

EXECUTIVE MASTERS IN ORGANISATION AND SPORTS MANAGEMENT



MEMOS XXIV

2021- 2022

ATHLETE CAREER TRANSITION IN SPORTS CASE STUDIES ON ELITE KENYA VOLLEYBALL

LADIES PLAYERS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The pressures of elite sport in contemporary society have become more demanding such that elite sportswomen and men dedicate increasing amounts of time and effort to training, preparing and competing. This means that they sacrifice their education or development of their vocational skills. As a consequence, when the end of the sporting career arrives, athletes are under prepared and/or underqualified to compete in the job market.

In Kenya, there are no proper procedures, guidelines and policies that have been put in place to support athlete career transition from active sports for retirement. Most athletes are ill prepared to career transition and many retired athletes are unable to cope with life after retirement financially and mentally. This is due to lack of proper planning by both the athlete and the institutions concerned. Therefore, this study aims at reviewing and identifying appropriate policies which might be adopted by sporting and/or educational institutions and which actions by individuals might be taken to address this problem.

The needs of athletes in volleyball may vary depending on the demands of the team places on individuals, the level of development of the federation, the context of the women's volleyball competition and the level of professionalization in the women's volleyball practice and the administration of the volleyball. Etc.

The focus of this study will on volleyball, specifically on the women. The research question for the study is thus as follows;

RQ1. What measures might be taken to facilitate the successful transition of elite female volleyball athletes into a post-athletic career in the Kenyan context?

This is an important issue in terms of the quality of life of athletes once retired from volleyball but it is also significant from the perspective of elite performance in national teams, etc. since playing talent may be lost if players feel that they must reduce or end their sporting commitment in order to take up employment to protect their own futures.

As we shall discuss in the literature review section of this project, the literature on ‘dual careers’ has grown considerably in recent years and there is a range of examples of dual career policies implemented in different national contexts and in different sporting context, referenced in that literature.

Women’s Volleyball in Kenya.

Kenya has been performing well in Volleyball since the late 1980s. In 1987, Kenya hosted the All Africa Games and the maiden women’s team represented the country for the first time at international level. From then, the team never looked back in terms of performance. Kenya has dominated the African Continent by winning the African Women’s Volleyball Championship nine times. The team has been able to qualify for the year 2000, 2004 and 2020 Olympics. The team was ranked 11th position in 2000 and 2004 while in 2020, they were in 12th position. The team earned its name ‘Malkia Strikers’ when they qualified to participate in the Grand Prix.

Team Rankings

Kenya was ranked 2nd after Cameroun in CAVB Women Africa Nations Championship 2019 while in the FIVB World ranking Kenya is position 19 with 42 points, confirming its prowess in Africa. This has been enhanced by its participation in the Africa Games, Africa Cup of Nations Intercontinental Olympics qualifiers and the World Cup.

Recruitment of players

Players are recruited directly from the school into the main clubs (of which are very few) while some join the universities, colleges and tertiary institutions. Once they have been recruited by their main teams, they are the selected to join the national team when there is a national assignment. Hence being in the national team is a part time rather than a full time occupation. When they don't have any assignment at the national level, the players go back to their mother clubs to represent their teams in the national league and tournaments.

Types of employment

The employment rate globally has declined and Kenya has not been spared from the same challenge. Young people graduate from schools, colleges and universities but there are fewer opportunities in the job market. This makes the players vulnerable in terms of choices and terms of service. Athletes then have to comply with the company policies and also the team's culture. When the players are recruited into volleyball teams, they get three different options;

Contractual employment

In this case, the management of the team offers a contract that runs between one to three years with an option of a renewal. This means that the management has the right to terminate or extend a player's contract depending on their set parameters.

Permanent employment

The government institutions teams like the Armed forces, normally recruit on an yearly basis. Meaning at some point they have an influx of players and need to pick on a number of players to participate in the different league levels. They also drop players from the main team frequently depending on the recruitment of new players. The dropped players are forced to go back to work without participating in sports, ending their career at an early stage. At this stage the athletes usually have no choice but to accept whatever is offered to them, the choice is never theirs.

Independent players

These are a clique of players who have attained university or college degrees and now join the teams. They are recruited according to their qualifications and negotiate for their terms of employment. Some have contracts with companies that don't have volleyball teams or are recruited into bodies that do have teams but get better terms of employment. In the same group, there are university students who play for clubs and therefore have individual agreements with the teams.

1.2 Problem Statement

Proper procedures, guidelines and policies are needed to prepare athletes for retirement or career transition. This will improve the systems that we already have to support athletes psychologically, gaining skills and financial benefits during their preparation to transition. It will at the same time enable athletes to relate to volleyball away from the limelight, and enhance social psycho support.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to first, determine whether elite female volleyball players are effectively prepared for retirement and whether the retirement is well planned. Secondly, if Clubs and Kenya Volleyball Federation have effective strategies or policies that give guidelines to support player retirement. The findings of the study may be used as a basis of other studies to create standard policies for players' retirement in the federation.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Being a professional player is viewed as reputable type of work and brings a touch of class because it allows some players to build their own lime lights (Adler and Adler 1989 in Roderick, 2006a), meaning that the players make their own performance record and limelight for themselves during their sports career. Involvement in sports career is either fulfilling or disappointing. The emotional experiences that players go through during their sports career may cause selected and biased stumbling blocks to make them successful or failures. (Cresswell & Ekiund, 2006).

Thus most commentators or researchers agree that it is important for players to develop transferable skills or gain qualifications that may help them face challenges related to life after their sporting career.

Martin, Fogarty & Albion 2014 state that most athletes find it hard to deal with the ending of their careers because they are strongly bound to the sports, perhaps financially but also socially and psychologically. However, when the decision to retire is a voluntary decision, the athletes are less affected. This makes them less likely to experience decreased well-being which is more likely to occur when the players' career is abruptly ended. According to a Government-commissioned report (Players Federation 2018) there is an acknowledged loss of identity as players struggle with a finding new central purpose in life. Their experience may lead to depression, self-harm and drugs or substance abuse and financial difficulties.

2.2 Dimensions of Career transition

Wylleman & Lavallee(2004) stated that sportsmen/women experience various stages in their life-cycle. They are called 'development dimensions' and they include; skills, education, mental, social, legal, income and career. Then Merikoski-Silius (2006) adapted the dimensions but concentrated on athletic, education/vocational and personal/family transition guidelines. Transitioning in (or out of) sport has been seen as amongst the hardest (Ceci, Epric, Wylleman & Zupancic 2002, Lavallee, Gordon & Grove, 1997). Some other studies indicate that athletes who were ready through preparation for transition, coped well with transitioning from active sports (Knight et al., 2016) Preparing for transition included fostering academic and career skills when the athlete was still active in sports.

2.3 Dual career in sports

A dual career is the doubling up of sporting career and academic career or employment. This gives different chances to sports people when they are active and when they become less active in sports. (European Commission, 2012; Duty of Care in Sport Review, 2017). Some of the mentioned benefits are social support systems, health related, development and financial.

Athletes face athletic, academic and vocational challenges. These are inclusive of mental health, social and income challenges. (De Brandt, 2017; Wylleman & Lavallee, 2004). Although they face all these challenges; athletes can still manage to balance their lifestyle by acquiring necessary dual career tools like dual career management, career planning, emotional awareness, civic mastery and ability to adapt are additions to supported career road maps and programs, according to De Brandt, Wylleman, Torregrossa, Defruyt, & Van Rossem, 2017; Li & Sum, 2017). Condello, Capranica, Doupna, Vara & Burk, 2019 state that the learning outcomes of a player in a dual career concentrates on the player's personality; and on factors, such as the family, friends, teachers, academic, institutions, and the government policies. The network among all the stakeholders and the athlete directly or indirectly affects the players' dual career experience. (European Commission, 2012; Gledhill & Harwood, 2015).

2.4 Responsibility of organizations and the players

The (Players Federation 2018) report also touched on a wide range of transition programs to assist athletes to move on with life, which included career training, counselling and funding their

education. A big part of that report concentrated on education especially on the role of sports enabling athletes to maintain their education, tennis player Andy Murray said that he regretted not continuing with education and wished he had given his academics more time. (Ornstein, 34 2017). A study by researchers from Loughborough University (Amara, Aquilina, Henry, and PMP Consultants, 2004) cites examples of dual career support provided for athletes in the European Union as listed below;

Hungary

Full scholarship or fee reduction; partnering with colleges and universities in the Olympian Course of Life program which supports one to three gifted athletes recommended by the IOC, dates for interviews, entrance exams or admission are flexible, athletes' absence from the institution is considered and timetabling is flexible and provision of textbooks, handbooks, manuals, special literature and other educational materials to enable them study effectively, etc.

Spain

Elite sports persons get support from the Sports Council by receiving aid programs at universities to aid their access, permanence and sports development. The universities have to reserve 3% of places for elite athletes corresponding to the requirements, physical activity centres that have degree programs and sports studies are required by the government to reserve an additional 5%.

Germany

Athletes are allowed to attend elite Sports Universities which is a contract between the Universities, Sports Federations and University Sports Association. These athletes have to be connected to Olympic support centres to enable them to benefit from; reduced entry requirements, flexible timetabling and examination times and substitute performance (flexible attendance at compulsory seminars and lectures).

United Kingdom

The government supports universities and colleges in England and Wales in providing services for some athletes. Included in the scholarship are benefits such as, customized dates for exams, locality, and time frame for tasks, they are allowed to attend classes when they can and prolonged course times.

2.5 Planning for retirement

(McGillvray and McIntosh, 2006) states that some managers are not happy when players spend much of their time in school rather than training with their teams. Therefore, they try to discourage the athletes from following their academic dreams inhibiting them from planning for life after sports. Players have a hard time reaching their academic goals. They go on to state that when players don't have academic qualifications and skills, they are disadvantage because they are insufficiently qualified for any types of employment (Mc Gilvary & McIntosh, 2006).

2.5.1 Retirement

In the past, retirement was viewed as a personal **event** but now after many studies, it is viewed as a transitional **phase** by researchers (Wylleman, Alfermann et al, 2004). They contend that the actual impact of retirement depends on whether it is the athlete's decision or if forced on the athlete by circumstances by their sporting or personal situation. Other studies have shown that the athlete has more control of the process if it is voluntary retirement which depends on non-sporting and sporting factors, like age, performance in sports, moving to the next level in sports, academic standard etc. (Erpic, 2004).

2.5.2 Retirement process

(Stambulavo et. Al (2007:116) suggest that career transition has different levels and factors which may depend on the athlete's country and culture. All this will have an important impact on to career transition. Researchers have also observed ways of minimizing negative aspects by analyzing the coping resources for athletes' retirement (Grove, Lavalley et al. 1998), Lavalley, (2005) states that plans or strategies can be put in place to assist the growth of an athlete in three stages.

There are clear indications that the type of decision athletes make in regards to their academic career must be informed, but very few countries have programs to support athletes' retirement process. This means that the athlete is the main planner of their life after active sports. In countries where measures exist, they may be offered for a short period of time. For example, athletes are supported for three months at the beginning of their post-athletics career as members of the World Programme in the UK (Argent, Aquilina & Henry, 2005).

There are fewer policy responses that focus on the needs of athletes who are in transition, and where such responses exist, they tend to be less effective. Thus, there is need for further research to concentrate on athletes' need and how those policies can be implemented to assist athletes effectively, to enable both athlete and the sport to benefit.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrates on how the study was conducted. First, the study research design is presented followed by the sources of data and how the data was analyzed and presented. Ethical issues in the research are also presented.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher uses a case study research design to enhance data collection. The research uses qualitative case studies of female elite volleyball players to undertake an exploratory analysis of the process of transition for Kenya Volleyball Women players of various levels of experience and expertise. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to collect information on feelings, opinions, views and perspective on career transition in Kenya with a particular focus on female volleyball players. The researcher also uses benchmarking design to allow the researcher understand how other countries seek to implement such programs.

3.3 Target Population

A purposive sample of interviewees was selected, drawing interviews from three groups; namely young elite players; mature elite players and retired elite players. This was intended to provide information from those with a wide range of experience and an outlook on the future plans for players. An enhanced understanding of the experience of athletes in the three categories (young, mature and retired elite female volleyball players) will assist in policy-making for players in the country.

3.3.1 Young elite players

These are players between the ages of 17 and 23 years of age who also may be involved in dual career during their sports career because most of them will be in universities or colleges or involved in studies. The data collected from the case study of the young players will give the researcher an insight into how they perceive their future, the challenges the players are facing in respect of dual career planning and whether and how they are supported through their study by the clubs, government or sponsors. It will also provide insight into the needs of the players to be ready for transitioning and on policy development.

3.3.2. Mature Elite players

This target group of players is between the ages of 24 and 30 years are experienced, are at the height of their sports careers and are prospective retirees from their elite sports career. Their case studies will allow the researcher to understand the challenges faced by players at this level of play. It will also allow the researcher improve on what is available for them.

3.3.3 Retired Elite Players

These are players who have already gone through the transitioning into a post athletics career. This group of players will give the researcher more insight on the challenges they faced during the transitioning period and how they have been able to manage those challenges. It will also allow the researcher insights into what to consider when developing the policies.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Primary data collection

The organizations involved in the study are drawn from the Kenya Women Volleyball Teams. These are the top teams in the Kenya Volleyball League which also feeds the National team for Regional and International assignments. The league involves six major teams in the country which each have young players (from school), mature players and retired (who have left the teams but are in the background).

3.4.2 Secondary Source

In particular, the study draws from secondary information by reviewing literature available on this topic. These secondary sources included but did not limit to examining research undertaken on Athletic Career Transition in former Chinese Elite Athletes, Education for elite young players in Europe which concentrates on dual career in sports and planning for retirement and retirement. All secondary sources have incorporate studies on different aspects of career transition

CHAPTER 4 DESCRIPTION AND FINDINGS

This chapter will provide an account of the findings of each of the case study athletes in respect of experiences and of policy and practice concerning dual career planning and implementation.

4.1 Interviewee/Case 1 Study

Interviewee 1 is a retired player and mother of three. She is a medalist who played for the National team for 12 years and was voted the best Libero player seven times in Africa. She was recruited after secondary school by the Kenya Defense force team which was subsequently disbanded. She later joined the Telkom Kenya team which was also subsequently disbanded. She then joined the Kenya Commercial Bank team and played for 4 years before being recruited by the Kenya Pipeline team, for whom she played for from **2008 up to 2019**. She does not have any formal employment. She feels her career was cut short after being dropped from her last team when the management of the team was changed.

The strengths for teams are teamwork and effective management support. The main weakness in the teams is favouritism and nepotism. She trained as a plumber and pipe fitter because the team management encouraged ladies to take course in male dominated fields.

She upgraded her skills by attending a plumbing college because she was on contract and expected to be permanently employed by the club. She thought that her team was below par in planning for retirement of players who have given service. She played for 15 years but was simply sent home without any benefits and was not psychologically prepared for transition. The federation has also done very little to plan for players' transition into retirement from playing. Initially she was scared of getting injuries because the team she played for did not have insurance for the players but when joined the Kenya Commercial Bank and Kenya Pipeline teams, because the teams insure their players and took good care of their players medically. The managements of

the last two teams supported academic development. She witnessed a forced career termination of her team mate due to a misunderstanding with the coach but the player was permanently employed so she just went back to the office when her volleyball career was terminated. She thought that athletes were not psychologically prepared for transition because they don't have someone to talk to them and take them through the process or preparation. When a player's team is successful because of the good performance of the team, players tend to believe that their performance level would never drop but as they age, they start to underperform. On individual transition planning, she was emotional and said ***'I don't want to talk about it, it's still too painful for me'***

The government has never had any plans because most of the players have been left living miserable lives because they depended on monies paid to them during the active times.

This athlete thought that the ministry should put in place policy measures to absorb retired players into employment within the ministry, within NOC-Kenya, in sports stadiums or any other sports facilities so that they would have the financial means to them sustain themselves.

She argued that the Clubs, federations, ministry and NOC-K should come with a policy which will cater for the retired players or organize a pension scheme for all national team players.

4.2 Interviewee/Case Study 2

Interviewee 2 is currently a Coach, married and a mother of two. She is employed by the government on a permanent basis. She was forced to retire and believes her plans were cut short by the coaches. She was recruited early and has had continuity since. After secondary school she joined the Kenya Commercial Bank and then moved to the Kenya Prisons Team for which she works. She has represented the country in Croatia and Germany during the Youth World Championship while she was still in school, and in the Africa Cup of Nations in 2005 in Nigeria.

Her team was Africa Champions on four occasions and her team represented the country in the World Club Championship which was held in Doha. She was involved in a dual career, as a player and student.

‘I wanted to retire after becoming an Olympian but that didn’t happen because the coaches frustrated me which led to my early retirement as a player’ she said

Being in a permanent job makes it easy for her to have a fall back plan with a government retirement plan for work and they are given choices to train as coaches, physiotherapist or to be in charge of roles in the teams but there are very few slots for this type of role.

She witnessed a team mate terminating her sports career because of injuries and another one due to disciplinary issues. They have internal programs for players to learn skills. The athletes are normally prepared for retirement but some of them don’t accept to retire.

According to her, the most appropriate time for one to start planning for retirement is between the ages of 25-35 years because there are so many eventualities in sports. Her sentiments are that the government has not put measures or policies to assist players in transitioning. According to her, the Ministry of Sports should create employment for retired players to enable them manage life challenges and should organize to educate young players on financial management or courses that can assist them to plan for retirement. Standard retirement policies should be created and would go a long way to assist players in retirement. This is necessary because most players are neglected after retirement.

4.3 Interviewee/Case Study 3

Interviewee 3 is married and a mother. She took some time off from volleyball to manage her family. This was due to frustration from the coach and the management of the team. She making

a comeback into volleyball but in another team, less strong than her former team. She is not employed but involves herself in entrepreneurship. She has been in sports for over ten years. She was motivated to pursue her career in the sport by her former Physical Education teacher in school who spotted her talent early. She led her team in many National events. She was able to get partial scholarship for her undergraduate program through her a university Coach. She managed dual career at that time because she was a student and played for the club. The club and the university had a good relationship

This brought a lot of team conflict in her team. She eventually was able to get a contract but still held on to her studies. But they terminated her contract when she was expecting a baby.

“I believe they treated me unfairly” she says. She thinks that the emotional trauma she went through taught her resilience and assertiveness. Being a graduate in Criminology, she also works closely with other companies on temporary jobs.

Her rating of her former team is poor because they don't prepare players for retirement but rather drop them and then don't communicate with them directly. She never used to get scared of the injuries because she was in a team that had a good medical insurance for the players. However, she thinks that her club does not prepare players for transitioning.

The club only partially supported academic development because they thought it interfered with the training programs. She said that her mother and her secondary school coach really supported her in her sports career. She says that there could be lots of opportunities to advance oneself in life if only the terms of the contracts were improved, allowing players to afford to pay their own fees to better themselves academically. In her opinion, all dimensions of career development are important for one to succeed but emphasizes the need to focus on family, athleticism, sports, finance and training.

Her current club was formed relatively recently and has not established a retirement plan.

According to her the government has not put in measures to support athlete career transition and there is need to focus on employment of players, monitoring, medical cover during retirement, benefits for the years played at national team level, women players' welfare. Measures should be taken to tackle discrimination against women and intimidation by management, especially when a player is pregnant. In addition, consideration should be given to promoting players to managerial position especially if they are qualified.

According to her, the government has delayed developing of standard policies for transition, employment, scholarships, salary packages and medical cover. In addition, there is a need for free counselling services for players due to pressure they get to perform in sports and daily life.

4.4 Interviewee/Case Study 4

Interviewee 4 is a 25 years old current Libero player. She is in permanent employment with the government and she plans to be in active sports for ten years. She hopes to be a coach in the future. She started her career in volleyball in primary school then continuing into secondary school and then she joined the Kenya Pipeline team but because the competition was very high. She then joined a University team where she was both player and student. She was lucky to get employment after graduating through volleyball.

She plans to invest for retirement. Just like interviewee 2, being in the government makes it easy for her to have a fall back plan in case she sops her sports career but she is vague about the set plans. The management supports their players through promotions and career guidance.

Athletes in her club are well prepared by being given counselling services, career and financial advice. The player thinks that there are many opportunities in her institution for example

identifying athletes who are qualified for some jobs which the club supports them to pursue.

Academic and finance dimensions are the most important to her.

She thinks the appropriate time for planning for retirement should be as early as possible, as long as one is earning. No measures have been put in place for players unless they work with the government, though in this case government concentrates on the assistance to get employment part only and not sports.

It is important for the stakeholders to come up with a standard policy. The government should make facilities available, have policies addressing the welfare of the players, gender, equity and support of older players in exiting positively allowing the young players to take over. The government should also give a package to the National team players in appreciation of their services and when players have assignment, the officials should seek to ensure the players are well remunerated.

4.5 Interviewee/Case Study 5

Interviewee 5 is a young single player who is 24 years old and she played from high school and continued to a centre of excellence then joining a university and subsequently joining two clubs.

She has a one-year contract with the club and plans to be in sports for a maximum of six years.

She was motivated by some players in volleyball and the coaches. She has participated in University games and in the U19 National team in Slovenia and the U23 National team in Egypt.

She thinks that the management in her case has given players all support in terms of training tools, allowances and contracts.

The players also have a strong sense of bonding that makes them see themselves as sisters and the strength of their team is unity and team work. The team has one weakness of losing players to

other teams. The area of life skills has impacted her. She has been on scholarship from primary school up to University and it has been a source of income to her.

She has participated in dual career from primary school to date. She plans to save and invest in business. She also has a fall back plan of teaching if things don't work out in sports. Her club is involved in her retirement with a project which sponsors in skill training. Her club does not prepare athletes psychologically because not many players are ready to retire.

Her team has so many opportunities to advance towards acquiring skills but the scholarships are not academic but for skills. She feels that academic, sports, financial and psychological dimensions are most important. She thinks she is well prepared to transition because she plans to advance in her academics in the area of sports management. The appropriate time to plan for retirement varies from a person to another and also the type of investment the person has done. Her club has not put any measure for players to retire, the government needs to take responsibility and help players. She supports the idea of a policy being put in place and she thinks that players should not be forced to retire but they should be left to retire voluntarily. She thinks there are so many vacancies in coaching and refereeing at the federation level, at the club level, the management can put in strategies to employ players permanently.

4.6 Interviewee/Case Study 6

Interviewee 6 is a single lady, aged 19 and is currently playing in one of the senior teams in the country. She is not in employment and doesn't know how long she plans to be actively involved in sports. Her motivation to join sports was intrinsic and she worked hard because of the fame of other players. She was 14 years when she took up the sports. She participated at the U20 Kenyan team qualifying and intends to represent the country in future. She thinks their performance is due to self believe and team work.

‘I don’t feel comfortable talking about the strengths and weakness of my team’ for her, hard work is important as a skill and she has never tried dual career but she plans to go back to school. She is scared of injuries. The management encourages the players to take vocational courses, however, athletes in her club are not psychologically supported for retirement. Players don’t want to retire which makes it hard to plan.

The important dimension of career transition for her are academic and sports. According to her, she can’t relate with retirement for now but says at thirty years it would be a good time to plan. She doesn’t know any measures that would enhance transitioning. The ministry should give opportunities to elite retired players at management level and come up with a policy that will guide all teams on the retirement package that will assist players.

‘The hardest questions to me are the ones about retirement because I am starting my career in sports.’ She said

4.7 Coding and themes

After collection of the data and transcription of interviews, coding was done according to the issues that were identical and important for the study in terms of performance, academic challenges, work and transition. The codes were then grouped into themes that were related to Kenya Volleyball Ladies, transition and policies as summarised in the table below;

Table of Codes and themes identified in the data

CODES	THEMES
1) Family	<i>Family Status</i>
2) Age of joining volleyball	– Married

<p>3) Performance level</p> <p>4) Dual career experience- training and education in primary, secondary schools and at university</p> <p>5) Plans for retirement</p> <p>6) Current status of participation in volleyball</p> <p>7) Voluntary retirement experience</p> <p>8) Current employment status</p> <p>9) Motivation</p> <p>10) Injuries preparedness</p> <p>11) Volleyball as a career</p> <p>12) Universities and schools are not flexible to players training schedule or programs. There is no flexibility in class and exams timetable.</p> <p>13) Psychological and Emotional trauma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single - Have children <p><i>Requirements at individual level</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full time engagement in the teams program - Personal contribution towards team success - Competition amongst team mates for position in the team - Hard work, discipline and sacrifice for the team <p><i>Pathway to sports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early recruitment to volleyball - Positive and negative motivation - Elite performance - Team work and team support - Medical Insurance by teams or lack of - Support from teachers, coaches and parents - Having other elite players as role model - Forced retirement without benefits <p><i>Academic Pathway</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dual career experience - Primary. Secondary and university education - Lack of skill training
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- Academic Scholarships

Pathway to career transition

- Employment- Contracts, Permanent
- Retirement/ Forced retirement by coaches/management
- Skill Training
- Dimensions of Career transition- Financial Family, Social, Spiritual, Athletic or Academic
- Experiencing dual career
- Government policy

Challenges faced by players

Players are ill prepared for transitioning at the club level and they know that the government does not have any sports retirement policies for them.

Termination can be caused by injury or forced retirement as most of them don't volunteer to retire.

Dual career is not supported by the coaches. Most of the retired players had negative support from the coaches. The players lack advice in terms of retirement.

Players are used and dumped by their clubs after many years of engagement when they get people to replace them without warning or benefits.

	<p>Poor performance academically which leads to termination of their education at secondary school.</p> <p>Those who get scholarships, are forced to go to schools and universities that may not be of their choice and pick courses according to what is offered by the institution.</p>
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**CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

This section gives a summary of the findings, the success and failure of Career Transition of individual Elite Athletes in Kenya Volleyball Federation Ladies teams’ case studies. The section will also consider policies that can be put in place to address the challenges and strengths that may come with a Transition policy if it’s introduced by the Government. The following questions were answered by the case studies’

5.1 Are players well prepared for career transition?

5.1.1 Psychologically and emotionally

Athletes were not well prepared psychologically for the retirement. This due to the fact that the coaches or management dropped the players without warning and in most scenarios it left players confused and depressed. It is the case that while players and clubs might be aware of the material

costs of retirement, the need to prepare for the psychological costs of retirement are much less recognized and there was a general lack of counselling advice or services available to players.

5.1.2 Financially

Most of the elite players in Kenya consider Volleyball as a source of employment. They therefore depend on the payment they get from engaging in volleyball activities. If they are dropped from the team, they have to adjust their life to the standard of not having income from the sport. When teams get assignments for the league and international matches, players and officials get allowances or per diem but these are generally not equivalent the level of a salary.

5.1.3. Employment sustainability

For the players who are permanently employed by the government, they get a chance to go back to the office and work when they stop playing at the elite level, but for players who have contracts with the clubs, it means that they may end the sporting career together with professional career.

5.1.4 Skill training

The case study has brought out the fact that clubs offer skill training to their players, however the training is limited to what the club offers and not what the player may want to engage in. The courses offered may not be of any help to the players if they are not given employment opportunities by the clubs.

5.1.5 Stakeholders responsibility for the players during career transition

The clubs in which the players are contracted don't take full responsibility for career transition for the players. The tenure of the player depends on the performance of the player. The player themselves also don't think critically about their retirement until they are dropped from the team. The government does not take any responsibility for players' career transition, even though the prestige of the nation is enhanced by the national team's performance.

5.2 Is dual career supported by the clubs' management to allow players to prepare adequately for their career transition?

Due to the nature of training for elite players and performance requirements, the management does not support dual career with the exception of the military teams. This is due to the fact that players missing training sessions, may lead to change in the training programs and incomplete team training. The team management has set goals in terms of performance which need to be achieved.

5.3 Are there set policies to enhance Career Transition experiences?

There are no set policies for Athlete Career Transition by the government which may assist players during retirement. The clubs are not guided on compensation for players in case of being dropped and this has left a loop on how each club treats its players. The Coaches decide on players to be dropped once they identify new players or when players' performance drops or when players become older or sometimes the coaches do not relate well to a certain player and so drops them.

CHAPTER 6 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

6.1 Expected effects of the policy if introduced and implemented

This section concentrates on the expected implications of the policy if the government can create one and implement it. These summary is for all stakeholders who may be involved in volleyball in Kenya.

6.2. *The Government and County governments*

A legal obligation should be placed on government departments to undertake the following;

- i. To introduce and maintain a data base of all elite sports performers and their employment/ education /training situation to be kept by appropriate government both during and after their sporting career.
- ii. In line with the proposals of Interviewee 4, ‘the government should make facilities available for training and education, introduce players’ welfare system, focusing on gender, equity and support old players in exiting positively to allow the young players to take over.’
- iii. Job Creation in Government facilities and could both provide employment opportunities and improve the management of such facilities
- iv. The government should play role in giving clear guidelines on players’ treatment by other institutions.

6.3. Academic institutions

Academic institutions which have been identified as a Center of Excellence will have the responsibility of ensuring that the student players perform well in meeting academic obligations to enable them pursue with their career goals. Once a player has been picked by clubs, they should be required to support these players with dual career activities and should be monitored and overseen by the government in terms of meeting their responsibilities to the players. Through this players' academic performance will improve.

6.4. The Ministry of Sports

The Ministry of Sports will have the full support of the government to implement the policy of promoting dual careers. The ministry will also have an opportunity to have more agreements with other stakeholders to support the implementation. It will work closely with the Ministry of Education to create programs that will support dual career and athlete sponsorship locally. Schools will also be required to demonstrate commitment in the success of elite players' in realizing their potential in terms of academic performance.

6.5. The Clubs

The Clubs will change their approach to recruitment and training regimes to allow Academic and skill development which will entail accommodating dual career. The policy may guide the volleyball clubs in the country to have a standard or basic guideline on support for player transition.

6.6.Sponsors

Sponsors will have a chance to increase or concentrate on their scope. This may also give them a chance to identify and assist in developing players at an early stage and monitor, tailor make their sponsorship packages which may include academic, skill sponsorship and work experience.

6.7.Players

The players will be empowered to make informed decisions on contracts, employment terms and planning for their retirement and implementing the plans with their clubs, government and the federation. This will also make the player be fully engaged in planning their academic and volleyball careers from a tender age.

6.8.Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

It seems that Athlete Transition in Sports has been under researched. This is due to lack of literature review on the topic. This may be due to lack of serious focus on transition of players and the diversity in government policies in different countries in the world could also be a contributor. In Kenya most Athletes depend on volleyball as their primary career while in other parts of the world athletes depend on their academic careers and then sports become a secondary matter. A dual career approach should promote the development of a player in terms of both sporting and post sporting careers. The Federation, Clubs and the Government need to work together to support Athlete Career Transition. The Government has not taken any responsibility on the players after they transit. However, it seems like such policies don't exist even in many of the countries that are thriving in terms of sports performance. My prayer is that this study will be used to cover the gap in my country.

Recommendations for the policies creation

Priority	Recommendation	Action	Lead	Resources	Timescales	Critical success factors
1	Policy creation	Network with countries which have Athlete Career Transition programs	Ministry of Sports and NOC	Travel, Accommodation, Time, Internet.	2023	Creation of policies
2	Creating a data base for all elite players at NOC and Ministry level	All federations to start collecting information about their players and monitor their career development	Federation Secretary	Interns, time, accommodation, internet charges	2024	Special numbers given to players by the Ministry
3	Recruiting players in sports facilities	Increasing the number of sports facilities and employing elite athletes in current facilities or government offices	The Minister of Sports	Salaries, contracts, skill training and stakeholders support	2023-2026	Increase number of athletes working in sports facilities. Increased number of sports facilities. Decreased number of frustrated athletes.
4	Skill Training	Support dual career amongst players. Improve programs with the ministry of education to enable players' academic performance	The Ministry of Sports	Trainers, Salaries, sports colleges, career excellence centers	2023-2026	Skill Training programs plans, graduates, improved number of players engaged in dual career. Improvement in career transition choices.
5	Club and stakeholder commitment	More engagement of the clubs, stakeholder and the Ministry of Sports.	The Ministry of Sports, Team Management and Federation Heads	Funds, implementation of policies, empowerment of players through welfare services	2023-2026	Policy implementation and communication between the stakeholders.

Abstract

Athletes all over the world commit themselves to very hard training programs which take most of the time. Elite players are expected to perform highly throughout their sports career life. This performance needs consistence, hard work, commitment and good planning by both the athlete and the team. Volleyball women in Kenya undergo such kind of life and stay away from their families due to assignments which are either National or club set goals. The players represent the country in major championship like Olympics, East and Central Africa Games, Africa Club Championship, All Africa Games, Common wealth Games and a range of qualifiers. However, the players have to plan for their retirement from sports and good transition.

The purpose of this study was to investigate if Elite Volleyball players in Kenya have proper plans towards their retirement, the kind of support they get from their teams in terms of skill development to support their retirement experience and if the government has a policy that has been put in place to guide the stakeholders in volleyball. The study also looked into how the players are able to juggle between dual career activities.

To achieve these goals, a qualitative approach which was also expletory was employed and six interviews were done to selected members of the teams. This interviews were recorded and transcribed then coded and grouped into themes which supported the transition of athletes or failed it. Following the research, it clearly came out that the government has no policy set for Athlete Career Transition and athletes did not have concrete plan for their retirement.

It is therefore clear that without proper strategies and good planning by individual and the clubs, transition can have a very adverse effect on its player.

Key Words; Kenya Volleyball Federation, Dual Career, Career Transition, Athlete Development, Skill training, Retirement, Policy, Government, Club

Transition de carrière au Kenya : études de cas sur les joueuses de volleyball d'élite du Kenya **Résumé**

Les athlètes du monde entier s'engagent dans des programmes d'entraînement très durs qui prennent la plupart du temps. On s'attend à ce que les joueurs d'élite soient très performants tout au long de leur carrière sportive. Cette performance nécessite de la constance, du travail

acharné, de l'engagement et une bonne planification de la part de l'athlète et de l'équipe. Les femmes de volleyball au Kenya subissent ce genre de vie et restent loin de leur famille en raison d'affectations qui sont soit des objectifs nationaux, soit des objectifs fixés par le club. Les joueurs représentent le pays dans des championnats majeurs comme les Jeux olympiques, les Jeux d'Afrique de l'Est et centrale, le Championnat d'Afrique des clubs, les Jeux de toute l'Afrique, les Jeux de la richesse commune et une série de qualifications. Cependant, les joueurs doivent planifier leur retraite sportive et une bonne transition.

Le but de cette étude était de déterminer si les joueurs de volleyball d'élite au Kenya avaient des plans appropriés pour leur retraite, le type de soutien qu'ils reçoivent de leurs équipes en termes de développement des compétences pour soutenir leur expérience de retraite et si le gouvernement a une politique qui a été mis en place pour guider les acteurs du volley-ball. L'étude s'est également penchée sur la capacité des joueurs à jongler entre des activités à double carrière.

Pour atteindre ces objectifs, une approche qualitative qui était également explicative a été utilisée et six entretiens ont été réalisés avec des membres sélectionnés des équipes. Ces entretiens ont été enregistrés et retranscrits puis codés et regroupés en thèmes qui ont favorisé ou échoué la transition des athlètes. À la suite de la recherche, il est clairement ressorti que le gouvernement n'avait pas établi de politique pour la transition de carrière des athlètes et que les athlètes n'avaient pas de plan concret pour leur retraite.

Il est donc clair que sans stratégies appropriées et une bonne planification par l'individu et les clubs, la transition peut avoir un effet très négatif sur son joueur.

Mots clés; Kenya Volleyball Federation, Double carrière, Transition de carrière,

Développement des athlètes, Formation professionnelle, Retraite, Politique, Gouvernement

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Appendix. 1 - Research Questions

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Tell me a bit about yourself, your family background, school career, and how you became involved in volleyball.
2. Tell me about your career in sport and more particularly your career in volleyball Are you currently actively involved in volleyball activities? In what ways? At which level? As a player? As a coach? As a physical education teacher? As an administrator?) What is the history of your involvement with volleyball?
3. Are you in employment? If yes, what type of employment are you in? Can you briefly describe your employment history?
4. If in contract, how long is your contract?
5. How long do you (or did you) plan to be active in sports

SECTION 2: TEAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

6. What motivated you to become a volleyball player? How has your volleyball career developed (or if you are in the early stages, how do you intend it to develop?)
7. Is your involvement with volleyball full time or part time?
8. Does your involvement in volleyball mean that you currently do not have time to work in a full time capacity? Do you work part-time? Is your work related to the sport of volleyball? What kind of work do you intend to do when you retire from elite sport? Will it be work in sport? Will it be work in the sport of volleyball?
9. Are you now, or have you in the past, been concerned that your sporting commitments have meant that you have not had the opportunity to obtain necessary academic qualifications, or to gain appropriate experience, to embark on a work career after you have finished playing volleyball?
10. Do you know what the term 'dual career' means in relation to sportspersons? Are you currently involved in any academic or vocational training, work experience designed to facilitate your entry into a work career when you have retired from sport?
11. What plans have you put in place to assist you in preparing for retirement from elite sport?

12. Does your club/National team management / national government body provide any support in terms of logistics and planning for your retirement from sport? Do you have access to support in terms of access to study for academic qualifications, or to work experience? Does your family provide support in your preparation for a post-athletic career?

13. What would you do if you were injured tomorrow and could no longer play at an elite level?

SECTION 3: INDIVIDUAL TRANSITION PLAN

14. Do you feel you have sufficient opportunities to advance yourself in terms of academic qualifications, work experience, entrepreneurship or in skills?

15. To whom do you (or would you) go to obtain advice in relation to your transition to a post-athletic careers?

16. How well prepared are you for transitioning from active sports into a post-athletic career?

17. In what dimensions of career would you like to have access to advice? (Academic, Athletic and Sports, Social, Psychological, legal, Financial, Vocational training and Family.)

18. At what stage is it appropriate for athletes to start planning for transitioning to a post-athletic career?

19. Has your club, federation, or other sporting body put any measures in place to enhance the process of your transition to retirement?

SECTION 4: FEDERATION AND GOVERNMENT MEASURES

20. Do you think there are, or there should be, measures put in place by the government to assist elite athletes to transition to retirement from sport? Which arms of government or other entities should be involved (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Sport, universities, sponsors etc.).

21. In what dimensions of career would like to advance? (Academic, Athletic and Sports, Social, Psychological, legal, Financial, Vocational training and Family)

Appendix II -Consent Letter

Researchers Name; Halima Bakari
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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to first, determine whether and in what ways elite players prepare for retirement and whether the retirement is well planned. Secondly, if Clubs and the Kenya Volleyball Federation have effective strategies or policies that provide guidelines for player retirement support. The findings of the study may be used as a basis of other studies to create standard policies for players' retirement in the federation.

Procedure of the Study

The study needs insight on individual experiences. The interviews will be done by having face to face meetings or on line meetings with the interviewees. The interviews will be recorded for the purpose of the study and the recordings will be discarded after the study.

The interview will involve questions and discussions which may be sensitive to you.

Duration of the interview

The interview will take between thirty minutes and one hour depending on whether it will be online or face to face.

Risks

1. Sharing your personal information with the interviewer
2. Insecurity about personal information after being selected for the interview
3. Some questions may arouse emotions

Having put all these into consideration, the measures put in place to minimize these risks are; ensuring that the data collected is used for the sole purpose of the study, the interview will be done in confidentiality and at the interviewees time and comfort. You may decline to answer any or all questions or withdraw from the exercise at any time if you choose to.

Benefits

You may not benefit from the study directly as an individual, however we hope that the information gathered may be used on create policies and improve retirement planning of current and future players in the country.

Confidentiality

Your response in this research will be treated with anonymity. The researcher will use all effort to preserve the information received with confidentiality including the following;

1. Not sharing the information with any other source apart from MEMOS XXIV lecturers for the purpose of the study
2. Coding all participants to protect their identity
3. The researcher will be the sole custodian of the raw information gathered, recordings or any other document that will be received from participants and will keep it safe.

The data collected for the purpose of this study will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher may be obligated legally.

Contact information

This study was approved by International Olympic Committee- MEMOS XXIV and Ottawa University, Canada. If you have queries about the study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information are on the first page. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant, or if any problems arise that you may not feel like discussing with the researcher,

kindly contact the MEMOS XXIV Lecturer, Prof. Ian Henry, email address

i.p.henry@icloud.com

Appendix III - Consent Form

I have read and understood the information provided herein and also had an opportunity to ask questions about the study. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the exercise any time, without giving notice and without any cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of the consent form and I voluntarily accept to take part in the study.

Name of Participant _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Name of Researcher _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Name of Witness _____

Signature _____

Date _____

