

## Abstract

Title: Being female AND: Using intersectionality theory to explore the experiences of female sport coaches

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Coaches play an instrumental role in the experience of youth sport participants. For example, coaches influence outcomes such as bullying (Shannon, 2013), motivational orientations (Smoll, Smith, & Cumming, 2007), effort (Rowold, 2006), overall engagement (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003), and positive youth development outcomes (Legg, Newland, & Bigelow, 2018). In addition, coaches often serve as role models for their athletes (Newland, et al., 2015).

Given the important role that coaches play in youth development, it is important to have coaches who represent diversity in both gender and ethnicity. Existing research supports the importance of diverse role models especially for culturally diverse youth (Ellison, 2011). However, coaching positions continue to be dominated by groups that yield the greatest power, thus reinforcing the marginalization of individuals from more diverse backgrounds including women and individuals of color (Adair, Taylor, & Darcy, Wicker, 2017). Female coaches, especially female coaches of color, are underrepresented in coaching which can be attributed to challenges including stereotypes and existing hegemonic masculine norms (Burton, 2015).

Intersectionality theory suggests that one's lived experience cannot be reduced to one characteristic (Simien, Arinze, & McGarry, 2019). Indeed, female coaches have noted that cultural forces such as class and race interact with gender to influence their experience (Brandy, 2014; Burton, 2015). Within sport, intersectionality theory has been used to study athletes (e.g. Simien, et al., 2019); however, limited research exists that explores the experience of coaches, and especially coaches at the recreational level. Focusing on intersectionality within the lived experiences of minority female coaches is thus an important step in understanding the underrepresentation of this group within sports roles.

A substantial body of research within sport examines the motivations and experiences of sport volunteers and coaches; however, the bulk of existing research explores the experience of head coaches of collegiate or elite level teams (Burton, 2015). This leaves a gap in understanding the experiences of volunteers and coaches who are not in positions at a highly competitive level. Further, researchers have noted the importance of additional research related to diverse population groups, including intersectionality within sport (Hoeber, 2010; LaVoi & Dutover, 2012). Given that race and gender play a role in an individual's lived experience, it is worth exploring the intersectionality of minority female that hold a coaching role.

The purpose of this present research is to explore the lived experiences of minority women who are coaches in recreational community sports. The primary instrument for data collection are semi-structured interviews. Currently, five interviews have been completed. Additional interviews are scheduled and will continue until data saturation is met. Interview questions and prompts have been developed to allow the participants to share their story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Interviews are being recorded and transcribed for analysis where qualitative themes will be developed. Consistent with a narrative inquiry approach, analysis and

presentation of data will evolve through the research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Smith, 2010). This research will provide insights for sport managers and may aid in recruitment and retention of a more diverse pool of coaches.

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