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Journalistic Coverage of Female Athletes Pre- and Post-Title IX

In 1972 the United States government enacted Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972. This study is a historical analysis of the effect of Title IX on journalistic coverage of female and male athletic events. The main focus of this paper is on whether significant changes occurred in journalistic coverage of female athletes as a result of Title IX implementation. Specifically this study focuses on the number of articles, the placement of articles, and the space allotted for coverage.

Data for this study were collected from random selection of issues of *Sports Illustrated* (1968-1993) and the *New York Times* during the summer of the Olympic Games of 1964-1992. Each document was evaluated according to the following criteria: the number of articles pertaining to female athletes, number of articles pertaining to male athletes, and number of articles dealing with non female or male athletes; the placement of articles within each document, that is front page, middle, or back page; and the amount of space allotted for female athletic coverage, and other. A time-series design was utilized to collect data. This design was incorporated to provide data to statically evaluate the effect of Title IX on patterns of journalistic coverage.

Instrumentation for this study consisted of content analysis. Each document was coded by two independent coders. To insure interrelated reliability data were coded independently, and then compared. Where discrepancies were noted, information was deleted from the study. In over 98% of the categories coded, evaluators were in complete agreement. Statistical analysis suggested that there was not a significant difference in journalistic sport coverage for females from pre to post Title IX. The findings indicate that approximately 80-90% of *Sports Illustrated* coverage is devoted to male athletic events and that approximately 75% Olympic coverage is devoted to male athletic events. For example, there were five times more articles pertaining to male athletes than female athletes; articles on male athletes were likely to be in the front page; and the amount of space allotted indicated 90% for male athletes.

Title IX has been responsible for changes in female athletic participation on scholastic and collegiate levels. For example, in 1966 approximately 16,000 women participated in intercollegiate athletics; by 1991 the number of female participants in college athletics increased to over 158,000. Furthermore, at the college level, the average number of intercollegiate sports offered to female athletes increased from 5.61 in 1978 to 7.31 in 1988. These data indicate changes in participation rates of females in intercollegiate sport. However, the increase in female athletic involvement has not had a concomitant increase in print media exposure. There is clear indication that Title IX has limitations in elevating the prestige of female athletes, and greater emphasis should be directed toward structural changes regarding the conduct of female and male athletics.