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Women in Top Management Positions in the Sport Industry: Breaking Down the Barriers and Stereotypes

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Even with the advancements that women have made throughout history, very few women have risen to the top of sports organizations. Previous research cites gender based stereotypes, segregation based on job type, and the "old boys' network" as causes for this trend. The purpose of this study is to focus on the women currently working in the industry and explore their experiences in the work place. Seven interviews were conducted with women working in leadership positions in the sport industry. Their responses to the interview questions contradict previous findings. The results of this study show that women are overcoming the barriers that were set in the past and more women today are successful in management roles in the Sport Industry.

Women in Top Management Positions in the Sport Industry:

Breaking Down the Barriers and Stereotypes

Did you know that there are a total of 60 executives working for the league in the NBA? Did you know that only 13 of these executives are women ("Playing at the Pro Level: Our Management Team", 2011)? Throughout the course of history women have had to fight for a place in society. Women have had fewer legal rights and career opportunities than men over the past hundred years. A woman's main role has always been to be a wife, and then to be a mother. Women have been stereotyped for years as being the less intellectual and weaker sex (Cohen & Huffman, 2007). In the 1800's women fought for their right to vote in the Suffrage movement. Led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B Anthony, the Women's suffrage movement was successful in 1920, when women received the right to vote (Cohen & Huffman, 2007). The suffrage movement may have ended, but women's struggles were far from over. Up until the 1960's, women's entry and participation in the work force had been restricted. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 required equal wages for men and women doing equal work. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination against women by any company with 25 of more employees. In 1967, a Presidential Executive Order prohibited bias against women in hiring by federal government contractors (Rampell, 2010).

Although the number of women working as managers has been increasing, in 1989, they were outnumbered about 1.5 to 1 by men (Women, Infants, Children [WIC], 2011). Despite the Equal Pay Act of 1963, women in 1970 were paid about 45% less than men for doing the same job (WIC, 2011). In 1979 females were paid 62.3 cents to every male $1 (Rampell, 2010). As recent as 2009, females are getting paid 80.2 cents to every male $1 (Rampell, 2010). This is a problem because in 30 years women have only seen a 17.9 cent increase.

In today's society, women have not only succeeded in becoming more educated, but they are also breaking into the male dominated Sport Industry. One is curious to understand why they have not received the same opportunities for career advancement as their male counterparts. Why does the advancement of women often stop just short of the general management level? Why is the problem still apparent despite several years of effort, represented by affirmative action and equal opportunity (Aline, Marlow, Marlow, 1995)? Behavioral and cultural causes are rooted in explanations that revolve around issues of stereotyping, tokenism, power, preferred leadership styles, and the psychodynamics of male/female relations (Oakley, 2000). This research paper explores the hardships and stereotypes that women face in their attempt to break into the old boys club, and what they have done in order to succeed in top management. The research obtained within this study is critical to the advancement of women in today's sports and business society, and will be useful to women who are pursuing a career in sports.

Theoretical Framework

The basis of the theoretical framework for this research consisted of three theories. The theories utilized within the research were: the Feminist Theory, Gender Theory, and Social Role Theory. Each of these theories discusses the inequality between males and females. The Gender Theory and Feminist Theory promote women's rights, and focus on the challenges they have had to overcome because of their gender. Gender Theory considers gender, both male and female, as a social construction upon biological differences. Gender theory proposes to explore "ideological inscription and the literary effects of the sex/gender system," (Feminist Theory- An Overview, 1996)

Feminist Theory aims to understand the nature of inequality between males and females. Feminist Theory focuses on gender as a social construct, social construction vs. biological construction, and the sociology of gender (Contemporary Feminist Theory, 2011).The basic theoretical questions that Feminist Theory asks are: Are women deliberately excluded? Why is this so? How can we change and improve the social world? What about differences between women? (Contemporary Feminist Theory, 2011). Social Role Theory was also utilized throughout the research. The Social Role Theory states that behavioral gender differences are caused by socialization. At a young age, males are encouraged and rewarded for being outgoing, and achievement oriented. Conversely, females are taught to be emotionally oriented, and reserved in their interactions with others (Buddworth & Mann, 2010). Social Role Theory describes the concept that men and women are allocated different roles in society due to their gender (Social Role Theory, 2008).

Literature Review

The fight for women's advancement in the work place continues today. Despite increasing numbers of women in senior sport management positions over the past thirty years, men still remain dominant in these roles, indicating a level of gender inequity within sport management (Hoeber & Shaw, 2003). About twenty years ago, the term "glass ceiling" was coined by the Wall Street Journal to describe the apparent barriers that prevent women and minorities from reaching the top of the corporate hierarchy (Pai & Vaidya, 2009). A glass ceiling effect is evident if the magnitude of the inequality not only increases, but also accelerates, as one moves up the hierarchy (Pai & Vaidya, 2009). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 barred sexual discrimination in the workplace, and more women are in the workforce today than ever. However, there is little doubt that women have not moved up in the ranks of corporate America

because there are very few women in top leadership positions (Pai & Vaidya, 2009). As

organizations such as the Women's Sports Foundation, the Canadian Association for the

Advancement of Women in Sport, and Womensport Australia have attested, there is a

considerable imbalance between women and men with regard to who holds influence in the

management of sport organizations (Hall, 1996; Harvego, 2001; Womensport Australia, 2001;

Women's Sports Foundation, 2001a).

      Sport organizations are recognized as institutions that often do not welcome gender

equity policies (Sport England, 2001). When women first started to enter the corporate world as

managers in substantial numbers in the late 1960's and early 1970's, very few expected to pursue

a career path leading to a senior management position (Hoeber & Shaw, 2003). Corporate

policies at the time did not include affirmative action programs to promote women to senior

management positions, which made the first generation of women managers even more wary of

setting a goal to rise to the top (Morrison, 1992). The continuing reliance on male CEOs for

board members is increasingly less practical and potentially dilutes quality (Luis-Carnicer,

Martinez-Sanchez, & Perez, 2008). On average this implies a much lower quality than if the

candidates are selected among the best from the distribution of both men and women quality

(Luis-Carnicer, Martinez-Sanchez, & Perez, 2008). There has been an abundance of literature

collected in the past based on women in leadership and management positions within the work

place.

      Several studies have shown that despite the efforts to increase diversity, women still face

the glass ceiling when it comes to top management jobs (Pai & Vaidya, 2009). The higher the

position, the less likely a woman will be able to fill it. The existence of the "glass ceiling" is not

limited to the United States. Wirth (2001) highlighted the point by stating that only 3% of top

management positions are held by women in the world's largest organizations. Why does this "glass ceiling" continue to bar women from advancing to top positions? Corporate policies and practices in training and career development, promotion, and compensation are often identified as major components of the glass ceiling that prevent women from making it to the top (Oakley, 2000). Oakley (2000) states that explanations for why women have not risen to the top include: inadequate career opportunities, gender-based stereotypes, the old boy network, and tokenism. Other explanations according to Oakley (2000) include the differences between female leadership styles, and the type of leadership style expected at the top of organizations, feminist explanations for the underrepresentation of women in top management positions. Three general categories emerged in Lemons and Parzinger's (2001) study as potential barriers to the advancement of women: educational aspects and family characteristics, corporate cultures, and sociological factors. Other reasons for women's under-representation in the senior management of sport organizations are linked to the perceived "naturalness" of men occupying those positions (Hoeber, & Shaw, 2003).

Factors that Facilitate and Hinder Career Development

An old boy's network is an informal system by which money and power are retained by wealthy white men through business relationships (Goodman, 2003). The "Old Boy's Network" can prevent women and minorities from being truly successful in the business world (Goodman, 2003). The old boy's network establishes business relationships on golf courses, at exclusive country clubs, in the executive sky-boxes at sporting events, and in other facilities. These are facilities from which women are traditionally excluded and thus are not welcome to the truly "serious" business transactions or conversations. A business person who does not travel in these

elite circles of influence will miss out on many opportunities, and many women do miss out (Goodman, 2003).

Numerous studies have attempted to explain the greater representation of men in top management positions within the United States and authors have presented various reasons ranging from differing levels of commitment to discrimination. Regardless of reason, the number of women in top management positions, unfortunately, has not increased significantly. Women's share of professional jobs increased only 0.7% between 1996 and 2002 (International Labor Organization, 2002). In addition, women's share of managerial positions in 60 countries range between 20% to 40% indicating women are markedly underrepresented in top management compared to their overall share of employment ("The Glass Ceiling...," 2004). Hymowitz (2006) agrees that while women hold many entry-level and middle management positions, they remain scarce at the top.

Women executives most often cite behavioral explanations such as stereotyping, whereas males executives tend to cite corporate promotional and career development practices as the primary barrier for women seeking senior management positions (Oakley, 2000) A double-bind is a behavioral norm that creates a situation where a woman cannot win no matter what she does. Throughout history, double-binds have been used by those with power to oppress those without power, and most often the victims were women (Jamieson, 1995). Typical double-bind for women in leadership positions is that they must be tough and authoritative (like men) to be taken seriously, but they will be perceived as "bitches" if they act too aggressively (Oakley, 2000). According to Jamieson's femininity/competency bind, one must be "un-feminine" to be competent. In other words, this means: speaking assertively, but not too assertively, and dressing "like a women" but not dressing "too feminine" (Oakley, 2000). Women working in the sports

industry have to be particularly careful when it comes to this double-bind. If a woman is perceived as "too feminine" she may come off as though she doesn't know anything about sports. Also if she comes off too feminine she has to face the stereotype that she only wants to work in sports to meet the players (N. Silver, personal communication, November 18, 2011).

Aggressive expressions of discourse of masculinity are valued in organizations because they are often considered synonymous with dominant forms of leadership (Alvesson &Billing, 1997; McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000). However, if a woman comes off as "too aggressive", men working in the sports industry alongside of her may feel threatened. The existence of toughness and femininity in one personality are difficult qualities for our culture to reconcile and digest (Oakley, 2000).

Female managers are described as less self-confident, less analytical, less emotionally stable, less consistent, and possessing poorer leadership abilities than male managers (Oakley, 2000). Managers consistently associate more desirable managerial traits with men and the less desirable managerial traits with women (Oakley, 2000). Femininity is often associated with incompetence. Women do not fit the male stereotype of leadership in the tone and pitch of voice, physical appearance, and mode of dress (Oakley, 2000). Physical attractiveness is another aspect of stereotyping that seems to work against women. One study found that attractive female managerial candidates received lower ratings of their performance, lower starting salaries, and fewer promotions that did unattractive females, or attractive males (Heilman & Stopeck, 1985). The cultural stereotype of leaders is male, and presents a barrier to any woman who aspires to a leadership position, especially a position like CEO where the symbolic function of the position is particularly important (Oakley, 2000).

Women are typically associated with discourses in femininity which may include cooperative work practices, consultations, or negotiation skills (Hargreaves, 1990). These discourses are largely undervalued in organizations (McKay, 1997). In general many people think that women will leave their positions to have children. This stereotype, while valid, may not necessarily be factual for everyone woman. Women's linguistic styles are often misinterpreted or devalued by men and the less aggressive and assertive forms of communication associated with females may be particularly unacceptable ways to communicate in the upper echelons of most corporations (Oakley, 2000). In corporate life, women are less likely than men to engage in behaviors that are self-promotion, a pattern that Tennen (1994) traces back to the habits learned in early childhood socialization. Tennen's study about habits learned in early childhood socialization is essential to the research and will be further expanded upon later in this document. Tennen observes that men more often than women engage in behaviors that get them recognized with those in power, which gives them an advantage over women in the art of managing up. Women are less likely to blow their own horn, and therefore are less likely to be recognized (Howell & Butterfield, 2003). In emulating a male linguistic style, female managers run the risk of being perceived as "too aggressive" by their male counterparts.

Women Working in the Sport Industry

Gender has been identified as an influential determinant of employment roles (Acker, 2000; Acker & Van Hoten, 1974). By analyzing the discourses that influence employment roles, we are able to examine how women's and men's roles are understood within sport organizations (Hoeber & Shaw, 2003). It is important to explore and critique how the creation and development of employment roles are influenced by discourses of masculinity and femininity

and how these discourses may undermine most women's access to power and support men's efforts to gain influence (Hoeber & Shaw, 2003).

The vast majority of women who work in today's society are still employed in clerical positions, retail sales, and service jobs. When examining the women's roles within sports organizations, an online study was conducted using the NFL, NHL, MLB websites. This study showed that the same patterns arise in the Sport Industry. (NFL, NHL, MLB, NBA websites). Based on the information gathered, the majority of women working in the sport industry are working as receptionists, assistants, or the in service side of sports (NFL,2011; NHL,2011; MLB 2011; NBA 2011).

Adler (2001) collected data for an average of 215 Fortune 500 companies for every year from 1980-1998, and found that companies with high number of women executives outperformed their industry median companies on three measures of profitability: profits as percent of revenues, assets, and stockholders' equity. While the numbers of women in top management in the sports industry are small. The few women that are working in top management level positions in the sports industry are making names for themselves. During eight years as an assistant general manager with the Yankees and Dodgers, Kim Ng helped assemble teams that made five trips to the playoffs. Kim Ng then became the first women in major league baseball to interview for a GM position. She interviewed with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2005. Women in Sports and Events (WISE), an organization founded in 1993 as a resource for female sports business professionals, announced its 2011 Women of the Year honorees. WISE's 2011 women of the year were: Stacey Allaster, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Women's Tennis Association (WTA), Lisa Baird, Chief Marketing Officer, United

States Olympic Committee (USOC), and Wendy Lewis, Senior Vice President of Diversity &

Strategic Alliances, Major League Baseball (MLB).

There are several other women working in top management positions within the sports

industry. Jessica Mendoza is the Vice President of ESPNW for ESPN. Lesa France Kennedy is

the CEO of International Speedway. Mary O'Connor is the President of the Women's Sports

Foundation. Julie Solwold is the Vice President of Global Sports Marketing for Paul Mitchell.

Amy Stanton is the Founder and CEO of Stanton & Company and Diane Thibert is the Director

of Global Public Relations for Oakley. Each of these women has made contributions to the sports

industry that has helped set the tone for women in the future.

With women's continued success in the sports industry it will make it much harder for

the stereotypes and old boy networks to stand in the way of women rising to the top of

management within sports. The purpose of this study was to uncover the reasons why women

face advancement barriers in the sports industry. This study sought to answer the following

questions:

1. What is the trend in positions that women carry within a sport organization?

2. Is there a pattern of childhood socialization that female executives in sport have in

   common? Were they tomboys? Did they play sports? Do they have more male

   friends?

3. What advice do these women have to share with young women wishing to rise to

   executive levels in the sport industry?

Specifically, this research seeks to explain the barriers women had to overcome to advance into the

top positions they hold within the sports industry today. This research also seeks to serve as a

"how to guide" for women of the next generation.

Method

A Triangulation Method was used in this study. A Triangulation Method incorporates both an ethnographic approach and qualitative approach by using multiple means of data collection in order to explore a single phenomenon (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Both survey and interviews were used to study women in management positions. The aim of this type of design is to understand the behavior of the group of women by seeing it from their perspective. This study consisted of qualitative research because the purpose of this study was to develop rich data from a small sample group. Qualitative research is research which assumes that reality is subjective, and uncovers these subjective meanings, experiences, and attitudes through words and rich description, rather than measurement and statistical analysis (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

Sample

This study used a non-probability sample. This means that certain members of the population are more likely to be chosen than others based on certain factors and characteristics (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Based on the non-probability sample, this study narrowly focused on observing women in management positions within the sport industry. In order to fit the criteria to participate in this study the women must have held a Management, Director, President, or CEO title within the Sport Industry. She must have worked in either major or minor league sports to qualify. The sports that this study focused on were baseball, basketball, football, and hockey.

To determine viable subjects for this research, the websites of ten NFL teams, ten MLB teams, ten AHL teams and ten MiLB teams were explored to locate female executives. Due to the volume of teams in each league the sample size of teams had to be narrowed down to ten each in order to be manageable. An initial contact list of thirty women was created based on those holding positions of Management, Director, President, or CEO in the sport industry. A

modified stratified sample was selected to include women from different geographic regions of

the United States and to have a representative sample from various sport leagues (Gratton &

Jones, 2010). A small sample of women was generated through Snowball Sampling. Snowball

Sampling is the process of locating initial participants, who then identify further participants

which they know. Another technique used to generate the sample was the Key Informant

Technique. This means that the individuals chosen to participate in the research were based on

the specific knowledge that they possess regarding this topic.

Eleven individuals responded to the email request and eight consented to be interviewed.

The response rate was 27%. Three interviews were conducted face to face and five interviews

were conducted via email. A list of the respondent's pseudonym, job title, and league can be

found in Appendix C.

Data Collection Procedure

An introductory email was sent to thirty female sport executives across the United States.

The introductory email can be found in Appendix A. The interviews consisted of seventeen

questions. The questions that were used in the interviews are listed in Appendix A. Following the

interviews the results were gathered and then analyzed. The results of the interviews were

gathered by re-reading each interview and tallying the interviewee's responses to each of the

seventeen questions. Similar themes in responses were noted. In order to protect the privacy of

the respondents and their organizations, pseudonyms were assigned to the participants.

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Results

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There were six major themes that appeared in the results. Although results were expected to

coincide with the ones from previous readings, the results gathered steered away from the

findings of past research, which is positive. It was expected that women felt stereotyped working

in the sports industry. Another expectation prior to the research was to see a relationship

between the roles/titles women are given within the corporation as a manager and the

characteristic of being feminine. These expectations were proven incorrect as results were

received. The following six reoccurring themes appeared within the research: Belonging,

Women feel respected by their subordinates, Women did not go to college for Sport

Management, The importance of mentors, Internships, and Most women did not feel pigeon-

holed into a position.

- ➤ **Belonging**

    Women feel they need to be part of the group. They don't want to be segregated from

    men during lunches or on golf outings**.** Women would like to be invited to these events that

    men attend and included at the event**.** This emerged as a grouping variable because many

    women shared this same concept when being interviewed. Inclusion existed only in the

    office, and not at outside events such as lunch or golf outings. Megan stated, "I often feel left

    out of group lunches and outings. I feel singled out because I am a woman sometimes". This

    is an example of segregation of women in the Sport Industry today. Women are also feeling

    left out when it comes to golf outings or happy hour.

- ➤ **Women feel respected by their male subordinates**

    In each interview that was conducted respondents were asked if they felt respected by

    their male subordinates. The response was unanimous, 100% of the women interviewed

    responded yes, they felt respected. This is a major accomplishment for women. Susan stated

    "All the men that work with me understand and recognize how knowledgeable I am about

    sports. That may have helped me with not being looked at as a "typical" girl in the office. I

    believe if everyone shares a passion for their job, it shouldn't matter male or female, you will

have a mutual respect for each other." This is very exciting for women who are planning on entering the sport industry.

➢ **Women in the past did not go to college for Sport Management**

Two out of the eight women that were interviewed had a degree in Sport Management. Five of the other women had degrees in Accounting. One woman had a degree in Nursing. The two women that had degrees in Sport Management were the youngest women that were interviewed. The statistics gathered in this research imply that as time has progressed more women are going to school to study Sport Management today than in previous years. The more women going to school for Sport Management could have a direct impact on the number of women working in the industry as time goes on.

➢ **Importance of a Mentor**

Four out of eight women expressed the importance of having a mentor during the interview. Out of the four women who discussed mentors, two women talked about their own specific mentor, how much having a mentor contributed to their success, and how grateful they were to have a mentor. Kristen said, "I have an amazing mentor that I use constantly to help stabilize myself if I am in question". Kristen also said, "Get a mentor! Someone in the industry that you trust and feel comfortable talking to- Needs to be someone that will constructively tell you when you do the stupid "little" things. Also, if you take the challenge of being a woman in sports out of the equation, it makes your decision making and visions so much easier." The other two women discussed how not having a mentor impacted their career. Rebecca stated, "Looking back on it I wish I was as lucky back then as you are today, I didn't have a female mentor in the industry to go to. Utilize the women that are already in the industry" "*I didn't have a role model, you can*", said Megan. These two women both

expressed a desire to have a female mentor in the sports industry, however they, themselves were the pioneers so there was no one to go to.

Internships

Unanimously, each woman interviewed responded that they had completed an internship before entering the Sport Industry. Some women even completed more than one. This was a very common theme throughout the interviews. "I took every single internship that I could find", Janet stated. Sarah said, "Just keep working. I interned as much as I could and used that time to learn what I needed to know about the sports industry. My internships helped me to push myself." Rebecca claimed, "An internship is your foot in the door with an organization". The women stressed the importance of internships to their career today and also stressed that any young woman looking to get into the sport industry must complete at least one internship.

➢ **Most women did not feel pigeon-holed into a position**

When asked if she felt pigeon holed Janet stated: "Not exactly pigeon-holed, just treated differently". Five women out of the eight that were interviewed said that they do not feel pigeonholed into a specific position because they are female. Three out of the eight women said that they have felt pigeonholed at one point in their career. However, all three of them left the jobs that made them feel pigeonholed and are now working for employers who do not make them feel that way.

Application of Social Role Theory

Aside from the original research questions, three side studies were conducted within the research linking to the Social Role Theory. As stated previously, the Social Role Theory discusses behavioral gender differences based on socialization. Also stated previously is the

study about habits learned in early childhood socialization by Tennen (1994). These side studies were inspired by Tennen's study and the Social Role Theory. The first side study conducted was whether women working in the Sport Industry today had more male or female friends growing up. As you can see by the chart in Appendix E, women working in the Sport Industry have had mostly male friends as children and teenagers. Based on the research there is a direct connection between having an abundance of male friends while growing up to working in the Sport Industry as female executive. This is an important concept that can be researched more thoroughly in the future.

The second side study conducted in this research was another study related to Social Role Theory. During this study, respondents were asked if they were a tomboy growing up. Out of the eight respondents three out of eight respondents stated yes, they were a tomboy. "I definitely have more guy friends! I was a tomboy growing up and I was friends with all of the jocks in high school", Christine stated in her interview. Mary also stated something similar in her interview, "I was a tomboy when I was a child and played sports with the boys from a very early age" .The data collected during this side study is also very vital information. The fact that almost half of the women interviewed claimed to have been tomboys is very interesting as their chosen professions are predominately male. (See Appendix F) This is also a study that can be further expanded in future research through a larger sample size of female sport executives.

The third side study conducted within the research explores when the women working in management level positions within the sport industry today first showed an interest in sports. The majority of women started showing an interest in sports at a very young age (Appendix G). Based on the Social Role Theory, this means that the majority of women working in the Sport Industry in Management Positions today were socialized to have an interest in sports at a very

young age. Out of the eight women interviewed, 62% of them said they first showed an interest in sports from the age of 1-6. Between the ages of 12-17, 13% of the women interviewed they began to show an interest in sports and surprisingly 25% of the women interviewed did not show an interest in sports until later in life, between the ages of 21 and 30. This side study can be further expanded in future research through a larger sample size of female sport executives.

Advice

Finally, each woman was asked to offer a piece of advice to women pursuing a career in the Sport Industry and aspiring to a top management level. The advice offered from each woman interviewed in this research process is listed below. Women pursuing a career in the Sport Industry should find this advice vital to their own success. Janet's advice was "*Be serious about work, but don't take yourself too seriously. Work hard — as hard as or harder than anyone. Think before speaking. Do what you say you're going to do- the first time. NEVER make your boss ask you to do something more than once. Be introspective. Don't be "silly". Don't do anything to lead yourself to be thought of as a woman who's in the game to find a boyfriend. Believe me, it's the fastest way to get the men around you to think of you in the way they will impede your career, and the women around you to dislike you.*" Christine stated: "*Simply, have backbone and stay true to yourself*". Megan's advice was "*Be on your game. Always stay one step ahead of the boys.*" Rebecca's advice was "*Don't fear the idea of being great. If you fear being great you should not work in sports. Also, don't be afraid to work hard. Work 5X as hard and put in the hours to be successful. Set goals for yourself. Goals that are not written down on paper are just dreams. And most of all have fun, if you're not having fun in the industry, get out.*" Mary said, "*The key is getting your foot in the door. Once you have the opportunity, make the most of it. Put time, effort, and passion into all of your responsibilities regardless of how*

mundane they may seem at the time. Go the extra mile and get noticed. Strive to be better every day." Sarah contributed by saying **"***Be passionate about what you do, if you are passionate enough about working in the industry it will show through"* Susan said *"My advice for any girls interested in pursuing a career in sports is if you really have a passion for it and are willing to work hard you will be fine. Be open to new jobs and experiences and learn as much as you can. Many careers in sports are not as glamorous as they seem when you are in college. You will work a lot of hours, and the pay is not that great but if your attitude is positive the jobs are really fun and you learn a lot."*

Discussion

Women in today's Sport Industry seem to be setting the bar for women of the next generation. "People have said "Men sell, Women service", I am here to change that", Megan said. While there is some gender segregation as explained by previous research still occurring in today's industry, it is at a minimum and women in the industry are learning how to deal with it. "My first year I worked with the GM from another ball club and he continually demeaned me. He said "You're a girl, what do you know about baseball?" This was a very valuable experience to me as it laid the foundation of the worst possible scenario to happen to me and it was very early in my career. It allowed me to address the "you're a girl, what do you know about baseball" attitude very early, Kristen said. Most women found that if they worked just as hard as or harder than the males in the industry that they were successful. "I've never felt discriminated against by colleagues. Though very rare, I've noticed initial skepticism in male clients from time to time. I find that the skepticism diminishes quickly when I've proven that I'm more than capable of doing my job", said Mary. "All the men that work with me understand and recognize how knowledgeable I am about sports. That may have helped me with not being looked at as a

"typical" girl in the office. I believe if everyone shares a passion for their job, it shouldn't matter male or female, you will have a mutual respect for each other."—Susan

Conclusion

The purpose of this research paper was to expose the inequalities that women face as they enter a male dominated industry, such as the Sport Industry. In attempt to uncover these inequalities, research was conducted and results proved to be more promising than expected. To conclude, it is suggested that future researchers continue to study the impacts of the Social Role Theory on women working in top management positions within the Sport Industry. It is also suggested that future researchers gather a sample size from a wide variety of Sports and States across the Country.

With continuous research this study may be able to help break down the barriers and stereotypes of the past and give women the proper knowledge to continue to succeed at the top level of the Sport Industry. In summary, the results collected from this research support a promising future for women who have the desire to work in the Sport Industry. The "glass ceiling" may not be as high as we once thought.

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APPENDX A

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am writing to you because you are an inspiration to me. I am a senior at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, NY. I am currently pursuing my degree in Sport Management. I am writing my Senior Thesis on "Women in Leadership Positions in the Sports Industry".

I began researching the topic of women in leadership positions within the sports industry last year and came across a lot of information regarding a glass ceiling and the struggles women face working in the "old boys club" atmosphere of the sports industry. I have conducted several face to face interviews this summer during my internship with the Pittsburgh Pirates and now I am reaching out to women all over the country who work in the sports industry to hear their stories.

When researching women are in leadership roles or managerial positions within different sports teams across the country, I found your name. I would be honored if you could take about 15 minutes of your time and answer the attached questions for me. Your input is valuable to my thesis. I would greatly appreciate your advice and any insight you could give to me and the next generation of women who desire to work in the sports industry. If you could send your answers back to me by Monday, November 21st I would greatly appreciate it!

Warm Regards,

Katie Simmons

Sport Management Major
St. John Fisher College
Class of 2012

APPENDIX B
I understand that this may be a sensitive topic; therefore I will be using pseudonyms in my thesis. Although your name will not appear in my thesis, if you do not feel comfortable answering a certain question, you may skip it.

1.) Tell me about yourself. Where are you from? Background Information

2.) When you were growing up did you have a lot of male friends? Were you a tomboy? In high school and college did you have more male friends or more female friends? What about now?

3.) When did you first show an interest in sports?

4.) Did you play sports in high school or college?

5.) Did you ever think that you would work in sports?

6.) What did you go to school for?

7.) How did you end up in the sports industry? What path did you take?

8.) Did you do an internship?

9.) What steps did you take to get to the position at the top that you are in today?

10.)   Have you ever felt pigeonholed into your position because you are a woman (motherly)?

11.)   What has it been like working as a woman in sales in the sports industry? (Two male dominated atmospheres)

12.)   Have you ever had an experience where you have felt undermined or treated poorly or with less respect because you are a woman?

13.)   How has being a woman affected you in the sports industry?

14.)   Do you feel like the men under your supervision respect you?

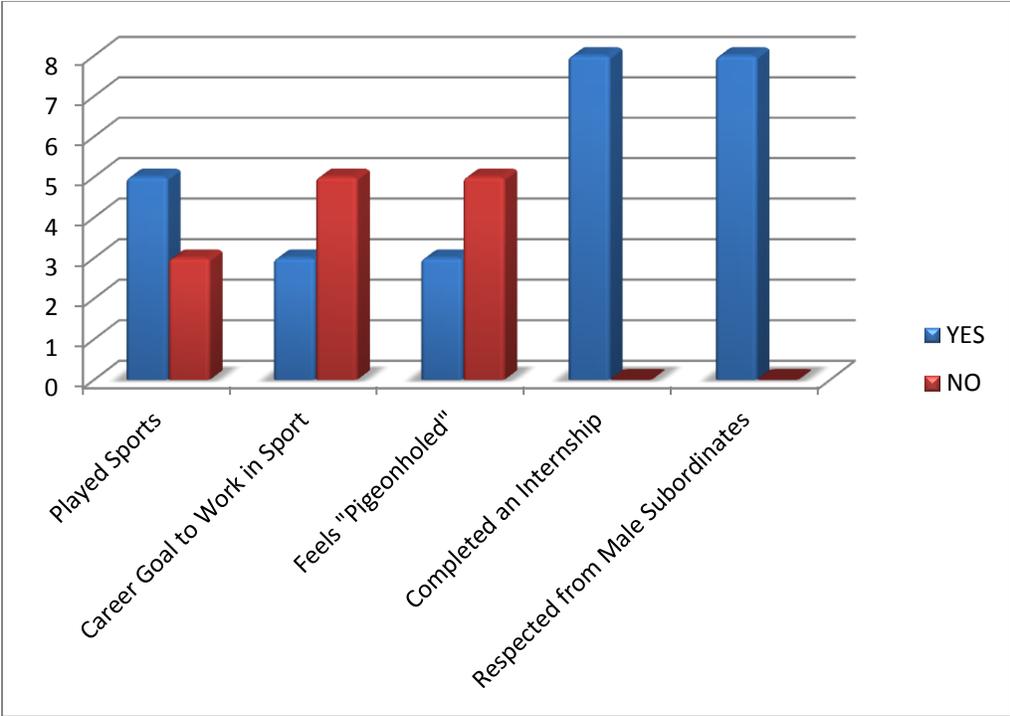15.)   If so, what are some of the things you've done to gain their respect?

16.)   What are traits that separate you from other women that are working in lower

positions? How do you differentiate yourself?

17.)   What is your advice to women of the next generation pursuing a career in sports?

Are there any tips you can give on how to succeed?
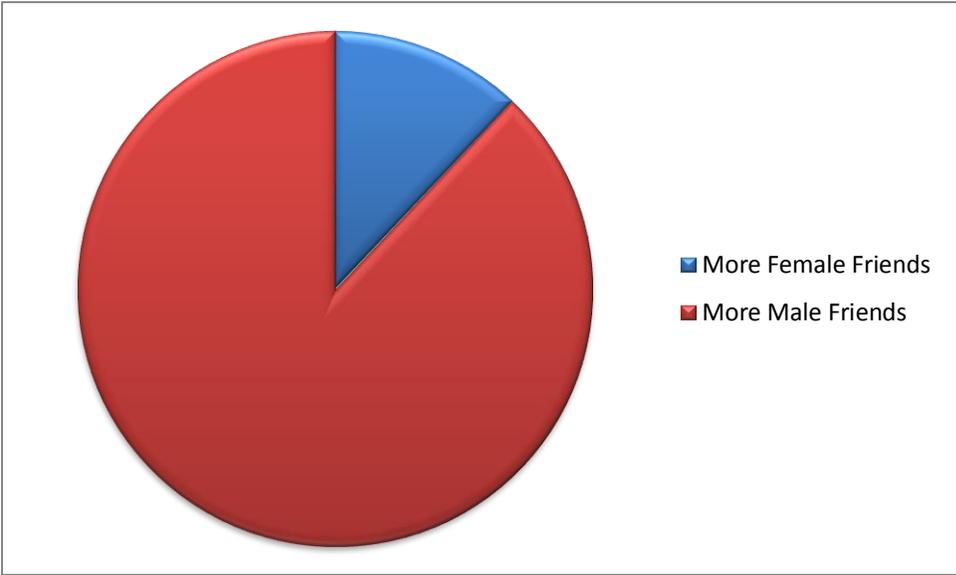
Appendix C

Table of participants

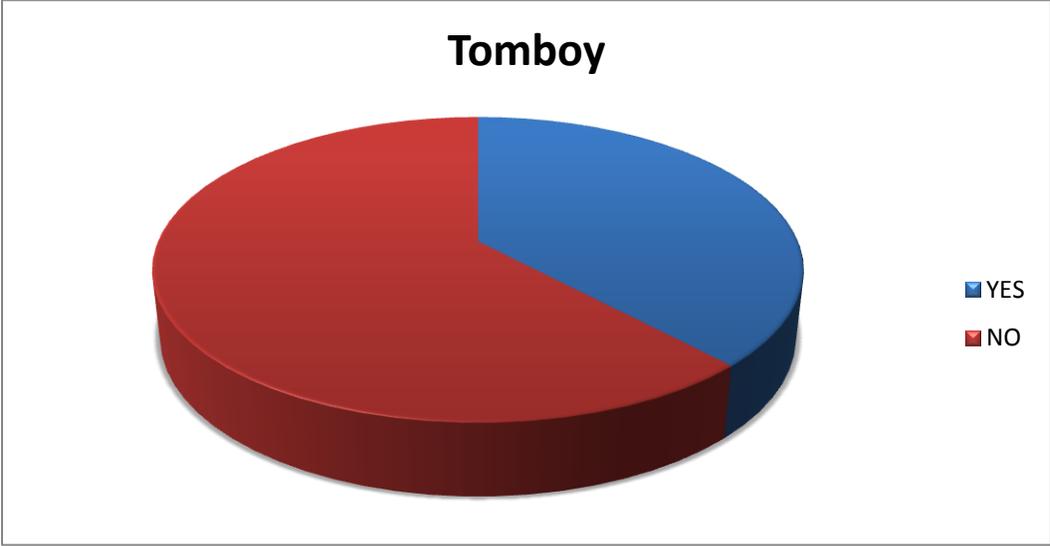| Pseudonym	Sport	Job Title
Kristen	Baseball	Director of Merchandising
Janet	Baseball	President, CEO & COO
Sarah	Hockey	Director of Game Presentation
Rebecca	Baseball	Manager of Season Ticket Service & Retention
Christine	Baseball	Manager of Ballpark Events
Mary	Baseball	Manager of Catering Sales
Megan	Baseball	Director of Suite Sales & Services
Susan	Hockey	Manager of Ticket Operations

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX E

More Male Friends or Female Friends?

APPENDIX F

Tomboy

YES
NO

APPENDIX G

When Did You First Show an Interest In Sports?