana Football Association), developed both male and female youth football as well as football coaches in Ghana.

Ben Koufie benefited from a CAF (Confederation of African Football) sponsored coaching course abroad. With the experience earned, he believed that developing the younger national teams (i.e. U-17, U-20), would help provide players to the Black Stars (Quansah, 2005). Hence, the motive of this plan was to empower coaches, improve their expertise and develop youth football in Ghana. This plan yielded great results such as, Ghana's participation in the 2004 Olympics and first qualification to the World Cup in 2006 (Quansah, 2005).

However, the unsustainability of such implementations has affected the quality of football players produced in Ghana. Malik Jabir, a former Black Stars player and former coach of Ghana's U-23 team said in an interview at Angel FM on October 15, 2019 that,

The limited provision of funds and poor administration is affecting all of us. If I tell you my story, you won't believe it. I was then the assistant Coach to C.K Gyamfi who led them to Congo in the '80s and I have never been paid a pesewa till today. They don't provide you with the needed support to prepare for competitions and blame you when you are kicked out of competitions early. But what about those who didn't administer for me to do well? (Angel Online, 2019).

Over the years, the Ghana Football Association (GFA) has not being held accountable for the lack of competition in the local leagues, the weak organisational capacity of the sub-national levels and the mismanagement of funds (Neequaye, 2019). Hence, football in the country is slowly dying, especially our local league (Neequaye, 2019).

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In Northern and Southern Africa, the football leagues are performing much better than those in West and East Africa (Moonda, 2019). In North and Southern Africa, the more advanced economies of these territories, enable the clubs to retain some of their talent and so the football ‘brain drain’ is not so pronounced and the patronage of the local game is appreciable (Liwewe, 2019). For the West African football leagues, most of their top talents play in European leagues hence there is no traction to patronise the local leagues.

Additionally, players in the West African leagues such as the Ghana Premier league do not earn as much as their counterparts in the Northern and Southern football leagues, and the European leagues do. This can be associated with the GDP per capita of West African countries being relatively lower than that of Northern and Southern African countries, and European countries. According to the World Bank, Ghana’s GDP per capita (adjusted by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)) in 2018 was \$4,788, that of Nigeria is \$5,980.5 and Senegal is \$3,775.8 (The World Bank, 2019).

Comparable to Egypt’s GDP per capita (PPP) of \$12,390 in 2018, Tunisia recorded \$12,483.5 and Morocco had a GDP per capita (PPP) of \$8,586.6 in 2018, so the Northern African leagues can afford to pay the football players more (The World Bank, 2019).

A football player in Nigeria earns within the range of ₦ 100,000 (\$276) to ₦ 1,000,000 (\$2,762) monthly (Hale, 2019). According to a survey conducted by International Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPRO), 100% of players in the Ghanaian premier league earn below \$1000 per month (FIFPRO, 2019).

Nevertheless, players in the European leagues earn much more: EPL salaries recording an average of \$3.2 million per month and La Liga salaries, \$1.6 million in a

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survey conducted in 2016 (Sporting Intelligence, 2018). This is a contributing factor in attracting most West African players, especially Ghanaian who believe they are worth more and deserve to play in top leagues. Hence the local leagues suffer in terms of retaining talents.

In the 2010 African Cup of Nations, Egypt who won the tournament had only 3 overseas players out of the 23 man-squad. West African teams such as, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, on the other hand, had 23 and 22 overseas players respectively (Liwewe, 2019). In contrast to North Africa, the West African, for example the Ghana premier league has very little infrastructure, a poor administrative organisation, very little or no sponsorship and pays low wages to players (Solberg, 2008).

Among many other administrative problems facing the football leagues in Ghana, another canker of the local league is the low patronage and commercialisation of the leagues. The low patronage did not just begin in the early 2000's.

In Ghana, apart from Obuasi Goldfields FC who had a relatively professional and technical approach to the game, the bankruptcy of traditional, well established and historically elite clubs such as, Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko, made them incapable of competing for the African Championship cups (Ackah, 1997).

Although the teams in the Ghana Premier league are struggling financially, the dilution of their crowd-pulling magic is affecting them even more (Ackah, 1997). That magic drawn from the presence of star players at games is crumbling (Ackah, 1997). Hence, supporters are not enthused to attend matches. Talent depreciation may be to blame.

Ackah (1997) stated that, talented players that had high value were sold by their clubs, to help them meet the cost of running the club. This myopic way of running the

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club without considering talent investments to draw supporter's attention, was the beginning of the downfall of most clubs in the local league (Ackah, 1997).

The dwindling of supporters' enthusiasm resulted in low patronage of the local matches. The professionalism and good administrative culture of European leagues, especially the English Premier League has not only attracted the best of African players, but African football spectators as well (Darby, Akindes & Kirwin, 2007). This has greatly affected the level of competitiveness of the local league.

By the beginning of the new millennium, Ghana had become one of the primary exporters of football labour from the African continent, as players sought for better conditions (Darby, 2010).

According to International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES) report, Ghana is Africa's second biggest exporter of footballers in 2019, with 286 players exported (CIES, 2019). With the poor state of pitches and poor development of the game at the youth level, there was a continued decline of the local game during the late 90's and early 2000's (Darby, 2010).

The development of football academies encouraged the exporting of young Ghanaian football talents, such as Tony Yeboah, Abedi Pele, Sulley Muntari and Michael Essien. This encouraged young players to ply their trade beyond the country's borders (Darby, 2010). With the quality of performance in the league reducing, fans gradually lost interests in supporting the local leagues and channelled that energy in supporting the foreign leagues. Hence, neglecting the development of young talents in a strategic way has cost the performance of Ghana's local league (Darby, 2007).

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### 1.1. Development of Football in the 1900's

Grassroots football is a less professional setting of football at the local level, that seeks to develop young talents. It is a concept initiated by FIFA to bring people together through football and make the game accessible to all irrespective of age, ethnicity or gender (FIFA, 2016).

Grassroots football players are mostly amateurs as they play for the love of the game. Grassroots football, also termed as Colts football, is typically played by budding footballers usually below their mid-teens. Most of Ghana's top football stars groomed their skills at this level in the early parts of their career. Any open school field or an open space with or without grass is a good setting for a football game in Ghana (Asante, 2017). Any pair of shoes were used, stones were used as goal posts and even sometimes a sock folded up or a tennis ball used in place of a football (Asante, 2017).

Since the early 1990's, when football academies were established in Africa, Europeans have used that channel to migrate the best of Africa's young football talents to top European leagues (Darby, Akindes & Kirwin, 2007). A football academy is a youth investment program where football skills of talented players are improved with the aim of helping them achieve a professional career (Barnat et al., 2011).

It is evident that many factors such as the exploitative and globalised nature of top European leagues has affected the development of football in Africa (Chiweshe, 2014). However, Africa's problem also stems from domestic, systematic and institutionalised issues with its football administration structures (Chiweshe, 2014).

Football has turned into a profitable industry across the world, but Africa remains at the periphery of this lucrative system and this is because corruption and maladministration has become synonymous with African football (Chiweshe, 2014).

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This is affecting the progress of the domestic leagues. For example, Lionel Messi earns \$127 million annually, which is \$18 million more than Cristiano Ronaldo (Platt, 2020). Ghanaian top talented footballers like Thomas Partey who plays in Spain's Atletico Madrid earns \$50,900 annually and Andre Ayew makes \$5,600,000 annually from the English club, West Ham United (Alcheva, 2020).

The first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, was instrumental in developing Ghanaian football to a sound base at both international and domestic levels. Nkrumah targeted football to promote the Ghanaian national identity, to mobilize the youth around a common identity and successfully established a national league in 1960 (Darby & Solberg, 2009). Nkrumah was eager to invest in the domestic game with the explicit purpose of engendering patriotic sentiments amongst the Ghanaian people (Darby, 2013).

Under Nkrumah's regime, the national team sought victories in international competitions as football was supported with all the funding and structures needed for a promising future. Unfortunately, when the economy began to struggle, football was not receiving the continuous level of investments from the state. Following a military coup in 1966, a long period of economic and political instability coupled with civil unrest ensued (Darby & Solberg, 2009). Hence, the conditions in the country made it difficult to establish a professional structure for football in the country (Darby & Solberg, 2009). With the limited public funds made available for football, most of the available resources were invested in the national team, leaving youth and club football neglected, under resourced and reliant on gate money for survival (Darby & Solberg, 2009). Yet, Ghana continued to produce highly talented players and achieved success at world youth level in the 1990s with the limited resources.



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Ghana participated in four under-17 World Championships in the 1990s and produced players such as Samuel Osei Kuffour, Isaac Asare, Stephen Appiah and Nii Odartey Lamptey (Darby, 2010). Ghana's U-17 team has won the U-17 World Cup twice in 1991 and 1995, and placed second in 1993 and 2001 (FIFA, 2007). In 1992, Ghana became the first African country to win an Olympic football medal (Quansah, 2019). Coach Sam Arday led the U-23 team with star players Kwame Ayew, Isaac Asare, Yaw Preko, Shamo Quaye, Ablade Kumah and Samuel Osei Kuffour in making this historic Olympic success in Barcelona (Quansah, 2019). In 2001, Ghana placed second in the U-21 World Cup, as talented players such as, Michael Essien, Sulley Muntari, John Mensah, Stephen Appiah and John Panstil were noticed by European clubs and signed lucrative contracts with them (Appiah, 2018). In 2009, the U-20 National team became the first African country to win the U-20 World Cup. Notable players including, Samuel Inkoom, David Addy, Jonathan Mensah, Emmanuel Agyeman Badu, Dominic Adiyah, Rabiu Mohamed Ransford Osei and Captain Dede Ayew, made an unforgettable impression on football stakeholders around the globe (Zurek, 2018). Dominic Adiyah was awarded the best footballer in the world, among player 21 years and younger (Zurek, 2018).

Prior to that, Ghana was the only African country who had won the African Cup of Nations 4 times and Ghana's success in the African Cup of Nations in 1978 made the talents in the country known and some caught the attention of European scouts (Yeboah, 2014).

In 2010, Ghana's Black stars reached the quarter finals of the World Cup held for the first time in Africa. They were denied by Uruguay's Luis Suarez who saved the goal bound header from Dominic Adiyah on the goal line with his hands (Burnton,

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2010). Asamoah Gyan stepped up and missed the penalty in one of the most famous and dramatic matches in World cup history.

The abrupt ending of Nkrumah's presidency negatively impacted on the levels of investment in the local game and opportunities to earn a living declined rapidly (Darby, 2010). As such, the playing and training facilities were neglected and became dilapidated. This affected youth or colt leagues and even the training pitches and facilities of top-level clubs, as there were no measures of maintenance (Akyeampong, 2015). This tested the commitment of the leading Ghanaian players to remain in the country.

### **1.1.1 Recent Performance of Ghana's Nation Football Teams**

For easy identification and categorisation of the national football teams, the GFA named the senior national team the Black Stars (i.e. players above 18), named the U-23 team the Black Meteors (i.e. players between 18 and 23), the U-20 team is called the Black Satellites (i.e. usually players between 18 and 20), and the U-17 team is called the Black Starlets (i.e. usually players between 15 and 17) (Ghana Football Association, 2020).

In 2009, Ghana became the first African country to win the U-20 World Cup with skilled talents like Dede Ayew, Samuel Inkoom, Jonathan Mensah and Dominic Adiyiah, beating powerhouse Brazil (Zurek, 2018). Looking past the recent glorious records of Ghanaian football which ended suddenly in the 2010 World cup, the Black Stars have continuously disappointed the expectant hearts of Ghanaian football fans. In the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) competitions, the Black Stars placed second in 2010, recorded fourth in 2012 and 2013, second in 2015 and fourth in 2017 (Kobo, 2019). The Black stars were eliminated in the round of 15 in AFCON 2019. The state of football in the country is declining: the disappointing display of maladministration

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and financial shenanigans in the 2014 World Cup, to an even more heart-breaking defeat in the finals of the 2015 AFCON, and the team's earliest elimination from the AFCON 2019 (Bruce, 2015).

Countries like France, Tunisia and England have improved organisational structures that are accountable for the development of football from youth levels. Hence, they reap the benefits both in their local leagues and at national competitions. For example, France won the FIFA World Cup 2018, Tunisia has successfully qualified for the World Cup five times and England finished fourth in the 2018 World Cup (FIFA, 2018).

Based on this, the objective of the study is to investigate how to improve the organisation of grassroots football in Ghana and whether an improved organisational structure at the grassroots level can significantly improve the local league, enable the players to stay longer in Ghana to develop their talents and also enable fans to enjoy aesthetically pleasing football from their local teams while creating jobs for the youth.

### **1.2. Research Problem**

According to Zdravko Lugarusic, ex-head coach of Asante Kotoko, "There is stagnation in the level of football in Ghana; we used to dominate in Africa and world football, but it is not like it used to be and the new generation that need to rebuild the lost image are lost in the country" (Laryea, 2017).

There are struggles in rebuilding the lost image as most of the young football talents with exceptional quality, have joined European leagues for the support they deserve and there is little excitement for the local football league.

As stated earlier, most West African talents are playing in European leagues. In national team selections, it has been observed as stated earlier that preference is given to European-based players than local-based players. This explains why most local-

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based players will also want to play in Europe. Hence little regard is given to the local league and the performance of the league keeps declining.

Aside the infrastructural challenges and other developmental issues the local football league in Ghana faces, one of the significant problems is low attendance at football matches resulting in low revenues for the clubs (Kuper & Szymanski, 2018). Thus, with little revenue, their challenges keep compounding and the quality of performance in the league keeps declining.

One of the major challenges affecting the quality of performance in the league, is the influx of young football talents to Europe as a result of better organisation, better salaries and strategic development of football in those countries (Darby, 2007).

Playing professional football is now an extremely financially rewarding career path. Therefore, most young players have the desire to earn huge sums of money they will not receive while playing in Ghana's local league. As such, the lack of competitiveness and low salaries in the local league encourages the young elite talents to journey to Europe.

This flaw in the progressiveness of the local league, may be attributed to the poor organisation and support of grassroots football in the local areas of the country. The neglect of the development of grassroots football pushes the young football talents to migrate to European leagues that will support their development.

The late former Chairman of the GFA, Benjamin Koufie, implemented a 5-year development plan to develop both male and female youth football, and improve the expertise of football coaches (Quansah, 2005). This plan was a turning point for football in Ghana and even termed as the blueprint of Ghanaian football.

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The unsustainability of this plan and poor organisational structures at the grassroots level, to develop our young football talents has cost the performance of the local league. Football is now a game for younger players than ever before. A focus on developing grassroots football can contribute to improving the state of the local league.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

- I. In what way can the organisation of grassroots football be strengthened to support the Ghanaian local league?
- II. What lessons can be learned from high-performing football leagues to aid revitalise the Ghanaian local league?

### **1.4. Research Objectives**

The primary objective of this study seeks to determine how the development of an improved organisational structure of grassroots football can help improve Ghana's local league. Also, the study aims to:

- I. Investigate how a clear organisational plan in developing grassroots football can improve the performance of the local league
- II. Identify lessons from well-established leagues that can be applied to the local league.

### **1.5. Research Relevance**

Understanding factors that influence the poor performance of the local league will provide the local league a basis to continually improve the management standard, achieve organizational levels that will increase economic and financial opportunities, bring more discipline and rationality to football accounting, and achieve effective management and organizational skills through income generated by football (Samur, 2018).

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It would also help the relevant stakeholders in football to benefit from a strategic and organisational plan that will fill the gap of non-performance of the governing bodies in the local league (Darby, 2007). The governing bodies will consider infrastructural development and the trickle down of investments to the grassroots level. Additionally, the quality of the performance in the league will improve as conscious efforts will be placed to improve young football talents.

This can contribute to revenue generation, better wages for players, improved standard of living for football stakeholders and reduced unemployment (Oladiemeji & Monisola, 2013). Ultimately the challenges facing Ghanaian football will be addressed, hence improving the local league and the football industry in Ghana.

### **1.6. Organisation of Study**

This section gives an overview of the chapters ahead. Chapter one highlights the background and overview of the research problem. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the research under discussion. In Chapter two, existing literature related to the study will be discussed. In Chapter three, the methodology of the study will be discussed. This chapter will constitute the research methods, tools, sampling strategy and limitations to the study. Chapter four will focus on the analysis of data collected to gain insights for better understanding of the study. Chapter five provides recommendations to improve the performance of the local league and conclusion of the study.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, literature about organisational theories and organisation of sports and football will be analysed. It begins with analysis of literature on an overview of the types of organisational structures in organisations. A general overview of studies in the organisation of sports will be examined, as well as a breakdown of organisation in football. This chapter concludes with the conceptual framework which will help organise the analysis of data and achieve the research's purpose of improving the organisation of grassroots football.

### 2.1 Introduction to Literature on Types of Structures in Organisations

An organisation's performance is greatly affected by the organisation's design (García-Bernal & Ramírez-Alesón, 2010). According to Powell (1995), an organisational management tool such as Total Quality Management (TQM) has proven to improve organisational structures by creating a competitive advantage in the firms that adopt it. This improves organisational performance.

Sandermoen (2017) defines an organisational structure as a descriptive design of tasks and responsibilities, linked together and grouped into functional units to achieve the organisation's strategic aims. Hence the flow of information and communication lines are well defined, and members of the organisation can be held accountable.

According to DeCanio, Dibble & Amir-Atefi (2000), organisational structure affects the behaviour of firms through two channels. Firstly, the performance of the company in terms of profitability and the firm's ability to adapt to productivity enhances innovations (DeCanio et al., 2000). Secondly, the individuals that comprise the organisation's operating units can be affected by the organisation's structure

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(DeCanio et al., 2000). Additionally, external circumstances such as changes in the economy or environmental changes, can cause adjustments in the firm's usual patterns of communication and connectedness (DeCanio et al., 2000). Hence it is relevant for organisations to use adjustable models for their organisational structures to catch up with fast-changing economies and unforeseen circumstances. An example of such organisational structure is one of the newer paradigms in organisational research, the structural contingency theory (Pennings, 1975).

The structural contingency theory focuses on factors such as technology and the environment, that contribute to a business' organisational survival and success (Pennings, 1975). As such contingencies can be speculated and at times avoided for organisational survival. This type of organisational frameworks leaves room for adjustments and innovations.

### **2.1.1 Types of Organisational Structures**

According to Anumba, Baugh & Khalfan (2002), many characteristics define organisational structures. They argued the characteristics that define organisations include:

- Classifying roles, tasks and functions;
- Decision making either by centralisation or decentralisation;
- Method of communication through lateral or top-down manner;
- Number of management levels;
- Chains of command (Anumba et al., 2002)

Anumba et al. (2002), classified the types of organisational structures into 2 main groups; traditional organisational structure and modern organisational structure



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### 2.1.2 The Traditional Organisational Structure

Schermerhorn (1993) defined the traditional organisational structures as a bureaucratic, pyramidal and centralised system with several management levels, rigid lines of authority and narrow spans of control. The key types of traditional structures are the functional and divisional structures.

The functional structure is composed of all departments needed by the company to produce its goods and services (Jones, George & Hill, 1998). In this structure, people with similar skills, using similar technology and performing closely related activities are grouped together (Anumba et al., 2002). Departments such as marketing, finance, personnel and site operation, shown in Figure 1 requires the functional organisational structure.



*Figure 1.* An Example of a Functional Organisational Structure. Reprinted from “Organisational Structures to Support Concurrent Engineering in Construction”, by C. Anumba, C. Baugh, and M. Khalfan, 2002, *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 102(5), 260-270.

Divisional structures have separate business units which contain functions and departments, that work together to produce a specific product for a specific customer (Jones et al., 1998). Unlike the functional structure, the divisional structure classifies people who have different skills and tasks together (Anumba et al., 2002). Hence, each

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division is a collection of different functions and smaller departments that are more manageable (Anumba et al., 2002).

A blend of the functional and divisional structure is the hybrid structure (Jones et al., 1998). According to Anumba et al. (2002), this structure addresses the different operating needs of a company, provides high flexibility, and makes it easier to address different challenges and environmental changes.

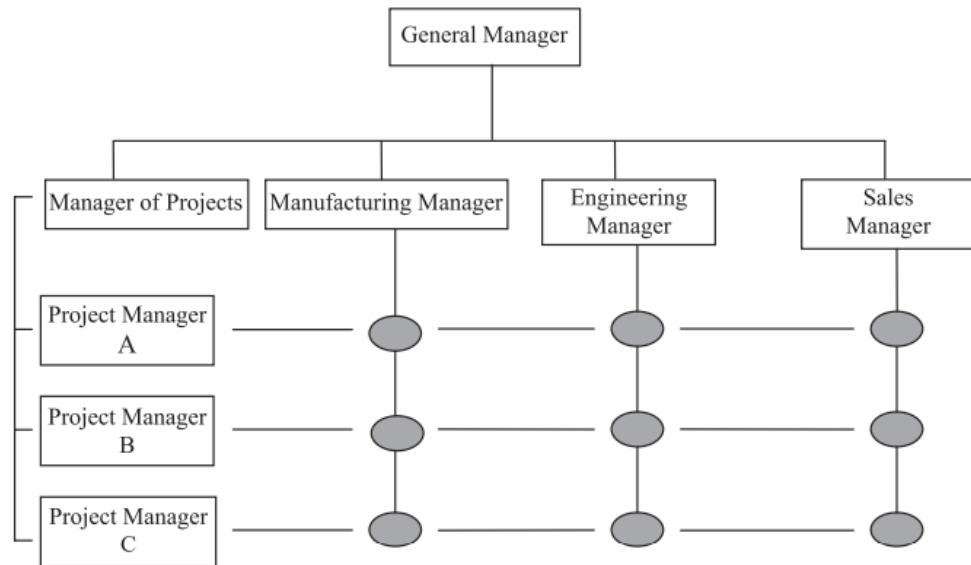
### **2.1.3. The Modern Organisational Structure**

The quest to find profitable and adaptable organisational structures to fit into the fast-changing economy and environment birthed theories like the contingency theory. This theory explains that there is no single best way to organise a company's operations.

Scott (1992) argues that, the most suitable structure depends on the type of work performed by the organisation, and the environmental demands and factors it faces. The theory suggested several contingency factors such as the organisational environment, strategy, human resources and technology employed, which must be considered when designing an organisational structure (Anumba et al., 2002).

The stringent nature of the traditional structures makes it suitable for specific situations. More flexible structures which are decentralised and have lateral communication lines easily promote teamwork and collaborations (Anumba et al., 2002). The matrix structure, an example of such a structure, promotes high levels of technical expertise, flexibility and teamwork (Jones et al., 1998).

This improves organisational performance and helps the organisation attain its goals. Large companies that desire to grow and operate effectively in rapidly changing environments use the matrix structure (Anumba et al., 2002).



*Figure 2.* An Example of a Matrix Structure. Reprinted from “Organisational Structures to Support Concurrent Engineering in Construction”, by C. Anumba, C. Baugh, and M. Khalfan, 2002, *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 102(5), 260-270.

## 2.2 Review of Literature on the Overview of Organisational Structures in Sports.

Research conducted by Theodoraki (1996) analysed the organisational structures, processes and effectiveness of National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) in Britain. The sport disciplines include boxing, fencing, rowing, bowling, gliding, basketball, golf, ski, cricket and squash. In Britain, the organisation of each competitive sport or recreation are in the hands of a national governing or representative body (Theodoraki, 1996). These bodies are responsible for the general administration, the development of the sport and how competitions are conducted (Theodoraki, 1996).

Theodoraki (1996) defined NGBs as voluntary organisations that employ professional staff and is usually from the public purse but encouraged to adopt a commercial approach to management. He argued that changes in the economic structure has caused changes in organisational forms as traditional organisational structures have transformed to a more flexible organisational structure.

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In political terms, Britain has reduced its involvement in a wide range of welfare areas including sports (Theodoraki, 1996). Hence, NGBs have been encouraged to reduce reliance on the public sector financially and seek commercial footing either through sponsorship or trading activities (Theodoraki,1996). This changes the organisational structures of the regulating sport bodies, makes them independent and encourages them to reap the benefits of growth for the sport and related stakeholders.

NGBs at the top tier of their organisational structures, either have a management committee headed by a volunteer executive board, or a paid Chief Executive officer with paid management employees (Theodoraki,1996).

The organisational environment of many NGBs in Britain have changed and adapted to using television and sponsorship as their main source of income (Theodoraki,1996). This has changed the administration of the governing bodies from a volunteer-based organisation to business organisations with enviable turnovers and well-paid employees (Theodoraki,1996). Hence, if the needed funds are not successfully acquired the governing bodies struggle to achieve their goals and support the various sports.

The selectivity of Sport Councils to provide funds to some sports than others, and the slow movement of funds to promote the growth of some sports has caused most sports governing bodies to look elsewhere (Houlihan, 1991).

Also, the priorities of different governments affect the allocation of funds made available for the development of some sports (Theodoraki,1996). Thus, relying solely on the government is not the best way for most NGBs to be funded. As such, in Britain a law was passed to reduce government's involvement in welfare issues such as sports (Theodoraki,1996).

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It was observed that the limitations of NGBs is as a result of bureaucratisation of the organisational structure. Research in Canadian sporting bodies proved that, over the period of past twenty-five years, organisations responsible for the delivery of amateur sport have increased dependency on government resources (Theodoraki,1996; Slack, 1985).

The bureaucratic nature of the NGBs make them operate in a functional organisational structure. Since the government has more control in the appointment of the regulators and allocation of funds, there is increased level of accountability to external bodies (i.e. the government) (Theodoraki,1996). Therefore, the greater the external control of the organisation, the more centralised and stringent the structure, and the more bureaucratic the administrative structure (Mintzberg, 1979).

Theodoraki (1996) concluded that as more entrepreneurial approaches to management of NGBs emerge, there is a need for organisational changes. With the need for quick decision making and flexible management, NGBs must move toward paid management at the top tier of their organisational structure (Theodoraki,1996). This will promote professionalisation of NGBs and incentivise the managers to work effectively as opposed to volunteerism.

### **2.2.1 The Structure of Sport Organisations**

Slack (1997) defines the structure of sports organisations as the way in which tasks of sports organisations are well-defined and allocated to employees or volunteers, and the coordinating of mechanisms used within the organisation. Though all sporting activities differ, their sports organisations have a standard structure and a goal for development. The differences across several sport disciplines emerged three classifications of sport organisations: sport governing bodies, sport providing entities and sport spectacle organisations (Gomez, Opaza & Marti, 2007).

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The first classification refers to sport organisations that administer and regulate sports, focusing on its development at all levels and regulating the rules of the game and in competitions (Gomez, Opaza & Marti, 2007). The second classification refers to sport organisations responsible to produce a competitive system aimed to satisfy and articulate the needs of professional sports (Gomez, Opaza & Marti, 2007). The third type refers to sport organisations that produce and deliver recreational or competitive games at a local or community level (Gomez, Opaza & Marti, 2007).

An example of a sport body classified as a sport governing body in football is the Ghana Football Association (GFA). For the second classification, an example of such in football is the Premier League Body. An example of a sport body in football for the third classification, sport spectacle organisation, is the youth and grassroots football body.

Sport governing bodies have collective international bodies regulating international competitions and setting standard rules for the sport (Gomez, Opaza & Marti, 2007). The international bodies are made up of national bodies representing their countries. The regulatory processes and sport programs of the national governing bodies may differ from country to country (Gomez, Opaza & Marti, 2007). In some countries the sport system promotes and develops sports through the educational system, while others use local sport services or private associations (Gomez, Opaza & Marti, 2007).

According to Gomez et al. (2007), the organisational structure of sports has experienced many changing theories over time and can be classified into three: a rationalisation process, a bureaucratic process and a professionalisation process. These processes are sub-processes that form an overall process called the formalisation

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process. The formalisation process involves an organisational structure where professionalism is key, procedures are followed as planned and coherent changes are made to match up to changes in economy or environment (Gomez et al., 2007).

### **2.2.2. Overview of the Organisation of Football in the International Context**

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is the governing body of world football and has assumed the role of a global player in the relationship between sport and politics (Eisenberg, 2006). Since 1904, FIFA grown in membership and has more member-countries than the United Nations, with 211 members (Eisenberg, 2006).

FIFA was organised to serve as an international sports organisation, administering rules and regulating competitive matches (Eisenberg, 2006). As the member-countries increased to include Africa, FIFA extended its duties to support Third World Countries financially. FIFA did this to give African member-countries the opportunity to participate in the sport like their international counterparts (Eisenberg, 2006).

As such, FIFA began to engage more professional staff and grew to a business on a global scale with a vastly expanded financial basis (Eisenberg, 2006). They did this through sponsoring contracts with Coca Cola, Adidas and other firms, and later with the help of its own merchandising activities (Eisenberg, 2006). The commercialisation of FIFA made the football body stand out, making football a global sport able to fund large competitions. Additionally, higher revenues were earned from TV rights for the World Cup from the 1980's to recent times (Eisenberg, 2006).

Critics accused the organisation of operating as a capitalist entertainment business (Eisenberg, 2006). According to Tomlinson and Sugden (1998), FIFA's commercial activities had turned football into a "millionaire's gambling casino" and

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had misused the organisation as a licence to print money. Yet, Eisenberg argued that FIFA's method of profit distribution saves them from such allegations.

Profits are not shared based on size of the initial investment capital, but rather to member associations who are treated according to their needs (Eisenberg, 2006). Hence FIFA should be classified as a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) instead. This is because they operate independently of governments and pursue cultural, humanitarian and developmental aims. This re-enforces Theodoraki's approach to the organisation of NGB's; reduced reliance on government funds.

### 2.2.3. Breakdown of the Organisation of Football

FIFA's structure at the top tier is led by a president who is elected for four years by the representatives of the member associations (Eisenberg, 2006). FIFA has six continental confederations: Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), Confederation of African Football (CAF), Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), Asian Football Confederation (AFC), and Oceania Football Confederation (Oceania) (Eisenberg, 2006).

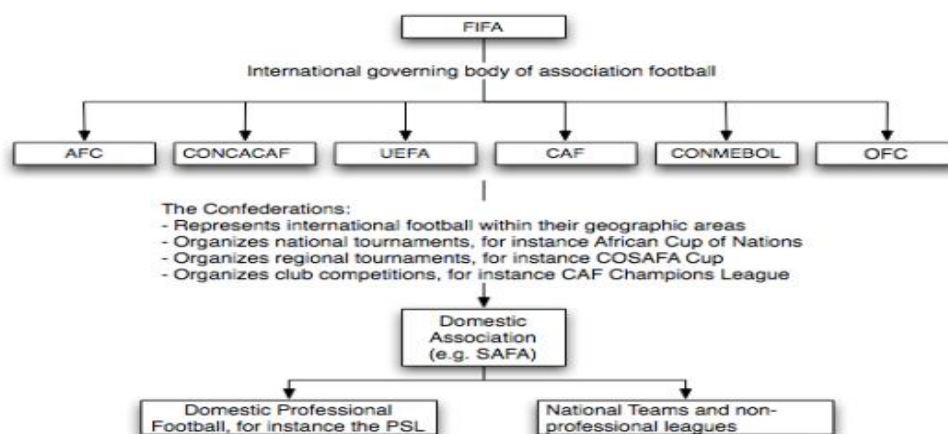


Figure 3. A Breakdown of the Organisation of World Football. Reprinted from "The Contours, Dynamics and Impacts of African Football Migration to South Africa", by E. F. Solberg, 2008, *Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch University, South Africa* p.39. Copyright (2008) by Eirik Solberg.



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Figure 3 illustrates the hierarchical organisation of world football. The continental confederations play the role of FIFA yet on the continental level. UEFA for instance, conducts continental competitions like the UEFA Champions League (Holt, 2009). The organisational structure of UEFA consists of four specific organs: The congress, the executive committee, the chief executive, and the organs for the administration of justice (Holt, 2009). The congress is responsible for the election of the president of the confederation, election of members of the executive committee and FIFA executive committee, and they amend laws to regulate the game within its continent (UEFA, 2004).

The executive committee has the power to make decisions on all matters which do not fall within the legal jurisdiction of the congress, the chief executive or administrative organs (UEFA, 2004). This committee defines the organisational structure of UEFA, approve the business plan and appoints the chief executive (UEFA, 2004). The executive committee is responsible for representing UEFA at FIFA, appointment and dismissal of staff, and submission of an annual business plan (UEFA, 2004). Lastly, the administrative organs comprise of the control and disciplinary body as they deal with all disputes of a sporting nature between member associations, clubs, players or officials (UEFA, 2004).

This is replicated in other continental confederations. The continental confederations are formed from smaller national associations who are responsible for regulating league competitions for football clubs, the organisation and implementation of football-related matters in the territory of their country (Holt, 2009). For example, the Italian Football Association is responsible for the organisation of Italy's premier league, Serie A and other sub-league divisions such as Serie B.

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The national associations are responsible for the organisation of the grassroots/amateur football, semi-professional and professional football (Holt, 2009). They also ensure technical and sporting progress, and the breakdown between international and club football (Holt, 2009). Also, the national associations give the football clubs the mandate to recruit and develop players (Holt, 2009).

### **2.2.4 How Football is Organised in Africa**

Continental football in Africa is supervised by CAF under the jurisdiction of FIFA. As such, CAF is responsible for organising both regional and national tournaments like the AFCON and African Champions League (Solberg, 2008). CAF was created in 1957 and its organisational structure has been modified to emulate UEFA over the years. Competitions like the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) and the CAF Champions League, have emulated the European model of national and club championships (Solberg, 2008).

Although, CAF and UEFA operate under the same framework, European football is not comparable to African football in terms of organisation and inadequate investments. According to Sugden and Tomlinson (1998), these differences between the European and African game can be attributed to post-colonial turmoil, problems within the individual African nations and lack of proper governance and organisation of sports. Corruption and lack of a system of accountability made the African game begin to lag (Solberg, 2008).

In Northern Africa, clubs such as Al Ahly of Egypt and Esperance Tunis of Tunisia, have good infrastructure and professionalism which enables the club to provide incentives like decent salaries (Solberg, 2008). Therefore, the clubs in Tunisia and

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Egypt can retain some of their top football talents and increase the excitement in the local league matches.

According to Darby et al. (2007), in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), football is built around 2 centres, West African talent academies and South Africa's top-flight league. The unstable socio-economic and political stability in West Africa, has made the development of football difficult. Hence, football infrastructure is low, and the professionalism of clubs and leagues are highly disappointing (Solberg, 2008). Most clubs in West Africa operate without corporate and individual sponsors, making it nearly impossible for clubs to offer their players regular, guaranteed salaries and labour protection like their European counterparts (Darby et al, 2007). For South Africa's league, though they are not able to retain highly skilled players, their economy and deliberate investments make their league attractive to some top talents on the continent (Darby & Solberg, 2009).

According to Darby et al. (2007), the absence of a functioning administration and needed infrastructure, has encouraged the current football industry in West Africa to be built around football academies. These football academies are mostly owned by Europeans and are mainly designed to extract African talent to make profit out of them (Solberg, 2008). Hence there is a high possibility of losing some good football talents in Sub-Saharan African countries. This is because of poor planning strategies in developing young football talents.

Darby et al. (2007) argued that, due to the absence of an administrative body to protect domestic football and young football talents from European exploiters, West Africa has become a paradise for talent speculators, recruiting agencies and European club scouts.

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Additionally, football in sub-Saharan African countries is largely controlled and organised by the state. According to Solberg (2008), most West African governments provide huge financial supports for the game and as such play a central role in controlling the game. The state (i.e. Ministry of Sports or local governments) controls important football infrastructure such as training facilities and stadia, hence clubs cannot use the facilities to create revenue to invest in their professional improvements (Darby et al., 2007).

Hence the commercialisation and commoditisation of European football has affected the political economy of African football (Solberg, 2008).

### **2.2.5. The Role of Grassroots Football and Youth Development**

Developing young talents was essential to the growth of European football clubs. Football-governing bodies such as FIFA and UEFA, as well as several national football federations encourage clubs to spend more efforts on youth talent development (Sæther & Solberg, 2015).

According to Sæther and Solberg (2015), the most ambitious and wealthy clubs particularly prefer to use experienced players than young talents in matches. For this reason, these clubs are likely to take a short cut and buy players instead of putting in the efforts to develop talents (Sæther & Solberg, 2015). This is also similar in clubs that lack the financial capacity to recruit the best of talents and have no youth development teams to support the growth of the elite team. Therefore, both rich and struggling clubs feed on experienced players, making it more necessary for struggling clubs to invest in young talents.

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A study conducted in South Africa to analyse the performance of youth football development programmes showed that there is no holistic support to enhance the development of adolescent football players.

In the study, 216 youth players between the ages of 12 and 20 years were sampled from eight football development teams (Coopoo & Fortuin, 2012). The outcome of the study revealed that, the youth development teams had poor structured training programmes, lacked the capacity to finance the needed infrastructure, and proper assessment of the youth football players (Coopoo & Fortuin, 2012).

According to Coopoo and Fortuin (2012), this negatively affected the development of football talents in this age group as they are not given support like the senior teams. They concluded that there is a need for a holistic support to improve the performance of youth players for the long-term benefits professional football clubs and national teams may receive (Coopoo & Fortuin, 2012).

According to Coopoo and Fortuin (2012), a uniform system of youth football development should be implemented by the South African Football Association in line with their National football plan on youth football development. Additionally, there should be great emphasis on the development of youth football coaches (Coopoo & Fortuin, 2012).

As stated earlier, for the purposes of this paper, grassroots football is defined as football played at non-professional levels by football players between the ages of 12-23. This is because the last age bracket for international youth football competitions is U-23. Developing young players may reap both sporting and financial rewards to clubs, players and football agents (Relvas et al, 2010). Hence, organizational structure and

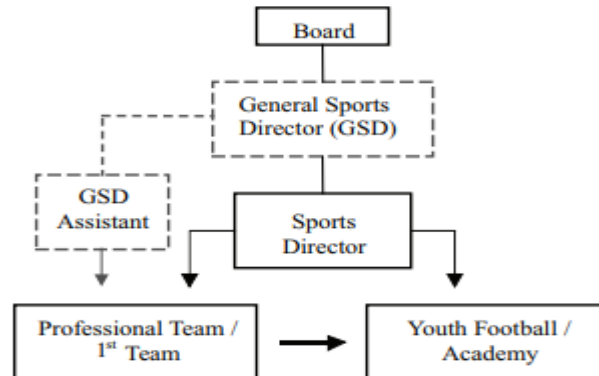
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practices of professional football clubs concerning young player development is important.

### 2.2.6 The Organisation of Top-flight Leagues

In a study conducted by Relvas et al (2010), twenty-six academy managers from elite professional clubs across five European countries (England, Spain, Portugal France and Sweden) were interviewed to gather data on the organisation structure of youth football within the clubs. These countries were selected because of the successes in club football of their local clubs over the period 2000-2010.

The results from the study showed that the clubs organisation have a sports director that is the link between the executive board and the 2 main football departments (youth and professional teams). Figure 4 illustrates the structure of a club from the five European countries.



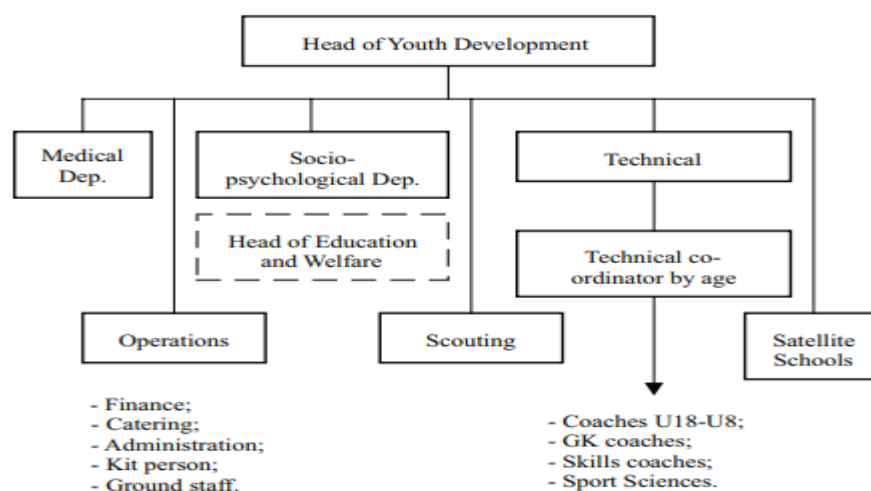
*Figure 4. A Structure of a Football Club from the Five European Countries. Reprinted from “Organizational Structures and Working Practices in Elite European Professional Football Clubs: Understanding the Relationship between Youth and Professional Domains”, by H. Relvas, M. Littlewood, M. Nesti, D. Gilbourne and D. Richardson, 2010, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 10(2), 165-187.*

The professional team has a Team A, Team B and sometimes Team C. The Team A plays in the highest league (eg. La Liga), the Team B plays in the second division (eg. Liga Adelante) and the Team C is the youth development team (Relvas et al., 2010).

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This structure depicts the traditional hierarchical or functional organisational structure. According to Relvas et al. (2010), the national associations demands that clubs must have a youth development team that has sub departments (eg. technical, medical, operations, socio-psychological) like that of the professional teams. The youth teams are age restricted and doesn't feature players beyond 23 (Relvas et al., 2010).

Figure 5 below shows how clubs operate in their youth development teams. This structure helps them recruit the best talent which usually forms their youth teams and eventually the professional teams. The scouting teams go beyond their cities to rural places that may not know about these development programs and are normally present at youth football competitions (Relvas et al, 2010).



*Figure 5.* An Organisational Structure of Youth Development Teams from Five European Clubs. Reprinted from “Organizational Structures and Working Practices in Elite European Professional Football Clubs: Understanding the Relationship between Youth and Professional Domains”, by H. Relvas, M. Littlewood, M. Nesti, D. Gilbourne and D. Richardson, 2010, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 10(2), 165-187.

The satellite schools are institutions, primarily academies that are affiliated to the club and they serve as a source of young talents to the club (Relvas et al, 2010).

This structure helps them recruit the best talent that form up their youth teams and eventually the professional teams. The satellite schools are different from academies

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because the academies have their educational units and training fields in one compound. As such, the schedules for a student's school and football training sessions are in sync and more attention is paid to the student's development.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

According to Samur (2018), to create efficiency in business organisations, there is a need to build expert departments based on functional sections and accelerate the flow of information. This will enable decisions to be taken more quickly, hence valuable resources such as time and money is saved and precautionary measures can be taken to reduce risks (Samur, 2018).

Samur (2018) in his study analysed the breakdown of football management into main processes and how it can be easily managed. He concluded that for football to be well managed, football clubs must have 8 main processes: Team Intelligence, Team Management, Youth Development, Footballer Transfer, Logistics Support, Public Relations and Corporate Communication, Economy-Finance, Sports Law (Samur, 2018). He argued that with an organisational system of accountability, the performance of departments can be managed, and there is an opportunity to target continuous improvement and development (Samur, 2018).

For these eight processes, especially youth development, to work together effectively, a contingency approach to organisational structure rather than the traditional organisational structure must be used.

The contingency approach considers five interdependent factors: the organisational environment, the organisational strategy and objectives, technology, organisational size and human resources (Anumba et al., 2002). These five factors

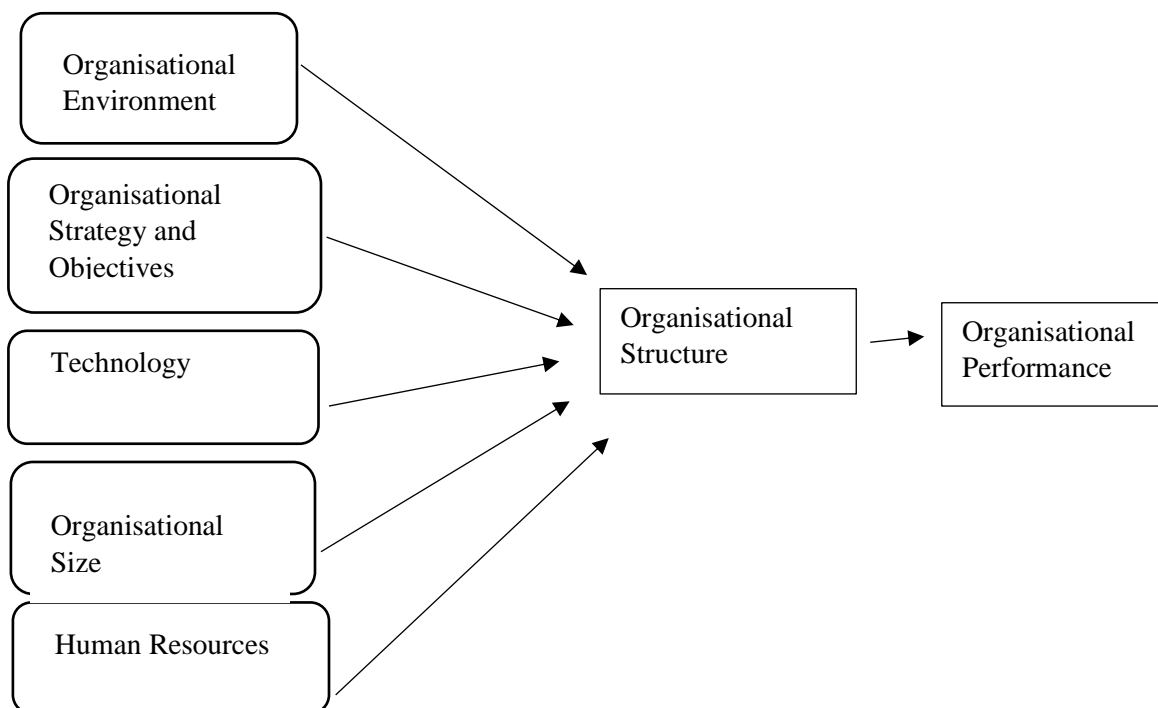


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consider contingencies, hence making room for innovations and adaptations to the economy and football environment.

Under this structure, the organisational environment is designed to consider commercial and technological advances to remain competitive in the environment it operates (Anumba et al., 2002). The organisational strategy and objectives in the framework define the purpose in a way that the structure and strategy are consistent.

Additionally, the purpose of the organisation and how to successfully implement the purpose. Under technology, this structure ensures that the needed skills, knowledge and tools are provided to the human resources (Anumba et al., 2002). This structure considers the organisational size and emulates the divisional structure which combines personnel with the same skills using the same tools into the same department. This decentralises the structure of the organisation and makes control more efficient (Anumba et al., 2002).



*Figure 6.* Author's Illustration of the Components of a Contingency Approach to Organisational Structure.

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### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Overview of Methodology

In this study, the primary objective is to identify how the organisation of grassroots football in Ghana can be improved using a more systemic and contingent approach.

A focus on developing grassroots football can contribute to improving the state of the Ghanaian local league, and contribute to revenue generation, better wages for players, improved standard of living for football stakeholders and reduced unemployment (Oladiemeji & Monisola, 2013).

As shown in chapter 2, Clubs that make intentional efforts to develop young talents, have stronger youth teams that feed their professional teams (Relvas et al, 2010).

Countries like Japan have progressed from a failing local league to be one the most successful football league in Asia. The Japan Football Association focused on improving their performance in international football competitions by developing grassroots football. Subsequently, Japan has successfully appeared in six world cups since 1998 and hope to win 2092 World Cup through coach education programmes, increased opportunities by clubs, leagues and schools (Sugiyama, Khoo & Hess, 2017).

This chapter delves into, the research design, scope, sampling strategy, data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity and ethical considerations of the research.

#### 3.2 Research Scope

With respect to this study, the term “youth” will be limited to players between the ages of 12 and 23. The selected age interval will be between 12 and 23 because the highest age-restricted competition for youth competitions organised by AFCON is the

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U-23 competition. Though the lowest age restricted bracket for football competitions U-17, according to Stanley, Lupkowski and Assouline (1990), children with special abilities must be given special attention by age 12. Hence the choice of the age range between 12 and 23.

A football player between the 12-23 age bracket the stated age bracket is likely to be playing grassroots football; either playing in a football academy or youth football teams. These players are also likely to pursue professional careers hence will be looking forward to play in the top league in the country.

### **3.2.1 Description of Study Population**

The population of this research study can be defined as all stakeholders in the football industry. This includes but not limited to club owners, football players, football fans, football management teams, football academies, Ghana Football Association and football journalists etc. This population was narrowed down to these sub-populations: football journalists, grassroots football players, grassroots football coaches, Ghana Football Association and retired football players and coaches. These sub-populations were selected because they are directly involved in grassroots football in the country.

The football league in Ghana consist of 4 main segments: the premier league (now 18 teams from 2019/20, was 16 teams previously), the division 1 league (49 teams), the division 2 league and the juvenile league (Neequaye, 2019).

Attached in the appendices (*Table 2*), is a list of football teams that participated in the premier league in 2017. 2018 is excluded because the GFA was dissolved after Mr Nyantakyi was filmed accepting cash gifts. As a result, the corruption allegations filed against the GFA led to all football activities in Ghana including the league to be

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stalled (BBC, 2018). Additionally, *Table 3* in the appendices shows a list of division 1 league teams in three zones and their locations.

In this study, the premier league of Ghana's football league, the top professional division is the segment under consideration. This is because most football fans prefer to watch the premier league as it has better organisation, increased display of skills and talents, its more competitive and entertaining (Robidoux, 2012). Hence, unless specified, the term "league" will refer to the premier league.

### **3.2.2 Study Area**

For feasibility of data collection, this study was limited to the Greater Accra region for ease of access to the clubs from which the respondents can be conducted for data. The study was conducted within 8-9 months; hence it was impossible for a comprehensive study to be conducted in more than one region in Ghana.

### **3.3 Research Design**

A mixed method research was used in this research study for the benefit of offsetting the weaknesses of using only qualitative research or quantitative research. The research articles such as Coopoo and Fortuin's *Scientific Support for Youth Football Development Programmes (2012)*, reviewed in the previous chapter, helped in analysing the relevant variables needed for the scope of the study.

Coopoo and Fortuin (2012), in their study used a mixed method research design to analyse the performance of youth football development programmes in South Africa. This study was conducted in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. Using the mixed method approach, questionnaires were distributed, and interviews were held among youth players between the ages of 12 and 20, in selected structured youth football development programmes (Coopoo and Fortuin, 2012). The sample constituted eight youth development teams with 216 participants completing the questionnaire. The

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researchers used a computer programme to compute the results of the questionnaire and analysed the results descriptively. This study was relevant in informing the research design, the relevant stakeholders in the study and the research tools to be considered.

### **3.3.1 Sampling Strategy and Sampling Techniques**

In this study, the sample entailed grassroot football players and coaches, a GFA personnel for youth football development, football journalists, and retired Ghanaian football coaches and players. These selected groups made up the sample because they are the parties directly involved in grassroots football or youth football development. They were sampled using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a non-probabilistic sampling where participants for a research selected from a population are easily accessible, available at a given time and geographically convenient (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2015).

To understand the relationship between GDP per capita (PPP) of a country and its influence on the average salaries paid to players, and other factors influencing the performance of high performing leagues, two Accra-based league teams representing the Ghanaian premier league were analysed in comparison with two English premier league-based teams and two Spanish (La Liga) league-based teams. The English premier league and the Spanish La Liga are among the top football leagues in the world with the best organisation, highest attendance and engagement, and high quality of infrastructure and football matches (Tansey, 2014). The English premier league recorded 1.33 goals per game in 2014, and the La Liga, 1.45 goals per game, hence the attention received from these leagues are well-deserved because of the entertainment value (Tansey, 2014).

The teams were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique which involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups that are well-

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informed about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest and fit the researcher's criteria (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Based on certain factors considered, such as, the team with the most premier league titles and a team with no premier league title between 2000 and 2017, purposive sampling was used in selecting two teams from the 3 leagues stated.

In selecting the teams from the stated leagues, one club must have won at least a premier league title (i.e. Hearts of Oak, Manchester United and FC Barcelona), and the other club must have no premier league title under their belt (i.e. Liberty Professionals, Southampton and Espanyol). The table below shows the teams that have won league titles between 2000 and 2017.

Table 1.

*Top Premier League Title Winners from Ghana, England and Spain's Premier Leagues between 2000 and 2017*

League	Football Club	Titles (2000-2017)
Ghana Premier League	Accra Hearts of Oak	6
	Ashanti Kotoko	6
	Aduana Stars	2
English Premier League	Manchester United	8
	Chelsea	4
	Manchester City	3
Spanish League (La Liga)	FC Barcelona	8
	Real Madrid	6
	Valencia	2

*Note.* Data for top premier league title winners in Ghana from Ghana Soccer.net (2019), for England from Worldfootball.net (2019), and for Spain from UEFA.com (2019).

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As shown above, is a table of the top three premier league title winning teams from the three premier leagues (Ghana Premier League, English Premier League and The Spanish League (La Liga)) between 2000 and 2017. From this table, the team with the most titles within the stated period was selected. The table excluded 2018 and 2019 because the Ghana Premier League was abandoned because of corruption issues (Gyamera-Antwi, 2018).

### **3.3.2 Sample Size**

Hence, the two Accra-based league teams are Accra Hearts of Oak and Liberty Professionals. The two English premier league-based teams are Manchester United and Southampton, and that of the Spanish league are FC Barcelona and Espanyol. The average salaries paid to players between a five-year period were recorded from these teams.

Additionally, in gathering qualitative data, 4 grassroots players from 3 grassroots teams, 4 grassroots football coaches, 4 football journalists, 2 retired football coaches and 4 retired football players and a GFA representative, were to be interviewed using convenience sampling. This provided information on a fair structure of what the organisation of grassroots football looks like and the performance of the league.

During the research, the researcher successfully interviewed 85% of the participants selected for the study. 23 out of 27 participants were interviewed. Some participants refused to take part in the study.

### **3.4. Data Collection**

For quantitative research, secondary data on the average salaries of the six teams (two Accra-based teams, two Spanish-based teams and two English-based teams) were collated. The average salaries of players from the Spanish based teams and English-based teams between the period of 2013 and 2017, were gathered from the Global

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Sports Salary Survey series (2013-2017). That of the Accra-based teams was collated from their team managers as data of their average salaries was not recorded in the Global Sports Salary Survey. These average salaries were analysed in tandem with their specific GDP per capita (PPP). The GDP per capita (PPP) of Ghana, England and Spain were gathered from The World Bank website. The average salaries and GDP per capita (PPP) values were expressed in one monetary unit, US dollars (\$).

Qualitative data was collected using guided interviews. This helped in capturing the whys, whats and hows concerning the structure and development of grassroots football.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

For the quantitative data gathered on the average salaries of the players and the GDP per capita (PPP), a time series graph will be used in understanding the trends in the data collected. The times series graph will be used to display the possible trends and relationship of the data gathered.

Using Microsoft Excel, graphs will be plotted with the acquired GDP per capita and average salaries, to understand the trend and influence of GDP per capita (PPP) on the average salaries.

Qualitative data gathered was analysed using thematic analysis. The thematic analysis is a qualitative descriptive analysis approach used to determine trends and patterns of words used, their frequency, relationships and discourses of communication (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). Hence, interviews with the selected sample was recorded and transcribed, after which the transcribed the data was evaluated and classified in patterns to form themes. These themes were analysed to explore the responses of the respondents and aid in presenting the results in an organised manner.



### **3.6 Reliability and Validity**

Validity is defined as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study (Heale & Twycross, 2015). This measure of quality is to ensure that the content related to the variables considered in the study are accurately measured. Hence in relation to this study, content validity entails asking valid questions related to how grassroots football is organised and how the performance of the premier league is stunted.

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure (Heale & Twycross, 2015). In the study, this was ensured by asking the same questions to all respondents and avoiding leading questions that influenced the responses of the interviewees. Additionally, interviews were communicated in a language the interviewees clearly understood.

A pilot test was conducted to ensure that the questionnaires are written comprehensibly for the layperson to easily participate in the research.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

The respondents of the questionnaires were not mandated to provide their personal details such as names, in their responses. All participants were briefed about the study before participating in the research and permission was sought for before they participated. Participants could withdraw from an interview or answering a questionnaire at their will without any negative consequences.

Respondents who are below 18 required an adult's permission before participating in the study. Grassroots players attained permission from their coaches before participating in the research.

Additionally, because the study involves human subjects, interview questions were submitted to Internal Review Board (IRB) and approved before administration.

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### **3.8 Limitations**

This study is not generalisable to the entire population of football stakeholders in Ghana because, the sample of stakeholders studied does not represent the population. Due to resource and time constraints only Accra-based teams in the Ghana premier league were considered for the study and the number of respondents from the interviews were not representative of the number of football journalists, ex coaches and players of the Black Stars, grassroots coaches and players in the country.

Additionally, the quantitative data collated were from a secondary data source hence the originality of the data may be questionable.

## **CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSIONS ON FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides insights from data collected from the stated sample in chapter 3. The objective of the research is to find how the organisation of grassroots football can be strengthened to support the Ghanaian premier league, and what lessons can be learnt from high performing football leagues. The results gathered from the semi-structured interviews and the average salaries of two Accra-based teams, will be discussed to address the research questions guiding this study.

To successfully propose a good grassroots football organisational structure based on the collected data, the qualitative data were analysed in themes. The major themes that were emphasised from the interviews include: grassroots football as the life soul and spirit of every football nation; lack of consistency in football development plans; inadequate investment in football infrastructure and skilled personnel; challenge of merging education and football.

In this chapter, the major themes from the interviews will be discussed, following an analysis of the average salaries and a suggested organisational structure based on the responses from the sample, and in comparison, with the conceptual framework.

### **4.2 Summary of Collated Responses**

A mixed research method was successfully implemented; qualitative data was gathered from three football journalists (one GTV Sports and two from Joy Sports ), 10 grassroots football players (four from Great Corinthians -Lapaz, three from F.C Glory-Taifa and three from Hope Soccer Academy-Abokobi) and 4 grassroots football coaches (from Great Corinthians, F.C Glory, Hope Soccer Academy and Biribi), a personnel from the GFA (office of the Technical Directorate), 2 retired football coaches and 3 retired football players.

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These participants highlighted their views on the challenges facing the performance of the league and the importance of grassroots football to the development of football in country.

The quantitative data on the average salaries of players from the Ghanaian premier league, were gathered from the team managers of two Accra based league teams (Hearts of Oak and Liberty Professionals). This data was compared to average salaries from two teams in two top performing leagues (i.e. English Premier League (Manchester United and Southampton), and Spanish La Liga (FC Barcelona and Espanyol)) along with their specific country's GDP per capita (PPP), to help understand the trends of the average salary payments, the factors behind the high salaries for high performing leagues and what lessons can be learned and applied in Ghana's premier league.

### **4.3 State and Structure of Grassroots Football and the Premier League (Before The 2000s)**

#### **4.3.1 State of Grassroots Football Then (Before The 2000s)**

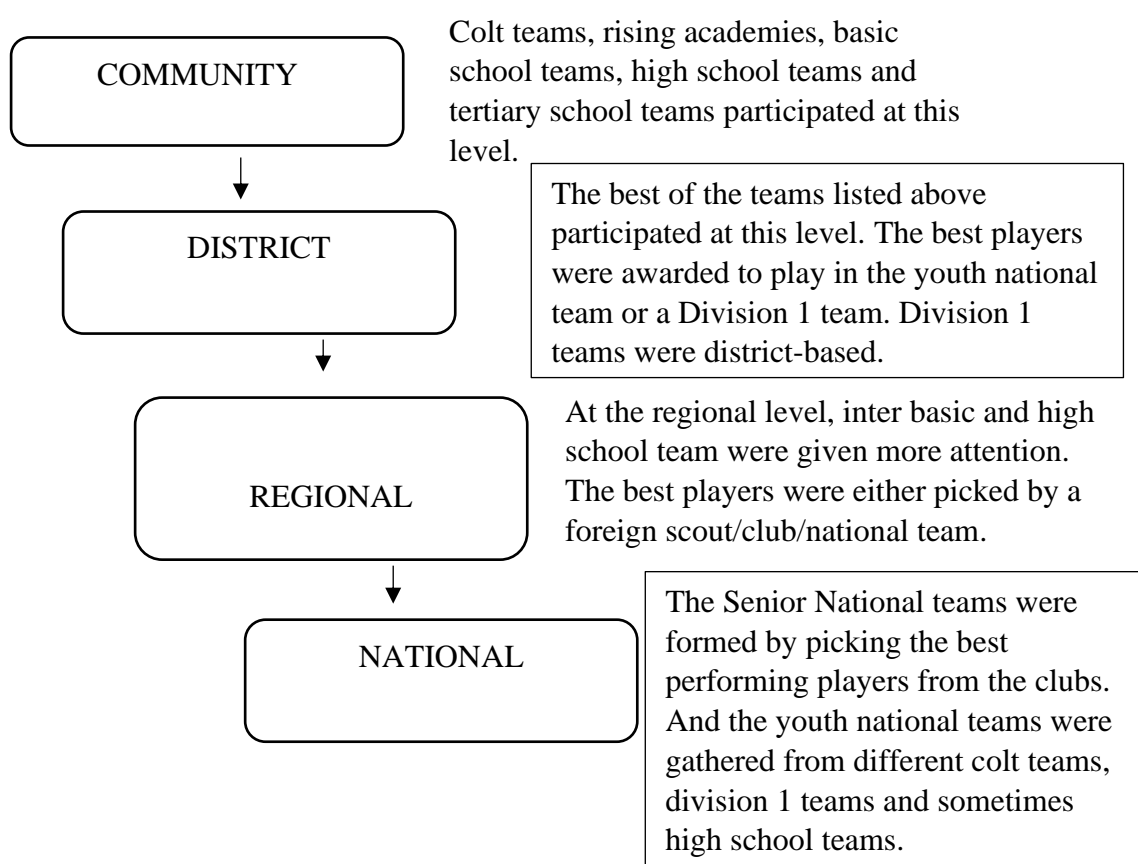
For every footballing nation, grassroots football is the soul, life and spirit of every successful team (Football journalist, personal communication, February 29, 2020). It forms the basis for players to begin their professional careers. It was understood that, passion and high interest to participate in the game of football, made it easy for grassroots football, commonly called "colts football" among Ghanaians, to thrive before the 2000s.

An ex Black Star player, who is currently a licensed coach and the Technical Director of Professional Footballers' Association of Ghana (PFAG) stated that, "there were systems in place that allowed colts football to thrive and talent identification was easy and huge." Some of the conditions that made grassroots football work earlier

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include, the availability of football parks, the increased participation of people in the community (as it served as a source of entertainment), curriculums for schools and colleges allowed for participation, and the colts teams were strongly linked to the communities. Additionally, football did not require a lot of investments then; any pitch was good enough for playing, boys played be bare-chested, and one or two balls were enough.

Football at the grassroots level was not perfectly structured, but there was an understanding of how it was run. Below is an illustration of the state of grassroots football before the early 2000s. There were frequent competitions featured at these levels. The competitions were linked to interschool competitions as well.



*Figure 7.* Author's Illustration of the Organisation of Football in the Country from the Grassroots Level to the National Level Before the 2000s.

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At the community level, children in different age groups (usually between 8-20) met to play against each other, and the outstanding players were selected to form a team for the community. An experienced football fanatic, who usually had no coaching license, coordinated training sessions and they participated in competitions according to their ages at the community level (i.e. with other community or colt teams).

From this level, the best players were selected to play at the district level with the other districts in their regions, whilst most of them still went to school. The teams at the regional level were formed from the best district team players. These competitions at the regional level were organised differently from the inter high school regional competitions, though players could play in both competitions. The best-performing players from the inter-high school competitions, were likely to get the opportunity to play in a club (mostly a Division 1 club). Also, the best-performing players from the regional teams were fortunate to represent Ghana in youth competitions and eventually join the senior National team.

In all these stages, the scouting managers of the league teams were present to spot the next star for their teams. An ex Black Star goalkeeper, said “the flexible system and encouragement for the game, made it easy for people like us to be spotted and play in the top division of the league.” It was understood that majority of players who played in the national team then, played in the league and it was after the exposure in international competitions that they caught the attention of scouting managers in foreign clubs. Playing in foreign clubs was not as rampant as it is now.

This structure worked because not a lot of resources were required to support it as it does today. The academy system was not as popular and was understood to be owned by foreigners who wanted to tap into the pool of talented Ghanaian youth.

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Parents wanted their children to have an education and support them with chores and their family trades. Hence the system illustrated in Figure 7, was more acceptable to them. Most parents also had the perception that academies only played football. Additionally, there were conditions that allowed the system to thrive even without sturdy support from the Football Association. Migration was not as rampant as today and the communities were always put first.

### **4.3.2 State of The League Then (Before The 2000s)**

The conditions that made the grassroots football thrive back then, are the same conditions that made the football league work. Since talent identification was easy, the passion for the game was high, and the matches served as a source of entertainment hence football matches had a lot of attention. People in the communities crowded the pitch on match days to support their neighbours, family members, students and church members.

Additionally, the standard of living of people in the country was not as demanding as it now, hence players were “okay” with the money they were paid (ex-Black Star player, personal communication, February 10, 2020). The money paid to players was enough to make ends meet. Before the scare of hooliganism, people enjoyed going to the stadiums and this served as a source of revenue for the clubs as well as sale of team merchandise.

Even in the period when the league was exciting, not every team was doing well financially, but they managed to survive. Some teams reaped high profits only when they played against big teams like Asante Kotoko or Hearts of Oak. The teams that were linked to their communities had a large fan base hence more revenue was generated on game days.

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### **4.3.3 The State of Grassroots Football Now (After 2000s)**

From all the respondents, it was emphasised that all the grassroots teams identified themselves with their communities. This was a great part of its success. As social and developmental changes were on the rise, people sought for better opportunities (i.e. school and work) beyond their communities. Hence migration became the order of the day, affecting the continuous development of these grassroots teams.

Most colt team coaches encourage their players to go to school as well. Two coaches stated that they have partnered with private schools that provide education to their players. As a result, they regard themselves as “mini academies”. The players who live far away from the school reside with their coaches at a “small fee” paid by the player’s parents to cater for feeding and accommodation. Such teams have players between age 8 and 18.

On the contrary some coaches stated that, not all coaches encourage their players to go to school. A colt team coach from Abokobi shared that, it was not his responsibility to secure their education but rather that of the player’s parents. “They gave me their children, so I help them get a football career and that’s what I am doing” (Colts coach, personal communication, February 29, 2020).

Some coaches shared that they advised their players to attend Day High Schools to enable them to show up for training and be consistent in their development. Therefore, it was understood that the current educational system is not supportive of youth football development; considering the special attention they need at that level.

To continually increase the relevance of the grassroots football, the GFA hopped on to assist the colt teams. They set up the “colts league” to facilitate better



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organisation. They had three categories: U-13, U-15 and U-17. Any player 18 and above, was eligible to play in the lower divisions of the league (division 1, 2 or 3), or play in the premier league.

The coaches of the colt teams registered their teams at the regional level of the GFA, the Regional Football Association (RFA). This registration made them eligible to compete in the colt league created by the GFA. Since the teams are independent of the GFA, the owners of the teams, usually the coaches, were responsible for the jerseys, footballs and other necessities the colt players needed.

The coaches could gather players across different communities to form a team and name it whatever he/she wanted. This was how the colt teams drew away from the linkages to their communities. According to a respondent from the current administration of the GFA, the past administration failed to allocate funds for the development of youth football. They were too focused on the national teams and invested so much on them. “Investing heavily in the national teams has affected youth football in the country and the narrative has to be changed to improve football at the grassroots level” (Respondent from the GFA, personal communication, February 29, 2020).

The RFAs were only responsible for fixing the games and the locations the games were played on. The teams were left to fund their own jerseys and training equipment. With the rise of investments in youth football in other footballing nations, Ghana’s failure to keep up with these changes, was the beginning of the fall grassroots football in this country (Football journalist, personal communication, February 10, 2020). “Look at the U-20 team from 2009, they helped us in 2010 World Cup; now look at us, and since 1995, our U-17 boys have not won a World Cup” (ex-Black Star

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goalkeeper, personal communication, February 10, 2020). It is evident that no continuous effort was made to keep the cycle going.

According to a colt team coach, no compensation was given to the teams when they won the league. Additionally, very few or no scouts showed up at the league games and a lot of costs were incurred by the coaches to keep the league running with no sponsors. “The big-league teams do not even have enough to support themselves, so we do not blame them for not supporting us” (Colts coach, personal communication, February 29, 2020). Occasionally we trade some of our talented players to the higher divisions to help us get some money (Colts coach, personal communication, February 29, 2020).

It is only during inter-regional competitions or academy try-outs, that more scouts from abroad and league team coaches show up. Even with that, there is still a slim chance that your player will be selected (Colts coach, personal communication, February 29, 2020).

The former president of the GFA, Mr. Kwesi Nyantakyi, in 2018 faced several allegations of corrupt practices in the FA. An investigation led by the undercover journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas, exposed Mr Nyantakyi and several football officials from West Africa, as they were caught on camera accepting cash gifts in a documentary titled “Number 12” (Gyamera-Antwi, 2019). This led to a FIFA ban as he also served as CAF’s vice president. Though Mr Nyantakyi did not admit any of the allegations, he resigned from the presidential position, leading the government to dissolve the GFA in 2018 (Oteng, 2018). After the corruption allegations against the GFA in 2018, all leagues coordinated by the GFA were put to a halt; hence the colts league and the premier league were halted. The colts league is still yet to run as the current GFA

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administration is trying to put measures in place to revive what they now call juvenile football.

During that period of non-activity in the league, the colt coaches resulted to taking their chances at football try-outs and scouting events organised by the premier league teams or academies. Additionally, there were tournaments organised by several colt coaches during school vacations, representing as many colt teams, where scouts are invited, and the players might get the opportunity to pursue a professional career.

Colts teams outside Accra were also invited. The purpose of the event was to get scouted into the divisions 1,2 or 3, the premier league, into an academy or a football academy or team in Europe. This is a huge source of revenue for the colt teams. Through these events, the colt coaches traded their talented players and received a compensation from the scouts for their contribution to the player's development so far. Also, the colt coaches make agreements with the scouts; a percentage paid to the colt team if the player signs a contract with a club. A percentage of about 20% will be given as a compensation to the colt teams for the efforts they contributed to the development of the player. The colt coaches were persistent in making the dreams of their players come true, despite the challenges they faced and the discontinuity of the league.

Some colt teams have good relationships with league division teams that can help promote their players. Hence if the players attain an age where they are not eligible to play in the colts league (above 17), they are automatically advanced to those teams. For example, Great Corinthians, a colt team, has a good relationship with a division 2 team they promote their good players who are above 18 to. Some players who are not attractive to the scouts and fail to get into higher division teams, are advised to learn a

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trade or focus seriously on their academics. Therefore, when a player is above 18, he would be more certain if a professional career in football is attainable.

This is the state of grassroots football in Ghana now and it is an undefined path. A key problem the colt teams battled with, is the availability of pitches due to developmental and real estate projects. Some ex Black Star players and sports journalists highlighted that, many unoccupied lands that were used as football pitches have been sold by individuals or the chiefs of that community for developmental projects. “Real estate developers, churches, schools, hostels and large corporations have occupied those lands today. Where will the children play freely?” (ex-Black Star player, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

In summary, the major factors that contributed to the fall of grassroots football in the country include: migration, low investments in colt teams, no support from the GFA, no sponsorships for the colts league, unavailable pitches because of developmental projects and an unsupportive educational system that makes the pursuit for a professional career a trade-off for an education.

### **4.4 Problems Affecting the Performance of Ghana’s Premier League**

#### **4.4.1 Finances of the Team**

100% of the respondents of the guided interviews stated that, lack of investments in the league from the league teams, is a major problem affecting the performance of the league. For the biggest clubs, like Kumasi Asante Kotoko, enough revenue is generated from ticket sales, yet management of the funds to invest in player development is the biggest difficulty.

“We have plans to be bigger than what we already are. In due time big investments will be made” (Respondent from Management of Asante Kotoko, personal communication, February 13, 2020). “Asante Kotoko for instance makes enough sales

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from merchandise, tickets and selling players. Yet, they do not have a stadium for themselves. They rent Baba Yara the National Stadium in Kumasi. Their leaders are just selfish, and organisation is poor” (ex-Black Star goalkeeper, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

According to the ex-Black Star players who were interviewed, the big-name players in the league do not compete in the league for more than 4 seasons. When the players perform well and are called to join the national teams, they are easily spotted by European scouts to teams that will pay the players better.

A good amount is paid to the player’s old club during player trades. Yet most of the teams fail to utilise these funds for the development of the team. “Very recently, Winfield Cobbinah (of Hearts of Oak) was sold for \$150,000 to Esperance in 2016. A percentage of this money could have been used to pay players well and develop infrastructure for the team” (Football Journalist, personal communication, February 17, 2020).

According to the team managers of Hearts of Oak and Liberty Professionals, majority of the teams do not pay more than half of their players above GHS 1,000. The most outstanding strikers and keepers can easily assess their value by using number of goals scored and number of clean sheets respectively. Hence, such players can easily earn a raise or make a case for themselves through negotiations when renewing their contracts.

Therefore, in terms of finances, poor management of their available funds and lack of consistent investments and sponsorships were dire challenges facing the teams.

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***4.4.1.1 Salaries of the Two Accra-based Teams Compared to the English League and the La Liga Teams***

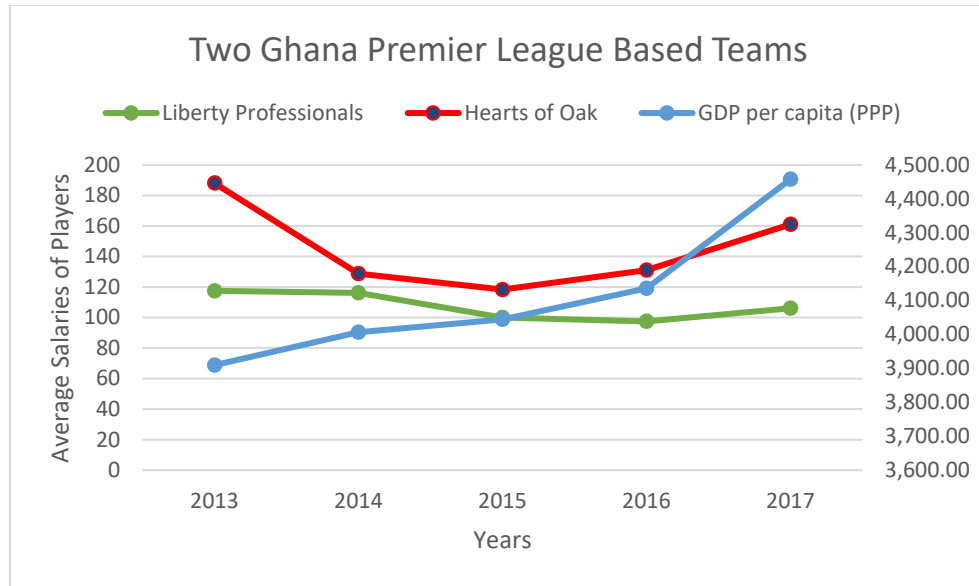
To understand how well the Ghana premier league clubs were fairing financially, the average salaries of two Accra-based teams; Liberty Professionals and Accra Hearts of Oak were compared to the GDP per capita (PPP) of Ghana (i.e. Figure 8.1). The average salaries of the players were converted to US dollars using the respective exchange rates of the specific years. The GDP per capita (PPP) values were recorded in US dollars from the World Bank online database.

From the data gathered on the average salaries of players between the period of 2013 to 2017, it was observed that the salaries paid to players were generally increasing over time. The y-axis on the far right of the graphs, represents the GDP per capita (PPP) of the specific country.

In Figure 8.1, it is evident that, over the years, the GDP per capita (PPP) was increasing at a minimum rate of 1% and maximum rate of 3% between 2013 and 2016. A whopping 7% increase was noticed from 2016 to 2017.

In the graph below, it is clear Hearts of Oak is a better paying club than Liberty Professionals. Regardless, Hearts of Oak averagely paid 14.3% less in 2017 than they did in 2013. Though the GDP per capita (PPP) kept on increasing as well as the minimum wage of the country, the salaries did not increase throughout the five-year period under study. Hence, there is no relationship between the average salaries of the players and Ghana's GDP per capita (PPP).

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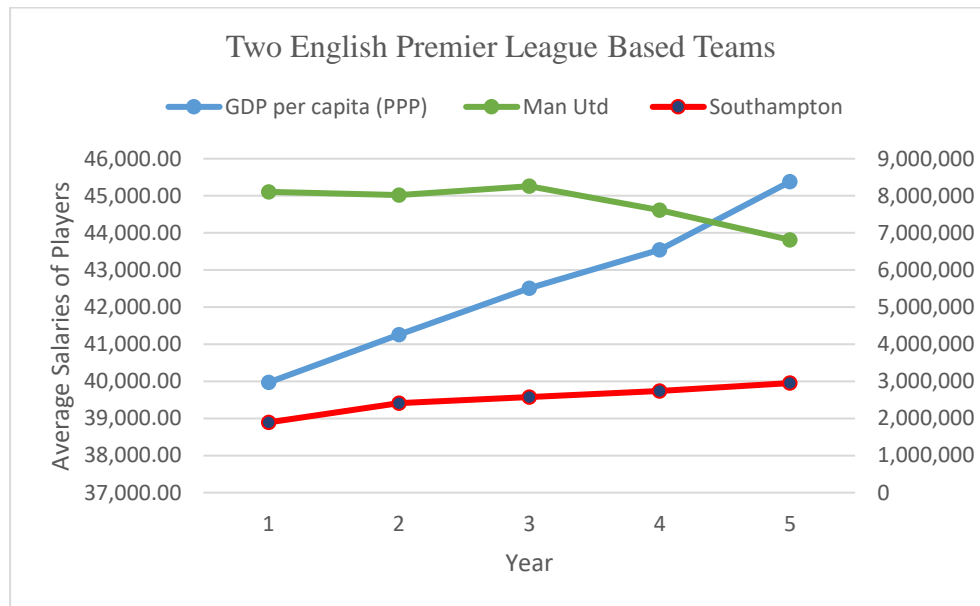
*Figure 8.1.* Average Salaries of Two Accra-based teams from the Ghana Premier League. Data for Liberty Professionals from Liberty Professionals Management (2020), for Hearts of Oak from Hearts of Oak Management (2020), and data on Ghana's GDP per capita (PPP) from The World Bank Group (2020).

To understand how well the English premier league clubs were fairing financially, the average salaries of two English based clubs; Southampton and Manchester United, were compared to the GDP per capita (PPP) of UK. From Figure 8.2 below, the GDP per capita (PPP) increased throughout the five-year period. Southampton recorded lower payments as compared to Manchester United, as the latter is a more successful club than the former. During the period, the increase in GDP per capita (PPP) positively affected the annual average salaries paid to Southampton. On the other hand, Manchester United recorded a fall in the average salaries paid from 2013 to 2014, experienced an increase from 2014 to 2015, and dropped further from 2015 to 2016.

Hence within the five-year period, Manchester United's average salary fell about 16% maybe due to decreasing quality of performance. Southampton rather had their average salaries increasing over the five-year period about 35.8%. Also, there is no relationship between England's GDP per capita (PPP) and the average salary of

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players in Manchester United, but there is a weak positive correlation between the average salary of Southampton players and England's GDP per capita (PPP).

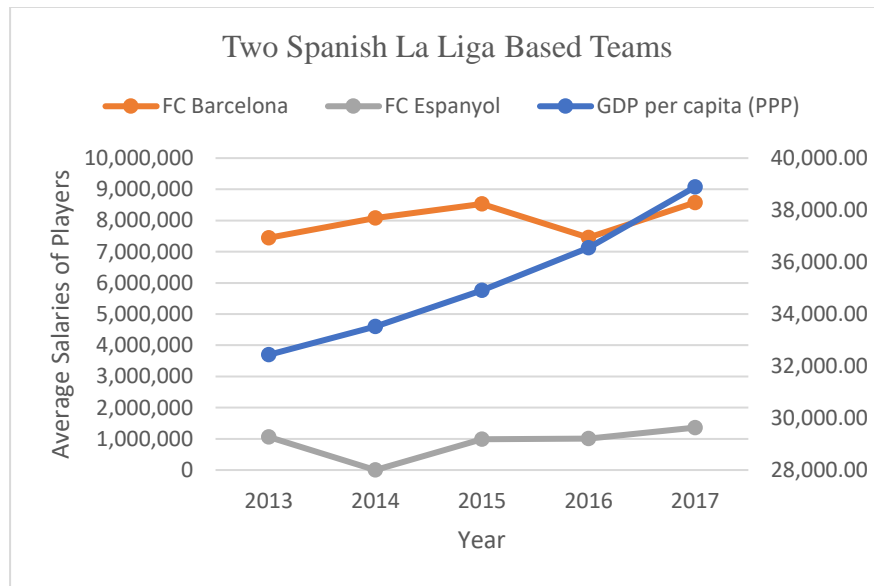


*Figure 8.2.* Average Salaries of Two English-based teams from the English Premier League. Data for Manchester United from Global Sports Survey (2014-2017), for Southampton from Global Sports Survey (2014-2017), and data on England's GDP per capita (PPP) from The World Bank Group (2020).

We next consider the Spanish Football League (La Liga). In Figure 8.3 below, the GDP per capita was increasing in the five-year period. FC Barcelona in 2013 and 2014 had an increase in the average salaries of players, and from 2015 to 2016, average salaries fell by more than 12%. Afterwards, there was a significant increase of about 13% in 2017. FC Espanyol on the other hand, recorded 85.8% less in average salaries paid to players as compared to the Spanish giants FC Barcelona. Espanyol experienced a fall in average salaries in 2014 and an overall increase of 22.3% over the five-year period.



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*Figure 8.3.* Average Salaries of Two Spanish-based teams from the Spanish La Liga. Data for FC Barcelona from Global Sports Survey (2014-2017), for FC Espanyol from Global Sports Survey (2014-2017), and data on Spain’s GDP per capita (PPP) from The World Bank Group (2020).

Comparatively the average salaries recorded in Figure 8.1 are much less than the figures recorded in Figure 8.2. The GDP per capita (PPP) of the countries are also significantly different. Ghana’s GDP per capita (PPP) increased by 12.3% over the five-year period. This implies that, the value of goods and services over the period increased and the benefits citizens enjoy from the country’s economy increased.

Additionally, within that period, the minimum wage of the country increased from GHS 5.27 (USD 0.91) in 2013 to GHS 8.8 (USD 1.76) in 2017 (i.e. 40.1%). That is a significant growth, but it is not substantially affecting the salaries of the players. If that were so, the average salaries will increase as the annual minimum wage increases. According to the team manager of Hearts of Oak, the players sign a contract and are paid in accordance to their contracts. “The contract does not talk about a raise. Unless the team makes more money, the team is only obliged to pay the amount in the contract” (Football Journalist, personal communication, February 17, 2020). Therefore, the

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contracts may or may not be inflation indexed and the players usually sign the contracts in the absence of lawyers because they cannot afford such services.

Another interesting observation is that the GDP per capita (PPP) of Spain and England, were below the average salaries of the players in these countries. Yet, that of Ghana's average players' salaries were substantially below the country's respective GDP per capita (PPP) over the five-year period. A good reason to explain this is the increasing demand for the English premier league and the Spanish La Liga and the corresponding decline in Ghana's premier league.

### ***4.4.1.2 How the Top-flight Clubs Make Money***

Clubs must compete for the best players by offering the highest wages. This is because the best players bring success to the clubs and fans to the stadia. The more successful a team is, the more money they make from broadcasting rights, merchandise and ticket sales (Bank of England, 2020).

Additionally, technological improvements and globalisation has made football matches more accessible in developed countries. Hence, the popularity and easy accessibility, is creating more profits for the industry. TV deals from media houses in the UK ranging between £3.3bn and £5.3bn, have made the Premier League Europe's most lucrative league by a big margin (Conn, 2018).

The comparatively lower wages paid to Ghanaian players in Ghana's local league in Figure 8.1, pushes them to seek for the better opportunities in European or good-paying clubs that scout them. From Figure 8.3, FC Espanyol's player were paid on average, 1,282,461.3% more than the average salaries paid to players in Liberty Professionals. Though the figures look highly depressing for Ghanaian based clubs, there are other factors such as, cost of living in the different economies considered, and

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influence of demand and supply, that affects the salaries paid to players. If people lose interest in football, clubs would not be able to make high profits; demand for players would drop and so would their wages (Bank of England, 2020).

For a league like the Ghanaian premier league, the lower wages could be explained by a higher supply of players who are competing for the little revenue generated by the clubs. Also, the interest of football fans in the league is low, hence the clubs make very low profits.

The current administration of the GFA has introduced a campaign “Bring Back the Love.” This is to increase domestic interest in the premier league. This campaign is geared towards mobilizing support for the various national football teams and the premier league (Otchere, 2019). As a result of this campaign, the GFA successfully set a new revenue record on January 27, 2020, in the Kotoko versus Hearts clash.

37,500 tickets were sold out and GHS 726,380 (i.e. USD 125,545.91) was generated (GBC, 2020). These two clubs are linked to their communities and have a great history in the league which many football fans will like to associate themselves with. Hearts is over 100 years old and Kotoko is nearly 90 years.

Football fans were awed by the sensational young talent of Asante Kotoko’s, Mathew Kudjoe. “He is just 16 years and his talent is amazing. They should try and keep him. He can make money for the club” (Football journalist, personal communication, February 10, 2020). His performance drew attention from the media and influenced fans to attend football matches.

Topflight teams like Manchester United and FC Barcelona heavily invest in attracting talent. For example, Barcelona, the Catalan club’s academy (La Masia) has produced a string of stars for the first team since the turn of the century. Players such

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as Carlos Puyol, Xavi Hernandez, Lionel Messi, Gerard Pique and Andres Iniesta were part of the formidable team of Barcelona in the early 2000s that graduated from the club's academy (Matchett, 2017). Barcelona won the European Champion's League 3 times between 2005 and 2015, with the afore mentioned players who also received individual awards (UEFA, 2020). For example, Messi has been voted the best player in the World for an unprecedented 6 times. Fans were enthused about the players progression from the academy and this drew large crowds to witness their development in the premier league.

In recent times, due to the increasing desire of these big teams to live up to the expectations of fans, the chances given to upcoming talents are very slim. The priorities of the general managers are changing; if a Lionel Messi comes along, he may still get through, but the chances of getting through are low as compared to previous years (Matchett, 2017). As such the first teams rely on big signings, forgoing the continuous development of the academy and lower division players of the first team.

Additionally, the continuous investments topflight clubs make in their infrastructural facilities has proven to increase the number of attendants to league matches. According to Bradbury (2018), there is a short-term boost in attendance when there is a new stadium. This is called the novelty effect. This boost in attendance and revenue tends to dissipate gradually, before evaporating within 10 years of operating (Bradbury, 2020).

Conclusively, since most teams in the league cannot afford to make big signings, it would be a good step for the teams to connect with their communities foremost and tap into their grassroots teams to help them possess talented players and eventually draw crowd for revenue generation. This can improve the financial situation

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of the teams in Ghana's premier league and help the teams attain partnerships with media houses easily. How the teams can connect with their communities will be explained in section 4.7.

### **4.4.2 Sponsorship of the Teams and Ghana's Premier League**

According to the team manager of Accra Hearts of Oak, the cost of living is on the rise hence players need to be paid more and teams must generate more money. He added that, "we have sponsors to support our activities, but we need more" (Team Manager of Accra Hearts of Oak, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

Teams with smaller revenue such as Liberty Professionals, do not have substantial sponsors because they lack attractive players and a committed fan base. They struggle to pay their players often and sell their best players as a source of revenue to pay other players.

The ex-Black Star players argued that, to get more sponsorship and good sponsorship deals, the teams need more quality and attractive players. This cannot happen when players are looking for the next opportunity to go abroad. "In our time, people always wanted to watch Charles Taylor play. This made people buy Kotoko jerseys to support the team" (ex-Black Star player, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

It was understood that, for the premier league teams to attain long term and beneficial sponsorship deals, they must keep the talented players that drive crowd. "In football, it is the fans that generate money for the teams through ticket sales and merchandise" (ex-Black Star player, personal communication, February 13, 2020).

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### **4.4.3 Talent Continuity of Players**

Some journalists revealed that the main source of revenue for some clubs is not by winning competitions, but by selling their talented players to bigger teams. FC Dortmund in Germany was given as an example.

In Ghana's premier league, clubs like Inter Allies and Dreams FC operate on such business models. They are always looking for the next best talent to sell to European teams, to generate money for their activities. This becomes a problem when the teams are not paying players well and building infrastructure for the team. "The talents in the league are not depreciating, rather they are not transitioning properly" (ex-Black Star goalkeeper, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

The most disturbing issue is that, most teams in the premier league, even the most successful (Asante Kotoko and Hearts of Oak) operate using this model. This affects player continuity and affects the fan base as well. When such players are no more in the team, the fans gradually lose interest in the teams. Additionally, this affects their sponsorships as some teams disclosed that, some sponsors like the spectators, are only interested in some players in the team and not the entire team.

### **4.4.4 Expectations of Fans**

Unfortunately, the expectations of football fans for Ghana's premier league is high because of exposure to big European leagues such as the English Premier League, Spanish La Liga and Serie A. Ghana's premier league does not have as many sponsors like the topflight leagues in Europe. This makes it difficult to meet the demands of the local people. The GFA respondent stated that, "the fans have to be gentle with us; it is just a phase we are going through. The league will stand on its feet soon."

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### **4.4.5 Lack of Large Fan Base**

“If Ghanaians want the premier league to be as exciting as the La Liga, then they should support the teams in the league” (Football journalist, personal communication, February 10, 2020). When the premier league was booming, the league teams had a huge following because the teams were linked to their communities. Some recent teams are not linked to any community. “Asante Kotoko is strongly linked to the people of Kumasi. Their fans follow the team across the country to watch their matches” (ex-Black Star player, personal communication, February 10, 2020). That is not the case for many other clubs. The teams can start creating that bond by involving themselves in programs within the communities. They could also join them in community clean-ups or show up at the community schools during football matches to inspire the youth.

Additionally, the teams could make a conscious effort to set up a colt team and gradually have teams playing in the younger divisions. This will help in increasing their fan base as more families will be affiliated to the team and contribute to the continuous talent development for the top division teams.

### **4.4.6 Quality of Pitches and Match Officials**

It was gathered from the research study that there are enough pitches available for the league matches, but the quality of the pitches is very low. “The pitches are not standard, and they affect the flow of the game. This affects us when we play in international club competitions” (ex-Premier League coach, personal communication, February 13, 2020). Even the best pitches in Ghana, which is the Baba Yara and Accra Sports stadium are not up to standard.

Additionally, the mishaps that fans cause at the stadiums when they disagree with the match officials is mainly due to the lack of experienced and quality officials (Sports

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Journalist, personal communication, February 21, 2020). Hooliganism scares many football fans to show up and support their teams. Hence affecting the growth of the league.

A respondent from the current administration of the GFA stated that, conscious efforts are being taken to improve basic infrastructure like the pitches and improve the quality of referees through training to improve the standard for the league.

### **4.5 A Summary of Lessons Learnt from Topflight Leagues.**

From research, not all the lessons learnt from the best performing leagues can be applied to Ghana's premier league due to different circumstances such as, differences in economy, culture and technological development. In this section, the applicable lessons will be analysed.

One of the major factors generating huge revenues for teams is their strong connection to their communities. Spain and England's topflight leagues have some of their clubs named after their communities such as Real Madrid which is based in Madrid and FC Barcelona which is based in Barcelona. Similarly, in Ghana, Accra Hearts of Oak is in Accra and Kumasi Asante Kotoko is in Kumasi. Two or more clubs located in one city could be rivals. For example, Manchester City and Manchester United, FC Espanyol and FC Barcelona. Such matches draw so much crowd and sometimes goes deeper than a normal football match due to years of shared history (Jessop, 2016).

Another major factor is that, the best clubs in these leagues have youth teams participating in the lower divisions. For example, Manchester United has U-18, U-21 and U-23 teams as well as the academy team. The youth teams participate in



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development leagues such as the Professional Development league for U-21s and regional division tournaments (Premier League, 2020).

The premier league 1 usually referred to as premier league (topflight) is for professional footballers with the top division teams, such as the Manchester United and Liverpool, which has lower division leagues for promotion or relegation of teams (i.e. division 1 and 2).

The premier league 2 is the highest level of the Professional Development League (Premier League, 2020). The U-23 youth teams and Team A reserve players of the topflight teams participate at this level. A high level of professionalism is kept even at the academy level (i.e. U-9, U-16 and U-18) to ensure the continuity of the program. This contributes immensely to talent development and continuity.

One great advantage topflight leagues have over struggling football leagues like the Ghana premier league, is the huge investment in facilities and player development. This is made possible because of their vibrant economies. Comparatively, European countries like Belgium, England and Spain are classified as developed countries (United Nations, 2019). Hence it is not entirely fair to compare Ghana's league to such European leagues in terms of economies.

Perhaps, leagues like the Egyptian Premier league (EPL) and South Africa's Premier Soccer league (PSL) can be a better comparison in terms of economies. Though these economies are better-performing than Ghana's economy, these countries successfully survived similar obstacles to build a strong league, hence a few lessons can be learned.

According to Soccer Politics (2015), the PSL struggled financially in its early stages but benefited greatly from the 2010 World Cup hosted in South Africa.

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Companies wanted to be associated with anything related to the World Cup, so many sponsorship deals were gained starting from 2007 (Soccer Politics, 2015). Sport television broadcaster *SuperSport* signed a \$195 million deal for broadcasting rights (Soccer Politics, 2015). Such revenue was invested in infrastructural facilities for the league and clubs which contributed to drawing large crowd for football matches.

Similarly, in 2011, the Egyptian Football Association sold the broadcasting rights of the Egyptian Premier League (EPL) to *Al Jazeera Sports* for \$2.6 million (Soccer Politics, 2015). The interest for the EPL in Arabic countries made it a profitable deal for the EFA. The EPL faced challenges of hooliganism at stadiums and this resulted to a season-long spectator ban, making television the only option for fans to view games (Soccer Politics, 2015). Unexpected political riots and protests also affected the finances of the clubs as the league had to be postponed.

Egypt's competitive league draws attention from football fans across Africa and Arabian countries, hence revenue is generated through television deals, sponsorships and merchandise. Their talented footballers, supportive fanbase and style of play are the contributors to this success. In the case of South Africa's league, they reaped the benefits from hosting major football competitions and other leagues can reap similar benefits from doing same (Soccer Politics, 2015). For example, hosting the African Cup of Nations. Hence the EPL and PSL successfully made it through broadcasting deals, therefore, Ghana's league can emulate such.

Yet, before the record-breaking successes of Egypt and South Africa's league, the local people had a strong connection with their clubs and the clubs were linked to their communities. This is the fundamental step the clubs in Ghana's premier league

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must take. When that is established, sponsorship deals can be attracted by the teams to support investments in infrastructural development and intensive talent development.

### **4.6 How a Structured Organisation of Grassroots Football Can Improve the Performance of the League**

From the primary data gathered, it was observed from all the respondents that, grassroots football is very important for the growth of football in the country as well as the improvement of the league. In this section, responses on how the organisation of grassroots football can be improved and its impact on the performance of the league will be highlighted.

The suggested structure is based on the responses from the sample the researcher interacted with. Hence the results cannot be generalised to the entire population. This structure will show how the organisation of grassroots football can be improved.

An ex- Black star player stated that, “the USA is not a footballing nation and yet they have got it right. Belgium is doing fantastic because they executed a plan. We can emulate them” (ex-Black Star player, personal communication, February 10, 2020). Belgium and USA have found a great way to merge education and football.

Considering the results collated, Ghana’s current educational system is not conducive for a talented child who wants to pursue a professional football career. Hence the colt league system will not be as efficient as some players forgo their chances of acquiring quality education. Additionally, not all young and talented players can successfully have a professional football career.

According to Romeo (2017), out of all the young boys who enrol in an academy at age 9, less than 0.5% make it to the professional leagues. Also, only 180 of 1.5 million players who play in the league team academies, will make it to the premier league- a

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success rate of 0.012% (Romeo, 2017). Therefore, education must be highly considered as the possibility of pursuing a professional career in football is very slim.

Ghana needs to focus on youth football and as such adopt the “academy system” which incorporates honing football skills and providing basic education. As stated in chapter 2, the suggested structure at the grassroots level based on the data collected, will be reflected in the contingency approach to organisational structure.

### **4.6.1 The Issues with the Colts System**

From the analysis of the data collated so far, there is evidence that the colts system at the grassroots level is failing; it is inefficient with regards to talent development. A concern some grassroots players shared in an interview reflected that, their parents expected them to help at home after school.

Some grassroots players are expected to assist their parents in their trades; hence it interferes with their team training times. Since the attention footballers need at this stage is crucial to their development, consistent training is important.

Additionally, some players shared that their imbalanced nutrition also affects their football growth as it is not closely monitored by their coaches. The financial inability of the teams at the grassroots level, also proves that a more supportive system can be more beneficial.

Hence it can be deduced that, emulating the academy system like England, Spain, USA and Belgium, will be more beneficial to Ghana’s upcoming football talents. The academy system at the grassroots level is a special training programme (through education and football) that is usually setup by clubs, to aid in developing young football players for a possible professional football career (Mills, Butt, Maynard & Harwood, 2014).

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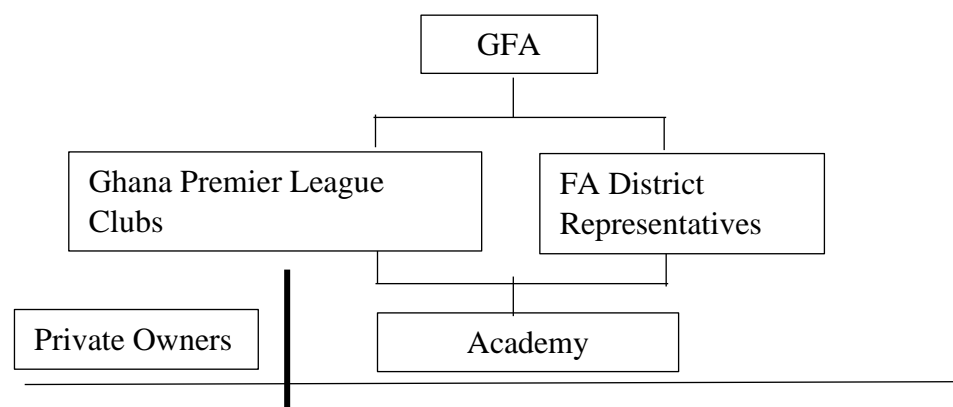
With regards to this study, adapting such a system can be paramount to merging education and football and contributing to creating a strong link between the premier league clubs and their communities.

### 4.7 An Improved Organisational Structure for Grassroots Football

The organisational structure that can improve grassroots football will be illustrated in the diagrams below.

Figure 9 shows the link between the supporting bodies surrounding the academies (i.e. academies, the league clubs and the GFA) that can enable an effective structure at the grassroots level. This illustration depicts the matrix organisational structure. The GFA is responsible for all football related activities in the country, hence cannot be separated from this structure (Holt, 2009).

For the academy system to be effective, there must be regulatory checks from the GFA and a connection with the premier league clubs. Additionally, the GFA must run a separate league from the juvenile league and the premier league, which can be called the U21 development league. This development league will give players between the ages of 18 and 20 more playing time than in the premier leagues.



*Figure 9.* Author's Illustration of the Interconnected Bodies Needed for an Effective System at the Grassroots Level, Using a Matrix Organisational Structure.

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In figure 9, the premier league clubs play a role of support to the academies. Support in this case means, going to training sessions and mentoring the young footballers. The clubs will benefit from this when they win tournaments or sell their players to foreign clubs. The clubs should be temporarily allowed to sell their players for the first 5 years of their affiliation with an academy and invest the returns in the academies to support them financially.

Nevertheless, the academies will be owned by private people at the initial stages. They must ensure that the regulatory requirements of the District FAs are followed and allow the premier league clubs to show their support. In the long run, a percentage should be owned by the club and the private owners.

From the figure above, a representative from the Football Association (FA) based at the district level will be responsible for ensuring that all academies are adhering to basic regulatory requirements. The regulatory requirements are to ensure that the young footballers are not exploited, and the academies are performing their roles as they should. These include:

- The academies must have four age-group teams, i.e. U12 (ages 8-11), U-15(ages 12-14), U18 (ages 15-17) and U21 (ages 18-20). This is backed by a research conducted by Stanley et al. (1990), as stated in chapter 2, proves that children with special abilities must be given special attention at least by age 12.
- The academies must be grouped in districts and be registered with the district FAs
- Players under 18 must be in an academy and participate in the juvenile league. Similarly, players between 18 and 21 are eligible to play in the premier league and have a professional contract with a premier league club, but they are advised

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to play in the U21 development league. Additionally, players between 18 and 20 must play in a Ghanaian football league for at most 3 years before migrating to foreign clubs.

- The premier league clubs including the lower divisions, must choose at most 5 academies they will link themselves to. This relationship can provide opportunities for the young players to start their careers. Additionally, the clubs will be linked to their communities. For example, Accra Hearts of Oak is based in Kpobiman in the Ga West District of the Greater Accra Region. Kpobiman can have 3 academies depending on its population and Hearts of Oak can be affiliated to these clubs.

Aside these requirements, the GFA will not be expected to mandatorily fund the academy and in the same light, the academy is independent of the GFA. Hence the academies will not be subject to the GFA's authority unless they fall short of the requirements stated above. These regulatory checks will be enforced by a representative from the Football Association who will be based in each district.

The figure below shows the detail of the improved structure at the grassroots level. Considering the contingency approach as stated in chapter 2, the five contingency factors which include: organisational strategy and objectives, organisational environment, technology, organisational size and human resources, formed a key part in structuring an improved organisational structure at the grassroots level.

From the data collected, the figure below shows clearly how the interdependence of these factors can improve the structure at the grassroots level.

In the contingency theory approach, an organisation's environment informs its strategy, while the strategy outlines the resources and capabilities needed i.e. the technology,

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people and human resource. In the same light, an organisation's environment influences the people recruited to achieve the organisation's goals, which in turn shapes its strategy considering their capabilities and technologies. Hence the interconnectedness of the structure.



*Figure 9.1* Author's Illustration of an Improved Structure at the Grassroots Level Using the Contingency Approach

### 4.7.1 An Overview of The Structure of the Academy System

As established earlier, the academy system is preferable considering the data analysed. Hence, the structure of the academy system which can improve football at the grassroots level considering the five contingency factors, explained below.

Firstly, the organisational environment of football. In the football landscape, many football nations use the academy system. Many of such countries have



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implemented it nationwide and it is regulated by their FAs to ensure consistency, but it is owned by the clubs. In Belgium for example, the FA trains the academy coaches, and instruct specific game plans and routines the players should be taught at every age category (James, 2014).

The football environment is changing as increased physical fitness of the players is required (90Soccer, 2017). Hence, one must start early and be consistent as it is easier to develop such techniques in their development age.

In recent times, football also demands technology to support the teams achieve high performance at all levels. Such include, quality pitches and ultra-modern training centres. In terms of finances as well, the top academies, leagues and players are reaping high profits. Huge investments in broadcasting rights, jersey and stadium sponsorships, merchandise and ticket sales revenue, has taken top leagues by storm. The most valuable football teams worldwide are worth an average of \$1.69 billion, which is a 74% increase since 2013 (Ozanian, 2018). According to Forbes' Ozanian (2018), a rush of foreign investors heavily boosted the English premier league as they managed the high risk of losing everything. Therefore, the private owners of the academies in this system must invest heavily in their units and infrastructure as higher benefits await them.

As stated earlier, not every child who wants to play football professionally makes it. Hence, the education to be provided at academies must be one that makes it possible for an academy graduate to attend a university if all else fails. For Ghana's league to gain more attention from fans, sponsors and investors, these environmental changes of football must be incorporated in the academy system.

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Secondly, the improved system's strategy and objective. There are two specific goals of this structure:

1. To give potential professional footballers an education while equipping them with the necessary football skills and techniques.
2. Create a link between the community and clubs, through the talents from the academies.

The means to achieve objective 1 with this system is to consider the current circumstances of the young players and increase convenience for them. For example, the players must attend the academies that are situated either in the academy player's school district or the district of the academy player's home. In an European academy called Bitcademy, 75% of players live in a 50 km radius from their academies (Bitcademy, 2018). With academies that may not have an educational unit at its initial stages, a partnership with a school to teach the academy players can help.

Nevertheless, in the long run, all academies will adopt the A-Levels educational system, like most English academies, to ensure that the academy players can successfully transition to university when they want to.

Also, in terms of financing the academies, the GFA will support with the procedures surrounding the location and amenities, and the government can assist by subsidising the cost of building materials as well as utility bills for the first 4 years. The GFA will announce to the public about the new system and interested parties who are willing to follow the requirements can own an academy by registering with the GFA, hence fund it. Corporations could cooperate and set up an academy as a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project. Retired players can assist by sponsoring

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equipment and training sessions, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) can support by funding talented but needy players.

The academy players would have to pay a fee to be enrolled. No exploitative amount will be tolerated, but an amount both the low and middle class can afford.

The second objective; create a link between the community and clubs, through the talents from the academies. The clubs will support the academies with their coaching staff and training equipment. Through a mentorship program, the academy players can interact with the club's professional players and guide them with their experience. The club players can visit the homes of the academy players and this can contribute to increasing the fan base of the clubs. Discounts on ticket prices can be given to the family of the academy players to draw more crowd for the clubs.

The third contingency factor needed to create the academy structure is technology. Every academy should have an up to date database of all its players, beyond just demographic characteristics. Such as player statistics (i.e. matches played, number of training sessions, etc.). The academies should have all matches and training sessions recorded, for assessment of player development. Improvised versions of some technological devices used at the professional level should be used to get the players accustomed with them. Such as the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) and the foam spray.

Good pitches are also a key infrastructure for any football team. All academies must get the needed support to fund both artificial and natural grass pitches within their facility. This can be a long-term goal for the academies. Nevertheless, the primary technology is the database and at least two good natural grass pitches.

The penultimate contingency factor is organisational size, labelled as people in Figure 9.1. The focus of the academies should be development and growth and not money, and

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unnecessary competitive pressure. Unnecessary competitive pressure can affect the mental health of the academy players. Hence, the employees in the academies must protect the mental health of the players and its must be their priority to do so.

An academy in this system must have these standard employees: nutritionists, teachers, certified coaches, scouts, a medical team, a maintenance team and an administrative team. A collaborative effort from these employees can easily contribute to increased performance in the academies.

The coaches and scouts can work together to set a benchmark for recruiting players. The teachers and coaches can work together to present an effective learning and football training plan, and the nutritionists can work with the scouts, coaches and teachers to ensure that the players are healthy.

Lastly, human resource. According to García-Bernal & Ramírez-Alesón (2010), recruiting the right people to fit the organisation's goals can greatly improve performance. The human resource team of an academy is key because hiring the best coaches, teachers scouts or nutritionist for the academy players can have a positive effect on everything. The human resource team and the administrative team can work in collaboration with the employees to offer training programs to keep up with changes in the football landscape and assess the performance of employees to ensure improvement where need be.

Based on the sample the researcher interacted with, the data analysed, and the conceptual framework used, this academy system described above can contribute to improving the organisation of grassroots football, and in the long run enhance talent development in football.

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### CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In this study, the organisational structure of grassroot football was examined to improve the performance of the league through talent development. Football like any other sport, is built on organisational structures which influence the performance of the sport. According to Powell (1995) choosing the right organisation management tools is key to organisational performance. In the case of grassroots teams in Accra-Ghana, there is barely an evident or working organisational structure, hence the need for this study.

Though there are numerous problems facing the performance of Ghana's Premier league, talent continuity due to player migration and poor support of grassroots football, is the focus of this study. The poor organisation of grassroots football is argued to be a fundamental problem affecting the performance of the premier league. This study established that, Ghana's performance in football is declining with reference to the premier league and recent performances of the Black Stars and the junior national teams from the 1900s to recent times. The research objectives included:

- I. Investigating how a clear organisational plan in developing grassroots football can improve the performance of the local league
- II. Identifying lessons from well-established leagues that can be applied to the local league.

The lack of professionalism due to poor administrative culture of most African leagues has drawn away some of the most talented African players as well as African football fans (Darby, Akindes & Kirwin, 2007). According to Samur (2018), the long-term benefits of improving organisational structures from the roots can reap economic and financial benefits, discipline and profitable investments through football related activities.

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In literature reviewed, Theodoraki (1966) stated that British sport governing bodies that performed well did not solely depend on the government for funds. They sought for funds through trading and sponsorship activities. Through the reviewed literature, a conceptual framework was identified to help restructure the organisational structure at the grassroots level. Anumba et al. (2002) argued that, the contingency approach to organisational structures, which formed the conceptual framework for this study, makes room for innovations and reflects adaptations in the football environment.

Data was gathered using the mixed method approach. Using purposive sampling, 2 teams from 3 leagues were selected to aid in understanding the financial performance of Hearts of Oak and Liberty Professionals through their average salaries and the country's GDP. This also helped in answering research question II, "What lessons can be learned from high-performing football leagues to aid revitalise the Ghanaian local league?" To understand how the organisation of grassroots football can be improved to support the premier league, interviews were conducted with relevant football stakeholders including grassroots players and coaches, football journalists, ex Black Star players, etc.

Data analysed from the interviews helped the author understand the problems facing the performance of the league, and the role a well organised system can play.

The study confirmed literature which stated that, focusing on improving young talents is key to recruiting the best talents for professional teams. Also, the study confirmed that poor organisation of talent development at crucial ages is giving away the best of Ghana's talented football players to foreign teams and academies that can do it better.

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Additionally, the footballing nations using the academy system have a good educational system which enables the academies to partner with schools. There are educational programs for student athletes. Yet, for Ghana, that is not the case.

In summary, with the help of the contingency organisational framework in analysing the data collated, an enhanced recommended system to improve the organisation of grassroots football was outlined. The contingency factors led the author to conclude that adopting an academy system can revamp juvenile football and Ghana's premier league.

There are variations on how academies are run in different parts of the world. As explained in chapter 2 there are schools that are affiliated to football clubs and they handle the academic aspect of the student athletes (Relvas et al, 2010). They are termed as satellite schools. Countries like Belgium, and Germany predominantly use this approach. The usual system of an academy houses both its educational unit and talent development units on the same compound. Countries like England and France utilise this approach. After thorough analysis of the data gathered as discussed in chapter 4, adopting the academy system is a step in improving the organisation of grassroots football.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

In restructuring the organisational structure of grassroots football, adopting the academy system appeared to be the best way to develop football talents and connect the community. Below is the summary of recommendations on how the performance of Ghana's premier league.

1. Learning from topflight European clubs, Ghanaian football clubs must endeavour to keep their talented players as it attracts long term sponsorship

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deals. Nevertheless, some top clubs in Europe sell their talented players to more successful clubs and use those funds to invest in infrastructure and player development. The clubs can adopt this strategy as a short-term plan to support their financial operations and improve their facilities.

2. The most primary step the clubs must take, is to create a bond with the communities they identify themselves with. As suggested in chapter 4, the recommended academy system will require the clubs to show support to their affiliated academy teams through mentorship programs. For example, the clubs can participate in community events such as festivals, interschool competitions, community clean-ups or teach them football skills. This will strengthen their relationship with their communities and in the long run, result in an increase in demand, which can increase ticket and merchandise sales.
3. The colt system (which worked in the past) is not efficient in providing education and football development to young talented footballers. Hence the academy system will cancel the education-football career trade-off and provide a promising future to the academy players in case they fail in football.
4. The GFA must run an U21 development league to give players between 18 and 20 more playing time than they would have gained in the premier league or its lower divisions.
5. The GFA must consider employing district representatives who will aid in the success of the academy system by providing regulatory checks on the academies. Also, there should be a nationwide football development strategy every academy will use in their football skills development sessions to ensure consistency across the board. Lastly, the FA can support the academies with protocols regarding land acquisition and amenities.



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6. The potential outcome of the academy system is increased interest and support for the premier league teams and successful national teams. Hence the government can also show support for the academy system by subsidising the cost of building materials and utility bills for the first 4 years. Also, the government can consider tax breaks on imported training equipment and football infrastructural facilities.

### **5.3 Recommendations for Future Research**

1. As a result of time and resource constraints, the study was limited to two premier league teams and five grassroots teams in the Greater Accra Region. To find out if the outcome of this study can be generalised to the entire population, a more extensive research can be conducted to include more of the Ghanaian population.
2. From the study, the current educational system is not conducive for grooming football talents. A research that investigates into how the current educational system can be revamped to support talented footballers or work in collaboration with colt football teams. This can provide insights on the best way to develop talented athletes across all sport disciplines.

### **5.4 Limitations**

The researcher did not get compute the average salaries of players in the Ghanaian premier league teams, rather the team managers of the teams provided the average salaries of the players. Hence this secondary data might not be accurate. Also, insights from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth Sports could have provided alternative ways of improving the talent development of student footballers. Failing to interact with these institutions due to protocol issues and bureaucracy, the researcher was limited to focus on the academy system, rather than a possible collaboration of colts teams and schools.

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## APPENDICES

Table 2

*List of Ghanaian Premier League Clubs in 2017 and their Locations*

Premier League Teams in 2017	
Team	Location of the Teams
Aduana Stars	Dormaa Ahenkro, Brong Ahafo Region
Asante Kotoko	Kumasi, Ashanti Region
Ashanti Gold	Obuasi, Ashanti Region
Bechem United	Bechem, Brong Ahafo Region
Berekum Chelsea	Berekum, Brong Ahafo Region
Dreams F.C	Ogbodjo, Greater Accra Region
Ebusua Dwarfs	Cape Coast, Central Region
Eleven Wonders	Techiman, Brong Ahafo Region
Elmina Sharks	Elmina, Central Region
Hearts of Oak	Accra, Greater Accra Region
Inter Allies	Tema, Greater Accra Region
Karela United F.C	Aiyinase, Western Region
Liberty Professionals	Dansoman, Greater Accra Region
Medeama S.C	Tarkwa, Western Region
Wa All Stars (now Legon Cities)	Wa, Upper-West Region (Accra, Greater Region)
WAFA	Sogakope, Volta Region

Note. Adapted from <http://ghanamansports.com/2017/05/10/ghana-premier-league-table-2017/>. Copyright (2020) by Ghana Man Sports.

Table 3

*List of Division One Teams in their Zone Divisions and their Locations.*

Division one Teams		
Zones	Teams	Location
Zone one	Mighty Royals	Wamanafo, Brong Ahafo Region
	Berekum Arsenal	Berekum, Brong Ahafo Region
	Tamale City	Tamale, Northern Region
	Unity FC	Kintampo, Bono East Region
	Techiman City	Techiman, Bono East Region
	Nkoranza Warriors	Nkoranza, Brong Ahafo Region
	Real Tamale United	Tamale, Northern Region
	Brong Ahafo United	Sunyani, Bono Region
Zones two	Achiken F.C	Asante Bekwai, Ashanti Region.
	Hasaacas F.C	Sekondi-Takoradi, Western Region
	New Edubiase United	New Edubiase, Ashanti Region
	Asokwa Deportivo	Asokwa, Ashanti Region

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Zones three	Phar Rangers F.C	Akuapem, Eastern Region
	Agbozume Weavers F.C	Agbozume, Volta Region
	Kotoku Royals F.C	Akim Oda, Eastern Region
	Nania F.C	Accra, Greater Accra Region
	Danbort F.C	Accra, Greater Accra Region
Zone 3	Heart of Lions F.C	Accra, Greater Accra Region
	Accra Lions F.C	Accra, Greater Accra Region
	Vision F.C	Accra, Greater Accra Region
	Tudu Mighty Jets F.C	Accra, Greater Accra Region
	Accra Youngwise F.C	Accra, Greater Accra Region
	Uncle T F.C	Accra, Greater Accra Region
	Team Youth F.C	Tema, Greater Accra Region
	Amidaus Professionals FC	Accra, Greater Accra Region
	Okyeman Planners F.C	Tafo, Eastern Region
	Krystal Palace F.C	Akosombo, Eastern Region
	Accra City Stars F.C	Accra, Greater Accra Region

Note. Adapted from <https://www.ghanafa.org/division-one/division-one-tables>.

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Table 4

*List of Ghana's GDP per Capita (Nominal GDP, Real GDP and PPP) in USD and GHS from 2013 to 2017*

Year	GDP per Capita in GHS		GDP per Capita in USD		GDP per Capita in USD	
	Nominal GDP	Real GDP	Nominal GDP	Real GDP	Real GDP	PPP (international \$)
2013	3,379.53	3,380.51	1,617	1,617.47	1,617.47	3,909.67
2014	5,222.67	5,221.45	1,627	1,626.62	1,626.62	4,006.19
2015	6,191.25	6,190.37	1,625	1,624.77	1,624.77	4,044.41
2016	7,064.9	6,977.09	1,643	1,622.58	1,622.58	4,135.65
2017	7,421.26	7,422.33	1,738	1,738.25	1,738.25	4,457.36

Note. Adapted from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD>

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