ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF MALE LEADERSHIP ON WORKPLACE GENDER IDENTITY, SELF-EFFICACY, AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF WOMEN WORKING IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS

by Elizabeth Virginia Goodwin

This study examines the interaction of male leadership and the gender identity, work self-efficacy levels, and career aspirations of women employed in NCAA Division 1 Athletic Departments. Records from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) show that during the 2014-2015 academic year only 21.7% of all leadership positions (Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director, Senior Women's Administrator) were held by women. This workplace imbalance has been predominately studied in areas other than sport. This study examined the proportion of males in leadership positions and its relationships between stereotypical sex roles, levels work self-efficacy, and career aspirations of women in lower level positions. The first two hypotheses were not supported, but significant relationships between psycho-social variables were found in the third. Masculine traits in women were highly correlated with higher career aspirations, but professional women were perceived to be more feminine.
THE EFFECTS OF MALE LEADERSHIP ON WORKPLACE GENDER IDENTITY, SELF-EFFICACY, AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF WOMEN WORKING IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS

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In the winter of 1880, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in a speech titled “Our Girls,” addressed the social situation of women during the first wave of feminism. In her 140-year-old speech Stanton stated, “She meets a dozen obstacles where a man does one.” Her statement still holds relevancy for women attempting to succeed in the workplace today, particularly in sport. Compared to their male counterparts, representation of women leaders in sport management is poor. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), one of the most influential sport organizations in the world, has never had a woman president, and only two of the 15 executive board positions are currently held by women (IOC, 2012). Another salient example of the under-representation of women is in college athletics. Prior to the passage of Title IX in 1972, 90% of women’s sport programs were overseen by females, but the percentage of female athletic directors was only 20.3% in 2012, and 9.2% of those NCAA division athletic departments have zero women administrators (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012).

There are a number of explanations for these statistics. While female representation and involvement in sport has improved dramatically, a number of issues have proved to be a hindrance the career advancement of women in sport administration. Gender discrimination, financial inequality, career related variables, familial responsibilities, and burnout have been cited as impediments to their careers (Bower & Hums, 2013). Beyond these reasons, a variable not yet explored in the sport context, but targeted in this study, is the influence of psycho-social characteristics on women’s career aspirations.

Currently, 21.7% of leadership positions in NCAA Division I athletic departments (defined as Athletic Directors, Associate Athletic Directors, and Senior Women’s Administrators) are held by women (Sport Sponsorship, Participation, and Demographics Search, Ncaa.org). The uneven representation of the sexes is the result of years of multiple, interrelated factors working for and against women’s involvement in sport. This study seeks to address why only 21.7% of top administrative positions are held by women in NCAA Division I Athletic Departments from a psychosocial perspective. By viewing this issue through the lens of social identity theory and the gender structure, this study examines the relationship between
workplace gender identity, work self-efficacy, and career aspirations of female employees in Division 1 Athletic Departments.

Social Identity Theory

This study is set within the framework of social identity theory by exploring how women’s workplace identity is affected when males dominate positions of power. Social identity theory (SIT), originally coined by Henri Tajfel in the 1970s, is concerned with people’s perceived inclusion or exclusion in social groups (Hogg, 2006). A person’s identity is created and bolstered by the groups they identify with, and also those in which they do not. In 1995, Robin Ely, operating under a similar premise of SIT in the workplace, found that women lawyers were more aware of their femininity when the firm’s partners were all male (Ely). Their exclusion from the salient male identity prompted their awareness of their inclusion of the female gender. They felt their workplace identity was and needed to be associated with stereotypical feminine characteristics, and males were expected to exhibit stereotypical masculine traits.

According to SIT, this stark contrast in workplace identity has been theorized as the result of different resources provided to the genders based on power relations (Stets & Cast, 2007). Those in power hold the resources necessary to create and sustain a social structure to retain their position. The workplace is one of these arenas, especially when leadership is primarily composed of men. Here, males hold a position of power and use resources to maintain that power. Resources are anything that individuals can use to verify their identity when interacting with their environment; they are not resources in an economic sense, but how a person sustains his or her identity. Those same resources, controlled by those in power, are utilized by others who exist in the same social structure. It is what people do with them that aid in self-affirming their identity. It may be the thoughts someone has about themselves, the actions they believe they must take, or values they hold. They can be beliefs of authenticity and competence, but also beliefs of incompetence or shame. It is the interaction of the individual and their use of available resources that creates and sustains people’s identities.

Identity, defined as, “the set of meanings that persons attach to themselves” can be attributed to a group, role, or person (Stets & Cast, 2007, p. 523). It is a personal opinion of the self, situated within a larger understanding of where one belongs in society. An individual’s person, role, and group identities often work in conjunction with one another. Role identity is the result of social structures and culture that help shape the person identity, a more stable self-
conception (Stets & Cast, 2007). This identity is a contributing factor in determining how a person interprets and reacts in different settings and situations (Ely, 1995). Role identities, as they rely on culture and social structures, are different for everyone. Person identity is relatively stable. For example, a woman would act differently if she were with her children versus how she may act at work or if she were alone. An individual is most concerned with affirming their person identity, but also wants to self-affirm their role identities (Stets & Cast, 2007).

This self-affirmation is otherwise known as self-verification in social identity theory. Self-verification is a personal desire of individuals to confirm what they already think about themselves, whether those views are positive or negative (Stets & Cast, 2007). In order to confirm self-conceptions, individuals interact with their environment and others within that environment to confirm that self-view both now and in the future. Individuals work to verify all of their identities to prove themselves right. Failure to do so may result in negative consequences for the individual in question (Stets & Cast, 2007). This identity becomes stable overtime which is comforting in its predictability, both for the individual and those they interact with. Without verification, a person will not feel comfortable in that role and is less likely to continue accepting it and see themselves differently (Burke & Stets, 1999). The goal is to sustain one’s identity, and if successful an individual becomes secure and confident in that self-conception over time (Burke & Stets, 1999). Furthermore, it becomes harder to change that identity once a person has sustained a pattern. This may very well be the case for women professionals in athletic departments, much like the law firms Robin Ely studied. If the available resources and interactions within the workplace do not verify the identity of a strong, assertive, self-confident professional woman, women may fall into those stereotypical female roles to fit into the structure of the situation around them. If this identity is verified, they run the risk of adopting an identity that is quite the opposite from the ones in leadership positions in their particular workplace.

Consider a female working in athletic administration. She has certain beliefs about herself and certain beliefs about her role at work. She will attempt to verify what she believes about herself, whether that be positive or negative. However, if her environment does not allow her to self-verify, issues arise, such as confusion, stress, a decrease in workplace self-efficacy, and it may even lead her to question her person identity. If the environment does allow an individual to self-affirm, this identity becomes stable overtime. For females who may enter the workforce unsure of themselves, or work in an environment that does not immediately self-
verify, they may develop habits, beliefs, or an identity that are not conducive to rising to new leadership positions. This assumes that a person’s behavior is determined by their self-concept (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). The theory, in social psychology, is that this occurs due to common underlying frames of reference, which means that individuals are assessing their situation in the same way they assess themselves (Burke & Reitzes, 1981). A woman in sport is likely to react in relation to her self-concept, because she views her environment in a similar way. Self-verification becomes a means to an end, of relating the two. Furthermore, this is a two-way street. Just as self-concept allows individuals to understand their environment differently, their environment can also cause them to see themselves differently.

**Women Professionals in Sport**

The possibility that females were not obtaining higher level leadership positions in sport due to psychosocial factors, was explored in 2007 by Melanie Sartore and George Cunningham. The pair set out to understand why females are so scarce in executive positions and leadership roles in sport organizations. They looked at this discrepancy through the lens of gender-role meanings and stereotypes in both sport and society at large. Their thesis was that women are not obtaining higher positions within sport organizations because they have been or are seen as the inferior sex whose expected qualities are not conducive to positions of power.

Sartore and Cunningham (2007) use a symbolic interactionist perspective to address the emotional and cognitive processes of women in positions routinely held by men. This model looks for factors and reasons that stunt female opportunity that go beyond explanations such as familial expectations or organizational barriers. The purpose is to see what unconscious factors may be keeping women from stepping up and taking higher-level positions. The symbolic interactionist perspective suggests that women professionals are interacting with certain symbols, meanings, and a language that are ultimately responsible for their identity at work and elsewhere (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007). The theory approaches the subject from a macro (society, organizational) level as well as a micro (identity, self) level. Women are both affecting, and being affected by, the environment they interact with. Their roles change, as does their identity, in relation to the context and relationships they find themselves. In one instance, they may see themselves as a sister, and act differently than they might if they were acting as a student or a granddaughter. Those would be their role identities, which all stem from the person identity.
They can take on multiple identities at once since they are all a part of the self. However, the adoption of some identities in certain contexts are inappropriate and may limit opportunities.

One such context is sport, where Sartore and Cunningham (2007) argue that the social and sport ideologies that keep women in lower level positions are continually reproduced through person interactions and the work/sport environment. Sport is paramount and often central to the identity formation of males (Dunning, 1999). In his book *Sport Matters*, Eric Dunning makes the case that, “sport has become one of the last bastions of male power and superiority over – and separation from – the feminization of society” (Dunning, 1999, p. 223). Sport may very well be the final place where the aggression and violence associated with masculinity is allowed and even encouraged. Women attempting to work in sport, who already face the complications associated with being a female in a professional setting, are likely given resources that will not verify the professional role identity necessary to help them succeed. Women in sport have beaten the odds and risen above stigmas, but whether or not they continue to do so and how they handle being a female surrounded primarily by men is the question at hand.

The symbolic-interactionist perspective posits that if women are having a hard time taking on a leadership role in a sport context, it may be due to the social and cultural ideologies that affect the creation of their self-identities. A woman working within a sport organization is more often than not surrounded and directed by males. This direct subordination and interaction with the opposite sex makes her femaleness extremely salient (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007). This saliency may cause a woman to adopt a feminine identity, even though that may not be her usual identity, and that subconscious decision has benefits and setbacks for the woman in question. Being surrounded by males in a masculine setting may cause a female to take on stereotypical feminine traits affecting her role identity. She will continue to verify that identity, making it more stable overtime. If this setting is providing resources to confirm her feminine identity, it would also celebrate stereotypical masculine qualities in its leaders.

Such contrasting expectations leave those women between “a rock and a hard place.” The adoption of traditional masculine characteristics that contribute to success in that athletic department would be unacceptable for her to take on, but the feminine traits expected of her would not contribute to her success in the department either. Thus resulting in lower levels of self-efficacy in their ability to handle and even apply for higher-level positions. This highlights
the need to assess the self-efficacy levels of female employees to discover their self-perceptions, opinion of their professional lives, and their perceived impact on the workplace. Furthermore, research has shown that positive, efficacious feelings about the self are associated with resiliency in the face of difficulty (Machida & Schaubroeck, 2011). A lack of confidence and self-belief may be the reason women in sport are not in leadership positions, and self-efficacy may serve as a mediating variable between career aspirations and gender identity in this context.

Self-Efficacy Theory

The construct of self-efficacy was introduced by Albert Bandura in the 1970s and is essentially situational self-confidence, a personal belief that one can produce or execute a desired outcome (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is affected by four sources: performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. To assess their ability to produce a desired outcome, people consider what they have previously achieved, other’s opinions of themselves, and how they’re currently feeling. Self-efficacy affects what people choose to do, as well as how they handle the consequences of their actions. These create certain expectations of the self in specific settings, or their level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977).

Self-efficacy beliefs help people decide what activities they want to participate in, how much effort they want to give, and whether or not they want to continue if it becomes difficult. If someone does not think they have what it takes to succeed, they are not likely to attempt to deal with the situation (Bandura, 1977). For example, a woman working in sport may have low expectations regarding her effectiveness at work because her male boss and co-workers treat her as if she were fragile and regard her efforts at assertiveness as being pushy. In her first few months, they didn’t take her work seriously, and continually flirt with her when she is trying to be professional. Instances like this in time negatively affect her efficacy levels in the work environment, and she may give less effort or refrain from working towards leadership responsibilities as a result because she feels insignificant.

A literature review, constructed in 2013 by Moe Machida and Deborah Feltz, addressed the role of leader self-efficacy in women’s career advancement in sport, more specifically female coaches. While studies have revealed that women possess the ability to lead and in some cases even more effectively than men, women, in general, show a lack of confidence about successfully completing leadership duties (Machida & Feltz, 2013). It may in fact be this low self-efficacy that is partly to blame for many women’s inability to achieve higher-level positions.
Their lack of confidence might be the reason behind their delayed career advancement because of its effect on their motivation levels, intentions, and ensuing actions (Machida & Feltz, 2013). Intuitively, it makes sense that low self-efficacy levels would deter females from applying for leadership positions, but what is not as clear in the literature is what is causing the low levels of self-efficacy. Research indicates that males do not have an evolutionary, or other, advantage over women to be an effective leader (Eagly & Carly, 2007). The issue surrounding leadership then is not a question of ability, but how it is dictated by gender. Female executives described themselves as collaborative, flexible, and inclusive, while male executives used adjectives like assertive, decisive, and strong (Eagly & Carly, 2007). Women face different expectations than men leading to inequality and the burden of balancing their roles as a woman and a leader.

**Gender Structure**

Barbara Risman (2004) argued that the basis of this inequality between the sexes is due to the social construction of gender differences. While sex is the recognition of the biological difference between men and women, the construct of gender has no scientific basis. Gender is a division between the sexes that creates social expectations of what it means to be male and female. This emphasis on gender differences leaves room for inequality and ultimately power. Unfortunately, gender is frequently assumed to be based on biological differences that encourages sexual stereotyping and accepts the power awarded to males over females (Hargreave, 1994).

In her argument, based on Judith Lorber’s (1994) book *Paradoxes of Gender*, Risman (2004) states that gender is a social structure that is independent of individual motivation. Gender is more than a personal decision, but there is a larger, external force at work acting on the individual. This larger, external force is the social and cultural ideologies women use as resources to self-verify their identity.

The assumption that males and females are born with a “masculine” or “feminine” identity is false. These identities are the result of the construct of gender, an unnatural category that suggests males and females possess certain characteristics common and widespread among their own sex (Hargreaves, 1994). These are characteristics fostered in individuals from the moment parents learn the sex of the baby, and from all of society. Baby girls wear bows and are rewarded for being sweet and cute. Baby boys wear shirts with trucks on them and as children are encouraged to be adventurous and tough. It isn’t that boys and girls are so fundamentally
different, but the expectations placed upon them are. Gendered identity is a classic case of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Boys and girls acquire different characteristics and hobbies not because they are so different, but because society and cultural treat them differently based on the expectations of the gender structure causing them to grow into separate roles. These gendered identities are not guaranteed outcomes for all males and females, but even those who don’t conform to the stereotypical masculine and feminine identities feel social pressure to do so (Horn, Lox, Labrador, 2015).

Eric Dunning (1999) voices similar concern for the effects that the gender structure has on society and ultimately men and women. Gender, the state of being male or female as described by Merriam-Webster is, “a historically established institution (that) has created and perpetuated differences between men and women and exists to justify inequality” (Risman, 2013). Even if individuals recognize and act out against this inequality, they are still working within the overall structure of society that they live in. This is the premise of hegemony, a false sense of control awarded to the lower class by those in power that only reinforces the status quo (Dunning, 1999).

An example would be the Senior Women’s Administrative position in athletic departments. While the position was created to give women a seat at the table, its primary purpose is to fill a quota without fully addressing the issue at hand. This hegemonic interaction between person and social structures in sociology is the balance between agency and structure, in which agents and structures are mutually produced and mutually transformed (Dunning, 1999). The gender structure is both affecting and being affected by the individual, and identities are both created by and working on the larger organizing structures.

**Gender Structure in Sport**

The current study is built upon the unequal relationship between the sexes in regards to sport. The dominant social structure is fueled by the sexual inequality and the consensus that males and females are inherently different. This inherent difference is understood as sport remains to this day a largely male-dominated affair (Dunning, 1999). Part of this argument is the assumption that men are physically superior compared to women, and since sport is largely a physical realm that celebrates competition and superiority, males have a biological claim to sport. Messner argues that this assertion is not true, “Sport is not an expression of biological human need, but a social institution created by men” (1992, p. 8). Males may possess the power
in sport, but women contest that power by expressing their agency (Messner, 1992). Even though hegemony exists and the gender structure shapes the social environment, women are not in the process. “Girls and women are implicated in the creation of their own identities and personalities, both in terms of how they participate in their own subordination and how they resist” (Messner, 1992; p. 21-22). The participation in subordination refers to the hegemonic masculinity, and while females in sport may be affecting the gender structure, it is likely that some are only perpetuating the culture enforced by males. The aim of the current study is to discover how women’s identities and self-efficacy levels at work are being affected by the larger gender structure within sport.

Robin Ely (1995) wanted to understand how the presence of more women in leadership roles in professional settings affected gender differences and gender identity in law firms. Stereotypical sex roles and power differentials between the sexes are extremely relevant and problematic for the women employed in male dominated professions, both in sport and law firms. The results of Ely’s study stated that men and women were expected to adhere to stereotypical sex roles more often when there were few women in leadership positions. Ely’s results offered further support for Sartore & Cunningham (2007) and Eagly and Carly’s (2007) theory that females find themselves at odds between a stereotypical leadership identity and a stereotypical feminine identity in their professional lives. The women Ely interviewed expressed the stress they felt as they attempted to enact gender roles that were personally satisfying, and consistent with their firm’s expectations of them. Females in Ely’s study, who worked in firms with male-dominated leadership, (less than 15% of partners were women) rated themselves lower when considering whether they had the requirements necessary for success in the firm.

In the terms of social identity theory, they were self-verifying their role as feminine women rather than their role as professionals. Instead of operating on the assumption that all women consider the concept of gender the same, Ely chose to gain a better understanding of whether or not those distinctions existed for professional women, how they existed, and what effect that had on their work identity and subsequent actions in a professional setting. Every woman in male-dominated law firms did not react the same way, but the heavy male influence more often than not forced woman into adopting stereotypical feminine traits in an environment
that celebrate masculinity and male privilege in the professional setting, thus stunting women’s professional growth.

The culture of athletic departments is much like the culture of big business or law, it is a culture where females face a very different reality than males due to hegemonic constraints. As humans, we have a certain amount of control over our situation, but at the same time we are products of it. The push and pull between agency and structure is dynamic and unclear. People certainly act on their own volition, but how much of that is free will and how much of that is an unconscious reaction to their circumstances?

**Gender and Leadership**

The social construction of gender is bolstered by evolutionary arguments and historical precedence. According to evolutionary psychology, males are biologically inclined through adaptation to be dominant and in charge (Eagly & Carli 2007). The assertions of dominance and competition are masculine characteristics. Historically speaking, they are expected of and attributed to males. Beyond a possible biological explanation for this trend of male leaders, there is the psychology of sex differences. Even with improved technology and a social revolution, there is still a modern expectation that men are meant for the workplace and women the home. “When one sex can perform particular roles more efficiently than the other, the more efficient sex will come to fill the majority of those roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007; p. 35).” The most obvious example is childbirth. The mothering role, meant for a woman’s children, suddenly became appropriate and normal for every facet of her life. Women then are expected to be nurturing, agreeable, and devoted in a range of contexts as if motherhood was a person identity instead of a role. By nature, they had to be invested in the process of pro-creation as they carry the fetus for nine months and nurse them for months after they are born. On the other hand, males only needed to provide sperm to the most fertile females fostering aggression, competition, and dominance among men (Eagly & Carly 2007). In an over-simplified evolutionary timeline, women were confined to the home to care for their children while men hunted and were in charge of other responsibilities. This trend continued into the 1960’s and was only challenged after World War II when women entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, challenging the former gender structure. This is something they continue to do now at an organizational level as they are not just in the workforce, but leading it.
There are assumptions that males should be dominant, strong, capable, and should take charge. In the same spirit, women should be caring, submissive, and mild-mannered. While this may seem to be an outdated idea, they are still the most widely accepted gender roles. Males are most often associated with a leader, and will take on that position more often than women. A meta-analysis of 58 studies on leader emergence found that men were more likely to become group leaders while women were more likely to become the social facilitators (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This is not the result of anything more than the social interaction between males and females because, “who emerges as a group leader depends on group members’ behaviors and their beliefs about what type of person would make a good leader (Eagly & Carli 2007).” Both sexes seem to gravitate towards male leaders. Furthermore, when the masculine landscape of leadership is coupled with the masculine realm of sport, we see that boys are more likely to be leaders in sport, and girls are seen in higher percentages as leaders of other activities (Eagly & Carli 2007).

Since the stereotype of a leader is relatively masculine, any association with femininity can cause a woman to have less interest in a leadership role. (Eagly & Carli 2007). Females are well aware of the stereotype that leaders display more masculine traits, and this knowledge, referred to as stereotype threat, cause females to worry or avoid becoming that stereotype. This, ironically enough, negatively affects their ability to do their jobs well and may even serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy leading women to become the very stereotype they meant to avoid. This stereotype becomes part of their identity in the workplace, and inevitably they no longer believe they have what it takes to be effective leaders. However, some women are confident enough in their abilities and experiences that they are able to overcome the stereotype, but only if they can recognize its existence. Plenty of women have demonstrated that they can be successful in male-dominated fields such as athletics. Their success challenges the idea that women cannot be effective leaders, which further inspires other woman and young girls (Hepler & Feltz, 2008).

Successful leaders tend to have a balanced mix of those stereotypical masculine and feminine traits, and are generally better off compared to someone who possesses a mostly masculine or feminine personality (Eagly & Carley, 2007; Sargent, 1981). Even contemporary descriptions of managers include both masculine and feminine traits and both are celebrated (Eagly & Carley, 2007). If women make just as good leaders as men, and effective leaders are not hyper-masculine, it makes very little sense that females would exhibit low self-efficacy when it
comes to leadership positions. However, higher efficacy levels in males and lower efficacy levels in females may be related to sex differences and social expectations regarding gender (Eagly & Carly, 2007).

**Purpose of Study and Hypotheses**

Existing literature has explored barriers to success of women in the workforce, but sparingly in sport, and never from a psycho-social standpoint. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the proportional representation of the sexes in leadership positions on workplace gender identity, work self-efficacy, and career aspirations of women who work in NCAA Division I athletic departments. The most salient of identities is gender, which is inextricably linked to expectations of masculinity and femininity. There is reason to expect that these expectations would be different based on the percentage of males and females in leadership positions of athletic departments (Ely, 1995). If a woman’s gender identity is inconsistent with the expectations of the athletic department she works for, it may have negative effects on her self-efficacy levels and an equally negative effect on her career aspirations.

The following hypotheses are of interest:

**H1:** Women in athletic departments with a higher proportion of males in leadership positions will perceive they exhibit more feminine characteristics compared to women working in athletic departments with a lower proportion of males in leadership positions.

**H2:** Women in athletic departments with a higher proportion of males in leadership positions will possess lower levels of work self-efficacy compared to women working in athletic departments with a lower proportion of males in leadership positions.

**H3:** Women who perceive they exhibit more feminine traits will have lower levels of work self-efficacy and will also have lower career aspirations compared to women who perceive they exhibit more masculine traits.

**Rationale for Study**

This study is a follow-up to Robin Ely’s 1995 examination of how women’s gender identity at work is created and sustained based on the presence of males or females in positions of power. The idea that gender is a binary category composed of masculine males and feminine females is the basic concept of the gender structure that affects and is being affected all of the time and in different ways depending on the context. The current gender structure is most notably a challenge for women professionals in sport who work in athletic departments led.
primarily by men. Not only are these women made aware of their sex by working in a male
dominated field, but they work for men who tend to lead in a hierarchical fashion, asserting
social dominance in a controlling or forceful way, and creating a masculine work environment
(Ely, 2006). These women are hyper-aware of their femininity in an environment of masculine
males and, sometimes unconsciously, begin to act in stereotypical feminine ways. In some cases
they may be expected to act feminine, or they may only feel that way. Exhibiting feminine
characteristics in an environment that celebrates masculinity can have negative effects on
women’s professional identity, levels of self-efficacy, and even impact their desire or beliefs in
themselves to succeed in higher level positions.

By the same token, women in lower level positions in athletic departments with higher
levels of female leaders may not feel as confined by the gender structure. There is less emphasis
on being a female surrounded by males, and women employees may not feel the need to adopt a
feminine identity to be accepted.

Therefore, this study examines the relationship between the proportion of sexes in
leadership positions on workplace gender identity, self-efficacy, and career aspirations of women
working in NCAA Division 1 athletic departments.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were 254 female employees of NCAA Division 1 athletic departments who
do not hold an athletic director, associate athletic director, or senior women’s administrative
position. Subjects were recruited via email, following ethical approval from the Miami
University Institutional Review Board. Email addresses were obtained by purchasing a one-year
online subscription to the 2015 edition of the National Directory of College Athletics. A short
email was sent to 1,274 women in 12 different Division 1 conferences requesting participation.
Emails included a link to the surveys on Qualtrics. Of the 1,274 contacted 279 responded, and
184 completed all questionnaires. On average, participants were 38 years of age (SD = 10.6).
Most have worked in their athletic department and their current position for two years, but
responses ranged from one to 41 years. On average participants have worked in their current
position for an average of 5.9 years, and have worked in their athletic department for a total of
9.2 years indicating some sort of movement whether that be lateral, downward, or upward.
Materials

**Demographic Questionnaire.**

Participants completed a demographic page assessing participant’s age, gender, academic and work experience, career aspirations, and the proportion of male and female leaders in their athletic department. The participants were not asked to include their names or any other identifying information on the demographics page to ensure confidentiality.

**Work Self-Efficacy Inventory**

The *Work Self-Efficacy Inventory* (WSEI) is used to measure an individual’s belief in their ability to work effectively in their workplace in order to succeed (Raelin, 2010) (See Appendix C). On a 1-5 Likert scale ranging from *not at all* (1) to *confident* (5) participants rated their confidence to perform certain tasks at work. The scale is composed of 30 items divided into 7 subscales of work self-efficacy: learning, problem solving, teamwork, sensitivity, work-politics, pressure, and role expectations. Learning is defined as being able to learn productively on the job, while another is solving problems at work. The pressure subscale is accomplishing his/her work well under time and schedule constraints. The role subscale assesses if individuals know what is expected of them in their role at work, and teamwork if they work effectively in a team environment. Sensitivity depends on how individuals are towards others, and the work politics subscale is whether or not the individual is aware of the accepted practices in their workplace. Finally, overall self-efficacy in the workplace depends on how well the individual manages themselves in the work environment. In a study on criminology job placement and work efficacy, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were above .70 for all seven factors and above .95 for the total scale (Bates et al., 2013).

**Gender Identity in the Workplace Scale**

The second instrument used in the current study was a quantitative measure created by Robin Ely in 1995 after a qualitative study on women’s identity in law firms. The scale is composed of 36 behavioral and psychological attributes typically regarded as masculine, feminine, or gender neutral. Participants were presented with the same 33 attributes/traits four times. Example items include *analytical*, *yells when angry/upset*, and *flirtatious*. Participants rated how characteristic each attribute was of professional women on a 1-5 Likert scale from *not at all* (1) to *very much* (5). They then rated how characteristic each attribute was of professional
men, how they were related to success in their athletic department, and finally how characteristic each attribute was of them on the same 1-5 Likert scale. Interterm reliability scores between professional women and men in the original study were .73 for the rating of professional women, and .65 for the rating of professional. Interim reliability scores between self-analysis and professional women were executed and found to be .68 for self and .78 for professional women (Ely, 1995).

**Career Aspiration Scale**

The final measure was the *Career Aspiration Scale*, created to measure a person’s desire to choose a specific career (Gray & O’Brien, 2007). It assesses if participants have any aspirations to continue in their current position or obtain a leadership role in their workplace. The scale is composed of 10 items on a 1-5 Likert scale ranging from *not at all true of me* (1) to *very true of me* (5). The two sub-scales include, leadership and achievement aspirations and education. A sample item of the leadership and achievement aspiration subscale is “When I am established in my career, I would like to manage other employees”. In a study involving post-college women the internal consistency reliability of the CAS was .75; Leadership and Achievement Aspirations, .78; and Education, .56 (Gray, O’Brien, 2007). Studies show a strong test-retest reliability, high convergent and discriminant validity, and high reliability (Gray, O’Brien, 2007).

**Research Procedure**

After ethical approval was obtained, emails were sent to 1,274 female employees working in NCAA Division I Athletic Departments who do not hold a leadership position (athletic director, associate athletic director, or senior women administrator). A link to the questionnaires on the program *Qualtrics* was included at the end of each emails. Addresses were obtained by purchasing a one-year subscription to the 2015 edition of the National Directory of College Athletics. Emails were sent to employees of schools in 12 different conferences: ACC, SEC, Big East, Big 10, Big 12, C-USA, American, MAC, Pac-12, MWC, Sun Belt, Big South, and SoCon. The size and revenue of these schools is relatively similar, and narrows the pool from 347 NCAA Division I athletic departments to 88. A follow up email was sent one and two weeks after the initial email. Upon completion of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to submit their name for a $50 Visa gift card as incentive for participating in the study.
The independent variable was percentage of females in leadership positions, operationalized as athletic director, associate athletic director, or senior women’s administrator. Three dependent variables were analyzed: gender identity, work self-efficacy, and career aspirations. Gender identity serves as a mediating variable between the independent variables and remaining dependent variables.

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the proportion of males in leadership positions of athletic departments with the gender identities, work self-efficacy levels, and career aspirations of women who work in those athletic departments.

Demographic Data

Of the 1,274 emails sent out, 254 women participated in the study. Responses came from all 12 conferences contacted during recruitment. The most-represented conference was the Atlantic Coast Conference at 15%. While 14% of the responses were from the Big 10

Preliminary Analysis

Internal consistency measures of reliability were computed for the WSES subscales, CAS, and Gender Identity subscales by calculating Cronbach’s (1951) alpha coefficients using SPSS version 23. The alpha coefficients for all variables in the study are listed in Table 1. The alpha coefficients for the WSEI subscales were .70 for learning, .78 for problem solving, .73 for pressure, .71 for role expectations, .64 for teamwork, .77 for sensitivity, and .71 for work politics. The overall alpha coefficient for the WSEI was .91. The alpha coefficients for the CAS were .80 for the leadership and achievement subscale, and .21 for the education subscale. Because the education subscale did not meet the .70 criterion alpha level advocated by Nunnally (1978) it was dropped for future analysis. The Gender Identity Scale consisted of 12 subscales including the perceptions of masculine, feminine, and gender neutral attributes of women in the athletic department, men in the athletic department, success in your athletic department, and of the self. The alpha coefficient of female’s perception of masculine attributes taken on by women in athletic departments was .77, it was .75 for feminine attributes, and .72 for gender neutral. The alpha coefficients for men in athletic departments were .78 for masculine attributes, .63 for feminine, and .65 for gender neutral. The alpha co-efficients for success in the athletic department were .75 for masculine traits, .66 for feminine traits, and .76 for gender neutral.
Alpha-coefficients for self-perceptions of attributes were masculine (.70), feminine (.68), and gender neutral (.63).

**Correlational Results**

A series of Pearson correlational analyses were conducted to examine the strength of the relationship between variables in the study. The results of these analyses (see Table 1) revealed medium to large positive linear relationships between all work self-efficacy subscales. Values ranged from \( r(185) = .36, p < .05 \) to \( r(185) = .62, p < .05 \) suggesting that the higher individual’s score on one work self-efficacy subscale the more likely they would score high on every other subscale. Positive significant relationships were also found between most gender identity subscales. Of particular concern is the degree of overlap between variables. Without a clear differentiation between attributes, it is difficult to discuss possible effects of stereotypical masculine or feminine qualities because they essentially do not exist in this context.

The leadership subscale for the CAS was significantly related to feminine attributes of professional women \( r(182) = .25, p < .05 \), and masculine attributes in professional men \( r(182) = .29, p < .05 \). This indicates that women with higher scores on the career aspiration scale rated professional men as having more masculine qualities, and professional women as having more feminine qualities. A moderate correlation was also found when participants indicated masculine traits led to success in their athletic department \( r(182) = .18, p < .05 \).

Finally, a number of positive relationships were found between work self-efficacy subscales and the gender identity subscales. Specifically, moderate positive correlations were found between learning and masculine traits of professional women \( r(182) = .16, p < .05 \), professional men \( r(182) = .19, p < .05 \), self \( r(182) = .29, p < .05 \), and gender neutral traits of professional women \( r(182) = .24, p < .05 \) and self \( r(182) = .42, p < .05 \). This suggests high levels of efficacy in learning productively on the job may be seen more in individuals who exhibit more masculine qualities. Moderate relationships were also found between the problem solving subscale and all gender identities for professional women \( r(182) = .2, p < .05 \), \( r(182) = .16, p < .05 \) as well as success in athletic departments for feminine attributes \( r(182) = .18, p < .05 \) and all gender identities for self-ratings \( r(182) = .44, p < .05 \), \( r(182) = .2, p < .05 \), \( r(182) = .51, p < .05 \). The sensitively subscale was positively related to feminine \( r(182) = .21, p < .05 \) and gender neutral \( r(182) = .32, p < .05 \) attributes in participants, suggesting an overlap in items. Furthermore, participants who thought they possessed more
feminine attributes had higher scores on sensitivity, but did not think professional women possessed the same attributes.

**Influence of Male Leadership on Gender Identity of Women in Athletic Departments**

Hypothesis 1 asserted that athletic department with a larger amount of males in leadership positions would have more women in their athletic departments with more feminine characteristics than those with fewer males. The proportion of males was calculated through SPSS using two questions from the demographic page. Participants were asked to consider how many individuals’ held positions of athletic director, associate athletic director, and senior women’s administrator. They were then asked how many of those positions were held by men. The latter was divided by the former, and Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between gender identity and the proportion of males in leadership positions.

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed no significant relationship between the proportion of males in leadership positions and participant’s feminine characteristics. The proportion of males in leadership positions was significantly inversely related to gender neutral characteristics of professional women $r (182) = -.150, p < .05$, and participant perceptions of their own gender neutral qualities $r (182) = -.157, p < .05$.

**Influence of Male Leadership on Work-Self Efficacy of Women in Athletic Departments**

Hypothesis 2 asserted that a higher proportion of male leadership would be related to lower levels of work self-efficacy among participants. Pearson correlation analysis revealed there was no significant relationship between proportion of male leadership and work self-efficacy subscales (Table 1).

**Influence of Gender Identity on Work Self-Efficacy and Career Aspirations**

To test the third hypothesis addressing the relationship Mplus version 7.2 and maximum likelihood estimation was used to examine the relationship between male leadership, gender identity, work self-efficacy, and career aspirations. The third hypothesis is best explained by a structural model (see Figure 1), and the fit of the model to the data was examined using a variety of criteria. In addition to information provided by previous research, global fit indices, and microfit indices. Global fit indices include chi-square, Comparative Fit Index, and Tucker-Lewis index. Microfit indices used were parameter estimates and Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA).
A RMSEA with a fit of less than .05 designates a well-fitting model (Browne & Cudeck, 1992). CFI and TLI indicate a well-fitting model if they are above .90, and finally non-significance from the does not mean that the hypothesis is significantly different from the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

A structural equation model was used to examine the relationship between male leadership, women’s perception of their gender identity, work self-efficacy, and career aspirations (Figure 1). The relation between these variables was significant $\chi^2(n=254, 44) = 114.60, p < .05$; RMSEA .08, CFI = .99, TLI = .98. Their masculine traits had a positive, significant relationship with their career aspirations (.15, $p < .05$). Work self-efficacy was significantly related to career aspirations (.86, $p < .01$). The Work Self-Efficacy Scale was significantly related to all subscales: problem solving, learning, teamwork, and pressure (.99, $p < .01$) while sensitivity and politics shared the same chi-square value (.98, $p < .01$). Furthermore, a significant relationship exists between self-perceived masculinity (.83, $p < .01$), femininity (.82, $p < .01$), and gender neutrality (.85, $p < .01$) and work self-efficacy.

More data was obtained then what was expressly mentioned in the hypotheses, leading to the creation of three more models with similar variables in a different arrangement. These models display the relationship between the remaining gender identity subscales (professional women, professional men, success in athletic department) and the other variables.

Figure 2 examined male leadership, women’s perception of professional women’s gender identity, their own work self-efficacy, and career aspirations. The chi-square test of model fit was significant $\chi^2 (n=254, 44) = 84.858$; RMSEA = .060, CFI = .99, TLI = .99. Similar to the first model there was a significant relationship between work self-efficacy and career aspirations (.81, $p < .05$). There was also a significant relationship between women’s perception of feminine characteristics of professional women and career aspirations (.19, $p < .05$). Women who thought professional women exhibited more feminine characteristics had higher career aspirations (Figure 2). The same significance between subscales on the work self-efficacy scale were found with each model.

Figure 3 examined women’s perception of professional men’s gender identity with the other variables. Results were significant $\chi^2 (n=254, 44) = 88.46$; RMSEA = .063, CFI = .99, TLI = .99. Significant relationship between work self-efficacy and career aspirations were revealed
again (.78, p < .05), as was a significant relationship between participant’s perceptions of professional men’s masculine qualities and participant’s career aspirations (.214, p < .05).

Figure 4 examined gender identity in relation to success in one’s athletic department compared to the other variables. The chi-square test of model fit was significant \( \chi^2(n=254, 44) = 94.67; \) RMSEA = .07, CFI= .99, TLI = .99. Results showed a significant relationship between masculine qualities and career aspirations (.19, p < .05) and work self-efficacy and career aspirations (.82, p <.05).

**Discussion**

The overall aim of the current study was to examine the relationship between gender identity, work self-efficacy, and career aspirations of women in NCAA Division I athletic departments, and whether or not the proportion of male leadership in those athletic departments affected those relationships. It was hypothesized that women in athletic departments with a higher proportion of males in leadership positions (identified as athletic director, associate athletic director, and senior women’s administrator) would perceive they exhibit more feminine characteristics than those women who work in athletic departments with a lower proportion of males in leadership positions. Correspondingly, an inverse relationship between males in leadership and female work self-efficacy levels was also hypothesized. The third and final hypothesis stated that a perception of more feminine qualities would lead to lower levels of work self-efficacy and lower career aspirations.

The first hypothesis that women’s gender identity would be related to the proportion of males in leadership positions was not supported. Analysis revealed no significant relationship between the proportion of males in leadership positions and women’s gender identity. This was inconsistent with the results found in Robin Ely’s study of women in law firms (1995). Women in male-dominated law firms (greater than 15%) were more likely to exhibit those characteristics stereotypically associated with women, and resist those associated with men. One reason for this discrepancy may be the nature of the two studies, as Ely conducted a mixed-study on gender identity in law firms. Four of the women Ely interviewed in male-dominated firms identified more so with feminine attributes, and saw gender identity as, “problematic and seemed a source of low self-esteem (Ely, 1995).” Furthermore, the gender identity questionnaire used in this study was created from the qualitative responses of Ely’s participants. The characteristics
deemed as masculine, feminine, or gender neutral may be specific to the experiences of lawyers in the mid-nineties.

These results do not discount Ely’s finding that women were hyper-aware of their femininity when surrounded by males (1995), only that the presence of more men in the upper-echelon’s in athletic departments seems to have no association with women’s gender identity in those departments. This may be due to the size and variability of Division I athletic departments. The athletic and associate athletic directors do not come in contact with every employee on a weekly basis. It is possible that women do not have enough contact with individuals who lead the athletic department, thus they have no effect on their gender identity in the workplace. Social Identity Theory posits that an individual’s identity is most effected by people they come in contact with on a daily basis (Stets & Cast, 2007). If these women are not in constant communication or interaction with the leaders of their athletic department, due to the size of Division I departments it could be why no significant relationship was found.

It could also be possible that the women who participated in this study have not been in their athletic departments for long enough for it to have made an impact on their gender identity. The greatest number of participants had only spent two years in their current position. That may not be long enough to be effected by the culture of the department, but there may also be a generational difference. Participants have worked in their athletic departments anywhere from one to forty-one years. It would make sense that their experiences would be very different depending on the time spent in the department. Specifically, participants who worked the longest in their departments would be most affected by the culture, then those who had not been there as long. Furthermore, the dichotomous nature of the term gender may have become less strict over the years. There may be a difference between how long participant’s worked have in their position, and their gender identities, and should be explored in future research.

The second hypothesis resulted in similar findings to the first hypothesis. Results showed no significant relationship between work self-efficacy and the proportion of male leadership in athletic departments. Levels of self-efficacy in the workplace could not be explained by the proportion of males in leadership positions of the current sample.

These results are not completely inconsistent with previous research as self-efficacy is the result of four sources (Bandura, 1977). The current study only looked at those psychological sources in relation to gender identity to explain work self-efficacy levels of these women.
Furthermore, the link between self-efficacy and male leadership in the current study was contingent on a significant relationship between gender identity and the proportion of male leadership. Without a link between the first two variables a claim for the fulfillment of self-verification leading to low levels of self-efficacy because of an inappropriate environment could not be fulfilled (Burke & Stets, 1999). Low levels of self-efficacy were also predicted because of differential power relations within the work place (Stets & Cast, 2007). Without evidence of those differential power relations, due to the higher proportion of male leadership, there is no proof that women face a lack of resources to self-verify their workplace identity, leading to lower levels of self-efficacy (Stets & Cast, 2007).

The third and final hypothesis proposes a link between gender identity, work self-efficacy, and career aspirations, and was partially supported. Results clearly indicated significant relationships between multiple variables. Structural modeling revealed a significant relationship between women’s perception of their own masculine qualities and career aspirations. The more masculine traits these women possessed the higher they scored on the Career Aspiration Leadership subscale. Concurrently, fewer self-perceived masculine traits coincides with lower levels of work self-efficacy, and fewer career aspirations. These results are consistent with social psychology and leadership research that masculine traits are perceived to be a better fit for both the workplace and leadership positions in general (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Ely, 1994; Ely, 1995; Machida & Feltz, 2013).

A significant relationship was also found between work self-efficacy and career aspirations. These findings support previous research by Albert Bandura (1977) as self-efficacy is a determining factor in whether or not people choose to participate or give effort in certain instances. High work self-efficacy means an individual feels confident in their ability to do their job productively and interact with those around them, translating to an increased effort and likelihood to pursue more responsibility at that job (Bandura, 1977; Machida & Feltz, 2007).

One final note to make regarding Figure 1 is the significant relationship between work self-efficacy and all gender-identities. It adds further insight into the second hypothesis, and supports what was previously shown in the results that confidence on the job was not related to masculinity or femininity. This does not support previous research, but does not serve to disprove it either (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Machida & Feltz, 2007). There are certain traits that have been shown in numerous studies to show up more often in males such as assertiveness,
dominance, aggression, and competitiveness (Eagly & Carli, 2007). However, lower self-efficacy levels were found in professional women for reasons beyond personality traits and perceived differences between sexes (Machida & Feltz, 2007; Bandura, 1977). Similarly, higher levels of self-efficacy can be explained by another of other variables.

In addition to what was hypothesized there are additional findings of particular importance that should be mentioned here. The structural models from the third hypothesis describe the relationships between variables based on gender identity subscales. Participant’s masculine gender identity was significantly related to their career aspirations. Interestingly enough, a different relationship was found when they were asked about professional women (Figure 2). While participant’s career aspirations were positively related to their stereotypical masculine qualities they perceived that professional women possessed more feminine qualities. Furthermore, participant’s thought masculine qualities led to more success in the athletic department (Figure 3).

There are a number of explanations for these results. The research would argue that sport, being a masculine realm, celebrates those masculine qualities (Dunning, 1999; Messner, 1992). In turn women with higher career aspirations choose to act in a way that puts them in the best position to succeed, but still face the pull to be feminine because of their sex (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Machida & Feltz, 2013; Hargreaves, 1994). It isn’t necessarily that they are hyper-aware of their femininity, but these women who identify with a stereotypical masculine identity, as described in this study, have an expectation that women in sport would be stereotypically feminine. There is certainly not a negative effect on these women in terms of their efficacy levels or career aspirations, but nonetheless future research should explore these results and take a closer look at this relationship.

Additional evaluation of Table 2 revealed a significant relationship between self-perceived masculine qualities and the importance of feminine qualities to success in an athletic department. The more women felt they exhibited masculine qualities, the more they thought feminine qualities led to success in their athletic department. The gender role meanings and sport ideology explored by Sartore and Cunningham (2007) and Eagly and Carli’s book Through the Labyrinth (2007) may help explain these results. To be a female in a masculine realm is a double-edged sword. Masculine characteristics are celebrated in the culture, but women are rewarded for acting feminine. These women may very well associate with masculine qualities
because of their interest in sport, but find that women who are more feminine receive more positive feedback (Ely, 1995; Stets & Cast, 2007; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

This should not be confused with the relationship between women’s career aspirations and the rating masculine qualities to success in athletic departments. If anything, these two findings support previous research by showing that women in sport are expected to be both masculine and feminine to prove they belong in their career, and as a woman. These women belong to two groups, that are historically opposites, and so self-verifying becomes a delicate, difficult balancing act (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Stets & Cast, 2007; Burke & Reitzes; 1981).

Another significant relationship was shown between gender neutral attributes that women perceived they and professional women exhibited were significantly inversely related to the proportion of males in positions of leadership. The more males there were in positions of leadership, the less women in athletic departments exhibited gender neutral attributes, or thought professional women should. There is extreme overlap in the gender identity subscales, and while we do not see a relationship between leadership and any other variables in this study, a clearer understanding of gender identity, and whether or not it is truly a dichotomous variable is needed. The significance between the two shows mild support for Ely’s study (1995).

Study Limitations

While the results of this study provided interesting insight of women in sport administration, limitations did exist. Every woman listed in the National Directory of College Athletics for the 2015 school year in the included conferences was contacted, but that does not mean every woman in each athletic department was given an equal opportunity to participate. Some schools listed every employee in the department, while others only included leadership positions down to assistant athletic directors. In addition to non-random sampling the educational background of participants was not similar, and they held a variety of jobs ranging from secretary to academic advisor to assistant athletic director. Furthermore, they worked in their athletic departments for a disproportional amount of time. The experience of a women who has worked for 41 years, and multiple athletic directors compared to someone who has worked for two years would be very different.
Beyond participants, limitations existed with the instruments used. Alpha levels were low for most gender identities and for the teamwork subscale of the work self-efficacy inventory. Historically, gender identity questionnaires are problematic in their assumption that everyone considers the same traits to be either masculine or feminine. The Gender Identity Scale was created in 1995, and could be dated in terms of cultural appropriateness. The social and political changes in the last twenty years, as well as the insertion of a scale created from lawyers into a sport context may have been inappropriate. A more accurate understanding of gender identity is necessary, and may have altered the final results of this study had they been clearer.

**Future Research Directions and Practical Applications**

The current study was a loose replication of Robin Ely’s 1995 study of gender identity of female lawyers. This study lacked the qualitative component, and drew from a larger sample of individuals. Future research should follow Ely’s study more precisely, and create a gender identity questionnaire from qualitative interviews with women who work specifically in athletic departments. Furthermore, due to the variability of athletic department structures, it may be helpful to compare women in athletic departments with similar hierarchical structures. This would lead to a more specific construct for males in leadership positions, and an easier comparison across departments. It may also be helpful to focus on departments within the larger athletic department. Assessing male leadership in specific areas may provide the constant contact necessary for affecting an individual’s identity.

As noted in the limitations, future research should seek to find a more conclusive, up to date understanding of gender, femininity and, masculinity as they pertain to the twenty-first century. These terms depend on cultural and regional norms, context, age, area of study, and year. Factor validity for the Bem Sex Role Inventory (1974, 1981) was extremely poor, and therefore a weak and often ignored measure (Lee & West, 2015). Robin Ely’s questionnaire (1995) proved to have decent factory validity for previous studies, but there is without a doubt room for improvement. The impact of gender identity, if there is any at all, cannot be understood and assessed without a true understanding of the construct.

Replication of the current study is needed to assess significant relationships between variables at the Division I level, but also at Division II and III. Just as athletic departments differ within divisions, they earn less money and place different emphasis on sports and specific jobs based on division level (Archives of NCAA Revenues and Expenses Reports by Division).
Replication of this study including males would be helpful to assess the existence of a workplace gender identity, and if differences exist between the sexes that would affect the relationship between the variables studied here.

The purpose of this thesis was conceived from a larger purpose, aimed at uncovering further reasons for the low proportion of women in leadership positions in NCAA Division I Athletics. Although first two hypotheses were not supported regarding male leadership, insight into subconscious factors affecting women’s rise to the top is paramount. Work self-efficacy is strongly related to career aspirations, as does masculine qualities. By understanding if and what kind of patterns are occurring within women, under the surface, steps can be taken to remove these barriers and help women fill positions of leadership in sport. Those barriers include the culture of sport and different athletic departments, as well as the expectations placed upon men and women in the workforce.
References


Table 1  
Alpha Coefficients for Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Alpha Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. GI, Prof. Women: Masculine</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. GI, Prof. Women: Feminine</td>
<td>.75</td>
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<td>3. GI, Prof. Women: GN</td>
<td>.72</td>
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<td>4. GI, Prof. Men: Masculine</td>
<td>.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. GI, Prof. Men: Feminine</td>
<td>.63</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. GI, Prof. Men: GN</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. GI, Success: Masculine</td>
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<td>8. GI, Success: Feminine</td>
<td>.66</td>
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<td>9. GI, Success: Gender Neutral</td>
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<td>10. GI, You: Masculine</td>
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<td>11. GI, You: Feminine</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. GI, You: Gender Neutral</td>
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<td>13. CAS: Leadership &amp; Achievement</td>
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<td>14. CAS: Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. CAS: Overall</td>
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<td>16. WSE: Learning</td>
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<td>17. WSE: Problem Solving</td>
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<td>18. WSE: Role Expectations</td>
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<td>19. WSE: Teamwork</td>
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<td>20. WSE: Sensitivity</td>
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<td>21. WSE: Work Politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. WSE: Overall</td>
<td>.91</td>
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Note. GI = Gender Identity; CAS = Career Aspiration Scale; WSE = Work Self-Efficacy
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<th>Instrument Subscales</th>
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<th>2</th>
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| M   | 3.5 | 3.1 | 3.5 | 4.2 | 2.5 | 3.4 | 3.9 | 2.5 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3  | 3.5 | 18.1 | 4.4 | 4 | 4.4 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4  | 4   |
| SD  | .53 | .52 | .44 | .45 | .45 | .41 | .52 | .49 | .54 | .5  | .45 | .41 | 4.9  | .47 | .56| .53 | .6  | .53 | .5  | .63  |
| N   | 183 | 178 | 176 | 183 | 177 | 176 | 182 | 176 | 175 | 183 | 177 | 176 | 182  | 185 | 185| 185 | 185 | 185 | 185 | 185 |

Table 2 Pearson Correlation Analysis – Instrument Subscales

*aTable presents means, standard deviations, and two-tailed Pearson Correlation statistics between subscales of instruments.

bGI indicates Gender Identity; CAS indicates career aspiration scale; WSE indicates work self-efficacy.

c*p < .05; **p < .01.
Figure 1

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; WSES, Work Self-Efficacy Scale. $\chi^2(\text{n}=254, 44) = 114.60, p < .05; \text{RMSEA} .08, \text{CFI} = .99, \text{TLI} = .98. (p < .05)$
Figure 2

Proportion of Males in Leadership Positions

Masculine: Professional Women

Feminine: Professional Women

Gender Neutral: Professional Women

Work Self-Efficacy Scale

Career Aspiration Scale (Leadership)

WSES

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; WSES, Work Self-Efficacy Scale. $\chi^2(n=254, 44) = 84.858; \text{RMSEA} = .060, \text{CFI} = .99, \text{TLI} = .99 (p < .05)$
Figure 3

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; WSES, Work Self-Efficacy Scale χ²(n=254, 44) = 88.46; RMSEA = .063, CFI = .99 (p < .05)
Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; WSES, Work Self-Efficacy Scale. $\chi^2(n=254, 44) = .94.67; \text{RMSEA} = .07, \text{CFI} = .99, \text{TLI} = .99
Dear Participant,

You are being asked to participate in a research study. I am conducting this research as part of my graduate thesis project in the Department of Kinesiology and Health at Miami University. The primary purpose of this research is to examine psycho-social barriers to female advancement in sport administration. That is, the research seeks to understand how environment and identity interact to affect self-confidence and career aspirations of women in sport.

This research is important because of the already large, but growing industry of sport. Sport is expanding at all levels, but women are still fighting for equal pay, and even equal treatment in a historically masculine realm. Approximately, 79.3% of Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director, and Senior Women’s Administrator positions occupied by males, even with the third category being fully comprised of women. This study seeks to understand if there is something occurring below the surface that is negatively affecting women’s advancement.

There are no physical or mental risks expected during completion of these inventories. Potential discomfort may occur by participating in the study as introspection and self-awareness are necessary to answer questions truthfully. If you do not feel comfortable answering questions you may leave them blank, and you may refuse to participate in the study at any point once you start. The benefit of this project is to start a conversation about being a woman in sport administration as well as inform future research on women’s experience in sport.

Your name and email address will not be linked to your data. Your answers are completely confidential, and demographic information only used to sort and better understand the full set of data. The results from this study may be discussed at professional research meetings and could be printed in relevant scientific journals; however, data will be presented in a way that you or your individual responses could not be identified. The information obtained from this study will only be available to the principal investigator (Elizabeth Goodwin; goodwiev@miamioh.edu) and research advisors (Dr. Robin Vealey, vealeyrs@miamioh.edu, and Dr. Rose Marie Ward, wardrm1@miamioh.edu).

You must be 18 years or older to participate, and taking part in the study is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study, with no consequence to you. If you choose to participate, you have the right to stop your participation at any time, with no penalty or loss of benefit to you.

If you have further questions, comments and/or concerns about this project, please contact the primary research, Elizabeth Goodwin (828-310-6427; goodwiev@miamioh.edu) or you may contact Dr. Robin Vealey (513-529-6530; vealeyrs@miamioh.edu) or Dr. Rose Marie Ward (513-529-9355, wardrm1@miamioh.edu). You may also contact the Office for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship (513-529-3600; humansubjects@miamioh.edu) for questions or concerns about your rights as a subject.
information but wish to receive a copy, contact Dr. Ward and a print and/or electronic version of this information will be provided.

I have read the above regarding the current study. I agree to participate in this study. I understand my participation is completely voluntary, that I may withdraw at any time, and that my name will not be associated with the information I provide.
Demographic Questionnaire

Age:
Gender Identity: Male, Female, Other
What conference is your Athletic Department in?
Current position in you Athletic Department:
Years employed in current position:
Years working in current athletic department:
Years working in athletics:
What is the gender of your current athletic director?
Who do you report to directly? Athletic Director, Senior Associate Athletic Director, Associate Athletic Director, Senior Women’s Administrator, Other
Is the individual you report to male or female?
Consider the athletic director, associate athletic directors, and senior women’s administrator in your athletic department. In total, how many of them are there?
Consider the athletic director, associate athletic directors, and senior women’s administrator. How many are women?
Do you have desire to one day work in a higher level position in your athletic department? If yes, please rate that desire on a scale of 1-7.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
No desire indifferent Extreme desire
Have you applied to a higher level position within your athletic department?
If yes:
What position did you apply to?
How long ago did you apply to that position?
Did you get that position?
If no: Continue
What is the highest degree you have earned? High School Diploma/GED, some college, college degree/technical certificate, advanced degree (Masters/PhD)
Do you plan on continuing your education? Yes, Maybe, No
Instructions: There are 30 statements in this inventory that reflect your confidence in your ability to perform a variety of workplace activities. Using the scale indicated, circle the number that most applies to you. Please be completely honest. Your answers are entirely confidential and will be useful only if they accurately describe you.

Thinking about your most recent work experience, how confident are you in your ability to:

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<td>1.</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>A Moderate Amount</td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>Confident</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Know what is expected of you as a worker.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Help build a team as a working unit.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Determine what is expected of you on the job.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Know how things “really work” inside an organization.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Be clear when presenting your ideas.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Work under pressure.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Master an organization’s slang and special jargon.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Manage conflict among group members.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Understand what all of the duties of your role entail.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Solve new and difficult problems.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Work under extreme circumstances.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Understand the politics in the organization.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Continue to learn once you’re on the job.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Develop cooperative working relationships with others.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Invent new ways of doing things.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Solve most problems even though no solution is immediately apparent.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Find out exactly what a problem is when first becoming aware of it.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Listen effectively to gain information.</td>
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<td>Know an organization’s long-held traditions.</td>
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<td>Work well in situations that other people consider stressful.</td>
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<td>Understand the behavior appropriate to your role.</td>
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<td>Challenge things that are done by the book.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Learn from your mistakes.</td>
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<td>Solve problems no matter how complex.</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Coordinate tasks within your work group.</td>
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<td>Learn to improve on your past performance.</td>
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<td>Be sensitive to others’ feelings and attitudes</td>
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<td>Function well at work even when faced with personal difficulties</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Concentrate on what someone is saying to you even though other things could distract you.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Listen effectively to understand opposing points of view.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Gender Identity Scale should be completed FOUR times. Refer to the following statements for directions. Each attribute should be rated on a 1-5 Likert scale. Please be completely honest. Your answers are entirely confidential and will be useful only if they accurately describe you.

**How characteristic are the following attributes of PROFESSIONAL WOMEN?**

**How characteristic are the following attributes of PROFESSIONAL MEN?**

**How are the following attributes related to success in YOUR ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT?**

**How characteristic are the following attributes of YOU?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not at all</strong></td>
<td><strong>Very much</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Masculine
Aggressive
Works long hours
Well connected to powerful superiors
Self-confident
Overbearing
Able to promote oneself to others
“One of the guys”
Able to speak knowledgeably & persuasively with little actual knowledge
Analytical
Yells when angry/upset
Feminine
Dresses attractively
Coy; manipulative
Flirtatious
Cries easily if angry or upset
Close to co-workers
Sensitive to people
Relates well to women at work
Management style shows concern for people’s well-being
Concerned with activities outside of work
Feminist
Relates well to men at work
Sets out to be reasonable when negotiating
Competent
Politically savvy
Persuasive
Expresses individuality at work
Able to handle many clients
Sexually involved with co-workers
Satisfied with workplace
Loves one’s work
In the space next to the statements below please circle a number from “1” (not at all true of me) to “5” (very true of me). If the statement does not apply, circle “1.” Please be completely honest. Your answers are entirely confidential and will be useful only if they accurately describe you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td>Slightly</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Quite a Bit</td>
<td>Very</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I hope to become a leader in my career field. 1 2 3 4 5
2. When I am established in my career, I would like to manage other employees. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I would be satisfied just doing my job in a career I am interested in. 1 2 3 4 5
4. I do not plan to devote energy to getting promoted in the athletic department I am working in. 1 2 3 4 5
5. When I am established in my current career, I would like to train others. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I hope to move up through any athletic department I work in. 1 2 3 4 5
7. I finished the basic level of education needed for this particular job, so I see no need to continue in school. 1 2 3 4 5
8. I plan on developing as an expert in my career field. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I think I would like to pursue graduate training in this career field. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Attaining leadership status in my career is not that important to me. 1 2 3 4 5

Note: Items 3, 4, 7, and 10 should be reverse scored. Items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 10 comprise the factor Leadership and Achievement Aspirations. Items 7 and 9 comprise the factor Educational Aspirations.