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**DEPARTMENT OF SPORT SCIENCE AND PHYSICAL  
EDUCATION**

**ROLES, CONTRIBUTIONS AND MANAGERIAL SKILLS  
OF ATHLETE MANAGERS IN ETHIOPIAN ATHLETICS**

**BY BEREKET YITBAREK**

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**BY**

**BEREKET YITBAREK**

**SUPERVISORS**

- **DR ASCHENAKI TADDESE**  
Major Advisor  
(Associate Professor, College of Education and Language Studies, Addis Ababa  
University, Ethiopia)
- **DR TEFERA TADESSE**  
(Associate Professor, Educational Development and Quality Center, University of Global  
Health Equity, Kigali, Rwanda)
- **DR ZERU BEKELE**  
(College of Education and Language Studies, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia)

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**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLAGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SPORT SCIENCE AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by **Bereket Yitbarek**, entitled '**Roles, Contributions and Managerial Skills of Athlete Managers in Ethiopian Athletics**' and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sport Science (Sport Management) complies with the regulations of Addis Ababa University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Approved and Signed by the Examining Committee:

Chairperson: <u>Dr Alemmebrat Kiflu</u>	Signature: 	Date: <u>18/03/2026</u>
Internal Examiner: <u>Dr Kesatie Legesse</u>	Signature: 	Date: _____
External Examiner: <u>Prof. Rajesh Kumar</u>	Signature: 	Date: _____
Advisor: <u>Dr Aschenaki Taddese</u> (Major Advisor)	Signature: 	Date: _____
<u>Dr Tefera Tadesse</u>	Signature: 	Date: _____
<u>Dr Zeru Bekele</u>	Signature: 	Date: _____

## DECLARATION

I the under signed, declare that this dissertation entitled “Roles, Contributions and Managerial Skills of Athlete Managers in Ethiopian Athletics” is my original work and has never been presented and written in this or any other universities, and all resources and materials used here in, are acknowledged.

Name: Bereket Yitbarek

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Place: Addis Ababa

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAU	Addis Ababa University
AD	Athlete Development
AR	Athlete Representatives
CNCS	College of Natural and Computational Science
CRR	Competition Related Roles
EAF	Ethiopian Athletics Federation
LTDA	Long Term Athlete Development
LS	Logistic Support
IOC	International Olympics Committee
OFR	Off Field Roles
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SS	Social Support
TRR	Training Related Roles
TS	Technical Support
YDP	Youth Development Program
WA	World Athletics

## ABSTRACT

Middle- and long-distance running is the most popular athletics event in Ethiopia, participated in both sexes in search of glory, recognition, and/or financial security. Athletes engage in the training tirelessly with enthusiasm, and their success was determined by the different stakeholders; however, athlete management protocols play a significant role. To this end, the study attempts to examine the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athletes' managers by using a concurrent mixed-methods research design. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered by using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and a semi-structured questionnaire. SPSS version 27 was used to analyze quantitative data, and the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The samples for the study were 248 elite athletes, 16 coaches, eight athlete managers/agents, and two experts from the Ethiopian Athletic Federation. The study was conducted in the capital city, Addis Ababa, where the majority of participants reside. The response rate for the questionnaire was 84.6%. Majority of the respondents were male athlete (n=151, 60.9 %); and in terms of their running discipline, majority of them were long-distance runners (n=171, 69%). On the other hand, all of the coach respondents were male. Factor analysis was carried out for roles, contributions, managerial skills, and developmental aspects; accordingly, each factor was treated as a subtheme. Accordingly, roles played by athlete managers can come in the form of training-related, competition-related, or off-field roles; and they provide logistic, technical, and social support to athletes under their supervisor. With regard to the managerial skills, an athlete manager possesses conceptual, technical, and human/interpersonal skill. On the other hand, the developmental aspects of the Ethiopian athletics focus on elite, youth, coach, and training center development. To better understand the descriptive analysis frequency and percentage were used to analyze the responses from the questionnaire. In relation to the inferential statistics, non-parametric tests were used since the data fails the normality test; Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests show a non-normal distribution (K-S,  $p < 0.05$ ); accordingly, Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H tests were employed to assess the group difference. The findings reveal that roles related to training and competitions were emphasized over off-field roles. The logistic and technical supports were favoured at the expense of contribution to the social support. Athlete managers were found to possess better conceptual skills resulted from their prior exposure as an athlete and/or coach while their human and technical skills require a remedy. Athlete managers highly emphasize on working with elite athlete via hunting what is on the market. Besides, poor linkage was observed among training centers, clubs and athlete representatives (athlete managers). Therefore, the Ethiopian Athlete Federation should play its mandating role in insisting athlete managers to address the roles, contributions and managerial skills in a balanced manner.

**Key words:** athlete management, contribution, managerial skills, elite athlete, elite development, Ethiopia, roles, training center

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the topic of the dissertation and provides an overview of athlete management in Ethiopia in relation to athlete development, specifically middle- and long-distance running. It justifies the need for research on the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers towards athlete development in the Ethiopian context by defining research problems and identifying research gaps based on a brief review of prior work related to the problem. Then, the general objective and specific objectives were clearly stated and defined, followed by the presentation of conceptual frame work of the study. The organization of the study was also included in this part to provide a clear picture of subsequent chapters. The operational definitions of the study were also presented in this part of the dissertation to define terms in the context of the study.

#### **1.1. Background and justification**

Professional distance running over the past 25 years has been dominated and monopolized by Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes ranked among the world's best runners in the 10 km, half marathon, and marathon by sex and nationality during 1999–2015 (Nikolaidis et al., 2017; Wolde & Gaudin, 2007). Even though almost all aspects of athletics are practiced in Ethiopia, the country is known and successful in distance races, with the best middle- and long-distance runners (Hamilton, 2000) representing the nation and the continent in various international sports arenas.

Athletics in Ethiopia is regarded as one of the most influential sports, which creates room for many irrespective of their age, sex, ethnicity, and athletic experience. In addition, it plays a vital role in promoting Ethiopia to the rest of the world by presenting icons to various sports arenas. Participation of Ethiopia in higher levels of athletic events goes back to the 1980s, when athletes got access to participate in Olympic games, showcasing

their potential to the world. Such an opportunity provides a good national spirit and gains Ethiopia national recognition in the sporting world (Chappell & Seifu, 2000). Apparently, the current outflow of athletes to sport was mainly inspired by the victory of Abebe Bikila and Mamo Wolde in the 1960s Rome Olympic Games. The barefoot runner, Abebe Bikila, is regarded as a pioneer for Ethiopian athletics, and his successive participation in the Olympics in Rome, Tokyo, and Mexico City made him the century's most memorable long-distance runner (Benti, 2010; Weidt, 2011). Ever since then, achieving international and especially Olympic sporting success has become increasingly important to all (De Bosscher et al., 2009).

Athletics, as a sport, is ranked fourth in terms of global interest and its reputation; and in comparison, to other sports federations, World Athletics (WA) was ranked third (Nelson,2020) entailing the improvement in overall perceptions as time goes. The dynamic nature of the sport performance brings room for the introduction and application of advanced scientific approaches to the sport, aiming to its betterment (Phillips et al., 2010). In terms of developmental pathway, it is regarded as a late specialization sport, as it demands a minimum of ten years (Thompson, 2009). This reflects that athlete development and sport development are not easy tasks and require collaboration of different stakeholders. In this regard, proper follow-up of the athlete development pathway ensures optimized development and reaching potential in relation to the athlete's age, sex, and ability level.

Athletics has a huge investment and reputation, which attracts and entertains individuals, groups, and organizations to invest and take part in it. Recently, there has been a growing trend and interest to invest in sport and organize athletic events in various parts of the world. In doing so, linking the athlete and the sport becomes crucial; hence, athlete representatives (AR), also known as athlete managers, play a significant role. As a result, the emergence of athlete managers opens doors for East African athletes to access international athletic races, mainly middle- and long-distance running events.

Athlete managers or athlete representatives are introduced to Ethiopian athletics in the 1990s mainly to serve as a third party in linking the financial relationship between the

athlete and the federation (Wolde & Gaudin, 2007). Ever since, Ethiopian athletes have begun to access the commercial events in athletics as of 1992, reflecting a remarkable potential. World Athletics (WA) states that athletes may use the services of an AR to assist them in the negotiation of their athletics program and in such other matters as they may agree (2020). They are responsible for facilitating athletic competitions for athletes outside of Africa, where money can be gained as a result of winning and participation as well. They promote the athlete and the entire athletic organization via ensuring all financial aspects are run smoothly. Worldwide more than 270 athlete representatives work in all track and field events (athletics); more than 20 are accredited to work in Ethiopian athletics via their agents in middle- and long-distance events, including 800 m, 1500 m, 3000 m steeple chase, 5000m, 10,000m, half marathon, marathon and also in varied road and cross-country races. Currently more athlete managers are attracted to work with Ethiopian athletes; the figure is increasing from time to time.

The governing body of athletics in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Athletics Federation (EAF), was established mainly to promote athletics. To this effect, development of athletics becomes its pillar task; hence, it establishes and monitors more than 40 athletics project sites, ten training centers, and two pilot projects (kid's athletics) in various regional states with an increment in number, quality, and coverage. The federation, which was established in 1961, strives to promote and monitor the sport of athletics in the country in line with the national sport policy as well as with the World Athletics (WA) protocol. The EAF supports the aforementioned projects and training centers throughout the country with its failures to address all demands put forth. The nature and amount of support are usually claimed as insufficient and inappropriate by many in terms of accessibility and scope.

In addition to establishing, supporting, and supervising projects and developmental centers, EAF guides and supports first- and second-division athletics clubs by preparing competitions and capacity-building courses. The link between them is expected to be smooth, apparently in question usually in the context of representing the country in major athletic events like the Olympics and world championships. In comparison to other sports (football), it accommodates fewer clubs in its highest division. Only six clubs enrolled in

the first division whereby many elite athletes engaged (Mechal, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Federal Maremia, Ethio-Electric, Federal Police and Ethiopian construction). On the other hand, second division clubs are two- to threefold, incorporating city administration athletics clubs and emerging clubs, which are promising. The former are financed by government and/or corporate companies, whereas the latter includes individuals. Nevertheless, some of the second division clubs were poorly organized, requiring restructuring.

Athletes at the elite level require synchronized support and a great deal of better management, ensuring unreserved engagement in training and competition (Andersen et al., 2015; Burns et al., 2022). In this regard, the roles of an athlete manager in contributing to and managing athletes to help them develop are undeniable. The presence of athlete managers helps athletes in various ways and in different aspects, ranging from access to sportswear to safeguarding and from training to competition opportunity. This attracts many elite athletes to work or join “management teams” or groups that were formed to provide training in the preparation of athletes for a desired competition. Nevertheless, this connection is hardly criticized by many as if it fails proper handling of an individual or a group of athletes. Effectiveness in sports and athletics encompasses varied skills, and being a skillful manager is unquestionable in the course of helping athletes to grow and prosper. With this notion, the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers/their agents should be clearly understood since they impact the development of both the athlete and the sport of athletics. Hence, the study aims to examine the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers as they are working with elite Ethiopian athletes. Exploring the developmental aspects of the sport, middle- and long-distance running in particular, was also the concern of the study.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

The interest to work with athlete managers is increasing from time to time by many Ethiopian middle- and long-distance runners, as it provides an opportunity to become international athletes. Becoming an international athlete is associated with performance, social, and economic development whereby athletes can boost economic gains and

recognition from society (Acquah-Sam, 2021; Răzvan et al., 2020). In linking athletes to international world, athlete managers serve as a mediator assisting athletes to get exposed to sports world. To this end, working with athlete managers opens doors for many to become international athletes through access to training and competition opportunities. Such grants help for the development of an individual athlete and the nation's sport development. Consequently, the desire to get nominated and recognized by athlete managers requires athletes to get focused and devoted in both training and competition.

Engagement and success in athletics is not an easy task. It defies the tendency of describing the sport as “effortless” and saying “athletes are born”; such thoughts mask the years of preparation and sacrifice athletes inevitably made (Crawley, 2019). Whilst athletes' desire to become successful stems from uninterrupted training, the philosophical perspective of their coach and managers may impact their development (Bloom et al., 2014; Jenkins, 2010). The “athlete first, winning second” coaching philosophy is considered an ideal approach to athletes. Such an approach emphasizes the progressive development of an athlete through avoiding specialized training for the young (Balyi et al., 2013). Training aiming for immediate success may ruin athletes' development and goes contrary to the notion of WA and the sport's natural intention. Besides, specialized training in young athletes has a risk of injury and burnout associated with more competition and decreased age-appropriate play (Myer et al., 2015). Hence, training provided to the athletes should be done with care and must consider their stages of development via considering a planned approach to training (Kipp, 2017; Stellingwerff, 2013). Despite this fact, Ethiopian athletics fails to produce as many athletes with sustained performance as possible.

Currently, it is evident to observe athlete managers influencing the sport of athletics in Ethiopia, driving as many young athletes as possible to take part and shine in worldwide athletic meetings and championships. Although the presence of athlete managers in the sport of athletics brought remarkable access to athletes to get promoted to the international athletics arena, athletes' sustainable performance is in question. The rise and fall of a newly introduced athletes were observed and can be considered as a drawback for sustainability, sine current performance were decisive. Besides, they usually help

potential athletes to show their performance and skill to the international sports. The athlete development philosophy advocated by the WA is not fully implemented, whereby an emphasis is given to able athletes at the expense of many athletes who sought to become elite. The transition of athletes from grass roots (kid's athletics) to elite level should be re-evaluated and done with caution and care (Seanor et al., 2017).

Although Ethiopia has been lauded for its reputation in distance races, a serious problem is still glaring, especially in athlete management. Athletes are at stake to be overused for the sake of fulfilling the demands of their representatives. Who is responsible? Is it the manager or the athlete? The roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers may impact the athlete development scheme, which are not clearly determined. Meanwhile, the objective of EAF is mainly to make the sport valuable to the community, and athlete managers intend to maximize profit. The latter uses different mechanisms, i.e., business models, to meet its objectives, which, one way or another, may be contrary to the EAF standpoint. At the elite level, the commercial interests of outside entities such as sponsors and agents are influential in harnessing the rich talent pool and translating that into global success (Shelley et al., 2023). The influence of athlete managers needs to be geared to the development of the athlete in particular and the sport in general. Hence, it demands an implementing strategy to link the athlete manager and the sport. The researcher argues that the athlete development strategy implemented by the national federation needs to be critically examined and supported by a finding that can benefit both parties: athletes and athlete managers. Despite these facts, there are no studies reporting the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers in Ethiopian athletics. Therefore, this study provides evidence on the actual roles played by athlete managers along with their contribution and managerial skill in dealing with elite Ethiopian athletes. The study further discusses the state of Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running.

### **1.3. Research questions**

On the basis of the aforementioned points, the study attempted to address the following basic research questions:

- What roles do athlete managers play for elite Ethiopian middle- and long-distance runners?
- What contributions/support do athlete managers provide to elite Ethiopian distance runners?
- Do athlete managers have managerial skills while working with elite Ethiopian athletes?
- What is the current status of Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running?

#### **1.4. Objectives of the study**

##### **1.4.1. General objective of the study**

The intent in working with athletes in any sport activity is to help them reach their maximum potential and outperform in a desired setting, i.e., competition. In doing so, so many are involved; hence, this particular study aimed to critically examine the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers while dealing with elite Ethiopian middle- and long-distance runners.

##### **1.4.2. Specific objectives of the study**

Based upon the general objective, this study was envisaged to achieve the following specific objectives:

- identifying roles played by athlete managers in Ethiopian athletics.
- examining the contribution of athlete managers to Ethiopian middle- and long-distance runners.
- assessing the managerial skills of athlete managers in dealing with elite Ethiopian athletes.
- exploring the reasons behind athlete managers' preference to work with elite Ethiopian athletes?
- identifying the positive and negative experiences observed while Ethiopian athletes deal with athlete managers?
- Assessing the status of Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running
- Assessing how the EAF ensures the development of Ethiopian athletics.

### **1.5. Significance of the study**

This study is believed to make some important empirical contributions to Ethiopian athletics in various ways. It is evident to observe athlete managers are doing their best to meet the demands of the sport by presenting athletes to local and international competitions. Yet, no clear studies have been made in the area of athlete managers'/AR's contribution to the development of Ethiopian athletics, particularly in distance running. Hence, the study is believed to vividly display and critically examine the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers. Since Ethiopia has a rich tradition of success in distance races (Grivas et al., 2024), the study will be helpful for those who directly and indirectly enrolled in Ethiopian athletics: the sports commission, EAF, athlete representatives, clubs, coaches, and athletes. Moreover, the findings from the study will convey valuable information for future studies in the area and operational amendments to be made by the concerned bodies. It might also be used as an input for sport policy makers in an attempt to shape the sport in a desired and advanced manner. Therefore, the findings of this study would help the concerned bodies to assess and evaluate the extent to which athletes are treated and developed/progressed, and the findings could also be used as a benchmark for other organizations (sport sectors or federations) in issues related to athlete management where positive and mutual benefits are sought/instilled.

### **1.6. Scope of the study**

Athlete development is believed to be a key aspect for better performance in sports and usually results in efforts made by different stakeholders. Athlete managers in this regard play a significant role in improving and maintaining athletes' potential. Cognizant of this fact, the study intends to critically assess the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers in Ethiopian athletics. Hence, it was delimited to the capital city, Addis Ababa, where many athletes, coaches, and athlete managers reside. Delimiting the study with a specific time frame, location, population, or issues to be investigated helps the researcher to focus the center of attention and address the research problem in a resource- and time-efficient manner (Creswell, 2009). In addition, the study was delimited to

athletes participating in middle- and long-distance running; athletes in other athletics disciplines (i.e., sprinting, jumping, and throwing) were not included since there is no experience in working with athlete managers in the Ethiopian context. Moreover, to make the study manageable and economical, the study was confined to elite athletes.

### **1.7. Limitations of the study**

The study attempts to address issues related to athlete management in middle- and long-distance running; it assesses the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers as they interact with elite Ethiopian distance runners. In the process, it undergoes certain limitations, including

- Absence of related studies in the area and inadequate measuring tools.
- In the data collection:
  - The uncooperativeness and unwillingness of some athletes and coaches to participate in the study in association with concerns regarding the value of the study and information leakage as they experienced in prior participation.
  - Negligence of the athletes to feel and return the questionnaire on time.
  - Training programs and sites were not predetermined; unexpected changes of the sites made data collection difficult.
  - tight schedule with athlete managers/agents
  - Frequent flight of athletes, coaches, and their agents to the outside world for competition purposes.

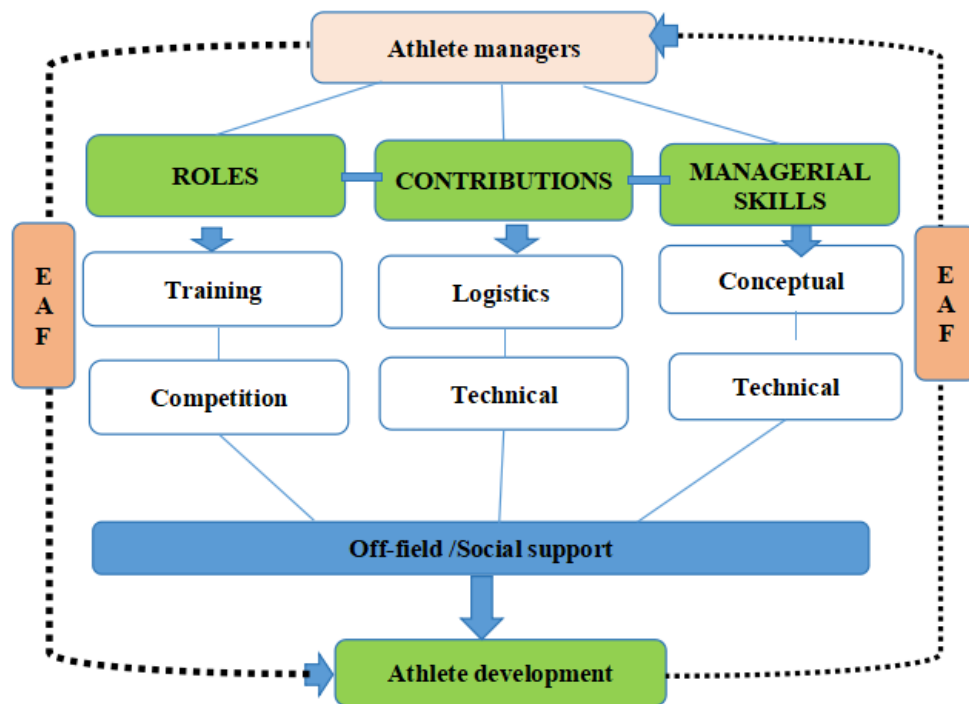
To overcome such challenges, a frequent visit and explanation about the aim of the study and the anonymity were made. Besides, critical validation protocols were made in the preparation of questionnaire items via robust discussion with experts and pilot tests.

### **1.8. Conceptual frame work**

The conceptual framework of the study comprises the roles related to training, competition, and out of these scenarios (i.e. off-field); contributions encompassing logistic, technical, and social supports; and the managerial skills of an athlete manager in the course of athlete development focusing on the conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills. As can be seen from figure 1.1, the role of an athlete manager is equally important

with the contribution or support rendered to elite athletes. The contribution, on the other hand, also has an equal impact as the managerial skills to be exhibited. These three aspects undertaken by the athlete manager are inseparable, and they do have a great deal to do with the athlete’s development, which in turn secures the sports development.

Athlete managers are expected to play roles that are related to training and competition and off-field/social aspects. Likewise, they give support to the athlete in terms of logistics, technical and off-field/social support. Meanwhile, in order to play better roles and provide better support/contribute to athletes in their supervision, athlete managers are expected to possess a great deal of management skill. Hence, they are expected to exhibit conceptual, technical, and interpersonal/social skills. All those elements, coupled with better supervision, support, and a positive outlook from the national sports federation/EAF, will move forward the development of both the sport and the athlete.



EAF-Ethiopian Athletics Federation

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of the study**

The above conceptual framework of the study depicts the direct and indirect linkage between the athlete manager and the athlete; as they are interacting, they contribute each other. Hence, their smooth linkage is a key to the country's success in the international arena. Athlete managers supervise and provide up-to-date, scientific training to boost the athlete's performance, and they are busy in the facilitation of the competition opportunity for these athletes. In the process they provide support. Athletes at the elite level are expected to exhibit their best performance where training and competition are becoming cyclical. In doing so, better management is key for successful accomplishment of the task at hand. The linking agency, EAF, in this regard should monitor and supervise the activities for the best practice to ensure promotion ranging from personal to national.

### **1.9. Operational definitions**

**Athlete development:** The process of nurturing and enhancing an athlete's skills, mind set and carrier trajectory

**Athlete management:** A comprehensive process of guiding and supporting athletes throughout their carrier (contact)

**Athlete manager:** A professional who oversees the carrier and welfare of athletes.

**Club:** A formally organized group or institution that provides training, competition, and support for the athletes.

**Developmental center:** A facility or institution focused on nurturing emerging athletes through structured training, education and support service.

**Elite athlete:** Athletes who compete in highest level of sports, often nationally or internationally and demonstrates an exceptional skills, discipline and performance.

**Kids Athletics:** Structured athletics program designed for children, typically aged 6-14, emphasizing motor skill development, fun, and basic competition.

**Stakeholders:** Any individual or group with an interest or investment in the outcomes of a sport program

**Training centers:** A dedicated facility equipped for athlete preparation

**Youth development:** A structured approach to nurturing the physical, mental and social growth of young individuals through sport.

### **1.10. Structure of the dissertation**

This dissertation constitutes six chapters. The first chapter deals with the background and justification of the study; it encompasses the following subtopics sequentially: introduction, background, problem statement, research questions, objectives of the study (general and specific objectives), significance of the study, and scope and limitations of the study. All these provide a clear insight about the overall concern of the dissertation related to elite athletes and their management in Ethiopia. The second and third chapters present the published work of the researcher in peer-reviewed journals aiming to address the research questions on the roles and contributions of athlete managers, respectively. Paper 1: “Assessing the Management of Elite Athletes and its Roles in the Development of Ethiopian Athletes: A Mixed-Methods Investigation”: Ethiopian Journal of Science (SINET) and Paper 2: “Elite Distance Runners and their Management: The State and Nature of Athlete Managers’ Contribution” Ethiopian Journal of Sport Science (EJSS). The fourth and fifth chapters of the dissertation discuss the managerial skills of athlete managers and the developmental aspects of Ethiopian athletics, which will later be published in a reputable journal. The final chapter, chapter six, provides discussions, conclusions, and recommendations on the basis of the findings of the study.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### ASSESSING THE MANAGEMENT OF ELITE ATHLETES AND ITS ROLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHIOPIAN ATHLETES: A MIXED METHODS INVESTIGATION

#### **Abstract**

Long-distance running is the most popular athletic event in the Ethiopian sports context since it is associated with remarkable achievements so far. As a result, athlete managers were attracted to invest and work with distance runners; hence, examining the roles played by athlete managers towards the development of Ethiopian athletes was the main objective of the study. To this end, a concurrent mixed-methods research design was employed to collect quantitative data from a sample of 248 distance runners and qualitative data from purposefully selected coaches and experts from the Ethiopian Athletics Federation. The study was conducted in the capital city, Addis Ababa, where the majority of the participants reside. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. SPSS version 27 was used to analyze quantitative data, and the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The finding of the study reveals that the role to be played by an athlete manager can come in three forms: training-related, competition-related and off-field roles. Consequently, athletes who are participating in more than one running discipline and who enrolled in privately owned clubs are preferred by athlete managers and are privileged in better training and competition opportunities that purely assist their athletic endeavors. Nevertheless, too much exposure to intense training and competition, a quick shift of running discipline, and poor implementation of psychological and social support (i.e., off-field roles) need to be carefully supervised, which may impact athletic development. Balanced implementation of roles would help athletes become successful in their chosen running discipline.

**Key words:** athlete management, club enrollment, distance running, elite athlete, Ethiopia

## **2.1. Introduction**

Sport is being used as a tool to build the image of a given nation, and achieving international and especially Olympic sporting success has become increasingly important to all developing countries (De Bosscher et al., 2009; Benouzekri, 2024). Countries like Ethiopia, which is in a state of development, strive to show their significance and potential in an international sports setting. Running events, more specifically distance running, helps a lot in this regard. It is evident to observe the dominance of East African countries in middle and long-distance running which often resulted in genetic endowment, stated as an “obvious” cause (Hamilton, 2000; Bezabih Wolde & Gaudin, 2017). Success in such events was mostly seen in athletes originated from Ethiopia and Kenya; meanwhile currently Ugandan athletes were observed sharing the podium with their outstanding performance in both sexes.

In the Ethiopian context, in comparison to other sports, athletics is regarded as a sport that promotes the nation to the rest of the world. Distance running particularly plays a significant role in changing the lives of its participants; being a successful runner brings economic and social advancement for the athlete (Wilber & Pitsiladis, 2012). Distance running, usually ranges from 3km and onwards to the marathon, is more popular since the race can be conducted on the road and street, while both sprint and middle-distance races normally compete only in the track (Simasathiansophon, 2021).

Ethiopia, as a nation, has produced the best middle- and long-distance runners, mainly inspired by the mythical victories of Abebe Bikila and Mamo Wolde (Bezabih Wolde & Gaudin, 2007). The barefoot runner in the Rome Olympics, Abebe Bikila, remains inspirational for many Ethiopian athletes. Iconic figures like Dertu Tullu, Haile Gebresilasie, Kenenisa Bekele, and Tirunesh Dibaba showed their effort in linking the legacy to the next generation through their success in the Olympics (Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008, and London 2012), and in different major athletic events. In line with this, the Ethiopian Athletics Federation (EAF) strives to support and guide athletes to keep the legacy and promote the sport of athletics in accordance with national and World Athletics (WA) policies.

Even though almost all aspects of athletic events are practiced in the country, many athletes (of both sexes) are currently attracted to distance running. Various reasons can be forwarded to athletes' inclination to distance races, mainly to bring a change to their lives. This in turn paves the way to link athletes to athlete managers, also known as "athlete representatives," to work and prosper together in the world of athletics. It is evident that the sport is evolving and becoming a big business, dynamic, and ever-changing (Beech & Chadwick, 2013; Immonen et al., 2017; Gréhaigne & Godbout, 2014), hence, meeting the commercialized demand becomes paramount. In this regard, the presence of athlete managers helps to an increased participation of Ethiopian athletes in commercial events abroad (Bezabih Wolde and Gaudin, 2007). The managers are also responsible for fulfilling the demands of the athlete in their athletic career, which may include athletic training, access to competition, sportswear, training facilities, and equipment necessary to undertake coaching.

Worldwide, more than 270 athlete representatives (AR) are functional under the supervision of World Athletics (WA), which advocates that athletes may use the services of an AR to assist them in the negotiation of their athletic program and in such other matters as they may agree (WA,2022). Consequently, the number of local and international athlete managers (athlete representatives) deemed to show their interest and work intensively in distance races in Ethiopia. More than twenty ARs are accredited to work in Ethiopian athletics. However, there are notions in viewing athlete managers as exploiting athletes to their own benefit with unclear roles. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the roles played by athlete managers to Ethiopian athletes and athletics. More specifically, this study answers the following research questions:

1. What roles do athlete managers play in Ethiopian athletics?
2. Do athlete managers treat athletes of both sexes equally?
3. How do athlete managers treat athletes in different running disciplines, club enrollment, and educational status?
4. What are the positive and negative experiences/consequences as a result of working with athlete managers?

## **2.2. Materials & methods**

A concurrent mixed-methods design was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time (Swanson & Holton, 2005; Crsewll J.W. and Creswell J.D., 2005) to maintain the breadth and depth of relevant evidence to understand whether the roles played by athlete managers provide room for athlete development.

### ***Participants***

Distance runners and coaches who were working with athlete managers were selected to take part in the study; in addition, personnel from the Ethiopian Athletics Federation (EAF) were also included in the study. By using Cochran (1963:75) sample size determination formula, from the total of 836 elite athletes registered in EAF dealing with athlete managers, 265 athletes were selected. Of which 248 respondents responded to the questionnaire, entailing a response rate of 94%. Hence, 248 athletes, 16 coaches and two personnel from the EAF took part in the study by using available and purposive sampling methods since athletes are not permanently available in a certain area due to varied competition schedules abroad.

### ***Procedure***

All participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the survey and provided with informed consent before entering the main component of the survey. The survey was voluntary and anonymous. The study was approved by the university's Research Ethics Committee, the Institutional Review Board of the College of Natural and Computational Science, Addis Ababa University, with Ref. No CNCSDO/430/14/2022.

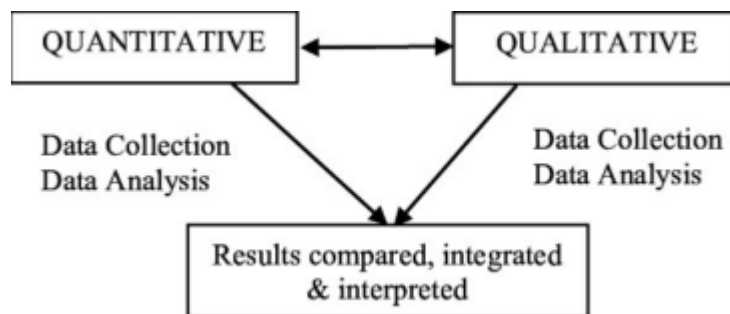
### ***Instruments***

The study employed both forms of data sources, primary and secondary sources. Consequently, questionnaires and interviews were used as data-gathering tools. Questionnaires were developed in English and then translated into Amharic for both athletes and coaches to reflect their perception of the roles of a manager and the development of athletes with a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5). Self-developed questionnaires were validated by experts from educational research institutes, the sports science department,

and the management department, and statistically from a pilot study. To collect qualitative data from the respondents', semi-structured interviews were used since it allows participants to seek further information where uncertainty exists and enable researchers to probe interviewees for more detail if required (Skinner et al., 2020). Basic demographic details were collected, including participant age and gender. Participants were also asked to identify their running discipline, the nature of their club enrollment, and their experience as an athlete and with the athlete managers, and finally reflect on their perception of the roles of athlete managers related to athlete development.

### *Statistical analysis*

The collected data from the respondents in the form of a questionnaire and an interview were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to meet the objectives of the study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SPSS Version 27, was used to perform descriptive and inferential analysis. Non-parametric tests were used since the data failed the normality test. Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H test were conducted to examine the group differences. Differences related to sex, running discipline, athlete's club enrollment, and educational status were the focus of the study. Thematic analysis was employed to organize and interpret qualitative data. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim to make thematic interpretations. Results obtained from both analyses were triangulated to conclude. Fig. 1 shows the method of data collection and analysis used for the study.



**Figure 2.1 Concurrent Mixed-Methods Design (adopted from Creswell 2003)**

## 2.3. Results

### *Sample characteristics*

Overall, there were 248 athlete and 16 coach respondents that satisfied the study inclusion criteria. From the elite athletes, 60% (n=151) were male and the remaining 40% (n=97) were female, with all the coach respondents being male. In relation to the athletes running discipline, 69% (n=171) of them were long-distance runners, 13.7% (n=34) participated in the middle distance, and the remaining 17.3% (n=43) participated in both middle- and long-distance events. More than half the coaches (56%, n=9) prepare athletes for only long-distance events. Concerning club enrollment, the majority of athletes and coaches were from government-owned clubs, which accounts for 69% (n=171) and 43.75% (n=7) respectively. Athletes from privately owned clubs and individually sponsored constitutes 7.7% (n=19) and 10.9% (n=27), and the remaining athletes 12.5% (n=31) were self-help, supporting themselves. With regard to their educational status, the majority of them were high school graduates, 60.3% and 93.8%, respectively, for athletes and coaches. The average training age and working experience with athlete managers of athletes were eight (SD = 4) and four (SD = 2) years, respectively. On the other hand, most coaches have eight years of coaching experience with a maximum of 12 years of working with athlete managers.

### *Results of Group Differences*

A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to evaluate whether athlete managers' overall roles differ by sex. The test result shows that there was no significant difference between male and female athletes at the 5% level in roles played by athlete managers,  $U = 7108.500$ ,  $p = .696$ . Similarly, the Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to statistically test the answering tendencies of male and female elite athletes concerning the subcategories of roles played by athlete managers. The result shows that males and females have the same scoring tendency at the 5% level for all sub-categories of roles (Table 1). From this, we can infer that the roles played by athlete managers for both sexes did not show any difference; hence, both sexes are treated equally by their respective athlete managers.

**Table 1 : Summary of the Mann-Whitney U Test for Sex Difference in Roles Played by Athlete Managers (N=248)**

Variable	Mean Rank		Test statistics		
	Male (n=151)	Female (n=97)	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Sig
Overall roles	123.08	126.72	7108.500	-.390	.696
Training-related roles	122.08	128.27	6958.000	-.667	.505
Competition-related roles	128.60	118.12	6704.500	-1.128	.259
Off-field roles	123.95	125.36	7240.500	-1.512	.880

*Source: Survey data 2022/23*

### **Kruskal-Wallis H test**

Unlike the first analysis, the Kruskal Wallis *H* test was used to analyze the group difference in athlete managers' roles related to athletes' running discipline, club enrollment, and educational status since the variable involves more than two groups.

### ***Running discipline***

Running discipline refers to running events where athletes devote their time and energy to get the best out of their preparation and to get prepared for the demands of the sport. For this study, running discipline was divided into three, namely middle distance, long distance, and both middle and long distance based on their participation in the elite level. Table 2, provides a summary of the results obtained, accordingly, the result revealed a significant difference in overall roles across running disciplines (chi-square = 16.547,  $p < .001$ ). To investigate which running discipline experiences a better role, the mean rank analysis was employed. Accordingly, athletes who participated in both middle and long distance had a higher score (mean rank = 153.72) in comparison to athletes engaged in middle distance (mean rank = 149.93) and long distance (mean rank = 112.10).

In a similar notion, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to statistically test if there was a significant difference among athletes in different running disciplines with respect to sub-categories of roles. The result shows a significant difference in the scoring tendency across

athletes' running disciplines. To further explore which running discipline receives a better role, mean rank comparisons were made. Consequently, the mean rank scores were found to be higher in both middle and long distance (154.66) for competition-related. In relation to the training-related and off-field roles, higher mean rank scores were observed in middle-distance 151.66 and 155.31, respectively. From this, we can understand that athletes experience different kinds of roles from their athlete managers related to their preferred running discipline.

**Table 2: Summary of the Kruskal-Wallis H-Test for Roles of Athlete Managers across Running Discipline (N=248)**

Grouping Variables	Running discipline	Test statistics		
		Mean Rank	Chi square	Sig value
<b>Overall roles</b>	Middle distance	149.93	16.547***	< .000
	Long distance	112.10		
	Both middle and long-distance	153.72		
<b>Training-related roles</b>	Middle distance	151.66	13.211**	.001
	Long distance	113.49		
	Both MLD	146.80		
<b>Competition-related roles</b>	Middle distance	128.41	10.117**	.006
	Long distance	116.14		
	Both MLD	154.66		
<b>Off-field roles</b>	Middle distance	155.31	15.771***	.000
	Long distance	112.47		
	Both MLD	147.97		

*Source: Survey data 2022/23*

### ***Club enrollment***

Club enrollment refers to the club setting where an athlete's annual training is based. Since athletes' best performance or potential impacts for the inclusion of athletes in athlete managers squads, athletes can come from different club settings. Athletes' current club enrollment is usually based on the monthly income (salary), training provision, professional support, inner motives, or lack of all or with little support. Based on this, an attempt was made to analyze the impact of athletes' club enrollment on the roles played by athlete managers. Club enrollment for the study was divided into four categories, namely governmental, private, individually owned, and self-help. As shown in Table 3, the Kruskal-Wallis H test result revealed that the overall roles of athlete managers significantly differ across athletes' club enrollment (chi-square = 22.908,  $p = .000$ ). To further investigate which nature of club enrolment is favored by athlete managers in reaching out to the athletes, the mean rank results were analyzed. Accordingly, athletes who enrolled in privately owned clubs (MR = 183.37) experience a better role in comparison to athletes enrolled in other settings.

**Table 3: Summary of the Kruskal Wallis H-Test for Sub Categories of Roles Across Club Enrollment (N=248)**

<b>Grouping Variable</b>	<b>Club enrollment</b>	<b>Test statistics</b>		
		<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Chi-Square</b>	<b>Sig value</b>
Overall roles	Governmental	111.34	22.908***	.000
	Private	183.37		
	Individual	142.67		
	Self help	145.21		
Training-relate roles	Governmental	114.99	12.023**	.007
	Private	165.58		
	Individual	134.06		
	Self help	143.47		
Competition-related roles	Governmental	118.64	10.888*	.012
	Private	167.00		
	Individual	110.81		
	Self help	142.71		
Off-filed roles	Governmental	110.47	25.909***	.000
	Private	183.11		
	Individual	156.72		
	Self help	137.92		

***Source: Survey data 2022/23***

In a similar way, an attempt was made to evaluate the significant differences among athletes in different club settings with respect to subcategories of roles. The result shows a significant difference in the scoring tendency across club settings on all sub-categories of roles at the 5% level (Table 3). As can be seen from the table, roles played in all subcategories by athlete managers significantly differ in relation to athletes' club settings. It can be evidenced that athlete managers' roles differ on the basis of athletes' club enrollment, the mean rank scores reveal a higher score in athletes engaged in privately owned settings in all subcategories of role with the values of 165.58, 167.00, and 183.11 for training-related, competition-related, and off-field roles, respectively.

### ***Educational status***

The educational status of athletes was also used as a means of analyzing athlete managers' roles; in doing so, Kruskal-Wallis H tests were employed to assess whether there is a significant difference in athletes with different educational levels. The educational level was grouped into six based on their current achievement, namely, primary, secondary, certificate, diploma, degree, and master's. The result showed that there was a statistically significant difference in overall roles (chi-square = 29.39,  $p < .001$ ) at a 5% significant level (Table 4).

To further see the difference, mean rank analysis was employed; accordingly, athletes who secured diplomas showed a higher mean rank score in training-related (155.46) and competition-related roles (173.08) of athlete managers. On the other hand, the off-field role is by far experienced by athletes with degrees (mean rank = 142.51). In all those roles, the minimum mean rank scores were observed in athletes with primary educational levels.

**Table 4: Mean Rank Scores and Kruskal-Wallis H-Test for Roles of Athlete Managers Across Educational Status. (N=248)**

Grouping Variables	Educational status	Test statistics		
		Mean Rank	Chi square	Sig value
Over-all roles	Primary school	93.45	29.390***	< .000
	Secondary school	147.03		
	Certificate	137.64		
	Diploma	142.92		
	Degree	136.86		
	Masters	86.25		
Training-related roles	Primary school	88.50	44.538***	.000
	Secondary school	151.27		
	Certificate	154.50		
	Diploma	155.46		
	Degree	128.36		
	Masters	52.75		
Competition related roles	Primary school	98.80	24.854***	.000
	Secondary school	127.46		
	Certificate	155.11		
	Diploma	173.08		
	Degree	142.04		
	Masters	116.25		
Off-field roles	Primary school	100.11	21.163***	.000
	Secondary school	145.03		
	Certificate	124.80		
	Diploma	106.54		
	Degree	142.51		
	Masters	101.00		

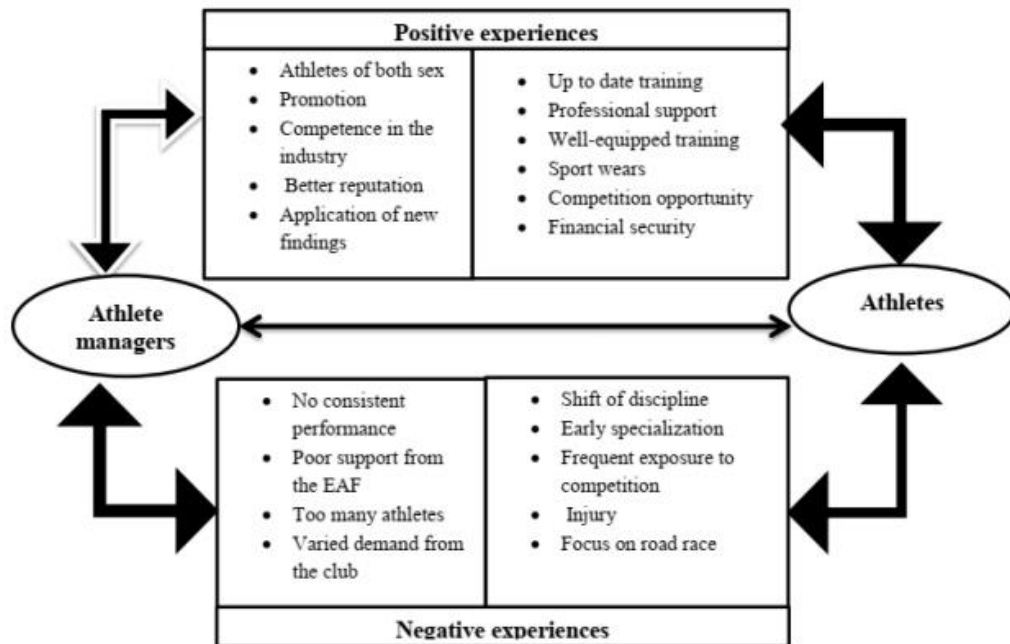
*Source: Survey data 2022/23*

***Results of qualitative analysis***

It is believed that the development of the athlete and the sport is not the mandate and responsibility of a given entity (the EAF or Sports Commission) or a group of individuals; rather, it requires the effort and contribution of different stakeholders. The response gained from the athletes and coaches shows that the state of the sport is not promising, but rather it is in an alarming state. According to the analysis of open-ended responses from both the coach and the athlete, the majority of them agreed that it is deteriorating

from time to time in terms of success as compared to the previous results and the neighboring countries Kenya and Uganda. Since the focus of the study is linked with the roles of athlete managers in the development of athletes, the analysis of open-ended items in the questionnaire and interview summarized as negative and positive outcomes/experiences of athletes and athlete managers in their contact. (Figure 2.2).

Compiled responses from open-ended and interview items reveal that as athletes interact with athlete managers, and vice versa, they may experience positive or negative aspects of their athletic career. As noted in the earlier discussions, athletes are mainly able to join the management team or work with athlete managers when they are in good shape or projected to be the next best performer by the coaches. Upon their contact with athlete managers, athletes will have access to good training and competition opportunities under well-equipped material and professional support. On the other hand, athletes experience a shift of discipline and are prone to frequent races, especially road races, which put athletes in a stressful situation, exposing them to an adverse athletic injury. Hence, from this, we can infer that the overall success of an individual athlete and an athlete manager or their team will be the result of maximizing the positive experiences of athletes via amendments to tasks that need to be improved.



**Figure 2.2. Both Positive and Negative Experiences of Athletes and Athlete Managers**

## **2.4. Discussion**

The main objectives of the present study were to assess the roles played by athlete managers for elite distance runners in Ethiopia. The finding from the study entails that roles played by athlete managers in Ethiopian distance running show no significant difference between male and female athletes. Both male and female elite athletes have access to training, competition, and off-field services equally; hence, athletes' main intent will only be maximizing their potential. It is evident that sex concerns are a current issue around the globe, advocated by many that men and women should be treated equally irrespective of their biological attributes and their gender, which is in line with the unique feature of the WA to provide equal opportunity and reward for athletes in all athletic events.

Athletes' field of specialization, running discipline, was also found to be crucial in roles played by athlete managers; accordingly, the result indicates that athletes who participate in both middle- and long-distance races are highly benefited as compared to athletes who specialize either in middle or long distance. Hence, two or more specializations are likely to help athletes stay engaged with athlete managers. On the other hand, taking part in two or more events demands athletes' utmost effort. It must be noted that an overemphasized inclination to participate in the sport may prone athletes to mental and physical injuries; in elite sports, injuries impair performance, reduce player availability, and significantly increase costs (Valentin et al., 2023). Consequently, frequent exposure to intense training and competition needs to be revised since it may lead athletes to get overstressed, which in turn may affect the current and future performance of the athlete.

Athletes are not meant to be either to train or to compete; other aspects of their day-to-day life need to be supported to get the best out of them, i.e., off-field roles. Rewards and recognition for athletic effort play a significant role in motivating athletes. Elite sports typically provide obvious rewards in terms of recognition (Readdy et al., 2014), which entails financial gain, but that is not the only thing that binds athletes to the sport. Social factors in the environment, i.e., coaches' behavior, the presence of competition or cooperation, and feedback about success and failure (Vallerand & Losier, 1999), are also

posited to influence psychological need fulfillment and subsequent motivation. The response to an athlete's request should always be prompt and adequate since it inspires athletes and can make athletes feel a sense of belongingness and recognized entity. It is evident that people tend to repeat behaviors that are rewarding (Wood & Neal, 2009) as a result of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation to perform a certain task. Reinforcement, the act of providing a reward when the desired behavior is achieved, should occur immediately after the desired behavior occurs so that the subject will learn quickly to associate the behavior with the reward.

The extent to which sport is developed depends on the development of its athletes, athlete development as a concept focuses on doing the right thing at the right time (Thompson, 2009). Clubs, athlete managers, and private organizations can play a significant role; above all, regional and national sports organizations (also referred to as sports federations or national sports governing bodies) are largely responsible for the provision and implementation of elite athlete development programs and pathways at a regional and national level, respectively (Sotiriadou et al., 2017). The impact of owning and managing youth development programs is best understood in today's sport. In realizing this, many nations, including Ethiopia, advocate the notion. However, athlete development and the business-oriented inclination to participate in the sport need to be balanced. Increased globalization, commercialization, and accountability in the sports industry over the past few decades have led sports organizations to adopt more sophisticated management systems and become more 'business' oriented (Taylor et al., 2008). The focus on the result and an emphasis on the elite may decrease attention on grassroots development. Care should be taken to the well-being of the sport as it should be accessible for all.

## **2.5. Conclusions**

Although the presence of athlete managers is believed to bring about a change in the sport of athletics in the world, their influence has not yet been studied in the course of athlete development in Ethiopia. Athlete managers play a varied and vital role as one of the stakeholders influencing the current trend of the sport of athletics. In this particular study, the roles linked with training and competitions are favored by athlete managers at the expense of unseen, off-field roles. Athletes have access to the latest training protocols

with qualified coaches where their age, sex, and physical ability (i.e., current performance) are considered, but issues related to quick response and motivation are far behind. Athlete managers have a positive influence both in the context of athlete development and athletics, however, challenges related to communication with the EAF and clubs aggravate the negative consequences, ranging from early specialization to doping scandals. The intent of preferring athletes best in both middle and long distances demands athletes to swing here and there, which impacts the progressive nature of athletes' bodily responses. Efforts made to help athletes develop will assist the development of the sport, therefore, combined efforts of the athletes club, the EAF, and the athlete managers should be there to lift the sport where athletes can keep the legacy of their legends and outshine in the world athletics arena. Athlete managers are rich enough in terms of finance, expertise, and relation to the outside world, efforts should be made to understand their ultimate demand better and, consequently, act in accordance with or shape them in the context of the nation's policy. The foreseen points of the study can be used for the betterment of the individual athlete, the club or management team, and the national athletics development programs.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### ELITE DISTANCE RUNNERS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT: THE STATE AND NATURE OF ATHLETE MANAGERS CONTRIBUTION

#### **Abstract**

Athlete managers are becoming crucial in facilitating competition opportunities and providing various forms of support to athletes, including technical support related to training, logistical support for training and competition materials, and social support encompassing psychological and life skill assistance. Ethiopian distance runners dedicate significant time and energy to excel in their chosen athletic discipline; in doing so, they prefer to work with athlete managers. To this end, this particular study aimed to assess the state and nature of athlete managers contribution to Ethiopian distance runners participating in elite level by employing concurrent-mixed method. The study was conducted in Addis Ababa, involving a sample of 248 athletes. 60.9% of the respondents were men, and 31% were female elite athletes, with the majority enrolled in long-distance running (68.9%) and government-owned clubs (69%). A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was developed and used to collect quantitative data from athletes, and a semi-structured interview was employed to purposively selected athletes, coaches, and officials from the Ethiopian Athletics Federation for the qualitative data. Statistical package for social science version 27 (SPSS27) statistical tools was used to process the collected data. For the descriptive statistics, frequency and percentage were used, and non-parametric tests, specifically the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis tests, were employed to assess the group difference. The internal consistency for the sub-themes of technical, logistic, and social supports was found to be  $0.90 \leq \alpha \leq 0.70$ . The findings of the study indicated that club setting and running discipline of an athlete significantly influence the support athletes get from their athlete managers; consequently, logistic support and technical support were found to be significantly favored at the expense of social support. Dealing with athlete managers helps athletes get scientific training access and international race opportunities; however, early specialization and overused injury are threats. Hence, emphasis should be given to all aspects of support to help an athlete become fruitful and remain successful.

**Key words/phrases:** club enrollment, elite athletes, running discipline, support

### **3.1. Introduction**

Elite athletes, as professionals, devote much more of their time and energy to excel in their chosen discipline to attain exceptional levels of performance (Ericsson et al., 2003); they are not considered developmental nor compete in a developmental path or system. The stage of participation is quite top; they train and compete at the highest levels of their chosen sport (Sands et al., 2019). The training and competition capacities are relatively stable, with the nature of participation requiring a repeated, intense exercise. Hence, continuous effort is required for the athlete to become an athlete as he spends hours of training (Noble et al., 2019) so that he/she could be able to get the desired adaptation.

Athletics, also known as track and field, requires better preparation and execution of athletes developed skills. Performance in middle- and long-distance running is influenced by a variety of factors (Rabadán et al., 2011; Thuany et al., 2023); physiological and social factors are paramount. To reach and remain at the elite level requires working day in and day out; it is not an easy task; hence, support from the external body, the manager, is needed in the production of elite athletes.

The presence of athlete managers is believed to give a light to the sport. The roles of athlete managers are multi-faceted (Staudohar, 2006); they are responsible for supporting athletes under their supervision; they provide supports ranging from training to travel expenses and accommodation. The combination of varied supports in the right way is believed to contribute to the betterment of an athlete's performance. Without a systematic approach, most contemporary research suggests that there is little chance of consistency success (Shipway et al., 2013; Böhlke & Robinson, 2009).

The commercialization of elite sports has presented numerous opportunities for revenue generation and global reach (Kulikov et al., 2023); as a result, athlete managers are attracted to take part in sport. In realizing the demands, the link between the athlete and manager becomes crucial, where athlete managers contribute to the betterment of the athletes' athletic progress. They create an opportunity and help athletes show/sell their performance to the rest of the world. The desire to be selected and stay in contact with the managers forces athletes to engage in risky and exhaustive forms of training (Crawley, 2019).

Currently, it is evident to watch Ethiopian athletes being busy in the training session with enthusiasm and no fallback to the training loads rendered to them. The number of athletes of both sexes to deal with athlete managers is increasing from time to time. Many reasons can be listed, but mostly it is evident that athletes are attracted by what is being told, observed, and based on their prior exposure (if any). The emergence of athlete managers, or athlete representatives, in Ethiopia goes back to the early 1990s to serve as a third party in linking the financial relationship between the athlete and the federation (Wolde, B & Gaudin, 2007). More than 230 athlete representatives are accredited by World Athletics (WA); in line with this, the Ethiopian Athletics Federation (EAF) gives accreditation to 26 athlete representatives to work in Ethiopia. Hence, the current study attempts to assess the state and nature of the contribution athlete managers provide to athletes. On the basis of this, the following research questions were addressed:

- What kind of support do elite Ethiopian athletes get from their athlete managers?
- Do athletes in different settings (sex, club, or discipline) get equal support from athlete managers?
- How do athletes perceive the contribution of athlete managers?

### **3.2. Methodology**

A concurrent-mixed methods design was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time (Swanson & Holton, 2005; Creswell J.W. and Creswell J.D., 2005) to maintain the breadth and depth of relevant evidence to understand the state and nature of contribution of athlete managers to elite athletes.

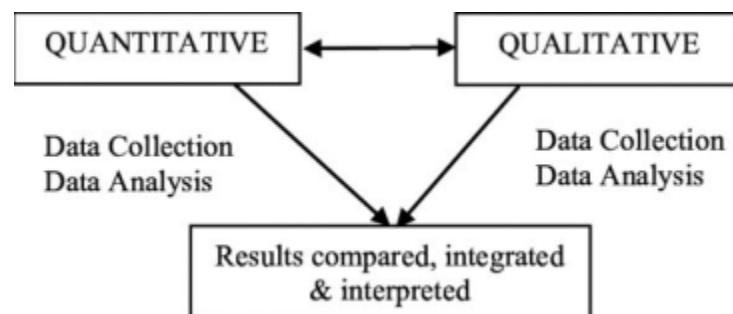
By using Cochran (1963:75) sample size determination formula, from the total of 836 elite athletes registered in EAF dealing with athlete managers, 265 athletes were selected. Of which 248 respondents responded the questionnaire entailing response rate of 94%.

The study area mainly focuses in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, where the majority of the respondents reside. To do so, an ethical review was granted from Addis Ababa University Research Ethics Committee, Institutional Review Board of the College of Natural and Computational Science, Addis Ababa University, on February 7, 2022, with Ref. No CNCSDO/430/14/2022. All participants were provided with information

about the purpose and nature of the survey and provided informed consent before entering the main component of the survey. The survey was voluntary and anonymous.

The study utilized a structured questionnaire to gather data from athletes regarding their experience and perception of athlete managers contributions to their athletic endeavors. A 5-point Likert scale response questionnaire item was developed along with personal information questions such as gender, age, marital status, training experience, and the number of years athletes had worked with managers to understand the sample population. The questionnaire was first prepared in English and then translated to Amharic to ensure comprehension, since Amharic is a native language. Assistance was also provided for specific and special athletes who do not read Amharic but are able to listen. The validation protocol involves expert review and pilot tests prior to the actual data collection.

The collected data from the respondents were analyzed quantitatively to meet the objectives of the study by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. In this study, frequency and percentage were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the athletes'; besides, the normality of the distributions was checked using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests; the result shows a non-normal distribution (K-S,  $p < 0.05$ ); hence, a non-parametric test, specifically the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis tests, was employed to assess the group differences in support received by athletes on the basis of their sex, running discipline, and club enrollment. Interview responses were transcribed and thematically analyzed to get an insight of the proposed research queries. Results obtained from both analyses were triangulated to draw a conclusion.



**Figure 3.1. Concurrent Triangulation Method (adopted from Creswell, 2003)**

### 3.3 Results

#### *Sample characteristics*

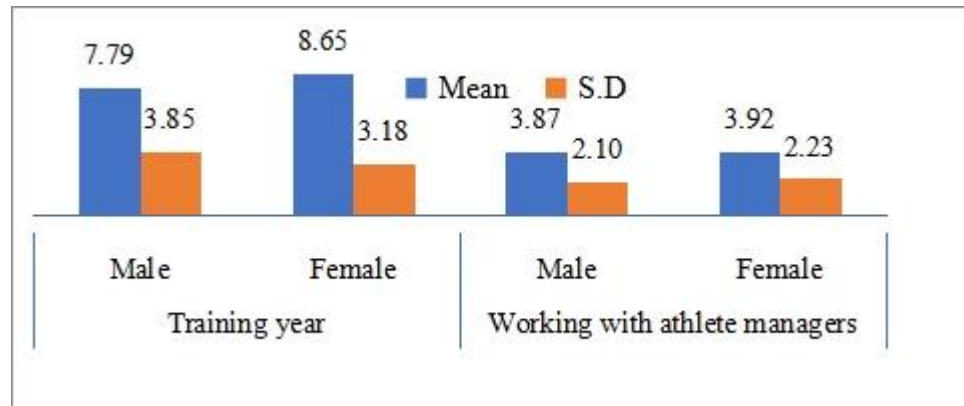
The study participants constitute a total of 248 distance runners. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents; accordingly, 60% (N = 151) of the study participants were men. With regard to their running discipline, 68.9% (N = 171) of them are enrolled in long-distance, 13.7% (N = 34) in middle distance, and the remaining 17.3% (N = 43) participate in both middle- and long-distance events. On the other hand, the majority of respondents enroll in governmentally owned clubs (N = 171, 69%).

**Table 3.1. Characteristics of the Respondents**

Variables	Athlete		Coach		
	N	%	N	%	
Sex	Male	151	60.9%	16	100%
	Female	97	39.1%	-	-
Running discipline	Middle distance	34	13.7%	3	18.5%
	Long distance	171	68.9.0%	9	56.25%
	Both middle- and long-distance	43	17.3%	4	25%
Club enrollment	Governmental	171	69.0%	6	37.5%
	Private	19	7.7%	7	43.75%
	Individual	27	10.9%	3	18.5%
	Self-help	31	12.5%	-	-

**Source:** Survey data, N: number of participants

Fig. 1 vividly shows the training age and years of experience in working with athlete managers; the minimum training age of the athletes was found to be one year, with an average training age of  $8 \pm 4$  years, and their exposure with athlete managers was  $3.9 \pm 2.12$  years.



**Figure 3.2: Athletes Training age and Experience with Athlete Managers**

### Results of group differences

The study mainly aims to explore athlete managers' contribution to Ethiopian distant runners participating in elite level; to do so, the study employs nonparametric tests, namely Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H tests. The Mann-Whitney test attempts to assess the significant difference in scores on the athlete's sex. The Kruskal-Wallis test, on the other hand, attempts to explore the athlete managers contribution across athletes in different groups (i.e., club enrolment and running discipline).

To assess the significance difference in athlete managers contribution between male and female athletes at the 5% level ( $p < .05$ ), a Mann-Whitney U test was employed. Since the number of cases in the study exceeds twenty, the value of Z will be used to analyze the result.

As it can be seen in Table 3.2, significant differences were observed in logistic support ( $Z = 2.67$ ,  $P = .008$ ) and social support ( $Z = 3.07$ ,  $P = .002$ ) in both sexes. No significant differences were observed between male and female athletes in the technical support. To further explore the contribution of athlete managers in relation to sex, the mean ranks were compared. Accordingly, female athletes' scores were higher than male athletes in both aspects. This indicates that female athletes receive better logistic and social support from their managers than male athletes.

**Table 3.2: Mann-Whitney U Test Based on Sex of Distance Runners (N=248)**

Grouping variables	Mean Rank		Z-value	Sig value
	Male (151)	Female (97)		
Logistic support	114.79	139.61	-2.67**	.008
Technical support	120.06	131.42	-1.22	.223
Social support	113.38	141.81	-3.07**	.002

**Source:** Survey data Significant levels: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , N = number of respondents

Table 3.3 presents the results associated with the running discipline. For the study, the running discipline was divided into three based on the athlete's participation: middle distance, long distance, and both middle and long distance. A significant difference was observed in the logistics support ( $H = 8.662$ ,  $P = .0132$ ) at  $p < .05$ . Post hoc pair-wise comparisons (Table 4) were also made for logistics support by the athlete manager; a mean rank score difference exists between athletes in long distance and athletes participating in both middle- and long-distance. Athletes participating in both middle- and long-distance events ( $MR = 150.2$ ) experience better logistics support and advantages than athletes participating only in long distance ( $MR = 116$ ). However, middle-distance athletes did not significantly differ from long-distance athletes and athletes participating in both middle- and long-distance.

**Table 3.3: Kruskal-Wallis H-Test Based on Running Disciplines (N = 248).**

Grouping variables	Middle Distance	Long Distance	Both Middle & Long Distance	H	Sig value
Logistic support	134.75	116.00	150.20	8.66*	.04
Technical support	124.90	121.43	136.41	1.51	.01
Social support	133.41	121.07	131.09	1.30	.01

**Source:** Survey data 2022/23: Significant levels: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , N = number of respondents

Post hoc pair-wise comparison (Table 3.4) of logistics support by the athlete manager indicated that mean rank score difference exists between athletes in long distance and athletes participating in both middle and long distance. Athletes participating in both middle- and long-distance events (MR=150) experience better logistics support and advantages than athletes participating only in long distance. However, middle distance athletes did not significantly differ from long distance and both middle and long distance.

**Table 3.4. Summary of Pairwise Comparisons of Logistic Support on Running Discipline**

Variables	Compression	Group	Mean rank	Sig-value
Logistic support	Between LD & MD	LD	116.00	.163
		MD	134.75	
	Between MLD	LD & LD	116.00*	.005
		MLD	150.20*	
	Between MLD	MD & MD	134.45	.347
		MLD	150.20	

**Source:** Survey data, Significant levels: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , MD: Middle Distance, LD: Long Distance, MLD: Middle and Long Distance

In the same way, Kruskal-Wallis H tests were employed to assess the difference in the athlete manager's contribution across club settings. Club enrollment was divided into four, namely, governmental, private, and individual and self-help based on the nature of contact with the athletes. As it can be seen from Table 5, the contribution of athlete managers was significant across athletes' club enrollment for all subcategories: logistic support  $H(3) = 27.56$ ,  $P = .000$ , technical support  $H(3) = 13.9$ ,  $P = .004$ , and social support  $H(3) = 8.30$ ,  $P = .040$  at the 5% significant level.

**Table 3.5: Kruskal-Wallis H-Test Based on Athletes Club Enrolment (N = 248)**

Grouping Variables	Mean rank				Test statistics	
	Governmental (171)	Private (19)	Individual (27)	Self-help (31)	H value	Sig value
Logistic Support	109.52	171.97	168.74	139.52	27.56**	.004
Technical support	114.74	163.39	128.63	150.89	13.9***	.000
Social Support	117.78	152.18	151.33	121.23	8.30*	.040

**Source:** Survey data, Significant levels: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , N = number of respondents,

To further investigate which club setting is better benefited, post hoc pairwise comparisons were conducted (table 6); accordingly, logistic support revealed that athletes in governmental clubs (MR = 109.52) significantly differ from athletes in private (MR = 171.97) and individual-based club settings (MR = 139.52). In relation to the technical support, athletes in governmental clubs (MR = 114.74) differ significantly from athletes in private settings (MR = 163.39) and self-help (MR = 150.89). With regard to social support, governmental-owned clubs (MR = 117.78) significantly differ from individual-based (MR = 151.33) and privately owned clubs (MR = 152.18).

**Table 3.6. Summary of Pairwise Comparisons of contributions on athlete’s club enrollment**

Grouping variables	Comparison	Group	MR	T value	Sig value
Logistic support	Between G & I	Government	109.52	59.223	.000
		Individual	139.52		
	Between G&P	Government	109.52	62.456	.000
		Private	171.97		
Technical support	Between G&P	Government	114.74	48.652	.005
		Private	163.39		
	Between G&S	Government	114.74	36.144	.010
		Self help	150.89		
Social support	Between G&I	Government	117.78	33.55	.023
		Individual	151.33		
	Between G &P	Government	117.78	34.404	.046
		Private	152.18		

**Source:** Survey data, Significant levels: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , N = number of respondents, MR: Mean Rank, G: Government, P: Private, I: Individual

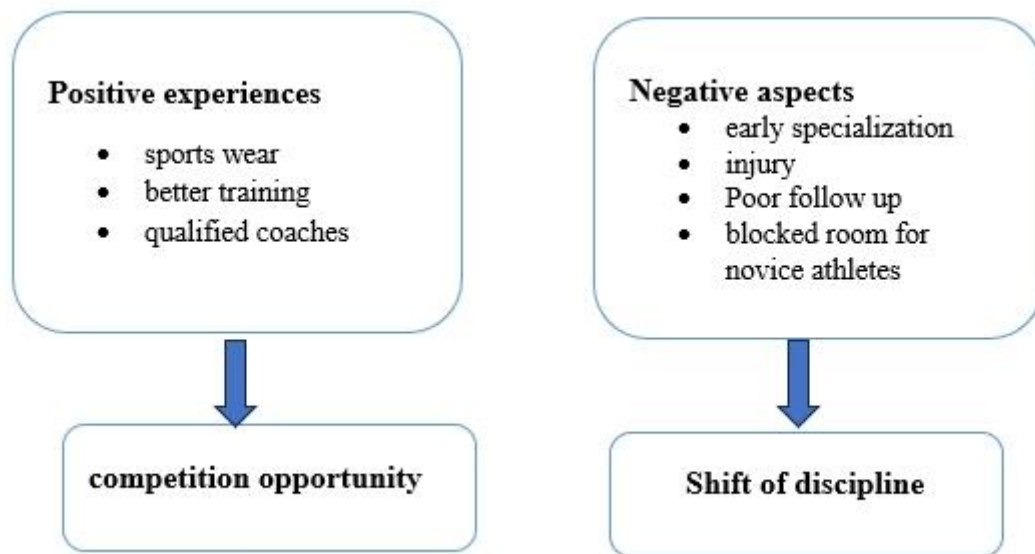
### Results of qualitative analysis

Development of an athlete and the sport is believed to be the result of varied stakeholder engaged in athletics world, with this it is clear that everything is not the mandate and responsibility of a given entity like the Ethiopian athletics federation (EAF) or the Sports Commission or a group of individuals or athlete managers; rather, it requires a collaborative effort of varied stakeholders.

The participants of the study were set to respond and reflect regarding the state of athletics, particularly distance running in Ethiopian context along with its fate. As a result, the findings reveal that the sport of athletics is not in a good state, rather it is in alarming state, reflecting that the expected tasks are not undertaken in accordance with the demands of both the athlete and the sport.

The presence of athlete managers scales up the interest and participation of athletes of both sexes with an increasing flow to distance races where athletes can access success and rewards. The thematic analysis with this regard reveal that athlete mangers contribute in varied ways, as it can be seen from the figure below (Fig 1), athletes may experience positive support or destruction. Succes and failure could also be tied to athletes' exposure to athlete managers.

Maximizing the positive and minimizing the drawback will be a crucial aspect for the athlete's development. A quick shift of discipline makes the road busy as many athletes fled towards road races, and early specialization brings athletes to stay in the sport for a shorter time and makes athletes prone to injuries (i.e., overused injuries where the athlete is exposed to do more).



**Figure 3.2 Summarized reflection on the contribution of athlete managers**

### **3.4 Discussion**

The study mainly focused on assessing the contribution of athlete managers for elite athletes participating in distance races. Non-parametric tests were employed to assess the significant difference across sex, running discipline, and club setting of an elite athlete. An explanatory factor analysis was performed using principal components and Varimax

to see the possible correlation between items. Based on the findings, the first five items in the first factor explain the logistic support; the second factor describes the technical support constituting five items; and the last factor describes the social support involving three items. Meanwhile, the internal consistency of the factors was found to be 0.90 for overall contribution, for logistic support (0.84), technical support (0.82), and social support (0.70). In a nutshell, the internal consistency ranges from 0.70 to 0.90 ( $0.90 \leq \alpha \leq 0.70$ ).

The finding of the study reveals that no significant difference was observed in the athletes related to the contribution/support of athlete managers. The notion of providing better support for all involved in the sport has been practiced and advocated by many, irrespective of their social and physiological differences. This has an enormous effect on athletes better athletic performance and carrier. In line with this finding, WA, the governing body of athletics, ensures equal exposure and winning prizes for both sexes in any of its competitions. In comparison to other sports, it is the only governing body that treats athletes of both sexes equally in number and type of competition and prize money. Which in turn paves the way for females to take part with full confidence and potential; this is the best experience so far from the governing body of athletics. Athletes of both sexes sought to meet the demands of the sport, and hence the introduction of performance-based incentives has become common, where athletes can earn additional rewards for achieving specific benchmarks or records during competitions (Versaci, 2016). This is currently evident in major athletic events, such as marathons and track meets, with a significant increase in prize money, often exceeding millions of dollars. For instance, top marathons now offer prize purses that can reach up to \$2 million, with substantial bonuses for record-breaking performances (Feldman et al., 2020). Hence, the introduction and application of equity in prize money are motivating for all involved in the races, irrespective of gender difference. What matters most is being ready and performing better; the opportunity is there for both sexes.

In the study, the nature of support athlete managers provide to athletes differs on the basis of the club structure and the running discipline. Accordingly, athletes who participate in

both middle- and long-distance and who are enrolled in private organization clubs demand better support, mainly logistic support. The logistic support focuses on coordinating schedules, travel arrangements, and training facilities; participating in more than one event requires better effort and synchronized logistical arrangements. In this regard, athlete managers could play a vital role in coordinating various logistical arrangements, including facilitation of access to medical care and rehabilitation services, which is vital for injured athletes to adhere to recovery protocols (Udry, 1997). In line with this, Pott states that in professional sports, functional teams should be there so that they (athletes) can fully concentrate on practicing their sport and perform their best on the playing field (Pott et al., 2023). From this, we can see that athletes should not be worried about handling necessary equipment in both training and competition; therefore, they are deemed to focus on the training workout and competition readiness. The issue related to the management of materials and equipment would be the issue of their athletic manager, who sought best performance from their athletes. This implies that poor logistics may impact athletes' overall performance; besides, it is listed as one part of the factors that may lead to a reduction of winning percentages in the analysis of athletes across three major leagues (Herold et al., 2020).

In the study, significant differences were observed in athlete club enrollment in relation to technical support. The technical support is purely related to coaching in the training and competition setting; athlete managers assist in identifying and implementing technical training programs tailored to athletes' needs; they also collaborate with nutritionists and other specialists to optimize athletes' performance through comprehensive support systems (Vinci, 1998). The technical aspect to be provided to the athlete's circles should ensure improved performance. Training makes athletes ready for competition, and competitions are key to helping athletes show their current outstanding performance. Running team NN advocates the fact that it is the individual who delivers the athletic performance on race day (2019). This implies that the athlete's effortful engagement in the training is crucial for better competition performance; hence, the technical support should be structured well; trainings and recovery regimes should also be transferrable, gearing the athlete to the desired goal when the athlete joins the management team.

The findings of the study suggest social support provided to athletes differs in relation to sex and club structure. Social support, the unseen aspect of the contribution of athlete managers to their respective athletes, goes beyond the technical and logistic support. It is beneficial for athletic performance (Nicholson et al., 2011), which reflects the provision of emotional and psychological support in helping athletes cope with stress and maintain motivation during rehabilitation (Udry, 1997). When providing the support, taking the sex and club structure into consideration is crucial; the support should be done with caution since harmful or insufficient support may not only lead to poor performance but may even increase the level of stress, burnout and dropout (Hartley et al., 2023). In addition to this, the structural limitations, such as short-term contracts, shrinking prize money as a result of the withdrawal of sponsors, and perceptions about the associated risks (Crawley, 2019), should be addressed since they have the potential to retract the athlete from showing his full potential. Therefore, identifying the path to success through a clear vision and strategic goals and implementing structures to fit the context were identified as key aspects of performance management (Molan et al., 2022).

### **3.5 Conclusions**

Assessing the nature and state of athlete managers contribution to the athlete was the main concern of the study. Athlete managers largely contribute to the success of an athlete; nevertheless, the club setting and the running discipline impact the nature of support athletes receive. The support from athlete managers can come in different forms, namely logistic, technical, and social; hence, emphasis should be given to all since it builds the full-fledged athlete. The social support is seen as the least valued aspect in the study at the expense of logistic and technical support. As poor coaching and logistics impact, so does emotional support. Pure emphasis on accessing athletes to the international arena and making them generate huge sums of money will not help athletes progress unless it is accompanied by balancing the supports based up on the situation. The study was limited to elite distance runners who are dealing with athlete managers; hence, it lacks generalizability to the whole athletics. However, further investigation in the area will benefit the athlete and sport development, which in turn will benefit the nation at large.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### SKILLS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ELITE ATHLETES: THE CASE OF ETHIOPIAN MIDDLE- AND LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS

#### **Abstract**

Today's sport demands better management for its effect; hence, possessing the managerial skill becomes crucial. Proper management of athletes ensures success; in doing so, athlete managers are expected to possess a great deal of managerial skills. To this end the study aimed at assessing the managerial skills exhibited by athlete managers while working with Ethiopian elite athletes. The study was designed on the three managerial skills proposed by Katz: conceptual, technical, and human/interpersonal skills. Descriptive survey research design was employed to examine the managerial skills of athlete managers. Athletes(n=248) and coaches(n=16) who are working with athlete managers in middle- and long-distance running were the participants of the study. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data from both subjects. SPSS version 27 was used to analyze data. For the descriptive statistics, frequency and percentage were used, and non-parametric tests, specifically the Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests, were employed to assess the group difference. The internal consistency for the items was found to be 0.93. The findings portray significant differences observed in the athlete's sex and club enrollment. No significant difference was observed in all managerial skills employed regarding athletes' running discipline; athletes were treated equally irrespective of their running discipline. The conceptual skills of athlete managers were found to be better with a slight limitation on the technical skill. Nevertheless, much work should be done on the interpersonal/human skills since they fail to make prolonged contact with the athletes and have poor relationships with the athletes' club and the Ethiopian Athletics Federation.

**Key words:** managerial skills, conceptual skills, interpersonal skills, technical skills

#### **4.1. Introduction**

Sport has always been an important part of society, which has an adverse effect on the well-being of those who directly and indirectly take part in it. Currently, sport is considered as the raw material of a large and complex international business that is becoming one of the largest industries in the world with enormous potential and influence on the economy of countries (Foster et al., 2006). Consequently, the state of the sport is becoming ever-changing with the advancement of technology and the society's needs, which then make it demand better management of its effect.

Management is a key issue in different aspects, and it is also decisive in the sports environment. It is concerned with the effective development of sufficient resources to achieve an agreed set of objectives (Pedersen & Thibault, 2019). The management of an athlete, athlete management, is concerned with the proper handling of the athlete in different aspects so as to make them feel safe and secure as they are expected to focus on the task at hand: training, competition, and recovery. In a broad sense, it has been defined and interpreted in several ways; it deals with the coordination of all resources through the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling in order to attain stated objectives. To manage is to forecast and plan, to organize, to command, to coordinate, and to control, as explained by Henry Fayol, who was regarded as a father of modern management (Fayol, 1949). According to Taylor, who was regarded as the father of scientific management, management can also be seen in two ways: as an activity and as a process. As an activity, it can be seen as the art of getting things done through the efforts of other people. It focuses on the art of knowing what you want to do and then seeing that it is done in the best and cheapest way. As a process, it involves a series of interrelated functions, including planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling (Taylor, 1911, 2004). Accordingly, management, as a process, can be seen as a social process, an integrative process, a continuous process, and an interactive process (Murugan, 2008), which requires better knowledge and interaction. Hence, it is not solely a task of one individual; it requires an interaction among people. And hence, the human factor is the most important part of it. (i.e., social process) As an integrative process, it brings human, physical, and financial resources to put into effort to work things in harmony and

smoothly. Besides, it is not a one-time activity; rather, it requires a continuous effort in identifying and solving a problem that may arise (continuous process). As an interactive process, its functions are contained within each other; for example, planning should involve controlling.

Every bit of the sports activity is currently influenced by different factors; the management of its governing bodies are vital in this regard. As a result of the 'commercialization of sport,' the sport governance and the business models are not without their own takeoffs (Sam, 2009); everything is intertwined, which requires careful handling. This reflects that there is no such thing as a sole contributing factor for success in the sports industry; different factors can be listed out as influencing sports development. To maximize their influence in professional sports development, different stakeholders adopted different business models to effect and show their presence. The convergence of private sector thinking to sport can be located in the rise of professional sports (Slack, 2004). For some disciplines, like athletics (track and field) and tennis, corporate models have translated into an increased emphasis on supporting professional athletes or hosting professional events because of their capacity to attract media attention and sponsorship (e et al., 2016). Consequently, the economic impact of sporting events has become a focus of interest to a number of groups and are becoming a big business. (Robinson, 2008)

Athlete managers manage the affairs of professional athletes by negotiating with promoters or others to settle contracts and business matters and direct training. The presence of athlete managers in the sport settings becomes a crucial phenomenon, favoring the development of both the athletes and the sport in line with the generation of huge sums of money/income. In addressing these demands, literature in the area of sports management shows a growing interest in the development and success of elite athletes (Maleske & Sant, 2022) in which athlete managers become responsible for various aspects of an athlete's career. Accordingly, the quality of athlete management can have a profound influence on the overall promotion of an elite athlete's career. Being in a position to address the demands of an individual athlete or a group of athletes ensures a positive coaching environment whereby effective management contributes to enhanced

development, performance, and long-term sustainability within their respective sport (Chen et al., 2013; Jolly et al., 2021).

In the context of athletics, athlete managers exercise a business model suited to their management system whereby they will be able to secure determined success. They serve as an agent, whom are considered to be necessary (or some might say a necessary evil) for the sporting industry that binds the sport and the athlete in the representation of sportsmen/women, the consultation of sports clubs and franchises, or the facilitation of employment contracts and transfer deals (Bull & Faure, 2022). Sports agents are legal representatives for professional sports who allow athletes to focus on their performance by handling the business side of the sport. In doing so, agents take over tasks related to contract negotiation, endorsement and sponsorship, career management, legal and financial support, public relations and brand building, and networking. All in all, they serve as a mediator between the athlete and the sports industry via providing holistic support. Hence, the management of an elite athlete at a higher level needs special skill and care as long as they are the one who will amaze and entertain and is able to meet the "meeting standard" for various international races whereby they keep on getting closer to the standard/record.

Athlete managers are usually tasked with navigating a complex set of responsibilities, including strategic planning, financial overseeing, marketing and promotion, human resource management, and legal compliance (Guidotti et al., 2022). Hence, the managerial skills become crucial in the course of athlete management. In Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running, the former athletes are now coaches and athlete managers. They are experienced and are believed to give due emphasis to the legacy of the sport. In doing so, the managerial skills become crucial in the course of athlete management. Their prior engagement and experience in athletics makes them understand the demands of the sport in a better way. This amplifies the importance of having knowledgeable professionals who have better insight and management expertise in the area. Nevertheless, their managerial skills need to be assessed. Although there is no clear study on the managerial skills of athlete managers in the Ethiopian context, the study will be one of a kind. It is believed to pinpoint the current issues related to athlete

management in middle and long distance. Cognizant of this fact, the study aims to assess the managerial skills of athlete managers with an attempt to address the following research questions:

- Do athlete managers possess the required managerial skills to meet the demand of the sport?
- How do athletes perceive the managerial skills of their managers?
- How do coaches perceive the managerial skills of their managers?
- How do athlete managers treat athletes from different groups (sex, running discipline, club affiliation, and educational status)?
- Which managerial skill is best exercised by athlete managers in Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running?

## **4.2 Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to systematically assess the managerial skills of athlete managers in Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running. This design was selected based on its strength in capturing the perceptions, experiences, and demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The target population for the study was athletes who are working with athlete managers. Following the sample size determination formula proposed by Cochran (1963:75), 265 athletes were selected from the total of 836. A structured survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the respondents. The response rate for the questionnaire was found to be 94%; accordingly, 248 athletes' responses were put forth for further analysis. In this case an available sampling technique was used since most elite athletes are subjected to frequent travel, tight training schedules, and competition demands, which may limit the feasibility of probability-based sampling.

The study participant comprises 151 males (60.9%) and 97 females (39.1%) athletes who engaged in middle distance (n=34, 13.7%), long distance (n=171, 69%), and both middle and long distance (n=43, 17.3%) running. On average, athletes reported having a training

age of 8 years and  $4 \pm 2$  years of experience working with athlete managers. Participants were drawn from different club settings, including 69% from governmental (n=171), 7.7% from private (n=19), and 10.9% from individually owned clubs (n=27), while the remaining 12.5% (n=31) were self-help. The educational status of athletes reflects that 39.9% (n=99) of them were at the primary level, and the remaining 31% & 29% were at the secondary and tertiary levels, respectively. In relation to coaches, all of the respondents were male, having 15 years of coaching experience and 8 years of experience working with athlete managers. In relation to club enrollment, 69% of athletes and half of coach respondents were from government-owned clubs.

This study was conducted following the ethical approval granted from the ethical review board of the College of Natural and Computational Sciences, Addis Ababa University. Informed consent from the participants was obtained, indicating their willingness to participate in the study after a brief explanation about the objective of the study. In addition, they were guaranteed that the data gathered would be kept confidential and would not be used for other purposes.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 27). Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage, were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their responses on the managerial skills of their managers. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-V,  $p < .05$ ) was conducted to test the normality of the data, resulting in the use of a non-parametric test more intended to assess the group differences based on sex, running discipline, club enrollment, and average monthly income of athletes.

## **4.3. Results**

### **4.3.1. Descriptive analysis**

#### **4.3.1.1. Athletes' perspective**

To assess the managerial skills of athlete managers, a series of questions were included in the questionnaire to let athletes reflect their perception on the management and managerial skills of their managers. Consequently, the following paragraphs summarize their responses.

In relation to the knowledge about the sport of athletics, the majority of athlete respondents showed their agreement (62%, n=154) that their athlete managers have the knowledge about the sport and its nature. With regard to updating themselves with the current trends of the sports, more than half of the respondents showed their agreement (56%, n=141). From the above discussion we can infer that athlete managers do have the know-how of the sport and the dynamic nature of the sport.

With regard to the relationship of athlete managers with their athletes, the majority of athlete respondents contended that they have a good relationship with their managers (71.8%, n=178) and they are very close to them (60.5%, n=150). On the other hand, more than half of the respondents claimed that their manager had good relationship with their club and with the federation, 54.9% (n=136) and 54.4% (n=135), respectively. With regard to working in collaboration with other athlete managers, more than half of them showed their agreement on the matter. From this we can see that athlete managers had a smooth relationship with all parties surrounding their circle, which can be seen as an asset to get everything done easily.

**Table 4.1: Athletes' perception on the managerial skills of their managers**

Managerial skills	Items	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Conceptual skill	Knowledge about Athletics.	48	19.3%	46	18.5%	154	62%
	Follow the current trends distance running.	70	28.2%	37	14.9%	141	56.8%
Human skill	They are very close to athletes.	70	32.2%	18	7.3%	150	60.5%
	Have good relationship with athletes.	60	24.2%	10	4.0%	178	71.8%
	Have good relationship with my club.	66	26.7%	46	18.5%	136	54.9%
	Have good relationship with the federation.	58	23.4%	55	22.2%	135	52.4%
	Work in collaboration with other athlete managers.	78	31.5%	43	17.3%	127	51.2%
Technical skill	Supervise the training & competition.	61	24.6%	14	5.6%	173	69.8%
	Handle financial issues.	70	28.2%	50	20.2%	128	51.6%
	Work with athletes for long periods.	91	36.7%	33	13.3%	124	50%
	Provide the right response for the problem.	120	48.4%	30	12.1%	98	39.5%
	Handle athletics-related problems.	120	48.4%	27	10.9%	101	40.7%
	Involve athletes in the problem-solving.	80	32.3%	49	19.8%	119	48%

Source: Survey data, N=number of subjects, %=percentage

Athlete respondents' perception of the technical skill reflects that the majority of them showed their agreement on the supervision of the training and competition (69.8%) by their respective athlete managers. In relation to the continuity of their relation with their athlete managers, half of the athletes (50%, n=124) claim that they have been working with their manager for a relatively longer period of time. On the other hand, 36.7% (n=91) showed their discontentment while the remaining 13.3% (n=33) were neutral, respectively. With regard to the involvement of athletes in the problem-solving scenario, 48% (n=119) of athletes agreed on the matter, and 32.3% (n=80) showed their agreement, while the remaining 21.8% (n=49) remained neutral. But they argue that athlete managers

fail to manage problems quickly (48.4%, n=120) and to provide the right responses (48.4%, n=120).

#### **4.3.1.2. Coaches' perspective**

The third part of the questionnaire prepared for the coaches (Annex B) presents items related to their perceptions on the managerial skills of the athlete managers involving conceptual skills, human/interpersonal skills, and technical skills. Hence, the descriptive analysis for this constitutes three paragraphs, each representing a managerial skill mentioned earlier accordingly.

On the basis of the coaches' responses, athlete managers who have been working with elite Ethiopian athletes do have the knowledge about the sport of athletics, agreed by 87.5%. With regard to their understanding about the strategic plan, goal setting, and evaluation of goals, an equal number of respondents reflect their agreement and disagreement, 50% and 37.5%, respectively. In relation to their understanding in identifying the strength and weakness and abiding by the rules and regulations and their intuition to predict, 75% (n=12) of them showed their agreement on the matter. On the other hand, almost half of the respondents claim that their managers identify ill behavior exhibited under their management. From this we can see that, similar to the athlete's response, coaches who are working with athlete managers believe that athlete managers possess a conceptual skill needed to undertake their management effectively and efficiently.

**Table 4.2: Coach perception on the managerial skills of athlete managers**

Managerial skills	Items	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Conceptual skills	Have Knowledge of their task	2	12.5%	0	0.0%	14	62.5%
	Prepare a strategic plan.	6	31.2%	2	12.5%	8	25.0%
	Set realistic goals.	6	31.2%	2	12.5%	8	37.5%
	Evaluate goals.	7	37.5%	1	6.2%	8	31.2%
	Identify strengths & weaknesses.	2	6.2%	2	12.5%	12	56.2%
	Identify ill internal behaviors.	6	25.0%	2	12.5%	8	50.0%
	Understand rules/disciplined.	4	18.8%	1	6.2%	11	37.5%
Human skills	Predict progress.	3	12.5%	1	6.2%	12	37.5%
	Communicate well.	1	6.2%	0	0.0%	15	75.0%
	Motivate the athletes.	0	0.0%	1	6.2%	15	50.0%
	Follow the training and competitions.	0	0.0%	1	6.2%	15	56.2%
	Provide adequate responses.	6	25.0%	2	12.5%	8	37.5%
	Notify every decision.	3	12.5%	4	25.0%	9	43.8%
	Motivate the team.	2	6.2%	1	6.2%	13	68.8%
Technical skills	Conduct meetings.	3	12.5%	2	12.5%	11	56.2%
	Negotiate for the athletes.	2	6.2%	1	6.2%	13	50.0%
	Report timely.	6	31.2%	3	18.8%	7	25.0%
	Work in collaboration.	2	6.2%	5	31.2%	9	50.0%
	Do tasks with plan.	3	12.5%	2	12.5%	11	50.0%
	Evaluate tasks.	3	12.5%	2	12.5%	11	56.2%
	Delegate the task.	3	6.2%	1	6.2%	12	56.2%
	Have good experience.	1	6.2%	2	12.5%	13	50.0%
	Good in marketing.	3	0.0%	4	25.0%	9	37.5%
	Manage financial issues.	5	25.0%	2	12.5%	9	31.2%
	Stay long wit athletes.	6	25.0%	3	18.8%	7	25.0%
	Work longer with coaches.	6	25.0%	3	18.8%	7	37.5%

Source: Survey data, N=number of subjects, %=percentage

The majority of coach respondents (68.8%, n=11) responded that they believed that their managers work activities with a plan and have the ability to evaluate their activities. With regard to their experience in the management, 68.8% (n=11) of coaches claim that their

managers do have a good experience. In line with this, they also claim that the managers do have the ability to delegate tasks to the right person, 81.25% (n=13). With regard to their marketing and financial management, 56% of the respondents show their agreement, and 37.5% disagreed on the matter, while the remaining 18.8% remain neutral. On the other hand, only 37.5% of coach respondents showed their agreement on the longevity of work with athletes and the coaches under their supervision. As can be seen from the above discussion, coach respondents show their agreement on most of the question items raised to assess the technical skills of athlete managers (they are experienced and perform tasks with a plan followed by evaluation while delegating a task for responsible personnel) but fail to work for prolonged periods of time with the athletes and their respective coaches. From this we can see that most of the responses were found to be similar to athletes' responses on the technical skills, but disparities were found in the time span in working with athlete managers and the adequacy and promptness of the responses provided to the problem. Coaches claim a short lifespan and adequate response, but the inverse is true to the athlete's perception.

The communication skill, the follow-up of activities, and the motivation rendered to the athletes reflect the agreement of almost 93.8% of the coach respondents. Similarly, 81.5% (n=13) of them argue that athlete managers inspire the team, notify every decision made, and negotiate for the athlete. In relation to the response to the athletes' request, almost half of the coach respondents believed that the managers provide a quick and prompt response. With regard to the timely report, only 43.8% (n=7) of them show the agreement on the matter; the remaining were disagreed (37.4%, n=6) and neutral (18.8%, n=3). On the other hand, more than half of coach respondents claim that their managers do have a good relationship with others in working together. From the above we can see that athlete managers possess good communication, work in collaboration with others, notify every single decision made, and inspire and motivate athletes under supervision, but fail to provide timely reports.

### 4.3.2. Factor analysis

The questionnaire prepared for elite athletes involves 13 variables, which has an attribute to measure the managerial skills of athlete managers, and three variables were found to have an Eigen value above one, whereby they explain 68.25 % of variation in the data (i.e., variability in the managerial skills). The communalities of the variables were also found to be above .500, and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was .875. The result was significant  $\chi^2(n=248) = 2037.415$  ( $p < .001$ ), which shows the applicability of the factor analysis for the data. Accordingly, the first and the second factor constitute five items each, and the third factor comprises three items.

**Table 4.3: Factor loading and communalities for varimax rotated three factor solution for 13 items (N=248)**

Items	Factor loading			Communalities
	1	2	3	
M5. They are very close to athletes.	.771			.804
M2. They follow the current trends of the sport.	.765			.758
M3. Follow-up the ongoing training and competition.	.697			.598
M4. Have good relationship with athletes.	.680			.647
M6. Handle athletics-related problems quickly.	.554			.713
M10. Handle financial issues.		.784		.725
M1. Have knowledge about the sport /athletics.		.713		.713
M9. Work with athletes for long periods.		.591		.708
M8. Involve athletes in the problem-solving.		.575		.505
M11. Have good relationship with my club.		.478	.	.494
M13. Work in collaboration with other athlete managers.			.834	.810
M12. Have a good relationship with the federation.			.734	.646
M7. Provide the right response for the problem.			.553	.750

Source: Survey Data

As can be seen from the table, factor one involves five items reflecting the technical skills in the implementation of the current trend of the sport (i.e. middle-and-long distance running), followed by the supervision of the ongoing training while being very close to

the athlete in addressing athletics-related problems. The second factor, on the other hand, represents the conceptual skills reflecting the importance of having knowledge and understanding of the sport, financial issues, and working in harmony with the club and athlete for a long period. The third factor reflects the human skills whereby working in collaboration with the federation and other entities while training athletes in the right way is an important entity. Further analysis was conducted on the basis of these three factors in relation to sex, running discipline, club enrollment, age, and educational status of athletes.

The internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) of the items loaded was found to be 0.927 for the overall items, and the internal consistency of the factors was .81, .810, and .814 for factors one, two, and three, respectively. In addition, these three variables explain 68.251 percent of overall roles of an athlete manager. (Table 4.4)

**Table 4.4: Eigen values, percentages of variance and cumulative percentages of factors for 13 items on managerial skills of athlete mangers**

Factors	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.982	53.706	53.706
2	.967	7.435	61.141
3	.924	7.110	68.251

Source: Survey Data

### 4.3.3. Results of group differences

The analysis for the Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H test were presented in the following order. Firstly, the Mann-Whitney U test result was presented in a single table representing the managerial skills against athletes' sex. Then the analysis for the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was made following the table representing each managerial skill separately against the grouping variables.

The Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to examine the difference in test scores between male and female athletes who are working with athlete managers on the managerial skills of their managers. Table 4.5 presents the results indicating the overall managerial skills along with its subdivisions, accordingly significant difference was observed on the basis of athlete's sex. To determine which sex is better influenced, the mean rank scores were compared. Accordingly, the mean scores were higher in female athletes than their male counterparts, with the values of 140.68, 136.50, 140.68, 136.50, 142.93 and 145.65 for overall managerial skills, conceptual, technical, and human skills, respectively. These findings suggest that the female athletes received better management than male athletes.

**Table 4.5: Summary of Mann-Whitney Test for managerial skills**

Grouping Variable	Sex	Test statistics			
		Mean rank	Mann-Whitney U	z	Asymp. Sig.
Overall managerial skill	Male	114.11	5754.50	-2.85	.004**
	Female	140.68			
Conceptual skills	Male	116.78	6159.50	-2.12	.034*
	Female	136.50			
Technical skills	Male	112.66	5535.50	-3.25	.001**
	Female	142.93			
Human skills	Male	110.91	5272.00	-3.75	< .001***
	Female	145.65			

Source: Survey Data, *Significant levels: \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001*

In addition to the Mann-Whitney U test, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to compare the conceptual skills, technical skills, and human skills exhibited by athlete managers across athletes in different running disciplines, club enrollments, educational

levels, monthly average incomes, ages, and marital statuses. As can be seen from Table 4.6, a statistical difference was observed in athletes' conceptual skill across athletes' club enrollment ( $H(3) = 19.10, p < .001$ ), educational level ( $H(2) = 13.18, p = .001$ ), average monthly income ( $H(3) = 31.97, p < .001$ ), and marital status ( $H(2) = 7.23, p = .027$ ) of the athlete. To determine which subgroup better experiences the conceptual skills, mean ranks were compared. Accordingly, self-help athletes with a secondary educational level earning more than 11,001 birrs on a monthly basis were found to have higher mean rank scores, indicating they benefited as compared to the rest found in the subgroups. These suggest that the running discipline and age of the athlete do not significantly influence the exploitation of conceptual skills.

**Table 4. 6: Summary of Kruskal-Wallis H Test for managerial skills**

Grouping variables	Factors	Conceptual skills		Technical skills		Human skills	
		Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
Running discipline	3	2.37	.306	5.06	.080	3.97	.137
Club enrollment	2	19.10	<.001***	12.35	.006**	24.11	<.001***
Educational status	5	13.18	.001**	20.90	<.001***	5.16	.076
Average monthly income	3	31.97	<.001***	22.20	<.001***	28.49	<.001***
Age	4	0.40	.982	6.98	.137	9.06	.060
Marital status	2	7.23	.027	0.15	.930	1.41	.494

*Source: Survey Data, df=degree of freedom; Significant levels: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ,*

Similarly, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was also conducted to compare the technical skills exhibited by athlete managers across athletes in different groups. Thus, the result indicated that a statistical difference was observed across athletes' club enrollment  $H(3) = 12.35, p = .006$ ; educational level  $H(2) = 20.90, p < .001$ ; and average monthly income  $H(3) = 22.20, p < .001$  of the athletes (Table 4.6). To determine which subgroup better

experiences the technical skills, mean ranks were compared; accordingly, athletes in private clubs, athletes with a tertiary educational level, and athletes who earn more than 11,001 birrs on a monthly basis were found to have higher mean rank scores, indicating they benefit as compared to the rest found in the subgroups. These suggest that the running discipline, age, and marital status of the athlete don't significantly influence the exploitation of technical skills.

With regard to the human skill, the results of the Kruskal-Wallis H Test indicated that a statistical difference was observed across athletes' club enrollment ( $H(3) = 24.11, p < .001$ ) and average monthly income ( $H(3) = 28.49, p < .001$ ) of the athlete. To determine which subgroup better experiences the human skills, mean ranks were compared; accordingly, athletes with no club (self-help) and athletes who earn more than 11,001 birrs on a monthly basis were found to have higher mean rank scores, indicating they benefit as compared to the rest found in the subgroups. These suggest that the running discipline, educational status, age, and marital status of the athlete do not significantly influence the exploitation of human skills.

With similar notion, an attempt was made to compare the overall managerial skills i.e. encompassing all skills all together, the test result indicated a statistically significant differences among athletes on the basis of their club enrolment  $H(3) = 19.58, < .001$ ; educational level  $H(2) = 15.00, P < .001$ ; and average monthly income ( $H = 30.53, P < .001$ ) of the athletes. Athletes with no club (self-help), secondary education and income more than 11,000 birr are experiencing better overall managerial skills respectively.

#### **4.4. Discussion**

The main objective of the study was to assess the perception of elite middle- and long-distance runners on the managerial skills of their managers; in doing so, a structured 5-point Likert scale questionnaire developed by the researcher was used. The instrument underwent a rigorous validation protocol (expert review and pilot tests), having an internal consistency of 0.927, which ranges from 0.810 to 0.814 across the subthemes of the managerial skills ( $0.81 \leq \alpha \leq 0.814$ ). The managerial skills proposed by Katz were used as a reference to denote the skills exhibited by athlete managers while dealing with

elite distance runners, namely conceptual skills, technical skills, and human skills, which are needed in different amounts by the manager depending on the situation (Katz, 1955, 2009; Quinn, 2010).

As noted in the characteristics of the respondents, athletes and coaches are from different settings (sex, club, discipline, and education), demanding better treatment; subsequently, the managers need to be equipped with different skills (Mostafa et al., 2012). Usually, athletes are focused on their training and may not give due attention to the other daily demands, and their success relies on the efficiency, knowledge, and skills of a manager; hence, paying due attention to the managerial skills can improve the quality and performance of the athletes. Without having the basic management skills, a manager could not be successful (Nazari, 2017). Besides, having a good knowledge of the dynamism of the work environment and managerial skills helps for the efficiency and effectiveness of managers (Goodarzi et al., 2012).

The finding from the study entails that a significant difference was observed between male and female athletes' perceptions of the managerial skills of their managers. Accordingly, female athletes are better managed by their managers, reflecting better overall managerial skills and specific skills (conceptual, technical, and human skills) via a higher evaluation of their managers in fulfilling their demands. This may indicate stronger interpersonal and developmental competencies exhibited by their managers considering their potential. The finding highlights the importance of gendered perspectives and approaches in the management of athletes whereby their perception impacts their motivation, trust, and development (Chelladurai & Saleh, 2007; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011). The most recent research by Meier and her friends examines the gender disparities in elite athletics participation and performance, showing how structural and managerial support influences female athletes' success (2021). Addressing female athletes' demands gives light to better performance of female athletes, which is further highlighted by Watt entailing the importance of adapting leadership to the cultural and gendered realities of athletes (2004), which can be considered as a crucial aspect in the context of Ethiopian sports, where female athletes were not privileged to access sports. Moreover, the results are consistent with the performance trends of Ethiopian athletes in

major athletic events where female athletes' performance surpasses male athletes (World Athletics, 2024).

No significant difference was observed in athletes' running discipline in all managerial skills, indicating it does not substantially influence the competency and utilization of conceptual, technical, and human skills. In addressing the expected managerial skills, athletes in all running disciplines equally perceive their competency. It is a quality of the managers to treat all athletes with different running disciplines under their supervision in the same way, ensuring motivation and trust.

### ***Conceptual skills***

The study reveals that athlete managers possess a great deal of conceptual skill, which can be considered as an asset. Since sports activities have their own culture, requiring an understanding of its peculiar aspects to its effect. The know-how about the sport and its elements is crucial in helping both the athlete and the manager to work efficiently. This aligns with Katz's conceptual skills, reflecting the ability to see the enterprise as a whole, recognizing how the various functions of the organization depend on one another and how changes in any one part affect all the others (Katz, 1974). Such skill requires systematic thinking, as some scholars refer to it as system/analytical thinking since it involves the ability to arrive at ideas, create a vision, and plan for the future (Lussier & Kimball, 2023; Quinn, 2010). The finding from the study entails that the conceptual skills portrayed by athlete managers significantly differ across athletes' club affiliation and educational status. Accordingly, athletes from privately owned clubs with a higher range of monthly income better perceive the conceptual skills of their managers as compared to others.

Equipped with conceptual skills ensures a better understanding of the scenario in the sport whereby it helps managers to identify the root cause of problems rather than simply stating the symptoms of an issue (Pedersen & Thibault, 2019).

### ***Technical skill***

Technical skills in management play a decisive role since they imply an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures, or techniques. (Katz, 1974). This skill requires the ability to use methods and techniques with special proficiency and expertise to perform particular tasks (Lussier & Kimball, 2023). Since technical skills are purely operational, they are regarded as the most familiar for being the commonest. In a sport setting, it could include coaching and facility management. In addition, it could be considered as an asset to good management, and the absence or lack of it could be a hindrance to good management (Hysong, 2008). Since the nature of the sport and its elements are dynamic, scholars in the area argued that technical skills must be in line with the current state via considering lifelong learning and practical training (Guidotti et al., 2023; & Alshahrani, 2024). This indicates athlete managers can fill their technical gap via learning. The finding portrays that the economic state of the athletes also determines the perception of athletes towards their manager; in this regard, Guidotti and his colleagues noted that athletes with higher earnings are more likely to access advanced facilities and professional support. They further claim that technical skills are ranked as essential for sports management globally across all sports rather than discipline-specific.

### ***Human skill***

The human skills, also referred to as interpersonal skills, demonstrate the ability to work well in cooperation with others, both individually and in a group setting (Quinn, 2010). It helps with the better daily functions of a sports manager, as each and every move of an athlete is determined by them. Similarly, proper handling and treatment of athletes is crucial in helping them feel important. The findings reveal that athletes' club affiliation and average monthly income impact the human skill exercised by the athlete managers; accordingly, athletes in private clubs and those who earn more than 11,001 birr are highly benefited. The higher the athlete's income, the more it tends to increase access to diverse social networks, training opportunities, and support systems (Wachsmuth et al., 2018). However, the educational status and running discipline were not predictors of human

skill, challenging the assumption that educational status inherits strong interpersonal competences. It also reflects that self-help athletes assume the responsibility vested upon them, reflecting the belief that training in a group is the only way to improve (Crawley, 2022).

As professionals, elite athletes require special care and treatment, as they are expected to excel in their chosen discipline. Here it must be noted that exploiting the athlete's potential demands better handling to let them focus on their duty, which in turn helps them to use their own resources effectively and efficiently. The aforementioned managerial skills do not function in isolation; most managers display multiple managerial skills at any given time, and their relative importance tends to vary by level of managerial responsibility (Pedersen & Thibault, 2019; Quinn, 2010). The technical skills must be complemented by conceptual and human skills to ensure holistic effectiveness (Masteralexis et al., 2012; Chelladurai & Kerwin, 2017) and vice versa, and they need to be seen as intertwined aspects with Mintzberg's managerial roles (1991).

The study reflects that athlete management is not an easy and specified task; rather, it is multi-faceted, requiring personnel equipped with better managerial skills. To meet this, the human resources that work in the sport sector are reaching a high degree of professionalization via emerging specialized managers in certain areas of the sport industry (Peris-Ortiz & Álvarez-García, 2017). In light of the above discussion, the study is believed to contribute in several ways to the sport sector. First, it adds to the body of knowledge to better understand the managerial skills exhibited by athlete managers while dealing with elite Ethiopian middle- and long-distance runners. It also provides a comprehensive view of how managerial skills impact athletes in different running disciplines, club affiliations, and educational statuses.

#### **4.5. Conclusion**

Athlete managers have the authority and responsibility to use available resources; in doing so, they have to plan, organize, train, and control everything under their supervision. To guide and lead athletes and their respective coaches to a better performance level, knowledge and application of the managerial skills become crucial.

Earlier exposure of athlete managers to the sport, coupled with continual updating of their management, makes everything smooth and attainable. The conceptual, technical, and human skills assist efficient use of available resources (Katz, 1974) and contribute to better functioning of athlete management. This was better perceived by elite female athletes, reflected in their recent international success. In comparison, the conceptual and human skills were best exercised by athlete managers with a slight gap in technical skills while dealing with athletes. The demands of the athletes for day-to-day aspects, usually training- and competition-related demands, require a remedy since their impact can easily spoil the overall integration. The managers should adhere to exercising the basic management skill as they are demanding the best performance, and there should be a room to discuss and sort out the possible problems beforehand. The demands of the athlete, especially related to training and competition, should be answered immediately and appropriately. The provision of a quick and right response ensures confidence and better performance. Moreover, prolonged contact among the coaches, the athlete, and the athlete managers should not be undermined since it has a tendency to build a culture whereby positive influences can be instilled.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### MIDDLE- AND LONG-DISTANCE RUNNING: EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF ETHIOPIAN ATHLETICS

#### **Abstract**

Development in a given sport results from the developmental procedures implemented in the area. In this regard athlete development is considered a pillar to sports development. In light of this, the study tried to examine the status and developmental aspects of middle- and long-distance running in Ethiopia. Accordingly, it employed a concurrent mixed-methods research design from a sample of 248 distance runners, 16 coaches, eight athlete managers/agents, and two experts from the Ethiopian Athletics Federation. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from the respondents residing in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. SPSS version 27 was used to analyze quantitative data, and the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Youth, elite, and coach development, along with the developmental centers, were the focus areas of the study on how they contribute to the development of the sport, i.e., athlete development. The study reveals that athletes were privileged in working with athlete managers through personal, social, and financial gains; nevertheless, standardized training facilities, rewards, and recognition were their concerns. Results from group difference indicate that no significant difference was found in athletes' sex and running discipline in relation to the overall developmental aspects,  $p = .618$  and  $.498$ , respectively. The sport is in an alarming state no matter how efforts were made by different stakeholders. Hence, a collaborative effort by different stakeholders (especially among clubs, management teams, training centers, and the Ethiopian Athletics Federation) should be made for its sake and the demands of the society.

**Key words:** elite development, managements, training center, training facility, youth development

## **5.1. Introduction**

Today's sport is not only the concern of a few and is no more a place where athletes with their coaches/clubs attempt to dominate; rather, it becomes a place for many to be involved in the pursuit of their end result. The media, sponsors, companies, governments, and many more are striving to uphold the triumph. All those parties play a significant role in the advancement of the sport as well; meanwhile, everything is applied to the athlete. Hence, the sport development relies on the development of the athletes. Elite athlete development is a field that requires the contribution of various interested groups, including government, sponsors, participants, spectators, sport supporters, and athletes themselves, in the array of specially designed strategies and programs targeted to those athletes that compete at the international level with the potential to create and regenerate involvement (Sotiriadou & Shilbury, 2009). Hence, it requires careful supervision and management of athletes.

A room given to athlete's development reflects the fate of the sport, reflecting athlete development. Athlete development as a concept focuses on doing the right thing at the right time (Thompson, 2010), which takes a relatively long period. In this regard, proper follow-up of the athlete development pathway ensures optimized development and reaching of their potential in relation to age, sex, and ability. Building a long-term developmental approach is the one that successful nation are applying with due emphasis; hence, it becomes an integral part of their strategy to excel in the sport. The LTAD involves tremendous scientific support based on the concept reflecting the treatment of athletes in a specific sport from an early age/stage to the elite level via providing training and support that are progressive in nature. This approach emphasizes the overall development of the athlete with the consideration of the athlete's age and stage of development in predicting talent development for elite performance, rather than sports (Astle et al., 2018; Varghese et al., 2022).

The value of providing long-term training is unquestionable in the production of elite athletes while minimizing injuries and burnouts, especially at early ages. In the process of making an athlete become an elite athlete, considering their age level is crucial. The positive long-term athlete development approach correlates with the age of the start of

training in a specific sport, the age-related training volume, the age of first recruitment into a support program, and finally the age-related amount of support/care (Güllich & Emrich, 2006), helping athletes to acquire the training load peculiar to the demands of the sport. Accordingly, the support rendered to these athletes should be made with care.

Participation in middle- and long-distance running has received a growing attention and interest in Ethiopia, yet the focus given to a structured pathway to elite level overlooked the youth development; grass root/kid's athletics/as well. This study attempts to examine the developmental aspects of Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running. Hence, it seeks to answer the following basic research questions:

- What are the pillars/ success factors for Ethiopian middle and long distance running in light with the developmental aspects of the sport?
- How do athletes perceive the developmental aspects of Ethiopian athletics; middle- and long-distance running?
- How do athletes of different group perceive the developmental aspects of the sport in Ethiopian context?
- Why do athletes prefer to work with athlete managers?

## **5.2. Literature review**

### **5.2.1. Success factors for elite athletes**

The success of an athlete is not only a substantiation of their dedication to training and innate sport talent but also the synchronized efforts of several stakeholders. (Baker et al., 2003; Burgess & Naughton, 2010; Sotiriadou et al., 2008). Coaches do the coaching; parents and others in the circle of the athlete provide assistance to contribute so as to see the effect of the athlete's effort and their value in the circle. Hence, the success of an elite athlete is the aggregate effect of different factors; the athlete himself/herself, the family, the coaches, and their chosen lifestyle determine the athlete's philosophical outlook. In addition, the training setting and the nature of the competition they are assessed in can also be influential aspects for their success.

The framework developed exhibits all these aspects regarded as critical factors for success in sports and elite athlete development, including high-performance coaching, international competition exposure, facilities, athlete development pathways, lifestyle support systems, technology, sports science medicine, talent identification and research, and sports information. From this we can see that a quality coach who aligns with the level, access to competition, availability of resources, and clearly determined developmental pathways, along with a clear talent identification protocol that is based upon scientific research, are crucial in the making of a world-class elite athlete. Knowledge about those factors will make the journey easy and result in prolonged success in the athlete's chosen discipline.

The stakeholders in the process of contribution to athlete development encompass a wide array of individuals and groups who are playing an indispensable role in shaping an athlete's career; these include the athletes, coaches, parents, sport organizers, sport scientists, sports administrators, and governing bodies (Purcell et al., 2022; Walton et al., 2024). The success of an athlete resulted from the development of the athlete himself and other stakeholders whose influence could be direct or indirect. Shelley and his friends in their study remark that the influence varies at different levels, such as micro, meso, and macro levels. They further point out that the influential factors are intra- and interpersonal, where the former represents the athlete's self-concept, skill, values, attitudes, and behavior, while the latter constitutes the athlete's social group, support system, and the sport governing bodies in various structures (club, sponsor, WA, IOC, WADA, and the like). Besides, the elite sport policy determines the elite sport success (Grix et al., 2024); hence, the intertwined relationship among these parties significantly influences athletes' development, well-being, and success, since athlete development is all about success. Accordingly, the influence ranging from the athlete himself/herself to the WA was marked to determine the success of an athlete. In line with the aforementioned points, athlete managers are among the many stakeholders who take responsibility in the sport, contributing for the betterment of the athlete.

### **5.2.2. Sport settings for elite development in Ethiopia**

Currently in Ethiopian sport varied organizations are participating, directly or indirectly (Yitbarek et al., 2024) , both local and international, governmental and non-governmental organizations are linking their logo and product to the sport. There would be no better improvement in isolation, rather the sport will grow and prosper if and only if collaborative efforts put into practice. The sport development through athlete development requires the involvement of government; in doing so the establishment of the EAF and the ESA remarks the pivotal mile stone. if sports wish to improve success, managers of elite sport systems should focus on improving the way the system is delivered in order to enhance the output of successful athletes (Böhlke & Robinson, 2009). The discussion here below focuses on the settings that are directly influencing the elite development in the Ethiopian context; these settings differ in their structure, purpose, and outcome.

#### **5.2.2.1. Training centers for athlete development**

Training centers are designed to cultivate talents and instill fundamental skills in the athletes, in which athletes learn the challenges and unique aspects of the sport. Usually in the training centers athletes are new and in their early ages; hence, these novice athletes require careful supervision and a progressive approach. The training should be general and fundamental in the beginning, as it has been advocated by WA's stages of development, which start with kids' athletics and direct towards specialization and performance stages. The value of providing long-term training is unquestionable in the production of elite athletes, since positive long-term training correlates with the age of the start of training in a specific sport, the age-related training volume, the age of first recruitment into a support program, and finally the age-related amount of support/care (Güllich & Emrich, 2006). Therefore, involving athletes in their specific age group helps them acquire a training load peculiar to the demands of their chosen discipline or sport. Hence care should be there in the developmental stages whereby the production of an athlete becomes a base for an elite athlete.

The training centers provide opportunities for the athletes to acquire the necessary skill; this is evident in the Ethiopian context, where athletes from the training centers possess a disciplined approach to their training. The study conducted by Kebede et al. (2019) reveals that the Athlete Tirunesh Dibaba Sport Training Center, situated in Assella, 175 km from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, presents more than 160 athletes to different clubs in the country, 47 to represent the nation, and 5 to break or improve the national records. Currently this training center merged with the then “Ethiopian Youth Sports Academy” to form a new entity as the Ethiopian Sport Academy/ESA to address the demands of the sport sector through implementing an athlete development approach from scouting to specializing. Taking into consideration the effect of the training centers for sports development, the ESA is devoted to empowering skilled young athletes with scientific training to achieve excellence and victory in national and international sports. (ESA, 2025). Therefore, the value of the training center in the development of athletics, middle and long distance, plays a crucial role in nurturing talent, improving performance, and expanding the country's success.

#### **5.2.2.2. Clubs in elite development**

Clubs are the next destination of athletes from the developmental centers; they usually entertain athletes with top performance. Clubs become an ideal spot for Ethiopian athletes to remain as professionals whereby they access regular training with the necessary accommodation. Organized athletics clubs play a vital role in the production and treatment of elite world-class athletes; they can foster elite athlete development in parallel with offering a diverse range of sport activities (Galatti et al., 2016). As has been stated in the works of Galatti and his friends, sports clubs are one of the main organizations supporting sports in various countries around the world—they are the key institution of elite sports (Heinemann, 1999; Rodríguez Díaz, 2008; Jakobsson, 2012; Paes & Galatti, 2013).

In the Ethiopian context, the transition from the developmental center to the clubs is usually undertaken on the basis of the athlete’s performance displayed in a competition. Earlier, the protocol of recruiting athletes was usually performed on the basis of spotting the best athletes in the annual athletics championship, of whom most of them join the

army and military/security clubs on a full-time basis (Chappell & Seifu, 2000). Currently, athletes have open access to join clubs, either private or governmental, as they wish in either of the two divisions (first and second divisions). In addition, individuals, sponsors, race organizers, and management teams are becoming an opportunity for athletes to get support necessitating their athletic achievement. Regarding the varied demands placed upon the agreement, the club structure could impact the athlete's development.

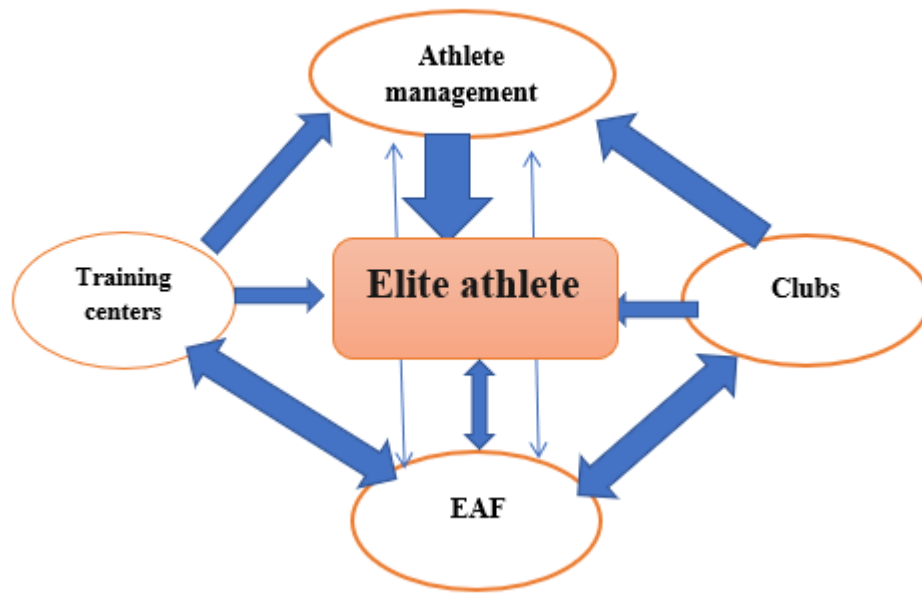
### **5.2.2.3. Management teams in Ethiopia**

“Management teams” are common in Ethiopia whereby athletes join and work together for the pursuit of success; these teams are usually formed by individuals or groups affiliated with the managers. Currently the size and number of athletes in the team are increasing, as interested and able athletes agreed to work under full control of the team's training protocol. The athletes in the management team range from novice to top world-ranking athletes with an assigned group of coaches to undertake the training.

Engagement in such a team creates an opportunity for potential athletes to get close to the international sports environment. In addition to this, athletes build a sense of being closer to success as they are contented that they are in the hands of professionals and elites in the area. Nevertheless, in order to acquire the eyes of their coaches and managers and to stay connected, athletes were observed to engage in manager-driven training. Such efforts may lead athletes to specialize early, where they experience overuse and burnout. (McClelland, 2016; Smith, 2003)

The training rendered to athletes is always considering the interest of their managers, usually based on the athletes that are very close to the major international competitions. Overexposure to “competition-like training” and “periodized training” would impact the athlete's development via early specialization or overuse injury. Training provided to the athlete should avoid early specialization (Côté et al., 2020), and in distance races where endurance is predominantly important, early specialization is not of benefit, and a young aspiring athlete should wait until his/her body has matured sufficiently before engaging in intensive physical training (Smith, 2003).

The decisive circle for elite athlete development in Ethiopia were depicted in Fig 5.1 reflecting the relationship among training center, clubs, EAF and athlete managers. On the basis of the discussion with the subjects, the link among those parties were found to be poor. Most of the respondents claim that the mediating role of the EAF in this regard were not OK. The activities that are undertaken in the training centers, clubs and the management team were promising independently.



**Figure 5.1. Elements for elite development**

The contacts and contracts of athletes in joining the management team usually undertaken by the athlete themselves or with their coaches, no clear transfer system were applied. Most of the deal made with the management were hidden even to the immediate coaches of the athlete. Where there is no clear transfer system among those parties, athletes are burdened in meeting the demands of all those entities.

### **5.2.3. Ethiopian athletes in major athletic events**

The Ethiopian athletes are known for their outstanding performance in many countries, with their exceptional performance mainly in middle- and long-distance running. They

were given different recognition and names associated with their unique features/talents: as a group, “The green flood/*Arengwadew gorf*,” and as individuals, “The baby face destroyer”—Tirunesh Dibaba, “The greatest of all time/the legend”—Haile Gebrselassie, “The gear shifter”—Mirutse Yifter, “*The barefoot runner*”—Abebe Bikila, and the like. Here an attempt was made to compare and see athletes in their top performance in a major athletic event reflected on the basis of ensuring/securing top performance (records), which the majority of the Ethiopian public are expecting and accustomed to. i.e., track events (indoor and outdoor), road races, world championships, and Olympic games. A total of 46 events are there in middle- and long-distance races for both sexes, 23 for each: outdoor track (four), indoor track (four), road race (four), world championship (five), and Olympic games (five). With this regard, Ethiopians secure eight records in the female category and six records in the men's category; currently a total of 14 records are in the hands of elite Ethiopians. (See ANNEX V).

### **5.3. Methods**

The study employed a concurrent mixed method research design to assess the developmental aspects of the Ethiopian distance running i.e. middle- and long-distance running. In doing so, it incorporates athletes (n=248), coaches(n=16), athlete managers(n=8) and experts from the EAF(n=2) lives in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. .61 % of the athlete respondents were male whereas all the other study participants were male. Athletes and coaches were from different club settings; the majority of the athletes were from governmental clubs (69%) while 50% of the coach respondents were from government. In terms of the running discipline, most of the athletes were engaged in long distance whereas majority of the coaches engage in both middle and long distance.

The study participants were recruited based on their availability and a notion that they can provide valuable information to the study. Both quantitative and quantitative data were gathered in the same time frame to substantiate the findings. Accordingly, a 5 point-Likert scale questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were used as a data collection instrument. SPSS version 27 was used to analyze the quantitative data and thematic

analysis were used for the qualitative data. A Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis H test were employed to assess the group difference on the factors extracted following factor analysis.

## **5.4. Results**

### **5.4.1. Descriptive analysis on the development of Ethiopian athletics**

Table 5.1 presents the descriptive analysis for the study, which focuses on regrouping items on the basis of the item analysis to avoid redundant presentation and description in the later parts. Accordingly, it presents the athlete development (elite development and youth development) followed by the institutional capacity of the EAF in relation to the developmental aspect (coach development and developmental/training centers). The responses of elite athletes, accompanied by coaches' responses on the matter, were presented and discussed.

Elite development, which underpins the presence of training settings, transparency, recognition, and reward by the EAF was perceived as inappropriate by both the athlete and the coach. Most athlete respondents showed their disagreement on the adequacy of standardized training places (80.6%, n=200). They also contended that athletes are not recognized and rewarded for their effort, 70.9% (n=178) and 55.6% (n=138), respectively. Similarly, coaches reflect their disagreement on the availability of a standardized track/training places in the country; more than half of them claim that the reward and recognition for the athlete's effort were poor (n=11, 98.7%). In addition to this, most of them argued that the activities under EAF lack transparency (64.5%, n=160). The youth development, on the other hand, reflects that more than half of athlete respondents showed their discontentment on the focus given to youth (52%, n=129) and the implementation of the youth development program (62%, n=154). Coaches, in this regard, believed that poor focus is given to youth development, while the implementation of the youth development program was OK.

In relation to the institutional capacity, the majority of athletes reflected that Ethiopia secured a qualified coach in the field (67.7%, n=168), but in terms of coach development, only half of them were positive on the coach development protocol made by the EAF;

33.8% (n=84) disagreed on the presence of capacity-building programs for coaches, and the remaining 16% (n=40) were neutral. Only 56.2% of caches claim that there is a chance of getting a capacity-building program. With regard to the availability of competition in the country, only 54% (n=124) of athletes were positive; the remaining showed their disagreement and were neutral. Most coaches in this regard argued that even though the EAF does not own an appropriate standardized training place, it prepares competition based on its schedule. Concerning the presence of qualified personnel in the EAF, more than half of the athletes reflect that there were no qualified personnel in the EAF, but the coaches said the contrary. Concerning the inclusion of promising athletes in the training center, half of the athlete respondents (51.6%, n=128) believed that the training centers includes promising athletes, which is also agreed upon by the coach respondents. On the other hand, 36.6% of athlete respondents fail to accept the link between clubs and the training centers. Similarly, the relationship between clubs and training centers; and with athlete representative/athlete managers was found to be poor by coach respondents.

**Table 5.1: Responses on the developmental aspects of middle- and long-distance running (N=248)**

Items	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Elite development</b>						
Recognition of athletes' effort.	138	55.6	9	3.6%	101	40.7
Rewarding athletes.	176	71.8	3	1.2%	69	27.8
Availability of training places.	200	80.6	12	4.8	36	14.5
Transparency on development	160	64.5	46	18.5	42	16.9
<b>Coach development</b>						
Qualified coaches in the country.	62	24.2	18	7.3	168	67.7
Capacity building courses for coaches.	84	33.9	40	16.1	124	50%
Availability of athletics competition	86	34.7	28	11.3	134	54.0
Equipped personnel in the EAF.	127	51.2	47	19.0	74	29.8
<b>Development centers</b>						
Relation with clubs and management teams.	91	36.7	49	19.8	108	43.5
Training centers are promising.	57	23.0	39	15.7	152	61.3
Relation between EAF and clubs	109	44.0	41	16.5	96	38.7
<b>Youth development</b>						
Focus is given to youth development.	129	52.0	49	19.8	70	28.2
Implementation of Youth development program.	154	62.1	41	16.5	53	21.3

Source: Survey Data,

### 5.4.2. Factor analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was performed using principal component and varimax rotation to see the possible correlation between variables /items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test measure of sample adequacy (MSA, was 0.745. Indicating the appropriateness (marvelous)of the data for factor analysis. The result was significant,  $\chi^2(n=248) = 999.32$  ( $p<0.001$ ). Nevertheless, in this initial EFA, one item, “EAF motivates athlete managers/AR to participate in the sport.” failed to meet the demand of loading set to the analysis; hence, it is not correlated with any of the data, having a .373 communality score, which is below the standard; therefore, the authors omit this item from further analysis and repeat the EFA. Consequently, the factor solution derived from this analysis yields four factors for the scale. The four dimensions explain 62.99 percent of variance among the items in the study. Bartlett's test of sphericity proved to be significant, and all the communalities were over the required value of 0.400.

**Table 5.2: Factor loading and communalities for varimax rotated four factor solution for 13 items(N=248)**

Items	Factors				Communalities
	1	2	3	4	
D14. Recognition of athletes for their effort.	.808				.674
D13. Athletes are rewarded for their effort.	.804				.717
D7. EAF owns adequate standardized training places.	.740				.569
D4. Transparent work done by the EAF on the development.	.567				.587
D11. There are qualified athletics coaches in the country.		.804			.657
D12. Coach development/capacity-building courses/for coaches.		.742			.589
D10. EAF prepares competition to assist performance evaluation		.561			.487
D3. Presence of well-equipped personnel in the EAF.		.548			.551
D9. Training centers have good relation with clubs.			.762		.642
D8. Training centers are promising for the development of athletics.			.743		.618
D5. Good relation between EAF and clubs.			.464		.495
D1. Focus is given to youth development.				.883	.816
D2. Well-implementation of Youth development program.				.830	.786

Source: Survey Data

Table 5.2 presents four factor loadings. Factor 1 contained four items, D14, D13, D7, and D4, which appeared to measure elite development (elite development) having an internal consistency of .764. Factor 2, on the other hand, involves four items. i.e., D11, D12, D10, and D3, which appear to measure the coach's development, with a good internal consistency of .718. The third and fourth factors involve three (D9, D8, and D5) and two (D1 and D2) items representing bridging the sport-developmental/training centers and youth development with internal consistency of .580 and .787, respectively. In addition, these three variables explain 62.99 percent of overall roles of an athlete manager. (Table 5.3)

**Table 5.3: Eigen values, percentages of variance and cumulative percentages of factors for 13 items on development (N248)**

Initial Eigenvalues			
Factors	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.162	32.018	32.02
2	1.753	13.488	45.51
3	1.266	9.736	55.24
4	1.007	7.743	62.99

Source: Survey Data,

#### **5.4.3. Results of group differences**

The analysis for the Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H test of independence were presented in the following order. Firstly, the Mann-Whitney U test result was presented in a single table representing the managerial skills against the athlete's sex. Then the analysis for the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was made following the table representing each development aspect separately against the grouping variables.

Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted to examine the difference in test scores between athletes on the developmental aspects of the sport (i.e., middle- and long-distance running). Table 5.4 presents the results indicating no significant difference between male

and female athletes on the overall developmental aspects of the sport,  $U=7049.000$ ,  $Z=-0.50$ ,  $p=.618$ . On the other hand, for each subdivision, a significant difference was observed between male and female athletes, where the mean rank of female athletes was higher than male athletes in elite and youth development, with mean rank values of 137.48 and 136.63, respectively. On the contrary, male athletes' mean rank scores were higher than female athletes' on the developmental/training centers ( $MR=136.95$ ) and coaches' development ( $MR=131.33$ ).

**Table 5.4: Summary of Mann-Whitney Test for developmental aspects**

Grouping Variable	Sex	Test statistics			
		Mean rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig.
Overall development	Male	126.32	7049.000	-0.50	.618
	Female	121.67			
Elite development	Male	116.16	6064.500	-2.30	.022*
	Female	137.48			
Youth development	Male	116.71	6146.500	-2.17	.030*
	Female	136.63			
Training centers	Male	136.95	5444.000	-3.44	.001**
	Female	105.12			
Coach development	Male	131.33	6292.500	-1.88	.060
	Female	113.87			

*Source: Survey Data, df=degree of freedom; Significant levels: \* $p<.05$ , \*\* $p<.01$ , \*\*\* $p<.001$ ,*

In addition to the Man-Whitney U test, a Kruskal-Wallis H Test was conducted to compare the perception of athletes across different groups on the developmental aspects of the athlete and the sport who are working with athlete managers. No significant difference was found in all subsections of development among athletes in different running disciplines. (Table 5.4)

Significant differences were found on the basis of the athlete's club, educational status, age, and marital status of athletes in the elite development, with higher mean scores for private clubs (MR=177.22), secondary educational level (MR=141.21), below the age of 18 (MR=197.50), athletes who earn more than 11,001 birrs on a monthly basis (MR=154.71), and athletes who are single (MR=134.49). With regard to the youth development, the result reveals a significant difference only in the educational status of the athletes,  $H(3) = 26.02, p < .001$ . Concerning the coach development, significant differences were observed across athletes' club enrollment, educational status, average monthly income, and marital status of the athlete. To determine which subgroup perceives better coach development, mean ranks were compared. Accordingly, athletes in governmental clubs (MR=132.17), with a secondary educational level (MR=147.32), below the age of 18 (MR=184.23), who earn monthly between 700 and 11,000 birrs (MR=148.92), and who are single (MR=130.34). Responses for training centers/developmental centers show a significant.

**Table 5.5: Summary of Kruskal-Wallis Test for developmental aspects**

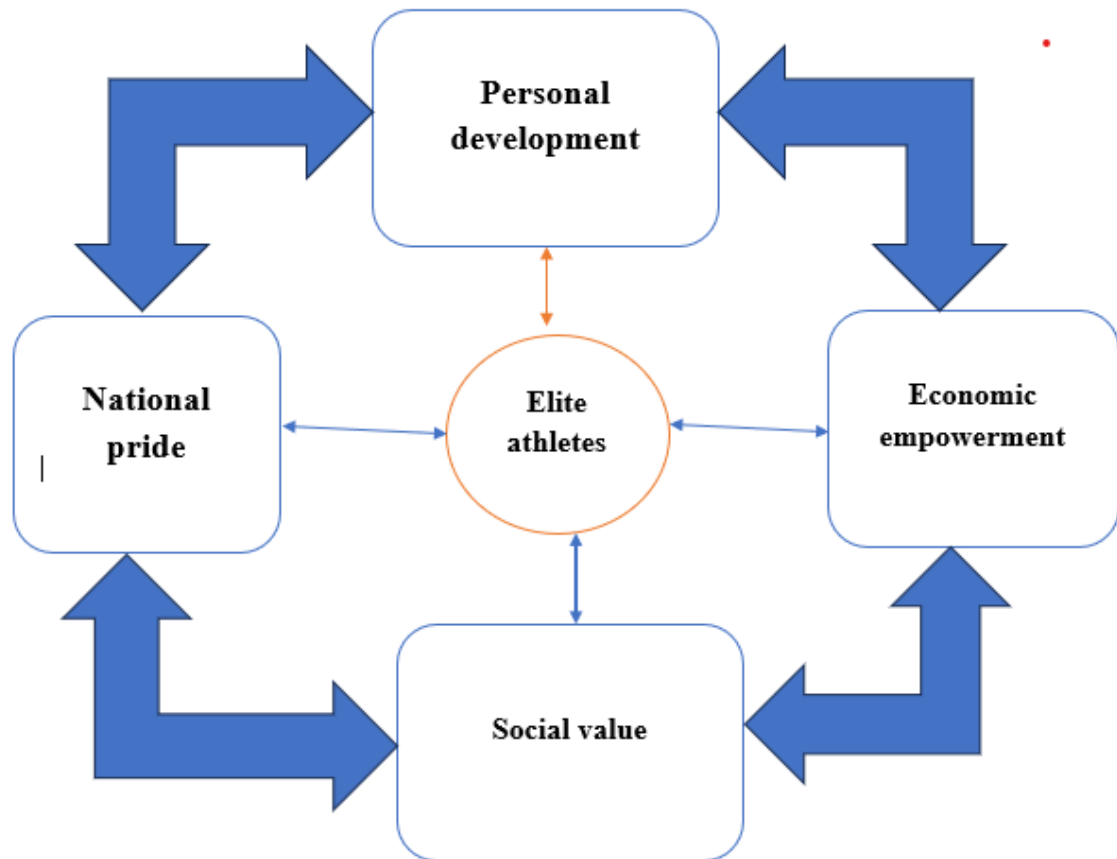
Factors	df	Elite Development		Youth development		Coach development		Developmental centers	
		Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
Club	3	16.06	.001**	5.77	.123	14.30	.003**	6.27	.099
Discipline	2	1.39	.498	4.42	.110	1.50	.472	0.38	.827
Income	3	8.33	.040*	1.52	.678	21.77	.001**	16.40	.001**
Education	2	18.68	<.001***	26.02	<.001***	19.21	<.001***	.04	.981
Age	4	39.61	<.001***	2.84	.585	9.07	.059.	11.20	.024*
Marital status	3	11.39	.003**	3.84	.147	10.34	.006**	10.56	.005**

Source: Survey Data, df=degree of freedom; Significant levels: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ ,

Statistical difference across age, average monthly income, and marital status of athletes, with higher mean rank scores of 191.25 for athletes below 18 years, 151.06 for athletes who earn more than 11,001 birrs monthly, and 134.02 for single athletes.

#### 5.4.4. Qualitative analysis

In response to the question: “Why do athletes prefer to work with athlete managers?”. Fig5.2 presents the compiled output of the interviews and the open-ended section of a questionnaire were summarized in the following manner after a thorough thematic analysis implemented after grouping and re-grouping ideas and reflections on the peculiar reasons for athlete to work with athlete managers.



**Figure 5.2. Reasons behind athletes’ involvement with athlete managers**

##### 5.4.4.1 Personal development

This theme includes issues relate to personal development of athletes as an effect of being involved with management teams/athlete managers including access to training, competition opportunity and performance improvement.

For an improved performance, trainings should be carried out in areas where it is safe for the athletes. Furthermore, the training elements, training equipment's and facilities should be aligned to the demand of the athletic event. In dealing with athlete managers most of the athlete respondents claim that they are privileged to access training facility, which are linked to entrance fee. Field observation by the researcher reveals that on a single training area/track or road or hills/, too many athletes are on duty. Accessing to a free and safe running track is a headache for both coaches and athletes. The number of competitions in the country is minimal, and access to international competition is not an easy task. Athletes will be privileged to access international competition as long as they are in a good shape. Most of the respondents claim that it is the driving force for them to work hard.

As a result of access to training and competition opportunity, athletes are benefited in having an improved performance. Frequent and regular training builds athletes, and make them competent. An improved wellbeing will not be an end, since the sport is dynamic it requires hard work. An improved performance transits athletes from novice to elite level and it also ensures their contract validity. No room will be there for an athlete with decreases performance.

#### **5.4.4.2. National development**

This theme is concerned with issues related to nation development; image building, sport development, youth development and knowledge transfer

Working with athlete managers are usually associated with access to international competition (as discussed earlier). Competing in international athletics meeting, provides an opportunity to athletes build positive image about their country. Besides accessing athletes to the international competitions helps EAF in the selection of athletes to represent the nation. The EAF and athletes club will not be burdened in search of competition to their athlete.

Most athlete managers are claimed to be experienced and rich in resource, accordingly it is a privilege to have them in the transfer of knowledge. Nevertheless, room given to youth

development were perceived as poor, the respondents claim that experienced athletes are preferred by the managers over novice and young athletes.

#### **5.4.4.3. Social value**

This theme is concerned with the social values given to athletes as a result of their best performance in different major athletic competitions; accordingly, they may get recognition, may become a role model and/or instill team work.

Athletes in Ethiopian context are better recognized as compared to other sport events since they are mostly representing and honor their country. The recognition is mostly twofold, governmental and citizen/individual wise. In this regard, the media plays a significant role. The recognition is mostly involving already known figures, and the room given to newer athletes were minimal. Both sexes secure an equivalent respect and recognition.

Most of the world class athletes of Ethiopia are role models, being a figure to the country, as a result, kids, novice and youth athletes are usually inspired by the success of these athletes. It can be said that, the trend of athletics in Ethiopia is associated with the impacts of the legends.

As a result of careful analysis of the athletes, coaches and athlete managers response, athlete develop a sense of team work which is far impractical in athletics where the sport is usually considered as an individual sport. No matter how the training is individualized, athletes are usually grouped homogenously with the intent to meet a certain standard. In doing so coaches usually implement a team work/tactic to help (mostly one or two) best athletes to maximize their performance.

#### **5.4.4.4. Economic empowerment**

This theme focuses on the economic aspect associated with athletes' exposure to work with athlete managers. Issues related to financial security, investment and supporting families are included:

As an effect of better performance or even presence in an event mostly makes athletes get rewarded. The intent to generate large sums of money mostly aspire athletes to stay and work hard with utmost effort. The respondents claim that athletes working with athlete managers are financially better as compared to athletes who do not access the touches of athlete managers. Most of these athletes lead a comfortable life since their athletic carrier is supported financially; athletes are left alone to focus only on their athletic performance. Besides, as a result of gaining large sums of money athletes are geared to invest in some sectors, usually in hotel investment. Hence, they lay a foundation to the rest of their life. In addition, athletes got a chance to support their family financially.

## **5.5. Discussion**

The present study aims to address athlete development issues in Ethiopia by analyzing elements identified through factor analysis, including elite development, coaches' development, youth development, and developmental training centers. The first two represent the more advanced state, while the rest reflects the foundation, “Peaking the sport” and “Bridging the sport,” respectively.

### ***Peaking the sport***

Athletes in the sport aim to continually upscale their performance via fulfilling the demands of their chosen discipline. Events in middle and long distance are led by their unique features and demand engagement in training suited to the level of the sport. Elite athletes in this regard are expected to be more disciplined and focused in their athletic endeavor. To this effect, coaches equipped with the latest training resources/protocols are becoming crucial. Nevertheless, the study reveals that elite development was viewed as inappropriate to the demands of the level, with limited resources in the area resulting from poor access to standardized training areas and unfair rewards pertinent to their effort.

### ***Bridging the sport***

The current state of a nation's sport is purely the reflection of what has been implemented or practiced in the developmental stages. The training centers, along with their intent to develop youth, play a vital role in the nation's upcoming success in major international competitions. Nevertheless, the study result depicts inappropriate focus was given to the youth development program (YDP) in the country, which demands a remedy via linking the sport with concerned bodies.

On the basis of the finding of the study, an athlete's sex, club affiliation, and educational status significantly impact the athlete's advancement and success at the elite level. It is evident that over the last two decades, female Ethiopian athletes have achieved significant success in major international competitions, surpassing male athletes. Even though earlier success in athletics was dominated by male athletes, the consistency and dominance coupled with record-breaking performance in recent years have been observed by female athletes. Experiencing success by female athletes helps in the promotion of the sport in addressing the demands of the nation, which is aligned with the notion of the WA and the IOC in bringing gender equality into practice (Patel et al., 2025). This suggests that better room was opened for women athletes to become more successful than their male counterparts. Their consistent presence at the podium can be attributed to the nature of the training, coaching, and management. Here it can be argued that based on the personal observation of the principal investigator, most female athletes were backed by their husbands or relatives as a "coach" or as a "pacemaker," bringing trust on the matter and unreserved support.

In terms of figures, the actual number of female athletes at the elite level in Ethiopia was less than male athletes, usually attributed to the social aspects. Success rates of female athletes in middle and long distance have exceeded those of male athletes since the 1990s. This demands a brilliance and wider support for them as they are able to proceed with their dominance in middle-and long distance. Therefore, a growing investment in female athletes would benefit the nation and athletes' development in terms of performance and social and economic aspects. Patel and his friend in their study projected a better

performance in the country (Ethiopia) by females due to a greater presence of women. Therefore, increasing the number of female athletes joining the training centers should be initiated since they have a tendency to outshine if they undergo the scientific training protocol. Training centers are pillars to the nation's sport development since they are places where LTAD is implemented. Besides, training centers open the door for many young talented athletes to maximize their potential.

In relation to the youth development, it was better perceived by female athletes, which aligns with the finding of elite development reflecting a positive transition of athletes from the grass root to the elite level. In this regard the “transfer system” is more applicable than the “escort” and “partner system,” which advocate helping an athlete from the early stage to the elite level by one person and helping a given athlete/s with a partner, respectively. According to Thompson, the transfer system is best advocated by the WA since it helps an athlete to be equipped with the basics and advanced skills progressively in different settings. Nevertheless, the procedural approach should not be the same and uninterrupted throughout different developmental stages of an athlete to tackle reversibility and overdose.

The impact of owning and managing youth development programs is best understood in today's sport; in realizing this, many nations, including Ethiopia, advocate the notion. In conjunction with this, the EAF employs a youth development program following the philosophy proposed by the governing body of athletics. “Athlete first, winning second sport,” which advocates the development aspect rather than winning. Nevertheless, the researchers argued that the sport will grow if and only if athletes and the institution are in great shape, whereby treatment of these parties separately will not answer the developmental issues. Providing the same nature of training in the training centers and attempting to develop them should avoid specializing too early. Early specializing since early specialization is not favored whereby athletes may forgo the foundation. Therefore, there should be a clear progressive pathway in helping athletes progress to the appropriate training level

In relation to the importance of working together, the finding from the study shows that athletes and coaches have a reasonably good time working with their management and management team for four and eight years on average, respectively. In the process of developing an athlete, continual support and contact become crucial, which was also noted by Sotiriadou et al. for the clubs/management teams to develop stability (2017). From this it can be inferred that as clubs become stable, rooms will be created to develop a culture and team cohesion, tackling scenarios observed in the short life span of some athletes and coaches that resulted in poor contractual agreements. Parties involved in the development of an athlete and the sport need to work in collaboration, which could result in a positive output. With this regard, Sotiriadou et al. pointed out the inter-organizational relationship in the elite athlete development process between clubs and federations involves the player, i.e., the athlete development process(2017)

Athletes' understanding of their athletic endeavor becomes crucial in the globalized world since information has become a key aspect. To better benefit in the developmental process, cognitive development is crucial, which usually results from a formal educational platform. The study reveals that educational status significantly impacts athletes' understanding of elite coaches and youth development. Athletes with secondary and tertiary-level education understand better the scenario contributing to their overall development. This is in line with the assumption that pupils in higher levels respond or understand better than those in the lower levels. This suggests that the contractual agreement and the demands of the athlete's chosen discipline will best be understood and implemented by the athlete, which in turn secures success. Athletes' psychological development will flourish with high cognitive and strategic skills (Kar & Kar, 2023; Martins et al., 2014; Scharfen & Memmert, 2019).

As athletes are accessed by the athlete managers, better performance is usually noticed. With this the athlete experiences personal development via hinging their development on a careful and simultaneous balancing of multiple training, psychological, and social factors (Fraser-Thomas & Strachan, 2014). Their top level builds their personal excellence, which can also be reflected in their lifestyle and performance improvement (Crawley, 2024; Chambers et al., 2019). Based on their top performance, they will have a

chance in the ‘Global Sporting Arms Race’ to better represent their nation to the world (Gómez-Rodríguez et al., 2024). According to Gomez and his friends, this race describes the competition among different countries to succeed in international sports competitions, which intends to increase soft power. Being an elite brings the opportunity to compete for the nation, whereby fame is secured as the usual names remain in the minds of the nation and the world as well. The economic contribution of elite sports is undeniable (O’Leary et al., 2024); huge sums of money are transacted at the level, resulting in athletes being benefited by being successful or by appearance. The economic variable is the most common input, with medals reached at the elite level being the most used output to check the correlation or significance of the results (Gómez-Rodríguez et al., 2024). In long-distance running, the primary sources of income for a professional athlete are prize/appearance money paid by major races and endorsement deals with running shoe manufacturers. (Shelley et al., 2023)

Taking into account the discussion made earlier, the study is believed to contribute to the literature to better understand the developmental aspects of Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

Assessing the developmental aspects of middle-distance running in Ethiopian athletics was the main concern of the study. Working with athlete managers provides different opportunities to athletes ranging from personal to social development. As a result, athletes were considered role models, economically stable, and public figures. The study focuses on the four factors underpinning the developmental aspects of middle- and long-distance running: elite, youth, coach, and training center development. Lack of standardized tracks and poor recognition of athletes pull backward the developments of the sport, and the efforts observed in the training centers were promising, involving potential athletes. Nevertheless, there is a poor transfer system for athletes to progress to the next stage (joining club or management teams). The country secures qualified coaches working in the discipline, but less effort was observed in capacity-building protocol. Therefore, maximizing the utilization of coaches at different levels would benefit the overall

development. Regarding linking stakeholders, the EAF poorly plays its mediating role with less transparency, and its effort to work in collaboration with clubs and athlete managers needs to be revised. The development in the youth and training centers bridges the sport to the next level whereby athletes achieve success; this progressive nature of the developmental approach brings stability and development to the athletes on one hand and the nation on the other hand.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1. Discussion

The purpose of this dissertation was to assess the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers in Ethiopian athletics. It focuses on athlete management and the developmental aspects of the sport and the athlete in Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running. The study involves six chapters, with the first and the last chapter gives an introduction and a summary of the study, respectively, and the remaining four chapters being interrelated and directly discussing the specified issues to address the research questions.

On the basis of the findings, the study developed a conceptual framework indicating the intertwined nature of the sub-elements of the study, i.e., roles, contributions, and managerial skills, followed by the discussion on the developmental aspect to reveal the current state of the sport of athletics, middle- and long-distance in particular.

The study applied a concurrent mixed method. The analysis and interpretation of primary and secondary data has led to key findings for the study. The descriptive analysis using frequency and percentage indicates the perceptions related to roles, contribution, managerial skills of athlete managers and the future prospects of Ethiopian athletics. However, the evaluation using group analysis indicates the athlete's manager's role, contribution, and managerial skill in relation to demographics (sex, age, running discipline, club enrollment, average monthly income, and marital status).

Athletes of both sexes were included in the study, having an average training age of  $8.33 \pm 4.04$  and  $3.88 \pm 2.14$  years of experience in working with athlete managers. They address all forms of club setting, including governmental and corporate/privately owned clubs functioning/participating in the first and second divisions recognized by the EAF. In

addition, some of them have individual sponsors or self-help for covering everything needed for training and competition on a regular basis.

Non-parametric tests were employed to assess the significant difference across different grouping variables (sex, running discipline, club setting, age, income, and marital status of an elite athlete). An explanatory factor analysis was performed using principal components and Varimax to see the possible correlation between items used to assess the roles, contributions, managerial skills, and developmental aspects of the sport. Accordingly, three factors were extracted for roles, contributions, and managerial skills each; nevertheless, for the developmental aspect, four factors were extracted, whereby each was used as a theme to regroup the questionnaire to get a better understanding. The internal consistency for the overall and for each subtheme/factor was analyzed and was found to fall under an acceptable range. On the basis of this Roles played by athlete managers encompass training-related roles (TRR), competition-related roles (CRR), and off-field roles (OFR). On the other hand, the contribution of athlete managers involves logistic support (making it ready), technical support (making it easy), and social support (making it comfortable). With regard to the managerial skills of athlete managers, as noted by different scholars in the area, the items were regrouped as conceptual skills, technical skills, and interpersonal skills. And finally, the analysis of the developmental aspects reveals issues related to elite development, youth development, coach development, and developmental/training centers. Each of these four aspects are treated separately in an attempt to produce four papers:

The first paper investigates the roles played by athlete managers in Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running. The study clearly states the roles and responsibilities of the managers towards athlete development in producing or in maintaining the athletes' potential gained as a result of tedious efforts exhibited both in training and in competition. The roles played by the athlete managers were analyzed on the basis of the athletes' sex, age, running discipline, club enrollment, education, marital status, and monthly income. In addition, resulting from factor analysis, the subthemes of the managerial roles of athlete manager were analyzed. In the context of this study, the roles

played by athlete managers can come in the form of training-related roles—*fulfilling the demands of the training*; competition-related roles—*fulfilling the demands of the competition*; or off-field roles—*fulfilling the demands out of training and competition settings*.

The findings on the overall roles reveal that club setting, running discipline, educational status, and average monthly incomes significantly differ across subgroups with  $p < .05$ ; accordingly, athletes in private clubs, athletes who engage in both middle and long distance, athletes with a secondary educational level, and athletes who earn more than 11,000-birr benefit from the roles of an athlete manager.

Considering the athlete's age, sex, and training ability is best, which helps to exercise the individual difference; hence, an individualized training approach is suited. A good attempt was made by athlete managers in monitoring the training protocol; hence, doing it on a regular basis may maximize the end result, which is in line with the athlete development notion advocated by the WA. The notion to expose athletes to demanding situations will be frustrating for the athletes. It must be noted that intense training followed by an inappropriate recovery strategy leads to athletes' failure.

The second paper explores the contributions of athlete managers towards athlete development; accordingly, the study reveals three dimensions whereby athlete managers contribute to the athlete as logistic, technical, and social support, reflecting *making it ready*, *making it easy*, and *making it accessible*, respectively. A similar approach was followed as of the preceding approach on roles; accordingly, the result entails that club enrollment, educational status, and average monthly income significantly differ across subgroups on the overall contribution made by athlete managers. Hence, athletes who enroll in government clubs, with secondary education and more than 11,000 experienced better support. In evaluating the subthemes, significant differences were observed additionally in the running discipline, entailing that athletes in both middle- and long-distance were favored.

The third paper attempts to assess the managerial skills of athlete managers while dealing with elite athletes; accordingly, the study reveals three dimensions whereby athlete managers manage their athletes involving conceptual skills, technical skills, and interpersonal/human skills. The findings reveal that there is a significant difference in athletes' sex on the overall and subthemes of the managerial skills with  $p < .05$ ; accordingly, female athletes have higher scores. Athletes' club enrollment and their monthly income were found to be influential factors in experiencing all the managerial skills exhibited by athlete managers with  $p < .05$ ; accordingly, those who earn higher wages and those who enrolled in self-help and private clubs reflect better experiences. No significant difference was observed across athletes' running discipline, age, and marital status in this regard.

The fourth paper looks into the state and the future prospects of Ethiopian distance running. The developmental aspects of the sport of athletics in the context of this particular study come in the form of elite, youth, and coach development, along with the training/developmental centers' perspectives. The findings reveal that no significant differences were observed in running discipline related to the overall roles and their subthemes. Athletes in different club settings show significant differences in elite and coach development with  $p < .05$ ; accordingly, higher scores were observed in private and governmental clubs, respectively. On the other hand, the educational level significantly differs on the perception of athletes on elite development, coach development, and developmental centers; accordingly, those with a secondary educational level perceive the developmental aspects better. Similarly, the average monthly income differs across these three subthemes, favoring the higher number. With regard to sex, female athletes were privileged in subthemes of youth and elite development (athlete development), while males perceived better functioning by the EAF on coach and training center development.

Distance running in Ethiopia is a popular athletic event where both sexes have contributed to raising the flag of the country in major international races. Successful former Ethiopian athletes played a key role in inspiring many to get involved in the sport of athletics. They are a spring board for the state of athletics, particularly distance running in the country and dominance in major international competitions. With this in mind,

recognizable efforts have been made by many to restore, maintain, or promote the sport. The introduction of athlete managers can be considered as one, mainly focused on helping athletes to show off their potential.

Currently, most managements form a “management team” to assist their coaching, involving athletes working together under full supervision of athlete managers. Hence, the heterogeneous nature of athletes' involvement was evidenced with the inclusion of athletes with different sex, specialization, club structure, age level, average monthly income, educational and marital status. Nevertheless, athletes participating in both middle- and long-distance and female runners were favored by athlete managers via offering better opportunity and support.

The research findings support the assertion that athlete managers induce athlete exploitation. This paper recognizes the fact that athlete managers do not always work through the commonly assumed channel to deal with the athletes. The reflection of athletes, coaches, and managers shows in this regard the presence of ill behaviors exhibited in the sport, which drags the sports development to its worst state. Poor collaboration among coaches, unplanned coaching, snatching of athletes, bribing, and doping were the concerns in the discussion with the subjects regarding the emergence of athlete managers in Ethiopia. In addition, role conflict between/among coaches was also observed, reflecting the different strategies or philosophies exhibited in the club and in the management/management team. Such acts were not compatible to the athlete's progress, rather forces athletes to engage with full potential in the training provided by both parties, resulting in serious physical and psychological stress, i.e., athletic injuries and psychological frustration. The study reveals that athletes from private clubs tend to have freedom due to the structure of the club as compared to government clubs. Therefore, the relationship between the club and the management/management team or the coaches in both settings should be smooth enough so that both parties need to understand the burden placed upon the athlete. The intense desire to stay in shape may force athletes to withdraw or engage in unethical practices/doping or simply fall apart (spoil).

The impact of owning and managing youth development programs is best understood in today's sport; in realizing this, many nations, including Ethiopia, advocate the notion. In conjunction with this, the EAF employs a youth development program following the philosophy proposed by the governing body of athletics. "Athlete first, winning second sport" purely focuses on the development aspect at the expense of the pure dare to "compete and win" approach. In the developed nations, the focus of the athlete management discourse is being shifted from its interaction with the competition-oriented to the development-oriented approach, where the output is always the result of the input. In this regard, there is strong work that should be done by athlete managers in acquiring skills that go beyond what is customary. The intent to deal with elite athletes only will be demotivating for novice athletes; Green & Houlihan confirmed that, the focus and due emphasis on the elite has often meant a decreased attention on the grassroots and recreational streams of the sport (2005).

For the overall development of an athlete, provision of structured, planned, and timely support is essential; excessive or inappropriate support should be reconsidered. Care should be made in balancing the support; the managers must balance the personal needs with the overall resources' constraints of their organization/clubs, often leading to difficult tradeoffs (Hopkins & Hyde, 2002). The developmental ages should also be considered since athletes are susceptible to different stressors during their peak performance year. Hence, athletes require a coping mechanism to make them deal with and manage the stressors (Nuetzel, 2023).

Acquiring managerial skills becomes crucial, which helps for effective and efficient use of the resources at hand. The study reveals that athlete managers are equipped with the conceptual skills; with better knowledge and understanding about what to do and how to do. In this regard, Pedersen, P. & Thibault noted that a manager's conceptual skill helps to identify the root cause of problems rather than simply stating the symptoms of the issue (2019). In addition, the conceptual skill helps to understand the heterogeneity of athletes' demands that a manager should cope with. The technical ability and human skills were also found to be decisive in directing and handling issues in the process. Similarly, the focus on a certain skill without providing appropriate delegation to act as needed might

impair athletes' focus, which ends up in frustration on the part of the athlete and themselves.

The present status of the athlete at the elite level is not the result of the effort that has been made by some groups; rather, it is the result of an intertwined, continuous investment. The athlete's success is the result of his/her development; but it can be influenced by the athlete him/herself or by the immediate surroundings and governing bodies of the sport. On the basis of the framework developed by Shelly (2025), the influence of the athlete manager is at a macro level. With this in mind, the finding reveals that there is a poor link among the federation clubs with the managers, which indicates that the issue must not be left alone and neglected. It is a big call that requires a remedy in favor of the athlete's development. The absence of supervision will jeopardize the future of the athlete. It also impacts the nation's success while representing the country in different international competitions. The relationship between the club and the management/management team or the coaches in both settings should be smooth enough so that both parties need to understand the burden placed upon the athlete.

In general, focusing on a certain skill or support/contribution or role has a tendency to negatively impact the athlete's development. Beside the focus on the development should be / transferable /temegagabi/ and transparent from a certain developmental state to the other - quick shift is a mirage/dangerous. Besides, roles outside of the training and competition setting play a significant role in the developmental process since they pave the way to build full-fledged athletes.

Based upon the findings of the study, the following implication sought to be considered: The presence of athlete managers plays a significant role; they hugely contribute to athletes' development in personal and social aspects in the course of athletes' successful careers. This study implies that the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers impact the developmental aspects of the sport with their inseparable nature. It also provides valuable information for policy options in accordance with the demands of the elite level and the needs of the nations (in securing the legacy or advancing the sport). Hence, the study's contribution to the literature is undeniable, which can be used as a source of information pinpointing future directions.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The study attempts to address the research questions and its objectives mentioned in the introductory part of this dissertation. The dissertation gives better insight in understanding the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers in dealing with elite middle- and long-distance runners of Ethiopia. The following conclusions were made based on the data gathered from the subjects in the form of questionnaires and interviews on the interrelated components of the study. The collective outcomes of the conclusions are believed to point out the scenario aiding the development of both the athlete and the sport.

The athlete managers, along with their coaches, possess a good evaluation of the training protocol while considering the athletes' age and sex. With relatively too much exposure to tedious and restless scenarios in training and competition. Hence, athletes were not prioritized over their success, and the responses provided to the athlete's request lacked integrity. Roles related to training, competition, and off-field were identified as a subtheme that athlete managers possess as they interact with elite athletes. In relation to the overall role, athletes who participate in both middle- and long-distance running were favored by athlete managers. Besides, the protocols in privately owned clubs suit both the athlete and the managers. Emphasis on specified roles and parties undermines the integrity.

Taking into account the athletes' age and sex, the athlete managers and their coaches have a solid assessment of the training regimen. with comparatively excessive exposure to monotonous and agitating situations throughout practice and competition. As a result, athletes' achievement was not given priority, and the answers given to their requests lacked honesty. Athlete managers' interactions with elite athletes were found to fall under the subtheme of roles pertaining to training, competition, and off-field activities. Athlete managers preferred athletes that ran both long-distance and middle-distance in terms of the overall function. Additionally, privately held teams have procedures that work for both the managers and the athletes. Integrity is compromised when specific roles and parties are emphasized.

The contribution of athlete managers focuses on provision of sportswear and scientific training with qualified coaches with poor access to the training materials, injury treatment, and life skill/psychological support. No room was given in supporting the athletes club, the federation/EAF, and developmental training centers in this regard. The contributions rendered to the athletes involved logistic, technical, and social support. The social support need not be neglected since it impacts the wholesomeness. Both sexes are privileged to all forms of support, and athletes participating in middle- and long-distance running require the wholesome support as compared to athletes in other disciplines.

The management of the athlete could be considered as a pillar in the proper implementation of the specified roles and contributions in the preceding sections; accordingly, the study addresses the conceptual, technical, and human skills. Accordingly, the athlete managers were found to have ample knowledge about the sport with limited relation with the athlete's club and the federation. Even though they work with athletes for a long period, they fail to provide appropriate and quick responses for the athletes' requests. The conceptual skills exercised by athlete managers impact female and self-help athletes. The technical skills, on the other hand, were better sensed by athletes in the private setting and athletes with a tertiary educational level. Self-help athletes and those who earn a higher wage experience better human skill from their athlete managers.

The developmental aspects of the sport of athletics in the context of this particular study come in the form of elite, youth, and coach development, along with the training/developmental centers' perspectives. The implementation of the youth development program (YDP) is perceived as good, with less emphasis given to youth athletes for the upcoming level (either joining clubs or management teams). Apparently, the elite development in the area was stagnant, associated with a lack of standardized tracks, transparency, and lesser recognition/reward from the concerned bodies. Nevertheless, the country owns qualified experts and coaches in the field with rare capacity-building programs. The need to strengthen the tie among clubs, the federation,

and athlete managers was reflected. Discrepancies among athletes in understanding the developmental aspects were observed.

The overall study suggests that the roles, contributions, and managerial skills of athlete managers, along with their subthemes, are inseparable, where one is supporting the other in the making of better athletes whereby the nation flourishes in middle- and long-distance running. The roles played by the athlete managers undeniably have a positive influence on the athlete's development and better performance; the same is true with the support system needed by the athlete, which results from better management through understanding the sport's nature and handling of its resources. (i.e., athlete's circle) The study also points out the potential risk of neglecting a certain portion of the subthemes resulting in frustration and the cost of the desired outcome. Care should be taken in the provision of prompt responses to help athletes to stay motivated.

The study accentuates the importance of collaborative efforts of stakeholders in elite development; accordingly, it stresses the care to be taken in the athlete transfer system while considering the exposure and experience of athletes to avoid early specialization.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

On the basis of the discussions and conclusions, the following recommendations were forwarded. First, smooth and collaborative interaction should be instilled among clubs the Ethiopian athletics feed clubs, the EAF, and the management./Athlete representative/. Second, it must be noted that sport is dynamic and, athlete managers should open their eyes wide open to upgrade their athlete management in terms of role, contribution, and managerial skill. In addition, their roles, contributions, and managerial skills should not be focused on the specified aspect/sub-theme (training and competition); they should take into account the athlete's circle. Third, athlete managers should be motivated and supported so that they can play an additional role in exploring talents in all athletic disciplines. Besides, the support should not be confined to the athletes; rather, their coaches, clubs, and training centers, and even the EAF should get a tangible benefit. They need to be exploited to share their experience and resources so as to upgrade the state of the sport via providing an opportunity to work and invest in developmental/training

centers and clubs. Fourth, EAF should supervise the activities of the athlete managers for the sake of the nation and sports since there are claims of ill behavior associated with them (doping, early specialization, fake promises). And the EAF should clarify and identify the demarcation between fake and real/licensed managers and/or coaches and managers; hence, there should be a controlling mechanism. Athletes should be aware of the responsibilities of their managers in their athletic careers. Besides, they need to be curious about the elements of their agreement. Fifth, The works of the developmental centers in Ethiopia bring a remarkable contribution to the sport in general and middle-and-long-distance running in particular; hence, expansion should be considered by the concerned bodies (the sports commission, the federation [EAF], the clubs, and the athlete managers or potential investors). The door to attract and entertain potential athlete managers for the sake of the sport's development should be wide open. Athletes should also insist their managers widen their range. Sixth, proper supervision and implementation of the youth development program (YDP) and athlete support program (ADP) should be taken into consideration since it will positively benefit the country's sport development. And care should be there in the transformation of athletes to the elite level should be reevaluated, and grass-roots/kids' athletics should not be neglected.

Since the study is confined to middle and long distance, further investigation on the area can also be brought to the front/floor to instill a better management culture in the sport. In addition, studies could be made encompassing other disciplines of athletics, and other sports involving athlete managers or agents should consider the importance of elaborating such studies. Currently, Athlete management and athlete development are becoming dynamic and ever-changing, influencing the development of the individual athlete and the nation's sport development; hence, a further investigation is mandatory to assist the developmental pathway of the athlete and the sport. Further studies can be made via restating the research questions in other athletic disciplines (and/or other sports) and by comparing with other successful nations in the area (e.g., Kenya).

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APPENDIX I



Addis Ababa University  
አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ



በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ  
ተፈጥሮና ቀመር ሳይንስ ኮሌጅ  
የስፖርት ሳይንስ ትምህርት ክፍል

**በአትሌቶች የሚሞላ መጠይቅ**

ወደ የዚህ የፅሁፍ መጠይቅ ተሳታፊ አትሌቶች በቅድሚያ ለሚያደርጉልኝ ትብብር ላቅ ያለ ምስጋና ላቀርብልዎ እወዳለሁ። በረከት ይትባረክ እባላለሁ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የስፖርት ሳይንስ ትምህርት ክፍል የPhD (ሶስተኛ ዲግሪ) ተማሪ ነኝ። ይህ የፅሁፍ መጠይቅ የተዘጋጀበት ዓላማ " Roles, Contributions and Managerial Skills of Athlete Managers in Ethiopian Athletics." በሚል ርዕስ ለሶስተኛ ዲግሪ(PhD) ማሟያ ፅሁፍ የሚወልድ የምርምር ስራን ለመስራት ግብዓት መሰብሰብ ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋናነት ፣ አትሌቶች ከማናጀር /athlete representative/ ጋር መስራት ያለው ሚና፣ አስተዋጾ/ድጋፍ እና የማናጀሮቹን የአመራር ክህሎት በመዳሰስ ለአትሌቶች እድገት እና ለአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት ልህቀት አስተዋጾ ማድረግ ነው። ጥናቱ ሙሉ በሙሉ አካዳሚያዊ ብቻ ነው። ስለዚህ መጠይቆቹን በመሙላት ለምርምሩ መሳካት የሚያደርጉት አስተዋጾ እጅግ ላቅ ያለ ነው።

ስም መጻፍ አያስፈልግም;

**ክፍል አንድ:- አጠቃላይ መረጃ**

መልስ መስጫ ሳጥኑ ውስጥ ከቀረቡት አማራጮች መካከል መልስ ይሆናል ብለው ያሰቡትን ከሳጥኑ ውስጥ የ "✓" ምልክት በማድረግ ይመልሱ።

1. ፆታ:  ወንድ  ሴት
2. ዕድሜ:  ከ18 ዓመት በታች  23-27  
 18-22  28- 32  ከ33 ዓመት በላይ c
3. የቤተሰብ ሁኔታ:  ያገባ  ያላገባ  
 የተፋታ  የተለያየ
4. የትምህርት ደረጃ:  የመጀመሪያ ደረጃ  ዲፕሎማ  
 ሁለተኛ ደረጃ  ዲግሪ  
 ሰርተፍኬት  ማስተርስ ሌላ\_\_\_\_\_

5. በአትሌቲክስ ቆይታ (ዓመት) \_\_\_\_\_

6. የሚሳተፉበት የሩጫ ተግባር :

- መካከለኛ ርቀት  ረጅም ርቀት  
 መካከለኛ ና ረጅም ርቀት ሌላ \_\_\_\_\_

7. የስራ(ክለብ) ሁኔታ:

- የመንግስት ድርጅት ክለብ  የግለሰብ ክለብ  
 የግል ድርጅት ክለብ  ራስ አገዝ ሌላ \_\_\_\_\_

8. ወርሃዊ የገቢ መጠን(ብብር)

- ከ3000 በታች  ከ3001-6000  
 ከ7001-11000  ከ11000 በላይ c

9. ከአትሌት ተውካይ ጋር የቆዩበት ጊዜ(ዓመት) \_\_\_\_\_

**ክፍል ሁለት:** ከዚህ በታች የቀረቡትን ሃሳቦች ከቀረቡት ምርጫዎች መካከል በመምረጥ መልስዎ በሆነው ሳጥን ውስጥ የ “✓”

ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ ::

**2.1 የአትሌት ማናጀር /athlete representative/ ተግባራትን: ሚናንና ኃላፊነትን በተመለከተ የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች::**

		በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስማማም	በጣም አልስማማም
2.1.1	እድሜን ያማከለ ልምምድ ያዘጋጃል::					
2.1.2	ጾታን ግምት ውስጥ ያካተተ ልምምድ ያዘጋጃል::					
2.1.3	አቅምንና ችሎታ ያገናዘበ ልምምድ ያዘጋጃል::					
2.1.4	አለም አቀፍ የውድድር እድሎችን ያመቻቻል::					
2.1.5	ተደራራቢ ውድድሮችን ያዘጋጃል::					
2.1.6	ሃገር አቀፍ ውድድሮች ላይ እንድሳተፍ ያበረታታል::					
2.1.7	የአትሌቶችን ብቃት ይገመግማል::					
2.1.8	የአሸናፊነት ስሜት እንዲሰማኝ ያደርጋል::					
2.1.9	ለአትሌቱ(ለኔ) እድገት ቅድሚያ ያሰጣል::					
2.1.10	ለአትሌቶች ጥያቄዎች ፈጣን ምላሽ ይሰጣል::					
2.1.11	ለአትሌቶች ጥያቄዎች አጥጋቢ ምላሽ ይሰጣል::					
2.1.12	የአትሌቶችን መብት ያስከብራል::					

**2.2 የአትሌት ማናጀሮች ለአትሌቱ፡ ለክለቦችና ለአትሌቲክስ ስፖርቱ እድገት የሚያደርጉትን ድጋፍን /አስተዋጾ/ በተመለከተ የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች።**

		በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስማማም	በጣም አልስማማም
2.2.1	በቂ የስፖርት ትጥቅ ድጋፍ ያደርጋሉ።					
2.2.2	ምቹ የስልጠና ቁሳቁስ ያቀርባሉ።					
2.2.3	ሳይንሳዊ የሆነ የልምምድ ፕሮግራም ያዘጋጃሉ።					
2.2.4	ሃገር ወክሉን ስንወዳደር ድጋፍ ያደርጉልናል።					
2.2.5	ብቁ አሰልጣኞችን ያቀርባሉ።					
2.2.6	ለአሰልጣኞች የሙያ(ስልጠና) ድጋፍ ያደርጋሉ።					
2.2.7	ጉዳት ሲያጋጥም ተግባራዊ ክትትል ያደርጋሉ።					
2.2.8	ለክለቤ የተለያዩ ድጋፍ ያደርጋሉ።					
2.2.9	ለፌዴሬሽን የተለያዩ ድጋፍ ያደርጋሉ።					
2.2.10	ለአትሌቶች የህይወት ክህሎት ድጋፍ ያደርጋሉ።					
2.1.11	ልምምድ ካምፕ ያዘጋጃሉ።					
2.1.12	የላብ መተኪያ ምግቦችን ያዘጋጃሉ።					
2.1.13	ተተኪ አትሌቶችን ያዘጋጃሉ።					

**2.3 የአትሌት ማናጀሮች የአመራር ክህሎት በተመለከተ የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች።**

		በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስማማም	በጣም አልስማማም
2.3.1	ለስፖርት (አትሌቲክስ) ስፊ አውቀት አላቸዉ።					
2.3.2	የአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት እድገትን ይከታተላሉ።					
2.3.3	ልምምዶችና ውድድሮችን በትኩረት ይከታተላሉ።					
2.3.4	ከአትሌቶች ጋር መልካም ግንኙነት አላቸዉ።					
2.3.5	አትሌቶችን ያዳምጣሉ/ለአትሌቶች ቅርብ ናቸዉ።					
2.3.6	ለሚፈጠሩ ችግሮች ፈጣን ምላሽ ይስጣሉ።					
2.3.7	ለሚፈጠሩ ችግሮች ተገቢ ምላሽ ይስጣሉ።					
2.3.8	ለሚከሰቱ ችግሮች እኛን የመፍትሄ አካል ያደርጋሉ።					
2.3.9	ከአትሌቶች ጋር ብዙ ዓመት ይቆያሉ።					
2.3.10	ዘላቂ ስራዎችን ከኛ ጋር ይሰራሉ።					
2.3.11	ገንዘብ ነክ ጉዳዮችን በአግባቡ ያስተዳድራሉ።					
2.3.12	ከክለቤ ጋር መልካም ግንኙነት አላቸዉ።					
2.3.13	ከፌዴሬሽን ጋር መልካም ግንኙነት አላቸዉ።					
2.3.14	ከሌሎች ተወካዮች ጋር በትብብር ይሰራሉ።					

**2.4. የኢትዮጵያ አትሌቲክስ ስፖርት እድገትን በተመለከተ የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች።**

		በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስማማም	በጣም አልስማማም
2.4.1	ፌዴሬሽን ለታዳጊዎች ስልጠና ትኩረት ይሰጣል።					
2.4.2	የታዳጊዎች ስልጠና በበቂ ሁኔታ ተግባራዊ እየተደረገ ነው።					
2.4.3	ብቁ የሆኑ ባለሞያዎች በፌዴሬሽኑ ውስጥ አሉ።					
2.4.4	ፌዴሬሽን ለስፖርቱ እድገት ግልፅ አሰራርን ይተገብራል።					
2.4.5	በክለቦችና በፌዴሬሽን መካከል ጥሩ ግንኙነት አለ።					
2.4.6	ፌዴሬሽን የአትሌት ማናጀሮችን በስፖርቱ ውስጥ እንዲሳተፉ ያርታታል።					
2.4.7	በሀገሪቱ ውስጥ ደረጃውቸን የጠበቁ በቂ የመለማመጃ ቦታዎች አሉ።					
2.4.8	በስልጠና ማዕከላት የሚሰጡ ስልጠናዎች ተስፋ ሰጪ ናቸው።					
2.4.9	በስልጠና ማዕከላትና በክለቦች መካከል መልካም ትስስር አለ።					
2.4.10	አቅምን ለመፈተሽ የሚረዱ በቂ ውድድሮች ይዘጋጃሉ።					
2.4.11	ብቁ የሆኑ አሰልጣኞች በሀገሪቱ ውስጥ አሉ።					
2.4.12	የአሰልጣኞች ደረጃን ከፍተኛ የሚያደርጉ ስልጠናዎች ይዘጋጃሉ።					
2.4.13	አትሌቶች ለልፋታቸው በቂ ድጋፍ ያገኛሉ።					
2.4.14	አትሌቶች ለልፋታቸው እውቅና ያገኛሉ።					

**ክፍል ሶስት : ከዚህ በታች ለቀረቡትን ጥያቄዎች ያለውን ሃሳብ በአጭሩ ይግለፁ**

3.1. ኢትዮጵያ በመካከለኛና ረጅም ርቀት ያለችበት ደረጃን እንዴት ታየዋለህ /ታይዋለሽ?

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3.2 ከአትሌቶች ማናጀሮች ጋር መስራት ለአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት ያለው ጥቅም ምንድን ነው?

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3.3. አትሌቶች ማናጀሮች ጋር በመስራት ያጡት ነገር ካለ:

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3.4. ለአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት እድገት ያሉት እንቅፋቶች/ተግዳሮቶች ምንድን ናቸው?

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3.5. ምን ቢሰራ የአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት በኢትዮጵያ አሁን ካለበት ከፍ ሊል ይችላልይችላል?

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**አመሰግናለሁ!!!**

APPENDIX II



Addis Ababa University  
አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

SEEK WISDOM, ELEVATE YOUR INTELLECT AND SERVE HUMANITY!



በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ  
ተፈጥሮና ቀመር ሳይንስ ኮሌጅ  
የስፖርት ሳይንስ ትምህርት ክፍል

**በአሰልጣኞች የሚሞላ መጥይቅ**

ዉድ የዚህ የፅሁፍ መጠይቅ ተሳታፊ አሰልጣኞች በቅድሚያ ለሚያደርጉልኝ ትብብር ላቅ ያለ ምስጋና ላቀርብልዎ እወዳለሁ። በረከት ይረትባክ እባላለሁ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የስፖርት ሳይንስ ትምህርት ክፍል የPhD (ሶስተኛ ዲግሪ) ተማሪ ነኝ። ይህ የፅሁፍ መጠይቅ የተዘጋጀበት ዓላማ " Roles, Contributions and Managerial Skills of Athlete Managers in Ethiopian Athletics." በሚል ርዕስ ለሶስተኛ ዲግሪ(PhD) ማሟያ ፅሁፍ የሚዉል የምርምር ስራን ለመስራት ግብዓት መሰብሰብ ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋናነት ፣ አትሌቶች ከማናጀር /athletre representative/ ጋር መስራት ያለው ሚና፣ አስተዋጾ/ድጋፍ እና የማናጀሮቹን የአመራር ክህሎት በመዳሰስ ለአትሌቶች እድገት እና ለአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት ልህቀት አስተዋጾ ማድረግ ነው። ጥናቱ ሙሉ በሙሉ አካዳሚያዊ ብቻ ነው። ስለዚህ መጠይቆቹን በሞምላት ለምርምሩ መሳካት የሚያደርጉት አስተዋጾ እጅግ ላቅ ያለ ነው።

ስም መጻፍ አያስፈልግም;

**ክፍል አንድ:- አጠቃላይ መረጃ**

መልስ መስጫ ሳጥኑ ውስጥ ከቀረቡት አማራጮች መካከል መልስ ይሆናል ብለው ያሰቡትን ከሳጥኑ ውስጥ የ “✓” ምልክት በማድረግ ይመልሱ።

1. ያታ:  ወንድ  ሴት
2. ዕድሜ  22-27  28-33  34- 38  ከ39-44  ከ45 በላይ
3. የትምህርት ደረጃ  ማንበብና መጻፍ  ዲፕሎማ  የመጀመሪያ ደረጃ  ስርተፍኬት  ሁለተኛ ደረጃ  ዲግሪ ሌላ \_\_\_\_\_
4. የቤተሰብ ሁኔታ  ያገባ  ያላገባ  የተፋታ  የተለያየ

5. በአትሌቲክስ የአሰልጣኝነት ቆይታ (ዓመት) \_\_\_\_\_

6. የሚያሰለጥኑት የኑጫ ተግባር

- መካከለኛ ርቀት                       ረጅም ርቀት  
 መካከለኛ ና ረጅም ርቀት      ሌላ \_\_\_\_\_

7. የሰራ ሁኔታ

- የመንግስት ክለብ ተቀጣሪ                       የግለሰብ ተቀጣሪ  
 የግል ክለብ ተቀጣሪ                       ራስ አገዝ      ሌላ \_\_\_\_\_

8. ወርሃዊ የገቢ መጠን(ቡብር)

- ከ3000 በታች                       ከ3001-70000  
 ከ7,001-14000                       ከ14,000 በላይ

9. ከተውካይ ጋር የቆዩበት ጊዜ(ዓመት) \_\_\_\_\_

**ክፍል ሁለት:** ከዚህ በታች የቀረቡትን ሃሳቦች ከቀረቡት ምርጫዎች መካከል በመምረጥ መልስዎ በሆነው ሳጥን ውስጥ የ “✓” ምልክት በማስቀመጥ ይምረጡ ::

**2.1 የአትሌቶች ማናጀር /athletre representative/ ተግባራትን : ኃላፊነትንና ሚናን በተመለከተ የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች::**

		ቡጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስማማም	ቡጣም አልስማማም
2.1.1	የውድድር እድሎችን ያመቻቻሉ::					
2.1.2	እድሜን ጾታን አቅምንና ችሎታ ያገናዘበ ልምምድ ይሰጣሉ::					
2.1.3	የአትሌቶችን ብቃት ይገመግማል::					
2.1.4	ተደራራቢ ውድድሮችን ያዘጋጃሉ::					
2.1.5	ለአትሌቶች ጥያቄዎች ፈጣንና አጥጋቢ ምላሽ ይሰጣሉ::					
2.1.6	ሃገር አቀፍ ውድድሮች ላይ እንድሳተፉ ያበረታታሉ::					
2.1.7	ከክለቤ ጋር መልካም ግንኙነት አላቸዉ::					

**2.2 የአትሌቶች ማናጀሮች ለአትሌቱ ለክለቦችና ለአትሌቲክስ ስፖርቱ እድገት የሚያደርጉትን ድጋፍን /አስተዋጾ /በተመለከተ በተመለከተ የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች።**

		በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስማማም	በጣም አልስማማም
2.2.1	ደረጃውን የጠበቀ የትጥቅና ቁሳቁስ ድጋፍ ያደርጋል።					
2.2.2	ሳይንሳዊና ወጥ የሆነ የልምምድ ፕሮግራም ያዘጋጃል።					
2.2.3	ለአሰልጣኞች የሙያ(ስልጠና) ድጋፍ ያደርጋል።					
2.2.4	ደረጃውን የጠበቀ ወድድሮች ላይ ያሳትፋል።					
2.2.5	ጉዳት ስያጋጥም ተግባራዊ ክትትል ያደርጋል።					
2.2.6	ለክለቦች የተለያዩ ድጋፍ ያደርጋል።					
2.2.7	ለፌዴሬሽን የተለያዩ ድጋፍ ያደርጋል።					

**2.3 የአትሌቶች ማናጀሮች የአመራር ክህሎት በተመለከተ የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች።**

		በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስማማም	በጣም አልስማማም
	<b>Conceptual skill/እውቀት ክህሎት</b>					
2.3.1	ስለሚሰሩት ስራ (አትሌቲክስ) በቂ እውቀት አላቸው					
2.3.2	ሚዛናዊ የሆኑ ግቦችን ያዘጋጃል					
2.3.3	የስትራቴጂ እቅዶችን ያዘጋጃል					
2.3.4	የስትራቴጂ እቅዶችን ይረዳል ይተገብራል					
2.3.5	ደካማና ጠንካራ ጎኖችን ይለያል					
2.3.6	አዳዲስ አሰራሮችን ተግባራዊ ያደርጋል					
2.3.7	ለሰዓት ክብር ይሰጣል					
2.3.8	ለስርዓት ተገዢ ናቸው					
2.3.9	እቅዶችን ይገመግማል					

2.3.10	ጥሩ ብቃትን ይተንበያሉ					
2.3.11	ተገቢ ያልሁኑ ውስጣዊ ተግባራትን ይለያሉ					
	<b>Human skill /ክህሎት</b>					
2.3.12	ጥሩ የመግባባት ክህሎት አላቸው					
2.3.13	አትሌቶችን ያበረታታሉ					
2.3.14	ልምምዶችና ውድድሮችን በትኩረት ይከታተላሉ።					
2.3.15	ለሚፈጠሩ ችግሮች ፈጣንና ተገቢ ምላሽ ይስጣሉ።					
2.3.16	የተወሰዱ ርምጃዎችን ያሳውቃሉ					
2.3.17	ቡድንን ያነሳሳሉ					
2.3.18	ስብሰባ /ምክክር ያደርጋሉ					
2.3.19	አትሌቶችን በተመለከተ ይደራደራሉ					
2.3.20	ወቅታዊ ሪፖርቶችን ያቀርባሉ					
2.3.21	ክሌሎች ተቁማት ጋር ተግባብተው ይሰራሉ					
	<b>Technical skill/ክህሎት</b>					
2.3.22	ስራዎችን በአቅድ ይሰራሉ።					
2.3.23	ስራዎችን ይገመግማሉ					
2.3.24	ስራዎችን ለተገቢው ሰዓት ያከፋፍላሉ					
2.3.25	ከአትሌቶች ጋር ብዙ ጊዜ (ዓመት) ይቆያሉ					
2.3.26	ገንዘብ ነክ ጉዳዮችን በአግባቡ ያስተዳድራሉ					
2.3.27	ጥሩ የማርክቲንግ/ማሻሻጥ ተሞክሮ አላቸው					
2.3.28	ዘላቂ ስራዎችን ከኛ ጋር ይሰራሉ።					

**2.4. የአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት እድገትን /በተመለከተ የቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች።**

		በጣም እስማማለሁ	እስማማለሁ	አላውቅም	አልስማማም	በጣም አልስማማም
2.4.1	ኢትዮጵያ በመካከለኛ ና ረጅም ርቀት ያለችበት ደረጃ ጥሩ ነው።					
2.4.2	የአትሌት ማናጀሮች በስፖርቱ ውስጥ መኖር ለአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት እድገት ወሳኝ ነው።					
2.4.3	በስልጠና ማዕከላት የሚሰጡ ስልጠናዎች ተስፋ ሰጪ ናቸው።					
2.4.4	በስልጠና ማዕከላትና በክለቦች መካከል መልካም ትስስር አለ					
2.4.5	አቅምን ለመፈተሽ የሚረዱ በቂ ውድድሮች ይዘጋጃሉ።					
2.4.6	የአሰልጣኞች ደረጃን ከፍ የሚያደርጉ ስልጠናዎች ይዘጋጃሉ።					
2.4.7	ፌዴሬሽኑ ለስፖርቱ እድገት ግልፅ አሰራርን ይተገብራል					
2.3.8	የአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት እድገት እኛን የመፍትሄ አካል ያደርጋሉ።					
2.3.9	ደረጃቸውን የጠበቀ በቂ የመለማመጃና የመወዳደሪያ ቦታዎች አሉ					
2.3.10	አትሌቶች ለልፋታቸው በቂ ድጋፍና እውቅና ያገኛሉ					

**ክፍል ሶስት :** ከዚህ በታች ለቀረቡትን ጥያቄዎች ያሉትን ሃሳብ በአጭሩ ይግለፁ

3.1. ከአትሌቶች ማናጀሮች ጋር መስራት ያለው ጥቅም

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3.2 ከአትሌቶች ማናጀሮች ጋር በመስራት ያጡት ነገር ካለ

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3.3. ለአትሌቲክስ ስፖርት እድገት ያሉት እንቅፋቶች/ተግዳሮቶች

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3.4. ምን ቢሰራ የአትሌቲክስ...ስፖርቱ ሊያድግ ይችላል

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**አመሰግናለሁ!!!**

## APPENDIX III



Addis Ababa University  
አዲስ:አበባ:ዩኒቨርሲቲ



### Questionnaire

#### To be filled by Athletes

Dear respondents, first and for most I would like to thank in advance for your willingness to take part in this study. The main objective of the study is to assess the roles played by Athlete managers on the development of Ethiopian athletics, which is part of the big research entitled " Roles, Contributions and Managerial Skills of Athlete Managers in Ethiopian Athletics." The study is purely for academic purpose only, for the fulfillment of PhD study in Addis Ababa University, sport science department, sport management stream.

All the responses will be used for this study and kept confidential.

#### Part I: General Information

1. Sex

Male  Female

2. Age:

Below 18  23-27  
 18-22  28- 32  Above 32

3. Marital Status

Married  Single  
 Divorced  Separated

4. Educational Status:

Primary  Diploma  
 Secondary  Degree  
 Certificate  Masters Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Training age (in years) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Running Discipline:

Middle Distance  Long distance  
 Both Middle- and long-distance  Others \_\_\_\_\_



## 2.2. Items presented to assess the managerial skills of athlete managers

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
2.2.1	They have knowledge about the sport /athletics.					
2.2..2	They follow the current trends of the sport.					
2.1.3	Follow up the ongoing training and competition					
2.2.4	Have good relationship with athletes.					
2.2.5	They are very close to athletes. . listening athletes.					
2.2.6	Handle athletics related problems quickly.					
2.2..7	Provide right response for the problem.					
2.2.8	Involve athletes in the problem solving.					
2.2.9	Work with athletes for long periods.					
2.2.10	Handle financial issues.					
2.2.11	Have good relation with my club.					
2.2.12	Have good relation with the federation.					
2.2.13	Work in collaboration with other athlete mangers.					

## 2.3. Items presented to assess the developmental aspects of Ethiopian athletics

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
2.3.1	Focus is given to youth development.					
2.3.2	Well implementation of Youth development program.					
2.3.3	Presence of well-equipped personnel in the EAF.					
2.3.4	Transparent work done by the EAF on the development of the sport.					
2.3.5	Good relation between EAF and clubs					
2.3.6	EAF motivates athlete managers to participate in the sport					
2.3.7	EAF owns adequate training places					
2.3.8	Training centers are promising for the development of athletics.					
2.3.9	Training centers have good relation with clubs.					
2.3.10	EAF prepare competition to assist performance evaluate.					
2.3.11	There are qualified athletics coaches in the country.					
2.3.12	Coach development /capacity building courses are provided.					
2.3.13	Athletes are rewarded for their effort.					
2.3.14	Recognition of athletes to their effort.					

### **Part III. Open ended items**

1. How do you see the status of Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running?
2. What are the benefits of working with athlete managers for the development of athletics in Ethiopian context?
3. What do your loss as a result of working with athlete managers?
4. What should be done to improve the sport of athletics?

## APPENDIX IV

### Questionnaire

#### To be field by coaches

Dear respondents, first and for most I would like to thank in advance for your willingness to take part in this study. The main objective of the study is to assess the roles played by Athlete managers on the development of Ethiopian athletics, which is part of the big research entitled " Roles, Contributions and Managerial Skills of Athlete Managers in Ethiopian Athletics." The study is purely for academic purpose only, for the fulfillment of PhD study in Addis Ababa University, sport science department, sport management stream.

All the responses will be used for this study and kept confidential.

#### Part I: General Information

1. Sex

Male  Female

2. Age:  Below 27  28-33

34-38  39- 44  Above 45

3. Marital Status

Married  Single

Divorced  Separated

4. Educational Status:

Primary  Diploma

Secondary  Degree

Certificate  Masters Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Coaching experience (in years) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Coaching discipline:

Middle Distance  Long distance

Both Middle- and long-distance Others \_\_\_\_

7. Club enrolment

Governmental  Individual

Private /Corporate  Self Help other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Monthly Income

- Below 6000       6,001-10,000  
 10,001-14,000       Above 14000

9. Experience in working with athlete managers (in years) \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II: Questions related to the study objectives.**

**Put “✓” mark for the response which best suits you.**

**2.1: Items presented to assess the duties, roles and responsibilities of an athlete manager**

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
2.1.1	Facilitate international competitions.					
2.1.2	The trainings provided consider the sex of the athlete.					
2.1.3	The trainings provided consider the age of the athlete.					
2.1.4	The trainings provided consider the ability of the athlete.					
2.1.5	Evaluate the performance of the athletes.					
2.1.6	Prepare frequent, demanding competitions					
2.1.7	Allow participation in local/national competitions					
2.1.8	Provide quick response					
2.1.9	Provide adequate response.					
2.1.10	Ensure athletes right.					

## 2.2. Items presented to assess the managerial skills of athlete managers

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	Conceptual skill					
2.2.1	They have knowledge about the sport /athletics.					
2.2.2	Set a realist goal.					
2.2.3	Prepare strategic plan.					
2.2.4	Understand strategic plan.					
2.2.5	Identify strength and weakness.					
2.2.6	Implement new approaches.					
2.2.7	Do things timely.					
2.2.8	Follow the reuses strictly.					
2.2.9	Evaluate plans.					
2.2.10	Predict good performance.					
2.2.11	Identify ill behaviors/actions.					
	Human skill					
2.2.12	Have good communication skill.					
2.2.13	Motivates athletes.					
2.2.14	Follow training and competition.					
2.2.15	Provide right response for the problem.					
2.2.16	Inform decisions made.					
2.2.17	Inspire teams.					
2.2.18	Prepare a discussion platform.					
2.2.19	Negotiate on behalf of the athlete.					
2.2.20	Provide Up to date information.					
2.2.21	Work in collaboration with other athlete mangers.					
	Technical skill					
2.2.22	Perform tasks with plan.					
2.2.23	Evaluate tasks.					
2.2.24	Delegate works for the right person.					
2.2.25	Work with athletes for long period of time.					
2.2.26	Manage financial relates issues carefully.					
2.2.27	Have a good marketing skill/experience.					
2.2.28	Work with coaches for prolonged.					

### 2.3. Items presented to assess the contribution of athlete managers.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
2.3.1	Provide standardized sportswear.					
2.3.2	Provide scientific training.					
2.3.3	Facilitate access to standardized competition					
2.3.4	Provide capacity building programs for coaches					
2.3.5	Support athletes in case of injury					
2.3.6	Support clubs					
2.3.7	Support the federation /EAF					

### 2.4. Items presented to assess the development of athletics in Ethiopia.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
2.4.1	Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running is in a good state.					
2.4.2	Presence of athlete managers help the athletics.					
2.4.3	Training centers are promising for the development of athletics.					
2.4.4	Training centers have good relation with clubs.					
2.4.5	EAF prepare competition to assist performance evaluate.					
2.4.6	Presence of coach development /capacity building programs					
2.4.7	Transparent work done by the EAF					
2.4.8	EAF uses coaches as a part of solution for the sports development.					
2.4.9	EAF owns adequate standardized training places					
2.4.10	Athletes are rewarded and recognition for their effort.					

### **Part III. Open ended items**

10. How do you see the status of Ethiopian middle- and long-distance running?
11. What are the benefits of working with athlete managers for the development of athletics in Ethiopian context?
12. What do your loss as a result of working with athlete managers?
13. What should be done for the development of the sport of athletics?

## APPENDIX V

### Sample Interview guides for semi structured interview

#### For Athlete **representatives/managers**

- How do you see the development of athletics?
- What` s is your motive to be involved in athletics?
- For how long do you act as athlete representative?
- What roles do you play as you deal with the athletes in the sport of athletics?
- What contribution do you make
  - To the athlete, club, Ethiopian Athletics Federation
- What do you do when you face problem with your athletes?
- How do you treat athletes
  - When they win, loss, injured
- Do you have a knowledge of the sport?
- What challenges do you face and what kind of strategy you devised to cope with the challenges?
- How do you see the support of EAF to your task in the athlete development?

**Prepared for coaches:**

- How do you see the development of athletics?
- How do you see the contribution of athlete representatives for the sport of athletics?
  - For the athlete, coach, club, federation /country.
- What specific tasks do athlete representatives are expected to play for the development of athletics?
- Do you think athlete representatives are working in harmony with the club and the federation?
- What are the limiting factors hindering their participation?
- What are the possible opportunities?

**Prepared for Ethiopian Athletics Federation experts:**

- How do you see the development of athletics?
- How do you see the contribution of athlete representatives for the sport of athletics?
  - For the athlete, club, training centers, federation
- What specific roles do athlete representatives play for the development of athletics?
- Do athlete representatives have a managerial skill?
- Do you think AR are working in harmony with the club of the athlete?
- Are they adhere to the agreement signed?
- What kind of monitoring strategy you use to evaluate the athlete representatives?

## APPENDIX VI

Current achievements of Ethiopia in middle and long distance in major event WC,  
Olympics

### World records (Track events)

Events	WOMEN		MEN	
	Country	Short track /indoor Events /	Country	Short track /indoor/
800m	Czechoslovakia (1983)	Slovenia (2002)	Kenya (2012)	Denmark(1997)
1500m	Kenya (2024)	Gudaf Tsegaye (2021)	Morocco (1998)	Norway (2025)
3000m	China (1993)	Genzebe Dibaba (2014)	Norway (2024)	USA(2025)
5000m	Gudaf Tsegaye (2023)	Genzebe Dibaba (2015)	Uganda(2020)	Kenenisa Bekele (2004)  Fisher USA not ratified
10000m	Kenya (2024)	-	Uganda (2020)	

### World records (Road races)

Events	WOMEN	MEN
5km	Kenya (2024)	Berihu Aregawi (2021)
10km	Kenya (2021)	Kenya (2020)
Half Marathon	Letesenbet Gidey (2021)	Uganda(2021)
Marathon	Kenya (2024)	Kenya (2023)

### Olympic records

Event	Women	Men
800m	URS (Mosco 1980)	Kenya (London,2012)
1500m	Kenya (paris-2024)	USA(Paris,2024)
5000m	Kenya (Rio,2016)	Kenenisa Bekele (Bejing,2008)
10000m	Almaz Ayana (Rio,2016)	Uganda (Paris ,2024)
Marathon	Nederland (Sifen Hassen- Paris,2024)	Tamirat Tolla (Paris,2024)

### World championship

Event	Women	Men
800m	TCH (1983)	USA(2019)
1500m	Nederland (Sifen Hassen- 2019)	Morrocco (1999)
5000m	Kenya (2019)	Kenya(Kipchoige,2003)
10000m	Birhane Adere (2003)	Kenenisa Bekele (2009)
Marathon	Gotytom G/Selassie (2022)	Tamirat Tolla (2022)

### Summary of Ethiopia in records in middle- and long-distance races

		Women	Men	Total
World record	Outdoor track	1/5*	-	1/10
	Short track (indoor)	3/4	1/4	4/8
	World record (road)	1/4	1/4	2/8
Olympic games		1/5	2/5	3/10
World championships		2/5	2/5	4/10
Total		8/23	6/23	15/46

\*No world record in middle distance races

Source: world athletics website.