

Still an “Old Boys’ Club”? Certified Mental Performance Consultants’ Gender-Typed Sport Specialization and Employment Setting

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Abstract:

Qualitative research has demonstrated the prevalence of gender inequity and sexism in sport-related careers, including those in sport psychology. To provide quantitative evidence, we examined the role of gender in Certified Mental Performance Consultants’ (CMPC) specialization and employment by extracting and coding the data (N = 576) from the CMPC Directory. Independent samples t tests showed that male CMPCs specialized in more masculine sports, less feminine sports, and a similar number of gender-neutral sports compared with female CMPCs. Chi-square tests of independence revealed a larger proportion of male than female CMPCs working in professional sport. No significant differences were found in other employment settings (college sport, military, and private practice), age-group specialization, and mental health licensure. These findings, which should be interpreted with caution before further investigation, suggest a need for collaboration between sport psychology professionals and sport organizations that might help mitigate internal and external barriers to gender equity.

Keywords: women | gender typing | equity | diversity | professional sport

Article:

Gender or gender identity—identification of oneself as male, female, or nonbinary (American Psychological Association [APA], 2016)—has always played a role in how the world views sport, an activity associated with masculinity. Although there has been an increase in female athlete representation in sport across the United States since the establishment of Title IX (Messner, 2011; Sobal & Miligrim, 2019), gender inequity is still prevalent in sport-related careers across the globe, including those in coaching (e.g., Acosta & Carpenter, 2014), athletic training (e.g., Mazerolle et al., 2015), and sport psychology (e.g., Roper, 2008). Studies over the past two decades have indicated the frequent occurrence of gender bias, discrimination, stereotypes, and sexism, resulting in fewer opportunities for female sport psychology professionals than their male peers (Goldman & Gervis, 2021; Krane & Whaley, 2010; Roper, 2002, 2008; Roper et al., 2005; Whaley & Krane, 2012). Although researchers have explored these issues through commentaries and qualitative

interviews with female professionals, no quantitative evidence is currently available on the role of gender in sport psychology professionals' specialization and employment, an indirect indication of gender stereotyping and representation (Fink, 2016; Hardin & Greer, 2009). This study, therefore, examined the data from Certified Mental Performance Consultants (CMPCs), who are mostly based in the United States, as the first attempt for understanding gender typing in the current applied sport psychology workforce and assessing areas of concerns and improvements.

Despite the recent organizational emphasis on diversity and inclusion, Fisher and Roper (2015) noted the lack of understanding and the need for considering intersectional identities within the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP). Gender is an issue of diversity, equity, and intersectional identity in sport psychology consulting, often normalized by the male perspective (Roper, 2002). The barriers to female sport professionals, especially those of color, can be explained using the ecological–intersectional model (LaVoi, 2016), which takes into account intersectionality and power. This model, stemmed from the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1992), states that each individual is impacted by their identities (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, ability) alongside experiences, social relationships, organizational policies, and norms, and systems of society. Taken together, these intersectional factors contribute to power (or lack thereof). For instance, sport psychology professionals might be given more or less power depending on their own background and experiences in sport, the culture of specific sports, the decisions and oversights of those in power (e.g., head coaches, athletic directors), and the typical societal gender norms (LaVoi et al., 2019). In a similar vein, systems such as higher education, military branches, and other male-dominated fields have institutionalized barriers and added burdens for those with differing identities (e.g., gender, sexual orientation) to enter. Therefore, sport psychology professionals may be more likely to be attracted to work settings within which they have more power based on their intersectional identities, including gender (Canetto, 2019).

Gender typing is the contemporary term used to represent the gendering of sports (Hardin & Greer, 2009), as well as other aspects of life, leading to the unintentional process of stereotyping (Sobal & Miligrim, 2019). Although sport is primarily viewed as masculine, certain sports are gender typed as appropriate primarily for women or for both men and women (Hardin & Greer, 2009; Koivula, 1995; Plaza et al., 2017; Sobal & Miligrim, 2019). The perceived gender types—masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral—influence individuals' sport and physical activity choices based on their gender (Chalabaev et al., 2013). Specifically, combat sports and contact team sports with the largest men's representation, such as American football, have been rated the most masculine. Aesthetics sports and expressive activities with the largest women's representation, such as gymnastics and dance, have been rated the most feminine (Chalabaev et al., 2013). As sport psychology professionals likely play(ed) sports themselves, the sports with which they work may also be gender typed, resulting in male professionals specializing in more masculine sports and female professionals specializing in more feminine sports.

Gender has been shown to play a role not only in sport participation but also sport-related careers; men tend to outnumber women (Forsyth et al., 2019). Only 43.4% of women's teams and 2.0%–3.5% of men's teams have female head coaches (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014); 25% of all National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) head coaches and 28% of all assistant coaches are women (NCAA, 2021). Women also constitute fewer positions in (a) sports medicine—11% of head team physicians and 32% of head athletic trainers (Lewis et al., 2020), and (b) sport leadership positions—24% of athletic directors and 36% of associate directors of athletics in NCAA institutions (NCAA, 2021). Despite increasing conversations on gender equity in sport, researchers have continuously reported gender discrimination, stereotyping, and barriers

concerning sport employment roles, practices, and beliefs (Forsyth et al., 2019; Goldman & Gervis, 2021; Roper, 2002, 2008), such as dismissal of female voices, assumed fragility, and sexual objectification (Goldman & Gervis, 2021). Sport psychology professionals indicated in recent research that mixed-gender Olympic sports had the most inclusive and accepting environment, whereas male-dominated professional sports were the least inclusive and displayed the most sexist attitudes and behaviors (Goldman & Gervis, 2021). Taken together, the actual employment of female sport psychology professionals working in professional and collegiate sports might be lower compared with their male counterparts.

As sport psychology is an interdisciplinary profession between sport and psychology, the gendered trends in psychology employment may also inform those in sport psychology related employment. Based on the responses from 3,800 doctoral-level Licensed Psychologists, the results of the Survey of Psychology Health Service Providers (APA, 2016) showed a significantly larger proportion of males than females frequently providing services to the military (6% vs. 4%), a performance domain in which sport psychology professionals work. The same survey responses indicated relatively equal proportions of female and male psychologists working in private practice (44%).

Furthermore, the proportion of psychologists providing services to various age groups differed across gender (APA, 2016). Specifically, a significantly larger proportion of females than males frequently worked with children (28.4% vs. 23.1%) and adolescents (35.8% vs. 32.2%), whereas a significantly larger proportion of males than females frequently worked with adults (87.2% vs. 80.4%). These differential proportions might be attributed to gender roles and norms—assuming women to be the primary caregivers of young children (Eagly & Wood, 2012). On the other hand, the proportions of females and males frequently working with older adults over 64 years were comparable (39.0% vs. 36.1%). Based on these data, it is plausible that a larger proportion of female than male sport psychology professionals work with children and adolescents and that a larger proportion of male than female sport psychology professionals work with the military and adult populations. In addition, more females than males are mental health counselors in the general population (Data USA, 2019), which might reflect a gendered trend in sport psychology professionals who hold mental health licensure.

Although the literature has shown gender typing and inequitable employment in sport, only qualitative data are available on applied sport psychology professionals (Goldman & Gervis, 2021; Hyman et al., 2021; Krane & Whaley, 2010; Roper, 2002, 2008; Roper et al., 2005; Whaley & Krane, 2012). The purpose of this study was to add statistical evidence to complement female sport psychology professionals' experience and perceptions of gender and intersectional issues in the profession. These intersectional issues, influencing professional and personal lives of individuals with multiple identities, can impact expected roles and norms, individually, and collectively, within the sport psychology profession. Such issues could affect professionals' career choices due to the nature and assumptions of their perceived gender (and other intersecting identities). More specifically, this study explored the role of gender in sport psychology professionals' gender-typed (masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral) sport specialization; employment setting (professional sport, collegiate sport, military, and private practice); age-group specialization (children, adolescents, young adults, middle-aged, masters, and seniors); and licensure (holding mental health licensure or not). We focused on the CMPC population, whose profiles and data are publicly accessible through AASP, to enhance the objectivity and representativeness of the results. Our hypotheses, informed by our literature review of the ecological–intersectional model and gender composition in other sport and psychology occupations, were as follows:

- a) A larger proportion of male than female CMPCs specialize in masculine sports, and a larger proportion of female than male CMPCs specialize in feminine sports.
- b) A larger proportion of male than female CMPCs work in professional sport, college sport, and military settings, and a similar proportion of male and female CMPCs work in private practice.
- c) A larger proportion female than male CMPCs specialize in children and adolescents, and a larger proportion of male than female CMPCs specialize in adult age groups.
- d) A larger proportion of female than male CMPCs hold mental health licensure.

Method

Data Extraction and Coding Procedure

We (a sport psychology professor, who is also a CMPC, and two sport psychology graduate students) extracted the data, between December 2020 and February 2021, from the CMPC Directory webpage (<https://appliedsportpsych.org/certification/cmhc-directory/>). The initial data included all the available profiles (N = 576; 52.3% female) on which CMPCs reported their job title, organization, webpage, social media, certification and licensure information, various types of specializations, and languages spoken. Table 1 presents the composition of the CMPCs' gender, employment setting, age-group specialization, and mental health licensure information.

The CMPC (first author) set up the data extraction and coding criteria, as described below, for Student A (second author) to extract the data from the CMPC Directory to an SPSS data set. After extraction and coding of approximately one-third of the profiles, the CMPC checked the data to discuss necessary changes and new categories that emerged in the coding process. Then, Students A and B (third author) each extracted and coded half of the rest of the data. After all the CMPC profile data had been extracted and coded, Student B randomly checked 5% of the data coded by Student A, and the CMPC did so for those coded by Student B to ensure 100% intercoder agreement.

Study Variables

Perceived Gender

We categorized each CMPC as male or female based on perceived gender because the CMPC profiles did not provide information about gender identities or pronouns. Specifically, perceived gender was determined using gender expression, how a person expresses their gender identity, by examining the CMPCs' profiles and webpages that had their names and photos (Karimi et al., 2016).

Gender-Typed Sport Specialization

Using the classification from previous research, we categorized each sport in which CMPCs specialized as masculine, feminine, or gender-neutral (Table 2). Categorizations were made according to Sobal and Milgrim (2019) who studied the gender typing of sports in the United

States. For sports that did not appear in Sobal and Miligrim (2019), we categorized them based on other studies focused on gender issues in a particular sport (Carr, 2017; Kidder, 2013; Knapp, 2015; Weninger & Dallaire, 2019): (a) parkour, rodeo, skateboarding, and Xtreme sports as masculine; (b) ice dancing and speed skating as feminine; and (c) CrossFit, futsal, pickleball, triathlon, and biathlon as gender-neutral. After coding each sport specialization, we added the number of masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral sports each CMPC specialized in.

Table 1. Composition of Certified Mental Performance Consultants' Gender, Employment Setting, Age-Group Specialization, and Licensure (N = 576)

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	275	47.7
Female	301	52.3
Employment setting (<i>n</i> = 570)		
Professional sport	32	5.6
Collegiate sport	53	9.3
Military	46	8.1
Private practice	259	45.4
Other	160	28.1
Age-group specialization (<i>n</i> = 381)		
Under 12	55	14.4
13–17	315	82.7
18–25	373	97.9
26 and above	172	45.1
Middle age	221	58.0
Masters	172	45.1
Senior	95	24.9
Mental health licensure (<i>n</i> = 519)		
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor	5	1.0
Licensed Clinical Social Worker	6	1.2
Licensed Professional Counselor	24	4.6
Licensed Mental Health Counselor	11	2.1
Licensed Psychologist	117	22.5
National Certified Counselor	24	4.6

Employment Setting

Based on the CMPC employment information and bios, we classified their employment settings into professional sport, collegiate sport, military, private practice, and other (e.g., faculty). We coded each of these categories dichotomously (yes or no).

Age-Group Specialization

We classified age groups (under 12, 13–17, 18–25, 26 and above, middle age, masters, and senior) each CMPC specializes in, based on choices provided in the directory, as dichotomous variables (yes or no).

Mental Health Licensure

We categorized the possession of any mental health licenses (Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Licensed Psychologist, and National Certified Counselor) reported in the CMPC profiles as a dichotomous variable (yes or no).

Table 2. Frequency of Gender Types in Certified Mental Performance Consultants' Sport Specialization (n = 293)

Masculine sports	Feminine sports	Gender-neutral sports
Baseball (n = 170)	Volleyball (n = 111)	Basketball (n = 169)
American football (n = 121)	Softball (n = 97)	Soccer (n = 161)
Ice hockey (n = 56)	Gymnastics (n = 71)	Golf (n = 140)
Wrestling (n = 28)	Ice skating (n = 26)	Tennis (n = 119)
Shooting (n = 27)	Dance (n = 23)	Swimming (n = 111)
Martial arts (n = 25)	Diving (n = 22)	Track (n = 67)
Rowing (n = 25)	Equestrian (n = 21)	Triathlon (n = 40)
Powerlifting (n = 21)	Field hockey (n = 20)	Lacrosse (n = 37)
Snowboarding (n = 21)	Cheerleading (n = 14)	Skiing (n = 37)
Mountain bike (n = 19)	Speed skating (n = 7)	Cycling (n = 30)
Rugby (n = 16)	Synchronized swimming (n = 6)	Racquetball (n = 23)
Xtreme sports (n = 15)	Badminton (n = 5)	CrossFit (n = 20)
Boxing (n = 14)	Ice dancing (n = 4)	Fencing (n = 17)
Water polo (n = 14)	Netball (n = 3)	Archery (n = 15)
Motor racing (n = 13)		Rock climbing (n = 14)
Bodybuilding (n = 7)		Sailing (n = 11)
Rodeo (n = 6)		Surfing (n = 9)
Cricket (n = 5)		Bowling (n = 8)
Skateboarding (n = 5)		Ultimate frisbee (n = 8)
Parkour (n = 2)		Table tennis (n = 6)
Bobsled (n = 1)		Curling (n = 4)
		Futsal (n = 3)
		Biathlon (n = 2)
		Handball (n = 2)
		Pickleball (n = 2)
		Roller derby (n = 2)

Data Analysis

If no information was provided for a specific section on the CMPC profiles, we treated that section as missing data (49.1% in sport specialization, 1.0% in employment setting, 33.9% in age-group specialization, and 9.9% in mental health licensure) excluded from coding. After the coding, we performed three sets of analyses: (a) descriptive statistics for the study variables; (b) independent samples t tests comparing gender-typed sport specialization between perceived gender; and (c) a series of chi-square tests of independence comparing employment setting, age-group

specialization, and mental health licensure by perceived gender. We used Cohen's d and ϕ coefficient, respectively, to represent small (0.20 and .10), medium (0.50 and .30), and large (0.80 and .50) effect sizes (Cohen, 1988).

Results

Descriptive statistics indicated that, on average, each CMPC specialized in 2.65 (SD = 1.92) masculine sports, 1.36 (SD = 1.24) feminine sports, and 3.59 (SD = 2.09) gender-neutral sports. Independent samples t tests showed that male CMPCs reported specializing in significantly more masculine sports ($M = 3.04$ [SD = 2.13] vs. 2.20 [SD = 1.52]); $t(292) = 3.85$; $p < .001$; $d = 0.45$, and less feminine sports ($M = 1.20$ [SD = 1.28] vs. 1.54 [SD = 1.17]); $t(292) = -2.33$; $p = .02$; $d = -0.27$, than female CMPCs. There were no significant differences between male and female CMPCs in the specialization of gender-neutral sports ($M = 3.75$ [SD = 2.34] vs. 3.40 [SD = 1.74]); $t(291) = 1.45$; $p = .15$; $d = 0.17$.

In terms of employment, chi-square tests of independence revealed a significantly larger proportion of male than female CMPCs working in professional sport settings (9.6% vs. 1.7%); $\chi^2(1) = 17.17$; $p < .001$; $\phi = .17$. In contrast, there were no significant differences between the proportions of male and female CMPCs working in college sport settings (9.9% vs. 8.7%); $\chi^2(1) = 0.24$; $p = .62$; $\phi = .02$, military settings (5.8% vs. 9.3%); $\chi^2(1) = 2.43$; $p = .12$; $\phi = .07$, and private practice (46.0% vs. 44.0%); $\chi^2(1) = 0.23$; $p = .63$; $\phi = .02$.

Regarding age-group specialization, no significant differences were observed between the proportions of male and female CMPCs who worked with children aged under 12 (13.2% vs. 15.6%); $\chi^2(1) = 0.44$; $p = .51$; $\phi = .03$, adolescents aged 13–17 (81.5% vs. 83.4%); $\chi^2(1) = 0.25$; $p = .62$; $\phi = .03$, young adults aged 18–25 (97.4% vs. 97.9%); $\chi^2(1) = 0.14$; $p = .71$; $\phi = .02$, adults aged above 26 (41.8% vs. 49.0%); $\chi^2(1) = 1.97$; $p = .16$; $\phi = .07$, middle-aged adults (59.8% vs. 56.3%); $\chi^2(1) = 0.49$; $p = .48$; $\phi = .04$, masters-aged adults (48.1% vs. 42.2%); $\chi^2(1) = 1.37$; $p = .24$; $\phi = .06$, and senior-aged adults (24.3% vs. 25.5%); $\chi^2(1) = 0.71$; $p = .79$; $\phi = .01$. In addition, the proportions of male and female with a mental health licensure were comparable (33.1% vs. 32.8%); $\chi^2(1) = 0.003$; $p = .96$; $\phi = .00$.

Discussion

Through data extraction from the CMPC profiles, this study investigated the role of gender in sport psychology professionals' gender-typed sport specialization, employment setting, age-group specialization, and mental health licensure. Findings support our hypothesis on the gender typing of sport specialization and partially support gender differences and inequity in employment settings. However, the hypothesized differences in age-group specialization and mental health licensure are not supported.

Consistent with the literature showing male and female sport participation according to gender types (Koivula, 1995; Messner, 2011; Sobal & Miligrim, 2019), we found a similar phenomenon in CMPCs' sport specialization. Male CMPCs specialize in more masculine sports with a small to moderate effect, and female CMPCs specialize in more feminine sports with a small effect. These differences support Chalabaev et al.'s (2013) review findings and notion that gender roles and stereotypes are extensive, especially among Western countries. As CMPCs may specialize in and work with sports that they played in the past, the pervasiveness of gender typing can be expected. Their gender and experience contribute to intersectional factors providing them

power in gender-typed contexts, as the ecological–intersectional model proposes (LaVoi, 2016). It is worthy of note that the larger effect size found in masculine than feminine sports between perceived gender, as well as CMPCs’ overall tendency to specialize in masculine sports, might imply a greater masculinity influence in sports (Chalabaev et al., 2013). The lack of differences in gender-neutral sport specialization between male and female CMPCs might be explained by research that has demonstrated that mixed-gender sports tend to be more inclusive (Goldman & Gervis, 2021; Roper, 2008)

Concerning employment settings, our findings suggest that gender inequity exists in sport psychology employment within professional sport, but not within college sport, military, or private practice domains. The larger proportion of male than female CMPCs working in professional sport is congruent with similar gender imbalance in other sport-related careers, including head athletic trainers (Mazerolle et al., 2015) and sport physicians (Stern & Barrett, 2013). This gender inequity might be attributed to evidence of gender bias and sexism across sport-related careers (Fink, 2016; Forsyth et al., 2019), including applied sport psychology work (Goldman & Gervis, 2021; Roper, 2002, 2008; Roper et al., 2005). Based on their interviews with female sport psychology professionals, Goldman and Gervis (2021) found that the combination of male privilege (i.e., culture and behaviors dominated and normalized by men) and the low status of sport psychology (vs. other sport sciences) elevated the challenges for women. Similarly, numerous studies have indicated the issues of homologous reproduction and the “old boys’ club”—White males hiring those who think alike and look similar to them to maintain their power, which created additional external barriers for women in sport-related careers (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Forsyth et al., 2019; Goldman & Gervis, 2021; Mazerolle et al., 2015; Whaley & Krane, 2012). Furthermore, as applied sport psychology positions have recently begun to emerge in professional sports (Vosloo et al., 2020), men’s sports (e.g., baseball), with more funding than women’s sports (e.g., softball), might be more likely to employ male CMPCs specializing in those sports rather than female CMPCs. These findings align with the ecological–intersectional model (LaVoi, 2016), suggesting that personal identities and experiences, social relationships, organizational policies, and norms and systems of society all play a role in the gender typing of sport psychology employment.

In contrast to our expectation, the proportions of male and female CMPCs working in college sport and military settings are comparable. This might be attributed to the preference of collegiate athletes or even some coaches toward having female practitioners (Lubker et al., 2012; Zakrajsek et al., 2013), which facilitates a better gender balance in employment than other professions (e.g., athletic director, coach) within the collegiate sport setting. Although no literature to our knowledge is available regarding the employment of sport psychology professionals in the military, the gender composition and group affiliation (i.e., psychology-related) of the department hiring CMPCs (e.g., master resilience trainers) may explain similar proportions of male and female CMPCs working in the military (Matthews et al., 2009). On the other hand, the comparable number of male and female CMPCs working in private practice is consistent with the gender balance in psychologists working in private practice (APA, 2016).

The results regarding age-group specialization did not support our hypotheses or APA’s (2016) statistics on more female psychologists working with children and adolescents and more males working with adults. A plausible explanation is that as sport participation is more popular among younger age groups (Eime et al., 2016), both male and female CMPCs typically work with youths and young adults. In addition, sport psychology students most often work with youth athletes and collegiate athletes, a population that they may continue working with throughout their career (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016). Finally, the comparable proportions of male and female CMPCs

with mental health licensure suggest a relatively equal distribution of male and female CMPCs providing mental health services. The athlete clientele might draw more interest among men into the profession, balancing the gender composition in CMPCs with licensed licensure, even though licensed counselors typically consist of more women than men (Data USA, 2019).

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

The strengths of this study include the objectivity and representativeness of the data. Extracting the data from all CMPC profiles reduced potential bias from recruiting or sampling individuals who are more likely to participate in research. To our knowledge, this was the first study to analyze gender differences and inequity in a large sample of sport psychology professionals to enhance generalizability to those practicing sport psychology in the United States. In addition, we systematically categorized 61 sports into masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral based on the literature. This method might represent better accuracy than collecting survey responses on participant perceptions of their gender-typed sport specialization, which could be influenced by social desirability. This study also provides insights into the CMPC gender composition in common applied sport psychology settings for sport psychology professionals, students, and stakeholders to gain awareness and potentially intervene.

On the contrary, this study presented some limitations due to the data (un)available for extraction. The major limitation was the use of perceived gender. Although gender identity is nonbinary, we had to categorize perceived gender based on gender expression from their profiles due to the data not being available in the CMPC profiles. Another limitation was the data extraction and analysis of sport specialization and employment. Almost half of the CMPC profiles did not list their sport specialization, which might have influenced the finding on gender typing in this study. Moreover, sport specialization was reported based on CMPCs' perceptions and preferences rather than past experience or current clientele. Although we could categorize employment settings based on the job titles and organizations listed, secondary employment or contracted work might not have been represented in the data.

Due to these limitations, we suggest that researchers replicate this study should gender, comprehensive employment information, and other intersecting identities (e.g., race/ethnicity) be available. Researchers may extend this study by conducting further quantitative research targeting sport psychology professionals to better assess and understand gender typing, gender norms, gender bias, and other gender issues related to sport psychology employment. Obtaining further evidence, such as the employment details in Meyers et al. (2001), will add more nuance to the conversation about the current status of gender inequity in sport psychology employment. Studying the intersectionality between gender and race/ethnicity, as well as other identities, would also provide a more complete picture of the inequity status (Hyman et al., 2021). It is important to note that a similar proportion of male versus female CMPCs working in different settings does not represent equity, as they could differ in salary and job security in the same employment setting or even position.

Another limitation pertains to the CMPC credential being the main source of credibility in the United States even though this credential is not legally required to conduct mental performance consultation (Sammet, 2021). Women, especially those of color, might be more likely to pursue the credential to appear credible, whereas men may assume credibility within the sport domain and do not feel the need to acquire the certification (Hyman et al., 2021). Therefore, the data in this study might not precisely reflect the current status of gender inclusion and equity among sport

psychology professionals, and thus should be interpreted with caution before further studies. In addition, perceived gender is the only intersectional identity considered in this study. Future research may include a broader group of sport psychology professionals beyond CMPCs and examine more intersectional identities, such as gender identities (e.g., transgender, nonbinary), sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and educational backgrounds, to provide a more accurate portrait of the diversity, inclusion, and equity in the sport psychology profession. It would be valuable to also examine practicum sites to which sport psychology students are assigned and student intention to pursue the CMPC credential and/or mental health licensure based on various intersectional identities.

Implications

Adding to previous qualitative evidence (Goldman & Gervis, 2021; Hyman et al., 2021; Krane & Whaley, 2010; Roper, 2002, 2008; Roper et al., 2005; Whaley & Krane, 2012), this study generally supports the existence of gender typing and inequity in the current sport psychology workforce. In order to promote gender equity and inclusivity, particularly in masculine sports and professional sport settings, we echoed Forsyth et al. (2019) and Shaw and Frisby (2006) to break down the internal and external barriers that female professionals face when pursuing a career in sport. To reduce internal barriers, sport psychology graduate programs and professional organizations, such as AASP and APA Division 47, should elevate the accomplishments of female sport psychology professionals, especially their work with male-dominated professional sports. Introduction to sport psychology courses, at the graduate or even undergraduate level, should explicitly discuss the contributions of female professionals, such as the eight trailblazers mentioned in Krane and Whaley (2010). These positive role models help enhance aspiring female professionals' confidence and belief that they can be successful (Forsyth et al., 2019). In addition, open discussion on gender stereotyping needs to be embedded in the graduate program curriculum.

To remove some of the external barriers for female sport psychology professionals and students, AASP and APA Division 47 should further their outward-facing efforts to promote gender equity. Although recent initiatives such as the Women of Color Empowered in Sport Leadership Institute (WE Lead), mentorship programs, and diversity awards help support underrepresented sport psychology students and young professionals within the organizations, they may not directly address employment issues. Helping professional sport organizations to assess, understand, and modify their employment practices can make a more direct impact on providing more opportunities for females. Such practices can include nondisclosure or nonidentification of gender on application forms and sufficient representation of females on hiring committees (Forsyth et al., 2019). More importantly, AASP, APA Division 47, and all sport psychology professionals, especially males, need to take action to reduce gender bias and report sexism in the workplace (Fink, 2016; Goldman & Gervis, 2021). As Cunningham (2014) stated, "justice and equality in sport will only be realized through our collective actions—not our silence" (p. 3). The development of a diversity action plan needs to extend beyond the work of the existing diversity committees to every member (Fisher & Roper, 2015).

Furthermore, we have a few more gender-related suggestions for AASP and APA Division 47. These organizations ought to regularly assess the needs of female (and other underrepresented) students and young professionals as part of their strategic plans. This assessment is crucial because these students and professionals may have different needs and experiences from the established female sport psychology professionals who "made it." We suggest that the assessment occurs in

the form of conversations beyond a simple survey that might not show enough depth about their experience. These conversations, coupled with quantitative data, will allow for a better understanding of the current diversity climate in the profession (Fisher & Roper, 2015). In addition, gender pronouns should be more widely used in professional events and made available in the CMPC Directory for clients and students to reach out to professionals from whom they feel comfortable seeking help.

Conclusion

Overall, this study supports the notion that gender typing and gender inequity exist in applied sport psychology, especially in male-dominated and professional sport environments. The current study adds to the ongoing conversations about gender, diversity, and intersectionality in sport psychology by utilizing objective sport specialization and employment data among all CMPCs. Although we have highlighted several important issues and potential solutions to facilitate gender equity, further investigation is needed, especially on sport psychology students and young professionals who are female or hold transgender and gender-nonconforming identities. In support of professionals in sport psychology (e.g., Fisher & Roper, 2015; Goldman & Gervis, 2021) and other sport disciplines (e.g., Cunningham, 2014; Forsyth et al., 2019; Shaw & Frisby, 2006), we call for collective action from sport psychology professionals and a collaborative effort with professional sport organizations to remove internal and external barriers to gender equity through education, research, and practice.

Note

1. The CMPC gender composition is comparable to the AASP membership gender composition (54.8%; E. Stark, personal communication, October 11, 2021).

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