Gendered Communication in Sports: Impact of Perceived Gender Inequality and Tokenism

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Professional Communication

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

May, 2024

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ABSTRACT

This was an exploratory quantitative study investigating the impact of perceived gender communication differences, double binds, gender inequality, and tokenism on women working in the sports industry. Scales were developed to assess the presence of these variables, and 115 women who work in sports, specifically administration, communication, and media, responded to the online survey. Statistical analysis was used to interpret the data collected. This study found that women are underrepresented in the sports industry and experience workplace discrimination. In addition, Tannen's (1990) suggested gender communication differences and Jamieson's (1995) proposed double bind between femininity and competence were barriers to females in the male-dominated world of sports. The results of this study indicated that, as women experienced the effects of double binds, gender inequality, and tokenism, they had less optimism that an increase in female representation would lessen the perceived negative effects of these variables. Time in the industry and whether women had worked under female bosses also influenced optimism for change. Decreasing optimism for change provides a foundation for future research assessing how the perceived negative effects of the identified barriers may be lessened. In addition, this study gives a foundation for future assessment on how being female and a racial minority in the sports workplace may influence the presence of these barriers.

Keywords: gender communication, double bind, women in sports, gender inequality, tokenism, female leadership

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Gendered Communication in Sports: Impact of Perceived Gender Inequality and Tokenism

Introduction

This was a quantitative study investigating the impact of perceived gender communication differences, gender inequality, and tokenism on women working in the sports industry. Decades of research is available on gender communication differences and how they affect women in the workplace. This study looks at gendered norms for communication and challenges experienced while striving toward gender representation in the sports industry.

In terms of communication, Tannen (1990) developed genderlect theory which details the differences in masculine and feminine communication styles, and Jamieson (1995) discussed a double bind regarding the consequences when women do or do not conform to feminine communication styles. Numerous researchers, including Kimmel (2008), discuss perceived gender inequality in society and in the workplace. Kanter's (1993) tokenism concept presents a potential consequence of pushes toward equality in workplaces where women are the minority.

Additional research on gender communication, perceived gender inequality, and tokenism is needed regarding women's experiences working in the sports industry due to the dominance of male professionals in that field. To continue this research, I surveyed 115 women working in sports organizations to learn how they perceive gendered communication and experience gender inequality and tokenism in the workplace.

Statement of the Problem

This research seeks to answer three problem statements: How are women working in sports impacted by gender communication differences and potential double binds? How do women working in the male-dominated world of sports experience gender inequality and tokenism? Lastly, as more women enter the sports workforce, how are gender inequality and

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tokenism impacted? This research explores women pursuing administrative, communication, and media-related career paths in sports rather than women as players and coaches.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the role that gender communication differences play in women's experiences working in sports and discover whether gender inequality and tokenism are present within the industry. Furthermore, the purpose is to build on the limited research regarding gender inequality within an organizational setting in the sports industry with the goal of moving sports organizations toward gender equality and equity. To further this research, I used purposive sampling that identified 115 participants to complete a survey about their experiences utilizing Qualtrics. I then utilized statistical analysis through a variety of calculations in Qualtrics and SPSS to tabulate results.

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Literature Review

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Genderlect Theory

There are hundreds of theories and ideas regarding how gender affects communication, and they point to the notion that men and women, or rather masculine and feminine communication styles, are different. Tannen (1990) coined the term *genderlect* to describe these differences in male and female communication. Genderlect theory holds several main key points. Feminine communication is based on rapport and utilizes talk to build connections, while masculine communication is based on reporting and transferring information. Feminine communication builds intimacy and connections, and questions are used to build relationships. Women empathize in communication and seek to gain support and agreement. When communicating, they give confirming nonverbals like head nods. Their true focus in speech is in the metamessage, which is the meaning behind what is said or done. In report-focused masculine

communication, information is the true focus. Few questions are asked, and males look to preserve their status. They will give advice and offer conflicting opinions. Their nonverbals are more indirect, and they are focused on the actual message or what is said.

Tannen (1990) discussed research that notes how this difference is apparent even in children as young as three, specifically in how children negotiate with one another. Girls looked to mitigate conflict and boys looked to prolong it. Boys tended to have large, structured groups with a leader, and they gave and took orders while girls looked for intimacy in small groups and suggested rather than ordered. Boys challenged each other, while girls sat, talked, and cooperated with one another (Tannen, 1990). Even at this early stage, gendered communication is evident. Children become adults, and this way of communicating continues throughout their lives.

Tannen (1990) went so far as to describe gendered communication styles as so different that they are cross-cultural. This stems from different focuses when communicating. The feminine style approaches communication as a means to connect with and support others. In communication, they look to protect intimacy in order to stay away from the feelings of isolation. The masculine style uses communication to achieve status, avoid being put down, and maintain independence while steering clear of failure. While the feminine style also uses communication to achieve status, it does not tend to be their focus. Men also look to connect through communication, but it is not typically their central goal. Women often speak a lot in private settings, while men do most talking in public settings. While women are typically seen as the talkative gender, it is men who do the most speaking in the workplace (public) and women who do the most talking at home (private).

Hoar (1992) discussed her experience studying students' inherent understanding of gendered communication. When asked to provide captions for images depicting feminine and

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masculine characters, each time the students in the study assigned male and female speakers to the stereotypical gendered communication styles, in keeping with genderlect theory (Hoar, 1992). This evidences how gendered communication is perceived by the general population, particularly the norms around how men versus women are expected to communicate. People have a built-in expectation of how men versus women communicate and that shapes their perceptions in the workplace and in life.

Muted Group Theory

Kramarae (1981) established a connection between muted group theory and gender communication and what this connection means for women who have typically been seen as the muted members of society. Tannen's (1990) genderlect theory and Hoar's (1992) research focused primarily on the differences in gender communication while Kramarea's early research describes the impact of gender communication differences on women.

Muted group theory originated with the idea that all speakers do not contribute equally to a language's formation and Kramarae explained what this means for women as muted members of society and the impact on gender communication. Linguistic studies indicate that female language tends to be superior to that of males; however, given muted group theory, this becomes difficult to explain as one would expect less fluency of females and the dominant communication of males to be superior. Kramarae (1981) noted the reason is likely that females are obligated to monitor their speaking in ways that males are not. Because of this, their verbal capabilities and understanding are further developed, and they are more conscious of their communication and are better able to interpret others' speech patterns, which correlates to the connection-building capacity of a feminine communication style discussed by Tannen (1990) in genderlect theory.

Barkman (2018) discussed the tenets of muted group theory and how muting can occur in a variety of contexts. Barkman mentioned that muted group theory reveals a dominant and sub-dominant group in communication. The dominant group is the privileged group in communication that creates the terms for the sub-dominant group. The sub-dominant group is subject to use the form of communication that the dominant group prefers, and their modes are less acceptable and respected than the dominants. This clash of dominance in various forms of communication leads to the muting of the sub-dominant group, where they will be less free to share and express ideas and communicate freely (Barkman, 2018). In Kramarae's (1981) research, men serve as the dominant group while women assume the sub-dominate role and experience muting.

Mahrukh et al. (2017) explored muted group theory and its relevance to the muting of women in the workplace. They found that despite males and females delivering equal work and performing well together, males used authoritative language over the females, and the women chose to remain silent due to men's dominant speech. Their research illustrates the muting that can occur in the workplace when men and women assume dominant and sub-dominant roles. As females occupy the minority role in sports organizations, they are at increased risk of being the muted members within the organization.

Double Bind: Femininity/Competence

Jamieson (1995) discussed the consequences when women do or do not conform to feminine communication styles. The feminine communication styles originally detailed by Tannen's (1990) gender research may become an expectation of women, which led to Jamieson's (1995) proposed concept of double binds. Jamieson found that women may be stuck in a double

bind, which Frye (1983) described as a situation in which whatever a person does, the action will not be seen as acceptable.

The double bind relevant in Jamieson's research is that of femininity and competence which is based on the notion that women are expected to be feminine, yet a feminine woman cannot be competent and have authority. However, if a woman goes too far and exhibits too many masculine communication styles, she will be seen as a shrew (Jamieson, 1995). This becomes especially important in the workplace as women in authority are scrutinized for being too cold when simply exhibiting masculine communication styles. However, if they become too warm and feminine, they will not be respected as an authority. This balance continues to bind women in the workplace, especially in sports as the industry remains male dominated. This also pertains to Kramarae's (1981) muted group theory as muting may be a consequence for women when this double bind is present.

Jamieson (1995) went on to share that feminine characteristics tend to be associated with being too emotional, easily swayed, and illogical; however, masculine characteristics are typically associated with logicality, psychological maturity, and effective decision-making. Because women are expected to be feminine, they are placed in a bind where they cannot be considered decisive, direct, and mature in the workplace. In addition, analyses point to the idea that assertiveness is considered valuable for males, but the same is not true for women. Women's competence is threatened when they use qualifiers in statements, pause when talking, make poor eye contact, and demonstrate other behaviors associated with a feminine style. When males do the same, they may be seen as shy, but their competence is not questioned like that of women. Jamieson (1995) declares, "In the process of accepting competence, women are held to a different standard" (p. 123).

These double binds have consequences for women's career prospects in numerous industries. Kimmel (2008) discussed the Hopkins vs. Price Waterhouse Supreme Court case that illustrated the double bind that occurs in workplaces. Hopkins was denied a promotion as she was described as too "macho" and overcompensating for simply being female. She was even told to do things more femininely, down to the way she talked, walked, and dressed. Kimmel (2008) describes how "either way, women lose. Either they are too aggressive, in which case, they are seen as manning, 'ball busting bitches,' or they are too ladylike and as a result are passed over as being too passive, sweet, and not ambitious enough" (p. 220).

Samariniotis et al. (2016) surveyed female head coaches of intercollegiate athletics. The study revealed that female head coaches did perceive a double bind in their work. The research team revealed that coaching is seen as a masculine domain and women in that domain felt a double bind was present in their work. They maintain that their results further illustrate the gender stereotypes surrounding sports and illustrate the struggle that women face in male-dominated industries. The women in this study experienced a double bind related to keeping their femininity but having to be masculine in order to be taken seriously (Samariniotis et al., 2016). This study further illustrated the need for additional research regarding women's experiences working in sports and how the presence of this double bind influences feelings of gender inequality.

Gender in the Workplace

Double binds and muting illustrate potential consequences women face in the workplace while the following research lends to further understanding of the role gender plays in the workplace on a larger scale, specifically how women are affected by it. Barratt (2016) found that women tend to adopt a masculine communication style to avoid feeling weak. Von Hippel et al.

(2011) found that women who feel stereotyped in the workplace will adopt masculine communication styles; however, when they do, they are seen as unlikeable and cold, further detailing the double bind women endure in the workplace. Weinberg et al. (2019) found that there is a lingering bias in the workplace because masculinity is preferred, and women can achieve greater compensation for exhibiting masculine communication styles.

The previous research assesses the preference of the workplace for masculinity and how it impacts women whereas Carli (1990) conducted a study on the influence of women and men when exhibiting an assertive, masculine style versus a tentative style. Compared to women that speak assertively, Carli found that women who speak tentatively were more influential with men but less influential with women. The reverse was true for assertive speech. Assertive female speakers were more influential with women and less with men. However, men were seen as equally influential regardless of their speech patterns with both genders (Carli, 1990). This further demonstrates the struggles that women face in the workplace and how their speech is continually scrutinized by both men and women, and it becomes much harder for a woman to effectively communicate with both sexes. Women are forced to adapt their speech to be successful in authoritative positions or they risk facing the consequences of a double bind.

Tannen (1990) discussed conversation in mixed-sex groups, finding that women are typically at a conversational disadvantage. Typical conversations with men and women gravitate towards what men want to talk about. A masculine style seems to prevail in mixed-sex groups, and male-female conversations exhibit more consistency with male communication than female communication (Tannen, 1990). As many conversations in the workplace are mixed-sex, women may face a disadvantage if they maintain a feminine communication style with men in meetings. As jobs in the sports industry remain male dominated, women may face an even larger

disadvantage in mixed-sex groups in the workplace as they likely occupy a small minority of the members in typical conversations.

As the research above discusses a variety of factors arising from conflicting gender styles in the workplace, Tannen's (1990) feminine and masculine separation of communication styles remains relevant as women continue to experience a double bind arising from choosing between the two. The above research illustrates the fine line women may walk within the workplace in order to experience acceptance and influence in their jobs. Due to the dominance of male professionals in sports, the consequences of communication style choices may be heightened for women working in sports as they remain the minority and likely sub-dominant group that experiences muting under Kramarae's (1981) muted group theory.

Managerial Styles

These conflicting styles also play a role in how men and women manage employees within organizations. Turesky and Warner (2020) found that organizations with female managers tend to be more open to equal opportunity for men and women and exhibit greater gender sensitivity. This may be due to differences in management styles. Statham (1987) found that female managers tend to describe themselves as both people- and task-oriented whereas men's perceptions centered more on image engrossment and the importance of their jobs. To accomplish tasks, women would utilize people orientation whereas men focused on autonomy in task completion. In subordinate involvement, women felt a need to be more involved with those below them in their managerial hierarchy whereas men noted that less involvement signified better management. How men and women approached their roles as leaders greatly differed.

Management styles also tend to differ not only in how males and females manage but also in how they manage different sexes. Rossi and Todd-Mancillas (1987) found that male and

female managers deal with problems in the workplace differently. Female managers tend to use both communication and power tactics with both male and female employees. However, male managers preferred to use power with female employees and open communication with male employees. The prevalence of Jamieson's (1995) double bind regarding femininity and competence in the workplace may hinder access to equal opportunity, as women tend to be viewed as less competent prospective managers.

This view that women are seen as less competent leaders was illustrated in recent research by Badura et al. (2018). They found that men have a greater chance of being perceived as leaders than their female counterparts. Their research regarding this competency gap found that gender communication styles played a big role in the view of women being viewed as less competent leaders. As men exhibit assertiveness and dominance and women tend towards cooperation and community, men's voices are heard more in discussion and their assertiveness is viewed as a quality that illustrates leadership (Badura et al., 2018). This relates back to Jamieson's (1995) double bind in that women cannot exhibit the same assertiveness without negative consequences, but if they remain feminine, they are less likely to be seen as leader-like.

Women in Leadership

As Badura et al.'s (2018) study found a preference for men as leaders, there are numerous studies and ideas that assess women as leaders that need to be explored. Typical organizational communication is based on a more masculine model of interacting in the workplace (Stewart et al., 2003). This may contribute to the preference of men over women as leaders. Productivity, competition, and independence have typically been an organization's focus, which ties into a more masculine style (Grant, 1998). Devine and Markiewic (1990) discussed how workers in an organization are often asked to set aside the typical interpersonal behaviors that do not

specifically aid in task performance, further illustrating the general masculine model of organizations. Despite this preference for a masculine style, Grant (1998) argued that "women's greater ease with the relational world could help make organizations places in which affiliation, friendship, connection, and personhood could also be valued in a more integrated matter" (p. 60). Women may listen to their subordinates more often than males as an expression of their communication style. Regarding accessibility to their subordinates, Josephowitz (1980) found managers who are women are twice as approachable and available than their male counterparts.

Borisoff and Merill (1998) discussed speculations that women tend to adopt masculine communication styles to compete effectively in the workplace. They discussed a survey conducted by the American Management Association that revealed that there were no significant differences in women's professional performance; rather, differences emerge in their commitment and managing capacity on the job. It was actually women who were more likely to relocate for a promotion and favor their jobs when both home and business conflicted. Despite this professional commitment, stereotyped perceptions of women's commitment in the workplace remain. The glass ceiling for women in managerial roles tends to come from the belief that women are more supportive and caring, which is better in support positions in the workplace rather than positions requiring extensive decision-making. This belief may inhibit women's promotions to top jobs in the workplace.

Early research suggests that women may be better leaders than their male counterparts when given the opportunity. Helgeson (1990), through a detailed analysis of female leaders, discovered that men and women are fundamentally different in their approach to work. These differences offer advantages for women and those under female leaders. Women tend to create organizations based on cooperation and creativity and offer instinctual decision-making capacity.

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They typically create an organizational structure that resembles that of a web, where a central purpose unites numerous interlocking components. Individuals are drawn closer into communities with the goal of sharing information seamlessly (Helgeson, 1990). Rosener (1995) offered similar findings on female leadership. Women empowered their employees and led a more interactive work environment whereas men tended to employ a command-control relationship with their employees, seeking authority and power. These findings are evidence for the supporting network of women indicated by Tannen (1990) in genderlect theory, applying this idea to women's style as leaders.

Eagly and Carli (2003) found that women were more likely than their male counterparts to lead effectively in present workplace conditions. They presented evidence that "women are slightly more likely than men to lead in the ways that managerial experts consider particularly effective and that have been shown to be effective in research on transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership" (p. 822). In addition, they showed evidence that in masculine domains of the workplace, female leaders may face prejudice because of their gender based on their gender, despite their leadership advantages. This prejudice is illustrated by Badura et al.'s (2018) research that showed how much easier it is for men to emerge as leaders compared to women due to prejudiced gender stereotypes. This further points to the bias and bind women face in the workplace despite their effectiveness as leaders. Burton (2015) also illustrated this prejudice, specifically in sports, by identifying that although female participation has been on the rise in sports, particularly as athletes, women have remained underrepresented in leadership positions in sports.

Gender Inequality in the Workplace

How gender is viewed in the workplace and the proposed double bind that women are placed in may lead to a lack of equality between women and men in the workplace, potentially being perpetuated by a lack of female leadership in sports. Kimmel (2008) discussed perceived gender inequality on a macro-level, noting that few tasks in any society are not assigned based on gender. This traditional way of thinking and allocating tasks based on gender permeates into the workplace, causing distinctive gender dynamics. Down to these fundamental differences, Kimmel (2008) declared that men are "unsexed by failure" whereas women are "unsexed by success," illustrating these distinctive differences. Gender confirmation and conformation occur for men when they are ambitious, competent, and show signs of aggression. On the other hand, women would be seen as gender disconfirming and nonconforming when portraying those same characteristics. When women portray these traits, they are seen as undermining their femininity (Kimmel, 2008). This further illustrates Jamieson's (1995) double bind and the battle women face when displaying both feminine and masculine characteristics. Kimmel's (2008) description of women being "unsexed by success" portrays the glass ceiling women face in the workplace, even describing how typical female workplace tasks in the past were to make male-to-male interactions in the workplace occur more smoothly.

These traditional gender expectations that continue to exist in present-day society cause women to face continuous discrimination based on their gender and be paid and promoted less as well as assigned to tasks because of their gender, regardless of qualifications. It has even been seen throughout history that certain jobs had pay rate changes when males entered or left the industry. Kimmel (2008) provided two examples of this: clerical work and veterinary medicine. When clerical work first originated, it was seen as a highly skilled job and was virtually all-male.

Once the gender distribution changed in the twentieth century and mostly women occupied clerical roles, the job was relabeled as less skillful and valuable and wages were lowered. For many years, veterinary medicine was male dominated. As more and more women have entered the industry in the latter part of the twentieth century, wages lowered with that change in gender composition. These examples provide a look at the traditional gender inequality that has long existed in the workplace.

Senne (2016) revealed that a lack of gender equity in sports governance leads to gender inequality for women in sports organizations. Senne found that sport has become a gendered institution where processes are geared toward operation within the hegemonic masculine norm. This has led to a lack of women in leadership roles in sports. Senne (2016) declared "sport institutions have institutionalized masculinity as the operating principle within sport, which identifies male activity as privileged, and reinforcing masculinity and masculine behavior as acceptable leadership qualities required in sport. Therefore, it is said that gender inequality has become an institutionalized practice within sport organizations" (para. 8). This perceived gender inequality in sport is further emphasized by Burton's (2015) research that identified a lack of women in leadership in sports and Samariniotis et al.'s (2016) survey of female coaches that revealed the double bind they face stemming from gender stereotypes within the male-dominated industry.

Tokenism

As women are the minority in the male-dominated sports industry, they may face tokenism in their careers. Kimmel (2008) explained that tokens in an industry are those that are accepted into a role or industry but are different than the large majority of the others in the organization. They are not just the minority. Rather, they are accepted because of their minority

status, not despite it. They may become representatives of their category and be seen as symbols of the minority group (Kimmel, 2008). Kanter (1993), who largely developed the theory, noted that tokenism is stressful for those who experience it and can lead to feelings of inadequacy and negatively impact their self-image among other consequences. Zimmer (1988) explored tokenism for women in male-dominated workforces and men in female-dominated workforces. Zimmer found that males entering largely female workforces had the complete opposite experience than females did in male-dominated fields. Women ran into a glass ceiling but not men; men rode a glass escalator, experiencing positive discrimination.

Drury et al. (2022) explored gender inequality for females working in football as coaches or referees. They found that there were deep-rooted gender inequalities that women faced, and as the Football Association made fixing these inequalities a priority, their effort seemed superficial and not looking for meaningly change. As the association worked for change, they instead increased the tokenistic nature of trying to get more women into the career path and used token women to further their agenda. Duyvejonck (2021) assessed tokenism in male-dominated environments and found that tokenism's presence slows organizations from moving toward gender equality and inclusivity.

As research points to women as potential token hires in the sports industry, Kanter's (1993) tokenism theory, particularly the hypervisibility of tokens and potential performance pressure, apply to sports research. Kanter (1993) found that women's visibility may heighten, and they may experience increased scrutiny and judgement on their performance in male-dominated industries. As sports is accepted as a male-dominated industry, further research is needed for tokenism's exploration in this environment.

Tokens in an industry may be placed into a particularly tight double bind as they face increased scrutiny of their performance at work. As tokens are a minority in their field, they may be relegated to participate in the gendered roles and styles of the majority of the organization. As women are the minority in sports organizations, they may be forced to occupy more masculine roles to fit in with the gender norm or they may be forced to engage in certain roles related to fostering relationships and building rapport due to their feminine style. It is also possible that women working in sports may become the muted members of the organization pertaining to Kramarae's (1981) muted group theory.

Research Questions

Previous research indicates differences in masculine and feminine communication styles and their implications in the workplace; however, more research is needed in the sports industry, which provides a unique landscape with gender representation disparities. In addition, research regarding women in the workplace and the gender inequality and tokenism they may face indicates the need for research in the male-dominated field of sports. To further this research, I investigated how women working in sports perceive gender communication differences and experience gender inequality and tokenism as well as their beliefs regarding the impact of more women entering the industry.

> **RQ1**: How are women working in sports impacted by gender communication differences and potential double binds?
>
> **RQ2:** How do women working in the male-dominated field of sports experience gender inequality and tokenism? As leaders?
>
> **RQ3**: As more women enter the sports workforce, how are gender inequality and tokenism impacted?

In the literature review, I discussed genderlect theory, double binds women face in the workplace, the managerial styles of women and their leadership capacity as well as gender inequalities and tokenism women may experience in the workplace. In the next section, I will discuss how I conducted research with women working in sports organizations to gather their thoughts and experiences regarding gender communication, gender inequality, and tokenism.

Method

This was an exploratory quantitative study investigating the impact of perceived gender communication differences, gender inequality, and tokenism on women working in the sports industry. This study gathered data related to gender communication, double binds, gender inequality, women in leadership, and tokenism. The purpose of this study was to understand the role that gender communication differences play in women's experiences working in sports and discover whether gender inequality and tokenism are present within the industry. Furthermore, the purpose was to build upon the limited research regarding gender inequality within the sports industry with the ultimate goal of moving sports organizations toward gender equality and equity. Research was conducted through purposive sampling, an online survey, and statistical analysis of results. Samariniotis et al.'s (2016) research utilizing surveys of female head coaches to interpret double binds and Kim et al.'s (2019) survey analysis of workplace discrimination support this way of conducting research.

Sample

I utilized purposive sampling based on the necessary characteristics of my population. Individuals in this sample had to be females who work in sports organizations, outside of players and coaches. The sample of 115 individuals was chosen based on gender and chosen profession and contacted via email ($N = 115$). I gathered contact information from college staff directories

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to make sure that the individuals fit the sample. A mass email was sent to 349 individuals which received a low response rate, so I individually emailed 327 potential participants and received 115 responses. Samariniotis et al.'s (2016) survey of female head coaches, chosen by gender and profession, justifies this sampling method. 25-34 year-olds (37.39%) were the most represented category in the survey while 18-24 (21.74%), 35-44 (19.13%), and 45-54 (17.39%) year-olds made up significant percentages of the sample. Most respondents identified as White (87.29%) followed by Black or African American (6.78%) and Asian (3.39%).

Procedure

First, approval was granted by the IRB, and the study was exempt from requiring signatures (see Appendix A). To begin sampling, it was first determined whether an individual met the necessary characteristics of the population. The potential survey respondents were then contacted via email and directed to a survey on Qualtrics (see Appendix B). Samariniotis et al.'s (2016) usage of surveys to assess the perceptions of female head coaches regarding double binds supports this method.

The survey began with an informed consent form. Following consent, participants responded to Likert-scale questions designed to assess their experiences with the following variables: gender representation, gender communication, double binds, workplace discrimination, gender bias, and tokenism. Then, participants were asked questions regarding their beliefs on whether an increase in female representation would lessen the negative effects of these variables. The final page of the survey asked a variety of demographic questions followed by an open-ended question that allowed participants to share experiences and thoughts related to the variables that the survey may not have covered.

Instrumentation and Measures

Data was collected through an online survey on Qualtrics using a variety of five-point Likert-scale questions with responses ranging from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). The Likert-scale questions assessed a variety of variables including gender communication, double binds, gender inequality, tokenism, and the impact of female representation in the field. In addition, basic demographics were asked to assess the background of the respondents.

The six-item *gender communication* scale measure was developed through analysis of Tannen's (1990) genderlect theory. To assess gender communication in the sports industry, participants were asked questions pertaining to the different communication patterns of males and females, specifically whether males were more direct and competitive in communication and whether females were more nurturing, relationship-building, and community-forming in communication. The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .76$, $M = 3.59$, $SD = .69$).

The five-item *double-bind* scale measure was derived from Samariniotis et al.'s (2016) double-bind measures to survey female head coaches and Jamieson's (1995) initial double-bind concepts. Questions assessed a variety of factors including whether displaying masculinity was perceived as aggressive and whether displaying femininity was viewed as emotional. In addition, questions assessed how female aggression was perceived, whether femininity caused women to feel that they do not fit in, and whether exhibiting feminine communication styles caused women to be taken less seriously. This scale was also reliable ($a = .82$, $M = 3.59$, $SD = .82$).

Three scales were developed to assess gender inequality within the sports workplace. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to make sure that *gender representation*, *workplace discrimination*, and *gender bias* were distinct measures of different types of gender inequality.

The results of the EFA determined that each scale was separate: *gender representation*, *workplace discrimination*, and *gender bias*.

The *gender representation* scale assessed the gender composition of the participants' workplaces and the overall sports industry as a whole. This scale was used to understand the representation of females vs. males in the industry. These five items assessed the representation of females within individual sports organizations as well as their representation in the sports industry and in leadership positions. The scale was reliable ($a = .81$, $M = 4.34$, $SD = .63$).

Workplace discrimination scale items were derived from the Workplace Gender Discrimination Scale used by Kim et al. (2019) to assess potential discrimination within sports organizations. These four items assess recruitment, promotion, pay and benefits, and job allocation in the sports industry based on gender. The scale was reliable ($a = .78$, $M = 4.11$, $SD = .73$).

Finally, *gender bias* items were influenced by Diehl et al.'s (2020) gender bias scale and Stewart et al.'s (2003) research that discussed an organization's preference for masculinity. These three items assessed whether a preference for masculinity exists in the sports industry as well as whether gender stereotypes exist and cause women to face pressure to prove themselves more than their male counterparts. This scale was also reliable ($a = .76$, $M = 3.50$, $SD = .88$).

The next scale measure assessed was *tokenism.* The 11-item scale for measuring tokenism was developed through analysis of both Duyvejonck's (2021) interview results conducted with women in male-dominated environments and Collica-Cox and Schulz's (2020) results from interviews with female correction executives regarding tokenism. In addition, Kanter's (1993) initial notion of hypervisibility of tokens within the workplace influenced the development of the scale measure. Participants were asked questions regarding hypervisibility,

scrutiny and judgement at work, isolation, different pressures due to being female, and utilization of their talents and ideas. In addition, questions were asked regarding whether gender played a role in the participant's hiring and whether women were believed to be token hires in the sports industry. Additionally, a question was asked regarding whether sideline reporters were viewed as token women in sports media. The scale was reliable ($a = .78$, $M = 3.21$, $SD = .68$).

The final scale measure was *female representation impact.* The three-item scale assessed whether respondents believed that an increase in female representation would lessen the effects of 1) gender communication differences, 2) gender inequality, and 3) tokenism. This measure assessed the influence of female representation in sports on other scale measures and was reliable ($a = .77$, $M = 3.35$, $SD = .80$).

Analysis

Statistical analysis was used to analyze the data collected through the online surveys. SPSS and Qualtrics output were utilized to analyze results. First, I started by analyzing the validity and reliability of the scale measures. Factor analysis was conducted on the gender inequality and tokenism scales to assess dimensionality, then alpha reliability was conducted on all scales to assess their reliability. In addition, correlations were utilized to determine criterion validity and assess the linear relationships between the scales. In addition, regression was used to predict female representation impact. Samariniotis et al. (2016) and Kim et al.'s (2019) analysis of survey results point to the statistical analyses utilized in the study.

Independent sample t-tests were used to assess differences in means for two groups, specifically those who identified as white and those who identified as racial minorities as well as those who had and had not worked under female bosses. An additional independent samples t-test was used to assess mean differences in beliefs regarding female representation impact for

women who had been in the industry for 10 years or less and those who had been in the industry for longer than 10 years.

Results

Data analysis included a variety of steps that begin with exploring the linear relationships between the scale measures. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationships between each of the seven variables (see Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender Representation	124	4.34	0.63	—						
2. Gender Bias	118	3.50	0.88	.39**	—					
3. Workplace Discrimination	120	4.11	0.73	.48**	.55**	—				
4. Gender Communication	124	3.59	0.69	.20*	.37**	.38**	—			
5. Double Bind	121	3.59	0.81	−.44**	.70**	.57**	.52**	—		
6. Tokenism	116	3.21	0.67	.47**	.74**	.59**	.33**	.76**	—	
7. Female Representation Impact	116	3.35	0.80	−.18	−.20*	−.27**	.02	−.16	−.24*	—

Note. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Correlation analysis indicated that double binds were strongly and positively correlated with tokenism ($r = .76$, $p < .001$) and gender bias ($r = .70$, $p < .001$). Though slightly lower, workplace discrimination ($r = .57$, $p < .001$) and gender communication ($r = .52$, $p < .001$) were

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also positively correlated to double binds. There was also a significant, strong, and positive relationship between gender bias and tokenism ($r = .74$, $p < .001$) as well as a moderate correlation between gender bias and workplace discrimination ($r = .55$, $p < .001$). Workplace discrimination and tokenism were also moderately and positively correlated ($r = .59$, $p < .001$). Each of these positive correlations were significant in analysis.

A notable finding was that the variables of gender representation ($r = -.18$, $p = .06$), gender bias ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$), workplace discrimination ($r = -.27$, $p < .01$), double binds ($r = -.16$, $p = .09$), and tokenism ($r = -.24$, $p < .05$) were weakly negative correlated with expectations regarding the impact of an increase in female representation. Although weak, this negative relationship suggests that as women experience gender inequality through lack of gender representation, workplace discrimination, and gender bias, they show less optimism that more women entering the industry will lessen the perceived negative effects of these variables.

Next, regression analysis was utilized to explore the predictive relationships of the scale measures of gender representation, workplace discrimination, gender bias, gender communication, double binds, and tokenism on the dependent variable of expectations regarding the impact of increased female representation.

In the regression, 11% of the variance in female representation impact was explained by the six other scale measures. The primary predictor was workplace discrimination, which was the only statistically significant predictor ($\beta = -.25$, $p < .05$). Gender representation ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .76$), gender bias ($\beta = -.05$, $p = .73$), gender communication ($\beta = .16$, $p = .14$), double binds ($\beta = .06$, $p = .74$), and tokenism ($\beta = -.13$, $p = .42$) were not statistically significant in the regression analysis.

Table 2

Regression - Dependent Variable: Female Representation Impact

	B	SE	β	t	p
Gender Representation	-.04	.13	-.03	-.30	.76
Gender Bias	-.04	.13	-.05	-.34	.73
Workplace Discrimination	-.28	.14	-.25	-2.04	.04
Gender Communication	.19	.13	.16	1.50	.14
Double Bind	.05	.16	.06	.34	.74
Tokenism	-.15	.19	-.13	-.81	.42

Note. $R^2 = .11$, $p < .05$ ($F = 2.21$)

Next, an independent samples t-test was used to assess whether there was a difference between the means of those who identified as white ($N = 102$) and those who identified as racial minorities ($N = 13$) regarding gender representation, gender bias, workplace discrimination, gender communication, double bind, tokenism, and female representation impact.

Means in gender representation significantly differed between women identifying as white ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .66$) and women identifying as racial minorities ($M = 4.69$, $SD = .45$). Women who identified as white had lower means ($t = -2.16$, $p < .05$). None of the other mean differences in the scales were statistically significant; however, means for women identifying as white were generally lower for all scales. The small number of participants who identified as racial minorities ($N = 13$) limited statistical analysis.

Table 3

Independent Samples T-Test of Mean Differences Between White and Minority Groups

	White		Minority		*t*	*p*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Gender Representation	4.28	.66	4.69	.45	-2.16	.03*
Gender Bias	3.47	.89	3.65	.89	-.70	.49
Workplace Discrimination	4.10	.74	4.33	.65	-1.07	.29
Gender Communication	3.55	.68	3.76	.76	-1.04	.30
Double Bind	3.55	.83	3.88	.82	-1.33	.19
Tokenism	3.19	.69	3.31	.66	-.57	.57
Female Representation Impact	3.25	.82	3.31	.60	.19	.85

Note. p < .05* White *N* = 102, Minority *N* = 13

An independent samples t-test was also conducted to assess whether participants' having had a female boss or not had a female boss impacted means of scale measures. The t-test assessed whether there were differences in means between those who answered yes to having had a female boss (*N* = 64) and those who answered no to having had a female boss (*N* = 50).

Gender representation and tokenism were statistically significant in mean differences between women who had worked under a female boss and women who had not. Women who had worked under a female boss had lower means (*t* = -2.62, *p* < .01) in gender representation (*M* = 4.18, *SD* = .75) than those who had not (*M* = 4.50, *SD* = .45). Likewise, women who had

worked under a female boss had lower means (t = -2.62, p < .01) in tokenism (M = 3.05, SD = .59) than those who had not (M = 3.38, SD = .74).

Table 4

Independent Samples T-Test of Mean Differences Between Yes or No Answer to Female Boss

	Yes		No		t	p
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Gender Representation	4.18	.75	4.50	.45	-2.62	.01**
Gender Bias	3.36	.84	3.63	.92	-1.64	.11
Workplace Discrimination	4.12	.73	4.12	.73	.02	.99
Gender Communication	3.51	.69	3.63	.69	-.90	.37
Double Bind	3.53	.80	3.63	.86	-.65	.52
Tokenism	3.05	.59	3.38	.74	-2.60	.01**
Female Representation Impact	3.44	.80	3.23	.80	1.43	.16

Note. p < .01** Yes *N* = 64, No *N* = 50

The differences in means of gender bias and female representation impact approached significance. Those who had worked under a female boss had slightly lower means (t = -1.64, p = .11) in gender bias (M = 3.36, SD = .84) than those who had not (M = 3.36, SD = .84). In addition, means in female representation impact were slightly higher (t = 1.43, p = .16) for those who had worked under a female boss (M = 3.44, SD = .80), indicating they believed an increase

in female representation would have more impact on scale measures, than those who had not (*M* = 3.22, *SD* = .80).

An independent samples t-test was also utilized to assess whether time in the industry impacted optimism for change as female representation increases. The first group included women who answered less than one year, 1-5 years, or 6-10 years when asked how long they had been working in the sports industry. The second group included women who answered 11-15 years, 16-20 years, or 20+ years.

Table 5

Independent Samples T-Test of Mean Differences in Female Representation Impact Based on Time in Industry

| | </=10 years | | 11+ years | | *t* | *p* |
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Female Representation Impact	3.45	.70	3.29	.91	-1.67	.10

Note. </=10 years *N* = 48, 11+ years *N* = 67

The mean differences between the groups approached significance (*p* = .10). Women who had been in the industry for longer than 10 years had lower optimism for change (*M* = 3.29, *SD* = .91) than women who had worked in the industry for 10 years or less (*M* = 3.45, *SD* = .70).

Responding to the Study's Research Questions

The first research question asked about the implications of gender communication differences and double binds for women working in sports. The sample leaned toward agreement (*M* = 3.59, *SD* = .69) regarding gender communication differences, indicating that women

working in sports recognize conflicting communication styles between males and females. Tannen's (1990) genderlect theory and conflicting styles were supported by the mean of the sample regarding gender communication differences.

These gender communication differences may present themselves in a double bind as the findings of this study were consistent with Jamieson's (1995) proposed double bind between femininity and competence. This was evidenced in the sample's general agreement ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .82$) with the presence of a double bind regarding how women were viewed when utilizing masculine or feminine styles. Gender communication differences and double binds were strongly and positively correlated. An important finding was that the presence of a double bind most strongly correlated with other scales in the study, including tokenism, gender bias, and workplace discrimination. These correlations suggest that women who indicated they experienced double binds also felt that tokenism, gender bias, and workplace discrimination affected women who work in sports. This indicates interrelation between double binds and tokenism, gender bias, and workplace discrimination.

The second research question asked about how women experience gender inequality and tokenism in the male-dominated world of sports. Women experienced gender inequality primarily in gender representation ($M = 4.34$, $SD = .63$). and workplace discrimination ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .73$). Females indicated that they were largely underrepresented in their workplaces and in the sports industry in general. The research question also asked about gender inequality for female leaders. Women in the industry indicated that females were most underrepresented in leadership positions in sports.

Regarding workplace discrimination items, which specifically asked about whether males were paid more, promoted more, recruited more, and allocated different jobs than females, most

women agreed or strongly agreed with its presence in the industry. As women indicated males were promoted more frequently, this may also reinforce the uphill battle women face to become leaders in the industry. In a regression analysis run to understand the predictive relationships of the scales on expectations regarding the impact of an increase in female representation, workplace discrimination was the primary and only statistically significant predictor in analysis. This indicates that the presence of workplace discrimination may lower optimism regarding whether an increase in female representation will lessen the effects of gender communication gaps, gender inequality, and tokenism within the industry.

A particularly interesting finding regarding how women in the industry are affected by gender inequality arose through an independent samples t-test assessing the mean differences between women who identify as white and women who identify as racial minorities. The analysis revealed that women of racial minorities may experience double binds, gender inequality, and tokenism on a higher rate; however, a limited number of respondents who identified as a racial minority limited statistical findings. Gender representation was the only statistically significant result as women who identified as racial minorities agreed more than women who identified as white with the lack of female representation in the sports workplace.

There was also a significant finding regarding how women who had worked under a female boss and those who had not responded to the scales. Results of an independent samples t-test indicated that those who answered no to having a female boss agreed more with the lack of gender representation in the industry as well as with the presence of tokenism. This may indicate that having or having previously had a female boss could lessen women's feelings that they are minorities and tokens in the sports workplace.

Overall, results on tokenism did not appear to be statistically significant. While women in the industry leaned towards agreement with the presence of tokenism in the industry ($M = 3.21$, $SD = .68$), a higher mean would be expected to state that tokenism was widely recognized by this sample of women working in sports. However, a few statistically significant measures were found regarding tokenism. There was a significant strong and positive correlation between gender bias and tokenism indicating that those who experienced gender bias also felt that tokenism affected women in sports. Tokenism was also strongly and positively correlated with double binds and moderately and positively correlated with gender representation and workplace discrimination, indicating interrelation between tokenism and many of the other scales.

The third question asked how an increase in female representation would impact gender inequality and tokenism. Women in the industry just slightly leaned towards agreement on the impact of female representation on the scale measures ($M = 3.35$, $SD = .80$). The results were close to the middle as a response of three noted neither agreement nor disagreement with the items in the scale, indicating a lack of confidence from women in the industry regarding whether more women working jobs in sports will produce change. As women experienced the effects of gender bias, workplace discrimination, double binds, and tokenism more, they had lower optimism regarding the effects of these variables being lessened as more women enter the sports workplace. Although weak, the negative correlations between female representation impact and other scales suggest this relationship. Time in the industry may also play a role in optimism regarding the impact of an increase in female representation. Results show that women who had been in the industry for more than 10 years had slightly less optimism than those who had been in the industry for 10 years or less.

A notable finding was that those who answered yes to having had a female boss were slightly more optimistic about the impact of an increase in female representation lessening the perceived negative effects of gender communication gaps, gender inequality, and tokenism. In addition, workplace discrimination was found to be a predictor of female representation impact, indicating its presence may cause women to feel less optimistic about change in the industry.

Discussion

Summary

The most important takeaway of the study was that women are underrepresented in the sports industry and experience workplace discrimination. First, women are largely aware of the fact that they are the minority gender in the workplace. Females are far too underrepresented in all facets of the sports workplace and sports industry, especially in leadership positions. Beyond a lack of female representation in the industry, women noted that they did experience workplace discrimination. Women felt that men were paid more, promoted more, recruited more, and allocated different jobs than them. Workplace discrimination was a predicting variable for optimism regarding an increase in female representation lessening the effects of gender communication gaps, gender inequality, and tokenism. In addition, workplace discrimination was moderately correlated with gender bias, double binds, and tokenism. This shows that workplace discrimination can be detrimental to women's experiences in the industry and may inhibit their optimism that the gender inequality present in the industry can change with more female representation.

An important finding of the study was regarding women's beliefs on the effects of an increase in female representation. The results of this study suggest that more women entering the industry may not solve issues of gender inequality that were deemed present. Women in the

industry were relatively split on this concept, yet findings show that as women move past entry-level, they become less optimistic about this change.

Figure 1

Means Plot of Female Representation Impact Based on Time in Industry
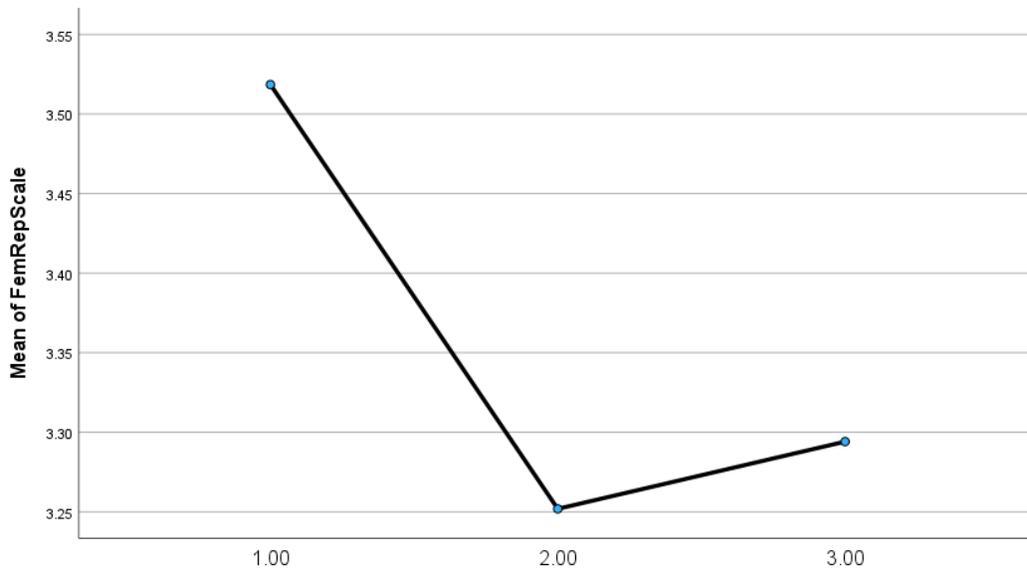
Note. 1.00 = 5 years or less, 2.00 = 6-15 years, 3.00 = 16+ years in industry

Women who were new to the industry ($M = 3.52$, $SD = .58$, $N = 36$), having worked for 5 years or less, expressed greater optimism for change than those who had been in the industry for longer. Women who were moving out of entry-level, having worked 6-15 years ($M = 3.25$, $SD = .85$, $N = 45$), had less optimism. Likewise, women who had been in the industry for 16-plus years had a similar mean to those at the middle of their career ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .91$, $N = 34$). As women moved past entry-level and into mid-career, they may have been passed on for promotions and pay raises and gathered enough collective experience with gender inequality in the workplace that they have lower optimism for change. In addition, female representation impact's negative correlations with gender bias, workplace discrimination, double binds, and

tokenism suggest that as women experience the effects of these variables more, they have lower optimism for change. Additional research will help clarify this link.

Another takeaway of the study was that more females in leadership may have positive effects on women's experiences in the industry. Women who had worked under a female boss in their careers expressed less agreement with the lack of gender representation in the industry. They also experienced tokenism on a lower scale than those who had never worked under a female boss. Results on workplace discrimination illustrated the barriers that women may face as they look to become leaders in the sports industry. This suggests that although more women in leadership may benefit other women's experiences, there may be significant barriers to making this change.

An additional takeaway of the study was that women in the industry leaned towards agreement with the notion that males and females do communicate differently, consistent with Tannen's (1990) genderlect theory. They also expressed that these gender communication differences may present themselves in a double bind for women working in the industry. They felt that if they acted too feminine, they may be perceived as too emotional, but utilizing masculine communication may lead them to be viewed as too cold or aggressive. This study acknowledges that Jamieson's (1995) double bind between femininity and competency may be a barrier that women face in the industry. Double bind's interrelation with the other scales found through correlations suggests that communication gaps and barriers may relate to feelings of gender inequality and tokenism.

Another key takeaway of this study was that women who identify as racial minorities may experience double binds, gender inequality, and tokenism on a higher scale. This suggests that being both a gender minority and racial minority in the workplace may lead to increased

negative effects of inequality and discrimination. The lack of women who identified as racial minorities in the study led to decreased statistical findings on the subject; however, the study provided the foundation for future research into the implications of intersectionality.

Limitations

There were a few limitations in this study regarding the sample size and sample diversity. While 115 survey responses provided a good representative sample of women working in sports, the sample was mainly limited to women working in collegiate athletics due to the accessibility of contact information. It would be useful to include more participants who have worked in various settings beyond the collegiate environment. It would also have been useful to assess the effects of gender inequality, double binds, and tokenism on female broadcasters, but this was again limited due to the accessibility of contact information.

The racial diversity of the sample size limited the independent samples t-test used to compare means between women who identified as white and women who identified as racial minorities. Only 13 women who identified as racial minorities responded to the survey, and items had to be re-coded to move all racial minorities into one group in order to reach a statistically analyzable number. An assessment of the responses of each racial minority would have been useful to better understand how race impacts the experiences of women working in the industry.

Another limitation of this study was related to its assessment of gender communication differences. It may have been useful to ask questions regarding which style, masculine or feminine, the women felt that they primarily utilized in communication. While this study did identify communication differences based on gender, it did not assess the specific communication style of its participants which could have been useful in statistical analysis

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regarding double binds and how gender communication differences affect women in the industry.

Directions for Future Research

The findings regarding race in this study created a strong direction for future research on how being a female racial minority working in the sports industry influences experiences with inequality, tokenism, double binds, and optimism for change. This study was unable to provide many statistically significant results on race due to a low number of racial minorities represented in the sample; however, it provided a strong basis for further research on this subject.

Findings regarding workplace discrimination provide the foundation for researching the pay disparity between women and men who work in sports. In this study, women believed that men were paid more than them, but the study did not dive into specific salaries to assess the foundation of this belief. Future research should analyze whether men are paid more than women in the industry and should research the barriers women face in being recruited and promoted in sports jobs.

Another direction for future research that arose from this study was a deeper exploration into tokenism experienced by women working in sports. Women in the study slightly leaned towards agreement with the presence of tokenism, but this could not be stated with statistical confidence. Research regarding tokenism may be better served with a qualitative study to assess the specific feelings and beliefs of women in the industry regarding the subject.

Further research should also be done on the different career paths that women can pursue in sports and how women on each of these paths are impacted by double binds, gender inequality, and tokenism. This study surveyed women who mainly worked in sports administration and communication in collegiate athletics due to the accessibility of contact

information, but more research should be done on how female broadcasters experience these variables as well as those outside of the collegiate environment. Another direction for future research is in gender communication style. A study where women working in the sports industry respond to a survey designed to assess their communication style could be useful in understanding how communication style impacts experiences working in the sports industry, particularly because muted group and gender double bind theories both explain that language and communication styles at work have consequences for women's careers.

Conclusion

Significant barriers for females working in sports were identified in this study. Women experience various facets of gender inequality in the workplace, including workplace discrimination, suggesting that there is a need for changes in order for equality to exist within the sports workplace. Women may experience a double bind regarding how they choose to communicate, and they face a variety of obstacles in not just working in sports but in pursuing leadership opportunities. Women are largely underrepresented in the sports industry, and despite more women entering the sports workplace, the effects of double binds, gender inequality, and tokenism decrease optimism that change will happen. Women who have faced these barriers on a higher scale and moved past the entry level in the industry are less likely to believe in the potential for positive change. More research is needed on what will push the industry to address gender inequality and lessen its perceived negative effects on women's experiences working in the sports industry.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

Re: Exempt - Initial - 2024-151 GENDERED COMMUNICATION IN SPORTS: IMPACT ON PERCEIVED GENDER INEQUALITY AND TOKENISM

Youngstown State University Human Subjects Review Board has rendered the decision below for GENDERED COMMUNICATION IN SPORTS: IMPACT ON PERCEIVED GENDER INEQUALITY AND TOKENISM

Decision: Exempt

Selected Category: Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly

reported to the IRB.

Findings: This is a student research project aimed to understand communication across genders.   The survey asks a series of select-response and open questions about participants' perceptions and experiences regarding male and female communication in the workplace,

perceived gender inequality, and tokenism as well as demographic questions. The survey should take no more than 20 minutes. No identifying information is requested and consent is passive. This meets the criteria of an exempt protocol, category 2(I).

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,

Youngstown State University Human Subjects Review Board

Online Survey

Informed Consent

Dear Participant:

I am collecting data for my master's thesis project in the Department of Communication at Youngstown State University. The purpose of this study is to understand the role that gender communication differences play on women's experiences working in sports and discover whether gender inequality and tokenism are present within the industry.

I will ask you to provide your perceptions and experiences regarding male and female communication in the workplace, perceived gender inequality, and tokenism. I will also need to collect information to describe you such as career status, education level, gender, age, race, etc.

You must be at least 18 years of age to participate. Completing this study should take approximately 10 minutes.

Your privacy is important and we will handle all information collected from you in a confidential manner. We will not record any identifying information about you and your responses will be anonymous. We plan to present the results at conferences and through publications, but we will not reveal the identity of our research participants in any of our reports.

We do not anticipate any benefit, harm, or emotional discomfort for our research participants. We expect that these findings will help us understand the impact gendered communication, perceived gender inequality, and tokenism have on women's experiences working in the sports industry.

You do not have to be in this study. If you don't want to, you can say "no" without losing any benefits that you are entitled to. If you do agree, you can stop participating at any time. If you wish to withdraw, please exit the survey.

If you have questions about this research project please contact Dr. Rebecca Curnalia, professor in the Department of Communication at Youngstown State: rmcurnalia@ysu.edu or 330-475-9295.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, you may contact the Office of Research at YSU (330-941-2377) or at YSUIRB@ysu.edu

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By responding "yes," you are

- agreeing to participate in this study,

- confirming that you are 18 years of age or older.

I agree, I am 18 and consent to the conditions listed above. (1)

I do not agree or I am under 18 and I do not consent to the conditions listed above. (2)

Gender Representation

I have more male coworkers than female coworkers.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

More men are employed in my organization that women.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Women are underrepresented in my workplace.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Women are underrepresented in sports organizations.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Women are underrepresented in leadership positions in sports.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Gender Communication

Males and females typically communicate differently.

    Strongly agree (5)

    Somewhat agree (4)

    Neither agree nor disagree (3)

    Somewhat disagree (2)

    Strongly disagree (1)

Men tend to be more direct and assertive in conversation.

    Strongly agree (5)

    Somewhat agree (4)

    Neither agree nor disagree (3)

    Somewhat disagree (2)

    Strongly disagree (1)

Women tend to be more nurturing in conversation.

    Strongly agree (5)

    Somewhat agree (4)

    Neither agree nor disagree (3)

    Somewhat disagree (2)

    Strongly disagree (1)

Women engage in more relationship-building conversations with their coworkers than men do.

    Strongly agree (5)

    Somewhat agree (4)

    Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Men are more competitive with other men than women are with other women.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Women form a community with other women in the industry more than men do with other men.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Double Bind

As a women, being too masculine is perceived as aggressive.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

As a women, being too feminine is perceived as emotional.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

When I act aggressively, I am perceived as a b*tch.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

I do not feel as though I fit in due to my femininity.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

I am less likely to be taken seriously by my male counterparts when utilizing feminine

communication styles.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Workplace Discrimination

Men are recruited more easily than women in sports.

  Strongly agree (5)

  Somewhat agree (4)

  Neither agree nor disagree (3)

  Somewhat disagree (2)

  Strongly disagree (1)

Men are promoted more frequently than women in sports.

  Strongly agree (5)

  Somewhat agree (4)

  Neither agree nor disagree (3)

  Somewhat disagree (2)

  Strongly disagree (1)

Men are given more pay and benefits than women in sports.

  Strongly agree (5)

  Somewhat agree (4)

  Neither agree nor disagree (3)

  Somewhat disagree (2)

  Strongly disagree (1)

Men and women are allocated different jobs in sports.

  Strongly agree (5)

  Somewhat agree (4)

  Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Gender Bias

Masculinity is preferred in the workplace in sports organizations.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Masculinity is viewed as more leader-like in the sports industry.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

In my organization, gender stereotypes are discussed or joked about.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Men automatically assume females know less about sports which causes me to have to prove my

capabilities more than my male counterparts.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Tokenism

I feel more visible than males in my position.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

I feel I have to work harder to prove myself as capable due to being female.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

I feel increased scrutiny and judgement on my work due to being female.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

I feel isolated at work due to dominance of male professionals.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

I feel increased pressure to be perfect and make right decisions because I am female in a male-dominated industry.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

I feel pressure to be "one of the guys."

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

My talents are fully utilized by my organization.

Strongly agree (1)

Somewhat agree (2)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (4)

Strongly disagree (5)

My ideas are seriously considered in the workplace.

Strongly agree (1)

Somewhat agree (2)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (4)

Strongly disagree (5)

I believe that my gender played a role in my organization's decision to hire me.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

I feel sideline reporters have become token women in sports media.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Women are sometimes token hires in the sports industry.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Female Representation Impact

As more women enter the workplace in sports, the communication gap between males and females is less noticeable.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

As more women enter the workplace in sports, the effects of perceived gender inequality in the industry are lessened.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

As more women enter the workplace in sports, situations where women serve as tokens of the female gender decrease.

Strongly agree (5)

Somewhat agree (4)

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

Somewhat disagree (2)

Strongly disagree (1)

Demographics

What is your sex?

Male (1)

Female (2)

Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

White (1)

Black or African American (2)

American Indian or Alaska Native (3)

Asian (4)

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)

Other (6)

How old are you?

Under 18 (1)

18-24 years old (2)

25-34 years old (3)

35-44 years old (4)

45-54 years old (5)

55-64 years old (6)

65+ years old (7)

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than high school degree (1)

High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED) (2)

Some college but no degree (3)

Associate degree in college (2-year) (4)

Bachelor's degree in college (4-year) (5)

Master's degree (6)

Doctoral degree (7)

Professional degree (JD, MD) (8)

Information about income is very important to understand. Would you please give your best guess? Please indicate the answer that includes your entire household income in (previous year) before taxes.

Less than $10,000 (1)

$10,000 to $19,999 (2)

$20,000 to $29,999 (3)

$30,000 to $39,999 (4)

$40,000 to $49,999 (5)

$50,000 to $59,999 (6)

$60,000 to $69,999 (7)

$70,000 to $79,999 (8)

$80,000 to $89,999 (9)

$90,000 to $99,999 (10)

$100,000 to $149,999 (11)

$150,000 or more (12)

Which statement best describes your current employment status?

Working (paid employee) (1)

Working (self-employed) (2)

Not working (temporary layoff from a job) (3)

Not working (looking for work) (4)

Not working (retired) (5)

Not working (disabled) (6)

Not working (other) (7)

Prefer not to answer (8)

How long have you been working in the sports industry?

Less than one year (1)

1-5 years (2)

6-10 years (3)

11-15 years (4)

16-20 years (5)

20+ years (6)

How many different organizations have you worked in within the sports industry?

1 (1)

2 (2)

3 (3)

4 (4)

5 (5)

6 or more (6)

Which area of sports would you say your job falls under?

    Administration (1)

    Sports Communication (2)

    Sports Media (3)

    Team Support Staff (4)

    Other (5) _____

Have you ever had a female boss within the sports industry?

    Yes (1)

    No (2)

Is there anything else you'd like me to know regarding your experiences as a woman working in sports?