

**(Peer Reviewed Article)****Factors Associated With the Underrepresentation of Female Head Coaches in Intercollegiate Athletics**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived barriers, stereotypes, and workplace challenges that contributed to the underrepresentation of female head coaches in intercollegiate athletics. One-hundred-twenty-four current collegiate coaches affiliated with three NCAA conferences completed their responses through an online survey. A 26-item self-created survey was implemented to identify perceived attributes and barriers which impact the females' involvement in the coaching profession. The results yielded four constructs of attributes and three types of barriers that affected female coaches' success for job obtainment and career advancement. Unlike the older experienced coaches, young and less experienced coaches tended to value the importance of administrative support less. Coaches with a higher level of education (having earned a graduate degree) also perceived the "dominant culture and social stereotypes" as a significant barrier that impeded female coaches' career. Based on the findings of the study, athletic departments ought to provide more family-related and administrative support to satisfy the needs of female coaches. For a department that does not provide such support, it may consider a change in its existing culture by offering more support in order to sustain the female coaches' career in a long-term basis. Limitations of the study and directions for future studies were further discussed.

Keywords: Gender equity, Coaching, Intercollegiate athletics, Female coaches, and Head coaches.

**Introduction**

Despite witnessing a few females obtaining an assistant coaching position in the prominent professional sports (i.e., Callie Brownson and Katie Sowers in the NFL, and Becky Hammon in the NBA), the underrepresentation of female coaches in various levels of American sports is still a norm (Fernandez, 2021; Fryklund, 2019; Springer, 2015; Tobias, 2020). Numerous studies had shown there has been an under-representation of female coaches and administrators in sports, especially in collegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Benbow, 2015; Welch & Sigelman, 2007). In 2011, women represented 42.6% of head coaches in women's collegiate sports (Walker & Bopp, 2011). Before the Title IX era, over 90% of female coaches led the women's sports; now male coaches represent the majority of head coaching positions in women's collegiate sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). In addition, women only represented less than 3% of head coaches in men's sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Walker & Bopp, 2011). The phenomenon of female under-representation in coaching occurs at various levels of sports in North America (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014, Reade, Rodgers, & Norman, 2009). Evidence of decreasing proportions of female coaches from entry-level certification and recreational positions to high-performance positions were found despite little

difference between their qualifications, experience and education and those of males (Reade et al., 2009). The rate of collegiate female coaches reached at an all-time low (Morris, Arthur-Banning, & McDowell, 2014), yet studies focusing on the causes of underrepresentation of female collegiate coaches were also very limited in numbers since 2000 (Carson, McCormack, & Walsh, 2018). Thus, there is an urgency to remind the public about this issue, and investigate the causes and concerns related to this trend.

The number of female participation in interscholastic and intercollegiate sports has reached an all-time high (Sage, Eitzen, & Beal, 2018). According to the perspective of social cognitive career theory, people are likely to pursue or continue with career paths, when they foresee opportunities and the ability to advance. On the contrary, when those chances are low, people will likely pursue other options (Cunningham, Doherty, Gregg, 2007). There must be many former female athletes who would like to continue to share their knowledge and experience to educate the next generation of athletes. Shouldn't those passionate female coaches who have extensive playing experience and appropriate qualifications within their respective sports deserve and be given a fair and equal opportunity to be a head coach? Why is it uncommon for females to hold head coaching positions? What affects their ability to obtain and succeed in those positions? In a society that witnesses the rise of females in various sectors of employment, it is perplexing to see the continued underrepresentation in the coaching profession.

The COVID-19 pandemic seriously affected the current revenue streams and operations of collegiate athletics. Inevitably, many institutions' athletic programs have furloughed or laid off their coaching staff and suspended certain less profitable sports to minimize their financial losses (Brown, 2020; Wertheim, & Apstein, 2020). This current pandemic has further exacerbated the challenges for existing or future female candidates who wish to pursue a head coaching opportunity in collegiate athletics, because the availability and funding for the coaching positions would be severely constrained. Even if the opportunities do exist, it is likely that they would be given to the male applicants, since the athletic departments' hiring culture and prevalent gender stereotypes might undermined the female candidates' chance to obtain the coaching jobs (Fryklund, 2019; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Wasend, & LaVoi, 2019).

### *Purpose of the Study*

Past studies had utilized qualitative research method to investigate young and millennial female coaches' experience and perceived challenges for their job success (Darvin, 2020; Carson et al., 2018; Morris et al, 2014). This current research continued to examine and validate those factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in collegiate coaching. The researchers investigated the perceived barriers and challenges that females experienced while pursuing a coaching career through a quantitative approach. The responses from a fairly large sample of female coaching cohort ( $n > 120$ ) covering various sports and levels of experience would provide more insights for formulating strategies to combat challenges and improve female coaches' hiring and retention.

To further discuss the issue of underrepresentation of female coaches at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)-affiliated institutions, the researchers would survey current NCAA Division-I athletic coaches' perceptions on the following research questions:

- (1) What were the necessary and important attributes for female candidates to successfully obtain a head coaching position? Were factors provided by the past studies relevant?
- (2) What were the main barriers that impede female candidates' chances for maintaining the position? And,
- (3) Were there any significant differences on perceived barriers and attributes for job successes based on the participants' coaching experience and other demographic variables?

The collected information can potentially aid in the effort to reduce sexual prejudices toward females and improve the hiring of female candidates within college athletics.

## **Review of Literature**

### *Dominant Culture and Social Stereotypes*

Previous research addressed the concerns related to the lack of female administrators and coaches in collegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Cunningham, Ahn, Anderson, & Dixon, 2019; Darvin, 2020; Sage et al., 2018). The world of sports is prevalently male-dominant (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Sage et al., 2018). This fact leads to the undercutting of females' efforts to establish themselves in any leadership role, such as coaches. Often time, biases among decision-makers, including stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination, inhibit the females' ability to be hired for coaching positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Cunningham, 2019; Cunningham et al., 2019). These social biases and stereotypes that negatively affect female candidates' hiring chances could exist in micro-, meso-, and macro- level (Burton, 2015).

The existing leaders' unfair assumption on the candidates' job competency, homologous reproduction of male candidates, discrimination, and paradoxical practices of gender regularity all impede female coaches' ability to ascend to leadership roles (Burton, 2015; Darvin, 2020). A double standard existed in the evaluation of female coaches' performance. Female coaches needed to achieve better records and proved their worthy more than their male counterparts did in order to secure their positions (Carson et al., 2018; Cunningham et al., 2019). The gender-biased hiring practice was unconsciously abided and followed by many men and women in the sport workplace (Cunningham et al., 2019; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Walker & Bopp, 2011). Male athletic directors often caved-in to the societal and stakeholders' expectations by maintaining the male leadership in the department and questioned female coaches' commitment due to their family obligations and overall coaching qualification (Burton, 2015; Cunningham et al., 2019; Kane & LaVoi, 2018). When female coaches led the men's sports teams, male athletes were likely to disrespect their authority and questioned female coaches' mental toughness and desire to win (Hensley & Chen, 2019).

### **The Lack of Support for Female Coaches**

Unfortunately, family-related challenges, lack of administrative support, and pressure of social norms were common negative factors that hampered women's intentions to become coaches (Carson et al., 2018; Darvin, 2020; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Walker & Bopp, 2011). Because female coaches were pressured to win, they often needed to work harder and longer, thus struggled to maintain work-life balance (Carson et al., 2018). The lack of administrative support for female coaches could come in

many forms. Darwin's investigation (2020) on 12 former NCAA women assistant coaches found that their aspirations and intentions to remain in coaching were detrimentally affected by getting burnout due to the prolong period of work and away travels. Athletic directors would set inflexible and demanding schedule for female coaches to abide. ADs might not fully trust female coaches' commitment and promote them to the adequate level of position, because they either assumed female coaches were busily bonded to their family-related obligations or had no capability to handle the tasks (Thompson et al., 2020). Female coaches were often pressured to overcompensate without much financial and personnel support for recruiting, equipment, and other operational needs (Walker & Bopp, 2011). Furthermore, inadequate (or low) salary was also a common issue that female coaches would encounter throughout their tenure (Carson et al., 2018; Walker & Bopp, 2011).

The lack of female mentors and networking opportunities were evident attributes that impeded female coaches' ability to ascend to leadership roles (Burton, 2015; Carson et al., 2018; Darwin, 2020; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Thompson et al., 2020). Walker and Bopp (2011) discovered that the male-exclusive social networks severely cut off female basketball coaches' chance to pursue and maintain careers in male-dominated workplaces. In order to build female candidates to be confident for pursuing an athletic coaching job, the departments may need to provide female-only coaching clinics, adequate administrative support, and mentoring program (Morris et al., 2014).

## Method

### *Participants and Procedure*

The researchers surveyed 124 current NCAA Division-I athletic coaches by soliciting their perceptions on: (1) important attributes necessary for female candidates to successfully obtain a head coaching position, and (2) barriers that impede female candidates' chances for maintaining the position. The researchers used the stratified random sampling method to create an invitation list, which contained 605 names and email addresses listed in three NCAA Division-I Conferences, Big Ten, Southeastern Conference (SEC), and Ohio Valley. These three conferences were chosen for a specific reason, since many of the member institutions in these conferences competed against the researchers' school (a member of Ohio Valley Conference) for the regular season games or the non-conference schedule. The researchers first identified all female coaches' name and email address listed on the staff directory of each institution of these three conferences. Then every other coach's name and email address was systematically selected. The researchers sent our survey invitation to those 502 selected individuals from 38 institutions. The rate of return was 24.7%.

Fifty-three percent of the participants were the head coach of their respective sport. They were predominately White (90%) and held a graduate degree (70%). Of all participants, over 70% were in the age group of 26-45, and 50% had less than 10 years of coaching experience. Their coaching expertise covered 20 different men's, women's or co-ed sports with 32 participants coaching basketball (25.8%), which was the highest number among all sports categories.

A 26-item self-created survey powered by the Qualtrics was implemented to assess the impact of various variables concerning female involvement in the collegiate athletic coaching profession. The researchers forwarded the survey link to the participants via emails. Participants directly submitted

their responses to the Qaultrics anonymously. The online data collection process started in early September of 2020 and ended in the beginning of November.

### *Instrumentation*

The 26-item survey was self-created mainly based on the work of Hensley and Chen (2019). In addition, the researchers also incorporated theoretical concepts of several past studies found in the Literature of Review (Carson et al, 2018; Cunningham et al., 2019; Darvin, 2020; Fryklund, 2020; Thompson et al., 2020). The survey covered demographic items as well as two sets of five-point Likert scale items ( $n = 18$ ), and two open-ended questions. The demographic information included participants' age range, ethnicity, their highest level of education, the respective sport in which they coach, their current coaching position, and years of collegiate coaching experience.

The first set of five-point Likert Scale questions (1 = not important, 5 = important) addressed the importance of variables for achieving or maintaining coaching success. The second section asked the coaches to rate the impact of listed barriers faced during the workplace (1 = not impactful, 5 = very impactful). The open-ended questions allowed the coaches to articulate any additional potential variables not covered in the Likert Scale sections that could support or hinder the success of female collegiate coaches. The reliability tests showed that the responses of two sets of Likert Scale items yielded a strong internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha values = .783 and .875, respectively).

### *Data Analysis*

The collected data were uploaded into the IBM SPSS Statistics Software for further analyses. The researchers performed the exploratry factor analyses to categorize primary constructs among variables related to the perceived barriers and attributes for success. The researchers also conducted a series of one-way ANOVA comparisons to identify the significant differences (expressed in p-value) in perceived barriers and attributes for success based on various demographic categories. Correlation analyses were performed to examine the relationship among the identified constructs.

## **Results**

Two sets of exploratory factor analyses were performed to identify four important constructs (attributes) that contributed to the success of female coaches' job obtainment (see Table 1) and three constructs that hindered female coaches' careers. The researchers chose the Varimax rotation to run the analyses and the Eigen value was set at 1. The identified constructs (factors) contributing to one's coaching success included: (1) Family-related Support, (2) Mentorship and Professional Development, (3) Administrative Support, and (4) Financial Resources (see Table 1). Three main constructs of barriers included: (1) Dominant Athletic Culture and Social Stereotypes, (2) Lack of Family-related Support, (2), and Lack of Mentoring and Social Support (see Table 2). Both Table 1 and 2 contained the factor loading and percentage of variance of each construct, and mean scores of each identified construct and its associated items. The descriptive results showed Administrative Support ( $M = 4.60$ ) and Financial Resources ( $M = 4.52$ ) were considered to be the two most important attributes to help female coaches obtain and succeed their coaching career. All three constructors

related to perceived occupational barriers were very close in values (ranging from 3.50 to 3.43), with Lack of Mentoring and Social Support ranking among the highest factor ( $M = 3.50$ ).

*Table 1. Attributes to coaching success (KMO value = .602; factor loading = 79.319%)*

<b>Factors and Items (% of Variance)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Family-Related Support (34.619%)	4.17	
Providing childcare services for female coaches with children	3.86	1.20
Giving flexibility for female coaches dealing with their family related concerns	4.01	1.17
Providing Female Coaches with equitable salaries	4.65	.58
Mentorship and Professional Development (16.761%)	4.07	
Providing mentorship programs for prospective female coaches	3.95	1.04
Offering professional development for prospective female coaches	4.19	.99
Administrative Support (14.528%)	4.60	
Administrators (Athletic Directors) support their coach's program and understand the program's needs	4.64	.70
College/University supports its coach's program	4.56	.62
Financial Resources (13.411%)	4.52	
Giving adequate recruiting resources	4.49	.61
Giving necessary staffing resources	4.54	.66

*Table 2 Barriers for impeding career success (KMO value = .768; factor loading = 75.833%)*

<b>Factors and Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Dominant Culture & Social Stereotypes (46.985%)	3.43	
Male coaches/administrators' perceptions of female coaches	3.76	1.05
Impact of perceived gender stereotypes on female coaches	3.59	1.10
Concerns related to homophobia and coaches' sexual orientation	2.88	1.22
Showing favoritism in hiring (Men Hiring Other Men)	3.76	1.21
Lack of Family-Related Support (16.977%)	3.45	
Lack of flexibility in scheduling	3.20	1.02
Lack of adequate family leaves	3.42	1.15
Lack of childcare resources	3.52	1.15
Lack of Mentorship and Social Support (11.899%)	<b>3.50</b>	
Lack of female mentors	3.65	1.08
Lack of female support groups	3.31	1.25

### *Analysis of Variances*

The results indicated that there were significant differences in Family-related Support and Administrative Support based on the participants' age. Those who were less than 25 and older than 55 in age valued the importance of both Family-related Support and Administrative Support less than individuals of three other age groups did [ $f(4, 120) = 3.315, p < .05$ ;  $f(4, 120) = 2.834, p < .05$ ]. Participants' perceived importance of Administrative Support also varied significantly based on the

year of coaching experience [ $f(3, 121) = 3.001, p < .05$ ]. Those who coached less than two years and more than ten years had a lower rating in this construct than those of two other groups did.

A significant difference in Dominant Culture and Social Stereotype was also found based on the participants' level of education. Apparently, coaches with a higher level of education (graduate degree) perceived this construct as a greater barrier that impeded female coaches' success for maintaining their coaching career [ $f(2, 122) = 2.911, p < .05$ ] than those without a graduate degree. The results showed no significant difference in any of the seven identified constructs based on the participants' ethnicity and coaching position.

### *Correlation Analyses*

The results indicated a moderate positive correlation between the importance of Family-related support and a Lack of family-related support as a barrier ( $r = .572, p < .05$ ). The rating of importance of Mentorship and professional development were also moderately correlated with Lack of mentoring and social support as a barrier ( $r = .504, p < .05$ ). Lastly, two of the identified barriers, Lack of family-related support and Lack of mentoring and social support were correlated with Dominant culture and social stereotypes ( $r = .611$  and  $.568$ , respectively).

## **Discussion**

The participants highly valued all four key constructs (attributes) that might contribute to the job obtainment and career success of female coaches (all mean scores  $> 4.00$ ). They seemed to agree that a head coach could not properly perform the job without proper organizational support and financial resources. Other than the concern of homophobia (one item), the participants gave similar weighing on all three key constructs of barriers that were considered to be impactful for their coaching career (mean score ranging from 3.43 to 3.50). The findings of this study reaffirmed the conclusions provided by past studies concerning the factors that might either positively or negatively influence the career success and job obtainment of a potential female coaching candidate (Fryklund, 2019; Hensley & Chen, 2019; Thompson et al, 2020).

It was alarming to observe the results of two sets of correlation analyses. Two well-valued constructs attributing to coaching success (Family-related Support and Mentoring) were also correlated to the two critical perceived barriers that might hinder coaches' performance. According to Wasend, & LaVoi (2019), mentorship and professional development are vital elements for helping coaches become the best versions of themselves and give them confidence to pursue a coaching career. Therefore, a lack of these elements may result in occupational turnover and/or disinterest in applying for coaching positions. If the athletic department does not invest in the development of their female coaches, female coaches will face many challenges to grow.

As suggested by the past studies, having family-related support, on-the-job training, and mentoring support can further ease one's worries and enhance the individual's competency and confidence (Darvin, 2000; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Thompson et al., 2000). In this case, coaches between the ages of 26 and 45 had the highest rating on Family-Related Support as a contributing factor for coaching success. Female coaches who just enter the coaching profession after college usually focus on their

coaching career first and strive to achieve promotion and job security. Many young coaches in the graduate assistant rank are less likely to be married or have children. They may not value the importance of Family-Related Support as much as their older peers. As they continue to progress in their coaching ranks they may plan to develop a relationship with someone, form a family, and have children along the way. Thus, childcare services, work time flexibility and adequate salary become more relevant as coaches get tenured and reached 30-40 in age (Cunningham et al., 2019). For coaches on the end of the age spectrum (older than 55), they may have a well-established family and older kids who are in high school or college. These older coaches may not need childcare services anymore or devote much time for their family responsibilities. Providing resources for childcare support may allow female coaches knowing that necessary supervision, education, and care will be offered to their children. Adequate family leaves and flexible scheduling can support female coaches to perform at their jobs and care for their families. These services allow female coaches to feel supported by their administration.

The finding of this study also showed that administrative (organizational) support was perceived to be more important for the more experienced female collegiate coaches. In general, supportive and inclusive organizational policies are keys to employee retention (Cunningham et al., 2019). Good internal administrative support is instrumental for hiring and retaining female coaches. This type of support plays a significant role in motivating coaches to stay with their organization. Support can take the form of having administrators who understand and consider female coaches' needs for childcare services and flexible work schedules.

Older tenured coaches tend to be in positions of authority (i.e., the head coach of a program). They are often in a role to make important decision for operation, budget, and personnel hiring. These coaches look to their administrators for stable commitment and support to achieve program success through effective recruiting, staffing, and facility renovations. Therefore, they count on strong administrative support more than younger coaches. It is vital for athletic directors to be able to trust their head coaches and give various types of support in recruiting plans, budget requests, and decision-making. As for young coaches, they often look to their head coach for direct support instead of relying on the high-level administrative guidance.

Earning a graduate degree is more like the norm for collegiate athletic coaches now. Having an advanced degree can help individuals gain future promotion and salary increases. On the other hand, the additional education will help the individuals understand and realize the unfair workplace dominant culture and social stereotypes toward the female employees. Typically, one's level of education corresponds to his/her age and work experience. In the current study, the participants with a graduate degree tended to perceive Social Stereotypes as serious barrier for their career success. For young entry-level coaches who just start their coaching career (perhaps not pursuing a graduate degree yet), they may not have experienced or encountered unfair treatment, stereotypes, or discrimination during their short career. Thus, they do not consider Dominant culture and social stereotypes as an eminent barrier for their career success.

There are positive significant correlations among the Dominant Culture and Social Stereotypes, and two other constructs of barriers (Lack of Family-Related Support and Lack of Mentorship and Social Support). This finding is intriguing, as the researchers suspect the impact of the dominant culture and



stereotypes toward the female coaches probably causes the existence of those two other barrier constructs. For a long time, gender stereotypes found in the athletic setting had hindered women's ability and desire to become coaches. Collegiate sports encourages male dominance and supports a culture of hegemonic masculinity through the hiring process (Massengale & Lough, 2010). The underrepresentation of women in collegiate coaching positions perpetuates a stereotype that sport and leadership positions within sport organizations should be exclusively male domains (Cunningham, 2019). Gender stereotypes result in the expectation of poor performance of women in positions of leadership, including coaches (Wicker, Cunningham, & Fields, 2019). This expectation may come from a false assumption that mothers will not be committed to their jobs due to their commitment to their kids and family. On the contrary, women who achieve great success in coaching, despite the stigma, are still plagued by these stereotypes. For instance, thoughts like “successful business women are less likely to be in a marriage-like relationship or less likely to nurture their children” can foster a discriminative stereotype toward high-performing female coaches. Accomplished coaches have been criticized due to the absence of “traditional” indicators of heterosexuality (Reade et al., 2009). Another area impacted by these gender stereotypes is female coaches’ salaries. Discrimination in treatments can take the form of pay gaps (Wicker et al, 2019). In a male-dominated industry, women are paid significantly less than men.

When social stereotypes encompass the male coaches’ and administrators’ perceptions of female coaches, the impact of these stereotypes could be apparent in their actions and decision-making. Male leaders may exhibit preferences toward certain gender of athletes, homophobia, and favoritism in hiring other men. They may provide less resources, available support, and employment opportunities for their female counterparts. It is logical to assume that all three barrier constructs are interrelated. The inadequacy in family-related and social support and mentorships can be the result of sports being a male-dominated industry. Sports operates as a space to define and reproduce hegemonic masculinity, which maintains male dominance by subordinating women (Burton, 2015). Hegemonic masculinity in sport inhibits women from achieving positions of authority. Thus, hegemonic masculinity prevents female coaches from receiving the necessary accommodations to maintain a collegiate coaching profession while raising a family. Social stereotypes and the lack of family-related support may result in the occupational turnover of females in the coaching profession.

Many sports critics had denounced the underrepresentation of Black sports coaches in collegiate athletics. The attention of the discussion mainly focused on football and men’s basketball. (Bozeman, 2013; Cunningham, 2019; Kopkin, 2014; Newberry, 2020). For this reason, the researchers originally hypothesized significant differences in ratings of certain identified constructs could exist based on different groups of racial /ethnic groups. However, no significant difference on identified constructs were found. This may be due to a high majority of responses (over 90%) were given by the Caucasian respondents. If qualified minority male candidates still have to struggle for a coaching job against White candidates, imagine the extra challenge that female minority coaches need to encounter during their job searching process. When the institutions’ senior administrators deal with the issues of social stereotypes, they must consider both racial and gender biases that minority females have faced. A limitation of this study was not having enough minority participants in the study to address their thoughts. The current study particularly addressed a small sample of Division-I coaches’ perceptions ( $n = 124$ ) of attributes and barriers related to their job obtainment and coaching success. Readers may need to be cautious about the generalizability of the findings. An expansion of the sample can

certainly boost the reliability of the results and confidence for applying the suggestions and recommendations. The researchers did not analyze any of the responses in identified construct specifically based on gender. Although the information of each participants' coached sport was collected, the researchers did not ask the participants to verify their individual gender identity. The demographic results showed that nine individuals coached men's sports. It is assumed that most of the participants were females; however, the exact number of female coaches could not be verified. The researchers' initial intent was to the unified responses from all coaches regardless of one's gender identity. Perhaps, future researchers can attempt to delve into gender differences on the surveyed constructs.

### Conclusions

In general, the findings of this study reaffirmed several studies' conclusions concerning the factors that might affect the career success and job obtainment of a potential female coaching candidate (Fryklund, 2019; Hensley & Chen, 2019; Thompson et al., 2020). In addition, our study pointed out the importance for monitoring and providing the needs of coaches of all ages as they went through their career journey. Based on the findings of the study, when an athletic department hires more young female candidates, there must be more Family-Related and Administrative support available in order to sustain the female coaches' career in the long run. Despite the awareness of gender equality and the rise of the movement of equal-opportunity employment, without any fundamental changes in the existing hiring practices and improvement of organizational support, the female coaches will continue to face discrimination while pursuing a coaching career. Well-qualified female coaches with national or international competitive experience and post-graduate education are still less likely to have full-time coaching positions as compared to their male-counterparts (Reade et al., 2009).

In the U.S., 41% of working mothers were the sole or primary breadwinner, however, they often have to reduce their work hours four to five times more than fathers do in order to take care their children and family duties (Lenz, 2020). Social stereotypes can strongly influence our perception by misinforming the notion that female coaches are destined for failure and disappointment before their hiring due to the lack of institutional support and the social typecasts imposed on women. In order to make intercollegiate athletics more diverse and gender-equal, organizational, societal, and structural changes must be established (Burton, 2015).

Further studies should be conducted to discover the impact of other potential variables involving the hiring of female leaders and head coaches in sports. The researchers would like to offer a few suggestions for the future studies concerning this issue. More studies should survey coaches' opinions in interscholastic athletics and/or different levels of collegiate athletics (NCAA Division-II or Division-III). Collected information may help identify certain needs and wants of female coaches at all levels, as well as universal issues and challenges within a unique organizational climate. Perhaps, more studies should obtain the input from the institutions' administrators (i.e., athletic directors), since their beliefs and practices carry more weight in the actual hiring of female coaches.

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