

Socio-Cultural Determinants of Athletics Abilities Among Kenyan Elite & Sub-Elite Middle and Long Distance Runners

Abstract.

Kenya has participated in the Commonwealth games since 1954, the Olympics since 1964, the All African Games since 1965 and the World championship since 1983. The tradition of dominance in middle and long distance running began in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. The total medal tallies in men track events (800m-10,000m) in Olympic Games (excluding boycotted Games of 1976 & 1980) stands at 86 medals, of which 56 are from long distance events (<http://www.iaaf.org>). This athletic performance of Kenyan middle and long distance runners has led to a series of studies. Many researchers have sought to explain the runners' success at international level. Many of these studies were based on biological characteristics and ethnic traits of middle and long distance athletes. The social sciences have been under represented in the search to explain this phenomenon. Many studies have not considered Kenyan middle and long running abilities as a socially constructed reality. Data for this paper was sought from secondary sources including written and audiovisual support materials. Articles on Kenyan middle and long distance running were reviewed. This included internet browsing of information materials on historical and socio-cultural determinants of athletic abilities among Kenyan middle and long distance runners. This paper therefore sought to document the historical and socio-cultural environment responsible for promoting middle and long distance running abilities.

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