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# An Investigation of Challenges Women Collegiate Volleyball Coaches Face in a Male Dominated Industry

Katie M. Pennewill

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AN INVESTIGATION OF CHALLENGES WOMEN COLLEGIATE VOLLEYBALL  
COACHES FACE IN A MALE DOMINATED INDUSTRY

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

Katie Mae Pennewill

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

December 2017

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Title: An Investigation of Challenges Women Collegiate Volleyball Coaches Face in a Male Dominated Industry

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This study investigates what challenges, if any, female collegiate women's volleyball coaches face in a male dominated industry. Participants were selected from the National Collegiate Athletic Association based on the criteria that they are a female currently employed as head women's volleyball coach and have has at least five years of collegiate coaching experience. The study was qualitative in nature and used a semi-structured interview approach in order to collect the data form the participants. Interview questions were formulated in order to answer the desired research questions: 1. Does gender affect these women coaches work life in regards to advancement, placement, and overall relationships? 1a. Are there common themes across all three NCAA women's volleyball divisions? 2. Have these women coaches seen improvements in gender equality over the years they have been a part of this male dominated industry? 2a. Have women collegiate sports and women's coaching jobs been significantly improved since Title IX, and do they think it will keep improving?

Previous research on this topic determined that even though female athletes have increased in number since the passage of Title IX, female head coaches have not (Loggins & Schneider, 2015). It has been reported that the underrepresentation is in result of organizational structure, stereotypes placed on females, domestic responsibilities, and resiliency to changes.

Participants in this study reported that there have been improvements in regards to equality amongst females and their male counterparts which can be attributed to Title IX and

strong leadership leading to no barriers being encountered upon entry into the sport industry. However, the findings also show that stigmas still exist that depict women as not being strong coaches and cause people to view them differently than men, and underrepresentation is caused by females' desire to have a balance between work and family.

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In addition to my committee members, I would like to thank all of the participants who completed the interview process. I wish nothing but the best for all of you in your coaching endeavors.

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Thank you,

Katie Mae Pennewill

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There is the notion circulating that regards women as being considered to be ineffective coaches and that women's sport as a whole has less value than men's sport in result of the "ideologies surrounding men and women's capabilities as athletes and leaders" (Norman, 2013). Because of this, women have been severely underrepresented in head coaching positions across all divisions of the NCAA. Based on the NCAA Sport Sponsorship, Participation and Demographics Search Report for the 2016-2017 academic year, there are 15,345 male head coaches with 8,898 of those coaches in men's sports and 6,447 in women's sports, and there are 4,875 female coaches with 467 of those coaches in men's sports and 4,408 in women's sports (2017). These numbers clearly show the underrepresentation of women head coaches in the NCAA, and it is said that women have faced numerous barriers in obtaining higher level positions. This glass ceiling has placed a limit on how far a female coach can advance in a male dominated sport industry and is seen in unequal pay rates, gender bias, and selective career paths (Surujlal & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2015). These barriers have deterred women from wanting to pursue goals of head coaching. Gender discrimination ranks as one of the greatest challenges women coaches face, and the male-dominated settings in which these women work cause them to be subject to social isolation along with men questioning their competence and abilities both subtly and non-subtly (Surujlal & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2015).

Female coaches are underrepresented based on the previous shared statistics, but some are finding ways to thrive and remain resilient to the challenges, and they have not fallen subject to the hardships and unjust occurrences in the workplace. The NCAA Sport Sponsorship, Participation and Demographics Search Report for the 2016-2017 academic year states that there

are only six sports throughout the entire NCAA to have more female head coaches than males, and those sports are women's basketball, field hockey, women's gymnastics, women's lacrosse, softball, and women's volleyball (2017). There are no male sports that have more female head coaches than males. In volleyball specifically, as this study aimed to discover any inequalities facing female women's volleyball coaches, there are 507 male head coaches and 577 female head coaches (NCAA Sport Sponsorship, Participation and Demographics Search, 2017). This is the only major team sport that has a male to female ratio that is almost 50/50. Even though volleyball in itself may not be male dominated, the majority of collegiate athletics is, so this study sought to find how this affects female head coaches in collegiate women's volleyball.

### **Research Questions**

1. Does gender affect women coaches' work life in regards to advancement, placement, and overall relationships?
  - a. Are there common themes across all three NCAA women's volleyball divisions?
2. Have women coaches seen improvements in gender equality over the years they have been a part of this male dominated industry?
  - a. Have women collegiate sports and women's coaching jobs been significantly improved since Title IX, and do they think it will keep improving?

### **Hypotheses**

1. Female head volleyball coaches across all three NCAA divisions do experience various types of discrimination in the workplace because of gender, which has affected their overall relationships with athletes and colleagues, advancement throughout their profession, and placement in their field.

2. Female head volleyball coaches across all three NCAA divisions feel that the inequalities are diminishing, however some gaps are still present that affect their ability to perform their job duties.

### **Assumptions**

1. The female head volleyball coaches interviewed will have similar experiences to other female head volleyball coaches in the industry who were not interviewed.
2. The female head volleyball coaches interviewed will know what Title IX is and how it relates to collegiate athletics and volleyball.

### **Limitations**

1. The coaches will not be truthful in their answers or will withhold details during the interview process.
2. Participants involved in the study are only from one gender.
3. Only a small sample of female coaches were interviewed.
4. Interviews were conducted via telephone and not in-person.
5. The study was conducted while the female coaches were in season and competing, so they may have been too busy to participate which may have hindered the sample size.

### **Significance**

The purpose of this study was to discover gender inequality issues and challenges female collegiate women's volleyball coaches face in a male dominated industry. By recognizing these issues and challenges, it can be brought to light the disparities between male and female coaches so that the problems are identified and can be solved. This study highlighted motives for females

wanting to enter the sport industry and what their career paths looked like allowing others to model their own career paths after these successful female coaches. Lastly, this study aimed to uncover reasons behind the limited number of female head coaches in collegiate athletics.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous research and findings has suggested reasons behind the lack of female head coaches, and the research has also illustrated the barriers that female coaches encounter preventing them from advancement and placement in head coaching positions. The following section will provide information in regards to female head coach underrepresentation, how organizational structure can be detrimental to the female coach, the impacts Title IX has had on female coaches, why domestic responsibility is hindering female coaches, stereotypes placed on female coaches, how female coaches are working to be resilient to these challenges, and how organizations can be more gender inclusive. Understanding the challenges female coaches have faced and are continuing to endure from past studies serves as the foundation for which this study was based on in order to see if the gender gap is diminishing or if problems are still evident and problematic for female coaches today.

#### **Underrepresentation**

Aforementioned, female head coaches are starkly underrepresented in the NCAA across all three divisions. When looking at the NCAA Sport Sponsorship, Participation and Demographics Search Report for the 2016-2017 academic year, women only account for 467 coaches in men's sports compared to 8,898 male coaches (2017). Granted there are a number of sports that women do not participate in, such as football and baseball, however even though there are some sports men do not participate in on the women's side, such as field hockey and softball, we still see more male coaches than females on the women's side.

Research suggests that women are underrepresented in their own sports. Female participation in athletics has drastically increased since the implementation of Title IX.

However, the number of females in coaching roles within athletics has plateaued (Loggins & Schneider, 2015). The decreased statistics of females holding coaching positions can be attributed to the following reasons. One being that men are still viewed as the authority figure who are controlling and demanding, more so than women, and, consequently, are perceived as being better coaches (Callary, Gearity, & Murray, 2014). Because of this, male coaches are often preferred over females thinking men will have a more winning mentality than women, and this way of thinking is behind unequal pay rates between men and women coaches who do the same amount of work, but women still receive less (Callary, Gearity, & Murray, 2014).

### **Organizational Structure**

To further explain the reasons behind the lack of female coaches, the organizational structure behind the athletic departments and teams must be analyzed. Unfortunately, women are being discouraged from applying to coaching positions because they believe it is a waste of time after noticing hiring trends when organizations keep hiring men and almost seem to disregard women (Callary, Gearity, & Murray, 2014). Therefore, “this unequal consideration results in little incentive for females to apply to coaching jobs” (Richman, 2011). Across all three divisions in the NCAA, there are 899 male athletic directors and 235 female athletic directors, and in the role of assistant athletic directors, there are 1,780 males and 907 females (NCAA Sport Sponsorship, Participation and Demographics Search, 2017). These numbers illustrate that more males than females are in the decision-making roles.

Men continue to play a dominant role in athletics, and research suggests that people like to hire other people who have similar views to their own (Kilty, 2006). As long as men still hold positions of power in administration, the trend of hiring male coaches will most likely continue despite women and men being equally qualified for the position in terms of education and



competitive experience (Reade, Rodgers, & Norman, 2009). These hiring trends of men hiring men are based on solely perceptions and stereotypes that a man will do a better job in a coaching role over a woman.

Having support from the organization who enable open communication to ensure the coaches feel like they are valued is key in the coaches finding success within that organization (Allen & Shaw, 2013). In a research study conducted by Allen and Shaw, they indicate that female coaches often leave the profession because they feel like they are being undermined, and when the open communication is not taking place it causes the coaches to think that their knowledge and skills are not being seen as crucial for the organization (2013).

When females do not feel like they are an integral part of the athletic community in which they work, it is difficult for them to deal with the inequalities and discrimination they face for fear of losing their job or worsening the isolation (Callary, Gearity, & Murray, 2014). In the research conducted by Callary, Gearity, and Murray in the Canadian Journal for Women in Coaching, they look at accounts from Coach JoAnne Graf, a retired softball coach from Florida State University (2014). Graf comments how fear of retaliation is a huge obstacle in why female coaches do not confront issues of inequality, especially if that female coach is not successful in getting wins for the program (Callary, Gearity, & Murray, 2014). When female coaches are not successful and complain about issues of discrimination and unfairness, it is feared that, without strong relationships in the department, the administration will terminate the coach (Callary, Gearity, & Murray, 2014). This fix is good in the administration's mind, but detrimental to female coaches because the discrimination will only continue.

To spark change and be gender inclusive starts within the organization and must be led by the leaders of the organization and those at the forefront. If no leader, such as an athletic director or president of the university, takes the initiative to ensure inclusiveness, then no one will and the organization will fail to support the minorities.

### **Title IX Effects on Coaching**

The implementation of Title IX in the early 1970's electrified an increase in female participation within intercollegiate athletics. As found in the report by Acosta and Carpenter (2014), Title IX is "federal legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs that receive federal money. It covers only sex discrimination but it includes all parts of education programs, including athletics, intramurals, financial aid, biology, psychology, and so forth." The implementation of Title IX is enforced by the federal government, and they ensure that all institutions remain in compliance. If the institution is found to not be in compliance with Title IX, the government has the right to remove federal funding from the institution (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). However, no school has ever been stripped of their federal funding for not being in compliance, and the Office of Civil Rights within the Department of Education simply tries to resolve the issue and guide the institution back into compliance (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

Since Title IX, we have seen a dramatic increase in female athletic participation, however we have seen a decrease in women who hold head coaching positions and higher administrative positions in result of the merging of men and women departments where men end up holding the positions of power (Loggins & Schneider, 2015). In a research study in 2006, the total number of female coaches in men's sports was only 2% and 18.6% of athletic program directors were women, which is a dramatic decrease from 1972 and Title IX when women held 90% of all

administrator positions (Kilty, 2006). Research accounts this decrease to the fact that there were a very limited number of teams available before Title IX, and when it was established the number of teams sky rocketed and the coaches started to be paid, and this led to more men stepping in to fill these new coaching opportunities (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Today, only 4% of coaches are females in men's sports and 40% in women's sports, which is seen in the NCAA Sport Sponsorship, Participation and Demographics Search Report (2016). In 1972, 9 out of 10 coaches for female sports were female and in 2014 only 4 out of 10 these coaches are females (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). The numbers are very evident of the fact that even though Title IX has greatly impacted women's participation in sport, it has stunted women's abilities to obtain head coaching and higher administrative positions (Kilty, 2006).

Since the year 2000 until 2014, there has been an increase of 2,080 teams in the NCAA for female athletes to participate, and this means that there are 2,080 new head coaching positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Of those available head coaching positions, men have obtained 64.7% while women have obtained 35.3% of those positions, which further proves the point that Title IX has been more evident in aiding the female athlete over the coach (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). The dramatic increase in teams and number of female athletes outweighed the number of female coaches available, and more men were available and in a better position to take these new positions (Richman, 2011).

Research indicates that 2 to 3% of females act as female coaches in men's sports, which is near the same as in 1972 when Title IX was established (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). When women do coach on the men's side it is often in sports such as tennis, swimming, or track and field, which are considered to be non-revenue generating sports, as opposed to basketball and baseball, where the men and women athletes practice together (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

These sports are considered minor in result of the perception that they come secondary to the larger revenue generating sports with lots of fan support (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

It has been formerly stated that people are more likely to hire someone who possesses the same qualities like themselves. Men tend to hire men over females, and females tend to hire more females. Statistics show that this is true. When a female is the athletic director, the percentage of female coaches increases from 43.0% with a male athletic director to 46.8% at the Division I level (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). In Division II under the helm of a female athletic director compared to a male, the percentage of female coaches increases from 35.9% to 40.6%, and in Division III, the percentage increases from 44.4% to 53.9% of female coaches (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). It is apparent to see from these numbers that there is a trend across all three divisions that effects the number of female coaches in the NCAA.

As previously stated, the federal government has never decreased or revoked federal funding of an institution as a result of being non-compliant with Title IX. This can be accounted to why women are still being discriminated “because Title IX, the legislation most often relied on for equal opportunity litigation, has proven to have inadequate remedies and penalties against such discrimination” (Richman, 2011). Title IX, in its traditional sense, was set to provide the female athletes with equal opportunities, but now the focus is shifting to the equality of female and male coaches and the pay gap between men and women coaches (Richman, 2011).

Females have been given more opportunities since Title IX, however more equity needs to occur between the male and female coaches since female coaches are not advancing and growing in numbers like the female athlete (Kilty, 2006). Along with the issues surrounding Title IX and pay gaps, other challenges are plaguing female coaches and are causing them to withdraw from the profession. These challenges are to be discussed in the subsequent sections.

## **Domestic Responsibility**

A reported challenge by female coaches is domestic responsibility (Machida & Feltz, 2013). Responsibilities at home has been a barrier for women in the coaching industry, and this barrier has prevented women from advancing in their career and has caused some to switch professions and stop coaching (Machida & Feltz, 2013). In a study by the NCAA, “female coaches indicated time requirements and amount of travel as the top two reasons for the lack of female representation in the coaching profession, and family commitments as a top-contributing factor for females’ hesitation to pursue a coaching career” (Bracken, 2009). These barriers have aided in the underrepresentation of women, and have caused issues for development and advancement for those who do decide to pursue coaching because they are concerned with balancing their responsibilities at work and at home (Machida & Feltz, 2013).

Research has shown that when women with families pursue coaching careers, it can be detrimental to their career if they are not resilient enough. Women experience issues with self-efficacy when family-related conflicts arise and negatively affect their abilities to perform at their highest level, and physiological states rank at the highest in self-efficacy sources (Bandura, 1997). These negative emotions cause women to lose confidence in their abilities to lead and be effective in the workplace (Machida & Feltz, 2013).

With an emphasis on winning, coaches are constantly being evaluated based on their win-loss record. This emphasis has put a strain on coaches’ lives because they must travel more, recruit more, train the athletes more, and spend more hours planning and strategizing (Ladda, 2015). These excessive and unrealistic expectations, along with the already misogynist, sexist, and homophobic attitudes in the field, have caused work-life challenges which have posed many issues for many female coaches causing them to leave the coaching profession (Ladda, 2015).

Domestic responsibility is considered to not be a main motivating factor for women's decisions to continue on their career paths in coaching, however based on the above findings it still can be seen that a balance between work and life is desired by women.

### **Stereotypes**

In addition to domestic responsibility, overcoming stereotypes can be quite challenging for women as well. Women are stereotyped based on their abilities, their looks, and the job they hold in general. For example, in the Sports Letter Interview of Sheila Robertson, she explains that some women are automatically considered to be a lesbian if they are coaching at elite levels, and when people see women who are strong and serving as top leaders, they are associated with having male characteristics and, therefore, must be a lesbian (2011). Robertson continues to explain in the interview that she has known numerous women who have lost their jobs over sexual orientation in result of homophobic people in society making an issue about it, and other women are constantly harassed for it (2011).

Another stereotype that Robertson mentions is that women are considered to lack athletic skill and are not qualified to coach, unlike a man (2011). People have the misconception that females are not able to be effective coaches because they think females lack the knowledge and physical skills to perform what they are trying to teach, and this, Robertson says, is difficult for women because they must constantly prove themselves when people question their credentials (2011). Change has been seen in regards to these changes, however there is still a long way to go. Robertson final comment on stereotypes was that it was thought before women could not run more than 1,500 meters because they would damage their reproductive organs, which we know now is not true, but women must continue to break down these barriers set to limit their success (2001).

Stereotypes can lead to sex discrimination. In the case of Tyler v. Howard University, the plaintiff, Tyler, stated that she was being discriminated against because when the university needed to hire a new athletic director they “unfairly passed her over for the job of athletics director because she was a woman” (Blum, 1993). Tyler also claimed that she, as the women’s basketball coach, did not receive the same salary as the men’s basketball coach even though they have identical job descriptions (Blum, 2013). Because of this, Tyler requested she paid more since the men’s basketball coach was making twice as much as her for the same work (Blum, 2013). However, Tyler was denied this request. Tyler believed her rights were violated in regards to Title IX and the Equal Pay Act, so she filed a lawsuit. Tyler won the case, and she was awarded monetary damages, which is the first time that a court had ever awarded monetary damages in a sex-bias case under Title IX (Blum, 2013). This case highlights how female coaches are viewed differently from males. Tyler was performing the same job duties as her male counterpart, which justifies her the same salary, but the athletic director did not agree. Additionally, because she was female, her claims that she was passed over for the athletics director position shows that those holding the power to hire may still stereotype women as not being capable of being an athletic director and holding a higher position.

### **Resiliency to Challenges**

Despite the issues of Title IX, stereotypes, underrepresentation, and domestic responsibility, there are women who are able to overcome these challenges and be successful in the coaching profession (Machida & Feltz, 2013). Their career paths are ones to modeled after in order for women to continue to find success. Giving opportunities for females interested in pursuing a career in coaching is key in priming them for a successful future, and experienced female coaches should be willing to serve as their mentors (Kerr & Banwell, 2014).

The challenges of coaching as a female is almost unavoidable, and these issues of male dominance, gender inequities, and stereotypes of women in high positions need to be addressed in order to prepare future female coaches to still be successful and be resilient to the adversity (Kerr & Banwell, 2014). Proper mentorship and education can prepare these women for the coaching life and show them how to handle these difficult situations so that measures can be taken to correct them allowing the female coaching profession to grow.

### **Steps to Inclusion**

Taking steps to be more inclusive is not always an easy one, as most organizations are resistant to change if they feel that no problems exist. However, as the statistics report, there is a low number of women and minorities who hold positions in the NCAA, which is why the NCAA has developed the Office of Inclusion which is dedicated to diversity, inclusion, and gender equity (Loggins & Schneider, 2015). Historically, college athletics has been referred to as “the old boys’ network” because white males have continuously been awarded top level administrative positions as noted by Suggs (2005) and Whisenant (2003). It was suggested by Suggs (2005) that the NCAA should adopt the “Rooney Rule,” which would require the NCAA to consider female and minority candidates who meet all the requirements for the position (Loggins & Schneider, 2015). The “Rooney Rule” is a term coined from Pittsburgh Steeler Dan Rooney, and he aided in the creation of the rule which would require hiring committees to be more inclusive of minorities and interview people from minority groups (Seifert, 2017). Instead of implementing a Rooney Rule, the Office of Inclusion is in place to serve as the advocate for equality. It was then noted by Lapchick, Johnson, Loomer, & Martinez (2014) that athletic departments should get in contact with the NCAA Office of Inclusion in order to promote inclusiveness within their own departments to support women and minorities in athletics.



When considering the decision making within athletic departments, the best candidate should be considered for the position, regardless of gender and ethnicity. With the NCAA at the forefront, there is the initiative to be more diverse and inclusive in order to bring about change to ensure fairness and equal treatment. Including females and minorities offers different viewpoints which can, in turn, strengthen the athletic department as whole because it promotes both success and inclusion of all people not just within athletics but the university as a whole (Loggins & Schneider, 2015).

### **Summary**

Since the enactment of Title IX, female head coaches in the NCAA have been outnumbered by male head coaches and are underrepresented in result of barriers stemming from Title IX, domestic responsibility, and stereotypes. Despite these barriers, women are working hard to be resilient and combat the challenges in order to find success. This resiliency and NCAA's effort to creating a more gender inclusive community are the first step in creating a sport industry that is accepting of all people, no matter the gender. Improvements have been made, but there is still more to be done until women coaches are evaluated and valued the same way as men.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the 11 female head volleyball coach. The principle investigator interviewed with the female head coach via telephone. The principle investigator devised a set list of questions for the interview, which can be found in Appendix A, and these questions were distributed to the interview prior to the interview. The interview was semi-structured, and each interviewee was asked the same set of questions and was prepared to be asked any additional questions needed for clarity or further details and information. All questions asked were in purpose of answering the research questions of the study.

#### **Participants**

The participants in the study included females who are currently employed as a head women's volleyball coaches in the NCAA. It was the objective to have 7 of the women head coaches at the Division III level, 7 at the Division II level, and 7 at the Division I level. The women chosen for the study had at least 5 years of volleyball coaching experience in any position, whether head or assistant, in volleyball. The final sample of the participants contained 11 total females with 4 at the Division I level, 4 at the Division II level, and 3 at the Division III level (Figure 4).

#### **Recruitment Strategies**

The coaches were chosen with a convenience sample based on the coaches' relationships with the Head Volleyball Coach at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Once chosen, the coaches were contacted via email or telephone in order to request their participation in the study.

A consent form (Appendix B) was distributed to each participant, and, once they agreed and signed the consent form, the interview process began.

### **Instrumentation**

Each female head coach applicable for the study was given the consent form, which can be found in Appendix B, prior to any questioning or involvement in the study. This consent form was accompanied by a cover letter, which can be found in Appendix B. The cover letter provided the coach with information about the purpose, significance, and voluntary participation in the study. Once the coach signed and gave consent, the interview process commenced. Each interviewee was given a sheet containing the list of interview questions and was made aware of the semi-structured nature of the interview before being questioned.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

The questions chosen (Appendix A) for the interview stemmed from previous studies that researched challenges female head coaches and female sport administrators face in the male-dominated sport industry. These studies included “The glass ceiling in sport coaching: Perceived challenges of female coaches” conducted by J. Surujlal and S. Vyas-Doorgapersad in 2015, “Feeling Second Best: Elite Women Coaches’ Experiences” conducted by Leanne Norman in 2010, and “The Challenges Facing Women Coaches and the Contributions They Can Make to the Profession” conducted by Leanne Norman in 2013.

### **Procedures**

Approval of this study was obtained from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board. Prior to performing this study, the female head coaches of the collegiate volleyball teams were contacted by email or phone and notified about the purpose of

this study. They were then given the cover letter (Appendix B), consent form (Appendix B), and list of interview questions (Appendix A). Upon consenting and reviewing the questions, the interview process began.

### **Design**

The design of this study was qualitative and semi-structured. The semi-structured interview contained a set list of interview questions and the liberty to ask subsequent questions in order to gain more information or to receive clarity. It was believed that a qualitative study and semi-structured interview approach was more beneficial than other strategies, like a survey, in order to gain more depth responses of the interviewees' experiences (Norman, 2010). This approach allowed the interviewees to speak freely, and their insights were recorded from their direct own words, rather than limiting them to select from fixed responses required in a quantitative study (Surujlal & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2015).

### **Statistical Analysis**

In order to determine if female head volleyball coaches across all three NCAA divisions were experiencing similar challenges in regards to gender discrimination and inequality issues, the data received from each interview was collected and examined. Descriptive statistics were used to compare demographic factors, such as age, years of collegiate coaching experience, years of head collegiate coaching experience, and current division in which the coach is employed. To gather the data from the interviews, the materials used entailed a voice recorder to record each interview, pencil and paper to write additional notes during the interview, phone or computer to conduct the interview (if not done in person), and a set list of interview questions to ask. Once all data was gathered from the interviews, the information was inputted into the NVivo for Mac version 11.3.2 software in order to identify reoccurring themes, congruencies, and differences throughout the sample of interviews.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to discover gender inequality issues and challenges female collegiate women's volleyball coaches face in a male dominated industry. The primary investigator addressed several research questions in the current study: 1. Does gender affect these women coaches work life in regards to advancement, placement, and overall relationships? 1a. Are there common themes across all three NCAA women's volleyball divisions? 2. Have these women coaches seen improvements in gender equality over the years they have been a part of this male dominated industry? 2a. Have women collegiate sports and women's coaching jobs been significantly improved since Title IX, and do they think it will keep improving?

#### **Response Rate**

The primary investigator contacted 43 female head women's collegiate volleyball coaches currently employed in the NCAA who have had at least five years of collegiate volleyball coaching experience. Potential candidates were contacted via phone and email that were found on the website of their respective university. Out of those contacted, 11 female coaches, 25.58% (N=11), responded and consented to participate by signing and returning the consent form to the primary investigator. Out of the 11 coaches who responded, 4 coach at the Division I level, 4 at the Division II level, and 3 at the Division III level.

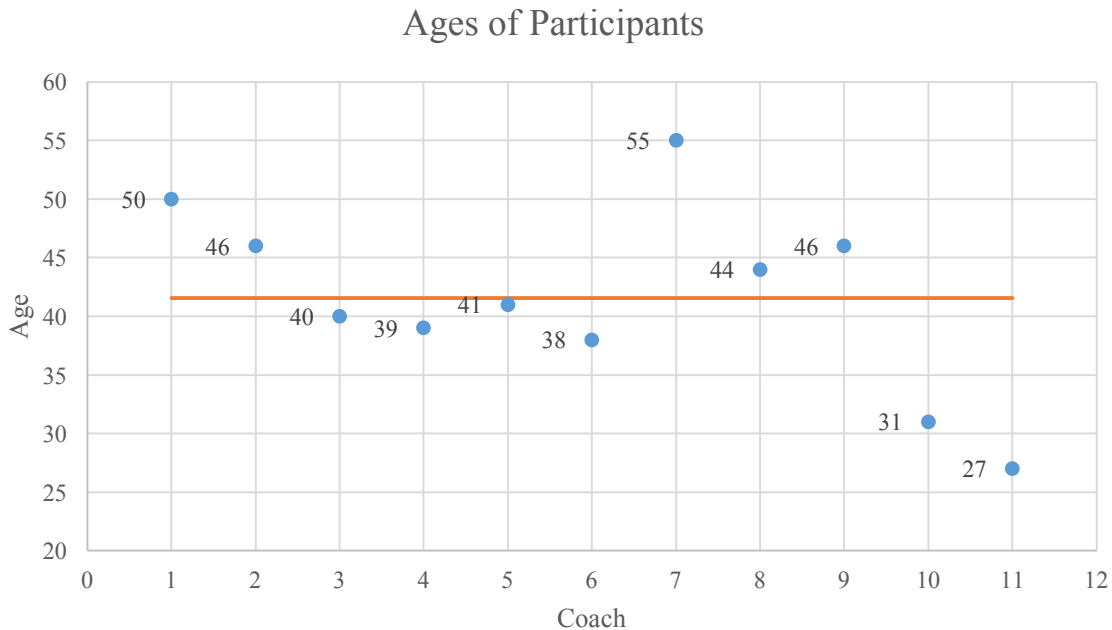
#### **Demographic Information**

##### **Gender**

Because this study sought only the inclusion of females, all collegiate head women's volleyball coaches (N=11) were female and identified themselves as such.

## Age

As depicted in Figure 1, the average or mean age of the coaches was 41.545 years old (SD=8.017) which is represented by the orange line. The coaches' ages ranged from 27-55. The median age of the coaches was 41 years old. The scatterplot below (Figure 1) provides supplementary information on the ages of all participants. In result of the confidential nature of this study, the participants are denoted with a number (1-11) in the figure below and were referred to as Coaches A-K.



*Figure 1.* Distribution of the age of collegiate women's volleyball coaches. Numbers on X-axes indicate Coaches A-K. Numbers on Y-axes indicate the age of the coaches. The mean of the data set is depicted by the orange line in the graph (mean= 41.545).

## Years of Collegiate Volleyball Coaching Experience

The average or mean number of years coaching women's collegiate volleyball was 17.818 (SD=7.653) which is represented by the orange line in Figure 2. The range of years was 6 to 34 years. The median of this dataset was 18 years of coaching women's collegiate volleyball. In result of the confidential nature of this study, the participants are denoted with a

number (1-11) in the figure below and were referred to as Coaches A-K. The scatterplot below (Figure 2) provides supplementary information on the years of collegiate women's volleyball coaching for the entire sample.

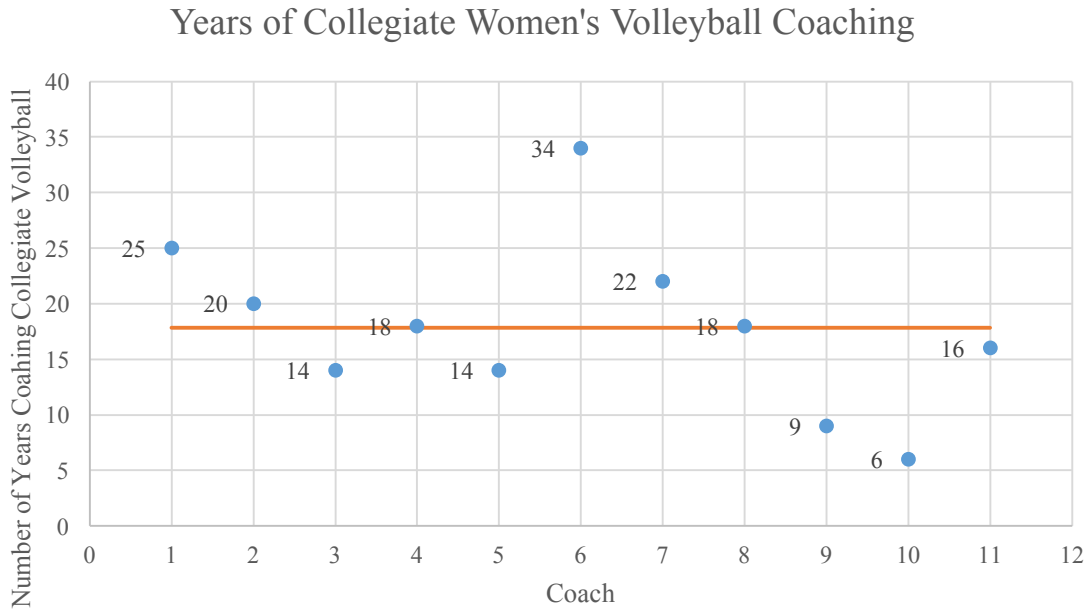


Figure 2. Distribution of the number of years each participant has coached collegiate women's volleyball in the NCAA. Numbers on X-axes indicate Coaches A-K. Numbers on Y-axes indicate the number of years coaching women's collegiate volleyball in the NCAA. The mean of the data set is depicted by the orange line in the graph (mean=17.818).

### Years of Head Collegiate Volleyball Coaching Experience

The average or mean number of years of head coaching women's collegiate volleyball was 13.091 (SD=9.914) which is represented by the orange line in Figure 3. The range was 1 to 34 years. The median of this dataset was 11 years of head coaching women's collegiate volleyball. In result of the confidential nature of this study, the participants are denoted with a number (1-11) in the figure below and were referred to as Coaches A-K. The scatterplot below (Figure 3) provides supplementary information on the years of head collegiate women's volleyball coaching for the entire sample.

### Years of Head Collegiate Volleyball Coaching

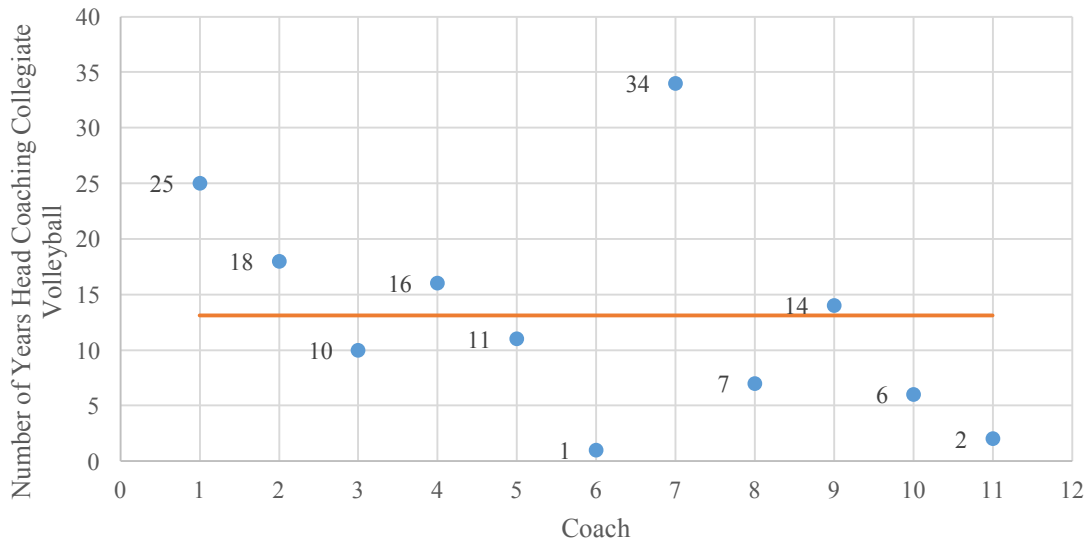


Figure 3. Distribution of the number of years each participant has head coached collegiate women’s volleyball in the NCAA. Numbers on X-axes indicate Coaches A-K. Numbers on Y-axes indicate the number of years head coaching women’s collegiate volleyball in the NCAA. The mean of the data set is depicted by the orange line in the graph (mean= 13.091).

### Division in the NCAA

In order to answer the research questions, information regarding the division in which the participants head coach women’s collegiate volleyball was gathered. Out of the 11 participants, 36.36% (n=4) reported head collegiate women’s volleyball coaching in Division I, 36.36% (n=4) reported head collegiate women’s volleyball coaching in Division II, and 27.27% (n=3) head collegiate women’s volleyball coaching in Division III. The bar graph below (Figure 4) provides supplementary information on the division in which the entire sample of collegiate women’s volleyball coaches are employed.



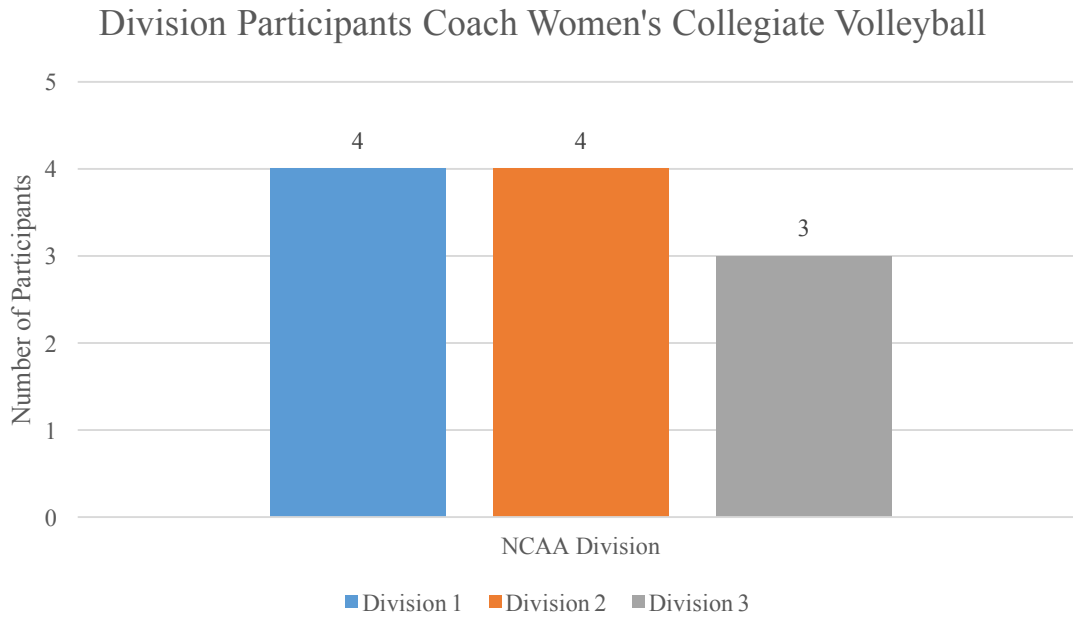


Figure 4. Frequency of head women’s collegiate volleyball coaches in Division I, II, and III in the NCAA. Numbers on X-axes indicate the division in the NCAA. Numbers on Y-axes indicate the number of head women’s collegiate volleyball coaches.

### Effect of Gender on Overall Work Life

The following addresses the first research question: Does gender effect women coaches’ work life in regards to advancement, placement, and overall relationships? Additionally, in this section will be addressed the sub-research question: Are there common themes across all three NCAA women’s volleyball divisions?

When asked what barriers exist for females upon entering the sport industry, 9 out of the 11 (81.8%) head women’s collegiate volleyball coaches interviewed stated that they personally did not experience any barriers and were able to obtain head coaching positions without discrimination. Their ability to earn a head coaching position stemmed from years of them playing collegiate volleyball, working volleyball camps, and networking with other coaches in volleyball. 9 out of the 11 coaches interviewed has previously played volleyball collegiately and one coach played professionally, and they contributed the ease of their transition into a head

coaching role because of their firsthand experience. Coach C explained her career path that compared to that of others.

I played volleyball in college which really helped me in the future because I had made those connections. Out of college, I was hired as an assistant coach. I remained an assistant coach for a couple of years until I wanted to have a family. During that time of having and raising my young kids, I decided to stop coaching college and become a teacher. While teaching, I still coached high school volleyball. When my kids were older, I knew I wanted to get back into coaching college, and I had always known that I wanted to coach. I was then hired as a head coach.

Having that playing experience has given these female coaches a leg up in their field, and the 9 coaches that have played college expressed how that helped them with their placement as a head coach.

Additionally, it was noted by the females who did not play in college how important it was building a network and gaining experience through more education and working camps. Coach G explained that she did not know that she was even interested in coaching until one of her mentors mentioned that she should apply for a coaching position that had just opened up.

I was working camps and volunteering because I enjoyed it and did it on the side. A coach I had worked under called me up and told me that a head coaching position just opened up and that I should interview for it if I wanted to pursue coaching. I did, and I got the job. I don't think I would have gotten into coaching if it weren't for that call.

Coach D shared that playing volleyball yourself doesn't mean you are the most qualified for the position and that there are other ways to advance and find a head coaching position.

It's all about what you have done with the time you have. It's okay to have a

nontraditional career path. Maximize opportunities that you have and never turn down an opportunity that could be helpful later on down the road. Getting a master's degree is also helpful especially for coaches who are just starting out. University's like to see that extra higher education because it shows that you have been taught to have a higher ability to critically think and problem solve.

When each coach mentioned what advice they had for females who wanted to pursue a head coaching career, 11 out of the 11 participants stated that building a network and getting to know people is key in getting placed in a head coaching position. Coach A's advice stemmed from her personal experiences of having connections with top tier coaches.

Get in with the best coaches you can. Find a job with the best connections. It's all about who you know. Find a graduate assistantship or volunteer position at the best division one school you can get into. That will help you when you want to go off on your own. Coach I shared similar advice in the importance of building relationships which will help in the advancement of a female coach's career.

Build a network, and get involved in women's alliances that will help you through the challenges of coaching. Finding a partner who is supportive and willing to make sacrifices for you. Seek out a support group of women to help you through the tough times. Balancing life and work is difficult for a lot of female coaches and having that strong support system and network of people will help to make the transition of advancing in your career easier.

Overall, the majority of coaches (n=9), did not experience any barriers upon entering the sport industry in result of being female, but a number of coaches (n=6) agreed in that times are different now and females entering the sport industry are experiencing more barriers. Coach J

stated that hiring committees will bring a female in for an interview to show that they have a diverse pool of applicants even if there is no intent to hire.

Places I went to were looking for a female to consider. I knew I was going to get an interview because I am a female and had a higher degree. Many places are looking to interview with diversity. Getting past that barrier can be challenging depending on the attitudes of the hiring committee, but I knew that, once I got the chance to talk and show them what I am capable of and have done, I would show through.

Coach F talked about how females have difficulties getting their foot in the door for assistant positions so that they can gain experience to advance.

People want assistants who can just hit balls and be a ball banger. So often at times females will get overlooked because they aren't seen as being strong enough to fill that role.

When females are put into assistant coaching positions, advancing into a head role can be challenging. Coach H spoke about seeing females being overlooked for head jobs because administrations aren't willing to take a chance on hiring a female and because female athletes have a stigma that a head coach should be a male.

I think women have to be twice as good to get the higher end job because places want strong female leaders in the women's sports teams. But, that transition from assistant to head can be tough. Females like males as head coaches. Especially, white males. Most coaches in club volleyball where these athletes have played are white males, and females feel that is who should always coach them because that is what is most familiar.

Coach F detailed why administrations aren't willing to take chances on hiring a female as a head coach.

No female head coach has won a national championship in volleyball at the division one level which is in the back of hirers minds. So the question hirers ask themselves is can it be done? Until that changes I think hiring males as the head will likely continue.

Every participant (n=11) agreed that female coaches are underrepresented at the head coaching position. They have noticed that the vast majority of the teams they compete against have a male as the head coach. In their own departments, the participants shared similar accounts in regards to the ratio of males to females who are employed, and 9 out of 11 of the coaches interviewed stated that their own athletic departments are more heavy on the males than females especially in head coaching and main administration roles.

Underrepresentation of females in head coaching positions is a common theme amongst all three divisions. 10 out of the 11 coaches agreed that the biggest reason for underrepresentation is that females do not seek head coaching positions in result of the time required away from family. Some participants (n=6) account this reason to societal norms that have been placed on females. Coach I shared her thoughts on gender roles society has created.

Coaching volleyball, well coaching any sport, is a difficult job to raise a family in order to be a main caregiver. Females are just geared to think that way. So many females stop coaching because of the time needed to be on the road, for the late night matches, and all of that extra stuff you have to do to be successful. Those extra things make it hard to raise a family. But, society doesn't put those demands on men. It's a personal choice, but I don't have children because I am coach. I don't know how female coaches who do have children do it.

The participants account domestic responsibility as a huge reason why males are more likely to apply for head coaching positions more so than females.

In regards to overall relationships, 10 out of the 11 coaches interviewed agreed that being a female and coaching females is a major advantage. Coach K explained how being an athlete once herself makes her more approachable to her athletes and creates better relationships.

My biggest advantage as a female coach is being able to relate better to my athletes. I understand the demands of being a female student athlete, so my athletes feel more comfortable coming to talk to me since I am a female. They know I can help them because I was in their shoes.

Within the athletic department and amongst colleagues, 7 out of the 11 coaches view their departments as being inclusive and team oriented. Because of this, gender does not play a factor in relationship and overall treatment of the females in the department.

### **Gender Equality Throughout the Years**

The following addresses the second research question: Have these women coaches seen improvements in gender equality over the years they have been a part of this male dominated industry? Additionally, in this section will be addressed the sub-research question: Have women collegiate sports and women's coaching jobs been significantly improved since Title IX, and do they think it will keep improving?

When asked about inequalities, 9 out of the 11 coaches interviewed stated that they have experienced some sort of gender inequity, whether it be directed towards them or their team. The longer these coaches (n=9) remain in their position, they said that the inequalities diminish. Coach J personal account provides further detail into this finding.

Someone looks at me and sees me as a young woman who doesn't deserve this status yet. They think I won't be able to recruit. People want to keep their circle small, and they think that I am just trying to invade. It is improving once I meet with others and people

become more open minded. Sometimes your voice gets left out because men just don't think to ask. It will get better when more coaches become administrators and females become athletic directors. (Females) have to have a seat at the table in order to have change.

Another inequality finding stems from outside personnel making assumptions about who is the head coach when there is a female and male present with the team. 45% of the coaches (n=5) reported being disregarded because of being a female. Coach K explained one of the moments she felt disregarded.

When my team walks into the gym, the referees will greet my assistant coach, who is a male, first not realizing that I am the coach. Some male coaches look down upon me and then during the match referees have ignored me to the point where I have had to have my assistant talk to them because that is the only way they would listen.

Other participants have experienced similar encounters in being disregarded. Coach D's account is almost identical to that of Coach K's.

I had a male assistant who traveled with us. When we walk into a gym, the opposing team's coaches shake his hand thinking he is the head coach. Assumptions are made all the time. This improves with becoming established and knowing people, but there shouldn't be different perceptions between males and females when they do the same thing.

Coach H's personal account shows that this disregard may be societal and not intentional.

Being disregarded happens in meetings all the time. Females are constantly being talked over, and a female will share a great idea and yet somehow a male gets the credit for the

female's idea. I don't think it is intentional but just habit and because the administrators are male as well.

For the coaches interviewed (n=5) whom have not experienced a time where they have been personally disregarded, they attribute this to "being vocal and assertive," as described by Coach E. Coach I parallels this statement with her own.

I don't let people disregard me. If I start to see that people are talking over me, I make sure that I am heard and stand up for myself. The tricky part of that is to not come off wrong and be seen as bitchy which is hard for females because people are quick to think that we (females) are just trying to be spiteful when that's not the case at all.

Coach I's last account brought attention to another finding that many of the participants (n= 6) mentioned, and that finding is how female coaches are viewed differently from their male counterparts in reference to coaching styles. When females coach other females, and the female coach is being tough and assertive, the female athletes are quick to judge the coach and think that they are just being "bitchy," as the participants (n=6) described. However, when a male coach acts in the same manner, the female athletes view him as just a coach doing his job and being tough. Coach I shared her insights in regards to this.

Many female athletes prefer a male coach. If you're a tough female coach, you're a bitch. Hard to empower women to know that we are our own worst enemies. We need to look each other up instead of tear each other down. If I were a man, you (female athletes) would not be complaining about me. You rebel because you think I am your peer because I am woman. From female to female, there is immaturity and labels.



Coach D shared a similar account.

If I were a man, I would be perceived differently. If I speak my mind and if I am assertive, then I am a bitch. No difference in what I am doing as compared to if it were a male, but I am viewed harsher.

Being viewed differently and disregarded are the inequalities that many of female coaches (n=6) interviewed expressed as personally affecting them. As noted above, improvements have been made the more established and successful the female coaches become but a lot of what is happening stems from societal norms and some (n=6) think that will never change. Coach J's account shows this finding.

Window for success is shorter than male coaches. Criticism is harsher. Although women may have a great resume, they are already being looked upon harshly. I don't think that this will change because people will attack and go after women because there is the stigma that a woman will never be good enough. Females have to work twice as hard. Wins speak volumes. Without wins, people will question you.

Improvements in regards to volleyball for the female coaches interviewed have been noticed thanks to Title IX.

The first finding shows that 9 out of the 11 coaches have seen less and less disparity between volleyball and other male dominated sports. Coach B shared her account which was similar to the responses to the rest of the participants.

Title IX is a great thing for female athletes and has impacted in a positive way. Athletic directors have worked to make sure to look across the board and see to it that the females are getting the same funds as the major male sports.

Female athletes and teams have received many benefits. Coach C supports this finding.

Title IX has created great opportunity. Because of it, the size of our budget has increased, and we get to travel much more. We also have had more opportunities to be broadcasted on TV. We now get all of the extras that men have always gotten.

Coach D reported that female athletes have benefited but those benefits do not always extend to the female coaches.

(University D) opted to do a self-initiated Title IX study. The results showed that Title IX has had a negative impact on coaches and positive impact on student athlete participation, resources, funding, transportation. Professionally there is inequality with our locker rooms and number of assistant coaches. I think that the study shed light on some key issues and forced people to start thinking about how changes can be made so coaches are more equal.

It was also found that Title IX offers great opportunities for females, but there are not enough finances to support those opportunities sometimes. Coach E supports this finding.

There are roster limits on male side, but there are no roster limits on female side. There has been a bigger push to increase roster size for female sports to make sure that schools avoid lawsuits. The problem is that there are no finances to support it. Positive for female athletes who have the opportunity to play but schools don't have the money to support it.

Coach G supports the above finding as well.

There is lots of hostility after teams get cut. Hostility towards women sports because they are reasons they got cut. Have to maintain numbers. More men's teams have more athletes, and women's teams are asked to make up the numbers. Asking for more people than there is money. There was never a problem when women had hand-me down

uniforms when the men got brand new ones. Now that there is more equality, there are more issues because we took opportunity away from the guys.

As Coach J states, “Title IX helps to create equality in the athletic department. It keeps people in check to make sure people are doing what they are doing,” and 8 other participants in this study agree. This supports the finding that there have been improvements and that Title IX works to help alleviate disparities.

The last finding suggests that the administration plays a key role in setting the tone for how inclusive the department will be. 8 out of the 11 female coaches interviewed agree that strong leadership accounts for increases equality between males and females. Coach J’s account shows how different leadership leads to different results.

Some athletic directors want everyone to have an equal seat at the table and are very inclusive. Across the board, athletic directors differ and some advocate for inclusiveness more than others. Some are about money and some want to have women coaches in women’s sports and in non-Olympic sports.

Coach G also showed how different leaders cause different results in regards to equality in hiring.

There is still a big network of the boy’s club who take care of each other. I don’t have a problem if the best guy for the job is a male, but not everyone has an athletic director who is willing to hold people accountable and hire the best person for the job.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### **Summary of the Study**

The circulating idea that regards women to be ineffective coaches and that women's sport as a whole has less value than men's sport in result of the "ideologies surrounding men and women's capabilities as athletes and leaders" has caused females to back away from college athletics (Norman, 2013). Female coaches have been severely underrepresented in head coaching positions across all divisions of the NCAA. This study aimed to discover any inequalities facing female women's volleyball coaches. Because women's volleyball employs 507 male head coaches and 577 female head coaches, it is the only major team sport that has a male to female ratio that is almost 50/50 (NCAA Sport Sponsorship, Participation and Demographics Search, 2017). Even though volleyball in itself may not be male dominated, the majority of collegiate athletics is, so this study sought to find how this affects female head coaches in collegiate women's volleyball.

To gather data, a sample of current females employed in the NCAA as a women's volleyball coach were interviewed. The participants (N=11) were asked questions that were aimed to answer the desired research questions with the overall purpose of discovering any gender inequality issues and challenges female collegiate women's volleyball coaches face in the male dominated industry that the NCAA is considered to be.

Previous research suggests reasons behind the lack of female head coaches in regards to female head coach underrepresentation, how organizational structure can be detrimental to the female coach, the impacts Title IX has had on female coaches, why domestic responsibility is hindering female coaches, stereotypes placed on female coaches, how female coaches are

working to be resilient to these challenges, and how organizations can be more gender inclusive. Understanding the challenges female coaches have faced and are continuing to face serves as the foundation for which this study was based.

After each interviewee completed the interview process, data collection began. The principle investigator compiled all of the interview into NVivo and sorted the data into nodes to see what reoccurring themes existed, if any. It was discovered that there were many constants throughout the set of interviews that was not specific to one division in the NCAA but all three.

The results discovered will be discussed heavily in the next sections in regards to the hypotheses that were suggested prior to the study being conducted.

### **Summary of Results with Regard to Hypotheses**

Two hypotheses were presented for this study: 1. Female head volleyball coaches across all three NCAA divisions do experience various types of discrimination in the workplace because of gender, which has affected their overall relationships with athletes and colleagues, advancement throughout their profession, and placement in their field. 2. Female head volleyball coaches across all three NCAA divisions feel that the inequalities are diminishing, however some gaps are still present that affect their ability to perform their job duties.

#### **Hypothesis One**

The first hypothesis was supported by the study in the aspect that female head volleyball coaches across all three divisions have experienced similar types of discrimination in the workplace because of their gender in regards to overall relationships. However, this hypothesis was not supported in that the head female volleyball coaches did not experience any discrimination in regards to advancement throughout their professions and placement in a head

coaching position. The constants noted from the study are the lack of barriers encountered, prior experience to coaching, and reasons for underrepresentation, and they are discussed further in the subsequent subsections.

### **Lack of Barriers to Placement in Head Coaching Positions**

The first constant was that, overall, the female head women's volleyball coaches did not experience any barriers upon entering the sport industry and were able to land a head coaching position without experiencing any gender discrimination. Their answers revealed that they were able to obtain the jobs they applied for without issue, and some made note that being a female may have actually helped them get a job. Without being on the hiring committees of the universities in which the participants are employed, the motives behind the hiring decisions may not be known. However, some of the participants remained fairly certain that they were hired because of the shift being made to have females coaching other females.

Even though these coaches themselves did not experience any barriers, the majority spoke about how females may struggle to start their coaching career because athletic directors are afraid to take a chance on females. Because no female head coach has ever won a national championship at the Division I level, it was believed that athletic directors have this in the back of their minds and it deters them from wanting to hire a female coach. The participants stated that athletic directors need to be more open to the idea of female head coaches.

Finally, many of the participants spoke in regards to hiring committees only looking to hire females even if a male candidate is more deserving of the job. Whereas the participants like the idea of more females getting involved in collegiate athletics, they agree that this is the wrong way to go about doing it. The hiring committees should not hire base on gender but hire the best person for the job whether that be male or female.

### **Prior Experience to Coaching**

One constant that was mentioned, which contributed to the participants not experiencing any barriers upon entry into the head coaching profession, was that the participants played volleyball themselves in college. This firsthand experience allowed the coaches to have great references, make connections that would serve as resources, and have a strong foundation to be able to coach at a high level since they played at a high level. Playing volleyball led to an easy transition into coaching volleyball because the coaches that the participants played for helped place them in positions or offered them positions as an assistant at the university in which they played. That served as the stepping stone to gain experience and then the interviewees were able to land a head coaching job without debate of whether or not they were qualified and no mention of gender being an issue at all.

### **Underrepresentation**

Another constant that the participants spoke about was reasons behind female head coach underrepresentation. Most coaches agreed that, in volleyball, they are starting to see an increase and more even male to female head coach ratio, but they do believe that female head coaches are underrepresented. In the NCAA as a whole, they also agree that it leans heavily towards the male side. The reason that the majority of participants gave to account for the underrepresentation is that females want to have a balance between work and family life. Females have the expectation to be the main caregiver for children and maintain the household. The interviewees explained how this stigma stems from society. Because of this, many females stop pursuing coaching positions. They do not see coaching as a viable career that can sustain a family and offer them the flexibility they desire to be able to be with their family. As long as this stigma exists, the participants agree that females will continue to view coaching as an

unsuitable career to raise a family. Coaching requires a lot of time travelling, late nights, weekends away at matches, and recruiting trips in order to be successful and build a strong program. To do this, the participants stated that a strong support system is needed who will help along the way.

### **Advantages in Overall Relationships**

The final constant found in this study was that the majority of participants accounted their biggest advantage of being a female head coach was that they are more relatable to their athletes. Being that the majority of coaches interviewed were once players themselves, they found that this gave them more credibility with their athletes causing the athletes to feel better connected with them. Being a female who coaches females contributed as an advantage as well, and the interviewees spoke how their athletes are able to open up more to them which allowed better relationships to grow on a more personal level. The coaches did not think that male coaches would be able to have the same personal connection since they would not be able to relate as well to the female athletes, thus giving the female coaches the advantage.

### **Hypothesis Two**

The second hypothesis was supported by the study because the results show that the participants across the three divisions are seeing improvements in result of Title IX efforts, effective leadership, and establishment of themselves in their career. The support of the hypothesis continues because even though inequalities are diminishing, the results show that there are still inequities. These inequities result from stigmas placed on female coaches that cause others to view them differently. Females coaches are often disregarded by referees and their male counterparts, so at times their ideas are not heard or are overshadowed by the males.



In the next subsections, the similar findings from each interview in regards to leadership, gender inequity, overall perceptions, and experiences being disregarded will be discussed.

### **Leadership**

A shared consensus was drawn from the interviews that accounts for athletic departments being gender inclusive, and it is strong leadership from the athletic directors. The coaches who stated that they had a great athletic director who was very team oriented led to a department that did not have any inequalities between anyone in the athletic department. For the coaches who felt like there was a lack of leadership, they experienced more difficulties in getting their ideas heard and changes instilled. The interviewees mentioned that a strong leader who demonstrated the importance of every member of the team and wanted everyone to have a role created the most feelings of inclusiveness.

### **Gender Inequity**

In result of Title IX, the females interviewed agreed that they were many more opportunities for females than ever before that equal to the male sports. Female athletes and teams are able to travel, be broadcasted live, receive new uniforms, and have access to scholarships. The one inequity that stood out from the results was that female teams do not have roster limits unlike the male sports. Female head coaches are encouraged to take as many players as they can so that the male teams are able to support more players in order to stay in compliance with Title IX. The issue noted by the participants is that even though offering more opportunities to females is great, there is no additional funds being allocated to support the larger rosters. The coaches noted that they operate with almost the same budget no matter the roster size. If the trend of increasing roster size continues, then an increased budget needs to follow. Otherwise, the female athletes will experience unequal benefits.

The majority of coaches interviewed concur that Title IX has increased benefits and opportunities for female athletes, but it has failed to do the same for female coaches. Female assistant coaches are not offered the same amenities as the male coaches are and some female sports do not offer a paid assistant position. The interviewees agree that Title IX needs to be implemented in order offer more to the female head coaches that equals to their male counterparts. Based on these provided perceptions from the coaches, more education in regards to Title IX should be given so the coaches understand all that Title IX entails.

### **Overall Perceptions**

The main underlying theme between all of the coaches interviewed was how others view them. The female coaches recollected numerous times where they have been viewed harshly by athletes and outside persons who perceived them a certain way based on the fact they are a woman. The biggest perception brought up the most was how female coaches are compared to male coaches in regards to coaching styles. For males, they are able to be tough on their female athletes, and the athletes do not think anything of it. However, when a female is tough, the female athletes take it more personally and consider the coach to be nasty and spiteful. The interviewees struggle to counter this perception that shouldn't exist because the problem of this scenario is rooted by the difference in gender.

### **Experiences Being Disregarded**

The final finding was in reference to the interviewees personal reports on times they were disregarded because of their gender. These times occurred at matches with other coaches and referees as previously mentioned. The reoccurring story from the interviews was female head coaches being overlooked by others when a male assistant coach or trainer was present alongside them. The assumption was made by others that the male should be the head coach so they would

direct the conversation towards the male. Even though he was not the head coach, the females interviewed stated that a male being the head coach was what was expected in our society and this expectation led to them being disregarded. Often, these instances occurred with no intent to be disrespectful and that society was to blame. The interviewees felt that no one intentionally disregarded them, but it was still problematic. To combat this challenge, the majority of participants found that being assertive and vocal led to less times being disregarded. Making their voices heard in a respectful yet authoritative way caused others to listen and view them as more of an equal.

### **Conclusion**

It can be determined that female coaches are not experiencing any barriers to entry, and they have not had trouble getting placed in head coaching positions. This is attributed to females becoming stronger candidates by playing in college, making connections, working camps, and having a strong support system. Sometimes difficulties can arise when hiring committees have a diverse pool just to say that interviewed diversity even if there is no intent to hire someone other than a male, but sometimes they are only looking to hire a female and disregard males instead.

Underrepresentation for female coaches may not be an issue in the sport of volleyball, but as a whole, the NCAA is very male-dominated. This study shows that females are underrepresented in result of wanting to have a more viable career that allows them to have a better balance between work and family.

The results show that even though there are some inequities, there is one big advantage to being a female and that is being able to relate better with the female athletes. From female coach to female athlete, there is a better understanding which allows for more transparency and open conversation.

Overall, the findings show that there have been improvements in regards to equality amongst females and their male counterparts which can be attributed to Title IX and strong leadership. However, the findings also show that stigmas still exist that depict women as not being strong coaches and cause people to view them differently than men.

### **Directions for Future Research**

The results of this study cannot be generalized for all female head coaches within the NCAA. Therefore, subsequent studies should be completed that interview female head coaches from basketball, soccer, softball, track and field, lacrosse, and other sports where female coaches are underrepresented.

Based on the similarities of the responses, this study serves a solid foundation for female head coaches of collegiate women's volleyball. To strengthen the findings and further this study, it is suggested to increase the sample size and conduct interviews during the off-season so that the coaches will have more time and will be more willing to participate.

This study focused on a female perspective only, and the only participants were female. Additional studies should be done from a male's perspective, so male head coaches should be included to discover what perceived challenges, trends, and barriers exist for not only women but themselves as well.

Lastly, because the culture of the workplace is so heavily influenced by the athletic directors of the department, a study should be considered that focuses on the thought processes, beliefs, and values of athletic directors. Equality starts from the top and works its way down, so it would be interesting to see what the motivating factors are behind the decisions athletic directors make and if gender does play a role in decision making.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions

#### Demographics:

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Years of volleyball coaching experience: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Years of head volleyball coaching experience: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Current NCAA division coaching in: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Questions:

1. How did you achieve the position you hold today?
  - a. What does your career path look like?
2. Did you experience any barriers upon entering the sport industry?
  - a. If yes, what barriers do you still see today?
3. What advantages do you have as a woman in a male dominated industry?
4. How many females does your athletic department employ?
  - a. Have you noticed an increase or decrease in female employment?
5. Why do you think female head coaches are underrepresented?
6. How has Title IX impacted your sport?
  - a. athletic department?
  - b. university?
7. Have you experienced any inequalities while working in the sport industry?
  - a. If yes, what are they and have they improved over time?
    - i. Why do you think that is?
8. Have you ever experienced a time where you felt disregarded because of your gender?



- a. If yes, describe the situation.
9. Describe the culture of your workplace.
    - a. Do you feel like you are treated as an equal?
  10. What was your experience like becoming a head coach?
    - a. Are you viewed differently from male head coaches?



## Appendix B

### Voluntary Consent Form Consent Form

**Principle Investigator:**

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You are invited to participate in this research study on a voluntary basis. When reading through the below paragraphs, if you have any questions, we ask that you contact us via the contact information listed above. The purpose of this study is to determine gender inequality issues and challenges female coaches in women's collegiate volleyball face in the male dominated sport industry that the National Collegiate Athletic Association is considered to be.

You have been invited because you are a female currently employed by a university as head volleyball coach of a Division I, II, or III collegiate program and have had at least 5 years of volleyball coaching experience. If any of these statements are not accurate, please notify the principle investigator immediately. All potential participants who meet the criteria will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview at a time and place, whether that be in-person, via the phone, or via skype, best suited for you and the principle investigator.

By completing this study, you will be helping increase knowledge about any inequalities female head women's collegiate volleyball coaches experience working in the male dominated sport industry. This study will not involve any risks or discomfort that is greater than the normal amount the participant experiences on a daily basis. There will be minimal levels of distress experienced in relation to topic sensitivity. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes depending on the extent of answers provided and if any additional questions are needed for clarity. The time, day, and location of the interview, whether done in-person or via technology, will be scheduled at your convenience. You will be provided with a set list of interview questions which you will be asked to answer to the best of your abilities, and your answers will be voice recorded and then transcribed by the principle investigator to ensure accuracy of the data collected. In the nature of a semi-structured interview, additional questions may be asked by the principle investigator for clarity and further explanation. The information obtained in the study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be used in place of any named persons and/or universities in order to maintain confidentiality. In the study, you will be referred to as 'Coach' with a designated letter (ex. Coach B). In order to maintain the confidentiality of the data and recordings collected from the interview, all information will be kept under a password protected

file on the principle investigator's computer, and it will only be accessed by the principle investigator and/or chairperson for purpose of the study.

There will be no compensation or medical care provided. The participation in the study is strictly on a volunteer basis and withdrawal from the study at any point in time is permitted without punishment by contacting either the principle investigator or chairperson. As a participant in this study you have the right to ask questions at any point in time toward the principle investigator or chairperson. The research team greatly appreciates the time you are taking to participate in the interview process.

By consenting to participate in this study and interview with the principle investigator, you are giving the investigator permission to use the information collected as part of the study.

**THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (PHONE: 724-357-7730)**



Department of Kinesiology and Health and Sport Science

**VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:**

I have read and understand the information provided in the informed consent form. I volunteer to be a participant in this research study. I understand that all of my data is to be kept confidential, and I have the right to withdrawal at any time during the study without penalty. I will be provided with a copy of the consent form for my personal records. I understand and agree to the conditions of this study as described.

**Name (please print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have explained to the above participant the purpose and nature of this study, and potential risks associated with participating in this study. I have answered any questions the participant posed, and have witnessed the above signature.

**Investigators Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_