

Gender Identity And Inclusion: Issues And Concerns Among Lgbt In Team Sports

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated gender issues and concerns among athletes' participation in team sports among the State University and Colleges in Zamboanga City, focusing on their experiences related to team entry, game line-ups, and accommodations during competitions. Employing a descriptive-correlational analysis method with quantitative approaches, the research reveals that age and years of experience as players do not significantly correlate with the factors studied. However, notable differences in perceptions regarding gender issues were observed among athletes, indicating diverse views on these matters.

The findings suggest a generally positive attitude toward the acceptance of LGBT athletes within team sports; nonetheless, instances of gender bias and discrimination persist. This indicates a need for enhanced awareness and understanding of LGBT inclusion in sports. Recommendations include creating a supportive environment for LGBT athletes by addressing derogatory language, involving them in consultations on campus issues, and recognizing contributions from former LGBT athletes to foster acceptance. Overall, the study underscores the necessity for ongoing dialogue and initiatives aimed at improving the experiences of LGBT athletes in Zamboanga City's SUCs, promoting inclusivity and equality within the sporting community.

Keywords: Gender bias and discrimination, LGBT, Team Sports, Athletes, Diverse Views, Inclusion in Sports,

Introduction

The entry of LGBT athletes in different team sports has created both positive and negative relationship effects among the athletes, the coaches, and even their teammates. Being male or female brings with it expectations about how one should feel and act and there is little room for gender questioning. Athletes who are of different gender preferences are seen all over the world. It is quite unusual nowadays for a school to bring in a delegation to compete within LGBT members on the team. One of the most difficult issues in relation to defining gender ethics is that it often gets confused with sex. The simplest way of differentiating between sex and gender is to remember that sex refers to the body of a man or woman (although some people consider themselves to be a third sex – neither man nor woman); and gender refers to the socially judged traits that can be applied to bodies of any sex. To emphasize the importance of perfecting a particular skill, the researcher also observed that athletes including the LGBT have to perform all the drills and routines, regardless of whether these activities seemed to be intense, and physically exhausting, and their coaches are often unmindful of the possible risk or danger for the athletes.

During casual conversation and after post-game evaluation for all officials, coaches, and athletes in particular, these LGBT athletes would share their thoughts and their experiences like their disappointment of not being taken in the team after a try-out, or not being chosen to form the first game team or be part of the first game line-up and other related forms of discrimination during their short stay in an accommodation where players will all be together in a sleeping quarter. Zamboanga City has notably been getting recognition as one of the cities in the Philippines that produce elite athletes in the local, national, and even international arena. A number of these athletes are enrolled in schools and universities where their sports programs are deemed to be active and mostly participate in invitational sports.

This city has three States Universities and Colleges (SUCs) namely Western Mindanao State University (WMSU), Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University (ZPPSU), and Zamboanga State College of

Marine Science and Technology (ZSCMST) that take part in the sports and cultural-literacy competitions such as that of Mindanao Association of State Tertiary Schools (MASTS) Games and Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) Games and other invitational games.

Methodology

This research employed a Quantitative design. The Quantitative-Correlational method was used as this attempted to explain relationships between the variables of interest such as athletes' age, gender, and number of years as athletes. This study was conducted in three (3) State Universities and Colleges: Western Mindanao State University (WMSU) which has two campuses; Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University (ZPPSU) is just a few meters from Western Mindanao State University and about 500 meters from Pilar College on R.T Boulevard; College of Marine Science and Technology (ZSCMST) as the only school in Western Mindanao that offer courses related to marine and sea studies. It is in the heart of the city, alongside Fort Pilar Shrine, Zamboanga City. The respondents of this study were 204 athletes comprised as the respondents of this study. These student-athletes were enrolled for the Second Semester, School Year 2015-2016.

Table 1 The SUCs and the number of the athletes per Team Sports

SUC	WMSU		ZCSPC		ZSSCMST		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Baseball	12	-	13	-	-	-	204
Basketball	11	11	15	-	13	-	
Football	16	13	-	-	-	-	
Sepak Takraw	7	-	7	-	8	-	
Softball	-	9	-	12	-	-	
Volleyball	8	12	14	8	8	7	
Total	54	45	49	20	29	7	

The treatment of data to address the main objectives of the study was factor analysis this multivariate technique was applied to responses obtained from the 25-item view of athletes on gender issues and concerns. Extracted factors were labeled for analysis; Correlational measures were calculated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to assess in particular the relationship of coaches' and athletes' views and other variables; and Parameter Limits were also used in order to quantify the level of perceptions among the respondents.

Results and Discussion

The following are tables that will show the profile of the respondents and the variables or indicators identified as gender issues and concerns. The respondents of this study were the athletes from the three State Universities and Colleges.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 2 Profile of Athletes and their Variables

Profiles	Frequency, n = 17	Percentage, %
Age		
15 – 18	108	52.94
19 – 22	76	37.94
23 and above	20	9.80
Gender		
Male	136	66.67
Female	47	23.04
Lesbian	14	6.86
Gay	2	0.98
Bisexual	5	2.45
No of Years as Player		
1 – 5	156	76.47
6 – 10	35	17.16
11 – 15	13	6.37

Table 2 shows the distribution of athletes according to the following variables.

Age. There were two hundred four (204) respondents who took part in this study. They were categorized in three (3) brackets. Ages 15-18 years old, 19-22 years old, and 23 years old and above. *One hundred eight (108)* or 52.94% of them belong to the fifteen (15) to eighteen (18) age -bracket. *Seventy -six (76)* or 37.25% belonged

to the nineteen (19) to twenty-two (22) category, while twenty (20), or 9.80% of them are within the age twenty-three (23) and above bracket.

Gender- This is a very unique profiling in this study because it was purposely done to categorize the gender of the respondents and to find out the sexual preference as declared by the respondents. During the actual conduct of the study, the recruitment or participation strategy was designed to encourage at least a bigger number from LGBT athletes, however, there was still a higher number of male participants followed by females.

Recruiting LGBT athletes for this purpose and asking them about their sexual preferences was difficult because there were still athletes who preferred to be silent and hide their gender identity for some reason. In this research, one hundred thirty-six (136) athletes, or 66.67% were males. Forty-seven (47) or 23.04% (47) were females. Fourteen (14) respondents or 6.86% were lesbians, two (2), or 0.98% were gays and five (5) or 2.45% were bisexuals.

Number of Years as a Player- This was also grouped in three (3) brackets. 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and 11-15 years. One hundred fifty-six (156) or 76.47% have been athletes from one (1) to five (5) years. Thirty-five (35) or 17.16% have been playing for a period of six (6) to ten (10) years. Thirteen (13) athletes or (6.37%) have been with team sports for almost eleven (11) to fifteen (15) years.

Level of Perception of the Athletes having Different Sexual Orientation about their Coaches

2.1 Acceptance in the Team

Table 2.1 Factor 1 (Acceptance in the Team)

ATHLETE'S VIEWS ON THEIR COACHES	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Acceptance in the Team			
1. Sexual orientation was not an issue for my coach to select players in the team.	3.03	0.86	High
2. Skills and my experience were more important than athletes with different sexual orientation to be part of the team.	2.98	0.86	High
3. My coach chose me because I can be at par with "straight athletes" in terms of performance in the game.	2.89	0.92	High
4. My inclusion in the team has created inconvenience with other players.	2.56	0.89	High
5. I felt that having me in the team made it difficult for my coach to deal with us.	2.85	0.95	High
Mean	2.78	0.56	High

In Table 1, the indicator/factor (**acceptance in the team**) has yielded a mean value of 2.78 (SD = 0.56) which is described to be **high**. This means that athletes did not have problems or have had bad experiences in terms of entry into the team.

Team try-out intends to assess potential players in action and require them to show their skills. In doing so, athletes who were sensed to be of different sexual orientations manifested by their moves, gestures, and even in how they talk or dress up are still being considered to be taken in the team. Some views on this particular indicator indicated some concerns. These are found in statement no. 4 with a mean value of 2.56 (SD=0.89) which states, "My inclusion in the team has created inconvenience with other players", and in statement no.5 with a mean value of 2.85 (SD= 0.95) which states, "I felt that having me in the team have made it difficult for my coach to deal with us". Both statements have yielded **high** results, and therefore implied that coaches and team members felt inconvenience and find it hard to deal with them when they became a part of the team. However, the over-all perception in this indicator highlighted the idea that when the athletes were accepted in the team, they experienced a warm reception and recognition which made them felt comfortable and easy to deal with their coaches and other team mates. Thus, this partnership of player-to-player, and athlete-to coach vice versa was not a problem. The result in this study revealed that athletes with gender issues did not feel an unwelcome gesture during the try out and having them picked to be part of the team.

2.2 First Game Line-Up

Table 2.2 (First Game Line-Up)

First Game Line-up	Mean	SD	Interpretation
6. My coach choose me as second or third pick to compose the first line -up, because he feels that I cannot handle pressures during critical games.	2.92	0.93	High
7. I create crowd noise and that eventually lose focus for my team.	3.09	0.86	High
8. My ways and behaviors during games will just distract our team focus and game plan.	2.51	0.93	High

9. My coach emphasized that my sexual orientation is not his/her criteria for including me in the first game line up.	2.58	1.05	High
10. My good performance record will always make me include in the first game line-up.	2.91	0.92	High
Mean	2.80	0.59	High

In Table 2, the indicator (**first game line-up**) has yielded a mean value of 2.80 (SD = 0.59) and is interpreted as **high** in the statistical parameter limits. This means that athletes felt that the chance and opportunity to be included in the first line-up was rare.

Additionally, this result gave the impression that their presence and uncalled behaviors and ways have caused inconvenience among the team members and coaches. The possibility that they cannot manage and handle pressures during critical situations is high, which in turn lose focus during games. However, the overall result implied that most coaches would still prefer hetero or straight athletes in the first game line-up and those with gender issues were usually considered the least. In any game, it is still the coaches' call. He has the prerogative and final judgment as to who will be fielded. In the first place, if a team loses, the coach is the first person to be blamed. Thus, this matter is more of a judgment call but not discrimination.

This holds true to what Golberg (2016) said that coaches inspire their athletes to believe in themselves and by continually putting them in situations which challenge their limiting beliefs. They don't allow their players to just get by with the status quo. They do this by pushing their athletes outside of their comfort zone, physically, mentally, and emotionally, and then helping them discover that, in fact, they can do better than they first believed they could. He noted that coaches teach the "Get Comfortable Being Uncomfortable principle," which states that the only way to grow physically and emotionally is to constantly challenge oneself to do things that aren't easy. In this way, they refuse to tolerate mediocrity in effort, attitude, technique, training, or performance.

These findings agree to a study made by Eric Anderson in 2010, who noted an increasing acceptance of gay athletes by their teammates. His study revealed that athletes in the 2010 cohort have had a better experience after coming out than those in the earlier cohort, experiencing less heterosexism and maintaining better support among teammates.

The positive result showed how Filipinos deal with LGBT and in terms of acceptance, a news article was featured by Philip C. Tubeza in inquirer.net (2013) that the Philippines earned its ranking as one of few gay-friendly countries in the world. It was stated that of the 39 countries covered by a global survey, only 17 countries had majorities that accepted homosexuality, the Philippines ranked number 10 among the 17. Further, despite its religiosity, the Philippines is one of the countries in the world where the level of public "acceptance" of homosexuals is high, according to the results of the survey.

The survey titled "The Global Divide on Homosexuality" conducted by the US-based Pew Research Center showed that 73 percent of adult Filipinos agreed with the statement that "homosexuality should be accepted by society," up by nine percentage points from 2002. The percentage of Filipinos who said society should not accept gays fell from 33 percent in 2002 to 26 percent this year, it added. Another study showing hope for the LGBT community is a study by Grasgreen in 2012, in which she stated in her article that LGBT athletes are slowly getting recognition and acceptance. According to her, the climate is indeed improving for gay athletes, but there is still the need to overcome widespread bias- particularly in women's sports. This contention was based from Anderson's studies.

Significant Relationship

Profile of athletes and their level of perception about their coaches on athletes having different sexual orientations;

a. Age

Table 3.1 Age of Athletes

Profiles/Indicators	Chi-squared	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Age				
<i>Acceptance in the Team</i>	29.894	0.368	Do nor Reject Ho	Not Significant
<i>First Game Line-up</i>	21.762	0.792	Do nor Reject Ho	Not Significant
<i>Athlete's Accommodation during Competition</i>	35.540	0.224	Do nor Reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 3.1. showed that the age of athletes showed no significant relationship in their level of perceptions on their coaches in all indicator/factors; these included (acceptance in the team, $p=0.368$), (first game line-up, $p=0.792$), (athlete's quartering, $p=0.224$). The computed p value is higher than the .05 level of significance, thus, the null hypothesis is not to be rejected. This means that younger or older athletes who participated in this research felt the acceptance, understanding, and respect from their coaches as well as their teammates.

Age therefore is not a hindrance for athletes to experience a warm and harmonious relationship among their teammates and their coaches. According to Werthner (2009), it boils down to the so-called team approach, and that it means listening and talking, ongoing, dialogue, figuring out together what it will take to win. The coaches understand that it may take time, so there is both hard pushing and great patience and athletes in turn will have to do their responsibility.

b. Gender

Table 3.2 Gender of Athletes

Profiles/Indicators	Chi-squared	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Gender				
<i>Acceptance in the Team</i>	77.149	0.032*	Reject Ho	Significant
<i>First Game Line-up</i>	55.350	0.499	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
<i>Athlete's Accommodation during Competition</i>	36.175	0.994	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant

Table 3.2, revealed that gender and the indicator/factor "acceptance in the team" showed a significant relationship in the perception of athletes about their coaches. This includes (acceptance in the team, a p-value of 0.032), and the computed p-value was lower than the .05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is to be rejected.

The gender of athletes implied a significant relationship with their perceptions in terms of how their coaches accept and deal with them being a known LGBT member joining a team. Researchers indicate that male athletes for instance may have the feelings of fear and rejection, especially with the idea that he is gay. The possibility of being teased, or experienced verbal abuse is high. Females' athletes on the other hand, if coming out and being open as lesbians, have the risk of being physical in games, described as hot-tempered, perceived as harmful, and may be considered a liability rather than an asset.

Aspiring female athletes become discouraged from playing sports with the assumption that they may be called lesbians, be insulted, or sexually assaulted and being told they could not play. In a study by Sophia Jowett (2005), she made mentioned that men had their gender and heterosexuality called into question when they played badly or to spur them on to a better performance. Her observation is that by definition, men who play badly cannot be heterosexual men -they must be sissies, girls, or they must be gay. The impact of being positioned in this way produced in the men feelings such as shame and hurt.

Table 3.3 Number of Years as Athlete

Profiles/Indicators	Chi-squared	p-value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
No. of Years as Athlete				
<i>Acceptance in the Team</i>	27.371	0.498	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
<i>First Game line-up</i>	26.421	0.550	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant
<i>Athlete's Accommodation during Competition</i>	22.200	0.847	Do not Reject Ho	Not Significant

In Table 3.3, the result showed that the number of years as athlete is not related with all the 3 indicators/factors in their level of perception on their coaches. This included their (acceptance in the team, $p=0.498$), (first game line-up, $p=0.550$), and (quartering, $p=0.847$). The computed p value was all higher than the .05 level of significance, thus, the null hypothesis is not to be rejected.

This further means that these indicators have nothing to do with how their coaches view about them as athletes. The number of years of being an athlete whether a new member or a long-time player, all have positive feelings and perceptions that such treatment, dealing, and experience from their coaches are positive. According to Kenow et. al. (1996), the perception of athletes comes from their coaches which is a strong factor that influences them to be effective or not.

The age of athletes does not necessarily qualify the idea that the older the athletes, the more there will be chances for the team to be successful, and winning chances are greater than having young team members. A winning team still adheres to the playing relationship between coaches and athletes and the roles and responsibilities that both take into consideration. According to a blog, believeperform.com posted by Methven (2014) it is also important that as a team, players are aware of other people's roles so that they link well together. Players can receive a real confidence boost when they know they are completing their role well and it is working well within the team. He further stressed that these roles can be very important in the smooth running of the team and can have a great impact on team cohesion and squad dynamics.

Summary of Findings

This study has dealt with the views of coaches and athletes on gender concerns of select team sports among State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) in Zamboanga City.

The following were the significant findings of this research; The profile of the athletes revealed that most of the respondents in this study were within the 15-18 years age bracket, and fewer respondents were in their 23 and above age bracket. In terms of gender, a bulk of these respondents were males, few were females, and there were those who declared themselves as lesbian, gay, and bisexual. In terms of the number of years as an athlete, a handful of these respondents have been playing from 1 to 5 years while others have been athletes for six to 15 years. There were notable low levels of perceptions among athletes on their coaches in the overall grand mean result, these are *first game line-up and quartering*. Meanwhile, the age of athletes revealed no significant relationship with all the factors or gender concerns such as acceptance in the team, first game line-up, and quartering. However, their gender showed a significant relationship with acceptance in the team.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following can be concluded. Although gender bias and discrimination of LGBT athletes are evident, there is a positive indication towards their acceptance in team sports, and this acceptance equates to respect, and understanding among coaches and teammates.

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