GENDERED REPRESENTATIONS OF COLLEGE ATHLETES: 
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF MARCH MADNESS

A Thesis

Presented to the faculty of the Department of Psychology
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by
Megan P Polney

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GENDERED REPRESENTATIONS OF COLLEGE ATHLETES:
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by

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Jianjian Qin Ph.D.  

Date

Department of Psychology
The purpose of this study was to examine whether print media portrays men and women athletes in ways that are consistent with traditional gender stereotypes. A content analysis of newspaper articles concerning the 2009 NCAA basketball championship was conducted using articles published by the Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Houston Chronicle, and Chicago Tribune. The results indicate little evidence that men and women athletes are portrayed in a stereotypical manner consistent with their respective genders. These findings contrast with prior research and suggest possible progress towards more gender equality in the representation of women athletes within print media.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Sports are an integral part of American culture and serve to embody the cultural ideals of physical ability and masculinity (Kian, Vincent, & Mondello, 2008). For the female athlete, competing in this male dominated area can be challenging from a social perspective. Society expects women athletes to maintain a stereotypical female gender role even while competing in sports that require masculine traits. Because of this expectation, women athletes do not receive as much media attention, and the coverage they do receive has historically trivialized their abilities or sexualized them (Kian et al., 2008). When the media covers men athletes, their stereotypically masculine traits are highlighted as assets to the sport (Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993). The present research study was designed to look at how the media portrays men and women athletes by examining the language used in print media coverage of college basketball players as well as how these athletes are portrayed in published pictures.

Men athletes naturally fit into masculine sports, which make emphasizing the stereotypical masculine traits in media very easy to do. Women athletes have to contradict their stereotypical feminine role in order to play masculine sports. It could be a challenge for a woman to participate in a masculine sport because of fears of negative societal stigma. The passage of Title IX in 1972 was the first step towards equalizing sports participation between the genders. Title IX prohibited discrimination based on sex
in any educational program that receives federal aid (Hogan, 1979). It therefore bound public institutions to comply and offer equal opportunities for men and women to participate in athletic activities. However, over a decade after the passage of Title IX, there were still large discrepancies in equality in terms of program funding, facilities, and media coverage (Messner, 1988). Even today, research still shows a discrepancy in gender equality, with women not receiving their equal share of sports resources in most organizational communities (Compton & Compton, 2010; Mak, 2006). However, because of Title IX, many more women are taking advantage of the opportunities to participate in sports today and women’s participation in sports has increased significantly over the years. For example, in 1971 and 1972, women made up only 15% of college athletes, compared to accounting for 42% in 2001 and 2002 (Mak, 2006). Full equality in school athletics remains to be achieved, but progress has been made.

While Title IX may have changed the law, and the ability of women to participate in sports, it had little impact on how society views sports. Prior research has shown that despite the intention of Title IX to equalize sports, bias against women athletes is still problematic (Hardin, Simpson, Whiteside, & Garris, 2007). In addition, students who grew up under Title IX tend to view sports as predominantly masculine activities (Hardin & Greer, 2009), and the media tends to perpetuate gender stereotypes that are harmful to women athletes (Duncan & Messner, 1998; Eastman & Billings, 2001; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Sabo & Jansen, 1998).
Media Representation of Athletes

Although women’s participation in sports has increased, recent research suggests the way the media portrays them has not changed much in the last 15-20 years (Hundley & Billings, 2010). The media unwittingly highlights the traditional stereotypical traits of both men and women athletes in order to fit the athletes into their proper social roles. American culture is so saturated with the idea of gender role conformance that it is even in the journalism curriculum. Journalism textbooks published between 1993 and 2003 were found to focus primarily on men athletes both in image and in print (Hardin, Dodd, & Lauffer, 2006).

Media Coverage of Women Athletes

Because competitive sports are still seen as stereotypically male, women athletes do not receive as much media coverage as men athletes (Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Billings, 2008; Duncan & Messner, 1998; Eastman & Billings, 2001; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Koivula, 1999). This may be because publicity of women athletes requires depicting women in a manner contrary to the stereotypical feminine role. It can be argued by devoting less coverage to women’s sports, the media is downplaying the importance of women athletes and upholding the dominant status of men’s sports (Duncan & Messner, 1998). Therefore, reduced coverage of women athletes may subtly reinforce the notion that playing sports is not consistent with traditional gender roles.

Although the amount of coverage for women’s sports substantially increased in recent years (King, 2007; Messner, Duncan, & Cooky, 2003), numerous studies still show it is far from equal to that of men’s sports (Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Billings, 2008;
Eastman & Billings, 2001; Higgs & Weiller, 1994; Koivula, 1999). Within print and televised media, women athletes are consistently given less coverage than men athletes. For example, women’s sports tend to be aired on less prominent sports channels than men’s sports (Hundley & Billings, 2010), and articles written about women athletes tend to be shorter than those written about men athletes (Tuggle, 1997). The focus on men athletics by the media seems to be a function of the societal stereotype that sports are masculine (Hundley & Billings, 2010), and therefore more coverage is given to men athletes who fit into the stereotypical masculine role, rather than women athletes who contradict traditional feminine roles.

An examination of literature suggests that televised coverage of sports has received more attention from researchers than print media, and findings have consistently shown a gender discrepancy. For example, one study taped a national public Swedish sports show for one-year and found that women athletes were covered only 11.7% of the time, with male coverage encompassing the majority of the airtime at 86.7% (Koivula, 1999). In the United States, coverage of the NCAA basketball final four games were taped and transcribed from two major networks (CBS and ESPN). Once transcribed, the researchers found that only 87 of the 272 pages of commentary were about women athletes (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002). Many other studies have been conducted that demonstrate the media’s gross underrepresentation of women athletes in all types of sports (Billings, 2008; Eastman, & Billings, 2000; Higgs, & Weiller, 1994; Messner, Duncan, & Cooky, 2003; Tuggle, 1997).
Print media has not received as much attention from researchers. However, the research that has been published shows a gender discrepancy in coverage, with more print coverage of men’s sports than of women’s sports (Cunningham, & Sagas, 2002; Kensicki & Fink, 2002; Wann, Schrader, Allison & McGeorge, 1998). Print media can show discrepancies in the amount of coverage in different ways. For example Tuggle and Owen (1999) found that the number of quotes in the articles by coaches of men’s sports was much higher than the number of quotes by coaches of women’s sports.

Although more women have become involved in athletic activities, they are still underrepresented in the media. While coverage of female athletes is increasing, it is still not equal to the coverage that male athletes receive. This might be explained by the fact that sports are perceived as a masculine activity, with women seen as intruders into a man’s world. When women are given media coverage, it only highlights their feminine qualities.

**Portrayal of Women Athletes**

Women are supposed to represent the opposite of everything masculine, and therefore are ideally powerless and non-threatening (Hundley & Billings, 2010). This ideal does not exactly fit into the tough competitiveness of a woman athlete. While women athletes perceive themselves as being no less feminine than women who are not athletes (Steinfeldt, Zakrajsek, Carter, & Steinfeldt, 2011), they are often seen by society as neither completely conforming to gender roles nor rebelling against them. However, sports media often uses several techniques to portray women in a stereotypically feminine manner. One way to do this is to de-emphasize their athleticism by objectifying women
in order to fit them into the more socially appropriate gender role of sex object (Hundley & Billings, 2010). This is a way to minimize masculine traits and emphasize the feminine ones. This marginalization of women in sports media appears to be universal across the world (Hundley & Billings, 2010). The media focuses on sexual voyeurism so much so that women athletes are trivialized and sometimes even women fans are sexualized (Messner, et al., 2003). For example, two television commentators covering the 1992 Olympic women’s volleyball games did not mention the volleyball skills of one Dutch player at all, rather they solely focused on the fact that she had posed for an issue of Penthouse magazine and how she should have been a centerfold (Higgs, & Weiller, 1994).

One of the primary ways to focus on women athletes’ appearance and sexualize and/or downplay their athleticism is by publishing photos that represent women athletes in a stereotypically feminine manner. While not all studies show this to be true (Duncan & Messner, 1998), the majority of the research indicates that pictures are the one area where women do often receive equal, if not more, attention than men (Eastman, & Billings, 2000; Crossman, Vincent, & Speed, 2007; King, 2007). However, that attention is not necessarily beneficial to women athletes because often the focus is on their sexual appeal and attractiveness, and they are in poses that often resemble those used in soft-core pornography (Duncan, 1990; Shugart, 2003). In addition, published photos often feature women athletes who conform to traditional standards of feminine beauty. For example, in the 2000 Olympics Amy Acuff was the most photographed woman, not Marion Jones who is the fastest woman in the world. Amy Acuff is a high jumper, who is
6'2”, blonde, and a part-time model, while Marion Jones has a very muscular build that appears very masculine (Bernstein, 2002). In basketball, women are more likely to be pictured off-court, out of uniform, and in less action poses than men (Buysse & Embser-Herbert, 2004; Kensicki & Fink, 2002). One sports reporter tried to defend the media’s position by saying that women athletes want this kind of attention, and flaunt their sexuality with the skimpy uniforms they choose to put on to gain popularity (Knoppers, & Elling, 2004).

Women athlete’s physical appearance is also covered in a negative way in an attempt to trivialize women athletes and refocus the attention away from their athleticism. An example of the media doing this to the point of becoming derogatory occurred during a radio program in which Don Imus referred to women basketball players from Rutgers University as “nappy-headed hos” (Cooky, Wach, Messner, & Dworkin, 2010). Not all women athletes are physically “attractive” in the traditional sense, which makes it more difficult for the media to use their appearance to distract from their skill. Therefore, media may instead focus on the athlete’s background, family, personality, and team orientation. This creates a human-interest appeal to the audience, which downplays the athleticism of the athlete (Higgs & Weill, 1994). Focusing on these aspects of the woman athlete, rather than her skill and athleticism, make her appear “hyperfeminine” and counterbalances the masculinity of the sport as well as help to avoid any confusion about sexual orientation (Lenskyj, 1994).

Another way the media portrays women athletes in a stereotypically feminine manner is to minimize their athletic abilities (or stereotypically masculine behaviors) by
infantilizing them. This could be an unconscious attempt to rectify gender-role conflict. By emphasizing the youth of the women athletes, it serves to make them seem more girl-like and therefore more asexual. For example, women athletes are often referred to as “girls” where men athletes are never referred to as “boys” (Daddario, 1994; Higgs, & Weiller, 1994; Koivula, 1999). One study reported that sports commentators tried to defend their labels by mentioning that the women tennis players were mostly in their teens, while the men tennis players were older. However the mean age for the women was 24, which was two years older than the mean age for the men (Messner, et al., 1993). An underlying implication could be that playing sports is a phase of life and that they have not yet stepped into their role as a “real” woman.

The media also tends to overemphasize women athletes’ stereotypically feminine traits (Duncan & Messner, 1998; Goodman, Duke, & Sutherland, 2002), by describing women athletes in terms of positive consonance, appearance, personality and background (Billings, et al., 2002; Eastman & Billings, 2001). In addition, less strength descriptors and more descriptors of weakness are used for them than men (Higgs, & Weiller, 1994). Studies also indicate the tendency of sports media to emphasize the personal nature of women athletes’ lives, more so then men. For example sports media is more likely to emphasize women athletes’ family life, dating habits, personality characteristics, and their personal history (Eastman & Billings, 2000; Eastman & Billings, 2001; Kensicki & Fink, 2002; Koivula, 1999). In addition, emphasizing an athlete’s team orientation is another way to focus on the stereotypical feminine trait of being other oriented (Daddario, 1994).
When the media does focus on athletic traits of the woman athlete, it tends to do so in a way that minimizes their masculine traits. For example, their athletic successes are often attributed to luck, intelligence, hard work, togetherness, and emotion, rather than innate ability or skill (Billings et al., 2002; Eastman & Billings, 1999; Messner et al. 1993). In contrast, athletic failures are likely to be blamed on personal shortcomings (Daddario, 1994; Messner, et al. 1993). In addition, women’s events are often labeled as the “other” event (i.e. men’s basketball would be referred to as “basketball” where women’s basketball would be referred to as “women’s basketball”), where the men’s events are rarely, if ever, labeled (Higgs, & Weiller, 1994; Hundley & Billings, 2010; Kian, et al., 2008; Koivula, 1999; Sabo, & Jansen, 1998). This “othering” is not necessarily oppressive, when done symmetrically. However, when only the women’s events are being labeled, it presents them as the lesser (Messner, et al., 1993).

Overall, it can be argued that sports media portrays women athletes in ways that emphasize their stereotypically feminine traits and minimize any masculine traits they may be exhibiting. Women athletes’ appearances are often used to further distract from any masculine traits through sexualization or by trivializing their appearance. The media also tends to highlight women athletes’ family life, dating habits, personality characteristics, personal history, while their successes are attributed to external factors rather than athletic ability. This appears to serve to draw the focus away from the athletics and on to the femininity of the woman athlete.
Portrayal of Men Athletes

This gendered language in the media makes no exception for men athletes. Because sports are seen as masculine by nature, it is easy, and seems natural to emphasize the masculine qualities of the man athlete. The athletic man is often seen as the ideal depiction of male youth both in appearance and actions (Sabo & Jansen, 1998). Men athletes are expected to be muscular, with well-developed chest and arm muscles, wide shoulders and a narrow waist (Hundley & Billings eds., 2010). The male gender role requires men to be aggressive and dominant (Sanderson, Heckert, & Dubrow, 2005) which are necessary traits when competing in most sports. The media highlights this raw masculinity and emphasizes their athletic abilities rather than the person, sometimes even comparing athletes to deities or superheroes (Eastman & Billings, 2000).

Men athletes’ failures on the court are usually attributed to factors external to the athlete. For example, when failure occurs, it is usually is attributed not to a deficiency on the part of the athlete, but due to his having faced a more worthy adversary (Daddario, 1994; Messner, et al., 1993). Therefore, sports media tends to portray the failures of men athletes not as a reflection of their true skills, but as caused by some factor other than incompetence (Duncan & Messner, 1998). Sometimes, an error is spun by the media to look like a good thing, such as making it seem as though the athlete’s raw talent got in the way causing him to make the error (Duncan & Messner, 1998), or the athlete’s nervousness is portrayed in a way to make it seem positive and normal (Messner, et al., 1993). When men athletes are successful, their triumphs are often depicted as stemming from their size, strength, instinct, and risk taking, which are all masculine traits
(Billings et al., 2002; Eastman & Billings, 1999). To a large extent, men athletes are absolved of their failures and sometimes even elevated to a supernatural level (Eastman & Billings, 2000), which contrasts with how the successes and failures of women athletes are depicted.

Sports media also tends to emphasize the mental skill and competiveness of men athletes. Men athletes are more likely to cite competition and winning as the most important reason for participating in sports (Lenskyj, 1994), and the media promotes that competition. Men are portrayed as having a strong desire to impose their will on their opponents and as often relying upon mental skill to succeed (Messner et al., 1993). The media also portrays injured men athletes as heroes who do not succumb to injury, but stoically endure the pain and return to the field. Because there is a patriarchal belief that pain is inevitable and that enduring pain enhances one’s character (Sabo & Jansen, 1998), it makes sense for the media to emphasize this quality in men athletes.

Sports media also consistently emphasizes the men image of strength and power, which reinforces the ideal male stereotype. Men athletes are described in “big” terms, with big performances, and even being physically big (Duncan & Messner, 1998). One study found that men were referred to as sports leaders, and were depicted in relationship to power or contact sports more often than women (Hardin, et al., 2006). Billings et al. (2002) found that men athletes were described as much more physical and athletic.

Photos of men athletes also emphasize stereotypical masculine traits. Buysse and Embser-Herbert (2004), found that more men athletes are likely to be shown in uniform, in action poses, and as true athletes (on the course, in uniform, and in action). Other
studies have similarly found that men athletes are likely to be pictured in action (Kensicki & Fink, 2002). When men athletes are being portrayed in pictures, it seems as though that male stereotypes still dominate the media.

Men athletes, like women athletes, are often depicted in a way that is consistent with their gender specific stereotypes. However, it seems to be easier for men to be portrayed in a stereotypically masculine manner because their sports are seen as masculine as well. Since there is no gender role conflict, the media is free to emphasize the athleticism of men athletes. Men athletes can be portrayed based on the stereotypical masculine traits including aggression, dominance, size, strength, instinct, and risk taking.

**The Current Study**

The purpose of this research is to examine the gendered representation of men and women basketball players participating in the 2009 NCAA Basketball Tournament.

A content analysis of newspaper articles published concerning the 2009 NCAA Men’s and Women’s Basketball Tournaments was conducted in order to determine whether men athletes were given more coverage in print than were women athletes. In addition, the research examined whether men and women were represented in terms of stereotypical gender stereotypes. The following hypotheses guided the research.

**Hypothesis 1.** Men athletes will receive more print coverage than will women athletes.

**Hypothesis 2.** Women athletes will primarily be presented in a manner, both in print and in photos, that is consistent with feminine stereotypes.
**Hypothesis 3.** Men athletes will primarily be presented in a manner, both in print and in photos, that is consistent with masculine stereotypes.

**Hypothesis 4.** Men athletes will be primarily presented in a stereotypically masculine manner in contrast to women athletes being portrayed in a stereotypically feminine manner.
Chapter 2

METHOD

Data Collection

A total of 574 newspaper articles (\(N = 574\)) covering the 2009 NCAA men’s and women’s basketball finals from four major U. S. newspapers (\textit{LA Times, New York Times, Chicago Tribune,} and \textit{Houston Chronicle}) were collected electronically via the respective newspaper’s website. There were 98 articles collected that covered the women’s basketball tournament, and 476 covering the men’s basketball tournament. Articles were collected if they mentioned the 2009 Division I NCAA basketball championship tournaments. Collection for the men’s tournament began one day prior to the finals on March 16, 2009 and ended two days after the finals on April 8, 2009. Collection for the women’s tournament began one day prior to the games on March 19, 2009 and ended two days after the championship on April 9, 2009. The articles were collected, using the computer’s copy and paste feature in order to transfer the articles into Microsoft Word so as to preserve the pictures.

Only articles that contained narrative were used in the analysis, while articles that exclusively contained statistical information were excluded. Therefore, 27 men’s articles and 6 women’s articles were excluded from the sample either because they only contained statistical information, or because they only featured narrative concerning basketball coaches, past players, or the United States President. Also, duplicate articles
that were produced by wire services, such as the Associated Press, and published by multiple papers were eliminated. Therefore, a total of 542 articles (449 men’s articles and 92 women’s articles) were included in the sample used for the analysis. See Table 1 for the number of articles used from each of the four newspapers by gender.

Photos from the collected articles were also used in the data analysis. There were a total of 290 photos in the articles, with the men’s articles containing 256 photos, and the women’s articles containing 34 photos. All photos used in the research depicted one or more athletes who played on a team in the tournament. A total of 26 photos from women’s articles and 193 photos from men’s articles photos were used in the analysis. Seventy-one photos were unusable either because they were duplicates used by more than one of the other news articles in the study, or the photo did not depict an athlete.
Table 1

*The Number of Articles Used Based on Gender and Newspaper*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Men’s Articles</th>
<th>Women’s Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston Chronicle</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Tribune</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Category Construction

A priori coding categories were used based upon previous content analyses of sports related media (Billings, Eastman, & Newton, 1998). These categories were a) physicality and athleticism, b) intelligence and mental skill, c) hard work and effort, d) determination and motivation, e) speed, f) positive consonance, g) negative consonance, h) leadership, i) versatility, j) team orientation, k) physical power, l) personality, m) looks and appearance, and n) background. In addition, seven categories were added that addressed a) stereotypical masculine traits, b) stereotypical feminine traits, c) role model, d) positive relationship with coach, e) unusually aggressive behavior, f) future career in professional sports, and g) family. See Table 2 for a detailed breakdown of each code and its operational definition. In addition, the number of words in the articles and article titles and the number of characters in the articles and article titles for each article were counted.

Coding Procedures

Text Coding Procedure

First, the articles were coded for title length and article length. Next, the articles were coded for the categories described above using HyperResearch 2.8 software. During the coding process, the researcher read through each article line-by-line looking for passages that depicted the 21 codes described in Table 3. When a passage that fit one of the 21 codes was found, the passage was highlighted and assigned that code in HyperResearch 2.8.
The articles were read and coded by one researcher twice to ensure the coding was consistent with the operational definitions of the codes. In addition, the researcher checked each relevant passage out of the context of the article to further ensure it was coded properly. Only the text of the articles was coded. The photo captions, titles, and headings were not coded. In addition, only text about current NCAA players was coded, all text about players who had played in prior years was excluded. The coding also focused only on narrative concerning single players, while statements made about the entire team in general were not included in the coding. This was done to better focus on the hypotheses, which were intended to look at the media’s portrayal of players and not entire teams.

The researcher filled out a researcher-designed quantitative coding sheet (Appendix A), from which the data was entered into PASW 18 software for data analysis. The coding sheet contained questions about the makeup of the article itself (number of words in the title, focus of the article, date of publication, etc.), questions about the number of quotations, questions about the references to athletes, and a question about whether or not a picture was included in the article. If an article or picture had a code present at least once, it was assigned a value of ‘1’ and if there was no code present it was assigned a value of ‘0’. Multiple occurrences of the same code in an article were not counted.
Table 2

*Names and Operational Definitions of the Codes for the Text*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicality and athleticism</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete having a natural physical skill or talent that allows him/her to succeed at basketball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence and mental skill</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s skill or successes being due to his/her ability to use his/her head while playing the game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard work and effort</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s exertion to play better/harder, regardless of whether or not the athlete succeeded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination and motivation</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s drive to succeed and win.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s quickness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive consonance</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete performing exceptionally well due to factors other than cited by other codes. E.g. “he/she is on fire”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative consonance</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete performing exceptionally poorly due to factors other than cited by other codes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete as a leader for the rest of the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versatility</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s ability to play in multiple positions, make a variety of shots, or having a breadth of different skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team orientation</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete being a team player, making the play with the help of teammates, or team spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical power</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete dominating an opponent or making a play through the use of strength or size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s personality traits; disciplined, careful, funny, patient, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks and appearance</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s physical appearance or attire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Player’s background</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s past prior to playing college basketball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Name</td>
<td>Operational Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical masculine traits</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete displaying stereotypically masculine traits such as assertive, confident, non-emotional, strong, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical feminine traits</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete displaying stereotypically feminine traits such as passive, emotional, self-critical, graceful, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role model</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete being a person who younger generations can look up to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive relationship with coach</td>
<td>Any mention of the coach and athlete getting along, working well together, or liking one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusually aggressive behavior</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete demonstrating extreme aggressive behavior, such as technical fouls or fighting (verbally or physically).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future career in professional sports</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s potential future in professional basketball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Any mention of the athlete’s immediate family (parents and siblings) or current/past partner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Picture Coding Procedure**

The pictures were coded using a researcher designed coding sheet (Appendix B). The sheet listed questions such as how many athletes were depicted and the gender of the key athletes. In addition, questions more specific to the research hypotheses addressed whether the key athlete was portrayed on or off the court, whether the athlete was in a stereotypically masculine or feminine pose, or whether the athlete was in a dominant pose. A list of operational definitions was also created and used when coding the pictures as shown in Table 3. Many of the pictures portrayed two athletes as very central figures in the image. In these instances, the caption was used to determine which player was the focus of the picture, and the coding was based on that player.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the athlete portrayed on or off court?</td>
<td>The athlete can be in any pose as long as he/she is pictured on the court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the athlete portrayed in or out of uniform?</td>
<td>The athlete can be in any pose as long as he/she is pictured wearing a uniform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the athlete pictured actively playing?</td>
<td>Any in-game/practice where the athlete is on court, playing basketball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the athlete pictured in a submissive/inferior pose?</td>
<td>The athlete is getting the ball stolen, getting lectured by coach, crying, or otherwise being dominated by another player.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the athlete pictured in a stereotypical feminine pose?</td>
<td>Any picture where the athlete is displaying emotionality, compassion, or gentleness. The emphasis is on his/her appearance rather than athleticism. Her clothing may be revealing (sexually appealing), he/she may have family with her, or she could be made-up with styled hair, makeup, nails done etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the athlete pictured in a dominant pose?</td>
<td>The athlete is yelling at someone or showing-up another player by outmaneuvering him. He/she can be pictured in the center of other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the athlete pictured in a stereotypical masculine pose?</td>
<td>Any picture where the athlete is displaying aggression, dominance, agility, or speed. The emphasis will be on those traits. He/she may be dunking, dominating an opponent, or yelling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The sample contained 449 men’s articles and 92 women’s articles. Table 4 provides the mean number of words and characters in the articles and the titles published by each newspaper, as well as the number and percentage of articles from each newspaper.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Article Length by Newspaper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Words in Title</th>
<th>Characters in Title</th>
<th>Words in Article</th>
<th>Characters in Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1197</td>
<td>5884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1231</td>
<td>6262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Tribune</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1037</td>
<td>4949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston Chronicle</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>5687</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Print and Pictorial Coverage

Hypothesis one predicted that men would receive more media coverage than would women. In order to examine this, I first conducted a Chi-square test to examine whether there was a difference in how often pictures were published of women and men athletes. The analysis indicated a significant relationship between these variables, $X^2 (1) = 15.03, p = < .001, \chi^2 = .16$. Articles concerning male athletes (59.0%) were more likely to include a picture of the athlete than were articles written about female athletes (37.0%). Therefore, the data support the hypothesis (see Figure 1).

Next, one-way ANOVAs were performed to examine whether male athletes were given more print coverage than were female athletes. Specifically, I examined whether there were gender differences in regard to number of words and characters in the article title, the number of words and characters in the article, and the prevalence of athlete quotations.

The analysis found no significant differences in the number of words used in titles for the articles concerning male and female athletes, $F(1, 539) = 3.40, p = .06, \eta^2 = .00$. While there were significantly more characters used in the titles of articles written about men athletes than about women athletes, $F(1, 539) = 6.89, p = .009, \eta^2 = .01$, the small effect size indicates this result may not give reliable support to the hypothesis. In addition, the analysis of the number of words used in the articles indicated no significant gender effects, $F(1, 539) = .25, p = .62, \eta^2 = .00$. Likewise, athlete gender did not
significantly influence the number of characters used in the articles, $F(1, 539) = .20, p = .65, \eta^2 = .00$. See Table 5 for the descriptive data.

In order to determine whether there were gender differences in the amount of coverage given to men and women athletes, I also examined whether there were differences in the frequency in which men and women athletes were quoted in the articles. The analysis indicated that 55.7% of the articles written about the men athletes contained quotes from athletes whereas 64.1% of the articles written about women athletes contained athlete quotes. However, this difference was not statistically significant $\chi^2 (1) = 2.26, p = .08$. 
Figure 1. The number of pictures included in articles written about the 2009 Women’s and Men’s NCAA basketball tournament.
Table 5

*Means and Standard Deviations for Article Length*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of words in title</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Tournament</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Tournament</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of characters in title</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Tournament</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>41.82</td>
<td>13.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Tournament</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>37.95</td>
<td>10.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>41.16</td>
<td>12.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of words in article</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Tournament</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>582.62</td>
<td>241.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Tournament</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>568.62</td>
<td>250.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>580.22</td>
<td>243.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of characters in article</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Tournament</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>2796.36</td>
<td>1148.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Tournament</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2736.46</td>
<td>1211.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>2786.17</td>
<td>1158.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gendered Representation of Women Athletes

Hypothesis two predicted that female athletes would primarily be presented in a manner, both in print and in pictures, that is consistent with feminine stereotypes rather than masculine stereotypes. I tested this hypothesis by examining variables related to the pictures and the article text.

Pictorial Representations

A one-sample chi-square test was conducted in order to determine whether women athletes were likely to be photographed in poses that were 1) submissive/inferior, or 2) stereotypically feminine. The analysis indicated the pictures were less likely to portray women athletes’ in submissive poses (15.4%) than in non-submissive poses (84.6%), \( \chi^2 = 12.46, p < .001 \). Likewise, the pictures were less likely to present women athletes in stereotypical feminine poses (15.4%), than non-stereotypical poses, \( \chi^2 = 12.46, p < .001 \). Therefore, the data indicate that women athletes are generally not pictorially presented in a manner that is consistent with traditional feminine stereotypes.

Textual Representations

In order to determine whether the articles’ text presented women athletes in ways that is consistent with traditional femininity I conducted one sample Chi square analyses on the prevalence in which women athletes are described in terms of their 1) hard work and effort, 2) positive consonance, 3) team orientation, 4) personality, 5) background, 6) stereotypical feminine traits, 7) positive relationship with coach, and 8) family. The analysis indicated that the articles were unlikely to emphasize women athletes’ hard work
and effort, $\chi^2=76.69, p < .001$; positive consonance, $\chi^2=47.34, p < .001$; team orientation, $\chi^2=31.69, p < .001$; personality, $\chi^2=69.56, p < .001$; backgrounds, $\chi^2=69.56, p < .001$; stereotypical feminine traits, $\chi^2=69.56, p < .001$; positive relationships with their coaches, $\chi^2=76.69, p < .001$; or family, $\chi^2=66.13, p < .001$. Therefore, the data indicates that women athletes are generally not textually presented in a manner that is consistent with traditional feminine stereotypes. See Table 6 for descriptive data.

I also explored whether women athletes were likely to be represented in a manner that is consistent with traditional masculinity. Thus, I conducted one-sample Chi square analyses on the prevalence in which the athlete was described in terms of 1) physicality and athleticism, 2) intelligence and mental skill, 3) determination and motivation, 4) speed, 5) negative consonance, 6) leadership, 7) versatility, 8) physical power, and 9) unusually aggressive behavior. The analysis indicated that the articles were not likely to emphasize women athletes’ determination and motivation, $\chi^2=47.38, p < .001$; negative consonance, $\chi^2=50.26, p < .001$; leadership skills, $\chi^2=88.04, p < .001$; versatility, $\chi^2=84.17, p < .001$; physical power, $\chi^2=62.78, p < .001$; and unusually aggressive behavior, $\chi^2=72.09, p < .001$. In addition, none of the women athletes were described in terms of intelligence and mental skill, speed, or traditional masculine stereotypes. Thus, analyses could not be conducted on these variables. See Table 7 for descriptive data.

One finding did differ from the majority of the above results. The analysis of how frequently women athletes’ physicality and athleticism was emphasized in the articles indicated that women athletes were similarly likely to have their physicality and
athleticism emphasized as they were to have it ignored in print, $\chi^2 = 1.56, p = .21$. See Figure 2 for the number of articles in which physicality and athleticism was mentioned and was not mentioned.
Table 6

*Percentages of Codes Present in Women’s Articles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>% of Articles Containing Code</th>
<th>% of Articles Not Containing Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard Work and Effort</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>95.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Consonance</td>
<td>14.13</td>
<td>85.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Orientation</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>79.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>93.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>93.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical Feminine Traits</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>93.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Relationship with Coach</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>95.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Relationship</td>
<td>7.60</td>
<td>92.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

*Percentages for Women Athletes and Masculine Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>% of Articles Containing Code</th>
<th>% of Articles Not Containing Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicality and Athleticism</td>
<td>43.48</td>
<td>56.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination and Motivation</td>
<td>14.13</td>
<td>85.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Consonance</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>86.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>98.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versatility</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>97.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Power</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>91.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>94.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. The number of articles that emphasize women athletes’ physicality and athleticism as well as the number of articles which do not.
Gendered Representation of Men Athletes

Hypothesis three predicted that men athletes would primarily be presented in a manner, both in print and in pictures, that is consistent with masculine stereotypes rather than feminine stereotypes. I examined this hypothesis by examining variables related to the pictures and the article text.

Pictorial Representations

A one-sample chi-square test was conducted in order to determine whether men athletes were likely to be photographed in poses that were 1) pictured on court, 2) pictured in uniform, 3) actively playing, 4) in a dominant pose, and the 5) in a stereotypically masculine manner. The analysis indicated that the pictures were more likely to present men athletes on court (87.2%), $\chi^2 = 113.12$, $p < .001$; in uniform (95.8%), $\chi^2 = 174.39$, $p < .001$; actively playing (71.0%), $\chi^2 = 39.24$, $p < .001$; or in a stereotypically masculine manner (62.1%), $\chi^2 = 14.99$, $p < .001$. The analysis of how frequently pictures portrayed men athletes in a dominant pose indicated that men athletes were similarly likely to be pictured in a dominant pose (44.2%) as they were to not be pictured in a dominant pose (55.8%), $\chi^2 = 5.76$, $p = .056$.

Textual Representations

In order to determine whether the articles’ text presented male athletes in ways that is consistent with traditional femininity I conducted one-sample Chi square analyses on the prevalence in which male athletes are described in terms of their 1) intelligence and mental skill, 2) determination and motivation, 3) speed, 4) negative consonance, 5)
leadership, 6) versatility, 7) physical power, 8) stereotypical masculine traits, 9) role model, 10) unusually aggressive behavior, and 11) future career in professional sports.

The analysis indicated that the articles were unlikely to emphasize men athletes’ intelligence and mental skill, \( \chi^2 = 394.75, p < .001 \); determination and motivation, \( \chi^2 = 340.49, p < .001 \); speed, \( \chi^2 = 354.57, p < .001 \); negative consonance, \( \chi^2 = 238.15, p < .001 \); leadership skills, versatility, \( \chi^2 = 406.08, p < .001 \); physical power, \( \chi^2 = 265.09, p < .001 \); stereotypical masculine traits, \( \chi^2 = 437.08, p < .001 \); unusually aggressive behavior, \( \chi^2 = 393.75, p < .001 \); and future career in professional sports, \( \chi^2 = 290.25, p < .001 \). Therefore, the data indicates that men athletes are generally not textually presented in a manner that is consistent with traditional masculine stereotypes. In addition, none of the men athletes were described in terms of role model. Thus, analyses could not be conducted on this variable. See Table 8 for descriptive data.

I also explored whether men athletes were likely to be represented in a manner that is consistent with traditional femininity. Thus, I conducted one-sample Chi square analyses on the prevalence in which the athlete was described in terms of 1) hard work and effort, 2) positive consonance, 3) team orientation, 4) personality, 5) background, 6) stereotypical feminine traits, 7) positive relationship with coach, and 8) family. The analysis indicated that the articles were not likely to emphasize men athletes’ hard work and effort, \( \chi^2 = 417.57, p < .001 \); positive consonance, \( \chi^2 = 277.53, p < .001 \); team orientation, \( \chi^2 = 376.22, p < .001 \); personality, \( \chi^2 = 351.02, p < .001 \); backgrounds, \( \chi^2 = 347.49, p < .001 \); stereotypical feminine traits, \( \chi^2 = 445.01, p < .001 \); positive relationships
with their coaches, $\chi^2 = 441.04$, $p < .001$; or family, $\chi^2 = 358.13$, $p < .001$. See Table 9 for descriptive data.
Table 8
Percentages for Men Athletes and Masculine Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Articles Containing Code</th>
<th>% of Articles Not Containing Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicality and Athleticism</td>
<td>41.87</td>
<td>58.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence and Mental Skill</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>96.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination and Motivation</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>93.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>94.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Consonance</td>
<td>13.58</td>
<td>86.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>97.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versatility</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>97.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Power</td>
<td>11.58</td>
<td>88.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical Masculine Traits</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>99.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusually Aggressive Behavior</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>96.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Career</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>90.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9
Percentages for Men Athletes and Feminine Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Articles Containing Code</th>
<th>% of Articles Not Containing Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard Work and Effort</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>98.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Consonance</td>
<td>10.69</td>
<td>89.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Orientation</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>95.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>94.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>93.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical Feminine Traits</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>99.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Relationship With Coach</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>99.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>94.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing Men and Women Athletes

Hypothesis four predicted that men athletes would be more likely to be portrayed in a stereotypically masculine way than would women athletes. I examined this hypothesis by examining variables related to masculine stereotypes. In order to equalize the discrepancy in the number of articles for men versus women, a random sample of 92 men’s articles was used in the analysis.

Pictorial Representations

In order to compare whether pictures of men athletes were more stereotypically masculine than pictures of women athletes I conducted Chi square analyses on variables that measured whether the athletes were 1) pictured in uniform, 2) pictured actively playing, 3) pictured in a dominant pose, and 4) pictured in a stereotypically masculine pose. The analysis indicated that the pictures were more likely to depict men athletes in a dominant pose, $\chi^2=8.74$, $p = .013$; and in a stereotypically masculine manner, $\chi^2=11.24$, $p = .004$, than women athletes. However, there was no significant differences in whether the pictures depicted men and women athletes actively playing basketball, $\chi^2=5.21$, $p > .05$; or in uniform, $\chi^2=4.76$, $p > .05$. See Table 10 for descriptive data.
Table 10

*Percentage of Pictures that Depict Athletes According to Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictured in Uniform</td>
<td>43.47</td>
<td>29.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictured Actively Playing</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>19.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictured in a Dominant Pose</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>8.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictured in a Stereotypically Masculine Pose</td>
<td>26.08</td>
<td>7.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Textual Representations

In order to compare whether the articles’ text presented male and female athletes differently, I conducted Chi square analyses on how men and women athletes were described in terms of 1) physicality and athleticism, 2) speed, 3) leadership, 4) physical power, 5) stereotypical masculine stereotypes, and 6) future career. I chose this selection of codes for the analysis based on the codes that had the most support from past research as being more masculine. The analysis indicated that print media portrayed men and women athletes differently in regards to their speed $\chi^2 = 6.202$, $p = .013$, with men’s speed being mentioned more than women’s speed. However, the analysis indicated that the articles were not likely to portray men and women athletes differently in terms of their physicality and athleticism, $\chi^2 = .02$, $p > .05$; leadership, $\chi^2 = 1.85$, $p > .05$; physical power, $\chi^2 = .24$, $p > .05$; and future career, $\chi^2 = 3.21$, $p > .05$. In addition, none of the men or women athletes were described in terms of traditional masculine stereotypes. Thus, analyses could not be conducted on this variable. See Table 11 for descriptive data.
Table 11

*Percentage of Articles that Depict Athletes According to Variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physicality and Athleticism</td>
<td>42.39</td>
<td>43.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Power</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>8.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Career</td>
<td>9.78</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of this study was to examine whether print media tends to apply gender stereotypes in its coverage of college basketball players and devote more coverage to male athletes, as prior research has suggested is the case. The analysis of 541 newspaper articles found very little support for any of the four hypotheses, with the exception of men athletes being more likely to be portrayed in a stereotypically masculine manner in pictures.

In regards to the first hypothesis, which purported that there would be more coverage of male athletes than female athletes, there were more articles devoted to coverage of men’s basketball, and they also received more characters in the titles of the articles. However, no difference between the genders was found for the number of words for either title and article or the number of characters in the article. By sheer number of articles, men athletes did receive more coverage. Therefore, the hypothesis was partially supported because men were covered more in general, but when women’s basketball was covered, the articles were given equal attention via length.

There was also no support for hypothesis two, holding that women would be portrayed in a stereotypically feminine manner. The results indicated that the athlete’s physicality/athleticism, which is considered to be a masculine trait, was just as likely to be emphasized as it was to be ignored by the media. However, that result only serves to show that the hypothesis cannot be supported and that female athletes have an equal
chance at being portrayed in a stereotypically masculine manner in their physicality and athleticism.

Similarly, hypothesis three predicted that male athletes would be portrayed in a stereotypically masculine manner. The results indicated that men athletes were not likely to be portrayed in a stereotypically masculine manner in print, but were more likely to be portrayed in a stereotypically masculine manner for four of the five picture variables. There was partial support for hypothesis three. Men athletes do seem to be portrayed in a stereotypically masculine manner in pictures, but not in text.

Hypotheses four looked at a comparison between how the genders were portrayed by the media, and some support was found for men being portrayed in a more stereotypically masculine manner and a more dominant pose in pictures, and their speed being highlighted more in print than were women. This does not provide enough support to completely confirm hypothesis four, because the majority of the variables showed no differences between the genders.

**Implications and Prior Research**

While the passage of Title IX was the first step towards gender equality in sports, studies today still show that the media does not cover men and women athletes equally, and the language of the coverage differs for the genders (Hundley & Billings, 2010). However, the results of this study were not consistent with prior research. Because this study showed that women were not portrayed in a feminine manner, and men were only portrayed in a masculine manner in pictures, it suggests a deviation from the prior body of research. I propose that this could be due to two possible reasons.
The first possibility is that the culture of the United States is slowly shifting to accept the female athlete in a masculine sport. The popularity of women’s basketball has been increasing, as well as more awareness of gender equality in society as a whole. This is evidenced by the greater number of working mothers and stay-at-home fathers, the acceptance of career women, and more women in stereotypically masculine professions. In addition, since Title IX spurred the increase of women participants in sports, it would be logical to assume that after 30 years, society would be more accepting of women athletes. The first step in changing a behavior, is knowing that that behavior needs to be changed. Perhaps, the media is starting to change the way women athletes are portrayed in response to the changing culture.

The second possibility, which is also a limitation of the research, is that only four newspapers were used in the study. All of the papers are from large cities, and are prominent periodicals that circulate widely. Because larger cities tend to have more diversity, they also may be more accepting of equal gender roles. It could be proposed that the workplace culture at these newspapers is more liberal and accepting of women athletes, and therefore affords more equality in the language used when covering the games. Future research should focus more on the changes over time to see if there is truly a shift. Also, future research can look for differences in how different media sources portray the athletes.

This study is an important contribution to this area of research because it shows relatively little gender bias in the media representation of women athletes playing in the NCAA basketball tournament. Although this study does provide some support for the
notion of stereotyping of men athletes in pictures, there was little evidence of gendered stereotyping within textual coverage. Because this study does not show support for women being portrayed in either a masculine or feminine manner, it could be an important piece of information for future research on this topic. If replication can find similar results, then it would be a strong indicator of a change in the way men and women athletes are being portrayed.

**Limitations and Implications**

There were a few areas of weakness in the way this study was executed. There was only one coder of the articles, which could pose a threat to the internal validity of the study. I tried to control for this by recoding the articles a second time to ensure consistency in the coding, as well as checking each code against the operational definition of that code. However, the coding consistency could have been improved with multiple trained coders. This would not have posed a problem for the first hypothesis, since a computer calculated the data.

One limitation of the study was that only one year of NCAA championships was covered. If multiple years of tournament data were collected, then it would provide a more accurate idea of how the media is portraying gender. Future research could look at this in more detail.

Another weakness of the study was the differences in the sample sizes of articles about men and women. With only 98 articles devoted to the women’s games and 453 devoted to men’s games, the data was very skewed. However, the statistical tests used should have been robust enough to reduce the impact of that discrepancy. In addition, the
analysis for hypothesis four used a sample of 98 men’s articles to equalize the sample size. However, this itself could pose a problem, because not every article contained the same number of codes. While a random sample should be representative of the population, it may not have been, and therefore the results could be less reliable as a result.

A final weakness of the study is that only newspapers were used as a venue for data collection. Newspapers tend to write sports stories that are more focused on the facts and which players contributed to the team’s victory or loss, with very few personal stories about the athletes. If sports magazines were included in the analysis, there might have been more of a difference in how the media portrays men and women athletes both in print and in picture. Therefore, the results of this study can only be generalized to newspaper print media, and not the entire body of print media.

This study presents an interesting contribution to the body of knowledge on this topic because the results are inconsistent with past research. Hopefully, future research will have similar results, which could indicate a general shift towards more gender neutral reporting.
APPENDIX A

Quantitative Coding Sheet

1. Document # __________

2. Year of Tournament
   1) 2005
   2) 2007
   3) 2009

3. Newspaper
   1) LA Times
   2) NY Times
   3) Chicago Tribune
   4) Houston Chronicle

4. Tournament
   1) Women’s Tournament
   2) Men’s Tournament

5. Date of Publication __________

6. Article Title

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

7. Reporter’s Name

   __________________________________________________________

8. Reporter gender
   1) Male
   2) Female
   3) Cannot Determine

9. Number of words in title ________________

10. Number of characters in title ___________
11. Number of words in article _______________

12. Number of characters in article ______________

13. Number of lines in article _________________

14. Game Round
   1) Round one
   2) Round two
   3) Quarter finals
   4) Semi-finals
   5) Finals

15. Does the article mainly focus on the coach or the players?
   1) Coach
   2) Players
   3) Both equally

Quotes

16. Number of quotes by coach _________________

17. Number of athletes quoted or interviewed ______________

18. Number of quotes by athletes ____________

References to Athletes

19. Number of times athletes are referred to by their full name (first & last)
    ______________

20. Number times athletes are referred to by their first names ______________

21. Number of times athletes are referred to by their last names ______________

22. Number of references to athlete’s families and significant others (e.g., Mom, husband, siblings, fiancé, spouse) ______________
Pictures

23. Is there a picture?
   1) Yes
   2) No

*Answer the questions on the Qualitative Picture Sheet if there is a picture.*
APPENDIX B

Qualitative Coding for Pictures

24. Does the picture just depict a single athlete?
   1. Yes
   2. No

25. Does the picture depict two or more athletes?
   1. Yes
   2. No

26. How many athletes pictured? _________

27. What is the gender of the central athlete(s) pictured? Note: Exclude crowd, coaches, groups of more than 4, and background athletes/people.

Athlete #1:
   1. Male
   2. Female
   3. Cannot Determine

Athlete #2:
   1. Male
   2. Female
   3. Cannot Determine

Athlete #3:
   1. Male
   2. Female
   3. Cannot Determine

Athlete #4:
   1. Male
   2. Female
   3. Cannot Determine

28. What are the genders of peripheral people in the picture (if applicable)? Note: Exclude crowd, groups of more than 4, and background people.

Person #1:
   1. Male
   2. Female
3. Cannot Determine

Person #2:
1. Male
2. Female
3. Cannot Determine

Person #3:
1. Male
2. Female
3. Cannot Determine

Person #4:
1. Male
2. Female
3. Cannot Determine

29. If a female is pictured is she in uniform?
   1. Yes
   2. No

30. If a female is pictured is she on court?
   1. Yes
   2. No

31. If a female is pictured is she in action (actively playing)?
   1. Yes
   2. No

32. If a female is pictured is she in a submissive/inferior pose?
   1. Yes
   2. No

33. If a female is pictured, does she appear in a stereotypical feminine manner?
   1. Yes
   2. No

34. If a male is pictured is he in uniform?
   1. Yes
   2. No
35. If a male is pictured is he on court?
   1. Yes
   2. No

36. If a male is pictured is he in action (actively playing)?
   1. Yes
   2. No

37. If a male is pictured is he in a dominant pose?
   1. Yes
   2. No

38. If a male is pictured, does he appear in a stereotypical masculine manner?
   1. Yes
   2. No

39. Does the picture just depict the coach(es)?
   1. Yes
   2. No

40. Does the picture depict one player and the coach(es)?
   1. Yes
   2. No

41. What is the race/ethnicity of the athlete(s) pictured?
   1. Black = _______________
   2. White = _______________
   3. Latino = _______________
   4. Asian = _______________
   5. Other = _______________
   6. Cannot determine = _______________

42. If the coach is pictured what is his/her gender?
   1. Male
   2. Female
   3. N/A (no coach pictured)
43. What is the race/ethnicity of the coach pictured?
   1. Black = _______________
   2. White = _______________
   3. Latino = _______________
   4. Asian = _______________
   5. Other = _______________
   6. Cannot determine = _______________
REFERENCES


