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The purpose of this study was to explore the cultural competence of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan in working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues in sport. Semi-structured interviews and grounded theory analysis were used to understand how 12 certified sport psychology consultants in Taiwan perceived their cultural competence in working with LGBT athletes, their experiences of working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues, their responses to provided vignettes, and their views of characteristics needed to be LGBT-culturally competent. The results showed participants' cultural background was the first factor influencing their attitudes and LGBT-cultural competence. Three other sources related to participants' LGBT-cultural competence were acquaintance with LGBT friends, working experiences with LGBT athletes, and related training or education. The information and experiences participants got from these sources shaped their open and accepting attitudes, levels of LGBT-cultural competence, and professional philosophies, which in turn, impacted and were evident in their readiness and approaches in working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues. They were all willing to work with sexual minority athletes and learn how to work effectively with them. The two different approaches they took in working with LGBT athletes reflected their different LGBT-cultural competence and professional philosophies. Limited LGBT-cultural competence impacted their readiness to deal with related issues, particularly at group and institutional levels. Seeking outside resources was their strategy to compensate for the limited LGBT-cultural competence.

Participants and the findings both indicated the need to include LGBT-related educational training in sport psychology training programs. Future studies can explore culturally-competent consulting services from LGBT athletes' perspectives and the effectiveness of implementing LGBT-related educational training.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF SPORT PSYCHOLOGY CONSULTANTS  
IN TAIWAN IN WORKING WITH LGBT ATHLETES

by

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Multiculturalism has been considered a fourth force in the field of psychology, supplementing psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and humanism (Pedersen, 1999). Multiculturalism does not necessarily aim to replace any of the first three forces. Instead, it enhances and strengthens existing models by emphasizing a culture-centered perspective to better understand human behavior (Mio, Barker-Hackett, & Tumambing, 2006). Culture is often narrowly used to emphasize race/ethnicity or nationality, but broadly defined as “any and all potentially salient ethnographic, demographic, status, or affiliation identities” (Pedersen, 1999, p.3). Thus, cultural identities include, but are not limited to, gender, spirituality, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and physical ability.

In recognition of the importance of addressing cultural diversity in psychology, the American Psychological Association (APA) developed Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists. As indicated in the guidelines, psychologists should recognize all transactions that occur between members of two or more cultures, the impact of cultural identities and contexts on people’s lived experiences, and the role of larger societal forces; and thus, psychologists should have knowledge of self and other cultures. Importantly, the guidelines also clearly indicate that psychologists are in a position to provide leadership



as agents of prosocial change, advocacy, and social justice. Guidelines 3-6 state that psychologists should apply multiculturalism in their education, training, research, practice, and organizational change. Moreover, the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) Ethics Code also states that sport psychology professionals recognize that differences in cultural identities can significantly affect their work, and professionals have the responsibility to develop the necessary skills to be competent with specific populations. It is clear that being culturally competent is essential for everyone, especially for sport psychologists in all professional roles, to better understand people's behaviors, achieve effective interactions, empower marginalized groups, challenge hegemonic powers/systems, and facilitate positive social changes.

Most multicultural literature addresses race/ethnicity issues. However, sexual minorities and sexual orientation issues appear to be a particular challenge for professionals. Historically sexual minorities have been misunderstood and stigmatized (Herek, 2000). People learn the stereotypes, myths and negative attitudes toward non-heterosexuals from the parents, teachers, peers, media presentation, and other societal resources; thus, these stereotypes and myths about non-heterosexuals will not disappear without re-education. Moreover, it is a heterosexist society, in which everyone is assumed to be heterosexual, and the opposite-sex sexual relationship is the only acceptable and legitimate form and therefore superior (Herek, 2010). Most people are used to and more comfortable with heterosexist thinking and behavior. It takes particular and extra efforts to become aware of our personal and societal gender and sexual prejudices and biases. Although we have seen many encouraging changes in policy-

making and people's attitudes related to sexual minority issues since the emergence of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) rights movements in 1960s (Altemeyer, 2002), we need to examine how our beliefs and daily practice are shaped by and shaping the heterosexist and homonegative worldview, how we could know non-heterosexual's worldview, and how we could adjust the use of language and behaviors in all individual, institutional, and societal levels to create a more inclusive environment for sexual minorities.

Sport is a particularly relevant setting for examining gender and sexuality issues because of its characteristics of physical/body-emphasis, male-centered, masculinity-required, and competition and domination-celebrated (Coakley, 2001; Messner, 2007). We learn how to play sport and how to do gender "appropriately" at the same time (e.g., the statement: "girls don't play soccer"; "don't throw like a girl"). And, these normative gender role expectations (socially-expected masculinities or femininities based on one's biological sex) are based on heterosexist logic (Griffin, 1998; Kolnes, 1995). Scholars have shown how heterosexism and homophobia are manifested in sport and influence and constrain people's thoughts and behaviors (Greendorfer & Rubinson, 1997; Krane, 2001). For instance, female athletes are expected to perform heterosexual femininity beyond their athleticism (e.g., wear dresses or skirts at official functions, wearing makeup, or having bows in their long hair) (Krane, 2001); lesbian coaches constantly struggle with identity negotiation to avoid potential prejudice and discrimination (fighting homonegativism in sport vs. remaining silent) (Krane & Barber, 2005). Plummer (2006)

showed that hegemonic masculinity and heterosexism intimidated some men and kept them from participating in sport.

Coaches, athletes and other staff are particularly vulnerable to sport's sexist, heterosexist and homonegative norms. Young athletes learn to use homonegative language or laugh at anti-gay jokes to show they are not non-heterosexuals (Anderson, 2005); LGB athletes learn the homophobic climate and silence code about non-heterosexuality from seniors and coaches (Krane & Barber, 2003). They reiterate and pass the code to the next generation because seldom would one stand out to point out that it is problematic. Things are getting better with the efforts of some sport scholars and activists to create an inclusive environment for sexual minorities. More and more professional LGB athletes have come out (e.g., Sheryl Swoopes, John Amaechi, Rosie Jones, Billy Bean and Amelie Mauesmo) although usually after their professional career, and more straight athletes have become allies supporting an inclusive environment. More educational programs have been developed for promoting respect, safety and equal access for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression (e.g., *Changing the Game: The GLSEN Sports Project & It takes a team* published by Women's Sports Foundation).

Sadly in Taiwan, no non-heterosexual professional athlete has come out yet, no Straight-Gay alliance or support group in sport exists, and no educational program has been created particularly for sport or exercise settings. Creating a safe and inclusive environment for all diverse people to enjoy their sport or exercise experiences is the responsibility of all sport professionals. Also, Krane (2004) indicated that sport

psychology professionals are in a good position to help create a fair and inclusive environment for minority groups in sport and to diminish homonegativism in sport. It is worrying that sport professionals (e.g., sport psychology consultants, coaches and physical education teachers) may be complicit with heterosexist and homophobic sport cultures and reinforce oppressive systems if they are not aware of heterosexist thinking and behaviors, not sensitive and knowledgeable about sexual minority matters, and not able to adjust existing ways of doing at all levels (e.g., language, policies, or educational design). The awareness, knowledge, and skills that sport professionals need go beyond attitudinal changes toward sexual minorities, and are aspects for professionals to work on to become culturally competent.

Sport psychology in Taiwan has expanded to include more emphasis on applied sport psychology in recent years. The only sport psychology professional organization in Taiwan, the Taiwan society of exercise and sport psychology, implemented the first certification training program for sport psychology consultants in 2008. Up to the time of recruiting participants for this study in Summer 2012, 33 people have been certified and some of them had started professional practice. It is a crucial time to examine these new sport psychology consultants' preparation for working with sexual minority athletes and dealing with sexuality issues in sport because they will set the tone and be the role models for prospective sport psychology consultants and other professionals or participants in sport.

In sum, the ability to effectively, sensitively, respectfully, and affirmatively work with sexual minority athletes and deal with sexuality issues in sport is essential for sport psychology consultants.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

A few studies (e.g., Gill, Jamieson, & Kamphoff, 2005; Marra, Covassin, Shingles, Canady & Mackowiak, 2010) have examined the multicultural competence of professionals in physical activity. However, none looked at the cultural competence of sport professionals in working with sexual minority athletes. Given that the researcher's ultimate concern is in Taiwan's society, the call for international perspectives in sport psychology, and the crucial timing for the first-certified generation of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan, this research focuses on exploring the cultural competence of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan in working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues in sport. The determination of cultural competence is complicated by the fact that it is relative to any given situation and specific issues that constitute the concept of cultural competence. Thus, this study aims to explore sport psychology consultants' LGBT-cultural competence by focusing on their perceptions, lived experiences and context around them. Specifically four research questions are addressed:

#### *Research Question 1*

How do sport psychology consultants in Taiwan perceive their cultural competence in working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport?

#### *Research Question 2*

What are the experiences of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan in working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport?

Research Question 3

What are the responses of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan to vignettes regarding working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport?

Research Question 4

What are sport psychology consultants' views of characteristics needed to be competent in working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport?

**Significance**

This study addresses the need for multicultural competence of all sport psychology professionals for the pursuit of respect for all and social justice. This study contributes to the growing body of work on multicultural competence in all professions, and especially is a pioneering work on multicultural competence in Taiwan's sport. This study integrates gender and sexuality scholarship in sport studies and LGB-counseling literature in a multicultural framework. This study provides specific information on sport professionals' cultural competence in working with sexual minority athletes in addition to general multicultural competence. This study extends existing studies on the sport climate and personal attitudes toward sexual minorities by exploring sport psychology consultants' cultural competence in working with LGBT athletes. This study attempts to bridge the gap between people's attitudes toward sexual minorities and advocacy actions by considering people's cultural competence and contextual factors that influence their competence.

**Overview of Study**

This section outlines the chapters included in this dissertation. Chapter Two presents the sociocultural background of sexual minorities in Western and Taiwanese

societies, and particularly in sport as well as the development of cultural competence in psychology and sport professionals. Chapter Three details the methods including semi-structured interviews with 12 sport psychology consultants in Taiwan and a grounded theory analysis approach. The fourth chapter presents the results of how participants' LGBT-cultural competence was shaped and influenced through main sources and contextual factors, and how participants' LGBT-cultural competency was represented in their readiness and approaches in working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues. Finally, Chapter Five presents the discussion of the findings and future directions, and also describes the implications of this study for the development of LGBT-cultural competence and social change.

#### **A Note about Language**

***Homophobia/Homophobic.*** Homophobia has typically been employed to describe individual antigay attitudes and behaviors (Herek, 2000). It was first used by Weinger (1972) to signify the irrational fear of homosexuals and homosexuality, which was criticized because it implicitly suggests that it is a form of individual psychopathology rather than a socially reinforced prejudice. Researchers have proposed several alternative terms to describe negative attitudes, prejudice and discrimination against non-heterosexuals and non-heterosexuality, such as heterosexism, homonegativism/homonegativity, and sexual prejudice. This study recognizes the problem of using phobia/phobic to describe negative attitudes toward non-heterosexuals and non-heterosexuality; however, given the wide use of homophobia, homophobia/homophobic is used interchangeably with other alternative terms to describe

negative attitudes towards non-heterosexuals and non-heterosexuality regardless at the individual or institutional level.

***Heterosexism/Heterosexist.*** “Heterosexism is a belief in the superiority of heterosexuals or heterosexuality evidenced by the exclusion, by omission or design, of non-heterosexual persons in policies, procedures, events, or activities” (Sears & Williams, 1997 p. 16). The core tenet of heterosexism is the heterosexual assumption: all people are presumed to be heterosexual, and heterosexual behavior and different-sex relationships are considered normal, natural, and unproblematic while non-heterosexuals are problematized and need explanation (Herek, 2000; 2010). Although heterosexism is mostly used to refer the societal-level ideologies and patterns of institutionalized oppression of non-heterosexual people, heterosexist is commonly used in current research to refer to the heterosexual assumption at both the individual and institutional level. For example, a heterosexist attitude might be: non-heterosexual persons should keep their sexual orientations private.

***Homonegativity/Homonegative.*** Homonegativity is a term proposed by Hudson and Richetts (1980) to describe any negative attitude towards homosexuality, including emotional, moral or intellectual disapproval. It emphasizes the social context in which negative attitudes towards non-heterosexuals develop and are maintained (Krane, 1997). The comparison of origins of negative attitudes toward non-heterosexuals is not the focus of current study, thus homonegativity and homophobia are used interchangeably in the current study to refer to any forms of negative attitudes toward non-heterosexuals and non-heterosexuality.



***LGBT-Cultural Competence.*** LGBT-Cultural Competence is used in current study as an abbreviation to refer to the ability of an individual to interact with LGBT people and deal with LGBT-relevant issues effectively. The effectiveness includes understanding, respecting, and appreciating the different culture.

***Sexual minorities*** can be broadly used to refer to people whose sexual identity, orientation or practices differ from the majority of the surrounding society. In the current study it is used primarily to refer to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people, and thus used interchangeably with LGBT people.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The aim of the research is to explore the cultural competence of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan in working with sexual minority athletes and dealing with related issues in sport. The review of the literature first outlines the development and emphasis on cultural issues and cultural competence in psychology in general and sport psychology specifically. The rationale for focusing on cultural competence in working with sexual minorities in the current study follows. Discourses about sexual minorities in both Western and Taiwanese societies; heterosexism and homonegativism in exercise and sport; sexual minority athletes and coaches experiences; and sport climate in both Western society and Taiwanese society are presented to provide the contextual information of the current study. Lastly, the role of sport psychology consultants and the importance of cultural competence in working with sexual minority athletes are discussed to demonstrate contributions of the current study.

#### **Multiculturalism and Cultural Competence in Psychology**

Multiculturalism has been considered a forth force in the field of psychology, supplementing psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and humanism (Pedersen, 1999). Multiculturalism refers to the recognition and inclusion of individual's social identities, including, but not limited to, age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physicality, socioeconomic status, and the ideology of appreciating and embracing these cultural

diversities. Multiculturalism does not aim to replace any of the first three forces. Instead, it enhances and strengthens existing models by emphasizing a culture-centered perspective that allows us to better understand human behavior (Mio, Barker-Hackett, & Tumambing, 2006). That is, psychologists recognize all individuals, including themselves, are influenced by different social, historical, economic, political, and disciplinary contexts. As Gill and Kamphoff (2009) indicated, the combined focus on the individual and cultural relations is the essence of multicultural psychology. These cultural identities do not serve as categories putting people into boxes; instead they should be seen as power relations and as spaces where individuals negotiate for greater agency within the existing cultural context and power structure (Fisher, Butryn & Roper, 2003). Thus, to better understand people, cultural identities are noticed and power relations and social context are addressed. Moreover, action and advocacy are encouraged to diminish unfairness and promote cultural diversity.

Many professional efforts in psychology have been seen in response to the need to address cultural diversity and reexamine dominant norms, including publications on cultural issues in counseling or clinical psychology, emergence of American Psychological Associations Divisions (e.g., Division 44-Society for the Psychological Study of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Issues, and Division 45 society for the Study of Ethnic Minority Issues), and the establishment of policies and guidelines (e.g., APA Ethical code and Accreditation standards). The concept and promotion of cultural/multicultural competence takes the ideal of multiculturalism/cultural diversities directly into practice. Cultural competence has been defined in many ways, such as

awareness and acceptance of others' and ones' own cultural values, and a commitment to honor and respect the beliefs and values of others (Luquis & Perez, 2003). Sue and Torino (2005) focused on counselor's multicultural competence and defined multicultural counseling competence as the counselor's acquisition of awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society (ability to communicate, interact, negotiate, and intervene on behalf of clients from diverse backgrounds), and on organizational and societal levels, advocating effectively to develop new theories, practices, policies, and organizational structures that are more responsive to all groups. Generally, cultural competence refers to the ability to work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, and it includes three general areas: awareness, knowledge and skills.

Sue and Sue (1990) stated that a culturally competent counselor is one who: a) is actively in the process of becoming aware of his or her own assumptions about human behavior, values, biases, preconceived notions, personal limitations, and so forth, b) actively attempts to understand the worldview of his or her culturally different client without negative judgment, and c) is in the process of actively developing and practicing appropriate, relevant and sensitive intervention strategies and skills in working with his or her culturally different clients. The importance of multicultural competency for psychologists has been promoted since the 1980's and clearly identified in APA Multicultural Guidelines (2003) and ethical standards (APA, 2002) that apply to all professionals in psychology. That is to say, sport psychologists should not be exceptions.

However, this multicultural wave did not really impact sport psychology until recently (see Schinke & Moore, 2011). Scholars have indicated that mainstream sport psychology is mainly mono-cultural (White, middle class, male-dominant, westernized values) and Eurocentric (Ryba & Kashope Wright, 2005; 2010). The development of sport psychology was based on positivist epistemology and focused on sport performance in elite sports, which leads to a sport psychology that is context-deprived and indifferent to power relations. Topics of diversity (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation, and physicality) are often marginalized, and issues of power, privilege or praxis are often neglected in sport psychology. Ram, Starek, and Johnson (2004) reviewed articles in sport and exercise psychology journals between 1987 and 2000, and found that only 20% of the articles made reference to race or ethnicity and 1.2% to sexual orientation, and those few articles provided little analysis or insights. Kamphoff, Gill, Araki, and Hammond (2010) examined the AASP conference program abstracts from 1986 to 2007, and found 10.5% addressed a cultural diversity issue, 31.9% included a diverse sample, and most of the diversity included gender with no attention to other social identities. Hall (2005) surveyed 192 attendees of the 2003 AASP conference about their experiences, attitudes, and skills in working with diverse clients, and found the majority of the respondents did not have specific coursework or training on diversity, did not live or socialize with diverse groups, but they still felt there were no barriers to working with diverse groups and did not seek consultation when working with diverse groups (cited by Gill & Kamphoff, 2009). This result suggested that sport professionals' cultural sensitivity is in question. To value human/cultural differences, the Association for

Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) Ethics code (AASP, 2009) based on the APA Ethical standards (2002) specifies, “AASP members recognize that differences of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status can significantly affect their work. AASP members working with specific populations have the responsibility to develop the necessary skills to be competent with these populations, or they make appropriate referrals.” Thus, each person (both the service provider and receiver), as a cultural being, has multiple intersecting cultural identities, and in all transactions occur between members of two or more cultures, the cultural competence of the sport professional becomes imperative, not an option.

### **Cultural Competence of Sport Professionals**

So far, there are very few empirical studies looking at cultural competence among sport and exercise professionals. Marra, Covassin, Shingles, Canady and Mackowiak (2010) assessed the cultural competence of 3102 certified athletic trainers, and found 53.8% of the participants had previous diversity training mostly in an employer-sponsored program (58.7%), college course (29.9%) or professional conference or seminar (24%). The athletic trainers self-evaluated themselves as having a high level of cultural competence (mean score: 4.5 out of 5), but the scores of their Cultural Competence Assessment (CCA), which constitutes two subscales (Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity and Cultural competence Behavior) revealed they operated at a lower level of cultural competence (mean score: 4.8 out of 7) and their cultural behaviors (mean=3.9) did not mirror their cultural awareness or sensitivity (mean=5.6).

Gill, Jamieson, and Kamphoff (2005) investigated cultural competence among physical activity professionals. They surveyed 171 pre-professionals (students in the departments of Exercise and Sport Science and Recreation, Parks and Tourism and professionals (mostly PE teachers) and conducted focus group interviews with subsamples of each group about the perceived climate for diverse groups and their own cultural competence. In terms of climate, gay/lesbian youth and youth with physical/mental disabilities were most often rated as excluded. One-third of professionals rated the climate in organized competitive sport/athletics as somewhat exclusive or very exclusive toward gay/lesbian youth. Most pre-professionals recognized the need to create a more culturally inclusive environment, but reported that they are not prepared to do so. In general, both the professionals and pre-professionals rated their ability to deal with students of other cultural backgrounds as good. However, less than half of the pre-professionals and professionals rated their ability to work with gay boys and lesbian girls as good or very good. Thus, sexual minority students are especially likely to be excluded and professionals have limited ability to effectively work with them. Importantly, data from focus group interviews indicated that what participants perceive to be cultural competence does not necessarily translate into actual culturally-sensitive practice. For example, some professionals emphasized treating everyone the same as a strategy to include everyone. Both Marra et al. (2010)'s and Gill et al. (2005)'s studies provided a general description of overall multicultural competence, and the results clearly reveal the need for multicultural training for current and future professionals in the physical activity domain. Importantly, the Gill et al. study indicated that among various cultural groups,

sexual minority people and sexual orientation issues appeared to be a particular challenge for professionals, which is one of the reasons that the focus of current study is on cultural competence in working with sexual minorities.

### **LGBT-Cultural Competence**

Most literature about multiculturalism and multicultural competence has focused on racial or ethnic minority groups because of the historical origin of cultural competency (i.e., the influence of civil rights) and the social context of American society, in which racial or ethnic issues are still pervasive. However, as previously mentioned, diversity includes all the cultural groups and cultural competence is not limited to working effectively with people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds. The central idea and theoretical framework of cultural competence can be applied to different cultural groups and settings, but the context and content of cultural competence in dealing with the diversity based on race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation may differ. For example, APA Multicultural Guidelines indicate that (a) psychologists are encouraged to recognize that, as cultural beings, they may hold attitudes and beliefs that can detrimentally influence their perceptions of and interactions with individuals who are ethnically and racially different from themselves, (b) psychologists are encouraged to recognize the importance of multicultural sensitivity and responsiveness, knowledge, and understanding about ethnically and racially different individuals. The term of “ethnically and racially different individuals” in those guidelines can be replaced with “individuals who differ in gender or sexual orientation” with no problem.



Scholars (e.g., Israel, Ketz, Detrie, Burke, & Shulman, 2003; Pope, 2002; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008; Sue & Sue, 2008) also discussed some special knowledge and skills, different from working with racial and ethnic minority populations, that one should have in order to work effectively with sexual minority clients. For instance, the prejudice and biases experienced by sexual minorities are different than those experienced by ethnic minorities, thus requiring professionals to develop specific attitude, skill, and knowledge competencies (Fassinger & Richie, 1997; Israel & Selvidge, 2003). Because being non-heterosexual is still seen by some individuals as immoral and likely remains the only minority category for which religious beliefs are used to substantiate intolerance, it is especially important that professionals develop an awareness of their attitudes, assumptions, and prejudices concerning non-heterosexuals (Israel & Selvidge, 2003). Professionals also need specific knowledge of sexual minority sociocultural history, biases in mental health care, and intragroup diversity to work effectively with sexual minorities (Buhrke, 1989; Israel & Selvidge, 2003). Finally, professionals need to obtain special training and experiences to develop effective counseling skills for working with sexual minority individuals, couples, or families (Kocarek & Pelling, 2003).

I recognize that everyone has multiple social identities, which constitute his/her unique cultural background. Here I am not arguing that sexual identity or orientation is more important than other identities. Given there are still misunderstandings and stereotypes about sexual minorities, and prejudice and discrimination may not be blatant but is still pervasive in this heterosexist society, there is no question that professionals must have particular abilities to work effectively with sexual minorities. Thus, this study

focuses on cultural competence in working with sexual minorities to add to our understanding of this particular issue beyond general multicultural competence. In the following section the unique historical, social and cultural background of sexual minorities in both western society and Taiwan is presented to give essential contextual information for this study.

### **Discourses about Sexual Minorities**

Non-heterosexuality was historically pathologized in psychology and non-heterosexuals were stigmatized and discriminated against (Herek, 2010). Given the domination of Western-European science throughout the world, the medical discourse of pathologizing non-heterosexuality has spread and impacted people's perception of non-heterosexuals in Chinese society as well as in North American and Europe (Damm, 2005). The impact is so deep that biases and stereotypes of non-heterosexuals are pervasive in society and among professionals, even though the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1973 (Garnets, Hancock, Cochran, Goodchilds, & Peplau, 1991). Fortunately, many positive social changes related to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) rights also happened with the efforts of social justice activists both in Western countries and non-Western countries. This study focuses on Taiwan's society, which has its unique socio-cultural-historical background and is also highly westernized in many aspects at the same time (Wong, 2003). In particular, discourses about sexuality issues and studies are largely influenced by Western-European worldviews (Sang, 2003). For instance, most scholars and professionals studied for their degrees abroad (majority

in the United States), and thus, they were trained and brought the Western-European worldview back to Taiwan. Also, Western pop culture is almost simultaneously promoted and popular in both Western countries and Taiwan.

In the next section, I briefly discuss the history of sexuality issues and research in Western society, specifically in psychology, and discuss how these Western discourses influence Taiwan's society. Then I point out several social events and movements related to gender and sexuality issues in Taiwan, and the uniqueness of Taiwan's society by discussing the influences of Confucius's philosophy on Taiwanese people's values and beliefs about gender, gender roles, sexuality, and sexual minorities.

### **Western Society**

Modern attitudes toward homosexuality have religious, legal, and medical underpinnings. The interpretation of homosexual acts as a sin and homosexuals as sinners in some religions has influenced people's attitudes since the High Middle Ages (Boswell, 1980). These religious origins also impacted the legal sanctions. The United States and former British colonies had sodomy laws, which punish homosexual acts and view people who violate them as criminals. The medical discourse about homosexuality started in the late 19th century. Although not all the scientists viewed homosexuality as pathology, mainstream psychology classified homosexuality as a mental illness before the 1960's (Kitzinger & Coyle, 2002).

Dr. Evelyn Hooker (1957) conducted the groundbreaking studies demonstrating that gay men were no more likely to experience mental illness than heterosexual men, which supported the argument that there is nothing inherently pathological about

homosexuality. Spurred by Hooker's and others' research, as well as the influence of the civil rights and feminist movements, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders(DSM) in 1973. The American Psychological Association (APA) followed in 1975 declaring they no longer considered homosexuality a mental illness and urged all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma associated with homosexuality (Conger, 1975). However, the stigmatization of homosexuality is deeply rooted in negative stereotypes and attitudes of the general population toward people with non-heterosexual orientation.

The good news is that with the civil rights movement, people's attitudes toward non-heterosexuals have become somewhat more accepting in recent years. Data from the General Social Survey (GSS), conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago showed that between 1973 and 1993, more than two-thirds of the public considered homosexuality to be "always wrong." Since 1993, the proportion saying homosexual behavior is "always wrong" began to decline and dropped to 56% in 1996 (Yang, 1997). A National Election Studies trend measuring the public's feeling toward gay men and lesbians on a 101-point feeling thermometer revealed that the mean rating for lesbians and gay men increased 16 points (from point 30 to point 46) between 1984 and 1998, although lesbians and gay men consistently receive among the lowest mean ratings while comparing to other social groups (Yang, 1998).

Recently the movement for same-sex marriage/gay marriage/marriage equality became prominent in the United States. Although same-sex marriages are not recognized

federally in the United States, same-sex couples can legally marry in nine states (Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, and Washington) and the District of Columbia. The U. S. Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in 1996, defining marriage solely as a union between a man and a woman for all federal purposes, and allowing states to refuse to recognize such marriages created in other states. However, the provision of DOMA forbidding the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages has been found unconstitutional in eight federal courts. Currently, five of these cases are pending review by the Supreme Court. President Barack Obama announced on 9 May 2012 that he supports same-sex marriage. Obama also supports the full repeal of DOMA. An increased public support for legalizing same-sex marriage has been seen in various polls and studies. Data from General Social Survey showed a significant increase on approval of same-sex marriage; the percentage of respondents answering “agree” or “strongly agree” increased from 12.6% in 1988, to 30.3% in 2004, and to 47.7% in 2010 (Baunach, 2012). A cultural shift is emerging.

### **Taiwan**

Western religious and legal discourses do not apply in Taiwan’s society because of different religious beliefs and political systems. However, the medical discourse of pathologizing homosexuality set the stage for the misunderstanding and negative attitudes of Taiwanese toward homosexuals.

The United States provided life-sustaining military, political, and economic backing for Chiang Kai-Shek’s Nationalist regime in Taiwan for several decades after the

Chinese Communists won the civil war against the Nationalist army and gained control over China in 1949. As a result, postwar Taiwanese society developed a strong American orientation. Even after the lift of Martial Law in 1987, American culture has continued, in both its popular and its elite guises, to be one of the defining forces shaping contemporary Taiwanese culture including certain intellectual practices. The medical discourse, which categorized same-sex desire as pathology, psychological abnormality, and gender confusion affection, became the predominant discourse affecting the general population's understanding of homosexuality (Sang, 2003). Sadly, the removal of homosexuality from DSM had little impact on changing people's perception of homosexuality. The stigmatization of homosexuals was also intensified by the media's biased portrayal of homosexuality as a disease of sexual perversion, and the association of sexual behavior of gay men with AIDS (Damn, 2005; Wu, 1997). So far, the messages people have received about homosexuality have been misleading and negative.

The lifting of martial law in Taiwan in 1987 made it possible for minority groups to have their own voices and was a mark symbolizing Taiwan's movement toward a democratic society. The development of the LGBT rights movement in Taiwan started in the 1990's with the establishment of the first lesbian group, "Between Us," in 1990 (Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, 2005). The first legally registered gay organization, the Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, was established in 1998 and organized the first gay pride parade in Taipei in 2003.

Unlike the U. S., the major religions in Taiwan are Buddhism and Taoism, which do not discuss or oppose same-sex sexual behaviors and homosexuals (Berry, 2001). By

the same token, there is no law punishing sodomy in Taiwan. However, the influence of religion works in another way underpinning people's attitudes toward homosexuality in Taiwan. The meaning and manifestations of religion in Taiwan are different from many other parts of the globe. Folk belief systems or folk religion, a combination of Polytheistic ancient Chinese religion, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, more closely describes the belief system and religious practice in Taiwan. Among those, Confucianism serves as the foundation of Taiwanese culture that gives guidance and instructions of daily practice, especially moral ethics (Chou, 2001). Confucianism focuses on the cultivation of virtue and maintenance of ethics, among which filial piety is considered among the greatest of virtues and must be shown towards both the living and the dead. Family is the central concept in Confucius philosophy. In addition to taking care of elderly parents, getting married and having offspring to carry on the name of family is viewed as the most important responsibility to fulfill filial piety (Simon, 2004). Thus, for homosexuals in Taiwan, the biggest guilt is from not being able to fulfill his/her parents' expectation of marriage and grandchildren. Wang, Bih and Brennan (2009) found that filial piety discourse played a central role in the decision-making process of coming out to parents. The considerations included fear of hurting parents' feelings (as they might blame themselves and worry), fear of parents' disappointment and frustration (shattering their expectations of having the family line continue) and not wishing to bring stigma onto the parents. To be considered normal, for both the parents and son or daughter, a man/woman should marry a woman/man, have his/her family, and have the next generation to continue the name of family. Gender education is about teaching boys

to become the representative and carrier of the family, and teaching girls to become the supporter of the husband.

In sum, the medical discourse on pathologizing homosexuality and the biased media portrayal of homosexual people is the root of the stereotypes and negative attitudes of the general population toward LGB people. The pursuit of harmony and fulfillment of filial piety make LGB people in Taiwan tend to be “cooperative” with the heterosexist society. However, the process of democratization and continual westernization also brought outside stimuli to this seeming inclusive, but also oppressive different voices, society. With the efforts of LGB rights activists, more issues are being noticed and discussed. However, without reeducation to clarify people’s misunderstanding and stereotypes, and promote knowledge of sexual orientation, diversity and respect, we cannot move to the next level of creating an inclusive environment.

### **Sexual Minorities in Sport**

Sport is a unique setting characterized as male-centered, masculinity-required, and competition and domination-celebrated (Messner, 1988; 1992). By the same token, female participation is viewed as subordinate, feminine attributes shown in male athletes are despised, and hegemonic femininity is used to constrain female athletes’ demeanors (Krane, 2001, Messner, 1998). Those characteristics of sport plus the closeness (both emotionally and physically) between team members make the sport setting susceptible to heterosexism and homophobia (Griffin, 1998; Plummer, 2001). Scholars have devoted effort to exploring heterosexism and homophobia in sport using several approaches (e.g., media analysis, LGBT athletes and coaches’ experiences, theoretical development, sport



climate) in the past two centuries (King, 2008). As the larger society has become more accepting, some positive changes for homophobia in sport also emerged (Anderson, 2010).

In comparison to significant work that has been done in Western sport, the discussion of sexual and gender issues in Taiwan's sport is very limited. So far no professional athletes in Taiwan have come out (either in or after his/her career); no scholars systematically explore these topics in exercise and sport. Only sparse thesis work, which I will discuss later, was conducted to address these topics. The lack of attention has two possible interpretations: there is no problem in Taiwan's sport, or there is an inability to recognize the problem. The following section on the sport climate toward sexual minorities examines the work of major western scholars, and then examines the limited but valuable studies on the sport climate in Taiwan.

### **Sport Climate in Western Society**

Although it is not specifically focusing on sport setting, the annual national school climate survey conducted by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) since 1999 provides comprehensive information on the experiences of LGBT students in school settings. The findings of the 2009 National School Climate report included the following: 6 in 10 LGBT students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation; and 4 in 10 reported feeling unsafe at school because of how they expressed their gender (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz & Bartkiewicz, 2010). The locker room was the most common space at school that they avoided specifically because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Athletic fields and physical education classes were

indicated by LGBT students as other spaces at school that they avoided due to concerns for safety or comfort. The 10-year review showed that although there was a significant decrease in frequency of hearing negative remarks at school and an increase in the presence of several LGBT-related resources and support in school, the percentage of students hearing school staff make homophobic remarks and remarks about gender expression has remained relatively constant over time (around 60%), and the rate of intervention in negative remarks by school staff has not increased.

Gill and her colleagues have conducted several studies of the climate for sexual minorities in physical activity settings. In the initial work, Morrow and Gill (2003) found that heterosexist and homophobic behaviors were a regular part of physical education experiences, and interventions to stop these behaviors seldom happened. Many of the teachers did not recognize heterosexism as problematic, and they felt they create a safe space for all students despite not confronting heterosexist or homophobia behaviors, not using inclusive language or gay role models. This (mis)perception was reflected in students' perception of safe space. About one-third of heterosexual students and nearly all LGBT students indicated that the physical education teacher rarely or never created a safe space for all students. In subsequent research, Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey and Schultz (2006) surveyed undergraduate students on attitudes toward gay men and lesbians and other minority groups. The results showed that attitude scores were in the middle range; however, evaluation scores were markedly lower for gay men and lesbians than for other minority groups (e.g., ethnic minorities).

In another study, Gill, Morrow, Collins, Lucey and Schultz (2010) examined the perceived climate of both college students and preprofessionals in exercise and sport science for LGBT youth as well as other minority groups in three physical activity settings (physical education, organized sport, and exercise). Consistent with national surveys indicating high levels of homophobic remarks and little intervention in physical education and sport settings, they found hostile climates for LGB people in all physical activity settings, with sexual minorities and people with disabilities more likely to be excluded than other minority groups, especially in organized sport settings. All these studies indicated that in order to create a more inclusive climate more work is needed beyond the change of people's attitudes. How to facilitate people's (especially professionals') awareness and transform the awareness into concrete inclusive practice is the current challenge.

### **LGB Athletes' and Coaches' Experiences**

The investigation of the experiences of lesbian athletes and coaches reveals many unspoken assumptions related to the heterosexism and homonegativism in sport. Many lesbian coaches and athletes perceived that revealing one's lesbian identity would be dangerous; for athletes it may result in poor treatment from coaches (e.g., unfair evaluation), and for coaches, it may result in job loss or problems recruiting athletes to their programs (Krane, 1997; Wellman & Blinde, 1997). The lesbian intercollegiate coaches in Krane and Barber's (2005) study described the prevailing homonegative atmosphere of women's sport across sports, competitive levels and universities. Silence on sexual orientation issues was a dominant social norm, which was reinforced by the

coaches' fear and the need for protection. Young lesbian athletes also learned the behavioral norm, concealing one's lesbian identity at all costs from the closeted senior lesbian athletes and coaches (Krane & Barber, 2003). This review highlights a climate of fear, silence and hyper vigilance. Silence is a form of social control, which also allows administrators, coaches, athletes and sport psychologists to disregard the importance of sexuality issues in sport. This silence code is also a major theme in a preliminary study related to the current research (Shang & Gill, 2011).

### **Sport Climate in Taiwan**

As previously indicated, the LGBT rights movements in Taiwan started in the 1990s and the attention to gender equity among various sexes, gender expressions and sexual orientations is a recent phenomenon. It is not surprising that there were few conversations on sexual minority issues in sport. Shang, Liao and Gill's study (2012) is the first work exploring athletes' and coaches' attitudes toward homosexual athletes in the Taiwanese context (205 male and 185 female collegiate student-athletes; 56 male and 35 female coaches). The results indicated that generally attitudes of both athletes and coaches toward homosexual athletes were neutral, and male athletes had more negative attitudes than female athletes. It should be noted here that two-thirds of male athletes indicated they would feel uncomfortable if they needed to share a room with a gay teammate although the overall attitude was neutral. Sport gender ideology, a person's beliefs that men and women have to behave appropriately under the conventional gender role expectations in sports, and past contact experience were the predictors of male athletes' and female coaches' attitudes toward homosexual athletes. One-third of male

athletes had contact with homosexuals before, while 85% of female athletes and 60% of female and male coaches did. In the process of recruitment, some coaches expressed being uncomfortable with this topic and refused to participate and refused to let their athletes participate.

Liao's (2007) master thesis explored the experiences and identity formation process of gay student-athletes in Taiwan. The participants in his interviews described the attitudes within the sports organization as full of "misogyny" "homophobia" and "sissy-phobia." Coming out was never an option for them because they felt the coaches would not understand and athletes had little gender consciousness. Chen's (2008) master thesis looked at the relationships between lesbian's self-identity and participation in sport. The lesbians in her study indicated that sport was not only what they liked to do but a place where they could form their lesbian identities and find other lesbians. However, it should be noted that participants in Chen's study were participating in recreational sports (e.g., school club sports) not collegiate or professional sports; thus, they had fewer concerns about reactions to their sexual orientations from coaches, administrators, media than collegiate athletes or professional athletes did.

More recently Shang and Gill (2012) examined collegiate athletes' perceptions of the sport climate for athletes with non-gender-congruent gender expressions and non-heterosexual sexual orientations. Results showed that male athletes perceived the climate as more hostile for athletes with non-gender-congruent gender expressions and non-heterosexual sexual orientations than did female participants especially when the target is a male. Male participants rated their own attitudes toward male athletes with non-gender-

congruent gender expressions and non-heterosexual sexual orientations as more negative than those of teammates, coaches or sports in general, while female participants perceived their own attitudes as most inclusive and coaches' attitudes as most negative. For both male and female athletes, more than 70% of athletes sometimes or often hear negative jokes, slurs, or comments about gender expression. One-third of male athletes reported that they more than often heard anti-gay jokes or comments in their teams, and sometimes violence happened because of one's gender expression or sexual orientation. These findings echoed the perceptions of gay athletes in Liao's study. The lack of intervention in those gender-prejudiced or sexual-prejudice incidents and the lack of institutional protections created an unsafe environment for diverse athletes (Shang & Gill, 2012).

In a follow-up study, Shang and Gill (2011) interviewed both lesbian and non-lesbian collegiate athletes to gain in-depth understanding of their experiences in sport. In the line with findings from the studies in Western Society, "don't ask; don't tell" was the norm in women's sport in terms of sexual orientation issues despite the relatively higher percentage of lesbians in sport compared to other domains. Lesbian athletes learned the silence code from their seniors and coaches. As one participant described: "Everyone knows their relationships. The coach knows, but the coach did not say anything, the coach will not say anything, and the coach cannot say anything...I think we just learned (the silence norm)." It is important to deeply examine the silence code among heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals. Firstly, it is clear that heterosexuals' silence about homosexuals does not equal acceptance or approval, and non-heterosexuals' silence

about homosexuals does not mean they are fully willing to being silent. Second, the implicit request of being silent about sexual orientation presents power imparity between heterosexuality and non-heterosexuality. The request to be silent about one's sexual orientation only applies to non-heterosexuals. However, this request is usually made under the excuse that "sexual orientation" is a personal issue and should not be talked about in public, which leaves the privileges of heterosexuality unexamined. Third, the silence about sexuality issues in sport is misused by heterosexuals and misinterpreted by non-heterosexuals as "we don't talk about it because there is no need to talk about it." On the contrary, the silence about sexuality issues in sport really implies "we don't talk about it because that is something people don't want to, don't know how to, or fear to talk about." Without official efforts at education by people in power positions (i.e., coaches, PE teachers and pre-professionals) and policy protection, social change depends on individual activist's efforts, which leads to double pressure for non-heterosexuals.

Participants indicated varied reactions of their coaches ranging from using sensitive language to being totally blind to non-heterosexuality. Usually coaches were complicit in institutional hegemonic femininity, which is based on the assumption of heterosexism by diminishing the agency of female athletes (Shang & Gill, 2011).

In conclusion, the sport climate in Taiwan is similar to western societies, and still full of heterosexist and homonegative language and behaviors even though people's acceptance of non-heterosexuals has increased in recent years. Sport professionals showed limited awareness of and ability to deal with LGBT issues in sport. Sexual minority athletes have to "manage" their sexual identities carefully to avoid any possible

negative results. In the United States as well as in Canada and Australia, more and more programs aiming at protecting students from bullying and harassment (e.g., Changing the Game program by GLSEN) or building the skills of educators to teach respect for all people (e.g., It Takes a Team by Women's Sport Foundation) have been created. In Taiwan the emphasis on respect for the hierarchical system in sport and group harmony in Chinese culture makes it harder for sexual minorities to make their voices heard. The marginalized status of sport in both academic and occupational domains also makes sport the last domain to be addressed in terms of gender equality issues.

It becomes understandable why LGBT athletes in Taiwan are less able to point out the (institutional or cultural) problems, tend to consider problems personal issues, accept and are complicit in homonegative language and behaviors, have less expectation of changes (especially the older generation), and continue the unbroken loop once they become coaches, PE teachers or other sport professionals. Ironically, all sport professionals should avoid being complicit with the heterosexist and homophobic sport culture, and aim at providing unbiased and equitable service to all diverse athletes. In the next section I discuss the unique roles of sport psychology consultants in working with diverse athletes and especially in dealing with gender and sexuality issues in sport.

### **The Roles of Sport Psychology Consultants**

Cultural competence is essential for all sport professionals, and especially for sport psychology consultants because they work directly with all the diverse athletes and their position is ideal for empowering minority athletes and facilitating institutional and societal changes toward social justice. The culture of sport has an interesting hierarchical



system, in which administrators govern coaches, coaches govern athletes, and senior athletes have relative power over younger athletes while sport psychology consultants have unique relationships with each position of this hierarchy (Barber & Krane, 2005). Generally, there are lines of communication between administrators and coaches and between athletes and coaches, and performance-enhancement and positive team dynamics are the common concerns/languages, that give sport psychology consultants the opportunities to bring gender, sexuality, diversity or social justice issues into the conversation.

According to ethical principles, everyone in sport, especially educators and professionals, shall value and ensure equality for all (APA, 2002); under the quest for excellent performance sport psychology consultants should also create a fear-free and respect-for-all climate for all diverse athletes to allow them to focus on their performance. Moreover, an athlete should be treated as a complete human-being, who has multiple identities in addition to being an athlete; sport participation is not just about performance from a humanistic standpoint and a holistic approach (Hill, 2001). Sport psychology consultants need to be concerned with the total development of athletes in terms of their experiences in the team and sport. Sport psychology consultants work directly and closely with athletes and coaches. At the interpersonal level, sport psychology consultants should be competent to work effectively with athletes with different cultural backgrounds. At the societal level, their positions provide the opportunities to challenge the heterosexist and homophobic norms in sport. Thus, sport

psychology consultants are encouraged to be activists and be the agent for social justice (Fisher, Butryn & Roper, 2003).

Sport psychology consultants often play key roles in perpetuating oppression regardless of whether or not they are aware of it. Authorities' reactions or non-reactions to homonegative or heterosexist statements send a strong message, especially to the LGB athletes. The non-reaction of sport professionals sends a silent permission of the language and behavior that reinforces heterosexism. On the other hand, when sport professionals emphasize the importance of working with athletes who differ in race, religion or sexual orientation, and indicate that homonegative comments just like other derogatory language are unacceptable, a positive and accepting climate becomes possible. Especially for sexual minority athletes, simply knowing that sport professionals are supportive and aware of issues related to sexual minority will reduce their stress and fear (Barber & Krane, 2005).

Because sexual orientation issues are related to athlete's personal growth, team dynamics and performance, it is logical that sport psychology consultants should have the ability to approach these issues appropriately with both non-heterosexual and heterosexual athletes and coaches. Realistically, whether or not acknowledged overtly, sport psychology consultants will work with LGB athletes sooner or later. In order to work effectively with sexual minority athletes sport psychology consultants must reflect on their own beliefs and confront potential biases and prejudices.

Martens and Mobley (2005) discussed some issues that sport psychologists might face when working with sexual minority athletes. One is dealing with one's own

homophobia. To effectively work with sexual minority athletes, sport psychologists need to recognize the issues related to homophobia in sport, particularly how they affect the development and performance of sexual minority athletes. When dealing with sensitive issues, such as homophobia, the sport psychologist needs to first understand his/her own feelings toward sexual minority people, and then address those feelings as much as possible. Fisher et al. (2003) encouraged sport psychology professionals, especially consultants, to recognize the oppressive cultural aspects of sport and take on the social responsibility to make social changes as opposed to being complicit in the perpetuation of injustice. In order for sport psychology consultants to move from being part of the problem to being part of the solution they must raise critical awareness about their personal, institutional and cultural value systems, complement insufficient knowledge, and develop cultural sensitive skills.

### **LGBT-Cultural Competence in Sport**

As found in Gill et al.'s (2005) study, sexual minority people and sexual orientation issues appeared to be a particular challenge for professionals. Hemphill and Symons (2009) cited the only reported study (Lewin, Ma Rhea, & Symons, 1999) of homophobia in physical education and sport-related programs in Australian higher education. Interviews with PE teachers indicated a poor understanding of the meaning of gender or sexuality inclusive curriculum and insufficient skills to deal effectively with stereotyping and homophobic, sexist, or heterosexist comments. Indeed, this is not the case only for sport professionals. The APA formed the Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns in 1980 to address issues of heterosexual bias in the psychology profession.

In 1984 the Committee formed the Task Force on Bias in Psychotherapy with Lesbians and Gay Men to comprehensively evaluate the state of psychologists' attitudes toward and practice with lesbian and gay clients and make recommendations to the APA for LG-relevant training and practice (Garnets et al., 1991). The Task Force on Bias surveyed 2544 APA members and discovered that the quality of services provided to LG clients varied to a great extent from biased, inappropriate, and/or inadequate to exemplary. Examples of undesirable practice included psychologists: (a) believing that homosexuality is a personality disorder or otherwise "sick," (b) attributing problems to sexual orientation, (c) assuming heterosexuality or discounting the validity of LG orientations, (d) holding ill-informed or stereotypical beliefs about LG orientation, (e) minimizing fears of familial and societal consequences for coming out based on ignorance homophobia, (f) knowing nothing about being LG and relying on clients for information.

Given the findings, the APA-authored "Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients" in 2000, which has been recently updated in 2011. Twenty-one guidelines cover six sections: attitudes toward homosexuality and bisexuality, relationships and families, issues of diversity, economic and workplace issues, education and training, and research. Examples of guidelines in attitudes are: (a) psychologists strive to understand the effects of stigma (i.e., prejudice, discrimination, and violence) and its various contextual manifestations in the lives of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, (b) psychologists understand that lesbian, gay, and bisexual orientations are not mental illnesses, (c) psychologists are encouraged to recognize how their attitude

and knowledge about lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues may be relevant to assessment and treatment and seek consultation or make appropriate referrals when indicated. These guidelines provide professionals with essential recommendations to help ensure a high level of professionals practice.

In sport, several scholars have provided suggestions and strategies for professionals in sport to create an inclusive environment for LGB people (Barber & Krane, 2005; 2007; Hemphill & Symons, 2009; Martens & Mobley, 2005; McCaughtry et al. 2005; Rotella & Murray, 1991). Many suggestions and strategies provided by different scholars or activists share similar concepts. In early, ground-breaking work, Griffin and Genasci (1990) advocated that professionals in sport should (a) educate themselves in order to separate myth from reality in understanding sexual orientation and gender through reading or attending workshops, (b) be willing to help educate colleagues and students, (c) learn to recognize and change one's own homophobic attitudes and actions. For instance, professionals should stop assuming that all our colleagues and students are or should be heterosexual; stop using homophobic slurs; stop telling or laughing at jokes about gay people; identify stereotypical assumptions made about gay men, lesbians; identify how homophobia affects our daily life experiences (e.g., choices of clothing styles, physical activity interests); be alert to different forms of oppressions (e.g., racism, sexism); stop providing tacit support and consent for the homophobic actions of colleagues and students by remaining silent; establish and enforce class or team guidelines for name-calling, harassment and teasing; include gay men and lesbians

in diversity awareness programs; be able to identify and provide local or regional resources to LGB people in sport.

Grossman (1992) identified four basic assumptions that professionals must acknowledge to achieve the goal of inclusion. They are: a) homosexuality is a normal variation in both sexual orientation and sexual behavior, b) adolescent homosexuality is not a phase leading to adult heterosexuality, c) sexual orientation is actually established during early childhood; attempts to change sexual orientation are unscientific, unjustified, unethical and psychologically scarring, and d) homophobia like other forms of prejudice is a devastating and insidious condition which closes off life options and stifles the spirit.

Martens and Mobley (2005) specifically discussed what sport psychology consultants should be aware of and knowledgeable about in terms of the experiences and challenges of gay athletes (e.g., contempt for sexual minorities; fear of being out; the misconception related to HIV/AIDS and gay people) in sport in order to provide quality service. Dealing with professionals' own homophobia is the first step. Coaches and sport psychologists working with LGB athletes are asked to deal with virtually all of the same issues and problems (e.g., anxiety, team cohesion, performance concerns) that face heterosexual athletes. However, given the generally heterosexist and homonegative climate, several concerns that are specific to LGB athletes need to be addressed. For instance, how does the homonegative climate (e.g., pervasive anti-gay jokes or slurs) affect LGB athletes' performance and mental health, or how to help LGB athletes and the team go through the coming out process.

McCanughtry et al. (2005) also emphasized that PE teachers and coaches should have awareness and knowledge of the scope and nature of LGB victimization/struggles/life experiences in schools, community, and at home, and of the struggles that LGB people experience as their sexualities develop/identity-formation or in the coming out process. In terms of practice, professionals should be vigilant in listening to students, take action on injustice, be inclusive of LGB students in images, representations, language and action in teaching or coaching (Barber & Krane, 2007), and teach student about the social construction of physical culture and sexuality. The Women's Sport Foundation published an education Kit, "It Takes A Team" for athletes, coaches, athletic directors and parents to make sports safe for LGBT athletes and coaches. Most of the action guides for coaches have been suggested by other resources as previously discussed. Example action guides include: a) put a "'safe space" sticker on the locker room door and your office door, b) schedule an educational program on LGBT issues in athletics for the team, c) make clear your expectations of respect for diversity among all members of athletic teams, d) If LGBT athletes or coaches identify themselves to you, respect their right to confidentiality and privacy, e) answer questions about LGBT people in sport in ways that do not support or accept prejudice. Other relevant literature (i.e., Rankin, 1998; Griffin, 1998; Barber & Krane, 2005; Hemphill & Symons, 2009) also serves as great resource to conceptualize and develop LGB-cultural competence in sport.

All in all, sport is a place, and should be a place, embracing all the cultural diversities. Caring for and providing equitable and effective service to all diversities are

sport professionals' responsibilities. As previously discussed, sport is a unique social setting in that gender and sexuality issues are significant but in an invisible and ignored way. Sport psychologists occupy positions that either reinforce existing oppressive cultures in sport (consciously and unconsciously) including sexism, heterosexism, and homonegativism, or initiate social changes to build a more inclusive and positive environment for both heterosexual and non-heterosexual athletes to cultivate their athletic, personal and social/democratic growth. Despite the ethical codes, APA guidelines and the strategies provided by sport scholars for sport professionals in working effectively with sexual minorities to create an inclusive environment, empirical research has yet to address sport professionals' cultural competence in working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues in sport. In sum, this study is built on the theoretical model of multicultural competence, collective knowledge from both LGB-competent counseling and gender and sexuality scholarship in exercise and sport. This study explores cultural competence of sport psychology consultants in working with sexual minority athletes and dealing with related issues in Taiwan.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Multicultural competency for sport psychologists has been addressed in APA Multicultural Guidelines (2003) and the AASP Ethical Code (2009). Cultural competence in working with sexuality minorities is particularly relevant to sport professionals given the pervasiveness of heterosexist and homonegative language and behaviors in sport. To date, no studies have looked at the cultural competence of sport professionals in working with sexual minority people. The first group of certified sport psychology consultants in Taiwan completed their certification training program in 2008. Considering it is a crucial time to understand these new certified sport psychology consultants' cultural competence, the purpose of this study is to explore the cultural competence of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan in working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and a grounded theory analysis was used. In this chapter, I address the qualitative strategy utilized and introduce the background of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan. Further, I explain the procedure by which data were collected and analyzed. This includes the recruitment procedure, expert panel review of interview questions, a pilot interview, telephone interview process, memo-writing and coding used to analyze interview transcripts, the trustworthiness of this study, and my reflexivity.

## **Methodological Approach**

Qualitative research methods are especially appropriate for the current study because research on cultural competence in working with LGBT athletes is just beginning. Existing literature and measures are in the counseling area and from western perspectives, which might not reflect the context and content of sport and Taiwan's society. Cultural competence, in and of itself, is a dynamic process, which is complicated by the fact that it is relative to any given situation, personal and contextual factors. No one snapshot can really capture its essence. Qualitative research methods allow exploration of Taiwanese sport psychology consultants' cultural competence from their lived experiences and a better understanding of the context that surrounds them. Through interviews with 12 certified sport psychology consultants, the following research questions were addressed: 1) How do sport psychology consultants in Taiwan perceive their cultural competence in working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport? 2) What are the experiences of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan in working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport? 3) What are the responses of sport psychology consultants in Taiwan to vignettes regarding working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport? 4) What are their views of characteristics needed to be competent in working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport?

A grounded theoretical approach was used to examine and organize the data inductively into increasingly more abstract units of information, and then generate a theoretical explanation to present a picture of sport psychology consultants' cultural

competence in working with LGBT athletes. At the same time, I recognize reality is seen through many views, and is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched (sport psychology consultants). The findings are presented as different perspectives that emerged from the interviews, relying on quotes as evidence from the participants, and including my own interpretations and values in conjunction with the interpretation of participants in the discussion.

### **Sampling**

Sport and exercise psychology in Taiwan emerged in the 1980s with the first sport psychology professor getting his doctoral degree in the United States and coming back to Taiwan. A few professors, who are now viewed as the major sport and exercise psychology scholars in Taiwan, completed their doctoral training in the United States and came back to Taiwan to establish concentrations in exercise and sport psychology in Taiwan from the 1990s to early 2000s. These pioneer scholars also contributed to the formation of the Society for Sport and Exercise Psychology of Taiwan, the main and only association of sport and exercise psychology professionals in Taiwan in 2000. Exercise and sport psychology expanded rapidly after 2000 with more new scholars working on various topics.

The applied aspect of sport psychology in Taiwan also developed over the past 10 years with a few sport psychologists working with Asian Games or Olympic athletes. The benefits of using exercise and sport science (including sport psychology consulting) on athletes' performances in the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens caught the attention of the government and indicated the need for an official training and certification program

of exercise and sport psychology consulting professionals. Thus, the Society for Sport and Exercise Psychology of Taiwan started the first sport and exercise psychology consulting professionals training program in 2008 in order to help student-athletes in all level schools with their training, studying, sport performance, and career development, and to develop the professionalism of sport psychology consulting and counseling services in Taiwan under the supervision of Taiwan Ministry of Education, Sports Affairs Council, Executive Yuan, and Department of Education, Taipei City Government. By March 2012, 33 sport psychology consultants had finished training and were certified. The certification of these sport psychology consultants is a notable benchmark in Taiwan's sport psychology development. They are the first generation officially certified as capable of working with athletes, coaches, teachers or exercisers.

It must be noted that the job expectations of certified sport psychology consultants/counselors in Taiwan are somewhat different from those for certified consultants by the Association for Applied Sport Psychology in the United States. The certified sport psychology consultants in Taiwan are expected to work with student-athletes in all level schools as both a consultant for training and performance and a counselor for helping student-athletes with integrating academics/school, life and sport aspects. To register for the training program, candidates must already have earned or be currently studying for a master degree in an area related to psychology. To become certified, candidates need to take 120 hours of coursework, which is offered every weekend in a continuous 12-week period by the Society for Sport and Exercise Psychology of Taiwan. The 120 hours of coursework includes 12 subjects: a) Helping

skills and basic consulting/counseling techniques, b) Motor learning and teaching, c) Human interaction and group dynamic, d) Mental skills and practice, e) Assessment and diagnosis in sport psychology, f) Athlete's psychological issues and problem solving, g) Theory and practice of counseling and intervention in sport psychology, h) Athlete's career planning and counseling, i) E-commerce in sport psychology consulting, j) Job searching, k) Professional ethics and standards, l) Athlete's life skills and self-management. At least 95% attendance of coursework is required to take the qualification exam and practicum/internship.

Consultants are required to take a qualification exam after completing the coursework. Those whose average exam score is above 80 (out of 100), are then eligible to take practicum. Those who do not pass the exam (score lower than 80) can take the exam again in a week. If they fail again, the third/last chance to take the exam can be held in another week. Those who do not pass the exam within three trials lose the training qualification. Those who pass the exam can then have a 150-hour mentored practicum, and those who complete 150 total hours of practicum are certified.

The majority of these certified sport psychology consultants are graduate students, or recently got their master or doctoral degrees, and were already working in this field as a PE teacher or a coach. They may have multiple sport professional positions at the same time, which makes cultural competence even more urgent. Considering that all certified consultants might work with LGBT athletes or deal with related issues at some time in their practice, no recruitment criteria regarding experiences in working with LGBT athletes were set. Although consultants who have more experience working with LGBT

athletes might present different pictures of their cultural competence, this study aims to explore certified consultants' LGBT cultural competence regardless of their working experiences. A couple participants suggested contacting those senior sport psychologists who are the mentors of this new generation of certified consultants and have provided mental skills training and consultation service to athletes before the implementation of certification training program. Although those senior sport psychologists may have more experience in working with LGBT athletes, they are not the target sample of this study, and the working experiences with LGBT athletes are not the major focus of this study. This research explores the cultural competence of this new generation of certified sport psychology consultants in working with LGBT athletes regardless of whether they already have experiences of working with LGBT athletes or not. These sampling criteria, being certified but not necessarily having working experience with LGBT athletes, may influence that the results in that participants may not present rich, varied and detailed practical experiences in working with LGBT athletes. Participants who do not have experiences in working with LGBT athletes may provide more conceptual information than concrete personal experiences. Given the small number of potential participants, I aimed to recruit 12 certified sport psychology consultants in Taiwan. Because studies show gender differences in attitudes toward sexual minorities (Shang, Gill, & Liao, 2012), both male and female sport psychology consultants were recruited in the sample.

## **Procedure**

### **Recruitment**

Approval was obtained from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to contacting and interviewing participants. An official email, which described the purpose of the current study, the IRB approval, and the request for helping with the current study was sent to the vice-president and the secretary of the Society for Sport and Exercise Psychology of Taiwan to obtain the list and contact information of certified sport psychology consultants. After gaining the contact information, an invitation email was sent to each certified consultant. Nine participants showed interest in participating by responding to the email with their phone number and preferred contact time. Two participants also had questions on recruitment criteria. They thought I looked for consultants who had experience with LGBT athletes, and they did not have experiences. After explaining the recruitment criteria and research purpose one more time, they both agreed to participate. A follow-up email with consent form and the interview outline was sent to the interested participants, and a brief phone call was made to: 1) introduce me/the researcher and tell the participants about my sport psychology educational background in Taiwan to build some rapport; 2) gain demographic information including age, gender, education level, current consulting practice; and 3) set up a time for the interview. The interview (about an hour) was conducted at participant's preferred time. Another three participants were recruited by asking participants who had completed the interview to introduce me to other consultants for this study. Consultants gave me contact information of other consultants with their agreement. I sent out an invitation email to the interested

consultants, and followed the same procedure as previously described for setting up the interview.

### **Expert Panel Review**

Two panels of experts examined the interview questions for clarity and content-appropriateness, and gave any feedback and suggestions for conducting the interview. The first panel included three experts in the U. S. in sport and exercise psychology, who are engaged in multiculturalism, and sexuality and gender studies. The interview questions were edited based on the experts' feedback and then sent to the experts to review again for final approval for the revised items. The major changes between the original interview questions and revised ones were: 1) changing some questions to a more open-ended format, 2) breaking compound questions into several questions, and 3) removing leading words or changing directional questions to more neutral ones. The revised interview questions were then translated to Chinese by me, and sent to the second panel review, who reviewed the interview questions in Chinese version. Three professors, whose native language is Chinese and who gained his/her doctoral degree in English-as-official-language countries were invited. Two sport psychologists had done some research in gender issues in sport, and one of them is also the main person implementing the sport psychology consultant certification-training program. The third expert is from counseling, and had publications in counseling with LGBT people. Both English and Chinese versions of interview questions were provided to the second expert panel to assure English version of interview questions were appropriately translated into Chinese, and Chinese version of interview questions are culturally-reflective of Taiwan's society



that participants can easily understand and probe their sharing. The experts thought the interview questions were clear and appropriate, and they emphasized interview skills, such as providing some examples of LGBT-related issues in sport when participants have limited understanding or exposure. The Chinese version interview questions were finalized after multiple revisions based on the feedback and suggestions from the experts.

### **Pilot Interview**

In addition to expert panel reviews, I also did a pilot interview with a certified sport psychology consultant in Taiwan to assure the clarity of interview questions from the participant's perspective, and that the most important questions could be addressed in the time allotted, as well as to refine my interviewing skills. The participant was notified that the interview was a pilot interview at the time of recruitment, and was asked to give feedback and suggestions regarding improving the interview process and questions. The participant thought the interview went well and all the questions were understandable. The only concern he had was social expectation effect. He indicated that he was hesitant as well as vigilant about the use of terminology (i.e., LGBT) while having the interview. Because sexuality-related issues have been ignored or marginalized in Taiwan's sport, and the stigma of sexual minority is not totally discarded, it might feel strange to talk about these issues or use some terminology. However, he also indicated that did not really impact how he responded to the interview questions. To respond to this feedback, I made a note on my interview protocol about being careful to not use any leading words or terminology from gender and sexuality studies while doing the interview.

### **Data Collection/Telephone Interview**

After sharing my background information with the participants, and gathering their demographic information, interviews were scheduled with each consultant at the end of the first phone call. I reminded the participant to find a private, comfortable place, where she/he could be worry-free for the telephone interview without any possible interruptions for about an hour. Telephone interviews allowed me to interview consultants all over Taiwan, and gave the participant more flexibility to schedule the time, to be more relaxed and willing to talk freely. There is little evidence that the quality of telephone interview data is inferior to face-to-face interview in collecting qualitative data (Novick, 2008). Although there were some benefits to phone interview, a limitation is that nonverbal communication such as body language and eye contact were not detectable.

At the time of the interview, some degree of familiarization and rapport had been built through the first phone call. Before each interview, I reiterated the purpose and rationale of the study and answered any questions that the participant had. I also explained that the interview was about knowing their experiences and what they thought. No right or wrong judgments would be given to their responses. I also assured confidentiality and reminded participants that the interview was going to be audio-recorded. At this time, the participant chose their pseudonyms or let me make up pseudonyms for them. Lastly, I explained that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I engaged with participants in an in-depth, semi-structured interview lasting approximately 40-65 minutes. Semi-structured interviews have predetermined questions that allow for flexibility in the interviewee's responses (see Appendix A). The focus of the interviews was to explore how the certified sport psychology consultants evaluate their competence in working with LGBT athletes, their experiences working with LGBT athletes, their responses to a provided vignette, and their views of characteristics needed to be culturally competent in working with LGBT athletes. The interview was relatively structured, but still left space for the participant to address certain events or topics, especially when they were sharing personal experiences. Most questions were open-ended and a few closed-ended questions served as a way to facilitate further elaboration.

The order of the questions is important with a semi-structured interview protocol. Initially, I used the demographic questions to learn more about the consultant's educational and training background particularly in applied sport psychology and counseling, and their current professional practice (e.g., what are your primary roles-teaching, counseling? who were your typical clients and what issues did you address?) Then, the questions became slightly more specific about their educational/training experiences of working with clients with different cultural backgrounds, including different sexual orientations. The questions moved to their self-evaluation of their competence to consult athletes from different cultural backgrounds, and I inquired in detail about what determined how they evaluated their competence to consult LGBT athletes. The interview continued on working with LGBT athletes and moved to dealing with related issues in sport afterwards. We talked about their experiences, if any, of

working with LGBT athletes, the challenges they faced, and the consulting relationship they built. Because only a few consultants had experience consulting with LGBT athletes, all of them were asked to respond to a vignette, in which a gay or lesbian athlete told the consultant that he/she was worried that his/her coach or teammates would not like him/her if they found out his/her sexual orientation. The vignette was based on the case described in Martens and Mobley (2005). We talked about their experiences, if any, of addressing LGBT-related issues in sport, other than directly consulting with LGBT athlete, in their practice. Even though most of them heard homophobic remarks in sport, they did not address related issues in their practice. Thus, a vignette, in which a team was having difficulty adjusting to having a gay player, was given to the participant to respond. The vignette was inspired by the case described in Barber and Krane (2005). Lastly, I asked their opinions of being a culturally competent sport psychology consultant. Questions were what attitudes, awareness, knowledge, skills, training or resources should a sport psychology consultant have to work effectively with LGBT athletes or address related issues in sport. The idea of separately asking attitudes and awareness, knowledge, and skills was based on the framework of multicultural competence (Sue, Bernier, Durran, Feinber, Pedersen, Smith, & Vasquez-Nuttal, 1982; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992)

### **Participants**

The 12 participants included 4 men and 8 women. All but one participant had no preference about the pseudonyms, which they allowed me to pick for them. The one participant asked me not to use any pseudonym that may sound like her nickname.

Participants ranged in ages from 25-41, with an average age of years 32. All 12 consultants have a master degree with sport and exercise psychology concentration either in the department of physical education (PE), coaching science (CC), sport science (SS) or recreational sports management (RSM). Seven are in a doctoral program in sport and exercise psychology now. Five have not regularly provided consulting service since being certified. Another three certified consultants, who are currently PE teachers or coaches, did not practice consulting, but used some counseling skills and provided some "unofficial" consultation service to their athletes or students. Four certified consultants are practicing now. The cases they are working with include national sport teams and athletes, professional sport teams, high school sport teams, governmental projects cultivating aboriginal athletes and junior athletes, and some other individual cases. One certified consultant had gone to the IMG Academy in the U. S. to provide sport psychology consulting service there, and had been providing consulting service to professional and national athletes in Taiwan for 6 years.

Table 1

## Description of Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Educational background	Sport Background	Practicum Target	Current consulting practice	Current Role
Wei	M	28	Doctoral student in PE	Previous collegiate athlete-basketball	Middle school-basketball	no	College lecturer
Tz	M	31	Master degree in RSM	Previous national player-tag of war	Middle school-baseball and track and field	no	College assistant; coach for tug of war (middle school)
Yun	F	25	Master student in PE	Previous Division I collegiate athlete-volleyball	High school-baseball, wrestling, judo	yes	RA; substitute PE teacher
Tian	F	26	Master degree in RSM	Previous Division I collegiate athlete-tug of war	Elementary school-basketball	No, but to students	PE teacher in elementary school
Ya	F	33	Doctoral candidate in PE	Previous collegiate athlete-basketball	High school-track and field, volleyball, basketball	no	Doctoral student
Ni	F	35	Doctoral candidate in CS	Recreational softball player	various	yes	Consulting
Ju	F	27	Master degree in PE	Recreational table tennis player	High school-table tennis	yes	Consulting; administrative assistant in national training center
Lin	F	35	Doctoral student in PE	Previous national Korfball player	various	No, but to students	PE teacher in elementary school
Chi	F	36	Doctoral student in PE	Previous collegiate player-track and field, volleyball	National players-archery	yes	Phd student in PE & master student in counseling
Tai	M	41	Master degree in SS	Previous Division I collegiate player-table tennis	High school-badminton, boxing	yes	Consulting; teach table tennis
Hung	M	35	Doctoral student in CS	Previous collegiate player-volleyball	National training center	no	Previous: coach-volleyball ; RA
Fang	F	36	Doctoral student in CS	Previous Division I badminton player	Middle school-track and field	No, but to players	TA; Coach badminton

### **Note Taking/Memo Writing**

Writing research notes allows the researcher to document reactions, thoughts, and conceptualizations about each task completed during the research process (Charmaz, 2006). Following each interview, I noted my initial reactions and thoughts about the participant and the interview. This note captured the first impression of the participant and his/her general responses, and helped me remember to return to something a participant said. Also, notes of my reactions and the ease of the interview helped me examine my biases and refine the questions. During the coding process, I used memo writing to explore ideas for data themes and categories, questions to explore in further interviews and data analysis, and highlight discrepancies in the data. I also kept notes documenting my thinking, feelings and biases, and thoughts about analytical decision-making during the process of interviewing, analyzing, and writing.

### **Data Analysis**

In addition to considering data analysis, this section also addresses data translation. This research is cross-cultural research. I, as the researcher, am cross-cultural. I am Taiwanese, and grew up and was educated in Taiwan's society until age 28 when I came to the U.S. to pursue a doctoral degree for 5 years. It is to be noted here that Taiwan is also highly westernized. Higher education in Taiwan depends a lot on foreign resources (i.e., textbook, journals). That is to say, the academic knowledge I got from studying for my master degree in Taiwan is still highly related to western views, and mostly to U.S. views. I was raised under and aware of Chinese cultures and philosophies, and I am immersed and possess many Westernized views and knowledge at the same time. The

concept of cultural competence was developed in the U.S. However, the idea of providing equitable service to all diverse people and promoting social justice is universal. In Taiwan, the development and promotion of multicultural competence is a relatively new agenda, and it is mostly addressed only in the counseling area. The concept of “multiculturalism” to most people in Taiwan and is more widely used in referring to ethnic groups, which include Taiwanese aborigines, Hoklo communities, Hakka communities, Mainlander, and New residents or immigrants. This group, known as Taiwan Xinzhumín, consists of mainly new residents, originally from other nations, who have either migrated to Taiwan or inter-married with a local Taiwanese. The majority of new residents came from Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, and Mainland China. This basically reflects the demographic changes in Taiwan. While ethnic and national diversity are addressed in multiculturalism or multicultural education, gender and sexual orientation diversity are mostly related to anti-discrimination policies and gender equity in education with the progress in feminist and LGBT rights movements in Taiwan. The “Gender Equity Education Act” was legislated in June 2004 to promote substantive gender equity, eliminate gender discrimination, uphold human dignity, and improve and establish education resources and environment of gender equity. In the chapter on learning environment and resources it states: “The school shall not discriminate in its teaching, assessments, etc. against students on the basis of their gender or sexual orientation, but shall affirmatively provide assistance to students who are disadvantaged due to those (such as gay, transgender, and pregnant students) in order to improve their situation.” Due to the “Gender Equity Education Act,” all schools now



have a “gender equity education committee”, whose tasks include promoting curricula, teaching, and assessments on gender equity education. In March 2010, the Taiwan Ministry of Education announced that beginning in 2011, school textbooks would include topics on LGBT rights and non-discrimination. However, the inclusion of LGBT education in junior high and elementary school curricula was opposed by Christian groups, who comprise a small but vocal religious minority in Taiwan. The inclusion of LGBT education has been suspended since then, and the official course content regarding LGBT education is still under study. In reality, the implementation of LGBT education for teachers, students, or the general population has been mostly an “Understanding LGBT” workshop, which is hosted by Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, a local LGBT organization.

Each interview was conducted and transcribed verbatim in Chinese. The transcription was read multiple times first, and then sent back to each participant for member checking. I contacted the participant for supplemental information if any information in the interview was recorded unclearly or missed. The interview data were analyzed through a grounded theory approach, which aims to generate a theory, an abstract analytical schema related to the context of the phenomenon that I was interested in (Creswell, 2006). In the current study, I wanted to know sport psychology consultants’ cultural competence in working with LGBT athletes; how they prepared, acted, reacted, and thought about working with LGBT athletes and addressing related issues in sport. Grounded theoretical approach provides a tool to discover the variables or concepts from field-based data, and a plausible relationship among concepts and sets of concepts. The

process of data analysis included open coding/initial coding, focused coding/selective coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Carbin, 1998).

In the open coding phase, I closely read the transcript, took segments of data apart, labeled them in concise terms/concepts/codes by asking what is happening, or what do the data suggest? Exemplary codes developed in the open-coding stage included “avoid probing athlete’s relationship” or “not sure how to respond to athlete’s sharing”. Some codes came out more frequently or as more salient through the initial coding. I used those codes or developed a more abstract theme to sift through large amounts of data and categorize the concepts. For example, I developed “uncertain of discussing same-sex relationship” to categorize the data which was coded in the open coding phase by “avoid probing athlete’s relationship” and “not sure how to respond to athlete’s sharing.” During axial coding, I examined categories for similarities and differences, and identified possible relationships between categories to reassemble data in new ways. For example, I found “open and accepting attitude” was influenced by participants’ “cultural background”, which served as a foundation of their LGBT-cultural competence and impacted their “willingness of becoming LGBT-cultural competent.” Finally, higher order themes were developed for organizing and interpreting the data. The whole coding process was done simultaneously in a constant comparison method, which is an iterative process of comparing new data to previous data in an effort to find similarities and differences within each participant’s narrative and between participants’ perspectives (Boeije, 2002).

To minimize data contamination, and to keep the foundation of analysis as close as possible to participants' voices and their cultural context, the analysis/coding process was conducted by using participants' original narratives (in Chinese) without translation. The translation of Chinese into English of participants' narratives was done at the stage of writing the draft of results. Back-translation techniques were employed in this study to maintain translation quality and equivalence between source and target versions. Back-translation first translates the input language (Chinese) into the target language (English), and then translates the target language (English) into the input language (Chinese).

### **Trustworthiness**

The term trustworthiness is used in qualitative research as compared to validity and reliability in quantitative research to signify whether the processes of research are carried out fairly, and the products represent the experiences of the people who are studied as closely as possible. To enhance trustworthiness in current study, I used member checking, included rich and thick description of participant's narratives, and clarified my bias and values. After completing each interview, I asked the participant if he/she would be willing to have two follow-up contacts with me. First, I emailed participants the summaries of their interview and asked for any feedback on whether I had accurately captured what they told me in the interview. Second, I emailed them a summary of the near-final results and asked for any feedback on whether their experiences and voices were reflected in the results. I provided detailed description when writing about a theme to allow readers to determine whether the findings can be

transferred. I also clarified my position and any biases or assumptions that likely had shaped the interpretation and approach to the study.

### **Reflexivity**

In a qualitative study, the researcher is the key instrument of data collection, and tries to transcend past knowledge and experience to understand a phenomenon at a deeper level (van Manen, 1990). It is not only a description, but also an interpretive process in which the researcher interprets the meaning of the lived experiences. Feminist researchers recognize it is impossible to have value-free knowledge (Harding, 2007). One's identities, values, beliefs and history influence not only how one collects and interprets information, but also influence how one asks certain research questions. Thus, it is important to be self-aware and examine one's lens throughout the study, and to provide readers with my own background, history, and prior understandings, which allows readers to make an interpretation as well.

I am currently a study-abroad PhD student (from Taiwan to the U.S.) majoring in exercise and sport psychology. I have taken some applied sport psychology courses but have no systematic consulting training. Thus, I have applied sport psychology knowledge, but do not have practical consulting experiences of working with athletes. This put me in an outsider position to view sport psychology consultants' working experiences. I have never been an elite athlete, but I love and have been involved in playing sports since I was 10 years old (e.g., both in and off-campus sport clubs). I completed my master degree and had a year teaching experience in a sport-specific college, where most students are student athletes. My own sport experiences and

familiarization with athletes also me gave a sense of what it is like to be a lesbian athlete in Taiwan's sport. I am a single 33 year-old female with a feminist perspective. I rate my sexual orientation as 4 on Kinsey's 7-point scale (0 indicates exclusively homosexual and 6 indicates exclusively heterosexual), although I believe sexual identity is a multi-dimensional concept, and it is changing and dynamic. If possible, I self-identify as uni-sexual, which means I would be attracted to a human being's certain characteristics but not his or her gender. I have not been subject to any overt sexual prejudice or discrimination, but had relevant conflicts with my family and some teachers in school about sexual orientations. I need to be aware of my expectations of sport psychology consultants' cultural competence because of my gender and cultural studies training background. I must be aware of the potential biases and misinterpretations caused by the different cultural positions between the participants and me. I did memo-writing throughout the study processes and incorporated notes into the analysis and discussion to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007).

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The purpose of this study was to explore sport psychology consultants' cultural competence in working with sexual minority athletes and dealing with related issues in sport. Through semi-structured interviews and grounded theory analysis, an attempt was made to understand how sport psychology consultants perceived their LGBT-cultural competence, what their experiences of working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues were, what their responses to vignettes were, and what their views of characteristics needed to be LGBT-culturally competent were. As Sue (2005) argued that cultural competency should be examined as a process and as specific content, the results of this study illustrate how participants' LGBT-cultural competence was shaped and influenced through main sources and contextual factors, and how participants' LGBT-cultural competency was represented in their readiness and approaches in working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues.

Results are organized into six sections to present the details of each theme and the relationships between themes. The first section illustrates participants' cultural backgrounds and how their backgrounds influenced their attitudes toward working with sexual minority athletes. The second section focuses on the findings related to the sources of participants' LGBT-cultural competence and how these sources influenced consultants' LGBT-cultural competence. Details of each source (i.e., acquaintance wit

LGBT friends, working experiences with LGBT athletes, and LGBT-related education and training) are covered in the section (Research question 2). The third section shows consultants' self-evaluation of LGBT-cultural competence (Research question 1). The fourth section presents consultants' readiness and approaches in working with LGBT athletes. The fifth section reports consultants' responses to vignettes, which includes their approaches, the expected challenges, and the resources they need (Research question 3). The last section presents consultants' views of characteristics of culturally competent and need for related training (Research question 4)

#### **Participants' Cultural Backgrounds: Highly Educated, Relatively Young, Former Athletes**

Consultant's personal cultural background was the first factor influencing how the consultant felt about and approached working with LGBT athletes. Precisely speaking, consultant's cultural background influenced their opinions about working with LGBT athletes through their attitudes toward LGBT athletes. All were highly educated (all participants had master degrees in PE or sport-related science, and 7 are in a doctoral program now), and relatively young (average age 32). They grew up at the time when the LGBT equality movement was emerging in Taiwan. They have been exposed to information about sexual minorities (at least from mass media) even though only a couple of them had gender equality-related education. Their attitudes might be influenced by the society which is slowly moving toward being more open and accepting to sexual minorities; one consultant expected coaches' attitudes should be more accepting, too "He (coach) should change with the societal changes. This kind of stuff (visibility of sexual

minorities) is growing. He should gradually start to accept.” Also, they all had been athletes in varied levels (2 were previous national players, 4 were previous Division I collegiate athletes, 4 were previous Division II collegiate athletes, and 2 were recreational players.) Many of them (both female and male participants) indicated it was common to see lesbian athletes in sport (regardless of whether the lesbian athlete actually came out or not). Thus, it was not surprising that they were acquainted with lesbian athletes to some extent, as Yun said, “There are lesbians in my friends, because I was an athlete.” Tian also stated:

There are many homos in my friends because of my surroundings. I think it’s because I’m in a sport setting, many girls tend to be more masculine. So they (lesbians) are there, where I live.

### **Open and Accepting Attitude as the Foundation**

With exposure to LGB people personally, to LGB information from mass media, and with accompanying societal changes, consultants’ attitudes toward sexual minorities were shown to be open and accepting. The attitude of being open and accepting to sexual minorities, in turn, formed the foundation of consultant’s cultural competence in working with LGBT athletes. Many consultants expressed that being open and accepting to LGBT athletes is the precondition for consultants to work effectively with them.

**Ling:** In terms of attitude acceptance. I think you need to be accepting, accepting diverse people. You can’t have any biases, either very dislike or very fond of... If the consultant has the accepting attitude, you accept the athlete, and then any challenge that happens in the following consulting service is manageable.



**Fang:** I think consultant needs to be open. Open? What I mean is the consultant can't feel uncomfortable. If the consultant felt uncomfortable, he/she would have some unconscious expressions or behaviors in the consulting session.

**Yun:** I think the first thing for a consultant in terms of working with LGBT athletes is the consultant's acceptance.

### **Sources for LGBT-Cultural Competence: LGBT Friends, Working Experiences and Related Training**

The three main sources for knowing LGBT athletes and how to work with them came out when they evaluated their competence in working with LGBT athletes: acquaintance with LGBT friends, working experiences with LGBT athletes, and LGBT-related training or education.

**Wei:** When I evaluated my competence in working with LGBT group, the first thing that came to my mind was whether I had related counseling training. Apparently not, at least in my case. So I went on to think whether I had working experiences with these athletes, or any experiences of being with these athletes. For example, I did have lesbian teammate, but I didn't have any experiences with being with others. So I might not know what challenges or difficulties they might have.

### **Limited Related Training and Education**

In fact, there was no existing training or education about how to work effectively with LGBT athletes or on LGBT-related issues in Taiwan. Only one consultant, who is studying another master degree in counseling with doctoral degree in sport science, had a course on multicultural counseling from counseling department in school. However LGBT issues were not addressed in the multicultural counseling course. Another consultant did not have multicultural related training in Taiwan, but in the U.S. The counseling training in the U. S. did offer LGBT related discussion, and mostly was about

providing equitable service to LGBT athletes and how to make appropriate referral. This consultant also mentioned that actually she had been self-educated on sexual minority issues when she worked with lesbian athletes in Taiwan and that was before having LGB-related training in the U. S. Two consultants exposed to the topics of gender and sexuality issues in sport from sport psychology courses, however they indicated there was only brief discussion on LGBT issues in the class. One consultant had a 2-hour “Understanding LGBT” workshop offered by Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association, and he learned not to easily assume people’s sexual orientations based on some stereotypes; one consultant exposed to a bisexual female guest speaker in gender equity education (undergraduate course), and she was impressed by the guest speaker’s openness of sharing herself. However the consultants felt the knowledge they got from the 2-hour workshop or one talk was still limited. Given the lack of related education and training, most consultants’ information about working with LGBT athletes was based on their personal experiences with LGBT clients or LGBT friends (particularly for those, who didn’t have working experiences with LGBT athletes).

### **Acquaintance with LGBT Friends**

Given the lack of related education and training, and because not every consultant had worked with LGBT athletes, having LGB friends played a major role in providing LGB information to the participants. Among 12 participants, 7 had working experiences with lesbian or bisexual women athletes. All of them had lesbian friends, 4 had bisexual female friends, 4 had gay men friends, 4 had bisexual male friends, and none of them knew any transgender people.

*A sense of interaction with LGB athletes.* Generally the participants got a sense of how comfortable they are and how well they can interact with LGB athletes from the experience of being friends with LGB people.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell me how you evaluated your ability in working with lesbian athletes as “limited”? What are your considerations?

**Tai:** Because I had few friends, who seemed to be lesbians. I felt I’m ok with interacting with them and understand some of their thinking. But in terms of connecting what I knew about them with sport performance, I felt...my ability is limited. I felt I only knew very few of them.

**Interviewer:** How about gay men athletes? You evaluated your ability as “good”. What are your considerations?

**Tai:** yeah, the same. I have gay man friends. I evaluated my ability as good because I felt I could communicate with them pretty well. It’s easier to understand their thoughts. In comparison to lesbian, I only had very few lesbian friends. So I... I am not very confident.

*Things learned/observed from LGB friends.* Interacting with or observing their LGB friends, teammates, or classmates also gave the participants some information/knowledge about sexual minorities and increased their cultural sensitivities even though some information they got might be biased. The information they learned or observed from LGB friends included: 1) masculine lesbian was more defensive, 2) homosexuals tended to be more emotionally dependent, 3) the cause of becoming homosexual, 4) unfair treatment from the coach, 5) sensitivity of words/language.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned that sometimes the athlete might be pseudo-homosexual, or possibly something happened in childhood made him/her become lesbian or gay. How did you get these concepts? from class? Or?

**Yun:** no, I didn't really have education or training in this area. But I felt there must be a reason that they had this change. Because I was in a sport team and we were all athletes many people would have such a change. Maybe it's because the team is a same-sex setting, all female or all male. In that circumstance, it's easier to be close with someone. Naturally it's like temporary dependency.

**Interviewer:** You also mentioned earlier that sexual minority athletes tend to have bigger emotional fluctuations when they have relationship issues based on your experiences. Can you tell me more about that?

**Yun:** I think it's because it's harder for sexual minority people to find a partner. Once they found one, they are likely to be more dependent on the partner.... These are some situations that happened in my friends. And what I have observed and heard.

**Tzu:** I feel masculine lesbians are more defensive. It might be hard for them to share their inside thinking and feelings. Because I had a female classmate, who is a lesbian and more masculine, her demeanors are just like a man, and sometimes she is more masculine than a man.

**Wei:** I knew some of this group of people when I was an athlete... We were both in a basketball team and we were good friends, too. But what she faced and what I faced in sport or in a team were different. For instance, we had the same coach, we made the same error, but the feedback and attitude from the coach to each of us were very different. This might be due to the consideration of biological sex. However, comparing to her female teammates, the feedback and attitude of the coach to her were still different. And the difference was carrying belittling messages.

**Wei:** This is what I observed. So I'm thinking sexual minority athletes are likely to have different treatment in the team or in training, could be better or worse, I'm not sure. But it was worse, at least, based on what I observed. Reflecting on my position as a sport psychology consultant, apparently what

LGBT athletes need from consulting service may be different from general athletes.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned the need to be careful about the language you use. How did you get this idea?

**Wei:** I started to have some non-heterosexual friends after college. And I noticed it's ok for them to describe or claim themselves as T (Tomboy), but they felt it's discrimination if some heterosexual people, who are not their friends, said that. I had that experience.

Things participants learned from their LGB friend experiences are mixed. Some are beneficial for developing cultural awareness/sensitivity, and some might need more information to clarify. Although Wei mentioned being careful about language, the challenge of language/wording/terms for participants to articulate sexual minority people or related issues became vivid in the interviews. They were more familiar with the term "gender," and thus they used the term "gender" when what they really meant is "sexual orientation."

**Yun:** I had experiences of working with people with this kind of gender.

**Tian:** The society is more and more open, so more people can express their preference in gender.

The relatively small number of consultants who had gay men friends might reflect the more homonegative climate in men's sport. Possible explanations for hardly seeing gay men in sport are: few gay men are in sport because the climate is not welcoming, and gay men need to protect themselves by staying hidden. Many participants indicated that the climate in men's sport was more conventional, and participants felt they need to be

more thoughtful and careful in dealing with sexuality-related issues in men's sport. As Chu said, "Many of the male athletes that I know dislike gay men". Their perceived ability to deal with sexuality-related issues in men's sport was also impacted by little exposure to gay men athletes. Fang said, "I am more comfortable in dealing with lesbian issues in sport because I had connections with lesbian athletes before and it's easier to gather more information or resources. But in terms of targeting men's sport about sexuality issues, I don't think I can do it now."

### **Working Experiences with LB athletes: Built Mutual Trusting Relationship**

Seven consultants had experience working with lesbian athletes. Among the 7, 2 had worked with bisexual female athletes. Consultants responded it was hard to identify bisexual female athletes. None of them worked with gay, bisexual male, or transgender athletes. They perceived the athlete's sexual orientation through observation (the athlete's appearance, demeanors, interaction with teammates), information from coaches or other teammates, athlete's direct or indirect self-disclosure, or the consultant's query. Consultants generally thought their working experiences with lesbian or bisexual female athletes were positive. However, the depth of the working relationship between the consultant and lesbian or bisexual female athletes seemed to be of two kinds: superficial/shallow and deeper/bonding.

***Superficial relationship.*** One working relationship was relatively superficial. That is, the consultant had not gotten to know much about the athlete's life beyond sport, particularly life related to sexual identity. Four consultants indicated that they did not discuss anything about the athlete's personal relationship issues. At most, the athlete

casually mentioned her "good friend," "intimate friend" or "girlfriend" in the conversations, and the consultants mostly just listened and did not respond. Some consultants felt it was just like a heterosexual female athlete talking about her boyfriend. Nothing stood out to them in terms of working with lesbian athletes. Only one consultant mentioned that the lesbian athlete seemed to be more defensive and liked to show her toughness.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned you had worked with 2 lesbian athletes. How did you know they are lesbian?

**Mei:** Just in the middle of conversation, she brought it out. For example, "I had an argument with my girlfriend yesterday" etc. And so you know she is a lesbian.

**Interviewer:** How did you feel when she mentioned that?

**Mei:** It's just like other female athletes mentioned fighting with their boyfriends.

**Interviewer:** Did you make any adjustments or become aware of words or language you use after realizing she is a lesbian?

**Mei:** I didn't. At most, change boyfriend to girlfriend.

Two of the consultants who worked with lesbian clients, but did not discuss the athlete's relationship in the consulting session were concerned about how to "appropriately" respond to the lesbian athlete's sharing of personal relationship once it became a topic in the consulting session.

**Wen:** It doesn't have to be a problem. Sometimes it may just...the athlete just tries to share with you. I don't know what perspective or standpoint I should have in dealing with her sharing.

**Chu:** Sometime, maybe it's because we (the athlete and consultant) are close, naturally, they would share some of their relationship stuff with me. But..I felt...sometimes...sometimes... I used to provide the function of listening from a friend's standpoint. But if they have some problems or difficulties one day, I don't think I can...it's not under my control. Yeah, so I feel maybe consultants can have education about same sex...same sex relationships etc...

*Deeper relationship.* The other 3 consultants had a deeper/bonding working relationship. They indicated that the lesbian athletes shared happiness or worries in their intimate relationships, and the consultants discussed the relationships with them. When asked about positive or negative experiences in working with lesbian or bisexual female athletes, these 3 consultants all mentioned support-confirmed and sexual identity-discussed experience. That is, the consultant talked about/openly expressed his/her support for sexual minorities to sexual minority athletes, and the sexual minority athletes, in turn, were comfortable disclosing and discussing their sexual identity with the consultant. Importantly, the consultants felt their working relationships with the lesbian athletes moved to a closer and stronger level, where athletes trusted them more, shared more, and were more willing to work with the consultant on all kinds of challenges they faced, including performance problems and relationship problems.

**Han:** I felt the group (lesbian athletes) was curious about whether I'm lesbian or not soon after I started working with them. It's a women's team, and I sensed they were curious about me. But their curiosity was far more than I expected. One day, they came to ask me directly. They wanted to ask directly, but they were shy at the same time, so they didn't know how to ask



the question. I tried to encourage them and said, "just ask. Don't worry. You can ask me anything." It's private space, but almost the whole team was there. I was surprised the first question they asked was right on sexuality issues. Finally, they pushed one person to ask, "XXX, we wanna know, wanna know how do you think about or feel about lesbians?" The next question was "Do you think we are lesbians?" And they kept asking whether I'm a lesbian or not.

**Han:** Actually I was a little surprised by all these questions, particularly in a group setting. I responded to their questions by saying: I feel very comfortable being with you and discussing this topic. Based on my own philosophy, it's like someone prefers meat, someone prefers seafood, and someone is a vegetarian. In your case, it's just what you like to eat is different from other people. And that's it.

**Han:** Then I also felt it necessary to clarify myself. So I went on to say, "I totally respect who you are, I'm very comfortable with who you are, and I also have friends like you, both male and female. But in my case, I'm carnivorous." I need to let them know that I like men. I don't want them to misinterpret that I'm also a lesbian.

**Han:** I told them they are more than welcome to discuss any related or unrelated issues with me. I told them I support them. I found everyone was laughing very happily after the discussion. It's like they got a very good answer or feedback. I feel they opened themselves more, we were closer, our relationship was stronger, and they visited me more often after that.

**Han:** Yeah, so our working relationship was very good. I helped them with many performance issues and sometimes relationship issues, etc. Yeah, so I think basically showing your support, care, or respect to this group from the beginning is very important.

Building a trusting relationship with athletes is the goal for every consultant.

Being understood and gaining support and help are what athletes want from consultants.

Sexual identity is part of the self, and particularly for sexual minorities, it is an identity

often hidden for several reasons. For heterosexuals, one does not need to tell others that

one is a heterosexual and one does not need to worry whether other people are supportive of heterosexuals or not. For sexual minorities, sexual identity becomes an identity that must be brought out for affirmation and support because this is a heterosexist and homophobic society. Everyone is assumed to be a heterosexual and sexual minorities still face prejudice. It is understandable that working relationships between the consultant and lesbian athletes are different when the consultant confirmed support for sexual minorities compared to consultants who did not discuss related issues with lesbian athletes. The lesbian athletes spent time observing the consultant's attitudes, possible acceptance and support for non-heterosexuals. They shared a little information when they felt the consultant might be ok with that, and at the same time, they could see how the consultant might respond. As Fang described:

Sometimes when we took a walk in the campus, sometimes when we had a casual meal together, they (lesbian athletes) tried to probe if I was accepting, and I always showed my support. They would start to disclose themselves little by little. The process was not taken for granted. I needed to show my care and support, and they opened themselves gradually. After some time when they were assured of support, they shared more and more. Sometimes you can't even stop them sharing (laughed with pride).

Han also expressed,

Actually athletes always observe the consultant. Particularly when I first joined the team, I could feel they were more defensive, and they were always observing me at the same time. If they couldn't really feel my openness and support, they might just feel I'm that kind of people who say one thing and do another.

For consultants who did not have close connections with lesbian athletes, working with lesbian or bisexual female athletes seemed no different from working with heterosexual athletes. The consultants who had deeper interactions with lesbian athletes recognized the importance of showing support and building trust, which was a crucial skill that they gained from the experiences.

### **Experiences of Dealing with Related Issues: Homonegative Language Common, But not Confronted**

Consultants did not discuss dealing with related issues in evaluating their competence because none of the consultants had dealt with LGBT-related issues (e.g., homophobic behaviors or language) in their practice. However, most of them indicated it was common to hear homonegative language among athletes, coaches, or teachers. In particular, using “sissy” in joking was common (“faggy” was also used less often) among athletes at all levels (from junior student athlete to adult national or professional players). Most of time, the consultants would not intervene unless a particular athlete was always targeted. In terms of intervention, for elementary school students, the consultant taught them about respecting different gender expressions. For middle school student athletes, the consultant asked the athletes to focus on training.

Three consultants heard negative comments about sexual minorities from athlete-clients either in or outside of the consulting session. Two of them did not give any feedback at the time; they viewed the negative comments as one piece of information about the athlete. One consultant asked why the athlete did not like gay people if the athlete was not too macho, but did not give further feedback to the athlete. Three consultants heard negative comments about sexual minorities from coaches or teachers,

and they usually responded by saying, “it’s ok. It’s just a different choice.” The consultants’ experiences indicated that words or language used to denigrate people with various gender expressions or sexual orientations still exist in sport and educational setting, and come from people in all positions. The passive actions of consultants reflected how they might deal with related issues in their practice in the future.

In summarizing this section, the various information and experiences participants have from LGB friends, working with LB athletes, and limited LGBT-related training and education formed participants’ varied LGBT-cultural competence. The two kinds of working relationships shown in their working experiences reflected different professional philosophies, which are illustrated in their approaches in working with LGBT athletes in the later section.

### **Consultants’ Self-Evaluation of Competence in Working with LGBT Athletes**

Seven consultants evaluated their ability as limited or very limited in working with transgender athletes (no difference between female to male and male to female transgender athlete). They knew little about transgender people, and some did not recognize the term “transgender”. They thought it meant lesbians who are masculine, or gay men who are feminine. Other consultants evaluated their abilities as good because they felt every athlete, transgender or not, would have similar sport-related problems, and consultants were able to help regardless of the athlete’s transgender identity. However, they also recognized their limited knowledge about transgender athletes, and evaluated their abilities as good, but not very good. Interestingly a consultant talked about how he viewed transgender athletes:

For me, the only difference for transgender people, no matter male or female, is physical body, like a man has female... What I try to say is I don't care about his/her previous sex. I would view him/her as the gender he/she has now. You know what I mean? I will treat the person as a man if the person transformed to a male, and I will treat the person as a woman if the person transformed to a female. Just view them as normal gender.

With positive attitudes toward sexual minority athletes, familiarization from having LGB friends, and some LB working experiences, most consultants evaluated their abilities in working with LGBT athletes as good or very good. Table 2 reports their self-evaluation. Interestingly, gender expression rather than sexual orientation, came out in two consultants' evaluation of their ability in working with LGB athletes. More interestingly, the consultant's gender complicated how the consultant perceived their connection to athletes with varied gender expressions. One male consultant had difficulty in understanding masculine lesbians and feminine gay men, while one female consultant felt confident in understanding all female athletes and feminine gay men.

**Tzu:** I feel gay men, who are girls (feminine gay men) might be more....I don't know how to say. I feel I can't handle that kind of people anyway.

**Interviewer:** How about gay man athletes, whose gender expressions are more masculine?

**Tzu:** That's fine for me. I probably don't see him as a man. I see him as a guy, who is attracted to opposite gender, too, but the opposite gender within men.

**Chu:** gay men...some gay men are more feminine. I feel I can interact with them as sisters. But some gay men are more normal, more masculine. I don't know how to continue the conversation if they didn't start a topic. I don't know what they are thinking. Sometimes men think very differently from women. But for gay men, who are feminine, I feel I can use the ways that I comfortably communicate with girls to interact with them.

Whether or not the issue was related to the athlete's sexual orientation affected the consultant's evaluation of ability. This concern led to two approaches that consultants took in working with LGBT athletes and are illustrated in the following section.

Table 2

## Self-Evaluation of Cultural Competence

	Female	Male	Lesbian	Bisexual Female	Gay Man	Bisexual Male	FTM	MTF	
Wei	Good	Good	Limited	Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited	
Tzu	Good	Good	Limited (Masculine) Good (Feminine)	Good	Good (Masculine) Limited (Feminine)	Limited	Good	Good	
Yun	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good	
Tian	Very Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good	Limited	Limited	
Wen	Good	Good	Good	Good	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	
Han	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good	
Chu	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good	
Ling	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	
Mei	Good	Good	Good Limited (if it's related to sexuality issue)				Good Very Limited (if it's related to sexuality issue)		
Tai	Good	Very Good	Limited	Limited	Good	Good	Limited	Limited	
Hung	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Good	
Fang	Good	Limited	Good	Limited	Limited	Limited	Very Limited	Very Limited	

## **Readiness and Approaches in Working with LGBT Athletes**

### **Willing to Work with LGBT Athletes and to Learn**

Even though some participants evaluated their abilities in working with LGBT athletes as limited, all of them have an open and accepting attitude to working with LGBT athletes and to learn how to work effectively with them. It is noted here that generally the participants' attitudes toward sexual minorities (the collective term including LGBT athletes) are open and accepting. However, we cannot assume their attitudes toward gay men are the same as toward lesbians, or their attitudes toward homosexuals are the same as toward bisexuals or transgender people even though when they self-evaluated their competence, they tended to group bisexual female athletes with lesbian athletes, bisexual male athletes with gay men athletes, or group all homosexual and bisexual athletes together. In contrast with being familiar with lesbian athletes, they all were unfamiliar with transgender athletes. They did not meet or know any transgender athlete in sport, and they only had superficial information from mass media about transgender people. However, the foundation of being open and accepting is applicable to working with each subgroup. With this attitude as the foundation, consultants are willing to work with LGBT athletes and are open to learning how to work effectively with them.

**Wen:** yeah, if you happened to work with LGBT athletes, you just try and learn, and you will become better next time. For me, working with LGBT athletes is not a big issue that bothers me.

**Han:** If you happened to work with LGBT athletes, just try your best. Don't refuse to try. How can you know your ability without trying it, so just try. If it really didn't work out, you can do referral anyway.



## **Two Approaches in Working with LGBT Athletes**

As previous indicated, the two working relationships that showed up in participants' working experiences also reflected consultants' professional philosophy and approaches to working with LGBT athletes. The two approaches are not dichotomous, but located on a continuum from a narrow-performance focus to a holistic-humanistic focus depending on how the consultant set the boundaries, which related to the question, "Should consultants talk about sexual identity in sport? Consultants were sure about being accepting of sexual minorities, but some of them were not sure about affirming non-heterosexuality. Two consultants were not sure how to respond "appropriately" to athlete's same-sex relationships.

*Same as heterosexuals-Performance focus.* "Should the consultant care about the athlete's personal issues?" Some consultants focused on the sport or enhancing performance, and were not concerned with the athlete's personal issues or other aspects of life. As one consultant said,

In terms of multicultural or gender issues, personally I feel in counseling, take myself as example. I don't assume an athlete's cultural background. I see him as a general athlete, and help with his problems. So I don't really need to know more about his sexual orientation.

Some consultants saw no differences between working with heterosexual athletes and non-heterosexual athletes because sexual orientation has nothing to do with sport performance, and an athlete is an athlete. They felt competent if the issue focused on performance-enhancement, and they felt the need to separate sport performance issues

and sexuality issues. They endorsed fair treatment, but the need of separate sport performance and sexuality issues came out often in some consultants.

**Interviewer:** How would you evaluate your ability in working with lesbian athletes?

**Mei:** I have a question for this question. Did sexuality issues come out in the consulting service? or... because I haven't been in a situation when sexuality issues came out in the conversation between the athlete and me.

**Interviewer:** okay, so you feel those are different situations for you. If sexuality issues came out, how would you evaluate your ability?

**Mei:** limited

**Interviewer:** If it didn't

**Mei:** good

And Mei explained more in the following statement.

I think consultants need to be aware that LGBT athletes might have different cultures. But this is when the LGBT athlete's sport performance was impacted. If the issue of being LGBT didn't influence the athlete's performance, I would think he/she is just like other ordinary athletes. If sport performance is impacted and I need to deal with the issue, I need to know their cultures, their struggles...

*Athlete as a whole person.* Some consultants had a more holistic approach. They thought performance enhancement would come from an effective working relationship, which was built on how much the athlete trusts you and shares their life with you. They recognized the lesbian identity as part of the athlete, so they would put effort into knowing every aspect of the athlete's life and build trust.

**Han:** As you know, building the relationship with athletes is very important. That's the foundation. If you didn't earn the athlete's trust in the beginning, whatever comes next, like relaxation skills, breathing exercise, are useless. The point is can you really know the athletes very well? Can you let them trust you? Can you let them feel that they are comfortable to share with you, even something very private and hard to tell other people? If yes, everything will go smoothly. If not, if the athlete crossed you out, whatever you do next is useless, because the athlete won't come to you for help. Even if you offer help, he would ignore it. It must be this way because they don't feel valued as who they are. Why would they care about the training you offered? And since they didn't receive positive feedback when they tried to share their personal significant stuff, they wouldn't share anything with you anymore.

**Tai:** I think we need to know more about what is in the athlete's mind because a simple thought can lead to many different emotions and behaviors. So I think there are many factors impacting sport performance, even just the way we communicate with the athlete is a major factor. If you couldn't stand in the shoes of the athlete but just interact with the athlete superficially, it's very hard to really help the athlete with his problems.

### **Responses to Provided Vignettes**

Given most participants only had limited interactions with LGB athletes in their practice, and none of the consultants had encountered LGB-related issues yet, I explored the consultants' responses to two vignettes related to working with LG athletes and on related issues.

#### **Professional Philosophy-Performance Issues vs. Personal Issues**

In the first vignette a lesbian or gay man athlete expressed worry that his/her sexual orientation would be discovered by the coach and teammates. The professional philosophy about separating performance issues and personal issues came up when a consultant asked whether the athlete's performance is impacted or not before responding

to the vignette, and another consultant questioned if this case belonged to sport psychology consultant's job expectations.

**Wen:** I wondered if cases like this fall into sport issues. Maybe the counseling teacher in the school is more suitable for dealing with it...the athlete is afraid to be found out in the team is like a student afraid to be found out in class.

### **Responses to Vignette 1**

Most consultants took an athlete-centered approach. They would try to understand the athlete's worries or fears, how the athlete positioned himself in the team, and what the athlete would like to do. The consultant would give help based on what the athlete needed. Below are the themes of their responses.

*Sexual-identity issue.* Six consultants mentioned that they would make sure the athlete was sure and comfortable with his/her sexual orientation first. Some consultants had a relatively positive perspective; they cared whether the athlete was comfortable with his/her sexual-identity; they emphasized the athlete's self-affirmation. As Ling said, "I will make sure he knows himself very well that he has this sexual orientation. How he identifies himself is more important than other people's opinions." Some consultants were relatively conservative; they were concerned about confirming the athlete's sexual orientation; they thought the athlete might be clearer about his/her sexual orientation after getting more mature or after changing to another environment. As Tzu said:

I will tell him that it's fine to present himself the way he wants to present, but I also think if he has more relationship problems, not really relationship... its...if he has some affection to another gay, special feelings, I prefer he hold on first,

maybe wait till he finishes his athletic training and school, go to college, or start working.

***Emotional support and knowing the context around the athlete.*** Consultants gave emotional support to the athlete. Some wanted to know more about his/her surroundings (e.g., the support from the family and friends), the athlete's emotions and coping strategies. The main concern of the consultants was the athlete's feelings, particularly once the issue was brought up to the team. Other considerations the consultants thought about were whether or not the athlete trusted the consultant, if the athlete had supportive families or friends, and if the athlete was emotionally-dependent. Most consultants seemed comfortable working with the sexual minority athlete to understand the problem and provide help, although one consultant found it difficult to think about this case, and she was not sure how she would help.

**Wen:** uh... I have no particular thoughts. I just feel it's going to be very hard, but I can't really describe the difficulty. Maybe it's because... I don't know what I can do to help. For example, if the athlete has difficulty concentrating, I know my goal is to teach him concentration. I have a concrete way to help him, but in this case, I don't know. I don't know what the goals is, what I can do to help him.

***Challenges at the level of coach and teammate's responses, and limited ability.*** One consultant wanted to contact the coach and counselor with agreement of the athlete. He assumed the coach would be accepting to the athlete. When I followed by asking, "what if the coach's attitude toward sexual minorities was not very positive?" the consultant found it difficult to think what to do in this situation, and still preferred the athlete go to the counseling center for further help. The issue seemed to become much

harder when other people (i.e., coach and teammates) were involved. As one consultant said, “providing emotional support to the athlete and discussing possible coping strategies with the athlete was the first stage. To really solve the problem, assuming other people’s support and a safe environment by bringing gender and sexuality discussion/education to the team was the next stage.”

Most consultants emphasized the first stage by focusing on easing the athlete’s worries and discussing possible coping strategies (e.g., how to safely keep hiding, how to accept and cope with the pressure). Half of the consultants thought about bringing gender and sexuality discussion/education to the team, but many of them were concerned about their own limited ability regarding gender and sexuality issues. The major challenges in bringing this issue to next level were the responses from coaches (e.g., how to change coaches’ attitudes, how to communicate with coaches about bringing sexuality discussion into the team), the responses of the team (e.g., how to start the discussion and lead the discussion without making the sexual minority athletes the target), and the consultant’s ability to address this issue (e.g., limited knowledge of sexual orientation, materials for educating, experiences for sharing, particularly in men’s sport, skills and strategies for communicating).

*Environmental factors and outside resources.* Several factors influence the consultants’ confidence in pursuing this case beyond the sexual minority athlete level. One consultant showed confidence in working on this issue with his team because he had built up a strong supportive relationship with the coach. Many consultants thought it was harder to address this issue in men’s sport than in women’s sport because the climate in

men's sport was more homophobic, coaches in men's sport were more conservative, and male athletes tended to challenge each other's manhood and sexual orientation.

Consultants would search for advice from mentors or colleagues in clinical or counseling psychology, and seek help from the counseling center to compensate for limited training, experiences and resources. One consultant, who had LGB friends, had some working experiences with lesbian and bisexual female athletes, some training, and was self-educated about sexuality issues, showed confidence in communicating with coach and teammates with little help. Her confidence likely came from deep acquaintances with non-heterosexual athletes, sufficient knowledge about sexuality issues in sport, and skills in communicating these issues with other people.

**Han:** I had worked with sexual minority athletes before having the class about consulting with sexual minorities. So I had searched lots of information and done lots of reading to know this group of people. And as I told you, I'm very open. So I feel I handled those cases pretty well.

**Interviewer:** What challenges do you expect in working on this case and working with the athlete?

**Han:** I think there will be no problems between the athlete and me because the consultant's attitude is the key. If I can make him feel supported and we work on solving this problem together, there will be no problem between us. In terms of next the level, between me and the team, or between me and the team's boss, basically, it just depends on how I communicate with them.

**Interviewer:** What resources or assistance do you think might be helpful for you to work on this case, particularly when something unexpectedly happened in communicating with the team or team's boss?

**Han:** Resources or assistance... I have no thoughts on that now. At most, possibly... I really can't think of one... At most, let's assume things get

worse, for example, the athlete's sexual orientation was found out, and the whole team excluded him. In the worst situation even the manager and the boss of the team felt negative about him. This is the worst situation I can think of. I will do a group session to discuss sexuality issues, discuss their fears and why they fear? The answer might be they are afraid to be infected or whatever. Official information or booklets from some organizations, like sexuality and gender equality resource center, might be helpful for me to educate the team. Inviting speakers from outside to educate the team might be a little too much. I prefer to educate the team by myself with some information that I can find from outside. That's the only resource I need.

## **Responses to Vignette 2**

The second vignette was related to both sexual orientation and sport performance, and it involved both sexual minority athletes and other teammates. In the vignette the team dynamics/cohesion were impacted by some athletes who expressed intolerant attitudes to sexual minority athletes. It seemed reasonable for consultants to approach the sexuality-related issue with sport performance concerns, even though some consultants were concerned about the appropriateness of bringing sexuality-related issues to a group level. As Mei said,

I am not sure, I can't determine whether it's appropriate to work on this issue in a group. Some issues about conflict, I know it's workable at a group level, but when the conflict is related to sexuality issues... I am not sure. I am not sure how I can work on this issue at a group level.

For most consultants, at least the vignette gave them opportunity to focus on issues (e.g., group cohesion, sport performance) other than sexuality.

***Respect, group cohesion, sport performance.*** Most consultants would get to know the opinions of the individual athletes or small group of athletes who dislike sexual minority athletes. After hearing teammates' voices, consultants would teach the



teammates respect by emphasizing: a) it's bad to judge someone based on one's sexual orientation; put-downs are no good for anyone, b) sexual orientation has nothing to do with one's work performance and social interactions; sexual minorities could be good friends and good athletes. A couple consultants mentioned that they would discuss sexual minority celebrities as successful cases because popular sexual minority athletes are not available. Also, consultants emphasized and built team cohesion either by group discussion or team-building activities, and shifted the teammates' focus to sport performance by emphasizing each athlete's contribution to the team performance despite his/her sexual orientation and the importance of team cohesion to team performance.

It is interesting to find the dynamic relationship/power tensions between sexuality issues, sport performance issues, and communication with coaches and teams.

Consultants expected the coach to be open to dealing with this issue because it can impact sport performance. As Ling said,

One principle about coach's openness to deal with this issue is how serious it is. If the issue has impacted the team's performance or interaction, I think coaches are okay to deal with the issue. If it's not too serious, probably not.

It is understandable that consultants use a performance-emphasis approach to communicate with teammates and coaches, because that is how they are usually trained and what is expected. However, over-emphasizing performance as the end product might risk marginalizing one's sexual identity, and might facilitate the "silent code" for sexual minorities or informal rule of "don't ask don't tell."

**Character-building.** Instead of emphasizing sport performance, can consultants and athletes emphasize character-building and an inclusive, virtue-valued climate as outcomes? Respect for all, no put-downs, and group cohesion are still the main components, but what the athlete got in the end is more than sport performance. Other than focusing on sport performance as the end, a couple consultants touched on the idea of inclusive climate and character-building. As Tian said, "I want them to learn to respect each other. I will teach them to respect other people's choices, which they might like or dislike, but that's other people's choices and they cannot bully someone." Consultants focused on educating about respect of different gender expressions or sexual orientations, but considering their limited ability, they needed assistance from outside resources.

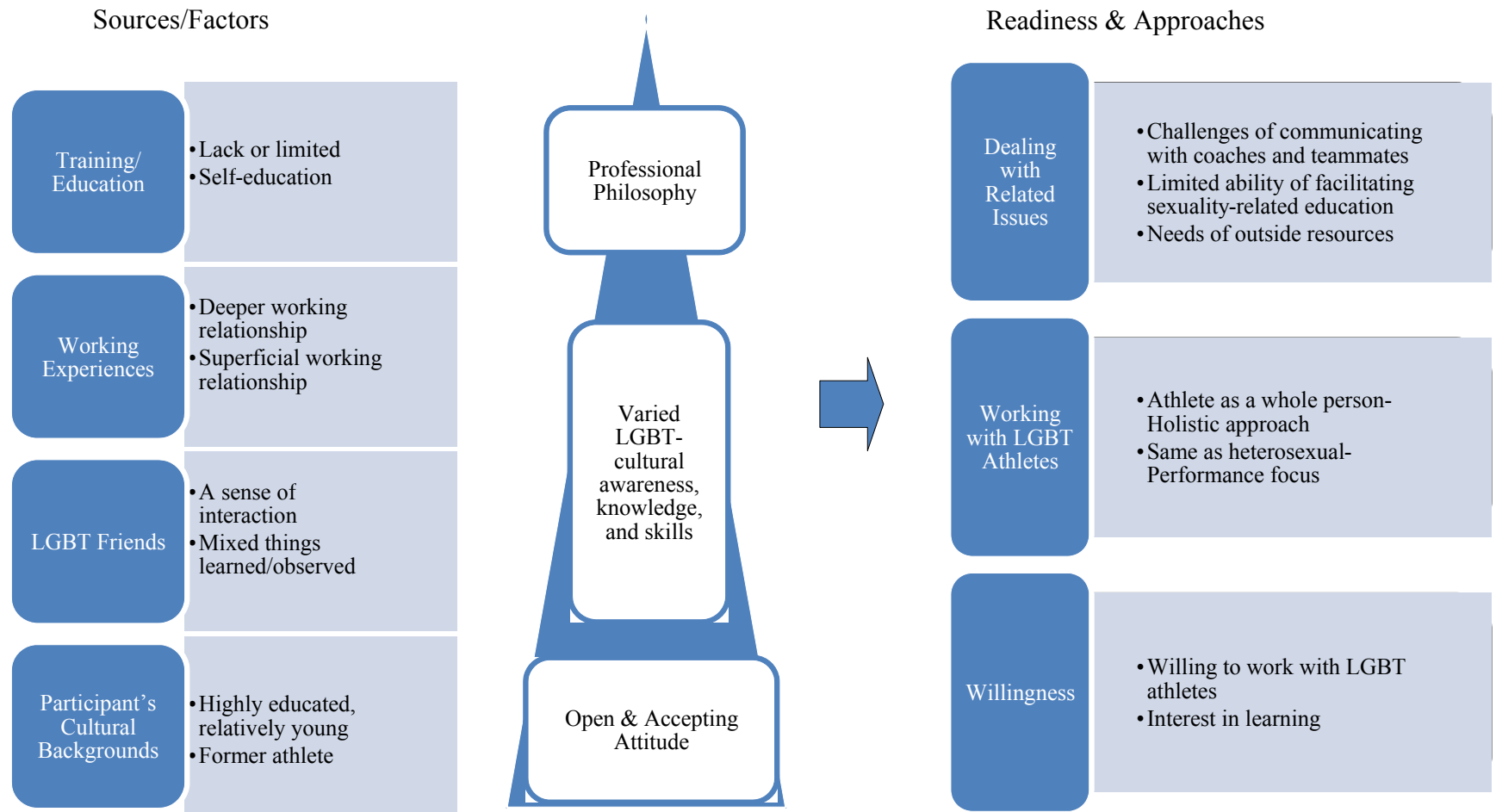
In addition to ability, outside resources, and contextual factors, consultant's professional philosophies might also influence how they approached the issues and their perceived competence in addressing sexuality-related issues. One consultant indicated that she was eager to implement gender and sexuality education and teach athletes about respect and empathy even though she recognized that she has to do lots of preparation beforehand. She intended to implement the education by herself to know all the athletes better, and most importantly, to use and teach empathy.

**Yun:** The most important thing is to teach them how to respect others and place themselves in others' positions. That is empathy. Yeah, most importantly is for them to learn empathy.

**Interviewer:** Do you prefer to lead the education by yourself or need some help from outside resources?

**Yun:** I think I am ok for that, but I must do lots of preparation. You need to make sure you are well prepared, like you also have high empathy and you are good at emotional management. Actually, as long as you have empathy, everyone can do that. You might consider professionals in related areas might be more qualified, but sometimes that's not most suitable for the practical situation.

The diagram presented in Figure 1 is a visual depiction of how their LGBT-cultural competencies were shaped and represented by the themes derived from the data. The diagram first reveals participants' LGBT-cultural competence in the context, which is in Taiwan's sports where athletes are marginalized in a highly hierarchical system (coaches control the resources and athletes, and senior athletes dominant juniors), and gender, sexuality, or power issues in sport are neglected.



Context: Taiwan's Sports; athletes are marginalized; hierarchical system (coach & senior are dominant); gender & sexuality issues are neglected

Figure 1 Participants' LGBT- Cultural Competence

As Figure 1 shows, participants' cultural background is the first source/factor influencing their attitudes and LGBT-cultural competence. "The practitioner is a person first and a sport psychologist second, and in all instances, the personal characteristics of the practitioner will influence how he/she practices." (Anderson et al., 2004 p. 189). Figure 1 also shows factors related to participants' cultural competence: acquaintance with LGBT friends, working experiences with LGBT athletes, and related training or education. The information and experiences participants got from these sources shaped their open and accepting attitude, varied LGBT-cultural competence, and different professional philosophies, which in turn, impacted and are evident in their readiness and approaches in working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues. They are all willing to work with sexual minority athletes and learn how to work effectively with them. They took two different approaches in working with LGBT athletes that reflected their varied LGBT-cultural competence and different professional philosophies. Limited LGBT-cultural competence impacted their readiness in dealing with related issues, particularly at the group and institutional level. Seeking outside resources is their strategy to compensate for limited LGBT-cultural competence.

### **Characteristics of Competent Consultants**

Consultants described the characteristics of a consultant who is competent to work effectively with LGBT athletes or deal with related issues as including: attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

## **Attitudes and Awareness**

The consultants in this research seemed to have the following attitudes: being open and accepting to different sexual orientations, being sincere, respect, showing care and support, being open to work with LGBT athletes. One tricky attitude is “tolerant,” “no differential treatments,” or “don’t care about sexual orientation, treat everyone the same and focus on the problem.” This attitude may run the risk of being culturally-blind if the consultant isn’t aware of how homophobia and heterosexism can impact LGBT athletes’ lives.

In terms of awareness, consultants mentioned being aware of one’s own values, biases and expectations, aware of athlete’s stresses and struggles, and aware of consultant’s own ability. Given few consultants had ever worked closely with LGBT athletes, and only one received formal training, awareness of heterosexism and homophobia seldom came out in the interviews. It can be said consultants might need some work on raising awareness.

## **Knowledge**

Consultants thought it’s important to have knowledge of LGBT athletes, professional/consulting intelligence, and knowledge of consulting LGBT athletes and referral/resources information. The knowledge of LGBT athlete includes: a) sexuality (particularly sexual-identity), b) culture and lifestyle, c) stresses, struggles and challenges. Consultants specifically pointed out that in addition to conceptual knowledge of how to consult with LGBT athletes, practicum or case study would be very helpful for hands-on knowledge. It can be assumed that the consultants in this study have basic

professional/consulting knowledge (they are certified). The interview showed that their knowledge of LGBT is varied. Most of them have limited knowledge of sexuality issues because of the lack of related education and training. Some had misunderstandings of sexual minorities, and some were unfamiliar with related terms. The limited knowledge of sexuality issues was also the main reason that they were hesitant in dealing with related issues at the coach level and team level. The knowledge of LGBT people's stresses, struggles, and challenges was also insufficient. So far, the topics the consultants had discussed with LGB clients or friends were emotional or relationship-related. Most consultants were unfamiliar with the difficulties that LGBT people faced. The importance of having knowledge of referral or information resources was also reflected in consultants' responses to the two vignettes. The resources were based on the consultant's personal network. There is no official resource or information source provided by the Taiwan Society of Exercise and Sport Psychology. Knowledge about transgender people was totally lacking among consultants.

### **Skills**

In terms of skills for competently working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues, many consultants first mentioned that required skills are the same as for working with other athletes. Other than that, the skills they mentioned were mostly about building trust and mutual communication, which included: a) listening skills (sincerely and patiently listening to them), b) inquiring skills (knowing their thoughts), c) observation skills (knowing their surroundings), d) communication skills (how to interact with them, be sensitive about their sensitivities, behavioral considerations). Reflecting

back to the two kinds of working experiences the consultants had with lesbian athletes, the skill of providing a safe, supportive, and affirmative space might be one of the key skills consultants should have. Another skill consultants thought important is utilizing outside resources. Most skills consultants mentioned were interpersonal, except for utilizing outside resources. This might reflect the power structure and job of the consultant in sport. Consultants are trained and expected to teach mental skills for improving sport performance. In the real world, consultants are supervised by the coach. Usually they need to consult with the coach and get the coach's permission to implement any training plans for athletes. No content about how to interact with coaches or navigate existing system is provided in consulting training. No wonder no consultants mentioned any skills in working with coaches at the institutional level.

### **Inclusion of LGBT Training in Current Training Programs**

All consultants thought it's necessary to include LGBT training in current training programs, particularly sexuality knowledge and consulting ethics. Considering the length of training programs, they thought the major ideas and concepts could be first introduced within the training period, and then followed up by theme workshops, in which experience-sharing, case studies, practicum and detailed guidelines are provided. All but one consultant was very interested in participating in such training. The reason she didn't put LGBT-training as priority was because she had other topics, which were more urgent. She would try to enhance her competency when she encounters difficulties in working with LGBT athletes.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

This research explored sport psychology consultants' cultural competence in working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues. A grounded theory approach was used to analyze interviews and explore how sport psychology consultants perceived their LGBT-cultural competence, what their experiences of working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues were, what their responses to vignettes were, and what their views of characteristics needed to be LGBT-culturally competent were. Figure 1 reveals participants' LGBT-cultural competence in the context. As figure 1 shows, participants' personal cultural background, acquaintance with LGBT friends, working experiences with LGBT athletes, and related training or education influenced participants' attitudes toward sexual minorities, their LGBT-cultural competence and professional philosophy, which in turn, impacted their readiness and approaches in working with LGBT athletes and dealing with related issues in sport. The following section discusses the findings in this study and provides recommendations for application and future research.

It is encouraging that participants all had open and accepting attitudes toward sexual minority athletes. As participants indicated in the interview, this open attitude is the precondition for sport psychology consultants in working with sexual minority athletes. Martens and Mobley (2005) described dealing with professionals' own homophobia as the first step in working with sexual minority athletes. With mentor's supervision, the consultant became aware, faced, and dealt with his own homophobia (Martens & Mobley, 2005). Being aware of one's homophobia is not easy. Homophobia not only shows up in one's attitudes but also can present unconsciously through one's feelings, values and biases. Thus, having resources or tools that can help consultants examine their feelings, values, biases or stereotypes may be helpful. The resources can be one's mentor or colleagues, experiential activities (Martens, Mobley & Zizzi, 2000), or self-reflexive logs and practice (Shinke, McGannon, Parham & Lane, 2012). Participants mentioned that referral is an option if the consultant is not comfortable with sexual minorities. This view aligns with the AASP ethics code: AASP members working with specific populations have the responsibility to develop the necessary skills to be competent with these populations, or they make appropriate referrals. However, without the process of facing and dealing with one's homophobia, consultants lose the opportunity of self-growth and working with culturally different athletes. Participants in this study were all open to working with sexual minority athletes even though their cultural competencies were varied. This further reflects the necessity of enhancing sport psychology consultants' LGBT-cultural competence and having a supervised system for assuring culturally competent service.

Having sexual minority friends was the major source for sport psychology consultants to know more about sexual minorities and gain a sense of how comfortable they were in interacting with sexual minorities. Studies have shown positive relationships between having LGBT friends and people's attitudes toward sexual minorities (Herek & Glunt, 1993; Shang, Liao & Gill, 2012). Herek and Capitanio (1996) proposed that people who knew multiple LGBT people or had close LGBT friends were more likely to recognize the group's variability and refute inaccurate stereotypes (e.g., gay men are all feminine). The number of LGBT friends and depth of friendship influenced participants' evaluations of their ability in working with sexual minority athletes. Only a few participants had gay men and bisexual friends, and none had transgender friends. It can be assumed that the difficulty in seeing or meeting gay men, bisexual men, and transgender people in sport is due to the unwelcoming climate, as many participants indicated that men's sport is more conservative. Studies also show that male athletes had more negative attitudes toward sexual minorities (Liao, 2007; Shang & Gill, 2012). It is hoped that with a changing climate, more gay men can come out, bisexual people can speak with their own voices, and transgender people can be seen. All these point out the need to create an inclusive environment for diverse sexual minority athletes, which is also sport psychology consultants' responsibility.

The two kinds of working relationships participants had with sexual minority athletes showed the difference between recognition/appreciation and ignorance/silence of athlete's sexual identities. The positive outcomes (e.g., athlete's trust and bonding relationships) of recognition and inclusiveness of athlete's sexual identities were also

shown in this study. Within an existing culturally diverse sport context, sport psychology consultants could choose to exclude or ignore culture, or to recognize and appreciate the cultural diversity of athletes and experiences. The point is that there are more positive outcomes if one chooses to be culturally aware, inclusive and competent. Positive outcomes include better athlete adaptation, decreased cultural stress for minority athletes, and enhanced sport enjoyment and performance for cultural minority athletes (Schinke et al., 2006). Constantine (2007) stated that attempting to minimize or ignore cultural concerns negatively affects counseling outcomes. Moreover, beyond consulting outcomes, if sport psychology consultants choose to downplay athlete's sexual identity without recognizing the privilege of and the oppression caused by heterosexism, sport psychology consultants are complicit in maintaining the status quo, and the marginalization of sexual minorities will hardly be changed.

The importance of sending positive messages of supporting sexual minorities was shown in the findings. In addition to provide caring and support to sexual minority athletes, showing inclusive messages openly (e.g., putting a "safe zone" sticker on the office door) is essential for not only giving positive messages to sexual minority athletes, who are in the closet, but also setting a tone and standard inclusive climate for all athletes. Sport psychology consultants need to examine and challenge existing norms, which usually privilege certain groups and leave out some groups. Doing nothing or being silent is a way of being complicit in perpetuating existing injustice. It takes "actions" to make changes. It makes a difference even just taking small actions like using "partner" instead of boyfriend or girlfriend to include diverse relationships. Some

educational kits, such as Walsh, Symons, and Hemphill's (2006) *Getting Over It: Homophobia, Sport and University Education*; *It Takes a Team! Making Sports Safe for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Athletes and Coaches* by the Women's Sport Foundation; *Changing the Game: the GLSEN Sports Project*, are good resources for sport psychology consultants and other sport professionals to put the ideal of creating an inclusive environment for sexual minorities into practice.

Generally participants' knowledge of sexual minorities and sexuality issues in sport is limited, and some participants had misunderstandings about sexual minorities. Three kinds of existing LGBT-related training or education that some participants had been exposed to were: a) multicultural counseling course from counseling department, b) "Understanding LGBT" workshop from Taiwan Tongzhi Hotline Association or gender equity education in school, c) LGBT issues in sport from sport psychology course. It would be useful to incorporate the resources from these three sources to design more systematic and comprehensive gender and sexuality educational programs or workshops for their certification training. The inclusion of a social bases course in the required training curriculum would also broaden sport psychology consultants' views of the connection between sport and society, individual agency and social changes, and cultivate their sense of responsibility in social justice.

Given participants' varied cultural knowledge and skills and unfamiliarity with sexuality issues in sport, when they needed to deal with sexuality-related issues in their practice, they often thought about seeking resources or help from senior sport psychology consultants and professionals in other disciplines (i.e., counseling or clinical psychology

and gender and sexuality studies). Participants in this study utilized their personal networks as resources. It will be beneficial if the Society for Sport and Exercise Psychology of Taiwan can develop an official system to integrate multicultural and multidisciplinary information/resource into training and help consultants accumulate multicultural consulting experiences and intelligence. This supporting system not only would provide sport psychology consultants useful information, but also send a message of respect for all to all coaches and athletes. This movement to enhance institutional multicultural competence will further expand the impact and address the multicultural competence of other sport professionals (e.g., coaches and PE teachers).

In addition to practical cultural knowledge and skills, two things that can facilitate participants' development of LGBT-cultural competence are: a) moving from passively accepting cultural diversity (i.e., sexual orientation in this study) to actively affirming and appreciating cultural diversity, and b) expanding sport psychology consultant's job mission from sport performance to well-being and social justice. These conceptual changes are also related to the central ideas of multiculturalism and multicultural competence. Also, these concepts appear in a consultant's professional philosophy when multicultural competence intersects with applied sport psychology. Non-heterosexuality is often ignored or silenced because of the historical discrimination. First, sport psychology consultants need to break the silence code on sexual minorities in sport (Krane & Barber, 2005; Shang & Gill, 2011). If sport psychology consultants have cultural awareness, they would recognize sexual identity as one of the cultural identities that is significant to both consultants and sexual minority athletes and that non-

heterosexuality is not something to be ignored. Butryn (2002) proposed that far too often, people adopt a “culture/race/sexual identity blind” approach in sport psychology, meaning that they treat all athletes the same. Sport psychology consultants often treat people similarly with the hopes of being equitable and with the belief that one’s skills transcend culture (Schinke & Moore, 2011) (this is also reflected in participants in this study), but they fail to recognize that the “blind” might only reflect and endorse the values and culture of certain groups. Sport psychology consultants need to recognize that sameness and equity are two different approaches, with the later considering people’s (both the receiver and provider’s) cultural and contextual factors, social difference and social forces.

With the gradual progress in sport psychology in addressing cultural diversity and cultural competence, the work and role of sport psychologists also need to be reconstructed. As Schinke and Moore (2011) proposed, culture is not meant to be a special topic or an add-on to the sport psychology literature. Rather, culture is at the center of all that we do. Ryba and Wright (2005) reconceptualized work in sport psychology as “cultural praxis.” The role of sport psychologists shifts from merely attempting to improve athletes’ performance from a cultural-indifference, apolitical and neutrality-myth perspective to assisting athletes for performance enhancement, athlete self-assurance, and empowerment; indeed social transformations occur from a multiple identification-focused, difference-sensitive and social justice-based perspective. Sport psychology consultants are agents of change not only for athlete’s sport performance but

also for athlete's well-being and social and political development, and in combating institutional and cultural oppressions.

The dynamic relationships of the components in figure 1 are not only working in a linear way. Regardless of participants' varied LGBT cultural competence, their open and accepting attitudes to sexual minorities and professional philosophy of helping all athletes with performance issues led to participants' willingness to work with LGBT athletes and to learn how to work effectively with them. This willingness facilitates the opportunities that participants expose themselves to in LGBT-related training or education when it is provided. Role play or experiential activities of working with LGBT athletes can be designed into part of the training, so participants' LGBT cultural competence can be enhanced by both training/education and working experiences. Working experience is a major component in evaluating and cultivating the skill aspect of LGBT-cultural competence. Sport psychology consultant's professional philosophy should be introduced and discussed in the training or education to illustrate and clarify consultants' role as not only helping with athletes' sport performance, but also caring about athletes' personal development and well-being, and being responsible for social justice. This professional philosophy (how sport psychology consultants define their roles and job expectations) influences how consultants view athletes' sexual orientation (ignorance, passively acceptance, or positively confirmation), how they work with LGBT athletes (athlete as a whole person-holistic approach or same as heterosexual-performance focus), and most importantly, how they deal with sexuality issues in sport (e.g., confronting homonegative language and actively creating an inclusive climate). The



professional philosophy of some participants in focusing on sport performance, treating everyone the same and being indifferent to social justice can be traced to the legacy of mainstream sport psychology. The development of sport psychology was based on positivist epistemology and focused on sport performance in elite sports, which leads to a sport psychology that is context-deprived and indifferent to power relations. However, with the social changes and recognition of the important roles of cultural identities, power relations and social context in better understanding human behavior, sport psychology consultants need to reexamine and redefine their professional philosophy. Consultants' professional philosophies also influence the education/training in which consultants are interested and the development of their cultural competence. If consultants view helping with athlete's personal development and promoting social justice as part of responsibilities in addition to helping with sport performance, the consultants would want to know the athlete beyond sport performance; actively take actions/challenge existing norms in creating an inclusive environment; recognize related training and education is needed; enhance his/her awareness, knowledge, and skills in fulfilling his/her professional philosophies. Thus, sport psychology consultants' professional philosophy serves as a guiding light leading consultants' development of LGBT-cultural competence.

### **Conclusion**

A critical focus of this research was to explore sport psychology consultants' LGBT-cultural competence. So far no research has examined sport professionals' LGBT-cultural competence. Marra et al. (2010) looked at general multicultural competence of certified athletic trainers, and Gill et al. (2005) looked at general multicultural

competence of physical activity professionals. Their results showed a gap between athletic trainers' self perception/evaluation of high cultural competence and their low scores on Cultural Competence Assessment, and a gap between their cultural behaviors and cultural awareness (Marra et al., 2010). Gill et al. also found professionals' perceived cultural competence did not necessarily translate into actual culturally-sensitive practice. However, these studies did not further explore the gaps.

The current study not only is the first study examining sport professionals' LGBT-cultural competence, but the findings also showed that in addition to cultural awareness, knowledge and skills, the professional's philosophy and contextual factors influence professionals' actual practice and cultural behaviors. The results confirmed that insufficient knowledge and skills are barriers constraining sport psychology consultants' actions in advocating sexuality issues in sport (Barber & Krane, 2007). The results also showed the need of changing consultants' culturally blind approach (i.e., treat everyone the same) to culturally sensitive and competent approach, and expanding consultants' role from enhancing athletes' sport performance to being agents of social changes. Such conceptual changes are related to sport psychology consultants' professional philosophy, which is influenced by the education and training consultants receive in sport psychology. In short, multiculturalism or cultural competence should start from changes in sport psychology programs (e.g., curriculum design, interdisciplinary work, and accreditation criteria).

### **Implications for Sport Psychology Practice and Future Research**

Being cultural competent is necessary for sport psychology consultants for self-growth, quality of service, athlete's satisfaction and empowerment, and social changes. Thus, cultural competence should be one of the core attributes in every profession. The findings in this study confirmed the importance and need of enhancing consultants' LGBT cultural competence, and showed the lack of related education and training for sport psychology consultants in Taiwan. Martens, Mobley, and Zizzi (2000) also pointed out a lack of emphasis on multicultural training in sport psychology graduate training in the U.S. and provided several suggestions for implementing multicultural training, including offering workshops, developing separate courses in the sport psychology training department, taking a multicultural training course from a different department, establishing an area of concentration in multicultural issues in the department, and integrating multicultural issues at every level of the program (i.e., theory, applied practice, supervision, and research). Given that cultural competence and sexuality issues are seldom addressed in sport psychology in Taiwan in academic training or certification programs, offering a workshop for sport psychology professionals and graduate students is a practical way to begin the process of multicultural training. Even though the workshop design is limited in nature, studies have shown enhancement of cultural competence in working with LGBT people through workshops (Fell, Mattiske, & Riggs, 2008; Riggs & Fell, 2010) Participatory action research on cultural competence training would be very useful. The findings in this study provided useful information for designing the workshop. It would be very informative to hear sexual minority athletes'

perspectives on culturally competent service, and their expectation of a culturally-informed working relationship. The nuanced cultural sensitivity and appropriate cultural adjustments could only be identified through the voices of the sexual minority athletes.

Future research and practice would also benefit from developing measures to assess LGBT-cultural competence in several aspects (e.g., awareness and attitudes, knowledge, and skills). In contrast to their acquaintance with lesbian athletes, participants in this study were unfamiliar with transgender issues in sport. Given participants' limited exposure to transgender issues, the data in this study tell us little about transgender athletes. Indeed, transgender issues are relevant but different than sexual orientation issues in sport. Future research could focus on sport professionals' cultural competence in working with transgender athletes and issues. In addition to examining other sport professional's/provider's (e.g., coaches, PE teachers, and sport team managers) cultural competence, researchers could also analyze cultural competence at the institutional level and community level. Issues such as establishment of curriculum and programs, inclusive policies, statements of professional organization aims and collaborations with community agencies and other disciplines are of interest.

In conclusion, the results of this study expand on the existing knowledge base regarding sport psychology consultants' cultural competence in working with sexual minority athletes and dealing with related issues. The findings and diagram developed in this study present the sources of, characteristics of, presentations of, and impact of cultural competence in a dynamic way with consideration of contextual factors. It presents cultural competence beyond the description of provider's characteristics. In

particular, quotes taken from the interview and a grounded theory analysis have explored the concept of cultural competence from Taiwanese sport psychology consultant's life experiences, local context and voices, which differ from the existing literature. The findings of this research also provide a scholarly base for application in professional practice. It is hoped that this study contributes to the limited but gradually growing multicultural scholarship in sport psychology and to the development of professionals' multicultural competence.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

*Warm-up (Knowing participants)*

1. Tell me about your educational/training background in psychology, sport psychology or counseling?
2. Tell me about your current professional practice in sport psychology (what are your primary roles – teaching, counseling, etc.; who were your typical clients and what issues do you address?)

*Interview Q-Group1 (Educational/Training Experiences)*

1. Tell me about any educational training such as conference programs or workshops that you have attended that address about how to work effectively with athletes or clients with different cultural backgrounds (e.g. gender, sexual orientation, age, religions, and nationalities)?
2. Tell me about any educational training such as conference programs or workshops that you have attended that address about how to work effectively with LGBT athletes or address related issues in professional practice? (L: lesbian, G: gay, B: bisexual, T:transgender)

(If the participant answers YES)

- What were the experiences?
- What topics were covered?
- How was the information presented (e.g., lecture vs. interactive)?
- Provide me an example of the types of exercises you did in the training?
- What did you get from the training beneficial to your practice? In what ways?

(If the participant answers NO)

- What kinds of training would be beneficial to you in your practice with multicultural athletes?
- If a training program about working effectively with LGBT athletes is available, will you be interested in attending? Why or why not? What program content or format would be of most interest to you

*Interview Q-Group2 ((Self-evaluations of multicultural competence, particularly with LGBT athletes)*

1. Use the scale of “Very Limited”; “Limited”; “Good”; and “Very Good”, how would you rate your ability to consult athletes from each of the following cultural backgrounds?
  - Female athlete
  - Male athlete
  - Aboriginal athlete
  - Mixed-racial athlete
  - Athletes from different countries
  - Lesbian athlete
  - Female bisexual athlete
  - Gay male athlete
  - Male bisexual athlete
  - Transgender athlete (separate: Male to Female; Female to Male)
  - Athletes with physical disabilities
  - Athletes who came from very poor socioeconomic background
2. Tell me about how your rating for lesbian athlete differs from other responses?
3. Tell me about how your rating for female bisexual differs from other responses?
4. Tell me about how your rating for gay athlete differs from other responses?
5. Tell me about how your rating for male bisexual athlete differs from other responses?
6. Tell me about how your rating for male to female transgender athlete differs from other responses?
7. Tell me about how your rating for female to male transgender athlete differs from other responses?

*Interview Q-Group3 (Experiences or responses of consulting with LGBT athletes)*

- How many times have you consulted with lesbian athletes? female bisexual athletes? gay athletes? male bisexual athletes? transgender athletes?

(If the participant has any consulting experiences with any one of the groups)

1. Tell me an experience that you felt confident/ positive about and one that you didn't feel as confident/comfortable with.
2. What were the challenges you experienced working with that athlete?
3. Tell me about your relationship with that athlete or how would you describe that consulting relationship.
4. How did you get to know the athlete and the situation he/she faced better?
5. What, if anything, would you do differently in the future?



(If the participant has no experiences, the following scenario will be provided)

A gay or lesbian athlete tells you that he/she is worried that his/her coach or teammates will not like him/her if they find out his/her sexual orientation.

1. What will you do in the situation?
2. What are the possible challenges that you can anticipate you may experience?
3. What may you do to learn more about the athlete and the situation?
4. What maybe be helpful for you to handle the situation?

*Interview Q4-Group (Experiences or responses of addressing related issues)*

- How many times have you addressed LGBT-related issues, other than directly consulting with LGBT athletes, in your practice? Such as some athletes use language expressing his/her dislike of LGBT people.

(If the participant has any experiences)

1. What were the issues you dealt with?
2. How did you address them?
3. How would you describe that experience?
4. What were the challenges you experienced in the case?
5. What, if anything, would you do differently in the future?

(If the participant has no experiences, the following scenario will be provided)

A team was having difficulty adjusting to having a gay player?

1. How will you address the situation?
2. What are the possible challenges that you can anticipate?
3. What may you do to learn more about the situation?
4. What may be helpful for you to handle the situation?

*Interview Q5-Group (Opinions of being LGBT-competent)*

1. What attitudes and awareness should a sport psychology consultant have to work with LGBT athletes or address related issues?
2. What knowledge should a sport psychology consultant have to work with LGBT athletes or address related issues?
3. What skills/abilities should a sport psychology consultant have to work with LGBT athletes or address related issues?
4. What trainings or resources should a sport psychology consultant have to work with LGBT athletes or address related issues?