AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER COVERAGE IN U.S. PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA DURING THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

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AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER COVERAGE IN U.S. PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA DURING THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

A Thesis

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Abstract

of

AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER COVERAGE IN U.S. PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA DURING THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

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According to research on sports media, reporters have both gender and racial biases. Women are marginalized in the media (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002), and athletes are stereotyped based on race (Banet-Weiser, 1999). These depictions affect the public’s image of athletics and particular athletes. White males are offered both more media attention and more salient coverage (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002). Women are characterized for non-task behaviors (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002), and minority groups’ behaviors are generalized (Banet-Weiser, 1999).

Media coverage of the 2010 Winter Olympics was evaluated to examine ways that athletes are portrayed by gender. The purpose of this study was to assess the coverage of the various types of media on Olympic athletes. An additional purpose was to gain insight into how this coverage affects athlete behavior and the public’s view of athletics. Coverage will be compared to past Olympic commentary. Currently, coverage is not equal quantitatively or qualitatively. More articles are written about male athletes than female athletes, as well as males receiving more photographs and larger photographs.
than females. Females receive less coverage about their athleticism and more coverage about non-task issues, where men are covered for their athletic accomplishments.

Overall, the findings showed that male athletes received more coverage in terms of number of articles and number of photos. Male athletes accounted for 62.45% of total articles and females received 37.55%. Furthermore, males received more task related coverage than non-task coverage, compared to females who received more non-task related coverage than task related coverage. Males received 1.53 times as many photographs as females. Males also had a higher percentage of action photos of total male photographs compared to the percentage of action photos for females out of total female photographs.

__________________________, Committee Chair
Maureen Smith, Ph.D.

__________________________
Date
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

The Olympic Games are of much political and social significance. People of varying economic, social, and racial backgrounds find a common ground when supporting their home nation during the Games (Billings, 2008). Countries come together every four years to compete and honor the tradition that accompanies this festival of sports. Dick Ebersol, chairman for NBC sports, stated that “the Olympics…are the one thing that still does put (the whole family) together in front of the television set” (Billings, 2008, p. 160). Regardless of medal count, it is an honor for an athlete to represent their country during the competitions. For many countries, the Games are more than just sport, they are an opportunity to raise the political standing of their nation (Espy, 1979). The diversity that is inherent within the Olympic Games allows for analysis of gender, nationalistic, and ethnic portrayals within Olympic media coverage (Billings, 2008).

Fewer countries participate in the Winter Games as compared to the Summer Olympic Games, due to the climate in many tropical countries. Currently, the Winter Games are conducted separately from the Summer games and are celebrated on alternating even years. The 2010 Winter Olympic Games will feature 15 sports and 23 countries. This year there were 2,622 athletes. Males typically have received a significantly larger amount of coverage as compared to women during the Winter Olympic Games (Billings & Eastman, 2003). Males have also been afforded more
opportunities within the athletic competitions. For example, women cannot participate in all of the sports afforded to men. Women are not allowed to participate in the ski jumping competition during the Olympics. Cross-country skiing, figure skating, ice hockey, Nordic combined, ski jumping, and speed skating have been competed at every Winter Olympics since 1924. Other Winter sports have been added as the Olympics have progressed.

Ski jumping is not the only sport that has discriminated against women. Biathlon, for example, was an Olympic sport for men in 1960, but women could not participate in the event until 1992. Women still are not afforded opportunities to compete in the Nordic combined event. As well, the sports that include both men and women have tailored events for women, allowing women less opportunity. The bobsleigh has the men competing in two and four-person bobsleds, where the women only participate in the two-person format. Women are slowly being included in more events during the Winter Olympic Games, but participation is still favored toward men.

A majority of sport coverage is directed toward White males in athletics (Urquhart & Crossman, 1999). Currently, the common trend is that males receive approximately 60% of coverage, where women receive 40%. Females have received less coverage and more coverage about their lives outside of athletics (Urquhart & Crossman, 1999). Stories about females growing-up and bonding with their families were shown more often than stories about their training and athletic accomplishments (Urquhart & Crossman, 1999). Males received coverage based on their sport and their athletic qualities. Females have also been subjected to gender norms, as there are many
barriers keeping women from progressing in sport and stereotypes dictate what a female athlete should be. According to Urquhart and Crossman (1999), females were predominantly covered in sports media performing in “feminine” sports, like figure skating or gymnastics. Contact sports have virtually been left-out of coverage on women.

In the media, athletes are described based on gender and ethnic norms. Black athletes are often acknowledged for their strength and natural talent, while White athletes were praised for their hard-work and intellect (Banet-Weiser, 1999). Many studies have shown that gender stereotyping and racial discrimination are rampant in our society (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Billings & Eastman, 2003). Sport coverage is guilty of following these trends and marginalizing select groups of people based on gender and/or race. Contradictory messages surround women and sports. The media actively promotes this and other gender ideologies, contributing to the popularity of an event, or the disproportional amount of men to women’s televised sports.

The Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles (1999) found that women’s sports were underreported in a six-week study of early evening and late-night television sports news. Three Los Angeles network affiliates were sampled, and men’s sports received 88.2 % of the airtime, 3.1 % was on gender neutral topics, and women only received 8.7 % of coverage.

Purpose of Study

This study will examine media coverage of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. Researchers believe that sport can influence the way cultures are portrayed on a global level (Williams, 1994). The Winter Olympic Games are a multi-sport event held
every four years, featuring winter sports held on snow or ice, such as hockey or skiing.

The purpose of this study is to assess the quantitative and qualitative coverage that the media provides for Olympic athletes based on gender. Media coverage from several print and electronic sources covering the 2010 Winter Olympics will be analyzed to generate themes and trends. The researcher will examine how the media portrays American female athletes, and male athletes, that are present in media coverage on the 2010 Winter Olympics.

**Significance of Study**

This study will provide information regarding how the media currently covers athletes. Research has shown, through past media coverage analyses, that differential coverage occurs at most sport levels. Furthermore, most literature on sport media coverage focuses on televised media, where this study will provide a base for trends occurring in the print and electronic sport media.

**Delimitations**

1. This study examined written and electronic media only, televised coverage was not included.

2. Information within sources chosen for this study will be gathered twice daily during the specified time frames.

**Limitations**

1. The times of the events, number of Americans in an event, and/or the sport event itself may affect coverage.

2. Multiple events may be at the same time, which could affect coverage.
3. Televised events may affect what written and electronic media is exposed to, influencing the stories for certain events.

4. U.S. coverage will tend to focus on U.S. athletes.

**Hypotheses**

1. Males will receive 60% of print and electronic media, compared to 40% for women.

2. Males will receive longer articles than female athletes.

3. Males will be given 60% task-related comments compared to female athletes, who will receive only 40% task-related comments.

4. Males will have one and a half times as many photos and much larger photos than females.
Over the course of history sport has predominantly been associated with men and varying forms of masculinity (Mangan, 1992; Cahn, 1994). Sport was designed to accentuate strength, speed, power, and quickness. In general, these traits are historically masculine. Sport was not valued in society by women until recently. Following history, the media has been found to substantially help sustain this gender order (Daddario, 1997; Duncan & Messner, 2000; Eastman & Billings, 2000, 2001; Pedersen, Whisenant, & Schneider, 2003; Pirinen, 1997; Vincent, Imwold, Johnson, & Massey, 2003). Sports broadcast commentary literature indicates that the coverage on athletic performance about men and women is implicated through the language of gendered stereotypes about the respective athlete and the respective sport (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002).

Media Coverage of Sports

Media meanings and interpretations have been analyzed within the context of sport in many different aspects (Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991). Both quantitative and qualitative research has been conducted on media coverage of athletes. Amount of coverage of particular athletes and sports, as well as quality of coverage, discloses the media biases occurring in sport coverage. Quantitatively, a researcher can examine running time of a segment, number of slow-motion replays, and onscreen statistics. Qualitatively one can look at narratives from the sports commentators.
Sport is important in most cultures and the media is a powerful medium dictating and shaping human thought. Both racial and gender bias arises from stereotyping based on characteristics of one or a few individuals and describing an entire group from that stereotype. Researchers have examined how sport participation is considered socially unacceptable or acceptable for females based on how each sport conforms to traditional images of appropriate feminine behavior (Kane, 1988; Koivula, 1995; Rowe, 1998). Cultural norms also feed into these “appropriate” behaviors that female athletes are supposed to abide by. Different cultures have different perceptions of what is acceptable behavior for females in regard to sport.

Perception of Gender in Sport Media

Gender stereotyping has been studied extensively in competitive sport. Media production and bias in sports events has been studied by scholars to understand how the press shapes public interpretation and perception of gender participation in sport (Daddario, 1994, 1997; Eastman & Billings, 1999; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Higgs & Weillier, 1994; Toohey, 1997; Tuggle & Owen, 1999). Sport reporters must be aware of the criticisms of gendered reporting, while avoiding paranoia about using words that may be considered to be inappropriate for one gender or another (Billings, 2008). Many studies have focused on elite competitions, such as the Olympics, for their data.

The media thus has the power to frame events, purposefully shaping their broadcasts to appeal to certain audiences. Electronic media is often the form of broadcast shaping sporting imagery, narratives, and competitions, for the enjoyment of fans (Stevenson, 2002). Global television has the power to deliver sports to mass audiences,
some of whom are not exposed to sports in any other form. Gender bias in televised sports broadcasts are documented in recent literature on the topic (Daddario, 1994; Eastman & Billings, 1999, 2000; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Tuggle, 1997; Tuggle & Owen, 1999). Often, sports are changed, not the media, to meet television demands for viewers (Stevenson, 2002). For example, there is pressure to reduce the Men's Grand Slam tennis matches from five to three sets, making it more appealing to viewers. NBC and CBS used this, among other strategies, to package broadcasts for a target audience (Daddario, 1997). CBS developed an “event management” strategy where they showed Olympic events according to their perceived entertainment value, rather than the real-time chronological occurrence (Daddario, 1997). CBS was aware of the results prior to an evening's telecast, and could provide more air time to events in which athletes from the United States won medals. NBC opted to highlight the “drama” of the Summer Games with special interest on the “heroic quest of the athlete” (Daddario, 1997).

The mass media is responsible for these broadcast strategies, along with being a willing enabler of gender discrimination in sport. A dual communication exists, with one aspect being masculine, focusing on athletics being played at the highest level, with the other aspect of femininity targeting a niche audience, and continually reinforcing the “supposedly crucial biological differences” between females and males (Williams, Lawrence, & Rowe, 1985) in U.S. print (Adams & Ruggle, 2004; Claringbould, Knoppers, & Elling, 2004; Daddario, 1992; Fuller, 2006; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Theberge, 1991; Tuggle & Owen, 1999).
Women. Modern sports have been set-up in ways that systematically discriminate against women through the separation of the sexes into descriptions such as dominant and inferior, powerful and weak, aggressive, and pretty (Davis, 1997; Jones et al., 1999; Nelson, 1994; Toohey & Veal, 2000; Tuggle et al., 2002; Ward, 2004). Toohey and Veal (2000) claim that gender disparity in sport has been based on morally and scientifically based assumptions that “women are physically inferior to men and that it is unbecoming for them to indulge in certain activities, many Olympic sports being included on the list of inappropriate pastimes” (p.179). Title IX was implemented in the US in 1972 with the aim of eliminating sexual discrimination in school-based athletic programs receiving federal funds (Billings, 2008). However, there was and still is a notable discrepancy between female participation in sport and the portrayal of girls and women within media coverage. For example, ESPN’s SportsCenter routinely focuses on women’s athletics less than two percent of the time (Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Eastman & Billings, 2000). Gender-role expectations and gender-related stereotypes have been present for a long time, making change difficult (Eagly, 1987; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002; Billings & Eastman, 2003). Market forces are accountable for under-representation of women’s sports on television or any other media source (Hilliard, 1984; Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002). Images or discussion of women athletes is almost entirely void in sport programs (Messner, Dunbar, & Hunt, 2000). Advertisements for sport programs are also lacking women and are geared toward a “man’s world”. Research has shown that women almost never appear in commercials, and if they do, they are in the company of men (Messner, Dunbar, & Hunt, 2000). Of all the commercials in Messner, Dunbar, and
Hunt’s study (2000), 38.6 % portrayed only men. Nearly all of the 91 commercials that portrayed no people included a male voice-over (Messner, Dunbar, & Hunt, 2000). Within the commercials that do portray both men and women, women are portrayed stereotypically and often have very minor roles.

The bias that occurs in sport media is largely due to corporate businesses and financial concern. When portraying sport, companies consider profit and produce what sells. Society repeatedly focuses more on male sports, so that is what is shown within the media. Companies do not focus on the just social significance of a situation. However, without representation, women's sports will not reach the level of male sports. Coakley’s (2004) study highlighted the profound role that the media plays with regard to gender, stating that “seeing women athletes on television and reading about them in newspapers and magazines encourage girls and women to be active as athletes themselves” (p. 244).

Women are also shown as sex symbols when they do appear on sports programs, being portrayed as masculinity-validating props, cheering men on (Messner et al., 2000). For example, “X-sports” on Fox Sports West used a woman in a bikini as a hostess to welcome the audience back after each commercial, as the camera moved provocatively over her body. Women do not narrate sporting events for men, they carry beer and wear bikinis (Messner et al., 2000).

Pictures emphasizing a woman’s attractiveness and sex appeal replace articles and photographs of women participating in athletics (Eastman & Billings, 2000). Women receive more photographs than articles, suggesting a bias toward using pictures of females to attract attention without having to provide information about women's sports
or athletic talent. To attract media attention, women’s sports have adopted sexy outfits to
compete in (Stevenson, 2002). For example, tennis has adopted short, revealing tennis
skirts for female players. Recently, female beach volleyball athletes have begun to wear
skimpy bikinis during competition.

Women “are still apologizing for their competitive drive by dressing and acting
like girls” (Nelson, 1998, p. 147). The media focuses on how women act and dress
versus their level of performance, criticizing them if they dress outside feminine norms
(Nelson, 1998). Nelson (1998) found that women have to look pretty and act
unthreatening, being strong but feminine. According to Kian, Vincent, and Mondello
(2008), if a woman is strong, it is not her own right, it is referenced that she attained these
skills by playing against boys as a child or in competitive sport against adult males.

Women are marginalized in the media by the use of stereotyped adjectives and
phrases used to describe female athletes, undermining athletic achievements carried out
by women (Daddario, 1994; Halbert & Latimer, 1994; Higgs & Weiller, 1994). The
media also chooses which events to use for prime-time coverage, choosing mainly
popular male sports, with the rejection of other events, based on viewer demand.
Women’s events receive substantially less time than men’s events, which is shown in
many research studies (Eastman & Billings, 1999). Females also are more likely to be
shown in individual rather than team sports (Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991).
Tuggle and Owen (1999) found that NBC gave women’s team sports 43 percent of
coverage and 57 percent coverage to men’s team sports in the 1996 Atlanta Summer
Olympics. Women are shown in figure skating, gymnastics, or any other sport that is traditionally “feminine”.

The media commentators tend to not take women’s sports as seriously as men’s sports, reinforcing male superiority (Bishop, 2003). Even when discussing women’s athletics, commentators mention men’s tournaments, teams, coaches, and players (Kian, Vincent, & Mondello, 2008). Differential language used by sports commentators has encouraged stereotypes about athletic gender roles surrounding athletic performance (Billings, Halone, & Denham, 2002). Koivula's (1999) study found a language bias against women athletes, noting that females were often referred to as “girls”, by commentators narrating events. Eastman and Billings's (1999) study of the Olympic Games found that language across sport commentators in all three Olympic telecasts were significantly different in “its characterization of the attractive nature of female athletes”. Commentary surrounding the strength of male athletes accounted for more than double the comments about the strength of their female counterparts (Eastman & Billings, 1999). There is a strong language bias against female athletes (Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993; Koivula, 1999).

In general, women receive more attention for their non-sport activities, while men are known for their athleticism. Women are often displayed as homecoming queen, student government representative, mother, wife, or Dean’s list honoree, versus being shown for their athleticism (Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991). Society seems very threatened by the fact that women could be men’s physical equals; female athleticism is threatening to male dominance. The news and media do not reflect the recent success of
women in athletics. Although females participate in sport at a higher level, competing in many more sporting events than the past, sport coverage does not reveal this. Women’s sports have not gained a permanent spot on the public’s agenda (Bishop, 2003). It is often debated whether there would be a significant increase in televised media if viewers had a higher demand for female sports. However, television broadcasts do not air women's sports often, so nobody has the opportunities to watch, or gain the interest necessary to make it a demand.

Males. The media does not always present a fair and pleasant picture for males though. The televised coverage found to be most watched by young audiences has been analyzed by researchers, including the commercials, pre-game, halftime, and post-game shows. The following programs have had extensive coverage analyzed: SportsCenter on ESPN, Extreme sports on ESPN and Fox Sports West, professional wrestling Monday Night Nitro on TNT, WWF Superstars on USA, NBA play-off games on TNT and NBC, NFL Monday Night Football on ABC, and Major League Baseball on TBS (Messner et al., 2000).

Both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that televised sports and their accompanying advertisements present boys with a narrow scope of what is masculine, known as the Televised Sports Manhood Formula (Messner et al., 2000). Ten distinct themes were identified to make up the Televised Sports Manhood Formula (Messner et al., 2000). The ten themes are as follows; white males are the voices of authority, sports is a man's world, men are fore grounded in commercials, women are sexy props or prizes for men's successful sport performances or consumption choices, whites are fore
grounded in commercials, aggressive players get the prize; nice guys finish last, boys will be (violent) boys, give up your body for the team, sports is war, and show some guts!.

Young boys are presented with these biased views of what manhood means and are rarely exposed to women and sport.

So, despite more coverage, males are also subjected to stereotypes and “norms”. Men are taught to be aggressive, not passive, and sport commercials are designed to poke at male insecurities, getting them to buy products making them the “ideal man” (Messner et al. 2000). This aggressive stereotype can lead to many problems, apart from labeling. Men who remove themselves from a game due to injuries are looked upon as weak and questions are raised about their manhood (Messner et al., 2000). For example, a National Hockey League star goalie sat out a game due to a groin injury and *SportsCenter* asked, “Could the dominator be soft?” (Messner et al., 2000). It is not healthy that our society would permit an athlete to injure themselves just for the sake of their “manhood”. The media does not cater to all men, it defines one type of man, and makes fun at anyone not fitting that masculine stereotype. The message for boys is that a real man is “strong, tough, aggressive, and above all, a winner in what is still a Man’s World” (Messner et al., 2000).

It is necessary to observe that most play-by-play commentators, sports writers, and announcers are white males (Nelson, 1991; Messner et al., 2000; Sabo, Jansen, Tate, Duncan, & Leggett, 1996). In general, women and Black males rarely appeared as the main commentators for sporting events, according to Messner et al. (2000). This finding alluded to several generalities among most of the research. For example, announcers
commonly had a laissez-faire attitude about male fighting in athletics, writing it off as “boys will be boys”, something that would not be tolerated in women’s athletics (Messner et al., 2000). For example, SportsCenter showed NBA centers, Robinson and O’Neill exchanging forearm shoves, and the commentators said “much love”. Additional media coverage focuses on similar issues in regards to race and ethnicity.

Media Coverage of the Olympics

The Olympics, a two-week competition of elite-level athletes, provides researchers with an event to analyze sport media, as media sources are covering the same athletes for two weeks. An accurate assessment of trends and generalizations can be concluded at the culmination of the Games. The Olympic Games are viewed and respected by millions, and the media coverage reaches a wide and diverse audience (Higgs, Weiller, & Martin, 2003). Research has shown that the media portrays Olympic athletes and sports differently based on gender and ethnicity of the participants. Furthermore, Olympic media coverage differs from that of other sport coverage. The Olympics are filled with drama and stories, where narratives are created to attract nontraditional sports fans who watch the Olympics because of its “transcendent nature” (Billings et al., 2008).

The Olympics started in 1896 with no female participants. Increasing participation rates of women in the Olympic Movement as both leaders and participants has been a long and arduous process (Zurn, Lopiano, & Snyder, 2006). The International Olympic Committee has made the movement for women’s participation in the Olympic Games one of its major concerns (Zurn, Lopiano, & Snyder, 2006). The International
Olympic Committee has taken the role “to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures, with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women” (Olympic Charter, Rule 2, paragraph 7, 2004). In the 2004 Olympics, nine of the 201 participating countries did not include women on their teams. In the 1992 Barcelona Games, there were 159 all-male events compared to only 86 all-female events. These numbers do not show that men are more successful, or that the lower percentage of female participants is warranted.

Currently, within Olympic coverage, there is still a high level of coverage toward men’s sports and male athletes (Eastman & Billings, 2000). The media is increasingly improving the amount and type of coverage of female athletes, but there is a very large gap between male and female sports. Both the Winter and Summer Olympic Games offer more sports for men than women. Women do not have as many events as males to compete in, so do they do not receive the same amount of coverage. Softball, an event providing 120 slots for female athletes, was dropped from the Games after 2008. Wrestling only has four women’s weight classes, where the men have 14. Boxing only has events for men. The International Olympic Committee not only grants men sports more rights, it is a male dominated committee, with only 16 of the 115 members being women.

NBC’s Tom Brokaw stated “that the gender gap grows smaller every day and NBC’s Olympic coverage has helped narrow that gap” (Ebersol & Roy, 1996). Several sports are close to equal as far as gender of participants is concerned, affording women more coverage time. With the Olympics being such a huge sporting event, they have the
power to influence the media to become more equitable towards female athletes.

Women’s sports received little attention prior to the Olympic Games. This has left commentators with little knowledge about female athletes. The media has the power to influence gender gaps in a positive light and much catch-up is warranted.

With the Olympics including athletes from many different countries, research can be concluded about the treatment of athletes based on ethnicity. The success or failure of an athlete has been researched and analyzed across many Olympic Games. American athletes are more likely than foreign athletes to be depicted as succeeding because of intense concentration (Billings, 2008). Athletes competing for the US received comments such as “on a mission” and “another determined effort for this US skier”. Foreign athletes, in contrast, were shown as lacking focus with comments such as “forgot what the phrase of music was”, “confused”, and “distracted” (Billings, 2008). These differences were shown during the 1996, 2004, and 2006 Olympic Games. US athletes who fail to perform as expected are described in derogatory terms, such as “physically under par”, “not technically sound”, and even “would be a shock if she could contend!” (Billings, 2008). For those athletes competing outside of the US, supreme athletic ability was the reason given for their success.

*Summer Olympics*

The Summer Olympics house more events and more athletes than the Winter Olympic Games. The Summer Olympic Games are intensely covered by the media, which unfortunately falls to stereotyping athletes based on race and gender. Studies have been conducted on many of the Summer Olympic Games.
Higgs and Weiller (1994) found that less than half of the coverage of the 1992 Summer Olympics went to women athletes, as 56 percent of all clock time was devoted to male sports. This is proportionate to events and athletes competing. However, the coverage was also skewed for women sports, highlighting physically attractive sports (diving, swimming, and gymnastics) rather than contact sports (Eastman & Billings, 2000). Kane (1989) found that “socially acceptable women’s sports” (p. 61) received the most coverage. Not only do women receive less coverage, of the coverage they receive, a significant amount is stereotyping and irrelevant to the athlete's athletic accomplishments.

Research was also conducted during the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, comparing the televised media coverage to that of the 1992 Olympics (Higgs, Weiller, & Martin, 2003). With increased focus on women’s sports and women athletes it was expected that the coverage of the 1996 Games would be less stereotyped and gender hierarchical than the broadcasts in 1992 (Higgs et al., 2003). This was the “year of the women,” women’s sports were just as prominent on television as their male counterparts (Eastman & Billings, 1999). Tuggle and Owen (1999) found that the gap closed slightly in the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympics, with a 53/47 percent split for male coverage versus female coverage.

During the 1996 Olympic Games, NBC alone had over 150 hours of coverage. Print media critics found that NBC blurred the line between fact and fiction and between athletics and soap (Borcila, 2000). Reporters seemed to forget that the Olympics are still supposed to be news. More men were still used as on-camera sources and most media announcers were male (Tuggle & Owen, 1999). However, research showed an
improvement in the way female athletes were presented from 1992 – 1996 (Higgs et al., 2003). Compared to previous studies (Higgs & Weiller, 1994), results show that women were granted more televised media coverage in the 1996 Olympics than men in same-sport activities. Most profound, coverage for women increased in team sports of basketball (by 26%) and volleyball (by 69%), whereas these same sports saw a decrease in time allotted for men (Higgs et al., 2003). However, apart from those specific team sports, coverage focused on individual sports for women, excluding team events (Tuggle & Owen, 1999). Men’s team competitions, in general, received more coverage than women’s team events. Women participating in sports involving power or physical contact also received almost no attention (Tuggle & Owen, 1999). Women were only covered in “socially acceptable” sports and were covered much less than their male counterparts.

More than one third of the Atlanta athletes were women and “there’s no doubt the Atlanta Games catapulted women’s sports to a new level of interest” (Coffey, 1996, p. 41). NBC’s network was cognizant of the new era and gender equity was on the forefront of their agenda (Eastman & Billings, 1999). Coverage for both men and women were virtually identical in the 1996 Olympic Games. Gender parity does not completely diminish gender bias and much disparity in coverage of women’s sports still existed. Commentators knew less about female athletes and were more prepared to cover men’s sports (Eastman & Billings, 1999). Mention of male athletes was also greater. The men’s teams and athletes received more task-related coverage than most women athletes or women’s events (Eastman & Billings, 1999). Even in the “year of the women,”
women athletes and women sports were not mentioned more often than in the 1998 or 1994 Games.

Higgs and Weiller (1994) showed that although women have increasingly more coverage in the Olympic Games, the coverage of the 1992 Games was very edited and biased. Personalities are the foci, versus athletic ability, when portraying women’s sports. Slow-motion replays were shown more frequently in men’s games (four per game) than in women’s games (three per game), but still, there was an improvement from the 1992 Games (Higgs et al., 2003). Coverage of women focused on individual sports, excluding coverage of team sports for women (Tuggle & Owen, 1999). Men’s team sports (57%) had substantially more coverage than women’s team sports (43%), and women’s sports that involve power or physical contact received almost no attention (Tuggle & Owen, 1999). Prime coverage was given to “feminine” women’s sports (Eastman & Billings, 2001).

Tuggle and Owen (1999) found that there was a higher frequency of task-relevant comments when females were playing female-appropriate sports (57.1%). When females played male-appropriate sports they received only 36.9% task-relevant comments. Female athletes in typical masculine sports were described by print media using male-to-female comparisons 20.8% of the time and little coverage was on actual athlete performance (Jones, Murrell, & Jackson, 1999). Print media on females participating in feminine sports reinforced female stereotypes (Jones et al., 1999). The frequency of such comments was 57.6% for male appropriate sports and 66.7% for female appropriate sports. Female athletes participating in male-appropriate sports were covered on
performance-irrelevant dimensions, despite their superior performance levels. Task-relevant aspects of female performance were not portrayed (Jones et al., 1999).

The Summer Olympics in 1996 were a landmark for women’s athletics. The Summer Games of 1996 honored gold medals for the women’s basketball, gymnastics, soccer, softball, and synchronized swimming teams. The athletes from these winning teams received a plethora of national media attention. Although these teams received attention, however, it was not always in regards to their athletic accomplishments. Men’s sports still received more sport-related coverage and men’s sports received more televised commentary. This held true in the 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000 Olympics.

Billings (2007) found that a majority of the coverage of females in the 2004 Games included sports involving swimsuits or leotards. Although coverage is increasingly becoming more task-related, women still receive less coverage and sexist themes emerge in articles and photographs about women. Recently, results show that the gap between women and men’s sports clock-time is widening (an 8.4 % differential compared to a 4.6 % differential) from the 2008 Beijing Olympics compared to the 2004 Athens Games (Billings, Angelini, & Duke, 2010). This data was collected from 74.5 hours of NBC’s 2008 prime time Olympic telecasts. Men’s sports received 54.2 % of the overall coverage, where women’s sports received just 45.8 % of the clock-time. More than four extra hours were devoted to male athletes versus females (Billings et al., 2010).
**Winter Olympics**

The first Winter Olympic Games were held in 1924 and included six sports and 16 events (Zurn, Lopiano, & Snyder, 2006). Women at this point were only included in individual and mixed pair figure skating. It was not until 1936 that Alpine skiing was added as the second sport for females (Zurn et al., 2006). Currently, of the events women participate in, 11 appeared later than the men’s original event debuted, 17 appeared at the same time as the men’s event, and just two appeared before the men’s reciprocal event (Zurn et al., 2006). The Olympic Winter Games have an estimated audience of 2 billion people, making it the most widely viewed forum for winter sports (USA Weekend, 2006). The media coverage of women participating in the 2006 Winter Olympics exceeds daily US print and electronic media coverage (Zurn et al., 2006). Editorial and photographic coverage by the *New York Times* provided 38.2% coverage for editorials and 36% coverage for photographs of women (Zurn et al., 2006). Furthermore, the average daily US editorial was only 8% for women in sports.

The Winter Olympics are only one quarter the size of the Summer Olympics, so often do not receive the same coverage. Women are underrepresented in the Winter Olympics and the number of female Olympic Winter Games participants and the number of opportunities to medal within those events has yet to equal the number of male medals or participants (Zurn et al., 2006). Small increases in participation numbers have attempted to “catch up” women’s participation, but men’s events and participation opportunities have also continued to increase, perpetuating the participation gap. It took 28 years for the number of women participants in the Winter Olympic Games to grow by
10 % (1924 – 1952) (Zurn et al., 2006). The next 10 % increase in women participation took 40 years (1952 – 1992), where the following was only 6 years (1992 – 1998). Since 1998, the percentage of female participants has not increased significantly (Zurn et al., 2006).

Commentators and media continue to portray women in a negative light and favored male sports in several studies conducted on Winter Olympics. Urquhart and Crossman (1999) found that articles were written by male reporters almost six times as often as female reporters. Announcers were found to apologize more for poor performances by male athletes than female athletes (Daddario, 1994), putting male sports in a higher regard and emphasis. For example, during the Torino Games, American snowboardcrosser, Lindsey Jacobellis, was closing in on a gold medal and made a foolish decision to flaunt her victory with a trick, causing a crash before the finish line, and no gold medal (Billings, 2008). She was interviewed and the reporter had a gentle tone, opening with a question, “what were you thinking?” One wonders if he would have been as compassionate if this had been a male snowboarder; his response was that his genteel nature was attributable to her youth, not gender (Billings, 2008).

Urquhart and Crossman (1999) conducted a study looking at the Winter Olympic Games from 1924 to 1992 and found that women received less print space from 1924 to 1960 and more from 1964 to 1992. However, women athletes were under-represented compared to their male counterparts, as male athletes were written about four times as much as women, and photographed three times as much (Urquhart & Crossman, 1999). Men were reported more often than women with respect to every theme of Winter
Olympic article (Urquhart & Crossman, 1999). Women were only depicted in “sex appropriate” sports (Urquhart & Crossman, 1999). Not only were women sports trivialized, underrepresented, displayed as gender-appropriate, but female sport coverage also tends to be located in the latter pages of sports sections. The articles were predominantly written by male reporters.

Receiving little coverage, female athlete role models are almost non-existent (Urquhart & Crossman, 1999). Role models are linked to interest in sport, so this trend could likely lead to fewer competitors, meaning even less sports coverage. This is detrimental to the world of sports, especially when the goal of advocacy groups for women’s sports is to grant equality of opportunity for women athletes (Urquhart & Crossman, 1999).

The use of condescending descriptors about female athletes has been identified in sports and gender literature (Daddario, 1994). In a study conducted on the 1992 Winter Olympics, women were often called “enchanting” or “beautiful” (Daddario, 1994). There was a strong emphasis on women’s familial roles, specifically on their roles as their mothers’ daughters (Daddario, 1994). Bronze medalist Nancy Kerrigan and her mother were high-lighted during this Olympic coverage. Mrs. Kerrigan is legally blind, so she can see Nancy “jump and spin”, but cannot see her face while she performs (Daddario, 1994). The camera cut to a close-up of Mrs. Kerrigan crying while watching her daughter, whom people told her “Nancy’s beautiful” (Daddario, 1994). Coverage of Winter Olympic female athletes often included footage of the athletes’ family (Daddario, 1994). When a female athlete receives attention about success in her sport, it is attributed
to the fact that she is blessed with “all that love” (Daddario, 1994). Females are praised for their generosity and selflessness, not their athleticism. Donna Weinbrecht, a mogul skiing gold medalist, revealed that she entered the Olympics for someone else as she stated “a big part of this is for my family” (Daddario, 1994).

The 1998 Winter Games were a success for women. The U.S. women’s hockey team won gold in the 1998 Winter Olympics (Jones, Murrell, & Jackson, 1999). However, the 1998 Olympics were covered with more bias than other Olympic Games (Eastman & Billings, 1999). Overwhelming favoritism toward men’s over women’s sports in televised commentary existed. Women did not continue to keep that rise in coverage as hoped, as the 1998 Nagano Olympics revealed coverage statistics of 60 percent devotion to males (Eastman & Billings, 1999).

The Olympic Games of 2002 had 77 countries competing with a total of 22 delegations sending no females, compared to only one sending no males (Zurn et al., 2006). The 2002 Winter Olympic coverage showed that men’s success was more likely to be attributed to athletic skill than that of women’s success (Billings & Eastman, 2003). The media characterized women athletes as failing because they lacked experience, which they did not do for male athletes.

The 2006 Winter Games saw a slight increase in participation for women and an improvement of amount and quality of coverage. There were 1,006 women (38.3 %) and 1,627 men (61.7 %) in the 2006 Winter Olympics, compared to 886 women (36.9 %) and 1,513 men (63.1 %) in 2002 (Zurn et al., 2006). Of the total women participating, 90 (42.2 %) were from the United States and 122 men (57.8%) were from the United States
(Zurn et al., 2006). This ranked the US delegation at 10th in the percentage of women athletes compared to other countries (Zurn et al., 2006). Women participating competed in 47.6 % of all sports (84 total events) and 45.3 % of all medal events (Zurn et al., 2006). There were 37 (44 %) female events, 44 (52.4 %) male events and three mixed events (Zurn et al., 2006). In all, 258 medals were awarded in the 2006 Winter Games with females receiving 117 and males receiving 141 (Zurn et al., 2006). The first televised broadcast of the Olympic women’s ice hockey tournament occurred during the 2006 Olympics (Zurn et al., 2006).

Male athletes received approximately 60 % of the clock time, as shown in an analysis of NBC’s 2006 Torino Winter Olympic prime-time telecasts (Billings, Brown, Crout, McKenna, Rice, Timanus, & Ziegler, 2008). Overall, men received 19 hours, 38 minutes of prime-time coverage with women receiving only 13 hours, 30 minutes (roughly 40 %). These results are further compounded when noting that the U.S. women won 56 % of the overall national total, with men winning just 44 % (Billings et al., 2008).

As time progresses, the racial profile of traditional White sports has changed too. While the US Olympic winter team’s racial and ethnic diversity has more than doubled since the 1990s, out of the 212 male and female US winter Olympians in 2006, only 20 athletes (9.4 %) were identified as African-American, Asian or Latino (Zurn et al., 2006). Only seven female athletes were non-white, comprising only 7.9 % of the entire US female delegation of 89 athletes (Zurn et al., 2006). This is only an increase of one athlete since the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.
Specific sports within the Winter Olympics are subjected to more marginalization and exclusion. Women still do not compete in ski jumping, Nordic combined, four-person bobsled (bobsleigh) or doubles luge in the Olympic Winter Games (Zurn et al., 2006). The qualifying rules for these events, excluding ski jumping and doubles luge, specifically prohibit women participation. There is no detailed prohibition against women participation for ski jumping or doubles luge, but it is unlikely that any woman could meet the qualifying standards (Zurn et al., 2006). During the 2006 Winter Olympics, coverage of men’s events was much higher than coverage for women’s events in the print media. The length of both text and photographs was greater for men than women (Zurn et al., 2006). Sports like skiing and snowboarding demonstrate the biases from the media. In general, winter sports are not covered as often as sports played year-round. Female athletes participating in winter events are portrayed in respect to traditional beliefs about gender (Stone & Horne, 2008). They are largely underrepresented and each sport receives scrutiny and is covered based on the level of respect the outside world gives it. Women are participating more and more in physically challenging events defying stereotypes of women, such as mogul skiing, luge, and the biathlon, but analysis shows that a masculine sports hegemony still exists through marginalization (Daddario, 1994).

Skiing and snowboarding, two popular winter sports, are often under-represented by the media. Skiers receive more coverage than snowboarders (Stone & Horne, 2008). Snowboarding is a relatively new winter sport and has the power to challenge traditional gender stereotypes (Thorpe, 2005). Within snowboarding, males dominate the field.
However, male snowboarders are rarely covered in national sports coverage (Stone & Horne, 2008). Skiers’ reports consist of task-related coverage, where snowboarders’ receive coverage on non-task topics.

Female skiers typically show themselves as youthful and pretty, making sure to take the helmet and goggles off for pictures (Stone & Horne, 2008). Female snowboarders are present in more sport literature than female skiers (70 articles compared to 36) (Stone & Horne, 2008). Snowboarders were featured evenly through national and local newspapers and magazines, where skiers were covered within newspapers and not magazines. However, skiers' reports covered task-related features 51.8% of the time, where snowboarders' reports covered more non-task topics (Stone & Horne, 2008). Women athletes in all winter sports receive more non-task coverage than their male counterparts (Stone & Horne, 2008). Of 157 articles that were task related, 120 were covering male athletes. In comparison, of the 64 non-task articles, 46 were about women (Stone & Horne, 2008). These various strategies serve to marginalize women athletes and their athletic accomplishments (Stone & Horne, 2008).

Summary

In general, sports media coverage is biased and shapes telecasts and articles to meet an audiences target needs. Sports media has become entertainment to viewers, not a depiction of factual athletic accomplishments and stories. Athletes are underrepresented based on gender. Female athletes receive a majority of non-task coverage, focusing on their personal lives and background information. Males however, are congratulated for
their athleticism and stories about their training and accomplishments in athletics are covered. Males also receive more coverage than females in sport media coverage.

The Olympics are a widely viewed sporting event. Much research on media trends has been covered within the Olympic Games. The Olympics, like other sporting events, follow typical trends where women are underrepresented and covered in a biased manner. Women are depicted more often for participating in “feminine” events and coverage of women participating in “masculine” events are relatively scant.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This study took place during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Media coverage was analyzed prior to, during, and after the Winter Olympic Games. Newspaper articles regarding the 2010 Winter Olympic Games were evaluated. The researcher began collecting data/sources the week prior to the Games. The two week period that the Olympic competition takes place, along with the week following the Games, were also included in the data. Only articles covering the 2010 Winter Olympic Games were included in this study, past Olympic Game coverage was not be evaluated. Not included was letters to the editors, charts, box scores, scouting reports, Web blogs, chat-board discussions, and posted feedback left for authors on Internet articles. Newspaper articles included in the sports sections, on the front page of the news section, or in special sections devoted to the Olympics were included.

The sources chosen for this study are reputable newspapers and websites. There were three newspapers selected for this research; Sacramento Bee, USA Today, and the New York Times. Sacramento Bee represented a local newspaper and USA Today and the New York Times are two National newspapers. The two websites used to collect data were NBC and ESPN. NBC holds the rights for Olympic media coverage and ESPN is a website checked by most sports enthusiasts. Articles shown on the main news and sports section for NBC were used in the study, as well as top stories and headlines from ESPN’s website.
Procedures

All articles in the newspapers and online websites covering the Olympics during the specified time-frame were included in the study. This also occurred for the two week competition period and the week following the Olympics. Pictures were analyzed for size and number based on gender and ethnicity. Amount of coverage devoted to males and females was measured. Articles were labeled task-related or non-task for males and females, and percentages were calculated, determining if male athletes received more task-related commentary than female athletes. These evaluations determined whether or not to accept or reject the hypotheses.

The comments about certain athletes based on gender were evaluated, determining if gender of an athlete elicits different types of coverage. In general, mentions or pictures of athletes based on gender were calculated for any variance between male and female athletes during the 2010 Olympics. Percentages from past studies help predict what will occur during the 2010 Olympics.

ESPN and NBC’s online web-sites were checked twice daily for new articles. Articles were collected from the 28-day period from the four newspapers and two online Web sites. Coders looked for the use of non-task descriptors and task-related statements, which have been identified and discussed widely in gender and sport literature highlighting the marginalization of female athletes, and tallied them for men and women. Performance-related statements about individual athletes were also tallied. Coders recorded the gender of every athlete in the articles from every source. Every sport (team or individual, women’s or men’s) was accounted for, and the number of articles covering
that sport, were counted. Each category was totaled on raw coding sheets and then combined to formulate subtotals to produce overall totals by sport and gender.
Chapter 4

RESULTS

Five sources, *USA Today*, *Sacramento Bee*, *New York Times*, ESPN.com, and NBC’s website were analyzed to determine gender trends. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate percentages to determine if the hypotheses should be accepted or rejected. All articles in the newspapers, from all sections, dealing with the Olympics were included in the data. Headings were tallied for NBC’s Olympic website, as well as ESPN.com. Articles were also printed from ESPN.com that were found on the main homepage under top stories or headlines. Data was collected the week prior to, the two weeks during, and the week following the Games. In conclusion, each source was combined to create overall percentages for the study at large. Results from each individual source are also included.

Articles Related to Male and Female Athletes

Hypothesis number one stated that male athletes would receive 60 % of the print and electronic media, compared to 40 % for women. Data was counted to determine an overall percentage, for both newspapers and internet websites combined. In total there were 961 articles. Male articles accounted for 32.36 % of the total articles, with 311 total articles. All articles specifically about men’s teams or individual male athletes counted as male articles. The females totaled 187 articles, 19.46 % of the total. Articles specifically about women’s teams or individual female athletes counted as female articles. There were 463 articles (48.18 %) that were either about both men and women,
or completely void of gender. Articles about both men and women included summaries of the previous day’s results, including event updates for various athletes (male and female) and sports, as well as articles on one specific sport that generalized the standings thus far during the Games for both men and women in that particular event. Articles completely void of gender included information about the International Olympic Committee members, special guests attending the games, articles about fans, information about Vancouver or updates on the weather, along with information about the opening and closing ceremonies in general. The total articles regarding gender totaled at 498, giving 62.45 % of the coverage to males and 37.55 % of the coverage to female athletes. The hypothesis that male athletes would be covered 60 % of the time, compared to 40 % for women is accepted for the overall study.

Hypothesis number two stated that male athletes will receive longer articles than female athletes. For the three newspapers (USA Today, New York Times, and Sacramento Bee) combined, there were 11,441.6 square inches devoted to men’s Olympic coverage. Female Olympic athletes received 7,184.56 square inches. This equates to approximately 61.43 % of the square inches being devoted to men, with 38.57 % being devoted to women. However, on average, the percent of total space utilized compared to the number of total articles for each gender within newspapers, equates to 48.07 square inches for men and 47.9 square inches for women. Men had longer articles, on average, than women. The hypothesis that men would have longer articles than females is accepted.

For the online websites, NBC only had a specific Olympic link for sports coverage, so no article lengths were calculated. The daily Olympic headlines were
counted for gender only. ESPN, however, does have a generic front page and all articles pertaining to the Olympics within the top stories and headlines were printed. In total, men had 103.75 pages of coverage and women only had 45 pages. The men had 69.75% of the total pages and women only had 30.25%. This is roughly 7% less than one would have guessed for the women, as they held 37.55% of the total articles. However, when looking at the percentage of space utilized compared to number of articles within ESPN.com for each gender, men, on average, had articles that were 1.96 pages long. Women had articles that were 1.8 pages long. Men, on average, had longer articles than females.

Hypothesis number three stated that male athletes would be written about using 60% task-related comments compared to female athletes, who will receive only 40% task-related comments. Past literature found that females are written about more often using non-task descriptors, where men are written about using task-related commentary. Task-related articles are those articles about athletes engaged specifically in their sport or event, with information about how an athlete performed, how an athlete trains, or any information about that athlete in regards to their sport at all. Non-task related articles are those articles about athletes and their life unrelated to the sport, such as family roles, where an athlete is from, what other activities or professions the athlete engages in, or articles about the emotions and feelings the athlete has in regards to the competition. In regards to commentary, 172 articles written about men were task-related, where 139 articles were non-task related. In total, 55.31% of articles for males were task-related, while 44.69% were non-task related. Females received 47.06% task-related coverage,
with 88 articles and 52.94% non-task-related coverage with 99 articles. The males actually received less task-related coverage than the initial hypothesis of 60%. The females however, received more than the 40% estimate, with nearly 50% of the coverage being task-related. Women are receiving significantly more task-related coverage, but still receive less than their male counterparts (See Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Newspaper and Internet Print Coverage of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games: Number of Articles and Total Space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number/Percentage of articles related to male athletes</th>
<th>Number/Percentage of articles related to female athletes</th>
<th>Total space covering male athletes</th>
<th>Total space covering female athletes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>63 (60.6%)</td>
<td>41 (39.4%)</td>
<td>4,856.74 sq. inches</td>
<td>3,529.06 sq. inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>91 (62.3%)</td>
<td>55 (37.7%)</td>
<td>4,333.91 sq. inches</td>
<td>1,936.39 sq. inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento Bee</td>
<td>84 (60.9%)</td>
<td>54 (39.1%)</td>
<td>2,250.99 sq. inches</td>
<td>1,719.11 sq. inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC Olympic website</td>
<td>20 (62.5%)</td>
<td>12 (37.5%)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESPN.com</td>
<td>53 (68%)</td>
<td>25 (32%)</td>
<td>103.75 pages</td>
<td>45 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>311 (62.5%)</td>
<td>187 (37.5%)</td>
<td>11,441.6 sq. inches (61.4%)</td>
<td>7,184.6 sq. inches (38.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Task-Related and Non-Task Related Coverage in Newspaper and Internet Articles, by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Task-related, Male</th>
<th>Non-task related, Male</th>
<th>Task-related, Female</th>
<th>Non-task related, Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento Bee</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC Olympic website</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESPN.com</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>172 (55.3%)</td>
<td>139 (44.69%)</td>
<td>88 (47.1%)</td>
<td>99 (52.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*ESPN*’s Olympic website published 109 total articles during the 28-day period. In total, 53 (48.62 %) were devoted to men, 25 (22.94 %) were female-related, and 31 (28.44 %) were gender-neutral, or entirely void of gender. Any articles related to International Olympic Committee members, articles about the weather during the Games, the fans watching the events, or articles regarding the politics involved with the Olympics were counted as non-gender. There were 78 total articles regarding gender, with males receiving 67.95 % of the coverage, leaving women with only 32.05 %.

Looking deeper into ESPN’s coverage, males received 34 (64.15 %) articles that were task-related. Females had 13 task-related articles and 12 non-task related articles, putting the percentages for females at almost 50/50. Although females did not receive equal coverage to their male counterparts in terms of task-related articles, they received close to equitable amounts of task-related coverage compared to non-task related coverage for this source.

*USA Today* had 304 total articles. Ninety-one were about male athletes, 55 female athletes, and 158 were not gender related, or were both male and female. Of the 146 gender-related articles, 62.33 % were male, with only 37.67 % female. Males also received 52.75 % (48 articles) task-related coverage. Females received 47.27 % task-related coverage, more than the 40 % expectation.

In the 28-day period, *NBC’s* Olympic website had 79 total articles. Twenty articles were devoted to male athletes, 12 were about female athletes, and 47 were non-gender related or were about both males and females. Of the 32 gender-related articles, 62.5 % were about male athletes and 37.5 % were on female athletes. Within the articles,
females received 58.33 % task-related coverage, with 41.67 non-task related coverage. Males received 35 % task-related coverage with 65 % of the total coverage for males being non-task related. This was much less task-related coverage than the expectation that males would receive 60 % task-related coverage.

*New York Times* printed 246 articles. Males comprised 63 (25.61 %), females received 41 (16.67 %), and 142 articles were gender-neutral or had information about both males and females. Of the total 104 gender-related articles, 60.58 % were about male athletes and 39.42 % were on female athletes. Within the articles themselves, males had 31 task-related articles and 32 non-task related articles. Females received only 34.15 % task-related coverage with 14 articles, and 65.85 % non-task related coverage with 27 articles.

In total, *Sacramento Bee* printed 223 articles related to the Olympics. Eighty-four articles were covering male athletes, 54 were about females, and 85 were gender-neutral or included information about both males and females. Of the 138 total gender-related articles, men had 60.87 %, with females having 39.13 %. Males received 52 (61.9 %) articles that were task-related and 32 (38.1 %) that were non-task related. Females received 28 (51.85 %) task-related articles with 26 (48.15 %) non-task related articles.

Photograph Coverage

Hypothesis four stated that men would have one and a half times as many photos and much larger photos than females. With all of the sources combined, there were 1,409 Olympic-related photographs. Men received 687 photographs, 448 were about female athletes, and 274 photographs were of both males and females or entirely void of gender.
The hypothesis that males would receive 1.5 times as many photographs as females is accepted, as males received 1.53 times as many photographs than females (See Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. Number of Male Photographs in Newspapers and Internet Sources, by Size (square inches)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Square Inches</th>
<th>Front Page</th>
<th>Front Page Sports</th>
<th>Front Page Olympic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESPN</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>643.08 sq. in.  (63.73 %)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1,022.4 sq. in. (64.19 %)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>5,034.24 sq. in. (64.81 %)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sac Bee</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1,234.3 sq. in. (59.54 %)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>3,465.23 sq. in. (60.84 %)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Number of Female Photographs in Newspapers and Internet Sources, by Size (square inches)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Square Inches</th>
<th>Front Page</th>
<th>Front Page Sports</th>
<th>Front Page Olympic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESPN</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>362.98 sq. in.  (36.27 %)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>570.4 sq. in.   (35.81 %)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>2,733.95 sq. in. (35.19 %)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sac Bee</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>838.64 sq. in.  (40.46 %)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>2,230.86 (39.16 %)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESPN printed a total of 146 photographs. Seventy-six were of male athletes, 41 female athletes, and 29 were either both male and female or void of gender. Those
photographs counted as non-gender were pictures of the specific event venues (ski hill, ice rink, and luge track), fans, or photographs of the celebration ceremonies and the Olympic torch. Males received 1.85 times as many photographs as females for this source.

In total, there were 373 pictures in USA Today. Male athletes received 194 pictures, female athletes received 119, and 60 were either both male and female or non-gender related. Male athletes had 1.63 times as many photographs as females for USA Today.

NBC printed 165 total photographs. Female athletes received 46, male athletes received 85, and 34 photographs were gender-neutral or had both male and female athletes. Male athletes received 1.85 times as many photographs as females for this individual source.

In total, New York Times printed 545 photographs. Male athletes received 240 photographs, women received 181, and 124 were either both male and female or completely void of gender. Male athletes only received 1.33 times as many photographs as females for this source; under the initial expectation.

Sacramento Bee published 180 total photographs. Ninety-two were photos of males, 61 were of females, and 27 were both male and female or gender-neutral. Male athletes received 1.5 times as many photographs as females.

Ancillary Data

Data worth mentioning, but not stated in the hypotheses, was also found. It is noteworthy to mention that there was some degree of variance in final results when
comparing internet to print data. Male athletes received 61.34 % of the newspaper articles, with women receiving 38.66 %. The internet websites fared worse for women, as they received only 33.64 % of the total articles, with men receiving 66.36 %. Women also received less overall photograph percentage on the internet websites, compared to the newspapers. Men received 64.92 % of the internet photos, where women received 35.08 %. For newspapers, men received 59.3 % of the total photographs, with women receiving 40.07 %. In general, women received more equitable coverage, when looking strictly at amount of photographs and articles, in newspapers than on internet websites.

It was also noted that there were different types of photos being displayed in the media coverage. The four categories that the photographs fall into are action, where the athlete is training or competing in their actual sport; posed, where the athlete is either not exercising at all, or is posing with their athletic gear; medal stand, where the athlete is either blanketed in their respected country’s flag celebrating a medal win, or receiving a medal on the podium; or with coach, where the athlete is or is not participating in their sport, but is engaged with their coach, in discussion. For females 212 (47.32 %) photographs fell into the action category. For posed photographs, females received 171 (38.17 %) photographs and 57 (12.72 %) photographs of athletes with medals. There were only 8 (1.79 %) photographs of females with their coaches.

The men received 400 (58.22 %) action photos and 201 (29.26 %) posed photos. There were 79 (11.5 %) photographs of men with medals and 7 (1.02 %) of men with their coaches. For both men and women, across all five sources, action photographs comprised the majority of the overall photographs. The second highest number of
photographs was of athletes in posed photographs, for both men and women. There were not very many photographs of athletes on the medal stand or with their medals, but there were even less photographs of athletes with their coaches in the overall media coverage (See Table 5).

Table 5. Type of Photographs in Newspapers and Internet Sources, by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Posed</th>
<th>With Medal</th>
<th>With Coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photos of female athletes</td>
<td>212 (47.3 %)</td>
<td>171 (38.2 %)</td>
<td>57 (12.7 %)</td>
<td>8 (1.8 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photos of male athletes</td>
<td>400 (58.2 %)</td>
<td>201 (29.3 %)</td>
<td>79 (11.5 %)</td>
<td>7 (1 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

For all individual sources, and all sources combined, males effectively received 60 %, or more, of the coverage, with females receiving less than 40 %. *New York Times* gave women 39.42 % of the coverage, which was the highest percentage of the five sources. Across the board, the hypothesis that males would receive 60 % of the total coverage, compared to 40 % for women, was accepted. Women have not kept a rise in coverage as hoped. They are receiving similar coverage to past Olympic Games, as the 1998 Nagano Olympics also revealed coverage statistics of 60 % devotion to males (Eastman & Billings, 1999). Females were under-represented when compared to their male counterparts during the 2010 Winter Olympics as well. However, some of these results could be due in part to a small amount of data. NBC’s website, for example, had only 32 total articles that were gender-related. With only 20 male athlete and 12 female athlete articles, the percentages are only based on a small number of articles and are not statistically strong. Males also represent a larger percent (60 %) of the total athlete count, so it is expected that they will receive more coverage. With females only comprising 40 % of the U.S. Olympic team, the coverage is equitable.

Specifically looking at the *New York Times*, a source analyzed by Zurn et al. (2006), the overall coverage for females has improved. Women received 39.42 % coverage for total articles printed during the 2010 Winter Games, whereas for the 2006 Winter Olympics the *New York Times* provided 38.2 % coverage of articles for women.
For photographic coverage, women received 42.99% of the total coverage in 2010 compared to 36% during the 2006 Winter Olympics.

The current study found that males were only written about 1.66 times as much as women. This is improvement from past studies. Urquhart and Crossman (1999) conducted a study looking at Winter Olympic coverage from 1924 to 1992. They found that male athletes were written about four times as much as women. Further, the 2010 Winter Olympics showed that men were photographed 1.53 times as much as women, compared to three times as much in Urquhart and Crossman’s study. It was found, within 2010 Winter Olympic coverage, that 47.06% of women’s coverage was task-related. Females received coverage within a variety of sports, including those typically considered male-dominated, such as downhill, slalom, and super g. It was also noted that females received coverage toward the front of sports sections, along with a few articles and photographs on the front page of the newspapers. The current findings are different than that of Urquhart and Crossman, who found women being trivialized, underrepresented, and displayed as gender-appropriate, with female sport coverage located towards the latter pages of sports sections.

Several sources, including USA Today, the New York Times, and NBC’s Olympic website, showed men receiving less than 60% task-related coverage. These two newspapers and one online website printed a majority of articles with an emphasis on familial roles for athletes, as well as background stories and information about the athletes. For example, in New York Times there was an article about Bill Demong and Johnny Spillane being particularly close teammates. Demong lived with Spillane’s
parents for a year in Steamboat Springs. “Every night is just totally chill,” Demong said. “We’re watching TV, we’re hanging out.” ESPN’s website and the Sacramento Bee had men receiving over 60% task-related coverage.

For female athletes, Sacramento Bee, ESPN’s website, USA Today, and NBC’s website had women receiving over 40% task-related coverage. For example, USA Today’s Olympic section printed a lot of coverage on women’s hockey. The results of the women’s games were included in much of the print. Individual players received information about their game stats; for example, “Jenny Potter, playing in her fourth Olympics at age 31, scored three goals on three shots in her first 5:02 of ice time”. This was a huge improvement from previous studies. For example, Daddario’s (1994) study showed commentators using condescending descriptors about female athletes. There was a profound focus on women athletes and their role in their families, specifically on their roles as their mothers’ daughters (Daddario, 1994). Although women are still receiving an inadequate amount of coverage, they are seeing a rise in task-related coverage. However, for all sources except NBC’s website, women still received much less task-related coverage than their male counterparts. In total, females received 47.06% task-related coverage, where males received 55.31% task-related coverage. This finding is congruent with past literature, as Stone and Horne (2008) found that women athletes in all winter sports received more non-task coverage than their male counterparts.

Article Length and Placement by Gender

The length of articles also impacts how much coverage one gender over another receives. For the three newspapers (USA Today, New York Times, and Sacramento Bee)
combined, there were 11,441.6 square inches devoted to men’s Olympic coverage. Female Olympic athletes received 7,184.56 square inches. This equates to roughly 61.43 % of the square inches being devoted to male athletes, with 38.57 % being devoted to women. The length of the newspaper articles was fairly equitable when compared to number of articles, being that the men received 62.45 % of the articles, where women had 37.55 %. The one newspaper that had a special section solely dedicated to the Olympics, USA Today, had the most profound variance in total article length when comparing men to women. The men had 69 % of the total square inches, where the women only had 31 %. The hypothesis that men would have longer articles than females was accepted.

Placement of articles is also crucial in print media. In total, for the three newspapers, men received only four front page articles, and women received three. Men received 28 articles on the front page of the sports section however, and women received only 17. USA Today was the only newspaper with an Olympic section and men received three articles total on the front page of this, and women also received three.

Photographs of Athletes by Gender

For all sources except for New York Times, male athletes received more than 1.5 times as many photographs as women. With men receiving approximately 60 % of the coverage, it is not surprising that they would have 1.5 times as many photographs. As far as actual coverage, the photographs are in par with the amount of coverage given to males and females. One would assume that males would have 1.5 times as many photographs being that they had 1.5 times as much print coverage. It was noted that the majority of the photos for men and women were action shots, the athletes participating in
their events or training. There were a handful of photos of athletes being interviewed, but even those typically showed the athletes in athletic attire. However, of the posed photographs, men were often shown with their arms around a teammate or celebrating with their teams. For posed photographs of women, they were shown in sexy attire, or with hair and makeup completely done. Eastman and Billings (2000) revealed that pictures of women emphasize a woman’s beauty and sex appeal, replacing articles and action photographs with women displaying their attractiveness.

Size of photographs also plays a role in equitable media coverage. The men received 11,399.3 square inches of photographs in the five sources. Women received 6,739.83 square inches of photographs for the five sources combined. Men received 62.84% of the total picture space utilized for the online websites and newspapers. Women received 37.16% of the total square inches of photograph space. Men received roughly 1.7 times as much photograph space than women, even more than the number of photographs (1.53 times as much).

For the three newspapers, placement of photographs is vital. Men received 37 photographs on the front pages of the newspapers, where women received only 9. Men also received 54 photographs on the front page of the sports sections, where women received 38. For USA Today’s Olympic section, men received 27 photographs on the front page and women received 16.

General Gender Trends

Some general trends occurred in the media for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games that are worthy of attention. It is necessary to note who and what is being written about
the most. It was noticed that the women’s coverage was predominantly of athletes who medaled. There were only a handful of female athletes that comprised the entirety of the female coverage. Lindsey Vonn, for example, consumed the sports coverage and totaled at approximately 60% of the female coverage. Vonn also made the cover of February’s *Sports Illustrated*. Although she is entirely made-up for the cover shot, wearing makeup, hair perfect, smiling at the camera, it is a stride forward for females that a woman made the cover during the week of the Super Bowl.

Julia Mancuso, another U.S. female skier, received the second highest amount of coverage. Vonn and Mancuso, two females often shown for their beauty, got the most coverage in the Winter Olympics, as skiing is a socially acceptable sport for females and their attire is sexy and appealing to the eye. The Summer Olympics cater coverage toward gymnastics, an even more socially acceptable sport for women. In the Summer Games, gymnasts such as Shawn Johnson and Nastia Liukin receive media coverage and have become national “darlings” (Billings et al., 2010). However, in the Winter Games, for 2010, apart from Vonn, Julia Mancuso, and Joannie Rochette of Canada (her mother passed away during the Games), other female athletes did not receive adequate coverage. For women, athletes who had a tragedy occur, like the death of Rochette’s mother received more attention than those athletes who did not have a specific event occur during the Games. Further, females received more attention if they medaled than those athletes who did not medal. The female skiers (Mancuso and Vonn), along with Rochette, received the majority of photographs in the newspapers and online websites.
For the men, Apollo Ohno received a majority of the 60% male coverage. He became the most decorated athlete for the Winter Olympics, which brought much media attention about him. His photographs, along with articles detailing every one of his events, plastered both the newspapers and online websites. Ohno has done well in previous Olympic Games and is a Winter Olympic athlete, who fans look for and follow all year, seeing his face on many advertisements. His past wins have captured the public consciousness, making him more marketable. Like Ohno’s Winter Olympic coverage, Michael Phelps was the athlete during the recent 2008 Summer Olympic Games to receive the majority of the male coverage. Phelps, who won eight gold medals, was the superstar of Beijing (Billings et al., 2010).

Shaun White, a snowboarder, received a lot of attention for his unique character. He chooses to dress a certain way and is photographed doing his dare-devil tricks on the snowboard. He is a highly decorated athlete and has his own training area atop a mountain, attracting media coverage. Bode Miller also comprises much of the men’s coverage, as he is a successful athlete himself, competing in a highly popular sport in the U.S. Photographs of Miller, White, Ohno, and Davis made up most of the individual male shots. The men’s hockey team also has many pictures, but mainly the group as a whole.

For the Winter Olympics there was a lot of coverage devoted to hockey, downhill skiing coverage, and speed skating, for both photographs and articles, as the U.S. has athletes in all of these sports that do well. The National Hockey League is well respected by sports enthusiasts and the United States men’s hockey team is made-up of many
League players. With fans already knowing a great deal about the hockey players, it is not surprising that they follow the hockey games during the Olympics, and desire media coverage on the sport. Ryan Miller, the United States goalie, is well liked on his team, the Buffalo Sabres, and received a lot of individual attention within hockey coverage. Also, for the women, this year had some interesting controversy. Canada took gold and the female athletes chose to celebrate, on the ice, in uniform, by drinking beer and smoking cigars. There was much discussion as to whether or not this was proper etiquette by Olympic athletes. Because much discussion occurred about this celebration, the female hockey athletes received much attention and media coverage. Furthermore, because the U.S. medaled for the first time in the Nordic combined events, they also received coverage this year.

Shani Davis was the first African American individual to get a gold medal in men’s speed skating in 2006 (Billings, 2008). He received much media coverage then, as well as during this year’s Olympic Games. The reason for the vast coverage is that he represented a first for an African-American competitor in a winter sport. With an overwhelming European influence of the Winter Games, the coverage is likely to continually be about White athletes (Billings, 2008).

Criticism highly aimed at sport media coverage is that coverage is excessively nationalistic, providing U.S. consumers with what they want to see in preference to displaying a more global experience (Billings, 2008). With all of the sources in this study being from the United States, data was biased toward U.S. athletes. However, there
is no clear consensus over what equitable treatment of international athletes would be (Billings, 2008).

Every Olympic Games elicits varying media coverage from the previous Games, as events occurring during the Games dictate some of the coverage. The descriptions and amounts of coverage for each gender changes as the athletes participating change every Olympic Games (Billings et al., 2008). The death of Nodar Kumaritashvili elicited many photographs commemorating the athlete and his family, him training, and articles and pictures of his crash itself. Future Winter Olympic coverage may not have as much coverage about the luge, as one would hope there would not be the death of another athlete. This year there was also considerable coverage on ski jumping, as it is not offered for women. Women ski jumpers sued the IOC this year, making headlines in print media.

In 2006, a proposal for women’s ski jumping during the Olympic Games was rejected by the Executive Board of the IOC. The reason given was for the low number of athletes as well as few participating countries in the sport. The IOC recognized that women’s ski jumping has yet to become an international sport. There is a wide variety of talent for women in ski jumping as well, with top competitors varying in skill, even in the top tiers. It remains unfair that a sport would be limited to women based on number of participants. A group of competitive female ski jumpers were the individuals who filed a suit against the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, who disregarded the claim, admitting they knew the women were being discriminated toward, but felt like it is an issue to be taken up with the IOC.
Past Olympic coverage has had different events take place, eliciting different coverage than this year’s Olympics. The 2008 Games, for example, had unique coverage, as there were many accusations surrounding the contested ages of the Chinese female gymnasts (Billings et al., 2010).

Recommendations for Future Study

There has been an increasing acceptance and appreciation of the skill of women athletes and the Olympic doors have been opened, but there is still much to be done (Billings, 2008). One would not know of the progress made in respect to opportunity by watching networks, listening to the radio or reading the sports pages. The amount and type of coverage provided to female and male athletes continues to yield gendered profiles of Olympic history (Billings et al., 2010). Further research into this area is warranted.

Future research in this area should look into the tone of comments within electronic media, as it varies greatly between men’s and women’s sports. The media’s influence on sport participation is huge and it would be a great avenue for researchers to help the sporting world. What commentators write could be just as important as how much a reporter says; the qualitative aspect of sport journalism needs to be explored in much more depth. For example, how minority professional athletes are treated by media is a greater problem than their representation in sports today (Eastman & Billings, 2001). Separating factual/neutral comments from biased comments about individual players would help solve where commentators are making biased comments. Positive and negative comments should be analyzed for minority athletes versus White athletes.
For the scope of this project, ethnicity was difficult to measure. The sources used for data collection were all from within the United States and the coverage was predominantly on U.S. athletes. The American team has little diversity in the Winter Olympic Games, making ethnicity percentages irrelevant. Less than 20% of the athletes participating in the Winter Games are minority athletes (Billings et al., 2008; Billings, 2008). Furthermore, the small number of athletes of color competing on the U.S. Winter Olympic team were extremely successful during the 2010 Winter Olympics. Data collection on ethnicity should be explored further, possibly looking at another major competition, or the Summer Olympic Games. The Summer Olympics offer greater ethnic diversity than the Winter Olympics (Billings, 2008). Future studies should further explore ethnicity in different sporting competitions.

Future studies could elaborate on the findings in several ways. One could broaden the scope of the results by adding more newspapers from different regions in the country and adding more online websites. Further, one could evaluate media coverage from other countries by examining International newspapers and websites. It would be interesting to note what other countries value in their media, which athletes (from which countries) get coverage across the globe, and which sports are more recognized. Looking at just U.S. coverage limited the results of this study. Media coverage on the Paralympics would also prove to be valuable information. It would be worthwhile to compare results from the Olympic Games to those of the Paralympic Games.
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