

# An investigation into psychosocial factors affecting Kenyan women's performance in international track events

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## Abstract:

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the psychosocial factors affecting the performance of Kenyan women athletes in international track events. The specific psychosocial variables considered were: the socialization process, individual athletes' attitude towards competitive athletics, the level of motivation, self-perception and the peer-group influence. A sample of sixty female athletes and twenty national coaches were selected on both stratified and snowball basis from all the national athletes and national coaches in Kenya. Both questionnaires and oral interviews were used in data collection from selected samples. Data collected was analyzed using computer following the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) programme. The coding system adopted was 01 for "Yes" items and 02 for "No" items. Two stages were followed in the data treatment: a descriptive analysis of the raw data was carried out and a chi-square test was then used to test the formulated hypotheses. The study revealed that the psychosocial factors of socialization process, individual athletes' attitude towards competitive athletics, the level of motivation, self-perception and peer-group influence had significant effect on the performance of Kenya women athletes in international track events. The level of significance at which the hypotheses were rejected or accepted was  $P < .05$ . From the study, it is recommended that: i. There is need to socialize girls into athletics and other sports during formative ages; ii. There is need for effective sex education programmes in Kenya to alleviate the problem of teenage pregnancies; iii. There is need to extend the residential training period for women athletes to at least two months prior to any international championship; iv. There is need for the ministry of culture and social services through the department of sports to device machinery for identifying, monitoring and following-up raw talent displayed by Kenyan girls right from the primary school level; v. There is need to create equal opportunities for women so as to have access to the institutionalized training and coaching opportunities; vi. There is need to adopt an athletics programme which will widen the scope of exposure of Kenyan women athletes to male competition; vii. There is need for off-seasons to be characterized by intermittent training modes in order to keep Kenyan female athletes' body in condition; viii. That athletics coaching and conditioning courses and clinics be accorded to all Kenyan individuals involved in coaching track events to young girls and women.