

RESEARCH PAPER

Factors Associated with the Underrepresentation of Female Head Coaches in Intercollegiate Athletics

A research study on the underrepresentation of female head coaches by **Lauren Smith, Chloe Whitlock and Steve Chen**

Abstract

Past studies had shown the underrepresentation of females in the coaching profession.

The purpose of this study was to examine the contributors to the underrepresentation of female head coaches in intercollegiate athletics. To further examine this issue, two studies were conducted to examine the perceptions of 124 current NCAA Division-I athletic coaches and 163 high school educators.

Introduction

PART 1

Research Problem

WHAT I WANT TO SOLVE

The goal of this study was to investigate the different barriers that females experienced while pursuing a coaching career.

The researchers would like to examine the factors that cause the existing underrepresentation of female coaches at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)-affiliated institutions.

Objectives

WHAT I WANT TO ACHIEVE



Investigate the important attributes for female candidates to successfully obtain a head coaching position

The researchers intended to identify the factors that inhibit female coaches from pursuing and obtaining head coaching positions in collegiate athletics.



Investigate barriers that impede female candidates' chance for maintaining the position

The collected information can potentially aid in the effort to reduce the biases and improve the hiring of female candidates within college athletics.

Review of Related Literature

PART 2

Related Literature

MALE-DOMINANT CULTURE

When social stereotypes encompass the male coaches' and administrators' perceptions of female coaches, the impact of these stereotypes could be apparent in their act and decision-making.

GENDER STEREOTYPES

Gender stereotypes result in the expectation of the poor performance of women in positions of leadership, including coaches (Wicker, Cunningham, & Fields, 2019).

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR FEMALE COACHES

The lack of family-related support may result in the occupational turnover of females in the coaching profession.

Social stereotypes can strongly influence our perception by misinforming the notion that female coaches are destined for failure and disappointment before their hiring due to the lack of institutional support and the social typecasts imposed on women.

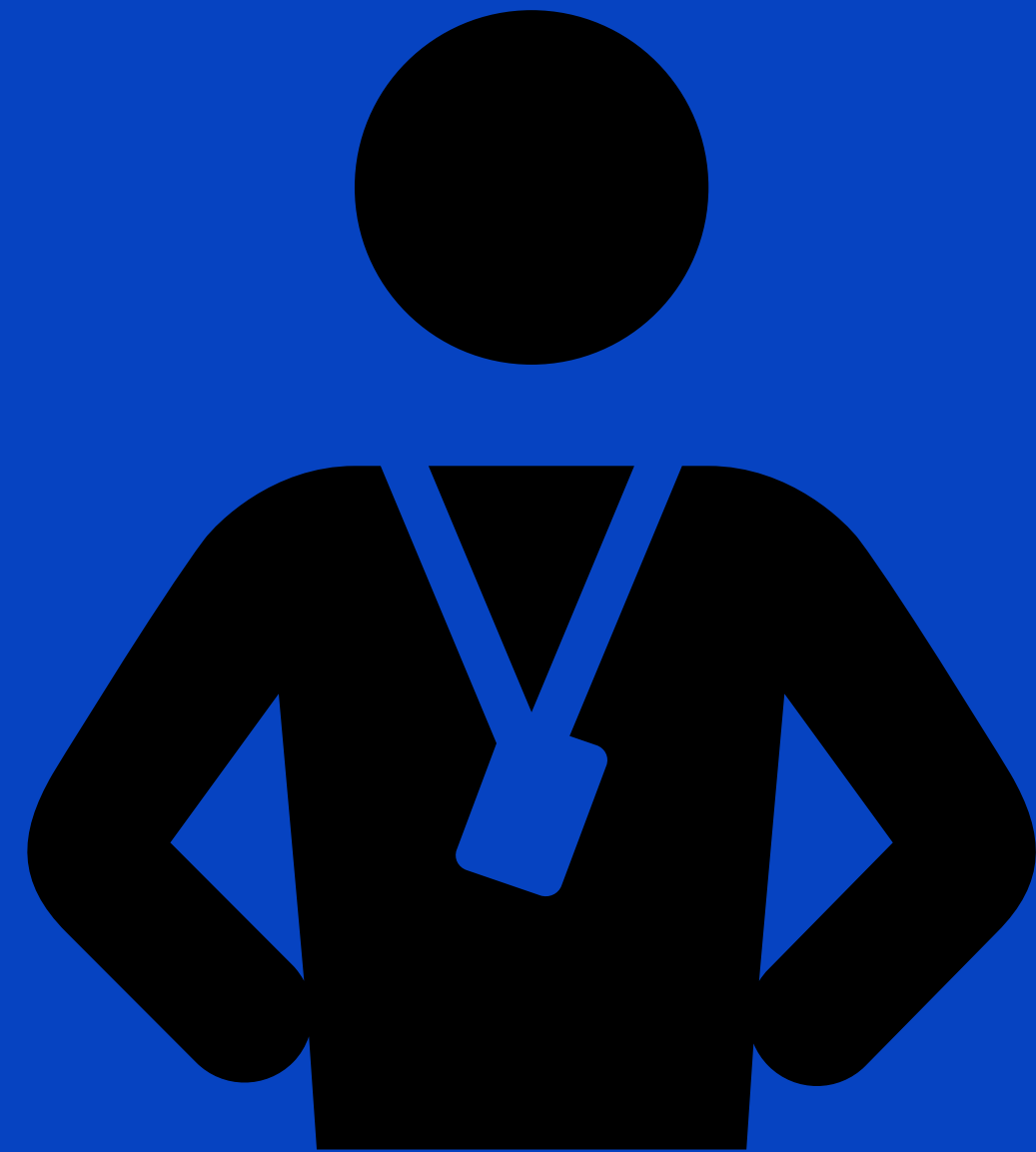
Methods

PART 3

Research Participants

SUBJECTS OF THE SURVEYS

A 26-item survey was made and sent to 502
randomly selected coaches.
124 coaches completed the survey



Instrumentation

The survey covered demographic items as well as two sets of five-point Likert scale items ($n = 18$), and two open-ended questions.

The first set of five-point Likert Scale questions (1 = not important, 5 = important) addressed the importance of variables for achieving or maintaining coaching success.

The second section asked the coaches to rate the impact of listed potential job barriers (1 = not impactful, 5 = very impactful)

Results

PART 4



Qualitative Results

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- **HIGHLIGHT 1**

Existing young and less experienced coaches tended to value the importance of Administrative support less than the older experienced coaches did [$f(4, 124) = 3.001, p < .05$].

- **HIGHLIGHT 2**

They also perceived Family-related support as less important in support their career success [$f(5, 124) = 3.135, p < .05$].

- **HIGHLIGHT 3**

Two of the identified barriers, Lack of family-related support and Lack of mentoring and social support were correlated with Dominant culture and social stereotypes ($r = .611$ and $.568$, respectively).

Quantitative Results

Attributes to coaching success

Factors and Items	Mean	SD
Family-Related Support	4.17	
Provision of Childcare Services for Female Coaches with Children	3.86	1.2
Flexibility for Female Coach's Family Concerns	4.01	1.17
Providing Female Coaches with Equitable Salaries	4.65	0.58
Mentorship and Professional Development	4.07	
Providing Mentorship Programs for Prospective Female Coaches	3.95	1.04
Professional Development of Prospective Female Coaches	4.19	0.99
Administrative Support	4.6	
Administration (Athletic Director) Supports the Program & Understands Program Needs	4.64	0.7
College/University Supports the Program	4.56	0.62
Financial Resources	4.52	
Adequate Recruiting Resources	4.49	0.61
Adequate Staffing Resources	4.54	0.66

Quantitative Results

Barriers for impeding carrer success

Factors and Items	Mean	SD
Dominant Culture & Social Stereotypes	3.43	
Male Coaches'/Administrators' Perceptions of Female Coaches	3.76	1.05
Impact of Perceived Stereotypes on Athlete Preferences	3.59	1.1
Homophobia Issues	2.88	1.22
Favoritism in Hiring (Men Hiring Other Men)	3.76	1.21
Lack of Family-Related Support	3.45	
Lack of Flexibility in Scheduling	3.2	1.02
Lack of Adequate Family Leaves	3.42	1.15
Lack of Childcare Resources	3.52	1.15
Lack of Mentorship and Social Support	3.5	
Lack of Female Mentoring	3.65	1.08
Lack of Female Support Groups	3.31	1.25

Conclusion

PART 5

Discussion and Conclusions

- **HIGHLIGHT 1**

Young coaches' perception vs. experienced coaches' perception

- **HIGHLIGHT 2**

The impact of the administrative support and one's awareness on gender equity

Based on the findings of the studies, more family-related + administrative support must be available to support female coaches hiring.

- **HIGHLIGHT 3**

Without any fundamental changes in the existing hiring practice and improvement of organizational support, the females would continue to face struggles in obtaining a position or retaining their existing job.