

Indigenous Women Athletes' Flourishing in Sport

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Context

- Sport participation fosters a range of positive physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social health-related advantages (Statistics Canada, 2008; Taliaferro et al., 2010)
- Indigenous women athletes, in particular, experience many challenges and they continue to struggle to increase their recognition and participation in sport (Forsyth, 2007; Hall, 2013)
- Learning from Indigenous women athletes about their meanings and experiences in sport is necessary for sport program implementation, health optimization, and sport policy development

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore Indigenous women athletes' meanings and experiences of flourishing in sport, and to identify culturally relevant strategies to support them to reach their potential and attain health outcomes in sport.

This research focuses on *the voices of Indigenous women athletes*.

Philosophical Worldview

- Two-eyed seeing (Bartlett et al., 2012)
 - Introduced to the research world by Mi'kmaw Elders Albert and Murdena Marshall
 - Rooted in the belief that there are many ways of understanding the world, some represented by various Indigenous knowledge systems and others by Western perspectives



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Theoretical Perspective

- Cultural sport psychology, a culturally sensitive approach to sport psychology research and practice (Schinke et al., 2006)
 - Encourages striving for a deeper understanding of marginalized and minority sport populations by considering athletes' cultural heritage in a meaningful and reflective manner (Schinke et al., 2006)

Research Design

- Narrative strategy of inquiry in which participants share stories about their lives to illuminate meaning on their complex, socially constructed experiences (Creswell, 2014; Smith & Sparkes, 2009)
 - Reflective of the nature of Indigenous knowledge, which rests on oral tradition derived from practical knowledge and storytelling (Baskin, 2005; Blodgett et al., 2011)

"We need to hear from Aboriginal sportswomen... we need to provide opportunities for them to tell their own stories. We need to engage in more oral history"
(Hall, 2013, p. 86).

Participants

- 16 competitive Indigenous women athletes
 - Self-identification as an Indigenous woman – First Nations, Métis, or Inuit (AANDC, 2012)
 - Minimum age of 13 years
 - Minimum provincial sport experience
 - Willingness to share personal experiences representative of flourishing in sport

Procedure

- Prolonged engagement through two phases to facilitate depth of understanding and ongoing consultation (Blodgett et al., 2015)

Procedure Continued

- Phase 1
 - Talking circles (Wolf & Rickard, 2003) to construct meaning about flourishing in sport
 - Symbol-based reflection (Lavallée, 2009) to represent the essence of flourishing experiences
- Phase 2
 - One-on-one interviews to expand on meanings and generate narratives of each athlete's unique experience
 - Reflexive photography (Swaminathan & Mulvihill, 2013) to provide another means to share stories and reflect on journey of flourishing in sport

Data Analysis and Knowledge Translation

- Combine textual and visual data to co-construct narratives with participants (Collier & Collier, 1986)
 - Highlight athletes' unique journeys toward flourishing in sport, and identify strategies/resources to support Indigenous women athletes' flourishing in sport
- Reach Indigenous, sport, and academic audiences (e.g., Indigenous media sources, social media, conferences)
- Provide platforms to generate attention with Indigenous women athletes (e.g., athlete interaction, product creation)

Acknowledgements

Thank you – tiniki – to the community advisors, Ms. Wuttunee from Red Pheasant First Nation and Mr. Dunn from Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, for their ongoing consultation, commitment, and involvement, and to the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) for providing funding for this research.



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