

Factors Influencing Post-Retirement Adjustment and Flourishing among Retired Professional Athletes of Sindh and Punjab

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ABSTRACT

Background: Retirement is a crucial shift in life that affects a person socially, mentally, and financially. Improper planning of retirement can affect the quality of life, flourishing, and overall well-being.

Objectives: The current study aimed to explore the personal and retirement-related factors influencing post-retirement adjustment and flourishing among retired professional athletes of Sindh and Punjab, Pakistan.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study design was employed, with a snowball sampling technique used to recruit 200 retired professional athletes. A self-administered questionnaire was developed, comprising a demographic sheet and two pre-validated tools, including the Retirement Adjustment Scale and the Flourishing Scale. SPSS was used to analyze the collected data, including tests such as Descriptive Statistics, Pearson's Correlation, Independent samples t-test, and Analysis of Variance ($p \leq 0.05$).

Results: Half of the athletes were male. Fifty-two percent of the respondents had played nationally, and 69% of the athletes retired voluntarily. The mean retirement age was 33.22 ± 9.89 years. Post-retirement adjustment among professional athletes had a weak positive correlation with flourishing ($r = .25$, $p < .001$). Moreover, female athletes and those who had better social and emotional support scored higher regarding post-retirement adjustment and flourishing compared to their counterparts ($p \leq .05$). Older retired athletes ($p < .001$), those who retired 11-30 years ago ($p = .002$), and those who were well prepared for retirement ($p < .001$), had better adjustment post-retirement compared to younger retired athletes, those who retired 1-10 years ago, and those who were not well prepared, respectively. Lastly, flourishing was higher among employed retired athletes compared to unemployed athletes ($p = .002$).

Conclusion: These findings reflect that proper retirement planning, post-retirement employment, and having social and emotional support from family and friends are crucial to avoid adjustment issues and foster flourishing among retired athletes.

Keywords: Retirement adjustment, flourishing, retired athletes, well-being, elite athletes, voluntary retirement.

Received: 26-05-2024

Accepted: 23-07-2024

Published: 31-07-2024

How to Cite: Sharin Adeel, Basit Ansari, Yasmeen Iqbal, Adeel Ahmed Khan, (2024) Factors Influencing Post-Retirement Adjustment and Flourishing among Retired Professional Athletes of Sindh and Punjab, *Journal of Carcinogenesis*, Vol.23, No.1, 1235-1245

1. INTRODUCTION

Retirement is a long-term shift in the lives of employed professionals that might bring both favorable and unfavorable outcomes [1]. Sports retirement is different, as athletes can be young at the time of voluntary or forced retirement, unlike other professions, where people retire at a certain age. Therefore, the sports retirement adjustment also differs significantly. The lifestyle of the athlete's centers around their athletic identity, competitive levels, and fitness requirements. Once they enter the retirement phase, they experience a loss of their athletic identity, which can complicate the transition. Physical demands, such as injuries experienced, and the emotional and physical burden of the athletic career, can lead to further complications [2].

In underdeveloped countries, retirement planning is not done, which can later on lead to multiple problems. As athletes retire early without proper planning [3] retirement becomes quite challenging, because while being relaxed, they rethink their lives and try to redefine their purpose beyond their sports career [4; 5]. This lengthy and continuous retirement phase has a significant impact on a person socially, psychologically, and financially, and policymakers are also taking this into consideration [6].

Athletes during retirement have both positive and negative experiences that influence their transition and adjustment. The most common barriers faced by athletes include low satisfaction with their professional career, being a perfectionist, having an extreme athletic identity, injury leading to retirement, issues with contracts, and poor sports performance. These barriers become more problematic due to other changes in life after retirement, which can increase hopelessness in athletes, reduce social support, and weaken coping mechanisms. Health concerns like weight gain, osteoarthritis, etc. can also cause difficulty adjusting after retirement. They can face mental health concerns like anxiety, depression, feelings of sorrow or grief, and sleep concerns like insomnia [7]. These serious issues, due to loss of purpose in life and the sudden lifestyle change from being physically active to being retired, warrant special assistance and support during the transition phase, more than those athletes who require general support for adjustment [8; 9].

In contrast, many factors make the transition process easier, including a reduction in training intensity over time, reduced pressure to perform, planning for retirement, becoming financially stable, developing social connections, continuing relations with colleagues and coaches, adopting coping techniques, and participation in support programs. Although retired individuals may face problems in the early stages of their retirement, these problems resolve with time through social support, and they can lead a flourishing life [7].

According to Tommaso and Cocchi [10] and VanderWeele [11], human flourishing is derived from the Latin word *florere*, which means to blossom. It extends beyond psychological well-being and can be viewed as a state where all aspects of human life are good. Flourishing has been defined as optimal human functioning and is linked to growth and resilience [12]. It concentrates on the high end of the spectrum of mental health, as opposed to the low end, which focuses on mental disease and suffering [13].

To be considered flourishing, an individual must have total mental health and high levels of well-being [14]. Flourishing improves individual functioning by promoting physical health, happiness, resilience, and therefore, overall well-being [15]. Flourishing among retired athletes is crucial because retirement from a sports career due to any reason and post-sport professional options [16] causes significant shifts in athletes' personal, social, and occupational lives, which eventually impacts the athletes cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally [17].

This reflects that retired life is complicated. The process of transitioning and moving on from sports includes a change in identity, formulation of a new self-concept, and a new self-definition. Athletes with a prominent athletic identity may assess their self-esteem based on their physical abilities. Due to reduced physical capabilities, athletes find it more challenging to enter retirement life [18]. In contrast, athletes who have other interests along with sports and are not confined to an athletic career easily go through the process of transition, have better post-retirement adjustment, and satisfaction with life [19].

Knights et al. [20] stated that the athletes who have strong social support and well-thought-out retirement plans often experience a sense of flourishing in their lives after sports. Proper planning of life after retirement, which may include attaining higher education, exploring other careers, or taking part in activities to keep oneself physically active, can increase the well-being of athletes during the process of transition or in post-retirement life [21]. In the same way, it is important to seek assistance and mental support from the people around you, like friends, family, and sports coaches. This communication can strengthen the connection with the social network, and such open discussions can help improve well-being [22].

A study was conducted in Kenya on soccer players regarding post-retirement issues. The major findings revealed that most of the players chose to resign voluntarily owing to insufficient incentives, declining fitness levels, lack of support, and decreased football performance or deselection [23]. A qualitative study concluded that positive social support and employing coping strategies such as staying active and maintaining a busy routine allowed elite athletes to successfully transition in their careers. Having academic opportunities and an alternative plan, whether within or outside the realm of sports, was considered vital [24].

A systematic review on the career transition of elite athletes highlighted multiple significant outcomes. Athletes who plan for retirement tend to have better emotional, cognitive, and behavioral readiness compared to those who experience an unplanned retirement. The latter athletes also had higher chances of facing adjustment challenges like financial and social issues [25]. Another review on post-retirement adaptation indicated that athletic retirement involves a significant transformation in identity, the dissolution of social networks, a decline in career aspirations, along with potential negative effects on physical and psychological well-being [7].

Ryan [26] explored the factors influencing post-sport adjustment difficulty and flourishing in retired athletes of New Zealand. Compared to those who resigned involuntarily, those who voluntarily retired indicated higher flourishing levels and less difficulty adjusting post-retirement. Retirement planning also resulted in much reduced post-sport adjustment difficulty. Furthermore, female athletes with strong athletic identities experienced greater negative emotions upon retirement.

A qualitative study was conducted on retired Football, Rugby, and Soccer players in Australia. The findings highlighted four key elements required for a positive transition, i.e., retirement planning, preparation for post-sport life, organizational support, and social support. Furthermore, it was discovered that the nature of transition could directly impact an athlete's post-retirement experience, influencing their flourishing experience after sport. The study indicated a lack of assistance from sports organizations and government bodies during their transition and post-retirement period [27].

The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between post-retirement adjustment and flourishing and to explore different demographic and retirement-related factors influencing these variables among retired professional athletes.

Table 1: Abbreviation used in this Study

CVT	Cardiovascular Training	HIAs	Hearing Impaired Athletes
CVE	Cardiovascular Endurance	CHL	Congenital Hearing Loss
QOL	Quality of Life	AHL	Acquired Hearing Loss

2. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design

A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted to explore the factors influencing post-retirement adjustment and flourishing among retired professional athletes of Sindh and Punjab, Pakistan.

2.2 Setting

This study was conducted in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab, Pakistan. Participants were approached through several governing sports bodies and at the individual level.

2.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Two hundred retired professional athletes were recruited from both provinces using the snowball sampling technique.

2.4 Study Tools

A questionnaire comprising a demographic sheet and two pre-validated tools was developed. The demographic sheet included questions like gender, age, marital status, current employment status, retirement age, time since retirement, retirement preparedness, etc. The following pre-validated tools were used:

2.4.1 Retirement Adjustment Scale

It is a 13-item scale that comprises five response options ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 reflecting strong disagreement and 5 reflecting strong agreement. Items from 4 to 11 are scored reversibly. For item number 13, if the athlete is not married or does not have a partner, the average scores of the remaining 12 items will be used. The total scores on the scale ranged from 13 to 65, with higher scores reflecting better retirement adjustment [28].

2.4.2 The Flourishing Scale

The Flourishing Scale has 8 items that reflect important elements such as healthy relationships, competent feeling, and living a life full of purpose. It is considered a reliable marker of positive functioning. It has seven response options, where 1 indicates strongly disagree, and 7 indicates strongly agree. The computed score of the flourishing scale is 8-56, where higher scores indicate higher flourishing. The reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha of the scale, was found to be 0.80 [29].

3. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

3.1 Data Collection Procedure

The retired professional athletes were approached. The researcher explained the study objectives to the participants. Written consent for study participation was obtained from willing participants. Afterwards, participants filled in the questionnaires. Participants were given the right of voluntary participation, with assurance of response confidentiality and overall anonymity.

3.2 Data Analysis

After collecting the data, it was coded and analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive Statistics, Pearson's Correlation, independent-samples t-test, and Analysis of Variance ($p \leq 0.05$) were applied to achieve the study objectives.

4. RESULTS OF PROPOSED STUDY

4.1 Demographic and Retirement-Related Characteristics of the Participants

Table 1: Demographic and Retirement-Related Characteristics of the Participants

Variables	N	%
Gender		
Male	100	50.0
Female	100	50.0
Marital Status		
Single	30	15.00
Married	167	83.50
Divorced	1	.50
Separated	2	1.00
Highest Competition Level		
Institutional	16	8.00
Provincial	32	16.00
National	104	52.00
International	48	24.00
Current Employment Status		
Employed	128	64.00
Unemployed	51	25.50
Self-employed	21	10.50
Current Sports Participation		
Yes	84	42.00
No	116	58.00
Current Affiliation with Sport		
Not Applicable	116	58.00
Player/Team member	29	14.50
Coach	39	19.50
Team manager	11	5.50
Umpire	3	1.50
Player and Coach	2	1.00
CURRENT LEVEL OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT		
Poor	5	2.50
Average	40	20.00

Good	116	58.00
Excellent	39	19.50
Voluntary Retirement		
Yes	138	69.00
No	62	31.00
Retirement Preparedness		
Extremely well	14	7.00
Very well	59	29.50
Moderately well	98	49.00
Not very well	24	12.00
NOT AT ALL WELL	5	2.50

Note. $n = 200$ retired professional athletes.

Table 1 shows that half of the participants were males and half were females. More than eighty percent of the retired professional athletes were married (83.50%). Fifty-two percent of the respondents had played nationally, while 24% had played internationally. Nearly two-thirds of the retired athletes were employed (64%). Fifty-eight percent of the participants did not currently participate in sports. In addition, almost twenty percent of the retired athletes were currently serving as a coach, and around fifteen percent were players or team members. Nearly sixty percent of the retired athletes rated their current level of social and emotional support as good. Moreover, around seventy percent of the participants retired voluntarily ($n = 138$), and almost half of the retired athletes were moderately well prepared for their retirement ($n = 98$).

4.2 Means and Standard Deviations

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Indicators	Mean	SD
Age	47.02	12.35
Starting age of sports participation	14.48	3.71
Number of years participated in sports	17.47	8.90
Retirement age	33.22	9.89
Time since retirement	14.68	11.19
Number of children	2.05	1.55
Best age to retire	49.52	13.99

The descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) are provided in Table 2.

4.3 Post-retirement Adjustment and Flourishing

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation for Study Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2
1. Post-retirement Adjustment	41.57	5.47	-	
2. Flourishing	46.25	6.81	.25***	-

Note. ***. $p \leq .001$.

Table 3 highlighted that post-retirement adjustment had a weak positive correlation with flourishing among retired athletes ($r = .25$, $p < .001$), which means that better adjustment after retirement may lead to higher flourishing.

Table 4: Mean Comparison of Post-Retirement Adjustment based on Demographic and Retirement-related Factors

Independent Variables		Post-Retirement Adjustment		<i>T</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>P</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Gender	Male	40.59	5.46	-2.57	198	.011*	0.36
	Female	42.55	5.33				
Voluntary Retirement	Yes	42.04	5.03	1.81	198	.072	0.27
	No	40.53	6.26				

Note. *. $p \leq .05$.

There was a significant mean difference in post-retirement adjustment among retired athletes based on gender ($p = .011$) and non-significant mean differences based on voluntary retirement ($p > .05$). Female retired athletes were better adjusted post-retirement compared to male athletes. The values of Cohen's *d* indicated a small effect size for both

variables (Table 4).

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation, and One-Way ANOVA in Post-Retirement Adjustment based on Demographic and Retirement-related Factors

Independent Variables		Post-retirement Adjustment		F	df	p	η^2	Post-Hoc
		M	SD					
Age	21-30	37.40	4.29	8.33	4, 195	<.001***	0.15	3>1,
	31-40	40.06	4.96					4>1,
	41-50	42.76	4.54					4>2,
	51-60	43.58	5.74					5>1
	Above 60	41.74	6.22					
Time since retirement	1-10	39.80	5.39	4.54	4, 195	.002**	.09	2>1,
	11-20	42.71	5.19					3>1
	21-30	43.86	4.67					
	31-40	42.19	6.14					
	41-50	41.67	.58					
Retirement preparedness	Extremely well	45.43	8.58	6.24	4, 195	<.001***	0.11	1>5,
	Very well	42.22	5.42					2>4,
	Moderately well	41.77	4.63					2>5,
	Not very well	38.00	4.68					3>4
	Not at all well	36.40	3.05					
Current level of social and emotional support	Poor	39.00	3.08	9.38	3, 196	<.001***	0.13	3>2,
	Average	38.33	5.37					4>2
	Good	41.90	4.34					
	Excellent	44.26	7.04					

Note. **. $p \leq .01$, ***. $p \leq .001$. η^2 : Small effect size: 0.01-0.059, Medium effect size: 0.06-0.139, Large effect size: ≥ 0.14 . Table 5 indicates a significant mean difference in post-retirement adjustment based on the age of the athletes ($p < .001$) with a large effect size. Older retired athletes had better adjustment after retirement compared to younger retired athletes. The results also highlighted a significant mean difference in post-retirement adjustment based on the time since retirement ($p = .002$), with a medium effect size. The athletes who retired 11-20 years or 20-30 years ago had better adjustment compared to those who retired 1-10 years ago. Furthermore, the post-retirement adjustment was also found to be significantly different based on retirement preparedness and the current level of social and emotional support ($p < .001$), with a medium effect size. Athletes who were well prepared for retirement and those who had a good or excellent level of social and emotional support were better adjusted after retirement compared to those who were not well prepared or had average support.

Table 6: Mean Comparison of Flourishing based on Demographic and Retirement-related Factors

Independent Variables		Flourishing		t	df	p	Cohen's d
		M	SD				
Gender	Male	45.15	7.45	-2.31	188.80	.022*	0.33
	Female	47.35	5.95				
Voluntary Retirement	Yes	46.41	6.21	0.48	198	.631	0.07
	No	45.90	8.05				

The table above presents the results of independent samples t-tests, which revealed a significant mean difference in flourishing among retired athletes based on gender ($p = .022$) with a small effect size, and a non-significant mean difference based on voluntary retirement ($p > .05$) with a negligible effect size. Female retired athletes had better flourishing compared to male athletes (Table 6).

Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation, and One-Way ANOVA in Flourishing based on Demographic and Retirement-related Factors

Independent Variables		Flourishing		F	df	p	η^2	Post-Hoc
		M	SD					
Age	21-30	42.20	10.73	3.44	4, 195	.010**	.07	-
	31-40	47.38	7.87					
	41-50	47.29	4.77					
	51-60	46.56	4.98					

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	Above 60	46.37	5.53					
Time since retirement	1-10	45.84	8.64	1.36	4, 195	.251	.03	-
	11-20	47.47	5.36					
	21-30	46.76	4.03					
	31-40	43.71	4.76					
	41-50	45.67	4.93					
Retirement preparedness	Extremely well	47.64	11.97	1.16	4, 195	.330	.02	-
	Very well	47.24	7.59					
	Moderately well	45.24	5.40					
	Not very well	46.63	6.21					
	Not at all well	48.60	5.27					
Current level of social and emotional support	Poor	38.20	17.81	5.94	3, 196	.001***	.08	4>2
	Average	44.25	6.22					
	Good	46.38	4.84					
	Excellent	48.95	8.88					
Current employment status	Employed	47.49	5.56	6.41	2, 197	.002**	.06	1>2
	Un-employed	43.75	7.28					
	Self-employed	44.76	10.24					

Table 7 indicates a significant mean difference in flourishing based on the age of the athletes ($p = .010$) with a medium effect size. The overall model was significant, but no pairwise comparison showed a significant difference. The results also highlighted non-significant mean differences in flourishing based on time since retirement and retirement preparedness ($p > .05$) with a small effect size. In contrast, a significant mean difference was found in flourishing based on the current level of social and emotional support ($p = .001$), with a medium effect size. Athletes who had an excellent level of social and emotional support had better flourishing compared to those who had average support. Lastly, flourishing was found to be significantly different based on current employment status ($p = .002$) with a medium effect size, in which employed retired athletes had better flourishing compared to unemployed retired professional athletes.

5. DISCUSSION

Retirement is one of the most critical stages in life with many facets, including psychological, social, and financial aspects. Retired athletes may experience low self-esteem, low self-efficacy, depression, and anxiety due to loss of athletic identities. These issues and lack of retirement planning can influence well-being, life quality, and ability to flourish post-retirement. The objective of the current study was to assess the personal and retirement-related factors influencing post-retirement adjustment and flourishing among retired professional athletes of Sindh and Punjab, Pakistan.

Two hundred retired professional athletes were equally included from both provinces, and half of them were males. Fifty-two percent of the respondents had played nationally, and 64% were currently employed. Ryan [26] reported in his study conducted in New Zealand that over 70% of retired athletes were employed. More than forty percent of the athletes still participate in sports primarily as a player/team member, coach, or team manager. These results were in line with another study in which 46.7% of retired athletes were still affiliated with sports after retirement [17].

Regarding retirement, the mean age of the participants was 47.02 ± 12.35 years, and the average retirement age was 33.22 ± 9.89 years. Thornton et al. [4] reported that the average retirement age reported by rowing and rugby retired athletes was 28 and 30 years, respectively. According to the participants of this study, the best age to retire is around 50 years. The score of retired athletes on the retirement adjustment scale was slightly above average, and flourishing was substantially above average. Moreover, nearly seventy percent retired voluntarily. Kashif et al. [30] also reported comparative findings where around sixty percent of their athletes retired voluntarily.

The present study showed that post-retirement adjustment among professional athletes had a weak positive correlation with flourishing. These findings were in congruence with the findings of another study conducted in New Zealand [26]. The potential reasons for the findings could be that athletes who view life as a transition process and plan for different stages of life, including the retirement phase, are comparatively ready for this change and accept its good and bad sides openly as well. Similarly, it is possible that retired athletes who are better adjusted to the post-retirement phase and exhibit flourishing may have maintained a work-life balance, which made transitioning easier for them. They have to make a few changes in their routines in comparison to those athletes who experience adjustment issues [7].

Another possible factor could be that almost 70% of athletes in the study were those who retired voluntarily. This potentially suggests that a sense of control over transition and retirement options helps athletes in the adjustment process and improves their flourishing. Another underlying factor that promotes control is self-efficacy [28]. Athletes who feel they can manage the post-retirement phase and its demands potentially score better on the constructs under study.

The current study also concluded that female athletes had better post-retirement adjustment and flourishing compared to male athletes. These findings were in line with a study conducted by Ekengren et al. [31]. Family-associated reasons are

prominent factors that help women adjust better than male athletes after retirement. It is important to note that females are innately nurturing and caring beings. Their archetype is present in women throughout their career, and they practice it by balancing home and career while managing the demands of their roles as wives, daughters, mothers, etc. [32].

These gender-related archetypal expectations create gender norms in society that are actively practiced in the form of family expectations for women, their educational and career pathways, and relationships that are practiced in careers, particularly the coach-athlete career. Their home- and family-based expectations and perceived duties help them in the post-retirement adjustment phase. Therefore, their adjustment and flourishing are better than male athletes in this regard [33].

The literature suggests that male athletes are less prepared for the retirement phase than female athletes. The reasons are the lower investment of male athletes in educational grounds and other areas of self-development. This reflects the cultural elements of such findings and is indicative of the role gender plays in the retirement adjustment process [34].

Unlike men, women have a variety of activities to engage in after retirement, such as household chores, caring for children, and becoming caregivers for their grandchildren. These activities may affect their well-being as they stay busy and feel less socially connected and lonely. This can also give them a long-awaited sense of fulfilment by fulfilling nurturing roles that are innately expected of women, while also offering a sense of purpose [35].

The findings also revealed that athletes who had better social and emotional support showed better post-retirement adjustment and flourishing than those who had average support. These results reiterate the importance of social support in adjusting to different phases of life, including adjustment. The presence and quality of social support help in developing a feeling of satisfaction among retirees. The presence of social ties such as parents, family, spouse, children, friendships, and peer groups proves to be supportive networks for these transitioning individuals. Engagement in different activities with these support sources and such groups makes life busier, and retired individuals feel engaged, which leaves less time to rethink their retirement and stay busy. Their engagement in these circles helps divert their attention from work-related thoughts, which makes retirement life less difficult. This is because it has been observed that feeling bored is linked to difficulty in adjustment [28].

Family is a resource beyond all others. Its availability makes it special in the adjustment phase. Family is not only present but also willing to listen to problems, struggles, and challenges of the adjustment phase. Not only this, but it also offers financial support if needed. Similarly, it is also important that athletes have help-seeking behavior. If the person is not ready themselves to seek help and support, those around, although willing to provide support, cannot do anything in this regard. Research shows that athletes who express help-seeking behaviors have less difficulty adjusting after retirement and find retirement a positive experience [22].

Furthermore, a non-significant mean difference existed in post-retirement adjustment and flourishing among retired athletes based on whether they retired voluntarily or involuntarily. These findings are in contrast with previous research [26]. The results further indicated that older retired athletes and those who retired 11-30 years ago had better adjustment after retirement compared to younger athletes and those who retired 1-10 years ago. The potential reason could be that as the athletes age, their athletic identity becomes weaker. They become open to settlements and embrace other life aspects better. They can see themselves beyond sports. This shows why the older athletes' group scored better on retirement adjustment in comparison who retired more recently [36].

The present study also revealed that athletes who were well-prepared for retirement were better adjusted after retirement compared to those who were not well-prepared for this transition. These findings align with previous research [25]. These athletes show better adjustment because getting time for planning retirement enables athletes to find other interests and pursue them for sake of adapting to life after retirement. This preparation is active in nature [37]. This planning provides behavioural, cognitive, and emotional advantages to the athletes because they create hypothetical scenarios and devise their action plan in a particular situation. This planning enhances their readiness, promoting better adjustment because they are mentally prepared for the post-retirement phase, leading to improved adjustment [38].

The results also highlighted non-significant mean differences in flourishing across time since retirement and retirement preparedness. However, flourishing was reported to be higher among employed retired athletes compared to unemployed retired professional athletes. This could be because unemployed retired athletes might have experienced obstacles in acquiring jobs, which has affected their well-being and life satisfaction [39]. The reasons may include being less qualified, non-systematic and poor career planning, being unfit for the job, discrimination due to being retired, and a lack of the required training and skill set for the job [40]. This reflects that not working after retirement becomes a reason for loneliness, particularly in males. Unemployment after retirement also leads to depression. On the other hand, retired employed athletes are happier, more satisfied with their lives because they had to worry less about finances, felt equipped outside of their sports [41].

5.1 Limitations

This research had the following limitations:

- There is an absence of a framework for approaching a fully representative sample and selecting respondents through a random sampling process. That is why this research may not be a full representation of the retired professional athletes, as a non-probability sampling technique was used to select the sample. This may limit the generalizability of research

findings.

- There are chances that the respondents may have selective recollections of their experiences. This may have led to limited responses to some questionnaire items, given that the minimum time of retirement was at least one year.

6. CONCLUSION

This current study on retired professional athletes concluded that post-retirement adjustment had a relationship with flourishing. Post-retirement adjustment was found to be better in female athletes, older athletes, those who had retired for more than ten years, those who had better social and emotional support, and those who were well-prepared for retirement. Furthermore, higher flourishing was seen in retired female athletes, those having better social and emotional support, and among employed retired athletes.

These findings reflect the influence of different factors on post-retirement adjustment and flourishing. Proper retirement planning, post-retirement employment, and having social and emotional support from family and friends are crucial to avoid adjustment issues and foster flourishing among retired athletes. Sports policymakers should work on a smoother transition for athletes by developing a support program that can provide timely guidance to the athletes so that they are well-prepared for retirement.

Author Contribution:

Conceptualization, M.Y., and B.A.; Methodology, M.Y., and B. A.; software, M.Y., and B.A.;writing-original draft preparation, M.Y.; Validation B.A.; Formal analysis, B.A; Investigation, M.Y., and B.A.; Supervision, B.A.

Ethical Approval:Prior to the commencement of the study, ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Karachi University.

Informed Consent: Parental informed consent was obtained for all children under 18 years, following ethical guidelines for minors.

Data Availability: The data presented in this study is available on the request from corresponding author due to the privacy and ethical restrictions.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest

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