



## Gender and Sports: The Experiences of Filipino Coaches

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### Abstract

Coaching plays a vital role in the development of student-athletes physically and psychologically. It is a multi-task responsibility that helps coaches evolve to become more pedagogical, sensitive, and technical in the needs of the program and of the student-athletes. Coaches fulfill the roles of a teacher, parent, mentor, competitor, friend, and guidance counselor. The present study described the lived experiences of Filipino school coaches in coaching student-athletes. The study used a qualitative descriptive approach for data collection and analysis. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview questionnaire. During the interview, eight (8) participants were engaged in semi-structured interviews in which they described their personal experiences in sports coaching. Three (3) recurring themes were seen across responses: (1) Gender and Coaching: Holistic Approach, (2) Gender and Relationship: Finding Self-worth, and (3) Gender and Discrimination: Foul Ball. Each main theme is supported by sub-themes that further explained the perspective and role of the sport's coach. The study concluded that gender-sensitive coaching standards must contain unique features that would help coaches become reliable and respectful in the field of sports. This study can be used by future researchers in conducting research that focus on gender equality in sports.

### Introduction

Coaches are front liners in the sports program. They are educators and their role is to work with one or more athletes to elevate the players' performance to an improved level. Coaching is a demanding profession with important implications for athletes' holistic development (Sundberg, 2016). Success in coaching is challenging as it is a complex and evolving industry with few guidelines on how to succeed. Athletic coaching is a complex practice that extends much further than simply training

athletes (Vallée & Bloom, 2005). Szabo (2012) explains that the definition and role of an athletic coach is more extensive than just an instructor or teacher, as coaches are demonstrators, planners, advisers, motivators, and leaders. Trikojus (2003) also believe that the core meaning of a coach is to change an individual from where they currently are to where they desire to go. The definitions of coaching above show how important it is in the life transformation of every athlete.

School sports program is an attractive environment

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among student-athletes where accessibility to sports contribute to their educational enrichment. School sports is another attraction among coaches where the realization of their coaching career come true. Coaches are central to a student-athlete's growth, welfare, and accomplishment at each step of their journey, in fact, literature shows that coaches have the most influence on determining the success and quality of a student-athlete's sports experience (Miller et al, 2012).

From its early beginnings, organized sports, specifically intercollegiate athletics, is defined as a male domain (Suggs, 2005). This seems to be the issue of gender bias in coaching. Felton & Jowett (2013) critiques sport as a patriarchal domain, one in which women have been sociohistorically positioned as physically inferior to men. It is believed that sports were created by men and for men as a way of transmitting certain values and physical capabilities. Globally, figures reveal that one in ten accredited Olympic coaches are women (Norman, 2015).

Subsequently, it was further believed that female coaches are a statistical minority in nearly all sports, at all levels across the Globe, and because of this, they often endure and experience a multitude of mental and physical barriers (Huyton, 2019). In America alone, women are greatly underrepresented in sports as a whole, women in men's sports are an anomaly (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010). Women currently represent less than 3% of the coaching positions in men's sports, while men represent more than half of the positions in women's sports and roughly 97% of the position in men's sports.

The presence of RA 9710 (Magna Carta for Women) in the Philippine Constitution, Title IX for America's civil rights law, and other women's rights protecting bodies allowed women to find their spot in the coaching arena but eventually lost its spark in the limelight. Still, women coaches remained subservient. According to Huyton (2019), it is well documented that these barriers can have an adverse effect on the well-being of these coaches with outcomes such as alienation, feeling highly visible, subject to scrutiny, having to perform to gain credibility, feeling the pressure, and suffering an increased risk for gender discrimination in the forms of sexual harassment, wage inequalities, and limited opportunities for promotion.

Another group of coaches that gained the title in field coaching are openly gay and openly lesbian coaches. The lesbian and gay population has become increasingly noticeable in the field of sports. Openly gay

and lesbian coaches find their spots in the games that most suit their sexual orientation. Despite this progress, prejudices about lesbians and gays are most expressed in the culture characterized by heterosexism.

Anderson (2009) proves that many athletic departments are still characterized by cultures of heterosexism and individual expressions of sexual prejudice. Sartore and Cunningham (2009), support the idea of Anderson and Griffin, openly gay and openly lesbian coaches and athletes are routinely cast as "other", face negative stereotypes, and experience status loss within the sport context. Sexual minority coaches are very much affected by this system of treatment, the effects of these were illustrated when Krane and Barber (2005) conducted a qualitative study with lesbian coaches. The study found that lesbians had negative experiences in their athletic departments and within the coaching profession as a whole.

According to the study by Iannotta and Kane (2002), they describe a sports climate that can be hostile for lesbians and documented occurrences of overt and covert discrimination towards lesbian athletes and coaches. Gay men, as well as heterosexual coaches, are also common victims of discrimination. In fact, Anderson (2009) states that gay men, as well as heterosexual men, also consciously operate to avoid any suspicion of homosexuality. Namely, men avoid so-called feminine activities to maintain their masculinity and, in turn, their heterosexuality. Sexual dominance is prevalent among coaches and players; Anderson (2009) explored LGB resistance in sports when he contends that LGB resistance results from how sport teaches boys to be men. This develops the idea of hegemonic, or traditional masculinity which places heterosexual males on the top tier. This idea offshoots to male and female dominance in sports. Discrimination is also very clear among openly gays and lesbians in other fields of work endeavors.

The experiences of openly gay and lesbian coaches and trainers have put them in a minority status that has a powerful impact in all aspects of their lives. As a result of negative support, LGBTs completely disclose their sexual orientation in the sports environment (Krane, 1996). On the other hand, it was noted however that due to fear of discrimination and prejudice, many lesbian coaches chose to remain silent and, in the closet, hiding their lesbian identity, attempting to pass as heterosexual, and/or avoiding any discussions about sexual orientation. It simply shows that structural diversity and double standards for openly gay and openly lesbian-related

problems exists in many workplaces. As a consequence, many gay men and lesbians are afraid of revealing their sexual orientation due to the fact that they might lose their jobs and reputation.

The Philippines has RA 9710 (Magna Carta for Women) which affirms the role of women in nation building equal to that of men. And recently, the GAD (Gender and Development) equalizes the status and condition of all gender orientations. Basically, GAD concerns the full development of women, and currently, the LGBT group has become part of the subject for protection. Gender equality in sports is primarily the responsibility of national and local stakeholders and efforts should be made at a local level to address the role of men, women, and LGBTs in the governing bodies of sports (Gender Equality in Sports Proposal for Strategic actions 2014 – 2020. (2014).

### Conceptual Frameworks

Models and theories in coaching are important guides in any practice because they help coaches understand more what they are doing based on the theories they have read. The application of these models and theories is the key factor in the improved performance of athletes. The quest for a universally accepted theory has engaged educational researchers, psychologists, and practitioners. The following are theories that focus on school coaches and learning theories associated with coaching.

Keyes' Model of Social Well-Being is best associated with the experiences of school coaches, and how their experiences motivated them to become "well" and "organized" individuals despite challenges related to their personal /gendered identity. Keyes' model is a multi-dimensional perspective of social well-being which guides every individual to understand their function within the social world. The model is comprised of five (5) components namely: social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, and social coherence. *Social Integration* as defined by Keyes (2005) is the assessment of the quality of one's relationship to their society and community around them. To feel a sense of belonging, coaches need to experience feeling part of society. This applies to all gender orientations with no setting of boundaries but the feeling of integrated.

Social Acceptance is the second dimension in which individuals feel secure and valued as part of a community that demonstrates trust, kindness, and belief

in the qualities and capabilities of others (Keyes, 1998). Applying this concept to women coaches and openly gay and lesbian coaches based on their experiences, researchers proved that discrimination and biases are likely to happen because of the expectations attached to their gender orientation. Society always give praises to men coaches as strong and capable leaders while women and lesbian and gay coaches are weaker genders who lack the capabilities to lead.

Social Contribution is defined by Keyes (1998) as a belief that one is an integral member of that context with something of value to contribute. This dimension follows the idea that once a person feels belonging and is accepted, the contribution will follow suit because a sense of social value is seen. Within the context of coaching, honoring hard work and contribution is a great opportunity given to the undermined coaches. In the study of Norman (2015) about women coaches, he emphasized that the contribution that women could make to the coaching profession is often ignored and devalued even though women represent a motivating and engaging addition to the profession.

Social Coherence (Norman, 2015) reiterates that to be socially well, individuals need to believe that the quality, organization, and operation of their social world is organized ('coherent') and that they have a sense of meaning within their life. The feeling of social belongingness in a person is a way of finding a sense of meaning and place. The key to effective sport coaching is getting the support of everybody in the community. Further, Feminist Theory enables an individual to rethink gender assumptions by positioning gender at the center of the analysis with the intent to eliminate domination based on gender. Patriarchal beliefs offer the concept of masculinity as more powerful than femininity, thus establishing social thought in gender roles (Whelehan, 1995).

### Objectives

The present study described the lived experiences of Filipino school coaches in coaching student-athletes. Specifically, it aims to identify the challenges faced by school coaches and how these concerns are addressed.

### Research Methodology

#### Population and Samples

This research study used purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to identify an initial number of school coaches to cover all significant dimensions of the

phenomenon being researched. School coaches could be teachers who are directly handling the team or outside professional coaches who are directly involved in a school's sports coaching program. During purposeful sampling individuals and locations are selected for the interview to purposefully develop an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2007). The Snowball sampling method involves primary data sources nominating another potential primary data source to be used in the research which means the selection of participants is based on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects. Therefore, using snowball sampling is a recruitment method via chain referral.

This study selected eight (8) school coaches specifically: two (2) male coaches, two (2) female coaches, two (2) openly gay coaches, and two (2) openly lesbian coaches. Participants were located in Metro Manila and other regions of the country as per identified and referred to. The selection of participants was based on the following criteria:

a. has a minimum of five (5) years of coaching experience at the school varsity program and handling team sports, individual and dual sports, and combative sports.

b. has participated and won in regional and national sports competitions.

**Table 1** Demographic Profile of Participants

Participants	Age	Gender Orientation	Number of Years Serving as a Coach
Participant 1	47 years old	Female	22 years
Participant 2	33 years old	Openly Gay	9 years
Participant 3	33 years old	Openly Gay	9 years
Participant 4	37 years old	Openly lesbian	15 years
Participant 5	32 years old	Male	7 years
Participant 6	53 years old	Female	20 years
Participant 7	38 years old	Male	15 years
Participant 8	42 years old	Openly Lesbian	13 years

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach for data collection and analysis. A qualitative approach allowed the researchers to gather data regarding sports coaching experiences from the perspectives of school coaches as participants in this study and ensure that the participant's voices was heard through verbatim recording of their experiences via interview. This study presents the lived experiences of the school coaches and at the same time identifies the common themes as expressed by the participants during the interview process.

Likewise, this study used a descriptive phenomenological approach as seen to be the most suited method in extracting data needed for analysis and interpretation. This approach aimed to explore the insights of school coaches by capturing the essence of their experiences.

### Research Instrument

The researchers used the interview form where all questions were written to ensure that the same questions as the procedure for the interview was followed during the interview process. The interview guide contains a series of questions that are divided into four (4) research questions (RQ). Interview guides were given to the participants ahead of the interview. In the case where participants asked for clarification regarding interview questions, follow-up questions would be given to clarify to the participant

### Collection of Data

The data-gathering procedure is divided into three (3) phases. Phase 1: Identifying possible participants, Phase 2: Communicating with the identified participants, Phase 3: Conduct interviews .

Phase 1. The gathering of data began with identifying possible school coach participants.

Phase 2. After identifying the participants, each prospective participant was initially contacted through either electronic mail or an introductory telephone call

Phase 3. The conduct of the interview was divided into two (2) phases: face-to-face interview and online interview.

### Data Analysis

The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using the steps presented in the study by Sundberg (2016). The following steps for the data analysis procedure were data management; reading and memoing; describing, classifying, interpreting; representing and visualizing. Creswell (2007) considers this style as a data analysis spiral. According to Creswell (2007), the data analysis spiral enables the researchers to enter with data and exit with an account or narrative.

Step 1. Data management. This is the first coding process where the researchers organized the data into computer files. The data was transcribed from its recorded audio material into the word document. This process enabled the researchers to have easy access to the files during the data analysis period.

Step 2. Reading, Memoing. This coding process allowed the researchers to gain an understanding of the data as a whole. The collected notes from the interviews were transcribed and read several times to ensure a holistic understanding of the content of the interview. Phrases and notes extracted from the interview were also synthesized to make the data more comprehensive.

Step 3. Describing, classifying, and interpreting. In this coding process, common themes were classified by classifying the common coaching experiences described by the participants during the interview. In the series of research questions, each RQ had several interview questions (IQ) which answer the latter.

Step 4. Representing, Visualizing. In this coding process, all data gathered through text will be presented in tables, graphs, and other representations for a better interpretation of data. This enables the essence of the experience to be seen in a more visual manner (Creswell, 2007).

## Research results

Face-to-face interviews and virtual interviews were transcribed. The transcription was the primary source of information used to arrive at the description of the experiences of coaches in their coaching careers. Common themes were identified based on the transcribed data. Table 4 presents the result of the study.

**Table 2** Gender Challenges and Experiences

Theme	Gender Challenges and Experiences
Gender and Coaching: Holistic Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- commitment to training</li> <li>- respect to individual privacy</li> <li>- training-focused</li> <li>- motivating leadership.</li> </ul>
Gender and Relationship: Finding Self-worth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- professional distance</li> <li>- trustworthiness</li> <li>- self-intimidation</li> <li>- maintaining sexual identity.</li> </ul>
Gender and Discrimination: Foul Ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- negative criticisms.</li> </ul>

This section discusses how straight men and women, openly gay, and openly lesbian coaches experienced challenges in their gender orientation and how these experiences influenced and formed them to become elite coaches. It also discusses how coaches experienced discrimination, dealt with it with courage, and made resolutions to it. Participants were labelled as P1 (participant 1), P2 (participant 2), P3 (participant 3), P4 (participant 4), P5 (participant 5), P6 (participant

6), P7 (participant 7), P8 (participant 8). Table 4 above presents the themes generated.

## A. Gender and Coaching: Holistic Approach

It is termed a holistic approach because of the wide range of influence in the whole being of the coaches. Coaching is exciting and challenging; it details overcoming barriers that would shape coaches to discover their creative side. The advantageous feature of coaching is the realization of positive and negative influences that lead to being a better coach. Coaching should not focus on who's who in coaching; beyond the idea that men are the dominant coaches while women, gays, and lesbians belong to the weaker sex. Equality in coaching should prevail regardless of gender orientation. In the theory presented by Eagly and Karau (2002) on Role Congruity Theory, they emphasized that this theory is essentially grounded in social role theory but extends the theory beyond sex differences in physical attributes and the sex-appropriateness of the occupation to the consideration of the congruency of the gender role in the job to be performed. Gender roles are socially constructed to further define socially shared expectations of how work should be performed and by whom.

Equality in coaching is now gradually recognized due to legal issues that brought awareness of human rights. In America, the amendment of Title IX protects the right of all genders, the Gender Awareness Development which expounds the idea about LGBTQ rights, and the Magna Carta for Women which acknowledges women to be socially assertive of their rights.

### A.1. Commitment to Training

A common dilemma among coaches is to get perfect statistics for the attendance of student-athletes attending training. There might be reasons why student-athletes fail to attend and the main reason could be the commitment and the consistency also of the coaches in attending their scheduled training practices. During the interviews with the participants, they acknowledged that their commitment in conducting training motivated the student-athletes to attend. In fact, according to them, they have been through lots of sacrifices due to their commitment to sports. This is one influence of the desire to prove that despite gender differences in coaching, one strives to become better.

P1 shared the following:

*As a coach, I always share my knowledge and*

skills with my students. As a woman, it seems that you can easily impart knowledge to them, especially during training. I just need to be charismatic and they would immediately follow.

P4 had a realization of why she became committed to training, she narrated:

*If I were a real woman, I think I cannot perform what I can do now. That is why I affirm myself, God wanted me to become lesbian because what a man does, I equally do, like a demonstration of skills during training. This is the reason why I am so passionate and committed.*

P7 wanted to establish a good rapport with his student-athletes, and this influences him to be committed to training. According to him:

*To be a coach is not enough, you should have a common ground with the student-athletes. If you have established that bond, they will love and appreciate you, and they will follow what you tell them to do. Like, playing do or die in the game or intense training, they will do that, indeed it's a commitment.*

## A.2. Respect to Individual Privacy

Coaching deals with sensitive issues, so as gender. In the field of sports, we commonly see male and female coaches exposed to coaching grounds. At present, this is not true anymore. The presence of openly gay and openly lesbian in coaching has become a common scenario. A question might arise; who is going to be the most effective gendered coach? The common denominator would be—who is persistent enough to dominate. During the interview, this question was answered by all the participants based on their personal experiences. Straight men and women coaches disclosed themselves from the issues of respect and privacy. Among openly gays and openly lesbians, this matter is sensitive in their gender standing. Coaches dealing with student-athletes are influenced by the ideas of respect and individual privacy.

P2 shared:

*As per my relationship with my players, I set a bar, and limitation every time we go out together. You need to set boundaries, not all the time you have to be together, the time comes they might not respect you during training.*

P3 narrated how his personality is influenced by professionalism:

*If I face my players, especially in school, I never show to them my true identity. You have to set a standard*

*for yourself. It's a no-no to show them the usual practice I do. You need to be proper when facing them, especially during training.*

P5 also shared his treatment with his female players:

*Regarding my female players, I treat them as women with respect. As a male coach, I respect their privacy and listen to their concerns. For example, when they have a menstrual period and cannot attend training, I let them rest.*

P8 also shared her respect to individual privacy:

*As a lesbian coach, my players know me well, I never touch them. I taught swimming for 9 years handling boys and girls, I always set my distance with them, I never touch any parts of their body, and if I do especially during training, I ask permission. I don't like issues.*

## A.3. Training-focused

One way to ensure the full implementation of the training program is to focus on the important aspect of it which is skill training. Focus here means, close monitoring. During the interview, participants revealed how religious they are when it comes to skill training, and they termed it “hard training”. They consider it “hard training” because they are all winning coaches.

P2 shared that, the negative impressions he heard about his gender have influenced him to show off his skill in volleyball and turned his focus on training. He said:

*Since their impression of me is a gay individual, I tried to be impressive during the training. I focused on training, indeed hard training. We never used the ball for a month, it's all-body conditioning. There, they were impressed with the way I train.*

P3 added:

*I didn't mind what others are thinking of me, that I am gay. What I'm thinking about is how to train well, not minding what others would say about me.*

P5 explained that he wanted to maintain his status of being a winner with medals:

*Actually, I am not that strict, I am just implementing the proper time they need to follow during training. I am firm, as a male coach. I show them the proper time they need to observe.*

## A.4. Motivating Leadership

Winning coaches always lead the way, they often order “let's go”. They are also the most influential

individual in molding student-athletes to become “who’s who” in the field of sports. The core meaning of a coach is to change an individual from where they currently are to where they desire to go (Trijokus, 2003). Therefore, coaches are admired because they are a powerful component of the student-athletes journey. During the interview, coaches revealed that the most influential weapon to motivate student-athletes are verbal motivation and self-modeling.

P1 exclaimed that what influenced her to become a motivating leader is her experiences with her previous coaches. She said:

*As a coach, you need to win the heart of each of your players. If you were able to penetrate the lives of these players, it will create a big impact on them. Since I started as a player, that’s what I felt and experienced with my different coaches. The rapport is developed between the coach and the player, and it is so inspiring.*

P4 stopped all her vices because she wants to model herself to her players and eventually influence them:

*My players look up to me, I believe what kind of leader I am can be reflected in my players. Even if they will say that I am a lesbian, I don’t care as long as I know what I am doing, my players are learning from me, and that’s what matters. When it comes to men’s basketball, I am overwhelmed by the respect they are giving me because they can’t believe that I am capable of doing the skills more than they can.*

P4 also added:

*When I became a coach, I stopped all my vices, because I know I should be a role model to my players, I don’t like that they have to say something against me. If they saw me drinking with other players, for me it’s very unethical.*

P5 shared:

*Some players get frustrated with their performance and plan to quit. As a coach, it’s our role is to motivate and guide them.*

## **B. Gender and Relationship: Finding Self-worth**

Based on the interview, participants shared various positive and negative experiences that challenged their relationships with the people that they work with. According to some participants they made a great adjustment in their relationship because they want to preserve the respect of the people that they are working with, other participants testified that their relationship with co-workers and student-athletes has never changed,

and other participants narrated that their gender was questioned and that pushed them to establish a great comeback to correct the wrong impression of others towards them.

Sub-themes below show how participants observed professional distancing with the student-athletes in the assumption that harassment might be the misconception. Participants also confessed how they give their full respect and trust to student-athletes expecting the same trust and respect they will harvest. Krane and Barber (2005) speak about lesbian college coach experience and identity role confusion (coach vs lesbian), and it was also identified that many lesbian coaches live a life of silence and fear because of the negative perceptions of homosexuals.

Building better relationships makes a team successful by working together and creating a “family” or a “community” through them. The sense of family or a community is integral for a team to function as one. Wolf-Wendel et al (2001) found that in today’s collegiate sports culture, race, socio-economic status, and other background variables are not significant factors for acceptance as long as one can positively contribute to the team.

### **B.1. Professional Distance**

Professional distancing is one challenge that coaches experience to maintain healthy relationships, especially with student-athletes. Coaches create boundaries between/among students and parents so as not to sacrifice their privacy. Participants said it all, especially in the case of openly gay and lesbian coaches, according to them, most of the time, they were criticized because of their gender orientation.

P2 answered how he perceived his relationship with his players:

*Yes, I put boundaries on relationships with my players. I set limitations also when I am with them outside school. I seldom go with them if there is no important agenda. I don’t want them to be overly comfortable with me; I keep my distance.*

P8 shared the same experience as P2.

*I set a wall with my players, but I let them understand that the wall between us is the wall of respect.*

P8 added how she observed carefulness:

*I’m always careful, double, or triple, it’s because I am a lesbian.*

P3 shared a different situation, he talked about

the feelings he might experience towards his players and said:

*When I was accepted as a coach in the school where I am coaching at present, I set already standards not to fall for my player. I should treat them as simply players, treat them as my children.*

P3 also lamented on parents' impression of him as a coach, coaching the men's team. When he heard those side comments from the parents, he said:

*I challenged myself not to mind them, I should not entertain them. What I should do is show them that I am not the person that they thought I am.*

P7 honestly shared the actual scenario in their school when training is done simultaneously.

*At times I have conflict with my fellow coaches, especially in the use of the basketball court, no one wants to give in. That happens most of the time especially if it is school intramurals, so hard to set the scheduling of games. But those are petty quarrels that we can solve immediately.*

A controversial question was asked on "favoritism" if this is practiced and how it creates chaos in the team. P7 shared his experiences on this, he stated:

*I cannot avoid having favoritism especially if this player is always beside me, sticks with me all the time, has no absences during training, easy to call. But in the course of play, everybody is equal, no one is above the other.*

## **B.2. Trustworthiness**

This sub-theme appeared to be positive among all participants. The interviews showed that they have established acceptance and trust. Participants during the interview shared how their fellow coaches welcomed them into coaching with no biases despite gender differences. Participant 2 shared:

*I was accepted by my fellow coaches as an openly gay coach. They are mentoring me on what to do in making players follow the standards. I learned a lot from them. They are my fellow coaches that are coaching other sports; there are straight men and women coaches and a lesbian coach. We share a lot of our experiences with our players.*

P5 supported the idea:

*I am on good terms with the other coaches, we compete in most of the leagues that is why we know each other, and we are friends. My relationship with them is good.*

P5 noted how important establishing rapport is:

*Yes, you need to build a good relationship with your players, with your co-teachers, and fellow coaches. That is important because you can easily ask for help from them especially in disciplining the young players.*

P6 mentioned how parents trusted her with their daughters:

*Yes, the parents trust me very much. I am a woman coach, they let their daughters sleep beside me.*

## **B.3. Self-intimidation**

Participant 1 shared her unforgettable experience on self-intimidation:

*When we were having a meeting dominated by male coaches in swimming, I felt so intimidated because when they speak in front during the meeting, their posture seemed to dictate that they are learned coaches, which is why I am reluctant to speak.*

## **B.4. Maintaining Sexual Identity**

During the interview, Participant 5 gave the best statement on sexual identity and how to maintain it despite all the influences. P5 is openly lesbian who coaches the women's basketball team. According to her, she wants every player entering her team to be certain of their sexual identity, and also some parents who are reluctant about the condition of their child under her charge. She emphasized this through her statement:

*I always told the parents and my players, especially my players, I told them indirectly, "if you entered the team as a straight woman, I want you to graduate and finish your playing year as a woman still." If you turned out to be lesbian, the impact would reflect on me. I don't want your parents to think that I am converting you to be like me.*

P5 also added:

*I'm worried that when the parents know that their daughter's coach is lesbian, they might think that their daughter will come out to be lesbian too. I proved to them that it would never happen.*

## **C. Gender and Discrimination: Foul Ball**

Discrimination is a common issue among any form of gender. Men, the dominant sex in coaching, have not had much concern about discrimination. Women seldom do. But openly gay and openly lesbian coaches experienced discrimination. During the interview, openly gay and lesbian coaches often experience discrimination in the early stage of their work. Participants were all honest in giving their experiences,



and, RQ 3 identified one (1) sub-theme: (a) personal criticisms.

### C.1. Personal Criticisms

Coaches expressed their experiences of discrimination during the interview conducted on separate dates. The participants experienced discrimination uniquely and for them it was a learning experience to create a new impression of themselves. The interview showed that openly gay and lesbian coaches experienced the most discrimination. This section presents the experiences of coaches on discrimination, how they were able to deal with the discrimination, and the realizations captured based on the experiences.

P1 experienced discrimination during the time that she became the head coach of the NCR (National Capital Region) swimming team. According to her, there was this young male coach, whose team ranked second place overall. Her team was the overall champion. A rule exist, whoever is the coach of the champion team will automatically be the head coach in the next step of the competition. The conflict happened when he showed an interest in claiming the role of head coach. Undeniably he is a great swimmer because he is a member of the Philippine Swimming Team. The rule must be followed; P1 will be the coach. One time, P1 called for the orientation of all swimming coaches. In filing the forms, the names of people who comprise the coaching team should be registered P1 was shocked when the previous coach wrote the names of his team.

*I set an orientation for all coaches for the filling out forms. He wrote his name after my name because he is my assistant coach. Come to the other positions like chaperone and trainer the previous coach wrote names without my permission. I am the head coach; it is my prerogative to assign whoever I want to assign to those positions. The previous coach didn't want to change the names, I told him that we need to talk about the finalization of the list.*

Despite what happened, P1 stayed humble and calm. She wanted to work with the previous coach in harmony because she knew he had to support her being her the head coach. One time, P1 encountered a problem during the competition, she asked him:

*I was humble enough to ask him, "sir what are we going to do?" but he replied, "you are the coach!", we made lots of discussions because of his selfishness. Indirectly, he wants to show that I knew nothing.*

Participant 1 was asked how she was able to deal

with the conflict, and she replied:

*I tried to understand him. His attitude might be the result of our age gap, secondly, he is like a student to me. Perhaps, he was brought up that way.*

Participant 1 was asked to share her realizations on her experience, and she stated:

*My realization was, don't be proud of yourself before other people, you do not know what skill they possess. They even have more as compared to you. In the following years of competition, I was always appointed as coach and I became assertive and aggressive, I don't want to be a nobody.*

Participant 2 also shared his own experience of discrimination. P2 is openly gay who started coaching at the age of 22. He noted that he experienced being bullied by others making fun of his gender orientation. He narrated:

*He is gay, we won't be able to train well? Hearing that, I promise myself, "I have to do something to prove them wrong.*

Participant 2 discussed during the interview how he was able to deal with the situation:

*Those students who regularly watched our training, and the same people who made fun of my gender, were amazed to see me train and perform on top of my skill.*

Participant 2 was asked about his realizations on his discriminative experience, and he narrated:

*Sometimes I forsake myself why I was born gay, a gay coach. It is hard but I have to step up. I love volleyball, I want to prove to them that I am capable of doing what normal people do.*

Participant 3 shared the same experience as P2.

Participant 4 is an openly lesbian coach who also shared her own experiences with discrimination. She informed that she knew it was discrimination, but she never entertained the idea of discrimination, she treated it as a challenge. Discrimination according to her denotes a negative meaning. She further explained:

*For me, it's simply a challenge, I don't look at it as discrimination because discrimination is negative. I treated it as a challenge.*

Participant 4 was asked about the instance she knew the act was discrimination and how she was able to deal with it.

*I heard them talking about me but I don't recognize them. Walk in my shoes and you will know who I am. I always tell myself that as a lesbian I have so much to prove. Yet I know I am a good person.*

With that experience, P4 shared her realizations:

*I knew I did the right thing; I studied hard, graduated, and became a varsity player, and a coach. During the time that they saw me on TV as a national team coach, I received special treatment from my town folks when I went home. I realized; you need to be somebody to be noticed.*

Participant 8 has a unique encounter also of discrimination from the parents. According to her:

*That was my very first experience, I was misjudged because I am a lesbian. That impression happened due to the previous experiences accumulated from their former coach.*

How was she able to deal with it? P8 explained:

*You need to compose yourself and make a name.*

Participant 8 discussed her realizations on the event of discrimination. She said:

*I was so thankful to my family, they brought me up to be a good person, and were the first to accept me as who I am.*

## Discussion

Camire et al. (2012) noted how coaches contribute to student growth by addressing various student needs. Coaches play a significant role in the sports life of every student-athlete. They provide direction and guidance on the path to which these student-athletes might lead. Coaches serve as co-parents and teachers to student-athletes as well their words will be imprinted in the minds of these young individuals.

School sports advocate for student growth and development (Pierce et al., 2019). All coaches have their share of challenges which influenced their brilliant minds to expose their unique characters in addressing those challenges. Furthermore, lived experiences are considered great motivators in upholding new ideals extracted from failures in coaching and as well successes in coaching. According to Villalon and Martin (2020), various experiences of coaches contribute to enhanced self-efficacy, thereby promoting coaching experiences.

This study has shown how coaches held on to their character which allowed them to be great coaches, how experiences have shaped them to embrace changes that took place in their workplace, how they viewed coaching from different perspectives, and able to apply them with scientific processes, how they were able to keep their poise when gender identity is being questioned, how they can maintain positive intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships with the stakeholders of the

program, and how they manage to gradually erase the pattern of discrimination in sports coaching. Every coach has a dream for the better; best result in their coaching program and better execution of the program by the student-athletes. Trikujos (2003) says that the core meaning of a coach is to change an individual from where they currently are to where they desire to go.

This study was conducted to find out the lived experiences of coaches in their coaching careers. Likewise, it focused on: the challenges the coaches experienced in their coaching career as well as the manner of coping with the challenges. Interviews were conducted in a virtual and face-to-face phase where the semi-structured questionnaire was used. The data gathered from the interviews were transcribed into text. The transcribed data uncovered the overall core of the experiences of coaches in coaching student-athletes.

The study is focused on the gender-related challenges that coaches had experienced. This includes three major themes, namely: Theme I, Gender and Coaching: Holistic Approach. Theme II, Gender and Relationship: Finding Self-worth, and Theme III, Gender and Discrimination: Foul Ball. Every major theme is supported by sub-themes. Theme I, Gender and Coaching: Holistic Approach has four (4) sub-themes; (1) commitment to training, (2) respect to individual privacy, (3) training-focused, and (4) motivating leadership. This means that coaches deepened their responsibilities in coaching as an influence of their gender orientation. Coaches became sensitive to coach-student-athlete relationships and acted upon boundaries. Moreover, Theme II, Gender and Relationship: Finding Self-worth has 4 sub-themes; (1) Professional Distance, (2) Trustworthiness, (3) Self-intimidation, (4) Maintaining Sexual Identity. This means that coaches build a positive relationship with the stakeholders. Theme III, Gender and Discrimination: Foul Ball has 1 sub-theme, (1) negative criticisms. This means that coaches with their gender orientation still experienced discrimination from society but were still able to counter negative criticisms through their skills.

Based on the findings of the study, conclusions were drawn which are presented below.

Coaches became resourceful and creative in findings means to provide the necessary resources needed by the team. A study by Kroshus et al. (2019) identified these professionals as capable of providing support for athletes facing anxiety or depression. Their

resourcefulness and creativity resulted in strong connections and support coming from different stakeholders of their community, especially government officials, well-off parents, sponsorships coming from private entities, and fellow teachers.

Coaches employ management practices such as planning, leading, organizing, and controlling. These management practices enable the coaches to exercise their management skills, especially during the preparation for training and competitions. It is the duty of the coaches to ascertain that the school's academic track contributes in maximizing the full potential of the student-athletes through enhancement and practice (Bjørndal & Gjesdal, 2020).

Negative challenges were mostly experienced by openly gay and lesbian coaches. These challenges influenced the perspective of coaches towards sports coaching and improved their positive relationship with student-athletes and the stakeholders.

### Suggestions

Based on the gathered data, the following recommendations are made. First, the Department of Education's (DepEd) policy on *Comprehensive School Sports Programs* must be a basis for a review of the effectiveness of the standard. Secondly, basic education and higher education institutions may consider the existing coaching standards as a base for ethical decision-making and coaching practices. Thirdly, future researchers, should conduct studies on the effective, ethical, holistic performance of coaches. Further research may be conducted on gender equality in sports.

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