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### **A Comparison of Athletes' Use of Situational Cues and Gender Stereotypes on Coaching Endorsement**

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*Gendered leadership stereotypes are possibly one of women's largest barriers to attaining leadership positions in sport organizations. While much research is available to address the decline of women in leadership positions in intercollegiate athletics, situational cues have largely been ignored. Two samples were collected using student-athletes and non student-athletes to test the hypotheses constructed from previous research on situational cues and gendered leadership stereotypes. Overall, the previous evidence supports the notion gender stereotypes overcome situational cues for women depicted in various scenarios while men are endorsed as leaders the majority of the time regardless of situational cues. The current analysis of situational cues' and gender stereotypes' impact on coaching endorsement demonstrates situational cues are salient for men and mixed results for women. A pro-gender bias was present in the male sample but not the females, and the results suggested individuals' sexist views impact coaching endorsement.*

### **Introduction**

**I**n support of the “think manager, think male” hypothesis (Schein, 1971), researchers have consistently found managerial stereotypes are associated with masculine characteristics (Eagly & Karau, 2002); delimiting women's ability to break through the “glass ceiling.” The stereotypes are largely based in gender schemas and stereotypes that associate leadership qualities, potential and ability with men rather than women (Foldy, 2006). A recent investigation by Aicher and Sagas (2010) demonstrated gender stereotypes impact the ascription of masculine characteristics to the head coaching positions in intercollegiate athletics; bolstering the notion of “think coach, think male.”

Evaluating the trends and research on women coaches may suggest gendered leadership stereotypes are possibly one of women's largest barriers to attaining leadership positions in sport organizations. For instance, Acosta and Carpenter (2012) reported 20.3% of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) athletic programs are directed by a woman, 42.9% of women's

teams have a woman head coach, and less than 2% of men's teams are coached by women. These statistics alone have been the foundation for research investigations into the decline of female coaches. For instance, researchers have established women receive less for their human and social capital investments (Sagas & Cunningham, 2004), as well as face access and treatment discrimination (Aicher & Sagas, 2009; Knoppers, 1992; Lovett & Lowry, 1994). Researchers have also found that women leave the coaching profession sooner than men (Knoppers, Meyer, Ewing, & Forrest, 1991), express less interest in becoming a head coach (Cunningham, Doherty, & Gregg, 2007), and anticipate lower outcomes associated with being a head coach, perceive less support from administrators (Dixon & Sagas, 2007), and perceive fewer opportunities in the profession (Knoppers et al., 1991). One area largely ignored in these investigations is the impact situational cues and gender stereotypes may have on coaching endorsement.

Numerous situational cues indicate the leader of the organization, group, or team. For instance, closest parking spot to the door, corner or largest office, and most importantly for this investigation, the head of a board room table. As outlined below, several research studies have evaluated the boardroom setting as a situational cue. Overall, the evidence supports the notion that gender stereotypes overcome situational cues for women depicted in various scenarios, while men are endorsed as leaders the majority of the time regardless of situational cues (Jackson, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommers, 2007; Jackson, Engstrom, & Hazzenzahl, 2005; Porter & Geis, 1981; Porter, Geis, & Jennings, 1983). Most recently, Jackson et al., (2007) established the presence of a pro-gender bias (i.e., individuals endorse based on their own gender).

Therefore, this investigation centers on determining if situational cues affect coaching endorsement? Is this endorsement impacted by a pro-gender bias? Do stereotypical beliefs predict endorsement? Answering these questions may provide some insight into the roles gender stereotypes and situational cues have in coaching endorsement in the intercollegiate athletic setting. In the following sections, we will review the literature on gender stereotypes, situational cues, and ambivalent sexism in order to frame the hypotheses for this investigation. Following the methods and results sections, we will outline the suggestions that may delimit the impact of gendered stereotypes in the intercollegiate coaching profession.

## Literature Review

### *Sport as a Male-Dominated Space and Gendered Stereotypes*

Sport is often cited as a male/masculine space (Hoerber, 2007; Shaw & Hoerber, 2003), created by and for men (Fink, 2008; Hartmann-Tews, & Pfister 2003). Messner (1992) cites modern sport as an inherently sexist institution, thereby making it a "gendered institution" (p. 16). Furthermore, sport is often cited as a heteronormative and homophobic environment, often valuing hypermasculine and hyperheterosexual behavior for male athletes in particular (Messner, 1992). Contemporary sport serves as an institution for young boys to learn the importance of increasing their masculine capital in various ways, such as displaying physical prowess, using sexism to devalue and dissociate themselves from femininity, and using homophobia and heterosexism to separate themselves from homosexuality (Anderson, 2002; Messner, 1992; Pronger, 1990).

Ultimately, sport seeks to normalize a binary, hierarchal gender structure and associated gender ideologies, which value and celebrate male superiority as natural (Hovden & Pfister, 2006). Feminists have acknowledged the potential for sport to act as a space for counter-narratives against this dominant ideology, but largely agree sport (as is) contributes to sex role stereotypes that reproduce the ideology of domination (Bryson, 1983). The sociocultural interaction present in sport contributes to the perpetuation, legitimation, and reproduction of gender inequity and sex-role stereotyping (Aitchison, 2005).

While similar to other male-dominated institutions, sport is unique. Sport can simultaneously propagate and challenge dominant ideologies (Hovden & Pfister, 2006) because gender is naturalized within sport more than any other institution (Caudwell, 2003; Davis, 1990; McKay, 1997; Messner, 2000). Specifically, sport media has the opportunity to portray male and female athletes equally and equitably, and focus on the athletic talents of the athletes to emphasize their abilities within their respective sport, despite their sex. However, this is not the reality of the situation. For example, female athletes are often minimized and portrayed in a heteronormative frame (Kane & Buysse, 2005; Kane & Lenskyj, 1998). Rather than focusing on the athletic talents of these female athletes, the media often emphasizes the roles of these women as wives and mothers. This type of media coverage contributes to the marginalization of female athletes and amplifies the use and acceptance of sex role stereotypes within sport.

### *Situational Cues*

Porter and Geis (1981) completed one of the first studies on leadership, sex, and seating arrangement. They observed how nonverbal leadership cues conferred leadership, power, and authority on men and women. In this study, the authors relied heavily on the head of the table as a nonverbal leadership cue, which may imply power and leadership (Davenport, Brooker, & Munro, 1971; Knapp & Hall, 2002; Pelligrini, 1971; Porter et al., 1983). They used photographic slides of a rectangular table with five individuals seated around the table. The slides were configured as follows: two all-male groups, two all-female, and four different mixed-sex groups. The mixed groups included two slides with males at the head of the table, one with the majority of the group being male, another with the majority being female. A similar design was utilized for the female condition. Participants then identified the individual who they thought would contribute most to the group.

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) was utilized as a pre-test to select participants for the study: individuals who scored significantly masculine, feminine, or androgynous were selected for participation at equal levels. The results determined the individual seated at the head of the table would be perceived as the leader in single-sex groups, and mixed-sex groups when the individual was a male, but not in mixed-sex groups when the individual was a female. Ultimately, Porter and Geis (1981) concluded sex role stereotypes were more powerful than the situational cue. Moreover, it is important to note the head of the table cue was ineffective only when in conflict with sex role stereotypes – only in a mixed-sex group with a female at the head of the table was this situational cue futile.

Porter et al. (1983) replicated this study and hypothesized the head of the table cue would be discounted against sex-role stereotypes in a mixed-sex group. Employing analogous methods as Porter and Geis (1981), this study yielded similar results: females at the head of the table in mixed-sex groups were not viewed as leaders, with either a female majority or a male majority, while males at the head of the table were considered the leader regardless of the group's

composition. Moreover, they found the person seated at the head of the table was considered to contribute the most to the group, perceived as the most talkative and dominant, and believed to possess the most leadership characteristics. These findings held form in all conditions with exception of females at the head of the table in the mixed group condition.

Jackson and her colleagues (2005) sought to determine if cultural perceptions had changed in the 20 years since the original Porter and Geis (1981) findings were published. For this study, participants were shown a diagram of a rectangular table with a graphic representation of five individuals surrounding the table: one at the head and two on each side. Rather than using photographs of actual people, the authors used the internationally recognized symbols for male and female to avoid any potential biases i.e., attractiveness, race, etc. They also turned the table so the head of the table was depicted at the top of the page to enhance the effect of the situational cue.

Contrary to the previous studies, Jackson et al. (2005) found participants chose the individual at the head of the table approximately 90% of the time, regardless of sex. Moreover, it was found participants did not choose men seated at the head of the table as the leader significantly more often than women. Additionally, females chose a woman as a leader significantly more often than males, even when a female individual was not depicted at the head of the table. These findings were the first indication of a “same-gender bias” (Jackson et al., 2007, p. 713), or pro-gender bias.

Continuing this research, Jackson et al. (2007) modified the previous research study in an attempt to discern how strongly gender stereotypes affect people’s decisions about leadership, when it is equally likely either a man or woman could be perceived as the leader. Using the graphic representations (similar to Jackson et al., 2005) of male and female figures, the diagram displayed these groups seated at a rectangular table, with an individual placed at each end of the table accompanied with two on each side (either all one sex or mixed sex). The table was situated horizontally, rather than vertically, and participants selected whom they perceived as the group’s leader. The results of the study indicated same-sex leaders were chosen significantly more often than opposite-sex leaders (Jackson et al., 2007); continuing to support the pro-gender bias from their previous study.

The second aspect of their study asked participants to “indicate the reason for your choice” (Jackson et al., 2007, page 718). The responses suggested the “think leader, think male” stereotype may be present amongst males, and according to the gender identity hypothesis, men continue to view leadership as part of the male group identity (Jackson et al., 2007). However, it appears women are beginning to associate leadership with their own sex, signaling a move from the “think manager, think male” perspective. For instance, responses given by males were consistent with such statements as “usually men act as the leader of the group.” Conversely, women overtly rejected the “think manager, think male stereotype.” For example, one female participant stated “being a female doesn’t mean that she can’t be a leader” (Jackson et al., 2007, p. 720). The authors postulated women might be learning more feminist or egalitarian views and attitudes in their collegiate careers, whereas male students may not be getting this same experience.

### *Social Identity Theory*

Building on the work of Jackson et al. (2007), we utilized social identity theory as our theoretical framework. Tajfel (1972) introduced social identity theory to explain how and why

individuals' conceptualize themselves in intergroup contexts. According to Tajfel (1972), one's social identity is defined as an individual's belief that s/he belongs to a certain social group, which has value or significance. From this, individuals sort themselves into groups based on salient characteristics, and then act in ways congruent with their most primary identities (Avery, McKay, Wilson, & Tonidandel, 2007; Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Social identity theory utilizes three main foci: categorization, identification, and comparison (Aicher & Cunningham, 2011; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Individuals employ these three foci and categorize themselves into a social group, which enables them to identify with other similar individuals. An out-group is simultaneously developed with the in-group to establish positive in-group associations, and enhance the individual's self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). To protect the prestige and status of the in-group, individuals look to increase self-esteem within the collective group. This self-esteem boost is based on the shared identity with other members, thus creating an "us" vs. "them" type of mentality, which helps to insulate positive characteristics and attributes of the in-group, and subsequently devalue out-group members (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004).

Based on the previous results evaluating the impact of situational cues, we hypothesize the same may be true for the coaching context. Thus, when presented with a situational cue that clearly indicates who should be considered the head coach of the team (e.g., one woman with five men or vice versa), the sex represented with one will be selected a majority of the time; consistent with the situational cue. When presented with the mixed group condition, individuals will turn to their coaching stereotypes, and consistent with the work of Aicher and Sagas (2010), a man will be selected most frequently. Lastly, in line with social identity theory and the findings of Jackson et al., (2007), we predicted a pro-gender bias will be present among the sample (i.e., females will select a female more frequently than a male, and vice versa). This leads us to three tentative hypotheses:

*H<sub>1</sub>*: When presented with a situational cue for the head coach (one female, five males and one male, five females), situational cues will inform coach endorsement.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: When presented with a mixed group condition, a male coach will be selected more often than a female as a coach.

*H<sub>3</sub>*: A pro-gender bias will be present among the sample.

### *Ambivalent Sexism*

Overt sexist beliefs and actions have become more unacceptable, and therefore have begun to manifest in more subtle ways (Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Joly, 1995). Glick and Fiske (1996) asserted individuals possess positive views towards women, while at the same time maintain hostile attitudes: defined ambivalent sexism. Comprised of two forms, benevolent and hostile, that are moderately correlated across several cultures (Sibley & Wilson, 2004), ambivalent sexism serves to bolster the justifications for one's perceptions of differences between the two genders (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

Glick and Fiske (2001) defined hostile sexism as "an adversarial view of gender relations in which women are perceived as seeking control over men, whether through sexuality or feminist ideology" (p.109). Hostile sexism has been shown to affect the perceptions of the non-traditional female stereotype (Glick & Fiske, 2001), and is associated with the ascription of negative feminine traits and positive masculine traits (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Hostile sexism has been found to affect leadership evaluations and endorsement of women in leadership positions, as well as enhance perceptions that women are less able to be managers (Masser & Abrams, 2004; Sakilli-Ugurlu & Beydogan, 2002). Finally, men who indicated high hostile sexism levels reported they feared, were intimidated by, and felt more competitive towards career woman (Glick, Diebold, Bailey-Werner, & Zhu, 1997).

Benevolent sexism is defined as a set of interrelated attitudes towards women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles, but are subjectively positive in feeling or tone for the perceiver and tend to elicit behaviors typically categorized as pro-social or intimacy seeking. (Glick & Fiske, 2001, p. 491)

This suggests individuals may not perceive their actions or thoughts as sexist because they feel they are protecting women, placing women on a higher moral level, or reproducing heterosexuality. This is consistent with the three main tenets of benevolent sexism: protective paternalism, complimentary gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy.

Benevolent sexism has been shown to negatively impact women in the corporate setting. For instance, benevolent sexism is related to sexual harassment (Russell & Trigg, 2004), and predicts the endorsement of gender stereotypes (Glick & Fiske, 1996). In the sport context, benevolent sexism was reported to impact perceived treatment discrimination (i.e., differential treatment once employed with the organization based on the individual's gender) among assistant coaches of women's teams (Aicher & Sagas, 2009).

In the present study, we hypothesize the participants' sexism level will impact their endorsement. Specifically, individuals who denote high hostile and/or benevolent sexism levels will more likely endorse a male as a coach regardless of the situational cue.

*H<sub>4</sub>*: Individuals with higher sexism levels will be more likely to select a male coach.

## Methods

### *Procedures and Materials*

Following similar methodologies to Jackson et al. (2005, 2007), we utilized internationally recognized symbols for male and female, but altered the context in two fashions. First, rather than placing the pictures in a boardroom setting with a rectangular table, we placed the group in a circle. The groups were composed of either all males with one female, all females with one male, and a mixed group of equal males and females depicted. An example of the group is depicted in Figure 1. Secondly, the individuals were informed the depiction was a sport team and asked the individuals to denote whom they perceived was the head coach rather than a leader. Next, participants completed the ambivalent sexism inventory and demographic questions.

Glick and Fiske (1996) developed the ambivalent sexism inventory (ASI) to measure both hostile and benevolent sexism. The ASI consists of 22 total items; 11 items measure hostile sexism (e.g., "Women are too easily offended") and 11 items measure benevolent sexism (e.g., "Women should be protected and cherished by men"). All responses were given on a six-point scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree.

## *Participants*

*Sample 1.* Students participating in activity classes at a major university in the Midwestern United States were selected for this study. With the instructor's permission, they were approached during class time, and were offered no rewards or incentives for their voluntary participation. In total, 155 participants completed the survey (109 males, 45 females, 1 unidentified). The majority of the participants were White (45.2%), followed by African American (31.6%), and Hispanic (11.6%). The sampled participants predominately possessed a higher academic tenure with most denoting they were seniors (38.1%), followed by juniors (28.4%), sophomores (21.9%) and freshman (7.1%). The participants' average age was 21.48, with 42 majors represented, and 89.0% indicated they had participated in organized sport, which is important as they have likely developed stereotypes about the coaching profession through their experiences.

*Sample 2.* With permission from a University's athletic compliance office, e-mail addresses were attained for each of the 417 student-athletes attending an NCAA Division I University located in the Midwestern United States. This is the same university as Sample 1. After the three rounds of online data collection, a total of 74 usable questionnaires had been completed. Of the 74 individuals who responded to the survey, 33 were female, 24 were male, and 17 did not identify (consistent with the remainder of the demographics). The majority indicated they were White (58.1%), followed by unidentified (23.0%), and African American (8.1%). The student-athlete breakdown by sport is as follows: 17 soccer athletes (4 male, 13 female); eight football players; five wrestlers and gymnasts respectively; four golfers; two volleyball and tennis players; and one individual from the basketball and baseball team. The participants' average age was 20.46, with the highest number of respondents indicating this was their freshman year ( $n = 20$ ), followed by seniors ( $n = 15$ ), juniors ( $n = 11$ ) and sophomores ( $n = 10$ ).

## *Data Analysis*

First, reliability scores were calculated for the ambivalent sexism score. Next, we conducted a MANOVA and chi-square tests to ensure the two samples were similar in composition in terms of sexism scores, leader endorsement, and composition. Once this was determined, the two datasets were combined to test the hypotheses presented in the literature review. We utilized a layered chi-square analysis to test the first three hypotheses: (1) When presented with a situational cue for leadership, situational cues will inform leader selection and (2) When presented with a mixed group condition, a male leader will be selected more often than the female as a leader (3) A pro-gender bias will be present among the sample. For simplification, if an individual indicated any one of the males or females in the scenario, then the corresponding sex was coded as the head coach. To determine if stereotypical beliefs impacted the endorsement of either a male or female coach (Hypothesis 4), a logistic regression analysis was conducted. Given the categorical nature of the dependent variable this is considered the most appropriate test.

## Results

Reliability calculations indicated both the benevolent ( $\alpha = .75$ ) and hostile sexism ( $\alpha = .81$ ) scales were reliable. Next, mean scores were calculated for both the student-athlete and non-student athlete samples and compared using a MANOVA. Results indicated there were no differences between the sexes and student-athlete status in terms of hostile ( $F [1, 209] = .50, p > .05, \eta^2 = .01$ ) or benevolent sexism ( $F [1, 209] = 1.70, p > .05, \eta^2 = .00$ ). However, men ( $M = 3.61, SD = .81$ ) did report significantly higher ( $F [1, 209] = 11.91, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$ ) hostile sexism scores than women ( $M = 2.89, SD = .79$ ). There was no difference in the denoted benevolent sexism levels for men ( $M = 3.52, SD = .83$ ) and women ( $M = 3.42, SD = .82$ ). Chi-square comparisons demonstrated the two samples indicated no difference in the leadership endorsement of a female or male ( $\chi^2 (2) = 5.94, p > .05, \text{Cramer's } V = .17$ ). The lack of differences between the two groups allowed us to continue with the hypothesis testing using a single dataset.

Chi-square analysis determined a significant difference occurred between the endorsements of males as the head coach compared to females ( $\chi^2 (2) = 12.83, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .26$ ). Analyzing the percentages demonstrated, males were endorsed as head coach more often than females regardless of the scenario. For instance, in the condition with all females and one male, the male was indicated as the head coach 73.0% of the time, while in the mixed group, a male was selected 85.3%. Finally, in the all male one female condition, 57.6% of the participants selected a male.

Further breaking down the data by the participants' sex indicated a different overall trend. In the condition where the situational cues would have indicated the single individual as the likely head coach, female participants selected a female an equal percentage in both conditions (45.8%). When presented with a condition in which situational cues were muted (i.e., mixed group), female participants selected a male symbol most often (77.3%): a significant difference ( $\chi^2 (2) = 6.04, p < .05, \text{Cramer's } V = .29$ ). Alternatively, male participants chose a male symbol as a head coach most often in all three conditions, however, demonstrated the least difference in the all male, one female condition (64.3%). This difference for the men based on situational cue was significant ( $\chi^2 (2) = 11.58, p < .01, \text{Cramer's } V = .30$ ). Table 1 depicts the chi-square results.

In terms of hypotheses, these results demonstrated situational cues were not as strong for the sample, and therefore the first hypothesis was rejected. The second hypothesis was supported by the data; a male symbol was selected most frequently in the mixed group condition. Finally, the results indicated support for a pro-gender bias among the male population, but not the female sample, thus only partially supporting the third hypothesis.

A test of the full model compared to the constant only model indicated the model was a close fit to the data ( $\chi^2 (2) 13.92, p < .001$ ); thus suggests an individual's sexism levels predict endorsement. Analyzing the Hosmer-Lemeshow test demonstrated no differences between the predicted values and observed values ( $\chi^2 (8) 6.93, p > .05$ ); indicating the model estimates fit the data at an acceptable level. Furthermore, results indicated approximately 74.5% of the outcomes were correctly identified. The Wald criterion demonstrated hostile sexism made a significant contribution to the prediction ( $Wald [1] = 8.63, p < .01$ ), while benevolent sexism did not ( $Wald [1] = 1.54, p > .05$ ).



## Discussion

This study was an exploratory analysis to determine whether situational cues or gender stereotypes possessed a greater impact on coaching endorsement. Previous research demonstrated situational cues are utilized in leadership selection, while gender stereotypes are used when the situation does not indicate a specific person as the leader. To conduct the research, we altered the conditions in previous experiments by eliminating the head of the table condition. Rather, we asked participants to select the individual who they perceived as the head coach based on a three different groups placed in a circle. A circle is more consistent with an athletic scenario on a field of play during a team meeting rather than a typical boardroom setting. Overall, the study bolstered the assertion that when individuals think of coaches, they first think of men and selection may be based in personal gender stereotypes rather than situational cues. The current study adds to the literature in two manners: extends the situational cue literature beyond the boardroom and into the coaching context, and strengthens previous research linking traditional values to coach preference.

The results determined a male was identified as the head coach most frequently regardless of group composition. These findings differ from previous research in that only in the mixed group condition were women not endorsed as leaders. This may suggest gender stereotypes about the coaching profession are more entrenched than the typical boardroom setting found in previous research. For instance, Shaw and Hoerber (2003) found individuals possess gender stereotypes about the coaching profession. They outlined stereotypes about women in the coaching profession (e.g., expected work-family conflict), and found men were perceived to possess a “naturalness” to leadership positions. They concluded femininity was associated with teaching and regional development roles while masculinity was associated with influential coaching and senior management roles. Additionally, Koivula (1995) found men were more likely to stereotype sports, and subsequently, positions within those sports. This finding may help to further elucidate the results of these studies, where men were more likely to choose a male as the leader.

The data also indicated male participants had a stronger preference for a male as a head coach compared to their female counterparts. Strikingly, both genders indicated their gender as a head coach when the situational cue indicated the opposite should be true. For instance, female participants indicated a female as the head coach equally in both of the single person conditions (i.e., selected a female in the one female condition an equal number of times as women in the one male condition selected a male), while male participants demonstrated a stronger selection for a male in both conditions. Only in a mixed group condition did the female participants stray from what may be considered a pro-gender bias.

The literature on coaching preference may also offer an explanation for the mixed group results for both men and women. For instance, Martin, Dale, and Jackson (2001), found male adolescent athletes indicated a stronger preference for a male coach compared to female adolescent athletes who possessed no preference for a female head coach. Their results suggested female athletes (84%) indicated they possessed no gender preference, while 50% of male athletes preferred a male. George (1989) found female athletes at the collegiate level reported equal preference for a male or female head coach (approximately 40%) with the remainder indicating no preference. Le Drew and Zimmerman (1994) surveyed male and female volleyball players and found males strongly preferred to have a male coach, while women again were balanced in their preferences. Additionally, Medwechuck and Crossman (1994) found a pro-gender bias in

their study of collegiate swimmers: male athletes preferred a male and female athletes preferred a female. These preferences may be created by the lack of female coaching men at any age group, as well as the number of men who coach female teams.

Finally, the data indicated hostile sexism was a significant predictor of endorsement. Individuals with higher hostile sexism levels were more likely to designate a male head coach, while individuals with lower scores did not show the same effect. This result is similar to that of previous research evaluating leadership endorsement and sexism. For instance, Hogg and colleagues (2006) found individuals who reported higher sexism levels were more likely to endorse a man as a leader of the group. Within the sport context, Aicher and Sagas (2010) established evidence that individuals who denoted higher sexism levels indicated a preference for a male as a head coach. Similarly, Fielding-Lloyd and Mean (2008) found individuals used modern sexist ideals in their evaluations of women coaches. For instance, some respondents in their study felt women were able to take advantage of affirmative action policies to get ahead in the coaching field, while others used this discourse to undervalue women's performance in the coaching profession. Together, this research line is developing evidence to suggest sexism may have an effect on women's ability to attain leadership positions within sport organizations.

### *Practical Implications*

This latter result may allow individuals in intercollegiate athletics a potential avenue for positive change in the recruitment and selection of women in coaching positions. For instance, the results indicated stereotypes about women enhanced the endorsement of a man as a head coach and reduced the endorsement of women. While this demonstrates the impact of gender stereotypes, it is these stereotypes that could be combatted through a strong diversity training initiative or proactive diversity culture within the athletic department to engender change.

Diversity training has been found to reduce various prejudices, including sexism, among professionals (Kulik & Roberson, 2008) and students as well (Fink, Burton, & Bruening, 2008). Cunningham (2012) reported only 53% of athletic departments utilize diversity training, and determined conditional antecedents for the success or viability of training programs. For instance, he found the size of the athletic department, employee diversity, and diversity culture were significant predictors in determining if the department utilized diversity training. Moving forward, given the low proportion of athletic departments employing diversity training, adds credence to the notion increase diversity training may reduce gender stereotypes and possibly lead to the increase of recruitment and selection of female coaches.

In the previously outlined study, the culture most likely to provide diversity training was considered a proactive diversity culture compared to the other three forms of diversity culture (Cunningham, 2012). Fink and Pastore (1999) developed a comprehensive diversity management framework, and suggested sport organizations' diversity management strategies fit within four categories: noncompliant, compliance, reactive, and proactive. Proactive organizations are the only organizational type fully receiving the benefits provided by managing diversity (Fink & Pastore, 1999), and would be the most appropriate to reduce gender stereotypes. For example, Aicher (2012) outlined several positive impacts that may stem from a proactive diversity culture, one of which was the reduction of gendered leadership stereotypes. He argued nontraditional leaders (i.e., African Americans or women) placed in leadership positions would receive the resources and support necessary to be successful (Cox, 1991; DeSensi, 1995; Fink & Pastore, 1999), and effectively managing programs may reduce negative stereotypes (Case, 2007).

Used in conjunction, a well-managed diversity training program and a proactive diversity culture may provide an avenue to reduce gender stereotypes. If this were able to occur, then women may become more likely to be endorsed as leaders given the current studies results. For example, the results of this study suggested stereotypical beliefs significantly impacted endorsement. Therefore, if through these initiatives you reduce stereotypical beliefs as suggested, you may in turn increase the endorsement of female head coaches.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

As with any study, this one is not without limitations. The two samples allowed us to first determine the internal validity of the study while the second enhanced the findings' generalizability. However, because the two samples came from the same university population this may have impacted the results. While the methodologies were altered and the student-athlete population has a greater awareness of the coaching profession, most may come from similar backgrounds and cultures because the student-athlete general areas. Additionally, the low response rate of the student-athletes may have also impacted the results. Although the  $n$  was rather small, no differences were found between early and late responders, which may indicate no significant differences between non-responders as well (Miller & Smith, 1983).

The current study and previous research prime the individuals to the expected results by determining the selected role. It may be beneficial for respondents to determine the individual's role based on a given scenario to determine if sex roles stereotypes impact role endorsement rather than leadership endorsement. In addition, the research on situational cues has largely ignored the impact of race on leadership endorsement. Thus, returning the original methods of Porter and Geis (1981), photographs could be utilized to indicate the individual's race around the boardroom table and determine the impact on leadership endorsement. Research suggests women who adhere to traditional feminine stereotypes are perceived more positively than those who are not (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Grappendorf, Pent, Burton, & Henderson, 2008; Koivula, 1995); therefore examining females' perceived gender identity may produce different results. Finally, additional contexts and populations should be sampled to bolster the findings in the current manuscript.

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