

Introduction

- Interdependent team sports (e.g., basketball) attract individuals from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Recent work has emphasized the importance of understanding how athletes' cultural backgrounds influence team and individual outcomes (Godfrey et al., 2020a)
- Subsequently, scholars examined the manner by which cultural diversity influences cohesion in youth and intercollegiate sport (Godfrey et al., 2020b, 2020c)
- Although this research provides an initial understanding of the effects of cultural diversity on teams, it does not explain *why* such effects exist

Purpose

To gain an in-depth understanding of athletes' perceptions of ethnic diversity (as a type of cultural diversity), and its influence on team functioning and individuals' experiences

Method

Table 1. Self-identified participant demographic characteristics

Demographic Category	Frequency
Gender	
Men	9
Women	4
Ethnicity	
Asian	1
Black	2
White	8
Mixed	2

Notes. $N = 13$ interdependent team sport athletes, $M_{age} = 21.15 \pm 1.99$.

Method (cont'd)

Semi-structured Interviews

- Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner (i.e., gave participants the freedom to elaborate on ideas, but also kept them on task; Braun & Clarke, 2013)
- Questions were focused on athletes' perceptions of the influence of ethnic diversity on:
 - 1) *A team as a whole*
 - 2) *Cohesion and interpersonal relationships*
 - 3) *Athletes' individual experiences*

Data Analysis

- Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase thematic analysis approach (Figure 1)

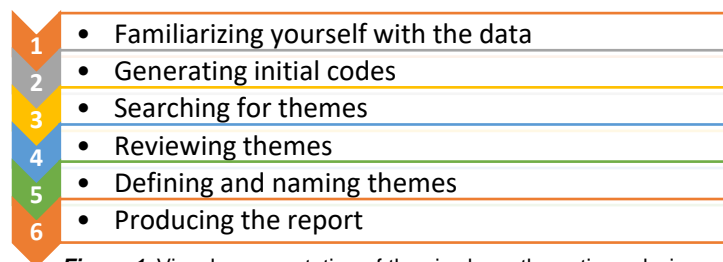


Figure 1. Visual representation of the six phase thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

- Participants perceived ethnic diversity to be influential upon group functioning and individual experiences (see Table 2 and Figure 2)
- Several boundary conditions were also unearthed that participants perceived to alter the effects of ethnic diversity (see Table 2 and Figure 3)

Results (cont'd)

Table 2. Thematic analysis summary

Categories	Themes
Team functioning	Playing styles Mutual learning Team acculturation Communication Cohesion Subgroups
Individual experiences	Personal growth Satisfaction Intentions to return
Boundary conditions	Athlete-level (e.g., ability) Team-level (e.g., diversity climate) Contextual/environmental factors (e.g., sport culture)

I wouldn't be happy if all my friends were White, you don't get the same perspective, you know, the same outlook...having friends of different ethnicities has shaped me. I think it has let me see the world in a different way. (P6)

Figure 2. Example quote from personal growth theme.

Basketball breeds a type of person...Because basketball guys are kind of similar. It's a little bit of a different culture that's just created whether you really like it or not, it's just how it is. (P12)

Figure 3. Example quote from contextual/environmental factors theme.

Practical Implications

1. Educate coaches about the sport culture that exists in their respective sports (e.g., hockey, soccer)
2. Implement diversity training with coaches and athletes to promote a climate that values diversity