

The Pasifika youth sporting experience: Pressure, opportunities and gaining an understanding through a coaching lens.

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Abstract

The experience of Pasifika youth in Aotearoa who participate in sport is important to understanding coaching and athlete development. Although Pasifika have higher participation rates in sport within the youth space, little has been done to privilege their voices. This qualitative descriptive study unpacks the perceptions and experiences of Pasifika youth in sport.

The participants in this study were secondary school athletes aged 16-18 years who identified as being of Pasifika-descent and played at least one sport at the school representative level. Data was gathered using a culturally appropriate method, Talanoa. Using thematic analysis, four dominant themes were identified that shaped the participants experiences: familial obligations, athlete perceptions of culture, coach-athlete relationship, and stereotypes and stigma. Pressures stemming from the need to reciprocate parents for providing opportunities for engagement was evident with participants. Opportunities to reconnect with heritage and redefine team culture were highly valued amongst this cohort. Coaches who formed an environment which embraced the backgrounds and individuality of athletes formed positive connections with youth. Participants were victim to various forms of stereotyping and racial prejudice both on and off the field.

The findings suggest that coaches who engage with Pasifika athletes must take into consideration their individuality by creating an environment which embraces the backgrounds of their constituents to form positive connections. By strengthening the connections with the athletes, practitioners may be in a better position to understand the motives behind their engagement and help navigate the associated pressure of being a developing Pasifika athlete. Through maintaining a high level of cultural responsiveness, coaches and practitioners alike can better utilize their role as a support mechanism to shape and enhance the experiences of Pasifika youth in sport.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed _____

Tayla Robinson

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Chapter One: Introduction

This qualitative descriptive study explores the pressures, opportunities and experiences of Pasifika youth who participate in sport and how this affects their perceptions of their sport experience. To the author's knowledge, there is limited academic research focusing on the sporting experiences of secondary school aged Pasifika youth in Aotearoa. However, developments over recent years have maintained a growing demographic of Pasifika youth undertaking sport during this period, highlighting the need for practitioners to strengthen their understandings of how to better support Pasifika athletes. Talanoa was held with current Pasifika student-athletes who are attending secondary school in Aotearoa, and are members of a sport team for their school. These discussions were held to allow the student-athletes to voice their personal and cultural experiences through and around their sporting experiences.

Aotearoa has become a centralised multicultural hub within the South Pacific which includes a substantial Pasifika population that has grown to 8.1% of the total population (Stats NZ, 2019). The Pasifika community is culturally diverse and is made up of several unique groups and languages, along with varying commitment levels to cultural traditions between each generation (Sauni, 2011). Sport and recreation maintain a significant social and physical role within the Pasifika community. A survey on engagement in sport and recreation in Aotearoa found that 90% of Pasifika adults took part in some form of sport and recreation on weekly basis (Active NZ, 2019). The survey also indicated that 92% of Pasifika youth aged between 5-17 were involved in similar levels of sport or recreation (Active NZ, 2019). These findings emphasise how sport is integral among Pasifika communities. However, it does not indicate the depth of understanding where sport is located culturally in the Pasifika lifestyle and the motives or issues behind it (Gordon et al., 2013).

Much of the primary body of data on Pasifika youth sporting experience is focused on professional athletes in the high-performance space, particularly within Rugby Union and Rugby League (Keung, 2018; Lakisa et al., 2014; Zakus & Horton, 2009). Most findings reflected a strong link between sport and culture, and how these entities can influence each other both positively and negatively. Lakisa et al. (2019) maintains the importance for high performing athletes to stay connected to their cultural identity. The author further highlights the constant negotiation Pasifika athletes go through with their cultural identities, which consequently develops a unique set of challenges only the athletes themselves fully understand. Gordon et al. (2013) also identified such challenges for aspiring professional Pasifika athletes, noting familial expectations as a primary driver towards gaining a professional sporting career. Underpinning this link is kinship obligation, where families often support young athletes, usually financially, on the expectation that it will be reciprocated once they turn professional (Uperesa, 2010).

A prominent limitation identified within past research fails to recognise voices outside of the professional or semi-professional space when discussing Pasifika sporting experiences (Ehlen, 2021; Hawkes, 2018; Keung, 2018; Lakisa et al., 2014; Uperesa & Mountjoy, 2014). Although these researchers acknowledge the high value of knowledge derived from the experiences of high-level Pasifika athletes, they also address the niche context of this data as only a small percentage of athletes play sport professionally (Lakisa et al., 2019). Hence, gaining insight into the youth experience may provide relevant data that could inform coach development and coaching pedagogies as it pertains to developing Pasifika youth athletes. Broader reviews of Pasifika-focused qualitative studies have argued limitations regarding the Western research designs or methodologies, as some have contradicted the desired outcome of empowering indigenous voices (Stewart-Withers et al., 2017).

Research Question and Purpose

The aim of this study is to explore the sport participation experiences of Pasifika males aged 16-18 in Aotearoa. The two key questions underpinning this research are:

1. How do Pasifika Youth perceive their sporting experience?
2. What are the implications for coaching/coaching practices based on these perceptions?

The key outcomes of the research are to:

- Provide an avenue for Pasifika Youth to voice their experiences in sport,
- Gain insight into the impact that cultural expectations and motivations have on Pasifika Youth in Aotearoa,
- Formulate recommendations to inform coaches that can be used to enhance the experience of Pasifika Youth in sport.

Structure of report

Chapter two of the report provides a review of relevant literature as it pertains to the influences on the Pasifika youth sport experience. The review offers insights into the role of a supporting environment through the positions of family, peers, and coaches. It then moves in-depth as to how coaches can influence the athlete experience based on the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. Finally, a focus on the cultural nuances that impact Pasifika athletes engagement in sport is highlighted.

Chapter three presents the study's methodology. The theoretical framework, researcher positionality, and formation of the cultural advisory group are then introduced, along with the qualitative method used. Procedure, participants, data collection and data analysis are then explained in line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic

analysis. Ethical considerations such as the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and criteria for methodological rigour and trustworthiness in qualitative research are also presented.

Chapter four presents the results of the thematic analysis. Four dominant themes were identified: 1) familial obligations, 2) athlete perceptions of culture, 3) coach-athlete relationship, and 4) stereotypes and stigma. Key findings from the dominant themes were then related back to previous literature. In line with the qualitative descriptive approach, the words of the participants are used throughout this section.

Chapter five concludes the dissertation. The summated findings, limitations, and recommendations for practitioners are presented.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a broad scope of current research that focusses on youth experiences in sport and recreation. Although extensive research has focused on the general experience of youth in sport, the lack of Pasifika or other Indigenous experiences require greater attention. Acknowledging the potential cultural differences between youth experiences allows for a greater focus on the interpersonal nuances within the environments and brings them to the forefront.

This literature review will provide an overview of the broader youth sporting experience, including what constitutes meaningful engagement. The focus will then be given to the construction of the supporting environment which embodies the sporting experience and outlines the interactions of key stakeholders within. A coach's role in shaping the sporting environment will then be explored, including understanding the impact of the coach-athlete relationship, and how the relationship impacts the youth sport experience. Finally, the cultural nuances that influence engagement in sport specific to Pasifika youth will also be explored.

The Role of a Supportive Environment in Sport and Recreation

Sport and Recreation has widely been acknowledged to provide several key physical, social, mental, and spiritual benefits through active participation (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Gould, 2019). Early experiences associated with sport are considered critical towards personal development at both the micro and macro-levels, as these aid in influencing the formation of perspectives, values and beliefs which will inherently dictate how youth perceive their experience as adults (Gould, 2019). Fraser-Thomas, Côté and Deakin (2005) reiterate that supportive sporting environments hold a pivotal role in the quality of experience, level of development and overall wellbeing from the earliest years of an athlete's development. The supporting environment itself consists of several personal and environmental-based factors such as: whānau (family), peers, coaches, facilities, and

community contexts; which interconnect to form a surrounding climate unique to the individual (Beni al., 2017; Keegan et al., 2010). These key stakeholders each contribute to the physical, psychological, and emotional growth of athletes and therefore have a profound foundational impact on the passion and engagement of youth in sports (Fraser et al., 2005). Fry and Gano-Overway (2010) highlighted youth athlete perceptions of 'caring' climates were positively associated towards the attitudes and caring behaviours of family members, coaches and peers. Traits such as warmth, safety, and acceptance were considered more inviting, and more likely to provide a sense of belongingness that leads to more positive behaviours. This strongly links to scholars advocating the necessity for actively enacting such traits to promote a positive and nurturing environment (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011). Doing so allows for the express focus of ensuring the wellbeing and passion of athletes are maintained for future benefits (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Mallet, 2005).

Families play a crucial role in a youth's sport experience and are considered the first to shape a youth's interactions with sport at most levels. Parents are noted as the primary drivers behind this because they seek out and recognise opportunities for growth, development, and socialisation for their children through sport (Côté, 1999; Dorsch & Vierimaa, 2017). By doing so, parents become active participants in the youth sport experience, engaging as the primary support system which entails: investment of time, energy, and money, including transportation, attending games and practices, instructional assistance and emotional support (Knight et al., 2016; Stein & Raedeke, 1999). Considerations for what is regarded as the 'appropriate' amount of parental involvement varies depending on the nature of participation (Holt & Knight, 2014; Jellinek & Durant, 2004). Eccles, Wigfield and Shiefele (1998) indicate that the level of involvement can be defined through their parental roles as either supporter, provider, coach or administrator. As the athlete begins to progress through increasing forms of participation, the subsequent role and level of involvement shifts as well (Knight et al., 2016). Accordingly, the effects of parental involvement are often mitigated by the quality of the parent-child relationship

(Wuerth et al., 2004). Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009) found through interviewing several competitive youth athletes, that children who perceive their parents providing unconditional love, praise and understanding have a significant positive impact on the enjoyment and potential of children in sport. Conversely, perceptions of pressuring behaviours such as excessive involvement, criticism, or withdrawing love has been linked towards negative experiences, and often lead to less or no future participation in sport (Bonavolonta et al., 2021; Knight et al., 2016). However, a meta-analysis from Sutcliffe and colleagues (2021) found that to fully grasp how parents impact their child's sport experiences, a greater emphasis must be placed on the cultural context of these studies, as it highlights differing levels of social and cultural norms depending on where the studies were conducted.

Peers also play a role in shaping the motivational behaviours and attitudes of young athletes within the supporting environment. Côté et al. (2003) defined the role of peers as social agents who provide friendship, cooperation, and model appropriate behaviours relative to the sport environment. Smith and D'Arriple-Longueville (2014) further adds that in sport team environments, the influence of key individuals can shift the perceptions and subsequent actions of their teammates. The unique nature and dynamic of peer interactions have been referred to by scholars as a commodity to actively encourage or discourage achievement motivations and can influence cognition and goal adoptions over time (Keegan et al., 2010). Like that of the positive behaviours exhibited by family members, interactions such as praise, encouragement, and active verbal communication positively impact the perceptions of youth athletes (Keegan et al., 2009). Conversely, behaviours such as frustration through the form of negative or non-communication, narcissism, and lack of cooperation had an equally consequential impact on motivational determinants in the environment (Erickson et al., 2020).

Traditionally, coaches maintain a significant leadership role within sport given their status and level of experience (Cassidy et al., 2015). This role assumes the primary responsibility of stimulating an active learning and participation environment for young

athletes that promotes healthy and holistic development (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). In doing so, a young athlete's experience is significantly influenced by coaches who actively facilitate progressive or maladaptive behaviours (Duda et al., 2017; Smoll & Smith, 2002). Research suggests that coaches who frame their environments to become more autonomy-supportive tend to experience more positive outcomes for young athletes (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). An autonomy-supportive environment is where coaches empower athletes to maintain a key decision-making role with minimal pressures and a heightened awareness of their feelings (Rocchi et al., 2013). A vital element to achieve this for coaches requires a significant level of understanding the background, motives, and values of each athlete as an individual. Schaaf (2006) reiterates that for coaches to optimise the performance of an athlete, one must have a basic understanding of the cultural and personal background supporting them. In doing so, the needs of the athletes can more easily be met as the athlete motives in sport are clearer for coaches to comprehend (Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011).

The summation of the interactions between families, peers and coaches results in the forming of perceptions, behaviours and experiences that a young athlete may exhibit throughout their sporting journeys. The synergy between these elements of the supporting environment is interdependently attributed to the behaviours and attitudes towards the individuals involved and is often reflected into the climate in a causal effect (Fry & Gano-Overway, 2010). Natural extensions to examine the deeper impact the environment has for Pasifika athletes requires greater insight into the coach-athlete relationship and cultural nuances that effect engagement.

Coach-athlete relationship

It has been established that coaches significantly impact the experience of youth athletes in sport, both at the macro-level in shaping the learning environment, and at the micro-level through the coach-athlete relationship (Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011). The coach-athlete relationship is considered one of the most critical aspects in facilitating an effective

sporting experience (Jowett & Poczwardoski, 2007). This relationship is both reciprocal and interdependent, where the emotions and behaviours of both parties are mutually interconnected over time (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). Subsequently, the quality of the relationship informs the motivational determinants, attitudes, and behaviours of an athlete (Lafreniere et al., 2008). Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004) developed the '4C's' model to elucidate those key determinants of a quality coach-athlete relationship.

Closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation are the four key elements of the 4Cs model (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). Closeness is defined as the emotional connection between the two parties, linked with the feelings of being appreciated, trusted and respected. Commitment is defined by the intent to develop a healthy and long-lasting relationship. Complementarity is defined by the interpersonal and cooperative leadership behaviours displayed towards one another. Lastly, co-orientation is the shared similarities and perceptions both the coach and the athlete have towards fulfilling agreed goals or desired outcomes. Olympiou, Jowett and Duda (2008) found coaches who actively involve athletes in decision making processes perceived higher levels of closeness, commitment and engagement over an extended period of application. This reiterates the earlier notion of coaches providing an autonomy-supportive environment, therefore contributing towards a positive relationship and sport experience (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). Contrary to this, environments with negative coach behaviours such as unequal recognition, belittling and objectifying comments are associated with lower levels of commitment and complementarity. Stirling and Kerr (2009) highlight the mitigating influence coaches have in situations with abusive or negative coach-athlete relationships, as this causes a considerable power imbalance which can harm the safety and wellbeing of the athletes. Therefore, the behaviours exhibited by coaches must be predicated towards nurturing a positive coach-athlete relationship (Jowett, 2017).

Cultural nuances that impact Pasifika youth engaging in sport

Understanding cultural nuances is key to positively influencing the Pasifika youth sport experience. The rich and diverse cultural tapestry of Pasifika communities exert a profound influence on the experiences, motivations and challenges confronted by young athletes along their sporting journeys (Connolly, 2018). These cultural-based attachments that are deeply rooted in traditions, values, and familial or societal expectations, help shape how Pasifika athletes engage with sports, as well as, how they navigate the complexities between their own identities and the predominant westernised environment they participate in. By exploring and understanding these cultural factors, one may gain a greater understanding of Pasifika in sport and recreation, which tends to be collectivist and community focused (Wilson et al., 2022)

Within Pasifika families, the close-knit and well-connected nature is highlighted by the sense of duty a member may feel towards their family. This is because of the importance of collectivism, which values the needs, wishes, desires, and successes or failures of the group over the individual (Zakus & Horton, 2009). Subsequently, many families often come together to support their young athletes to provide them with opportunities to progress further in their path (Uperesa, 2010). This support tends to form an impression of kinship or familial obligation for Pasifika athletes, influencing their motivation to succeed based off a sense of duty and respect towards the sacrifices of others (Kearney & Donaghy, 2010; Lakisa et al., 2014; Zakus & Horton, 2009). Panapa and Phillips (2014) expand on the notion of collective success highlighting how success in professional sport can also be reciprocated through generating positive examples and situations for younger siblings or family members. However, research on Pasifika athletes in Australia has also noted the potential negative consequences deriving from familial pressures. Interviews with ex-rugby league players found in some cases the extensive pressures faced over a sustained career negatively affected mental wellbeing and was one of the leading causes of early burnout (Lakisa et al., 2014).

The negotiation of cultural identity is a unique and intricate process for Pasifika athletes. Pasifika athletes strongly value their cultural upbringing, and often find themselves balancing the upholding of their heritage and traditions alongside navigating the dominant Western sports culture (Lakisa et al., 2014). In the sporting context however, discovering or rediscovering one's culture can cause athletes to 'weave' their identity across several domains (Erueti & Palmer, 2013). Vaka (2014) states that this is common for Pasifika to experience in Aotearoa, as it can result in a blend of cultural perspectives which may not fully reflect a contemporary position. This is due to an individual who is informed or raised by both cultural values and customs that are infused by other dominant societal norms and values. As sport is considered a site for socio-cultural expression, it becomes clear to understand how the environment may impact upon the cultural identity with causal effect (McDonald et al., 2019).

The available body of literature as it pertains to Pasifika sporting experiences provides a general overview of the youth sport experience, impact of the supporting environment, and insight into the cultural nuances related to post-professional level Pasifika athletes. This study aims to add to current literature by providing relevant perceptions and experiences in sport through the lens of Pasifika youth.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology and the philosophical underpinning applied to this research. It also provides a description of the research design, ethical considerations, Te Tiriti o Waitangi considerations, participants, procedures, data collection and data analysis.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a dynamic approach to inquiry that seeks to explore the complexities of human experiences and behaviours (Berg, 2009). Approaches to qualitative research are characterised by the emphasis on understanding the social world, with researchers engaging in open-ended exploration through interviews, focus groups, and participant observation to collect data and analyse (Magilvy & Thomas, 2009). The ability to open insight into subjective perspectives allows for the investigation into human phenomena and provides a platform for researchers and practitioners to gain a deeper context-driven understanding of these dynamics. There are several forms of qualitative methodologies for researchers to apply, however it is the researcher that establishes the philosophical standpoint and relevant method to best answer the research questions (Grant & Giddings, 2002).

Positionality

As a non-Indigenous researcher undertaking Indigenous research in the qualitative field, it was critical I was able to demonstrate researcher reflexivity throughout this process. Reflexivity involves consistently analysing values, beliefs and practices which are integral to heightening self-awareness during the research process (Elliott, 2005; Rettke et al., 2018). Previously acknowledged as a limitation, Tunufa'i (2016), suggests that if the values and process of the cultural context are not informed or followed respectfully by the positionality of

the researcher, it could be considered a form of 'colonising' the research. This required me to regularly question my input and understanding of the data, as the aim of this research is to provide a voice for the participants in an authentic manner. Questions that were applied to maintain such reflexivity included; "Have I created the right space for people to be heard?" and "Does this reflect the voice of the group or the individual?".

Research Philosophy

The philosophy that a research methodology derives from serves as the guiding principle that helps the reader understand the lens which the researcher views the world (Grant & Giddings, 2002). From this, it also acts as a critical starting point which aligns and connects the researcher with the aim of the study and the methods to achieve them (Crossan, 2003).

This research will utilise a qualitative descriptive approach to collect and analyse data. Qualitative descriptive studies aim to keep the description of the experience or interaction as close to the raw data, by keeping the data exact or summarising the events in the language used by the participants to ensure it is their voice through the data (Sandelowski, 2000). This approach examines the social and cultural environment in events and experiences, and is used to form a deeper understanding of how socially constructed behaviours develop (Berg, 2009). Studies applying this methodology aim to keep the description of the events as close and accurate to the data as possible, as it maintains the integrity and perspective of those experiencing it (Sandelowski, 2010).

The Pacific worldview is a grounded and culturally rooted perspective which has been nurtured over generations, with distinct connections to land, sea, sky all tied together through ancestry (Ofe-Grant, 2018). These philosophical principles align strongly with use of the research method of Talanoa, as it enables the researcher to explore cultural behaviours,

narratives, and experiences of participants with a much lower inference than other approaches (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012). Furthermore, the methodological framework will be informed and supported by Samoan principles from the *Ula* framework (Sauni, 2011). This framework consists of the following principles: *fa'aaloalo* (respect), *alofa* (love), *tautua* (service), *fa'aleagaga* (spirituality), *fesoa'aiga* (reciprocity), *va* (relational space), *gagana* (language), and *feagaiga* (covenant). According to Sauni (2011), the aim of these principles is to maintain and protect the integrity of the relationship between the researcher and participant by addressing issues concerning the power dynamic between the two entities. The key principles of *fa'aaloalo* (respect), *fesoa'aiga* (reciprocity) and *va* (relational space) are essential pillars of the research process, as they represent grounding links for a researcher to harmonise the Indigenous paradigm through increasing the cultural competency and reciprocity of the process. It is critical for the research process to interweave the Pasifika worldview inclusive of respective Pasifika knowledge and values through such a framework, as it both acknowledges and mitigates the potential effect of colonising the research (Dunlop-Bennett et al., 2019; Lingam et al., 2017).

Research Design

This research utilises Talanoa to gain an understanding of the experiences of Pasifika youth in secondary school sport. Talanoa is connected to the phenomenological research family, which focuses on the participant and their understanding of what certain events mean to them (Patton, 1991; Vaioleti, 2006). Superficially, this approach can often be referred to as both a formal and informal exchange of conversation or thinking primarily through oral and written forms (Vaioleti, 2006, 2013). The purpose of Talanoa is not to discover or tell stories, but to develop and co-construct meanings through discussion (Matapo & Enari, 2021).

Stewart-Withers et al. (2017) states the depth of data derived from the 'truths' that are produced are considered all encompassing, reflecting the various interconnected

relationships, protocols, faiths and customs that underpin the Pacific paradigm. Furthermore, it promotes the active and dynamic nature that Pacific people are used to, by providing a safe and trusted setting to collect and communicate ideas, similar to church, family or other community-based settings. It is suggested that deliberately creating such a setting allows participants opportunities to challenge, clarify or re-align as the discussion progresses, which effectively integrates into a shared outcome (Morrison et al., 2002). Through this method, an enriched synthesis of the information, stories and emotions produces the relevant knowledge in a culturally appropriate manner for addressing Pacific issues (Vaiolati, 2006).

Cultural Advisory Group

The primary purpose of a Cultural Advisory Group (CAG) was to ensure I as the researcher was held accountable in the research process which is respectful of Pasifika values and philosophies. As a non-Pasifika researcher navigating Pasifika-centric research, establishing a baseline familiarity of the various values, practices and beliefs which embody Pasifika cultures was essential from the earliest stages of the research process.

Researchers inherently have the responsibility to mediate any power or knowledge imbalance between themselves and those involved in the research (Pipi et al., 2004).

Consequently, the necessity for the formation of a CAG was required as an integral support mechanism for the safety and integrity of the researcher, participants and the research itself.

The group consisted of three members, including a local Pasifika community leader and two world-leading Māori and Pasifika researchers acting as research supervisors. Initial consultation with the research supervisors was established to determine the academic foundation and logistics, which was maintained through regular contact via in-person meetings, video calls and emails throughout each stage of the research process. The role of the cultural advisor was to assist in identifying potential participants, implementation of relevant Pasifika values and principles through the 'Ula' framework and participate in the

Talanoa (refer Appendix B). Extensive discussions were required to ensure both the researcher and research process were in accordance with the cultural protocols and principles associated with Pacific research.

Procedure

Initial contact was made via email to the principal (and principal's personal assistant) of a secondary school in Auckland. The email provided a high-level summary of the project and its aims and sought permission to liaise with the Director of Sport and local community leader (Appendix C). Permission was granted by the principal, and both the Director of Sport (the liaison between the school and researcher) and community leader (the project's Cultural Advisor) were provided the relevant information sheets (Appendix D) and consent form (Appendix E) for potential participants. Once the school agreed to engage in the project, the information sheet and consent forms were sent via email to participants. The Director of Sport then liaised with the talanoa participants and confirmed that the talanoa would be held on-campus, to reduce travel or commitment stresses for the athletes.

Participants were identified by the project's Cultural Advisor, alongside the Director of Sport. The potential participants were emailed an invitation to engage in the project via the information sheet (Appendix D). Participants accepted the invitation to participate by emailing the primary researcher using the available contact details expressing their interest in the research project.

Participants

The aim of this study is to voice the experiences of Pasifika youth in sport. Therefore, current Pasifika secondary school students who participated in one or more sports at any level were included. This research followed guidelines suggesting three people is an appropriate size for a talanoa group and allows for sufficient depth of discussion to occur (Fa'avae et al., 2016; Vaka et al., 2016). Both Toner (2009) and Krueger (2014)

support this as the increased time and questions per participant improves the quality and depth of the data.

Due to the strict selection criteria of participants required to answer the research questions, purposive sampling/selection was applied to the recruitment process. Purposive sampling allowed the research to focus on particular characteristics of a population of interest and will provide a relevant response to the research question (Rai & Thapa, 2015). Participants selected were identified by three key characteristics/criteria: a) the participant must be attending secondary school in Aotearoa and be of secondary school age, b) must identify as being of Pasifika descent, and c) must participate in at least one sport at the school representative level. A total of three participants agreed to participate in the talanoa. All participants fully consented to participate in the research. All participants were aged 16 years and over at the date of the talanoa.

Data Collection

The data collection process was heavily guided by the principles behind the method of Talanoa. As a method, talanoa is both formal and informal and involves a dynamic mix of engaging in storytelling, reflections and discussions while sharing family genealogies, food and other necessities (Otunuku, 2011; Vaioleti, 2006). Prior to the data collection process, an extensive focus on building and nurturing respectful relationships must be followed in the build up to the Talanoa. Following consultation with the CAG, it was recommended that establishing a comfortable environment to acknowledge the *fa'aleagaga* (spirituality) of the occasion. This was achieved through the act of conducting a *lotu* (prayer), followed by the sharing of a meal pre-Talanoa. This created the opportunity for informal conversation to develop relationships. Macfarlane (2013) emphasises the importance of researchers investing time to develop relationships when conducting research alongside Pasifika communities. Thus, allowing for a more authentic facilitation of organic opportunities to be

expressed by the participants. The building of relationships also establishes an early understanding of the guiding principle of *fesoa'aiga* (reciprocity) which helps to enlighten the relational space between the researcher and participants, strengthening the emotional sharing that solidifies the interpersonal relationship (Stewart-Withers et al., 2017; Vaioleti, 2013).

As the Talanoa focuses on exploring the experiences and perceptions of the participants, no specific interview structure was followed. This is a critical distinction of the method as it allows for themes to emerge naturally through conversation. This was necessary to maintain integrity of the participants' perspectives, as this is where the essence and richness of the data lies (Stewart-Withers et al., 2017; Vaioleti, 2006). However, an adapted form of indicative questions commonly used in semi-structured interviews was developed; and participants were asked to reflect on a few potential questions as a starting point if deemed necessary by the cultural advisor and lead researcher (refer Appendix G). The Talanoa concluded once the discussion began to lose *malie* (spirit), and the conversation had reached its natural conclusion (Vaioleti, 2006). It was at this point that a closing *lotu* (prayer) was given, and the participants, cultural advisor and researcher parted ways.

The discussion was recorded with a digital recorder and was transcribed verbatim by the researcher. All transcripts were then re-read while listening to the audio to ensure they were accurate.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected from the Talanoa. Thematic analysis is defined as a "method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). The theme is the main result that the data has produced relative to the research question being asked (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). To retain the voice of the participants, themes were formed relative to the research question

(Vaismoradi et al., 2013). To inform the analysis, an inductive approach was applied to develop the meaning of the data in the words and understandings used by the participants. This approach was considered suitable as it allows the data itself, and therefore the voice of the participants, to emerge naturally without any preconceptions to frame the data (Thomas, 2003). The ability to retain the integrity and empower the voice of the participants directly throughout the analysis strongly aligns with Talanoa and the 'Ula' framework (Vaioleti, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline a guide to indicate the six key phases of thematic analysis as follows: 1) familiarising yourself with your data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) producing the report. Terry et al. (2017), reiterate the non-linearity of this form of analysis, suggesting that movement and overlapping between phases will likely occur as the researcher gradually completes the analysis process. The table below (Table 1) describes in detail how these phases were applied in the context of the research setting:

Table 1. *Phases of Thematic Analysis*

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with the data	Transcribing the data, reading and re-reading the data, writing down any initial notes or characteristics. Once the data was transcribed, the researcher edited the transcriptions by re-listening to each focus group accordingly to maintain accuracy.
2. Generating initial ideas	Coding interesting or reoccurring features from all data used, gathering appropriate data under each code. The researcher manually coded through the data based on the content of the transcription.

<p>3. Searching for themes</p>	<p>Composing data into potential themes using data collected from each group under the appropriate theme. Each code was then further collated under relevant categories based on their description. For example, all codes relating to discussions between players and the coach were shifted into a larger code category under 'coach-athlete relationship'. Once the larger codes were developed, they were compared to display any commonalities. E.g. 'coach-athlete relationship' had similar notes to 'early experience with sport' and 'primary sport/rugby'.</p>
<p>4. Reviewing themes</p>	<p>Analysing if each theme maintains relevance towards the greater data collection and research question, creating a thematic map. At this time contact between the researcher and academic supervisor was made to discuss each of the codes, potential themes and how they were linked.</p>
<p>5. Defining and naming themes</p>	<p>Analysing if each theme maintains relevance towards the greater data collection and research question, creating a thematic map. At this time contact between the researcher and academic supervisor was made to discuss each of the codes, potential themes and how they were linked.</p>
<p>6. Producing the report</p>	<p>Final analysis and completion of the sections, relating back to literature. Continual edits were made upon sending updates to CAG.</p>

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted for this study on the 20th of July 2023 by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (Appendix A).

Informed and Voluntary Consent

Participants were provided with an information sheet regarding the study prior to any Talanoa. The information sheet informed participants of what the project was about, the aims, the people involved, and how the findings from the project would be used. As the participants were 16 years or older, they gave informed consent and therefore did not require parental consent. At each stage of the process, participants were reminded that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they desired. Any further questions or queries following this stage were directed using the contact details attached to the respective information sheets.

Respect for Rights of Privacy and Confidentiality

To protect the identities of the participants, no names of participants or the school they attended were used throughout the data collection, data analysis or discussion processes. Instead, participants were allocated a number during the sessions to provide anonymity. This information was detailed and verbalised alongside the information sheet prior to the Talanoa. Participants were informed that the contents of the discussion would be disclosed but not discussed outside the project unless the participants deem appropriate.

Potential Conflict of Interest

The primary researcher maintains a social/professional relationship with the participants as a basketball coach for the past 3-5 years. The primary researcher has never worked with the participants directly, however, there is a potential power imbalance relative to the coach-athlete relationship between the researcher and the participants. In respect to

the context of this research a pre-existing relationship provides a significant advantage as an inside researcher and an outsider researcher.

Insider research is specifically focused on the depth of data, where the participants are more comfortable in sharing their experiences allowing the researcher easier access to quality data (Unluer, 2012). An established relationship grounded in trust and credibility over an extended period allows for more open discussion, therefore providing an advantage at a social and professional level for the researcher. Fa'avae, Jones and Manu'atu (2016) support this stance, highlighting in Pasifika research the richness and type of knowledge available to the researcher is reliant upon the strength of the relationship between the two parties.

However, from the perspective of a cultural relationship the researcher can also be considered as an outsider. With the primary researcher of a non-Pasifika background researching Pasifika people this difference in cultural relationship provides a unique angle which can inform a further strengthen the research. This is because it limits the assumptions made between the two parties, and in some cases, known to be a reason that participants are more willing to share their knowledge, particularly with non-Pasifika researchers who adhere to the principles of the respective cultural backgrounds (Fa'avae et al., 2016).

Managing and mitigating the potential power imbalances is central to using Talanoa. This is required through the principles and values that underpin it. Specifically, the leading value of *fa'aaloalo* (respect) highlights the awareness and acknowledgement of status between both researcher and participant which builds towards a balanced respect. Potential imbalances were mitigated throughout the research process by ensuring an active review of the data to ensure any assumptions have been limited. In addition, as the researcher portrays both insider and outsider perspectives throughout the process, a consistent reflection process was undertaken by the researcher to understand their own changes and perceptions throughout the process (Lingam et al., 2017). Assurances were both written and

verbal that their position in school will not be affected in any way due to the researcher's position at the school.

Rigour and Trustworthiness

To ensure rigour and trustworthiness throughout the research process, the notions of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability were consistently addressed.

Credibility is related to how believable the research findings are (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The axiological positioning of Talanoa ensures research credibility through researcher awareness and reflexivity, as the subjectiveness is led by the participants interpretation.

Similarly, confirmability relates to how accurate the findings are. This will be ensured by keeping decisions consistent with the Talanoa methodology as guided by the Ula framework. Transferability will be focused through clear and extensive descriptions alongside participant interpretations of the data to allow others to test findings themselves.

Dependability ensures the findings are related to the data or participants and not the values of the researcher. As previously mentioned, continuous engagement with the participants during each phase of the research process helps to mediate this from occurring.

Te Tiriti or Waitangi

As this study is being conducted in New Zealand, the researcher must be cognisant of the three principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi which are partnership, participation and protection (Hudson & Russell, 2009).

Partnership. The design and practice of the research is predicated upon the participants voicing their perspectives and understandings. Hence, the relationship between researcher and participant was central to the process. This partnership is critical as the

quality of data relies on the level of openness of the participant, which is dependent on the strength of the relationship and the trust that the researcher maintains the integrity of how their voice is applied (Macfarlane, 2013). Consistent dialogue integrated with follow-up conversations help to validate the participant voice. These aided in informing how the recommendations took place to ensure they accurately reflect participants perceptions, offering reassurance that the reciprocal aspect remains balanced from both parties.

Participation. The participants of the research maintained a central role relative the research process from the data collection phase to the final representation of the research. This is achieved through carefully managing how participants understandings shaped the outcome of the data, and how the data is represented. This required follow-up discussions through their involvement in approving the mutual understanding of their perspectives, recommendations, drafts, transcripts, to ensure their role was maintained in both the input and the output of the research.

Protection. Participants were not exposed to any significant psychological, social or physical risk throughout the study. Although some may have experienced discomfort in relation to some of the topics discussed, consultation was offered at any phase of the process. Support was provided by the CAG who also offered assurances the correct protocols and procedures were followed in a culturally sensitive manner.

To protect the identities of participants, no names were used during the data analysis process. Instead, participants were allocated pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Participants were given verbal assurance that the information shared during the talanoa will not be disclosed nor discussed with anyone involved outside of the project unless or until the group deems it appropriate. Where necessary, specific sporting activities that might be used as identifiers will also be anonymised.

Although a prior relationship between the researcher and the participants may be seen to cause some research bias. In accordance with the Talanoa method the establishment of a prior relationship can be seen as highly beneficial in regards the quality of research process (Macfarlane, 2013).

Chapter Four: Results

This chapter offers an in-depth analysis of the findings combined with a critical discussion to answer the two key research questions for this study:

- 1) How do Pasifika Youth perceive their sporting experiences?
- 2) What are the implications for coaches/coaching practices based on these perceptions?

Qualitative research allows for an investigation into the natural environment, producing greater insight and understanding by providing a channel into the experiences of people (Maglivi & Thomas, 2009). A qualitative descriptive approach aims to keep the description of the experiences as close to the raw data as possible, and consequently highlight the language of the participants (Sandelowski, 2000). Using an inductive thematic analysis approach, four dominant themes evolved from the data (see Table 2).

The first overarching theme states that upholding familial obligations has a profound impact on the way Pasifika athletes engage with sports. The role of the parental relationship, and the subsequent pressures of reciprocity evolved as subthemes. Findings revealed that parents were critical in providing opportunities for their child's initial engagement in sports. However, understanding the context of these opportunities resulted in significant pressure to reciprocate through success and achievements.

Theme 2 suggests that significant developments of the athlete's perception of culture were formed through experiences in sport. Within this broad theme, the desire to reconnect with Pasifika heritage, and providing an opportunity to redefine team culture were highlighted as subthemes. Findings demonstrated how peers who are also of Pasifika descent, had shared experiences of negotiating and discovering their cultural identity, while previous negative experiences of team culture motivated participants to create positive examples for younger athletes.

Theme 3 considers the value of the Coach-Athlete Relationship. The strength of such a relationship was a determinant of the environment a coach created. Further analysis found two subthemes: acknowledging the individual in a team environment, and the importance of trust in the coach-athlete relationship.

Theme 4 addressed experiences of Stereotypes and Stigma through sport. The impact of physical differences in sport and dealing with stereotypes in the classroom as Pasifika athletes were identified as subthemes. Findings revealed the mental impact of navigating the heightened demands on Pasifika athletes due to their advanced physical development compared to non-Pasifika athletes. In addition, participants shared experiences of feeling prejudice and being deprived of attention in the classroom due to their status as Pasifika athletes.

Overall, findings reveal how Pasifika youth athletes perceived their sporting experiences. As a result, relevant insights for coaches and practitioners to better support the Pasifika athletes they engage with are also offered.

Table 2. *Summary of Themes of Pasifika Youth Sport Experiences*

Theme 1:	Familial Obligations
Subtheme 1:	Parental relationship
Subtheme 2:	Pressures of reciprocity
Theme 2:	Athlete Perceptions of Culture
Subtheme 1:	Desire to reconnect with Pasifika heritage
Subtheme 2:	Redefining team culture
Theme 3:	Coach-Athlete Relationship
Subtheme 1:	Acknowledging individuality in a team environment
Subtheme 2:	Importance of trust in the coach-athlete relationship
Theme 4:	Stereotypes and Stigma
Subtheme 1:	Physical differences
Subtheme 2:	Dealing with stereotypes in the classroom

Theme 1: Familial Obligations

Upholding familial obligations was found to have influenced participants' sport experience. Specifically, participants shared how understanding the motives behind their parents providing opportunities to engage in sport acted as a primary motivator to succeed. From this, participants also experienced significant pressure to succeed in order to repay their parents. Two sub-themes were identified to provide broader insights for coaches who engage with Pasifika athletes: 1) parental relationship, and 2) pressures of reciprocity.

Parental relationship. Families have widely been recognised as playing a pivotal role in the youth sport experience, as they help to establish and shape interactions with sport at a critical level (Côté, 1999; Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009). The importance of family was

strongly expressed by all participants as an essential support system not just in their sporting journeys, but also their lives. Participants conveyed the importance of maintaining a strong understanding of the connection with their parents towards unpacking the role they play within their sporting experiences. Parents have been identified as key decision makers who determine the context for their child's initial participation. From this, parents regularly seek out opportunities for their children to grow, develop, and socialise through sport (Dorsch & Vierimaa, 2017). An example of seeking out these opportunities can be based behind the decision to shift to New Zealand, "...my parents came here looking for better opportunities" (P1). This is considered a common occurrence within Pasifika families, as it reflects the collectivist values in which they accumulatively provide support for young athletes (Uperesa, 2010; Zakus & Horton, 2009).

"Families an important part of my life...the connections there... my family's like, through thick and thin you know." (P1)

"Like they had me young. My mother, my Mum was 18 turning 19 and my Dad was 20 turning 21. For them it was struggling trying to look after a kid when they're still growing up as well. Pretty much. So like family, for me, it's always been pretty, pretty tight." (P2)

Recognition of the difficulties their parents experienced throughout their lives allowed for a greater appreciation of the current situations the participants were provided with. Subsequently, the participants expressed a moral responsibility and sense of duty to reciprocate through capitalising on opportunities provided through sport (Kearney & Donaghy, 2010).

"When you're growing up, you don't really understand. Like, for me if I didn't really understand anything until actually, like, I came to school. But I realised that both of my parents came from dysfunctional families... I understand that stuff now. You know, they've been through the struggles." (P3)

Lakisa et al. (2019) found that significant athletic achievements are often attributed to parental sacrifices for youth athletes, further highlighting the effect of the collectivist values. An example of the impact of reciprocity was observed through Participant One, whereby the necessity to succeed was a "*big motivation*" to ensure the opportunities were not wasted.

Furthermore, the relational link of parents affording their child access to sport experiences, and subsequent value of reciprocity, have a profound causal effect on the pressures Pasifika athletes experience (Uperesa, 2010).

Pressures of reciprocity. The participants in this study described the significant pressures attributed to the need to reciprocate for parental support they received. Expanding on the moral responsibility, one participant stated how the need to perform well in sport resulted in constant pressure from his parents due to his awareness of the adversity they faced in supporting him. Lakisa and colleagues (2019) found similar advanced instances of this occurring in former Rugby League players, highlighting pressures to ‘perform-on, provide-off’ as a means of financially giving back to their parents:

“But, yeah, the pressures, the pressure is still there kinda like because it's like, because now you kind of take on that responsibility of knowing the struggles they've been through, it's kind of like a more like a moral thing for yourself. Like, just like trying your best to give back. Even though they're supporting you, see, because like, even then, even though they've been through all the struggles, like they still want you to do your best. So it's like, you want to do your best for them.” (P1)

Individualised rituals were also observed to be a necessary part of the coping process for the participants in rugby games. Two participants prepared for games by writing the names of family members alongside a reference to biblical scripture on their wrist tape, while another followed the same when taping his boots. These served as a reminder of their purpose, who they were representing, and who helped them get the opportunity to play the game. Therefore, this acted as a form of honoring and reciprocating the support given to them.

Intriguingly, for one participant, the idea of reciprocity did not fully eventuate until he attended LeVa's¹ Pasifika Leadership workshop, *“...remember, when we went to the workshop, I think LeVa...the idea of reciprocity...”* (P2), to which a fellow member nodded

¹ LeVa is an organization who aim to support Pasifika by providing services and resources that can help Pasifika youth care for their wellbeing and fulfill their potential.

reiterating, *“Yeah that was really good”* (P3). Tulisi (2019) suggests that the lack of cultural understanding from the current generation of Pasifika youth is due to the decline in the transfer of intergenerational knowledge. The author strongly advocates for the establishment Pasifika-led youth programs, like those delivered by LeVa, to help educate Pasifika youth in such knowledge to help unpack these cultural experiences.

In contrast, another participant perceived a heightened sense of internal pressure due to a lack of external expectations from his parents:

“My parents are quite supportive ay. Like, they always just give me that reassurance. That there’s not that much pressure on me, like they try not to put much pressure on me. So that I don’t crack... kind of more like, just do what makes you happy, instead of pushing me to do this or do that. I don’t really feel that kind of pressure.”
(P2)

However, the participant also reiterated his parents’ openness and understanding as a consequence of their age: *“Mum and Dad are more understanding because they’re younger... Not as strict. But like, still get a hiding.”* Further into the discussion the participant experienced greater internal pressure, suggesting the lack of external pressure forced him to elevate his own expectations:

“It was like I think it was my own expectation but then like their expectation. That was probably my hardest year last year just because with the expectation of coming off like a pretty good season 2021. And then like all the boys, coach and my parents. I think it just like all just come up...I think it was because there was no expectation I didn’t have any expectation on myself.” (P2)

This seemed to resonate with his fellow athletes regarding the consequence of both the internal and external consequences caused by the desire to do well for their parents, stating, *“Gotta keep going till you crack it. It’s just how it is. Big motivation. Family.”* (P1).

Consequently, this differs from common western ideas which inform the role of parental pressure in the youth sporting experience, as it underlines the importance of relational and cultural context as opposed to just the impact of parents (Sutcliffe et al., 2021; Uperesa, 2010).

Theme 2: Athlete perceptions of culture

The participants were able to develop their own comprehensions and experiences of culture through both family and sport. Lakisa, Adair and Taylor (2014) suggest that Pasifika athletes undertake a natural negotiation of cultural and personal identity throughout key developmental years. Insight into these understandings helps to contextualise the athletic experience and cultural perceptions that were identified as a dominant theme. Two sub-themes were then identified: 1) desire to reconnect with Pasifika heritage, and 2) negative experiences leading to redefine team culture.

Desire to reconnect with Pasifika heritage. When asked about their connections to their Pasifika heritage, each participant acknowledged a strong yet disconnected relationship to their cultural background. Opportunities to gain additional perspective on their cultural heritage were regularly sought out through sports by the participants. According to Erueti and Palmer (2013), the rediscovery of one's cultural identity allows an athlete to negotiate or 'weave' their understandings by providing insight into their own traditions and values to others. As such, the participants of this study appeared to be at varying points of their cultural identity journey.

"It's kind of different compared to some of my mates like what they had growing up. What I had growing up was like, two different worlds. For my parents. They weren't really involved as much culture when they were growing up. Like still the, still the same traditions and stuff but not really...connected. They didn't really pass it on to us." (P2)

One participant described how it was only once he arrived at secondary school that he realised the impact of having young parents created a generational disconnect, which played a significant role in initially understanding his cultural identity, "...they're still growing up as well... they're not like your typical Island parents..." (P3).

The group also discussed how their connection, or lack of, was not fully realised until they attended secondary school, noting an increase in comparable experiences with other Pasifika student-athletes. Interactions with peers were observed to be a critical starting point

for establishing their own identity, as it allowed the student-athletes to share, reflect and compare their own upbringings to others in a relative context (Jowett et al., 2016). A growing change in perspective was further emphasised through one of the participants who moved from Tonga to Aotearoa as a primary-aged student. Following the shift, he observed a generational shift in treatment and sharing of knowledge through his younger siblings who were born in Aotearoa:

“...but now looking at them taking care of my little brothers growing up here. I'm like, damn where was that? Like, they've kind of switched up? Like, what happened?”
(P1)

Vaka (2014) highlights this is due to blend of cultural perspectives which subsequently might not reflect the contemporary positions of cultural identity. Consequently, this is considered part of the ‘weaving’ process in which their own traditions and values are infused with other more dominant societal norms and values (Erueti & Palmer, 2013). This became a source of frustration for this participant, as they conveyed their desire to return to their place of birth at the conclusion of his secondary schooling years, *“yeah I really miss going back I haven't been back in ever since we came so as some of the family back in the Islands haven't seen them in a while”* (P1). Preservation of heritage and traditions is strongly valued by Pasifika athletes while they navigate Western sports culture, as it helps to maintain the connection to their identity (Lakisa et al., 2019). Thus, the need to connect culturally influenced the participants’ experiences of team culture in sport.

Redefining team culture. Each participant extensively shared their own experiences of navigating the negative aspects of team culture. Participant Two highlighted how the traditional “hierarchy” in place during his first year in the 1st XV squad compounded the negative atmosphere which reflected the attitudes of his teammates. When asked to expand on what they meant by “hierarchy”, he shared a moment from their rookie year:

“...I remember trying to talk in one of the huddles one day in training, and they just said shut up one day in training. One of the boys told me just shut up, like you're a rookie. It's not your place. So I just didn't want to talk after that...That group was quite separated. Wasn't really a team.” (P2)

“Yeah I didn't talk at all... That was probably like our worst season 2021...see, because then it wasn't about the team it was mostly about the individual.” (P2)

This was perceived to be a defining moment in their first 1st XV experience, as the supposed role models and leaders of the team culture adversely affected their willingness to be open and honest within the environment. Research states that negative comments such as these can have detrimental impact on the motivational determinants of an athlete (Beni et al., 2017; Keegan et al., 2010).

Despite this, the participant noted an example of a positive outcome from this through his desire to redefine the cultural environment for the benefit of others, stating they *“...would not want that for anyone else in the team”* (P2). Interestingly, the participant, who went on to captain the squad for the next two years, noted some key benefits to creating an open space for players to express their feelings and opinions.

“Like so that's why I just tried to get like this year build the boys like build that connection will help with that connection of everyone's allowed of talk like good bad whatever just it's better to speak up into like as if you have an idea you're not telling that might benefit the group and no one even hears it because you're scared to talk.” (P2)

This expands on the previous value of reciprocity, demonstrating the desire for positive change for the benefit of others (Kearney & Donaghy, 2010). Panapa and Phillips (2014) elaborate on the importance of generating positive examples for younger athletes, as it aligns with the idea of collective success.

Furthermore, the focus on improving the team environment was illustrated as improving the connection between players by allowing a relationship to develop both on and off the field. Participants described how the improved team connection allowed them to embrace each other individually. Furthermore, an improved connection with teammates provided an opportunity to compartmentalise their own cultural identities through sharing their experiences with others:

“... the boys already know like we've already had that talk as friends about how it is with our families how it is with your families like everyone's already got that

understanding. I mean everyone's different but all the boys just get it when we had that talk this year, like about the family and like your family where you come from.” (P3)

“Sometimes I'll just be sitting in my room and one of the boys would just walk up just like like just doesn't even leave me a message or anything they just bang the door open Sup bro! And I'll just get outta bed but I think that's like how it should be to be honest. Because even as a team like if you're not mates to them it's kind of hard to like have a stronger connection with another team so if your mates on and off the field and on just stays there the whole time.” (P2)

The researcher noted that during this period of the Talanoa the participant spoke with a great sense of pride relative to the earlier stages of the discussion, expressing with passion and self-belief of his impact on the team culture and environment. This emphasises the quality of the environment in fostering positive relationships, and how the unique cultural values within can enhance an athlete's experience (Côté, 2003; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005).

Theme 3: Coach-athlete relationship

The coach-athlete relationship was acknowledged by participants as having an influential role in shaping their sport experiences through how coaches frame the environment. Two key sub-themes were identified to help contextualise how coaches interact with Pasifika athletes within their environments: 1) acknowledging individuality in a team environment and 2) importance of trust in the coach-athlete relationship.

Acknowledging individuality in a team environment. When the participants were asked about their experience with past or present coaches, all gave positive responses regarding their relationship with their current rugby coaching group. Notably, little was mentioned about the quality of the coaching regarding improving rugby skills. Instead, much of the talanoa was predicated towards highlighting the significant lengths their 1st XV rugby coaches would go to stimulate a caring and supportive environment:

“I reckon he's good coach ay. Because he's quite understanding of the boys like. I was us like, I wanted to have like a mental health day. And he's just like take the day

off, just reset. We had training that day and he was just like nah it's algood don't come to training just take some time for you. Because if you're not alright, you're not going to be right in our space. Need to be alright with yourself and everything else. Like he's quite an understanding coach you know quite supportive too" (P2)

According to the '4C's' model, forming these environments helps to represent the quality of closeness and commitment of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004). Jowett (2017) believes an ongoing concern for wellbeing and clear investment in maintaining a long-lasting relationship are critical identifiers for establishing positive connections.

Participants seemed to hold the coach in high regard due to their willingness to work alongside individual athletes to develop a positive connection. For Pasifika athletes, developing quality relationships with those who have such an impact is of utmost importance (Ioane & Tudor, 2017; Keung, 2018; Samu & Suaalii-Sauni, 2009). Furthermore, they praised their coach's efforts to develop and maintain these connections with every member of the team:

"Everyone's equal. Equal like he doesn't [have] favourites [but] some people do think that he favours others, but I don't think he really does..." (P3)

"...he made my rugby just more enjoyable... Like even right now. He's trying to he's looking out for us getting us recovery stuff...He's giving us boots. That's how much he cares." (P1)

The concern of the overall wellbeing of Pasifika athletes aligns with the important value of respect by acknowledging the individual and their role within the environment (Gordon et al., 2013).

Valuing student-athletes as individuals was extended further through embracing the families and cultural backgrounds of each player. Participant One gave an example of strong bonds being created with fellow teammates and coaches through sharing photos of their families:

"Like we had we got a camp every year that will there and like we always go around the group and you share like, who you are like your family your reason why you play and so it like kind of brings all the points together like bonding with the boys with that trust aspect of knowing everyone knows you so you kind of bonded

better with them more closely. And like this year we got like a board in our room on our 1st XV changing room just of photos of all the boys families. Like on your way out and on your way and we just see it that's the reason why you play.” (P2)

As a result, forming positive connections within the relationship are considered a key element in creating a balanced and happy experience for young Pasifika athletes (Marsters, 2017).

The willingness to embrace the cultural identities and backgrounds of the players was a significant act in enhancing the participants sport experience as evidenced by Participant One: *“Not an old white man coach, like he is quite understanding of he knows the culture of people...He’s a legend”*. Schaaf (2006) emphasises the importance for coaches to take an interest in the personal and cultural backgrounds of Pasifika athletes to optimise performance. In this case, the willingness of the coach to embrace the families of all the athletes is portrayed through the family photo board in the changing room. Incorporating familial values are central to the Pasifika paradigm, as this can be seen as aiding the athletes in their constant negotiation of their identity by strengthening the connection with the team space (Erueti & Palmer, 2013; Mila-Schaaf, 2010). For coaches, acknowledging the background of an athlete is critical to ensuring their needs are always met, thus facilitating a positive experience (Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011).

Importance of trust in the coach-athlete relationship. Coaches traditionally assume a primary leadership role within sport (Cassidy et al., 2015). Previous studies have acknowledged the significant level of trust and therefore respect Pasifika athletes have for those in such a position of authority (Ioane, 2017; Keung, 2018; Lakisa et al., 2023; Marsters, 2020). Participant One discussed how he initially was recruited into rowing by one of the coaches:

“I remember the rowing coach was like you got so much potential. Your height, your height. It gives you that length. That length on the drive... and then I started rowing. I loved rowing and was so fun” (P1)

As coaches maintain such an influential position, encouraging comments such as the above from coaches are significantly impactful for Pasifika athletes in establishing a positive connection (Ioane, 2017). The following season, Participant One shared that many of his mates who joined rowing with him dropped out due to their negative interactions with the coach: *“we're gonna like row this mean as eight... and then it was like, fine,...then they just stopped rowing.”* Consequently, this caused a significant rift in the coach-athlete relationship as other team members blamed the entitlement and subsequent heightened success for rowers leaving; causing the coach to become distant and despondent:

“I'm feeling great... And then just yeah rowing. I've heard I think they got pissed off at me because I started breaking their records... was like fuck how does this...how am I supposed to supposed to row and then I had to I had to sit in you know took the row of shame and went down the lane of shame, you know got shame by other people. I was just sitting there I thought - it was really because me and my brothers aren't rowing in the same boat.” (P1)

According to the participant, it was the breakdown of trust due to the negativity of the competitiveness in this relationship which pushed him to leave the sport. This level of neglect within the coach-athlete relationship can have profound consequences for Pasifika athletes given the level of respect associated with a coach's position of authority; meaning the coach should not be challenged (Ioane, 2017). Consequently, the negative energy which surrounded their interactions caused the participant to feel incredibly isolated and not confident as the relationship no longer reflected the familial values it was built on (Keung, 2018; Panapa & Philips, 2014; Rochford, 2004).

Theme 4: Stereotypes and Stigma

Finally, a strong theme identified that the participants experienced a variety of cultural and racial stereotypes throughout their sporting journeys. The journey of navigating the negotiation of cultural and personal identities for Pasifika athletes have been well documented by academics in recent years (Horton, 2014; Kanemasu & Molnar, 2013; Lakisa

et al., 2019). Alongside the negotiation of cultural and personal identities, research suggest that Pasifika athletes also have to deal with various forms of racial stereotypes and stigmas that are placed on them during their secondary school years (Lakisa et al., 2014).

Participants spoke strongly of dealing with these negative connotations in two key areas of their student-athlete experience. Hence, two key sub-themes were identified: 1) physical differences in sport, and 2) dealing with stereotypes in the classroom.

Physical differences in sport. Early sporting experiences were spoken of fondly throughout the Talanoa, as it provided them with the opportunity to develop their enjoyment and passions alongside their peers and family. However, one key delineating aspect of their early sport experiences were expressed through their physical and subsequent cultural differences relative to other kids their age. Participant One described how his early rugby experiences was defined as coming into the predominantly non-Pasifika space as the “*big Poly kid*”:

"Because in Year five and six that's when we started like getting really into rugby...But it was embarrassing because I went to like St Josephs primary in Puke. And as like mostly like little white kids. Like coming in as that big Poly kid, and um I think I think there was only one person in the team that like actually try and tackle me." (P1)

Similarly, Participant Two shared how he was considered “...*too big for my own grade*”, which required him to play in older age groups for the “*safety of other athletes*”. The rhetoric of the natural size and athletic advantages Pasifika athletes hold have long been associated with an increased likelihood of resulting in a professional career (Hawkes, 2018). Researchers suggest that a cause of this is based on the pseudo-objectivity of the physical development Pasifika athletes as youth (Grainger, 2009). This was perceived to be a relatively normal occurrence to the group, as they stated this happened to close to a dozen other Māori or Pasifika student-athletes in their year group once they arrived at intermediate and secondary school. The racialised perception of Māori and Pasifika athletes being ‘naturally-gifted’ has been widely criticised amongst academics for endangering the

wellbeing of young athletes throughout early stages of participation (Grainger, 2009; Hippolite & Bruce, 2010; Palmer, 2007). Subsequently, researchers suggest that this sentiment is responsible for leading young Pasifika athletes to believe that success is limited only to sports (Hokowhitu, 2008; Rodriguez & McDonald, 2013; Stronach et al., 2014). Hokowhitu (2008) has strongly criticised sport academies within New Zealand schools for helping to feed this rhetoric by treating athletes physical bodies as assets, as it potentially dehumanises their experiences.

As the participants delved further into the topic of physical differences, each participant began to open up on the consequences of being considered “*larger than normal*” and “*overweight*”. In two key examples, the participants described the extensive lengths they tried to go through to maintain their size due to the weight limits of grade school rugby:

“But yeah rugby has just been, you know, a bit of a roller coaster. It was it was fun but like when I played rugby for school I was kind of overweight. (laughing) I was a bit of a fatty. They didn't let me play because I was the cause of [being] five kgs over the limit...I started and I was like kinda overweight so I had to play touchie [touch judge] hahaha. Running on the sideline.” (P1)_

“But yeah, I was pretty fat back in the days...So I kind of had to go on a diet. And that's when I started getting skinnier. And then you know got skinny then got pretty fit. You know, it was a bit of a mentally it was a bit of a struggle.” (P3)

Participants further expanded on the difficulties and pressures associated with their weight during their early secondary school period. One highlighted how after the first COVID lockdown he had gained 20kgs and had been told to trim down over the preseason. Despite this, he also credited the support of one of his coaches for allowing him to maximise his physical potential in the 1st XV space: “*Kind of, you kind of brought up that mental fortitude ay. He would yell out ‘What do you love - I love fitness!’. Now say it!*”. However, this is concerning as it can significantly add to the already acknowledged pressures Pasifika youth experience, and consequently compromise their wellbeing (Hawkes, 2018).

Dealing with stereotypes in the classroom. The second sub-theme that was evident was their experiences in the school classroom as Pasifika athletes. Initially, the discussion was predicated towards any potential experiences associated with stereotypes specifically within the sporting environment. However, participants explained how infrequently incidents occur, suggesting that there is strong social shift towards inclusivity within the sport space:

“That like Pasifika players are good players...so it's kind of like not really treated different, but like you know. They [coaches] have kind of like the like the thing not to treat you like differently.” (P1)

“...I haven't come across a person there. I feel like nowadays everyone's more aware.” (P2)

Hapeta et al. (2019) recognised that although this is not fully the case in every context, cultural and social progressions are slowly beginning to open sports to embrace inclusivity. However, according to the participant, this was limited to the on-field environment, as they experienced significantly greater forms of racial stereotyping in the classroom instead:

“Yeah, like you haven't come across it in sport, but like in the classroom or like... Yeah, the classroom I reckon some teachers...they don't try as much with Polynesian students as they do Palagi students...Like they would rather chuck you a ball instead of checking your paper.” (P2)

Insinuating that Pasifika students do not care about developing their intellectual capabilities reinforces the narrative that the only place of success for Pasifika peoples is on the field. Thus, highlighting the negligence of Eurocentric systems (Hokowhitu, 2008; Grainger, 2009). All of the participants of this study wholeheartedly agreed with the above stereotypical assumption. They went on to share an example of one teacher who they noted regularly pushes Pasifika student-athletes to settle for a trade as opposed to attending university:

“Like Ms. Like she reckons. Ohh, like I've I've heard her say it to some of my mates just like telling them to go and do a trade instead of trying to do uni... Yeah, she'll say push for push for uni but like...but she was kind of saying like just settle for a trade... I don't wanna, like it makes me sound bad, but I don't think she was trying to like be mean it's just... You know, it's kind of stink to hear. It wasn't like a 'you should try get your UE' (university entrance). More like you can just settle for a trade.” (P2)

Similar to coaches, teachers maintain a significant level of respect in Pasifika culture, as they hold an influential position of power and authority where knowledge should not be

challenged (Ioane, 2017). The implications for teachers are enormous in these positions of power, as they have a direct impact on the level of achievement the student-athletes experience (Porter-Samuels, 2013). According to Gay (2018), a significant determinant of these implications is the teacher's level of 'cultural responsiveness'. Specifically, the personal and cultural strengths, intellectual capabilities and prior achievements must be considered when interacting with students of Pasifika backgrounds. Like the coach-athlete relationship, it is essential for a teacher to understand their student's cultural identity and personality to maximise the student's experience (Kidman & Hanrahan, 2011). One participant determined that the teacher was somewhat understandable in coming to this conclusion, as he acknowledged her opinion was likely based off "*...looking at the grades and stuff and kind of basing her decisions off that*" (P1). Despite this, the participants still linked their perceptions to unfair stereotypes cast on Pasifika athletes, stating "*it's just that age-old stigma...they'll encourage you to make it in sport because you'll never make it in the classroom*" (P3).

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The aim of this study is to provide Pasifika males aged 16-18 years old in Aotearoa the opportunity to unpack their sport participation experiences through Talanoa. Participants were invited to discuss how cultural and familial expectations shaped their experiences, the impact coaching has had on their motivation and sport performance and offer a perspective on the personal challenges involved in navigating their young sporting careers.

Familial obligations emerged as a strong theme and cornerstone in the Pasifika youth sporting journey. Parents were identified as significant influencers in both initiating and facilitating the youth sport experience. The sacrifices made by parents, including relocating to countries like Aotearoa for better opportunities, highlight the collective family values which underline Pasifika culture. Participants expressed a strong sense of moral responsibility to reciprocate their parents' sacrifices by excelling in sports, amplifying the cultural foundation of reciprocal giving and kinship obligations.

The study illuminates how Pasifika athletes negotiate their cultural identities within the sporting context. Seeking connections with peers sharing similar backgrounds, they engage in a process of rediscovering and understanding their heritage. Some athletes experienced transformative moments where negative experiences in sports prompted them to reassess and redefine their cultural understanding within their team dynamics, aiming for a more positive reconnection with their identity.

The coach-athlete relationship emerges as a pivotal factor influencing the sporting experiences of Pasifika youth. Positive coaching experiences were characterised by coaches who fostered supportive environments, demonstrating an understanding and appreciation for the cultural backgrounds of Pasifika athletes. Conversely, negative coaching experiences significantly impacted athletes' well-being, emphasising the critical need for cultural awareness and supportive coaching environments based on trust to enhance an athlete's experiences and overall well-being.

Moreover, the study sheds light on the pervasive issue of stereotypes and stigma faced by Pasifika youth. While improvements were noted in sports settings, persistent racial stereotyping was still evident in academic environments. Instances where athletes were forced to play in older age groups due to physical attributes and experienced prejudices in classrooms underscored the challenges they encountered beyond the sports field.

In essence, the study unravels the interaction between familial support, cultural perceptions, coaching relationships, and societal stereotypes in shaping the multifaceted experiences of Pasifika youth in sports. It advocates for coaches to develop a sound understanding of cultural nuances, emphasising the imperative need to foster supportive environments by challenging stereotypes, and promoting inclusivity to amplify the holistic development and well-being of Pasifika youth. This research calls for comprehensive approaches for practitioners to integrate cultural sensitivity and support systems to optimise the sporting experiences and overall growth of Pasifika youth.

Recommendations

The following practical learnings and implications from this study may be of potential use for coaches and practitioners who engage with Pasifika youth athletes.

- *An understanding of the role and impact of the familial relationship* will enhance awareness of the motives behind engagement in sports. Parents play a significant role towards the initial and prolonged participation in sports. It is important for the practitioner to recognise the strength of this dynamic, as the impact of key decisions made by coaches and administrators alike can be compounded depending on parental perceptions. This requires a heightened level of awareness for coaches to help navigate the environment and therefore experiences for Pasifika athletes.
- *Creating an open and inclusive learning environment* by embracing the personal and cultural backgrounds of individuals can enhance the coach-to-athlete and

athlete-to-athlete connections. Coaches who were able to provide opportunities for athletes to share their cultural identities were noted as having an increased connection to their players. By improving these connections, athletes are more likely to maintain a positive sport experience and healthier wellbeing.

- *Maintaining a high level of cultural responsiveness* whilst in a position of authority is critical to maintaining the respect of the relationship with Pasifika athletes. Navigating social stereotypes and stigma is extremely evident in several contexts for Pasifika athletes. Therefore, it is the responsibility for practitioners and coaches to uphold a critical level of cultural sensitivity due to the wider impact they have on those within and around the supporting environment of their athletes.

Limitations

This study faced a number of limiting factors which influenced the research process. The unique sample group (male Pasifika youth student-athletes) means the findings cannot be generalised to all youth athletes. Although this focused on a specific demographic, future researchers should break down this grouping further due to the significant diversification of Pasifika ethnicities. Furthermore, as only a small portion of research has focused on female Pasifika sporting experiences, what has been observed are key potential differences in the experiences between Pasifika males and Pasifika females.

Another notable limitation of the study was the scope of the research project through the number of participants involved in the Talanoa. Despite suggestions that three participants allows for sufficient depth of data due to the increase in time per participant, only one key Talanoa session occurred (Fa'avae et al., 2016; Krueger, 2014). Multiple Talanoa sessions were also originally planned to further increase the time per participants. However, due to timing constraints (e.g. sport tournaments and exam period) only one Talanoa session could take place. Researchers who have previously utilised this method advocate

for multiple discussions to help strengthen the relationship with participants, as allows for greater quality of data (Keung, 2018; Ehlen, 2021; Vaiutoletti, 2013).

Lastly, only the perceptions and experiences of the athletes were captured. Hence, there were no opportunities to compare this information with key members of the supporting environment to contextualise the participants perceptions within the relevant space. Opportunities for further research could investigate how these perceptions are formed and the impact these experiences have on the supporting environment.

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Appendices

Appendix A: AUTECH approval for study



Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTECH)

20 July 2023

Sierra Keung
Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences

Dear Sierra

Re Ethics Application: **23/164 The Pasifika youth sporting experience: Pressure, opportunities and gaining an understanding through a coaching lens**

Thank you for your responses to AUTECH's conditions.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 20 July 2026.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTECH.
2. All public facing documents must have the AUTECH approval number and be of a high standard of spelling and grammar. Dates on the Information Sheet(s) and Consent Form(s) must be consistent.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTECH prior to being implemented.
4. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date.
5. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project.
6. Any serious or adverse events must be reported to AUTECH, this includes unforeseen issues that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
7. AUTECH grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management permission for access from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

The application number and title need to be referenced on all correspondence related to this project.

All forms are available online <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTECH Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: taylajrobinson@gmail.com; dion.enari@aut.ac.nz

Appendix B: Evidence of consultation



Evidence of Consultation

Cultural Advisor Member

Project title: ***The Pasifika youth sporting experience: Pressure, opportunities and gaining an understanding through a coaching lens***

Project Supervisor: Sierra Keung

Researcher: Tayla Robinson

With whom has the consultation taken place with:

CA 1 – Joshua Malolo

What has been discussed:

The primary researcher has discussed the scope of the research process with the Cultural Advisor (purpose, expectations, methods participant selection etc.), as well as the overall outcome the study is aiming to achieve and the potential benefits for Pasifika youth in sports.

Due to the cultural and social demographic of the study dealing with Pasifika youth, the main purpose of having a Cultural Advisor is to inform the primary researcher and hold them accountable in carrying out the research processes in line with the Samoan principles and philosophies informing the study.

Appendix C: School Information Sheet



School/Principal Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

2nd May 2023

Project Title

The Pasifika youth sporting experience: Pressure, opportunities and gaining an understanding through a coaching lens

An Invitation

Kia Ora,

This is an information sheet regarding a potential research project for Pasifika Youth Athletes who currently attend your respective school/organization. The project is being undertaken by Tayla Robinson, a postgraduate student from the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) Sport & Recreation.

Involvement in the study will be engaging in Talanoa for 45-60 minutes. Quotes from these discussions may be used as part of the final research report, however no names or identifying characteristics will be included in any instances of the report.

Tayla is currently employed by Sacred Heart College as a basketball coach, and any participation will neither advantage or disadvantage any participants who participate in basketball, whether in any school or representative programmes.

What is the purpose of this research?

Tayla is undertaking this research as part of his Dissertation to complete his Masters in Sport, Exercise & Health at AUT.

The purpose of this research is to provide an outlet for Pasifika males aged 16-18 in Aotearoa to unpack their sport participation experiences. Participants will be invited to discuss how cultural and familial expectations shape their experiences, the impact coaching has on their motivation and performance, and provide their perspective on the personal challenges involved in navigating their young sporting careers.

The findings of this research may be used for academic publications and presentations.

How will potential participants be identified to participate in this research?

The invitation to take part in this research is open to those who identify as male Youth Pasifika, who is currently attending secondary school and participates in at least one sport at the school representative level.

However, those who are members of the premier boys Sacred Heart College Basketball team will be unable to participate in this research.

In addition, the researcher will ask coaches of other sports at Sacred Heart with male players of Pacific heritage if they can support the recruitment drive for this project by sending the project invitation email to their players that meet the criteria.

What will happen in this research?

If your school/organisation agrees for the Primary Researcher to carry out the project, you will be asked to:

- Sign a Permission to Access Students form.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Any risk to the reputation or character of the school/organization is very unlikely, as the general experience of the participants in sport is the focus of the research.

Any discomfort or risk is unlikely in the interview process. Participants may express some discomfort when discussing personal experiences relating to family, culture, and coaching.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Participants will not be required to answer any questions that cause discomfort and are free to end the discussion at any point. They will also have an opportunity to review the transcripts of discussion to remove or alter comments.

AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9292.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

What are the benefits?

One of the principal aims of this research is to provide the participants with an avenue to voice and unpack their own experiences in sport. Traditionally, most sporting environments are limited when it comes to participants voicing their perceptions as to the social and cultural constructs within the space. The opportunity to express these perceptions in a culturally safe and relevant space allows them to strengthen their own understandings through discussion in a manner that would otherwise be neglected. In addition, their involvement through sharing their experiences will help construct recommendations predicated towards better informing programmes that are desired towards this cohort. By taking part in this research process, this will help contribute to the knowledge-base of coaches and community members regarding the perceptions and experiences of young Pasifika athletes. In particular, this input will help shape recommendations for coaches to be better equipped in developing a safer and more conducive environment for both Pasifika athletes and young athletes in general.

This will also help the researcher obtain their Masters in Sport, Exercise & Health.

How will participant and school/organization privacy be protected?

Personal details will be kept confidential at all times throughout the duration of this research. Names or identifying characteristics (including the school/organization they attend) will not be included in any data or reports of this study. Quotes from the interviews may be used as part of the research report, but names will not be used and instead a pseudonym will be applied. If there are any concerns regarding what this will look like, examples can be provided upon request.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There is not cost associated with participating in this research besides 45-60 minutes of the participant's time. No additional costs are associated to the school by allowing the research project to be carried out.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

The school/organization will have two weeks to consider and respond upon presentation of the research project. From there, once invitations are sent out potential participants will have two weeks to consider and respond to this invitation. If the school or potential participants require further information, please contact Tayla using his details at the bottom of this form.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, the school will receive a summary of the research produces upon request.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor.

Name: Sierra Keung

Email: skeung@aut.ac.nz

Phone: 099219999 ext 6834

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Name: Tayla Robinson; Email: taylajrobinson@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Name: Sierra Keung; Email: skeung@aut.ac.nz; Phone: 099219999 ext 6834

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 20th July 2023, AUTEK Reference number 23/164.

Appendix D: Permission to Access Students



Permission for researchers to access organisation school staff / students.

Project title: **The Pasifika youth sporting experience: Pressure, opportunities and gaining an understanding through a coaching lens**

Project Supervisor: **Sierra Keung**

Researcher: **Tayla Robinson**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 2nd May 2023.
- I give permission for the researcher to undertake research within
- I give permission for the researcher to access the students / employees of _____

Principal's signature:

Principal's name:

Principal's contact Details (if appropriate):
.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 20th July 2023 AUTEK Reference number 23/164

Note: The head of the organisation should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix E: Consent Form



Consent Form

Project title: *The Pasifika youth sporting experience: Pressure, opportunities and gaining an understanding through a coaching lens*

Project Supervisor: *Sierra Keung*

Researcher: *Tayla Robinson*

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 2nd May 2023.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes No

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 20th July 2023 AUTEK Reference number 23/164

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix F: Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

2nd May 2023

Project Title

The Pasifika youth sporting experience: Pressure, opportunities and gaining an understanding through a coaching lens

An Invitation

Kia Ora,

This is an invitation for Pasifika Youth Athletes to participate in a research project. This project is being undertaken by Tayla Robinson, a postgraduate student from the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) Sport & Recreation. Involvement in the study will be engaging in Talanoa for 45-60 minutes. Quotes from these discussions may be used as part of the final research report, however no names or identifying characteristics will be included in any instances of the report.

Tayla is currently employed by Sacred Heart College as a basketball coach, and any participation will neither advantage or disadvantage any participants who participate in basketball, whether in any school or representative programmes.

What is the purpose of this research?

Tayla is undergoing this research as part of his Dissertation to complete his Masters in Sport, Exercise & Health at AUT.

The purpose of this research is to provide an outlet for Pasifika males aged 16-18 in Aotearoa to unpack their sport participation experiences. Participants will be invited to discuss how cultural and familial expectations shape their experiences, the impact coaching has on their motivation and performance, and provide their perspective on the personal challenges involved in navigating their young sporting careers.

The findings of this research may be used for academic publications and presentations.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been invited to participate in this research, as you have been recommended by a local community leader as a male youth athlete who identifies as Pasifika, is currently attending secondary school and participates in at least one sport at a school representative level.

The invitation to take part in this research is open to those who identify as male Youth Pasifika, who is currently attending secondary school and participates in at least one sport at the school representative level.

However, those who are members of the premier boys Sacred Heart College Basketball team will be unable to participate in this research.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

An email invitation to engage in this research will be sent to potential participants via the Sacred Heart School Sport coaches; and individuals will have two weeks to respond through email to the researcher (Tayla). Participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and the decision to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage participants in any way.

Participants can withdraw from the study at any time. If a participant chooses to withdraw from the study, then they will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to them removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of the data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to:

- Sign a participation consent form.
- Engage in a discussion or interview at the Sacred Heart College Gymnasium, or an alternate agreed upon location (e.g. School classroom, local community center).
- Discussions will last approximately 45-60 minutes. These will be audio recorded and some notes may be taken, with the permission of the participants. Mr Josh Malolo (cultural advisor) may be present during the talanoa. His role is to observe the talanoa and provide cultural support and safety for both the researcher and the participants.
- Data collected from these interviews will be used for the express purpose of research and will be kept confidential by Tayla Robinson.
- Interviews will be transcribed verbatim.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Any discomfort or risk is unlikely in the interview process. Participants may express some discomfort when discussing personal experiences relating to family, culture, and coaching.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Participants will not be required to answer any questions that cause discomfort and are free to end the discussion at any point. They will also have an opportunity to review the transcripts of discussion to remove or alter comments.

AUT Student Counselling and Mental Health is able to offer three free sessions of confidential counselling support for adult participants in an AUT research project. These sessions are only available for issues that have arisen directly as a result of participation in the research and are not for other general counselling needs. To access these services, you will need to:

- drop into our centre at WB203 City Campus, email counselling@aut.ac.nz or call 921 9292.
- let the receptionist know that you are a research participant and provide the title of my research and my name and contact details as given in this Information Sheet.

You can find out more information about AUT counsellors and counselling on <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-support/counselling-and-mental-health>

What are the benefits?

One of the principal aims of this research is to provide the participants with an avenue to voice and unpack their own experiences in sport. Traditionally, most sporting environments are limited when it comes to participants voicing their perceptions as to the social and cultural constructs within the space. The opportunity to express these perceptions in a culturally safe and relevant space allows them to strengthen their own understandings through discussion in a manner that would otherwise be neglected. In addition, their involvement through sharing their experiences will help construct recommendations predicated towards better informing programmes that are desired towards this cohort.

By taking part in this research process, this will help contribute to the knowledge-base of coaches and community members regarding the perceptions and experiences of young Pasifika athletes. In particular, this input will help shape recommendations for coaches to be better equipped in developing a safer and more conducive environment for both Pasifika athletes and young athletes in general.

This will also help the researcher obtain their Masters in Sport, Exercise & Health.

How will my privacy be protected?

Personal details will be kept confidential at all times throughout the duration of this research. Names or identifying characteristics will not be included in any data or reports of this study. Quotes from the interviews may be used as part of the research report, but names will not be used and instead a pseudonym will be applied. If there are any concerns regarding what this will look like, examples can be provided upon request.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There is not cost associated with participating in this research besides 45-60 minutes of the participants time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Potential participants will have two weeks to consider and respond to this invitation. If potential participants require any further information please contact Tayla using his details at the bottom of this form.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, all participants will receive a summary of the research produces upon request.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor.

Name: Sierra Keung

Email: skeung@aut.ac.nz

Phone: 099219999 ext 6834

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, ethics@aut.ac.nz, (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Name: Tayla Robinson; Email: taylajrobinson@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Name: Sierra Keung; Email: skeung@aut.ac.nz; Phone: 099219999 ext 6834

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 20th July 2023, AUTEK Reference number 23/164.

Appendix G: Indicative Questions**Indicative Questions for Talanoa****The Pasifika youth sporting experience: Pressure, opportunities and gaining an understanding through a coaching lens**

1. Tell me bit about yourself?
 - Where are you/your family from?
 - How many siblings?
 - Where are you based?
2. How is it being a secondary school and representative player?
 - What sport do you play? Why?
 - What is your favourite memory playing sport?
 - Least favourite memory?
3. What role does your family have with your involvement in sport?
 - How do you feel family has impacted how you experience/enjoy sport?
4. What role does culture have with your involvement in sport?
 - How do you feel culture has impacted how you experience/enjoy sport?
5. Any favorite coaches?
 - What did they do/ how did they coach made them your favourite?
 - What kind of feedback does he give you?
 - Any least favourite coaches?
 - Good/bad experiences with either*