The Role of Media on Declining Sport Involvement

Sarah Lynch, The Citadel Graduate College
Stavros Triantafyllidis (Advisor), The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina

Communication - Media (Amateur Sport) Thursday, May 30, 2019
Poster 2:35 PM
Abstract 2019-096 Room: Napoleon AB corridor

Although women’s sports have made a significant movement for the better in the past few years, sport media has hardly caught up with the presence of women in sport (Cooky, et al. 2015). With the rise of collegiate female athletics sky rocketing by 45.6% since 1972, sport dominated television stations and magazines such as, Sports Illustrated seem to give women less of a platform (Riebock & Bae, 2013). From the years of 1999 and 2008, Sports Illustrated only featured 26 individual female athletes and teams on the cover (Riebock & Bae 2013). ESPN Sports Center has covered off-season male sports before covering in-season female sports (Cooky et al. 2015). This gendered television media offers a platform to assess female sport media coverage and investigate how it affects the involvement of amateur female athletes in sport. The latter indicates the purpose of the current study which uses Agenda Setting Theory (AST) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to support its research. Specifically, AST supports that the information provided by the media has effects on people’s perceptions and behavior (Mehrad & Yaghtin 2017). In addition, TPB should also be called upon as a framework because media as a public agenda can be viewed as subjective norms, which interact with people’s attitudes and predict their behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Yangm et al. 2018). With respect to the sport involvement concept, Beaton et al. (2011) indicated that this concept can be seen as people’s perceived behavior towards sport participation. Accordingly, it is proposed that: (1)-there is a significant difference of media on gender; (2)-there are gender differences towards sport involvement that significantly influence negative athlete's attitudes towards sport participation; (3)-gender mediates the relationship between media exposure and sport involvement.

Method
Data will be collected through Amazon Mechanical Turk. The target population of this research will include amateur athletes’ over 18 years old, in the United States that have participated in sport in the past 6-months. The web-survey will measure demographic characteristics, past experiences with sport, attitudes towards sport participation (e.g., Cunningham & Kwon, 2003), sport involvement (Beaton et al., 2011), and media information through items that capture subjective norms (Ajzen, 1999). The three propositions will be tested through t-test to explore the gender differences towards sport involvement and the Sorbel test for the mediation analysis. Per Hair et al. (2016) the statistical techniques require at least a sample of 100 based on the number of independent variables.

Results/Discussion
Results are expected to show support of the hypothetical scenarios and reveal theoretical implication with regards to gender differences, AST and sport involvement. Specifically, if significant gender differences presented, it could be assumed that the females will not intend to involve in sport in the future. This found support of TPB, where negative attitudes affect negatively behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). Limitation can be considered to the items that would measure media exposure, as there is lack of measurement scales in the literature and the adoption of measures is found only conceptual support.