Investigating the underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in Leadership and Management positions in the UK football industry

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Abstract

Black, Asian, and Ethnic females face several challenges in the UK football industry with high levels of negativity and discrimination from society, organizations, and individuals in decision-making positions. These attitudes have been apparent since the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when women's football was banned for 50 years. The underrepresentation of ethnically diverse women in leadership and management roles in the UK football industry has been a prevalent issue that reflects the broader inequalities in society. Despite women attempting to make progress in recent years with advancement in the playing field from the Lionesses' victories, barriers to advancing in senior decision-making positions within organizations remain a challenge. Evidently, there is a lower representation of women in senior leadership and management roles, with an even lower representation from ethnically diverse females. Key factors contributing to this issue is the stereotypes and traditional gender norms from society, which reflects the discrimination faced at senior levels. Also, with it traditionally being a white male-dominated industry, barriers to advance professionally increase for ethnically diverse females. A mixed methods approach was taken using secondary quantitative reports from Sporting Equals and The FA. Also, a primary qualitative approach taken to collect 9 semi-structured interviews from Leicester City in the Community and other respected bodies from the UK football industry. An inductive thematic approach was taken to interpret and gain a greater understanding of the underlying issues faced by Black, Asian, and Ethnic women in leadership and management positions through their experiences. The results demonstrated women generally face barriers in leadership positions however, those from underrepresented groups faced further barriers. This included the lack of role models in senior positions, support from organizations, misogyny and intersectionality, as well as language and financial barriers. This project also highlights recommendations for organizations to introduce in the UK football industry to provide an inclusive and diverse workforce environment for their employees, and reducing the gap in the disparity of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership and management positions.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Women's participation in football has transformed significantly over the years, evolving from marginalization to progressively more leading roles both on and off the pitch. The 50-year ban from The Football Association between 1921 and 1971 caused football to traditionally be associated with male dominance (The FA, 2024). Recently, there has been an increase in female involvement in all aspects of the game by challenging gender stereotypes and perceptions of women's involvement in the sports industry. Despite progress, women have faced inequalities within the football industry, specifically ethnically diverse females in senior leadership positions

This study explores intersectionality in the football workplace, by focusing on the underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in senior leadership and management roles. By examining the experiences, opportunities, and challenges faced by Black, Asian, and Ethnic women (ethnically diverse) within football organizations, this study aims to shed light on the complex dynamics associated with the sports industry. As women's football develops globally, addressing factors of diversity and representation in leadership has become increasingly imperative. The importance of this study underlines a practical and theoretical perspective. This study will add value and scope to the current research available on women's sports, specifically football, and demonstrate the importance of research to pave equality for women. From a practical perspective, Leicester City in the Community and the other respected bodies in the football industry will contribute to the research findings to encourage an inclusive organizational culture and create opportunities and pathways for ethnically diverse females in the UK football industry.

The study examines the representation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership and management roles within football, and explores the factors of influence. For this study, a comprehensive analysis is conducted of the football industry to understand the challenges faced by ethnically diverse women in leadership roles. Three key questions are analysed to gain an understanding of the scope of the topic. The following questions are:

1. What are the factors that influence a lack of underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in senior leadership and governance roles in the UK football industry?

2. What are some of the challenges organizations are facing in providing and gaining opportunities for females in their career progression in the UK football industry?

3. What strategies and actions can organizations in the UK football industry introduce within their firm to provide an inclusive and diverse workforce environment for their employees?

Studies on underrepresented groups such as ethnically diverse females in the football industry is limited. Therefore, this study clarifies whether there is an underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in leadership and management positions within the UK football industry through a dissertation format. The chapters include a literature review, methodology, findings and discussions, with limitations for future research, and conclusions

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter explores the relative literature on the underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in the UK football industry. The first section will explore the development of women's football in the UK, from the 1800s till the present, understand the importance of charitable organizations in the football context, and demonstrate organisation's corporate social responsibility (CSR) within football. The second section will analyze viewpoints of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, and then in the football context to understand opportunities and limitations based on this framework. Lastly, race and gender will be examined using critical race theory to understand opportunities in senior leadership positions to identify a research gap.

2.1 History of Women's Football UK and the importance of Charitable Football Organizations

The first official female-led match that was recorded took place in Scotland in 1892 however, women started participating in the game before that time. It was officially taken into force by the Football Association (FA) in 1864. While there was continuous growth for the men's game throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the women's game did not attract the same growth (Williams & Hess, 2016). The women's game received criticism for their professionality and faced several setbacks such as the FA's ban of women's games in 1921, which was lifted 50 years later in 1971. Despite the ban, women continued to play with over 30 teams across England, including the most famous Dick Kerr Ladies and developed the English Ladies Football Association (ELFA) in 1921 (The FA, 2024).

The first FIFA Women's Cup (Federation Internationale de Football Association) took place in 1991, while the men's Cup was hosted in 1930, which suggests an advantage in the continuous growth, professionalism, and support compared to the women's game (Williams & Hess, 2016). However, in recent years the women's game has seen an increase in popularity and professionalism, which has enhanced the quality of the game, support from governing bodies, and media attention. Support from large organisations including FIFA and the FA suggests an increase in progression since the twentieth century. Researchers noticed a change in the behaviour of these governing bodies with attitudes toward women's participation in UK football, especially after the Lionesses' record-breaking European Championships win in 2022 (Gov.UK, 2023). Contrastingly to the efforts of organizations such as the FA and FIFA in 1921, is how they are now enforcing strategies in place to promote more women participation. For example, FIFA committed to a '1 billion USD investment in women's football' between 2020-20222 (Kryger, et al., 2021), suggesting a global drive to enhance the women's game. Over two million fans were attracted during the 2015 Women's World Cup, where England received a bronze award (Clarkson, et al., 2020). In an article published regarding 'media coverage of the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup', Petty and Pope gathered that media coverage of this event was mostly positive, and comments of England's team focussed on achievements and performance rather than gender discrimination. They argue that women's football is experiencing a positive shift in media coverage, revealing a changing attitude towards the sport (Petty & Pope, 2018, p486-502).

During this period, the FA launched a strategy to boost elite women's football by leveraging support for the national team to generate interest in domestic leagues. The launch of the FA's Women's Super League (WSL) was formed in 2011 and primarily took place during the summer period to increase

attraction from fans and create its own brand identity. It wasn't until 2016, that WSL transitioned into the winter period like traditional football in the UK (Fielding-Lloyd, et al., 2018). Since then, the women's game has received positive attention from fans, and a survey conducted by Barclays (2019) found that 'one-third of adults now consider themselves interested in the women's game and 69 percent of those believe that women's football deserves the same profile as the men's game' (Clarkson, et al., 2020, p50-61). Clarkson et al.(2020) noticed a shift in the professionalism of WSL in the 2018/19 season whereby new criteria were set by the FA for clubs to gain professional status, such as setting a 'minimum level of investment per club' and 'financial fair play and salary cap'. This shows the level of progression of the women's game and demonstrates female players are now gaining recognition like the men's game.

While there is a role for governing bodies in shaping the football industry, charitable organizations have a strong influence in driving the corporate social responsibility (CSR) of a club within the UK football industry. CSR is explained by Caroll's pyramid 1991 whereby "Corporate social responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (Carroll,1991, p39-48). Charitable organizations within sports hold unique roles due to their strong passion, media scrutiny, and link to the community. They are dependent on the founding company to diversify and provide funding, as well as having representatives on the board from the founding company (Minciullo & Pedrini, 2015). Studies from Anagnostopoulos et al.(2017) reveal charitable organizations seek support from professional sports organizations and indicate efforts cannot be independent, and in fact, must hold efforts from both the professional body and the charitable organization to uphold social responsibility. The unique relationship between professional bodies and charitable organizations differs from others due to their close tie with the founding company representing the brand and upholding its image (Anagnostopoulos, et al., 2022). Examples of these are Leicester City in the community, Manchester United in the community, Liverpool FC in the community, etc.

2.2 Understanding the concept of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion within organizations

The role of equality, diversity, and inclusion have a significant role in any industry to provide attitudes to equal opportunities for men and women in any aspect. EDI has several terms of definitions and conceptions such as equity, diversity, and inclusion however these three concepts are closely related to define what it means for individuals to be represented and work in any industry. The phrase diversity is described by Köllen et al.(2018) in their book *Moral Perspectives of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion* as phrases 'humans can utilize to describe themselves' such as 'age, gender, sexual orientation, etc.' The similarities and differences between humans are what define diversity in society and the workforce. Moreover, there have been debates about 'specific dimensions are valued more highly than others.' The phrase equality is therefore concerned with how an individual representing characteristics of specific dimensions of diversity relates to '(un)equal achievements, status or access to resources' (Köllen, et al., 2018). This is usually figuratively demonstrated as a hierarchy in the workplace. To understand how these characteristics of equality and diversity are organized, academics of inclusivity define inclusion as the process of '(de)hierarchizing' these dimensions. These scholars argue that high levels of inclusivity should be managed to promote the highest level of inclusion as well as equality, which in an organizational environment can be seen through values as an indicator of representation.

Köllen, et al.(2018) also draw on "diversity management" to demonstrate effective attempts for inclusivity. Based on research, literature on diversity management also suggests the importance of EDI in the workforce, and highlights organisations' moral value as it can be seen as a "praiseworthy" strategy in their external and internal communication. Usually, the term "equality" is seen as a crucial indicator for an organization to demonstrate its ethical standards, and can sometimes be used as a competitive advantage. However, the moral legitimacy of organizations implementing these standards is questioned. On the one hand, it is argued that the legitimacy of presenting EDI standards morally is overshadowed by personal and competitive agendas. Therefore, ethically criticizing their actions and questioning whether they truly value diversity management as an approach to promote EDI in the workforce. On the other hand, EDI is presented as a force of "justice" which means regardless of intention, in this context, the moral value of EDI for an organization is non-debatable, and its characteristics (i.e., its values) are seen as a primary indicator of determining the intensity of EDI performance (Köllen, et al., 2018).

2.3 Defining Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in UK Football

A major challenge for women gaining equality in the workforce is influenced by the perceived football culture. Women are involved in predominately all levels of the game from a competitive and development perspective e.g., coaching, playing, spectating, and managing. Women's participation in football has been acknowledged globally with evidence of advancement (The FA, 2024). However, views on gender in traditional football culture remain contingent. Historically, football culture has been perceived as a men's 'entitlement' to the game.' Caudwell (2011) explains the level of fluctuation of women in UK football and is beneficial in explaining the ability of women to access different levels in football. For example, in this context of societal and cultural perceptions, it would still be beyond 'acceptable' that women could manage or coach a men's club. However, it may be acceptable to coach/manage a youth team. Therefore, based on traditional values and norms of football culture, it is seen that women are "incapable" of demonstrating leadership in the same way as men. However, it can also be traditionally seen as unfavourable for a non-white male leading a men's club (Caudwell, 2011). This way of thinking creates an entitlement to maintain traditional football culture thus, creating barriers for women to demonstrate their ability and increase representation in senior management roles in the UK football game. It also raises concerns of intersectionality and the lack of representation of women from ethnically diverse backgrounds. This literature demonstrates the significance of traditional football culture views and their impact on delivering effective diversity management in the sports sector.

Since the nineteenth century, commitment to EDI in the football industry has increased with attitudes to bringing people together. However, historically it is evident that females and ethnic minority groups are under-represented, criticizing the lack of diversity management demonstrated by the football industry during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Kryger, et al., 2022). Contradictory to the FA's ban on female participation in football between 1921 to 1971, present initiatives demonstrate strong commitments for individuals to access and receive equal opportunities as well as promoting an environment of inclusivity (England Football Learning, 2023). For example, in 2023, the FA confirmed to deliver pitches with a £30m investment supporting women and girls in football England (The FA, 2023), which suggests commitments to enforcing equality, diversity, and inclusion for women in the football industry. However, Clarkson & Philippou (2022) have argued the gap in gender disparity for women in sports at present remains a concern, especially in leadership/decision-making roles. Studies indicate 'a lack of women on boards of directors in professional football clubs' (Clarkson & Philippou, 2022, p1-5).

Historically football demonstrates low board gender diversity due to its sexist history and structural discrimination. Traditionally, positions of the board of directors were white males, with some exceptions to non-white male members and no female representation. A study by Bryan, et al.(2021) '*Examining Women's Exclusion From Core Leadership Roles in the "Extremely Gendered" Organization of Men's Club Football in England'* reported that only 8% of board members were female within 30 years. This study proves the lack of representation of females, including those from underrepresented backgrounds in management and leadership roles, and suggests the importance of understanding the challenges faced by ethnic women pursuing a football career.

2.4 Underrepresentation of BAME in Football UK, Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Culture

Bradbury & Conricode (2020) argue the football workforce dismisses the diverse cultural and racial population of the UK. Coaching scholars in Sterkenburg, et al.(2020) book on *'Race', Ethnicity and Racism in Sports Coaching* also reveal the double marginalization faced by black women coaches whilst advancing in football. They argue the football industry fails to address white supremacy, inequality, and racism within their organizations. They draw on the Critical Race Theory (CRT) approach and suggest how race limits rights and opportunities for those that fall out of the 'white male' category which is seen to be the privileged norm by society. CRT was implemented in the US however, scholars have used this approach to identify behaviours towards race in society in the British context. To understand how these scholars have used CRT to examine behaviours in society, it is necessary to understand what it means. Critical race theory is an approach that explores the 'social (re)construction of race in ways that have material impacts on the lives of people' (Parry, et al., 2023, p867 – 888). This theory helps to understand the impact of race with power and how it favours the privileged race interests (white). Arguments from Meghji (2021) in favour of this theory explain how, despite its critiques of this theory, the flexibility and interdisciplinary nature means it can be applied in different contexts including sports. Therefore, it enables us to understand the factors influencing the progression of EDI in the football industry. A case example is a study by Kilvington, et al.(2024) on the lived experiences of 21 British South Asians (5 women and 16 men) in governance or management positions in UK football, which revealed several barriers to inclusion and acceptance in the workplace. They found that when these ethnic minority groups attempt to be their true authentic self, they are often held back by a 'culture of Whiteness'. Men and women were considered equal in this study however, they were able to gain fewer women than men in this study due to receiving a small number of British South Asian participants meeting the requirement (Kilvington, et al., 2024).

A critical belief in white supremacy helps to understand CRT as a theoretical approach in the football context. Dyer (2017) argues that 'Whiteness' is considered the standard, and White individuals are frequently seen as unmarked, resulting in a "concealed privilege" in social terms. This White supremacy extends its privileges to White individuals even within the field of football. If we accept these views of white supremacy in football, it explains the ability of white people in this day and age to still be able to adopt job roles e.g., management and leadership roles without being questioned, or being seen as a surprise (Sterkenburg, et al., 2020). Yet, those without the ability to perform 'white privileges' such as BAME groups are questioned as seen by the study of Kilvington, et al.(2024). The benefit of their study is that it has addressed the exclusive approach of opportunities based on race in governance positions, however as it only represented 5 women in the study, it suggests limitations of gender representation in

the study of women in governance positions. Therefore, there is a research gap in identifying the underrepresentation of women in senior management positions in UK football.

2.5 Discrimination for 'BAME' Women in coaching and leadership positions

Studies show a gap in BAME representatives in the football industry with both men and women facing challenges with career opportunities in their organizations. However, Clarkson et al.(2022) study on black women in coaching positions demonstrates further challenges in career progression for females due to sociocultural assumptions associated with race and gender. Despite an increase in female coaches at local and national levels, female coaches experience 'negative gender bias, high levels of scrutiny and limited career mobility' *(ibid)*. Women in coaching courses have previously faced sexualized language, and as women move into higher coaching positions these experiences do not disappear (Clarkson, et al., 2019). Therefore, proves a gender and racial bias perceived in the football industry. They also reveal the impact of language used in the football environment. One of the participants disputed their club as being referred to as 'the BAME coach' which Sterkenburg et al.(2020) argued is a result of marginalization in the workforce. In addition, Parry et al.(2023) findings on the attitudes toward the acronym 'BAME' suggest two approaches. On the one hand, the use of BAME in the context of employment positions (e.g., coaching, governance roles) affected their 'confidence' and increased levels of 'anxiety', as it creates differences based on historical and societal forms of 'supremacy based on race.' On the other hand, BAME was preferred to other 'overtly racist terms' as it creates recognition which was a challenge for decades for females and underrepresented groups (Parry, et al., 2023). Also, a study from the UK government mentioned the removal of the term BAME as it creates disparities between ethnic groups and can 'create misleading interpretations of data' (Gov.UK, 2021). This explains Sterkenburg et al. (2020) explanation of marginalization that can occur in the workforce, and the need to challenge language to encourage diversity and inclusion in the football industry for ethnic females.

Discrimination on race and gender in the workforce differs in experience as Rankin-Wright et al.(2019) find black male coaches' experiences are mostly impacted by race over gender, whereas female black coaches' experiences are dominated by gender over race. This view, alongside historical and social context, explains the underrepresentation of females in the sports industry especially within senior positions such as managerial and leadership. Within structural levels in the UK sports workforce, there is a level of underrepresentation of minorities such as Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Black people who receive 'twice the rate of unemployment than the national average wage.' Also, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black employees are 'overrepresented' within lower occupations whereas, Indians are 'overrepresented' in managerial roles; the overall representation of ethnically diverse backgrounds accounts for 7% of the UK Sports workforce (Shibli, et al., 2022). This shows there is a level of unequal distribution of representation within the ethnic minority category, especially indicating whereby some groups are more favoured than others. However, what this literature fails to reveal is the number of females from underrepresented groups, and whether Rankin-Wright, et al.(2019) views on race and gender apply, which creates limitations and suggests an area of gap in the literature.

2.6 Research gap

Evidently, there is a gap in understanding female representation in leadership/management roles. Critical Race Theory identifies race as a key component in addressing limitations for opportunities within career progression for ethnically diverse groups. The literature review demonstrates the progression of the women's game however fails to provide an understanding of why there is only 7% representation in ethnically diverse groups within organizations, and how many of them are females Shibli, et al., 2022). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to critically analyze the research gap in the following three questions:

1. What are the factors that influence a lack of underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in senior leadership and governance roles in the UK football industry?

2. What are some of the challenges organizations are facing in providing opportunities for females in their career progression in the UK football industry?

3. What strategies and actions can organizations in the UK football industry introduce within their firm to provide an inclusive and diverse workforce environment for their employees?

2.7 Summary of Literature

To summarise, this chapter has identified key areas of understanding on the underrepresentation of diverse male and female ethnicities within the UK football industry. It has provided a holistic examination of women's development in UK football over the last 50 years and has suggested some of the key limitations of workforce progression in terms of equality, diversity, and inclusion as well as discussions around intersectionality.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Aim

This chapter demonstrates the research methods used to address the underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in the UK football industry, with a focus on Leicester City in the Community and other charitable organizations. The research methods used are well aligned with the research questions. It will identify the factors influencing a lack of underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in senior leadership/management roles in the UK football industry, the challenges organizations are facing in providing and gaining opportunities for females in their career progression in the UK football industry, as well as, providing recommendations on the strategies and actions organizations in the UK football industry can introduce within their firms to provide an inclusive and diverse workforce environment for their employees. This chapter will include the research philosophy, research method

and analysis, sample selection and technique used, as well as any ethical considerations taken to retain the research's integrity.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to a 'system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge' (Saunders, et al.,2023, p 129-175). This research will adopt critical realism and interpretivism approaches to identify the reasons for underrepresented Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership/management roles in the UK football industry. By adopting from individual's experiences directly through Leicester City in the Community and other charitable organization participants, a phenomenologist approach is undertaken. Also, through investigating the diversity of individual experiences and the nature of reality in society, an interpretivism approach will be undertaken. This will provide an in-depth analysis of the research and provide explanations of the underlying social issues of female representation in the UK football industry. However, it is necessary to note any form of philosophy used is liable to reliability due to its nature of bias hence, limiting the dependability of data *(ibid)*.

3.3 Research Methods and Analysis

The research method refers to the plan of action on how the research project will be conducted in answering the research questions, aims, and objectives (Saunders et al, 2023, p176-233). It is driven by the research questions and will determine how data is collected, measured, and analysed for the research topic. The two types of research approaches that can be undertaken are qualitative and quantitative research methods *(ibid)*. An inductive approach will be undertaken using primary and secondary data which means a mixed methods approach will be conducted. This is due to the structure of the findings as well as the use of both primary and secondary data. The findings section will be split into two sections. The first section will compile secondary qualitative and quantitative data of reports from the FA and Sporting Equals. Their findings on race representation will add depth and value to the research question to determine the outcome of the research findings. The use of compiling secondary qualitative and quantitative analysis from these three reports is to first gain a holistic and then statistical understanding of the diverse representation and commitments of females in the UK football industry. This will give an overview of the current position of female representation, and identify justifications for organizational and individual challenges of Black, Asian, and Ethnic female representation in the UK football industry in senior leadership and governance positions.

The benefit of conducting secondary analysis is the easy accessibility through their websites and provides efficiency compared to primary data (Saunders, et al, 2023, p288-341). Another advantage is that compared to qualitative research which is open to interpretation, there is a clear result of the findings (ibid). Thus, allowing a clear understanding of the female and diverse position in the UK football industry. A limitation of using a mixed methods approach is that secondary data may be outdated and contain errors in the data. Also, as it is already conducted, it limits the ability to maximize the findings to answer the research question providing its limitation (ibid). To combat this, data that is published between 2022 and 2024 (two years) will be used as well as a mixed methods approach whereby the basic descriptive statistics approach will provide a comprehensive and statistical explanation of the underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and ethnic females in the UK football industry.

The second section compiles primary qualitative data through semi-structured interviews containing interview questions based on the literature research and guidance. A thematic approach is adopted to

gather themes, codes, patterns, and meaning in the findings (Saunders, et al., 2023, p650-717). This is an appropriate method for the research as it allows an in-depth, contextual analysis of the interviewee's experience in the UK football industry. The process of data analysis will involve a six-step procedure to analyze the data. Firstly, becoming familiar with the dataset, then generating preliminary codes, identifying recurring themes, examining the identified themes, describing and labelling the themes, and producing a comprehensive report.

A total of 9 interviews have been gathered; 4 participants from LCitC and 5 participants from respected bodies in the UK football industry. All participants in this research held senior leadership/management positions such as coaching, director, activist, and EDI manager. While this demonstrates a lower proportion of participation, it demonstrates the limited number of females holding a senior leadership/governance role. For this study, it was significant to gather experiences from females to understand some of the challenges they are facing however, it was useful to gain a male perspective on female involvement hence a male participant was chosen to get interviewed. Interviews were online through Microsoft Teams and lasted between 55-60 minutes. This method has been chosen to create a natural interaction between participants and gather an in-depth response rate compared to surveys and questionnaires.

In addition, compared to surveys and questionnaires, interviews can be done at a time and place convenient and can determine the order of asking questions based on the interviewee's responses. Thus, creating flexibility in the sampling technique. However, as they are conducted online, it limits interaction and authenticity compared to face-to-face interviews. To minimize this, passionate individuals who have high involvement in the football industry were chosen for the research. Saunders, et al.(2023) demonstrate the benefits of qualitative research design as an open for interpretation, meaning the findings are not inaccurate and there is not a 'right way' of approach in characterizing data.

3.4 Sampling selection

Sampling explains the overall population that is being researched. As opposed to a census which provides an accurate statistical explanation of the population, sampling would only provide a small proportion. However, due to cost and time restraints, researchers adopt a sampling technique, either probably or non-probability to determine justifications for the research question (Saunders, et al., 2023 p 288-341). Therefore, this demonstrates the reasons for a sample of 9 participants for the research.

The sampling technique applied is non-probability using a purposeful sampling technique first to gather participants from LCitC, and then using snowball sampling to gather the participants from the respected bodies in the football industry. To gain participants to interview, several methods were used such as directly emailing participants using an email template and information sheet explaining the intended research, as well as social media channels e.g., LinkedIn. The intended outcome of using purposeful sampling ensured depth in selecting individuals holding a leadership position in an organization, and 7 of those with a Black, Asian, or Ethnic background. From those participants, they recommended others who were involved/knowledgeable in the UK football industry thus, snowball sampling was compiled.

3.5 Ethical considerations

To ensure integrity within the research, ethical considerations have been taken into consideration. The secondary data used in the first section of findings is gathered from the organization's websites thus, is open for individuals to use, so no ethical constraints in using the data. All participants involved in the

interview process have been made aware of the intended aim and significance of the research by reading the information sheet provided. The information sheet created outlines a clear understanding of the research, the research questions, participants' involvement, as well as how the data will be collected and used. To provide recorded permission, participants were required to sign the given consent form acknowledging their agreement to participate in the research. Both forms were sent through email when making initial contact to participate in the research. Also, in the consent form and at the start of the interviews, participants were made aware they could opt out at any point of the data-gathering process. During the interview, participants are made aware of the right to not answer any question they are uncomfortable with, and move on to the next question. Information is kept anonymous unless permitted to be used such as permission to use company name signed by LCitC in the access letter. Also, participants were made aware of data being stored confidentially with access to only the researcher and for academic use only and destroyed upon project completion.

3.6 Summary of methodology

Overall, this chapter has addressed the research philosophy, sampling technique, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations used in the research project. It provides a detailed description of the participant's involvement in the research and the appropriate steps for producing comprehensive findings on the underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in senior leadership/governance positions in the UK football industry. The next chapter will contain the quantitative and qualitative findings from primary and secondary data, categorized into two sections.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussions

In this chapter, the findings will be presented in two sections. The first section will explore the ethnically diverse landscape within the UK sports and football industry, drawing insights from reports by Sporting Equals and The FA. The second section will delve into the findings from 9 qualitative interviews using an inductive and interpretivism approach. Participants, comprising individuals in coaching, club directorship, activism, or EDI managerial roles, consisted of eight females and one male. This section will analyze interviews from Leicester City in the Community (LCitC) alongside insights from prominent bodies in the UK football sector, shedding light on ethnic representation from an organizational perspective. LCitC was established in 2007 as a charity linked with Leicester City Football Club, with funding from national bodies such as the Premier League Charitable Fund (PLCF) and the Premier League Professional Footballers Association Community Fund (PL PFA). Their mission revolves around actively engaging diverse communities through football and community-based initiatives, guided by core values emphasizing 'engage, inspire, and empower through togetherness, respect, and pride' (LCFC, 2024). This chapter aims to provide a mixed methods approach to analyze Black, Asian, and Ethnic representation in the broader UK football industry using quantitative secondary data, and then using qualitative primary data to analyze the 9 interview responses collected, gathering new findings to answer the research questions.

4.1. Section 1 Findings from secondary data

4.1.1. Sporting Equals Race Representation Index 2023

Sporting Equals (SE) was established in 1998 as a national charitable organization promoting work on race inclusion within sports and physical activity. They are partners of both Sport Scotland and Sport England working with national governmental bodies, corporate partners, and active partnerships to influence and advocate, policy and community change (Sporting Equals , 2024). The movement of The Black Lives Matter movement from the death of George Floyd in 2020 raised concerns about providing more evidence of public progress in sports thus 'The Race Representation Index' (RRI) was created in 2021. It provides an understanding of ethnically diverse representation specifically Black individuals in senior decision-making levels within the National Government Bodies (NGBs) in the sport sector. They used a quantitative survey analysis approach to gather information that was funded by UK Sport and Sport England.

Arun Kang, CEO of Sporting Equals explains, *"The RRI benchmarks data on the decision makers within NGBs. Those that decide strategy, budget, interventions and select who enters the talent pathway; this enables us to ensure those of influence are reflective of the communities we seek to engage"* (Sporting Equals, 2023, p3)

Figure 1: Overview of ethnic representation in NGBs from the Race Representation Index 2023 Sporting Equals (Sporting Equals, 2024, p17)
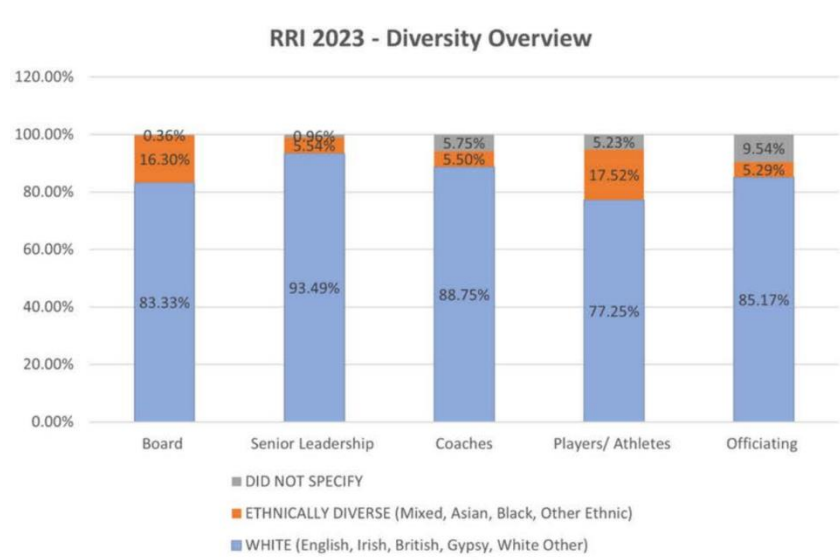
The 2023 Race Representation will be analysed in this section compiling images from the report. The response rate received by NGBs (National Governing Bodies) participating was 92%, the highest score received so far, and 8% declined. A total of 63 NGBs were contacted, and 58 responded, collecting officiating data for the first time.

The data gathered findings from 5 levels including board level, senior leadership, coaching, players/athletes, and officiating. Within the board level, a majority of 83.33% of the ethnic composition identified as white with only 16.3% ethnically diverse. At the senior leadership level, 93.49% were white, 5.54% were ethnically diverse, 88.75% in coaching were white and 5.5% were ethnically diverse. Players/Athletes demonstrated a 77.25% representation of white ethnic composition and 17.52% ethnically diverse which was the highest score of ethnically diverse representation from the data. Lastly, officiating compiled 85.17% white with 5.29% ethnically diverse. The data shows players/athletes as the highest ethnically diverse position in NGBs and Board level following second place.

Figure 2: Ethnic Composition of Boards from Sporting Equals RRI 2023 (Sporting Equals, 2023, p12)
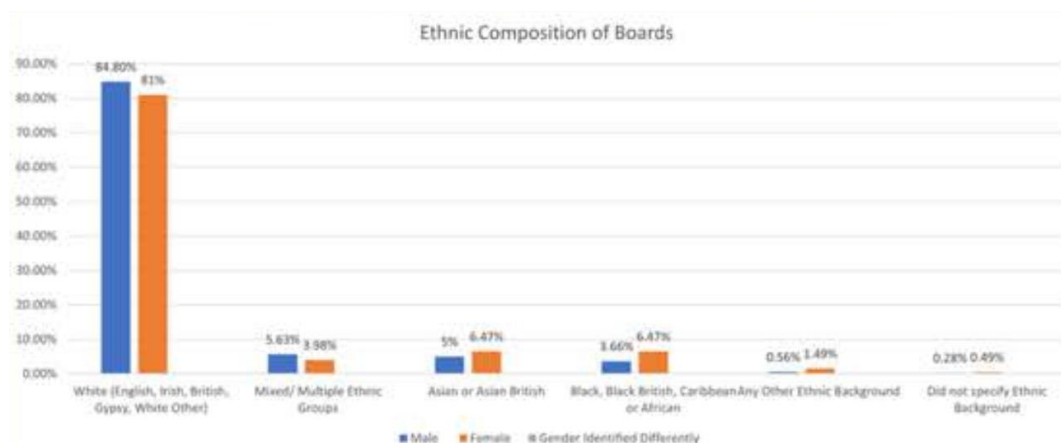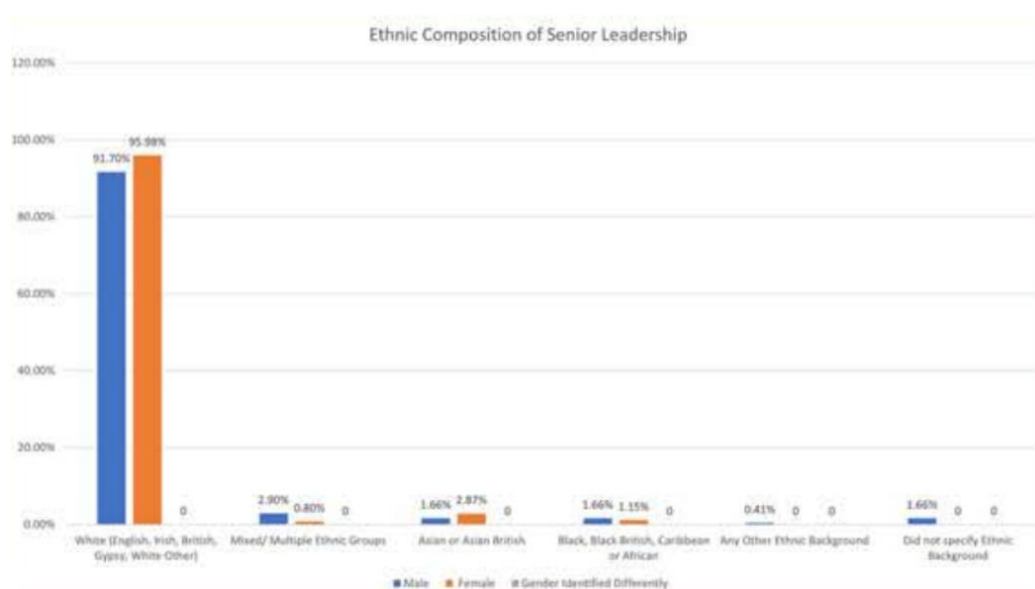

Figure 3: Ethnic Composition of Senior Leadership from Sporting Equals RRI 2023 (Sporting Equals, 2023, p13)

Figures 2 and 3 give a detailed description of ethnic composition at board and senior leadership levels. The highest ethnic diverse representation was at the board level from the report. The male-to-female

distribution at the board level was 63% male and 35% female (1.06% prefer not to say). Amongst females, 18.41% were ethnically diverse, 6.47% from a Black background, and 6.47% from an Asian background. The overall male-to-female distribution at the senior leadership level was 56.7% male and 40.94% female (2.35% of respondents selected prefer not to say). From females, 4.82% were ethnically diverse, 1.15% from a black background, and 2.87% from an Asian background (Sporting Equals, 2024). This data shows there is a particular underrepresentation of Black females within senior leadership levels. However, there were more females from Black and Asian backgrounds represented at the board level compared to males, which shows better progress for female representation in the sports industry.

Overall, the RRI gathered a representation of ethnic composition in the UK sports industry with results suggesting greater diversity at the player/athlete level followed by board level and then senior leadership positions. However, there is a far lower representation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership and governance positions compared to the white ethnic composition. This data provides an overview of the sports industry, and the data analysed was mainly female representation for the purpose of this study to identify the proportion of female underrepresentation in the sports industry. The next section will provide a detailed analysis of the UK football industry at senior leadership and governance positions using the FA's Football Leadership Diversity Code 2023.

4.1.2. The Football Leadership Diversity Code (FLDC) 2023 by the FA

The FA is a national governing body that ensures the governing and regulation of football is enforced across all levels from grassroots, coaching, and senior leadership roles. The FLDC was first introduced in 2020 to 'help improve the diversity across the men's and women's games' as well as better represent the workforce and leadership with society. It was designed to provide a platform for better-conducted data and transparency for the research and development of the football industry. Also, it ensures the 53 clubs and 3 football authorities taking part in the FLDC such as the FA, English Football League (EFL), and Premier League, as well as clubs across the women's and men's game, commit to better diversity in their workforce by 'focusing on recruitment targets and implementing best practice recruitment processes' (The FA, 2023). Table 1 created below demonstrates the FA's targets in senior leadership and operations, and the men's and women's professional coaching clubs.

Table 1: The FA's Football Leadership Diversity Code targets (The FA, 2023, P6)

Targets	Area of organization
1. 15% of new hires will be of Black, Asian, or mixed heritage 2. 30% of new hires will be female	Senior Leadership and Team Operations
3. 25% of new hires will be of Black, Asian, or mixed heritage 4. 10% of new senior coaching hires will be Black, Asian, or mixed heritage	Coaching: Men's professional clubs
5. 50% of new hires will be female 6. 15% of new hires will be of Black, Asian, or mixed heritage	Coaching: Women's professional clubs

The targets set by the FA are set above and categorized into sections from black, Asian, or mixed heritage and females. The report stated those that who were promoted to higher roles were based on merit and not personal networking and bias to promote equal opportunity in the promotional process (The FA,

2023). This section will mostly use the female figures from the report to analyze the findings and understand the female representation in the UK football industry.

Figure 4: Results from Football Leadership Diversity Code 2022/23 (The FA, 2023, p9-10)

Code Segment	Targets		Clubs	FA/PL/EFL	Collective Football Average
SENIOR LEADERSHIP TARGETS	15%	of our new hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed Heritage (or a target set by the club based on local demographics)	9.1%	27.3%	9.4%
	30%	of our new hires will be female	23.0%	36.4%	23.3%
TEAM OPERATIONS TARGETS	15%	of our new hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed Heritage (or a target set by the club based on local demographics)	11.2%	20.2%	11.7%
	30%	of our new hires will be female	29.9%	47.1%	31.0%
COACHING - MEN'S CLUBS TARGETS	25%	of our new hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed Heritage	16.0%	50.0%*	16.2%
	10%	of our new senior coaching hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed Heritage	8.9%	100.0%*	9.4%
COACHING - WOMEN'S CLUBS TARGETS	50%	of our new hires will be female	41.6%	50.0%*	42.1%
	15%	of our new hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed Heritage	8.3%	16.7%*	8.8%

Target reached   Close to target – within 5%   Target not reached
* Only The FA hires coaches as part of the Football Authority coaching targets

Code Segment	Targets	Clubs	FA/PL/EFL	Collective Football Average
SENIOR LEADERSHIP	BLACK, ASIAN OR MIXED HERITAGE	7.4%	7.2%	7.4%
	FEMALE	21.3%	30.1%	21.6%
TEAM OPERATIONS	BLACK, ASIAN OR MIXED HERITAGE	8.9%	14.5%	9.2%
	FEMALE	28.9%	43.1%	29.7%
JUNIOR COACHES	BLACK, ASIAN OR MIXED HERITAGE	13.2%	28.6%*	13.3%
SENIOR COACHES	BLACK, ASIAN OR MIXED HERITAGE	10.5%	28.6%*	11.1%
OVERALL WORKFORCE	LGBTQ+	3.5%	10.6%	3.8%
	DISABILITY	7.7%	8.5%	7.8%

The results showed the clubs as a collective failed to meet the targets, but some clubs did individually which can be seen in the report. However, the FA, EFL, and Premier League met the targets as a collective which is a progress from previous years. As a football collective, the only target met by both the clubs and football authorities is achieving 31% of new hires as female within the operations department. The target for new female hires as a football collective in senior leadership positions only achieved 23.3% which failed the 30% target. Within the women's club coaching, a 50% target of female representation was made. However, the results showed 42.1% as a football collective which is progress, but failed to meet the target. Within clubs, the female senior leadership representation was only 21.3%, 30.1% from football authorities, and 21.6% as a collective.

The results demonstrate, that while the FA, EFL, and Premier League have made positive progress, the clubs have failed, suggesting concerns within the club's hiring process to promote diversity in the workforce. It also raises further concerns about the practices and policies within the workforce, and whether they promote greater diversity. The positive of this report is that there is progress in female hiring within operational positions as a collective. However, all figures relating to female hiring fail to determine the ethnic composition including those females that represent Black, Asian, and Ethnic minorities. Therefore, this evidence alone fails to conclude the reasons for the underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership and governance positions in the UK football industry.

4.2. Section 2 Findings from Primary Data

4.2.1. Summary of data collection and results

This section of the findings will analyze the interviews with participants who took part from Leicester City in the Community and respected bodies in the football industry. To ensure the integrity of participants, personal information is kept anonymous. The coding structure of participants involved categorizing them between participants 1-9. An inductive approach to conducting the sub-themes has been implemented by going through the interviews and gathering concepts. Table 2 below describes the profile of participants from LCitC and other respected organizations in football. The majority of participants are female ranging from coordinators, coaches, managers, activists, and ambassadors whilst, one is a male manager. This is to gain a competent understanding of females' experiences in the football industry that are within leadership and management roles. The male participant provided a male perspective on the underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in leadership roles in the UK football industry. Participant's involvement in the football industry ranged between 1 and 20 years thus, providing sufficient experience in analyzing the factors impacting the underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership/management roles.

Table 2: Profile of Participants from Leicester City in the Community and other respected bodies in the UK football industry

ORGANIZATION	INTERVIEWEE	GENDER	JOB POSITION
Leicester City in the Community	P1	Female	Coordinator
	P2	Male	Manager
	P3	Female	Coach
	P4	Female	Manager
Other respected organizations in Football	P5	Female	Coach/Activist
	P6	Female	Ambassador
	P7	Female	Ambassador
	P8	Female	Manager
	P9	Female	Manager

Figure 5: Thematic analysis interview findings from LCitC and other respected organizations in the UK football industry.

Theme 1

What are the factors that influence a lack of underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in senior leadership and governance roles in the UK football industry?

- Intersectionality and Discrimmination
- Personal and Financial barriers
- Role Model

Theme 2

What are some of the challenges organizations are facing in providing and gaining opportunities for females in their career progression in the UK football industry?

- Whiteness culture
- BAME stigma
- Women vs women
- Having dreams
- Misogyny (man's world) and intersexuality
- Language and Education

Theme 3

What sort of strategies and actions organizations in the UK football industry can introduce within their firm to provide an inclusive and diverse workforce?

- Not just a one size fits all culture
- Support from men and women in power
- Education and training
- EDI in the workplace
- Language, jobs, and media
- Pathways to football
- Support and willingness to educate

4.2.2. What are the factors that influence a lack of underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in senior leadership and governance roles in the UK football industry?

Using an inductive and thematic methodological analysis, the findings unveiled 5 themes associated with the lack of female representation in leadership/management roles in football: Intersectionality, personal and financial barriers, role models, misogyny, and language and education. While certain similarities emerged during the interview and coding process, notable differences were also observed. The following section will delve into each theme in detail. A total of 13 questions were asked during the interview, and each interview lasted around 55-60 minutes. Q1 and Q2 were asked to gather findings from their experiences in their current role such as at Leicester City in the Community. Results ranged based on job roles such as P4 described her role as a manager involved in *"leading and managing the charitable arm of Leicester City in the Community. We're a separate, independently registered charity, but we're hugely supported by our football club in terms of the use of the brand facilities. Support ranging from payroll to legal to media. We*

aim to use the brand LCFC to create a sense of belonging for our staff, team, and participants to deliver high-impacting projects. These involve under the themes of education and community, targeted interventions, and health and well-being.”

Whereas P5 responded with *“I'm a sports activist and a grassroots football coach. I do a lot of consulting and I coach kids from 2 1/2 year olds to 14-year-old girls, so it's very, very diverse in ability, but super fun and I love it.”*

Intersectionality and discrimination

To gain an understanding of women's involvement in the football industry over the years, participants were asked in Q3 to give their opinions on women's progression. All participants revealed the level of progression in women's involvement had increased tremendously over the last five years, especially in the playing field. P4 mentioned the increase in media coverage of the Women's Super League suggesting the level of accessibility and exposure compared to the early years and all participants revealed they now attend both the men's and women's games. P1, P2, and P4 especially credited women's progression in football as a result of the Lionesses Euro's victory. P4 stated '*It's heading in the right direction in terms of professionalism and resource use of men's stadiums*' however, barriers are still there, especially in senior leadership/management roles.

Intersectionality was identified as one of the themes that impacted women's involvement in the football industry as P1 expressed "*the barriers are still there and I don't think that the barriers are dissimilar depending on which community you're from' and, anybody who is also not from underrepresented or you know diverse communities also face challenges and barriers when they're going into football." This relates to* Bryan, et al.(2021) findings that only 8% of board members were female within 30 years, proving the lack of representation of females, including those from minority backgrounds in management and leadership, remains a challenge. To understand some of the barriers associated with intersectionality, participants were asked in Q4 whether they had faced any form of discrimination in the workforce they are currently in or at any point in their journey within football. Participants responded with associations of discrimination and bullying in the workplace whereby those with Black, Asian, or Ethnic backgrounds faced societal, cultural, and personal barriers within the UK football industry.

P6 revealed she had faced several forms of discrimination with her experience creating a YouTube channel to discuss women in football by receiving comments such as "*Get back in the kitchen, you don't know what you're talking about" and "stick to cricket because that's the Asian culture." This relates to* Clarkson, et al.(2022) study on black women in coaching positions, whereby factors relating to sociocultural assumptions with race and gender were identified. Women, in general, are facing sexualized language however, P6's experience revealed social and cultural barriers associated with ethnically diverse females in the sports industry. A different response was received by all respondents from LCitC, whereby they positively emphasized the inclusive environment and faced no experiences of discrimination at the club but had experience in past jobs. P1 responded, *“I haven't seen it happen here at the club, so I can't comment on it as sort of now." This questions whether associations with intersectionality and discrimination exist collectively in the football industry.* Kilvington, et al.(2024) study on the lived experiences of 21 British South Asians revealed several barriers to inclusion and acceptance in the workplace contrasting with LCitC experience in the workplace.

Financial barriers

Another theme that was identified was financial barriers from participants. When participants were asked in Q5 if they feel there is an underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership positions, all including the male participants responded yes. To understand the factors of influence, Q6 asked the reasons for the underrepresentation of ethnic females in those roles. While a varied response was given by all respondents financial barriers were a strong factor.

P1 and P5 responded to the difficulty in getting into jobs that offer training whereby courses are paid, or whether you are "*relying on other people to fund your training, your courses*" *to perform effectively in the role. Another financial barrier associated with women in football is childcare as a lot of jobs in senior leadership/management roles require* "*traveling around, nationally and internationally.*" Therefore, this suggests there is limited support for childcare support in the football industry. LCitC and other participants working in charitable organizations revealed the limited pay available as P1 expressed funding is limited in the charitable sector. They did reveal the financial support received was "supported by the club" which "limits pay, costs, and things like that." P6 and P7 revealed their role was voluntary as an ambassador. Therefore, this suggests females currently in senior leadership roles such as ambassadors and those working in charitable organizations receive low financial incentives.

A personal barrier associated with financial barriers was identified when P1 responded, *"It's more acceptable to do the job, lower paid because you're a woman. I think, yes, there's a financial element to it in terms of if there's a lower paid job, then more likely to go for it, but anything higher paid is like, well, that's not for me."* This indicates factors of occupational segregation, systemic biases in the hiring process as well as, and societal and cultural expectations of women which increase the barriers faced by ethnically diverse women in accessing the higher paid roles in the football industry.

Additionally, P2 and P7 revealed the pressure of securing a job that provided financial stability related to the upbringing as a first generation in the UK. P2 responded, *"Parents that have landed in the UK, are normally here to work and earn to create a better life for their families."* Therefore, ethnically diverse individuals from a first-generation background are pressured to comprise on their dreams to pursue a career that provides financial stability as they feel they *"haven't got a choice"* but *"to be a success"* and make decisions such as *"I have to be an engineer."*

Role Models

The female role models from Black, Asian, and Ethnic backgrounds in the football industry is limited. P1, P2, P4, and P7 expressed the phrase "If you can see it, you can believe it" to demonstrate the importance of roles to motivate ethnically diverse women to pursue a leadership/management career in football. P1 stated how a lot of South Asian women and Muslim women "*don't see themselves as being the women that would be in a football stadium or watching a game.*" However, *P1 feels positive about being amongst the limited representation at LCitC for representation*. This finding highlights Anagnostopoulos, et al.(2017) study on the unique relationship between charitable organizations and using the brand of their founding football club to uphold social responsibility in motivating Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership/management positions. Furthermore, P1 mentioned "*The higher up you go, the less likely is for you to see women in general. And then even at coordinator lead roles, it's very unlikely that you'll see any women from ethnically diverse communities." Again, this demonstrates the underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in leadership positions and questions the level of support provided as P1 shares concern that "it's very much still a man's world and a lot of your senior roles are taken up by men, and I always look at organizations and feel like the further up you go, the more men there are and the*

least women there are." This proves the significance of role models to motivate ethnically diverse females to pursue a career in football.

The findings demonstrate there is a significant lack of underrepresented Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in the UK football industry within senior leadership and management positions. Intersectionality, financial barriers, and lack of ethnic role models were strong factors to explain factors associated with the lack of ethnically diverse female representation in leadership/management roles within the football industry.

4.2.3.What are some of the challenges organizations are facing in providing and gaining opportunities for females in their career progression in the UK football industry?

Organizational challenges were seen during the interviews in providing and gaining opportunities for females within leadership and governance positions in the UK football industry. The 4 corresponding themes throughout the 9 interviews involved women against women, misogyny, Language and education as well as, limited opportunities and support.

Women Against Women and Misogyny

Surprisingly, women against women was a large factor associated with the lack of Black, Asian, and ethnic representation within senior leadership roles. P1, P5, and P7 shared similar views revealing how women competing in higher roles "*start to go against each other rather than supporting"* and a pattern of *"jealousy and envy"* takes place in the workplace that reflects on the level of opportunities of women progressing in their career within the football industry. Participants addressed misogyny and social, cultural stereotypical views of women associated with this pattern. The added "*layer of being from an underrepresented community"* whereby *"women don't get support"* to get into a role in football adds another challenge. This highlights a barrier of mindset from communities and families around ethnically diverse women in gaining an opportunity in football. Also, associations of intersectionality are demonstrated showing similarity to previous findings, which suggests a lack of ethnically diverse representation is both an individual and organizational challenge in the football industry. Neither participants from LCitC revealed this theme which suggests they provide an inclusive work environment.

Q7 showed that all but one participant mentioned there is a 'culture of whiteness' associated with organizations in the football industry. P3 responded how football is perceived as a sport for *"British white men and women"* and is a *"heavily male-dominated sport."* However, P4 response reveals the changing culture whereby diversity is demonstrated especially amongst the players which LCitC demonstrates is their *"most diverse."* She explained how *board rooms are changing, but there's more room for change."* This is comparable to Bradbury & Conricode, (2020) study on the failure of the football industry to address the existence of white supremacy, racism, and inequality in leadership positions within the wider football industry. Also, the use of critical race theory and Sterkenburg, et at. (2020) findings explain the impact of race in limiting opportunities for those outside the 'white male' category.

Language and Education

Q8 and Q9 looked at organizational issues associated with career opportunities in football with the term BAME. Interestingly, there were mixed views on these questions whereby all members from LCitC and P7, P8, and P9 did not want to specify themselves with BAME as they see it as being categorized into a *"different box"* and recommended the need for moving away from this terminology to be seen *"as one of them rather than the other"* to progress into leadership/management roles. Recommendations to use inclusive terminology such as "ethnically diverse communities" were made by P9. Contrastingly, P5 and P6 weren't sure or liked being associated with the term to an extent as it helps provide opportunities for underrepresented groups and helps with *"funding scholarships."* P5 explained the importance of applying at present BAME in bringing *"more young people from our backgrounds into those spaces early on"* to minimize the ethnically diverse gap in senior leadership/management roles in the football industry. This supports Parry, et al.(2023) findings on the two approaches associated with BAME. However, the majority expressed the need to use more inclusive language demonstrating the need to remove the label from the terminology in the football industry. There is an association of understanding and a lack of education towards the needs of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females from boards and organizations as P8 and P8 revealed *"there's a lack of education about different communities and different beliefs, and wanting to learn about them"*

Limited opportunities and support

Responses to Q10 have already been highlighted in the earlier sections of the reasons for underrepresented Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership roles. However, support and willingness to be educated was another factor. There is limited support available for Black, Asian, and Ethnic females as P1 expresses the significance of opportunities and support in progressing into *"the next level."* Furthermore, with career opportunities, P7 expressed how she wanted to excel in sports but there weren't many pathways created/made aware of by organizations. She reveals how the *"system is set up to prevent"* ethnically diverse women *"from being able to progress"* as there are limited pathways in place. Interestingly, P6 stated the opportunities are available and are advertised through websites such as the FA and reached out to individuals like herself to *"advertise it."* However, she believes not enough *"is being done physically to attract people."* There is a gap in opportunities available for women to access or be aware of. However, P6 mentioned the FA advertise roles available, indicating football authorities advertise better than football clubs which explains the results from the diversity leadership code 2023 of football clubs compared to football authorities in section 4.2.B of findings. Therefore, the lack of opportunities and pathways for ethnically diverse females is predominately limited in senior leadership/management positions.

Continuing with organizational issues, Q11 asked how the organizational culture impacts the recruitment, retention, and advancement of female adults from minority backgrounds in senior management roles in the football industry. Collectively, all respondents believed organizational culture plays an important role in career advancement, especially females from Black, Asian, and ethnic backgrounds. P2 from LCitC explained how *"the organizational culture is everything."* He further explains that *"you can have the best-intended strategy in terms of where you want to be in one or ten years time, but if your culture is not right then it's not going to work. It will work to a degree but it might not be sustainable. You won't bring in the right people. So for me. culture's huge. If you find a culture whereby they are forward thinking, they're releasing in the fact that you know they allow you to be who you are, from a personal perspective, but also professional perspective, and allow you to make mistakes and*

learn from them will go a long way." P2 expresses all participant's views on the importance of culture in the workplace and proves how valuable it is. Culture plays a massive organizational challenge in providing and gaining more opportunities for Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in the UK football industry. Actions towards inclusivity by providing a nurturing environment for women to feel comfortable, and increase the sustainability of women working in leadership/management roles within organizations are crucial.

4.3. Summary of findings and discussions

To summarise, this chapter analysed the secondary quantitative data and the primary qualitative data from the 9 interviews collected. The results have identified the factors associated with the underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in senior leadership/management positions as an individual and organizational issue. Results from the RRI and FLDC clearly demonstrate there is a lack of ethnically diverse females in decision-making roles which reflects on the opportunities presented for pathways and career progression. While LCitC respondents revealed no level of discrimination in the workplace, with their exception, evidence from other participants demonstrates discrimination exists in the wider football industry for ethnically diverse females with limited support available from football organizations. The next chapter will reveal recommendations made by participants, the existing literature, and own suggestions to answer the last research question.

Chapter 5 Recommendations

From the findings, it is evident there are several factors underpinning ethnically diverse female representation in the football industry. An inductive approach was taken through thematic interview analysis however, several unexpected themes were surprising. Both quantitative and qualitative findings admitted to an underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in leadership and management positions. Results from Sporting Equals RRI stating 18.41% of ethnically diverse females in senior leadership positions (Sporting Equals, 2024) and 23.3% of new hires that are female from the FLDC (The FA, 2023) demonstrate the statistical imbalance of ethnically diverse females in leadership positions. The third research question is examined to give recommendations on the strategies and actions organizations in the UK football industry can introduce within their firm to provide an inclusive and diverse workforce environment for their employees. The recommendations are based on both primary and secondary data analysis as well as existing literature and own suggestions.

5.1 Role models

While there is diversity in the player/athlete level suggested by Participant 4 and RRI, there is a far lower representation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in leadership/management positions compared to the white ethnic composition. Existing literature from Bradbury & Conricode, (2020) highlights a failure to address the existence of white supremacy, racism, and inequality within organizations and the wider football industry. A culture of 'whiteness' and misogyny associated with the findings was prominent as

participants addressed the lack of ethnically diverse female representation in higher leadership positions. This addresses the critical race theory examined in the literature section which was also used by Sterkenburg, et at. (2020) findings whereby race limits opportunities for those that fall out of the 'white male' category are privileged by society. As a result, findings demonstrate the need for role models for ethnically diverse females in the football industry to gain incentives towards aspiring for a career in the sports industry.

5.2. Fostering new language and open to education

Language and lack of education of individuals in senior leadership positions in the football industry are major factors limiting opportunities for females. The 'BAME' term in the football context is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it lumps together diverse ethnic groups with distinct histories, cultures, and experiences under a singular phrase. This masks the unique challenges faced by different communities within the broader category of ethnic minorities. In addition, the term 'BAME' can perpetuate stereotypes and assumptions about these communities, failing to recognize the nuances of their identities and contributions to football. It categorizes ethnicities in the 'BAME' order which can suggest some ethnicities are more important than others, instead of being represented equally in the football industry. Recommendations made by participants to use more specific and inclusive terms such as 'ethnically diverse communities' or referring them to their cultures such as 'South-Asian communities' football organizations can better address the specific needs and concerns of each community and promote greater inclusivity and diversity within their organization.

5.3. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion embedded into workplace culture

Furthermore, recommendations to implement equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies and strategies within every organization in football will enable better practice and policymaking as Participant 2 expressed the inclusive and nurturing environment at LCitC. Ensuring EDI in football workplaces is important for promoting ethnically diverse female representation in senior leadership positions for several reasons. Firstly, diverse leadership teams promote a range of perspectives, skills, and experiences to decision-making processes, leading to more effective and innovative solutions. By including ethnically diverse females in senior leadership positions, football organizations can better reflect the diversity of their fan base and society as a whole, raising greater trust and engagement with ethnically diverse females. Also, recommendations for more support from organizations as well as males and females in senior leadership/management positions will push toward an EDI process and can reduce discriminatory competition between females in leadership positions. Thus, creating a culture whereby women are nurtured and encouraged to increase ethnically diverse female's involvement in decision-making positions.

5.4. Pathways and partnerships through schools and universities

As mentioned by LCitC participants, EDI forms a more inclusive and welcoming environment for employees, despite their background or ethnicity. This promotes higher job retention and attracts individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds to apply for positions in the organization, enabling wider access to talent and expertise. Therefore, recommendations in creating partnerships and pathways through schools, universities, and local communities would be far more impactful by ethnically diverse

females in decision-making positions. The need for using charitable organizations to implement EDI practices is essential as Anagnostopoulos, et al.(2017) suggest the dependent relationship between founding clubs and charitable organizations. Overall, prioritizing EDI in football workplaces is not only morally beneficial, but it can minimize the gender disparity gap as mentioned by previous studies such as Clarson & Philippou, (2022).

Limitations of the study

During the process of conducting this study, there were some limitations. Firstly, the use of sampling to justify the research problem from a global perspective, limited the accuracy of findings as it was based two secondary reports and 9 collective interviews. The use of sampling provides a cost-efficient technique for research findings (Saunders, et al., 2023). A suggestion for future study is to gain funding from research investors to complete the study on a larger scale. This will present more findings and understanding to the study. Another limitation was the use of interviews as it increased participants' emotional biases and accuracy in the findings and time-consuming as the 9 interviews lasted 50 to 60 minutes individually. A recommendation to collect data through a focus group would promote time efficiency than 9 interviews collected individually. Focus groups allow data collection from multiple participants at the same time, and provide comprehensive findings through group interactions. Another limitation was majorly using charitable organizations to gather findings. The leadership diversity code by the FA identified football clubs as major factors of underrepresented ethnically diverse females in senior positions. While participants from LCitC provided context from the club perspective, it holds a charitable brand perspective of their partnered club. Therefore, gathering the majority of data collection from individuals within the clubs would provide more depth and accuracy to the research findings. The use of a mixed methods approach to collecting qualitative primary and quantitative secondary research methods has provided a comprehensive research analysis of understanding the factors influencing underrepresented ethnically diverse females in leadership and governance positions, and provided suggestions for organizations and individuals in the football industry to implement for a gender-balanced culture in the football industry. However, these recommendations from this study will provide more reliability on future research on ethnically diverse females in the UK football industry.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

To conclude, the research aim and questions have been answered and demonstrates there is an underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in the UK football industry with factors limiting representation in leadership roles. Also,. Existing literature such as Bryan et al.(2021) study on women's exclusion from leadership roles, justifies the importance of challenging the football industry to explore the factors affecting Black, Asian, and Ethnic females pursuing a career in football. Decades of misogyny and stereotypical perceptions of female roles in society have challenged female representation in the football industry, with cultural barriers further impacting ethnically diverse communities.

A need for senior leadership males and females, especially those identified as white British need to enforce inclusive language choices and have the intention to be educated in the different cultures and barriers from ethnically diverse communities. LCitC participants demonstrate the second research question of the study whereby explains the importance of providing an inclusive and diverse culture at work to encourage and provide opportunities for females in career progression in football. Overall, the findings from this study have provided a theoretical and practical framework for understanding the challenges faced by Black, Asian, and Ethnically diverse females in pursuing a career in leadership/management positions in football. A need for organizations to raise awareness of these studies will contribute to gender equality from a global perspective.

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Appendix 1: Ethics Approval

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER   School of Business Research Ethics Committee

12/03/2024

Ethics Reference: 43471-ag583-ss/bu:work,emp,m'ment&org,dept

TO:

Name of Researcher Applicant: Anju Godhania

Department: Management

Research Project Title: The underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic females in the UK football industry

Module Name or Course: MN3201 Project

Supervisor's or Module Leader's Name: Melisa Yazdanpanahi

Dear Anju Godhania,

RE: Ethics review of Research Study application

The School of Business Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and discussed the above application.

1.   Ethical opinion

The Committee grants ethical approval to the above research project on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation, subject to the conditions specified below.

2.   Summary of ethics review discussion

The Committee noted the following issues:

After careful consideration of the research proposal and reviewing the revised information, consent forms and interview agenda, I confirm that the potential risk to human subjects is minimal in this research project. Therefore, I approve the ethics application for this project, with the understanding that:

1. Informed consent procedures will be diligently followed by the researcher, ensuring that all participants are fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and potential risks of their participation.

2. Measures will be taken to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, and their rights and welfare will be upheld throughout the research process.

3. The researcher will adhere to ethical guidelines and regulations set forth by the University of Leicester, ensuring the integrity and ethical conduct of the study.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Melisa Yazdanpanahi

12/03/2024

3.   General conditions of the ethical approval

The ethics approval is subject to the following general conditions being met prior to the start of the project:

As the Principal Investigator, you are expected to deliver the research project in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, which includes the University's Research Code of Conduct and the University's Research Ethics Policy.

If relevant, management permission or approval (gate keeper role) must be obtained from host organisation prior to the start of the study at the site concerned.

4.   Reporting requirements after ethical approval

You are expected to notify the Committee about:

- Significant amendments to the project
- Serious breaches of the protocol
- Annual progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

5.   Use of application information

Details from your ethics application will be stored on the University Ethics Online System. With your permission, the Committee may wish to use parts of the application in an anonymised format for training or sharing best practice. Please let me know if you do not want the application details to be used in this manner.

Best wishes for the success of this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Aris Boukouras

Chair

Appendix 2 : Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your background and where you are from?
2. Can you tell me your current role and involvement in the sports industry?
3. How would you say women's involvement in football has been over the years?
4. Can you give me an example of a time when you experienced instances of bias and discrimination in the workforce?
5. How do you feel about women in leadership roles e.g., coaching, managerial positions?
6. Do you think there is an underrepresentation of women in senior management roles, and do you feel the significance of representation in sports?
7. Is there a culture of 'Whiteness' associated with the football industry?
8. As women, is there a form of cultural influence on having a career in sports e.g., the ability to understand career opportunities available in sports?
9. Is there a stigma with the term BAME and its perception which affects women in this category to participate in football?
10. From your perspective, what do you believe are the main reasons behind the underrepresentation of BAME women in senior management roles within football?
11. How do you think the organisational culture impacts the recruitment, retention, and advancement of female adults from minority backgrounds in senior management roles in the football industry?
12. In your opinion, what steps could football organisations take to promote greater diversity and inclusion, particularly BAME women in leadership positions?

13. Final question, is there anything that you would like to add that you think would be relevant to the research?

Appendix 3: Participation Information Sheet

THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF BLACK, ASIAN, AND ETHNIC FEMALES IN THE UK FOOTBALL INDUSTRY

Anju Godhania

School of Business, University of Leicester

Information for participants

Thank you for considering participating in this study which will take place from 11th March till 2nd May 2024.

This information sheet outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant if you agree to take part. Before you decide on whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully, discuss it with others if you wish, and decide whether or not you wish to take part.

My name is Anju Godhania, a final-year student pursuing a degree in Business Management Studies at the University of Leicester. I am reaching out to you on behalf of my research project, which focuses on exploring and understanding the disparities in women's participation in football, specifically from a management perspective.

Project Overview

The primary objective of my research is to shed light on the challenges and opportunities faced by ethnic women in football management roles. The project aims to contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge and provide recommendations for fostering inclusivity and gender equality within the sports industry. The research will also highlight some of the barriers faced by women in gaining career progression, and help understand the number of opportunities available for women by clubs and organizations in the UK football industry.

Research Problem

The underrepresentation of women in football, both on the field and in managerial roles, raises critical questions about the existing structures, barriers, and opportunities within the sports industry. This

research seeks to identify and analyze the key factors contributing to gender disparities in football from a management perspective. By doing so, it aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform policies, practices, and initiatives for fostering gender equality in the sports industry.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors that influence a lack of underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in senior leadership and governance roles in the UK football industry?

2. What are some of the challenges organizations are facing in providing and gaining opportunities for females in their career progression in the UK football industry?

3. What strategies and actions can organizations in the UK football industry introduce within their firm to provide an inclusive and diverse workforce environment for their employees?

Why have I been chosen?

I have selected you as a potential collaborator due to your reputable presence and significant contributions to the football industry. Your commitment to diversity, inclusion, and community engagement aligns well with the goals of my research.

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do decide to take part I will ask you to sign a consent form which you can sign and return in advance of the interview meeting or sign at the meeting. The interviews will take place online through Microsoft Teams meeting, and you can withdraw at any point during the interview process.

Benefits of Collaboration

Industry Insights: Your participation will provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for women in football management, contributing to a deeper understanding of the issues at hand.

Enhanced Visibility: By being part of this research project, [Company Name/Individual] will be acknowledged for its commitment to promoting diversity and equality within the sports industry.

Research Methodology

The research will employ a mixed methods approach of secondary data reports and primary qualitative research, with qualitative interviews study. It will be conducted with the utmost professionalism and respect for confidentiality. Interviews will be conducted with individuals who hold a leadership/managerial role, advocates of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workforce, or aspire to be in the position.

I am reaching out to seek your consent and participation in this important initiative. If you are interested, we can schedule a meeting to discuss the project in more detail, address any questions, and establish a collaborative framework. I am confident that your involvement will significantly enrich the project's outcomes and contribute to the broader goals of promoting gender equality in sports management.

What if I have a question or complaint?

If you have any questions regarding this study please contact the researcher, Anju Godhania, on AG583@Student.le.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the University of Leicester Research Governance Manager via ethics@le.ac.uk

If you are happy to take part in this study, please sign the consent sheet attached.

Appendix 4: Interview Consent Form Sheet

THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF BLACK, ASIAN, AND ETHNIC FEMALES IN THE UK FOOTBALL INDUSTRY

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY IS VOLUNTARY.

I agree to take part in the study	YES / NO
I understand that I am free to decline to participate in this research study, or I may withdraw my participation at any point without penalty. My decision whether or not to participate in this research study will have no negative impact on me either personally or professionally.	YES / NO
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask any questions I have.	YES / NO
I understand that my data will be kept for as long as the university archive stores data and data will be anonymised/encrypted. I have a say on whether it will be either maintained for future research or destroyed at the end of the study.	YES / NO
I agree to the interview being audio and video-recorded	YES / NO
I agree to the interview being transcribed and used for the purpose of this research	YES / NO

Please retain a copy of this consent form.

Participant name:

Signature: _____   Date _____

Interviewer name: Anju Godhania

Signature: ANJU GODHANIA   Date _____

For information please contact: Anju Godhania (AG583@Student.le.ac.uk)

Appendix 5: Access Letter

Access Letter

To (NAME ANONYMISED),

My name is Anju Godhania AG583@student.le.ac.uk and I am an undergraduate student on the BA Management degree at the School of Business, University of Leicester under the supervision of Melisa Yazdanpanahi my213@leicester.ac.uk.

I am currently researching and exploring to understand the disparities in women's participation in football, specifically from a management perspective. I aim to understand the challenges faced by women who are currently in leadership roles, as well as those who want to be in a position in UK football. The three key areas to gain an understanding of the scope of this topic are:

4. What are the factors that influence a lack of underrepresentation of ethnically diverse females in senior leadership and governance roles in the UK football industry?

5. What are some of the challenges ethnic minority females are facing with their career progression in the UK football industry?

6. What strategies and actions can organizations in the UK football industry introduce within their firm to provide an inclusive and diverse workforce environment for their employees?

I would like to conduct empirical research interviews on 4 employees in Leicester City Football Club and Leicester City in the Community from 11/03/2024 to 02/05/2024.

The name of your organisation, all individual participants, and the data collected will be kept confidential and anonymised.
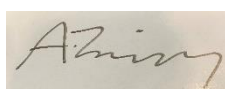
If your organisation is willing to participate in the research, I kindly ask that a manager with the authority to give authorisation and consent signs under the statement below with their name, position, and email address.

"I hereby give my authorisation and consent to allow the abovementioned student from the University of Leicester to conduct the research specified and will gladly help her organise the interviews to the best of our ability. We also agree that all data collected must be kept confidential and anonymised/encrypted. Also, I have the right to withdraw at any point of this research"

Name: (NAME KEPT ANONYMISED)   Date: 1st April 2024

Signature:

Position & email address: Head of Community – (KEPT ANONYMISED)

Appendix 6: Interview Records

PARTICIPANT 4 TRANSCRIPT

Transcript

3 April 2024, 01:33pm

Researcher 0:05
You say that. How are you doing today?

Researcher started transcription

◉

Participant 4 0:08
Hi. Hi. Yeah, I'm doing really well. Thank you and thanks for asking me to be a part of your research.

Researcher 0:15
No, it's it's been amazing to have you on. So I'm just going to have to before I do get started. Just go over a few things at the beginning and then then I'll, you know, go over like then. Obviously we'll get started with the interview I've sent you my, you know, consent form. So you do know about this interview is going to be recorded.

Participant 4 0:23
Yeah.

Researcher 0:37
And so anything that you do say it will be part of the research and we'll use that obviously to have part of my research stuff. However, I'm not going to use your name and stuff like that. That'll be anonymized. So don't worry about that.
And in terms of like the structure of the interview, I'm just going to ask you a list of like questions.
And if at any point I do ask any questions and you're uncomfortable or you don't want to answer them, just let me know and we can move on to the next question. I'm not going to force you to answer any questions if you don't want to.
I may possibly, when it does reach like the halfway mark or like a 20 minute mark, I may ask them to see if you're OK to carry on with the interview. If you have any, you know questions, or if you want to take a little break and stuff, if that's OK.
And yeah, have you got any questions so far?

Participant 4 1:24
I think the only question for me is that's really clear.
And I understand that my personal name won't be used, but would you use the name of the organisation that I'm representing?

Researcher 1:36
So that was, uh, what? I was gonna ask you, would that would you allow me to use the organisation or do you want me to keep private? So I'm not sure. Like what? The university itself want me to do. So I can ask them.

Participant 4 1:46
Yeah. What? What could I make a suggestion that once you write up mine and any of my colleagues input

into your research because I know that others will participate as well. If you could show us how you're going to site the organisation, then I'll give further consent or otherwise at that point.

Researcher 1:50
Yeah.
OK, that was fine. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Participant 4 2:09
Do you see what I mean? Does that make sense? I think it'll be fine, but it would be good practise from our comms policy point of view that we would have sight of it before it went into the public domain.

Researcher 2:22
Well, when I put it up and stuff, I was just let you know how and what I was fighting stuff like that. So I'll let you know before it gets all deported. That's fine.

Participant 4 2:28
Yeah.
Great. Thank you.

Researcher 2:34
And I think I've sent you the the information sheet. So I think you do kind of know just of what it's about. And I feel like everyone's told you about it anyway. So I think you kind of have a gist of what it's about, but it's, I'll just kind of be like, goofy on it. It's just basically about.

Participant 4 2:44
Yeah.

Researcher 2:52
You know, women's involvement in the football industry, more specifically, you know, a lack of under representation or black Asian ethnic females in management leadership roles within the football industry. So just kind of wanted to know why there's a lack of, you know, female leaders, especially from the ethnic diverse backgrounds within those roles. And I thought, why not, you know, get people, especially from Leicester City Football Club or in the community especially that are within those roles and just see either intake on it so.
That's sort of like my research.

Participant 4 3:24
Excell.

Researcher 3:25
In terms of, you know, just to guess, I just wanted to start off with just going to know a little bit more about yourself. You're background, you know where you're from, like your ethnicity and your current roles within at the moment.

Participant 4 3:39
Yeah, sure. Yep. So.
I'm . Obviously I'm currently head of community at Leicester City Football Club, which means that I lead and manage the charitable arm Leicester City in the community. We're a separate, independently registered charity, but we're hugely supported by our football club in terms of use of the brand facilities. Support ranging from payroll to legal to media.

Et cetera. And our aim is to use the brand lcfc to create a sense of belonging for our. We're a staff team and participants and to deliver high impacting projects.
Under the themes of education and community, targeted interventions and health and well-being, we've got a staff team of about 8050. Of those are contracted.
30% of them are female.
30% of them represent a diverse ethnicity and about 14% represent the LGBTQ plus community.
Our 26% of the 50 have been former participants or volunteers on our programme and have gained contracted employment through our grow your own strategy, which is sort of a key strategy that underpins our Ed and I strategic plan.
Which is that ultimately we want to look like Leicester. So our aim is that 50% of our staff team will be female, 50% will represent diverse communities.

Researcher 5:20
Hmm.

Participant 4 5:28
And will be reflective of the changing communities within which we serve.
So I identify as female. I'm one of only 14 heads of community that are female. Out of the 92 professional clubs charitable arms.
And I am part of a female network that encourages other females that are working within a football context to develop and grow and take on board leadership programmes and roles ultimately.
I've worked in football for just over 20 years now and before I was at Leicester I was at West Bromwich Albion, which also serves a very diverse demographic demographic.
I've worked in schools, mainstream schools, as an English teacher, progressing to head of English.
I've run an alternative provision for young people outside of mainstream.
And I grew up in Bristol, in the city centre, which was also.
A very diverse area of our of our country. So I've got a diverse family.
And I'm.
I'm very passionate about about Ed and I, and I'm very passionate about.
Using football as a as a vehicle to raise awareness as well as as a way to change our, you know our demographic and and reflect the communities within which we work.

Researcher 7:04
Wow, that's amazing. I feel like you've done a very to like different roles throughout your like career journey and to that's got you to the point that you have at the moment in terms of like I think there's two things that kind of stuck up. I just want to just mention one thing that in terms of like yourself, yeah, what sort of?
Pushed you to go into like especially the role that you are currently or was it just have you always been interested in like football or is it like more so like what the other part of it like you said because you're passionate about your DNA bringing people together, community that sort of stuff, was that more of a factor?

Participant 4 7:45
I always liked football.
And typically it was something that, you know, we did as a family in Bristol that we watched, that we supported, that we talked about and and still do. I've never played and I've no interest in playing.
I'm a I'm a fan through spectating rather than participating.

Researcher 8:05
Yeah.

Participant 4 8:12
I benefited from a link with Bristol City.
I was at school myself in terms of interventions and support and using.

You know football as a kind of reward in a way to engage me. So that was quite something I remember from my own education as being good and positive and help me to maybe achieve higher at that point. I'm I've always wanted.
Jobs and a career path that meant I could see the difference that I was making.

Researcher 8:50
Mm.

Participant 4 8:50
So through teaching and then into the charitable sector, I think it's just been coincidental, but also really exciting that the backdrop is football. But ultimately my passion is, you know, education, charity work, making a difference. But I'm just in an amazingly fortunate position where I get to do that with the.

Researcher 9:12
All of it, yeah.

Participant 4 9:13
With the power of football and a kind of hobby being them part of of what I do, so I'm very fortunate.

Researcher 9:20
Yeah. No, it was amazing. And it's quite interesting because the some of the people that like interviewed so far and said they've always been like they've either, like played football themselves or you know, they've gone into that sort of route or they've done.
Touching or other sorts of like volunteering stuff, and that's how they got into it. So it's interesting to see how.
Your your pathway were quite different to.

Participant 4 9:45
Yeah, yeah, it's definitely not my pathway. I've benefited. Like I said, I benefited when I was at school, you know, God, I'm going back 35 years.

Researcher 9:49
Yeah.

Participant 4 9:57
Of a, you know, remembering.
How special it was for us to have a link with our local pro club as a school and what that meant to enhancing the curriculum and you know, engagement and learning, I suppose. So I've always seen the power of it, but I saw it as a.
As a pupil rather than as a player.

Researcher 10:18
Yeah, yeah, I understand. So were those clubs coming into schools to provide, like programmes and stuff, and then that's where you saw and I was like, oh, clubs actually do care about other stuff other than just football.

Participant 4 10:30
It actually started through a link with my then English teacher who used to live near Bristol City's ground and she used to rent out rooms in her house to the players and therefore she got tickets and she used to invite those of us that were, you know, doing well or needed an incentive to do better to the matches. And then we got to meet them as well.

So yeah, it's a bit of a random link, but it showed the power of it and then I got really, you know, when I was old enough, I used to go with my dad and my brother. But then when I was old enough to go on my own, I went with my friends home and away, and it was just that bonding experience, that sense of belonging that, you know, it's how I learned the geography of this country really was through football. So I, you know, and I did that until until I from the age of 15 to 18, I probably went to every home and away game.

Researcher 11:00
Yeah.
OK.

Participant 4 11:31
And I and I reap the benefits of what that meant in terms of having a hobby, having a passion that you could share with other people, and, you know the experience and the connection that that brings you. And it was quite unique then as a female to be doing that actually because this I'm talking 1980s.

Researcher 11:48
Yeah.
Oh, OK yeah. So a while ago. Yeah. No, 100% agree. Yeah, I still see it's quite interesting. 'cause, even when I obviously was in school, it wasn't that long ago. But I did this Premier League's competition with Leicester City Football club, actually. And that's when I kind of like, grew sort of more of an int because I've always been a sporty person anyways, played like sports and football and stuff in general. But when I saw like the, you know, you guys come into my school and stuff, I thought there's more to it than that. So it's quite interesting to see that aspect.

Participant 4 11:53
Yeah.
Yeah.
Yeah.
Yeah.
Yeah, it's. Yeah, it's about.
Harnessing the power that the brand and the connection has, and that could be to campaign or to have a difficult conversation, it could be to make a real difference through our delivery and it could be through giving back to the communities within which the Pro club set to ensure that there's something for everyone because only people that can afford.
Tickets can come and watch Leicester City play.
And even of the group that can afford to come here, only you know 30,000 people can, because that's the capacity. So it's it's making sure that in communities where there's a pro club, which is loads of, you know, a great geographical spread across the 92 that they're offering something back to their communities for be for being there, you know.

Researcher 13:19
Yeah. No, I agree 100%. You mentioned something you were mentioning, some that like statistics about your club and stuff and you said you wanted you want like 5050 like an equal representation of male and female within the organisation. Are you talking about the community side in particular or is it the club site that you you were mentioning about?

Participant 4 13:36
Yeah.
I'm talking about community specifically because that's my area of influence.
But also you know, I work very closely with our clubs, Edie and I lead. He's a former member of my senior management team. John, you've met him and I'm sure, though my aspirations are shared with the club, but you know, my sphere of influence is over community. So, you know, as a society, we've got a pretty much 5050 gender split. So I think that that's how our our staff team should look.

And as you'll know, like less serious. Currently, the most diverse city in the country, the only city without a majority group in terms of ethnicity. So we need to be matching that as well.

Researcher 14:15
Good luck there.
Yeah, I agree. Because then even though like it is a diverse like a diverse city and stuff the club. Especially like the club side as well. It's not that diverse because I've looked at there's like I think the CEO is of stadium of listed is female, but there's only like one of the female representation from the like higher CEO level.

Participant 4 14:51
Yeah. So our CEO is female, which is very unusual in football. So she's probably one of only four.

Researcher 14:52
So it's quite.
It is, but yeah.
Participant 4 14:59
And then our director of Women and Girls Football is female as well.
Researcher 15:03
Yeah.

Participant 4 15:05
And then we've got an increasing number of heads off that are female.
But like I said, my my sphere of influence in my role is to diversify the Community staff team so.

Participant 4 15:18
I've been really honest about the figures. They're not where we want them to be, but we've diversified year on year and it is not something you can do overnight because otherwise I'd have to sack 20% of my staff and then start again. And obviously I'm not going to do that because they're excellent, so.

Researcher 15:29
Yeah.

Participant 4 15:36
It's about looking at recruitment through a different lens. It's about looking at role descriptions through a different lens. It's about thinking about where you advertise, what you're advertising for. It's about scouting for staff. It's about developing that volunteer and participant base into contracted members of the team. It's about making links with your local community and community ambassadors.
To overcome barriers to to recruitment.

Researcher 16:09
Yeah. No, I completely agree.
So I just wanted something get your intake on like women's football in general, like it's it's evolved a lot throughout the years, but what's your intake on that in general being a fan or spectator as you say?

Participant 4 16:18
Yeah.
Yeah, because I obviously I go to Leicester City men's games and I go to Leicester City women's games.

Also, I think the growth in the game.
Really, as a result of the lionesses prowess in, you know, in the in the EUR and then subsequent World Cup has been amazing.

Researcher 16:46
Mm hmm.

Participant 4 16:47
I think that it's heading in the right direction in terms of professionalism and resource use of men's stadiums etc.
But I think it's still got a long way to go.

Researcher 17:04
Yeah.

Participant 4 17:04
But I'm really pleased with where it's at and I think.
I mean, it's changed. We didn't play football when I was at school.
And I think the changes, the more the most rapid change has been within the last probably five years.

Researcher 17:21
Yeah. In what way? Like how like the.

Participant 4 17:26
I'd say in professionalism in terms of the resource around the players.

Researcher 17:29
Yeah.

Participant 4 17:33
In terms of, you know strength and conditioning physios, you know everything that you need around a player to help them perform to their maximum. I think that's increasing all the time. I think training and playing facilities are increasing all the time and you'll probably know that Leicester City women play at every game at King Power Bar a handful of season where perhaps there might be a clash.

Researcher 17:56
Mm hmm.

Participant 4 18:00
Our pitch needs arrests etcetera. Whereas even the most prominent women's clubs you know, Man City, Chelsea, man U, etcetera, they only use them in stadiums occasionally.

Researcher 18:15
Yeah.

Participant 4 18:17
I mean, there may be a case that women should have their own stadia and I and I think that will come with time.
I've seen an increase in coverage of the women's game, so not just watching live games, but also coverage

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of game. And I've also seen a huge increase and I think this is where, you know, people like Alex Scott have been instrumental in like female commentators.

Researcher   18:32
Media coverage.
Preventing, yeah.

Participant 4   18:51
Profile of female managers.
And just the, you know, accessibility now of if of WSL in particular in terms of where you can watch it, where you can read about it, where you can find out about it, you know like Panini sticker books, all of that. It sounds simple, but that's been in the men's game for years, so.
I think those things are key.

Researcher   19:17
Yeah, I think lack of.
Awareness and stuff, especially like media that has a huge impact on like promoting more.
More of the females game and stuff I completely agree with you on that.

Participant 4   19:31
Yeah.

Researcher   19:32
In terms of like, because I feel like there's been a lot of, there's been a lot of advancement of like women's football in general.

Participant 4   19:40
Yeah.

Researcher   19:41
But in terms of women in in leadership roles. So say for example in coaching manager positions like yourself.

Participant 4   19:46
Yeah.

Researcher   19:48
You know, and those of had, like roles and stuff.
First of all, how do you feel about women being in those roles in clubs and organisations and stuff? And also, do you feel like there is a lack of under representation of women in those worlds, especially from the diverse ethnic, diverse background?

Participant 4   20:10
Yes, I do think there's under representation. I mean, I think Lester bucks the trend with this because we've got a female director of women and girls football. We've got a female director of our Women's Academy. We've currently got a female.
Head coach in an acting role for Leicester City women and like I said, we've got a female CEO and a female head of community and all of those things are quite unusual, but we've got them all here.
In terms of ethnicity across that group, it's pretty limited.

I don't want to guess people's ethnicity just by how they look, but I would say the majority of us are white British. I don't know that for definite, but I would say that.

Researcher 20:54
Yeah, yeah.

Participant 4 20:56
Is the case.
Do I think females should be in those roles? Absolutely I do. I think they're. I think for me.
The best organisations.
Have diversity of thought and diversity of thought.
And diversity of experiences comes from a diverse staff team.
Simple as that and I don't. I don't think that should just be the case in football. I think that should be the case in every in every boardroom, in every organisation, because.

Researcher 21:23
Yeah.
Anyway.

Participant 4 21:34
I will have a similar thought process to someone who grew up like me who looks like me, who's the same demographic as me in terms of age and gender.
And sexuality, for example. So if I surround myself with people like me.
Then we're only going to think in one way, whereas if I surround myself with people who are male, because I'm not.
Who are represent a diverse ethnic community? Because I don't.
Who have you know who represent the LGBTQ plus community who have a religion or a faith that I don't have? Then that's only going to make for a richer, more diverse.
Decision making.
And thought process. So for me it's not just about football. I think football does a lot around diversity and I think football is often under the spotlight for what are really societal issues. So there isn't just racism in football. There's racism in society, but football operates as a kind of microcosm of that wider society, which I've got no issue with, by the way. Because then I think football can then.

Researcher 22:43
It's everywhere, yeah.
It just gets, yeah.

Participant 4 22:56
Help with that and take responsibility for that and can try and influence that. But my my belief is any organisation, whatever the output, whether it's to do a football or not, it doesn't matter whether it's a charity or not, whatever. Whatever will always benefit from diversity of thought and you only get diversity of thought from diversity of experiences and and ultimately your people.

Researcher 23:19
See, I'm having those. Having them within those roles as well. So I think that would make a difference be 100%.
Participant 4 23:24
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher 23:27

You did obviously mention that obviously that there is a lack of you know.
I think females within those roles, do you feel like because some of the research I've done that that suggested that there's a cultural influence or?
Understanding of of, you know, the career opportunities within sports as well.
That are like, you know, available and stuff. So do you feel like women from like those backgrounds?
It's a lot. It's it's a lot to do with, like, the culture of, you know, where they've been brought up and where they've come or do you think it's an organisational issue or both?
OK.

Participant 4 24:08
And I think we need should take responsibility for both. So I think in terms of culture, I'm not talking about specifically about specific cultures. I'm talking about anyone really like seeing is believing, isn't there, if you can see it, you can be a. So if when I was growing up, there were more females in football either playing it or working in it, then I might have been doing this a long time ago or no, might have played it. I've never played it.
Do you see what I mean? I've never played football because no one I've known. I didn't grow up with anyone that played football and in in the 80s when I was mainly at school play girls didn't play football.

Researcher 24:40
Yeah.

Participant 4 24:53
And I didn't. I didn't know, and I didn't come into football straight away in my career, I went through a teaching pathway, as I've said, local authority, etcetera.

Researcher 24:53
Well, I told.

Participant 4 25:05
And then I became one of the only women to be employed by the 1st Football club that I went to.
Would I have done that sooner? Could I have done that sooner? Yeah, if I'd known it was an option.
So I never saw when I was at school, if you'd said to me, what do you want to do when you grow up? I would have said, well, I might go into teacher because I could see teachers that look like me. I never said I want to work in a football context because I didn't. I didn't know that was available. So when I speak to staff or potential staff now, we have to make sure that they feel that there is something for them here because otherwise they won't. Even not only won't even apply, but they also won't even know that there's a role for them.

Researcher 25:46
Father.

Participant 4 25:50
So really simply we have a project and you'll meet some of these people for your research because they're amazing. We have a project called active Women.
That's not his real name. It's actual project name is active through football. We remove the word football from the project name. It's a national project. Everyone else calls it active through football. We call it active women because it targets women and we feel that the word football might preclude some women from the programme.
So we made a decision to change the name and get permission from the funder as Sport England and Football Foundation, administered by the National Lottery. Then we went out to offer we didn't get anyone that we wanted.
So we didn't emphasise flexible working enough and we wanted females in these roles. Females still generally tend to be the greatest caregivers if they've got families. So we need you to be really flexible. Can

we accommodate childcare? Can we accommodate part time? Can we do reduced hours? What about during time? Only we can do any of those things. But how did anyone who was applying know that?

Researcher 26:59
So that's the problem, yeah.

Participant 4 27:00
Yeah. Then then we a lot of us, I don't wear a kit. 'cause. I'm. I haven't got the figure anymore. But all of our stuff, it deliver where? Full, full on care. So if you're a Muslim woman and you see us delivering, you might think, oh ****, they're not wearing any headscarves or, you know, they're not fully covered. They might have. We might have shorts on or, you know, or like me, they might be thinking, oh, I don't quite have the figure for that at my age or whatever. I don't want to wear a full on tracksuit.

Researcher 27:13
Yeah.

Participant 4 27:34
So what they see then puts them off because they think right, I want. I still want to do the school run.
I don't want to wear a full cap.
There's football in that job title and I'm not a footballer, so all of those barriers have to be removed and until you remove those you won't ever get a diverse staff team.

Researcher 27:53
Mm hmm.
Yeah. No, I completely agree. I think one of my yeah.

Participant 4 28:04
So they're really simple, simple things. So that's why my answer is both is cultural and organisational, and we have to manage both of those things.

Researcher 28:17
Yeah. No, I completely agree. Because you mentioned like how especially like female and women, they have like all of the other responsibilities like if, especially if they do have family and stuff. So they can't always work like the full time hours and stuff or they don't. Yeah, which is fine. But at the same time, it should be like a organisational they should be the one to provide more flexibility in terms of like working hours and.

Participant 4 28:32
And that's OK, yeah.
Where we went wrong is we do provide it, we provide, we've got a really robust flexible working policy. I've got people on contracts from 6 hours a week up to 40 and everything in between. I've got compressed hours I've got.
A print shared parental.
Policy term time only.
Extended leave unpaid where necessary, etcetera, etcetera.
But was it on our job adverts? No. So how do people know that? How do people know that we do that. And that was the difference.

Researcher 29:23
Yeah.
Yeah. No, completely, because a lot of football clubs, they have all these.

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Job offers, but they don't put them out there. Obviously we don't know about them, especially within like, why? Why can't they put it on there like website like but they put on other external you know web websites that would promote.
More you know, people to apply and stuff, but they should put it on their own on their own website. And I think that's great that you guys are doing that because I think that's a that's a that's in the right direction.

Participant 4 29:50
Yeah.
Yeah, we've got. We've got to keep working at that though and really the next phase of that is to advertise jobs in Community languages, not just English.

Researcher 30:08
Yeah.
Is that your next step? Is that what you guys are gonna?

Participant 4 30:11
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher 30:14
Amazing in terms of like the football industry in general, it's it has been obviously historically like white male dominated and.
This is word called Association of Black whiteness associated within the football industry. Did you feel like that? Is that still is the case at the moment, especially in those in those roles?
Or is it getting better?

Participant 4 30:39
No, I think it's changing and I would say let's not forget the players who are our most diverse.
In the world, probably in the Premier League, I don't know, that's a fact, but I would imagine it is a fact that I would say the Premier League has the most diverse nationalities of all the leagues. So I think we need to look at where there is diversity first and not just think there's no diversity.

Researcher 31:05
Yeah.

Participant 4 31:07
And then we need to look at how.
It's changing, but to really understand that this isn't going to happen overnight.
So like say, we're supporting our club to diversify the fan base, but if you sell out every game, how do you do that?

Researcher 31:23
Mm hmm.

Participant 4 31:27
So you have to be creative and think of other ways to do it. It's a bit like what I said about diversifying my staff team, like really only 30% are female. I want it to be 50, but I can't sack 20% of the men who are doing a brilliant job every day. No, why would I? So you know, it's a diversifying any organisation, whether it be football or otherwise, has to be you can make short term gains and how you change your recruitment.

Researcher 31:39
This is not realistic.
Yeah.

Participant 4 31:57
And you know, you're seeing us believe in peace and scouting for staff, Community languages, changing your job descriptions and the way they've written, et cetera. But ultimately it's a long term plan that you must have running alongside that as well with key targets against that. So I don't think football is, is why entirely, because we have real pockets of diversity.
I think board rooms are changing, but there's more room for change.
And I do think that there's a genuine desire. You've only got to look at things like Pledis, which is the Premier League equality, diversity and inclusion standard, and how many clubs go through that. And it's a self evaluation process.
To you know, which is a huge sort of time and resource commitment to see, to look at improving these things all of the time.

Researcher 32:57
Yeah. No, I completely agree. And there was this thing called the FA Diversity Code that I think that FA released in 2020 and they wanted to obviously have more.

Participant 4 33:05
Correct.

Researcher 33:10
You know, inclusivity and diversity and stuff within within. Like, you know, coaching boardrooms at the FA stuff in general. But when they've released the results and stuff they they didn't like match, it didn't really match up to the other standards and the goals and stuff. So it's quite interesting how they say they're going to release like, go and do these strategies. But then when the result come out there, there it's not matching up. So it's like what's going on there.

Participant 4 33:12
Yeah.
No.
But it. But that's like if I said to you, I want 50% of my staff team to be diverse in the next three years time.
So to get from 30 to 50, I can't just say that and then do nothing about it.
So those targets were released, but what's the plan to get to that?

Researcher 33:53
Yeah.

Participant 4 33:54
And what's the resource and where's the support?
Would be my view because you know if I I can go, I can say that I can say what my targets are to everyone, but unless I've got a plan to achieve them, I'm going. Will I? So.

Researcher 33:59
Yeah.
That's the thing. So when they, they shouldn't release these targets if they haven't got any plans or actions in place.
'Cause. Then it kind of contradicts like them, if that makes sense.

Participant 4 34:22
It totally makes sense. Yeah. So I would like, I don't know a lot about that. I'm aware of the.

Researcher 34:26
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Participant 4 34:30
The the FA data that you're referring to, but I'm unaware of any strategies to actually deliver that so they may well be in place, but if they're not, then that's the reason why they haven't hit their targets.

Researcher 34:33
Yeah.
Yeah. No, I'll completely agree.

Participant 4 34:46
Also, I'm not sure a governing body can do that to an organisation or whether an organisation should be doing it for themselves.

Researcher 34:54
Well, I think organisations had to sign up to because like their strategy code and they had to like implement it.

Participant 4 35:00
Hmm. Yeah, that's right.
Yeah.

Researcher 35:04
So that that's where. That's how they were going on about it.
Participant 4 35:07
Yeah, yeah.

Researcher 35:09
Yeah, that's interesting. I was researching about there's this term called like BAME, I'm sure you've heard of it. Do you feel like there's a stigma with that term that promotes, you know, effects women?

Participant 4 35:20
I I would not. I would not use that term and I wouldn't. No, no. And I I don't recommend that any of our staff team use that either. It's not a term that we use.

Researcher 35:22
So you wouldn't want to use it.
That was my next question.
What would you want to use instead of? What do you use instead and why?

Participant 4 35:34
Diverse ethnic communities.

Researcher 35:37
What? What do you not like about the term being?

Participant 4 35:43
Well, not everyone's black or Asian.
For a star, so it doesn't include all of our groups, and it also puts that first. So it's like black, Asian minority ethnic. Well, that's not the case in some of our communities. It makes no sense to me. I think it's old fashioned. I think it's old hat. I think it's inappropriate.
I'd be very disappointed if any of my staff use that term.

Researcher 36:09
So you just wanna get rid of the tab?

Participant 4 36:11
I do. I'd love it to be eradicated entirely from society, but I yeah, but I wouldn't. It wouldn't be something that you'd hear here.

Researcher 36:15
I think.
At the club now, yeah, no.

Participant 4 36:20
Oh, I hope you wouldn't. No, I I no, I think language is really, really important. I'll give another few examples as well. So we say refugees and people seeking asylum rather than asylum seekers. I don't think you should be defined by by something that you know is not your is not your fault type thing. Do you know what I mean? So I think it. Yeah. I think I think language is very, very important. And I think I think BAME is.
God, I think that's archaic.

Researcher 36:50
But I could just put three in a box as well, like this is what you're categorised to and nothing else. You know what I mean?

Participant 4 36:53
It's Harley, like just if you're black and Asian and you're a minority ethnic. Here you are. We're gonna put you all in here. That doesn't reflect Leicester that.
Researcher 37:00
Yeah.
You're not even a minority, I'm like.

Participant 4 37:04
Exactly. So it's not even correct. It's it's terrible. It's an awful term.

Researcher 37:06
Yeah.
Why didn't the people are still like attached to that time? Cause I've obviously done interviews and I've I've asked people about this and some have said obviously they don't mind the time and obvious.

Participant 4 37:22

Like I said, I think language is ever changing.
And I think it's very important that we use the correct language and the reason why I put such an emphasis on language is as if people don't know how to talk about someone or something, then they probably won't. And that means they're precluding them immediately. So I I actually think if you talk to most people about race, for example.

Researcher 37:49
Yeah.

Participant 4 37:50
They get anxious about not knowing the right words and terminology to use.
So if you have like a sort of standard way that you and your organisation are going to talk and write about different groups of people, then that helps everyone to have those conversations.
So I think it's really important, but for me bam is.

Researcher 38:14
9.
And I.

Participant 4 38:16
It's an absolute no.

Researcher 38:19
Perfect. Got your answer. I'm just gonna just gonna go on to living mobile organisational culture. I just wanted to know whether that has an impact on like the recruitment, retention and advancement of emails from you know, my naughty background specifically with like going into the senior management roles in the football industry. I just want to hear you.

Participant 4 38:21

Thanks.
Yeah.
It's entirely linked entirely linked. If you don't have the right culture and ethos in any organisation, then you won't attract diverse staff. You won't keep staff, you won't develop staff and staff won't be at their best because they won't feel like they can be themselves at work. So culture and ethos is.
Is the bedrock of any successful organisation and it's so important it's something that you have to work on every day.
So you need clear values that have been developed and established by your staff team so that everyone's bought in, so made them up that they've they've developed them and devised them themselves. You need clear behaviours against each of those values so you know, people like us do things like this or people like us use words like this. People like us don't say bame, et cetera.
That's specific, you know, and then you do your very best to recruit against those values.
By trying to assess whether people have got them or not, inherently because my view is you can, if you came to work for me and I needed you to improve your mentoring skills, I would put you through a youth through a Level 2, for example, and then a specific mentoring programme. If you came to me and you could mentor and you could engage hard to reach young people, let's say I don't like that term particularly.
But people that are deemed that are deemed to be hard to reach. Services are harder to access. Not people are hard to reach.
But you were a judge, mental.
Or you were disrespectful or you were.
Lacking in an ability to inspire people that would be harder for me to support you to develop than your actual skills that you needed for the role.

Researcher 40:39
Right. But does that not mean like you should provide some sort of like training then for the people that you hire so they have those sort of understanding on how to?

Participant 4 40:49
Oh, wait, yeah, we do, of course. But all I'm saying is that. Oh, yeah, yeah, of course we do, because otherwise they wouldn't know that I hated the wearing bane so much. But it's all about the training. But ultimately, if you haven't got the right ethical and moral compass for community work, then you shouldn't be doing it.

Researcher 40:51
How to speak and how to like behave and stuff?
Yeah.
Yeah, yeah.

Participant 4 41:11
So our values are engage, so we would expect everyone to be able to engage, engage, but we can help you to engage further. But if you can't engage or don't want to engage.
Then inspire, empower, togetherness, respect and pride. So for me, if you come with any like prejudgements or like your homophobic or something, then like for me, I'm not going to train you to not be. I just don't want you anywhere near our organisation.
So the values have to be correct and then of course there'll be a full, you know, everlasting training and development programme. But if you don't present with the right values in the 1st place, then I'd rather have people with the right values that we can help develop skills with than people with great skills. But the wrong set of values.

Researcher 41:42
Yeah.
Hang on, yeah.
Yeah. No, that's quite interesting.
So yeah, so organisational culture does have an impact.

Participant 4 42:11
Massive. It's got the biggest, I would say this the the the single biggest impact.

Researcher 42:12
Yeah.
Unretention. Yeah, no, completely agree.

Participant 4 42:21
On retention, on recruitment, on effectiveness, happiness, you know, happiness in the workplace is massive. You you got to if you're full time, you're spending at least 37 1/2 hours here. So.

Researcher 42:29
Yeah.
Spending most of the time day after you gotta like what you were.

Participant 4 42:35
You spend more time with your colleagues and your family members. I appoint. So for me like and I don't

think you can make a real difference to other people if you're not happy in your own work. So like we we do like happiness and an engagement survey around that.

Researcher 42:53
K whatever year.

Participant 4 42:54
Yeah.

Researcher 42:56
Interesting. Just got two questions left. If if you've got, if that's OK.

Participant 4 42:57
Yeah.
Yeah, I'm cool with time.

Researcher 43:04
In, in your opinion, what steps do you think football organisation should take to promote more diversity inclusion, especially for people within you know, ethnic, diverse backgrounds into leadership, leadership positions? Because we talked about a range of things in terms of like.
Culture, organisational like issues and barriers and challenges. But you know.
Females of the face in terms of knowing about those roles, some of the challenges in terms of like flexibility of work and you know all those kind of stuff, but what do you think or or let's say what do you think will be the next step for Leicester City?

Participant 4 43:46
The next step for I mean again, I'll just talk on behalf of my own sphere of influence. So the next step for Leicester City in the community.
Is looking at how and where we promote our work and what we do because.
We've got about, I don't know, something like 38,000 followers across social media platforms.
But obviously that only reaches a certain audience. So at the moment we're on Ramadan FM every Monday of Ramadan, which is a community radio station obviously, and that gives us a different audience.
But what we really want to do.
Over the next few months, is recruit like community influencers.
So they'll be participants on our programmes, they'll represent our communities, they'll speak Community languages and they'll promote our programmes to people within their areas.
So that we can truly show that, like we say, there's a place for everyone at Leicester City in the community, but we can only demonstrate that if we're promoting that to everyone in a different way, a bit like when I mentioned earlier about advertising jobs in Community languages and things like that, and then that way we can show off our diverse staff team so far.
So we can we can use different media outlets to promote the fact that we have got Muslim females that work for us. You know we have got a staff who represent the LGBTQ plus community. We have got staff with learning and physical disabilities etcetera, etcetera. And as they're all protected characteristics so that.
The sort of myths that might surround who we are and what we do are broken down, and people can see someone that looks like them doing a job that they could do like they could do.
Promote it through different mechanisms so that we get a much wider reach for volunteering and unpaid opportunities and participants of course.

Researcher 46:18
Yeah. No, that's that's amazing. Do you feel like you can use, like, your community power and influence it

on, like, not just of yourself as as a, as a nothing community but other like, community organisations? You feel like they could use?

Their influence and power, and how much obviously they've have influence on the community and stuff, they can use it.

To influence more diversity on the club side, like you say, for example, because you're obviously your main aim is to get on the on the Community side, but.

You also said you were trying to Lie liars to get more diversity from, you know, the the club itself, because that's what you that's what you're actually using to promote the less stable club is actually what you're using to promote, like everything that you do so.

Participant 4 47:05
Yeah, I I think it will. I think, yeah, I think it will make a difference. And I we work, we work hand in hand with our club on many things.

But particularly Ed and I and you know, like I said earlier, the club's Edie and I lead is a former member of my senior management team.

He represents a diverse background and I don't know, I'm speculating he's more than capable to have got that job on his own, but he came through a community route to get that and I think that's quite interesting. And I've also got a few joint roles within both the Girls Academy and the Boys Academy. So I think we can we can bring diversity to our club. So for example, we've 100 tickets for Leicester City women's games. And the majority of people we bring to utilise those tickets are women and children, not just girls, but boys as well. But women and children and young people.

Participant 4 48:11
They've never been to a football match before that maybe never thought it was for them and represent some of our most diverse communities so we can facilitate, you know, people who have never been to football and don't think football's for them are not just going to come and buy a ticket and come to a match. So what we can offer our club is that facilitation we can build confidence and trust in those communities. We can deliver projects in programmes and then we can bring.
People to games.

Researcher 48:43
Influence them to come in. Yeah. No, that's amazing. And I think a big part of it is to to do with, like, going into, like, education.

Participant 4 48:43
Expose them to football.
So that's our role.

Researcher 48:53
Like schools and stuff to get because it starts from the beginning, doesn't it? Like from you as a little kid and then obviously that can have an influence like where you go and stuff. So I think like you said, if you saw that when you was, you know, little then it you would have, you would have.

Participant 4 48:55
Yeah.
Yeah, yeah.
Yeah.
Yeah.
Yeah.

Researcher 49:10
He who knows why you would have been.

Participant 4 49:12
Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. I don't. I would have never been a footballer, though. I need to be honest about that. Whether I played it from the age of four and yeah, no, I'm totally. I've got no coordination.

Researcher 49:17
You never know.

Participant 4 49:25
So I think we have got a role in that without a doubt. And I do, I can see change. I can see huge change, but I can also see that the minute you stop thinking about EDI and I or a culture in ethos and that's the minute that you don't progress.
So they have to be constantly at the forefront of everything that you do.

Researcher 49:46
No.
Yeah, not that, but that's interesting. Was there Aedi role on the club side before John joined or was there or there wasn't a role there? has there always been a role?

Participant 4 50:02
There was, yeah.
Not always, but I've been here for six seasons and there's there's been that role since I've been here.

Researcher 50:12
OK.
OK, that's interesting. Umm, I think that was that was it my final question was I think 'cause we've covered like a lot of of topics and stuff, but is there anything else that you wanna add that you think would be relevant to the visa? Did you feel like you've queezed out everything?

Participant 4 50:15
Yeah.
I think there's.
I mean, you know, when I said there's only, it's either 12 or 14 female heads of community across the 92 clubs. Only one of those.
Visibly.
Represents a minority ethnic background.
And that's a good friend of mine who's had a community at Luton. She's just won the football Blacklist award for practitioner, but I think that that's.
There's an issue with females, but there's an even greater issue with.
Representative females.
So I don't know whether you'd be interested in in speaking to her. She's amazing. Like I said, she's a friend of mine, so she's had a community at Luton, which is obviously again another very diverse area.
But she's she is currently the only black female.
In certainly in a headed community role in the country.

Researcher 51:35
Yeah, no, I would be interested just to get her her take on it. So no, that'll be quite interesting.

Participant 4 51:38
Yeah.
I'll I'll speak to her and see whether she's got time and like availability, but I just think it's I can only talk to you from a female perspective, obviously, and lend my learnings from my diverse friends and family and staff.

Researcher 51:53
Yeah.

Participant 4 51:58
But I'm really conscious that I'm there's no getting away from the fact that I'm speaking to you as a white British woman.
And I fully acknowledge that. So I think it'd be good to hear it really from people with real, like lived experience.

Researcher 52:07
Yeah.
From my experience and stuff, no, that's that that would be great. Thank you so much, Allie. I'm just gonna stop the recording.

Participant 4 52:17
Yeah.
Thank you.

Researcher stopped transcription

◉

PARTICIPANT 1 TRANSCRIPT

Transcript

25 March 2024, 10:00am

Researcher 0:03
Perfect. OK, it's fine.
Hi, roxana. Thank you so much for coming and joining me for this, for this project and this interview.
I really appreciate it. So before obviously we get started, I'm just going to let you know a few things like how how the interview is going to go about and just something like that.

Participant 1 0:34
Mm.

Researcher 0:35
You have every right to. Obviously, if whenever I do ask any questions, if you don't answer them, you can just say it not from the blanks answering it and can move on to the next question. If it does get to like the 20 minute mark and stuff, I will obviously ask you and see if you're OK.
Carry on, and if you're just happy, happy with it all. And if there is anything else that you know you would want to say or you're not, you know, comfortable or anything like that, just let me know. I'll stop the interview and I'm more than happy to obviously accommodate to that. Is that OK?

Participant 1 1:07
Yeah, that's absolutely fine. Thank you.

Researcher 1:09
Yeah, brilliant. So this interview or this research is basically about I think I've already spoke to you and told you about it anyways, but it's just about.
Well, women in sport, particularly this one's about women in football, more so about why there's a lack of under absentee, black, Asian and, you know, ethnic females within leadership and management roles within the industry. So I've done my like, you know, some background knowledge and research on it so.
I've got a few questions for you to be able to, you know, answer given. Obviously your role in stuff. So my first question is, can you just tell me a little bit more about, you know yourself where you're from, your background and you know who you work for and stuff?

Participant 1 1:55
Mm hmm. So I'm Roxana, Roxana Hussain. I'm currently the active women lead coordinator for Leicester City football clubs. I've been in this role now 18 months.
And I sort of fell into this role, having done Community work since 2015. So yeah, never really saw myself working for a football club, but here I am and really enjoying the job.

Researcher 2:20
Oh, OK, so you didn't really see yourself working for Football Club, did you?

Participant 1 2:25
No, I think I always saw myself outside of football, so I had no interest in football, didn't really have sort of watched a match before or even watched it on TV, to be honest. So yeah, football wasn't something that I was into or, you know, being part of. So yeah, I always saw myself outside of that. So driven past the stadium many times, having lived in Leicester for many years now, but never really ever thought that I would approach it or like park up and go inside or even go to like the fan store, which is like, you know, just outside of the club. So yeah, none of that was really part of my life before.

Researcher 2:54
Yeah.

Participant 1 2:57
Having got this job. So yeah, it's been really interesting. The journey actually.

Researcher 3:02
Oh, that's great. And I feel like 'cause, it's this. You're part of the community side. I feel like that's why you kind of like.
But but you couldn't like have an impact and stuff because that's that's where you're kind of like that's where your expertise and stuff is from, isn't it?

Participant 1 3:16
Yeah. So I feel like I sit in that representation space now. So I think that I didn't see myself in that space either. But now that people can see me there, they see themselves in that space as well. So it's really interesting how.
A lot of especially women, but women sort of South Asian background or Muslim women don't really see themselves as being the women that would be in a football stadium or watching a game or. And this sort of stories are probably not the same, but very similar to mine. As in wasn't part of their life.
By before, but now they can't believe that they've been to a football stadium, watched a game, you know,

they go to the women's games and they see that. So yeah, absolutely. I think that's it. Like I said, in the space of representation. So if if we look like them, then they feel like they can, they can be us. So as in, you know, she looks like us, she's from our community. She's got a similar background and experiences of us. And therefore, if she can do it, then we can do it too. And it's really nice to be able to be in that space.

Researcher 4:10
Yeah.
Yeah. No, that I completely agree with that. What what is your ethnicity? Again, if you don't mind me asking.

Participant 1 4:18
I'm Pakistani.

Researcher 4:19
OK, perfect. Yeah.
In terms of like like Woman's involvement in sports, I know you have well, you've been in this role for a little bit. I don't know if you follow like women, you know, football and stuff like that, but how would you say, like the woman's involvement? Football has been over the years and.
Can you give an example, maybe within your your your organisation as well?

Participant 1 4:43
Yeah. So I think a women's football from last year's EUR, I think that you know that really put a good put us in a good space because I think obviously the women winning and you know being part of that and and us following it. So I think our project started, we started to follow the game a bit more. We were watching the games we were, you saw, you know, around more knew about it a little bit more strik and learn what the game was about and what it means to win and all those things. And I think that's what the women in a real good space.
Of understanding that there is a space for women in football, but we're also very aware of the challenges that has been for those women in particular already there. So professional football players.
But also for women, just in general to be part of sport. So we understand that the barriers are still there and I don't think that the barriers are dissimilar depending on which community you're from. So I think that anybody who is also not from underrepresented or you know diverse community also face challenges and barriers when they're going into football, whether that's as a professional or any other kind of role. So I think I've spoken to many women over the 18 months whether I've been on training, doing courses, you know, sort of just upskilling myself or.

Researcher 5:39
Mm hmm.

Participant 1 5:54
Have been in just spaces. Having conversations at a grassroots level and community. A lot of the things that we're hearing is women are struggling with the same things or similar things even now that they were many years ago as well. And the phrase. Yeah. And that phrase of, you know, football's not for women, still gets thrown around. And I know there's lots of really good.

Researcher 6:05
So it's still, yeah.
Yeah.

Participant 1 6:15

Sort of initiatives going like high game two and things like that where we're still saying, you know there is a space for us women in football. And I think those initiatives are really important.

Researcher 6:27
Can you give an example of some of like the barriers and challenges that women face in general and that maybe you have faced? So like any like any sort of time like you've you've experienced like some sort of like biasness or discrimination in the workforce or just like within the football industry in general?

Participant 1 6:48
I think so in so I think barriers to start with would have been not just not seeing my own personal barriers were not seeing myself in a space with sport or football. So I think that was a personal barrier for me and I think that really comes from sort of stereotypical views of people where it's a man's world. It's a man's sport. It's not for women. And then I'll add it on top of that, another layer of maybe being from a underrepresented community is that women don't really do support and then that's not a role that you sort of go into.
It's more acceptable to do other jobs like being a teacher.
Being a pharmacist or, you know, do being a doctor. Yeah. So the typical thing of, you know, sort of Asian parents, but also like, my, my sort of personal sort of life of you've got children. So your sole priority should be bringing up your children and shouldn't be thinking about work. And you shouldn't be worrying about career or education, that that shouldn't be something you want to do. So I think the barriers were that the mindset of those around me, whether that be sort of family.

Researcher 7:23
Doctor. Yeah.
Yeah.

Participant 1 7:51
Community, or why did or wider than that sort of my work space?
But it was acceptable for women just to do the everyday normal jobs or what they would see as normal and not really aim high or look for full potential in yourself, where you could go. I've got a dream and I really want to fulfil that. There wasn't really a thing around dream. So I think one of the barriers is not having a space to dream. And I talked to lots of young girls now and they still talk about this idea of we don't have hopes and dreams because we're not allowed to have them. And it really surprises me that even in this day and age, we have young girls that think they don't need to dream because they're just going to get married and have children and settle with their husband. And it's the husband that needs to work and earn the money and all of that. And that that's really, really sad to hear whilst we've come.

Researcher 8:28
Hello.

Participant 1 8:35
A long, long way and I think, yeah, lots of girls are educated and study and don't get married. And it's not, you know, immediately seen that you leave school or college or university and then get married. There still is quite a majority of people that do believe that that is the right way and that should be done.

Researcher 8:36
A long way, yeah.
Yeah.

Participant 1 8:53
So that I think that their kind of barriers, I mean there's financial barriers as well.

Researcher 8:57
Yeah, that's fine. That's a big one.

Participant 1 8:58
You know, how do you get into these jobs? How do you do your training if you have to pay for courses, where does that money come from? If you're not working? What if you don't have your own independence and your own money?
Are you relying on other people to fund your training, your courses? So I think that's another barrier. And I think one of the challenges we've seen with women in terms of taking part in sport has been sort of childcare as well since they've got children, they can't take fines for. So in the same way, if you've got children, you can't do all the jobs like travelling around, you know, nationally or internationally. If you really wanted to do a job. And that meant that you had to travel a lot of women will be restricted. So I think for us women, we just end up having some. There's initial personal barriers that we'll have the cultural barriers as well. But then you've got societal barriers.
As well. So I think we've sort of got that triple layer of issues that challenges.

Researcher 9:44
So I feel like.
Yeah. So I guess it comes more more towards like the cultural barriers first then do you feel like there's like a barrier within organisations as well? You've mentioned something about like you briefly mentioned about like financial barriers as well that comes. I feel like that comes from within like.
Yourself as well. Thinking, oh, if I were to go into the sports industry, there may not be, you know, the higher pay salary compared to if I were to become a doctor.
But do you feel like that's more is, do you think that firstly that's an issue?
And secondly, do you feel like it's a organisational issue as well?

Participant 1 10:33
I think some of the challenges in terms of the pay can be that when you work, so I work for the charity arm of the Football club as a whilst we're supported by the club as well. We do run the organisations run as a charity so that does limit pay and and costs and things like that. So I think for me it would be that it's not about maybe the personal challenges around the financing, that space is more around, it's more acceptable to do the job, lowered paid because you're a woman.
Whereas a man probably wouldn't go for that job in the same way as a woman would go. OK, I'll do admin for a for a club.
Well, I'll go and do this job for a club, 'cause, that's OK. But they wouldn't see themselves. Maybe the sports side of that club and actually playing football or being like, I don't know, a coach or, you know, 'cause. We're having conversations with women now around coaching for women from, you know, diverse communities. And, you know, they didn't see themselves as they could become a coach or a referee. That like those kind of things they thought weren't for them. So that's one of the things I think. And I think, yes, there's a financial element to it in terms of, I think it is that if there's a lower paid job, then more likely to go for it, but anything higher paid is like, well, that's not for me.
I think the other thing that organisations in general need to do is be more culturally aware.
About people's experiences and differences and just really how they've been brought up differently and how the challenges for each person will be different. So one of the personal things for me when I first started was around the kit and what we would wear and that I don't wear short sleeved T-shirts and you know my arms show my legs can't show and we have some, you know, conversations around what was acceptable in terms of kit.

Researcher 11:56
Yeah.

Participant 1 12:15
And what wasn't? And I think that can also pose as a barrier, but as an organisation, I think there needs to be learning across the whole work board nationally.
Because everybody will be different and this can't just be, you know, one-size-fits-all. So one Muslim woman comes and says I need to wear long sleeved kind of longer top. So that means every Muslim woman want long sleeves and a long top. But it's more about having that kind of conversation with the individual to see what they feel comfortable with. I mean, I've never worn a tracksuit in my whole life.

Researcher 12:38
Yeah.

Participant 1 12:47
And the only time I wore any kind of sports wear was when I was in school and we were in PE. And apart from that, I've never ever had to wear anything that's been either outside of Westlife clothes for work, which were my work clothes or my home clothes, which where you go home and you get dressed into your traditional saloon's and that's what you wore at home. So for me to then sort of at this age of 43, be wearing a tracksuit, it was a really big deal. And the challenges that come with that sort of internally are very different.

Researcher 12:53
Mm hmm.
Yeah, I feel comfortable wearing it as well.

Participant 1 13:17
So externally.
Yeah. Externally, people think, oh, she looks really good. She looks like, you know, the people that always say, are you a footballer? And I'm like, do I? And I don't feel like I'm a footballer. I don't even think I look like a footballer, but do other people. The perception is she's an elasticity kit, so she must play football, which is fine because I think some of that is really good. But I think some of that, the challenge that poses for some of us is that I don't feel confident in myself to be in the kit that I'm in. And it took me a long while to get used to that. So I think.
Those conversations need to happen about what is comfortable.
You know, buying your first pair of trainers after like 20 or 25 years because you've never won any. That's a big deal, you know, and it might not be for some people because they might wear trainers every day. But for me personally, it was.

Researcher 13:56
Yeah.
Yeah.
Oh no, I'm completely 100% agree with you on that. I think you you did obviously you've like mentioned like about representation in sports and stuff in terms of like within like senior management roles and you know leadership role since do you do you personally believe there is like an under represented?
Representation of women in general, and like people within, like the main background as well within those roles. And if so, like why?
Why do you think there is?
What's your intake?

Participant 1 14:39

64

Yeah. So I I definitely think that the higher up you go, the less likely is for you to see women in general. And then even at some of those maybe sort of coordinator lead roles, it's very unlikely that you'll see any women from ethnically diverse communities. So I think for me.
The difficulties or challenges and why that might be is that.
Do we see ourselves in those spaces?
And if we do, are we supported in the same way that maybe other women are supported as well? So in general?
I think it's just very much still a man's world and a lot of your senior roles are taken up by men and I always look at organisations and I feel like the further up you go, the more men there are and the least women there are, but I think Leicester City is probably an exception. So, you know, Leicester City Football Club is led, you know, by Sue and then Leicester City in the community is headed by honey. So you've got two women at the top of a football club and the charity arm. So this is quite unusual. So.

Researcher 15:25
Mandar.

Participant 1 15:43
Across the board nationally, that won't be the case.
Why that's happened for Leicester, I don't know if I could comment completely on how that's happened, but I think it's about women supporting women as well, and I think it's about looking for allies in men and the men supporting you as well in your direction. We know that the research says when women apply for jobs, if there's a couple of things on that job description that they can't do, even if there's one thing on that job description they can't do, they won't apply for the job. Whereas men there'll be more than, I think it's more than like three things on there that they won't be able to do and they'll still apply for it. So I think there's definitely this kind of level of imposter syndrome in women.
I think they've been brought up in a certain way that they internalise some of their own difficulties and challenges.
That they can't overcome them without support or direction from people around them. So we I think we look for that external validation sometimes as women because society keeps telling us that we're not good enough and society keeps telling us that we can't do things because it's only men can do them. So how many years, I mean I'm 43, all my life, every like every I don't know month every couple of weeks you you'll see a post. Yeah. Even every day. I mean if you're in if you're not quite in the right spaces, then yeah, every day.

Researcher 16:47
Hmm.
Every day.

Participant 1 16:59
You get reminded that you're just a woman, or you're a woman, so you can't do that, or girls can't do that. So I've got three daughters.

Researcher 17:01
Yeah.

Participant 1 17:06
So constantly like people saying, well, they can't do that 'cause they're girls and I'm thinking, well, why not? So why should it be different 'cause if we're in this world and it's women that are bringing these children into the world, why can't these women girls do things then? So I think there's a huge society.

Researcher 17:15
Why can't they?

Participant 1 17:21
Discrimination and difference that's getting portrayed to women against men. So boys are allowed to go out and drive their cars, you know, late at night and go somewhere. But women can't.

Researcher 17:32
Yeah.

Participant 1 17:33
You know you wouldn't get to send your 18 year old to, you know, I don't know, a different city after 9:00 o'clock at night. So mums will go. No, you can't go. But then some mums are doing it too. So us as mums as well? Are we treating them differently and should we and I always try and treat. I've got two kids and they're very similar ages as 18 months between them. So I've really had to think about why I would treat any of them differently and if I trust one of them, I should trust the other one because they've been both been brought up by me as their mum. So I've given instilled those values in them now it's their time to make the choice. But I still see.
Many women that won't allow their daughters to do things that they will allow their sons to do.
And if we don't change that mindset, how are we gonna get women in leadership? And how are we gonna get women in those places where men are? Because we ourselves are restricting them and stopping them from reaching that their full potential. So I think there's a lot of work that needs to be done around parenting around schools as well, and universities and then really instilling the equality. So we women have been fighting for equality for years, right. So we, you know, fighting for the right to vote, fighting for certain things that we were allowed to do. But I don't think we're quite there yet. And I think that that's why we don't see.
Women in those leadership roles, because they themselves don't see themselves in that space and they're looking for that live **** and that validation from the external sources that they've got to say you should apply for this. You should go for that. I mean, it was another woman that said to me, you should apply for this role. And I still didn't apply for it because I thought it's football. It's not me. I'm not going to be able to do that without having even looked at a job spec or the description or anything about what the actual job was not doing any research just by looking at the title, I'd already decided I wasn't going to do it. So for me it was like.
That's not OK like I shouldn't have and and I don't really know what it was that stopped me completely, but there was something stopping me from actually reading the description and seeing whether I could do it, and if it wasn't for this other person, I wouldn't be here and I wouldn't have applied for the job.

Researcher 19:28
We have.
Do you feel like it was more so to do with yourself as an individual and then like your cultural instincts, barriers coming out and being like, no?

Participant 1 19:40
Yeah, I mean, definitely a level of that. I think society as well. So I think definitely that because I think that kind of cultural challenge and internal sort of fight or battle, whatever you want to call it is probably still there because you know, people around me or sort of in my closer net family probably still don't know why I do the job that I do or probably don't even know what I do. And just having got that kind of interest because it's so far from what they expect of me that they don't want to have those conversations.

Researcher 20:01
Yeah.

Participant 1 20:08
So nobody really knows. And my sisters probably know a bit more about what I do on my job, but again, it is like if I was just, you know had a different role, a doctor or a an *** or some other job that would be OK.

66

Yeah. And it more acceptable to them, isn't it? That culture is doing that job. So we know that what that is. But if I say to them I'm an active women coordinator, they don't even know what that means. And actually I'm sitting at, you know, sort of a fairly high level in terms of leading your project, which is one of 25 national projects. So what I do and the difference that it will make.

Researcher 20:19
It would make sense, yeah.
Yeah.

Participant 1 20:41
Is huge.
So I think, yeah, I think that definitely there's a personal difficulty in terms of like not seeing myself in the space. But then there's other women not watching in that space. So there's a huge thing I'll talk about around jealousy and envy and how other women can stop women from moving forward as well. So I find that a lot that's been a huge challenge for me in the last eight years, definitely in the community space. And whether that and I've seen that happen in the corporate world as well.
I think where women are trying to get into those leadership roles, there will be other women they're fighting against as well. So we do need women to support women and we need the men to be our allies. To say this is OK, this should happen, but I don't see that genocide and envy in men and men will go for a job and and they don't really care how it affects the other ten people in their office, but the women.
I don't know if it's as I'm just thinking out loud is that is it because we share more about what we do or don't want or do we discuss things even before we've done them? Because I know that I'm definitely one of those where.
I'll take something to my sister and go. I just want to talk to you about this 'cause. I'm not really sure. Whereas I'm not sure that happens with men. I think they'll just go for it anyway.

Researcher 21:55
But.
There are. They probably just have have.
The instinct? Yeah, I'll just do it anyway. And whatever it is because, like, maybe females they. I'm just saying it as as thing. Maybe they just kind of think about it and like should I like, they'll like overthink it because I feel like I do that sometimes as well. So that's great to hear in terms of like the culture and stuff within like the industry, do you feel like there is a culture of like whiteness within like the industry?

Participant 1 22:10
I.
Mm hmm.
Because I think, especially in football, because I think football is seen as a sport for the British and when I say British, I mean British White, you know counterparts, women or men. And I think that when I look at football, even now, I don't see even in sort of the British communities that is 5050 in terms of men and women, it's still very heavily male dominated sport, even whether it's played, whether it's watched either way, I think it's still the domination is with men and you get less women I think.

Researcher 22:31
Yeah.

Participant 1 22:57
Watching sport, you get less women going out to matches. You get less women, you know, going on, going to play football on a Saturday afternoon, whereas you get men going all the time, like every weekend, they're out playing sports.
A lot of the kids as well, if you look at, you know, grassroots community football, it's mainly that the teams that you've got are boys. So you've got boys, teams, lots of boys teams and you get the odd one girls team and I think now there's this huge push to get girls in into sport earlier and younger. I was at a community

event at the weekend and there was kids playing and there must have been sort of five. They were tiny like four. I would say there were four or five and out of all them they were playing. There was one girl. So the group must have been about 10 boys.

Researcher   23:23
Mm hmm.

Participant 1   23:37
And then there was one girl. It was really nice to see. Really, really nice to see. But again, she was one out of, like, 11. Yeah. And I just thought and. And I've seen myself in those spaces where I've been one of 11 where everybody else has been males I went to do my multi sports training. The Level 2 qualification and when I got there as well I think out of all of us things we were a group of 16 and then I was the only woman there so forget I was the only woman of colour or the only Muslim woman actually in completely I was just the only woman.

Researcher   23:43
Just one, yeah.
The only woman.

Participant 1   24:09
Who had gone for her level 2 water sport. So that's showing me because that was national. So we went down to London to do that.
Are showing me nationally. This didn't less women, definitely less women and we're not represented in those spaces enough. They I would. I would have hoped that would be equal. Now we were saying half and half, but it isn't.

Researcher   24:23
And.
OK, now I completely agree with that in terms of like and so I've got two questions. I'm going to combine together. We kind of mentioned about cultural influence in sports as well.
In terms of, you know that having like a influence and understanding whether there are opportunities available in sports, but do you feel like?
There's there's stigma with the term like BAME, Black, Asian, minority and ethnic, you know, ethnic.
And like the perception of that which effects women in the category to participate in sports, or do you feel like there isn't because?
I'm not sure about like your opinion, but in terms of like research and stuff, there's been loads of research about like the Tambay or just being just being individual men and women. I don't know if that that relate would relate to like the.

Participant 1   25:19
Mm hmm.

Researcher   25:26
The under representation and discrimination, and like the the would basically explain the culture of whiteness.
I like what? What's your input on that?

Participant 1   25:39
Yeah. So I definitely think, I mean, one of the things that I really don't like is the actual terms. So I think there's been some conversations that definitely are happening around whether that is the right term. First of all, I think the other thing for me is that I don't see myself fitting in that. I don't see myself that I should have to fit into a different box or a separate box. I think that we should look at diverse communities and try and integrate them into everybody else rather than have a separate, because I think when we talk about

being communities where we talk about having, you know, a bane, I don't know.
Working group or a Bane support group, or that that's implying that we need something.

Researcher 26:17
The pro, yeah.

Participant 1 26:17

Separate to others, so not different but separate. And I think that we do need something different. 'cause when we look at equality and we now talk about equity and that everybody needs something different in order to get to where they need to get to or everybody needs something different, you know, in order to be the person that they are, we talk about equity. But if you're going to label people and I do see it as your labelling people or you're separating them and I don't feel like I should sit under that because I'm more than Asian. So if I was to sit in the same space, I have to sit under a label that says I'm Asian.
But I'm a woman, I'm Muslim, and yes, I'm Asian as well.
But I sit under just an Asian label, but my religion is part of who I am. My British values are part of who I am. I was born in this country, so I've been here my whole life. So why do I have to sit under a bane space when I'm British, born and bred? And I've been in this country for 43 years. So I think that whilst it does have a role to play, I think that it probably distances us from other people.
And we are seen as the other.
And it's like an add on to everything else that's been that's happening rather than integrating us into football or sport or leadership or whichever spaces. So we there needs to be a huge understanding around that. And I know that when I worked in the NHS a couple of years ago, they were talking about the term BAME and looking to change it. And one of the things I use is Dec, which is diverse ethnic communities. So I use that all the time and I I don't like.

Researcher 27:46
OK, OK.

Participant 1 27:49
To use my minority, you know, ethnic minorities or minority groups, because actually I live in Leicester where of our own diverse city and I don't I'm not 100% sure that we are the minority anymore and I think with the the stats that will come out with the most recent census, we'll see that actually a lot of people in Leicester, what you know are from a mixture of spaces and places. But actually in most in some spaces when we see it. So if I look at active women as a project.
We aren't the minority because most of the women that come to that group are South Asian.
Some of them aren't, but most of them are. So if we're looking at certain spaces, we're not the minority. So I think what we need to do is lose some of the labels, which will then help us to sit in those spaces when we talk about progressing into leadership or those higher roles is that if we could drop the labels and we can get into those spaces because people would see us as one of them rather than the other. And I think that very often because we, you know, my skin colour is different. I dress different. So there's lots of differences. So I get treated different and I shouldn't be treated any differently than any other person, regardless of whether that's a man or a woman applying for a job in a leadership role.
But there definitely is that, and I think there's the unconscious bias around that as well. But also there's this kind of society acceptance around whether Bain people should, you know, get the same opportunities as everybody else. Well, we should, because we have every right to be here just as everybody else does.

Researcher 29:21
Yeah, like, why shouldn't we? Yeah, completely. So you think they should get rid of it, basically.

Participant 1 29:26
Yeah, I mean, I don't. I'd really don't like the the bane at all. There's other things that people use like

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ethanol, diverse or diverse ethnic communities, which I think diversity should be celebrated because diversity can be more than just your colour or your heritage or your religion. You know, diversity could be that we've got a different colour. Hair diversity could be we've got we're different heights. We're different ages. Yeah. So that diversity. So when when you go into like I did at Ice breaker once at a training course and they did.

Researcher 29:40
Yeah.
That's true, yeah.

Participant 1 29:53
They told us to put ourselves in age order, which I thought was really nice because that's another way of sort of diversifying your workforce and saying.

Researcher 29:57
Yeah, that's fine. Yeah.

Participant 1 30:01
Yeah, this is our workforce and we go from like 16 right up until I don't know 70 something. So that that kind of diversity. So we need to celebrate diversity in a different way. And I think it needs to move from Bane to something around diverse ethnic communities because, you know, your ethnicity is still part of who you are and people don't like to lose the heritage. And I absolutely wouldn't want to lose mine. So I happily celebrate my ethnicity, but I'm more than fame. I'm more than that label.

Researcher 30:28
Perfect. Completely agree with you on that one.
In terms of.
Like so how? How do you feel? How do you think or feel like the organisational culture? How do you think that?
Impacts the recruitment, retention and advancement of female adults from, you know, minority backgrounds within, like senior management and leadership roles. So we're kind of we're kind of did talk about like promotion and you know that kind of stuff. But and you mentioned something about when you you, you yourself.
Got got like a. Well, someone told you about your role and stuff and how like, you know, you saw like the ad. Like the job drawn and description and you were like no, that's not for me to.
I do think the recruitment retention and like the advancement like within like the HR perspective, how do you think that would have an impact for females upgrading to those roles?

Participant 1 31:23
Yeah. So I think that first of all, like I think when you look at a job role, it's usually the title that you read and it's normally that that sort of I think it's that kind of first impressions, isn't it, when people see you, they make a first impression and they have a perception of you. So it's the same when it comes to jobs. So I think the titles need to be more open in general. So I think they don't need to be specific. So one of the things that happened with my job role was it was changed from.

Researcher 31:35
Yeah.

Participant 1 31:51
The active it was active through football coordinator and it was changed to active women coordinator.
As soon as it was changed, I started to read the rest because they had the word women in it and I thought,

Oh yeah, I can work with women. But when they had football in it, I was like, no, I can't work in football because I didn't have a relationship with football or didn't see myself as working for a football club. So, but when I saw active women coordinate and I still knew it was with the club, it felt different. So I think wording language is so important. So language that's more open and sort of inviting rather than discouraging because, you know, football's quite specific and that can discourage people that are not part of football. But I absolutely can do the job.

And I wonder how many people might have looked at that and actually not applied for it, which is a shame, because they might be women that are more experienced than me or actually have a real passion for football that may have gone for that job had it not have said football in the title. So I think one of the things is how do we advertise the jobs? I think the other thing has got to be the desirables and essentials on, on job roles as well.

And how important it is because there's so many skills that you can learn these days and you can do so many courses to up skill yourself, to do a job, and that should be our ongoing workforce development. So we should never look at, if I can't do this job today, I'll never be able to do it is how do we make sure that people are offered support as well around the training.

Flexible working has got to be a really big one as well, like I've they've been really good at Leicester City in the community, like I've got flexible working pattern, it works with, you know, where I'm at. The other things I do outside of my job role as well, so being a community leader in the community, I need to be accessible to the Community as well. So how do I do that with doing a full time job as well? So they've been really flexible. So I think that flexible working for women.

Should be there and I think that if women are the sole sort of providers or those looking after the household or looking after the children.

Then obviously the flexibility needs to be there for those women and as women, I do truly believe that we can multitask and we're able to do more than one thing and we can be our best versions of ourselves at work if we're allowed to be rather than seen. As always, she can't. She can't do it because she's got kids or we can't give her that job. She's had a baby or, you know, those kind of things. HR needs to think about. What does it look like for that individual person rather than in general, a woman with children will be less available for us then. So because she's if she's got a support network at home, she'll be available in the same way that any man would be available.

Researcher 34:01
Yeah.

Participant 1 34:23
So I think that that equality piece needs to sort of sit in that space as well. When it comes to children and childcare and the flexibility that people offer.
And there's another thing I had in my mind, and it's gone now, and I was going to talk about.
Do you want to just repeat the question because it might trigger me to remember.

Researcher 34:43
Yeah, I said. How? How do you think the organisational culture impacts the recruitment, retention and advancement of female adults from minority backgrounds within senior management roles in the football industry?

Participant 1 34:55
Yeah. So I think the other thing has got to be performance management. So I think that if people are doing really well, that should be celebrated. And I think that often women are doing their jobs like better than some men. I've seen this happen. So I'm not just saying this, I'm saying this from experience where I've seen people work really well and have the skills to be able to work at the next level, but then not having maybe the support professionally to be able to do that. And they're not having that and advancement of, you know, if you do this course, you could be sort of at that next level whereas.

Researcher 34:58

OK.
OK.

Participant 1   35:29
The man will just go for it anyway. So how are we as organisations? So that's an organisational thing because the courses should be offered to everybody, which I think they are, but generically they'll go out. But like I said, I didn't apply for the job because it's only because somebody else told me to. So if that's what is required for women to feel more confident than who is that person? So do we have those people in HR or do we have those people in our organisations that really look at developing people and that they're developing all the stuff? Yeah, not just the ones that are doing really well, but maybe look at the ones that maybe aren't doing well, but what is missing?

Researcher   35:55
Mm hmm.

Participant 1   36:03
So auditing their skills and really looking at what's missing for them, that could get them to that next level. Because I think sometimes it's the lack of support you get from other people that stops you from going to the next level.
Because you're not really sure what's missing. No one's having the conversation with you about if you want to do this, this is what you need to do, and if somebody was having that conversation, you'd be working towards it all the time.

Researcher   36:23
Mm hmm.

Participant 1   36:25
So I think there's definitely a level of like that support around you that you need from the organisation. And I think one of the things that probably gets missed a lot is you get you end up doing jobs where you're doing quite a lot of things that you probably don't enjoy. So about 25% of your job you love and 75% of these things that maybe either you're not very good at or you don't really enjoy doing. I'm I'm very much like a community engagement person because I love people. But if I get stuck behind a laptop or if I'm going to start doing admin or do other things, that takes up my time. I'm not really seeing myself in that space. I'm missing out. I feel like then I'm not doing the thing that I love and enjoyment has to be.
A key part of why people stay in the jobs they do, because if they don't enjoy it, they're not gonna stay.

Researcher   37:09
They won't stay here.

Participant 1   37:10
And if we talk, we haven't touched on bullying or we touched a little bit on discrimination, but bullying in the workplace is something that happens a lot and people don't talk about it. I mean, I haven't experienced it, so I'm very lucky and I have experienced it in my younger years when I was actually bullied by a manager. But she was a lot older than me and she was in a higher role than I was and that it was actually one of my first jobs. I was 16 at the time, 1617. So I'm going back to that. I remember she was a woman that I saw in power. She was a woman that was in a leadership role.
But she used that power in the wrong way. So rather than investing in people that are really passionate about what they do, she actually made me feel like I wasn't good enough. And the job for her, not the good enough for the job, for the hospital that I worked out, but actually wasn't good enough for her, and therefore she wasn't going to make my life easy. So there's a lot of that that happens as well when it goes back to that jealousy and envy. Sometimes they see something in you that's really good and they want to

take that away from you because they're not. They're in owning securities are being played up because somebody else's skills.

Researcher   38:08
Of themselves.

Participant 1   38:10
Are better than that. So how do we enhance people's skills and how do we build that confidence? And I just think women need to be there for women.

Researcher   38:10
Yeah.

Participant 1   38:19
I think the biggest power has got to be women empowerment and I don't don't feel like I see it enough. I think that as soon as women get a little bit higher up the ladder than the other women, they start to go against that rather than supporting that. And what they don't realise is that if they're opening up their doors for other people, then that's a door that's open for you as well. But if you don't allow that woman to open the door.
Then you're stopping yourself reaching that door as well. And sometimes maybe women are quite happy sitting at that space where they're not in that space because they don't see themselves there. They don't want anyone else there as well. And I think that's one of the really unfair things that do happen in work. First workplaces. I mean, I haven't seen it happen here at the club, so I can't comment on it as a sort of now. But in the past I've had many jobs.

Researcher   39:00
Yeah.

Participant 1   39:06
And done different jobs and even done community projects as well and women just not supporting other women.
And then men just follow that as well, 'cause then it's easier for them 'cause, it means there'll be another man in the job, not a woman.

Researcher   39:13
OK.
Yeah, completely agree.
So like in terms of in terms of like you kind of mentioned on on like what what you could do and stuff, but what what steps like you can do like personally and like talk about you know female empowerment stuff but?
What steps do you think football organisations in particular could take to promote like, more diversity and inclusion?
Particularly from, you know, like I think I think minority being background.

Participant 1   39:48
Mm hmm. So I think one of the things is they've gotta a real true understanding of different cultures and different backgrounds and different experiences and what the challenges might be for some people to come into those roles. I think that's the learning for the the workplace and and those in leadership roles already. So when we look at the edni roles, so you know the quality diversity and inclusion that sits in an organisation for a reason, that's there because it should be for all. So how are they promoting that to people that may might want to come and work for them? So in that football sort of space is it can't be a

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culture just about sport.

To be a cult around people, and I think we need to come away from this sport and look at people and their well-being because you can get people and look at their well-being and what they need. You automatically get them in the sport roles anyway and sport will just be in addition to what they already love. But you can have somebody who's absolutely passionate about football or any other sport. But if you don't get them in the right space or they don't feel valued or secure, they won't be the best at the sport as well. So if you're going to get coach and you want them to be their best and they want them to train other people.

They're not going to be the best if they don't feel their best. So how do we use that equality, diversity, inclusion space to really learn about other people and and what their experiences are?

Researcher   41:00
Yeah.

Participant 1   41:08
I think the other thing has got to be the workforce development. So what, what training is out there, what's on offer? What's the sustainability part of that as well? And can you show people what the strategy for your organisation is earlier when they come into your organisation so they can see where they're going? Because if they can't see the vision and they can't see the aim of your organisation is how can they see themselves in it? So I really need to understand the vision of somebody's to be right near them or behind them or beside them, because if I don't understand where they're heading, I'm sort of walking into it blind. So do we share enough of the vision and mission of what we're trying to achieve as well? Because I think sometimes we're missing that we're not doing that, so that that's got to be one of the things definitely.

Researcher   41:47
Yeah.
Did you think in terms of like the management side, they need to like?

Participant 1   41:56
Good, good.

Researcher   41:57
Like show the vision like the strategy and put that in place to make people aware like this is what we need to do. And you mentioned about like having an EDI role like I don't I think I feel like that's quite recent in like organisations that they're starting to introduce. Do you feel like they should have like that role within like clubs and organisations to be able to like promote and?

Participant 1   42:19
Yeah. I mean, I think that Edie and I should sit so that umbrella sort of everything that people do and I think that one thing that we do at necessity is that is that we are able to umbrella that across the board. And it's not just a separate thing, but it's it's incorporated everything. So we did like cultural awareness training at work. We also then did like share your stories. So like every couple of months, people you work with, you might not necessarily even know their past or experiences. So you get to, they get to share their story and you get to share, you know, a bit about yourself and that kind of thing.

Researcher   42:19
Have that.

Participant 1   42:50
Some questions you read there true understanding of the people that you work with and really what their purpose is. And I think we have to go back to if you can understand people's why then you can understand

why people do the job that they do. And a lot of people that work in community, especially in sort of from a Community perspective is that they do it because they want to make a difference to their community and they could see where the gaps were and therefore they're wanting to do that. So I think that we have to really be sitting in that space.

Researcher 43:16
Perfect. That was, that was kind of it with like the interview. I just have one final question, if you have anything else that you'd like to obviously add at, I know you've mentioned so much that you know inside of information, but if there's anything else you want to add that would be relevant to the research, I would love to hear from that.

Participant 1 43:26
Yeah.
I think it's like wrong. One of the things we haven't touched on is role models and I think that one of the real important things is that if you can, if you if there's a role model that you see, you sort of aspire to be or be like them. And I think that where are those role models for us. And there have been some really important women in sport, but you never really hear about them and they never they sort of go through their professional sports career. And then as soon as they're not famous, you don't hear of them again, but they have a life outside of sport as well and they must be doing some amazing stuff. So.
Researcher 43:37
Yeah.

Participant 1 44:05
You know, there's there's so many people that are retired from sports.
Very early, like 253035, they haven't even got to 40 because of professional career's over. But you know, it's sort of young ages could because of injury, it should just be the sport. But where are those people and why don't we hear from them? So one of the things clubs and sport organisations definitely need to do is bring their people back into the organisation. So I know that we have Steve Walsh that comes back and presents at some of our community events and all of that and just hearing from him, that's somebody people know, you know, he's from Leicester. People know him. People see him, they can be a part of his journey.
Researcher 44:14
Yeah, we engage.
Yeah.

Participant 1 44:40
We need to share that role models and journeys we need to share them more and be more connected with people.

Researcher 44:46
Oh, perfect. Yeah, no, I think I'm completely agree with you on that one. Having like people from that have already done it. And then being like coming back and be like this is great to see you guys getting one about. Had that inspiration basically, but yeah, thank you so much for the interview. I'm going to stop the recording now.

Participant 1 44:54
Yeah.
That's OK.

Researcher stopped transcription
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