

# Comparison of the Performances of Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes at the Summer Olympic Games

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** *The main thrust of this work was to compare the performances of Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes at the summer Olympic Games. The study considered the number of times each of the two countries attended the events of the summer Olympic Games. The focus was on the number of medals, won by the two nations in their Olympic history which is between 1956 and 2008.*

**Design / Methodology:** *Relevant data was sourced for through the internet. Research questions were raised to guide the study and they were answered using the mean, standard deviation and percentages. The three hypotheses postulated were tested using student t-test.*

**Findings:** *It was found that male athletes from Kenya were better than male athletes from Ethiopia, the performances of the female athletes from the two countries were however comparable.*

**Practical Implications:** *This study implies that both Kenya and Ethiopia had done well at the summer Olympic But needs to do more in the training of female athletes*

**Paper Type:** *This is an empirical study.*

**Keywords:** *Kenya, Ethiopia, Olympics, medals*

## **Introduction**

Kenya and Ethiopia are two East African countries with common geography. Comparable population and GDP, common demography and similar cultural values. Hoffmann, Ging and Ramasamy (2002) found that these variables have significant impact on medal winning success of countries at the Olympics. Andrew, B and Meghan, B. ((2002) opined that although population of a country may function as a factor it is not enough to make a country win medals. They pointed out that if population was the main thing countries like China, India, Indonesia and Bangladesh with 43% of world would have won more than 66% of the total number of medal in 1996. The two African countries have a landscape that is made up of elevations the climatic condition in the two countries are similar (New world encyclopedia 2009, and World Lingo Translario 2010). According to Wikipedia (2009) the two countries experience climate conditions that are cool, temperate and hot. The environment of Kenya and Ethiopia

encourage endurance activities. This may be why they are involved long distance sports.

Kenya and Ethiopia are well known in the middle and long distance races although they are also active in cricket, volleying, football, Rugby, boxing and other Athletic events (Wikipedia, 2009), Kenya and Ethiopia have distinguished themselves in distance races where they have shown some level of superiority over so many other countries of the world. The two countries have shown great prowess in middle and long distance races of 1500m, 3000m steeplechase, 5000m, 10000m and the marathon. There have been questions on which of the two countries is superior to the other on the track considering the fact that there are common prevailing factors in the two countries. The summer Olympic Games is good platform for sporting countries to prove their superiority in certain sports over other countries.

Kenya and Ethiopia took part in the summer Olympic Games for the first time in 1956 at the Melbourne Games (Olympic Organisation United Kingdom, 2007 and Organisation United Kingdom, 2007 ). Kenya has been to summer

Olympic Games on 12 occasions, while Ethiopia has been to 11 of the Games. The two countries have been winning medals at the summer Olympic Games. According to International Olympic Committee (1960), Ethiopia made the medals table for the first time in 1960 Games in Rome, Italy while Kenya had her first Olympic medal in 1964 Games in Tokyo, Japan. The two countries also made the 2008 summer Olympic medals table (Wikipedia, 2008).

It has not been clear from the point of literature which of the two countries had performed better in terms of total medals won so far at the summer Olympic Games. This is because of the different levels of performance put up by athletes from the two countries, sometimes, it is Kenyan athletes that are dominating the middle and long distance races at another time it is the Ethiopians that are in charge. In the 1960 and 1964 Games Ethiopia was ahead of Kenya on the summer Olympic medals table. However in 1968 and 1972 summer Olympic Games Kenya was ahead of Ethiopia on the medals table (Wikipedia, 1960; Wikipedia, 1964; Wikipedia, 1968; Wikipedia1972). In 1980 Games Ethiopia finished ahead of Kenya on the medals table. The next three editions of the summer Olympics (1984, 1988 and 1992) saw Kenya finishing ahead of Ethiopia on the medals table (Wikipedia, 1980; Wikipedia,1984; Wikipedia, 1988; Wikipedia, 1992) . In the Games of 1996, 2000 and 2004 Ethiopia returned to the top by finishing ahead of Kenya. Finally at the last summer Olympic Games held in Beijing, China it was the Kenyans that had the better result (Wikipedia, 1996; Wikipedia, 2000; Wikipedia, 2004; Wikipedia, 2008). On the whole each of the two countries had finished ahead of the other a record six times. So it is not clear on the overall which of the two has an edge over the other. Therefore this study is intended to compare male to male performance, female to female performance as well as the combined performances of all the athletes from both countries

### **Research questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What is the performance of Kenyan male and female athletes at the summer Olympic Games?
2. What is the performance of Ethiopian male and female athletes at the summer Olympic Games?

### **Hypotheses**

The researcher tested the following hypotheses.

- 1 There is no statistical significant difference in the number of medals won by Kenyan male and Ethiopian male athletes at the summer Olympic Games
- 2 There is no statistical significant difference in the number of medals won by Kenyan female and Ethiopian female athletes at the summer Olympic Games
- 3 There is no statistical significant difference in the overall number of medals won by Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes at the summer Olympic Games

### **Methods**

The study is largely historical as it conceded the performances of the two countries at the Olympics. The data was collected through the internet. The researcher downloaded the data from several sites on the internet. The number of sites visited for data collection depended on the number of times each countries have been to the Olympics. For Kenya 12 sites were visited for data collection. In the case of Ethiopia 11 websites were consulted for relevant data.

The data collected was sorted into male and female. Percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the performances of the athletes from the two east African countries. The T-test served as the statistical instrument for testing the three hypotheses propounded at .05 alpha levels.

### **Results**

The result of this study is presented in tables 1-4.

Table 1: Number and percentage of medals won by male and female Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes

Country	Sex	Gold		Silver		Bronze		Total	%
		N	%	N	%	N	%		
Kenya	males	20	90.91	23	79.31%	23	95.83	66	88
	Female	2	9.09	6	20.69	1	4.17	9	12
Ethiopia	male	12	66.67	4	66.67	9	64.29	25	65.79
	Female	6	33.33	2	33.33	5	35.71	13	34.21

Table 1 show that out of the 75 medals won by Kenyan athletes at the summer Olympic Games 66 or 88% came through the male athletes. The female athletes contributed 9 medals or 12% of their total number of medals. Ethiopia has a

total of 38 medals won by both their male and female athletes. According to the table 1, 25 medals or 64.3% were won by the male athletes while their female counterparts contributed 13medals or 34.21%

Table 2: Mean Standard Deviation and Student T-Test of summer Olympic medals won by the male athletes

N=23

Country	NA	Gold Medals	Silver medals	Bronze medals	Total	X	SD	Computed T- value	Table T- value
Kenya	12	20	23	23	66	5.5	3.48	3.03	2.08
Ethiopia	11	12	4	9	25	2.3	1.48		

Keys: NA= Number times Olympic Games attended by the country; P> 0.05, degree of freedom= 21

Table 2 shows that male athletes from Kenya have gathered a total of 66 medals from the country's 12 appearances at the summer Olympics. In the same vein male athletes from Ethiopia have 25 medals to their credits for their 11 appearances at the summer Olympics. The Kenyan males have a mean of 5.5 medals and standard deviation of 3.48 medals. Ethiopian athletes on their part had a mean and standard

deviation of 2.3medals and 1.8medals respectively.

The same table 2 also shows that computed t-value is 3.03 as against the table t-value of 2.08. Since the computed t-value is greater than table t-value. It means there is a significant difference. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no statistical significant difference in performances of Kenyan male athletes and Ethiopian male athletes was rejected.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and Student T-test of summer Olympic medals won by the female athletes

N = 23

Country	NA	Gold Medals	Silver medals	Bronze medals	Total	X	SD	Computed T- value	Table T- value
Kenya	12	2	6	1	9	0.75	1.45	0.66	2.08
Ethiopia	11	6	2	5	13	1.18	1.65		

Keys: NA= Number of Olympic Games attended by the country

P> 0.05, degree of freedom= 21

Table 3 indicates that Kenyan female athletes have a total of 9 medals at the summer Olympics. They have a mean of 0.75 medals and a standard deviation of 1.45 medals. The Ethiopian female athletes on their part have

accumulated 13 medals at the summer Olympics. They have a mean of 1.18 medals and a standard deviation of 1.65 medals.

Table 3 equally indicates that computed t-value is 0.66 while table t-value is 2.08. It

means there is no significant difference since computed t-value is less than table t-value. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that

there is no statistical significant difference in the performances of Kenyan female athletes and Ethiopian female athletes was not rejected.

Table 4: Mean, standard Deviation and Student T-Test of overall Olympic medals won by the athletes

N =23

	NA	Gold Medals	Silver medals	Bronze medals	Total	X	SD	Computed T- value	Table T-value
<b>Kenya</b>	12	22	29	24	75	6.25	4.3	0.53	2.08
<b>Ethiopia</b>	11	18	06	14	38	3.46	3.13		

Keys: NA= Number times Olympic Games attended by the country;

P> 0.05, degree of freedom= 21

Table 4 shows that Kenya has a total of 75 medals in their 12 appearances at the Olympic Games. They have a mean of 6.3 medals and a standard deviation of 4.3 medals. The Ethiopians have a total of 38 medals in their 11 appearances at the summer Olympics. They have a mean and standard deviation of 3.46 medals and 3.13 medals respectively.

Table 4 also shows that the computed t-value is 0.53 whereas the table t-value is 2.08. Since computed t-value is less than table t-value, it means that the difference between the two groups is not significant. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no statistical significant difference in the overall performance of Kenya and Ethiopia athletes was not rejected

**Discussion**

The result of this study revealed a lot about Kenya and Ethiopia with respect to their achievement at the summer Olympic Games. The result indicated that Kenyan male athletes hard more medals than their Ethiopian counterparts. It showed that there is a significant difference in the number of medals won by the male athletes from the two countries at the summer Olympic Games. The performance of the two nations however are better than that of Nigeria (Elendu, 2009). It may not be easy to determine the reason for significant difference since they have similar environment. That notwithstanding the factor of a more efficient training programme may be responsible for the difference. It could also be that Kenyan programme is more male centered than that of Ethiopia.

The result of this study equally revealed that there was no significant difference between the performances of female athletes from Kenya and Ethiopia. The level of participation of female athletes from the two countries may be

responsible for the result. The females seem not to have achieved much when compared to their male counterparts.

The result of the study shows that Kenyan and Ethiopian overall performances at the summer Olympic is comparable. It showed that there is no significant difference. The concerted effort by both countries in the middle and long distance races and the common geographical, demographical and cultural factors may have accounted for this result (Hoffmann, Ging and Ramasamy 2002).

**Conclusions**

The following conclusions were made from the results.

1. That Kenyan male athletes have performed better than their Ethiopian counterparts in the summer Olympic Games
2. That the performance of female athletes from Kenya and Ethiopia is comparable
3. That the overall performances of Kenyan and Ethiopian athletes are comparable.

**Recommendations**

It was recommended that:

1. Ethiopian male athletes should do more than there are doing presently to bridge the gap between them and their Kenyan counterparts and
2. The female athletes from both countries should do more to improve their performances at the summer Olympic Games.

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