

**EXPLORING SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
RESILIENCE: A CASE OF KENYAN DISTANCE RUNNERS DURING
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Mutuma Nelly Nkatha

M10/38320/2020

**Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Award of Masters of Arts degree in Women, Leadership and
Governance in Africa to the Department of Sociology, Social Work and
African Women Studies, University of Nairobi**

2023

DECLARATION

I certify that this work is my own and has not been submitted to another institution for evaluation

Mutuma Nelly Nkatha

M10/38320/2020

Signature  _____


Date 16/08/2023

The research project has been presented for assessment with the authorization of the undersigned university supervisors.

Dr. MaryGorety Akinyi

Department of Sociology, Social Work & African Women Studies

University of Nairobi

Signature  _____

Date 16/08/2023

Dr. Josephine Muthami

Department of Psychology

University of Nairobi

Signature  _____

Date 16/08/2023

DEDICATION

A dedication of this research is extended to sports men and women, sports organizations and sports researchers. Given the efforts exerted at a personal level, I dedicate this work to myself, my always caring mother, my family and close friends.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Certainly, this research was possible, thanks to the Almighty God for the breath and abundant providence. Foremost, therefore, I believe it is the strength from God which enriched me with resilience, endurance, and the enthusiasm to set the ball rolling.

Were it not for the University of Nairobi postgraduate scholarship, and subsequent mentorship by Emeritus Professor Wanjiku Kabira, my studies would not have amounted to something worthwhile. It is important that I mention Dr. Gideon Rute Marete whose guidance and mentorship spans the entire University study period. I have indeed immensely benefited from the mentorship and inspiration of the two dons.

Even then, harmonizing ideas on resilience in a researchable manner only became possible upon wholehearted guidance by my assigned research advisor, Dr. Mary Goretty Akinyi. I am greatly indebted to her. Additionally, useful insights were received from Dr. Muthami Josephine whose support is herein acknowledged. In particular, Dr. Muthami helped me integrate psychological components into a sociological study.

Nothing beats the marvelous contribution accrued from loving and supportive family. My mother provided the first base of support and encouragement which was vital in ensuring that I stayed true to the course. Looking back, I cannot help but smile at the foregoing. In a way, close friends and classmates offered immense moral support at various levels. In particular, these strong social networks ensured that I stayed sane amidst the demanding nature of this research project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
ABBREVIATIONS	x
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	2
1.3 Research Questions	4
1.4 Objectives of the study	4
1.4.1 Overall Objective	4
1.4.2 Specific Objectives	4
1.5 Justification of the study	4
1.6 Significance of the study	5
1.7 Assumptions	5
1.8 Scope	6
1.9 Definition of Terms	6
CHAPTER TWO	7
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	7
2.0 Introduction	7
2.1 Athletes' Psychological Well-Being	7
2.2 Athletes' Socio-Economic Status	9
2.3 Women's Sports	11
2.4 Tokyo 2020 Olympics	13
2.5 Athletes' Resilience and Coping Mechanisms	14
2.6 Theoretical Framework	15
2.6.1 Socio-Ecological Model	15
2.6.2 Psychological Resilience Theory	17
2.6.3 Self-Determination Theory	19
2.7 Conceptual Framework	21
CHAPTER THREE	22
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	22
3.0 Introduction	22
3.1 Study Site Description	22

3.2 Research design	22
3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure	23
3.4 Target Population	23
3.5 Data Collection Methods	23
3.5.1 Questionnaires	24
3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews	24
3.5.3 Focus Group Discussions	24
3.5.4 Case Narratives	24
3.6 Reliability and Validity of Data Collection Tools	25
3.7 Data Analysis and Presentations	25
3.8 Ethical Considerations	25
CHAPTER FOUR	26
DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION	26
4.0 Introduction	26
4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents	26
4.2 Motivation for distance runners	27
4.3 The effects of COVID-19 pandemic on distance runners	29
4.3.1 Social Dimension	29
4.3.2 Economic Dimension	30
4.3.3 Psychological Dimension	31
4.4 Interventions	32
4.4.1 Individual Level	33
4.4.2 Team Level	33
4.4.3 Community Level	34
4.4.4 Government Level	34
4.4.5 International Level	35
4.5 Strategies for developing resilience	36
4.5.1 Economic Resilience	36
4.5.2 Social Resilience	37
4.5.3 Psychological Resilience	38
CHAPTER FIVE	40
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	40
5.0 Introduction	40
5.1 Summary	40
5.2 Conclusion	40
5.3 Recommendations	41
5.4 Areas for further research	42

REFERENCES	43
APPENDICES	51
APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTION LETTER	51
APPENDIX B: CONSENT	52
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE	53
APPENDIX D: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE	57
APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE	60
APPENDIX F: CASE NARRATIVE GUIDE	66

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Age Distribution	29
Table 2: Education Level	30
Table 3: Gender Distribution	30
Table 4: Years of Athletic Experience	30
Table 5: COVID-19 Vaccination Status of Respondents	36

ABSTRACT

Resilience as a broad concept has attracted different academic orientations over the years and subsequently, been applied in diverse fields. The concept of developing resilience capacities has also gained prominence among sport scholars in recent times. This is a crucial component in the sporting industry especially during crises. The unparalleled global nature of the COVID-19 pandemic threatened the income, training routines and well-being of athletes due to the preventive measures put in place to moderate the spread of the potentially evolving virus. This study therefore sought to explore ways of developing socio-economic and psychological resilience to future pandemics among distance runners in Eldoret and Iten by drawing lessons from their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. It examined the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, assessed the interventions, and established effective strategies for developing resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. The research relied on the socio-ecological model, psychological resilience theory and self-determination theory all which best explains resilience from a multidimensional perspective. A mixed method research design was adopted for this study. Secondary data was obtained through a thorough desk review while primary data was collected using key informant interviews, questionnaires, case narratives and focus group discussions. The key findings suggested the following: distance runners in Eldoret and Iten struggled with loss of livelihood sources as well as loss of athletic identity, missed athletic scholarship opportunities, reported depression, anxiety, stress and fear during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This research concluded that developing socio-economic and psychological resilience required preparedness among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten as well as concerted efforts by the government, Athletics Kenya, the National Olympic Committee of Kenya and the general community. Stakeholders in the sporting industry need to ensure that resilient systems are put in place in order to overcome the effects of future pandemics. It is expected that the results of this research can be applied in other sports disciplines since it will be instrumental in determining multiple ways of developing resilience. Future research is necessary to look at the unique experiences of para-athletes and paralympians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABBREVIATIONS

AK: Athletics Kenya

APA: American Psychological Association

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

IOC: International Olympic Committee

NOCK: National Olympic Committee of Kenya

PFA: Psychological First Aid

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

SEM: Socio-Ecological Model

SDT: Self Determination Theory

WHO: World Health Organization

WRC: World Rally Championship

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Coronavirus disease 2019 which was classified as a global pandemic by the WHO on March 11th 2020 has had numerous effects on sports globally. The effects witnessed on athletes and the sports industry can be linked to a variety of mitigating actions taken by countries, including lockdowns and travel bans (Jia et al., 2022 ; Håkansson et al., 2020). Kenya's sports industry was not spared ever since the confirmation of the first instance of COVID-19 on 12th March 2020 by the Ministry of Health. The pandemic wreaked havoc in the industry since it led to cancellation of major sporting events. The events that were canceled in Kenya include the Magical Kenya Open Golf Championships, World Athletics Under-20 Championship, and World Rally Championship (WRC), among many others.

Globally, the disruption of key sporting events including the Tokyo 2020 Olympics left some of the athletes vulnerable (Håkansson et al., 2020). This pattern of disruption and cancellation of events has also been witnessed in other pandemics such as the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARs) in Hong Kong. SARs led to postponement and cancellation of international women's sports events in football and hockey (So, R. C. H. et al., 2004).

In Kenya, the ministry of youth, sports, culture and heritage suspended all sporting activities indefinitely in 2020. The suspension was one of the actions that were set up to moderate the spread of the potentially evolving virus. Most sports involve close interaction of fans, coaches and athletes making it an easy route for the virus to rapidly spread. In an effort to control the virus, cessation of sporting activities in the country was carried out twice by the government.

The initial cessation was conducted in March 2020 after the first case while the other was conducted in April 2021 following a rising number of cases reported in the country. Additional mitigating measures that were adopted included lockdowns and travel restrictions which affected the athletes in terms of training (Rotich, 2021). It is also due to these mitigating measures put by various governments across the globe that several sportsmen and women lost their sources of livelihood.

The sporting industry was among the COVID-19 pandemic's largely affected industries in terms of jobs and subsequent financial losses (Alam & Abdurraheem, 2021). Most of the athletes lost their jobs globally prompting a decrease of the global worth of the sports industry, which was projected to be 756 billion US dollars yearly (UN, 2020). In Kenya, distance runners were suffering in silence due to financial losses experienced from missing international marathon events (Rotich, 2021). Women in sports were the most affected individuals in the sector (UN Women, 2020). These detrimental effects witnessed in the sporting industry signals a pressing need to develop efficient resilience mechanisms especially for distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although pandemics sometimes occur, the COVID-19 pandemic was particularly shocking and unexpected since it uncovered the weakness of societies as it had no regard for borders, countries and continents. It brought to halt different socio-economic activities. In particular, sports in Kenya could not be carried out as governments set in motion COVID-19 pandemic combating measures. These included suspending sporting activities and restricting gathering, at least indefinitely in 2020 and in 2021. This then meant that most athletes had to reconsider their options in meeting their livelihood needs.

In both Eldoret and Iten, it was noted that athletes were ravaged by the pandemic due to the loss of athletic income (Rotich, 2021). Moreover, the sporting industry was among the COVID-19 pandemic's largely affected industries in terms of jobs and subsequent financial losses (Alam & Abdurraheem, 2021). Equally the effects witnessed on the sports industry especially on athletes can be linked to a variety of mitigating actions taken by countries (Jia et al., 2022 ; Håkansson et al., 2020).

In the same vein, negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt across various sectors and industries including the sporting industry (Frawley & Schulenkorf, 2022). Similarly, it was further observed that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the loss of physical contact was among the key things that individuals reported to be missing (von Mohr et al., 2021).

Additionally, previous research in the last decade on athletes developing resilience focused on stressors that athletes overcame in their specific sport disciplines or the connection between resilience and an ideal sport performance (Galli & Vealey, 2008 ; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the stressors among athletes were unprecedented and multidimensional due to the unparalleled global nature of the pandemic. Resilience was viewed as athletes building adaptations to COVID-19 pandemic which was a tough, upsetting, and traumatic changing event in a person's athletic career (Gupta & McCarthy, 2021).

However, beyond these perspectives, there is paucity in the existing literature on the socio-economic and psychological experiences of distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten during COVID-19 pandemic. This research seeks to explore ways of developing socio-economic and psychological resilience to future pandemics among distance runners in Eldoret and Iten by drawing lessons from their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study argues that addressing these issues among distance runners will strengthen their resilience capacities for them to fully adapt well to the future pandemics. There is a need for this research to cast a light on the pandemic's impact on distance runners and provide novel insights on how to develop resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. What are the socio-economic and psychological effects of COVID-19 pandemic among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten?
- ii. What interventions existed during COVID-19 pandemic among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten?
- iii. Which strategies are effective in developing socio-economic and psychological resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten?

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 Overall Objective

The main aim of this research was to explore ways of developing socio-economic and psychological resilience to future pandemics among distance runners in Eldoret and Iten by drawing lessons from their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To examine the socio-economic and psychological effects of COVID-19 pandemic among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten.
- ii. To assess the interventions during COVID-19 pandemic among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten.
- iii. To establish strategies for developing socio-economic and psychological resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten.

1.5 Justification of the study

Kenya's athletes have dominated the middle- and long-distance races locally, regionally and globally. Majority of distance runners in Kenya live and train in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County and in Iten, Elgeyo Marakwet County. Participating in distance races in those counties has been long established to have a positive impact on youth and community empowerment (Kemboi, 2013). In addition, a study carried out in Iten and in Eldoret indicates that family influences also assume a huge part in the identification and growth of athletic talent, successful athletic performance and specialization in distance races (Mwanga et al., 2017). These motivating factors have driven more individuals in those areas to participate in distance races.

In 2020 at the point when Coronavirus pandemic shocked the world, sporting activities globally and domestically in Kenya came to a standstill. The government intervened to moderate the trajectory of the potentially evolving virus witnessed in the athletic community and safeguard these distance runners against the adverse effects of the pandemic. Despite these efforts, distance runners in Eldoret and Iten continued to be affected by the pandemic due to some of the measures which were set up to contain and control the virus (Rotich, 2021).

Therefore, the rationale for this study stems primarily from the fact that evidence based research indicates that the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt across the sporting industry (Frawley & Schulenkorf, 2022). This makes it necessary to conduct research to look at how the pandemic affected distance runners and to position them as resilience experts to cope well in the face of future crises. The study further provides a holistic perspective of the experiences of distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten during the two lockdowns imposed in the country. Athletics as a non-contact sport consisting of all codes was among the sports that were suspended in Kenya despite resuming with strict regulations of observing the laid out containment measures.

1.6 Significance of the study

This part demonstrates the advantages of this research to academia and the sporting community in general. There is currently very little published research on the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. Furthermore, this study goes beyond examining the effects by seeking to identify and recommend appropriate strategies for developing socio-economic and psychological resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten.

This study also adds value to the scholarship around sport sociology and sport psychology pertaining to the area of resilience. It will be helpful in providing an opportunity to discuss resilience from multidimensional perspectives. The findings will also be useful in influencing policy and will act as a significant reference to the sporting community.

1.7 Assumptions

The researcher adopted the assumption that the study's participants will provide all necessary information with full participation. The second assumption is that the distance runners in

Eldoret and Iten were the most vulnerable athletes during the pandemic and there is a need to develop resilience capacity among them. The third assumption is that the interview questions formulated accurately capture the phenomenon under investigation and will be effective in eliciting rich textual data. The fourth assumption is that the experiences of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic medalist in distance races will provide great lessons on strategies of developing resilience which can be emulated by other runners. These Olympians are assumed to be worthy of emulation as they serve as an embodiment of resilience. Finally, the findings in this research can be adopted by athletes in other sports disciplines.

1.8 Scope

This study targeted distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. It was limited to two counties in Kenya's North Rift region namely: Uasin Gishu and Elgeyo Marakwet since they provide a diverse population of distance runners. The research study's scope is on COVID-19 pandemic's effects, existing interventions, and effective strategies for developing socio-economic and psychological resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Athlete Entourage: All the individuals connected to the distance runner, including, physical trainers, team managers, coaches, medical personnel, agents, sponsors, sports lawyers, sports organizations and any other individual promoting the athlete's sporting profession, including relatives and family members.

Distance Runners: Runners in Eldoret and in Iten who participate in middle and long distance races.

Interventions: The approaches utilized by distance runners and the entourage to overcome the effects of the pandemic at all levels.

Psychological Resilience: The mental thought processes and role of behavior in promoting individual assets and shielding a person from the stressors' adverse effects.

Socio-economic Resilience: This is the ability to lessen the effects of losses on welfare and gauges how well-being and capacity for recovery may be restored after losses, taking into account a variety of socio-economic circumstances.

Strategies: The multidimensional approaches of developing resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. These strategies include best coping resilience practices that have been proven to be effective during a crisis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This study acknowledges the prevailing and pertinent writings that have delved into vital conceptions that are applicable to the study's subject issue. The literature review was done under key themes which focused on athletes' psychological well-being, resilience, coping mechanisms, women's sports and Tokyo Olympics. Generally, the literature review part proves that there is an existing gap which this research intends to fill by focusing on the experiences of Kenyan distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten during the pandemic period.

2.1 Athletes' Psychological Well-Being

This section seeks to study and review scholarly materials on how biological or environmental factors can affect athletes psychologically. Looking at what mental health entails, it is essential in determining well-being and functioning of individuals. The term mental health is conceptualized as the health state wherein individuals realize their abilities as well as being capable of coping with normal life stressors (WHO, 2022). It is out of the mental health that individuals can effectively handle any setback in their normal operations. WHO's definition of mental health has also been supported and emphasized by various scholars. According to Galderisi et al., (2015) it is vital to include individuals' ability to handle life stressors in their daily activities to the novel definition of what amounts to psychological or mental health. They emphasized that mental health does not necessarily mean nonexistence of mental illness.

A good mental health state is a strong requisite foundation for proficient practice and exemplary sport performances. Beauchamp et al., (2021) argue that performance among athletes requires a holistic approach which should incorporate taking care of athletes' mental health and general well-being. They also emphasize that unmanaged stress levels that generally affect the psychological health of individuals can lead to physical and mental weaknesses among athletes, which is a catalyst for poor performances. Even though physical activities lead to a positive influence on individuals' health, the existence of mental illness among athletes can be detrimental to their performance and well-being.

In view of the reviewed scholarly literature, it is quite evident that mental health is a critical issue that cannot be ignored in regards to the performance of athletes in all sports disciplines. Equally the study was did not focus on distance runners in Kenya during the pandemic. Therefore the proposed study will seek to provide the typologies of mental health issues that distance runners in Eldoret and Iten experienced during the pandemic.

According to a toolkit developed by the IOC, (2021) 13% of individuals in the global population experience some mental disorders while 33.6% of elite athletes experience depression and anxiety issues. IOC's statistics are definitive of the prevailing circumstances as far as the sporting industry and general well-being of elite athletes is concerned. However, it is worth mentioning that IOC's statistics only indicate an overview of the prevailing types of mental health issues which elite athletes face. It does not focus on the specific contexts of distance runners in Eldoret and Iten during the pandemic as in the case of this research.

Globally, mental issues among athletes increased with the beginning of pandemic. These issues included depression, stress, and worry attributed to the prevailing pandemic circumstances according to a systematic review of studies conducted on the pandemic's impact on emotional and psychological health of athletes (Jia et al., 2022). Elite athletes may have greater vulnerability to mental health concerns on account of the new strains COVID-19 has put them under as noted by Reardon et al., (2020) from the USA. Equally, this research will advance our understanding by utilizing a mixed method design in an attempt to uncover the typologies of mental health issues experienced by distance runners in Eldoret and Iten.

The emergence of COVID-19 had impacted sports men and women in Belarus and Poland (Nosal & Lopez-Gonzalez, 2021). They further established that decreased physical activity engagement had a significant influence on athletes' mental health. High level of physical activities was associated with life satisfaction, low anxiety and stress levels. Similarly, the associated factors of the pandemic increased the level of mental health symptoms among athletes in Netherlands (Gouttebarga et al., 2022). Also, Norwegian athletes suffered insomnia and depression during the emergence of COVID-19 (Pensgaard et al., 2021).

In Nigeria, Olaseni et al., (2020) established that COVID-19 had a substantial influence on psychological distress among Nigerian athletes. However, their study established that athletes' age, gender, marital status did not influence psychological distress. Similarly, Uroh and Adewunmi (2021) established that during the pandemic, athletes with a tenuous sense of identity are more likely to experience psychological suffering.

In addition, some studies have been carried out in Kenya regarding motivating influences of distance runners and contributors of various challenges witnessed among distance runners before the pandemic. A study was conducted in Iten and in Eldoret indicates that family influences assumed a huge part in the identification and growth of athletic talent, successful athletic performance and specialization in distance races (Mwanga et al., 2017). Despite the positive contribution of families, distance runners in Eldoret are exposed to several psychosocial problems intensified by overdependence by close kin (Mutuku et al., 2017). However, few studies have been conducted to highlight their experiences during the pandemic, hence the choice of the study.

From the review of the scholarly materials, it is evident that all indications lead to the conclusion that the COVID-19 pandemic had psychological effects on athletes, which also has a potential negative impact on their sport performances. The psychological challenges experienced by athletes tend not to be uniform across the board. However, all the aforementioned studies were conducted in other Countries both at global level and regional level. Nevertheless, there is a necessity to contextualize the psychological challenges which bedeviled distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten especially during the pandemic.

2.2 Athletes' Socio-Economic Status

A person's socio-economic position is measured as a combination of their financial and social standing, and it is typically favorably correlated with improved health (Baker, 2014). The socio-economic status of a family is a major feature in suggesting results emanating from shocks and vulnerability. Previous research by Wiltshire et al., (2022) established that COVID-19 did not spare sports institutions in both the USA and UK. In the United States of America, (USA) incurred a loss in the sports leagues of USD 13 billion. On the other hand, Europe had revenue losses of over EUR 1 billion. Consequently, that led to millions of sports dependents to lose their income.

The Nigerian sports economies were severely hit by COVID-19 which in turn affected job creation for the youth and their earnings negatively (Adamu & Balatoni, 2022). However, the research was conducted in Nigeria but the current study takes place in Kenya. Moreover, a local research by (Barasa et al., 2022) assessed the impact of COVID-19 on socio-economic status of young people. One of the specific objective of the research assessed socio-economic well-being of household members. From the study results, most households could afford basic necessities like food and medicine. This implied that the effect socio-economic impact of COVID-19 was not too devastating. However, this study did not specifically assess the impact of COVID-19 on socio-economic status of Kenyan distance runners in Eldoret and Iten.

Research has been conducted on the immense benefits associated with participating in sports in Kenya. For example, a case study conducted on KapTuiyoot community revealed that athletics has contributed to the general economic growth of that community as a consequence of globalizing community projects related to athletics (Byron, 2015). This indicates that tapping into the economic power of sports can benefit the communities and countries greatly but what about the Socio-Economic aspect of the distance runners, specifically, those in Iten, Eldoret? The proposed study intends to answer the raised concern.

The developments of towns like Iten and Eldoret have also been attributed to income generated from participating in athletics by some of the residents (Kemboi, 2013). Additionally, athletics has been used as a source of economic empowerment to Kenyan youths in the North rift region (Kemboi, 2013). It is also through participating in distance races that some students in Eldoret have been able to get educational scholarships which cater for their domestic or international studies.

In the COVID-19 setting, it is actually quite crucial to note that from the review of the scholarly materials, there are no studies that exist to investigate the socio-economic experiences of distance runners in Iten and in Eldoret, thus presenting a gap which this research intends to fill.

2.3 Women's Sports

A lot of work has been done as far as women and sports are concerned and this work continues at different levels globally, regionally and locally. For example, various governance instruments have been formulated in a bid towards enhancing sporting activities among women. Such instruments internationally include the Kazan Action Plan which was developed to safeguard female athletes against neglect, abuse, harassment, and exploitation while the 1994 Brighton Declaration sought to foster an environment that enables complete participation of women in all facets of sports through its ten principles (Gaston et al., 2020).

Kenya is in support of several international and regional instruments of governance which indicate strong commitments to empowerment of women and girls. Globally, SDG 5 envisages achieving gender equality as it addresses nine issues pertaining to gender equality. The SDGs are used as a blueprint for the prosperity of humankind and can be incorporated in sporting activities. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action also outlines the twelve major areas of concern that make up the global agenda for women's empowerment (Termine & Percic, 2015).

Regionally, the Maputo protocol supports the political and socio-economic participation of women in Africa while the Africa Agenda 2063 recognizes gender inequality in Africa and envisions eliminations of all forms of discrimination in the Africa we want. All this can be fully achieved by realizing the potential of sports as a driver towards sustainable development. Moreover, empowerment of women has also been achieved through participation in sporting activities which promotes their health and psycho-social circumstances. For example, Kenya women have benefited immensely from participating in athletics which further leads to the development of their communities. Their participation has been proven to have a trickle-down effect despite facing numerous challenges in their athletic pursuits (Sikes, 2014).

Locally, Kenya's 2010 Constitution has been widely acknowledged as a progressive and a comprehensive framework for realizing gender equality. It provisions that men and women possess equal right to treatment and access to various opportunities. The Vision 2030 is also a long- term strategy anchored in social, economic and political development. Additionally, the National Gender and Development Policy, 2000 asserts the significance of equality in every aspect of advancement (Kariuki, 2019).

The above-noted work also continued even during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, UN Women, (2020) posit in a policy brief that prior to the pandemic; women in sports had gained unmatched attention. This was evident from record attendance at women's games in various events like the Cricket T20, World Cup, and the expectations for Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

The much witnessed attention for women in sports was aimed at achieving gender parity, raising awareness and mobilizing actions around women's participation and leadership in sport. Such mobilized actions include representation in the media, development of safeguarding policies, equal pay, and incentives for women and girls to play. However, UN Women, (2020) argue that despite the numerous milestones, the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to erase the momentum because women in sport experienced pay cuts and others lost their jobs.

In another study which evaluated the pandemic's effects on South African professional athletes, it was confirmed that females were more bound to report a lack of motivation, energy loss and depressive feelings compared to males (Pillay et al., 2020). However, despite the key arguments made concerning the negative effects, previous studies create a contextual gap which this research sought to fill by narrowing down on the experiences of female Kenyan distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.4 Tokyo 2020 Olympics

Kenya first took part in the Olympics in 1956 (Wilber & Pitsiladis, 2012). Taking part in important sporting events like the Olympics often includes years of preparation for many athletes. The Tokyo Olympics were scheduled to take place in 2020 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Olympics did not happen and instead, Tokyo Olympics were rescheduled for 2021. These disruption left some of the athletes vulnerable since it was unexpected and they risked losing sponsorship deals (Håkansson et al., 2020).

This was also the first time throughout the entire existence of Olympics games for a postponement to occur. Olympic Studies Centre, (2022) highlights that the 2020 Tokyo Olympics were unusual compared to other Olympics since strict COVID-19 regulations were adopted to control the evolving virus. They argue that despite the occurrence of the Tokyo Olympics, athletes' psychological development and general well-being was affected due to the adopted COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines in a global sporting event.

The laid down guidelines and restrictions did not allow fans or spectators and this resulted in few sponsorship deals as there was limited coverage and ticket revenue. Some of the participants in the Tokyo Olympics faced economic and psychological challenges, lack of or limited sponsorship and restricted training (Olympic Studies Centre, 2022). Due to the challenges, the I.O.C came up with an agenda aimed at addressing future interruptions in the Olympics. This agenda also includes a roadmap aimed at promotion of sustainability, digitalization, financial and economic resilience for participants in Olympic Games.

The efforts that have been made towards comprehending the effects of the pandemic on Tokyo Olympics participants have been phenomenal. This research, consequently, builds upon these efforts by exploring the effects of the pandemic on Kenyan distance runners who participated in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

2.5 Athletes' Resilience and Coping Mechanisms

Previous research in the last decade on athletes developing resilience focused on stressors that athletes overcame in their specific sport disciplines or the connection between resilience and an ideal sport performance (Galli & Vealey, 2008 ; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). Galli & Vealey, (2008) conducted research among athletes to investigate they experience and perceive resilience. Resilience was the result of agitated states brought on by athletes' exposure to different types of stressors that are controlled by personal resources and sociocultural factors.

According to Southwick et al., (2014), resilience was viewed as a complex concept that can take a different approach in its definition to include the context of families, society, cultures, individuals and organizations. Components of this resilience can be attributed to how one responds to traumatic experiences is influenced by a wide range of elements which interact with one another. (Southwick et al., 2014). They concluded that resilience can be enhanced by efforts directed on different levels. To fully comprehend the process of resilience in sports, a multidisciplinary and dynamic perspective needs to be adopted (Den Hartigh et al., 2022). They argue for a joint blend of information from different disciplines such as sports science, psychology, data science and physiology.

Adopting the psychology perspective, psychological resilience has been described as the thought practices and conduct in supporting individual resources and shielding a person from a stressors' adverse effect (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2016). They conducted a study which sought to provide a scientific method for enhancing psychological resilience for long-term success.

A review conducted by McManama O'Brien et al., (2021) highlights the significance of developing psychological resilience among female athletes. They argue that female athletes confront particular difficulties in sports, such as gender inequality, problems with body image and eating disorders, as well as heightened mental anguish. This research however focused on female athletes while the current research focuses on both genders.

Also, Reardon et al., (2020) established that elite athletes in the USA received more extensive medical care, including counseling and medication. Psychotherapy modalities may be useful during the pandemic if they are delivered using fresh content and techniques. Nevertheless, the providers must consider the requirement for on-site management such as physical exams, lab testing and higher levels of care.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the stressors among athletes were unprecedented and multidimensional due to the unparalleled global nature of the pandemic. Gupta and McCarthy (2021) conducted a study to explore the type of adversities experienced by elite athletes during the lockdown and to comprehend the complex process of adaptation among athletes. They viewed sporting resilience during the pandemic as athletes building adaptations to COVID-19 pandemic which was viewed as a tough, upsetting, and traumatic changing event in a person's athletic career (Gupta & McCarthy, 2021). The research adopted exploratory research design but the current research adopted a mixed method research design.

Summary of Gaps in Literature

Considering the literature review it is clear that experiences of distance runners in Eldoret and Iten have not been well explored in the COVID-19 context. Previous research that was examined centered mostly on the general effects of the pandemic on foreign athletes from different sport disciplines. A contextual gap in the literature exists and there is need for this research to be conducted since it is specific to distance runners in Eldoret in Iten.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks are existing theories which serve as roadmaps for developing arguments in scholarly undertakings. They guide arguments and discussions in research. The three theories guiding this inquiry are socio-ecological model, psychological resilience theory and self-determination theory which fall respectively in the academic field of sociology and psychology.

2.6.1 Socio-Ecological Model

SEM is a well-recognized model for comprehending human growth (McLeroy et al., 1988). It has been developed over time and refined into a model that endorses health behavior change. This model has been applied in several areas including public health and sports management. In sports, it has been used to designate probable avenues for intercessions to lessen sport-related issues and deaths (Scarneo et al., 2019). In the COVID-19 setting, perspectives from this model have been utilized to increase an understanding on effective ways of building resilience at levels (Zhang et al., 2022).

SEM stresses on multidimensional levels of interactions (McLeroy et al., 1988) hence its relevance to this study. Intrapersonal level is concerned with individuals' features, such as skills, knowledge, behavior, and attitude among others. These individual features influence individuals' decisions and actions. Interpersonal level concentrates on how informal and formal social networks, such as friends and family influence individuals' actions.

The community level focuses on influences of a culmination of various institutions while organizational level focuses on influences from institutions procedures of operations. When various organizations or institutions pool their resources together, their influences over individuals' behaviors can be enormous. Lastly, policy level focuses on influences of the policies formulated by governing bodies and agencies at local and state levels. Some of the major issues that could influence athletes' behavior include; epidemiological uncertainties, social uncertainties and economic uncertainties.

A study by Cristea et al., (2022) indicates that there are still some epidemiological questions about the virus's makeup or distribution. Information uncertainties, on the other hand, refer to a lack of ability to recognize trustworthy sources of information or a lack of knowledge of where to find vital information. Social uncertainties are those brought about by being unable to predict one's own conduct in relation to that of others in one's immediate social surroundings. Finally, it is determined that financial instabilities of people, their families, or the entire nation are related with economic uncertainty.

SEM was utilized to offer useful insights in an attempt to comprehend the interventions during the pandemic as well as an integrated approach of strategies for developing socio-economic and psychological resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and Iten. It was used to analyze the study findings through its five levels of interactions which were also plausible in coming up with effective strategies of resilience. The model is appropriate and relevant to the study since it stresses that no single feature can predict the occurrence of a particular phenomenon.

In addition, it is important to address resilience from an ecological viewpoint since this approach considers not only individual factors in reducing the element of risk and uncertainty but also the effect of environmental factors. This model can be effective in identifying risks and protective factors of resilience at all the five levels of interactions. The psychological well-being and resilience of distance runners are key components in their performances. This means that resilience and existing interventions directed to them can be analyzed through a systematic approach that uses multilevel interaction processes like SEM.

2.6.2 Psychological Resilience Theory

This theory was developed to investigate the connection between ideal sport performance among Olympic champions and resilience. It has been applied in many fields including sports and nursing to provide insightful analytical basis for resilience. In sports, it has been applied in the scrutiny of Olympic champions' performances, hence its relevance to this study (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012).

The existence of different theoretical perspectives in understanding resilience can be explained by Southwick et al.,'s postulation. They argue that components of resilience can be attributed to a multitude of biological, psychological, social, cultural and psychological factors which interact with one another to determine how one reacts to traumatic situations (Southwick et al., 2014).

It is essential to include the above definition in an attempt to comprehend the psychological resilience theory. Moreover, psychological resilience can be described as the thought practices and conduct in supporting individual resources and shielding a person from a stressors' adverse effect (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2016). Thus, the psychological resilience model has included the concept of stressors, which includes things or occurrences that are capable of negatively affecting the well-being of an individual. These stressors can emanate from numerous sources including an individual's surrounding or the environment. The stressors can be viewed as risks to the development of resilience. They further argue that it is necessary for persons working in sports to recognize and evaluate the psychological dynamics such as motivation, focus, confidence, positive personality, and support that an athlete requires to improve resilience. The identified psychological dynamics in this context can be viewed as protective factors of psychological resilience.

Athletes also need to maintain balance of the psychological dynamics and develop them at the optimum level. Meta-reflective strategies are also effective when it comes to dealing with stressors. Such identified strategies include reducing negative thinking, appraising individual assumptions, cognitive restructuring, and challenging counterproductive beliefs (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012).

Additionally, in an attempt to understand the development of psychological resilience, individual performances are juxtaposed in four different environments to the kind of support one receives. An unrelenting environment is characterized by high blame culture when there is low performance. In a stagnant environment, individuals experience low challenges and low support while in a comfortable environment; there are less challenges and high support (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2016). Resilience is a requisite for success and there is a need for creation and maintenance of a facilitative environment, where the high challenges are met with high support. Individuals who lacked resilience tended to experience more negative and fewer happy feelings.

Uncertainties associated to the pandemic might exacerbate negative psychological consequences including stress and anxiety, which could have long-lasting impacts on the people who encounter them. Less compliance is particularly linked to stress experienced during the pandemic. This could only be done if there was good communication which enhances positive psychology. With positive mindset, one is able control the COVID-19 dynamics as they changed since it elevated worry and stress levels in the community's athletes. Positive psychology and resilience frequently go hand in hand. Both are interested in how promotional elements function and in how a positive construct might promote human welfare (Luthar et al., 2014).

This theory is relevant since it offers insights necessary to comprehend the significance of resilience on specific stressors and its affiliation with an ideal athletic performance through the reduction of anxiety and stress. It is also appropriate in coming up with strategies for developing and sustaining psychological resilience by recognizing the crucial factors needed for a facilitative environment to be achieved.

2.6.3 Self-Determination Theory

SDT theory has been applied in numerous fields and was developed by two psychologists (Deci & Ryan, 2012). In the COVID-19 setting, SDT has been used extensively as a framework in providing explanations around emerging issues in its areas of application. For example it has been used as an approach to develop individual resilience through integrating emotional regulation in counseling programs targeted to people experiencing stress during the pandemic (Waterschoot et al., 2022).

SDT is based on two key assumptions. Individuals' behavior is driven by the need for growth while autonomous motivation is imperative. The initial assumption projects that individuals are always seeking to improve and grow in their various aspects and roles. Thus, individuals find it essential to gain mastery over challenges as this will help them develop a sense of self. The second assumption means that individuals regard internal motivation sources more than external motivation sources (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

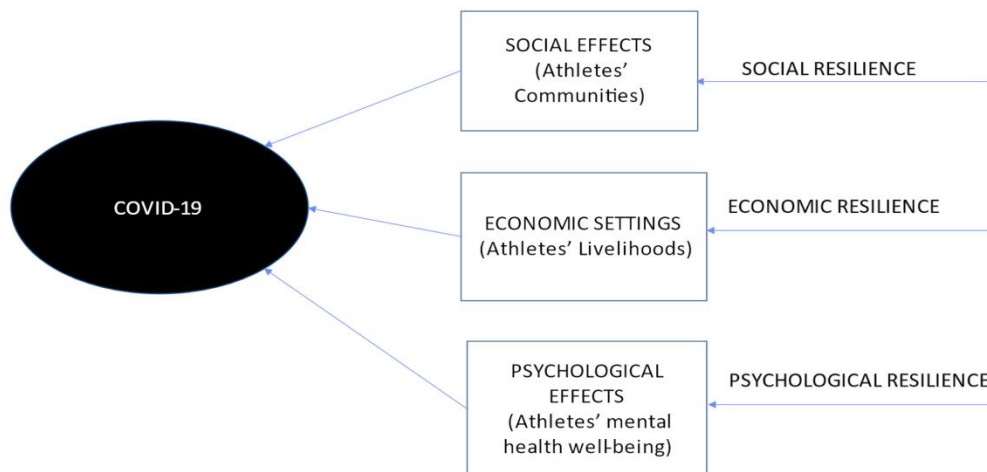
The model is more concerned with three key psychological needs including relatedness, autonomy, and competence, which underlie growth, development, and optimum human functioning (Ryan & La Guardia, 2000). Thus, proponents of SDT were of the view that all individuals including athletes are driven to change and grow by the aforementioned distinctive and collective psychological needs.

The model further argues that individuals only become determined when their basic needs for autonomy, connection and competence are achieved. Autonomy in this context denotes gladly approving an individual behavior, while competency is mastering and operationalizing one's actions. On the other hand, relatedness denotes the need to have a sense of belongingness with others and feeling connected (Ryan & La Guardia, 2000). According to Djeriouat, (2017) one of the behavioral regulatory mechanisms that has been extensively investigated in the context of risk research is autonomy. People who value autonomy perceive themselves as the source of their behaviors. Individuals who are autonomy-oriented do so voluntarily; as a result, their behavior is based on true internal demands and significant personal preferences, and they are less susceptible to being swayed by outside forces. Autonomy predicts coping responses to risk issues which good for the athletes.

It was observed that the loss of physical contact was among the key things that individuals reported to be missing throughout the pandemic (von Mohr et al., 2021). Additionally, athletes who were accorded more social support during the pandemic reported better psychological well-being and low erosion of their athletic identities (Graupensperger et al., 2020). This proves that by meeting the need for relatedness the psychological well-being of athletes can be improved. Moreover, the degree to which these basic requirements are met then reflects individual differences in self-determination. As a result, SDT encouraged a novel approach to examine risk taking by demonstrating that individuals are more susceptible to risk-related issues the less self-regulation they engage in. Lastly, SDT illustrates that a social environment which includes; culture, family, friends, and coaches can promote or hinder individual efforts to achieve the basic psychological needs. SDT is relevant to the study since it captures the three aspects of psychological needs which are critical for athletes' well-being and performance.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

In this study, resilience has been conceptualized as the gradual dynamic process through which distance runners in Eldoret and Iten can become adapted socio-economically and psychologically to overcome challenges associated with future pandemics by drawing lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of COVID-19 pandemic threatened the resilience capacities of some distance runners in Eldoret and Iten. The effects were direct and indirect on the socio-economic and psychological set up of distance runners in Eldoret and Iten. For instance, in the social set up athlete meet ups and training session was directly affected while the economically most athletes lost their source of livelihoods which in turn negatively impacted their mental health and well-being. Therefore, there is need for resilience build among them.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The methodology is subdivided into the following subsequent sections: the study site description, the research design, the sampling procedure, the target population, the data collection methods, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Study Site Description

Research was undertaken in two counties in Kenya's North Rift region which were purposively selected. The counties were Uasin Gishu and Elgeyo Marakwet. The justification for this selection is that they represent a diverse population of distance runners in Kenya. Eldoret in Uasin Gishu county and Iten in Elgeyo Marakwet county are globally and locally known as the home of champions. Majority of the people found in Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu counties are Kalenjins who are a community of the larger Nilotic group in Kenya. Moreover, some of them are known to be great at middle- and long-distance races (Wilber & Pitsiladis, 2012). It is due to this prowess associated with the distance runners in those counties that foreign or international athletes have taken interest in touring various North Rift counties in Kenya including Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu.

Foreign athletes also visit the aforementioned counties due to the suitability of the training environment, as their attitude enables generation of more oxygen carrying cells hence enhancing training activities. Apart from income generated from athletics and tourism, Elgeyo Marakwet and Uasin Gishu counties also generate their income from agribusiness as they farm maize, and rear cattle.

3.2 Research design

This is a researcher's plan on how to best obtain responses to the research questions (Akhtar, 2016). It is significant since it helps to distinguish the kind of evidence that is needed to answer research questions in a comprehensive way. A mixed method embedded design was used in this study where quantitative data was secondary to the wider qualitative data. Both data sets were collected and analyzed accordingly. Quantitative data provided the numerical

statistics while the qualitative data allowed for the exploration of the experiences of distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten during the pandemic.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The Cochran formula was employed to ascertain the size of the sample accordingly (Robb, 1963).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} = \frac{3500}{1 + 3500(0.1^2)} = 97.2 \cong 100$$

Where n=sample size, N=population size, and e=margin of error. The researcher considered 10% precision level.

Selecting a sample is very critical in a study because a sample should be sufficient enough to fulfill the needs of the research and should be unbiased. Random sampling was applied in selecting a hundred distance runners who were both from Eldoret and Iten. Each unit had an equivalent possibility of being chosen and hence eradicated the researcher's bias. Caution was, however, exercised in selecting the sampling due to the possibility of measurement errors, recording errors, and related prejudices. Moreover, purposive sampling was utilized in choosing key informants, participants in FGD and Tokyo 2020 Olympic medalists for the case narratives.

3.4 Target Population

The target population included men and women involved in middle and long-distance races in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County and in Iten, Elgeyo Marakwet County.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Primary and secondary sources of data collection were utilized by the researcher. The primary sources were first hand sources of data gathered by administering a questionnaire to athletes, conducting FGDs and interviews. Secondary data was obtained through reading the accessible e-journals and published books on how the pandemic affected the sports industry. Triangulation of data collection techniques was employed to bridge the gap that may arise by use of a single method. Below are the methods of primary data collection which were selected based on the nature of the objectives.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire was administered to a hundred distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten to obtain specific information from them. It was a structured questionnaire had both closed-ended and open-ended questions that were separated into four sections.

3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews

These interviews were utilized to obtain knowledge from experts from those who work with the distance runners. The six key informants chosen in the study included coaches, a sport psychologist, Athletics Kenya officials and National Olympic Committee of Kenya officials. The researcher was interested in knowing the following information from the informants: their views on the effects of the pandemic on distance runners, available interventions and appropriate strategies for developing sporting resilience.

3.5.3 Focus Group Discussions

Two FGDs were carried out in Eldoret and in Iten to provide an opportunity to gain collective knowledge, opinions and perspectives from the distance runners. A guide consisting of guiding questions directed the entire discussion. The group discussions with the distance runners were recorded and the audios were transcribed in preparation for analysis of data.

3.5.4 Case Narratives

The researcher sought to collect data from Tokyo 2020 Olympic Medalists in distance races about their preparation and experiences during the Olympics. The case narratives were used to build an informed understanding of their lived experiences during the pandemic and their approaches to resilience. Qualitative analysis was later conducted to dig deep into these captivating experiences. The three Tokyo 2020 Olympic medalists who willingly agreed to participate in the study were recruited on the assumption that they served as an embodiment of resilience.

3.6 Reliability and Validity of Data Collection Tools

These two features are central in the evaluation of any tool for research. All the research tools were pre-tested for reliability to ensure accuracy. Efforts were made to ensure that the questions were meaningful and well understood by the participants. Validity was achieved by having objective and clear questions to avoid ambiguity in the responses. Moreover, the researcher sought input from the assigned supervisors to validate the interview guides and questionnaire before going to the field.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentations

The analysis and presentation of data utilized a quantitative and qualitative approach. In quantitative analysis, the researcher utilized Excel software in unearthing the relevant information, including: proportions and frequencies as well as pictorial representation.

In qualitative analysis, NVivo software was utilized in the organization of textual data. Coding was later done along the key thematic areas identified from the research objectives in order to reorganize the raw data into manageable information. The study specifically adopted the six phase analysis of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Continuous reflection on the questions assisted in identifying the prevalent and emerging themes since themes are useful in understanding a phenomenon by providing order. The presentation of qualitative findings took a verbatim approach utilizing direct quotation in order to capture the voices of the participants and their perspectives.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to all the essential steps to make sure that the rights of the participants were safeguarded. The authorization to research was acquired as required by the ethics of research. An introduction letter was also obtained at the departmental level. Before participants took part in the study, the research objectives were well explained and consent to participate was presented. Moreover, their involvement in the research was totally deliberate. The researcher took precautions to protect the subjects' confidentiality and anonymity.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussions. Quantitative data has been presented using tables while qualitative data has been presented thematically with the verbatim transcriptions included.

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

The researcher wanted to find out the demographic information of the respondents. This information included their age, education level, gender, years of athletic experience and COVID-19 vaccination status. This demographic information is presented using tables.

Table 1: Age Distribution

Category	Frequency Eldoret	(%)	Frequency Iten	(%)
20-24years	21	42%	17	34%
25-29years	11	22%	8	16%
30-34years	17	34%	23	46%
35+ years	1	2%	2	4%

As illustrated in table 1, the proportion of 20-24year-old distance runners as well as those aged 25-29years in Eldoret was higher than that for Iten. For the age cohort 30-34years and above 35 years, Iten had a higher proportion than Eldoret. In both study areas, the lowest proportion of distance runners were aged 35years and above. It could be argued that distance runners are generally active at ages below 35years where they maximize their full potential when young.

Table 2: Education of Respondents

Education	Frequency Eldoret	(%)	Frequency Iten	(%)
Secondary	34	72%	39	78%
Tertiary	13	28%	11	23%

Primary	1	2%	0	0%
---------	---	----	---	----

In the two study areas, the majority of the distance runners had completed secondary education as illustrated in table 2. 28% of distance runners in Eldoret and 23% of distance runners in Iten had completed tertiary education. Only one distance runner in Eldoret had primary education. In Eldoret, for instance, the distance runner with only primary education was over 40years old. Hence, it is arguable the 40year old lacked many opportunities to go to school while young.

Table 3: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Category	Frequency Eldoret	Percentage (%)	Frequency Iten	Percentage (%)
Female	19	38%	17	34%
Male	31	62%	33	66%

As indicated in table 3, in both Eldoret and Iten, there were more male distance runners than females with females being slightly more in Eldoret than in Iten. It could be argued that in both study areas, distance running is dominated by males. Moreover, Eldoret probably offered greater opportunities for females to venture into athletics compared to Iten.

Table 4: Years of Athletic Experience

Years of Athletic Experience	Eldoret Frequency	Percentage (%)	Iten Frequency	Percentage (%)
2-4 years	33	79%	26	60%
5-7 years	9	21%	17	40%
8+ years	8	19%	7	17%

Eldoret had more distance runners with 2-4years of experience than Iten. More experienced distance runners were in Iten than in Eldoret. It could be argued that Iten was the most preferred training base for the experienced distance runners than Eldoret.

4.2 Motivation for distance runners

During the FGDs and interview sessions, respondents were asked to mention reasons for participating in distance races in an attempt to understand their underlying motivation. A respondent in Iten had the following to say about the reason for engaging in distance races.

“I participate in distance races because it is something I have loved doing ever since I was in high school. I view running as an expression of myself because I find it very fulfilling. The pure joy and fulfillment derived from running makes me practice every day to improve my skills.” Athlete, Iten

This indicates an internal influence of motivation among some respondents which included the pleasure or fulfillment derived from running. This passion for participating in distance races was a common theme among the respondents which was later categorized as intrinsic. In line with the SDT theory, this kind of motivation includes those forces that innately come from within an individual (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Additionally, it is also due to this forces that they practice daily to enhance their skills which is a reflection of the need for competency in SDT as explained below.

“I have always enjoyed running, breaking new records and targets I set for myself. This is the reason why I participate in distance races. Setting an athletic goal and working towards it has given meaning to my life.” Tokyo 2020 Olympic Medalist

However, this was not the case for all the respondents in Eldoret and Iten. Some respondents had external influences of motivation which slightly differed depending on the type of distance runner. For example, student athletes run to get a scholarship.

“I run because I want to get a scholarship abroad and further my studies. My parents can't afford to pay for my university education so I decided to use my talent. This is my only hope and the main reason why I engage in distance races. ” Athlete, Eldoret

There are other distance runners who participate in distance races solely for economic reasons or a means of their livelihood.

“Participating in distance races over the years has enabled me to earn a decent living and support my family. I have managed to take part in several international races where I won good prize money. I try to use this income to invest in my business, feed my family and educate my children.” Athlete, Iten

The identified external influences of motivation among the respondents were categorized as extrinsic. This are the external forces which encourage individuals to engage in various activities (Deci & Ryan, 2012). In conclusion, these two categories of motivation that emerged from the analysis explain the underlying motivations for distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten.

4.3 The effects of COVID-19 pandemic on distance runners

The researcher sought to examine the socio-economic and psychological effects of the pandemic on distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. The results indicate that all the respondents in Eldoret and Iten reported that the COVID-19 pandemic affected them socially, economically or psychologically.

4.3.1 Social Dimension

Individuals' movement and assembly were limited through various mechanisms like lockdowns and social distancing during the pandemic. The resultant effects were that distance runners in Eldoret and Iten could not meet physically or even train together as they were used to.

“The COVID-19 pandemic denied me something I enjoy doing since I could not meet up with my training partners to train or socialize with them in person.” Athlete, Iten

The loss of social contact and cohesion with other runners was a common theme among the respondents. This loss of social connection was further expounded by a key informant who works closely with athletes.

“Participating in sports is important since it brings people together whereby they socially interact. The COVID-19 pandemic affected team and individual sports greatly because athletes could not train together due to the preventive measures. The normal structure of training routines was also interrupted despite resumption of sports because athletes had to adhere to the laid down guidelines for their safety.” NOCK, official

It is evident that the pandemic disrupted the normal structure of training among distance runners and led to loss of social contact. Social connection is essential for individuals including distance runners and this is underscored on the interpersonal level of influence on SEM. Interpersonal level of influence such as informal and formal social networks influences an individual's actions. This level of influence is essential for runners, since it fosters positivity and boosts their performance. It is also fostered when team members, such as runners meet, share their experiences, and even train together.

4.3.2 Economic Dimension

Generally, distance runners in Eldoret and Iten reported that the pandemic led to the cancellation of several races which they had intensely prepared for. This means that they could not get financial gains like income generated from participation and subsequent winnings in the various scheduled sporting events as expressed below.

“I was supposed to travel to Italy and participate in a marathon but the event was canceled. Cancellation of this event negatively affected me since I was physically and psychologically prepared for it. The pandemic situation was so unexpected for me. I never thought that such a thing could happen.” Athlete, Eldoret

Loss of athletic income was a recurring theme among the respondents. As mentioned earlier, external influences of motivation like economic incentives motivate distance runners in Eldoret and Iten. The COVID-19 pandemic created a situation where athletic income was no longer reliable since all races were canceled globally and locally. Moreover, unprepared distance runners who had not invested well prior to the pandemic or those who rely solely on athletic income appeared to be more affected by the pandemic as explained by a coach in Iten.

“The COVID-19 pandemic was a great shock to some distance runners who were unprepared. With my years of experience as a coach, I have noticed that some of them are not good at managing their finances, especially money gained from races. I therefore tend to think that every athlete was affected but those severely affected are distance runners who had not invested well prior to the pandemic.” Coach, Iten

Additionally, some student athletes reported that they lost their athletic scholarship opportunities for failing to join their respective academic institution on time. The failure was attributed to the travel restriction enforced in Kenya and other countries.

“I had plans for the year 2020 but I felt like my dreams were completely shattered as a result of the pandemic. As a student athlete, I lost my scholarship opportunity due to the fact that I never reported immediately for the semester and it was not my fault.” Athlete, Eldoret

“Before the initial case of the virus was reported in Kenya, I had received great news of being admitted to a university abroad but I could not travel since the embassy was closed and international travel was banned. Most student athletes here were in such a situation but when normal operation resumed some were lucky to report while others missed the opportunities.” Athlete, Iten

Loss of scholarship opportunities was identified as an economic effect due to its pecuniary nature since education offers learners with numerous financial options and muscles including getting income through qualifications-based employment. In conclusion,

4.3.3 Psychological Dimension

The psychological effects of the pandemic on distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten were well examined. This was achieved by identifying the typologies of mental health issues experienced by distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten.

“I was so stressed by everything concerning the pandemic. Firstly, I missed an international event that I was looking forward to because it was canceled. The duration of the pandemic was also unknown and this created an uncertain athletic future which I never expected. I also struggled to meet my basic needs because I had not taken part in any race during that period. Athletics is the only source of livelihood for me and it was not reliable at that time. Things were very tough and stressful for me.” Athlete, Iten

“The nature of the pandemic created a lot of uncertainty and anxiety. I was afraid of contracting the virus especially during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. It was like fighting an enemy that you are afraid of and you cannot see, so I had to take all the necessary measures that were put in place to make sure I don’t get sick. However, I am lucky that this anxiety did not affect my performance at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. I managed to perform extremely well despite being in an uncomfortable situation. ”
Tokyo 2020 Olympic Medalist

“I feared contracting COVID-19 during the Olympics. I had tested positive a few months before the Olympics and I was in isolation for two weeks before being cleared by the doctors. The first experience of contacting the virus made me fearful of contracting the virus again since I did not like the feeling of being sick or in isolation.” Tokyo 2020 Olympic Medalist

Depression and anxiety were the most reported psychological problems. Depression was attributed to loss of livelihood, scholarship opportunities and athletic identity. On the other hand, uncertainty regarding the duration for which the pandemic would exist made distance runners anxious about their future in the athletic industry and career progression. This anxiety was also experienced by Kenyan distance runners who attended the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

The distance runners were also stressed by the fact that they could not train and were susceptible to injuries. Stress was also a theme identified in the study. They were aware of the repercussions of inadequate training including loss of momentum and being out of shape due to gaining weight during the instituted lockdown. A coach in Iten also confirmed this.

“I noticed when sporting activities resumed in Eldoret, some of the distance runners had gained weight and they were not in good shape. Some had lost all the momentum they had before the pandemic due to the interruption in their normal training schedules. The pandemic also seemed to erase the motivation of some distance runners since quite a number have never resumed up to now. Another thing worth mentioning is that some women became pregnant during the time sports were suspended and they have also never resumed training.” Coach, Eldoret

4.4 Interventions

This study sought to assess the interventions that existed during COVID-19 pandemic among distance runners in Eldoret and Iten. From the qualitative findings, a number of mechanisms were utilized in a bid to overcome the consequences of the pandemic. Qualitative data was analyzed to produce themes of support that were mapped onto the equivalent levels of influence on the SEM.

4.4.1 Individual Level

“I would train alone at home during the lockdown but the experience was different since I was used to group training whereby I am training together with my fellow athletes. Personally, I feel more motivated when I am running together with my friends as opposed to running alone” Athlete, Eldoret

The need for some distance runners to enhance their running skills influenced them to train alone at home when sports were suspended and athletic camps closed. However, the lack of proper training facilities and environment at home hindered the quality of training. Intrapersonal level of influences in SEM involves individuals' skills influencing one's decisions and actions. The need for competence and mastery in SDT is also evident through the individual level interventions taken by the distance runners.

4.4.2 Team Level

Team level concentrates on how informal and formal social networks, such as friends and family influence individuals' actions.

“We had formed a WhatsApp group which was a platform that we usually used to share messages of encouragement and hope during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our coach would also call to check on us.”
Athlete, Eldoret

“At team level, the coach would always keep in touch with the runners during that tough period. Most of the young runners like me had lost hope in our athletic pursuits and the coach would remind us that all will be well when things resume back to normal. He would also share with us plans of keeping fit at home since we could not meet as usual.” Athlete, Iten

“My family has been supportive before, during and after the pandemic. I managed to overcome the setbacks brought about by the pandemic because of the support and encouragement I received from my family members. If I was alone in this journey, I would have given up. My family has shaped me into the resilient person I have become and I cannot underestimate their support.”
Tokyo Olympic Medalist

Team level interventions were grouped as the interpersonal level of influences in SEM. Evident interventions at this level included coaches sending training plans aimed at helping distance runners keep fit during lockdown and motivating them. Motivation was paramount for distance runners during the pandemic. Family members also assumed a basic part in motivating some distance runners through words of encouragement. The respondents also reported checking on each other through phone calls and WhatsApp.

4.4.3 Community Level

At community level, the reported interventions included some elite athletes supporting vulnerable athletes.

“Eliud Kipchoge through his foundation donated foodstuffs to distance runners in Iten. It was a great gesture since some of the distance runners were struggling to access basic needs during that period.” Coach, Iten

“I was among the distance runners who received food donations from Eliud Kipchoge when he came to donate in Eldoret,” Athlete, Eldoret

Some participants reported that elite athletes like Eliud Kipchoge donated food to needy athletes who were severely affected. Community based organizations and faith based organizations in Eldoret and in Iten also contributed in assisting distance runners during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to SEM, this level focuses on influences of a culmination of various institutions or organizations whereby when they pool their resources together and their influences over an individual behavior can be enormous.

4.4.4 Government Level

The Kenyan government intervened to lessen the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten

“The county government of Elgeyo Marakwet donated food stuffs to vulnerable distance runners in Iten and some of the distance runners I train managed to receive the food donation.” Coach, Iten

“The ministry of sports supported everyone who participated in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games including distance runners. There were vaccination exercises and regular testing at Kasarani Stadium before departing for the Tokyo games where more safety measures were observed.”Tokyo 2020 Olympic Medalist

Some of the respondents expressed satisfaction that despite government delays, various interventions including provision of food support and facilitation of vaccination exercises were beneficial to them.

Table 5: COVID-19 Vaccination Status of Respondents

COVID-19 Status	Eldoret Frequency	Percentage (%)	Iten Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not vaccinated	10	20%	13	26%
Vaccinated	40	80%	37	74%

In both Eldoret and Iten, there were more vaccinated distance runners than those not vaccinated. It can be argued that the distance runners were well aware of the benefits of being vaccinated. Vaccination is effective in diminishing the possibilities of infections and minimizing the effects of the virus when one contracts it. Another reason for this is because proof of vaccination is also a requirement for distance runners to participate in major athletics events or travel abroad. In SEM, such policy level influences are formulated by governing bodies and agencies at local and state levels.

4.4.5 International Level

International community also intervened to assist distance runners and this is consistent with the qualitative findings. It was reported that the world athletics donated food to some distance runners in Iten which helped them reduce some costs of obtaining basic needs. I.O.C through NOCK also intervened by supporting the Tokyo Olympic distance runners and other athletes who took part in the Olympics.

“We were concerned about the wellness of our athletes since everyone could relate to the challenges of the pandemic. We conducted webinars where athletes received mental health support. We also provided a monthly stipend to selected athletes who were suffering and we donated some training facilities to encourage home workout for Tokyo Olympic athletes.” NOCK official

4.5 Strategies for developing resilience

This study sought to establish effective strategies for developing socio-economic and psychological resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. Athletes' understanding of resilience was a critical area of investigation in an attempt to establish strategies. The qualitative findings indicate that most of the participants defined resilience as a trait a distance runner can possess, a process of overcoming an obstacle or an outcome of training. They had a similar understanding of what amounts to resilience in the athletic industry at individual level. In their definitions, they reported that resilient distance runners have distinct qualities and features. These include never losing hope when faced with challenges, persevering during crises and exercising patience with themselves and the environment. Their definitions were consistent with the positive traits identified in resilient athletes (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). Additionally, in order to comprehensively establish the effective strategies, the scope of resilience needed to be clearly understood and the interconnectivity of the broader elements that contribute to resilience identified.

4.5.1 Economic Resilience

Some of the distance runners shifted to other ventures to earn a living because athletics was no longer reliable. Agribusiness was the most reported alternative source of livelihood where they practiced farming as expressed by a respondent below.

“With nowhere else to go or practice after the pandemic-induced recess, the majority of us shifted from sports to farming, and running errands at home. For me it wasn't a big deal since before joining athletics, I had done some farming on my small piece of land. Not that I am regretting it; I only feel that some of my colleagues were caught unawares. I would encourage any distance runner out here to increase their livelihood options to avoid stagnation during a crisis.” Athlete in Eldoret

Shifting to other ventures is a best practice since it points out a strategy for diversifying income generating activities among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. It can be argued that distance runners who had alternative livelihood options were less severely affected by the income loss from athletics as opposed to those who solely relied on athletics. Pursuing dual occupations assists in the growth of multiple identities that can uphold the well-being of athletes during crisis when they lose their athletic identity (Wylleman, 2019). The distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten are therefore encouraged to venture in activities outside their

sport to develop multiple streams of incomes and identities. This strategy will assist them not only during crises but also during their retirement.

However, it is vital to mention that considering this strategy in the view of an economic crisis requires significant structural changes to be put in place. For example, one way to achieve this would be by teaching financial management skills to distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. This approach will be instrumental in assisting them to develop economic resilience that is necessary during a crisis.

4.5.2 Social Resilience

The qualitative findings indicate that social support is vital during a crisis even though it can be threatened depending on the nature of the crisis. Distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten can strengthen their social resilience by maintaining meaningful social connections with others while adhering to the set measures. These ties can be maintained through virtual networks of communication or telephone conversations which are convenient in social isolation situations.

Social connections have been strongly linked to improved psychological outcomes among people. Other sources of social resilience can emanate from the athlete's entourage which includes sport organizations, community organizations, and relatives. Family members and coaches can serve as the first base of support for distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. With the necessary support, distance runners can report low erosion of their athletic identities and better psychological well-being.

“My family has been supportive before, during and after the pandemic. I managed to overcome the setbacks brought about by the pandemic because of the support and encouragement I received from my family members. If I was alone in this journey, I would have given up. My family has shaped me into the resilient person I have become and I cannot underestimate their support.”

Tokyo Olympic Medalist

Individuals working with the distance runners need to recognize and evaluate the psychosocial dynamics such as motivation, focus, confidence, positive personality, and support. Effective strategies of continuously checking in on them are necessary since it enhances their resilience and motivation. These efforts are encouraged even when there is no

crisis in order to make sure that distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten are open to seek help and support when calamity strikes.

4.5.3 Psychological Resilience

It is necessary to consider strategies which can improve the psychological resilience of distance runners in Iten and Eldoret. As previously discussed, psychological resilience is the capability to positively adjust to a changing setting (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). It is therefore a valuable skill for distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten to have so that they can cope well when challenges occur in their athletic pursuits.

Providing a facilitative environment is also necessary in enhancing the psychological resilience of distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. A facilitative environment guarantees high support when the challenges are high like in the case of the pandemic. It has already been established that the distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten faced a myriad of challenges during the pandemic and the effects would have been less severe if timely and adequate support was offered to them.

This means that their psychological resilience can be enhanced through mobilized efforts by relevant authorities as well as the athletes. The facilitative environment should be maintained since it is the ideal environment for developing psychological resilience among athletes entourage (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2016). Caution should be exercised to avoid distance runners from falling into the other three tenets present in the resilience matrix which are detrimental to the development of resilience. A facilitative environment in this case would also consist of a twenty four hour crisis hotline, immediate psychological aid and counseling for vulnerable distance runners.

The psychological resilience of distance runners can further be developed through training programs whereby they are taught relevant meta-reflective skills which enhance their ability to effectively deal with setbacks. These skills include, among others, cognitive reappraisal. Cognitive reappraisal is the deliberate use of one's thoughts to reframe a negative situation. Moreover; they can also be taught how to control their negative emotions during a crisis since resilience can be affected by evidence-based interventions and deliberate continuous practice on the part of the athlete and the wider athlete's entourage. The following responses illustrate that it is a transferable skill that can be developed through effective training.

“The military keeps one always active and engaged in a variety of activities. To me, practice is part of my daily schedule, and I believe I am actually strong enough to cope with stress. What I learnt from the military is what I utilized during the pandemic. Of course, I believe I am resilient and ready to face any difficulties which may present themselves. I also believe that resilience is a transferable skill.”Tokyo 2020 Olympic Medalist

“I think resilience is something present in almost all distance runners. For example, I have been a distance runner for over twenty years and I have never given up even when running a marathon. We can transfer this skill or will of never giving up in other areas of our lives such as overcoming the consequences of pandemics.” Athlete in Eldoret

“2020 was the year where it became evident that some of our hard working athletes were physically fit but not so mentally. The pandemic also accelerated the significance of good mental health among athletes and mental health awareness among different sports stakeholders. Therefore, it is critical to incorporate mental performance skills and techniques in their normal training routines.” Sport and Exercise Psychologist

Furthermore, all the respondents reported having access to a smartphone and the majority had basic secondary education in both study areas. The government through Athletics Kenya can develop a mobile application tailored to meet the basic psychological needs of distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. They can also use such platforms to digitize sports content on resilience to empower distance runners with adequate information. Investing in developing resilience at all levels should be a key priority in preparedness since the pandemic provided a significant opening for the utilization of innovative methods of even providing quality mental health care to distance runners. This technological move is very flexible and efficient to the extent that it can transform the athletic sector if adopted.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the main findings in accordance with objectives. The conclusion presented here was drawn from the findings. In addition, possible areas for further research were included.

5.1 Summary

The aim of this study was to explore ways of developing socio-economic and psychological resilience to future pandemics among distance runners in Eldoret and Iten by drawing lessons from their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study examined effects of COVID-19 pandemic on distance runners, assessed interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic and established effective strategies for developing resilience. The study used secondary sources of data to complement primary data to attain these objectives. Primary data was gathered using a questionnaire given to distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. Moreover, information was also collected from FGDs and key informants from the sports sector who provided critical information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and sports.

5.2 Conclusion

It has been concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic affected distance runners in many ways including, but not limited to; loss of incomes to distance runners following cancellation of races which eroded their livelihood sources, loss of scholarship among student athletes, loss of identity among them which was worsened by loss of team cohesion. Even then, some distance runners were not drastically affected. These were, generally, those who received more support such as home-training, government support, and encouragement from their families and the larger athletic community. Developing socio-economic and psychological resilience requires preparedness among distance runners and concerted efforts from the athlete's entourage.

5.3 Recommendations

This research has established the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic affected distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten and ways of developing resilience among them. This calls for strong action by the relevant sport authorities to effectively invest in developing socio-economic and psychological resilience among distance runners for them to overcome future pandemics. If they take action in view of enhancing resilience, immense benefits could be generated for the runners, their families, communities and the country.

Well-being of distance runners: There is an urgent need to increase the number of sport psychologists and mental health experts to offer psychological support to the distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten. There is also a pressing need to increase the number of mental health institutions in the two counties for timely assistance and accessibility in times of need.

Mental health awareness: Athletics Kenya and other sports organizations should facilitate mental health awareness initiatives among athletes like mental health education and campaigns to advocate for the well-being of athletes all the time. This will help in normalizing the pursuit of psychological care and aid among athletes even during crisis. Additionally, by normalizing these conversations, stigma surrounding mental health issues among athletes will be greatly reduced.

Technology: Technology is likely to transform Kenya's athletic industry if there is proper investment put in place. Distance runners in Eldoret and Iten ought to be empowered with information on financial planning and resilience building in order to strengthen their resilience capacities. Proactively linking these distance runners with all the necessary resources will also increase a wide range of interventions for them during a crisis. Whereas such measures require major investment, they will reap benefits in the long-term.

Community engagement: Engaging the athletes' entourage frequently is likely to provide adequate feedback at all stages during a crisis. Coordinating such efforts through an integrated approach will provide a unique chance to understand issues distance runners in Eldoret and Iten face. It is through such networks that distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten can also enhance their resilience.

5.4 Areas for further research

Despite the timely nature and potential of this research, it has not been without gaps, especially on inclusion and better resilience assessment models for distance runners in Eldoret and Iten. The following are some of the areas that future research could prioritize.

- A quantitative research should be done using resilience scales to measure the resilience of distance runners and Olympians in Eldoret and in Iten.
- Future studies ought to focus on Para-athletes and paralympians to explore their unique experience during the COVID-19.
- More studies should aim to quantify the prevalence and impact of mental issues on distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten since this study sought to identify the typologies. Quantifying will help in gaining a deeper understanding of the issue as well as coming up with more actionable solutions to address it.

REFERENCES

- Adamu, U. G., & Balatoni, I. (2022). The effect of COVID-19 epidemic on the industry of a Sub-Saharan Country: A perspective on sports industry in Nigeria. *Metszetek Társadalomtudományi Folyóirat (Cross-Sections Social Science Journal)*, 11(1), 32–48.
- Akhtar, D. M. I. (2016). *Research Design* (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 2862445).
<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2862445>
- Alam, Md. M., & Abdurraheem, I. I. (2021). COVID-19 and the financial crisis in the sports sector around the world. *Sport in Society*, 0(0), 1–14.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2021.1979964>
- Baker, E. H. (2014). Socioeconomic Status, Definition. In *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior, and Society* (pp. 2210–2214). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118410868.wbehibs395>
- Barasa, P. P., Maloba, B., E. Mukuna, D. T., & Tesfaye, A. (2022). *The Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Young People in Kenya*.
<https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/17430>
- Beauchamp, P., Kamis, D., & Stull, T. (2021). Achieving Mental Health and Peak Performance in Elite Athletes. *The Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 44(3), 347–358. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psc.2021.04.002>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Cristea, F., Weishaar, H., Geurts, B., Delamou, A., Tan, M. M. J., Legido-Quigley, H., Aminu, K., Mari-Sáez, A., Rocha, C., Camara, B., Barry, L., Thea, P., Boucsein, J., Bahr, T., Al-Awlaqi, S., Pozo-Martin, F., Boklage, E., Jegede, A. S., & Bcheraoui, C. E. (2022). A comparative analysis of experienced uncertainties in relation to risk

communication during COVID19: A four-country study. *Globalization and Health*, 18(1), 66. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-022-00857-x>

Deci, E., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). *Motivation, Personality, and Development within Embedded Social Contexts: An Overview of Self-Determination Theory*. Oxford University Press. <https://acuresearchbank.acu.edu.au/item/8q35y/motivation-personality-and-development-within-embedded-social-contexts-an-overview-of-self-determination-theory>

Den Hartigh, Ruud. J. R., Meerhoff, L. R. A., Van Yperen, N. W., Neumann, N. D., Brauers, J. J., Frencken, W. G. P., Emerencia, A., Hill, Y., Platvoet, S., Atzmueller, M., Lemmink, K. A. P. M., & Brink, M. S. (2022). Resilience in sports: A multidisciplinary, dynamic, and personalized perspective. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 0(0), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1750984X.2022.2039749>

Djeriouat, H. (2017). Self-determination and risk: The role of life goals and causality orientation in domain-specific risk propensity. *Journal of Risk Research*, 20, 256–276. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2015.1043573>

Fletcher, D., & Sarkar, M. (2012). A grounded theory of psychological resilience in Olympic champions. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 13(5), 669–678. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2012.04.007>

Fletcher, D., & Sarkar, M. (2013). Psychological resilience: A review and critique of definitions, concepts, and theory. *European Psychologist*, 18, 12–23. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000124>

Fletcher, D., & Sarkar, M. (2016). Mental fortitude training: An evidence-based approach to developing psychological resilience for sustained success. *Journal of Sport*

Psychology in Action, 7(3), 135–157.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/21520704.2016.1255496>

Frawley, S., & Schulenkorf, N. (Eds.). (2022). *Routledge Handbook of Sport and COVID-19*.

Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003176329>

Galderisi, S., Heinz, A., Kastrup, M., Beezhold, J., & Sartorius, N. (2015). Toward a new definition of mental health. *World Psychiatry*, 14(2), 231–233.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20231>

Galli, N., & Vealey, R. S. (2008). “Bouncing Back” from Adversity: Athletes’ Experiences of Resilience. *The Sport Psychologist*, 22(3), 316–335.

<https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.22.3.316>

Gaston, L., Blundell, M., & Fletcher, T. (2020). Gender diversity in sport leadership: An investigation of United States of America National Governing Bodies of Sport.

Managing Sport and Leisure, 25(6), 402–417.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1719189>

Gouttebarga et al. (2022). *Minds matter: How COVID-19 highlighted a growing need to protect and promote athlete mental health—Amsterdam UMC research portal*.

<https://researchinformation.amsterdamumc.org/en/publications/minds-matter-how-covid-19-highlighted-a-growing-need-to-protect-a>

Graupensperger, S., Benson, A. J., Kilmer, J. R., & Evans, M. B. (2020). Social

(Un)distancing: Teammate Interactions, Athletic Identity, and Mental Health of Student-Athletes During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *The Journal of Adolescent Health*,

67(5), 662–670. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.08.001>

Gupta, S., & McCarthy, P. J. (2021). Sporting Resilience During COVID-19: What Is the Nature of This Adversity and How Are Competitive Elite Athletes Adapting?

Frontiers in Psychology, 12.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.611261>

Håkansson, A., Moesch, K., Jönsson, C., & Kenttä, G. (2020). Potentially Prolonged Psychological Distress from Postponed Olympic and Paralympic Games during COVID-19-Career Uncertainty in Elite Athletes. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18*(1), E2.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18010002>

IOC. (2021). *IOC.(2021). IOCMentalHealthinLife;AthletesToolkit.*

[Htts://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Document%20Library/IOC/Athletes/Safe-Sport-Initiatives/IOC-Mental-Health-In-Elite-Athletes-Toolkit-2021.pdf](https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Document%20Library/IOC/Athletes/Safe-Sport-Initiatives/IOC-Mental-Health-In-Elite-Athletes-Toolkit-2021.pdf)—

Jia, L., Carter, M. V., Cusano, A., Li, X., Kelly, J. D., Bartley, J. D., & Parisien, R. L. (2022). The Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Mental and Emotional Health of Athletes: A Systematic Review. *The American Journal of Sports Medicine,*

3635465221087473. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03635465221087473>

Kariuki, G. (2019). *Determinants of Women's Involvement in Coaching Individual and Team Sports in Nairobi City County, Kenya* [Thesis, Kenyatta University]. <https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle/123456789/19653>

Kemboi, W. J. (2013). *Impact of athletics on youth empowerment: A study of Iten town, Elgeiyo Marakwet county, Kenya* [Thesis, University of Nairobi].

<http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/56344>

Luthar, S. S., Lyman, E. L., & Crossman, E. J. (2014). Resilience and positive psychology. In *Handbook of developmental psychopathology, 3rd ed* (pp. 125–140). Springer Science + Business Media. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-9608-3_7

- McLeroy, K. R., Bibeau, D., Steckler, A., & Glanz, K. (1988). An ecological perspective on health promotion programs. *Health Education Quarterly*, *15*(4), 351–377.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/109019818801500401>
- McManama O'Brien, K. H., Rowan, M., Willoughby, K., Griffith, K., & Christino, M. A. (2021). Psychological Resilience in Young Female Athletes. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(16), 8668.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18168668>
- Mutuku, E. N., Kioli, F. N., & Gaudin, B. (2017). Psychosocial Challenges Facing Athletes (Medium and Long distance Runners) in Eldoret, Kenya. In B. Gaudin (Ed.), *Kenyan and Ethiopian Athletics—Towards an Alternative Scientific Approach*. IRD Editions.
<https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01428776>
- Mwanga, S. S., Gaudin, B., & Felix, K. (2017). Family and its Influence on Kenyan Athletes' Performance. In B. Gaudin (Ed.), *Kenyan and Ethiopian Athletics- Towards an Alternative Scientific Approach*. IRD Editions. <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01427745>
- Nosal, P., & Lopez-Gonzalez, H. (2021). How did regular sports bettors behave during COVID-19 lockdown? Evidence from Poland. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *21*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2021.1909092>
- Olaseni, A. O., Akinsola, O. S., Agberotimi, S. F., & Oguntayo, R. (2020). Psychological distress experiences of Nigerians during COVID-19 pandemic; the gender difference. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *2*(1), 100052.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2020.100052>
- Olympic Studies Centre. (2022). Impact of COVID-19 on sport and the olympic movement. <https://library.olympics.com/>

- Pensgaard, A. M., Oevreboe, T. H., & Ivarsson, A. (2021). Mental health among elite athletes in Norway during a selected period of the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMJ Open Sport — Exercise Medicine*, 7(1), e001025. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjsem-2020-001025>
- Pillay, L., Janse van Rensburg, D. C. C., Jansen van Rensburg, A., Ramagole, D. A., Holtzhausen, L., Dijkstra, H. P., & Cronje, T. (2020). Nowhere to hide: The significant impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) measures on elite and semi-elite South African athletes. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 23(7), 670–679. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2020.05.016>
- Reardon, C. L., Bindra, A., Blauwet, C., Budgett, R., Campriani, N., Currie, A., Gouttebauge, V., McDuff, D., Mountjoy, M., Purcell, R., Putukian, M., Rice, S., & Hainline, B. (2020). Mental health management of elite athletes during COVID-19: A narrative review and recommendations. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 55(11), 608.
- Robb, R. A. (1963). w. G. Cochran, Sampling Techniques (John Wiley & Sons, 2nd edition, 1963), ix+413 pp., 72s. *Proceedings of the Edinburgh Mathematical Society*, 13(4), 342–343. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0013091500025724>
- Rotich, B. (2021). *Rotich, B. (2021). Kenyan athletes struggle with bills as coronavirus bites. Nation. <https://nation.africa/kenya/sports/athletics/kenya-athletes-struggle-with-bills-as-coronavirus-bite>*
- Ryan, R. M., & La Guardia, J. G. (2000). What is being optimized?: Self-determination theory and basic psychological needs. In *Psychology and the aging revolution: How we adapt to longer life* (pp. 145–172). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10363-008>
- Scarneo, S. E., Kerr, Z. Y., Kroshus, E., Register-Mihalik, J. K., Hosokawa, Y., Stearns, R. L., DiStefano, L. J., & Casa, D. J. (2019). The Socioecological Framework: A Multifaceted Approach to Preventing Sport-Related Deaths in High School Sports.

Journal of Athletic Training, 54(4), 356–360. <https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-173-18>

Sikes, M. (2014). *Choosing to run: A history of gender and athletics in Kenya, c. 1940s - 1980s* [[Http://purl.org/dc/dcmitype/Text](http://purl.org/dc/dcmitype/Text), Oxford University, UK].

So, R. C. H., Ko, J., Yuan, Y. W. Y., Lam, J. J., & Louie, L. (2004). Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and sport: Facts and fallacies. *Sports Medicine (Auckland, N.Z.)*, 34(15), 1023–1033. <https://doi.org/10.2165/00007256-200434150-00002>

Southwick, S. M., Bonanno, G. A., Masten, A. S., Panter-Brick, C., & Yehuda, R. (2014). Resilience definitions, theory, and challenges: Interdisciplinary perspectives.

European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v5.25338>

Termine, P., & Percic, M. (2015). *Rural Women's Empowerment through Employment from the Beijing Platform for Action Onwards—Termine—2015—IDS Bulletin—Wiley Online Library*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1759-5436.12154>

UN. (2020). *The impact of COVID-19 on sport, physical activity and well-being and its effects on social development | DISD*.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2020/05/covid-19-sport/>

UN Women. (2020). *UN Women (2020). COVID-19, women, girls and sport: Build back better*.

Uroh, C. C., & Adewunmi, C. M. (2021). Psychological Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Athletes. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 3.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fspor.2021.603415>

von Mohr, M., Kirsch, L. P., & Fotopoulou, A. (2021). Social touch deprivation during COVID-19: Effects on psychological wellbeing and craving interpersonal touch.

Royal Society Open Science, 8(9), 210287. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.210287>

- Waterschoot, J., Morbée, S., Vermote, B., Brenning, K., Flamant, N., Vansteenkiste, M., & Soenens, B. (2022). Emotion regulation in times of COVID-19: A person-centered approach based on self-determination theory. *Current Psychology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02623-5>
- WHO. (2022). *World Health Organization, (2022). World Mental Health Report: Transforming Mental Health for All.*
- Wilber, R. L., & Pitsiladis, Y. P. (2012). Kenyan and Ethiopian distance runners: What makes them so good? *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*, 7(2), 92–102. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsp.7.2.92>
- Wiltshire, H. D., Supriya, R., & Baker, J. S. (2022). COVID-19 Impact on the Sport Sector Economy and Athletic Performance. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 15(4), 173. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm15040173>
- Wylleman, P. (2019). A developmental and holistic perspective on transiting out of elite sport. In *APA handbook of sport and exercise psychology, volume 1: Sport psychology, Vol. 1* (pp. 201–216). American Psychological Association.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0000123-011>
- Zhang, N., Yang, S., & Jia, P. (2022). Cultivating Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Socioecological Perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 73(1), 575–598. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-030221-031857>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTION LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, SOCIAL WORK & AWS

Fax 254-2-245566

Telex 22095 Varsity Nairobi Kenya
Tel. 0204913217

P.O. Box 30197
Nairobi

Kenya

September 8, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR NELLY NKATHA MUTUMA
(MA STUDENT)**

This is to confirm that **Nelly Nkatha Mutuma (Reg. M10/38320/2020)** is a registered Master of Arts student at the Department of Sociology, Social Work & African Women Studies, University of Nairobi.

She is currently working on her research project

Any assistance accorded her during her research period is highly appreciated

Prof. G.G. Wairire
Chairman

Department of Sociology, Social Work & African Women Studies



APPENDIX B: CONSENT

I intend to explore ways of developing resilience to future pandemics by drawing lessons from the experiences of distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten during the COVID-19 pandemic period. By signing this form you accept to participate and confirm that you have no objection in the use of any audio recording during the session. *I have understood the information above and agree to participate.*

Name _____

Sign _____

Date _____

I intend to explore ways of developing resilience to future pandemics by drawing lessons from the experiences of distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten during the COVID-19 pandemic period. By signing this form you accept to participate and confirm that you have no objection in the use of any audio recording during the session. *I have understood the information above and agree to participate.*

Name _____

Sign _____

Date _____

I intend to explore ways of developing resilience to future pandemics by drawing lessons from the experiences of distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten during the COVID-19 pandemic period. By signing this form you accept to participate and confirm that you have no objection in the use of any audio recording during the session. *I have understood the information above and agree to participate.*

Name _____

Sign _____

Date _____

I intend to explore ways of developing resilience to future pandemics by drawing lessons from the experiences of distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten during the COVID-19 pandemic period. By signing this form you accept to participate and confirm that you have no objection in the use of any audio recording during the session.

I have understood the information above and agree to participate.

Sign _____

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

To be administered to Middle-and Long-Distance Runners in Eldoret

INTRODUCTION

Greetings. The aim of the study is to explore ways of developing socio-economic and psychological resilience by drawing lessons from the experiences of distance runners Iten during the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire captures how you have been affected by COVID-19 and best resilience practices. Your participation is voluntary and will not attract any form of compensation. However, the study is significant and will provide appropriate policy directions.

Are you willing to participate?

- Yes
- No

SECTION A:

Indicate your sex?

- Female
- Male

Indicate the age category you belong to?

- 18-19
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-35
- >35

Indicate education status?

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

Where is your training based at?

- Eldoret
- Iten

SECTION B: EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

<p>Years in athletics?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 0-1 yrs ▪ 2-4 yrs ▪ 5-7yrs ▪ >8 yrs
<p>In what ways did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your socio-economic activities?<i>(Including restrictive measures like lockdown)</i></p>
<p>What forms of mental health challenges did you experience during the pandemic?</p>
<p>SECTION C: INTERVENTIONS</p>
<p>Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
<p>How did you cope with the (socioeconomic and psychological) effects of the pandemic?</p>
<p>What forms of external support did you receive during that period?</p>
<p>SECTION D:RESILIENCE</p>
<p>Indicate if you can access a Smartphone?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
<p>Based on your experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, what strategies would you recommend for developing socio-economic and psychological resilience to future pandemics?</p>
<p>SECTION E: FOLLOW-UP</p>
<p>Shall I contact you for the validation of these findings?</p> <p>Please provide your most preferred contact method? Email/Telephone</p> <p>Thank you. I shall share with you the findings and recommendations of this research.</p>

To be administered to Middle-and Long-Distance Runners in ITEN

INTRODUCTION

Greetings. The aim of the study is to explore ways of developing socio-economic and psychological resilience by drawing lessons from the experiences of distance runners Iten during the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire captures how you have been affected by COVID-19 and best resilience practices. Your participation is voluntary and will not attract any form of compensation. However, the study is significant and will provide appropriate policy directions.

Are you willing to participate?

- Yes
- No

SECTION A:

Indicate your sex ?

- Female
- Male

Indicate the age category you belong to?

- 18-19
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-35
- >35

Indicate education status?

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

Where is your training based at?

- Eldoret
- Iten

SECTION B: EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Years in athletics?

- 0-1 yrs
- 2-4 yrs
- 5-7yrs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ >8 yrs
<p>In what ways did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your socio-economic activities?<i>(Including restrictive measures like lockdown)</i></p>
<p>What forms of mental health challenges did you experience during the pandemic?</p>
<p>SECTION C: INTERVENTIONS</p>
<p>Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
<p>How did you cope with the (socioeconomic and psychological) effects of the pandemic?</p>
<p>What forms of external support did you receive during that period?</p>
<p>SECTION D:RESILIENCE</p>
<p>Indicate if you can access a Smartphone?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes ▪ No
<p>Based on your experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, what strategies would you recommend for developing socio-economic and psychological resilience to future pandemics?</p>
<p>SECTION E: FOLLOW-UP</p>
<p>Shall I contact you for the validation of these findings?</p> <p>Please provide your most preferred contact method? Email/Telephone</p> <p>Thank you. I shall share with you the findings and recommendations of this research.</p>

APPENDIX D: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

To be administered to Coaches/Trainers, Athletics Kenya (AK) officials, National Olympic Committee Kenya Officials (NOCK) and Sport Psychologists

Introduction

Hello. I want to understand your perspectives on how to effectively develop resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and Iten. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes and I would like to audio record it for reference.

Do you accept to being interviewed?

Yes

No

Organization.....Role of KI in the Organization..... County.....Date.....

KEY AREAS	<i>Guiding questions</i>	<i>Guidance notes</i>
Warm-up questions	-How are you today? Do you have any questions you would like to ask first?	<i>Inquire about their day and whether they have any questions before the interview starts.</i>
1. Athlete Engagement	- How did COVID-19 pandemic disrupt your work with athletes?	<i>Probe for the specific disruptions caused by COVID-19 pandemic</i>
2.Socio-Economic Effects	-What are some of the socio- economic effects experienced by distance runners?	<i>Probe for specific socio-economic issues</i>
3.Psychological Effects	- What psychological effects were experienced by distance runners?	<i>Probe for the specific psychological effects</i>
	-How did the athletes deal	<i>Probe for a variety of</i>

<p>4. Interventions</p>	<p>with their socio-economic effects?</p> <p>-How did the athletes deal with the psychological effects?</p>	<p><i>interventions utilized by athletes in both dimensions.</i></p>
<p>5. Stakeholder Support</p>	<p>-From the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic until now are you aware of any stakeholder support athletes received?</p> <p>-What type of support?</p>	<p><i>Probe for specific type of support (i.e. capacity building, financial support etc)</i></p> <p><i>Probe whether it was from the government, NGO, CBO, FBO.</i></p>
<p>6. Resilience</p>	<p>What does Resilience mean to you?</p> <p>What are some of the aspects you would look for, in a runner, to know that he or she is resilient?</p> <p>What would you consider resilience from your organization's perspective?</p> <p>What forms of opportunities exist in the athletic space as a result of the pandemic?</p>	<p><i>Probe for the Knowledge, definition, attitude, understanding and practice of resilience</i></p> <p><i>Probe on the characteristics of a resilient athlete</i></p> <p><i>Probe how the organization measures resilience or recovery</i></p> <p><i>Probe for variety of opportunities</i></p>

	How can resilience be improved?	<p><i>Probe for specific skills athletes lack</i></p> <p><i>Probe for different perspectives of developing resilience</i></p>
Conclusion	<p>We are at the end of the discussion. Do you have any questions or comments before we conclude?</p> <p>Thanks for your time.</p>	<p><i>Probe for further comments or questions as you wrap up and thank the participant.</i></p>
Follow Up	<p>Shall I contact you for the validation of these findings?</p> <p>Please provide your most preferred contact method?</p> <p>Email/Telephone</p> <p>Thank you. I shall share with you the findings and recommendations of this research.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Telephone</p>

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

To be administered to a group of middle- and long-distance runners in Eldoret

Introduction

To begin with, we will basically be discussing your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. So please feel comfortable to also share your perspectives on how to develop resilience to future pandemics. I want to gather different views so please feel free to talk. I would also like to audio record the session so that I can refer to information in case I miss anything. Do you all give me permission to record? I will spend about 45 to 60 minutes with you.

Do you accept to be interviewed?

Yes ----- If yes, the researcher will provide the consent form for signature.

No----- If not interested, terminate the discussion, and thank the participant/s.

Focus Group Protocol

Let us start by going around the group where each person could share with us their name and tell us whether they are middle or long distance runners?

Thank you.

Key Areas	Guiding questions	Guidance notes
Warm- up questions	-How are you today? Do you have any questions you would like to ask or comments you would like to make before the discussion begins?	<i>Inquire about their day and whether they have any questions before the discussion starts. (Make sure all the distance runners are comfortable in the setting before the discussion)</i>
1.Athlete Engagement	- What are some of the reasons for engaging in distance running?	<i>Probe for the specific motivation or reason for engaging in distance running</i>

2.Socio-Economic Dimension	-What are some of socio- economic issues you experienced during this period?	<i>Probe for specific socio-economic issues experienced by the distance runners</i>
3.Psychological Dimension	What are some of the psychological issues you experienced during this period?	<i>Probe for the specific psychological effects</i>
4. Interventions	-How did the distance runners deal with their socio-economic effects? -How did the distance runners deal with the psychological effects?	<i>Probe for a variety of interventions utilized by distance runners in both dimensions.</i>
5.Stakeholder Support	-What type of stakeholder support did athletes receive during the COVID-19 pandemic?	<i>Probe for specific type of support (i.e. capacity building, financial support etc.)</i>
6 Resilience	What does Resilience mean to you? What do you call it in your local language? What are some of the aspects you would look for in a distance runner, to know that he or she is resilient? How can resilience be improved?	<i>Probe for the Knowledge, attitude, understanding and practice of resilience</i> <i>Probe on the characteristics of a resilient athlete</i> <i>Probe for different perspectives of developing resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten</i>

<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>We are at the end of the discussion. Does anyone have any questions or comments before we conclude this discussion?</p> <p>Thanks for your time.</p>	<p><i>Probe for further comments or questions as you wrap up and thank the participants.</i></p>
<p>Follow up</p>	<p>Shall I contact you for the validation of these findings?</p> <p>Please provide your most preferred contact method? Email/Telephone</p> <p>Thank you. I shall share with you the findings and recommendations of this research.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Telephone</p>

Introduction

To be administered to a group of middle- and long-distance runners in Eldoret

To begin with, we will basically be discussing your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. So please feel comfortable to also share your perspectives on how to develop resilience to future pandemics. I want to gather different views so please feel free to talk. I would also like to audio record the session so that I can refer to information in case I miss anything. Do you all give me permission to record? I will spend about 45 to 60 minutes with you.

Do you accept to be interviewed?

Yes ----- If yes, the researcher will provide the consent form for signature.

No----- If not interested, terminate the discussion, and thank the participant/s.

Focus Group Protocol

Let us start by going around the group where each person could share with us their name and tell us whether they are middle or long distance runners?

Thank you.

Key Areas	Guiding questions	Guidance notes
Warm- up questions	--How are you today? Do you have any questions you would like to ask or comments you would like to make before the discussion begins?	<i>Inquire about their day and whether they have any questions before the discussion starts. (Make sure all the distance runners are comfortable in the setting before the discussion)</i>
1.Athlete Engagement	- What are some of the reasons for engaging in distance running?	<i>Probe for the specific motivation or reason for engaging in distance running</i>
2.Socio-Economic Dimension	- What are some of socio-economic issues you experienced during this period?	<i>Probe for specific socio-economic issues experienced by the distance runners</i>
3.Psychological Dimension	What are some of the psychological issues you experienced during this period?	<i>Probe for the specific psychological effects</i>
4. Interventions	-How did the distance runners deal with their socio-economic effects? -How did the distance runners deal with the psychological effects?	<i>Probe for a variety of interventions utilized by distance runners in both dimensions.</i>
5.Stakeholder Support	-What type of stakeholder support did athletes receive during the COVID-19 pandemic?	<i>Probe for specific type of support (i.e. capacity building, financial support etc.)</i>

<p>6 Resilience</p>	<p>What does Resilience mean to you?</p> <p>What do you call it in your local language?</p> <p>What are some of the aspects you would look for in a distance runner, to know that he or she is resilient?</p> <p>How can resilience be improved among distance runners?</p>	<p><i>Probe for the Knowledge, attitude, understanding and practice of resilience</i></p> <p><i>Probe on the characteristics of a resilient athlete</i></p> <p><i>Probe for different perspectives of developing resilience among distance runners in Eldoret and in Iten</i></p>
<p>Conclusion</p>	<p>We are at the end of the discussion. Does anyone have any questions or comments before we conclude?</p> <p>Thanks for your time.</p>	<p><i>Probe for further comments or questions as you wrap up and thank the participants.</i></p>
<p>Follow up</p>	<p>Shall I contact you for the validation of these findings?</p> <p>Please provide your most preferred contact method? Email/Telephone</p> <p>Thank you. I shall share with you the findings and recommendations of this research.</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Telephone</p>

APPENDIX F: CASE NARRATIVE GUIDE

For Tokyo 2020 Olympic Medalists in Middle- and Long-Distance Races

Greetings, I am interviewing Tokyo 2020 Olympic medalists in middle- and long-distance races to understand their experiences.

- Do you accept to be interviewed? Yes/No
- How long have you been a distance runner?
- What motivates you to be a distance runner?
- Would you kindly share your athletic experience before the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Kindly tell me about your experience during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics?
- Kindly tell me about the challenges if there are any that you experienced before the Tokyo 2020 Olympics?
- What about during the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, did you experience any challenges?
- Do you think that these challenges to some extent affected your athletic performance?
- How were you able to overcome these challenges to achieve your Olympic success?
- What are your main sources of resilience, or rather what kept you going during this challenging period?
- What would you recommend in order to overcome challenges associated with future pandemics?
- We are at the end of the interview. Do you have any questions or comments before we conclude?
- Thanks for your time.
- Shall I contact you for the validation of these findings?
- Please provide your most preferred contact method? Email/Telephone
- Thank you