

The Impact of Female Sport Coaches: Role Models for the Next Generation

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Gender equity in higher education settings such as employment as a professor and admission to graduate schools in medical and STEM fields has been well researched (Ceci & Williams, 2011; Cheryan, 2011; Moss & Racusin, 2012). Based on this previous research, there is a pattern of implicit bias towards female applicants for professorships as well as admissions to graduate and research positions. However, less research has been conducted on the gender inequities that exist in another area of higher education, the coaching of collegiate athletics. The need for equity in sport leadership roles is vital for empowering the next generation of women to lead in athletics and other areas. The purpose of this research is to identify if the gender of a head coach, as a role model (Meier, 2015), impacts his or her players self-perceived coaching self-efficacy (ability to perform the duties associated with a job) and desire to pursue a career in a sports coaching role. Specifically, this study will focus on the female student-athletes who compete for NCAA Division III women's soccer programs. The research was conducted by emailing quantitative surveys to head coaches of NCAA Women's Soccer Teams. The survey is titled 'Coaching self-efficacy and desire to pursue coaching as a career.' It consists of 10 questions total and includes three demographic questions: age, region of the country where their college is located, and year in college. There are three questions related to gender of sport coaching role models the participants currently have or have been influenced by in the past. One qualitative question asks for the participants thoughts on how playing a collegiate sport may impact their professional aspirations. Finally, there are two Likert scales. The first one asks for participants to rank their desire to coach at different levels of the game of soccer (i.e, youth, high school, and college) on a scale from 1-'I have no interest in pursuing a coaching career' to 5-'It is my primary goal to coach as a career.' The second Likert scale has participants rank their perceived ability to complete a list of coaching tasks on a scale from 1-'I would not be successful in this area' to 5-'I would excel in this area.' The coaches were asked to forward the surveys onto their players for completion and return. The data collected will be analyzed to answer 3 research questions: Does a collegiate soccer head coach's gender influence a female student-athlete's level of coaching self-efficacy? Does a collegiate head soccer coach's gender influence a female student-athletes desire to pursue coaching as a career? Does exposure to a strong female sporting role model who is not their current head coach, influence a collegiate female athletes' coaching self-efficacy and interest in athletic coaching as a viable career?

The results could help to determine if it is important to have female head coaches of female teams, or if men and women have similar effects on their female athletes in terms of desire to enter the coaching profession and their self-perceived coaching self-efficacy. Ultimately the major consequences of improved equity of women in leadership

roles in one environment may improve the circumstances of marginalized groups in other situations.