

The under representation of women as coaches of men's collegiate sport teams: Are legal approaches needed to address occupational closure?

Athena Yiamouyiannis, Ohio University
Anita Moorman, University of Louisville

Legal aspects
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Abstract 388

Prior to the 1972 adoption of Title IX, the vast majority of NCAA men's sport teams were coached by men (98%), and the vast majority of NCAA women's sport teams (90%) were coached by women (Acosta/Carpenter, 1992). Since that time, men have gained significant access to head coaching positions of women's sport teams, as they currently hold 58% of head coaching positions of NCAA women's teams (the highest percentage ever), while women have not made any gains as head coaches of men's sport teams (Acosta/Carpenter, 2006). In fact, the percentage of women coaching NCAA men's sport teams has remained at 2% for more than three decades (Acosta/Carpenter, 2006).

Title IX and Title VII were adopted to provide equal educational opportunities and equal employment opportunities for individuals. In intercollegiate athletics, it appears men have gained access to jobs coaching women, but the reverse has not occurred. Why are women under represented as coaches of men's sport teams? Are they not interested? Is due to societal factors and/or institutional discrimination? Does it involve the recruiting and hiring process? Furthermore, is greater attention needed to address the issue? And if so, are there legal remedies beyond Title IX and Title VII that should be considered?

This presentation will address the relevant findings from a mixed method study that relied on Kanter's (1977) model of occupational sex segregation and Witz (1991) model of occupational closure to examine barriers affecting women as coaches of men's sport teams. In addition, this presentation will include a discussion on operational strategies that can be used by athletics departments to increase access and equal opportunity for women coaching men. And finally it will include a discussion on the legal landscape (e.g., Title VII, Title IX, related case law) applicable to occupational closure.

The study on women coaching men included all NCAA Division I, II and III female head coaches of men's sport teams. A mailed questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents and a 43.1% response rate (84/195) was achieved. Results from the mailed questionnaire suggest that "women as head coaches of men's sport teams face unique barriers and challenges, including job access barriers, workplace discrimination, the gendering of the coaching role, and agency barriers" (Yiamouyiannis, 2007, p. iii). Furthermore, the findings suggest the low representation is not due to lack of female interest, qualifications, or experience; rather, the primary reasons indicated by respondents for the low representation of women in these positions are that "women are not applying for coaching positions of men's teams because the jobs are not open to them, lack of societal support, lower salaries, and athletics directors are not recruiting/hiring women" (Yiamouyiannis, 2007, p. iii). The findings of the study also suggest the under representation of women as head coaches of men's teams is due in part to treatment discrimination in the workplace. Many female head coaches of men's sport teams reported experiencing negative treatment based on gender by parents, student-athletes and administrators, including authority/experience being questioned, disrespect, and exclusion. The few women serving as head coach of men's teams are marginalized; they serve in the lower profile, lower salaried sports and typically have double duties serving as head coach for both men's and women's sport teams (Yiamouyiannis, 2007).

The NCAA, conferences, and colleges have failed to address the occupational closure that has occurred related to women coaching men's sport teams. A number of suggestions are offered in this session to assist colleges in addressing the inequities, discrimination, and exclusion that is occurring within their programs. Operational strategies to consider include changing the culture to be more inclusive, active recruitment, and other action by various entities. However, if the athletics community continues to ignore this issue and fails to take action, then legal action may be necessary.

Existing employment law provides for employment discrimination complaints by individual coaches based on not being hired for a job due to gender or not being paid the same rate (Brake, 2000). Group discrimination presents a number of legal and managerial challenges. If women, as a group, continue to be excluded from coaching positions for men's sport teams, and if colleges fail to address the issue, what laws come into play? The laws that will be examined include: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Equal Pay Act of 1963, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to determine whether a viable legal remedy exists for situations of group discrimination.

The presenters contend that greater administrative attention is needed and legal action may be necessary to address the group discrimination and occupational closure that is occurring within intercollegiate athletics as it relates to women's access to

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coaching positions of men's sport teams and treatment while in those positions.