Exploring sports leaders' understanding of male allyship for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa – an exploratory study.

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Abstract

The sports coaching profession has historically been and remains a male dominated profession, both in Aotearoa New Zealand and worldwide. Not only are female coaches under-represented, but the numbers of female high-performance coaches are declining, leading to the loss of the female voice from the coaching landscape. Sports organisations cannot genuinely reflect their communities without female representation and that includes female coaches. Men in sports leadership and coaching positions can be utilised to support and empower women coaches, by men playing an essential role in enabling gender equity.

Little is known about male allyship advancing gender equity and supporting female high-performance coaches. Therefore, this study focused on the following questions: what are the perceptions and understandings that sport leaders hold about individual and organisational male allyship in the context of female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa? And how, and to what extent, is male allyship evident in the support of the development of high-performance women coaches in Aotearoa?

This study utilised the Transformational Allyship Model and the theory of allyship as frameworks to guide the study. A purposeful sample was selected from senior leadership teams representing 8 individual national sports organisations currently working with High Performance Sport New Zealand. A total of 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom and analysed using reflexive Thematic Analysis which followed a six-phase process. Three key themes were developed from the data: male sports leaders' perceptions of allyship; the range of male allyship for high-performance female coaches in Aotearoa and supportive actions of ally activists in Aotearoa. Key findings indicated the existence of male allyship for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa and being an ally activist was identified as the most effective form of allyship. Overall, participants perceptions of allyship were associated with support of female coaches.

This study contributes to the literature by adapting the continuum of gender allies for the purpose of this research and it identifies the presence of male allyship for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa utilising the transformational allyship model.

Key words: Allyship; female coach; gender equity; gender ally spectrum and the transformational allyship model.

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This thesis has brought me great joy and has provided me with a high impact learning experience. My research goal is that this research journey continues from here.

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List of Abbreviations

NSO	National Sports Organisation.
HPSNZ	High Performance Sport New Zealand.
IOC	International Olympic Committee.
TAM	Transformational Allyship Model (Jolly et al., 2021).
CoGA	Continuum of Gender Allies (LaVoi, 2019).
GAC	Gender Ally Continuum (Mulhern et al., 2022a).
EIM	Ecological Intersectional Model (LaVoi, 2016).
NZOC	New Zealand Olympic Committee.
NZD	New Zealand Dollar.
WOTP	Women Only Training Programs.
GAS	Gender Ally Spectrum (Mulhern et al., 2022b).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"Progress has been neither swift nor easy" (Fink, 2008, p. 147).

Coaches are an integral part of sport. They can have a positive influence on the athlete beyond the locker-room or field and on wider society as important role-models (Davis et al., 2018; LaVoi et al., 2019). However, female coaches do not always enjoy the same opportunities or experiences as their male counterparts (Cunningham, 2008; Cunningham, 2009; Hindman & Walker, 2020; LaVoi et al., 2019; Lusted & Fielding-Lloyd, 2017). Female coaches do not operate in isolation—their experiences are shaped by the people, organisational culture, and policies of those in power and the societies in which they live (LaVoi et al., 2019; Lusted & Fielding-Lloyd, 2017).

Hidden processes such as gender segregation are more visible and even naturalised in sports (Anderson, 2017). As a result, female coaches experience significant inequities which manifest for example, in systemic oppression; 'blaming the women' narratives; negative effects on female coaches' well-being and sense of belonging in their roles (Demers, 2019; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; LaVoi, 2016). Norman (2021) wrote that if workplace inequities are not challenged and changed for female coaching staff we are adversely effecting organisational capability to entice and retain coaching staff and develop high-potential female coaching talent. Despite the recognition by scholars, sport administrators, funders, and athletes that women need equitable, inclusive, and diverse sport workforces, women are consistently underrepresented in high-performance sports coaching in almost all sports across the globe (Didymus et al., 2021; Hinojosa-Alcalde et al., 2018; LaVoi, 2016; Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2018). This matters because a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace benefits all (Demers, 2019; LaVoi, 2016; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018).

Sports coaching is historically a male dominated profession and unfortunately it continues to remain that way (Norman, 2010b, 2013, 2021; Schewinbenz, 2021). For example, in 2019, the Council of Europe investigated the number of women coaches and women in sports leadership positions.

Eighteen European countries participated in the study with the results showing that women accounted for 22% of elite-level coaches working across Europe (Fasting, 2019). Internationally, not only are female coaches under-represented at the high-performance level, but the number of females coaching at this level is declining (Demers, 2019; Demers et al., 2021). The under-representation and declining representation of high-performance female coaches has been described as a war on women coaches (Griffin, 2015). It is a global sports issue and an issue for sports organisations in Aotearoa.

The situation in Aotearoa

Aotearoa's national sports organisations (NSOs) are generally not representative of the sporting communities they represent, and this also applies to coaches. Female coaches are significantly underrepresented, particularly at the high-performance level. A 2019 online survey of female coaches by High-Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ), reported that women are coaching at multiple levels across sport in Aotearoa (High Performance Sport New Zealand, 2019). However, only 9% of respondents were coaching athletes at professional club level with 15% of respondents currently in a head coach role and paid part-time; 5% were in a full-time contract head coach role; 12% were paid as a part time head coach; 9% were in a contract part-time head coach role and 56% were voluntary head coaches (High Performance Sport New Zealand, 2019). The lack of high-performance female coaches was recently exemplified in Aotearoa's Olympic team at the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics. Aotearoa had 211 athletes competing at the Tokyo Olympic Games across 21 sports. The coaching staff for these athletes consisted of at least 62 male coaches and just four female coaches (Anderson, 2021; McFadden, 2021). When looking across all sports and nations at the Tokyo Games, only 13% per cent of coaches and 30.5% of technical officials were women (IOC, 2021). Over the past decade, just 10 per cent of accredited coaches at the Olympic Summer and Winter Games have been female (IOC, 2021).

The Tokyo Summer Olympic Games may have been Aotearoa's most successful in terms of medal count (IOC, 2021), but female high-performance coaches have been consistently absent over past

Olympic cycles. This continued absence speaks directly to the issue of gender inequity and social justice more broadly. In Aotearoa, the data is compelling concerning the lack of representation of women coaches in high-performance sport. As of 30 April 2022, only four women hold the role of high-performance director or manager across 10 high performance target (podium) sports in Aotearoa (High Performance Sport New Zealand, 2022).

In response to statistics such as these, many sporting organisations have publicly declared a goal to include more women in high performance roles and their efforts have met with varying degrees of success (Maurer & Qureshi, 2021). To support organisational efforts, LaVoi et al. (2019, p. 137) called for researchers to shift their focus away from barriers that impede female coaches, to efforts that focus on identifying the factors that support female coaches to "help them not only survive, but thrive". Locally, Women in Sport Aotearoa (WISPA), Ngā Wāhine Hākinakina o Aotearoa was launched on International Women's Day in 2017 with a vision that sees "Women and girls valued, visible and influential in sport" (WISPA, 2021).

In consultation with WISPA, the New Zealand Government has responded to the need to level the playing field for women and girls in sport and physical activity by launching the Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation Strategy. This strategy was supported by an investment of $10 million spread over three years to facilitate its successful delivery (WISPA, 2018). More specifically, the Government recognised the significant lack of high-performance level female coaches in Aotearoa and committed $2.7m to a Women in High Performance Sport pilot project. HPSNZ launched the Te Hāpaitanga new coach development initiative, designed to grow emerging and future high-performance level female coaching and leadership talent (High Performance Sport New Zealand, 2021). The initiative aims to remove existing and future challenges for female coaches in their pursuit and maintenance of a career in high performance sport, thereby accelerating their development and growth as women coaches (High Performance Sport New Zealand, 2021). The inaugural intake saw twelve female coaches enter the 18-month program with the second intake of women coaches in 2022 (HPSNZ, 2022). This targeted initiative consists of female coaches with high performance potential

drawn from nine different sports, such as surf lifesaving, triathlon, football, basketball, boxing, and water polo (High Performance Sport New Zealand, 2021).

Allyship as an approach

Gender inequity is an outcome of an inability to attract, retain, and develop high potential female coaches at an individual and organisational level (Norman, 2021). To accelerate and facilitate change, sports scholars have demanded additional, more equitable, and novel approaches to address the issue of inequity in the coaching workforce (LaVoi et al., 2019; Norman, 2021). Furthermore, sports scholars have called for these approaches to be research-based, innovative, sustainable and include all genders working together to address this issue (LaVoi et al., 2019; Norman, 2021; Schewinbenz, 2021). Innovative approaches are required to address the issue of gender inequity for women, and it is believed that allyship may be such a mechanism as it has been demonstrated to produce positive organisational outcomes in various fields (Carlson et al., 2020; LaVoi et al., 2019; Madsen et al., 2020; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; Valerio & Sawyer, 2016; Wilson et al., 2021). This research is a response to this call to action by focusing specifically on gender inequity for high-performance women coaches (Jolly et al., 2021; LaVoi & Wasend, 2018; LaVoi & Boucher, 2021; Schewinbenz, 2021; Warren et al., 2021; Werthner, 2020; Wilson et al., 2021).

It is well established in the literature that sport organisations serve as sites where men and men's concerns are privileged (Cunningham & Fink, 2006; Ratten & Jones, 2020). Allies are consistently described in the literature as individuals who work for social justice from a position of privilege and allyship has the potential to influence change at multiple organisational levels (Jolly et al., 2021; Schewinbenz, 2021; Wilson et al., 2021). The focus of this research is thus on male allyship and how it relates to male sport leaders supporting and advancing women coaches in Aotearoa. The purpose of this study is to identify and examine the extent of male allyship for women coaches in Aotearoa and provide evidence for the utility of the Transformational Allyship Model (TAM) (Jolly et al., 2021). The

TAM was used as a conceptual model and framework to guide the study and address the following research questions:

What are the perceptions and understandings that male sport leaders hold about individual and organisational allyship in the context of female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa?

How, and to what extent, is male allyship evident in the support of the development of high-performance women coaches in Aotearoa?

Research Approach

This study was underpinned by constructionism as it connects to the researcher's values, primarily honesty, respect of others, and a drive to understand the world from others' lived experiences. As a result, this paradigm influenced the research process from beginning to end. The thesis is structured in the following way. In Chapter 2 a comprehensive body of literature is reviewed in relation to the research questions, highlighting the various implications of gender inequity and female coaches in sport. This chapter describes the TAM conceptual model utilised for analysis, discussion and framing of the findings. The chapter further details the research gap and emphasises the significance of the study.

Chapter 3 introduces and describes the methodology, discussing how the qualitative based exploratory research design, paradigm and reflexive thematic analysis were best suited to address the research question. The Continuum of Gender Allies (CoGA) (LaVoi, 2019) is described, and its relevance discussed in relation to answering the research questions and the contribution of the research tool to the trustworthiness of the study. Significantly, this chapter introduces a new research tool – the Gender Ally Continuum (GAC) (Mulhern et al., 2022a) - specifically adapted from the CoGA (LaVoi, 2019) for the purpose of this research. Chapters 4 to 6 discuss the key themes that were generated from the findings in relation to the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a), the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021)

and relevant literature. Finally, Chapter 7 closes with the discussion including study limitations and opportunities for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature pertinent to the research. Sports participation rates for girls and women have increased globally across all sports (Didymus et al., 2021; Norman, 2021). Despite increased participation rates, the underrepresentation of female coaches in sport remains an enduring issue (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Didymus et al., 2021; LaVoi et al., 2019; Norman, 2021). This issue is further amplified in the high-performance setting, with female high-performance coaches not only under-represented, but their numbers are declining (Demers, 2019; Demers et al., 2021). Gender equity for female high-performance coaches does not exist and is a long-standing issue, with no evidence to suggest this will change anytime soon (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Culver et al., 2019; LaVoi et al., 2019; Norman, 2010a, 2021). As highlighted in Chapter One, sports scholars are calling for new and innovative approaches to drive long-term impactful change to redress gender inequalities for female coaches (LaVoi et al., 2019; Norman, 2021). Because of this, the literature review incorporates the following themes to examine the existence and extent of male allyship, as one such new approach, for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa.

The literature review begins by detailing examples of global and domestic athlete activism in sport. The chapter then moves to review the significance of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion for women more broadly in the business world, and then focuses on efforts to address gender inequity for female high-performance coaches (Brannon et al., 2018; Leberman & Shaw, 2015; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; Valerio & Sawyer, 2016). The concept of male allyship is presented as a potential way of redressing gender inequity for female high-performance coaches. Justification for using male allyship is provided by the theory of allyship from the sport and business literature (Carson et al., 2021; Jolly et al., 2021; LaVoi & Wasend, 2018; Schewinbenz, 2021; Taylor, 2015; Wilson et al., 2021). Following this literature on allyship, the chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the TAM (Jolly

et al., 2021), which is the conceptual framework utilised for the analysis and discussion of the research findings.

Sport as a site for social activism

Sport does not function in isolation from broader society (Cooper et al., 2019). Several authors (e.g., Anderson, 2017; Cooper et al., 2019; Norman, 2010a) have emphasised that sport operates as a site where societal inequalities such as sexism, marginalisation, economic stratification, and oppression in its various forms are reproduced, intensified, and resisted. Historically, sport has been one site where the tension between the possibilities and the limitations of driving positive social change have resided (Jolly et al., 2021). Sport has a long tradition of athlete activism - Billie Jean King striving for gender equality in tennis and more broadly throughout the world of sport (King, 2021); Tommie Smith's and John Carlos' black power salute supported by Peter Norman wearing a human rights badge while on the podium at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics (O'Bonsawin, 2015); American footballer Colin Kaepernick's refusal to stand for the American national anthem before National Football league games and US soccer player Megan Rapinoe later joining Kaepernick's protest (Rapinoe, 2020).

Closer to home, in 1970 Bob Burgess and several other All Black rugby players refused to play on the tour to South Africa in protest against the apartheid regime (New Zealand History, 2015). By 1981, with the South African rugby team touring Aotearoa, Burgess along with a significant portion of Aotearoa society were part of an anti-tour protest movement, opposing domestic and international racism (New Zealand History, 2015). This period from July to September in 1981 is regarded as a significant and divisive moment for sport, social justice, and activism in Aotearoa where over 200 demonstrations took place, across 28 locations, with more than 150,000 protestors and 1500 people charged with protest related offences (New Zealand History, 2020). More recently, in March 2022, Aotearoa's national women's cricket team – the White Ferns – took a knee in support of the Black Lives Matter campaign before their World Cup games. Apart from the White Ferns, all the above-

mentioned activists experienced some form of repercussions as a result of their activism. Athlete activism for social justice in sport has increased in recent years (Martin et al., 2022). Activism in sport has also moved beyond athlete activism to include other stakeholders (Martin et al., 2022). Other stakeholders include men, who are overly represented in leadership positions at all levels of sports (Kempe-Bergman et al., 2020). Significantly, at this influential general leadership level, men are sometimes responsible for the production, management and implementation of gender equity initiatives and policies (Kempe-Bergman et al., 2020).

An emphasis on moving sport away from a deeply gendered institution toward a more diverse, equitable and inclusive space includes critiques of the sexist and homophobic culture that pervades much of sport (Cunningham et al., 2021; Fink, 2016; Shaw, 2019). Sport, like other spheres of social life, is a highly gendered system based on the knowledge, privileges, and experiences of men, deeply embedded within the culture of sport (Burton & Leberman, 2017; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; LaVoi et al., 2019; Wasend & LaVoi, 2019). Despite the well-documented advantages of having a more diverse and inclusive organisation, and evidence of a positive relationship between gender equity and business performance (LaVoi et al., 2019; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; Valerio & Sawyer, 2016), this pervasive culture presents enduring challenges to women's participation and contribution in sport.

The issue of a lack of diversity within sport is not simply an issue of under-representation, but one of a lack of inclusion, and a challenge to human rights more broadly. The under-representation and marginalisation of female coaches is a complex problem. The complexity of this issue was addressed by LaVoi (2016), who highlighted the issue of intersectionality of women coaches. Intersectionality refers to the overlap and intersection of women's social identities, included but not limited to, sexual identity, race, education, ethnicity, ability, and economic status, creating compounding experiences of discrimination (LaVoi, 2016). On this basis, LaVoi (2016) argued that the lives and experiences of female coaches needed to be represented to reflect this diversity. Given the scope of this thesis, the focus is only on gender, whilst recognising the importance of intersectionality. However, the

intersectionality of women coaches' oppression should be interrogated in future research to recognise that women are far from a homogenous group.

For the purpose of this research, gender equity is defined as fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs (Massengale & Lough, 2010; Norman, 2021). In contrast to gender equity, gender equality is the process of ensuring that all genders have the same access to such things as resources, programs, and facilities regardless of individual needs. Equality and the implementation of equality measures tends to overlook the fact that all people differ in their experiences, abilities, concerns, and resources, and therefore what they require (Canadian Women and Sport, 2020; Culver et al., 2019).

The pursuit of gender equity in sport – rethinking the structure of sport

Sport scholars have well-documented the issue of gender inequity in sports (Demers, 2019; Norman, 2021). Various national governments have legislated for it (Government, 1990; Norman, 2018; Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2018) and national sports organisations have implemented such legislation (Demers, 2019). Despite these efforts, gender inequity continues to be a persistent issue relating to women in sport. Gender inequity is particularly prominent with respect to female coaches across international sport (Norman, 2010a; Norman, 2018).

In 2014, Kerr and Banwell (2014) wrote that the pursuit of gender equity in sports coaching had been a prevailing concern for scholars for more than half a century. Considering Kerr and Banwell (2014) observation, Burton and Leberman (2017) argued that there are too few women leaders in sport to effect meaningful change alone, and because men are likely to constitute most of an organisation's leadership, their involvement is critical. The financial case for diversity, equity and inclusion, and the positive relationship between diversity, performance and both real and potential profitability is well recognised in the broader business world (Brannon et al., 2018; Leberman & Shaw, 2015; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; Thomas et al., 2021). Highlighting that unrealised value, McKinsey and Company

proposed that approximately $28 trillion US dollars could potentially be added annually to global GDP by 2025, if gender equity existed in international labour markets (Thomas et al., 2021).

The strong presence of women in the workforce is important, with the ratio of women to men in the boardroom being critical for change (Konrad et al., 2008). Konrad et al.'s (2008) study of corporate directors and CEOs indicated a critical mass of at least three women is likely to result in a fundamental transformation in the boardroom, including improved corporate governance. Bear et al. (2010) also proposed that the effectiveness of women on boards may increase with the addition of more than one female director. The authors argued that while a single female director may have a positive impact on the firm's reputation, she may also face challenges. Numerical minority groups e.g., a female director, may be considered as a token by the board numerical majority (male) members, and may be perceived as less competent. Torchia et al. (2011) findings suggested that going from one or two females to at least three makes it possible to enhance the level of firm innovation. Konrad et al. (2008), Bear et al. (2010) and Torchia et al. (2011) findings are all consistent with a 'tipping point' or 'critical mass' argument. Biswas et al. (2021) maintain that women's greater representation on boards is positively associated with a greater likelihood to adopt policies and practices that address social justice. Based on these arguments it is unrealistic to expect significant change within organisations unless female representation reaches a critical mass.

Diversity at all organisational levels enhances decision making and has a positive impact on productivity and profitability (Demers, 2019; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). According to Burrell (2016), diverse organisations are more equipped to connect with diverse consumers, which is a proposition that can arguably be readily transferred to the sports coaching context. However, in sport, women face unique, multiple, and complex challenges. Women, for example, have little access to coaching positions in the men's game, while men regularly feature as coaches in the women's game (Walker & Bopp, 2010). The result is a market with less opportunity for, and greater competition amongst, women for female coaching roles coupled with a loss of the female coaches' voice from sport (Walker

& Bopp, 2010). Walker and Bopp (2010) investigated the under-representation of females in the male-dominated workplace of American college basketball. The study indicated the extent to which men coach in women's sports, largely due to the unexpected consequences of Title IX. Supported by evidence demonstrating an imbalance of women and men in the sporting workplace, Walker and Bopp (2010) highlighted the double-standard that exists whereby men are afforded greater coaching opportunities essentially across two job markets – men and women's college basketball. Conversely, coaching opportunities for women are limited in women's sports and almost non-existent in men's sports. Importantly, Walker and Bopp (2010) reported that the female coaches they interviewed believed that societal, structural, and organisational changes would be required if women were to actively pursue and successfully obtain positions in a male-dominated workplace.

Walker and Bopp (2010) recommended that a mandate be attached to coaching positions, whereby college athletics departments must interview at least one female candidate per vacancy, or funding would be cut. They argued that the benefits of such a mandate were twofold: (1) it enhanced the female coach interviewee's network by meeting the athletic director and staff; and (2) it rewarded the colleges that recruit a female coach for a male sports teams, for example, through increased scholarship funding. The authors also recommended that the governing body of college athletics and its community create a recognised and vocal action group for the fair and equitable treatment of women wanting to coach in men's sports.

The observation that diversity reproduces diversity is a key finding from the work of LaVoi and Wasend (2018). LaVoi and Wasend (2018) defined organisational culture as the way an organisation goes about its daily business in the form of the way things are done, the norms, the lived values, and implicit rules of behaviour. LaVoi and Wasend (2018) advocate for organisations to develop an inclusive culture as an important consideration for organisations when trying to attract and retain talent. Talented women will actively seek out a workplace which provides visible and tangible proof that women are valued, supported, and where they perceive they can thrive (LaVoi & Wasend, 2018). These recommendations

enable individuals, such as policy makers, and sports organisations to re-envision sport as an equitable system for female coaches. This reframing of gender inequity as an issue for all to address is discussed in the following section.

This is not a woman's issue, it is an issue for everyone

An important element of a vision for gender equity for high performance sport coaches is that the under-representation of women coaches in sport is not the problem in itself, nor is it simply a 'women's issue'. Rather, the issue of gender inequity needs to be re-framed as an organisational and societal issue (Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2018; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; Wilson et al., 2021). This is because research has demonstrated that gender equity movements require men, and the need for men's active involvement in systemic change if progress is to happen (Norman, 2018; Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2018; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; Wilson et al., 2021). Wilson et al. (2021), for example, provided a highly contextual account that discussed the author's experiences of establishing a men's allyship group in a traditionally male dominated university engineering faculty. The aim of the allyship group was to promote a more equitable and inclusive faculty in collaboration with women. Wilson et al. (2021), reported that the male allyship group used various methods, supported by the literature on allyship, to advance their purpose, including:

- Seeking guidance and feedback from female colleagues.
- Identifying ways in which male group members had benefited from their privileged gender identities.
- Providing group members and aspiring allies with the tools needed to practice effective allyship, such as professional relationship building with female colleagues, and
- Influencing change at multiple levels within the organisation.

The Ecological Intersectional Model (LaVoi, 2016)

Central to re-framing the issue of gender inequity for women coaches is LaVoi's and Dutove's work (LaVoi, 2016; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012). As part of their work, these two researchers developed an important framework to help understand the complexity of gender inequity for women coaches in sport (see Figure 1). LaVoi and Dutove (2012) first developed the ecological model of barriers and supports for women coaches, with LaVoi (2016) expanding this model - creating the Ecological Intersectional Model (EIM) - to include intersectionality and the role of power. Specifically, the EIM framework was developed to examine the experiences of women coaches globally, from the individual (micro) to the societal (macro) levels. The framework's purpose is to systematically consolidate and identify gaps in the existing literature to assist researchers target their inquiry and aid and empower decision makers to make changes that can improve opportunities for women in coaching (LaVoi, 2016). This is evident in the framework being widely employed in the sports literature for this purpose (Banwell et al., 2019; Barrett et al., 2021; Clarkson et al., 2019; Culver et al., 2019; Cunningham et al., 2019; Kraft et al., 2020).

Figure 1: Barriers and Supports for female Coaches: An evidence-based Ecological model (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012, p. 20)

The EIM (LaVoi, 2016) clearly illustrates that there are more barriers than supports for women coaches, particularly those women who are further systematically marginalised based on their identities e.g., sexuality, race, ability, age, ethnicity. LaVoi (2016) points to the irony that the individuals in the system with the least power (i.e., women) are often held responsible for the lack of women head coaches - a visible leadership position. Women are often situated as other or not belonging, and their presence as athletes, coaches, or leaders is under constant scrutiny (Fink, 2016; Kane, 1995). Any discussion of women in coaching must include an understanding of gender as fundamental to both organisational and social processes in the sport sector (Pape, 2020). Extending

this narrative, LaVoi and Boucher (2021) are explicit in their view that sport is a gendered system that privileges men and changes to that system must also be driven by men.

Drawing on the EIM (LaVoi, 2016), Taylor and Wells (2017) utilised a multi-level approach to interrogate the supports and barriers of 10 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I female Athletic Directors. During the interviews, each participant described a significant career moment in which they were encouraged by a person of power to advance in their field. Taylor and Wells (2017) found that working with a male athletic director was the norm for these participants and none had worked for a female athletic director. The authors maintained that one significant factor in the participants' career advancement had been establishing relationships with influential stakeholders, who positively influenced organisational action. For the female participants in the study, one of the most influential stakeholders in their careers had been a male athletic director. Male athletic directors as leaders hold a lot of human and social capital. Examples of the positive impact at an organisational level by these male stakeholders included, using their human and social capital to create inclusive environments through policy implementation and education. Male athletic directors also used their platform to publicly support current and potential female athletic directors.

The business case for women in leadership and management positions, including sports organisations is understood and embraced by many men (Madsen et al., 2020). Supportive actions are required for those wanting to advance gender equity for women in leadership positions in sport. However, men often lack effective workplace strategies to advance women in the workplace (Demers, 2019; Madsen et al., 2020). LaVoi and Boucher (2021, p. 187) are clear that "organisational leaders should explicitly ASK women what they need to feel supported—listen—and then strategically act". Demers (2019) proposed that those men who feel they do not possess the right information to support and advance gender equity for women in sport, may also not know how to best counter a negative response to a request for involving more women. Demers (2019, p. 1) referred to this phenomenon as a "speechless syndrome".

Demers (2019) goes on to present a remedy for this syndrome and argues that people in general want to do the right thing, they just may not know how to address it. Demers (2019) explicitly speaks to the connection between women, gender diversity and the positive impact on the workplace environment. Demers et al., (2021) called for the implementation of gender quotas with a 50/50 split of both genders in coaching as one example of a tangible way to initiate and foster organisational change by ensuring that the female voice is represented and heard. The International Olympic Committee for example, has set out gender equality and inclusion objectives for the period 2021 – 2024 as part of their overall Gender Equality Review (International Olympic Committee, 2018). Of the 25 recommendations presented in the review, one recommendation (number 6) targets female coaches with the view to achieve balanced gender representation for coaches selected to participate at the Olympic Games (International Olympic Committee, 2018). This objective is currently classified as requiring significant work (International Olympic Committee, 2018). This example reflects the recognition that gender balanced coaching is receiving plus the amount of work required to achieve this.

The importance of the female coaches' voice

Norman (2010b) highlighted the importance of listening to different voices within the coaching profession to gain a holistic understanding of what that environment should be for all members. Subsequently, Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018) made a key contribution to the literature highlighting the value and importance of the female voice, specifically the female head coach's voice within high-performance sport. The authors investigated the influence of the work environment on the career progression and experiences of female football coaches working in the United Kingdom. They highlighted how organisational culture can adversely influence the experiences of female coaches - who were the gender minority – in terms of their health and wellbeing. Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018) argued that a fair and equitable workplace is directly related to organisational leadership, which facilitates an environment based on inclusion and diversity by driving compliance

with culture from the top down. The overwhelming message from Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018) is that it is critical that organisational leadership is reflective of the workforce it manages.

Continuing this thread of the importance of, and implications for, the female coaches' voice, Kraft et al. (2020) highlighted that women-only training programs (WOTP) and experiences are important for preserving women's continued participation in sport. WOTP programmes need to include same gender social supports, such as networking opportunities and role models, as these matter to female coaches (Kraft et al., 2020). This reinforces the criticality of using both the female voice to inform, and a multi-systems framework to examine, gender-based inequities. The literature also emphasises the absence of networking opportunities and female role models as problematic barriers for female coaches (LaVoi et al., 2019; Wells & Kerwin, 2017). Allen and Reid (2019) shared a good practice example of a WOTP using the concept of scaffolding to capture a similar approach to Kraft et al. (2020). The scaffolding concept incorporates access to, and engagement with, various learning situations, role modelling, coach mentoring and same-gender networks for female coach developers. Swim et al. (2021) argued that women in leadership positions such as coaches, serve as excellent same-gender role models for female student-athletes by fostering their development through mentorship. The experiences of female student-athletes may be enhanced by access to same-gender coaches and role models, as they may have more in common than with male coaches, which can help promote a positive relationship and potentially lead to increased growth and development.

Findings from Wasend and LaVoi's (2019) study of the relationship between collegiate female basketball players' post-playing career behaviour and the gender of their collegiate head coach, indicated no significant relationship between the gender of an athlete's collegiate head coach and the likelihood of the athlete to enter coaching. However, the results did indicate that when a female athlete was coached by a woman, they were four times more likely to persist in the coaching profession in the first two to six years of their coaching careers than female athletes who were coached by men. This suggests that female coaches may play a vital role in sustaining a female

athlete's early coaching career when it is at its most uncertain. This finding has further significance as LaVoi and Wasend (2018) previously reported that male athletic directors emphasised the importance of leveraging existing female role models to encourage and support the next generation of female coaches.

Supporting the next generation of female coaches is central to this study. A recent research update by Werthner (2020) stated that their next research goal will focus on the use of allyship as a mechanism to ensure advancement of women in leadership positions. Gender allyship is also a central focus for LaVoi and Boucher (2021). One of the three ways LaVoi and Boucher (2021) identified to explicitly support women coaches at the interpersonal and organisational levels, includes the concept of gender allyship. They acknowledged that applying the theory of allyship to sport leadership and organisational change in terms of gender allyship for women is very recent (LaVoi & Boucher, 2021). Extending this further, the concept of male allyship to support female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa is both new and innovative. Male allyship has the potential to support female coaches at several levels, including organisational and societal levels. Given these narratives, the following section reviews the allyship literature in the context of this study and provides a comprehensive argument for its potential as a critical enabler for female coaches to drive systemic change.

Male allyship as a potential support for women coaches – raising awareness and shaping new narratives

No current research exists in Aotearoa or internationally relating to male allyship for women high performance sports coaches. For the purpose of this study, an ally is a male sports leader, who is representative of the dominant gender group (Schewinbenz, 2021). Women and, more specifically, female sports coaches are considered the marginalised or non-dominant group in this context (Barrett et al., 2021; Carson et al., 2021; Culver et al., 2019; de Haan & Knoppers, 2020; Norman, 2010a;

Wasend & LaVoi, 2019). The term allyship has been defined by scholars as the authentic, intentional action of a person of privilege, e.g., a white male who engages in some form of support toward a minority individual or group (Anicha et al., 2018; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Kalina, 2020; Terry, 2021; Veer et al., 2021). As the dominant gender, several authors have proposed engaging males strategically to support and increase inclusivity for female coaches and women in the workplace generally (LaVoi & Boucher, 2021; Madsen et al., 2020; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). In contrast to a mentor or sponsor, an ally has an acute awareness and understanding of the social issue they are endeavouring to address (Anicha et al., 2018; Jolly et al., 2021).

Allies aim for long lasting systemic improvements in organisational strategies, policies, practices, and culture (Jolly et al., 2021). A genuine ally will acknowledge their privilege and use it for good, rather than for personal gain (Schewinbenz, 2021). An ally's initial action may begin with their own individual actions with the intention that these actions transform into collective action through collaboration, and ultimately societal change (Jolly et al., 2021). Allyship involves both public and private acts to support a marginalised individual or group, with the goal of changing the oppressive processes and systems through collaborative work that benefits all people in society (Madsen et al., 2020). Allyship is an ethos and a lived concern (Taylor, 2015). An ally is overall concerned with all members of their community.

Within the business and sports literature, allyship is overwhelmingly associated with action (Carson et al., 2021; Jolly et al., 2021; LaVoi & Wasend, 2018; Schewinbenz, 2021; Taylor, 2015; Wilson et al., 2021). That is, action to create change at the individual, organisational and societal levels, including collaborating with and supporting unrepresented or marginalised groups (Taylor, 2015; Wilson et al., 2021). Carlson et al. (2020, p. 892) emphasised the “constant action of the everyday ally”, as a commitment to the practice of allyship and accountability through everyday actions in all situations. As men typically hold the largest representation in most organisations, they also tend to hold most of the social capital and organisational power, and therefore their role as allies is critical to facilitating

change at an organisational and at a socio-cultural level (Cheng et al., 2018; Madsen et al., 2020). Hudson Taylor (2015) founder of Athlete Ally - a not-for-profit organisation which sets out to promote the inclusiveness of LGBT athletes in sports by redefining the culture to ensure that sport is an environment where all identities thrive - defined allyship as a philosophy not an identity, which requires a person to act to facilitate change.

Allies re-envision a system where all members of the organisation, community or group are considered with equal importance, especially the marginalised (Schewinbenz, 2021). For example, male allies can create equitable opportunities for women in sport by dismantling existing barriers for women. Returning to LaVoi and Wasend (2018), male allies can have a direct positive impact on human resources practices and processes, including (but not limited to) recruitment, promotion, advocating for transparent pay policies, plus recognition of the importance of work-life balance/family to enable better retention of talented women. Such examples of positive action can encourage others to act by role modelling, which can have wide reaching effects on organisational culture (Cheng et al., 2018; Madsen et al., 2020).

The cost of allyship

Allies may experience a cost as a result of their actions. Drury and Kaiser (2014) reviewed the literature concerning men who become allies to confront sexism in the workplace. Their study found that when men engage in confronting sexism, they can often be more effective than women. They also found that when men speak up about sexism and confront it, they are taken more seriously than women, are less likely to experience social costs (e.g., derogatory remarks), and are more persuasive in convincing others, particularly other men, that sexism exists. Drury and Kaiser (2014) reasoned that men are taken more seriously because confronting sexism does not seem to directly benefit them. Alternatively, when women confront sexism, they may be seen as acting out of self-interest, or

attempting to advantage their gender (Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Importantly, men may also perceive male allies more positively than women, because of systemic patriarchy.

There are social costs for men when engaging in male allyship toward women, but men may face less societal backlash than women when confronting discriminatory practices and behaviours (Kutlaca et al., 2020). Kutlaca et al. (2020) found that overtly challenging others and thereby challenging the status quo for social justice can be seen as courageous behaviour, but it also comes at a risk as it is challenging and potentially disrupting social norms. If a male ally takes the initiative and seeks to challenge or disrupt a non-inclusive policy, this can come with social implications (peer isolation) and inherently involves an element of risk, which is context dependent. Such risks include career derailment and incurring stigma via association with a marginalised group (Thoroughgood et al., 2021). The need for activism on issues of gender inequity is clear (Cooper et al., 2020), however when women advocate for themselves, e.g., at hiring or pay negotiations, they may face a hostile response that silences them. Such a negative response is often considerably less for male allies (Kutlaca et al., 2020).

Allyship needs to be explicit and ongoing

As indicated, male allies and their efforts can be more effective than women's alone (Wilson et al., 2021). Allies must actively engage in the practices of allyship, one that is a continuous and reflexive practice on their own privileges and how proactivity disrupts the status quo (Schewinbenz, 2021). Essential to effectiveness is an ally's openness to receiving feedback and advice from people within the non-dominant groups. This is important in order to overcome any disconnect between men's perceptions of male allyship and women's expectations of male allyship (Warren et al., 2021). In terms of a disconnect, Warren et al. (2021) noted that men may express invisible allyship, or express allyship that does not correspond to women's needs for inclusion. This is problematic for women for several reasons. Firstly, it is risky for women to volunteer feedback that might help their male colleagues

achieve their goals of allyship, particularly if they are sceptical of their male colleague. Secondly, not providing feedback or guidance maintains the status quo, whereby men's allyship is not only inefficient, but can also be destructive to the allyship relationship (Warren et al., 2021).

Essential to the effectiveness of the allyship relationship is that an ally must recognise that they may make mistakes, and accept this without defensiveness (Schewinbenz, 2021). Arguably, this helps to increase the ally's self-awareness and promote reflexivity, thereby reducing the unintended likelihood of replicating gendered hierarchical power structures and systems. Collaboration between the ally and the marginalised individual or group is a fundamental tenet of allyship (Carlson et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2018; Jolly et al., 2021; LaVoi & Wasend, 2018; LaVoi & Boucher, 2021; Nash et al., 2021; Schewinbenz, 2021; Warren et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2021). Ideally, the motivating force behind men's allyship is not primarily driven by the personal benefits that may ensue, but rather by the goal to bring about equity for their female colleagues (Warren et al., 2021).

Performative allyship, or optical allyship, is inconsistent with the ethos of collaboration. Performative allyship refers to someone from a dominant group professing support and solidarity with a marginalised group, but it is ultimately unhelpful to that marginalised group (Kalina, 2020; Wellman, 2022). Wellman (2022) contends that social media influencers who posted black squares in support of the Black Lives Matters movement were an example of performative allyship. While often well-intended, it essentially became a way for influencers to create and build an image brand and credibility with their followers, rather than addressing the social issue in question. By reducing social justice activism to a meme on Instagram, the allyship is disingenuous due to the lack of knowledge of the movement and understanding of their role. Such actions ultimately devalued valuable social media content for Black Lives Matter protestors and suppressed images of those who had actively protested police brutality in the streets (Wellman, 2022).

Organisations can also create what Jolly et al. (2021) refer to as an illusion of allyship, for example, an organisation can post a diversity and inclusion statement on their website without any real tangible

action to commit to implementing it, or it becomes reduced to what Dobscha and Ostberg (2021) refer to as a box-ticking exercise. Dobscha and Ostberg (2021) argued that an organisational preference for performative allyship has not only obstructed progress towards gender equity, but actually encouraged a gendered organisational resistance to change, especially within the higher education context.

In a sporting context, LaVoi and Wasend (2018) identified several gender ally characteristics. Focusing on best practice for the recruitment, retention and hiring of female collegiate coaches, the authors interviewed 21 college athletics directors who had employed a majority of women head coaches for their women's teams. LaVoi and Wasend (2018) were unequivocal in that they wanted to learn from athletic directors who were not only competitively successful, but who were also "doing it right" (p.23). Unpacking the interviews further, LaVoi et al. (2019) described this specific group of both male and female athletic directors as allies. These athletic allies had several distinctive characteristics. At an individual level, allies held an unambiguous and unapologetic confidence that competent women existed. At an organisational level, allies had been uncompromising and systematic in their recruitment of women. LaVoi and Wasend (2018) provided the basis for a persuasive argument that men are part of the solution in effecting organisational change, as men's influence gives them the ability to introduce initiatives which can disrupt existing gendered social practices in sport organisations. Their findings demonstrated how these allies' used strategies at both the individual and organisational level to intentionally create an environment inclusive and conducive to female coaches. These allies believed women should be coached by women and created an organisational environment centred on the care, value, and support of women.

The final section of the literature review discusses the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). Specifically, Jolly and colleagues proposed the TAM as a model of transformational allyship for social change within sport (see Figure 2). This model has implications not just for athletes who are allies, but for other individuals such as coaches across all levels of sports organisations. Jolly et al. (2021) argued for the potential

positive impact such individuals can have at individual and organisational levels, when they utilise their privilege, platforms, and resources to activate allyship as a form of activism.

Transformational Allyship: A Conceptual Framework

"The most disruptive social justice action one can take is activism" (Jolly et al., 2021, p. 10). Social justice requires that all members of society should have access to an equitable, respectful, and just society (Culp, 2016). More specifically, social justice in sport is concerned with creating an environment in which all members are provided with the same protections, opportunities, and rights while recognising the roles of power and privilege (Martin et al., 2022). The TAM is a highly developed conceptual model which draws on social identity theory and a resistance typology to maintain that genuine, sustainable transformational allyship only occurs at the intersection of individual and institutional activism (Jolly et al., 2021).

Jolly et al. (2021) provide a comprehensive framework of transformational allyship to achieve long term sustainable positive practical outcomes. Jolly et al. (2021) proposed that transformational allyship is realised when both individual/s and organisational structures work together to address systemic barriers strategically and proactively to achieve equity, diversity, and inclusion. In contrast to non-activist allyship and advocacy, transformational allyship is dedicated to systems disruption and dismantling (Jolly et al., 2021). Whereas individual forms of allyship can be problematic if they are shaped only by those who are structurally advantaged, allyship at an organisational level can advance social change by embedding gender equity outcomes into all levels of the organisation, including decision-making and key strategic agendas. Jolly et al. (2021) investigated the concept of allyship and differentiated it in terms of (1) agency, (2) advocacy and (3) activism. They further categorised allyship, into allyship at the individual and institutional levels respectively and argued that allyship has the potential to accelerate change across multiple levels i.e., at the micro (individual), meso (organisational), and macro (structural).

Figure 2: Transformational Allyship Model (Jolly et al., 2021, p. 8).

Jolly et al. (2021) defined 'allyship as agency' as the most basic form of allyship and arguably as the most ineffective form, but the one associated with the least degree of risk. At an individual level, it can be considered as individual awareness of a privileged identity. However, the person has no real interest in acting for social justice and does not actively engage in genuine actions to address social issues. At an organisational level, there is an awareness of the existence of systemic barriers to social justice but there is no interest in challenging systems of oppression, hegemonic structures or acting to redress gender equity issues.

Allyship in the form of advocacy is grounded in conformity and reactionary behaviour (Jolly et al., 2021). The authors described this form of allyship as having the potential for opposition, but without instigating a direct challenge to existing systems. For the purpose of this study, allyship as advocacy is the intentional, but reactive actions of those sports leaders and organisations, who use personal privilege and social capital to only generate awareness of gender equity issues to empower elite women coaches. These organisations display intentional, but reactive actions that have the potential

to disrupt or challenge systemic barriers for women coaches, but in reality do not directly challenge the status quo. Performative allyship, as discussed earlier, is also located in this category of allyship.

Jolly et al. (2021) maintained that 'allyship advocacy' can help influence change, but for real sustainable change and transformational allyship to take place, 'allyship as activism' is required at both the individual and organisational level. Allyship as activism is distinct from the other two types of allyship in that it is the only one that can contribute to transformational allyship (Jolly et al., 2021). Allyship as activism is proactive resistance and must involve overtly challenging and disrupting the systems of oppression, rather than having a singular focus on episodes of discrimination. As a result, this form of allyship also involves greater exposure to personal risk than agency, performative, or advocacy forms of allyship (Jolly et al., 2021).

The TAM is centred on allyship that involves social action at both the individual and institutional levels to drive systemic change to enable diversity, equity, and inclusion (Jolly et al., 2021). The oppressed or minority individual or group is placed at the centre of the model to emphasise empowerment of, and positive social impact on, that minority individual or group. In the context of this study, allyship as activism is considered an intentional focus on the core individuals i.e., high performance female coaches. Male sports leaders are considered potential allies, who can deliberately enact change, by challenging, disrupting, and presenting a clear opposition to the existing systemic oppression of female high-performance coaches. This also includes identifying and dismantling barriers to high-performance female coaches, together with a clear connection to the wider social issue of gender inequity within the NSO's of Aotearoa. Critical to this form of transformational allyship, is critically reflexive, culturally mindful, and intentional allyship. Jolly et al. (2021) argued that allyship is at its most salient and transformational when it shifts from agency and advocacy to activism.

The sport and organisational literature have both identified that men hold the majority of power and privilege within sports organisations and the business world more broadly. In this chapter, male allyship is conceptualised to be part of the solution to address gender inequity for female high-

performance coaches in Aotearoa. This involves men working in collaboration with women to challenge and disrupt the current gender inequities within sports coaching. The TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) presents a framework for analysis and discussion, where individual and organisational change needs to take place for transformational change to occur. The following chapter details the research design and methodology used to guide this inquiry to answer the research questions relevant to male allyship and female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction and overview

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology that underpins this research. First, the paradigm is introduced and discussed in relation to the research purpose and question. An outline and discussion of the research approach and design is provided, and the ethical concerns are also addressed. The methods used for data collection, including participant recruitment and semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection approach are then presented. The adaptation of the CoGA (LaVoi, 2019) and how it was used during the interview process is also discussed. The Gender Ally Continuum (GAC) (Mulhern et al., 2022a) is introduced as a research tool specifically adapted, from the Continuum of Gender Allies (CoGA) (LaVoi, 2019) for use in this study. Following discussion of the methods for data collection, a comprehensive and detailed description of the data analysis that followed Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase process for conducting reflexive thematic analysis is detailed. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of how the standards of trustworthiness of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were addressed during this research.

Research Paradigm

This study is underpinned by constructionism, an ontological position, also referred to as constructivism. This paradigm asserts that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through social interaction, experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (Bell et al., 2019). Therefore, the knowledge the researcher presents is a version of their experiences and learning and not a definitive or absolute end point. Bell et al. (2019) state that epistemology is underpinned by ontology. In the context of this study, participants were interviewed to gain their understanding of how male allyship for women high performance coaches were perceived and understood. The understandings of male allyship for example, were based on the participants' background and lived experiences. This study remains faithful to this paradigm by reflecting on how

the data was collected, i.e., as it is not merely discovered, rather it is produced and co-produced, as the result of interactions between the participants and researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Constructionism is associated with post-modernism, a philosophical approach that highlights reflexivity, the significance of the researcher in the research process and the subsequent caution associated with any findings presented (Bell et al., 2019). Reflexivity requires an acknowledgement of the researcher's choices (Bell et al., 2019). This was demonstrated in relation to the rationale for utilising the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021), and the theory of allyship (Anicha et al., 2018; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Kalina, 2020; Terry, 2021; Veer et al., 2021), during this study. It will also be demonstrated later in this chapter in relation to the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a). Consequently, the models, tools and theory employed in this research played a significant role in the production of knowledge presented in the findings, discussion, and conclusion sections. It is acknowledged that engagement in the research is driven by a passionate interest in women's sport, social justice in sport and more specifically male allyship for women high performance coaches and the theory of allyship, therefore this process was never entirely free of theoretical or other assumptions.

Research approach and design

To explore the understanding of male allyship for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa, this study used a qualitative exploratory approach. A qualitative research method is considered appropriate when the researcher explores a new field of study (Jamshed, 2014). To effectively answer the research questions, this research sought to capture the richness and depth of detail through semi-structured interviews. The purpose of a semi-structured interview process is to achieve an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon by capturing rich representations of participant perceptions and experiences, without the constraints of a structured format e.g., a questionnaire. Qualitative research is also appropriate because it facilitates flexible ways of collecting, analysing, and presenting rich, complex, and contextual data (Brinkmann, 2013; Kallio et al., 2016). This differs from quantitative

research where the focus is on collecting standardised responses from participants in order to understand the issue in question. As discussed in Chapter 2, the TAM is the conceptual framework (Jolly et al., 2021) that guided this research and provided a framework for the analysis and discussion. A conceptual framework adds rigour to qualitative research by supporting conceptual and methodological coherence (Johnson et al., 2020). The interview questions were crafted and guided by the theory of allyship (Anicha et al., 2018; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Kalina, 2020; Terry, 2021; Veer et al., 2021).

An exploratory research design seeks out meaningful patterns or themes (Stebbins, 2001; Thomas & Lawal, 2020). Exploratory research is often conducted on newly emerging social issues where the research base is limited, or it is undertaken in the early phases of an evaluation and the findings used to develop a plan for further study (Henry, 2009). Therefore, this research design is considered well suited to understanding the role of male allyship to support female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa, with potential application internationally. Creswell et al. (2007) recommended data collection from multiple sources to develop a deep contextual understanding of the topic and to avoid over-reliance on one method of data collection. Yin and Campbell (2018) proposed six types of data sources: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artefacts. For the purpose of this study, publicly available annual reports, and strategic reports from the participants' organisations were analysed. These documents, alongside the semi-structured interviews provided this study with multiple sources of data consistent with Creswell's recommendation. The fundamental aim of the multi data sources was to provide a comprehensive analysis and enhance confidence in the research findings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was sought from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee as this study involved human participants (Massey University, 2017). A low-risk notification was submitted to the committee which was approved prior to commencing data collection. The researcher maintained regular consultation with supervisors Professor Sarah Leberman, and Professor Bevan Catley to ensure the overall trustworthiness and quality of the study. The study complied with the professional code of conduct of ethical research as set out in the Massey University Human Ethics Code and integrated Māori ethical principles by considering the principles of Mānakitanga and Māna.

Mānakitanga in this context is particularly relevant to the participants and their respective organisations. Mānakitanga is the responsibility of the researcher to treat research participants with respect; to protect their privacy and to be culturally sensitive and aware. Mānakitanga was addressed as follows: all potential participants were contacted via email with an invitation to participate that contained an outline of the research project, the requirements for their involvement, ethical safeguards, and best practice ethical principles as per Massey University policy (Massey University, 2017), see Appendix A. The research was conducted in a manner consistent with Māna by ensuring research participant autonomy, and that participant rights were explicitly explained, and informed consent obtained, including that the interview would be recorded in audio and visual formats via ZOOM. Participant participation was voluntary, and all participants had the right to accept, decline or withdraw their participation at any time during the study. This ensures the participants of their right to be appropriately informed of risks to their individual or collective mana, therefore the researcher demonstrates respect of each individual's mana.

The key ethical issues for this research were the principles of confidentiality and anonymity to protect the participants. The ethical challenge in this study was that NSO's in Aotearoa, particularly in the high-performance sports environment, comprise a relatively small community where participants and/or their organisation may be easily identified, even with little contextual information. Care was

taken to balance the requirement for detailing characteristics of the participants, but not so much detail that individual and organisational identities were potentially compromised. Therefore, all reasonable measures were taken to ensure that participant and organisational confidentiality and anonymity were preserved. This included assigning pseudonyms to all participants and organisations, (see Table 1) and not reporting the individual roles and responsibilities of the participants. For the purpose of transparency, one eligible NSO was not invited to be part of this research, due to a conflict of interest with one of my supervisors.

Data Collection

Participants

Invitations to participate in this research were sent to men holding senior leadership roles in NSOs currently working with High Performance Sport New Zealand. Senior leaders were invited on the basis that they were likely to have knowledge other staff did not and could provide a detailed overview of the organisation and discuss external stakeholders. They were also potentially more familiar with legal and financial structures and should realistically be able to discuss organisational policies and future plans (Goldman & Swayze, 2012). Male leaders were selected because these participants were considered the most suitable to convey rich understandings of the phenomenon of male allyship under inquiry.

High Performance Sport New Zealand works in partnership with ten targeted and thirty aspirational sports in Aotearoa (High Performance Sport New Zealand, 2022). HPSNZ targets specific sports and sporting campaigns to facilitate elite level athlete and team performance at international level by providing various resources and investment to these NSOs. Eighteen individuals from 12 separate NSOs were contacted by email and invited to participate in this study (see Appendix A). Of those 18 potential participants, 8 participants either did not respond or declined to participate due to workload commitments. A single follow-up email was sent to the non-responders, but no response was

received. A total of 10 male participants took part in the research from eight different NSOs (see Table 1). The number of participants was considered suitable for the scale and scope of the research, as they represented a range of NSOs with a variety of experiences, roles, and organisational and operational responsibilities at the senior level.

Table 1: Organisation and associated participant/s

Organisation	**Participant/s**
Bronze	Bruce
Cobalt	Carl
Denim	Daniel
Harlequin	Harry
Maroon	Mike
Neon	Nicholas
Pastel	Paul and Peter
Silver	Stuart and Steve

Semi-structured interviews

The interview questions were designed to identify and explore the existence of male allyship at individual and organisational levels for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa, see Appendix B. Following data collection, Jolly et al., (2021) original terminology was adapted. Allyship as agency was re-labelled ally agents; allyship as advocacy to ally advocates and allyship for activism to ally activists. The label institutional' was revised to 'organisational'. The researcher felt that these changes represented the data better and provided for easier reading quality.

Semi structured interviews are best based on an interview guide or framework (Jamshed, 2014). The interview framework can take the form of a diagrammatic representation of questions or topics that

are to be explored by the researcher. Interview frameworks are multi purposeful allowing the researcher to explore participant's responses in a more systematic and comprehensive manner, yet keeping the interview focused to achieve optimum use of interview time (Jamshed, 2014). The interview framework for this study contained core questions specifically aimed at answering the research questions. These core questions were accompanied by planned follow-up questions to gain deeper insights and unplanned follow-up questions aimed at targeting specific aspects of the participants' answers to those follow-up questions (see Appendix C). The interview framework also minimised the potential for missed questions. All interviews were conducted via Zoom. This helped to maintain the researcher's focus and prevented the researcher from missing key points (Jamshed, 2014). The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission (both audio and visual) with the Otter transcribing app on the researchers' phone serving as back-up. Zoom automatically produced an audio transcript.

DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) outlined several potential limitations to semi-structured interviews. These limitations included that not all participants make great interviewees, that participants may be difficult to engage, or that they may be reluctant to share sensitive information or personal experiences relevant to the topic. The researcher may also forget to ask follow-up questions or fail to actively listen. Online interviews and telephone interviews were a necessary alternative to one-to-one interviews considering the restrictions facing the people of Aotearoa in the Covid-19 environment of July-December 2022. Online interviews allowed the researcher to communicate with the participant/s remotely, safely, at any time, potentially anywhere and on the participant's terms. This was consistent with the researchers' own values and the research value of roha ki te tangata – demonstrating an awareness of the bicultural context in Aotearoa - respect for people including facilitating participants to define their own space and meet on their own terms (Massey University, 2017).

Harvey (2010) provides good practice guidelines when interviewing elites (i.e., senior leadership in the context of this study) which were adopted in this study by:

1. Providing flexibility when arranging and conducting interviews. For example, and consistent with roha ki te tangata, a participant who was overseas was interviewed over two separate days to accommodate their schedule.
2. Ensuring transparency when communicating with elite members, e.g., Participant information sheet (Appendix D).
3. Maintaining good etiquette with all participants to ensure the highest professional standards.

Two pilot interviews were conducted and were of great benefit in terms of preparation; timing; familiarity with the research questions; order of questions; explaining various terms and focusing on achieving a conversational flow. One interviewee came from a sports background and the other was a Managing Director of a large organisation from an historically male dominated industry. This process highlighted practical considerations such as having a hard copy of the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a) available for the researcher to write on during the interview. The GAC will be discussed in the following section. The interviewees provided valuable feedback on the interview process. Each participant was asked for their feedback on the structure, content, and length of the interview - neither individual recommended changes to the interview questions or length of the interview. Both pilot interviewees were unsure/unaware of the concept of allyship, therefore an explanation was provided by the researcher. This explanation of allyship was also incorporated into the interview framework, (see question 4 of interview framework, Appendix C).

The Continuum of Gender Allies - a platform for exploration

The CoGA (LaVoi, 2019) is a research and education tool created by Dr Nicole M. LaVoi, Director of the Tucker Centre for Research on Girls and Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota, to illustrate allyship as a continuum, (see Figure 3). Dr LaVoi generously gave her permission for this continuum to

be revised for the purpose of this study. The CoGA (LaVoi, 2019) consists of 6 labels on a continuum, ranging from “hostile” to “ally” (see Figure 3). The CoGA (LaVoi, 2019) was considered highly relevant to assisting in answering the research questions as it provided a platform to explore various forms of allyship. Furthermore, this research tool is considered valuable and important for collecting data pertinent to the research question, particularly concerning participants perspectives on allyship. This aligned with the constructionism paradigm which under pinned this study and it also supports the credibility of the study by providing evidence to demonstrate that the purpose and research questions are truly being addressed. The CoGA (LaVoi, 2019) contributes further value to the study by supporting confirmability by demonstrating that the data represents the participants responses, therefore contributing to the overall trustworthiness of the study. The rationale for adapting the CoGA is discussed in detail in the following section. This following section provides a description and rationale of a research tool adapted for the purpose of this study, specifically to capture data concerning male sports leaders’ perceptions of allyship in Aotearoa.

Figure 3: The original Continuum of Gender Allies (LaVoi, 2019)

Design rationale for the GAC

To help structure the interviews the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a) was used to elicit contextual information concerning the participants individual and organisational perceptions of allyship, for example, where and why participants see themselves and their organisation on the continuum. Each element of the GAC was carefully developed specifically for this study to explore the participants' perceptions related to the individual and organisational understandings of male allyship in the context of female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa. All participants were asked to focus on the text, rather than the accompanying images as the study did not intend to ask or discuss the respondents' feelings about each image.

Paulhus and Zerbe (1987) described the tendency of individuals to make themselves look good according to current cultural norms and standards when answering researchers' questions, as socially desirable responding. Socially desirable responding is a prominent form of response bias reported in the literature which may be motivated by impression management or self-deception (Stocké & Hunkler, 2007). Stocké and Hunkler (2007) define impression management as the assumption that research participants will bias their answers to gain social approval from others including the researcher. In contrast, self-deception, predicts that socially desirable responding bias will result from respondents' aiming to enhance their self-perception and to preserve a positive self-image (Stocké & Hunkler, 2007).

As socially desirable responding and impression management was a potential concern in this study, several steps were taken to adapt the GAC to limit its influence and make it more applicable to the Aotearoa context. The original CoGA (LaVoi, 2019) was comprised of 6 one-word labels on a continuum ranging from "hostile" to "ally" (see Figure 3). The GAC (see Figure 4) was revised and condensed to 5 descriptors, each with a brief description replacing the one-word label to provide a more contextualised continuum based on this research's purpose and location in Aotearoa. The original anchor label of "Hostile" was considered too polarising in the context of this study and

changed to “Unaware of any Gender Equity Issues”. This descriptor better captures a key fundamental of allyship – that an ally must be highly aware of the social issue they are trying to address (Anicha et al., 2018), in this case, gender inequity. Moving from left to right, the next label on the continuum is “Good ‘Ole Boys/Girls”. According to (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012), the Ole Boys’ Clubs’ i.e., the presence and strength of informal male networks that use their power either directly or indirectly for their own benefit, was most frequently cited by female coaches as the barrier that obstructed or prevented them from remaining in coaching roles. This label was changed to the descriptor “Some awareness. No action taken” to make it consistent with the concept of allyship discussed earlier. Specifically, this new descriptor is consistent with a form of allyship where the individual and/or organisation is aware of gender equity issues but is unable or unwilling to take action to address the issue.

The third label “Pretender” and the accompanying graphic “Fake” were renamed to “Professes Support”. Professes support refers to performative allyship, as described earlier in the literature review (Jolly et al., 2021; Kalina, 2020; Wellman, 2022). Words “Pretender” and “Fake” were identified as potentially risking participant engagement, with ‘Professes Support’ considered less confrontational. The fourth label on the continuum ‘Neutral’, was removed from the GAC as its utility to the research was considered limited and may have given participants an ‘opt out option’ to not give a perspective. The fifth label on the continuum, ‘Wannabe’, is arguably more an Americanised colloquial term, but more significantly in the NZ context it’s a term used in a disparaging way. As a result, it was renamed following the same logic as the ‘pretender’ label and is “Some action to address gender equity issues”. The final element on the extreme right of the continuum, ‘Ally’, is considered an obvious and perhaps an easy and potentially desirable option for participants. This was adapted to a core ally action i.e., ‘Commitment to ongoing Action to Foster Gender Equity’, as opposed to declaring oneself an ally. The GAC was used with questions 4, 5 and 7 during the interviews, see Appendix B. Overall, the semi-structured interviews were amplified by utilising the GAC.

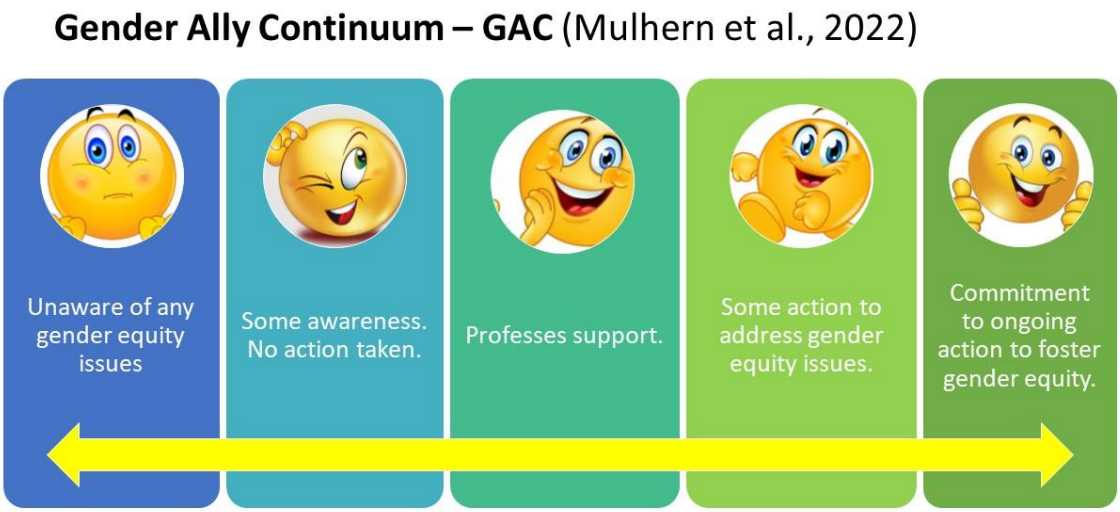


Figure 4: Gender Ally Continuum - GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a)

Data Analysis – reflexive thematic analysis

Data from the semi-structured interviews and relevant documents from the participants' NSO were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2022) a focus on language and words is central to reflexive thematic analysis where the researcher takes an active part in the process and when underpinned by constructionism, research produces, rather than reveals evidence from the data. This is important as Braun and Clarke (2022) contended that reflexive thematic analysis is a valuable data analysis technique in qualitative research aimed at producing contextualised knowledge and therefore aligns with the overall research purpose and methodology for this study.

This form of analysis is well suited to this research because it provided the flexibility to combine multiple sources of data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Knowledge is created and constructed by using a theme as the unit of analysis, through which researchers can make sense of the complexities and contexts of individual interviews with the interviewees. This differs from other and more positivist forms of thematic analysis as reflexive thematic involves the organic production of themes by

organising codes around the central organising concept – existence and extent of male allyship – and analysis did not predefine themes in order to then find codes (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The semi-structured interviews generated large volumes of raw data which were actively listened to, automatically transcribed (via Zoom) and corrected as necessary by the researcher. Interview times ranged from 40 minutes to 1 hour 20 minutes. These transcripts were saved in separate files under pseudonyms. Specific audio segments were re-visited as necessary to clarify and/or to gain further context (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2022). Progression through the analysis was an evolutionary process, gaining further and deeper insights as familiarity with the dataset increased and for example, resulted in the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a) emerging as a far more valuable data collection tool than originally anticipated.

To determine if an individual and/or organisation could be identified as an ally activist, four criteria were adopted based on (Jolly et al., 2021):

1. A clear opposition to the status quo.
2. Concrete disruption and challenging (as opposed to reinforcing) of hegemonic structures, norms, and mental processes.
3. Specific goals and objectives (often in the form of demands) to assess progress and,
4. a connection to broader social justice movements.

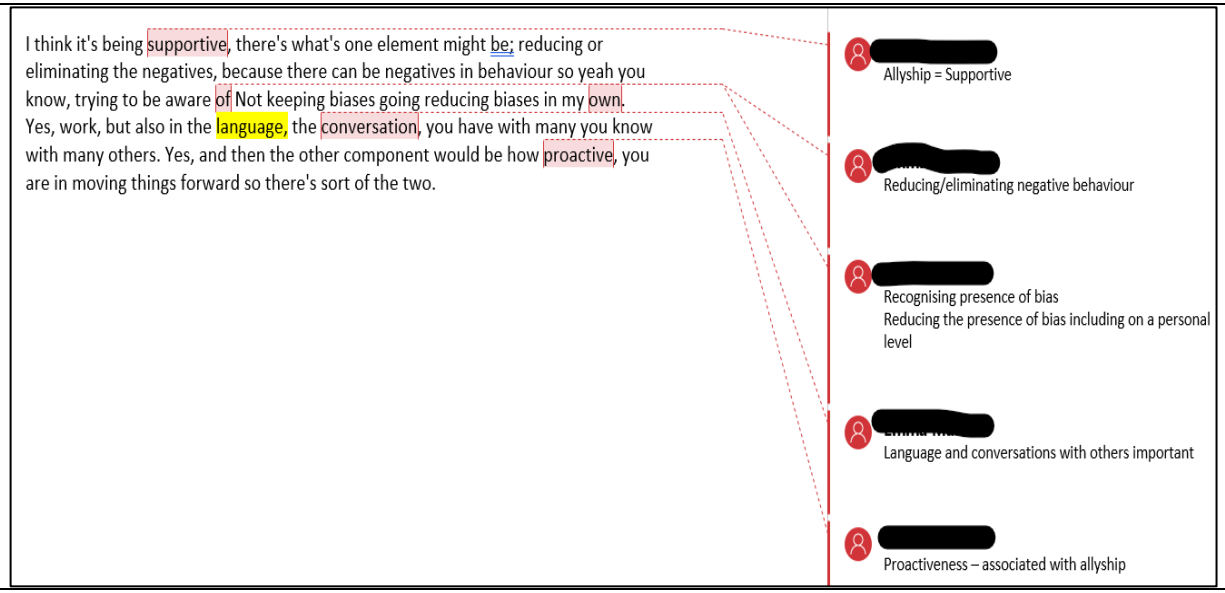
A challenge emerged during the data analysis, when it came to determining what was proactive (ally activist) and what was reactive allyship (ally advocate) when categorising individuals and organisations according to the criteria as set out by the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). Analysis of the semi-structured interviews and documentation in isolation from each other could potentially have produced a different conclusion regarding the positioning of the individuals and/or organisation. Using information from multiple sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the research questions proved valuable to facilitate a full and trustworthy utilisation of the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) and support subsequent findings (Bell et al., 2019; Nowell et al., 2017).

Braun and Clarke (2022) proposed that qualitative research demands high levels of reflexivity and creativity. Reflexivity is demonstrated, for example, with data analysis being conducted in an exhaustive, systematic manner, including detailed disclosure by the researcher, (see table 2). Reflexivity and creativity are demonstrated through detailed disclosure of the rationale for developing the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a) as a new research tool specifically for the purpose of this study. Reiter (2013) described exploratory research as an analysis of the richest, most illuminating cases to expose the thickest and most significant connections, which will be highlighted in subsequent chapters.

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke (2022) six-phase process for conducting reflexive thematic analysis. Each phase of the data analysis is detailed and demonstrated with examples in Table 2. Table 2 follows a sequential format beginning with the first step of the analysis involving the familiarisation of the data content and the initial coding of the dataset. This is followed by an explanation of the systematic process of coding the dataset. The third step covers the generation of the initial themes which are identified by the researcher as potentially important for answering the research questions. The next step provides an explanation and accompanying example of the development of a theme. Included in this fourth step is a demonstrable example of the reconceptualization of a theme, and re-ordering of themes occurred which highlighted the continuous active role of the researcher in the data analysis. The fifth step also included an example of refinement of a theme and finally the write-up stage is acknowledged.

Table 2: Six Phases of Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

1. Familiarisation with the dataset	Phase One commenced with transcription of the interview recordings. Listening and re-listening to the recordings, reading and re-reading selected documentation e.g., strategic reports, plus taking notes of insights and impressions relevant to the individual data item and/or the data set as a whole. This took place before the entire data set was available to allow as much time as possible for participants to respond and interviews to be completed in the two weeks prior to Christmas 2021. Reading and initial analysis of selected documentation took place prior to, during, and after, interviews took place.
2. Coding	This phase involved further immersion in the data set. Analysis was inductive and driven by the data to best represent what was articulated by the participants and to be consistent with the research paradigm. Transcripts were read line-by-line and initial codes were inserted via comment boxes linking them directly to the item/quotation in a column alongside the transcripts (see example below). These codes were refined and added to in an iterative manner as the transcripts were revisited. Coding included semantic codes, (representative of explicit meanings), and latent codes (representative of implicit, underlying meanings), which required active researcher participation (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Coding also included creating separate files and separating relevant sections and codes from each interview under initial code labels (descriptions of the codes) into these files, as part of the data management process. This organised codes and themes for ease of access and allowed theme titles, boundaries, and code labels to be reviewed and adjusted, which helped generate initial themes and was of great practical benefit when writing the analysis.

Example: Initial coding example		

<table>
<tr><td>3. Generating initial themes</td><td>Shared patterns of meaning were identified across the entire dataset with codes merged or clustered to generate shared meaning/s or meaningful concept/s relevant to the research question. This involved the researcher actively reducing these meanings or concepts into single dominant distinctive themes. This was an iterative process with the researcher constantly returning to the data to ensure the themes generated would assist in answering the research question.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Example:</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th>Codes</th><th>Code Label</th><th>Theme</th><th>Sub-themes</th><th>Example data extracts</th></tr>
<tr><td>MAND (Mandates)
ADV (Allyship Advocacy)
AGEN (Allyship Agency)
ACTV (Allyship Activism)
PROACT (Proactive)
REACT (Reactive)
PERFORM (Performative)
TEHAP (Te Hāpaitanga)</td><td>TAM as a framework to identify various levels of allyship (existence and extent) within NSOs at individual and organisational level.</td><td>3. Allyship and activism</td><td>Rhetoric not practice
The potential for women coaches and mandates
Stakeholders can be allies
Allyship has no boundaries
Allyship as advocacy with a performance of allyship
Changing the narrative – Allyship as activism</td><td>“We don't feel we're very proactive in promoting women in [names organisation] coaching”.

“I mean it's tough in the high performance setting to mandate that because, I guess we're competing against the rest of the world and we can’t be having [ ] a less qualified or unqualified coaches”.

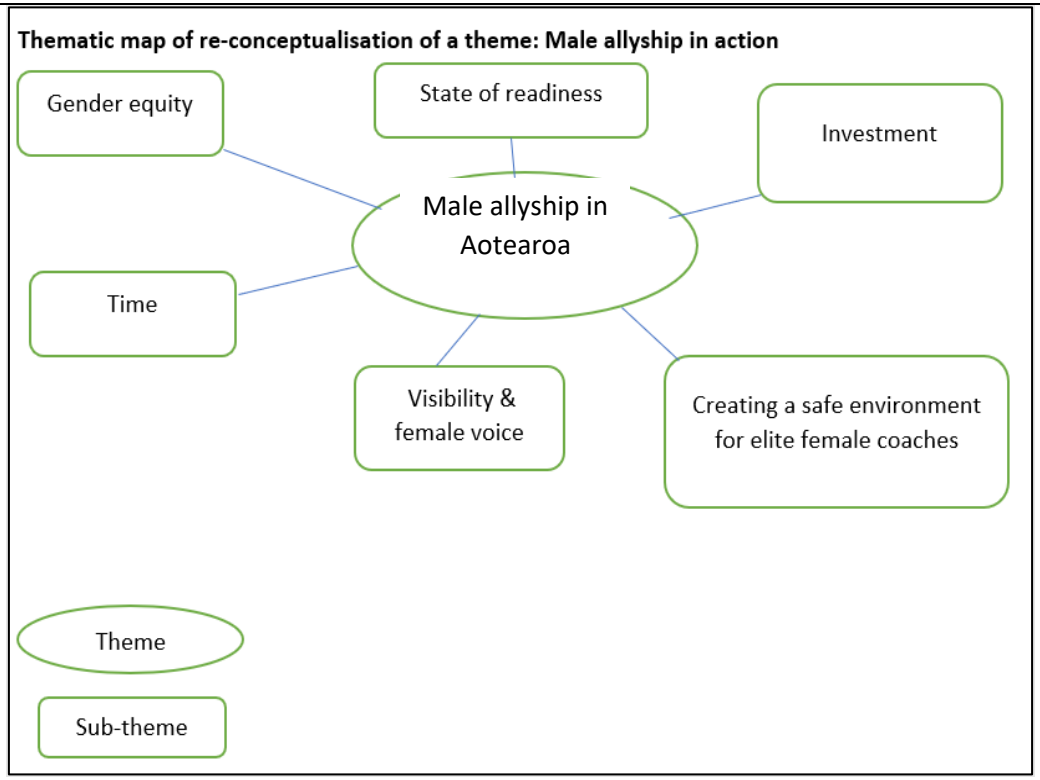
“We’ve tripled our investment in high performance coaches and prioritized that over a lot of other things”.

“I haven't seen as a requirement in the paperwork is a woman in sports strategy”.</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>4. Theme development and review</td><td>This part of the process involved checking and re-checking to ensure the initial themes generated in the previous step were actual themes and not codes and were the most relevant to answer the research question. This involved reconceptualising an initial theme (see example below) from ‘a safe environment for women coaches is critical’ to, ‘male</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>allyship in Aotearoa', which is a more accurate representation of the dataset relevant to the research question. This re-conceptualisation of this initial theme (a safe environment for women coaches) illustrates the active role of the researcher and the iterative nature of reflexive thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2022).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Example:</td><td>
<table>
<tr><th>Codes</th><th>Code Labels</th><th>Initial Theme</th><th>Sub-theme</th><th>Relevant quotations</th></tr>
<tr><td>SEWC (safe environment for women coaches)
INVEST
PATH
ROLE
TPOOL
VIS (visibility)
BAR (Barriers/Challenges)
VOICE
HPSNZ
GOVN (Government)
WOP (Women only Programs)
DBM (decisions based on merit)
SOR (State of readiness both for the individual and the organisation)</td><td>Multi-factors that contribute to the construction of an ideal / safe / most conducive environment for female coaches based on perspectives of participants. Several factors serve as a support and a challenge/barrier e.g., Investment or lack of.
Several factors are important from both organisational and individual perspective e.g., DBM.</td><td>2. A Safe Environment for women coaches is critical</td><td>Gender, equity, time and investment
Pathways, roles, and a talent pool
A dedicated space and male allyship
What does a safe environment look like, or not!
Visibility and amplifying the minority voice</td><td>"she's the best person, without a doubt, however, I also recognize that [_] I probably going to get some stick for it, there was always going to be a bit of a question mark around why are you letting a female loose in the male game and it sounds awful to say it, but that that was exactly the feedback that I got".

"to give her [the coaching candidate] opportunity to get the experience that she needs that next time she is ready".

"Making sure they [women coaches] have a voice".</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>5. Theme refining, defining, and naming</td><td>Themes were named and re-named to ensure the names provided a coherent and logical narrative and accurate representation of the entire dataset, this included an element of over-lap with step 4. This process took a recursive approach with the order in which themes were reported re-ordering several times to ensure a coherent and logical narrative.</td></tr>
</table>

Example: Theme refinement	
6. Writing up	Note taking, which had reflexivity at its core, started at phase one of the process and continued all the way through the study. Write-up of findings and discussion commenced when analysis identified three overarching themes. Thick, rich, and vivid quotations were selected to answer the research question. This will be demonstrated in the findings section.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research emphasises the exploration of human experiences, description of phenomena and theory development (Cope, 2014). Trustworthiness is a feature of qualitative research methodology that aims to answer the question concerning the value of the inquiry. Value in this sense is seen in its ability to contribute new knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1986), which aligns with the exploratory research design of this study. To develop trustworthiness in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1986) presented four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Nowell et al. (2017) argued that for a study to be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that their data analysis has been carried out in a detailed, consistent, and comprehensive approach through recording, systematising, and disclosure of the methods of analysis with enough detail to allow the reader to determine the credibility of the process. The following criteria, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, were used to maintain and enrich the trustworthiness of this study.

Credibility:

This refers to truthfulness in terms of presentation, interpretation, and representation of the data, with the focus of credibility to ensure that the purpose and research questions are being addressed (Cope, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Nowell et al., 2017). A multitude of strategies were used to ensure the credibility within this inquiry. These strategies included: the implementation of established research methods, demonstration of active engagement with the data, reflection on the findings supported by theory, verification of transcript with participants and supervisor scrutiny of the research project. To further ensure credibility, iterative questioning was used, and as the interview was semi-structured it allowed probing questions to be asked to ensure that participants' perspectives were captured (Patton, 1999). Member checking was an additional strategy used to establish credibility (Candela, 2019). This was done by asking participants to review their interview transcript to confirm

it was an accurate representation. Finally, credibility was ensured through the guidance and oversight of my supervisors, who provided guidance and oversight of the entire process.

Transferability:

The focus on transferability considers the applicability of findings to other contexts (Bell et al., 2019). This research is highly contextual – exploration of the existence and extent of male allyship for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa – meaning that transferability may be limited.

Dependability:

Dependability ensures a consistent and transparent process is undertaken during data collection and that this process can be replicated by others with similar participants in similar conditions (Lincoln, 1985; Bell et al., 2019; Nowell et al., 2017). Dependability focuses on creating similar processes, rather than recreating the same process as the interactions that create qualitative data generation do not always allow for the same process to occur every time (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Therefore, to achieve dependability in this study, the methods of data generation and data analysis have been comprehensively documented for potential replication. In the interests of transparency and dependability, re-stating, and member-checking during the interview to clarify which stage of the continuum the participant is referring to was essential. This involved, taking notes on a hard copy of the GAC, as described previously, participants frequently used numbers to describe the respective sections of the GAC, which will be discussed in the conclusion chapter.

Confirmability:

The rationale behind confirmability is to provide assurance that the phenomenon being explored represents the participants' perspectives, and not the researcher's bias or viewpoints (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Nowell et al., 2017). To demonstrate confirmability, several strategies were used within this

inquiry. Similar to achieving and enhancing credibility, supervisor guidance was imperative; evidence of an audit trail i.e., detailed descriptions and rationale for inclusion and adaptation of the CoGA; detailed description of the TAM framework and explicitly and consistently disclosing that findings are derived from the data e.g., inclusion of rich quotations. Detailing the data generation and collection procedures enables readers to assess how the researcher arrived at their conclusions and if these conclusions are justified based on the data collected by the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Nowell et al., 2017).

Researcher subjectivity was discussed in the paradigm section. Confirmability was not established via the use of an independent or multiple coders as this was not possible for master's research. This speaks to the demarcation and value of reflexive thematic analysis as it embraces the subjectivity and creativity of the researcher, where themes cannot exist independent from the researcher, instead themes develop organically as in the context of this study where this researcher constantly reflected, revisited, reviewed, and refined the data to give full justice and meaning to the participants voices. The following three chapters discuss the three key themes developed from the findings - male sports leaders' perceptions of allyship, the range of male allyship for high performance female coaches and supportive actions of male ally activists for high performance female coaches in Aotearoa.

Chapter 4: Male sports leaders' perceptions of allyship

Introduction

The data provided insight into the synthesis and variety of perceptions of allyship by male sports leaders in Aotearoa. This theme will be explored in two parts. Firstly, male sports leaders' perceptions of the concept of allyship will be explored. These findings were generated from the data whereby participants were asked to define allyship in their own words. This highlights the range of understandings and insights as offered by the participants and a word cloud is used to support these findings. It will be argued that sponsorship and mentorship practices require a person with positional power and privilege to enact such practices. Based on this understanding, it is proposed that male allies can be more effective than sponsors or mentors in shaping long term social change.

In the second part, the participants' perceptions of allyship and the extent of individual and organisational allyship generated using the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022) are discussed in relation to participant comments. Most individual perspectives are centred on two parts of the GAC, with a wider range evident from an organisational perspective. The significance of the link between self-education and effective allyship for female high-performance coaches is highlighted and discussed. Based on participants' comments, the perceived constraints to allyship are also highlighted and discussed. Finally, limitations of the GAC are considered leading to the next chapter and the use of the conceptual model.

Male sports leaders' perceptions of allyship

The word cloud in Figure 5 is a visual representation of the weighted word synthesis from the participants' individual descriptions of allyship. Figure 5 is useful as it emphasises the most frequently used words utilised by the participants in defining allyship and allows the participants perspectives to get identified and highlighted. The word cloud highlights 'support' as the most prominent word, followed by 'help'. This helps to recognise the perspectives of the participants at a superficial level,

and it also indicates that the participants understood the basic premise of allyship. Given the exploratory nature of this study, the word cloud provides a good starting point to understanding the perspectives of male sports leaders' perceptions of allyship.

Figure 5: Participants perceptions of allyship

Several participants explicitly referred to allyship as a new and unfamiliar concept. For example, Peter had never heard of the concept of allyship in the context of sport. Carl's response was "that's a new word to me" and Harry enthusiastically responded, "I am not sure what allyship is, but I love the sound of it". This newness and unfamiliarity are indicative of LaVoi and Boucher's (2021) assertion that employing the concept of allyship in sport leadership as a potential support for female coaches is a novel and recent approach. Although these comments explicitly conveyed a lack of awareness of allyship as a concept, it did not necessarily indicate a lack of the desire to act as an ally.

Other participants who were more familiar with the concept of allyship offered a range of understandings. Stuart's interpretation considered allyship to be a one-way interaction:

> For me, allyship would mean somebody who you can depend on and rely on to help achieve your goals and objectives. Someone who's going to help promote and support you during challenging times.

However, in the literature, allyship is a constant, ongoing process not just limited to tough moments in life (Carlson et al., 2020). In this instance Stuart's perspective lacks consideration of a core tenet of the practice of allyship. Helping and supporting are positive actions, however if allyship is authentic it becomes part of one's identity and for that to occur, Carlson et al. (2020) are unequivocal when they argue that allyship must be an ongoing, everyday lived concern. Stuart's explanation is more consistent with a mentor or sponsor role, rather than that of an ally.

Sponsorship and mentorship are not the same as allyship in how they are conceived and operationalised (Anicha et al., 2018; Banwell et al., 2019; Jolly et al., 2021). Banwell et al. (2019) argue that female coaches need mentors from both genders over their entire career path and this mentorship must be supported at organisational level. Banwell et al. (2019) found that mentorship is a reactive process, that mentors for instance required training on gender issues and may not have the same level of power as sponsors. Reactionary behaviour lacks the critical consciousness of taking action against oppressive behaviour in light of your own understanding of the issue (Cooper et al.,

2019; Jolly et al., 2021). Jolly et al. (2021) argued that critical consciousness is an essential element of allyship and allyship as activism.

Furthermore, Banwell et al. (2019) recommended a step beyond mentorship to sponsorship to facilitate the advancement of female coaches. Sponsors can, for example, help provide high-profile career opportunities by introducing female coaches to other senior level leaders who might help their careers. This does not necessarily address any gender inequities or any underlying gender bias within the workplace. In contrast to allyship, sponsorship does not seek to address any long-term change at the organisational level. Based on these understandings of sponsorship and mentorship, both these practices will still require an individual or group with power and privilege to support this systemic change. Both Jolly et al. (2021) and Wilson et al. (2021), for example, provide convincing cases that an ally or allies can be more effective than a sponsor or mentor in terms of achieving lasting change at individual, organisational and societal levels.

Jolly et al. (2021) indicate that all forms of allyship are suitable for driving change, but some are more effective than others. Jolly et al. (2021) proposed that transformational allyship is the most effective form of allyship, where individual and organisational activists combine to disrupt and dismantle existing systems, challenge the status quo, and create transformational change. Allyship acknowledges that those in leadership positions can leverage their power and privilege to facilitate long-term substantial gains of social justice movements within and beyond sport. It is well established in the literature that men hold a considerable amount of power and privilege and are over-represented in leadership positions at all levels of sports (Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Kempe-Bergman et al., 2020; Schewinbenz, 2021). It makes sense that allyship and male allyship can have a greater impact than sponsorship or mentorship and therefore individuals in leadership positions need to at the very least be aware of the concept of allyship.

Mike's interpretation of allyship included the following elements: “being supportive”; “reducing or eliminating negatives”; “reducing biases” and that allyship is about “how proactive you are in moving

things forward". It is interesting to note that Mike associates allyship with lessening or removing the impact of biases. Bias and negatives in this context are considered barriers to female coaches (LaVoi, 2016). Removal of barriers that impede female coaches are considered advancing organisational practices towards creating an equitable workplace for this marginalised group (LaVoi & Wasend, 2018). Mike spoke often about removing these barriers which is a fundamental supportive action of a male ally toward disrupting the status quo (Jolly et al., 2021).

The EIM (LaVoi, 2016) systematically organised the existing literature to help detect gaps in the literature and assist researchers focus their inquiries. The EIM highlighted that more barriers than supports were in play for female coaches (LaVoi, 2016). There are a multitude of reasons for the current status quo concerning the under-representation and marginalisation of female high-performance coaches, one of the reasons for this is implicit bias (LaVoi, 2016; LaVoi et al., 2019). This bias can manifest as sexism and gender inequity. Authors such as Fink (2016) and Norman (2021), have convincingly argued that sexism and gender inequity in sport are not quirks within the sports industry, but deeply embedded within its structures. If sexism and gender inequity are not identified and understood, then the androcentric status quo will remain within sports organisations (LaVoi, 2016; LaVoi et al., 2019). LaVoi et al. (2019) explicitly call for men with positional power, to commit to learning more about the embedded sexism and gender bias in sport coaching.

With this in mind, an understanding of gender is fundamental to both organisational and social processes in the sport sector when discussing female coaches (Pape, 2020). For example, Anicha et al. (2018) stated that an ally has a keen awareness and understanding of the social issue they are endeavouring to address. An ally's awareness and understanding are developed through education, primarily self-education of the issue in question e.g., gender inequity for female high-performance coaches (Jolly et al., 2021). LaVoi and Wasend (2018) identified several ally characteristics of male athletic directors who were responsible for the recruitment practices of coaching staff. These gender allies held unequivocal views that competent female coaches existed, and that these athletic directors

had a demonstrable history of hiring female coaches. More recently, LaVoi and Boucher (2021) provided persuasive arguments of the effectiveness of gender allies to support female coaches at interpersonal and organisational levels. This is consistent with calls from business and sports scholars, such as Norman (2018); Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018); Sawyer and Valerio (2018) and Wilson et al. (2021) for men to drive change for female coaches across all levels.

Nicholas understood allyship in terms of gender representation, that is equal numerical representation of both genders. As for allyship succeeding as a potential mechanism for organisational change, he stated:

> Allyship. It will not happen because 50% of the population say it should happen, whether they're right or wrong, doesn't matter. It's not going to happen if only 50%" [support it]. The conversation has to include the other 50% of the population.

The implications of what Nicholas said, are that male allyship extends beyond gender inequity being framed as an organisational and societal issue for women to solve. In short and highlighted by the literature, men are part of the solution and women are not the problem (Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2018; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018; Wilson et al., 2021).

The criticality of the female voice to inform and reframe current organisational structures is an ongoing concern in the sports literature (Norman, 2010b; Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2018; Walker & Bopp, 2010). Walker and Bopp (2010) examined the threat to female coaches in terms of the integration of male coaches into the women's game, where the superior numerical representation of male coaches dominate the men and women's game. Both Norman (2010b) and Norman and Rankin-Wright (2018) concluded that the female coaches' voice is essential to informing what a diverse and inclusive coaching environment should be.

Steve's articulation of allyship also included representation and collaboration as themes. Steve's view gave the impression that he believed allyship can produce good outcomes for both genders if those outcomes are aligned.

> Allyship. I would say it's recognising that everyone's in this game together and the actual outcomes that we want are all aligned and actually if we support and champion each other we're going to be in a better place, so it's almost that coming together of all groups.

Warren et al. (2021) advised that effective male allyship includes listening to and accepting feedback from the marginalised individual or group. This is important to avoid a disconnect between male allies and female colleagues which results in ineffective male allyship. It also provides further evidence to highlight the importance of collaboration and the absolute necessity of the female voice in a diverse and equitable coaching environment.

Paul's interpretation of allyship was a move away from the previous participants' perceptions. Rather than encapsulating collaboration, Paul focused his understanding of allyship as being generated from a highly gendered, homogeneous sports system.

> People from the advantage agenda, which would be me, providing additional support to women until we get to the point where we believe there's true equality of opportunity.

Paul identified his role as one having a privileged status, where his role was to support non-advantaged groups i.e., women. There was an implication that Paul believed female coaches or females in general in sport were seeking "true equality", rather than true gender equity. Schewinbenz (2021) stated that possessing privilege does not simply make one an ally. Privilege and recognising one's own privilege are important, how one recognises the social issue in question and then acts on that privilege are important first steps. More critical is how one recognises the social issue in question and acts on that

privilege in order to be a genuine and effective ally (Jolly et al., 2021; Schewinbenz, 2021). The significance of this comment will be explored further in the next chapter – identifying the range of allyship in relation to the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021).

GAC and male sports leaders' perceptions of allyship

Overall, the analysis of Figures 6 and 7 demonstrated that there was only individual and organisational alignment for Mike/Maroon and Bruce/Bronze. It is also clear in Figures 6 and 7, that the participants' perceptions of their individual position on the GAC and their perceptions of their organisations' placement on the GAC can vary between participants and between participants within the same organisations. Taking the participants' perceptions of their organisations position on the GAC at face value, it was encouraging that no organisations were located at 'Unaware of any gender equity issues' on the continuum. The majority of individuals placed themselves one step further along the allyship continuum than their respective organisations. With the exception of Carl who placed Cobalt one step more advanced on the continuum than he positioned himself personally.

Figure 6 specifically highlights where each participant positioned themselves on the GAC. This is important because it captured individual perspectives across the eight NSO's. In Figure 6, all 10 participants are located at either 'Some action to address gender equity issues' or 'Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity'. It could be considered positive that all individuals located themselves on this part of the GAC, with no participants positioning themselves lower on the continuum. The implication being that all the participants have moved beyond awareness to either taking some action or being committed to ongoing action to address gender inequity issues, or a hybrid of these.

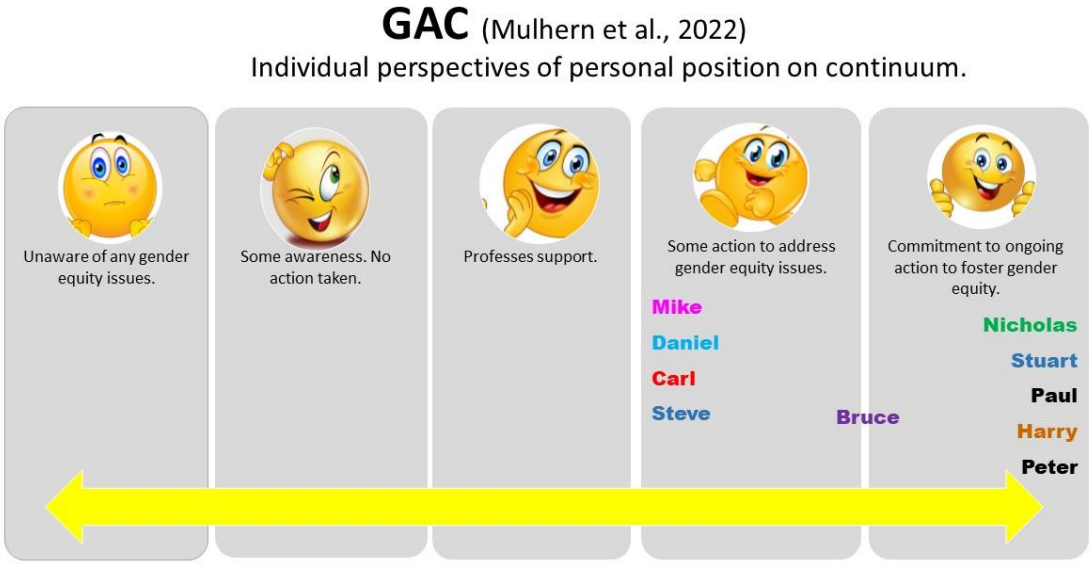


Figure 6: Participants perspectives of personal position on the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a)

Figure 7 represents where each participant located their respective organisation on the GAC. Please note that names with the same colour denote the same organisation. The majority of participants placed their organisation in 'Some action to address gender equity issues'. There was more variation in Figure 7, compared to Figure 6, in terms of organisations placed in 'Professes support' and a hybrid of 'Some awareness to address gender equity issues' and 'Professes support'. Denim, Silver, and Harlequin were positioned at less advanced positions on the continuum than their associated individuals. Interestingly, only Cobalt was located entirely in 'Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity'. Carl attributed this to Cobalt's high focus on gender equity at all levels of the organisation, including a clear organisational strategy targeting the development of female coaches, particularly high-performance female coaches. Carl qualified why he placed himself one position lower than Cobalt – "I always take the approach [there] is always room for improvement".

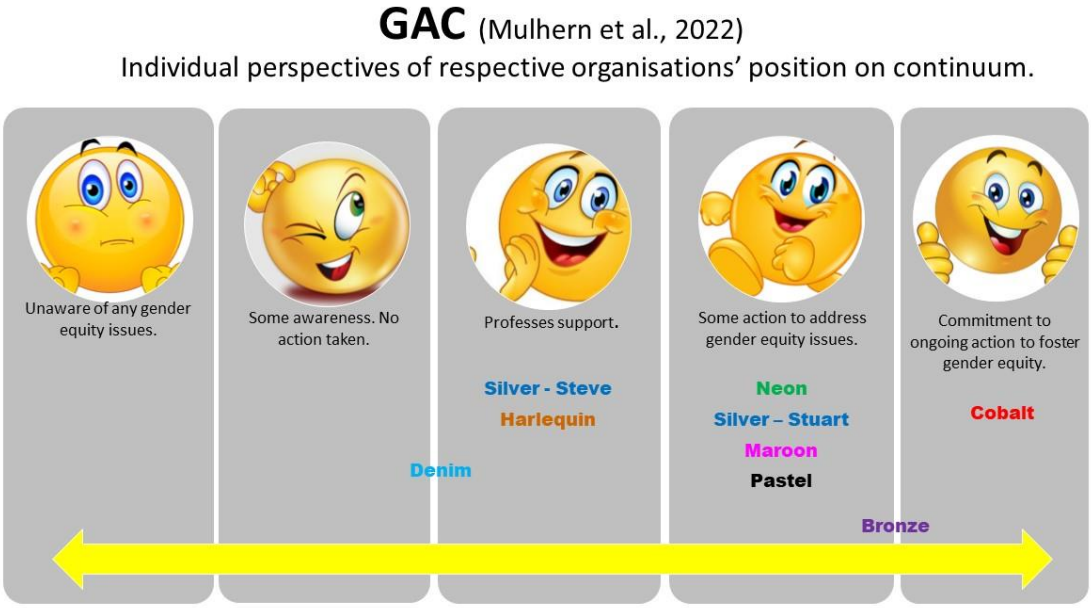


Figure 7: Participants perspectives of organisational position on the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a)

Silver and Pastel were the only two NSOs, with two participants interviewed for this research. Steve and Stuart positioned themselves individually at different points on the GAC, as shown in Figure 7. These particular participants placed Silver at different points on the GAC also. Steve made this comment with respect to his opinion of where Silver would be located in terms of fostering gender equity practices for female high-performance coaches:

> There's definitely a desire to be at [commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity], without a doubt. When I speak to them, I think they probably think they're further along the scale than they are.

Paul and Peter positioned themselves individually at the same point and both positioned Pastel at the same point on the GAC, but at a different position to their individual positions, see Figures 6 and 7. This suggests that Peter and Paul feel they are individually further along the allyship continuum than their organisation.

Daniel considered himself at ‘Some action to address gender equity issues’ and positioned Denim between ‘Some awareness. No action taken’ and ‘Professes support’. He highlighted two issues:

> I have taken some action to address gender equity issues, but it's not necessarily on my brain at a daily level or a weekly level, it's more of a sporadic kind of implementation. I'm not clear on a sort of pathway of how to be more effective.

Daniel commented that he did not know how to be more effective in addressing gender inequity issues in the workplace, which is consistent with the literature. Demers (2019) and Madsen et al. (2020) argued that men require supportive actions to advance gender equity for women in the workplace. This is also consistent with Wilson et al. (2021), who reported that men actively working on gender equity practices is one mechanism through which culture change can occur. LaVoi and Wasend (2018) described this culture as how an organisation goes about its daily business, the manner in which everyday things are done, the norms, the lived values, and embedded rules of behaviour. Wilson et al. (2021) provided experiential and contextual features of practising allyship through their work in establishing a male allyship group. The authors reported two critical lessons learned during the formation of this male allyship group:

1. An overriding concern that the primary and most crucial action of the group is to learn and understand from female colleagues.
2. Single, deliberate actions are less effective than continuous actions.

Demers (2019) suggested that men who want to support women in sport often feel they do not possess the right information to support and advance gender equity. Demers offered several suggestions to help men be more effective in this context:

- Men need to remember that women are not a minority group in terms of the population.
- Self-education is important so men should become familiar with statistics from an individual’s sport; organisation; country etc. regarding female leaders and coaches.

- Educate colleagues who may be misinformed regarding women's experiences especially women in leadership positions e.g., coaches.
- Connect with colleagues within your industry that are facing the same issues and learn from each other.

The above research suggests that Daniel's reference to his efforts being sporadic, as opposed to continual, would mean that his actions were likely ineffective. In addition, the fact that Daniel's entire coaching workforce was male, meant he had limited opportunity to learn and understand gender inequity from a female high-performance coach perspective. Warren et al. (2021) are clear that communication is paramount between organisational leaders and women. Communication is essential to establish what women need to feel supported, then organisational leaders need to act strategically in response to those needs.

The scholarly literature indicated that it is essential that Daniel connect with and develop relationships with female coaches or leaders in general within his wider organisation or industry (LaVoi & Boucher, 2021; Wilson et al., 2021). Within the context of this argument, Daniel made an important point concerning an indirect, but positive outcome, perhaps even supportive action, of the Te Hāpaitanga program. The overall implication being that participants such as Daniel require education and that programs such as Te Hāpaitanga are valuable sources of education to non-cohort members. The following quotation by Daniel summarised his experience as a facilitator on a course that ran as part of the Te Hāpaitanga program and provides valuable contextual insight:

> It [Te Hāpaitanga] gave me more experience of opportunities and strengths that women can bring to the table, and it reaffirmed my belief that you treat the individual as an individual.

Self-education and allyship – a connection

Finally, all participants were asked where they would like to be on the GAC. All participants stated that they would like to be at 'Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity' on the GAC. At a superficial level, this overwhelming consensus bodes well on two fronts for gender equity and female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa:

1. A recognition from sports leaders that gender equity is required.

2. That there appears to be a willingness to commit to ongoing action to foster gender equity.

Understanding why participants positioned themselves at a certain point on the GAC generated some interesting comments. Both Nicholas and Carl highlighted the salience of their work environment on their past, present, and potential positions on the GAC. Carl emphasised that his work environment had positively impacted his allyship journey, exemplified by the following statement:

> If I didn't work at [Cobalt], I would be probably the middle one, [professes support]. If I came out of [Cobalt] now and went into another sport. I would still probably sit in that space [some action to address gender equity issues], because of the experiences that I've had here.

Nicholas positioned himself as 'Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity' and linked his position to education. Nicholas utilised the GAC in a similar manner to Carl, by reflecting on his own experience to contextualise his position:

> I wouldn't have put myself there five years ago. I think the opportunity I had in the education I got at [at a particular sports organisation was fundamental]

As identified in the first section of this chapter, Carl was one of the participants for whom the concept of allyship was new. In contrast, Nicholas provided a more comprehensive understanding of allyship. Fundamental to constructing an informed notion of allyship, is the need to listen intently to the perspectives of marginalised persons (Wilson et al., 2021). The literature defines this as self-education

and a core tenet of allyship. There is an implied link between workplace environment or culture, education and allyship. The literature has already established a link between allyship and education, or more specifically self-education (Anicha et al., 2018; Wilson et al., 2021). Jolly et al. (2021) for example, argued that an ally's knowledge and understanding is developed through education, predominantly self-education of the issue in question e.g., gender inequity for female high-performance coaches.

Time and allyship – a disconnection

Steve considered his commitment to ongoing action to address gender equity issues as constrained by time. This issue of time is interesting. Firstly, Steve, like Nicholas, offered a more evolved awareness of allyship compared to participants who considered allyship as something completely new. This would imply, but not guarantee, that Steve understood that allyship is defined by everyday action, and as an inherent values and belief system, rather than as a one-off strategy to support female coaches.

> Sure, I'd love to say to you that I'm on this 'commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity'. I'd love to say I was there. I think I'm probably one away from that [some action to address gender equity issues]. And I think it's probably from a sort of a selfish perspective, where I'm sort of going, I can't focus enough time on it. Just because you've got other agendas.

A disconnect appears between Steve's perception of allyship and his perceived ability to be an ally or a more effective ally. Does this disconnect matter? The argument is yes. The literature has well established that sport is based on the knowledge, privileges, and experiences of men deeply embedded within its culture (Burton & Leberman, 2017; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; LaVoi et al., 2019; Wasend & LaVoi, 2019). If an ally does not commit to everyday action in a highly gendered system such as sport, then the status quo remains (Jolly et al., 2021). As mentioned earlier, Wilson et al.

(2021), pointed to the irregular action of male organisational leaders, such as Steve and highlighted earlier in relation to Daniel, as falling short of being effective. Extending this argument further, Warren et al. (2021) contended that if male allies are falling short of the expectations of their female colleagues, then this is problematic and risky for both genders. Warren et al. (2021) noted that when male allyship is not compatible with women's needs for inclusion, it is not only problematic for maintaining the status quo, it can also be destructive to the allyship relationship.

This chapter highlighted the range of individual and organisational perceptions of allyship. Some participants articulated a lack of understanding of the concept or ethos of allyship. This lack of knowledge provided the basis to strengthen the argument for allyship as a support for female high-performance coaches over and above sponsorship and mentorship, for example. Based on the findings and the literature specific to this theme, it is argued that an understanding of allyship matters. An ally develops this understanding mainly through self-education. This understanding of allyship as a lived concern is essential, not a sporadic support that turns on and off depending on what the ally has on their agenda. Overall, an understanding of allyship matters. The importance of this understanding permeates through the following chapters.

In the second part of this chapter, the GAC highlighted where individuals placed themselves and their organisations on a gender ally continuum. The GAC did not show what the various forms of allyship were, or what constituted allyship at an individual or organisational level. What is compelling is what participants and their organisations were doing in terms of allyship which is explored in the next chapter using the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021).

Chapter 5: The range of male allyship for high-performance female coaches in Aotearoa

Introduction

Chapter Five explores the range and depth of male allyship at individual and organisational levels. This chapter specifically focuses on utilising the Transformational Allyship Model (Jolly et al., 2021) and the findings are presented across three sub-themes: ally agents, ally advocates, and ally activism to clearly demonstrate the existence and extent of male allyship for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa. In doing so, the value and utility of the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) as a conceptual model is also clearly demonstrated. Findings specific to the GAC are succinctly compared and contrasted to the findings in this chapter, with the main analysis and discussion framed by the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). This demonstrates the limitations of the GAC and further demonstrates the importance of the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) for this study.

Figure 8 provides an overview of the participants' and organisations' position on the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). In Figure 8, the NSOs are dispersed relatively evenly across the three forms of allyship at the organisational level. The majority of individuals are considered ally activists, which bodes well for female high-performance coaches going forward. Bruce was the sole ally advocate and three other individuals, two from the same organisation, were considered ally agents based on the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) framework. The findings highlighted both individual and organisational ally activists combined in Neon, Silver and Cobalt as Transformational Allyship i.e., both individual and organisational activists working in tandem is considered as transformational allyship as proposed by (Jolly et al., 2021). Harlequin and Maroon do not qualify for transformational allyship under the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) framework as they are located as ally advocates and their respective individuals are located in ally activists (see Figure 8). This chapter provides a thorough examination of these

individuals and their respective NSO's to support their position as ally agent, ally advocate or ally activist and provides empirical data for the conceptual model.

	Ally Agents	Ally Advocates	Ally Activists
Individual	Daniel	Bruce	Nicholas
	Paul		Steve
	Peter		Stuart
			Carl
			Harry
			Mike
Organisational	Denim	Bronze	Neon
	Pastel	Harlequin	Silver
		Maroon	Cobalt
			Transformational Allyship

Figure 8: Individual and organisation positions as guided by the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021)

Denim and Pastel Organisations as Ally Agents

To recap Jolly et al. (2021) defined an ally agent as an individual or organisation who has no real interest in acting for social justice and does not actively engage in genuine actions to address social issues. From the outset of this study, Daniel explicitly referred to himself as an ally in response to the letter of invitation to participate in the study and again at several points during the interview. Recalling Daniel's position on the GAC (see Figure 6), as 'Some action to address gender equity issues' this would suggest Daniel as an ally advocate within the framework of the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). Yet Daniel's comments demonstrate a disconnect between his perception of himself as an ally, the research findings, and the literature. For example, Daniel provides some evidence of what he perceives as his individual allyship activities outside of his immediate role in Denim. Daniel states that he supports a female coach (not a high-performance coach) he previously coached. His description is more aligned to a fusion of a mentorship/sponsorship type role –

> Since she's retired from competing, she's got back into coaching. And I feel like I've tried to be a sounding board, a promoter, a supporter of her so there's a sort of individual case study.

The literature establishes sponsorship and mentoring as potentially effective strategies for supporting female coaches, for example improving representation of women in the workplace by nominating women for boards or significant projects, as discussed in Chapter 4. Sponsorship and mentorship are not the same, and potentially not as effective as allyship in creating transformative organisational change (Anicha et al., 2018; Banwell et al., 2019; Jolly et al., 2021). Daniel was aware of the absence of female coaches within Denim but appeared to be unaware that the absence of female coaches from his organisation was reinforcing entrenched beliefs and implicit gender bias, which served to maintain the status quo.

The literature is clear that an ally acts for social justice, without a mandate. An ally will oppose a strategic directive if it contributes to maintaining a system of oppression (Cooper et al., 2020; Jolly et al., 2021). Several authors, for example, Anicha et al. (2018); Cooper et al. (2020); Jolly et al. (2021) and Wilson et al. (2021), have recognised an ally as someone who resists, disrupts, and dismantles systems of oppression. These same authors further specify that an ally seeks to convert the identified needs of the marginalised individual or group into strategy, to promote gender equity for women in the workplace (LaVoi & Boucher, 2021; Madsen et al., 2020; Sawyer & Valerio, 2018). Daniel did not exhibit any obvious characteristic advocacy or activist allyship behaviours as outlined in the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). Daniel was mainly defined by his inaction. Significantly, the findings suggest that neither Daniel nor Denim had any demonstrable intention to act to redress gender inequity within Denim without a strategic directive. This was exemplified in his comment below regarding why he had not acted to redress any gender inequities in Denim.

> "I haven't seen as a requirement in the paperwork [from HPSNZ], as in a woman in sports strategy".

The above comment also speaks to a wider issue that HPSNZ may not be demanding gender equity for female high-performance coaches from the NSO's they engage with and provide funding to (it was beyond the scope of this study to determine this facet). Daniel's statements regarding expectations in the strategy and accountability at a leadership level, is arguably indicative of a broader issue regarding funding requirements and the potential role of stakeholders, such as HPSNZ when providing such funding. Over the last few years, Denim received several million dollars in direct funding from HPSNZ and several million more in sponsorship, as per their annual reports. Considering the scale of financial investment, stakeholders are vital for the organisation's existence. Jolly et al. (2021) suggested that external stakeholders have a wider role to play, for example, in the design and evaluation of funding applications to include requirements that hold organisations to account regarding gender equity and female high-performance coaches.

In their study investigating the lack of female coaches in men's college basketball, Walker and Bopp (2010) directly connected funding and accountability of organisations and organisational leaders in sports. The authors recommended policy be attached to coaching positions at the interview stage of recruitment to produce a more equitable coaching workforces. The policy would require at least one female be interviewed for every men's sports leadership vacancy or federal funding would be cut. The same authors recommended rewarding additional scholarships to coaching departments that recruited a female leader for a male sports team. More recently, Demers et al. (2021) proposed that accountability and monitoring should be more closely connected. Based on this understanding, organisations need to explicitly build this connection intentionally and include all actors i.e., in Aotearoa the Minister for Sport and Recreation (Ministry for Culture and Heritage); HPSNZ and individual NSOs. In order to create equitable opportunities for female coaches, the sources of funding i.e., The Government of Aotearoa; HPSNZ, must implement improved compliance incentives and/or policy enforcements, as suggested by Demers et al. (2021), highlighting that this important commitment by all stakeholders is critical to creating a new and sustainable culture in sport coaching through transformational change.

Demers et al. (2021) suggested that organisations should include gender equity measures in strategic plans accompanied by audits and action plans that are put into action and monitored. Daniel believed that as an ally he needed to be resourced, instructed, or mandated to be an ally for gender equity and female coaches. This is comparable to Steve noting that time was a constraint to his effectiveness as an ally (see Chapter 4). This perception implies a false perception on Daniel's part that he was an ally. This is consistent with the literature as Anicha et al. (2018) emphasised the social construction and unearned privilege of men. The authors describe that men with such unearned privilege are too frequently oblivious and uninformed and therefore, cannot fully comprehend social justice issues or hope to generate social justice. It is also consistent with what Hinojosa-Alcalde et al. (2018) consider as a gender bias or resistive practice.

Daniel's comment below illustrates what would enable him to progress from where he was on the GAC to his desired position on the GAC i.e., from 'Some action to address gender equity issues' to 'Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity':

> What would help me shift would be a clear pathway. More available resources and accountability. You know if my boss told me, we need to do this project, that's nice you don't need to do this by this date, I would happily you know commit bandwidth to it. So, I guess a little bit of direction and leadership and or a mandate or accountability yeah.

Daniel highlighted an awareness of gender equity as an issue, commenting - "I understand some of the issues", but there was no evidence of any action taken to address these issues, which was epitomised by Daniel stating that he placed gender inequity and female coaches in the "too hard basket". This is in sharp contrast to the work of Schewinbenz (2021) who endorses that a male ally must possess a clear picture of their unearned privilege, how it benefits them, and how these unearned advantages systematically disadvantage the marginalised. Overall, based on the findings

and utilising the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021), Daniel did not fit the criteria as an ally advocate or activist at an individual level positioning him firmly as an ally agent.

At an organisational level, Denim's strategic plan was published as a single webpage on their website. The organisation's most recent annual report stated that the organisation was working on a future strategy with a strong emphasis on athlete performance, athlete agency and wellbeing. Denim's existing strategy was heavily focused on performance, with measures of success aligned to performance and medal outcomes at an international level. Within the strategic plan, inclusivity was mentioned as a single word with no expansion on this. There was no diversity statement in the strategic plan. A subsidiary strategic plan to Denims' main strategic plan existed, which included coach education and coach development as an area of focus. Overall, none of Denims' areas of strategic focus, their vison or mission statements, referred to diversity, inclusion, or gender equity either implicitly or explicitly. Denim's strategic direction as detailed in the documentation examined for this research was positive in relation to athlete agency and wellbeing but presented a myopic and constrained strategy in terms of its scope and ambition, specifically in regard to gender equity and female high-performance coaches. Allyship as agency is the absence of a sincere commitment to gender equity at individual and organisational level (Jolly, et al., 2021). Daniel may have implied this by aligning Denim as a hybrid of 'Some awareness. No action taken' and 'Professes support' on the GAC.

As an organisation, Denim has taken some positive action, but arguably from a compliance mindset. Daniel acknowledged this when he commented on accountability and Denim, in response to a question asking what he would like to see happen to help promote and support women's coaching within Denim:

> "There's no accountability to make it a priority, [that is] a strategy around gender, [and] addressing the gender inequity in sport are not followed through".

Daniel and Denim exhibited no obvious responsiveness or challenge to current systems at an individual or organisational level, unless as Daniel suggested there was a “mandate” or “accountability” at leadership level. It is clear from the findings that unless mandated, gender inequity for female high-performance coaches, is not an issue that Denim are likely to address. Based on Daniel’s comments perhaps, mandates are necessary to encourage organisations classified as ally agents to move from ally agents towards being ally activists. The obvious inaction in combination with a compliance mindset as described above, is what Dobscha and Ostberg (2021) considered a performative or box ticking exercise. This is consistent with Daniel's assessment of Denim on the GAC (see Figure 7).

Figure 8 also shows Pastel, and its respective individuals, Paul, and Peter as ally agents. However, in contrast to Denim, both Paul and Peter located Pastel at the same position on the GAC ‘Some action to address gender equity issues’, (see Figures 6 and 7). Pastel had taken comparable action to Denim and also had female coaches accepted to the Te Hāpaitanga program, plus the Prime Minister’s Sports Scholarship program. It should be noted that the Prime Minister’s Sports Scholarship program is not dedicated to female high-performance coaches. Both Paul and Peter pointed to a junior female (non-elite) coaching program that Pastel recently delivered, which they both commented was successful. Paul gave this summary of the program:

> We put them [junior female coaches] through that, and they’ve had a really great experience.

The data explicitly indicated that to date, high-performance female coaches and female coaches in general had not been a strategic priority for Pastel at an individual or organisational level. Peter offered this insight:

> I saw we didn't really have a great capture of who's actually coaching [in] our community.

Pastel promotes several different sport disciplines under the one organisation. Both Paul and Peter, articulated a strong preoccupation with participation rates and performance, which is reflected by Peter who is driving strategy in this area:

> We're looking at getting more people into the sport, how do we get more people and We [Pastel] are trying to look at other strategies to get more people involved.

Pastel had no female high-performance coaches, which was not unremarkable and consistent with several other NSO's participating in this research. What was interesting was that there was no demonstrable evidence to support that Pastel was trying to address the absence of female high-performance coaches. Pastels' strategic plan explicitly acknowledged the underrepresentation of women coaches at all levels within the organisation, and that significant work was required to identify and develop this underrepresented group, but no specifics were provided, or progress reported. Peter clarified that the organisation did not have a specific focus on female coaches and that they were just - "Trying to get coaches, full stop".

A disconnect was apparent between Pastels' leadership and their grassroots level. Pastel's current strategy aimed to address this disconnect with Peter sharing that "we've been trying to get a relationship with each main club". When asked what Pastel were presently doing around female coaches (not specifically elite coaches), Peter commented that Pastel recently ran a coaching conference and some women "popped up through that". There was no great energy to this statement, and this gave the impression that Pastel was seeking to connect with coaches in general, not specifically female coaches. Significantly, Pastel's strategic plan incorporating the next six years, received feedback from their community that they would like to see the sport inclusive and diverse in several areas including gender, yet there was little evidence of this being addressed. Conceivably, this disconnect will at least continue, if not exacerbate, if Pastel does not respond to its community feedback.

A strategic priority for Pastel included creating and maintaining pathways for stakeholders to contribute to the future direction of the sport. Although quite generalised, this strategic priority could be significant for a stakeholder concerned with supporting and promoting gender equity for high-performance female coaches in the organisation e.g., a sponsor. Extending the significance of accountability as discussed previously in reference to Denim, Jolly et al. (2021) posit that it is essential that organisations positioned in agency or advocacy be encouraged to consider the implication of inaction and complicity in maintaining the status quo. Current and future consequences of inaction could be significant, for example, as highlighted previously access to funding, sponsorship and other competitive disadvantages compared to rivals who implement more equity-minded systems.

Overall, Pastel and participants Paul and Peter were reactive to increasing Pastel's participation rates which they regarded as a fundamental organisational challenge. What was striking was that there was no evidence that Pastel was responding to their community feedback, which recommended increasing gender inclusivity and diversity within their organisation. Arguably, increasing participation rates will not necessarily lead to increased diversity in their organisation. When speaking to the future recruitment of a high-performance coach for Pastels' women's program, Paul implied that because the role was focused on the female gender then the organisation would look to employ a female coach –

> We will likely be on the lookout for a new high-performance coach either high performance or development coach [soon]. We'll definitely be looking to employ a woman, if we can, because the role would be focused on our women's program.

This is positive that Pastel is considering hiring a high-performance female coach. However, would a female be considered for their men's program? And the "if we can" part of the statement could be a throwback to this comment made by Paul:

> Currently if we're not getting competitive female coaches applying for the roles, I don't think that we would be doing any favours by appointing someone who's not equipped in the wrong.

These two quotations echo what LaVoi (2016, p. 20) calls the “blame-the-women” narrative - a male construct that continues to marginalise, repress, and dissuade women from becoming coaches. These blaming narratives are prevalent in sport and are typically associated with male organisational leaders, which in turn influence hiring practices (LaVoi, 2016). LaVoi (2016) suggests several common ‘blaming’ perspectives, which are implied in Paul’s statements above, including:

- Inadequate talent pool of female coaches.
- Women are uninterested in coaching men.
- Female coaches inherent lack of knowledge, expertise, confidence, and experience.

LaVoi (2016) argues that these dominant discourses maintain the status quo and find fault with the marginalised group, which deflects from the real issue – gender inequity. Such discourses can be attributed to a lack of awareness or an ill-informed individual/s (LaVoi, 2016). The implication that female high-performance coaches are potentially less qualified than their male counterparts, is problematic as it reinforces the entrenched bias and the gendered nature of sport organisations. The literature draws attention to sport as a common place where women are considered not suited for particular roles based on gender alone (Hindman and Walker, 2020; Fink, 2016). Fink (2016, p.5) asserts that “as sport managers, we must be willing to denounce the status quo relative to sexism in sport”.

Considering the above findings in relation to the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021), Paul, Peter and Pastel can be classified as male ally agents at both the individual and organisational level. Both Pastel and the two participants demonstrated some awareness, but there was no obvious intentional action or intent to act. The findings do not present any evidence that these participants would utilise their privileged leadership positions to plan or act to challenge existing structures and address gender equity

specifically for high-performance female coaches. Paul and Peter's strategic priorities appeared to reside elsewhere, with a focus on increasing the organisation's participation rates. There is also a concern that Pastel is not listening to feedback from its community specifically recommending that Pastel actively address a lack of gender diversity and inclusivity within the organisation. This is significant as it goes to the core of the under-representation and marginalisation of women in sport, not only coaching. This is emphasised in the literature Demers (2019) asserts that sports organisations should replicate their communities. The next section discusses ally advocacy, specifically Bronze, Maroon, and Harlequin as organisational ally advocates and Bruce as the sole individual ally advocate.

Bronze, Maroon, and Harlequin Organisations: Ally Advocates

Allyship advocacy is a step beyond allyship agency moving towards allyship as activism (Jolly et al., 2021), (see Figure 2). Bruce was identified as the sole ally advocate at an individual level. Ally advocates, and more specifically, the existence and extent of performative allyship – a form of allyship as advocacy (Jolly et al., 2021) are discussed in the in relation to Bruce. Based on the findings, Bronze, Maroon, and Harlequin, were positioned as ally advocates, at an organisational level. While these organisations were positioned as ally advocates, two of the participants within these organisations were identified as ally activists – Mike from Maroon and Harry from Harlequin. Overall, Bruce's narratives demonstrated that Bronze was an organisation that reinforced hegemonic structures and gender stereotypes. The findings suggest that Bruce and Bronze exhibit what can be described as performative allyship at both individual and organisational levels. This is in contrast to Bruce who considered himself and Bronze to be more aligned to a hybrid of advocacy and activist allyship. As discussed in the literature review, Jolly et al. (2021) associated performative allyship with allyship as agency, but not exclusively. The level of performative allyship displayed by Bronze was arguably a more nuanced form of performative allyship, where Bronze's strategic documentation stated support for values that supported and promoted gender equity, but this was not evident in the narratives and insights provided by Bruce. The following quotation from Bruce signals an awareness of gender equity.

> We know we've got a huge, a huge amount to make up and what you're starting to see in [Bronze] and starting to see what [names specific sport] is a desire to accelerate and actually start to catch that up. And the challenge the administration has, is how do you catch one up. Rather than this [reference to women] moving forward at the expense of that [reference to men]. The reality [] is if you do anything at the expense of this, being the [men's national team] over here, then the size of the pie you have to distribute commercially across the whole of the game, women and men is substantially smaller, so there are there's a practical challenge.

Additionally, and significantly, there also appeared to be an overt reluctance from the organisation to commit to a fair allocation of financial resources based on gender. This is an example of performative allyship. Bruce's statement clearly differentiates on the basis of gender, where the narrative was about losing something, rather than building up the women's game to achieve gender equity. The quotation frames gender equity as a commercial challenge for the organisation to overcome. A deficit mindset as described earlier by Anicha et al. (2018) may also provide an explanation for Bruce's comments above.

Gender equity differs to gender equality as it is about creating the same outcomes for all genders by providing everyone with the requisite opportunities and experiences based on their individual needs (Canadian Women and Sport, 2020; Norman, 2021). Gender equity is based on the fair and equitable distribution of resources, programs and decision-making based on individual needs of the female coach, as an example. At an individual and organisational level, Bruce was disregarding one of the most fundamental and distinguishing factors of gender equity, compared to gender equality, by not addressing or resourcing the individual needs of their female coaches. This was in contrast to an articulated desire by Bruce to be at the 'Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity' position on the GAC, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

The equitable distribution of programs does not necessarily mean that female high-performance coaches need or even want the same programs as their male colleagues. Assuming that female coaches do, can be problematic. Bronze's coaching model for female coaches was based on and within a male coaching education model. Bruce, unlike other participants, did not offer any acknowledgement that this model may not be the most conductive environment for female coaches. He also implied that female coaches may have little to offer the male game. This echoes LaVoi's (2016, p. 20) "blame the women" narrative, particularly a perceived lack of competence and expertise, previously discussed in Chapter 4 with reference to Paul and Pastel.

Situating the development of women coaches within the male coaching training environment is another example of performative allyship. In this case, Bronze was providing female coaching programs while simultaneously protecting the male interests of the organisation. This situation reinforces dominant ideologies of gender and fails to recognise that some women may not thrive in a male dominated environment. In the literature, experiences of women head coaches interviewed described having to compromise personal values and silence their own voices to fit in with the dominant male coaching culture which worked to repress any opposing voices (Norman & Rankin, 2016). This dominant culture was favourable to men and unsupportive for women head coaches. Perhaps combining women and men's coach training was a cost-effective option for Bronze. Or it reflects a more deeply embedded and unconscious gender bias reflecting the prioritisation of masculinity within Bronze's organisational structures. Irrespective of the reasoning, this perspective is passive (women have little choice in the learning experience), ill-informed - also associated with performative allyship (Wellman, 2022) - and reductive. The literature describes this form of allyship as insincere and misleading (Wellman, 2022).

Much research has advocated for and provided compelling arguments in support of WOTP (Allen & Reid, 2019; Kraft et al., 2020). Kraft et al. (2020) highlight that WOTP are important for creating and promoting a shift towards gender equity for women coaches. WOTP can act as sites for changing the

status quo of the sport coaching landscape by targeting the development of female coaches, based on their needs as coaches, in an environment where women can connect, support, and inspire other women. WOTP have wide reaching benefits. LaVoi et al. (2019) contend that same sex social support may act as a site of resistance; to inform and resist gender inequities; to resist the blaming women narrative and a site where women can take active control over their career development. LaVoi et al. (2019) also highlight how same sex role models matter, for example, the experiences of female student athletes can be positively impacted by same gender role models. In addition, organisations and individuals can benefit via leveraging existing female role models for the recruitment and retention of potential and existing female coaches (LaVoi & Wasend, 2018). Rather than pushing against the hegemonic structures and practices and actively disrupting them, Bruce appeared to be embracing and reinforcing them. What is implied in the following statement, is that there is nothing for the 'men's game' to learn from the 'women's game' which does reinforce a gender hierarchy and superiority. Bronze is revising their existing systems for their female coaches in terms of access but limiting their female coaches to these existing systems. This was illustrated in the following quotation from Bruce:

> The best places and [] in the country to develop your skills as a coach because the best male coaches will be there. So, your technical and tactical understanding will accelerate and then you apply it, in a woman specific environment and learn all of the extra they [female coaches] can because there are differences between the male game and the female game. And differences between male and female athletes and so take the best out of the men's technically and tactically and bring across and apply in leadership and a woman specific environment.

Several participants identified the fundamental need to create a talent pool of high-performance female coaches and pathways to achieve this. Bruce explained that at Bronze "[we] are way off in this space right now". The response to being 'way off' signalled a reactive and limited process. For

example, female coaches were appointed on an intern basis or as an add-on, rather than appointed as an assistant or head coach. Bruce also made it clear that changes to developing a female coaching talent pool were driven by international competition. It was also noteworthy that all of Bronze's high-performance head coaches for the upcoming international competitions were male across both the male and female games. Bruce went on to explain what type of work was underway to develop a female high-performance coaching pathway and talent pool:

> We have introduced a scholarship program for an intern or aspiring coach to be attached to every team going to the [next] women's [pinnacle event], and so we have a coach also attached to the program, but not appointed over and above the existing three coaches that are there, a fourth coach.

Bruce explained why Bronze had developed a talent pool of female coaches:

> The realisation that I've come to [] is that you go to market looking for candidates on merit. To that end, in they're actually not there, right, they [female coaches] haven't got the experience or the necessary skills either technical or tactical from a broader coaching perspective and that's just because frankly that immediate group prior haven't had the opportunity to do that.

Once again, this is highly consistent with LaVoi's (2016) comments emphasising the explicit presence of a 'blaming the women' espoused by male sports leaders i.e., lamenting female coaches regarding their perceived skills, experience, and absence in the workforce market.

Building on his comments regarding the lack of a talent pool of female high-performance coaches, and similar to Denim and Pastel, Bruce was explicit that the performance and maintenance of high levels of performance were to be a top priority – "record and performance as always number one". The creation and development of a talent pool was positive. Gender equity at all levels within Bronze was a documented organisational goal, closely associated with visible pathways for female coaches.

However, the strategy relies heavily on maintaining profitability, performance success and leveraging women for organisational gain e.g., participation rates, rather than overt strategies to achieve gender equity for females. This type of strategy was classified as performative allyship and consistent with Lusted and Fielding-Lloyd (2017), who highlighted the challenges and limitations on females when they are forced to 'fit into' a male dominated structure. Decision-makers in sports organisations need to be aware of how gender bias and sexism are embedded in sports organisational culture and the wider sociocultural context in order to improve workplace experiences for female coaches, including the implementation of gender specific policies (Hinojosa-Alcalde et al., 2018).

Bruce was concerned with organisational credibility and brand. His main concern appeared to be the publics' perception of Bronze's credibility and in this sense Bruce focussed on women being a risk to the organisation's credibility and sporting performance. The preoccupation with performance and winning was also noted as a strategic priority in Bronze's annual report, along with a focus on brand and highlighted in this comment by Bruce:

> When you get deliberate about gender choices, [] you really need to make sure from a credibility perspective that you've got someone who's good enough, as well, because otherwise you get a whole backlash of that's just token and that's compromising performance.

Wellman (2022) reported that performative allyship can be utilised strategically to build and maintain brand credibility with stakeholders without significant progress toward diversity, equity, or inclusion. Performative allyship has been described as not beneficial to the marginalised individual or group (Kalina, 2020). A concern for optics and credibility creates an overall image of Bronze reactively and performatively supporting female coaches e.g., talent pool development, as opposed to authentically challenging the status quo. The lack of evidence of a significant response or even a reaction to past reviews in the organisation added further weight to Bronze's categorisation as a performative ally advocate. Based on this understanding, Bronze remains stuck in an ally advocate mindset and, more

specifically, as a performative advocate unless it proactively addresses the issue of gender inequity in a radical way. This form of allyship is in contrast to organisational ally advocates Maroon, and Harlequin, who will be discussed next.

Maroon was one of three organisations categorised as an ally advocate. Mike's positioning at both the individual and organisation level on the GAC – 'some action to address gender equity issues' – was consistent with Maroon's position as an ally advocate using the TAM framework (Jolly et al., 2021), but inconsistent with Mike's as an individual where he was classified as an ally activist. Maroon had taken positive steps and employed several high-performance female coaches and coach developers. They had relatively recently completed their new strategic coaching plan, with its full implementation hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic. Mike commented that:

> You know what we are doing and it's not that much yet, and I think in part Covid it's gotten in the way, yeah so things aren't happening.…in that we lost a good chunk of 2020. We will be moving in the right direction, so like, [] I'm sure in a year we will be [] quite a bit more advanced than we are now.

All Maroon's coach development staff were female, and Maroon's strategic coach development plan was female led from conception to implementation. Being designed solely from a female perspective is very unusual. However, the plan itself was not overly disruptive in terms of challenging and changing the current system of gender inequity for high-performance female coaches within Maroon. The coaching strategy declares that Maroon places a high value on diversity and inclusion and as a NSO they are aspiring to lead in this space, and this is an area Mike highlights on several occasions during the interview. Maroon was focused on developing its high-performance coaching capacity and capability in general, which it identified as a strategic priority. Despite this focus, there were no specific goals or objectives regarding female coaches or more specifically high-performance female coaches. There was no clear opposition to supporting or empowering women as a marginalised group, rather a more generalised approach to coaches.

Maroon was lacking the following criteria for organisational ally activism as set out by Jolly et al. (2021) i.e., a clear opposition to the status quo and specific goals and objectives to assess progress specific to gender equity and female high-performance coaches. Maroon demonstrated purposeful and genuine actions in their overall endeavours to address gender inequities in the organisation, compared to the lack of interest and a compliance mindset exhibited by ally agents. For example, Maroon had achieved gender parity at governance level and exhibited good gender diversity (almost 50/50 split) across organisational leadership and high-performance coaching. Considering Maroon's gender diversity across the organisation at board, leadership, and coaching levels there is a potential for opposition to the status quo, with the presence of the female voice. This further supported Maroons' position as an ally advocate. This is supported by the literature, which contends that in order to advance gender equity women need to attain a critical mass of board positions (Biswas et al., 2021). Although this theory is applied at a governance level it is relevant to demonstrate the potential of having a more diverse organisation and coaching workforce when striving to eliminate gender inequity. Gould et al. (2018) and Biswas et al. (2021) recognised the importance of having women in decision making positions due to the access their leadership positions afford them and the potential to be impactful. Women holding these positions have the ability to shape decisions that have greater impact on women and determine certain outcomes, such as issues concerning gender equity and providing nuance about how policies may have unintended gendered effects, for example.

Harlequin was the final organisation categorised as an organisational ally advocate using the TAM framework (Jolly et al., 2021). Harry placed Harlequin at the 'Professes support' stage of the GAC, which is considered equivalent to being an ally advocate or performative allyship within the context of the TAM framework (Jolly et al., 2021). In this case there was a correlation between the findings generated by the GAC and TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). Harry emphasised this picture of Harlequin in the following quotation:

> I don't feel that it [Harlequin] is complimentary for both genders, I think it's definitely suited more towards men than for women.

Harry shared an example from a similar role in the same sport he had held overseas. Although the example was historic, it was highly relevant to the barriers facing Harry as a male ally within an NSO in Aotearoa and to the paucity of elite female coaches in Harlequin:

> We had a policy for every male coach that we appointed, we would appoint a female coach. I would love for that to happen here in New Zealand as well. But we just don't have enough confident female coaches like, if I could see enough confident female coaches willing to you know stand up and coach on the men's side of the ledger, I would have for every male coach we appoint, we appoint a female, but I just don't have enough confident female coaches.

Such a policy could be perceived as highly disruptive by demonstrating a clear opposition to traditional hiring practices, along with an obvious connection to driving gender equity within coaching across both the men and women's game in Harlequin and perhaps the wider sports industry in Aotearoa. This type of policy would have implications across both female and male coaching job markets. Returning to Walker and Bopp (2010) for example, where the authors revealed that a double-standard exists in college basketball, where men are afforded greater job opportunities across the male and female games. Introducing and implementing Harry's proposed policy would perhaps eliminate this double-standard. However, Harry also generated a "blame the women" narrative LaVoi (2016, p. 20) by asserting he was unable to follow through on this policy initiative, due to the lack of confident female coaches and a lack of female coaches willing to coach men. This was a deficit-based approach and focused on blaming female coaches, as opposed to considering the wider structural and/or societal issues concerning gender inequities. It was also interesting to highlight this deficit-approach considering Harry was positioned as an ally activist using the TAM framework (Jolly et al., 2021).

There is an obvious discrepancy between an ally activist mindset and deficit-based approach. Ally education and self-education has been consistently highlighted as a fundamental element of effective allyship throughout the literature and this study (Demers, 2019; Jolly et al., 2021; Schewinbenz, 2021; Wilson et al., 2021). An essential element of this self-education is that an ally is concerned with evolving as an ally and developing a high degree of self-awareness, which involves identifying and learning about their own prejudices to prevent reinforcing them (Schewinbenz, 2021). An ally can and will make mistakes, how an ally responds to feedback from the individual/group they are collaborating with is an important part of being an ally (Schewinbenz, 2021). While Harry generated a 'blaming' narrative towards female coaches overall, he can still be considered an ally activist due to his proactive individual actions, which are discussed in the following section. This is also consistent with (Jolly et al., 2021) who describe allyship as activism as proactive resistance and must involve clearly confronting and disrupting the oppressive systems, rather than employing a singular focus on episodes of discrimination.

Harlequin's annual reports (2018 - 2020), were consistent with other NSO annual reports reviewed for this study, and heavily oriented towards reporting organisational performance. Harlequin had no obvious organisational strategic report/s or diversity and inclusion statements publicly available. The organisation did have a specific coaching strategy document detailing coaching pathways from grassroots to high-performance level. The coaching strategy, vision and philosophy were focused on the coach as an individual. More significantly, the strategy recommended that the individual coach develop their own personal coaching system based on their own personal values and experiences.

Considering the well documented paucity of women in coaching, particularly at the elite level, Harlequin may be complicit in maintaining the status quo, including the presence of male dominant discourses with their current coaching strategy. This is relevant as De Haan and Knoppers (2020) report that coaches draw on their own experiences, including being coached themselves, to inform their practice. The same authors suggest that the "normalisation of men within the context of coaching

continues to be generative and remains unchallenged" (De Haan & Knoppers, 2020, p.643). Harry perceived that, although innovative, Harlequin maintained a gender biased system.

> I just feel that the current system that we have in place is suited for men, and not for women. I feel that the coaching cycle that you know we currently have again is suited for men than for women, so we've made a number of innovative things in place for coaches, as well as for athletes.

Harry noted incremental improvements regarding gender equity:

> We have our coaches, if they want to bring their kids on the road, they can also get a carer [and] we pay for everything.

These improvements were accompanied by several recent high-profile female coaching appointments. Whilst reactive, they demonstrated tangible action-orientated change within the coaching system consistent with allyship as advocacy. It could also be argued that Harlequin was engaging in efforts to advance gender equity and to prevent a symbolic presence of women coaches by appointing more than one female coach. It should be noted that the head coach for Harlequin's women's national team was male, and that the entire men's national team coaching staff were all men. Appointments of a female head coach to the women's national team or more strikingly, to the men's national team could be considered as disruptive and challenging to the current system. In contrast, the appointment of more than one female assistant coach appeared to be in response to building capacity and capability success at the sport's pinnacle event. This is important for the representation of female coaches within Harlequin, a positive move, but not ally activism as proposed by Jolly et al., (2021). Ally activists in Aotearoa will be identified and discussed in the following section.

Silver, Cobalt, and Neon Organisations as Ally Activists

The criteria to identify male allyship as activism created by Jolly et al. (2021) positioned three organisations as ally activists: Cobalt, Neon and Silver. In addition, six individuals were considered ally activists: Steve, Stuart, Nicholas, Carl, Harry, and Mike. To recap, ally activism is the intentional, proactive action of an ally to challenge systems that oppress marginalised individuals or groups e.g., women. Allies collaborate effectively with the marginalised individual or group to produce tangible, sustainable social change.

Stuart considered himself to be at the 'Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity' stage of the GAC, which was consistent with the TAM individual level i.e., both aligned to ally activist. From an organisational perspective Stuart positioned Silver at 'Some action to address gender equity issues' on the GAC, which was different to Silver's position as an ally activist at the organisational level using the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). The data indicated that Silver as an organisation had shifted from reactionary efforts, aligned with ally advocacy, to taking a more robust approach and implementing change purposefully and proactively for women and specifically female coaches. This is a critical part of the argument by Jolly et al. (2021) that as the TAM is highly applicable when allyship shifts away from either agency or advocacy, towards activism to create transformational change. To illustrate this point, analysing the documentation in isolation, Silver could be considered reactive in terms of strategy as evident from the examination of their recent annual reports where Silver had launched several initiatives in the form of scholarships and programs to develop female coaches. Silver had also exhibited reactionary and conformist behaviour following a recent review that included resignations, and the identification of several barriers to female coaches, which were consistent with barriers identified by LaVoi (2016) in the EIM.

However, the recommendations with respect to high-performance women coaches had been implemented. Notably in the form of the appointment of a female head coach for the international women's team alongside the appointment of high-performance female coaches and assistant

coaches, investment in the women's games and long-term programs to ensure sustainability. So, while the review may have provided the impetus, these actions were within the criteria for allyship as activism at an organisational level, given they were proactive and challenging current systems. By way of further example, Stuart commented that Silver had:

> Set up a coach female coach mentor network and revamped our competition structures, in particular in the women's game in a way that's going to put more and more investment into female coach scholarships and female coach mentors.

Stuart highlighted various initiatives where Silver was recruiting, supporting, and developing female coaches, and more specifically, several individual high-performance female coaches and teams. He provided the following insights:

> It is a different approach at different levels, and I'll start at the higher end. I'll start right from the top of us that we've been involved significantly in the appointment of the first full time female head coach.
>
> We have over oversight of both the coach selection and player selection over that team for the next few years, so I had a big hand in rolling that [out].

Stuart's rich insights were consistent examples of 'good practice' within the literature. Most striking are the corresponding findings from LaVoi and Wasend (2018) of best recruitment and retention strategies for female head collegiate coaches. Using the EIM as a multi-systems framework to analyse and organise their findings, the authors divided the strategies into what an athletic director can do on an individual level, an interpersonal level, and organisational level to promote and support the recruitment and retention of the female coaches. At an interpersonal level, LaVoi and Wasend (2018) found that athletic directors deliberately supported and developed female mentorship and developed succession plans for their female coaching staff. Findings relevant to an organisational level, included authentically creating a culture that values and supports female coaches, leaders, and teams. These

organisations were also found to build diversity more broadly. Similarly, Stuart highlighted Silver's female mentorship program and investment in female teams, demonstrating support of the female coach; long-term female coaching appointments, which showed female coaches were valued and initiatives aimed at creating a diverse and inclusive organisation at all levels were in train.

Stuart drew attention to the importance of the visibility and role modelling for high-performance female coaches, alongside evidence of empowerment of this marginalised group and financial investment into the women's game within Silver. Stuart's focus on visibility and role modelling centred on the individual female coach, which contrasts with Bruce's (an ally advocate) concern regarding organisational credibility, for example. This point exemplifies how individuals and organisations can be positioned at different stages within the TAM framework (Jolly et al., 2021). Stuart provided an example of how Silver was recognising and amplifying the female voice:

> Decisions while they were based on merit and the ability of the individuals to do the role and being really mindful of how visible those roles are. The importance of that visibility, as it as they [female coaches] become role models for future. [] I think role modelling and visibility ….. is so critical [to] the old adage is you have to see it to be it, to ensuring that they [female coaches] have prominence, ensuring that they have an opportunity to speak and represent themselves as individuals to the media [for example].

Stuart's observations support, LaVoi (2016, p.3) comment:

> "Individuals who are seen and known in the world of sport, like coaches, communicate who and what is valued (and who is not)".

Supporting and driving women's visibility and amplifying the female voice are considered ally actions (Anicha et al., 2018; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Kalina, 2020; Wilson et al., 2021). Chapter Four explored

this including the female voice and listening to the female voice as important influencing factors for effective male allyship.

Compared to Harlequin, Harry was at a more evolved allyship stage within the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) – being positioned as an ally activist. Harry was a very action orientated individual. He outlined several positive and impactful initiatives that he personally had actioned in order to develop and support female coaches in Harlequin. By way of illustration Harry explained he has actively worked to create a supportive and an equitable environment for female coaches -

> a place where they [female coaches] can actually thrive. I want our coaches, [our] female coaches to know that you know [] if coaching is something that they want to do that they will get as much support.

At an individual level, Harry shared how, as an organisational leader with a specific focus on coaching, he established and helped resource and support an annual coaches conference with a strong female component and a women's leadership program (including coaches). This programme had over 69 female members organisation wide and has progressed to a point where Harry's involvement has organically decreased as the female members have taken ownership and leadership of this group. Harry described this as:

> Something that you know [I am] super proud of being a part of that, creating it, and now trying to [] step back and allow them [female leadership] to kind of drive it, move and push it, to whatever direction or whatever it's going to be.

Harry exercising his influence as an individual at an organisational level is reflective of the organisational capital that male sports leaders hold. It is well established in the sports and business literature that men are the largest stakeholders in organisations and as a result, men hold a lot of social capital and organisational power (Madsen et al., 2020; Nixon, 2019; Cheng et al., 2018). Therefore, their role as allies is critical to facilitating organisational change by activating substantial

programs, such as the example Harry provided. This is also consistent with findings examining supports and barriers of 10 female athletic directors (Taylor & Wells, 2017). Social capital emerged as one of three support only-factors, human capital and inclusive environments being the other two. Social capital involved those individuals holding decision making positions (male athletic directors), who used their platform to publicly support the advancement of females.

As an ally activist, Stuart demonstrated a deep understanding of the challenges facing Silver at various organisational levels, particular those of a hegemonic nature. Specifically, Stuart pointed to gender inequity as a multi-level issue given its existence at grassroots level and as a significant challenge for Silver going forward. To address this issue, the organisation's leadership had aligned investment to grassroots level achieving a minimum of 40% female representation at the governance level (Sport NZ, 2018). This example highlighted Silver's active engagement with Government lead initiatives such as the diversity quota (Sport NZ, 2018). This initiative is not a mandate to directly increase representation of women coaches, but to deliberately foster gender equity and address the issue of gender inequity from the bottom up. Stuart identified the preoccupation at the grassroots level to be on the "first men's team and not much else". This was an example of Silver, as an ally activist, being creative and proactive in their efforts to challenge current system inequities and create organisational change. This is consistent with the literature regarding gender equity initiatives, for example, positive initiatives that target specific groups are important because they try and redress the imbalances and inequities effecting women created by historic socialisation, traditions, and norms (Canadian Women and Sport, 2020).

Keeping in mind Silvers' initiative discussed above, Silver shared a similar strategy to Cobalt. Cobalt also implemented a strategy to influence structures within its sport but in a very different manner to Silver. Cobalt prioritised investment to directly target developing and supporting female coaches, whereas Silver's initiative targeted female representation throughout the organisation. Cobalt's leadership was essentially distributing funding to its provincial teams to positively influence strategy

to prioritise investment in female coaches. This implies a link between effective male allyship using targeted investment and the positive impact on gender equity for female coaches, and how investment can positively shape organisational priorities within an NSO. By way of example, Carl offered this insight:

> We have invested and more, we have more influence on the structures set within it [Cobalt], and those ones we have [invested in] have changed the structure to prioritise the coaches

Carl provided a narrative as an individual and an organisation, strategically influencing structures via strategy and targeted investment to prioritise their female high-performance coaches, over and above other strategic priorities. Carl was explicit in how and by how much Cobalt targeted their funding relevant to high-performance female coaches. Based on the TAM criteria, the findings suggested that Carl and Cobalt were ally activists. Carl who was a well-placed organisational male leader with a specific focus on high-performance coaching provided insight into Cobalt's high-performance coaching development strategy:

> Particularly our high-performance environments, so since I've been [at Cobalt] we've probably tripled our investment in high-performance coaches and prioritised that over a lot of other things.

In contrast to other participant organisations, Cobalt's overall strategic documentation was highly developed in terms of having a specific focus on female coaches, and even more specifically on high-performance female coaches.

> With us [Cobalt] we have coaching as a strategic priority for us. We have three critical success factors that sit within our strategy, one is the development of high-performance coaches.

Stuart's colleague from Silver, Steve, also exemplified being an ally activist by clearly articulating his history of utilising his privileged identity to actively appoint female coaches from early in his career by challenging and disrupting organisational systems and historic hegemony. Coincidentally he identified and appointed some of the most successful international female coaches [specific to Silver's sport] early in their careers. Significantly, he also appointed female coaches to the men's game, a practice which Steve personally considered highly disruptive to the status quo:

> I think I was one of five [names specific organisation] in the country where we appointed females into the male game.

Throughout his interview, Steve was consistently explicit in his commitment to supporting female coaches. The interview highlighted Steve's deep understanding of gender inequity issues within his own organisation and the wider sports industry. Steve spoke to the advantages and risks associated with diverse recruitment, more specifically to the element of risk associated with appointing a female coach to a male team. Overtly challenging the status quo for gender equity can be seen as courageous behaviour and highly consistent with ally activism (Kutlaca et al., 2020). Achieving greater gender equity in organisations often depends on the efforts of gender allies and for male allies like Steve to take risks to challenge the existing system on behalf of his marginalised colleagues. This is consistent with the literature regarding allyship and the potential or associated risks (Thoroughgood et al., 2021). Allyship involves an element of risk which is context dependent, and includes such risks include career derailment, social isolation, and incurring stigma via one's association with a socially devalued group (Thoroughgood et al., 2021). In the following statement Steve summarised his experience of appointing a female coach to a male team. This statement based on feedback Steve received from parents of players in particular, reflected how discrimination can be used to protect the systems that Steve disrupted -

> [She] is a really good example where actually I was quite conscious that I recognise some of the qualities she was going to bring to the organisation, and it was

> definitely I am appointing her because she's the best person. I'm not ticking a box here. She's the best person, without a doubt, however, I also recognise that [] I was probably going to get some stick for it. There was always going to be a bit of a question mark around why are you letting a female loose in the male game and it sounds awful to say it, but that that was exactly the feedback that I got.

Steve also spoke to the importance of collaboration of both genders and the potential benefits of doing so. Steve believed that internally Silver was not availing itself of the benefits of collaboration of men and women in the high-performance space. Steve implied that there was a lack of recognition of what female high-performance coaches 'can bring to the table'.

> There are some very good quality skill sets that exists with the female coaches, that the men could really learn from and, vice versa. But the opinion only seems to go one direction at the moment and actually I think we would really start becoming high performance if actually there was this balance of recognition.

Significantly, the above statement concerning a "balance of recognition" is consistent with findings from Madsen et al. (2020). Madsen et al., (2020) identified behaviours and strategies men utilise that were perceived by both female and males to be effective in supporting and advancing women in the workplace. Madsen et al. (2020) found differences existed between women and men's perceptions of allyship behaviours, with women believing there was a more serious problem of women's advancement in the workplace than men did. The analysis of the women's perceptions yielded a hierarchical ranking of four key strategies that men can use to advance women in the workplace. The number one strategy suggested by the female participants for men in the workplace, was recognising women's contributions in both public and private settings. The analysis of the men's perceptions yielded a different hierarchical rank order with developmental relationships, predominantly mentoring was identified as number one by men as supporting women's leadership in strategies following analysis of male perceptions. Steve reinforced this view when he presented a more in-depth

picture of the contrast existing between the grassroots level and high-performance coaching space relative to gender equity in Silver.

> At a community level, there's a recognition that I would say some action to address gender equity issues without a doubt. From a high-performance perspective, I would say some awareness, no action taken.

Overall, Steve presented as an active ally activist, who had proactively used his own privileged identity to empower female coaches. Steve and Stuart both demonstrated as individuals that they had actively engaged in wide ranging efforts to address gender inequities. Steve and Stuart made it clear that they understood and acknowledged both the challenges and need for an equitable environment for high-performance female coaches in Aotearoa, from moral, societal, and organisational viewpoints. These two participants had also undertaken a combination of individual and organisational level ally activism, consistent with the type of ally activism proposed by Jolly et al., (2021), by providing resources, influencing strategy and proactively empowering female high-performance coaches to create transformational change.

Similar to other participants, a disconnect exists between Mike's perceived individual position on the GAC – 'Some action to address gender equity issues', and the form of allyship associated with Mike - ally activist - when using the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). Mike has potentially underestimated his level of allyship when self-positioning instead of the other way round which potentially shows a higher level of self-awareness. Mike described his role as that of a "facilitator" and compared to the other participants interviewed, he was not directly involved on a daily basis in the high-performance coaching aspects of Maroon. This was due to Maroon's organisational set-up where another individual, a female, who Mike recruited for the role, manages this area. Mike clarified this by stating:

> "[The] two people who are in charge of coach development are both women"

Mike also actively gave credit when describing the female lead coach developer as “a strong leader in our sport in our organisation”. This recognition of his female colleague as a strong leader and asset is consistent with Madsen et al. (2020), who found that women identified recognising women’s contributions in both public and private settings as a highly desirable and effective strategy male allies can use to support women in the workplace. Despite not being directly involved in the daily management of high-performance coaching, Mike had proactively influenced this area of the business via his recruitment practices and explicitly used the word “proactive” when referring to his personal involvement Maroon’s recruitment practices. In this respect Mike has used his privileged position as an ally activist to recruit and empower women, a marginalised group.

Mike was aware that women are not a homogenous group and actively worked to empower women across the organisation, this is illustrated by way of Mike’s comment:

> [My role is a] component of supporting women, component of supporting young people [and] there's a component of supporting Māori and Pacifica.

Throughout the interview Mike expressed a deep sense of awareness and knowledge of gender equity explicitly concerning female coaches:

> Not having boundaries, not having things that are unfair, but not trying to have everything exactly the same, because the context for and in coaching the context [is different for females and males].

Mike’s articulation of gender equity is consistent with the literature (Norman, 2021) and speaks to the needs of individual coaches based on gender. Mike’s recruitment practices also exhibited similarities with LaVoi and Wasend’s (2018) recommendations for recruitment and hiring strategies utilised by athletic directors at the interpersonal level for female coaches. One such recruitment practice included being willing to invest in female coaches early in their careers. Mike’s individual allyship extended to the intersectionality of women within his organisation, not only from a cultural

perspective but also extending to Maroon's younger generation of potential female leaders. Mike was actively shaping new narratives through his systematic recruitment and hiring of female leaders and coaches by -

> Giving a leadership role to someone who's on the young side and is a woman with potential.

Mike's other strategies parallel LaVoi and Wasend (2018) and included valuing and leveraging existing successful female role models to recruit female talent. Mike viewed his female colleague as an invaluable asset to Maroon and their sports community. Mike spoke of examples where he was developing succession plans for female athletes in the hope they will become coaches, one was already in a transition period from competing to coaching and had already experienced international success as a coach.

Neon and Nicholas were also positioned as ally activists within the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) framework. Overall, Neon presented as a gender equitable organisation at both leadership and administration levels. Nicholas provided a clear example of Neon's action taken at a governance level in regard to gender equity and follow-through on Neon's strategy:

> A male has resigned from our board because we need to commit to the agenda that we've set for ourselves.

Neon's annual reports exhibited an obvious and demonstratable shift from reactivity to proactivity in terms of addressing gender inequity and female coaches. This proved very useful in terms of assisting with analysis and the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021). In Neon's 2018 Annual Report, coaching and high-performance coaching were documented as priorities, but with no specific mention of women in coaching. Around this time the organisation underwent a review that focused on the overall culture of the organisation. In this same year, the organisation lost a major long-term sponsor, which may or may not have been related to the review. Subsequent annual reports noted the development of a

high-performance strategic plan, women in high performance coaching and explicit acknowledgement of the paucity of women coaches in high-performance roles, plus the value of gender diversity. The 2020 Annual Report specifically referenced women in coaching and the practical supports that are available and being utilised to develop this underrepresented group, particularly at the high-performance level.

Neon's strategic plan covered a shorter time frame than other NSO strategic plans reviewed for this study. This is relevant as it implies the organisation was exhibiting more reflexivity and responsiveness to change or the ability to adapt and be more responsive as an organisation, rather than committing to an overly lengthy long-term plan. Overall, the strategic plan presented as a holistic plan, with a focus on people, wellbeing, and accountability. It also included a proactive approach to implementation, for example, workplace culture was reviewed bi-annually. This approach including reflexivity and persistent focus on systemic issues and their connection to lived experiences and outcomes is recommended by Jolly et al., (2021) as best practice for stimulating transformational allyship. Based on the above, Neon's workplace was considered aligned with best practice for transformational allyship as proposed by Jolly et al., (2021).

Focusing specifically on Neon's coaching workforce at the high-performance level, there was a striking gender inequity in contrast to the remainder of the organisation. This is consistent with the literature concerning the under-representation of high-performance female coaches internationally (Demers, 2019; Demers et al., 2021). Nicholas pointed to this inequity during the interview:

> As an organisation, we exhibit really strong gender equity. If you look at a very superficial perspective, absolutely. 50/50 [high-performance] teams slightly stronger gender of female [athletes]. When we get into different parts of the business, coaching particularly, we are massively male dominated and aware of it right at grassroots.

Nicholas highlighted that in order to redress this inequity there was an organisational focus on identifying and developing women coaches across all tiers, to create a talent pool and to develop pathways for women coaches. As a leader in Neon, he was ideally placed to drive this and was actively working to address this issue. As an organisation, Neon was examining the various levels of the business specific to coaching from grassroots to high performance level. Neon has specifically examined coaching developmental programs across the various tiers of coaching where there was an identifiable gender imbalance.

> We're able now to have the demographics of the female to male coaching scenario and what it looks like across the tiers of the programs that we run developmental programs. [There is a] slow emergence of female [coaches] but however, still heavily [male] dominated all the way through - we had [a number of] male coaches at the Olympics.

Nicholas was acutely aware of Neon's gendered history, and the effect this had on coaching pathways, particularly coaching pathways for females. Neon's overall vision for female coaches was to disrupt traditional, entrenched systems and as Nicholas put it, "accelerate" these coaches in a manner which was acceptable and safe to do so. Arguably, that will take collaboration and close consultation between the organisation and its female coaches. The future for women in coaching in Neon was centred on having a female coach as part of the elite coaching team at a pinnacle event. Consistent with allyship as activism as proposed by Jolly et al., (2021), Neon was explicitly goal, action and future orientated. As part of the process to achieve gender equity, Nicholas emphasised that Neon is in a strategic planning phase which will then:

> drive some policy stuff around success and success measures [] across the layers of our coaching development programs, tiers of development programme, driving to targets around female and male coaches may not be equity straightaway, but we'll have targets over a period of time to drive to that.

Neon presented as proactive in creating an inclusive and sustainable environment for female coaches. As an organisational leader Nicholas provided this example of creating the right environment for women coaches:

> One of my responsibilities is not to put any coach whatever gender or whatever race into a situation that is going to give them a negative experience. And so right now, that involves educating our male coaches.

This quote demonstrated a shift away from blaming women narratives, mentioned several times previously in this chapter, to a focus on educating male coaches. This deliberate action from Nicholas to focus on both genders to address Neon's overall coaching culture and workplace environment, highlighted the intentional action of a male ally at an individual and organisational level, implementing equity-based practices. Nicholas described this as providing the organisation with "depth of capability" and "opportunities to not only develop but identify talent", specifically to female coaches. Nicholas provided further evidence of the potential disruption within Neon by highlighting their commitment to a series of all-female coaching programs in this traditionally male dominated coaching environment.

The value of WOTP has been discussed and by implementing a series of female only coaching programs, as opposed to a one-off program, and intentionally developing female coaching talent, a commitment to sustainability is evidenced. Long term social change and sustainability via gender equity-based practices is a key element of transformational allyship (Jolly et al., 2021). That is, male sports leaders acknowledging the power of privilege and working in collaboration with female coaches at an individual and organisational level to eliminate inequitable experiences for female coaches and creating an equitable coaching environment. Nicholas and Neon are a clear example of transformational allyship, where ally activism at individual and organisational levels work in tandem. The following chapter highlights and discusses what supportive actions male ally activists are utilising to create change for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa.

Chapter 6: Supportive actions of ally activists in Aotearoa

Introduction

The TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) proved to be a highly effective conceptual model in terms of identifying and analysing the various forms of allyship in this research. An ally activist cannot be separated from their actions, as one of the defining characteristics of an ally activist is that they are action orientated (Carson et al., 2021; Jolly et al., 2021; LaVoi & Wasend, 2018; Schewinbenz, 2021; Taylor, 2015; Wilson et al., 2021). Chapter 6 highlights the supportive actions utilised by male ally activists to support female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa. These supportive actions are discussed under two main themes: top-down priority funding for female high-performance coaches and male allies create opportunity. Overall, these themes demonstrate that male ally activists can create and drive positive impactful change to redress gender inequalities for female coaches at individual and organisational levels. Identifying these actions are important to inform current and future practice and, in keeping with the exploratory research design to serve as a catalyst for future research.

Top-down priority funding for female high-performance coaches

The findings suggest that male allies are important at all levels and, as Jolly et al. (2021) pointed out, all forms of allyship can be useful. However, ally activists are best placed to effect meaningful long-term societal and organisational change compared to ally agents or advocates. Support for female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa is evident beginning with high level strategy and investment from the Government of Aotearoa, transferring down through the various crown agencies such as High-Performance Sport New Zealand and then onto the NSO's. The importance of financial investment for female high-performance coaches comes through strongly as one allyship strategy to redress past under-funding and to target and retain future female coaches.

Nicholas provided the following insight regarding the two mechanisms he considered driving change regarding gender inequity and female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa -

> I think the catalyst for some of the movement that is happening and rolling in across sport is leveraged through by the mandate and or investment.

Several participants highlighted the significance of financial resourcing from a variety of stakeholders, including the Government of Aotearoa, HPSNZ and targeted funding of female coaches by the individual NSO's. Nicholas and Stuart explicitly mentioned the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Sport and Recreation, Grant Robertson, as influential in providing government funding for initiatives specific for female coaches in sport, such as the Te Hāpaitanga program. Within the context of this study, Grant Robertson could be considered a male ally, suggesting that allies at Government level are important for female high-performance coaches. All ally activists spoke of the significance and positive impact of the Te Hāpaitanga program, suggesting that the continued funding of this program is important. Stuart pointed to financial resourcing to achieve gender equity in Silver and remarked that:

> Grant Robertson's obviously had a major impact in terms of driving these changes.

In the literature, Jolly et al. (2021) propose that allyship can be effective at all levels from micro to macro levels. The presence and positive influence of external stakeholders demonstrates consistency with the literature where Jolly et al. (2021) suggested that they have a role to play by demanding, for example, greater accountability from organisations through funding application requirements. Perhaps, similar accountability could be exerted by the role of financial sponsors. Specific to the context of this research all the NSO's participating in this study received substantial sponsorship each financial year. As highlighted in Chapter 5 this financial sponsorship is critically important for the operation and development of these NSO's. Therefore, it is reasonable to assert that financial sponsors can and should exert accountability from the NSO's they support. Extending this further, an ally or allies supporting and driving gender equity within these external stakeholders / financial sponsors are ideally placed to exert such accountability. Jolly et al. (2021) contended that current and future consequences of inaction regarding an organisations' systemic gender inequities could have

significant consequences for those organisations that have less gender equity-based systems than organisations that are based on gender equitable systems.

Nicholas was explicit regarding the role of HPSNZ when he remarked "what's compelling is the strong financial commitment from High-Performance [Sport New Zealand]" to support female high-performance coaches. This was also echoed by several other participants, regarding the recognition of actual support for female high-performance coaches. Harry stated that the strong financial commitment from the HPSNZ has made his role "easier" and enabled him to be more effective in his support of female high-performance coaches by being able to provide financial support to female-led initiatives within Harlequin. Carl also highlighted the significant role HPSNZ had played as an external stakeholder, specifically relevant to funding and Cobalt's female high-performance coaching programs. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Cobalt leveraged this funding to create development opportunities for female high-performance coaches. Carl offered the following insight:

> One of the things obviously, High-Performance sport New Zealand is a really important funder of ours and [in] our last funding round our number one priority initiative was to get some investment from them and to our [high-performance] coaches.

Stuart also noted the importance of engaging external stakeholders, to achieve financial resourcing in order to implement organisational initiatives - "Bringing in and getting major corporate as well as the government behind [Silver] is an important priority for us". Stuart identified Silver as a "heavy investment partner" in the organisation's women's professional teams, including their female high-performance coaching staff. This investment was a direct result of external stakeholder funding e.g., government and sponsorship for example. During the interview, Stuart pointed to historic insufficient investment in female coaching talent pathways as one factor which contributed to a historic absence of female coaches and more specifically female high-performance coaches in Silver. When Stuart

spoke about specifically financially supporting female coaches in Silver, his views were consistent with the following narratives from his colleague Steve, who was also unequivocal in his view:

> We've got to have streams of funding that align to or be ring fenced for that part of the game.

Steve highlighted the connection between targeted funding for female high-performance coaches and the value of diversity and inclusion –

> [Funding] will open up a bigger pool of quality coaches for me.

Steve followed up with:

> I didn't really care if it was male or female, for me it was I need the best quality people in those roles.

As highlighted in Chapter 5, targeted funding for the development of high-performance female coaches was a strategy Carl advocated for and operationalised in Cobalt. Harry also recognised the value and necessity of financial support and as previously mentioned Harry established a female coaching cohort in Harlequin. This initiative has evolved and is now entirely female led, with Harry available to provide support as needed -

> I said look I'm here to support, so if you need financial support, human support whatever you need I'm here.

Continuing on this theme of funding Stuart made this point:

> Even [the] coach education can be a bit cost prohibitive, it's time prohibitive and so, ensuring that some of the barriers that might prevent any female [coaches] who want to be in the system are eradicated or lowered is really key to us.

These findings regarding the criticality of investment in female coaches and identifying lack of funding as a barrier to female coaches are consistent with LaVoi and Dutove (2012) and LaVoi and Wasend (2018). For example, LaVoi and Wasend (2018) identified adequate financial resourcing of female coaches as central to the retention of female coaching talent, with this resourcing explicitly translating as valuing of the female coach. LaVoi and Wasend (2018) suggested wider implications for an organisation that explicitly valued its female workforce, as such an organisation will be actively sought out by future/potential female talent in preference to organisations that do not explicitly value their female coaches. In this current research, it was interesting that prioritisation of funding and strategy was proposed exclusively by ally activists. Financial investment or targeted funding were not mentioned by any of the participants, considered ally advocates or ally agents. Perhaps these individuals do not consider it important or valuable to invest in female high-performance coaches. This suggests the priorities and mindsets of ally activists are different to the compliance and deficit-based mind sets of their ally agent and advocate colleagues, as identified in Chapter Five.

Male allies create opportunity

Steve provided a high-level evaluation of the essential organisational design elements necessary for female high-performance coaches:

> What we've got to do is make sure that we create these opportunities for people to grow, [] we have female only course programs, however, what we can't do is just sort of go let's tick the box and get 20 female coaches through our program and give them the [certification]. We can't do that, we've still got to maintain that quality, [] and environment that's got to be right, we can't do that tick box exercise we've got to make sure that when they go into an elite environment, they are ready.

Steve recognised that some female coaches would survive in a male coaching education program, and some would not. Steve's concern was for the female coaches who were not get the opportunity or could not thrive in an environment that was not designed to allow them to thrive. Steve offered this perspective -

> You'll get strong characters that can go through coach education and they'll exist within a male group and [] they're strong leaders, however, it will be uncomfortable for some people, it will be out of their social scope to cope within that group and we're missing out on a, on a whole generation of people that don't get those opportunities and they just need the right environment where they'll develop and they can exist and grow and unless we give them that opportunity we will, we will lose them.

Steve's statement highlights the potential value of WOTP's, to capture and develop female coaches who may not survive or thrive in a male dominated training program (Kraft et al., 2020). Steve further amplified the importance of WOTP in the following statement concerning coaching pathways and the significance of making high-performance coaching in Silver accessible:

> It's a real challenge in terms of that pathway. What we've got to do is make sure that opportunities are afforded to people, and we make [] the high-performance space accessible so people can see where you need to get to. We also need to make sure that we [have] in terms of the coach development [a] pathway that has dedicated courses for females.

Steve pointed to creating the right opportunities by appreciating and acknowledging female coaches and their intersectional identities. Steve acknowledged that "ticking a box" was insufficient, and that female coaches required various supports e.g., WOTP, relative to their individual needs to develop in a system traditionally dominated by hegemonic norms. Several male participants explicitly identified a state of readiness as having two dimensions, encompassing the importance for both the female

coach and the organisation. Nicholas summarised these two dimensions when describing how he supported women coaches in the workplace. The first dimension centred on the female coach, as a "state of readiness to coach in the pathway where they aspire to" while the second from an organisational standpoint as a "state of readiness that the organisation needs to be at, [] make their experience the way it should be". What is evident from the findings is that Steve, Stuart, Nicholas, and Harry were centring their focus on the female coach - a key feature of allyship as identified by Jolly et al. (2021). These statements are in contrast to Bruce's statement in Chapter 5, that he believed that the 'best coaching' environments for female coaches within Bronze were limited to the male coaching system. This is important as it highlights the difference in mindset and organisational strategy between an ally advocate and ally activist, in this context.

Carl specifically referred to the influence of an organisation's leadership driving "strategy to build the people in their readiness", as necessary to develop this readiness at an individual and organisational level. Stuart and Steve were staunch in their opinions that female voice and visibility must be amplified – a male ally can be effective in this area. By intentionally placing female coaches in front of the media for example, Silver provided their female coaches with a platform. This is consistent with LaVoi (2016) who emphasised the importance of a female coaches' platform to communicate the value and importance of the female coach.

Several authors explicitly regard supporting and enhancing women's visibility as ally actions (Anicha et al., 2018; Johnson & Smith, 2018; Kalina, 2020; Wilson et al., 2021). Having a platform also creates a visible female role-model which was identified in the literature as producing positive effects for current and future female coaches, for example improved experiences for female athletes and better retention of talented female coaches' (LaVoi & Wasend, 2018; Swim et al., 2021). Positive ally action can also encourage others (men) to act by role modelling, which can have wide reaching positive effects on organisational culture, such as calling out sexism and educating peers (Cheng et al., 2018;

Madsen et al., 2020). These actions are perceived as more effective in an organisational setting (Cheng et al., 2018).

Steve echoed Stuart's sentiments regarding the value of female coach role modelling within their industry and the wider impact that a female coach can affect, including the associated benefits of a diverse workforce. Steve offered this assessment of a female coach he appointed:

> I knew she should be a really good role model for other female coaches to come through. So, recognising that she wasn't just a good coach actually she was probably going to be a little bit of a catalyst for other female coaches to come through.

All ally activists in this study recommended long-term appointments to ensure job security for the female coach. Demers (2019), Kane and LaVoi (2018) and LaVoi (2016) emphasised the associated positive returns for the individual based on job security, for example improved well-being and sense of belonging in their roles. Similarly, organisations explicitly valuing the female coach is a valuable strategy for recruitment and retention of female coaching staff (LaVoi & Wasend, 2018). Carl specifically described the uniqueness of his organisation as an environment for women coaches that provides "a safe place for women to express themselves but also grow in and push the empowerment of women". This is important as Cobalt was the only NSO perceived as 'Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity' on the GAC and designated as an ally activist at organisational and individual levels on the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) i.e., potential to achieve transformational allyship.

In Chapter 5, Nicholas spoke about ensuring female coaches in his organisation never had in general, a negative experience, which was similar to Harry who spoke directly to the positive impact of his actions as a male ally on the organisational environment and high-performance female coaches. This builds on the picture of Harry as a male ally activist -

> First and foremost, [I] have tried to create an environment … a place where they [female coaches] can actually thrive. I want our coaches, female coaches to know that you know, if this is, if coaching is something that they want to do that they will get as much support to help them achieve things that they want to achieve.

The following excerpt from Steve's vision of high-performance sport in Aotearoa builds on the theme of male allies' supportive actions for female high-performance coaches. Steve posited coaching as a platform for allyship and shared his roadmap for transformational change with individuals and organisations combining to drive change, which is consistent with the Transformational Allyship Model (Jolly et al., 2021) -

> I think if we can foster that collaborative environment where they [both genders] start to really recognise where they could support and develop each other. [] We're going to get [] some fantastic players out of it but will also get some really good coaches out of it.

Creating and fostering a collaborative environment to create systemic change and organisational transformation is consistent with the literature (Cooper et al., 2020; Jolly et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2021). Collaboration is synonymous with the ethos and practice of allyship (Wilson et al.,2020; Anicha et al., 2018). The literature also suggests that organisational transformation is possible when men actively collaborate and support women to drive organisational change (Madsen et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2018; Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Steve offered insight into creating opportunities for female coaches via coaching education. Nicholas echoed this sentiment indicating that Neon needed to consider its whole approach to coaching:

> The biggest challenge I've got is it can't just be up to one person or two people or three people actually you need to sort of be quite infectious with it. So, we'll have to I think we'll have to be quite smart in terms of how we use our coach education.

The findings suggest that male ally activists have a wider role to play outside of their immediate organisations by educating other male allies or potential allies to influence a change in attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs. For example, the recurrent 'blame the women narrative' LaVoi (2016, p. 20) was evident in the data and across all levels of allyship. Taylor and Wells (2017) highlighted the positive organisational level impact male stakeholders can have when they use their human and social capital to create inclusive environments through education of other coaching staff and stakeholders. Wilson et al. (2021) identified educating others who are misinformed or critical of gender equity through conversation and discussion as an effective supportive action of a male ally. Education is an important theme discussed in the final chapter.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

> "Equity is not a women's issue, a LGBTQ+ issue or a minority issue – it's everyone's responsibility. None of us is as strong as all of us are together" (King, 2021, p.381).

This quotation by athlete activist Billie Jean King is taken from her autobiography, *All In*. The quotation and the title of her book encapsulates the fundamental nature of allyship as deeply rooted in collaboration. The ethos of allyship is also captured, where the issue of gender inequity must be tackled - as a societal issue, an issue for everyone to be concerned with, working together to dismantle and resolve. The data from this study suggests that there are male sport leader ally activists for women high performance coaches in Aotearoa, who can be activists for social justice.

The existing literature has highlighted why the problem of gender inequity in sport is present and why it endures. Despite this extensive research, female coaches and more specifically female high-performance coaches remain underrepresented and in many cases are declining in numbers worldwide. Aotearoa is no exception. Reviewing the literature for this study highlighted a perceptible shift by scholars towards seeking to identify new and innovative approaches to drive systemic and societal change for this marginalised group, rather than continuing to focus on barriers. Researchers are not only seeking to implement change, but also increase the pace of change to achieve a gender equitable coaching landscape (Didymus et al., 2021; Fink, 2008; Hinojosa-Alcalde et al., 2018; LaVoi, 2016; LaVoi, et al. 2019; LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; LaVoi and Wasend, 2018; Norman, 2022; Norman & Rankin-Wright, 2018; Schewinbenz, 2021). Allyship was identified as a new approach in sports research aimed at dismantling and eliminating gender inequities for present and future female high-performance coaches at systemic and societal levels.

Prior to this study, there was no empirical data on the existence of allyship or male sports leaders' perceptions of gender allyship, and specifically women high performance coaches, in Aotearoa. This study directly addressed this research gap, by applying existing allyship conceptual frameworks to the

New Zealand sport context. Chapters 4-6 have discussed the findings in light of the existing research to answer the two research questions:

1. W*hat are the perceptions and understandings that sport leaders hold about individual and organisational male allyship in the context of female high-performance coaches in Aotearoa?*
2. *How, and to what extent, is male allyship evident in the support of the development of high-performance women coaches in Aotearoa?*

The three thematic chapters presented compelling evidence for the existence, comprehension, and extent of male allyship within eight NSO's in Aotearoa. Beginning with the importance of allyship. These perceptions were important as they provided an indication of what male sports leaders understood allyship to be. This was crucial as allyship is identified as more effective than other practices, such as sponsorship and mentorship. Practices such as sponsorship and mentorship have been strategies to help support female coaches for a long time, however gender inequity for female high-performance coaches continues to persist in sports and the rate of change has been glacial. Allyship goes beyond the potential of sponsorship and mentorship and seeks to disrupt and dismantle the systems of inequity and oppression to affect long term systemic and social change for female coaches.

Education is crucial

Self-education is key for an ally to develop and be an effective ally, requiring a high degree of reflexivity, including identifying and learning about their own prejudices to prevent reinforcing them (Schewinbenz, 2021). Awareness alone does not make a person an ally. It was evident from the findings that male allies are not homogenous and allyship is not a linear narrative. Harry and Steve, for example, although ally activists, were imperfect. Steve, for example, highlighted time as a constraint to allyship. Being an authentic ally is an everyday lived concern (Taylor, 2015). An ally

develops their understanding of the concept of allyship and the social issue in question, mainly through self-education which should eliminate the perceived notion of time as a constraint from being an effective ally. Therefore, an allies' perception is important to help identify their 'blind spots'. For example, Carl identified that his experience at Cobalt enabled him to be at 'Some action to address gender equity issues' on the GAC, a position he believed he would not have achieved if he had been at another sporting organisation. Nicholas also identified his previous experiences as influential in his evolution relative to his position on the GAC i.e., 'Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity'.

Education and self-education are important for the evolution of the male sport ally, because men both currently and historically, are the most represented in leadership positions (Kempe-Bergman et al., 2020). Therefore, in some instances it can be difficult for some men to recognise the structures that sustain inequity as they can seem natural or even invisible. Bruce and Daniel were such individuals and suggest that education is crucial for ally agents and ally advocates. This can be achieved by collaboration, seeking feedback from female colleagues within the organisation or the wider sports industry. Education is crucial to inform an ally's awareness of unearned privileges and potential to use privilege and positional power for good. Participants such as Bruce need to understand the value of WOTP, for example. Therefore, education is essential for all forms of allyship as identified by the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021).

GAC and TAM – a need for both

This is the first time the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a) and TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) have been utilised either individually or collectively for the purpose of a study of this kind. The value and utility of the GAC as a research tool developed as a significant finding in itself from this study. The adaptation of the GAC is anchored in the literature, clearly documented, and demonstrates a high degree of reflexivity and trustworthiness. The importance of this highly effective contextual qualitative research

tool facilitated active researcher engagement with the participants and engendered higher levels of reflection and discussion among the participants. Extending this further, the findings suggest that the GAC encouraged the participants to reflect on their personal allyship journey as it encouraged participants to talk about their current, future, and desired state on the GAC. This provided richer data sets than may have been possible if only semi-structured interviews had taken place. Going forward it is hoped that allyship will be of particular interest given that this research tool has encouraged participants to self-reflect and consider the ways in which they are maintaining and/or resisting systemic oppression and the impact this had on female high-performance coaches.

The GAC assisted the researcher to examine how participants perceived the concept of allyship from an individual and organisational perspective on a continuum. Whilst this was an excellent starting point, it was limited in scope, due to its self-assessment i.e., participants self-assessed where they were. Therefore, the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) was utilised as a conceptual model to analyse the data using specific criteria by which to measure the degree of allyship, as highlighted in Chapter 3. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the TAM is an excellent conceptual model and provides an effective and meaningful framework for identifying and analysing the various forms of male allyship at both individual and organisational levels for high-performance female coaches in Aotearoa. It is anticipated that this model is transferable to other research contexts identifying allyship.

An interesting outcome of the interviews occurred and was later refined after data analysis where the participants frequently used numbers to describe the respective sections of the GAC i.e.,:

1 = Unaware of any gender equity issues.

2 = Some awareness. No action taken.

3 = Professes support.

4 = Some action to address gender equity issues.

5 = Commitment to ongoing action to foster gender equity.

As a result, the GAC was further adapted to the Gender Ally Spectrum (GAS) (Mulhern et al., 2022b) for improved reporting of findings and readability (see Figure 9). It is suggested that this research tool could be used by researchers in the future in other contexts identifying allyship.

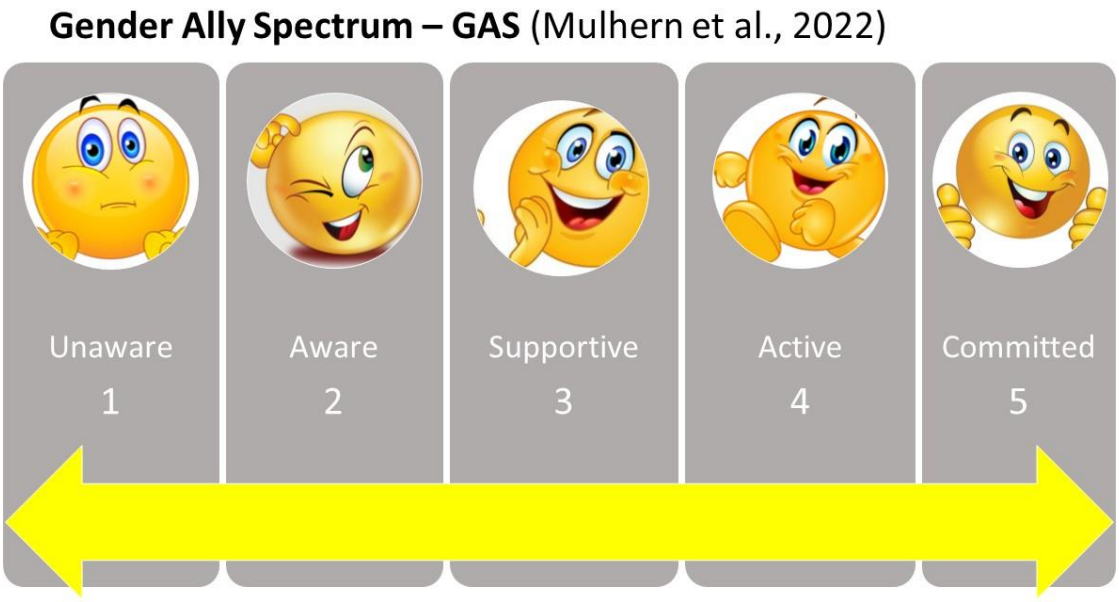


Figure 9: Gender Ally Spectrum – GAS (Mulhern et al., 2022b)

Ally activists are the most effective allies

The findings from this study demonstrates that male allyship does exist and varies in its extent at individual and organisational levels, within the eight participating NSOs. The 6 individuals identified as ally activists on the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021), (see Figure 8), provided valuable knowledge concerning the supportive actions they used as individuals and what their respective organisations were doing to support and advance female high-performance coaches. To fully affect change, inequity experienced by individuals must be addressed at the systemic level, where individuals in leadership roles and positions of power can influence change (Jolly et al., 2021). The findings indicated that well placed allies can address gender inequity at multiple levels, for example, from the highest levels of government via mandates, investment, and the continued funding of Te Hāpaitanga in Aotearoa; to

NSO's such as Silver and Cobalt utilising mandates creatively and investment to unambiguously target funding for female high-performance coaches to create opportunity and equitable coaching workplaces. Male ally activists invoke a series of tangible supportive actions designed to create opportunities and reduce and eliminate gender inequity by:

- Publicly and privately recognising women's achievements.
- Using existing female coaches as leverage for recruiting future female coaches.
- Recognising and supporting younger potential female leaders/coaches.
- Strategic financial investment to develop high-performance female coaches.
- Actively providing and promoting the female coaches' platform. This platform more specifically encapsulates the female coaches voice and visibility.
- Male allies can support, influence, and implement long-term appointments/job security for female high-performance coaches.
- Crucially male allies can design and implement policies and business practices which ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to achieve their potential and fulfil their aspirations. Allies can also oppose policies and business practices that are do not produce fair and equitable outcomes for female coaches.

Within the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) the data confirmed that ally activists are the most effective form of allies, and ally agents were the least effective. Transformational allyship was achieved when both individual and organisational level ally activism was present - this was the case for three NSOs Cobalt, Neon and Silver. In addition, performative allyship emerged as a distinctive form of allyship within the context of ally advocacy. This form of allyship was not always immediately obvious, but ultimately appeared not to have produced long-term sustainable individual or organisational benefits. Performative or optical allyship is a discrete form of allyship, generally but not always associated with ally agency (Jolly et al., 2021). This implies that performative allyship can occur at agency and advocacy levels of allyship, with individuals and organisations needing to be aware of the potential of this.

Finally, the findings indicate that internal and external accountability may be effective in creating a shift from being an ally agent towards activism (Jolly et al., 2021). Within the organisations an ally agent may be hesitant to act without a mandate and this needs to be considered by policy makers, for example. Mandatory gender equity policies may be necessary in Aotearoa for those NSO's identified as ally agents or ally advocates. Rather than being viewed negatively, Demers (2019) suggests that mandates can be seen as setting a positive precedent. Allies at all levels are important as allies can influence policy decisions that establish mandates at government level and their implementation at NSO level, for example. As organisational leaders' male allies are ideally placed to create opportunities for female high-performance coaches.

Arguably, accountability and mandates share a close relationship. Mandates can help ensure accountability by placing public and regulatory pressure on sports leaders to act, for example on gender equity for female high-performance coaches. External stakeholders such as sponsors, government, and HPSNZ, as the typical and main sources of funding for NSO's, can play a significant role in demanding and ensuring such accountability. Conceivably, male ally activists within these external stakeholders could use their positional power and privilege to ensure such demands are raised and followed through to help create long term sustainable systemic and societal change.

Study limitations and opportunities for future research

It is noteworthy, that all ally activists acknowledged their privileged identity without having directly been questioned about this aspect during the interview. Nicholas for example, explicitly acknowledged and expressed an understanding of his own privilege as a leader within their NSO and the wider sports industry in Aotearoa. Jolly et al. (2021) proposed that in order to foster and exemplify transformational allyship, it is fundamental that allies at an individual and organisational level acknowledge and accept the privileged identities and power they hold. Privilege and power contribute to inequitable power relationships in systems where women are systematically marginalised (Kane &

LaVoi, 2018). To deny the presence and influence of power and privilege could be considered a barrier to change (Jolly et al., 2021).

As researchers we need to research, develop, use, and refine models such as the TAM and tools such as the GAC, as demonstrated in this study. It may therefore be a useful additional criterion to include in the TAM (Jolly et al., 2021) when analysing individual qualification for allyship as activism. A suggested example of an additional criterion:

- Individual and organisational allies need to identify the privileged identities and power, either explicitly or implicitly, that they hold.

Jolly et al., (2021) conceptualised that transformational change cannot take place unless ally activism is present at both the individual and organisational level. Future research can investigate how this shift from ally agent to ally advocate to ally activist at individual and organisation level can be achieved.

It is suggested that further research would be useful to clarify how workplace environments have impacted individuals, such as Carl and Nicholas. What experiences or education, for example, have influenced these participants' allyship journeys? It is worth highlighting that only one participant from most organisations was interviewed. There is opportunity for further research, for example, a case study of these organisations, with researcher access to various actors throughout the organisations to gain a deeper and more holistic view of the organisation. To support this recommendation, Creswell et al. (2007) recommends when searching for a deeper understanding of the research question it is important to achieve a holistic account of the issue from multiple perspectives, as opposed to relying on a single source of information.

Organisational leaders play an important role in shaping and modelling the culture of sport organisations so that the organisation reflects the shared experiences of all members, not just that of the leader or dominant group. Therefore, we need to examine the female gender perspectives on the

existence and extent of male allyship in Aotearoa and if they believe it exists what are the most effective male allyship strategies that they deem most effective and meaningful. Are the collective vision of male allies and female high-performance coaches the same?

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Appendix

Appendix A: Letter of Invitation

Kia ora _____

My name is Emma Mulhern, and I am a post-graduate student at Massey University. This is an invitation to participate in a study I am conducting for my Masters in Business Studies Management at Massey University. My Masters supervisors are Professor Sarah Leberman and Professor Bevan Catley.

I am conducting interviews as part of my Masters research which focuses on gender equity and allyship for women coaches in Aotearoa from a leadership perspective. As _____, you are in an ideal position to offer first-hand information and valuable insights from your own perspective. The interview will take approximately 30 – 45 minutes to complete via Zoom.

Participation is voluntary and your identity will remain confidential. Your name or any other personal identifying information will not be used in the thesis resulting from this study; however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used.

If you are willing to participate, please suggest a day and time that suits you and I will send you an invite for Zoom. In the meantime, please feel free to contact myself, Emma Mulhern, and/or my supervisor(s) if you have any questions about the research.

I look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this study.

Noho ora mai,

Emma Mulhern

Post Graduate Research Student

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Mobile: 021 302 115

Supervisor Contacts:

Professor Sarah Leberman – Primary Supervisor Professor Bevan Catley Co-Supervisor

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Appendix B: Interview questions

1. How would you define gender equity?

2. In your own words how would you define allyship?

3. Looking specifically at women coaches, how have you supported women coaches in the workplace?

4. Show interviewee the GAC (Mulhern et al., 2022a). Based on the scale:

   Where do you see yourself on this scale?

   Why?

   Can you give me an example?

5. Is this position where you would like to be?

   Follow up with: Why?

   What would assist you achieving this?

6. Looking at your organisation - What does your organisation do around women coaches?

   The researcher will have read the specific organisations available documentation i.e., annual reports; strategic documents and will be aware of their gender equity and/or women in coaching policies, if any, to ask follow-up questions:

   What was the genesis of these policies/initiatives?

   What drives these policies/initiatives?

What are your organisations future plans in this space?

What would you like to see happen in this space?

7. Where do you think your organisation is on the scale?

   Follow up with – Why?

   Can you give me an example?

   What's worked so far to get your organisation to here?

   Has your organisation tried something that didn't work?

8. Where would you like your organisation to be in respect to female coaches?

   What needs to be done?

   (a) What are the facilitators?

   (b) What are the barriers?

9. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Appendix C: The interview framework

Type of Question	Definition	Purpose	Question	Link to TAM
Introductory	Introduction and informal chat. General information related to the content of the overall research question.	● Initiate the interview and begin a conversation ● Establish trust and rapport	Kia Ora – greeting and thank you for participation. Outline general guidelines for the interview e.g., approximate timing. The interview will begin with asking the participant about themselves and their role. The participant's position in the organisation will be known prior to the interview and information regarding the research will be provided to the participant before the interview. How long have you been in this role? Please tell me about your current role and responsibilities.	

Core questions	Specific to research question - the data that the researcher wants to collect	● Answer the research question ● Collect data specific to the research question ● Enable the participant to talk, while focused on the topic/question ● Same questions asked of all participants – to achieve a level of standardisation across interviews	1. How would you define equity? 2. What ways, if any, have you used to support women coaches in the workplace? 3. What do you consider an effective strategy/strategies specifically for the support and advancement of women coaches?	1. Focus on the individual level awareness of gender equity and at what level of the TAM does this exist. 2. Aim to gain insights into individual action (if any) taken in the interest of gender equity – was this action reactive or proactive or no action at all – to help define/clarify/support what level of the TAM that individuals' allyship exists. 3. Direct focus on the research question and Agency level of the TAM re: individual and organisational awareness of strategies that support female coaches and systemic barriers to female coaches.

			4. Please define allyship in your own words. If the participant is unsure/unaware of the concept of allyship, then an explanation will be given in lay terms i.e., allyship refers to the actions, behaviours, and practices that leader's take to support, amplify the voice of, and advocate with others, especially with individuals who don't belong to the same group e.g., gender. Allyship is defined as ongoing action with a focus on others not you, including sustained behaviours that create inclusive environments.	4. Direct focus on the research question. This question aims to gain insights into the individual awareness of allyship and at what level of the TAM does this exist.

			5. Show interviewee Continuum of Gender Allies Scale (LaVoi, 2018). Based on the scale Where do you see yourself on this scale? Why? Can you give me an example? 6. Where would you like to be? (if not an Ally). 7. What do you need to do to get there? 8. Have you ever experienced allyship in this/another workplace? How?	5. Following on from question 4, the interviewer gives the participant a visual scale in order to illustrate where they are in terms of their own personal allyship. This question aims to gain insights into the individual awareness of allyship and at what level of the TAM does this exist. Planned follow-up questions 6 - 8, ask for further clarification/deeper insights.

			9. Where do you see your present organisation?	9. Direct focus on the research question and aims to provide further insight into where the organisation is positioned in relation to the TAM (what level).
			10. What's worked so far to get your organisation to here?	10. This question can help to clarify if drivers/actions are reactive or proactive and what practical form does that take – Allyship as Advocacy or Activism.
			11. Where should your organisation be?	11. Aims to provide deeper insights into individual awareness re: what level of the TAM the individual would like to see their organisation operate at. May reveal insights re: future plans within the organisation to challenge inequity / empower female coaches for example (Allyship as Activism – proactive)?

			12. What needs to be done? (c) What are the facilitators? (d) What are the barriers?	12.This question follows on from the previous question, aiming to provide further depth to the participants previous answers and in particular re: perceived organisational barriers and facilitators to male allyship.
Planned follow-up questions	Specific questions that ask for more detail relevant to the core questions	● Obtain deeper insights based on answers generated by core questions	Planned follow-up questions are included in the core questions above.	

Unplanned follow-up questions	Questions that arise during the interview based on the participants responses	● Answer aspects of the participants response/s to pre-planned follow-up questions ● Obtain deeper insights		
Conclusion	Close the interview.	● Round off the interview ● Thank the participant	Ask the participant if they have any questions? Ask the participant if there are any questions I should have asked and didn't?	

Appendix D: Participant information sheet

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Exploring Sports Leaders' Understanding of Male Allyship for Women High Performance Coaches in Aotearoa

Kia ora _____,

My name is Emma Mulhern, and I am a post-graduate student at Massey University. This is an invitation to participate in a study I am conducting for my Masters in Business Studies Management at Massey University. My Masters supervisors are Professor Sarah Leberman and Professor Bevan Catley.

I am contacting you as you are considered to have the experience and expertise to provide rich information and valuable insights for this study.

Below is the key information about this research and what your involvement would entail.

In 2018, the Government of Aotearoa launched the Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation strategy. One of the aims of this strategy is to have more women and girls lead, work, coach and volunteer in sport and active recreation, at all levels across Aotearoa. My Masters research focuses on gender equity and allyship for women coaches in Aotearoa from a leadership perspective.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 30 – 45 minutes to take place via ZOOM. With your consent, the interview will be recorded to facilitate collection of information, which will be later transcribed for analysis. After the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points.

Your identity and your organisation will remain confidential. Your name or any other personal identifying information will not be used in the thesis or in any publications resulting from this study. This research will be conducted consistent with the ethical safeguards and best practice principles when working with human participants as per Massey University policy.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation.

If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question.
- withdraw from the study at any time during the study.
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation.
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher.
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- ask for the recording to be turned off at any time during the interview.

Please feel free to contact myself, Emma Mulhern, and/or my supervisor(s) if you have any questions about the research.

I look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this study.

Noho ora mai,

Emma Mulhern

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