

Home-Advantage Decision-Making: Experiences Of Soccer Referees At The 23rd GUSA Games

Michael Agyei

Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana
michael.agyei@ucc.edu.gh

Abstract: Soccer teams seem to win most of their matches when they compete at home compared with when they compete away from home. This is partly attributable to the home-advantage decisions referees' award to the home teams. This study used qualitative methods to explore the views of referees who officiated soccer matches at the 23rd GUSA games held at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, on the phenomenon. Also, theoretical concepts were exploited from knowledge-based repositories on home-advantage decisions. Seven experienced referees were selected to supply information through an adapted semi-structured interview protocol. Content analysis procedures identified nine inter-related factors that define three higher-order themes. The factors; experience, opinion and control form a higher-order theme labelled personal factors. Crowd aggression, team reception, play conditions, and player reaction were identified as situational factors, and geographical location and travel conditions represented environmental themes. All the nine factors inter-relate to influence the decision-making efficiency of referees when officiating soccer matches. It was recommended that referees pay particular attention to the home-advantage themes and models expatiated in this study to become aware of varied factors that underlie the award of home-advantage decisions. This will enable referees device appropriate strategies to cope with the factors. Also, the activities of referees should be monitored via the use of electronic monitoring systems such as video technology at all league centres to force referees rescind arbitrary decisions they make on the field of play. This is likely to lead to a reduction in biased officiating.

Keywords: Decision-making efficiency, home-advantage, home crowd, soccer referee,

INTRODUCTION

Soccer seems to be one of the numerous sporting disciplines in Ghana that is often watched and is associated with large crowd attendance whether; an ordinary game, training session, friendly match, or competitive match. Soccer is a beautiful game of chance where the teams showcase disparities in skills because they buy the best talents [1]. The satisfaction derived from soccer matches usually depends on the capabilities of the players, the quality of teams playing, the occasion, and quality of officiating exhibited by the referees [2]. Team sport officials including soccer referees play a critical role in adjudicating competitive matches to the extent that the decisions made during a match can have a potential impact on the match outcome [3]. Existing research reports that match play imposes high physical demands on soccer referees [4], [5] who cover up to 12km during a match leading to a reduction in physical ability towards the end of a match [6], [7]. This reduction in ability impact on their decision-making efficiency due to a reduced ability to position themselves rightly around the playing area. Other referees also deliberately use their discretion to twist the rules and give bias decisions [8]-[10]. Notwithstanding that decision-making is the most important role of soccer referees during matches, many infractions of the laws of the game by players go unheeded as referees seem to indulge in acts that portray favouritism, especially for the home teams. This form of biasness, is particularly pertinent in sports to the extent that partial decision-making can determine competition outcomes, have strong repercussions on athletes' careers, and affect supporters' well-being [11]. Referees are usually charged with the interpretation of the laws of the game in a fair but firm manner, and to regulate the play behaviour of players. As the sole arbiters, they possess complete authority in the discharge of their duties by judging events instantly as they occur on the field of play [12]. This suggests that the referee has unlimited authority backed by Law 5 of the rules of soccer which states inter alia-“the decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not

a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final” [13] (p. 63). The same rule admonishes all stakeholders to always respect the decisions of the referee, and all other match officials to ensure the success of every soccer programme. Let's consider this scenario: A forward of the home team dribbles the ball past the opposing halfback and runs into the opposing penalty area. The opposing halfback quickly pursues and tackles the forward who falls down. Then in a reactive manner the garrulous home crowd roars “penalty, penalty.” What decision does the referee award? Does he/she award: a penalty kick to the attacker and caution or expel the defender; award indirect free kick to the attacking team inside the penalty area; signal play on; or award indirect free kick to the defending team and caution the attacker for simulation? Would the referee give the same decision if the away team forward had fallen and the away crowd had yelled similarly? If not, then what could possibly account for the differences in decision despite the similarity in the situations? Would the crowd effect be a significant determinant of the referee's decision, or other puzzling factors might come into play? The varying standards of performance of different referees, and the varying performance of the same referee in various matches and during two halves of the same match is very critical in determining the outcome or results of matches, especially to the advantage of teams playing at home. Home-advantage consists of prevailing conditions at a team's base that tend to favour or offer valuable help to the team to enable it win matches at the home ground. This phenomenon is indisputably a powerful influence on performance outcomes to the extent that playing at home increases the chances of winning [14]. This suggests that athletes enjoy more success performing at home than when not at home. Three explanations for home advantage are commonly advanced; learning factors (ground familiarity), travel factors (fatigue, disruption to routine) and crowd factors (home crowd support and possible referee bias) [15], [16]. This study will focus on the importance of the above factors in addition to the percentage of wins chalked by home

teams and the role played by referees in home advantage situations. The role played by referees is very crucial because referees tend to be biased when officiating matches [15] which potentially contribute to home advantage [11]. Such acts of compromise go a long way to help home teams win their matches. Home advantage effects are more apparent in some sports than in others and they play an important part in determining the result of sports where the referees' decisions can influence the result, such as soccer and boxing [17]. Literature [15], [18] has revealed referees give many decisions in favour of the home team most of which arise as a result of home player reaction, home team reception and familiarity, home team promise of paraphernalia, and home crowd noise. Experimental studies have revealed that officials are more likely to award discretionary decisions that favour the home team (e.g., extension of time), more controversial penalty kicks and goals to the home team, and harsher punishments for the away team (e.g., show of cards) with large crowds [8], [10], [19-22]. Also, examined game records have indicated home teams win more matches often than away teams; they are awarded more penalty kicks, and receive fewer bookings [23]. Nevill, Balmer and Williams (2002) corroborated the belief that referees favour home teams and that crowd noise greatly influenced this phenomenon. Nevill et al. asked 40 referees to view an edited video-taped game between Liverpool and Leicester City, played at Liverpool during the 1999/2000 season, and give decisions to incidents in the presence and absence of a vociferous crowd. The video was stopped after every challenge on a player for six seconds, and each of the 40 referees was to decide whether the challenge was a foul or not, and to which team the decision should go. Half the referees watched the videotape with audible crowd noise and the other half in silence. Results showed that the referees who watched the game with audible crowd noise awarded a significant amount of the decisions to the home team, hence supporting the notion that referees consistently give decisions in favour of the home team. This has implications for a strong support base for soccer clubs to cheer their respective teams in their quest to win matches. Other studies also compared home advantage and referee behaviour in stadia with and without the usual crowds present [25], [26], and indicated referees adjusted their decisions to appease the home fans, punished the away players more harshly, and treated the home players with leniency [25]. The existence of home advantage has been established for all major professional team sports but greatest in soccer [27]. This, according to the author, is less marked in local derbies, in the FA Cup and in non-professional competitions. It is greater in the European Cup and increases as the stages of a competition progress. Analyses of nearly 9000 matches between 1993 and 2004 revealed that international sides won an average of 50.3% of home games and lost just 25.1%. Brazil, Spain and France, all won over 60% of home fixtures [28]. A similar trend was evident across Europe where 17 of the 20 clubs in Spain had better home records than away [29]. An examination of the domestic leagues of 72 countries revealed that home advantage was higher than average in the Balkan countries, especially Bosnia and Albania and in the Andean countries in South America [30]. All the findings suggest the existence and high magnitude of home-advantage the world over with very high levels in Europe. An analysis of the 2012/13 English Premier League table revealed a similar trend of better home records. For instance,

18 of the league's 20 sides had better records at home than away. From the League table, the topmost team won the highest home ($n = 16$) and away ($n = 12$) matches [31]. This speaks possibly of the strength or form of the club. All the 20 clubs, with the exception of Wigan Athletic (which placed 18th), won more games at home than away. The same trend was repeated in the 2013/14 [32] and 2014/15 [33] leagues with Manchester United and Crystal Palace being the only exceptions respectively. From 2012-2015, Manchester City won majority of home matches (45 [60.8%] out of 74 wins in 114 matches). A linear model analysis of data on individual home advantage in the Japan J-leagues revealed a significant home-field advantage. The author attributed this to audience size but did not find similar results in the Japan Women's Football league which is usually watched by a small crowd size. The trend has not been different on the African front where [29] reported that just 4% of away fixtures were won in the 2011/12 season in the Nigerian Premier League. This implies that all the 19 clubs put in the necessary structures to win their home matches. In Ghana, the 2013/14 Premier League table indicated that nine (56.25%) out of the 16 clubs won 9-11 home matches [35]. Only the top three clubs had near parity home-away performances. The rest, with the exception of one (Medeama Sporting Club) performed woefully away (75%, 8-11 losses). An overall home win of 58% compared to away of 17% was reported. A similar trend was recorded in the 2014/15 soccer league. The league table [36] showed that the top three teams all won 12 out of 15 home matches, but managed to win only 1-3 away matches. All the 16 clubs lost 6-14 out of 15 away matches played. On the average, 65% home wins were recorded as against 10% away wins; an improvement over the previous year's. This confirms the contention that the home side can expect to win about half or more of their fixtures, with the away side victorious just one quarter of the time [29]. This present study is underpinned by three comprehensive models that have been developed to guide understanding of the home-advantage phenomenon; The Standard Model, The Territoriality Model, and The Attentional Shifts Model (Home Disadvantage). The Standard Model gives information on the causal processes connecting game-location factors to performance outcomes [37]. The model considers four important game-location factors; support of the home audience, travel fatigue of the away team, familiarity with the home venue, and (in some sports) competition rules that might favour the home team. These factors contribute to the psychological states of players, coaches, and sometimes officials. In support of the proposals of the standard model, [38] demonstrated that components of crowd structure (size, density, and propinquity) and crowd behaviour (booing, teasing, fighting, and cheering) are related to the magnitude of home-advantage making home teams more successful in the presence of large audiences that display responsible behaviour. This implies that larger and denser crowds produce greater advantages for home teams. Comparisons between travel and home-advantage have revealed that travel effects become relevant over relatively long distances, especially when players are travelling in an eastward direction [39]. Also, home-advantage increases by about 20% per time zone crossed [40]. Teams experience a decline in home-advantage when they relocate [30]. Unfamiliarity to the new stadium and Territoriality could be a possible explanation of this effect. However, competition rules has been found to contribute minimally to home-

advantage [38] although referees favour home teams in the performance of their duties. The Territoriality Model equates home-advantage to the natural response to protect the invasion of one's territory [41]. Recent studies have shown the protective response that is associated with heightened testosterone concentrations and a higher occurrence of overt aggression when the perceived territories of animal species are invaded compared with neutral or rival territory [42], [43]. The proposal by [41] that a similar territorial response operates in humans and is observable in competitive sport was no fluke. The authors conducted a study on soccer players and found that testosterone concentrations were considerably higher before home games compared with before away games and ordinary training sessions. To this effect, [44] explored testosterone responses to competition outcomes and found increases in testosterone levels after victory in a home venue compared with victory in an away venue. Rises in testosterone leads to greater physical aggression and motivation to compete and so thought of as the panacea to athletic performance [45] when playing comfortably at home. The third model; Attentional Shift or Home Disadvantage, suggests that athletes' motivation to achieve success may be over-shadowed by a desire to avoid failure and that crowd pressure is responsible for the attentional shift in players which could lead to poor performance (choking) in critical conditions [46]. For instance, In win-imminent situations of high importance (eg., championship point in a tennis grand slam), athletes will naturally try to do everything in their control to ensure they execute their tasks very well. This desire often results in attention shifting from an external to an internal focus as athletes pay more attention to their movement responses [38, p. 50]. This attempt to consciously control previously automatic movements often results in poor performance [47] and it explains why athletes perform abysmally despite the support of the home crowd. The three models of the home-advantage phenomenon complement each other to determine players' psychological states which differ between home and away matches and how competing at home can enhance athlete and team performance. It also impacts spectator behaviour and the officiating experiences and psychological states of referees. For instance, the crowd structure/behaviour can put fear in some referees and result in the application of home-advantage. The earlier analysis of the International, European, English and African soccer trend suggests that there is clearly an increased chance of success for the home side in any soccer competition and that teams always try to win matches at home because referees' decisions usually favour home teams. Winning home games and amassing points by winning some away matches seems to be the only true means to success in soccer, any deviation from this is not a probable success story. Why do soccer teams win most of their matches when playing at home than away? To what extent are the chances of victory when playing at home? Can a team's form/strength enable them win home and away matches equally? What factors influence referees' decisions in favour of the home team? What experiences of home-advantage do referees have? Answers to these and other questions catalysed a research into the topic. Although research has reiterated that the causes of home-advantage are still not completely understood, geographical location, crowd effects and travelling have been cited as accounting for 76.7% of the variability in home-advantage [30].

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to explore the experiences of soccer referees in awarding home-advantage decisions during matches. It focussed on the decision-making efficiency of referees and the reasons behind the advantages they give to home teams.

METHODS

Research Design

The research was particularly interested in establishing a contextualised perspective of referees' subjective experiences in applying home-advantage when officiating soccer matches in Ghana leading to more home wins than away. In this wise, qualitative content analysis (CA) was used as the study design. CA is especially useful in reducing data, identifying meanings, and making sense out of voluminous qualitative material [48], and emphasises an integrated view of speech or texts in clearly identifiable contexts [49]. CA enabled me to construct the personal and social worlds of referees in the light of giving decisions in favour of home teams. The study was developed from an interpretive stance, a paradigm most consistent with CA.

Participants

The study population comprised the 13 male referees selected from the various universities for the 23rd GUSA games held at University of Cape Coast, Ghana, from 11th-22nd June, 2014. After a briefing on the purpose, significance and ethical considerations of the study, all the referees agreed to participate in the study. However, the purposive sampling technique was used to include only the seven class one referees amongst the group in the study. These class one referees had officiated soccer matches for a minimum of seven years (having graduated from potential, through class three and two to one), have a great deal of experience and thus have applied home-advantage situations severally in matches to be able to supply the required information for the study. Five of the participants were referees whilst the remaining two were assistant referees. The participants had an average age of 32 years (SD = 3.317; range = 28-37 years), average refereeing experience of 10.43 years (SD=2.760; range=7-15 years), and time frame since last officiating a match = 1 day-4 weeks. Three participants were officials of the 2014/2015 First Plus Capital Premier League in Ghana.

Interview Protocol

Data was collected using a semi-structured interview guide. Little emphasis was placed on the ordering of questions, but the participants' interest was followed. By so doing, the participant's psychological and social world was "entered" into and they shared in the direction of the interview. An interview schedule on soccer referee decision-making [18] was adapted and used for this study. Although this interview guide consisted of 22 items, the present guide was made up of 11 items in addition to the demographics. The competency of the authors was unquestionable since they had conducted other studies using the same data gathering technique thus, reducing issues about validity. This was in line with [50] who provided an excellent summary of the issue. The modified interview schedule comprised questions such as:

What is your take on the interpretation of the Laws of the Game when officiating matches?
Is it problematic sometimes to apply the rules? How difficult?
Do you think there is much disparity in the standard of refereeing across soccer matches?
Is it natural to wander from the rules when faced with certain pressures, or is it just bad practice?
Are there moments when it is challenging to conclude on whether there was a foul or not? When?
How does making wrong/unpopular decision affect you?
Does home-advantage exist? What concerns do you have to share?
How do you give home-advantage in a match?
What factors account for the award of certain decisions in favour of a home team?
Anything else?

The interviews were conducted within the period slated for the GUSA games and lasted an hour each. An hour of interview was considered normal [51]. This was after the participants had finished officiating for the day, showered down and taken their supper. During the interviews, ideas were fed back to the participants to refine, rephrase, and interpret in their own words [52]. Since the participants were not interviewed in their typical working places, contextual richness could not be enhanced nor could data fragmentation minimised [52]. Establishing intimacy and rapport with each participant was of paramount importance. Each interview was tape recorded using an Infinix Zero 2013 model phone. Notes were also taken of salient information as a back-up activity to enable a cross-check of facts. Conducting the interviews in this manner ensured that the participants' evaluation of giving home-advantage were obtained rather than the researchers' interpretations/ definitions of the phenomenon [53]. In an informal post-interview session, five of the participants, who could be reached, were given the chance to discuss the findings on telephone (8 months after the collection of data). To minimise the epistemological assumption of the perceived distance between the researcher and the participants [54], the interpretations of the data were shared with the participants. This was possible because the participants were traced to the addresses they provided during the data collection period.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the steps to qualitative content data analysis [49]. These included; prepare the data, define the unit of analysis, develop categories and a coding scheme, test the coding scheme on a sample of text, code all the text, assess consistency in coding, draw conclusions from the coded data, and report the methods and findings. In line with the above steps, the interviews were transformed verbatim into written text and the transcribed write-ups were given back to the participants, for two weeks, to cross-check if the information they gave have been adequately presented. This technique was adopted to ensure that massive data were not lost nor distorted and ensure reduction of complexity [55]. This member checking technique was done to ensure credibility of results. After ascertaining exactness, each manuscript was read several times and the "unit of analysis" in the form of notes that reflected interesting or significant concerns on decision-making and home-advantage were made in the left hand margin. This helped to check

interpretations against raw data as a form of improving credibility. Categories were generated by the use of the constant comparative method [49]. This method stimulates original insights and is able to clearly present differences between categories. To ensure the coherence and consistency of coding procedures, a coding manual which consisted of category names, and definitions or rules for assigning codes [56] was developed. This manual presented a broad framework upon which all coding processes hinged. To test or check the coding scheme on a sample of text for example, regarding why referees favour home teams at the expense of away teams, a Principal Research Assistant at the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, University of Cape Coast, coded the same selected text just as the researcher. This fellow had received some coding training from a Professor in that Department and been involved in two similar qualitative studies with the said Professor. An assessment of the inter-coder agreement was initially low. Coding rules were revised and coding consistency was checked severally to ensure that sufficient coding consistency was achieved [56]. This led to the resolution of doubts about the definitions of categories, coding rules and categorisation of certain cases. Once consistency was achieved, the coding rules were applied to the entire text and rechecked severally in view of the fact that mistakes could be made as a result of hunger, fatigue and other situational occurrences. Next, sense was made of the identified themes or categories and conclusions drawn from the coded data. Here, inferences as a result of reconstructions of meanings derived from the data were made. The findings have finally been reported so as to make the study replicable. In doing so, quotations and a diagram have been used to facilitate the descriptions and justify some conclusions made [57]. Implications of participants' responses were drawn for the exploration of referees' experiences of home-advantage situations in general. It must however be emphasised that one other nonfoundational approach adopted to enhance the trustworthiness of the study was "bracketing." Prior to data collection and analysis, I maintained a reflexive journal to help "bracket" my personal values and experiences, as a retired class one referee, on the research, having refereed soccer matches at all levels in Ghana for 15 years. Notes about when I had given home-advantage were codified. A careful attempt was made to avoid imposing my views of home-advantage on the participant's accounts. Discussions with a Sport Management expert from a sister university, who acted as a "critical friend," revealed inadequacies, queries and biases in the analytic decisions made. Further discussions led to a better interpretation of the views of the participants. This approach resulted in the utilisation of the appropriate analytical processes, created self-awareness in me and added to the quality of the analysis of the data.

Results

The study sought to explore the experiences of soccer referees in awarding home-advantage decisions during matches. A considerable amount of information on the subject was received to facilitate analysis. All the seven referees admitted to doing their best to interpret and apply the Laws of the Game accurately when officiating matches. They agreed to the existence of home-advantage in soccer and further admitted that they are culprits of the phenomenon. All the referees had applied home-advantage in one way or the other as and when it became necessary. This home-advantage

phenomenon, according to six of them; Leads to the enormous variation in the standard of refereeing across soccer matches in Ghana and elsewhere. These variations come about as a result of the number of errors committed in a match, usually in favour of the home team. Some of these errors are however, unpardonable. Nine themes emanated from the collected data. Not all the participants made mention of all the themes. However, five mentioned four themes (geographical location, crowd aggression, team reception, and play conditions), three themes (travel conditions, player reaction, and experience), were identified by four referees, and a further three referees mentioned two themes (opinion and control). The themes that received the modal score were crowd factors and team reception. Following are the descriptions and participants' experiences of the identified themes.

Theme 1 – Geographical location

The theme geographical location describes the location or place where the team is situated, whether, in a city, town or village, a mountainous area, a beach side and even the weather conditions. It also refers to the site or location of the field and its easy accessibility to major roads, streets or nearby houses which are the readily available routes of escape in case of a spectator/team rage. The location of the field according to the referees is very critical in decision-making. Sometimes when you get to the match venue and you assess the hidden nature of the field you start praying to God for a successful match. You pray that the teams comport themselves so that you return home peacefully. Some of the pitches are unmotorable and about a kilometre from the main road and you can imagine your fate when the home team loses a match as a result of referee error. (TR 2) I remember a match on a valley-like field which was quite a distance from the next major town somewhere in the Eastern Region in which the home team was down by a lone goal in the first half. In the second half we had to award some decisions in favour of the home team to enable them equalise to save us from a probable assault and the trouble of walking that distance, through a bush, to the next town to board a vehicle. (TR 3)

Theme 2 – Crowd aggression

The theme crowd aggression describes how spectators misconduct themselves in a bid to influence the decisions of match officials. Acts of misbehaviour such as booing at, throwing objects at, using abusive/offensive language on, and physically assaulting referees are eminent. All these are done with the intention of creating panic and fear in the referees so that certain decisions can go in a particular team's favour. This can be illustrated by the following quotes: When any decision against a home team is met with an uproar/insult, I panic and become jittery temporarily. I am compelled to appease them with a decision to sort of balance the scales. There are instances where the home crowd disagrees with every decision you make. This can affect your concentration, composure, decision-making efficiency and consequently performance. When the level of home crowd influence is great, you award most decisions in their favour. (TR 1) As one of the strategies of the home team to help them win a match, they will cast insinuations at you, openly insult, threaten and hurl objects (stones, sachet water, bottled water and sticks) at you during a match. This kind of intimidate you, make you feel uncomfortable and apprehensive resulting

in you making decisions in their favour. (TR 2) At a match, two first half goals (one controversial) by the away team was enough to cause pandemonium. After the second goal, the home fans started threatening our lives and targeting objects at us. When we had gone to the dressing room during the halftime interval, they besieged the place, banged the door, used life threatening and abusive words, and declared war on the few security officers at post should they interfere. The only thing that will satisfy the home team supporters was to overturn the scales in their favour. In the second half we had to award all 50-50 decisions and two penalty-kicks in their favour, for them to equalise, before conditions normalised. (TR 4) I don't necessarily give decisions because the crowd shouted or threatened me. However, if the prompt from the home crowd is relatively dense, I feel bad that I have not satisfied them. I don't reverse the decision, but somehow satisfy them in other situations. I can't say the same for other referees, but I can assure you that some of these things happen unconsciously and are natural. (TR 7) When the scales are overturned in favour of the home team to win a match, the away team becomes bewildered and unhappy, which is insignificant though, they start thinking about retaliating the incident during their next encounter on their home soil. You can hear comments like "you will see what we will do to you when you come to our home" "it will be better for you not to come to our home at all, we will discipline you and the police cannot stop us."

Theme 3 – Team reception

This theme relates to how officials of a team conduct themselves and show decorum in their attitude to match officials/strangers. This includes how club officials establish contact with match officials, how they help convey match officials to the venue, how they feed and accommodate, and how they grant courtesies to match officials prior to a match. One participant emphasised; When you attend a match and the home team, who are your hosts, receive you nicely (relates well with you, feeds you, shows you around the locality, puts you in the best of hotels, and gives you a little token), you fall in love with them so you show appreciation by awarding certain decisions in their favour to help them win the match. (TR 6) In the African setting, when a stranger is well received and given all the courtesies thereof, the stranger becomes very happy and it leaves fond memories in the minds of the stranger for a long time. This informs the individual of the next line of action to take to show appreciation to the host. This is evident in soccer where well received referees show appreciation by giving decisions to favour home teams or enable them win matches.

Theme 4 – Play conditions

Play conditions such as organisation of the match, advertisement, responsible crowd, playing equipment and so on may not necessarily have so much impact on decisions, but may be a crucial contributory factor to decision-making. Some of the participants discussed that: The mere sight of a magnificent edifice coupled with well-structured and colourfully sighted equipment at a match venue draws me close to the home team. Most of such facilities have well lit rooms for relaxation prior to matches. I instantly develop some love for the home team. Not surprising, this influences most of my decisions in their favour. (TR 5) When I officiate on a very good pitch I tell myself that the home team should be assisted to win their matches so that the amount spent in

maintaining the pitch will not go to waste. I remember a match in the Brong Ahafo Region where I fell in love with the home team because the turf was green with nicely painted goals and structures. I awarded many fouls in their favour although most of them were uncontroversial. I also liked their organisational ability and rapid response to replacing balls that had gone out of play. (TR 2)

Theme 5 – Travel conditions

Good road networks are an incentive to travelling for matches. Feeling comfortable and safe on the road as a result of the available mediums of transportation informs referees how to plan their journeys; which route to use, when to take-off, how many transit points to use, what to carry along, etc. Consider the following quote; Before I was even informed by my refereeing district of a match I had been appointed to, the home club had called to inform me about the match. The caller indicated their intention to transport the trio from the Eastern Region to pass the night at Kumasi on Saturday and continue to Berekum in the Brong Ahafo Region where the match would be played on Sunday. The three of us met at a point and were picked with a four-wheel Pajero car. We enjoyed the best of country music and journey. The reception (accommodation, food, and social interaction) given to us was overwhelming. The same car waited and conveyed us back to our various destinations after the match. You can imagine the direction of most of the decisions during the match, humans as we are. (TR 1) In their bid to influence you to help them win matches, some clubs provide a better means of transport to match officials instead of the officials finding their own routes to the venue. If the journey is far and the officials have to pass the night somewhere, the clubs provide the needed accommodation and meals in addition. This has implications on the safety, comfort, confidence and biasness of referees.

Theme 6 – Player reaction

This theme relates to the show of adverse behaviour by players when a decision is awarded against their team which they disagree with. Every soccer player seems to be inadvertently guilty of this phenomenon in his/her career. Players throw their hands or feet off, kick or throw balls away, shout certain words, frown their faces, rush towards the referee, etc, to show their disagreement with certain decisions. These tantrums have the tendency of influencing decisions directly. For instance: When players continually show acts of disagreement you become frightened as this can lead to loss of concentration. When this happens you tend to focus more on how to appease them instead of applying the rules. When this is usually done by the home team you are forced to misapply sanctions. For instance instead of sending off you issue a yellow card to a home player, or award a penalty-kick for the slightest challenge on the home attacker in the opposing penalty area. On the other hand, when referees consistently give accurate decisions, players accept it more, are happy, have confidence in the referees, tap them at the back, raise their thumbs to signal acceptance, and compliment them with statements like “good call ref.”

Theme 7 – Experience

The theme experience describes; the number of years of officiating, one’s encounter with difficult situations, how one gets away with difficult situations, and how one manages player behaviour confidently to avert further misconducts.

Experience leads to the reduction of inaccuracies in difficult situations and to accurate decision-making. When I am officiating and difficult situations come up I quickly rush in to calm players down, and let them understand that I am in charge. I seldom issue cards, I believe in player management. The inexperienced referees keep flashing cards and calling for every minor infringement. No. Experience will teach you to be calm, concentrative, and win the confidence of the players even when you commit occasional errors. (TR 4) My handling of very difficult situations in the Premier League has impacted on my level of officiating. Now I am able to do anything in a match, stray away a little from the rules, interpret players’ actions on the field more than the eye sees, and direct the game to my expected destination. (TR 1) Experience can even enable one handle both small and large crowd sizes conveniently. The pressure that come from large crowds are enough to throw a referee off his/her feet. It comes through learning and in a gradual process. For instance, one could compare the crowd size of a match involving Aduana F/C and Tema Youth, and another involving Kotoko and Hearts of Oak. Of course the Kotoko vs Hearts of Oak match will pull a large crowd and present very difficult situations than the former. My handling of variety of matches across the breadth of the country has given me so much confidence and experience to be able to face off all threats of the crowd and concentrate on what I want to achieve in a match. To a large extent I always achieve my objectives. (TR 6)

Theme 8 – Opinion

Referees give different interpretations to similar situations that come up during soccer. The Laws of the Game permits them to use their discretion. Offences that could be allowed to go unpunished by one referee will call for the showing of a card by another; it all points to their opinions. Although some of these opinions could vary from the regulations, referees are protected by the clause in the Laws of the Game that makes their decisions incontestable. “The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final. The decisions of the referee, and all other match officials, must always be respected” [13, p. 63]. The opinion of the referee is one factor that has never been predictable. Sometimes when a referee is faced with the same situation on two occasions, he/she gives different interpretations. On the other hand two referees give different opinions about the same situation. What one referee will caution, another will just talk to the player and yet another will send off. So you see, home-advantage decision taking is very real. I usually don’t take too many decisions against the home team as the away. But whatever decision I take, I apply a lot of common sense so as not to unduly inconvenience one team. (TR 7) The theme “opinion” renders referees very subjective notwithstanding the fact that the Laws of the Game are always modified and made stringent than before. Opinion undoubtedly hinges on experience and so experienced referees take a lot of unilateral decisions and are able to defend it.

Theme 9 – Control

When a referee is competent, is able to conduct a match appropriately, and take accurate decisions, he is seen to possess a high level of confidence. This level of confidence assures players/spectators that the referee has control over the

game. Control describes how the referee dictates the pace of the game by not allowing other extraneous factors to affect his/her form. When your decisions are not doubted in the first few minutes of a match, you gain the respect of the players and spectators and you have control over the match. Once you take control over the match you can then sway a few decisions without encountering the rage of the players and spectators. (TR 6) In most of my matches I stay calm, unruffled, and do not show any sign of pressure on me. When you show signs of uncertainty, the players capitalise on your weakness and confront your personality. If you are not careful you will submit to their dictates and ruin your matches. (TR 1) These extracts show that sometimes players, spectators, and team officials are suspicious of the actions and decisions of the referee. However, they can doubt their own beliefs/perceptions about a referee when they come face-to-face with a confident and competent referee who adjudicates appropriately. These nine themes are significant and inter-related to home-advantage decision-making in soccer and have been used to develop a conceptual framework to explain how they co-exist in Figure 1. From Figure 1, the higher-order theme labelled personal factors, constituted by experience, opinion and control, and situational factors constituted by crowd aggression, team reception, play conditions, and player reaction were identified. Geographical location and travel conditions represent a higher-order theme labelled environmental factors. All the nine themes inter-relate with each other and together contribute to influence the decision-making efficiency of referees when officiating soccer matches. Looking at the complexity of the situation, referees have to combine all these factors in addition to other themes from other studies [34], [18] before making a decision. This instantaneous decision-making has the tendency to lead to the compromising of the rules to the advantage, of the home team.

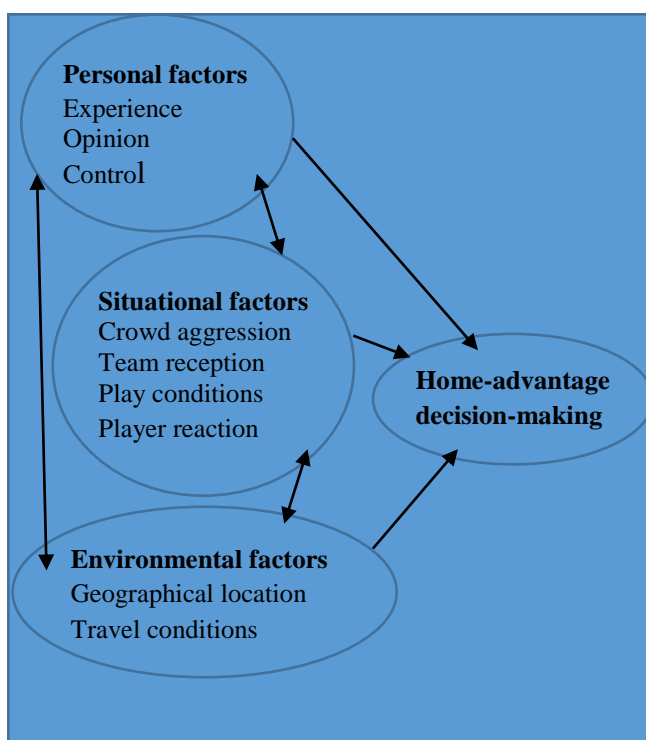


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of factors accounting for referee home-advantage decision-making in soccer.

Discussions

The aim of the present study was to explore the experiences of soccer referees in awarding home-advantage decisions during matches. Qualitative techniques were utilised to probe the subject. An interview schedule based on the previous works of [18] was adapted to explore the phenomenon. Qualitative data yielded nine themes which are central to home-advantage decision-making in soccer. The referees recounted giving accurate and unquestionable decisions when officiating matches. However, in the discharge of their duties, they are faced with personal, situational, environmental and other psychological conditions that derail their purported intentions. These conditions have implications on the performance exhibited by referees on the field of play which is of utmost interest and importance to all stakeholders involved in the management of every soccer programme [2]. The results indicated the existence of referee bias in favour of the home team to win matches. The study results corroborates a qualitative study on five experienced male referees to find out their perceptions about factors that influence decision-making in soccer with particular focus on crowd noise [18]. These authors identified four higher-order inter-related themes; ideal decision-making (accuracy-error, regulations, professionalism), individual factors (opinion, concentration, control), experience factors (experience, personality, personal life), and situational factors (crowd factors, player reaction, environmental factors, and crowd interaction) as factors that influence referee decision-making in home-advantage situations. This current study has demonstrated, confirmed and added to knowledge that soccer referees apply home-advantage decisions when officiating matches. Other previous research have also done same, especially by comparing two groups [17], [24]. This current study has confirmed [18] study on the themes that are central to referees decision-making in the award of home-advantage. The insignificant differences between [18] study and this current one could stem from the differences in the number of referees used, the calibre of referees used, and the study area. This study has however brought to the fore three additional themes (team reception, play conditions, and travel conditions) which did not form an integral part of [18]. This research has also pulled together a host of studies done on the topic for easy reference and usage. Literature has reported; familiarity with the venue, travel and rule factors, hormonal responses in players, and crowd influences on both players and sport officials as other factors that contribute to home-advantage [58]. All these factors are embedded in the models mentioned earlier that underpin this research. Experimental tests of home-advantage has added to the notion that crowd factors are a major contributory factor to why referees favour home teams [17], [58], [24]. This has brought to the fore the inconsistency in performance or decision-making by referees when faced with similar situations, which should be of immense concern to referees. Another results also revealed the number of potential stressors that confront referees [59]. This was based on the assumption of previous research that aspects of refereeing is stressful [60] and that inconsistent decisions was associated with increased anxiety as a result of crowd noise [17]. These results have implications for referees to be circumspect in their interpretation of the laws of the game, and for a strong support base for soccer clubs to eschew appropriate behaviour when throwing their support behind clubs. It also calls for the utilisation of coping strategies to enable referees deal appropriately with stressful

conditions, especially those associated with huge crowds to enable them give accurate decisions under the circumstances provided by the models mentioned earlier. A major limitation of these studies is the practical verification of the results. For instance, a conscious observation of a sampled group of referees in a number of championship matches over a period (eg., a season) by a team of experts (including retired referees, practicing FIFA referees, match commissioners, FIFA/CAF assessors, etc.) who will be able to identify decisions deliberately made in favour of a home team at the expense of the away team. Future research should account for this limitation. It is also recommended that quantitative methods should be used to conduct further research on the influence of the nine themes identified in the present study. Confirming findings from a qualitative study in quantitative studies would provide a strong foundation for designing strategies to help referees cope with situational stressors in soccer [18].

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study has confirmed the existence of home-advantage situations in soccer. The conceptual models of home-advantage, discussed earlier, provide enough evidence of the existence of the phenomenon. This notwithstanding, the decisions of referees seem to be influenced mostly by the home crowd structure and behaviour. Although the participants indicated their preparedness to give accurate decisions, they were always disrupted by the personal, situational and environmental factors identified in this study. These factors were found to interact jointly to influence the decision-making efficiency of referees. This study adds to literature by providing further evidence that home-advantage exists in soccer and has daring consequences on the development of any soccer programme. It is recommended that referees pay particular attention to the three home-advantage models expatiated in this study to make them aware of and guide them in their dealings with home players and the crowd. Referees should be very knowledgeable about the Laws of the Game and be taught coping strategies as part of their training. This will enable them deal appropriately with crowd and player intimidation. The activities of referees could also be monitored via the use of electronic monitoring systems such as video technology to force referees rescind arbitrary decisions they make on the field of play. Raising awareness of monitoring, in this regard, may likely lead to a reduction in biased officiating.

References

- [1]. J. Tierney, "Soccer, a Beautiful Game of Chance," *The New York Times*, July 2, 2014. [Online]. Available: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/08/science/soccer-a-beautiful-game-of-chance.html>. Accessed June 11, 2017.
- [2]. M. Agyei, "Physical Fitness Levels of Male Soccer Referees in Ghana: An Inter-belt Analysis," *Ghana Journal of Health, Physical Education, Sports and Dance (GJOHPERSD)*, vol. 4, pp. 161-170, 2011.
- [3]. D.R.D. Mascarenhas, C. Button, D. O'Hare and M. Dicks, "Physical Performance and Decision Making in Association Football Referees: A Naturalistic Study." *The Open Sports Science Journal*, vol. 2, pp. 1-9, 2009.
- [4]. C. Castagna, G. Abt and S. D'Ottavio, "Physiological aspects of Soccer Refereeing Performance and Training." *Sports Medicine*, vol. 37, pp. 625-646, 2007.
- [5]. M. Weston, C. Castagna, F.M. Impellizzeri, M. Bizzini, A.M. Williams and W. Gregson, "Science and Medicine Applied to Soccer Refereeing: An Update," *Sports Medicine*, vol. 42, pp. 615-631, 2012.
- [6]. N. Elsworth and B.J. Dascombe, "The Match Demands of Australian Rules Football Umpires in a State-Based Competition," *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*, vol. 6, pp. 559-571, 2011.
- [7]. J. Malo, S. Veiga, C.L. Subijana and E. Navarro, "Activity Profile of Top-Class Female Soccer Refereeing in Relation to the Position of the Ball," *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 129-132, 2010.
- [8]. R. Boyko, A. Boyko and M. Boyko, "Referee Bias Contributes to Home Advantage in English Premiership Football," *Journal of Sports Sciences*, vol. 25, no. 11, pp. 1185-1194, 2007.
- [9]. P. Dawson, S. Dobson, J. Goddard and J. Wilson, "Are Football Referees Really Biased and Inconsistent?: Evidence on the Incidence of Disciplinary Sanction in the English Premier League," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A*, vol. 170, no. 1, pp. 231-250, 2007.
- [10]. T.J. Dohmen, "The Influence of Social Forces: Evidence from the Behavior of Football Referees," *Economic Inquiry*, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 411-424, 2008.
- [11]. T. Dohmen and J. Sauermaun, "Referee Bias," IZA Discussion Paper No. 8857, 2015. [Online]. Available: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/joes.12106>. [Accessed: Jan. 19, 2017].
- [12]. A. P. Agbovi, "Psychology of Refereeing and Stress Management," Unpublished Premier League Course Lecture Notes, RAG, Ghana, 2007.
- [13]. International Football Association Board, "Laws of the Game 2018/19," Author, Zurich, 2018.
- [14]. J.P. Jamieson, "The Home Field Advantage in Athletics: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 40, no. 7, pp. 1819-48, 2010.
- [15]. S.R. Clarke, "Home Advantage in the Australian Football League," *Journal of Sports Sciences*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 375-385, 2005.

- [16]. M. Ponzio and V. Scoppa, "Does the Home Advantage Depend on Crowd Support? Evidence from Same- Stadium Derbies," *Journal of Sports Economics*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 562-582, 2018. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/1527002516665794>
- [17]. N.J. Balmer, A.M. Nevill and A.M. Williams, "Home- Advantage in the Winter Olympics (1908-1998)," *Journal of Sports Sciences*, vol. 19, pp. 129-139, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/026404101300036334>, 2001.
- [18]. A.M. Lane, A.M. Nevill, N.S. Ahmad and N. Balmer, "Soccer Referee Decision-Making: 'Shall I Blow the Whistle?'" *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*, vol. 5, pp. 243-253, 2006.
- [19]. B. Buraimo, R. Simmons and M. Maciaszczyk, "Favoritism and Referee Bias in European Soccer: Evidence from the Spanish League and the UEFA Champions League," *Contemporary Economic Policy*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 329-343, 2012.
- [20]. P. Dawson and S. Dobson, "The Influence of Social Pressure and Nationality on Individual Decisions: Evidence from the Behaviour of Referees," *Journal of Economic Psychology*, vol. 31, pp. 181-191, 2010.
- [21]. C. Goumas, "Home Advantage and Referee Bias in European Football," *European Journal of Sport Science*, vol. 14, no. S1, pp. S243-S249, 2014.
- [22]. C. Unkelbach and D. Memmert, "Crowd Noise as a Cue in Referee Decisions Contributes to the Home Advantage," *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, vol. 32, pp. 483-498, 2010.
- [23]. A.M. Nevill, S. Newell and S. Gale, "Factors Associated with Home-Advantage in English and Scottish Soccer," *Journal of Sports Sciences*, vol. 14, pp. 181-186, 1996.
- [24]. A.M. Nevill, N.J. Balmer and A.M. Williams, "The Influence of Crowd Noise and Experience upon Refereeing Decisions in Football," *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, vol. 3, pp. 261-272, 2002.
- [25]. P. Pettersson-Lidbom and M. Priks, "Behavior under Social Pressure: Empty Italian Stadiums and Referee Bias," <https://papers.ssrn.com>, para. 1, Apr 18, 2007. [Online]. Available: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=981122 (2007). [Accessed: Dec. 1, 2018].
- [26]. N. Van de Ven, "Supporters are not Necessary for the Home Advantage: Evidence from same Stadium Derbies and Games without an Audience," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 41, pp. 2785-2792, 2011.
- [27]. R. Pollard, "Home Advantage in Soccer: A Retrospective Analysis," *Journal of Sports Sciences*, vol. 4, no. 30, pp. 237-48, 1986.
- [28]. J. Albert, and R.H. Koning, "Statistical Thinking in Sports," Chapman & Hall/CRC, Boca Raton, FL, 2007.
- [29]. C. Atkins, "How much does Home-Field Advantage Matter in Soccer?" Bleacher%20Report.html, 2013. [Online]. Available: file:///E:/PHD%20on%20refereeing/How%20Much%20Does%20HomeField%20Advantage%20Matter%20in%20Soccer_%20_%20Bleacher%20Report.html. [Accessed: Sept. 15, 2016].
- [30]. R. Pollard, "Worldwide Regional Variations in Home Advantage in Association Football," *Journal of Sports Sciences*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 231-240, 2006. doi:10.1080/02640410500141836
- [31]. Statto Organisation Limited, "English Premier League 2012-2013." <http://www.statto>, 1998-2016a. [Online]. Available: <http://www.statto.com/football/stats/england/premier-league/2012-2013/table>. [Accessed: June 19, 2018].
- [32]. Statto Organisation Limited, "English Premier League" 2013-2014. <http://www.statto>, 1998-2016b. [Online]. Available: <http://www.statto.com/football/stats/england/premier-league/2013-2014/table>. [Accessed: June 19, 2018].
- [33]. Statto Organisation Limited, "English Premier League" 2014-2015. <http://www.statto>, 1998-2016c. [Online]. Available: <http://www.statto.com/football/stats/england/premier-league/2014-2015/table>. [Accessed: June 19, 2018].
- [34]. O. Aoyagi, "Statistical Definition of Individual Home Advantage in Soccer: Application of Linear Model to Unbalanced-Paired-Comparison Data," *Japan Journal of Test and Evaluation in Health and Physical Education*, vol. 11, pp. 35-47, 2011.
- [35]. Ghana, First Capital Plus Bank Premier League, 2015. [Online]. Available: http://www.Bari91.com/football_stats/Ghana_First_Capital_Plus_Bank_Premier_League/2014-2015. [Accessed: Sept. 12, 2017].
- [36]. Ghana, Glo Premier League, 2014. [Online]. Available: http://www.bari91.com/football_stats/. [Accessed: Sept. 12, 2017].
- [37]. A.V. Carron, T.M. Loughhead and S.R. Bray, "The Home Advantage in Sport Competitions: Courneya and Carron's (1992) Conceptual Framework a Decade Later," *Journal of Sport Sciences*, vol. 23, pp. 395-407, 2005.

- [38]. M.S. Allen and M.V. Jones, "The 'Home Advantage' in Athletic Competitions," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 48-53, 2014.
- [39]. L.D. Recht, R.A. Lew and W.J. Schwartz, "Baseball Teams Beaten by Jet Lag," *Nature*, vol. 377, p. 583, 1995.
- [40]. C. Goumas, "Home Advantage in Australian Soccer," *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 119-123, 2013.
- [41]. N. Neave and S. Wolfson, "Testosterone, Territoriality, and the 'Home-Advantage,'" *Physiology and Behaviour*, vol. 78, pp. 269-275, 2003.
- [42]. F. Jansen, R.S. Heiming, V. Kloke, S. Kaiser, R. Palme, K.P. Lesch and N. Sachser, "Away Game or Home- Match: The Influence of Venue and Serotonin Genotype on the Display of Offensive Aggression," *Behavioural Brain Research*, vol. 219, pp. 291-301, 2011.
- [43]. M.E. Sobolewski, J.L. Brown and J.C. Mitani, "Territoriality, Tolerance and Testosterone in Wild Chimpanzees," *Animal Behavior*, vol. 84, pp. 1469-1474, 2012.
- [44]. J.M. Carré, C. Muir, J. Belanger and S.K. Putnam, "Pre- Competition Hormonal and Psychological Levels of Elite Hockey Players: Relationship to the 'Home Advantage,'" *Physiology and Behaviour*, vol. 89, pp. 392-398, 2006.
- [45]. R.I. Wood and S.J. Stanton, "Testosterone and Sport: Current Perspectives," *Hormones and Behaviour*, vol. 61, pp. 147-155, 2012.
- [46]. H.M. Wallace, R.F. Baumeister and K.D. Vohs, "Audience Support and Choking under Pressure: A Home Disadvantage?" *Journal of Sport Sciences*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 429-38, 2005.
- [47]. R. Masters and J. Maxwell, "The Theory of Reinvestment," *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, vol. 1, pp. 160-183, 2008.
- [48]. M.Q. Patton, "Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods," Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2002.
- [49]. Y. Zhang and B.M. Wildemuth, "Qualitative Analysis of Content," <https://www.ischool>, 2014. [Online]. Available: https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~yanz/Content_analysis. [Accessed: Sept. 12, 2018].
- [50]. S.J.H. Biddle, D. Markland, D. Gilbourne, N.L.D. Chatzisarantis and A.C. Sparkes, "Research Methods in Sport and Exercise Psychology: Quantitative and Qualitative Issues," *Journal of Sports Sciences*, vol. 19, pp. 777-809, 2001.
- [51]. J.A. Smith and M. Osborn, "Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis," in *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*, J.A. Smith (ed.), (pp. 51-80). Sage, London, 2003.
- [52]. A. Foster, "A nonlinear model of information-seeking behaviour," *Journal of the American Society for Information, Science and Technology*, vol. 55, no. 3, pp. 228-237, 2004.
- [53]. A.R. Nicholls, N.L. Holt and R.C.J. Polman, "A Phenomenological Analysis of Coping Effectiveness in Golf.," *The Sport Psychologist*, vol. 19, pp. 111-130, 2005.
- [54]. J.W. Creswell, "Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions (3rd ed.)," Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2013.
- [55]. L. Cohen, L. Manion and K. Morrison, "Research Methods in Education," Routledge, London, 2007.
- [56]. R.P. Weber, "Basic Content Analysis," Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA., 1990.
- [57]. J. Schilling, "On the Pragmatics of Qualitative Assessment: Designing the Process for Content Analysis," *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 28-37, 2006.
- [58]. T.D. Myers, "Achieving External Validity in Home Advantage Research: Generalising Crowd Noise Effects. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2014. [Online]. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00532>. [Accessed: Mar. 20, 2016].
- [59]. M.H. Anshel and R.S. Weinberg, "Re-examining Coping among Basketball Referees Following Stressful Events: Implications for Coping Interventions," *Journal of Sport Behavior*, vol. 22, pp. 141-161, 1999.
- [60]. M.J. Stewart and P.J. Ellery, "Sources and Magnitude of Perceived Psychological Stress in High School Volleyball Officials. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, vol. 87, pp. 1275-1282, 1998.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the tremendous assistance offered by the critical friend and the other proof readers in fine-tuning the manuscript to the desired standard. I also appreciate the selected referees for the quality of primary data supplied to enrich the study.

Funding of Project

This research did not receive any grant from governmental and non-governmental, funding agencies, nor commercial or private bodies. Every responsibility was on the shoulders of the author.

Author's Profile

Michael Agyei holds B.Ed degree in Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Sports (HPERS) from the University of Education-Winneba (UEW) in 1997 and M.Phil in HPER in 2010 from University of Cape Coast (UCC), all in Ghana. He had scholarship to pursue Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma in Olympic Studies at Loughborough University (Module at IOA) and International Olympic Academy in 2007 at Olympia-Greece respectively. He is daily involved in teaching and supervising undergraduate and postgraduate students at Department of HPER-UCC. His expertise is in the following areas; Sport Management, Psychology of Refereeing, Olympic Studies, Pedagogy in HPER, and Teacher Education Issues. Mr. Agyei is one of the few sport management personnel and consultants in Ghana.