

Relationship Between Group Culture and Athletic Performance among Sportsmen and Sportswomen at Kenyatta University in Nairobi City County, Kenya: Relationship Between Peer Pressure And Athletic Performance

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ABSTRACT

The concept of group culture has been integrated in sports, where it allows sports women and sports men to bond creating a norm of behaviour and routine that directly influence how the team functions and performs. Kenyatta University is a recognized sports hub, producing talent who compete at both local, regional, and global levels. This study researched on the influence of group culture on the athletic performance of sports men and sports women at Kenyatta University. Consistently, one major construct of group culture, which is peer pressure, was studied. The research resulted in the formulation of a model that would be utilized to understand how to enhance the performance of sports men and women at Kenyatta University through group culture. The theory that was used for this study was operant conditioning by B. F Skinner. The behavioural approach considers that to maintain being a good performer in sports, one has to learn skills and unlearn the ones with a negative outcome. The research employed a correlational design. The independent variable was the group culture (peer pressure) while the dependent variable was athletic performance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26.0 was utilized to analyze the data. The study was conducted at Kenyatta University, the main campus in Nairobi City County, Kenya, since this is where the sportsmen and sportswomen were easily found, considering the institution offers grounds where they come for training daily. The target population was the sportsmen and sportswomen who actively participate in the games and represent Kenyatta University in various league matches. The target population was approximately 606 athletes. The sample consisted of 241 sports men and sports women from the different games at Kenyatta University. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling, whereas questionnaires were used to collect data. The data analysis used in this study is quantitative analysis to investigate the relationship between group culture and athletic performance among sportsmen and sportswomen at Kenyatta University in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The outcome from this study revealed that higher levels of peer pressure were linked to decreased athletic performance, while greater implementation of group culture interventions was associated with improved athletic performance. The research resulted in measures that will form a model expected to assist the coaches in knowing how to enhance the group culture of their sportsmen and sportswomen, which may, in turn, improve their athletic performance.

Keywords: Athletic performance, group culture, peer pressure, sportsmen and sportswomen.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Group culture plays a pivotal role in fostering a sense of belonging and cohesion among team members, influencing their behaviors, attitudes, norms, and values within a team (Bissett & Tamminen, 2022). This concept is particularly significant in the realm of sports, where it can significantly boost athletes' motivation and performance as they support each other in pursuing shared goals. Coaches and managers have recognized the importance of cultivating a strong group culture as it enables teams to work harmoniously towards athletic achievements (Bissett & Tamminen, 2022). However, group culture is not always positive,

as some athletes may find themselves part of a negative or overly competitive team environment (Chiu, Hui, Won, & Bae, 2022). Emotional culture within a team can also impact athletes' performance, with excessive certainty potentially hindering their ability to perform at their best (Adler et al., 2022). In light of these influences, athletes may not have full control over their group culture but can choose to embrace it, switch teams, or focus on individual sports (Adler et al., 2022). To better understand the dynamics of athlete involvement and success, a study was conducted at Kenyatta University, exploring both external factors (such as sports infrastructure and coaching) and internal factors (including human aspects) affecting athletes' performance (Gabana, Wong, D'Addario, & Chow, 2022). These investigations aim to shed light on the multifaceted aspects that impact athletes' engagement and achievement in sports, with a more focus on peer pressure and how it influences athletic performance.

A. Research Objectives

- 1) To determine how peer pressure affects athletic performance among sportsmen and sportswomen at Kenyatta University, Nairobi City County, Kenya.
- 2) To provide interventions on how group culture can enhance athletic performance among sportsmen and sportswomen at Kenyatta University, Nairobi City County, Kenya.

B. Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between peer pressure and athletic performance in sportsmen and sportswomen at Kenyatta University, Nairobi City County, Kenya.

C. Research Question

Are there interventions on how group culture can enhance athletic performance among sportsmen and sportswomen at Kenyatta University, Nairobi City County, Kenya?

D. Research Justification and Significance

Kenyatta University athletes have consistently excelled in university competitions, highlighting the importance of athletics within the university culture. However, there's a pressing need to address the impact of peer pressure on athletes, often leading to harmful coping strategies (Filho & Basevitch, 2021). The study also emphasizes the importance of understanding the influence of group culture on athletic performance. While physical fitness receives attention, psychological factors like peer pressure are often overlooked. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of coaches and university administration understanding the psychological challenges faced by athletes and how these challenges affect their performance (Riggio & Jagoda, 2021; Sachs *et al.*, 2020). Sharing the findings with the Ministry of Sports in Kenya and Kenyatta University's Department of Games can benefit athletes' well-being. The research proposes measures to enhance athletes' psychological well-being and ultimately improve their athletic performance, contributing to existing literature in the field.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Impact of Peer Pressure on Athletic Performance

Several studies have explored the impact of peer pressure on the athletic performance of sportsmen and sportswomen. Gucciardi *et al.* (2017) conducted research in Australia and found that peer pressure plays a crucial role in influencing athletic performance. They emphasized that the way athletes handle peer pressure affects their success. Competitive sports tend to have higher levels of peer pressure due to elevated expectations and success demands.

Lee *et al.* (2017), in a study conducted in Korea, linked stress from peer pressure to various disorders such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. They noted that individuals with underlying conditions are more susceptible to stress triggered by peer pressure.

Watson (2017), through a literature review in Nigeria, highlighted the issue of burnout among high-level sportsmen and sportswomen, leading them to drop out of their athletic careers. Continuous peer pressure was identified as a significant factor contributing to burnout.

Siart *et al.* (2017) studied the relationship between hormone levels and athletic performance during the European Games in Azerbaijan. They found that excessive endocrine responses, driven by stressors from peer pressure, were linked to reduced performance.

Rintaugu *et al.* (2014) investigated the motivational orientation of sportsmen and sportswomen in Kenyan universities, considering parental socio-economic status as a factor. Parental pressure and expectations were noted as additional sources of stress on student-athletes.

Ogama *et al.* (2019) explored the impact of attitudes and knowledge on doping behavior among long-distance runners in Kenya, highlighting how peer pressure can lead to doping in pursuit of quick success.

Rintaugu *et al.* (2018) studied sources of sports confidence and contextual factors among university

sportsmen and sportswomen in Kenya. They emphasized that first-year students were more stressed by peer pressure, while final-year students were less affected.

Overall, these studies provide insights into the diverse ways in which peer pressure can affect the athletic performance of sportsmen and sportswomen, including its psychological and physiological consequences. They also underscore the importance of addressing and managing peer pressure in the sports environment. These findings contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the impact of peer pressure on athletic performance, especially among students at Kenyatta University.

B. Interventions on How Group Culture Can Enhance Athletic Performance among Sportsmen and Sportswomen

The development of a productive group culture among managers and team leaders in Kenya was explored by Mutuku *et al.* (2017). They identified two approaches: First, the organic approach, where culture develops naturally but risks unfair shaping by dominant individuals, leading to unhealthy group performance. The second approach involves active coaching to create culture through teamwork and open discussions, fostering a sense of belonging and compliance with rules, thus enhancing group performance.

Schinke and Hanrahan (2009) suggested sports professionals manage training stress by avoiding excessive training and gradually planning competition stress to improve performance. Everyday stress should also be addressed to prevent personal issues from affecting athletic performance. Coaches play a vital role in changing team culture to enhance performance, emphasizing the importance of open discussions and teamwork (Bale & Sang, 2013).

Hasanpour-Dehkordi *et al.* (2016) found that social anxiety and stress management techniques like cognitive behavior therapy, positive thinking, relaxation, and hypnotherapy can effectively mitigate these issues. Their study, although not specific to athletes, is relevant due to the psychological impact of anxiety and stress on physical performance. Muta *et al.* (2020) also suggested that managing social anxiety and stress could improve athletic performance, emphasizing the need for further research in this area (Guridy, 2021). Addressing rising social anxiety and stress levels among athletes through comprehensive research is crucial.

C. Theoretical Framework

This study, based on Skinner's operant conditioning theory (1985), explores how behaviour is learned and unlearned, particularly in the context of sports performance. The study focuses on operant conditioning concepts, including positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment, and negative punishment (Chu, 2020). Athletic performance is significantly influenced by reinforcement and punishment (Leeder, 2022). The research delves into how group culture impacts athletic performance, considering that group culture encompasses learnable and unlearnable behaviors influenced by external factors, as emphasized by Skinner (Leeder, 2022). Peer pressure, a component of group culture, plays a pivotal role in influencing athletic performance. The study aims to illustrate the connection between group culture and athletic performance at Kenyatta University while recognizing that athlete skills, talent, and physical fitness are intervening variables not covered in this research.

D. Conceptual Framework

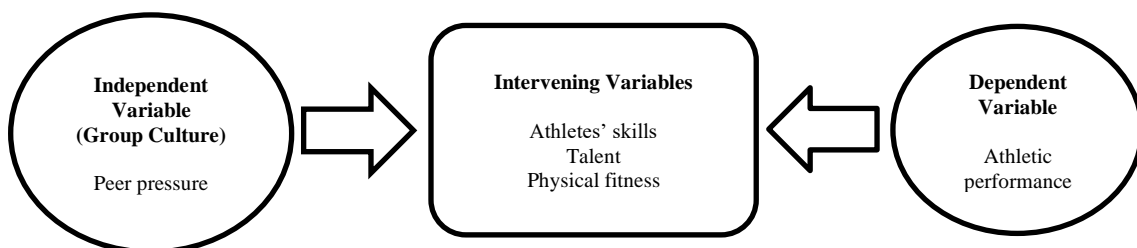


Fig. 1. The conceptual framework.

E. Summary

Group culture and athletic performance are intertwined because they work together to produce excellent outcomes (Rintaugu *et al.*, 2018). As aforementioned, group culture is crucial since it directly impacts the overall team performance and functioning (Ogama *et al.*, 2019). The study used African culture to explain this relationship. For instance, most sportsmen and sportswomen engage in sports-related activity because their cultures consider sports a crucial activity.

Regarding the first objective, a positive relationship exists between peer pressure and athletic performance among sportsmen and sportswomen. The studies from Bissett and Tamminen (2022) and Bali (2015) illustrate how sportsmen and sportswomen adapt to stressful situations and determine their overall performance. According to Watson (2017) and Tshube and Hanrahan (2016), sportsmen and sportswomen

experience elevated peer pressure levels during competitions because they expect to perform better. Stress experienced through peer pressure also emanates from their coaches, parents, or sponsors, obligating the sportsmen and sportswomen to win their respective sports (Guridy, 2021).

The last objective involved interventions that would improve sportsmen's and sportswomen's psychological health at Kenyatta University. The general approach involved managing the various psychological elements like peer pressure, anxiety and stress, and group culture head-on. Sportsmen and sportswomen can avoid training in environments that elevate their stress levels, manage social anxiety and stress using cognitive behavior therapy or relaxation methods, and enhance their group cultures (Resende & Gomes, 2021).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey-based correlational study approach. The independent variable was the group culture (peer pressure), while the dependent variable was the athletic performance of sportsmen and sportswomen at Kenyatta University, Nairobi City County, Kenya. Also, the participants involved sportsmen and sportswomen at Kenyatta University, who actively participated in various games. Athletic performance is also influenced by other aspects, such as the athlete's skills, talent, and physical fitness. However, the mentioned three aspects are extraneous variables which were not studied in this current research.

The research was conducted in the training fields of Kenyatta University, the main campus in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The target population in this study were the sportsmen and sportswomen who actively participate in the games and represent Kenyatta University in various league matches since they are the perfect representation of the sportsmen and sportswomen at Kenyatta University. These games include hockey, tennis, football, rugby, swimming, rugby, basketball, football, table tennis, taekwondo, wood ball, netball, scrabble, chess, floorball, karate, athletics, badminton, cricket, softball, and roll ball. The target population is approximately 606 sportsmen and sportswomen.

The researcher created a closed-ended Questionnaire. All completed questionnaires in this research were graded on a 5-point Likert scale. Then, the surveys were distributed to individuals through a link.

The study employed a simple random sampling technique since a representative sample of sportsmen and sportswomen were selected from each game. Consistently, the sample size was made up of about 241 sportsmen and sportswomen. The confidence level was 95%, and $e = 0.05$, as assumed for the calculation. The formula that has been used to arrive at the sample size is the Yamane formula (Adam, 2020):

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \quad (1)$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size of sportsmen and sportswomen estimated at 606, and e is the precision or sampling error level of $\pm 5\%$ (Adam, 2020).

$$n = \frac{606}{1 + (606 \times 0.05^2)} = 241 \quad (2)$$

IV. RESULTS

A. Population and Sample Size Distribution

The study employed a simple random sampling technique. Consistently, the sample size was made up of about 241 sportsmen and sportswomen. The population of the sportmen and sportswomen was 606. Table I depicts the games, number of teams each gender has in a particular game, and the population of athletes in each game in Kenyatta University, Nairobi City County, Kenya.

TABLE I: ATHLETES ENROLLMENT AT KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

No.	Game	Male Teams	Female Teams	Population
1	Hockey	2	1	54
2	Football	2	2	72
3	Rugby	2	1	48
4	Tennis	1	1	16
5	Swimming	1	1	20
6	Table tennis	1	1	16
7	Badminton	1	1	16

8	Chess	1	1	16
9	Scrabble	1	1	16
10	Taekwondo	1	1	16
11	Karate	1	1	16
12	Volleyball	2	1	42
13	Netball	1	1	28
14	Handball	2	1	48
15	Wood ball	1	1	20
16	Roll ball	1	1	24
17	Athletics	1	1	24
18	Floorball	1	1	24
19	Basketball	1	1	42
20	Soft ball	1	1	24
21	Cricket	1	1	24
TOTAL				606

B. Demographic Analysis

Table II shows the demographic information for the participants in the study; from the table, most of the participants, 53.5%, were males, while 46.5% were females. Examining the current age groups, the largest segment consists of individuals between 21-25 years old, comprising 81.7% of the sample. This suggests that the majority of the Kenyatta University community falls within the early to mid-twenties age bracket. Additionally, individuals between 16-20 years old represent 10.4% of the sample, while those between 26-35 years old make up 7.1%. Most of the study participants, 90.9%, hold a bachelor's degree, highlighting the prevalence of undergraduate students or graduates in the sample. Furthermore, 4.1% possess a college diploma, 2.9% hold a master's degree, and only 2.1% have a high school diploma. These statistics underscore the educational aspirations and achievements of the Kenyatta University community, indicating a highly educated population. 28.2% of the sample have been associated with the university for less than a year, while 59.8% have been engaged for 1-3 years. A smaller proportion of 9.1% has been involved for 4-6 years, and only 2.9% have been affiliated with Kenyatta University for more than 6 years. These figures suggest a mix of relatively recent members and long-standing individuals within the university community.

TABLE II: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	129	53.5
Female	112	46.5
Age		
16-20	25	10.4
21-25	197	81.7
26-35	17	7.1
Current Level of Education		
High school diploma	5	2.1
College diploma	10	4.1
Bachelor's degree	219	90.9
Master's degree	7	2.9
Duration played for Kenyatta University		
Less than an year	68	28.2
1-3 Years	144	59.8
4-6 Years	22	9.1
More than 6 years	7	2.9

C. Descriptive Statistics

Table III shows the findings for effect of peer pressure on athletic performance for sports men and women at Kenyatta University. From the table in terms of feeling safe and secure when playing with their teams, a significant proportion of respondents (45.6%) agreed, while 41.5% strongly agreed. This indicates that the majority of athletes at Kenyatta University feel a sense of safety and security when participating in team sports. This finding suggests that the presence of a supportive and cohesive team environment contributes to the athletes' overall perception of safety and well-being during their athletic endeavors.

When considering the need to fit in with the team to perform well, the data reveals that 45.2% of respondents agreed, while 29.9% strongly agreed. This indicates that a substantial number of athletes feel that fitting in with their team is crucial for achieving optimal performance. This finding suggests that the desire to be accepted and valued by their teammates plays a significant role in motivating athletes to perform at their best. Concerning the impact of performance on self-esteem, 34% of respondents agreed, while 21.2% strongly agreed that their self-esteem depends on how they perform. This finding highlights the influence of athletic performance on the athletes' self-perception and self-worth. It suggests that achieving positive results in sports is closely linked to the athletes' confidence and feelings of self-esteem. When considering the influence of teammates on performance, a considerable proportion of respondents (40.2%)

agreed, and 49.4% strongly agreed that their teammates influence them to perform better. This finding emphasizes the role of peer influence in motivating athletes to strive for improved performance. It suggests that positive interactions and support from teammates can positively impact individual athletes' efforts and outcomes.

TABLE III: IMPACT OF PEER PRESSURE ON ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel safe and secure when playing with my teams	2.5 (6)	2.9 (7)	7.5 (18)	45.6 (110)	41.5 (100)
I feel I need to fit into my team to perform well.	4.1 (10)	8.7 (21)	12 (29)	45.2 (109)	29.9 (72)
My self-esteem depends on how I perform	11.6 (28)	17.4 (42)	15.8 (38)	34 (82)	21.2 (51)
I feel appreciated by the team when I perform well.	1.2 (3)	1.2 (3)	7.9 (19)	44 (106)	45.6 (110)
My teammates influenced me to perform better.	1.2 (3)	1.2 (3)	7.9 (19)	40.2 (97)	49.4 (119)
My safety and security do not depend on my teammates.	8.3 (20)	33.2 (80)	30.3 (73)	19.9 (48)	8.3 (20)
I do not need to fit into the team to perform well.	16.6 (40)	38.6 (93)	21.6 (52)	17 (41)	6.2 (15)
My self-esteem is not affected by how I perform.	13.3 (32)	30.7 (74)	17.4 (42)	25.7 (62)	12.9 (31)
I fear being isolated by my team if I don't perform well.	7.9 (19)	33.2 (80)	25.7 (62)	23.7 (57)	9.5 (23)
I do not depend on my team to perform better.	17.4 (42)	41.9 (101)	21.6 (52)	11.6 (28)	7.5 (18)

Table IV shows the findings for the impact of group culture on athletic performance. Regarding the impact of performance expectations on anxiety and stress during competitive sports, the data shows that a considerable proportion of respondents (30.3%) agreed, while 27% strongly agreed that their anxiety and stress would be reduced if the expectations to perform were lower. This finding suggests that athletes at Kenyatta University perceive high-performance expectations as a significant source of anxiety and stress. The table reveals that a significant number of athletes (37.8%) agreed, while 39.4% strongly agreed that they would benefit from therapy to reduce their anxiety and stress related to their game. This finding emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing the mental health and well-being of athletes.

Moreover, a noteworthy finding is that a substantial proportion of respondents (55.6%) strongly agreed, while 36.9% agreed that they would want their team to embrace each of their unique personalities and behaviors. This finding highlights the significance of fostering a positive group culture that values diversity and individuality among team members. Additionally, the table demonstrates that a significant proportion of athletes (47.3%) strongly agreed, while 34% agreed that they would appreciate it if their coach and family viewed sports as a fun activity and did not become obsessed with winning. This finding emphasizes the impact of external influences, such as coaches and family members, on athletes' experiences and performance. Furthermore, the data reveals that a considerable number of respondents (53.1%) strongly agreed, while 40.2% agreed that they would like to learn anxiety and stress management techniques applicable every time they engage in active sports. This finding emphasizes the importance of providing athletes with the necessary tools and resources to manage anxiety and stress effectively.

TABLE IV: IMPACT OF GROUP CULTURE ON ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My anxiety and stress during competitive sports would be reduced if the expectations to perform were lower.	6.6 (16)	17.4 (42)	18.7 (45)	30.3 (73)	27 (65)
I would benefit from therapy that would reduce my anxiety and stress to my game.	2.1 (5)	5.8 (14)	14.9 (36)	37.8 (91)	39.4 (95)
I would want my team to embrace each of our unique personalities and behaviors.	0.4 (1)	1.7 (4)	5.4 (13)	36.9 (89)	55.6 (134)
I would appreciate it if my coach and family would view sports as a fun activity and not be obsessed with winning.	2.5 (6)	4.6 (11)	11.6 (28)	34 (82)	47.3 (114)
I want to learn anxiety and stress management techniques applicable every time I engage in active sports.	0.8 (2)	2.1 (5)	3.7 (9)	40.2 (97)	53.1 (128)
I would want to be treated as an individual person in a sports team.	5 (12)	11.6 (28)	12.9 (31)	32 (77)	38.6 (93)

The findings in Table V reveal that athletes, on average, rated their satisfaction with the effectiveness of their training program in improving their athletic performance at 5.61, with a standard deviation of 2.899. This suggests a moderate level of satisfaction but also indicates some variability in athletes' perceptions of the effectiveness of their training program. Similarly, the mean rating for the frequency and duration of training sessions is 5.59, with a standard deviation of 2.873. This indicates that athletes generally perceive their training sessions to be moderate in terms of frequency and duration, with some variability in individual responses.

The athletes' overall physical fitness level for their sport is rated at 5.16, with a standard deviation of 2.972. This suggests a moderate level of perceived physical fitness, with some variations among individuals. In terms of satisfaction with their current level of physical performance, the mean rating is 5.4, with a standard deviation of 2.891. This indicates a moderate level of satisfaction but also highlights some variability in how athletes perceive their own physical performance. Regarding mental preparedness and focus during training and competitions, the mean rating is 5.44, with a standard deviation of 2.882. This

suggests a moderate level of perceived mental preparedness and focus, with some differences in individual experiences.

TABLE V: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
How satisfied are you with the effectiveness of your training program in improving your athletic performance? (1-10 scale)	241	5.61	2.899
How would you rate the frequency and duration of your training sessions? (1-10 scale)	241	5.59	2.873
How would you rate your overall physical fitness level for your sport? (1-10 scale)	241	5.16	2.972
How satisfied are you with your current level of physical performance? (1-10 scale)	241	5.4	2.891
How would you rate your mental preparedness and focus during training and competitions? (1-10 scale)	241	5.44	2.882
How satisfied are you with your recent competition results and performances? (1-10 scale)	241	5.41	2.919
How satisfied are you with the support you receive from your coach, teammates, and support staff? (1-10 scale)	241	5.66	2.947
On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your overall athletic performance?	241	5.34	2.94

Athletes' satisfaction with their recent competition results and performances is rated at 5.41, with a standard deviation of 2.919. This indicates a moderate level of satisfaction, with some variability in how athletes perceive their recent performances. The support received from coaches, teammates, and support staff is rated at 5.66, with a standard deviation of 2.947. This suggests a moderate level of satisfaction with the support system in place, indicating that athletes generally perceive a satisfactory level of support, with some variations. Finally, athletes' overall satisfaction with their athletic performance is rated at 5.34, with a standard deviation of 2.94. This suggests a moderate level of overall satisfaction with their athletic performance, with some variability among individuals. Importantly, the findings indicated a significant positive correlation between athletic performance and interventions of group culture to enhance athletic performance. This suggests that greater implementation of interventions aimed at improving group culture was associated with higher athletic performance outcomes.

D. Evaluating the Research Hypothesis

The findings contradict the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between peer pressure and athletic performance in sportsmen and sportswomen at Kenyatta University. The correlation analysis reveals a significant negative correlation between athletic performance and the impact of peer pressure on athletic performance ($r = -0.423$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that higher levels of perceived peer pressure are associated with lower athletic performance. Additionally, the regression analysis shows a significant negative relationship between the impact of peer pressure on athletic performance and the dependent variable (athletic performance) ($B = -1.099$, $SE = 0.201$, $Beta = -0.47$, $t = -5.469$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the findings provide evidence of a statistically significant relationship between peer pressure and athletic performance, contrary to the initial hypothesis. These findings align with Gucciardi *et al.* (2017) study, which found that peer pressure significantly affects athletes' performance.

E. Summary of Findings

From the results, it can be deduced that peer pressure influences athletes to strive for improved performance. Secondly, positive interactions and support from teammates can positively impact individual athletes' efforts and outcomes. Consequently, expectations can create immense pressure and anxiety, affecting athletes' confidence and focus during competitive matches. For coaches to avoid poor performance among athletes, it is imperative that they recognize and address the mental health and well-being of athletes. The athletes also need to be provided with the necessary tools and resources to manage anxiety and stress effectively. Therefore, higher levels of peer pressure were linked to decreased athletic performance, while greater implementation of group culture interventions was associated with improved athletic performance.

V. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between group culture, particularly peer pressure, and athletic performance among Kenyatta University's sportsmen and sportswomen. It found that a supportive team environment and the need to fit in positively influenced athletes' performance, while higher levels of peer pressure were associated with lower performance outcomes. The study emphasized the importance of addressing performance expectations, providing mental health support, promoting diversity and individuality within teams, fostering a positive team environment, and equipping athletes with stress management techniques.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. For the University

- 1) Implement mental skills training to help athletes manage social stress and anxiety through techniques like relaxation exercises and positive self-talk.
- 2) Foster a supportive team environment by promoting support, inclusivity, and positive peer influence while discouraging negative peer pressure.
- 3) Ensure coaches incorporate rest and recovery periods into training schedules to prevent overtraining and enhance performance.

B. For Policymakers

- 1) Work with coaches and athletes to establish balanced performance expectations that emphasize individual progress and development.
- 2) Provide psychological support through sports psychologists or counselors to manage stress and mental health issues.
- 3) Promote individuality and diversity within teams through team-building activities and workshops.
- 4) Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions to improve group culture and athlete well-being.

C. For Further Research

- 1) Investigate how diversity and culture can encourage fair participation among athletes, addressing institutional barriers.
- 2) Explore effective programs and interventions to enhance athletes' performance, extending research beyond the university level.
- 3) Expand the research scope to include a larger and more diverse sample size across universities to examine the impact of group culture on sports performance.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

I, Grace Buyanzi Kashamba, declare that this research proposal is my original work and has not been presented by any other person or any other institution.

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