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Sponsorship in Sports and Financing of Clubs of the Professional Volleyball League in the Republic of Benin

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Abstract

Our research studied the financing of volleyball clubs in the professional league in Benin. It analyzed the financing sources and the actions developed by the clubs in the search for sponsors by administering a questionnaire to 54 players and by conducting interviews with 5 club managers. The study shows that most of these clubs have an administrative staff reduced to a president who learned alone the management of the club within the limits of his possibilities. To carry out its activities, each club would first benefit from having the services of a dynamic marketing manager capable of carrying out and defending a sponsorship file. Also, the State should increase subsidies granted to sports associations and encourage greater involvement of public or private companies in supporting clubs in the organization of their activities.

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Keywords

Club, financing, volleyball, sponsorship, sport.

Introduction and Justification of the Subject

The main mission of a sports federation is to promote its discipline generally through the organization of activities: competitions, training, promotion, etc. In Benin, the FBVB organizes tournaments, championships, etc. for the benefit of the clubs affiliated to it with the obligation for the latter to participate in view of selection to represent the country abroad.

As we know today, a people can even be evaluated by the number of its medalists in an international competition. Sport thus reflects the social, political and economic realities of a country or society. Faced with the parallelism between the level of sporting practice in a country and that of its development, the public authorities and the sports movement have therefore sought to finance sport but not without difficulties,

because the state budget allocated to sport is no longer sufficient. As a result, we are constantly exploring new avenues.

Indeed, if in some countries, the financing of sport has long been the responsibility of the State and local authorities, in the countries of Europe, America and Asia, a form of private financing from companies is being deployed and called sponsorship or corporate partnership. In these countries, the sporting spectacle and even the athlete to a certain extent have become products to sell and corporate sponsorship is a technique that causes large investments in sporting events as an extension of advertising campaigns, this with the support of the media, especially commercial television channels. On our continent, sport has become a socio-cultural and even economic reality and significant efforts are being made by our states in the construction of modern sports

infrastructure, in the training of technical staff, in the monitoring of our national teams, etc. But the global economic crises added to our difficulties as developing countries constitute so many obstacles to the full exploitation of the immense potential of continental sport, which nevertheless presents large-scale sporting events that can contribute to the financing of sport. So many problems that undermine the sport of the continent in general and that of Benin in particular where sport has become a real social phenomenon with more than 40 national sports federations. However, the promotional value of sport struggles to convince companies to exploit the sporting spectacle despite the financial policies of the clubs taken by the State in favor of this sponsorship initiative.

It is in this context that this study is part of the theme "Sports sponsorship and financing of professional volleyball league clubs in the Republic of Benin". That said, is there funding for professional volleyball league clubs to carry out their activities? This is our main concern which insinuates that professional volleyball league clubs do not have funding for their activities. To verify this hypothesis, we set ourselves the main objective of showing the strategies to improve the financing of the activities of professional volleyball league clubs. To do this, we will take stock of the lack of funding for professional volleyball league clubs and then explore ways to improve the funding of their activities. In this research examining sponsorship in sport, these are actions carried out by an organization (club) as part of the search for funding. The strategic analysis model of [Crozier and Friedberg \(1997\)](#) then seems appropriate.

To achieve these objectives, we adopted a methodological approach that we will present.

Materials and Methods

This research, which is qualitative, took place in Beni on a target population consisting of: • Managers of professional league clubs • Club players. For technical reasons and referring to Deslauriers (1991), we selected, by reasoned non-probabilistic choice, a sample composed of 59 subjects and distributed as indicated in the table below.

To this sample we administered an online questionnaire to collect the opinions of volleyball club players and a semi-directive interview with the managers. After data collection, their processing was done with Word 2007

and Excel 2007 software to obtain the results of the following section.

Results and Discussion

Availability of adequate infrastructure for training

The study shows that the clubs of 58.18% of respondents do not have adequate infrastructure and equipment for training, that is to say that only 41.81% have them.

Participation of clubs in other competitions outside the professional league

The clubs of 58.18% of respondents participate in other competitions outside the professional league. On the other hand, the clubs of 41.82% of subjects only participate in the professional league. The competitions other than the professional league in which the clubs participate include the African Cup zone 3, the tournaments of the Borgou-Alibori regional volleyball league and the Champions League. All the responding players stated that their clubs have management offices. The following point reports on the holding of meetings between managers and players as part of the development of the clubs.

Holding meetings with managers as part of club development

95% of respondents say they have sessions with their managers as part of the development of their respective clubs compared to 5% who do not. 2.4 Personal monitoring of players.

The majority of players say they are not subject to personal monitoring (87.27%) compared to only 12.73% who benefit from it.

Perception of income by players

67% of players believe they have an income while 33% do not. The players' sources of income are presented in the graph below.

Sources of Players' Income

67.60% of players have the club as their source of income while for 29.70% it is the State when 10.80% have other sources of income outside the State and their club.

Sources of financing of club activities

47.30% of respondents mentioned sponsors as a source of funding for their clubs' activities. 41.80% of respondents indicated that their clubs' activities are funded based on the contributions of supporters and club managers.

For 30.90% of them, club activities benefit from the State's contribution while 5.5% of players mentioned the participation of the volleyball federation. For their activities (training, matches, etc.), players need sports equipment. This graph shows their ability to obtain it.

Sources of funding for club activities

63.63% of players sometimes manage to obtain their sports equipment when 18.18% of them manage to have some and the same percentage of athletes do not manage to do so. To understand this situation, it is important to look at the means of acquiring this equipment. 2.9: Sources of acquisition of sports equipment by players.

A very large proportion of players (71%) acquire their sports equipment through personal savings. Managers only contribute 20% as for sponsors, their contribution is very low, given the responses in which they only appear at 9%. On this basis, the level of satisfaction of players with the working conditions in their clubs is shown in the graph below.

Level of satisfaction of players

56.36% of players are dissatisfied with the working conditions in their various clubs when 29.09% of them are not very satisfied while only 14.55% are satisfied. Sport requires a whole set of strategic, technical and psychological provisions for its good practice. The graph below shows the availability of all the elements for the good performance of the players questioned.

Availability of everything necessary for the good performance of the players

83.64% of players said they do not have everything they need to perform at their best, compared to 16.36% who said they have everything they need at their disposal. It is noted that many clubs do not participate in the professional volleyball league.

The players surveyed gave their opinions on the determinants of this state of affairs. These opinions are presented in the point below.

Reasons for the low participation of clubs in the professional volleyball league

All players surveyed (100%) agree that the lack of financial resources of clubs is a hindrance to their participation in the professional volleyball league. Other reasons also push clubs not to be able to take part in the professional volleyball league according to 25.50% of respondents. For only 1.8% of respondents, it would be the lack of will of clubs that prevents them from participating in the professional volleyball league.

The results of the questionnaire as well as the comments collected from the interviews allowed the analysis of the results. The results of our surveys show that many club presidents are not satisfied with the level of development of Volleyball in Benin. The lack of funding is the main factor of this dissatisfaction. "The instability of funding blocks the development of activities. Funding will help clubs to develop activities both internally and externally" says the president of the USB-SAKARE VBC club. He adds that "the lack of funding, the lack of monitoring and infrastructure are the main factors that explain the low level of Beninese teams at the continental level". This is confirmed by the idea of [Hounkpè \(2008\)](#), for whom, "the insufficiency of the results obtained is explained either by economic causes, or by the responsibility of the State which arrogates to itself by a restrictive legislation, the monopoly of the organization of sport, without putting in place a coherent policy of financing, supervision and construction of infrastructures integrated into a national sports policy". The strategies they adopt to find funding for activities are multifaceted (request for sponsorship, solicitation of FBVB and the State). Although this can contribute to the development of activities, many clubs do not have managers who are able to master the sponsorship application process. The various presidents with whom we spoke have various sources of funding (sponsors, aid from the federation, state subsidies, etc.) even if this funding remains insufficient. Funding is the foundation of any business. "Sport is an activity that requires funding from state subsidies, sponsors, umbrella organizations and supporters," says [Baba-Moussa, 2004](#). They suggested the involvement of the state to encourage corporate sponsorship. For the president of ALLADA VBC, "The state must now impose the support of clubs at least in the professional league by public or private companies." The president of ENERGIE VBC approaches in the same direction before adding that the subsidy of the State and the federation, the external financing in particular the sponsorship of the companies could better help the clubs.

Table.1 Summary of the sample surveyed

Category	Name of categories	Number of subjects per category
1	Professional league club leaders	5
2	Players of the professional volleyball league clubs	54
	Total	59

Figure.1 Availability of adequate infrastructure for training

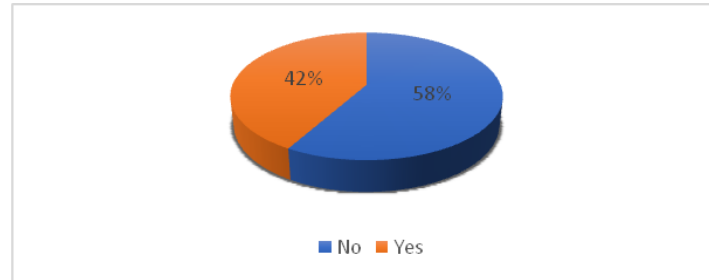
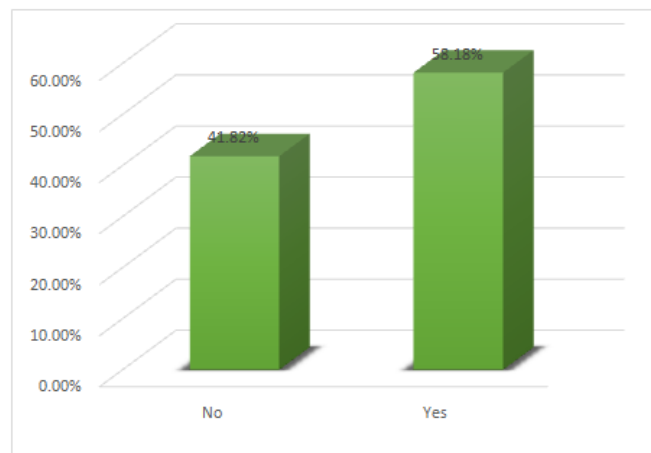
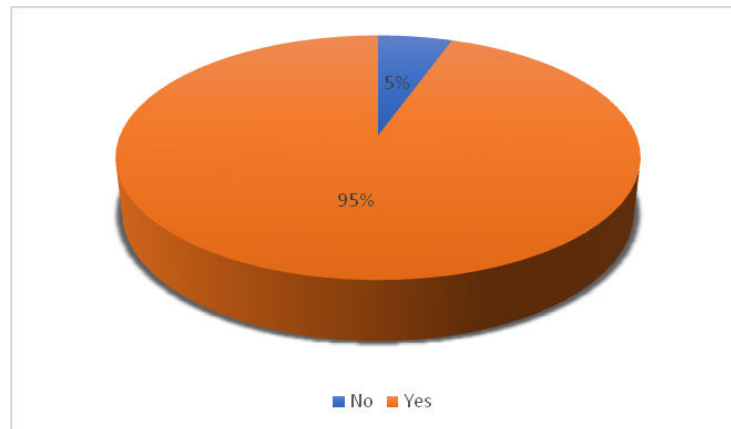


Figure.2 Club participation in other competitions outside the professional league



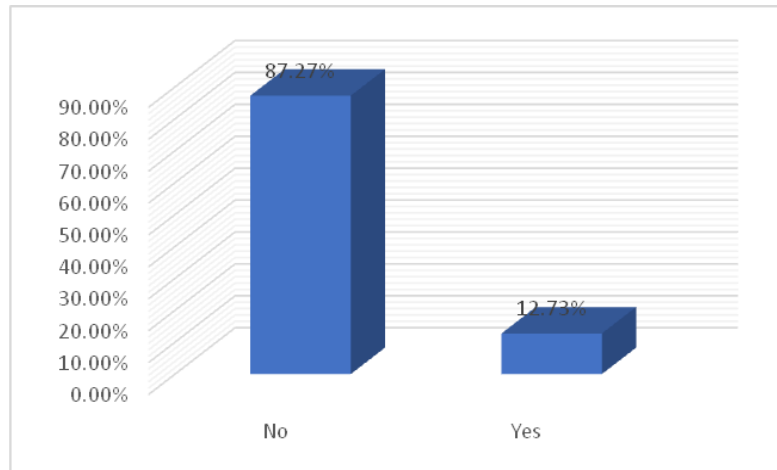
Source Field data, 2022

Figure.3 Holding sessions with managers as part of the development of clubs



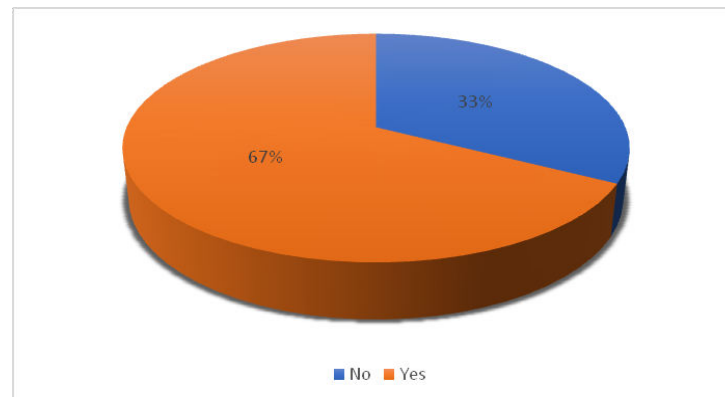
Source Field data, 2022

Figure.4 Personal monitoring of players



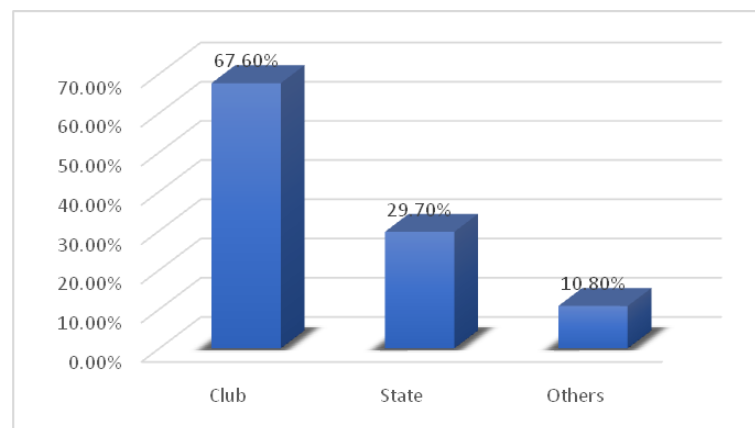
Source: Field data, 2022

Figure.5 Players' Income Perception



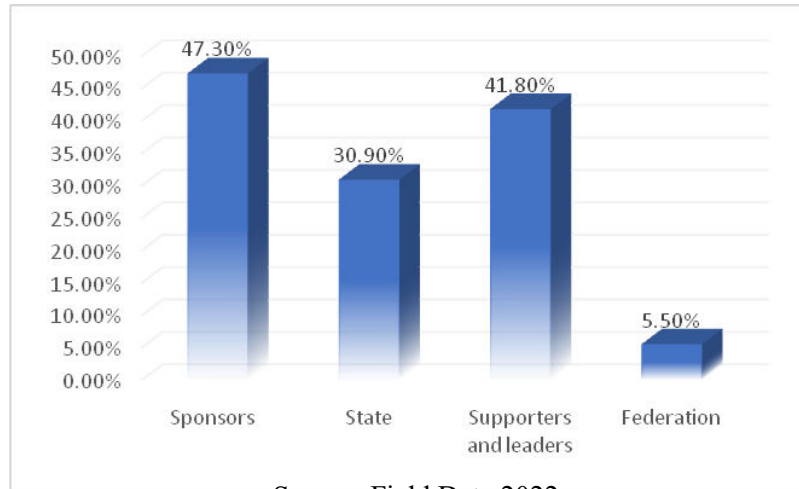
Source : Field Data 2022

Figure.6 Sources of players' income



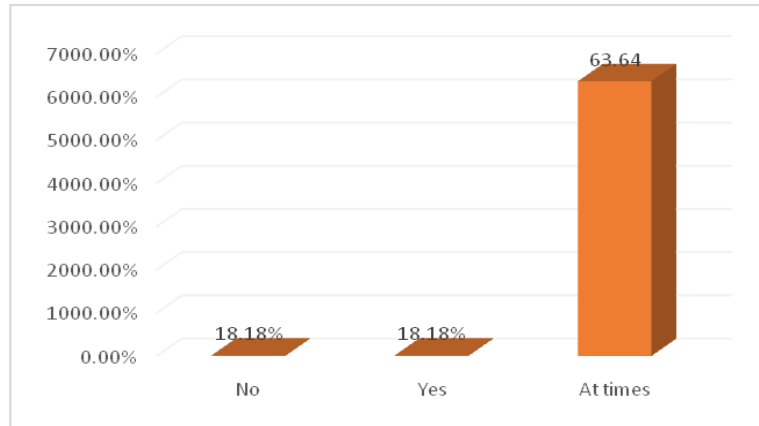
Source Field Data 2022

Figure.7 Sources of funding for club activities



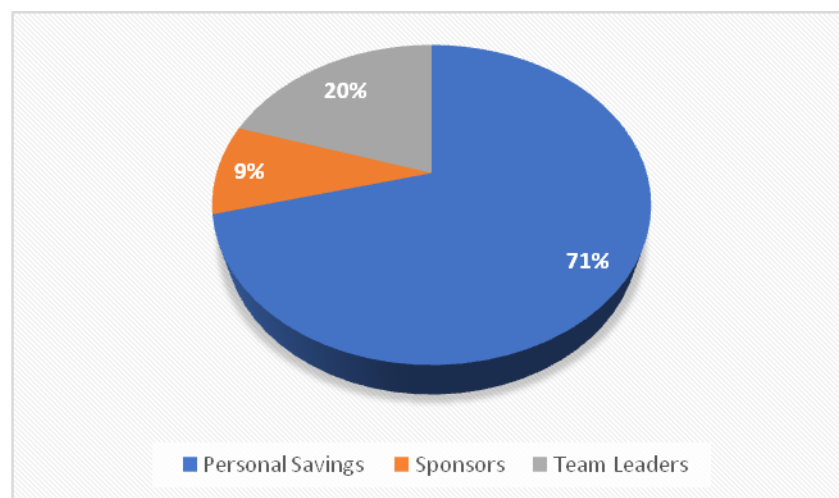
Source: Field Data 2022

Figure.8 Players' ability to obtain sports equipment



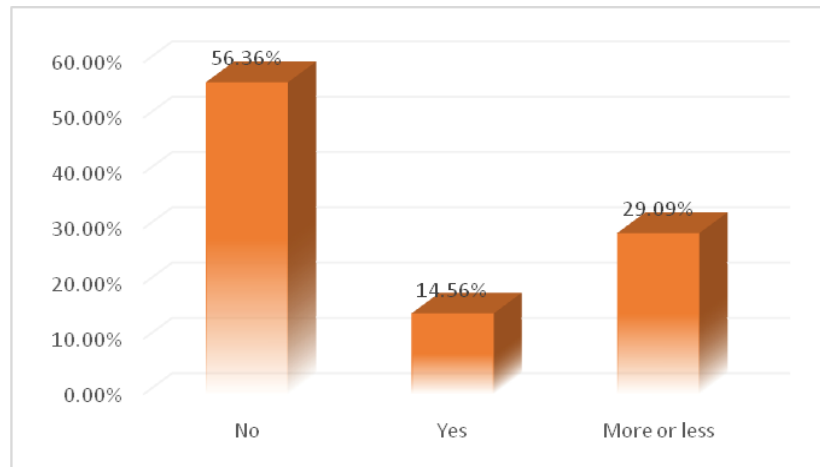
Source: Field Data 2022

Figure.9 Sources of acquisition of sports equipment by players



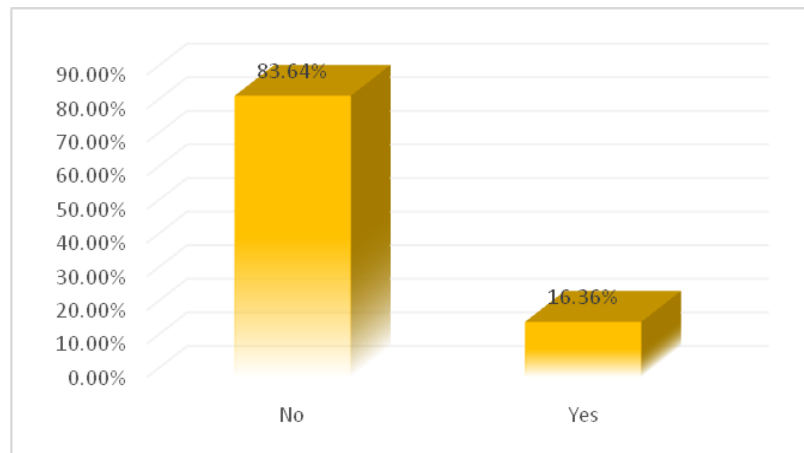
Source Field Data 2022

Figure.10 State of player satisfaction



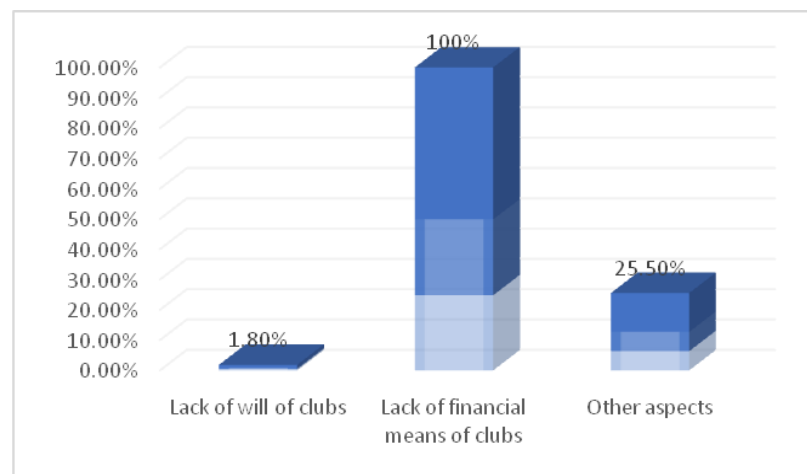
Source Field Data 2022

Figure.11 Availability of everything necessary for players to perform well



Source: Field Data, 2022

Figure.12 Reasons for low club participation in professional volleyball league



Source : Field data, 2022

This lack of financing largely explains the non-existence of equipment necessary for the practice of volleyball and the low participation of the teams in the professional league coupled with their poor performance at the continental level. Indeed, the majority of the clubs of the league do not have the adequate infrastructure and equipment for the practice of volleyball (Graph 1) and do not provide their players with personal monitoring (Graph 11). Since the adoption of law n ° 91-008 of February 25, 1991 on the charter of sports in the Republic of Benin inviting the clubs to take charge of themselves, this self-financing has remained an empty word until now. Almost all volleyball clubs (5/6) do not have a marketing management office, unlike French clubs for example, where sponsorship is the main source of funding for the sport (Mahama, 2002). The funding of the clubs in our sample comes from sponsors, the participation of supporters and club managers. Gounon (2012) mentions the following types of sponsorship: naming, jersey sponsorship and event sponsorship. According to the author, "in the different clubs, management and expenses related to the life of the club are exclusively the responsibility of the president."

The same author in his analysis also thinks that the poor performances would be due to the poor organization of sponsorship within the clubs. This results in a lack of means which often goes hand in hand with non-compliance with the federation's competition programs. However, some clubs are nevertheless sponsored. The president of ENERGI VBC states that "SBEE does everything to put the team in the best conditions even if some efforts remain to be made. This is why the team's performance has evolved compared to the level of past years but this is hard given the various financial efforts made through the signing of new players, salary contracts that were offered to them". The president of FINANCES VBC also adds that "it is thanks to funding that our team has been trying to give these somewhat satisfactory results for some time. We believe that the availability of funding and a good organization of volleyball in Benin will allow a significant improvement in results". At the end of our surveys and analysis of the results on the sources of funding for volleyball clubs in Benin, we can affirm that most of the clubs in the professional league do not have funding.

Conclusion

Volleyball in BENIN is among the sports most practiced by young people. Various leagues are organized there for the development of this discipline including the

professional league. The different clubs that participate in this league are faced with problems, mainly the problem of funding which creates handicaps internally as well as externally. This is what justifies the research that we have conducted in this sporting activity. These clubs, although affiliated with the FBVB, have difficulty financing their activities and thus achieve for the most part poor results both locally and internationally. It is in this area of sports funding that we have invested. In this work, the aim was to show how to improve the financing of the activities of professional volleyball league clubs sustainably.

To achieve this, we consulted related documentation. Surveys were conducted with club players using questionnaires and with 5 presidents of professional volleyball league clubs who were interviewed. The analysis of the results obtained made it possible to verify the hypotheses according to which: "The professional volleyball league clubs do not have funding for their activities". Several results show that the majority of professional volleyball league clubs in Benin do not have strategies that will allow them to obtain funding effectively and sustainably, and that their administrative staff is most often limited to the president. This poses a real organizational problem within them. The clubs should have a qualified marketing manager in their administrative staff who is able to present a sponsorship application file that meets the expectations of the sponsors. The State, for its part, should on the one hand increase subsidies and on the other hand encourage the culture of sponsorship by public and/or private companies.

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