ABSTRACT

SANDERS, STACY. Gender Equity and foxsports.com: A Coverage Analysis of the NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament. (Under the direction of Dr. Judy Peel.)

Previous research (Sage, 1998; Coakley, 2004, Billings & Eastman, 2003; Kane 1996) concluded that women, based upon societal views within gender ideology, are trivialized and underrepresented throughout the mediation of sports. This study investigated the media representation between males and females from the online website foxsports.com during the 2007 NCAA Division 1 Basketball Tournament. This study followed an existing methodology (Shifflett & Revelle, 1994 & Cunningham, Sagas, Satore, Amsden, & Schellhase, 2004), as data was collected for six days three times a day from the websites dedicated to both men and women's college basketball produced by Fox Sports.

Results, consistent with previous research (Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004; Knight & Giuliano, 2002; Shifflett & Revelle, 1994) indicated that men received more coverage in terms of more paragraph and photo counts. Interestingly, the types of paragraphs attributed to women were mostly factual information related to athletics while the men's paragraphs, included mostly personal information related to athletics. Discussion is provided in light of these findings.

GENDER EQUITY AND FOXSPORTS.COM: A COVERAGE ANALYSIS OF THE NCAA DIVISION I BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

by
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BIOGRAPHY

Stacy Sanders was born in Greenville, North Carolina. She attended North Carolina State University, and in 2005 she received her bachelor's degree in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management with a concentration in Program Management. Upon completion of that degree she decided to stay at NC State and pursue a Master's degree in the same field. During her undergraduate years she became a member of the North Carolina Park and Recreation Association (NCRPA), and while in graduate school became a member of the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA). She has presented three consecutive years at NCRPA, the first two as an assistant and the third as a co-presenter. During her graduate career, she also assisted with the publication of an article, and worked for Raleigh Parks and Recreation's Adventure Department. She currently sits on the Student Board of NRPA as the liaison to the Citizen Branch, and she continues to enjoy her passions and interests by participating in road races, staying involved in outdoor sports, and collecting National Park Passport Cancellation Stamps.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Women are participating in sports at all time highs. The increased participation has taken place at all levels in women's athletics; including the high school level, collegiate sports, and in the Olympics (e.g. Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard, 2002; Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004; and Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993). Unfortunately, the media's coverage of women's sports is not reflective of the increased participation. With the passage of Title IX in 1972, male and female athletes in collegiate sports are expected to have equal access to equipment and practice facilities, media representation, coaches of the same quality, and scholarship money proportional to participation (Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004). Realistically, print, broadcast, and online media, due to time and space, cannot cover all sports contest. According to Tuggle, Hoffman, and Rosengard (2002) the degree to which the media cover female athletes helps mold society's view of female athletes and its perceptions of women's coverage. To date, women still receive less coverage than males, and are trivialized with regard to their sex appeal and not given credit for their athletic ability (Kane, 1996; Coakley, 2004). Therefore, quantity and quality should be evaluated because more can be done to equalize the coverage between men's and women's athletics. Equitable coverage is not reached by solely providing an equal number of articles and photographs, but also, as stated by Fink and Kensicki (2002), not discrediting females by using them as sex symbols in sport mediation while men are portrayed as powerful and talented athletes. Also, reaching equitability in sport mediation would cover females participating in sports deemed by society as masculine (rugby, basketball, soccer), whereas

currently, sports considered feminine (golf, tennis, swimming) are covered more extensively (Kane, 1996).

According to Coakley (2004) the coverage in big-city newspapers, since the early 1990's, has started to devote more space to women's sports, but overall coverage is still less than 15% of the entire sports section. Though 15% may not seem to be an advancement, it was previously concluded by Miller (1975) that only 6% of the sports section contained photos of females in the Los Angles Times and the Washington Post. Bryant (1980) concluded that from 1979-1980 only 4.4% of the aforementioned news papers devoted coverage to women's sports in terms of total column inches of text. Though more mediated coverage is being dedicated to female athletes, women are still trivialized with regard to their sex appeal and not their athletic ability. Women are portrayed in the media with emphasis on their physical attractiveness devaluing and ignoring their athleticism (Kane, 1996). Additionally, from an analysis of the Sports Illustrated 1979 Silver Anniversary issue, 60% of the photos of females depicted athletes in passive, non-athletic roles (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983).

Mediated sport is one of the leading areas where the reproduction of dominant traditional gender images is present, but there has been improvement within the last 10 years (Sage, 1998). The media is one of the most powerful and influential institutions in organizing the ways in which society knows and understands gender relations, as they construct the overall consensus of what is male and female (Sage, 1998). Sports that contain muscle mass, strength, and speed are seen in society as more prestigious than those that have an emphasis on aesthetic grace and beauty (Kane, 1996), therefore, limiting many female "gender appropriate" sports, such as gymnastics and figure skating, to be mediated. One

major cultural belief is that by participating in certain sports women become strong which challenges the ideological gender norm. With the fueled trivialization by the media, mixed messages are sent marginalizing strong women athletes (Coakley, 2004).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the media coverage of an online sports website to compare the media coverage between males and females during the 2007 NCAA Division 1 Basketball Tournament.

Statement of Problem

Women's participation in sports has made huge strides through the years with the passage of Title IX. However, the amount of coverage, along with the type of coverage females receive is far from equitable in comparison to men's coverage. Without equal coverage, female adolescents may not have the opportunity to have a positive female athlete to view as a role model. Also, female athletes are not given their deserved credit for being athletes, but rather they are portrayed in a way that conforms to a hegemonic belief. Alluding to or referring to a female's attractiveness, emotionality, femininity, and heterosexuality are all ways to stereotypically convey to an audience that a female's gender role is more important than her athletic role. This practice is common among sports commentators and writers, while on the other hand, men are depicted as powerful, independent, dominating, and valued (Knight & Giuliano, 2002).

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of this study were to (1) Determine whether equal coverage was displayed through mediated coverage of an online sports website during the 2007 Men's and Women's 1st and 2nd rounds of the NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament, and (2)

Determine if the articles and photos attributed to males and females are gendered biased with regard to photography frames and text content.

Research Questions

RQ I: Does Fox Sports produce, on their website, foxsports.com, equitable coverage, in terms of featured article content, for men's and women's basketball during the 2007 Men's and Women's 1st and 2nd rounds of the NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament?

RQ II: Does Fox Sports produce, on their website, foxsports.com, equitable coverage in the photos of Men's and Women's 1st and 2nd rounds of the NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament?

Delimitations

1. This study was limited to the main homepages of both men's and women's college basketball.

2. This study was limited to foxsports.com.

Limitations

1. The findings cannot be generalized to all coverage of the tournament.

2. The analysis was limited to a six day period.

Definition/Description of Terms

1. Hegemony – A concept of Gramschi's *Prison Notebooks* about the winning and holding of power and the formation of social groups that involve persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through the media, and the organization of social institutions in a way that appears "natural", "ordinary", and " normal" (Donaldson, 1993).

2. Gender Schema Theory – From the concept which proposes that society has an implicit cognitive structure that provides them with expectancies when processing information (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

3. Framing Theory – Proposes that mediation provides social cues that help views interpret events supporting the claim that portrayals of gender, ethnicity, and nationality are altered by the media to provide images which appeal and apply to society's desired view (Goffman 1974; Billings & Eastman, 2003).

4. Hegemonic Masculinity – The perceived societal view that masculinity is the defining characteristic of Western society that places women in lower social positions due to male related strength, emotional detachment, and aggressiveness (Whisenant, Pederson, & Obenour, 2002).

5. Equitable media coverage – Achieved in sport media by not minimizing or trivializing women's athletic accomplishments, as well as providing equal amounts of photos and articles which contain consistency between men's and women's photo types and language usage while also not eliminating sex inappropriate sports from mediation (Coakley, 2004; Kane, 1996; Sage, 1998; Metheny, 1967).

Significance of the Study

To date, there has been limited analysis of the equality of sport media coverage of online sports websites, and in particular during the men's and women's NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament. A need to perform an analysis is important so matters of inequality can be addressed if under representation is found. By conducting this study, online sports websites can see exactly where inequalities lie and hopefully correct the problem to report equally on men's and women's athletic online coverage.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research (Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard 2002; Messner, Duncan, & Jensen 1993; Lee & Choi 2003) has indicated under-representation of women's athletics through all types of media outlets. Whether competing in sex-appropriate or sex-inappropriate sports, women are not given equal media coverage, whether in print, broadcast, or online coverage in comparison to men's athletic coverage. Though coverage of women in sports has improved during the past few years, Dalton (1999) contended it still fell short of providing the quality and quantity women merit. Furthermore, athleticism and femininity, under the hegemonic belief, are contradictory, therefore females athletes must balance their femininity and athletic prowess to be socially accepted (Krane, 2001).

Women's mediated sport coverage

Within women's athletics, as a whole, there are two gendered ideologies. According to Metheny's (1967) sport typology, females either compete in "sex-appropriate" or "sex-inappropriate" sports. Sex-appropriate sports are sports where females perform in graceful and aesthetically pleasing ways. Gymnastics and figure skating are prime examples of sex-appropriate sports because of their aura of femininity. On the other hand, sports that produce sweat and use heavy objects, as in basketball, field hockey, and shot put, are considered by society as sex-inappropriate. Though media coverage may be on the rise for female athletes and women's athletics as a whole, Kane (1989) found that women who participate in more feminine and socially acceptable sports such as tennis and golf received significantly more coverage than women who participated in socially unaccepted sports such as basketball or softball. Along with Kane's study, Coakley (2004) noted that the coverage of women's

6

sports are not a priority of the media, except when sex-appropriate competitions such as the

Olympics, figure skating events, major tennis or golf tournaments are being held. U.S.

coverage of the Olympics highlights women gymnast, swimmers, and divers during the

summer games, and during the winter games, figure skaters and skiers get the media's

attention (Tuggle & Owen, 1999). Sports containing attributes consistent with traditional

gender ideology and images of femininity such as those with grace, balance, and aesthetics

are the ones that the media tend to cover with more regularity (Duncan & Messner, 1994).

Sport is one of the most prominent and hegemonic social institutions and cultural practices in

society today (Sage, 1998). The concept of hegemony comes from Gramschi's *Prison*

Notebooks, and is a belief about the winning and holding of power and the formation of

social groups that involves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly

through the media, and the organization of social institutions in ways that appear "natural,"

"ordinary," and " normal" (Donaldson, 1993).   Hegemonic masculinity is the acceptance of

masculinity as the defining characteristic of Western society that places women in lower

social positions (Whisenant, Pederson, & Obenour, 2002). This ideology is disadvantageous

because it has the ability to limit the amount, and type, of media coverage women receive as

they participate in athletics due to the association of sports and its emphasis on masculinity.

Studies from the early 1990's found that the hegemonic masculinity belief was reinforced

throughout the media via the sexist language used to portray females in athletics and through

the print media as they mainly focused their articles on the female's personalities as opposed

to their athletic ability (Sage, 1998). Sport sociologists have argued that mass media shape

and perpetuate a multiplicity of ideological beliefs, (Kane, 1996) therefore fostering the

belief that women do not carry the same athletic skill as men due in part to their perceived

7

role in society, leading to inequitable coverage in sports media. Gender inequalities within sport media not only occur with the differences in the amount of coverage, but also within the type of coverage that is generated between the sexes. Minimizing or trivializing women's accomplishments in sports through the type of language and sex appeal images used also fosters inequitable coverage. Inequalities within sports media coverage can be said to stem from the ideas and beliefs about what is and is not appropriate for females (Coakley, 2004). Sports mediation, which continues to strengthen the hegemonic belief that sports is a male dominated institution (Elueze & Jones, 1998; Pederson, 2002) promote and produce inequalities in media coverage between males and females by discrediting females in their athletic accomplishments, promoting a sense of femininity within sex-inappropriate sports, and overall, under representing them in articles and photographs (Kane, 1996; Sage, 1998; Metheny, 1967)

In analyzing Olympic coverage trends, Tuggle, Huffman, and Rosengard (2002) analyzed the coverage of the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney to examine NBC's broadcast media to report the hypothesized inequality of coverage between men's and women's events. Prime-time coverage was recorded and the content was coded accordingly by two coders. As reported in their findings, more than twice as much airtime went to women's individual events as compared to team events, and overall men received more coverage (Tuggle, Hoffman, and Rosengard, 2002). This finding was consistent with other research (e.g. Kane 1996; Knight and Giuliano, 2001) and may be attributed to the fact that the individual sports (gymnastics, swimming, and track relays) are the socially accepted sex-appropriate sports for female athletes.

Numerous studies, which have analyzed the amount of coverage given to women's athletic events, have reported the inequalities when compared to the amount of coverage men's event receive (e.g. Kane, 1996; Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard 2002; Billings and Eastman, 2003). At one point, the coverage seemed to becoming more equal among men's and women's events during the Olympic Games. An analysis of the 1992 Barcelona Summer Olympics conducted by Higgs and Weiler (1994) found that 56% of all clock time was devoted to men's sports, with the remaining 44 % devoted to women's athletics (Eastman & Billings, 2001). During the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics Tuggle and Owen (1999) found the gap to be decreasing with findings of men's coverage at 53% and women's at 47%. The hope of nearing the goal of equal coverage was thwarted when Eastman and Billings (1999) reported the coverage findings during the 1998 Nagano Olympics showing the gap to have widened to 60 % for men's coverage and 40% for women's. Additionally, at the 1996 Olympics Games in Atlanta, there was a 2.6% drop in the proportion of television time devoted to the coverage of female athletes and competition in the Sydney Games (Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard, 2002).

On an encouraging note within print media, Cunningham et al. (2004) found an equitable amount of coverage from the NCAA *news's* overall coverage of athletics. The equitability was achieved through consistent language usage which described the athletic accomplishments between males and females as well as attributed equal amounts of articles and photos in the magazine. Their photo and text analysis was conducted based on a previous study by Shifflett and Revelle (1994). Their focus was to see if any advancement, with regards to equality of sports media coverage between men and women at the collegiate level had been made. Shifflett and Revelle had previously reported an unequal coverage rate

9

of men's and women's sports photo and text print media coverage. Shifflett and Revelle (1994) reported women's articles attributed to only 26.5% of the print media, the photo coverage was reported at 34%. A decade later, Cunningham et al. (2004) reported that the articles attributed to women's athletics had increased by 15.9% and photo coverage had also increased by 5.7%.

Lee and Choi (2003) analyzed the gender equality of online media using the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics and the 2002 Pusan Asian Games. After collecting the photos from the online websites, the two coders analyzed the photos based on how many photos were posted, how impressively the athletes were descried in the photos, how importantly the photos were presented, and which sports categories were more prominently covered according to gender (Lee & Choi, 2003). One of the limitations noted by the researchers was the difficulty in capturing every picture. This was due in part to the nature of online websites which allowed for constant updates and frequent changing of text and pictures. In reporting their findings of overall coverage, they stated that men were covered more than females at a percentage of 61.8% and 24.4% respectively in the U.S. coverage. As for the Korean coverage, frequency of covering males was at 65.5% while females were covered only at 27.8% of the time.

Theoretical framework

Gender Schema

According to Sage (1998), "Organized sport has been a powerful cultural arena for reinforcing the ideology and actuality of male superiority and dominance; its traditions, symbols, and values have tended to preserve patriarchy and women's subordinate position in society" (p. 64). Femininity is a socially constructed standard for women's appearance,

10

demeanor, and values (Bordo, 1993). For female athletes, negotiating and reconciling the social expectations of femininity within athleticism, two identities are created – athlete and woman (Krane, Choi, Baird, et al, 2004). As compared to men, who are seen and accepted as athletes, women struggle to gain proper recognition for their sports ability and overall athleticism. The gender schema theory argues that people are socialized (i.e. through parents, teachers, peers, toys, and the popular media) into believing that gender differences are significant and worth maintaining (Bem, 1981, 1983). The participation of females in athletics has, and does, pose a threat to the preservation of the traditional gender ideology, which alludes to the fact that males are symbolically big, tough, and powerful leading to superiority over women (Coakley, 2004). Unlike men, females must deal with the consequences of traditional gender ideology (Duncan & Hasbrook, 1988). To combat some of the consequences, female athletes will often dress in hose and high heels, wear ribbons in their hair, or mention the fact that they would like to eventually settle down and have children (Mennesson, 2000).

The type of language used in print, broadcast, and online media has the ability to shape the way society currently or will view women's sports or women as athletes in general. Regardless of the media outlet, men are more readily portrayed as athletes first because being an athlete is consistent with the traditional male role (Coakley & White, 1992), whereas the portrayals of female athletes focus on aspects of their femininity, possibly to make these female athletes appear more gender-role consistent (Knight & Giuliano, 2002). The resounding finding with regard to the type of media portrayal female athletes receive is that media coverage overemphasizes femininity and sexuality (Kane, 1996). As reported by Duncan, Messner, Williams, and Jenson (1990) broadcasters frequently used terms such as

"girls," "young ladies," and "women" when commentating during women's events, while during the men's events the term "men" was used instead of "boys" or "young men". Adolescents are avid consumers of the mass media, and social representations and descriptions of women through mediated sports coverage can contribute additional support to the social construction of gender stereotyping (Sage, 1998).

Framing theory

Goffman's framing theory (1974) proposes that mediation provides social cues that help viewers interpret events. The way sports are mediated plays a huge role in how female athletes and women's sports as a whole are depicted to society. Rowe (1999) wrote, "If culture is the 'stuff' of everyday life-the frame through which we experience , interpret, mould and represent everything that surrounds us-then sport occupies…an uncommonly prominent position within it" (p.23). The framing process involves reporters and editors selecting and highlighting particular aspects of reality while obscuring or omitting other elements (Goffman, 1974). Neglecting to report on the true athleticism of female athletes gives society a false sense of the role women play in today's sports world. Entman has one of the better explanations of how the media frame a story, whether it is a photograph or the text of an article, "Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem, definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman, 1993).

Photos have been defined as an important reference by which readers judge a news story (Mathews & Ruess, 1985). Therefore the types of photographs used to portray female athletes needs to be taken into account as to not send the readers a false sense of reality that

12

women are not as athletic as their male counterparts. Within his framing theory, Goffman (1974) also proposed that mediation provides social cues that help viewers interpret events. The mass media have the ability to actively set the frames of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret or discuss events (Tuchman, 1978). Through the framing theory, Billings and Eastman (2003), argue that a claim can be made that portrayals of gender, ethnicity, and nationality are altered through a media controlled shaping function in which images are manipulated to appeal to the desired audience. Using the framing theory, Bissell and Holt (2006) analyzed the gender bias coverage of the 2004 Olympic Games via the Internet. One of their hypothesis suggested that males would be seen in more active shots in the dominant photographs, whereas women would be seen in more passive shots in the dominant photograph (Bissell & Holt, 2006). This portrayal stays consistent with the gender schema theory that females are and should be seen throughout society as females first. Their study found that, of 45 total photographs of men, 29 shots were active and 17 shots were in passive. From the 19 total photographs of women, nine were active and six were passive. They note that the remaining four photographs of females had to be coded as "other", therefore decreasing the reliability of their Chi square result, which only gave limited support for their hypothesis. By not selecting more photographs of female athletes in active roles, the use of more passive shots for women suggest sexual difference in the way male and female athletes are portrayed in visuals on the web (Bissell & Holt, 2006). Another one of their supported hypothesis was that of framing in regards to the photo angles used to portray males and females. It was suggested that males would be portrayed in upward angle camera shots, and female shots would be shown in straight-on or downward camera angles. It was reported that men, with a 59% rate, were shown with upward camera angles, emphasizing strength,

masculinity, and superiority while 63% of the female photos were at straight-on angles emphasizing femininity and weakness.

Chapter III

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was conducted to analyze the equality of gender coverage through the online mediation of college sports. SPSS version 14.0 was utilized for data analysis. Pearson's chi-square analyses and descriptive statistics were run. Additionally descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, range and standard deviations were calculated.

In a descriptive study, the researcher observes and then describes what was observed (Babbie, 2005). To report on the issue of whether equality exists in the online mediation of college sports, the website, foxsports.com was used. From foxsports.com two hyperlinks were available to take one to both the men's and women's college basketball home pages.

The unit of analysis of the written material was paragraphs. The paragraphs were analyzed and coded based on five criteria options. The other unit of analysis was the photographs displayed on the websites. To code and analyze these, six criteria were selected to label each picture.

Two researchers independently coded all paragraphs and photographs during the given time frame for the study. Before the start of the actual study, a pilot test was conducted to clarify definitions as well as provide consistency in the upcoming study. The same websites, foxsports.com for men's college basketball and women's college basketball, that were used during the actual study were also used during pilot study as previously done, for familiarity, by Shifflett and Revelle (1994) and Cunningham et al (2004). . After the pilot study was conducted and the researcher's codes were compared, any inconsistencies were discussed to ensure both researchers were in agreement on category types among both paragraphs and photographs. For the actual study, the reliability (Cohen's kappa) was high,

$K = .912, p < .001.$ According to Landis and Koch (1977), it is suggested that *a K* between

0.60 and 0.79 is substantial, but *a K* of 0.80 or better is outstanding, therefore suggesting a

strong correlation of consistency.

Sample

Foxsports.com on MSN is a comprehensive and entertaining online source of sports

news, statistics, interactive games and special features from the world of sports.

Foxsports.com averages over 14 million unique visitors a month according to comScore

Media Matrix, and it consistently ranks as one the highest trafficked sports destinations

online (Microsoft.com). For their coverage of NCAA basketball, two pages existed; one

dedicated for men's coverage and one for women's coverage.

Instrumentation

To answer research questions one and two, the Fox Sport's website was coded for

text content and photographs respectively. The coding process was taken from Shifflett and

Revelle's (1994) study which examined the print media coverage of the NCAA News. This

study eliminated one part of the above mentioned study because of irrelevance; the coding of

paragraph and photo location was not included. Cunningham et al. (2004) replicated the

coding process to also analyze print mediated gender equity in sports media.

For the coding process of text content, the articles were coded as (a) factual

information related to athletics, (b) factual information not related to athletics, (c) personal

information related to athletics, (d) personal information not related to athletics. For

photographs, the coding categories included (a) competing athlete, (b) athlete in competitive

context but not competing, (c) head shot of the athlete(s) or coach(es), (d) head shot of a

person other than an athlete or coach (i.e. administrator or mascot), (e) a group photograph of

16

persons other than players or coaches (e.g., committee members or fans), and (f) other
(Cunningham et al., 2004).

Data Collection

The schedule of the first and second rounds of the 2007 NCAA Basketball
Championship games was obtained from ncaasports.com. Data was collected during the First
and Second Rounds of the NCAA Division I Basketball Championship Games, and each
website for men and women was viewed and analyzed three times each day at 8 a.m. EST, 1
p.m. EST, and 7 p.m. EST. These times were chosen based upon previous research's
observations that, unlike printed media, website articles and pictures can be changed
throughout the day. Therefore, the researchers for this study checked each site three times a
day. The times were chosen to capture all the articles that were reported on each day. The 8
a.m. time slot would capture all the media reports from the games the night before. The 1
p.m. time captured articles and pictures that recapped and projected what may occur on that
given day, and the 7 p.m. slot would capture media on what had occurred during the day.

The researchers independently coded each paragraph and picture at each specified
time according to the previously agreed upon method using a coding sheet produced by the
primary researcher based upon the work of Shifflett, Revelle, and Cunningham et al.. As each
researcher read an article, each paragraph had to be coded. Based upon the five criteria
options, as the paragraphs were read, the researchers labeled the category each one fell under.
The same is true with the pictures. After the collection period was over, the primary
researcher entered data into an Excel document.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics (f; %) were calculated through cross tabulations to show the percent differences between the independent variables, gender, and dependent variables, category type, for both the articles and photographs. In addition, a Pearson's chi-square (X^2) test was run for research question 1 to test any significant difference between paragraph types among genders. Chi-square is an approximate test of the probability of getting the frequencies that have actually been observed when the sample size has a substantial number of observations (Chernoff, 1954). Research question 2, relating to photographs had a small sample size, therefore, the criteria for conducting a Chi-Square test was not met, so frequency distributions were the only analysis used to show differentiations.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

In all, foxsports.com produced 796 total paragraphs during the first and second rounds of the NCAA Division I 2007 basketball tournament and 36 photographs (see Tables 1 and 2 respectively). Results from the chi-square analysis indicated that there was a significant difference in the amount of coverage between males and females, $X^2 = 78.7$, $p < .01$. The men's site contained 53.8% (n = 428) of the total paragraphs and 88.9% (n = 32) of the total photographs while the women's site had the remaining 46.2% (n = 368) of the paragraphs and 11.1% (n = 4) of the total photographs.

For the coding process for text content, the articles were coded as (a) factual information related to athletics, (b) factual information not related to athletics, (c) personal information related to athletics, (d) personal information not related to athletics. Within all paragraphs (N = 796), 44.7% (n = 356) of the information included was coded as (a) factual information related to athletics. Individually, within that same category, the men received an overall percentage 29.2% (n = 125), while the women received 62.8% (n = 231) overall of the total paragraphs of that type. Within the category (b) factual information not related to athletics the overall percentage of the total paragraphs (N = 796), was 1.1% (n = 9). The men individually received an overall percentage of 1.4% (n = 6) paragraphs coded in that category, and the women received an overall percentage of 0.8% (n = 3). Of the total paragraphs (N = 796), 51.0% (n = 406) were coded as (c) personal information related to athletics. In that category, the men's individual percentage overall was 66.8% (n = 286) total paragraphs. The women received an overall percentage of 32.6% (n = 120) total paragraphs that included factual information. In the next category (d) personal information not related to

athletics, 2.1% (n = 9) of the paragraphs were attributed to men's overall percentage with

2.7% (n = 10) being attributed to the women's overall percentage. This category received a

combined percentage of 2.4% (n = 19) overall. Last, within the category of (e) other, of the

total paragraphs (N = 796) there was an overall percentage of 0.8% (n = 6). The men had an

individual percentage of 0.5% (n = 2) overall, and the women received 1.1% (n = 4)

paragraphs in that category overall.

For photographs, the coding categories included (a) competing athlete, (b) athlete in

competitive context but not competing, (c) head shot of the athlete(s) or coach(es), (d) head

shot of a person other than an athlete or coach (i.e. administrator or mascot), (e) a group

photograph of persons other than players or coaches (e.g., committee members or fans), and

(f) other. Within all photographs (N = 36), the men individually received 25% (n = 8) of

their photographs coded in the category of (a) competing athlete while the women received

0%, leading to an overall combined category percentage of 22.2% (n = 8). Of the total

photographs (N = 36), in the category of (b) athlete in competitive context but not competing,

the combined total percentage for this category was 47.2% (n = 17). Individually, 50% (n =

16) of the men's photographs were coded in this category, and the women received 25% (n =

1) of their photographs coded in the same category. The percentage of the overall

photographs (N = 36) in the category (c) head shot of athlete (s) or coach(es), was 22.2% (n

= 8). For this category, the men individually received an overall percentage of 15.6 % (n =

5), and the women, for their individual percentage received 75% (n = 3) of photographs with

this code. Within the remaining three categories, (d) head shot of person other than athlete or

coach, (e) group photograph of persons other than players or coaches, and (f) other, the

women received no photographs attributed to any of those categories. However, the men did

20

see an individual percentage of 3.1% (n = 1) in each of those categories, leading to an overall

combined percentage of 2.8% (n = 1) for those categories.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

Research Question 1 asked if Fox Sports produced equitable coverage, in terms of featured articles, for men' and women's basketball during the 2007 Men's and Women's 1st and 2nd rounds to the NCAA Division 1 Basketball Tournament. The study found that of the total paragraphs (N = 796) men where attributed with 53.8% (n = 428) and women with 50.1% (n = 406). While the total percent appears to indicate near equitable coverage in terms of numbers, the context indicated some noteworthy information.

Consistent with Cunningham et al, but unlike previously reported studies (Billings & Eastman, 2003; Bissell & Holt, 2006; Huffman, Tuggle, & Rosengard, 2004), it was found that the men received the majority of their paragraphs, 44.7% (n = 356), coded as (c) personal information related to athletics, and the women received the highest number of codes 62.8% (n = 231) in the category of (a) factual information related to athletics. Based upon these findings, the researchers did not find what was expected in terms of article context types within mediated sports. Based on the theoretical ground work of this study, it was expected the articles to discuss or describe more of the personal details, neglecting their athletic abilities, regarding women. However, what the study did find was just the opposite when considering the gender schema theory regarding the articles. Past studies (Tuggle & Owen, 1999; Knight & Giuliano, 2002) reported that women's articles contained verbiage that discredited a female's athleticism by first mentioning an attribute which labels them with feminine characteristics. Since, according to the gender schema theory, the conventional female role is contradicted by a female athlete, and the media tend to focus on femininity, this study may represent a shift in reporting styles. Though the women's articles did report

22

more of their athletic accomplishments, there was less focus on their personal information as demonstrated by large percent of the articles containing factual information. This "cut and dry" reporting could potentially minimize the intrigue, excitement and overall entertaining factors of women's basketball. Therefore, an opportunity to generate fan interest, or the ability to capture the reader is lost.

Seemingly, it appears that online mediated coverage produced by Fox Sports has gone from one end of the continuum to another; from only providing personal information or descriptions about females bodies or personal lives, to omitting any type of personal information at all. While a step in the right direction to get away from reporting personal information minimizing athletic accomplishments and reiterating the traditional feminine role; one must be cautious to celebrate the type of reporting that this study found. Ultimately, this approach can have just as detrimental results for females in sports. In other words, by omitting the emotions or descriptions of female athletes while reporting, the reader is left with a void that does not allow them to connect with the female athlete or team in the ways that it does for men's athletics as a whole. Thus, the ability to promote or sell the women's game is severely limited, which perpetuates the ideological view of hegemonic masculinity by allowing men's sports continue to dominate the mediated coverage of sports (Coakley, 2004).

As photographs provide the visual interest and cues to capture an audience, leading them to potentially read an article, it is important for women to be represented. Consistent with previous research (Lee & Choi, 2003; Shifflett & Revelle, 1994; Bissell & Holt, 2006), it was found that Fox Sports unequally displayed photographs of men. Of the total photographs (N = 36), the ones shown on the women's page (n = 4) were 75.0% (n = 3) of

pictures categorized as (c) head shot of athlete(s) or coach(es). No codes were given to women in the category of (a) competing athlete, while the men received the highest number of codes, 50.0% (n = 16), in this category, and 15.6 % (n = 5) in the category of (c) head shot of athlete(s) or coach(es).

The lack of photographs reinforces previous suggestions that the media does not assist with the selling or marketing of women's sports by eliminating the visual appeal through photographs of female athletes. Maintaining existing societal views regarding gender ideology, the disproportionate number of photographs between men and women reinforces the notion that women are under represented and not shown photographically in action type sports. Based upon the theoretical thought of the framing theory, which suggests that stereotypes persist in the mediation of sports because previous strategies from representing gender have become the norm in news casting of sports (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Tuggle, Huffman, & Rosengard, 2002), it has been found still today that the photographical coverage of females, with regard to number of photographs as well as types of photographs, was inequitable when compared to men. Results of this study showed that women had no photographs attributed to them in the category of (a) competing athlete, therefore portraying to society that previous discussions (Metheny, 1967; Kane, 1996) about the media reporting on women in sex-inappropriate sports, especially in photographs, is still very limited.

Though this study did show that the articles dedicated to women during the 2007 NCAA Division I Basketball tournament reported the athletic accomplishments of women and did not trivialize or discredit their athletic ability, the interest factor of the articles was lost due to lack of personal information related to the women or teams. It may seem a great

stride has been made with the reporting of women's accomplishments on the court, but there are still more advancements to be made and many more steps to be taken before coverage can be considered equitable.

One recommendation for future research that should be addressed is the monetary differences between what men's athletics draws compared to women's. As addressed by Tuggle (1997), sport media sources which depend solely on consumers report what is demanded, and most often it is male dominated sports. Another factor to be addressed in moving toward more equitable sport coverage is to further this study, and see if other women's sports, especially those deemed as sex-appropriate, are also reporting athletic accomplishments.

While athletic accomplishments are being reported, a balance between accomplishments and personal athletic information must be found to attract and connect readers with players and or teams. Potentially, owners, editors and reporters have the ability to change the coverage provided for women's sports. Additionally, whether as commentators or sports writers/editors, more women in the field could potentially decrease the inequitable coverage leading to more interest. More interest generated could in turn lead to more consumer demand, therefore having a significant following could mean higher consumer spending in the area of women's athletics.

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APPENDICES

Table 1				
Frequency Distributions of Text				
Paragraph Category Types				
	Men		Women	
	N	%	N	%
Total paragraphs	428*	…	368	…
Factual information related to athletics	125	29.2	231	62.8
Factual information not related to athletics	6	1.4	3	0.8
Personal information related to athletics	286	66.8	120	32.6
Personal information not related to athletics	9	2.1	10	2.7
Other	2	0.5	4	1.1

* $X^2 = 78.7$, p < .01.

Table 2

Frequency Distributions of Photographs

Photograph Category Types

	Men		Women	
	N	%	N	%
Competing Athlete	8	25.0	0	0
Athlete in competitive context but not competing	16	50.0	1	25.0
Head shot of athlete(s) or coach(es)	5	15.6	3	75
Head shot of persons other than athletes or coaches	1	3.1	0	0
Group shot of persons other than athletes or coaches	1	3.1	0	0
Other	1	3.1	0	0