

Women in Sport Leadership: Perils, Possibilities, and Pathways



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Women in Sport Leadership: Perils, Possibilities, and Pathways

Executive Summary

Overview of Research and Data Collection:

This research endeavor was primarily undertaken to explore the status of women in sport leadership in the state of Michigan, and to identify the factors impacting their sport leadership opportunities and experiences. The purpose of the research was aligned with the Governor of Michigan's Executive Order to explore the barriers, inequity, and glass ceiling that women experience relative to their sport leadership aspirations. Data were collected for this research using an online Qualtrics survey that was disseminated via email and various other electronic platforms to males and females who were identified and/or self-identified as sport leaders in the state of Michigan. This process resulted in a sample size of 566 Michigan sport leaders, who provided the data on which this report was based.

Sport Leaders' Characteristics

- The sex composition of the leaders who participated in this research was 55% female and 45% male.
- There was very limited racial/ethnic diversity among the leaders, as 90% were White/Caucasian.
- The leaders represented various age ranges; however, more of the female than male leaders were in the younger age ranges, and more of the male than female leaders were in the middle and older age ranges.
- The leaders were very educated. Nearly half of both groups of leaders had Master's degrees. Moreover, their educational backgrounds were varied and represented a wide assortment of academic majors (including biochemistry, electrical engineering, psychology, education, exercise science, physical education, horticulture, mathematics, business/management, languages, political science, psychology, social work, communications, media studies, various other liberal arts, etc.).
- Almost all of the leaders (93% of the females and 98% of the males) were former or current athletes.
- The majority (80%) of the male leaders were married or in committed relationship, compared to a lesser percentage (57%) for the female leaders. Thus, more than twice as many of the females (43%) as males (20%) were unmarried/single.
- The majority of the male leaders (approximately 73.5%) had children, compared to a much less percentage of the female leaders (44%) who had children. Consequently, more than twice as many of the females (56%) as males (approximately 26.5%) did not have children.

Sport Leadership Profile

- The leaders who participated in this research worked in various sectors of sport leadership (ranging from community sports to professional sports). However, the sector that was represented the most was the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) in that it employed 48% of the female leaders and 65% of the male leaders. A lesser percentage of the leaders were employed in high school sport settings (15% of the females and 22% of the males).



- The majority of the leaders were employed in leadership settings that consisted of male and female sports (rather than settings for male sports only or female sports only. Of note, while similar percentages of female and male leaders worked in settings with male sports only, twice as many female as male leaders worked in settings with female sports only.
- The leadership roles of the leaders varied and included a wide array of positions. Over half of the male leaders were coaches; however, the roles of the female leaders varied (as directors, administrators, and miscellaneous sport leadership positions).
- The majority of the leaders were employed in senior level sport leadership positions. However, there were more male than female leaders in positions at the senior rank, and more female than male leaders in positions at the lower ranks.
- The total time in which the leaders were employed in a sport leadership capacity in Michigan or elsewhere ranged from less than 5 years to more than 20 years. Twice as many male as female leaders had sport careers that spanned 20 years or more, and twice as many female as male leaders had careers in sport leadership for less than 5 years.
- This sample included sport leaders from various counties throughout the state of Michigan, notably Washtenaw and Wayne counties. However, a number of the leaders were employed in Kent, Ottawa, Oakland, and Ingham counties.

Sport Career Satisfaction

- The male leaders reported higher ratings than the female leaders on the overall composite measure of their sport career satisfaction. The males also reported higher levels of satisfaction than the females on the specific items concerning their success, their goals, their income, their advancement, and the skills they accrued during their sport leadership careers. The dimension of their sport career in which the female leaders expressed the least satisfaction was with their income.

Well-Being at Work

- The leaders were asked to indicate their well-being (i.e., their vitality, engagement, and enjoyment) during their work as a sport leader in the state of Michigan. The results revealed no differences in the males' and females' responses to the overall composite measure of well-being at work, as both groups of leaders frequently enjoyed the positive feelings their work elicited. However, one difference was revealed such that while the female leaders indicated that they 'often' feel like going to work when they get up in the morning, this rating was slightly higher (more often) for the males.

Sport Organizational Culture

- The leaders were asked to assess the extent to which their respective organizational cultures celebrated ideals of leadership that reflected what has been termed a 'masculinity contest' (i.e., gendered roles and gendered dynamics of sport leadership favoring males). Significantly more of the female than male leaders agreed that a culture of a 'masculinity contest' was prevalent and a true description of their sport organizations' culture.



- Regarding the specific elements of the sport organizational cultures, significantly more female than male leaders indicated that: (a) if you do not stand up for yourself, people will step on you; (b) there are clearly sex and gender-role leadership expectations; (c) when a woman demonstrates the behaviors attributed to an effective leader, she is assessed less favorably because she is a woman; (d) women are often not viewed to be suited for leadership positions; and (e) expressing any emotions other than anger or pride is seen as weak. While both the female and male leaders indicated that women who model assertive characteristics will move up in leadership in their sport organizations, this sentiment was espoused by significantly more of the male leaders than the female leaders.
- Additionally, regarding the impact of the respective sport organizational cultures of masculinity on the female leaders' experiences, small but significant and inverse relationships were revealed such that an increase in the perception of a masculine sport culture resulted in a decrease in the female leaders' assessment of their sport career satisfaction and their sense of well-being at work.

Gender Equity in Sport

- The leaders were asked to comment on a number of elements pertaining to gender equity in their sport organizations. The male leaders perceived their sport organizations to embody and practice gender equity significantly more than the female leaders. More specifically, the female leaders agreed significantly less than the male leaders that in their workplaces: (a) gender biases are not prevalent in work expectations, hiring practices, promotions, performance evaluations, wages and compensation, and opportunities for advancement; (b) women receive comparable career advice; (c) women are valued equally as competent leaders with their voices respected; (d) institutional support and protections are in place for women; and (e) the allocation of resources to men and women are equitable.
- Leaders who were employed in organizations that included male and female sports were asked to assess the equity in those settings. The female leaders perceived the mixed-sex sport settings to be less equitable for female and male sports, and they disagreed significantly more than the male leaders that: (a) the quality of facilities for male and female sports are comparable; (b) resources are allocated to male and female sports in an equitable manner; and (c) male and female athletes are treated equitably.
- Additionally, significant and positive associations were found such that an increase in the female leaders' perception of gender equity resulted in an increase in their assessments of their career satisfaction and their overall well-being at work.

Treatment of Women in Workplace: Gender Intersections, Identity, and Status Characteristics

- The leaders were asked to assess the treatment of women in their workplaces based on various identities and characteristics. All of the ratings were favorable for both groups; however, the female leaders agreed significantly less than the males that women were treated fairly regardless of their distinguishing characteristics or identities. The most discrepant treatment as perceived by the female leaders was due to women's age, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and whether they had a disability.



Perils of Women's Sport Leadership: Micro, Meso, and Macro Level Barriers

- The leaders were asked to indicate the extent to which a number of factors were barriers to women's sport leadership opportunities and experiences. Significant differences were revealed. The top five factors agreed upon by the female leaders as barriers were: (a) stereotypes and perceptions that sport leadership is a male characteristic; (b) gender biases in sports towards women (recruitment, hiring, salaries, promotions, advancement, etc.); (c) gendered norms that permeate the culture of sport environments; (d) lack of male advocates for women in sport leadership; and (e) lack of female role models in sport leadership. Only two factors were perceived to be barriers by at least half of the male leaders: (a) stereotypes and perceptions that sport leadership is a male characteristic, and (b) gendered norms that permeate the culture of sport environments.

Perils of Women's Sport Leadership: Glass Ceiling and Career Pathways

- The leaders were asked to offer their assessment of items reflecting the concept of the glass ceiling. The concept was comprised of four underlying sub-dimensions: (a) denial, the belief that the glass ceiling is a myth and currently non-existent; (b) resignation, women's failure to pursue promotions and advancement as sport leaders because of social and organizational obstacles; (c) resilience, a feeling that women can proceed and progress as sport leaders; and (d) acceptance, women's general satisfaction and resolve in not seeking higher positions and advancement as sport leaders.
- The female and male leaders had very different perspectives about the components of the 'glass ceiling' impeding women's leadership careers in sport organizations. While a greater percentage of the male leaders were in *denial* of the glass ceiling, a greater percentage of the female leaders believed that women often *resign* to the effects of the glass ceiling – notably, because women in sports are more likely to be hurt than men are when they take big risks necessary for success. Both groups of leaders believed that women have the *resilience* to work in sport leadership and do their jobs effectively when given a chance; however, a greater percentage of the female leaders believed that successful mothers who work in sport inspire their daughters to overcome sexist hurdles. Neither group of leaders expressed strong agreement that women *accept* the structures in sport or lack the desire or ambition for sport careers; however, significantly more of the female leaders believed that women in sports prefer a balanced life more than they value gaining highly paid careers.

Possibilities: Policies and Practices

- The leaders were asked to rate the likely impact of a variety of different policies and practices to improve the status of women as sport leaders in the state of Michigan. Although the nature of their perceptions differed, the top seven most impactful practices for both female and male leaders were: (a) enhancing the visibility of women sport leaders; (b) offering training and professional development opportunities for girls and women with career aspirations in sport; (c) establishing pay equity for women in sport leadership; (d) the establishment of a formal mentoring program for women in Michigan; (e) the establishment of a Michigan women's sport leadership network; (f) diversity, equity, and inclusion training for sport organizations in Michigan; and (g) Michigan sport organizations' adherence to child care and paid leave.



- The three most notable (and most dramatic) differences between the leaders' assessment of policies and practices to improve the status of women in sport leadership in Michigan were: (a) the implementation of the female equivalent of a 'Rooney Rule'; (b) requiring a state-mandated gender equity review and report; and to a lesser extent (c) establishing a permanent Michigan entity with oversight and authority to monitor and ensure gender equity in sports. Significantly more of the female than male leaders perceived these three initiatives to have a positive impact on improving the status of women in sport leadership in Michigan.
- Additional suggestions for policies and practices to improve the status of women in sport leadership that were offered by the leaders in an open-ended free recall format included: (a) grants for Michigan organizations who want to help with child care costs; (b) creating a 'best practices' manual for sport organizations at all levels with training and sample policies and processes; (c) policies to promote work-life balance; and (d) more recruitment of female coaches and sport administrators in general, and the recruitment of more women of Color in particular.

Pathways to Progress: Championing Change for Michigan Women in Sport Leadership

- The results of this study were obtained from a sizable sample of Michigan sport leaders in various phases of their career, who were employed in various leadership settings, with positions in various leadership ranks.
- The results suggested that female athletes offer a rich pipeline from which to nurture and create a viable pool of women for sport leadership positions.
- The results revealed that the more prominent barriers the women faced in sport leadership were structural and systemic in nature (institutional, ideological, cultural, etc.), and not individual factors specifically anchored to deficiencies in women's career pursuits or job performance. The most notable barriers as perceived by the female leaders were associated with the 'gendered' nature of sport leadership (the stereotypes, gender biases, and gendered norms that permeate sport)
- Despite the challenges the female leaders faced and the mistreatment many of them experienced, they reported a sense of exuberance and vitality while doing their work, and they were proud to be sport leaders. However, sport organizational cultures of masculinity and the pervasiveness of gender inequity significantly and adversely impacted their sport career satisfaction and their work-related well-being.
- Therefore, while women's internal empowerment for a career in sports is laudable and important, their progress will not be sustained without systematic and organizational change: (a) changing the sport organizational cultures to be less of a 'masculinity contest' and changing their climates to be more inclusive of all women; (b) making gender equity the norm – i.e., 'baked' into the fabric of the organizational culture via accountability and organizational policies, procedures, and practices relative to sport leadership; (c) breaking the metaphorical glass ceiling by challenging, contesting, and removing the disparate rungs in the 'broken' ladders to success along their career path(s), and (d) eliminating the structural and systemic barriers that are entrenched in the institution of sport leadership.
- The findings of this research offered insight into plausible solutions that could be implemented locally and at the state level to improve the status of women in sport leadership. See the following page for the list of recommendations suggested by this research to 'champion change' for Michigan women in sport leadership.



Championing Change for Michigan Women in Sport Leadership

Policies to Improve the Status of Michigan Women in Sport Leadership

- 1) Instituting a procedure for ensuring pay equity for Michigan women in sport leadership.
- 2) Requiring Michigan sport organizations to adhere to and/or implement child care and family leave support programs to prevent/counter pregnancy discrimination, and offering grants and other resources to assist them in this regard.
- 3) Requiring Michigan sport organizations to submit a comprehensive "Gender Equity in Sport Report" every 3-5 years.
- 4) Requiring a process (akin to a "Rooney Rule") to increase the number of qualified women interviewed as candidates for hire in Michigan sport leadership positions.

Practices to Improve the Status of Michigan Women in Sport Leadership

- 1) Implementing a statewide marketing campaign to celebrate girls/women in sport throughout Michigan.
- 2) Offering state-sponsored events to recognize/celebrate girls and women in sport throughout Michigan.
- 3) Promoting state-encouraged partnerships between sport entities and colleges/universities throughout Michigan to create 'Athlete to Leader' pipeline programs (with a specific focus on internships and other experiential learning opportunities for female student-athletes).
- 4) Establishing a "Michigan Women in Sport Leadership Network."
- 5) Establishing a "Michigan Sport Mentorship Database" for girls and women with sport leadership aspirations.
- 6) Creating, producing, and disseminating a Michigan "Best Practices for Gender Equity in Sports" manual or guide.
- 7) Developing a statewide measure of 'Organizational Culture' to assist Michigan sport organizations with identifying and addressing elements of a masculinity in the workplaces.
- 8) Offering state-supported training, seminars, and speaker series on topics related to Sport Leadership. Such topics could include but are not limited to:
 - ✓ Gender Equity in Sport Leadership
 - ✓ Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Leadership
 - ✓ Unconscious Bias Training for Sport Leaders (in Recruitment, Hiring, Promotion, Compensation)
 - ✓ Health and Wellness and Work-Life Balance for Women in Sport Leadership
 - ✓ Careers in Sport Leadership
 - ✓ Conflict Resolution for Women in Sport Leadership
 - ✓ Risk Management for Women in Sport Leadership

**** End of Executive Summary ****



Women in Sport Leadership: Perils, Possibilities, and Pathways

Introduction

The state of Michigan recently witnessed an unprecedented ascension of women in leadership positions (e.g., in the positions of Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, and others). As stated in the Governor of Michigan's Executive Order No. 2019-16, "More women leaders are serving in state and federal government than ever before, but there is still much work to be done." One domain of leadership in the state of Michigan that women have yet to be prevalent in is in the area of sport leadership (at the youth/community, scholastic/secondary, collegiate, professional, corporate, and international levels). This beckons the question(s): Why? What is it about the institution of sport that is challenging women's leadership opportunities? Identifying and better understanding the underlying factors contributing to the status of women as sport leaders in Michigan was the primary impetus for this research.

In absence of a central repository of statewide sport leadership data, a dearth of information exists on the status of women in sport leadership in the state of Michigan. Nonetheless, a report by Kochanek, Pollard, and Gould (2019) that combed various data platforms for relevant information offered credence to this widespread notion affirming women's underrepresentation in the leadership ranks in Michigan sports. For example, Kochanek et al. reported that: (a) women comprised only 17% (145 of 865) of the positions of Athletic Director or Assistant Athletic Director in the high schools and citywide throughout Michigan; (b) women comprised 8% (2 of 25) of the positions of Athletic Directors in Michigan NCAA sanctioned colleges or universities (of note: at the national level, women comprised 21% (239 of 1126) of Athletic Directors at the National level); and (c) for the professional men's sport teams in Michigan, there were only 12 women in administrative leadership positions, among the many positions available. Michigan does not offer a professional women's sport team, but Kochanek et al., reported that it is the home to nine (9) different semi-professional women's sport teams in tackle football (3 teams), soccer (4 teams), and basketball (2 teams). However, the gender composition of the leadership for these teams and organizations is unknown.

Regarding coaching, as another leadership position of power and influence in sports, Kochanek et al. (2019) also reported that for the state of Michigan, women comprised approximately 26% (99 of 386) of all of the NCAA head coaches, approximately 28% (315 of 1,146) of the NCAA assistant coaches, and approximately 25% (37 of 174) of the NAIA head coaches. While women are most likely to only coach women's sports teams, a greater number of men also coach women's sport teams. Numbers on the gender composition of leaders in youth and community sports and the various other sport sectors in the state of Michigan are either not available or incomplete.

Nonetheless, the available data convey women's underrepresentation in leadership positions in Michigan sports. These numbers are striking, yet not surprising, as the composite picture of the lack of women in sport leadership in Michigan generally mirrors the national trend of women's underrepresentation in sport leadership (Lapchick, 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; Lapchick, Estrella, & Gerhart, 2019; Leberman & Burton, 2017; Staurowsky et al., 2020, and others).



Additionally, while the path(s) to sport leadership for women in general may be ‘a lonely’ road, the path to sport leadership for women of Color in particular has long been characterized as a ‘desert highway’ (Abney, 2000; Abney & Richey, 1991) as race/ethnicity often intersects with sex to adversely influence the sport leadership opportunities and experiences for women of Color. Such is seemingly the case for the state of Michigan. While accurate racial demographics are difficult to attain for most of the sport sectors in Michigan, anecdotal evidence suggests that the portrait of Michigan’s female sport leaders does not reflect much racial diversity. As Kochanek et al. (2019) reported, at the time of their data collection all of the women in leadership roles in Michigan’s professional sport leagues were White/Caucasian. Similar trends of a lack of racial and ethnic diversity among sport leaders have also been documented nationally at the collegiate and professional ranks (Lapchick, 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; Lapchick, Estrella, & Gerhart, 2019). The lack of a comprehensive database on Michigan sport leadership makes obtaining the type of information needed to derive solutions to this dilemma an arduous task. Nonetheless, it is clear that women in general and women of Color in particular, are grossly underrepresented as sport leaders throughout the state of Michigan and in various domains and sectors of the Michigan sport industry.

Previous research (Batrol, Martin, & Kromkowski, 2003; Burton, 2015; Cook & Glass, 2013; Lumpkin, Dodd, McPherson, 2014; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Staurowsky et al., 2020; Whisenant, 2008; and many others) has revealed that a convergence of factors have contributed to women’s woeful underrepresentation in sport leadership. Consequently, women with sport leadership aspirations often experience a number of barriers that have created systematic inequities that have impeded their progress and impacted their access, opportunities, and overall experience as sport leaders. Such may also be the case for women in Michigan, as Michigan sport organization are not exempt from the myriad of factors impacting women in sport leadership. As the Governor of Michigan’s Executive order indicated, “This inequity in access and opportunity prevents girls and women in this state from fully accessing the benefits in leadership development that sports can provide – to the detriment of not only these girls and women, but also this state, which stands to gain from their leadership.” Consequently the Governor’s Office, Department of State convened a Task Force on Women in Sports comprised of national and local leaders in sports and education to explore this situation, evaluate this problem, develop strategies, and ultimately position Michigan as a model for what states can do to support and advance and improve leadership opportunities and experiences for women.

As such, the overarching goal of this research was to assist the Michigan Task Force on Women in Sports with its charge of obtaining information to inform laws, policies, programs, and financial incentives to increase the opportunities and improve the experiences for girls and women in sport. The specific focus and purpose of this research was on increasing the opportunities for women to work in sport as leaders. However, given the overrepresentation of males in sport leadership, it was important to ascertain the perspectives of Michigan male sport leaders as well. So, while the primary target of this research was on women in sport leadership, obtaining information from male sport leaders was necessary for additional insight and context, given the ‘gendered’ nuances that permeate the ethos embedded in sport and other male-dominated professions (Burton, 2015; Darwin, Pegoraro, & Berri, 2017; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Stamarski & Hing, 2015; Whisenant, 2008).

This research sought to offer a comprehensive assessment and critique of sport leadership in the state of Michigan. To do so, various elements (i.e., practical issues and theoretical concepts) related to sport leadership at the individual, group, and system levels were explored in this research endeavor.



The specific dimensions and content areas that were examined included the following for the sample of sport leaders who participated in this research:

- ❖ Demographic profile including their sex/gender, race/ethnicity, age range, education, athlete status, marital status, and child status.
- ❖ Leadership profile including their sector of sport employment, characteristics of their work setting, their leadership role and rank, the duration of their sport leadership career, and the county in which they were employed.
- ❖ Sport career satisfaction.
- ❖ Work well-being (and feeling of wellness in the sport workplace).
- ❖ Perceptions of a 'masculine' culture in Michigan sport organizations.
- ❖ Assessment of gender equity in Michigan's sport organizations.
- ❖ Perceptions of the impact of gender identity intersections in the sport workplace.
- ❖ Assessment of barriers to women's opportunities and experiences in sport leadership.
- ❖ Perceptions of the prevalence of a 'glass ceiling' in the career pathway for women in sport leadership.
- ❖ Suggestions for improving Michigan women's opportunities and experiences in sport leadership.

Research Protocol: Data Collection Methods and Data Analyses

Data Collection Methods

❖ Research Instrument: Survey Construction and Pretesting.

Items for this research were generated based on: (a) previous research related to women in sport leadership and (b) information received based on conversations and feedback from various stakeholders (see the Author's Acknowledgement section on page 2 of this report for the list of individuals who assisted with the generation of content for this research exploration). A survey was created and pretested for accuracy and suitability, and submitted to the University of Michigan (UM) Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research Protection for approval. The survey did not require the respondents to provide any personally identifying information, and the instructions allowed them to omit any item of their choosing without penalty. The survey was approved by the UM IRB office, and was converted to an electronic format for administration using the online data collection platform of Qualtrics.

❖ Target Participants.

The individuals targeted to participate in this research were men and women employed as sport leaders in the state of Michigan. The span of sport leaders targeted for this research ranged from community/youth sports to international/elite sports. The respondents were allowed to self-select their leadership roles among a variety of pre-determined leadership roles (administrators, directors, marketers, journalists/media personnel, coaches, etc.). The respondents were also able to write in their role(s) in an open ended format if it were not listed among the pre-determined options.



❖ Sampling Procedure:

The targeted sample frames for this research included: (a) the Athletic Directors and Senior Women Administrators at the NCAA and NAIA institutions in Michigan; (b) Community College Sport Administrators and Coaches in Michigan; (c) the Michigan membership of the Women College Leaders Association; (d) Michigan High School Association; and (e) various list serves, websites, and social media outlets of the Michigan Task Force on Women in Sports and its affiliate supporters to identify sport leaders throughout the state of Michigan.

There is currently no defined population frame to accurately identify every sport leader in the state of Michigan. Therefore, systematic random sampling was not permissible. Instead, the survey was administered using the non-random snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is a process of sampling from a known network, whereby individuals from the network who have been identified or self-identity as meeting the criteria to participate in the research assist in recruiting additional individuals who also meet the criteria (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Various snowball sampling methods were used to obtain the sample for this research, and included word of mouth communication, emails, list serves, social media postings, website postings, etc. This process allowed for the identification of a wide range of sport leaders in Michigan to participate in this research.

❖ Sampling Power:

The sampling procedures previously described resulted in a total of 673 surveys submitted via the Qualtrics portal. However, since the respondents were not required to complete each item in the survey, some (107) of the submitted surveys were missing a notable amount of information. These incomplete surveys were discarded from the analyses, yielding a usable sample of 566. Sample size integrity is based on the size of the target population. As mentioned previously, there is currently no defined population frame to accurately identify every sport leader in the state of Michigan. But, let us assume (at the high end) that there are an estimated 250,000 sport leaders in the state of Michigan (at the various levels in the various sport entities). A sample size of 400 would allow for results within 5 percentage points (with 95% certainty) of what the results would have been if all 250,000 sport leaders in the state of Michigan had been surveyed (Sallant & Dillman, 1994).

Thus, the sample of 566 obtained for this research exceeds the required sample size threshold for a maximum estimate of the population of sport leaders in Michigan. Although the results of this research are not directly generalizable to the every sport leader in Michigan because random sampling was not employed, this sample size was deemed appropriate for capturing the likely variation within the target population of Michigan sport leaders. Therefore, the sample size allowed for the explication of unique and credible insights into the general nature of the perceptions and experiences of Michigan sport leaders.



Data Analyses

The results of the analyses in this report are presented and grouped in aggregate, comparing the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the responses of the female and male sport leaders. Based on the suggestions of Cohen (1988), Hair, Babin, Anderson, and Black (2018), and Pallant (2005), the statistical procedures employed to analyze the quantitative data from the scaled items were as follows:

Descriptive Statistics:

- Mean scores were computed to describe the averages (along with the standard deviations) of the leaders' responses to the various items in survey.
- Frequencies were computed to describe the percentages (proportions) of the leaders' responses to various items in the survey. Note: In some instances the total frequencies reported do not equal 100% due to the rounding of the values to the nearest (higher or lower) whole number.

Measures of Associations:

- Bivariate correlational analyses were used to determine: (a) the strength and direction of linear relationships between the leaders' responses to variables, and (b) whether the associations between the variables were statistically significant. The correlation analyses computes a 'Pearson r' statistic which ranges from -1 (reflecting a perfect negative association) to a +1 (reflecting a perfect positive association). Perfect correlations indicate that the value of one variable can be determined by knowing the value of another variable. A correlation of 0 indicates no association or relationship between the variables; otherwise, the strength of the positive or negative correlations may be classified as small ($r < .30$), medium ($r = .30$ to $.49$), and large ($r = .50$ to 1.0) as suggested by Cohen (1988).

Tests of Differences:

- A One-way Multivariate Analyses of Variance (MANOVA) was performed to compare the leaders' mean responses to items in the survey, and to determine whether the differences between the mean scores were statistically significant or likely due to chance.
- Chi-Square analyses were performed to compare the leaders' frequencies responses to items in the survey. The Chi-Square analyses compares the observed and expected frequencies to determine if the differences were statistically significant or likely due to chance.

The level of statistical significance for the analyses of quantitative data was set at .05, yielding values with a 95% confidence level. The sample size was appropriate for these analyses and thus, allowed for the appropriate level of statistical power (Hair et al., 2018) to have confidence in the results.

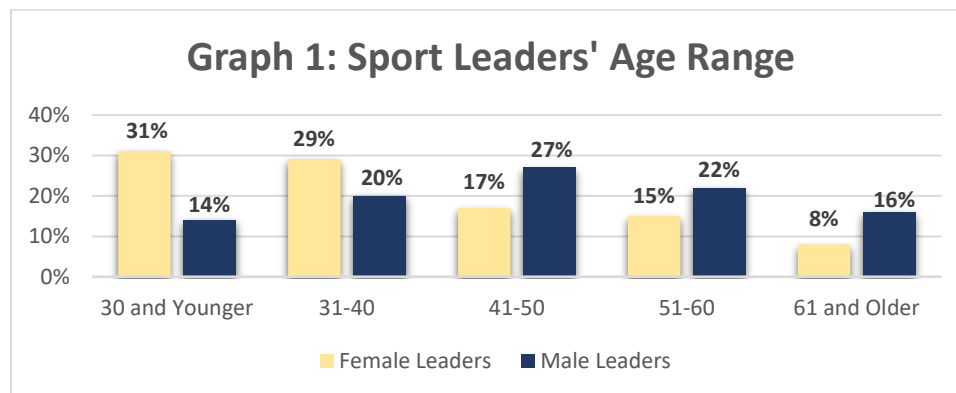
Content Analysis: Themes from the qualitative data obtained from open-ended comments provided by the leaders were summarized via content analysis.



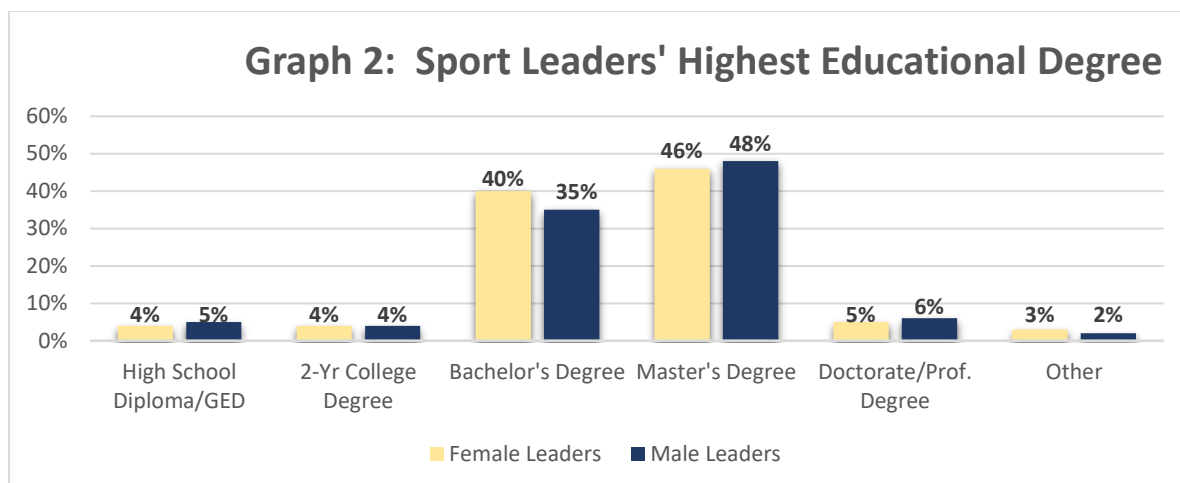
Results

Sport Leaders' Demographic Profile

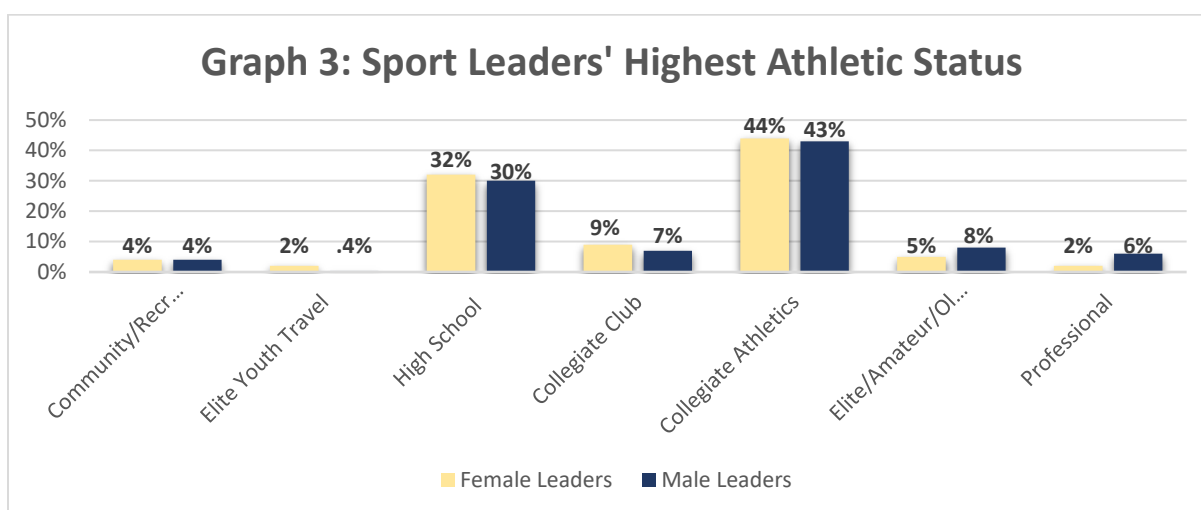
- **Sex:** The sample for this research consisted of 308 (approximately 55%) female sport leaders and 254 (approximately 45%) male sport leaders. Although women are generally underrepresented in sport leadership positions, they were overrepresented in this sample of Michigan sport leaders.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** The sample of sport leaders reflected very limited racial/ethnic diversity, as 90% was White/Caucasian, 5% was Black/African-Americans, 1% was Asian Americans/Asian, 1% was Hispanics/Latinx, .6% Native American/Alaska Native, and 2% consisted of various other racial-ethnic categorizations.
- **Age:** The age ranges of this sample of sport leaders varied; however, more of the females were in the younger age ranges and more of the males were in the middle and older age ranges. See Graph 1 below for the percentages of the sport leaders in each age range.



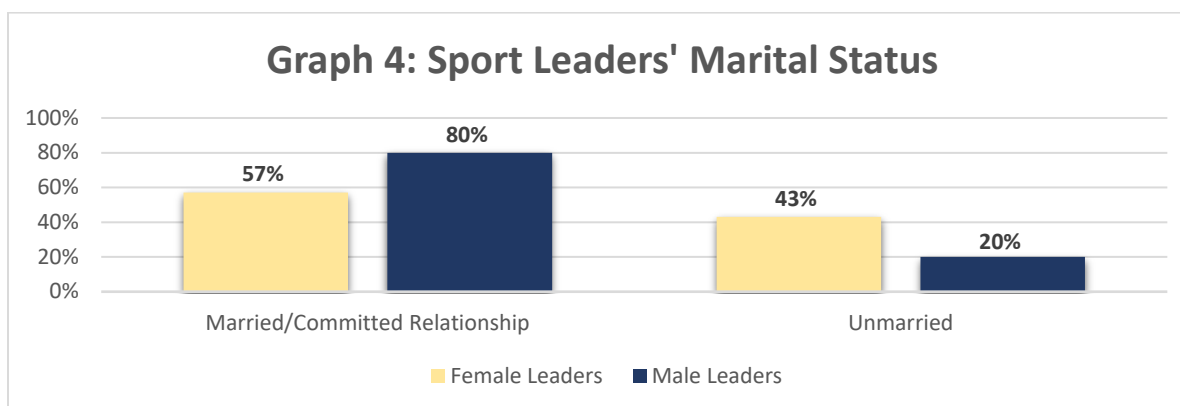
- **Education:** Overall, this sample of sport leaders was very educated (as nearly half of both groups had Master's degrees). Items in the 'Other' educational category consisted of a number of licenses, certifications, or graduate level training. The educational profiles of the sport leaders did not differ significantly. See Graph 2 below for the sport leaders' highest educational attainment.



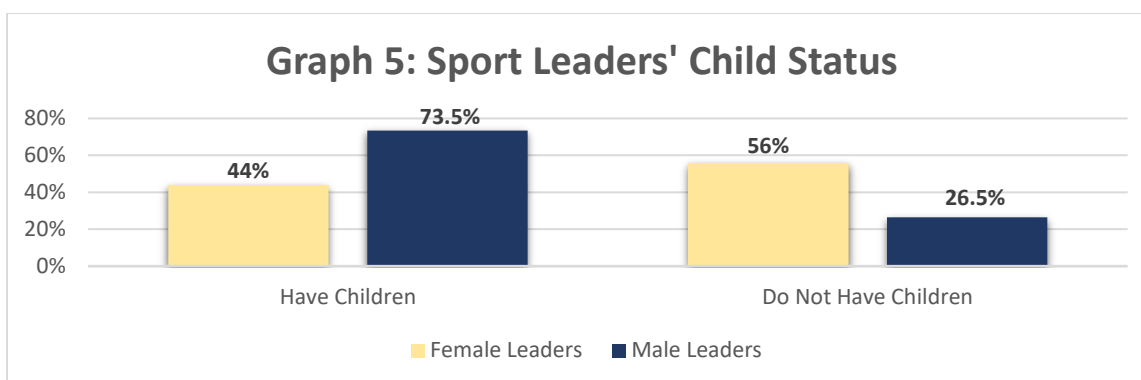
- ❖ **Academic Majors:** The educational backgrounds of the sport leaders who participated in this research were varied and represented a wide assortment of academic majors such as: including biochemistry, electrical engineering, psychology, education, health sciences, physical education/exercise science, biological sciences, horticulture, mathematics, business/management, languages, political science, psychology, social work, communications, media studies, a range of social sciences, and various other liberal arts. These results suggested that there was not one direct academic path to sport leadership, but many options for obtaining the necessary academic content/preparation for a career in sport leadership.
- **Athletic Status:** The overwhelming majority of the sport leaders (93% of the females and 98% of the males) in this sample were previously or currently athletes. Most of them participated in sports at the collegiate and high school levels, and to a lesser extent at the professional level. No differences were revealed in the highest level of athletic participation among this sample of sport leaders. See Graph 3 below for the sport leaders' highest athletic status.



- **Marital Status:** There were significant differences in the marital status of the sport leaders who participated in this research. Significantly more male than female leaders were married or in a committed relationship, and twice as many female as male leaders were unmarried/single. See Graph 4 below for the compositions of the sport leaders' marital status.

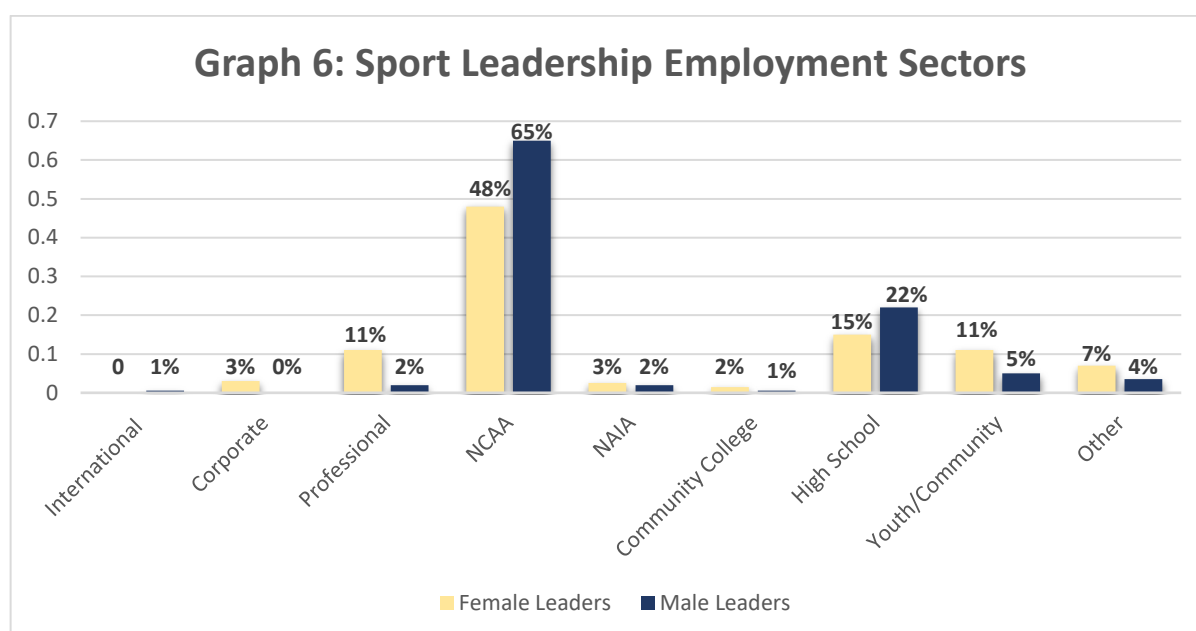


- **Child Status:** There were significant differences in the child status of the sport leaders in this sample. The overwhelming majority of the male leaders had children, and twice as many female as male leaders did not have children. See Graph 5 below for the sport leaders' child status.

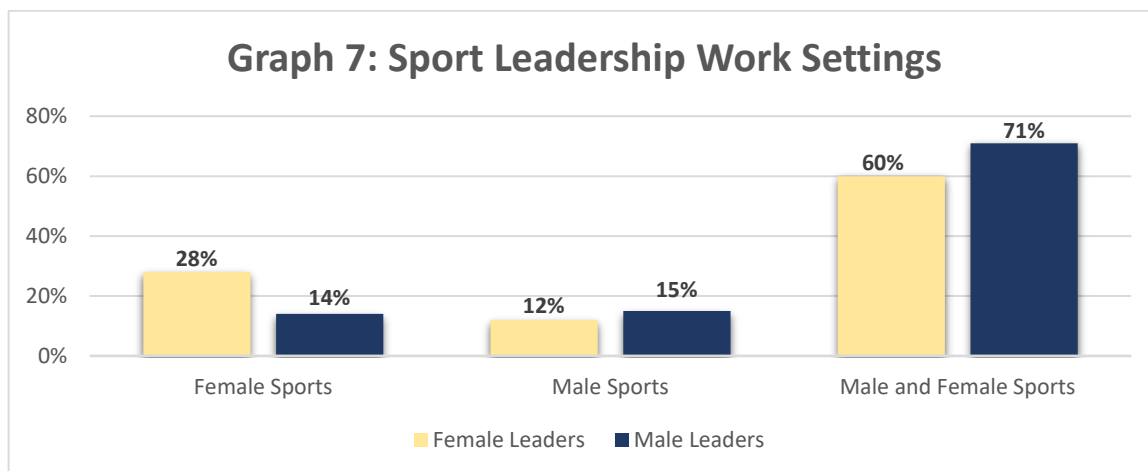


Sport Leaders' Leadership Profile

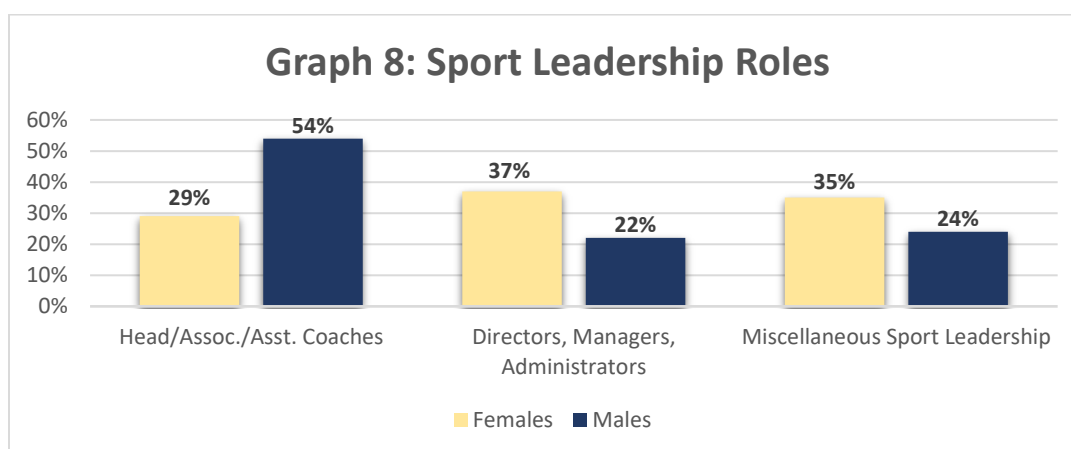
- ❖ **Sport Leadership Employment Sectors:** The majority of the sport leaders who participated in this research were employed in sports associated with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), with significant more males than females employed at the NCAA level. High School Sports comprised the next largest employment sector. Significantly more female than male leaders were employed in professional and youth/community/recreational sports. Sectors included in the "Other" category include various amateur, private, and miscellaneous sport sectors. See Graph 6 below for the sectors in which the sport leaders were employed.



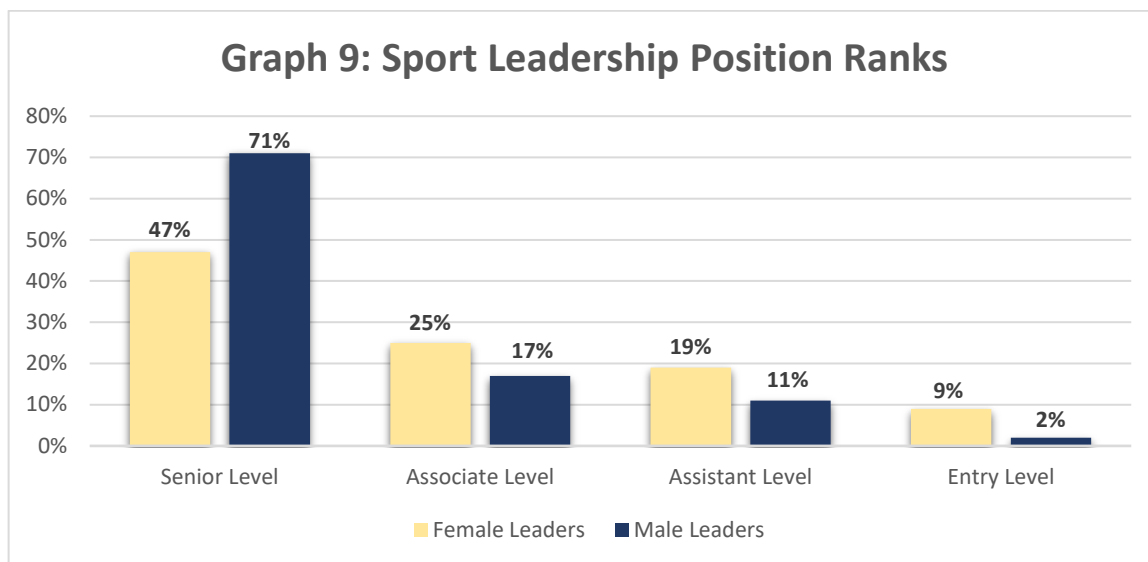
- ❖ **Sport Leadership Work Settings:** The majority of the sport leaders who participated in this research worked in mixed sex (males and females) sport settings. However, while similar percentages of the female and male leaders worked in male sports, twice as many female as male leaders worked in women's sports only. See Graph 7 below for the leadership settings in which the sport leaders were employed.



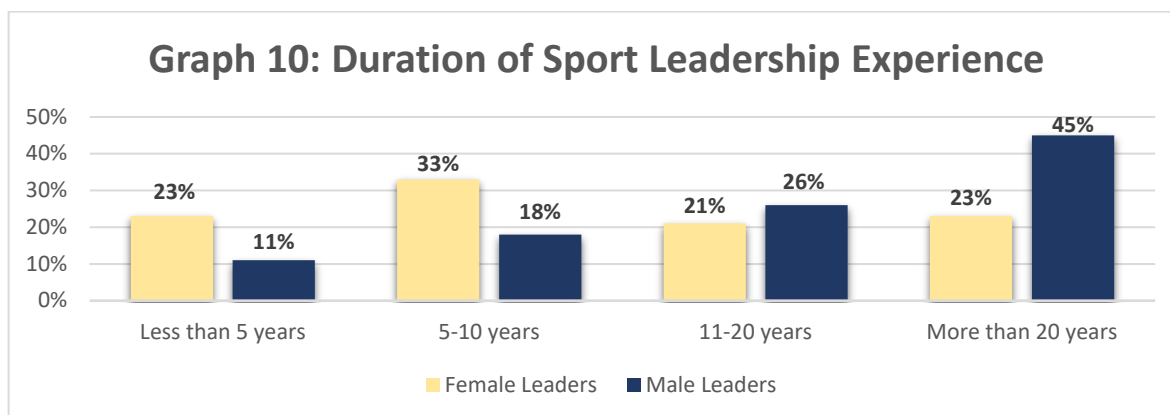
- ❖ **Sport Leadership Roles:** The leaders were asked to indicate their primary role/area of responsibility as a sport leader in Michigan. The options consisted of coaching (head, associate, or assistant); sport media, journalism or communication; sport medicine, training, and strength and conditioning; sport administrator, manager, director, etc.; officiating; and 'other' (which included academic counselors/learning specialists, sport coordinators, sport tourism, sales, marketing, facilities, equipment, and other roles listed by the leaders). These various roles and responsibilities were grouped into three larger categories: (a) coaching, (b) administration, and (c) the various other miscellaneous and specialty sport leadership positions. While the predominant occupation of the male leaders in this sample was in coaching, the occupations of the female leaders varied. See Graph 8 below for the sport leaders' leadership roles.



- ❖ **Sport Leadership Position Ranks:** The sport leaders were asked to indicate the rank of their position. The majority of the leaders indicated that they were employed in sport leadership positions at the senior level. However, there were gender differences such that more of the male leaders were in senior level positions, and more of the female leaders were employed in positions at the lower ranks. See Graph 9 below for the rank of the positions held by the sport leaders in this sample.



- ❖ **Duration of Sport Leadership Experience:** The leaders were asked to indicate the total length of time in which they had worked in a sport leadership capacity in the state of Michigan or elsewhere. The duration of their leadership was captured in four broad time frames: (a) less than 5 years, (b) 5-10 years, (c) 11-20 years, and (d) more than 20 years. The results revealed that the leaders' experience reflected a wide range; however, the percentage of male leaders whose sport careers spanned 20 years was nearly twice the percentage of female leaders, and the percentage of females who had been their sport leadership career for less than 5 years was twice the percentage of males. See Graph 10 below for the total years in which the sport leaders worked in a sport leadership capacity.



Sport Leaders' Career Satisfaction

As revealed previously, the duration of the leaders' careers in sport leadership varied. Nonetheless, individuals often remain in their respective careers for a number of reasons that are not necessarily related to the enjoyment of their work (such as their comfort, stability, familiarity, family obligations, etc.). Therefore, it was important to obtain a baseline assessment of the extent to which the sport leaders were actually satisfied with various dimensions of their sport leadership career. They were asked to assess their satisfaction with their success, overall career goals, income, advancement, and skill development using Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley's (1990) Career Satisfaction Scale, with options that ranged from 1="Highly Dissatisfied" to 5="Highly Satisfied." The average ratings of the responses to the individual items were computed to create a composite measure of their overall career satisfaction.

The MANOVA to examine differences between the mean scores on the various dimensions revealed that the male sport leaders were significantly more satisfied than the female sport leaders with their composite measure of career satisfaction, as well as with the individual dimensions of their sport career. A notable finding was that although the female leaders were somewhat satisfied with the success they had achieved and the extent to which they met their career goals, they were significantly less satisfied with their income than were the male leaders. See Table 1 below for the dimensions of sport career satisfaction and the mean/average ratings and standard deviations of the female and male sport leaders' ratings of each dimension. The dimensions for which the ratings of the sport leaders are statistically different are denoted with asterisks.

Table 1: Sport Leaders' Career Satisfaction

Dimensions of Sport Career Satisfaction	Female Leaders Mean (SD)	Male Leaders Mean (SD)
Overall Composite Career Satisfaction.***	3.55 (.77)	3.81 (.74)
Success Achieved in Career.*	3.86 (.90)	4.04 (.92)
Progress Made Towards Meeting Overall Career Goals.*	3.80 (.93)	3.98 (.89)
Progress Made Towards Meeting Goals for Developing New Skills.**	3.77 (.90)	4.01 (.78)
Progress Made Towards Meeting Goals for Advancement.***	3.44 (1.01)	3.80 (.91)
Progress Made Towards Meeting Income Goals.***	2.90 (1.15)	3.24 (1.10)

Scale Range: 1= Highly Dissatisfied to 5 = Highly Satisfied

Levels of Statistical Significance of Difference: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$



Sport Leaders' Work Well-Being

Another element that is related to satisfaction that this research sought to explore was well-being. In the context of this research, well-being referred to the feelings of vitality, engagement, enjoyment, and sense of purpose experienced when performing a job. The leaders were asked to indicate the frequency in which they felt certain emotions associated with well-being when performing their jobs as a sport leader in Michigan using the shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006) with options ranging from "Almost Never" to "Almost Always."

The majority (55% or higher) of both groups of leaders reported positive feelings of well-being during or as associated with their work often/almost always. Moreover, nearly all (97%) of both groups indicated that they frequently feel proud of the work they do as leaders. The high frequencies in which both groups of leaders were also enthusiastic about their job, happy when working intensely on their jobs, and inspired by their jobs were also notable.

However, the Chi-Square analyses revealed one significant finding for one of the individual well-being items. While a substantial percentage (78%) of the female leaders reported that they 'often' feel like going to work when they get up in the morning, this rating was significantly higher and thus, expressed more often for a greater percentage (88%) of the male leaders. More specifically a deeper analyses into the results revealed that 44% of the male leaders reported excitement for work when they get up in the morning 'almost always' compared to 34% of the female leaders reported having this morning feeling 'almost always.' See Table 2 below for the dimensions of well-being and total percentage of leaders who reported experiencing the dimensions 'often' or 'almost always.' The dimension for which the percentage for the leaders is statistically difference is denoted with an asterisk.

Table 2: Sport Leaders' Work Well-Being

Dimensions of Work & Well-Being	Female Leaders Often/Almost Always	Male Leaders Often/Almost Always
I feel proud of the work I do.	97%	97%
I am enthusiastic about my job.	87%	90%
I feel happy when I am working intensely.	84%	85%
My job inspires me.	83%	85%
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.*	78%	88%
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	68%	74%
At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	67%	67%
I get carried away when I am working	58%	55%

*Level of Statistical Significance of Difference: $p = .01$



Michigan Sports' Organizational Culture

Organizational cultures impact organizational success and employee satisfaction (Canning et al., 2020). Research (Burton, 2015; Darvin et al., 2017; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Stamarski & Hing, 2015; Whisenant, 2008) has revealed that sport organizations tend to reflect a culture of leadership that celebrates the ideals of masculinity. Glick, Berndahl, and Alonso (2018) categorized organizational cultures of 'masculinity contest' as those embodying four underlying dimensions: (a) showing no weakness; (b) celebrating strength and stamina; (c) prioritizing work; and (d) a 'dog eat dog' competition/mentality. Given the underrepresentation of women sport leadership, this study sought to assess the prevalence of a masculinity contest culture in the Michigan's sport organizations in which the leaders were employed. To do so, the leaders were asked to indicate the extent to which various norms and values reflective of masculinity contest culture permeated their sport leadership workplaces by responding to the eight-item version of Glick et al.'s Masculinity Contest Culture scale with options ranging from "Not at all True of My Environment" to "Very True of My Environment."

The Chi-Square analyses revealed significant differences, as more female than male leaders indicated that a culture of a 'masculinity contest' was prevalent and a true description of their sport organizations such that: (a) if you do not stand up for yourself, people will step on you; (b) there are clearly sex and gender-role leadership expectations; (c) when a woman demonstrates the behaviors attributed to an effective leader, she is assessed less favorably because she is a woman; (d) women are often not viewed to be suited for leadership positions; and (e) expressing any emotions other than anger or pride is seen as weak. While both the female and male leaders indicated that women who model assertive characteristics will move up in leadership in their organizations, this sentiment was espoused by significantly more of the male (68%) than female leaders (55%). See Table 3 below for an overview of the percentages of the female and male leaders who indicated that the respective norms and values were prevalent, i.e., "Somewhat True" or "Very True," when describing their sport workplace environment. The dimensions for which the percentages for the leaders are statistically different are denoted with asterisks.

Table 3: Michigan Sports' Organizational Culture

Dimensions of Masculine Sport Organizational Culture	Female Leaders Prevalent/True	Male Leaders Prevalent/True
If you do not stand up for yourself, people will step on you.*	58%	48%
Women who model assertive characteristics will move up in leadership.*	55%	68%
There are clearly sex and gender-role leadership expectations.**	49%	21%
Taking days off is a frowned upon.	40%	39%
It's important to be in good physical shape to be respected.	39%	44%
When a woman demonstrates the behaviors attributed to an effective leader, she is assessed less favorably because she is a woman.**	38%	9%
You are either "in" or you are "out" and once you are out, you are out.	36%	31%
Women are often not viewed to be suited for leadership positions.**	33%	13%
To succeed you cannot let family interfere with work.	31%	27%
Admitting you do not know the answer looks weak.	24%	22%
Expressing any emotions other than anger or pride is seen as weak.**	20%	8%
People who are physically smaller have to work harder to get respect.	14%	13%

*Levels of Statistical Significance of Difference: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$



Sports' Organizational Culture and Female Leaders' Career Satisfaction and Work Well-Being

The coupling of the notable differences between the female and male leaders' assessment of the prevalence of a masculine organizational culture, and males' higher level of sport career satisfaction (as reported previously) warranted additional exploration. Therefore, bivariate correlation analyses were performed to examine whether organizational culture was statistically associated with dimensions of the females' sport leadership experience such as their assessment of their overall career satisfaction and their work well-being. The correlation results revealed small but statistically significant inverse (negative) relationships such that an increase in the female leaders' perception of a masculine sport organizational culture resulted in a slight decrease in their assessment of their overall career satisfaction rating ($r = -.19, p < .01$) and a slight decrease in their feeling of well-being regarding their work as a sport leader in Michigan ($r = -.16, p < .01$).

Gender Equity in Michigan Sport Workplaces

Given the underrepresentation of women as sport leaders, another focus of this research was to assess the leaders' perceptions of the extent to which gender equity was a reality in their sport organizations. They were asked to respond to a number of statements about practices and behaviors related to the promotion and support of gender equity in sport leadership opportunities and experiences in their workplace. Twelve (12) different organizational practices were examined in which the leaders responded using a scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

The Chi-Square analyses comparing the frequencies revealed that the male and female leaders had very different perspectives of the gender equity embodied and practiced in their workplaces, with the males perceiving their sport workplaces to be significantly more equitable than the females. The female leaders rated 11 of the 12 items significantly less favorably than the males. More specifically, females agreed significantly less than the males that in their sport workplaces: (a) gender biases are not prevalent in work expectations, hiring practices, promotions, performance evaluations, wages and compensation, and opportunities for advancement; (b) women receive comparable career advice; (c) women are valued equally as competent leaders with their voices respected; (d) institutional support and protections are in place for women; and (e) the allocation of resources to men and women are equitable. The item in which the women expressed the most disagreement with was that gender biases were not present in wages and compensation.

Note: although women were in less agreement that it is a norm to have critical discussions about equity and inclusion as it relates to gender in their workplace, this difference was not statistically significant. See Table 4 on the following page for the dimensions of gender equity examined and the percentage of female and male leaders who either 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' that each dimension was operative in their sport workplace. The dimensions for which the percentages are statistically different between the male and female leaders are denoted with asterisks.



Table 4: Gender Equity in Michigan Sport Workplaces

Dimensions of Gender Equity in Michigan Sport Workplaces	Female Leaders Agreement	Male Leaders Agreement
Women's voices are respected.**	63%	89%
Men and women are valued equally as competent leaders.**	54%	83%
Gender biases are not prevalent in performance evaluations.*	47%	63%
Institutional support and protections are in place for women in the workplace.**	45%	71%
Resources are allocated to men and women in an equitable manner.**	44%	71%
Men and women have equal opportunities for advancement.**	43%	74%
It is the norm to have critical discussions about equity and inclusion as it relates to gender.	41%	52%
Gender biases are not prevalent in hiring practices.*	41%	56%
Gender biases are not prevalent in work expectations.**	38%	56%
Gender biases are not prevalent in promotional practices.**	36%	60%
Men and women receive comparable career advice.**	36%	63%
Gender biases are not prevalent in wages and compensation.**	26%	58%

Levels of Statistical Significance of Difference: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Gender Equity for Michigan's Female and Male Sports

The majority (65%) of the sport leaders were employed in mixed-sex settings. To examine equity in the workplaces that included both female and male sports, the leaders who were employed in these settings were asked to indicate their level of agreement with items regarding equity in the resource allocations, quality of facilities, and treatment of female and male athletes. The Chi-Square analyses revealed that the female leaders were in significantly less agreement than the male leaders that equity was practiced for female and male sports. See Table 5 below for the dimensions of gender equity examined between male and female sports and the percentage of leaders who either 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' with them. The dimensions for which the percentages are statistically different are denoted with asterisks.

Table 5: Gender Equity for Michigan's Female and Male Sports

Dimensions of Gender Equity in Michigan's Mixed Sex (Female and Male) Sport Settings	Female Leaders Agreement	Male Leaders Agreement
The quality of facilities for male and female sports are comparable.*	62%	72%
Resources are allocated to male and female sports in an equitable manner.*	50%	72%
Male and female athletes are treated equitably.*	41%	56%

*Level of Statistical Significance of Difference is $p < .001$



Intersectionality: Treatment of Women Based on Gender and Other Identities

Related to the concept of gender equity in sport organizations is the issue of fair treatment of women. However, the fairness of how women are treated is often essentialized by considering women one demographic group, with little regard for how their treatment may vary based on their race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and other characteristics that may intersect with sex or gender (Collins & Bilge, 2016) to exacerbate unfair treatment. It is important to not consider sex or gender in a monolith. Therefore, the leaders were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements regarding the fair treatment of women in their workplace based on women's various personal, identity, and lifestyle factors using a scale with options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

The Chi-Square analyses revealed that both the female and male leaders perceived the treatment of women in their workplaces to be fair regardless of their identities, affiliations, and status characteristics, as all of their ratings were generally positive. However, the female leaders were in less agreement than the male leaders that women were treated fairly on all of the factors, with the most discrepant treatment being due to women's age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and whether they have a disability. A striking 85% of the male leaders perceived women's treatment based on their race or ethnic identity to be the most favorable. See Table 6 below for the characteristics examined and the extent to which the female and male leaders "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that women were treated fairly in their workplaces based on these characteristics. The characteristics for which the females' and males' responses are statistically different are denoted with asterisks.

Table 6: Treatment of Women Based on Gender and Intersecting Characteristics

The Fair Treatment of Women Regardless of the Following:	Female Leaders Agreement	Male Leaders Agreement
Their religion or spiritual practice.*	73%	78%
Their marital status.*	71%	79%
Their racial or ethnic identity.***	70%	85%
Their political affiliation.*	67%	73%
Their sexual orientation.**	65%	80%
Their status as a current or former athlete.***	63%	72%
Whether or not they have children.***	62%	71%
Their gender or gender identity.***	61%	77%
Their attractiveness or physical appearance.***	61%	73%
Their age.***	60%	80%
Whether or not they have a disability.**	60%	74%

Levels of Statistical Significance of Difference: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$



Gender Equity and Female Leaders' Career Satisfaction and Work Well-Being

Given that the female leaders had a significantly less favorable assessment of gender equity in their workplaces compared to the male leaders, it was necessary to examine whether gender equity impacted (i.e., was associated with) other elements of their sport leadership experiences such as their sport career satisfaction and their well-being at work. To do so, bivariate correlational analyses were performed for the female leaders. The results revealed modest, but statistically significant positive associations such that an increase in the female leaders' composite perception of gender equity in their workplaces resulted in: (a) a medium impact in increasing their composite sport leadership career satisfaction ($r = .32, p < .001$), and (b) a small impact in increasing in their composite feeling of work well-being ($r = .24, p < .001$).

Time in Sport Leadership and Leaders' Perceptions and Experiences

As reported previously, the duration of the leaders sport experience varied from 5-10 years to 20 years or more. However, over the past 20 years there have been a number of new initiatives, programs, associations, communities, etc. designed to change the narratives surrounding the perceptions of women as leaders, to support women who are currently employed in sport, and to improve the opportunities and experiences for women as sport leaders. Therefore, it was important to examine the extent to which the female and male sport leaders' perspectives and experiences were a function of the overall duration of their sport leadership experience. Therefore, bivariate correlational analyses were performed to examine the association between time in sport leadership and the leaders' sport career satisfaction, well-being at work, perceptions of organizational culture, and assessment of gender equity.

The correlation analyses revealed that for both female and male leaders, time in sport leadership was not significantly related to their assessment of their sport organization's culture or their perceptions of gender equity being practiced in their sport organizations. These assessments did not vary with the length of time the females or males were employed as sport leaders. However, time in sport leadership exerted a small but significant and positive impact on the female and male leaders' overall sport leadership career satisfaction ($r = .24, p < .001$ and $r = .26, p < .001$, respectively) and on their feeling of well-being regarding their work as sport leaders in Michigan ($r = .23, p < .001$ and $r = .20, p < .001$, respectively). This means that for both the female and male leaders, their sport leadership career satisfaction and work well-being increased as did the time in which they were employed in a sport leadership capacity.



Perils of Women's Sport Leadership: Micro, Meso, and Macro Level Barriers

As mentioned at the outset of this report, previous research (Batrol, Martin, & Kromkowski, 2003; Burton, 2015; Buzuvis, 2015; Clopton & Sagas, 2009; Cook & Glass, 2013; Hancock & Hums, 2016; Hoffman, 2011; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Staurowsky et al., 2020; Whisenant, 2008) has attributed a number of factors to women's lack of or limited advancement as sport leaders. Based on previous findings, this research examined 13 possible factors that may create barriers at the micro (individual), meso (group), and macro (system) levels that adversely impact women's sport leadership opportunities and experiences in Michigan. To gauge the leaders' perceptions of the extent to which the factors identified were barriers to women's leadership opportunities and experiences, they were asked to indicate their level of agreement that each of the factors were barriers using a scale with options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

The Chi-Square analyses comparing the frequency and nature of their responses revealed that the female and male leaders differed in their perceptions of what factors created barriers to women's sport leadership. For the female leaders, there were fairly high levels of agreement overall on the factors posited to be barriers (with agreement levels ranging from 29% to 82%). The factor the female leaders perceived to be a barrier the least was 'women's general lack of interest in sport careers.' The following factors were the most agreed upon by the female leaders as barriers to women's leadership opportunities and experiences:

1. Stereotypes and perceptions that sport leadership is a male characteristic.
2. Gender biases in sports towards women (recruitment, hiring, salaries, promotions, advancement, etc.).
3. Gendered norms that permeate the culture of sport environments.
4. Lack of male advocates for women in sport leadership.
5. Lack of female role models in sport leadership.

For the male leaders, the factors garnered more neutral ratings; consequently, the males' overall levels of agreement that the factors identified were barriers were much smaller (ranging from 25% to 53%). Only two factors were perceived to be barriers by at least half of the male leaders: (a) stereotypes and perceptions that sport leadership is a male characteristic, and (b) gendered norms that permeate the culture of sport environments. The barrier the male leaders perceived to have the least impact on the status of women in sport leadership was the lack of women in sport management related degree programs.

See Table 7 on the following page for the complete results of the factors examined as barriers to women's leadership and the percentage of "Agreement" or "Strong Agreement" among the sport leaders that these factors/issues were barriers to women's sport leadership opportunities and experiences. The characteristics for which the percentages are statistically different between the male and female leaders are denoted with asterisks.



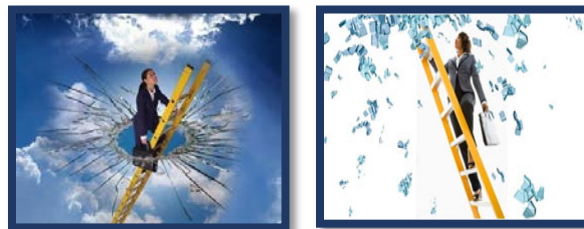
Table 7: Barriers to Women's Sport Leadership

Barriers to Women's Sport Leadership	Female Leaders Agreement	Male Leaders Agreement
Stereotypes and perceptions that sport leadership is a male characteristic.***	82%	53%
Gender biases in sports towards women (recruitment, hiring, salaries, promotions, advancement, etc.).***	81%	44%
Gendered norms that permeate the culture of sport environments.***	75%	50%
Lack of male advocates for women in sport leadership.***	74%	44%
Lack of female role models in sport leadership.***	68%	47%
Unfavorable public perceptions about women in sports.***	63%	35%
Women's lack of access to mentors in sports.***	61%	42%
Lack of professional networks in sports.***	59%	35%
Lack of professional development and leadership training opportunities for women in sport.***	58%	32%
Women's lack of pursuit of sport leadership positions.**	51%	37%
Lack of institutional accountability to gender equity in sports.***	50%	30%
Lack of women in sport management related degree programs.*	43%	29%
Women's general lack of interest in sport careers.**	29%	40%

Levels of Statistical Significance of Difference: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Perils of Women's Sport Leadership: Glass Ceiling and Career Pathways

Research has revealed that 'invisible' barriers exist in the culture and structure of many organizations that prevent individuals employed therein from advancing. The invisible barriers are referred to as metaphorical 'glass ceilings' (Bartol et al, 2003; Clopton & Sagas, 2009; Davis & Maladonando, 2015; Lumpkin et al., (2014); Ng & Sears, 2017; Smith, Crittenden, & Caputi, 2012; Staurowsky et al., 2020). Smith et al. (2012) posited that the glass ceiling is comprised of four underlying dimensions: (a) denial, the belief that the glass ceiling is a myth and non-existent; (b) resignation, women's failure to pursue promotions and advancement as sport leaders because of social and organizational obstacles; (c) resilience, a feeling that women can proceed and progress as sport leaders; and (d) acceptance, women's general satisfaction and resolve in not seeking higher positions and advancement as sport leaders. While the glass ceiling may impact everyone (men and women) in an organization to some extent, previous research has revealed the disparate impact that it has had on women's career pathways, trajectory, and overall success. Previous research has also revealed that men and women often have different perceptions of the presence of a glass ceiling and its impact on women's career advancement.



To examine the sport leaders' perceptions about a glass ceiling in sport organizations, they were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a modified/condensed list of statements from Smith et al.'s (2012) Career Pathway Survey with options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The items reflected a range of thoughts and perspectives about the career aspirations and advancement of women in sport leadership. The statements also reflected the underlying dimensions of the glass ceiling of denial, resignation, resilience, and acceptance. The Chi-Square analyses comparing the frequency of responses revealed that the female and male leaders had very different perspectives about the underlying dimensions of the 'glass ceiling' and the extent to which they were impediments to women's leadership careers in sport. Following is a summary of the findings.

- **Denial:** A greater percentage of the male leaders tended to deny the existence of the glass ceiling. Their responses were such that: (a) three times as many of the male as female leaders (25% and 7%, respectively) believed that women and men have to overcome the same problems in the sport workplace; (b) twice as many of the male as female leaders (36% and 17%, respectively) believed that women with many skills and qualifications are recognized for promotions; (c) five times as many of the male as female leaders (22% and 4%, respectively) believed that women starting careers in sports today will not face sexist barriers; and (d) significantly more male than female leaders (38% and 23%, respectively) believed that it will not take decades for women to reach equality with men in high level management positions.
- **Resignation:** While a greater percentage of the male leaders were in denial of the glass ceiling, a greater percentage of the female leaders indicated that women resign to the social and organizational barriers in sport. Moreover: (a) twice as many of the female as male leaders (47% and 22%, respectively) agreed that women in sports are more likely to be hurt than men are when they take big risks necessary for success; (b) almost three times as many of the female as male leaders (27% and 10%, respectively) believed that women who are sport leaders suffer more emotional pain than men who are sport leaders when there is a crisis within their unit or department; and (c) three times as many of the female as male leaders (19% and 6%, respectively) believed that women sport leaders are very uncomfortable criticizing members of their team/unit/department.
- **Resilience:** Both the female and male leaders believed that women have the resilience to be sport leaders. Both groups believed that women have the strength to overcome discrimination, and will do the job effectively if given an opportunity. However, significantly more of the female leaders agreed that daughters of successful mothers who work in sports are inspired to overcome sexist hurdles.
- **Acceptance:** Neither group of leaders agreed that women accept the barriers in sport. Both groups of leaders believed that women have the same desires and ambitions to be leaders as men, and women do not prioritize motherhood over their careers. However, significantly more of the female leaders (31%) than male leaders (19%) believed that women in sports prefer a balanced life more than they value gaining highly paid careers.

See Table 8 on the following page for the dimensions of glass ceiling that were examined and the percentage of female and male leaders who 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' with the sentiment presented. The items for which the percentages for the leaders are statistically different are denoted with asterisks.



Table 8: Perspectives of Glass Ceiling and Career Pathways for Women in Sport Leadership

Glass Ceiling and Career Pathways Items	Female Leaders Agreement	Male Leaders Agreement
Denial of Glass Ceiling in Sport Leadership:		
It will not take decades for women to reach equality with men in high level management positions in sports. ***	23%	38%
Women with many skills and qualifications are recognized for promotions in sports. ***	17%	36%
Women and men have to overcome the same problems in the sport workplace.***	7%	25%
Women starting careers in sports today will not face sexist barriers. ***	4%	22%
Women's Resignation in Sport Leadership Because of the Glass Ceiling:		
Women in sports are more likely to be hurt than men are when they take big risks necessary for success. ***	47%	22%
Women who are sport leaders suffer more emotional pain than men who are sport leaders when there is a crisis within their team/departments/units. ***	27%	10%
Women sport leaders are very uncomfortable when they have to criticize members of their team/department/unit. ***	19%	6%
Being in the limelight creates many problems for women in sports.*	10%	5%
Women's Resilience for the Glass Ceiling in Sport Leadership		
When women are given opportunities to be sport leaders they do effective jobs. ***	92%	83%
The more women seek senior positions in sports, the easier it will be for women who follow them. **	91%	82%
Women have the strength to overcome discrimination in sports.	88%	82%
Daughters of successful mothers who work in sports are inspired to overcome sexist hurdles. ***	69%	50%
Higher education qualifications will help women to overcome discrimination in sports. ***	42%	47%
Women's Acceptance of the Glass Ceiling in Sport Leadership		
Women in sports prefer a balanced life more than gaining highly paid careers. ***	31%	19%
Motherhood is more important to most women in sports than career development.	16%	15%
Women in sports have do not have the same desire for power as men in sports. (a)	10%	7%
Women in sports are less concerned about promotions than men in sports are. (a)	7%	5%
Women in sports are not as ambitious in their careers as men in sports. (a)	3%	6%

Levels of Statistical Significance of Difference: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

(a) Denotes items where the leaders differed in their 'neutral' and 'disagreement' ratings, but not their 'agreement.'



Possibilities: Policies and Practices to Improve the Status of Women in Sport Leadership

As stated at the outset of this report, one of the overarching purposes of this research was to obtain data to inform the creation of policies and practices to enhance, expand, and/or improve the opportunities and experiences for women in sport leadership in Michigan. A total of 14 factors likely to have a positive impact (i.e., enhancing and improving) women's sport leadership opportunities and experiences were included in this study based on previous research and information gleaned from various conversations with sport leaders in Michigan and in various parts of the United States. The leaders were asked to assess the likely impact of the policies and practices identified using a scale with options ranging from "Very Negative Impact" to "Very Positive Impact."

The Chi-Square analyses revealed differences in the female and male leaders' perceptions of all of the practices listed except one: the offering of Title IX or gender equity workshops. Both groups of leaders similarly considered these types of workshops to have a positive impact on improving the status of women in sport leadership in Michigan. Three notable (and most dramatic) differences between the female and male leaders were their perceptions of the likely impact of: (a) implementing the female equivalent of a 'Rooney Rule'; (b) requiring a state-mandated gender equity review and report; and to a lesser extent (c) establishing a permanent Michigan entity with oversight and authority to monitor and ensure gender equity in sports. All three of these items were perceived to have a positive impact on the status of women in sport leadership in Michigan by significantly more of the female than male leaders.

Although the perceptions of the female and male leaders differed, the top seven most impactful practices as perceived by both groups of leaders to improve the status of women in sport leadership in Michigan were:

- Enhancing the visibility of Michigan's women sport leaders.
- Offering training and professional development opportunities for girls and women in Michigan with career aspirations in sport.
- Establishing pay equity for Michigan women in sport leadership.
- The establishment of a formal mentoring program for women in Michigan
- The establishment of a Michigan women's sport leadership network.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion training for sport organizations in Michigan.
- Michigan sport organizations' adherence to or implementing child care and paid leave policies.

See Table 9 on the following page for the complete list of the policies and practices examined and the percentage of the female and male leaders who deemed them impactful in improving the status of women in sport leadership in Michigan by evaluating them as "Somewhat Positive" or "Very Positive." The asterisks for the policies and practices where the frequencies reported by the female and male leaders are statistically different are denoted with asterisks.



Table 9: Policies and Practices to Improve the Status of Michigan Women in Sport Leadership

Policies and Practices for Women's Sport Leadership	Female Leaders Positive	Male Leaders Positive
Enhanced visibility of women sport leaders throughout the state of Michigan.***	94%	89%
Training and professional development opportunities for girls and women in Michigan who are interested in a career in sports.*	94%	88%
Establishing pay equity for women in sport leadership.***	92%	77%
The establishment of a formal Michigan mentoring program for women in sports.***	90%	87%
The establishment of a Michigan women's sport leadership network.***	89%	77%
Diversity, equity, and inclusion training for sport organizations in Michigan.*	86%	76%
Michigan sport organization's adherence to child care and paid leave policies to counter pregnancy discrimination.**	84%	75%
Bringing professional women's sports to Michigan.***	80%	71%
More promotion of Michigan's semi-professional women's sport teams.***	79%	61%
The establishment of a permanent Michigan commission or entity with the oversight and authority to monitor/audit and ensure gender equity in sports.***	78%	55%
Rewarding and incentivizing sport organizations that have achieved or made significant efforts and/or improvement in gender equity in the ranks of leadership.***	77%	63%
Requiring sport organizations in Michigan to participate in a state-mandated gender equity in sport leadership review and report (every 3-5 years).***	74%	44%
Title IX and other related workshops on gender equity offered throughout the state of Michigan.	74%	65%
Offering the female equivalent of a 'Rooney Rule' requiring Michigan's sport organizations to interview women for leadership positions.***	72%	39%

Level of Statistical Significance of the Differences: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Other Suggestions: The leaders were also allowed to offer any other suggestions beyond those identified in the list of possible solutions. Among the other suggestions offered for improving the status of women in sport leadership included:

- Grants for Michigan sport organizations who want to help with child care costs.
- Policies to promote work-life balance.
- A best practices manual for sport organizations at all levels with training and sample policies and processes.
- More recruitment of women as sport coaches and administrators in general, and the recruitment of more women of Color in particular.



Discussion: Pathways to Progress

"... the most common issues for women seem to be a lack of understanding of how to get to be a sports leader and then how to do the job when they get there. I think that if we can do a better job of educating on the path they can better prepare and set goals to get there" (Comment by Sport Leader Respondent).

"Pathways will be created once women are placed in the high level roles --I know that, how to get them there is the question, and I am really not sure... This will not happen until women are taken more seriously. Until all individuals are able to see women as not only their peer but as an authoritative, knowledgeable and competent figure" (Comment by Sport Leader Respondent).

The results of this research offered rich insight into 'Pathways to Progress' for women in sport leadership, as the above comments from two of the leaders who participated in this research referenced. Following is a general integrated summary analysis of the core areas examined in this research. For additional insight, comments from the leaders that were offered in the free recall/open-ended questions are included in this section as a supplement or complement to the overall nature of the quantitative results. The areas to be discussed include: (a) creating a leadership pipeline, (b) sport leadership career satisfaction and work well-being (c) sport organizational culture, (d) gender equity, (e) gender and intersecting identities, (f) racial and ethnic diversity, (g) the glass ceiling, (h) structural and systemic barriers, and (i) solutions and suggestions for improvement.

Sport Leadership Pipeline: Getting Girls and Women in the 'Game'

The results of the demographic profile of the sport leaders in this study revealed that there is not one direct or specific academic path to sport leadership, as the leaders received content knowledge and academic training in various disciplines. However, given the importance of advanced education to the leaders' profile, it is important that women pursue graduate degrees. Colleges and universities throughout the state of Michigan offer such opportunities. Additionally, the more important leadership pipeline seemed to be athletics participation, since 96% of the overall sample of female and male leaders were former or current athletes. This finding supports the need to nurture and develop female athletes (via mentorship, internships, etc.) for careers in sport leadership. Again, the state of Michigan offers a wealth of athletic participation opportunities at various levels with access to female student-athlete to create an effective leadership pipeline for women in sports. Given the role of being resilient to women's leadership effectiveness, it is likely that such resilience is/can be nurtured and honed through athletics participation.



Girls' & Women's Athletic Participation as a Pipeline to Leadership



Following are a few of the many comments offered by the sport leaders that addressed the salience of athletics as a pipeline for increasing the number of women in sport leadership:

- *"I feel the next generation of female athletes has the potential to gain a greater piece of ground in sport leadership."*
- *"For women, I think it is about two things, who you know, and whether or not you played professionally (with relative success), then you are more capable of finding a route to being a sport leader."*
- *"We need to be doing a better job encouraging our young girls to think about continuing after their athletic careers are over. I regularly remind/preach to all of my athletes that they should plan to give back to the sport they love - as a coach, official or just as a supportive parent."*

Sport Leadership Career Satisfaction and Work Well-Being: 'Pride and Joy'

The results revealed that the male leaders were more satisfied with their overall sport leadership careers as well as the individual aspects of their careers. The female leaders were 'fairly' satisfied with their sport leadership careers, with the exception of their income (this will be addressed later in this discussion). Notwithstanding females' dissatisfaction with their salaries and other dimensions of their sport careers, they generally enjoyed their work and were vibrant Michigan sport leaders. These results illustrated the need for sport organizations to regularly assess the quality of the experiences of the individuals employed therein, noting any disparate findings and sources of discontent for the women. These results also suggested the need for sport organizations to accentuate the pride that 97% of both group of sport leaders expressed and celebrate the joys of working in sports.

Michigan Sports' Organizational Culture: A "Masculinity Contest"

The quantitative results revealed that the female and male leaders had significantly different perceptions of the Michigan sports' organizational culture, with the female leaders perceiving them to reflect a masculine contest culture (Glick et al., 2012) significantly more than the male leaders. Additionally, the organizational culture of masculinity adversely impacted the female leaders' assessment of their overall career satisfaction and their well-being at work. Following are a few of the many open-ended comments offered by the sport leaders that supplemented the quantitative findings and addressed the need for making sport workplaces more diverse and inclusive of all women, and less of those sustaining and perpetuating ideals of masculinity:

- *"We need to make the athletic workplace inclusive and be done with the "old boys club" feel. We need leadership to set policy and examples of work-life balance. We need to change perceptions that being a "working-mom" is a bad thing that negatively effects our work production and advancement."*
- *"...Continued focus on creating a diverse work environment has immense benefits for all those involved including the young lives being shaped and molded throughout the athletic and educational journey. I have seen many work environments resisted to gender diversity at first but when it does occur, the positive impact is beyond measure."*



- *"During my 15 years in collegiate athletics I was repeatedly subject to the "old boys network" and denied opportunities for advancement or recognition from supervisor and university leadership. For ten years there were no female head coaches and ... only [three] full time females in our department I was told on multiple occasions that, despite my leadership positions in our conference organization, I was not qualified for advancement at the university. After 10 years I left, due in part to lack of diversity in our department and lack of support The first thing they did was hire a male replacement."*

Since the majority of the males who participated in this research were employed at the senior rank, it is critically important that steps be taken to help male sport leaders throughout the state of Michigan to recognize/identify, assess, and address the manner in which sport workplaces may be unconsciously 'normalizing' masculine ideals, social roles, and gendered expectations for sport leadership that creates a 'boys club' that 'displaces' and adversely impacts women. The development of a standardized tool(s) to assess Michigan sport organizations' operative (as opposed to their aspirational) cultures may be very helpful in this regard.

Gender Inequity: An Uneven Work 'Playing Field'

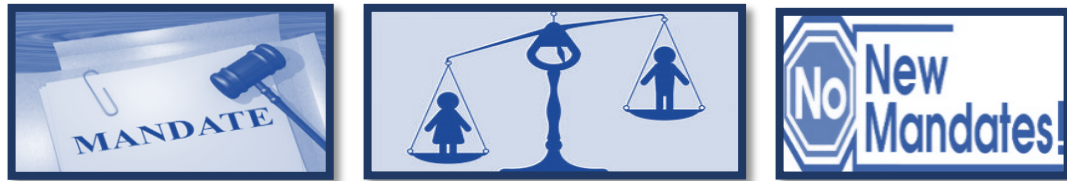
The quantitative results revealed that female and male leaders had very different perspectives about the extent to which their sport organizations embodied and practiced gender equity, with the female leaders' assessment being significantly less favorable. These results suggested a need for greater transparency in the ways in which sport organizations in Michigan are operating to create what the female leaders perceived to be an uneven terrain on the workplace 'playing field.' These results also substantiated the need to highlight the expressed and implied biases and nuances embedded in hiring, promotions, performance evaluations, wages and compensation, allocation of resources, etc. that may unjustly and unfairly impact women's sport leadership opportunities and the experiences of the participants in girls' and women's sports. Two of the many open-ended comments pertaining to gender equity seemed to reinforce the quantitative findings and capture the sentiments of the female sport leaders:

- *"Gender inequality goes deeper than male vs. female roles, but how the roles themselves are perceived. Traditionally female held roles are often seen as administrative or support/office positions, rather than strategic leadership positions. Shifting the perception of these roles away from "office support" to demonstrate why these areas deserve a "seat at the table" will also help to combat gender inequalities."*
- *"Establishing a system of True and Total Accountability is the only way to truly move forward transparently and accurately."*

The last comment was particularly reflective of the findings from the quantitative analysis revealing the female leaders' sentiment that having established policies and procedures for accountability will be paramount to achieving gender equity in sport leadership. There was also significant disagreement between the female and male leaders over the effectiveness of mandates to accomplish this feat. The results revealed that substantially more of the female than male leaders were in favor of having some mandates to ensure gender equity and equal opportunities for women in sport leadership.



For example, more female than male leaders believed that the state of Michigan should: (a) institute the 'female' equivalent of the Rooney Rule requiring women to be interviewed for leadership positions (72% and 39%, respectively), (b) require sport organizations to participate in a state-mandated gender equity in sport leadership review and report every 3-5 years (74% and 44%, respectively), and (c) establish a permanent commission with the oversight and authority to monitor and ensure gender equity in sport (78% and 55%, respectively).



As the graphics above convey, the female and male sport leaders had significantly different perspectives on the role of mandates in improving the status of women in sport leadership, with the female leaders being proponents of mandates to ensure gender equity. Some of the reservations about the impact of mandates to ensure/enhance women's opportunities and experiences as sport leaders were expressed in the open-ended comments the leaders provided. The following are some of the comments that articulated the concerns:

- *"I don't think polices and mandated training is the answer, they just create frustration from those who have to go through it. We need to create a better culture around sports administration and the impacts women can have on it."*
- *"Don't try to control it, just influence it. I don't want to be the "token" woman in an organization. The barriers established by the "good old boy" networks in all corporate segments are coming down as girls see women being successful. Mandates will make these girls/women be resented."*
- *"The gender bias in schools ... has been shocking. I'm disgusted with the words, actions, and decisions that have been made ... [that] often perpetuate the biases, discrimination, and trauma... Although I believe having female leadership in sport is essential to turning the tides of discrimination, our nation's history (and current climate) point to a very large stigma that comes with any affirmative action-type policy.... It can be incredibly frustrating to see women passed up for certain positions that they are well-qualified for (I've been in this position). However, I'm not sure placing women in these positions will do much to reduce the gender bias in sport -- if anything, I think it will lead to more anger and animosity toward females in leadership positions. ... I do fear that the hard work and dedication of female leaders in sport will be erased or overshadowed by a policy that places women in positions of power...."*

Gender and Identities: Inequity at the Intersections

The quantitative results revealed that the female and male leaders differed in their perceptions of how women are treated in their respective sport organizations based on demographic characteristics, identities, orientations, and status, with the female leaders' assessment being significantly less favorable. Following are several of the many open-ended comments offered by the female sport leaders that addressed the demographic intersections in which many women in sport leadership must contend, notably based on their age, appearance, and race/ethnicity:



- *"...both my age and gender are constantly pointed out and thrown in my face by others (students, parents, colleagues, administrators, etc.). My age and gender seem to always be the topic of conversation -- as if I'm unaware of it. I'm too young, too inexperienced, too attractive, too... everything & anything! These inherent characteristics prevent me from getting paid for one of my coaching gigs...."*
- *"Every day I face issues of underlying sexism and discrimination due to my age and appearance. I'm hoping Michigan will develop new laws and requirements for sports businesses and their female employees."*
- *"I never felt like my age or gender had an effect on my success. Actually, people thought a young, uneducated female couldn't do everything I did so I was actually able to get ahead. No one was intimidated by me therefore I was able to 'fly under the radar.'"*
- *"Women in sports is already a small fraction, but Black and other minority women in sports is an even smaller within the pool of females. Attention must be addressed in this area, as it limits the mentorship, advancement, and support for these smaller sub-communities of women."*
- *"More needs to be done to expand efforts of sports recruitment to more women of Color, particularly Black women. ... women of Color (WOC) are kept from professional opportunities not based on their gender but their race. My company is full of women in various roles--but they're all white women. All of the suggestions listed for fostering gender diversity need to be used in conjunction with racial diversity. ... WOC have a markedly different experience in the world, and in sports, than their white counterparts."*
- *"I have been in multiple sports leadership roles, from collegiate coach, high school athletic administration, and now Collegiate Administration. For me it is an issue with not just being a woman but being a minority woman in athletic leadership. Schools are not as supportive. You are faced with multiple road blocks and it becomes a fight that you rather not deal with. Overall you stay because of your passion and love for your student-athletes. For me, my athletes see my daily struggles no matter how hard I try to hide them. It's uncomfortable and frustrating for them."*

Since the majority of the male leaders who participate in this research were employed in senior ranking positions, and they perceived the treatment of all women in their workplaces to be 'good,' it is important that Michigan sport leaders take care in not treating sex/gender as a monolithic ascription. Michigan sport leaders must be cognizant of the manner in which 'sex' is contoured by a number of variables (age, appearance, race/ethnicity, ability, etc.) to create women's composite identity that exerts a negative impact on their treatment in the workplace and thus, their sport leadership opportunities and experiences. As such, there is a need for programs to simultaneously and concurrently address matters of sexism (in all of its various permeations) as they intersect with ageism, racism, ableism, etc.



Racial and Ethnic Diversity: Time Out! ... All In!

Although the gender composition of the leaders who participated in this research was comparable and there was some variation in the sport leaders' age, the sample of sport leaders represented very limited racial diversity. Nonetheless, the results also revealed that significantly more of the female than male leaders did not believe that women were treated equitably based on their racial/ethnic identity. Moreover, 85% of the male leaders assessed women's treatment based on their race or ethnicity to be the most favorable. However, as some of the open-ended comments illustrated, Black women and other women of Color are subjected to unfair treatment in unique ways, consequent to the manner in which race and ethnicity often intersects with gender. As illustrated in the previous comments on gender identity and intersectionality, there is a need to infuse elements of racial diversity and practices for anti-racism into programs seeking to impact gender diversity, otherwise the needs and challenges of women of Color will continue to go unaddressed. As one of the leaders specifically commented:

- *"A commitment to not just hiring White women but women of Color for senior leadership roles. A commitment to promoting and fostering inclusive environments for people of Color, not just White women."*

Given the multicultural appeal of sports, its stakeholders, and constituents, intentional and strategic efforts are particularly needed to increase the racial/ethnic diversity among Michigan sport leaders in general, and among the women who are sport leaders in particular. Additionally, given the importance of role models there is a need to create dedicated and intentional programs at each level of sport that will groom and inspire girls and women of Color for sport leadership positions. The Ross Initiative for Sports Equality that is housed in the state of Michigan may play a pivotal role in this regard.

Perils of Women's Sport Leadership: Structural and Systemic

Based on previous research, a number of barriers (at the macro, meso, and micro levels) were examined in this research as likely obstructions for women in sport leadership. The quantitative results revealed that the more prominent barriers were structural and systemic in nature (institutional, ideological, cultural, etc.), and not individual factors specifically anchored to deficiencies in women's career pursuits, skills, or job performance relative to sport leadership. However, the male leaders did not perceive the barriers to the same extent as the females. The barriers the female reported to the greatest extent were 'gendered' in nature and based on: (a) the stereotypes and perceptions that sport leadership is a male domain; (b) gender biases towards women in sport leadership (in recruitment, hiring, salaries, promotions, advancement, etc.); and (c) gendered norms that permeate sport. The male leaders also agreed (albeit to a significantly less extent than the female leaders) with the stereotypes and perceptions that leadership is a male characteristic and gendered norms that permeate the culture of sport being barriers for women. The female leaders offered numerous comments in the open-ended responses that reiterated the extent to which the barriers impacted them emotionally, psychologically, and financially. Following are a few of the comments that offer deep insight and reflection into the systemic gender discrimination some of the female sport leaders experience:

- *"It is hard being a female sports leader You have to find the line between being confident and knowing when not to say anything... "*



- *"One of my challenges as a female working in athletics is finding the best approach to handle the sexist comments that occur at meetings/conferences where I am often the only female in the room."*
- *"When I speak about issues and concerns I am told to "calm down" and to "not get so worked up" when the same behavior by males of the group is met with praise for assertiveness. I am 100% tired of this crap and having being dealing with some form of gender discrimination in a sport leadership position for the entirety of my career."*
- *"Being a young professional in the sports industry in Michigan can be tough at times, especially also being female. We will never be a part of the "old boy's club" and will continue to struggle busting our butts for little pay with unequal benefits. It's also difficult when you have a (all male) leadership team that doesn't see all the hours/hard work you put into gamedays and tournaments, etc. They're the face of the company making the \$ and taking the credit for our work. It's hard not being recognized financially for all that we do for our organizations."*
- *"My high school and athletic department valued my experience and treated me with respect, but I did not always receive the same from other coaches and schools in my conference, district, etc. ... I was the youngest head coach by a number of years and one of [a few] head coaches in the conference and district. Most of the coaches were men that had been in their position for 15+ years (some were 30+ year veterans). I was talked down to, questioned on my knowledge of the rules and my qualifications for the position. My opinions were dismissed when it came to league and district meetings, and it was made clear to me that any opinion or idea I had that was not "status quo" would be immediately dismissed. I am no longer in that environment, but I know others who are. Young female coaches are often shut down and/or driven out when they attempt to advocate for the best interest of current athletes - particularly when it involves change in policy, current scheduling practices, or rule changes."*
- *"I often wonder about my ability to continue long-term (it's not like the financial compensation makes the gender bias worthwhile). I often find myself frustrated and angry at my male counterparts because they don't have to endure what I do (much of which was described in the survey). A person can only take so much and take it for so long before the degradation is internalized and they wonder why they even entered this profession (teaching & coaching) to begin with. To enter a system so optimistic, then to let that system chew you up and spit you out... to give in to that system and betray all that you've said you will fight against (and not let these things happen to you), it's a terrible feeling. I stay for the students/athletes I serve, encourage, and mentor. ... after only [a few] years in the profession (teaching & coaching). It's done a number on me. I hope to stay and I hope to play a part in improving sport in Michigan to reflect the safe and supportive environment I crave."*
- *"Sexual harassment is another obstacle for women in the sports profession. I've had clients make comments about classes being discounted because it was "being run by a young woman." I'm certain he meant it as a joke, but it isn't funny when statistically women are already going to get paid less money. ... there's no escaping that you become "that girl" to clients and some coworkers."*



As the collection of quantitative and qualitative results revealed, changing the landscape for women in sport leadership in the state of Michigan will require clearly illuminating the challenges they face that are largely rooted in sexism and gender inequity. Addressing the stereotypes, perceptions, and gendered norms in sport leadership is a place to start the critical conversations, given their prominence among the female leaders and their modest acknowledgement by at least half of the male leaders. This would require educating those who are unaware of the expressed and implied ways in which gender inequity is entrenched and embedded into sport organizational cultures and thus, operative in sport workplaces. It will be particularly important to bring these matters to the attention of men in sport leadership (based on the fact that the male leaders who participated in this research did not perceive the various workplace factors to be barriers to the same extent as the female leaders).

Perils of Women's Sport Leadership: 'Cement' Ceilings and 'Broken' Career Ladders

The quantitative results revealed that the female and male leaders had very different perspectives about the components of the 'glass ceiling' purported to impede women's careers in sport leadership. Neither group of leaders were in agreement that women in sports *accept* the concept of the glass ceiling. However, a greater percentage of the male leaders tended to *deny* the existence of the glass ceiling. This finding revealed the need for more transparency in processes and procedures to eliminate the 'invisible' factors that men are ('denying' or) not perceiving as barriers to the career trajectory of women in sport leadership.

A greater percentage of the female leaders gave credence to the concept of sport career *resignation*, the factors that may cause women's refrain regarding career advancement - notably due to women in sports being more likely than men to be hurt when they take big risks for success. Given the consequences of the risks that the female leaders perceived as detrimental to women in sport leadership, this finding highlighted the need for systemic support that will allow women in sport leadership to take the necessary risks for their career advancement.

The findings also revealed that both group of leaders generally agreed that women had the *resilience* to overcome the glass ceiling in sport leadership. Moreover, significantly more of the female leaders believed that successful women who work in sport inspire their daughters to overcome sexist hurdles. The findings supporting women's resilience highlighted the need to share the stories of female sport leaders to celebrate their resolve and inspire their daughters as the next generation of sport leaders. These findings also reiterated the need for having mothers in sport leadership as strong role models. Three of the many comments offered by the sport leaders in the open-ended responses underscored this perspective.

- *"I have been coaching for a long time, and now my daughter, who is a senior in high school, is coaching also. She could become a college coach, or an administrator with an athletic dept. I feel the only reason she is on this path, is because of the example I have set for her" (Female Sport Leader).*
- *"I think there is great potential for female leadership in sports at an administrative and coaching level. My wife has been an athlete and coach for many years and I have 11 nieces that are or have been highly involved in athletics at the club, high school and collegiate level. Having mothers that have played, are coaching and leading them gives them the vision to become sport leaders" (Male Sport Leader).*



- *"I've raised my daughter to know she can do anything. You often here people said "so and so said I can do anything" my daughter KNOWS she can conquer the world because I SHOW HER THROUGH MY ACTIONS. Examples speak louder than words" (Female Sport Leader).*

Significantly more of the female leaders agreed that women in sports prefer a balanced life more than they value gaining highly paid careers. These findings supported the need for systemic support to allow women in sport leadership in general and mothers in particular, to achieve work-life balance. The number of open-ended responses freely offered by the sport leaders that pertained to the challenge of having a family while working in sport were substantial and voluminous. They further substantiated the prevalence of family-related issues (marital status and child status) as a challenge to women's ascent in sport leadership. The challenges women face based on the social roles attached to being a wife and/or mother and the lack of financial support from the respective sport entities for childcare, maternity leave, etc. were illuminated throughout this research. Among the many comments offered by the leaders that add insight into this issue include the following:

- *"I passed an opportunity for leadership because I was going to be a new mother. I still don't want that position because I know that it would take away time from my family."*
- *"...Most of the time, the longer you coach, the better you become at it - but women are still stuck "working and managing households" while men are more relieved of household responsibility...."*
- *"In my opinion the number one barrier to women STAYING involved in sports as a career is their ability to take care of their family and do their job or put in the time to advance in their career. I have heard it out of every single female that has left our organization. Most often careers in sports have responsibilities of the normal work day AND evenings and weekends. I would love to see grant opportunities for organizations to get funding to help with childcare costs beyond the 8am - 5pm timeframe. Help organizations create family friendly workplaces."*
- *"Coaching at a high school level is challenging. Coaches typically do it for the love of their (previous) sport and/or to supplement a (teaching/social workers) income. Female coaches are often in other care taking or child centered/focused careers. And more often are balancing that along with carrying the weight of raising children. These qualities and strength based qualities make women critical and valuable leaders in the sports leadership arena."*
- *".... Our program is a small, non-profit community program and we don't have access to the finances needed to support a potential female coach who may take a maternity leave."*
- *"Affording women and men senior leaders to spend time with their families and not be punished or demoted as a result will help inspire youth to seek these positions."*
- *"There needs to be better solutions for new mothers and availability for childcare."*



- *"Motherhood and the work/life balance issues that come with it was something that drove some women from the career they were having in sports from my experience. Policies and/or practices that could help that would be tangible ways in which women in sport could be helped versus the traditional ways of mentorship programs, etc. We had a female trainer that traveled a good amount so we paid for her child and spouse to travel with her on one long trip per year. Unfortunately, that was all we could afford and eventually, she left her position when the second child came along. Sport leadership positions are time-intensive positions so any help with child care etc. would be helpful in retaining women in sport leadership positions."*
- *"I think it's important to find ways to retain women in sports leadership positions and the biggest obstacle that I see is how to balance family and career. It requires a lot of sacrificing of the traditional female roles and having support both at work and home is crucial to retaining women in leadership positions from what I've observed. I've had a fantastic boss who has supported my family goals and helped me close the salary gap with my male counterparts so that we can afford additional support for childcare costs and to help my family. By the same token I have seen other female coaches that have not been so fortunate to have the support."*

Perhaps the fact that substantial number of the males compared to the females who participated in this research were married (80% and 57%, respectively) and had children (74% and 44%, respectively), accentuates how marital status and child status are particular impediments to women's sport leadership experiences and aspirations. Since the majority of the female and male leaders (84% and 75%, respectively) believed that requiring Michigan sport organizations to adhere to child care and paid leave policies to counter pregnancy discrimination would increase/enhance the representation of women in sport leadership, this could be a 'low hanging fruit' policy that would seemingly be one with widespread support among female and male leaders alike. Additionally, some of the leaders suggested that offering grants and other resources to assist sport organizations in addressing this would help in providing a more family friendly workplace for women. As one of the male sport leaders commented:

- *"As a male, I know I didn't have to face [the issue women face], so any policies or programming that could be done to assist women leaders in sport who become mothers would be of great help!"*

Another issue that was revealed throughout the quantitative results and further highlighted in the open-ended comments was pay inequity. Following are a few of the many many comments the leaders offered regarding how the pay inequity creates challenges that are exacerbated by women's domestic roles and familial obligations:

- *"We need equal pay. We need equal pay. We need equal pay. Then there is more opportunity to pursue both career and motherhood goals, more choices for families who may have a promising female leader but due to inequity choose to have the partner occupation be the lead."*
- *"Pay is the biggest problem facing women in sports at almost every level and sport. I have worked as a head coach at the youth (club), high school, and collegiate levels and as the general manager of a women's professional team (not in MI). Pay for most positions I held was not sufficient to support a family of 4. This was especially true for so-called "non-revenue" sports at the D1 collegiate level and most coaching positions in NCAA D2 or D3."*



"I was devastated to have to leave my dream career to be able to raise my kids (as a single mom) on a livable salary. I stay involved in sports because it is just in my DNA, but dearly wish it could have paid the bills. In my current role ... in a community youth sports organization in MI, I don't receive pay at all--I run it as a volunteer."

- *"When women don't get equitable pay in Sports Leadership positions, it becomes harder to choose having a career over staying at home with your children. Women are asked to have a career like they don't have children and be a mom as if you don't have a career. The pressures that this puts on women is insurmountable. We need to celebrate the woman that is trying to have both with flexibility and equitable pay and stop reprimanding her for being "unwilling" to put in extra hours or making the "wrong" decisions."*

As these comments illustrate, pay equity for women exerts a systemic impact on their sport careers in various ways. The addition of pay inequity to the collective impact of organizational, ideological, and sociocultural barriers in the workplace often create 'cemented' (as opposed to glass) ceilings and 'broken' career ladders for women's advancement in sport leadership.

Winning Ways: Women in Sport Leadership

Just as the results from the quantitative (scaled items responses) and qualitative (open-ended responses) analyses revealed that the barriers and challenges women in sport leadership face were primarily rooted in the culture of gender ideology, so too was the essence of the solutions offered. As one leader commented:

- *"There is a long road ahead regarding equity, cultural attitudes need to change."*

The factors the female leaders perceived to be most impactful in improving the status of women in sport leadership may be broadly categorized in two domains.

- One domain consisted of policies with accountability that will 'un-gender' sport organizational cultures and change (eradicate) the institutionalization of the masculinity that pervades sport leadership. Among the most notable policies (and support/assistance to implement them) needed are those that will address situations of pay equity for women in sport, and family and child care considerations.
- The second domain of solutions consisted of a myriad of practices and endeavors that will inspire girls and women and promote and facilitate their interest and readiness for careers in sport leadership. Such endeavors should include but are not limited to marketing/enhanced visibility of women in sport, featuring women as role models in sport, offering training/professional development for girls and women who are interested in careers in sport, and establishing mentoring and support networks for girls and women in sport.

On the following page are some of the many comments that further addressed: (a) the need for more visibility of women in sport leadership; (b) the salience of role models and mentors for girls and women in sport; and (c) a need to focus on youth sport leadership.



- Visibility, Recognition, and Celebrations of Women in Sport in Michigan:

- *"Recognize female leaders in sport ... those that rise to the top often have to overcome more obstacles than their male peers."*
- *"The more visibility of success and opportunity for girls, the faster the gap closes."*
- *"The development of girls' confidence, leadership, and ability to see themselves at the "next level" is imperative. When our youth grow up and aspire to hold a place in leadership in women's sports, they need to see that it is attainable. Putting women in leadership positions aids the development of our youth, as well as other women who aspire to hold these positions."*
- *"Recognize companies that promote women in sports. Help promote National Women's Sports Day. Promote or feature outstanding women in sports during Women's History Month."*
- *"I think a networking event for female leaders in sport would be a great opportunity to learn from and collaborate with other female leaders."*
- *"A banquet should be created to honor women in athletic administration who have achieved success (HS, JUCO, NCAA, and NAIA). Our women need to see as women we are breaking the glass ceiling. This can also be done for our standout athletes as well."*
- *"I love publicizing female student-athletes. I love to follow athletics - male and female - equally. They have different qualities but are also very similar. Encouraging and celebrating female athletic participation and leadership is a must!"*

- Role Models and Mentors:

- *"I think mentoring women in sports is one of the most important things we can do. Helping women learn how to navigate a very male-dominated field is huge."*
- *"I believe it starts when girls are young. If you ask a young girl to name a professional basketball player, most likely she will name a male. Young girls have to be able to see themselves in the role models we put in front of them. If we continually promote and broadcast male sports, they will define athletes as men. We need to show young girls the MANY career paths that are available to them in athletics."*
- *"Representation matters!!!!"*
- *"....We always hear that you can't be what you can't see. Let's break that trend and give our young women something to see and believe that they can achieve."*



- *"I asked my 10 year old daughter "what she wants to be when she grows up" the other day and she said she wants to be a football coach! A big reason is because of Coach Sowers with the 49ers, so role models have a tremendous impact and to do this work to create avenues for females in sport leadership is an awesome venture...!"*
- *"Empowerment is key, seeing women who are successful is very important..."*

One of the male sport leaders offered a poignant reflection of how he has witnessed the impact of women coaches' empowering female student-athletes, and how that has also impacted him as a leader:

- *"I work closely with 2 women that have over 65 years of coaching experience and have won literally dozens of ... Conferences Championships combined. As a male Strength & Conditioning Coach, I work closely with these two women, their coaching staffs, and female student-athletes. Over the last 10+ years, I have watched dozens of young women mature and leave our institution more world ready and empowered to be leaders in their fields of choice. ... What I've learned is that empowerment and belief in young women helps prepare them for the challenges that lie in front of them in the professional world. As leaders of these young women, the two [women] head coaches continue to represent themselves in a strong and powerful sense. They fight for equity and it's visible to their student-athletes. ... They champion the growth of young people and I continue to learn more about developing as a leader myself through my time with them."*
- Youth Sports: A number of comments were offered to address the problems of women in sport leadership by focusing on youth sports. Two such comments were:
 - *"Include program at the youth sports level for girls and boys that allow for female leadership opportunities."*
 - *"Workshops within youth sports organizations in particular - we lose far too many female coaches, leaders, at the youth levels such that it becomes unique to find them at the more advanced levels and therefore the educating of athletes, fans, [and] sponsors doesn't begin until they meet women later in the process."*





Conclusion: Championing Change for Michigan Women in Sport Leadership

"The women who are currently in leadership and coaching roles within sports are confident and understand the barriers we face. We need to find a way to make that a universal understanding with the men in sports as well. As most of the highest levels of leadership are typically taken by men, we need the support of people in those positions at this point to help change the norm" (Female Sport Leader).

As the comment above by one of the female leaders who participated in this research suggested, the fundamental purpose of this research was to gather information to create a universal understanding of the challenges women face in sport leadership and change this norm in sports. In accord with the Governor of Michigan's Executive Order, this study sought to offer a comprehensive examination of factors influencing sport leadership opportunities and experiences of Michigan's sport leaders in general, and the female sport leaders in particular. The results of this study were obtained from a sizeable sample of Michigan sport leaders in various phases of their career, who were employed in various leadership settings, and held positions in various leadership ranks. In addition to the respondents offering their perspectives via various quantitative measures (scales and ratings), they also offered a voluminous amount of qualitative data in the open-ended items that offered additional insight that further supported and supplemented the quantitative data obtained from the survey items.

The findings of this research were generally in accord with previous research on the topic of women in sport leadership (Batrol, et al., 2003; Burton, 2015; Buzuvis, 2015; Cook & Glass, 2013; Hancock & Hums, 2016; Hoffman, 2011; Lumpkin et al., 2014; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Staurowsky et al., 2020; Whisenant, 2008; Walker & Bopp, 2011, and many others). As previous research revealed, the female sport leaders who participated in this research also reported on the prevalence of gender biases; gender inequity; unfair treatment as women and due to their intersecting identities as well; lack of a supportive organizational culture; a glass ceiling impeding their career trajectory; and a host of individual, group, and system level barriers. Regarding solutions, this research affirmed similar suggestions offered in previous research regarding the need for pay equity; family and child care allowances; role models and increased visibility of women as sport leaders; and the need for intentional efforts to attract women of color in sport leadership. So, while the findings of this research generally supported previous research on this topic, this research was unique in situating the *perils, possibilities, and pathways* for women in sport leadership in a Michigan-centric context.

One of the most notable outcomes of this study was its illustration of the varied and significantly different perspectives shared by female and male sport leaders throughout the state of Michigan. However, it is likely that the sample composition contributed to some of the differences. For instance, a limitation of sample was that while over half of the male respondents were coaches, coaches comprised the least percentage of the female leaders as more of the female leaders were directors/managers and employed in other miscellaneous positions with various sport leadership roles. Undoubtedly, the leaders' assessments were framed through the lenses of the roles they occupied, and coaches may have perspectives that are vastly different from administrators, coordinators, directors, etc.



Nonetheless, the gendered dynamics revealed in this research were notable, and (as subsequent analyses revealed) did not differ based on the type of leadership position the female leaders held in sport (be it coaching, administration, or various other sport leadership roles). This finding suggested that while women should not be perceived as a homogenous group with homogeneous leadership experiences, there appears to be some shared commonalities in their experiences as female sport leaders in the state of Michigan.

Despite the challenges they faced, the female sport leaders who participated in this research reported a sense of exuberance and vitality while doing their work, and they were proud to be sport leaders. However, sport organizational cultures of masculinity and the pervasiveness of gender inequity significantly and adversely impacted their sport career satisfaction and their work-related well-being. Therefore, while women's internal empowerment for a career in sport leadership is laudable and important, their progress will not be sustained without systematic and organizational change: (a) changing the sport organizational cultures to be less of a 'masculinity contest' and changing their climates to be more inclusive of all women – regardless of their unique and/or defining characteristics; (b) making gender equity the norm – i.e., 'baked' into the fabric of the organizational culture via accountability and organizational policies, procedures, and practices relative to sport leadership; (c) breaking the metaphorical glass ceiling by challenging, contesting, and removing the disparate rungs in the 'broken' ladders to success along their career path(s); and (d) eliminating the structural and systemic barriers that are entrenched in the institution of sport leadership.

As two of the sport leaders eloquently concluded:

- *"I believe with the growth of female participation in all athletics that we will see a surge in women in leadership and coaching roles. The trend is rising for women in these roles but definitely not at the pace needed to gain equity to make it a non-issue within this profession. I believe change can be driven by policy but can only be sustained by acceptance and generational progression. But when the problem is identified hopefully behavior can change, however slightly in [the] beginning, for the better."*
- *"It begins and ends with education. What we learn as our values will likely stay with us unless there is a significant change in our thinking and practices. Creating more opportunities for women in leadership roles will help but more emphasis placed on equity in early childhood experiences will go a long way to shaping the kind of world we want to see."*

As the Governor of Michigan indicated, the inequity in women's access and opportunity to sport leadership is not only to the detriment of women, but also a detriment to this state, which will undoubtedly benefit from their talents and valuable contributions. The findings of this research offered unique insight to support the creation of data-informed and theoretically-infused recommendations to: (a) address the inequities in sport, and (b) position Michigan as an exemplar and a beacon for championing change for women in sport leadership. Please see Table 10 on the following page for a summary of policies and practices suggested by this research endeavor to *champion change* for Michigan women in sport leadership.





Table 10: Championing Change for Michigan Women in Sport Leadership

Policies to Improve the Status of Michigan Women in Sport Leadership	
1)	Instituting a procedure for ensuring pay equity for Michigan women in sport leadership.
2)	Requiring Michigan sport organizations to adhere to and/or implement child care and family leave support programs to prevent/counter pregnancy discrimination, and offering grants and other resources to assist them in this regard.
3)	Requiring Michigan sport organizations to submit a comprehensive "Gender Equity in Sport Report" every 3-5 years.
4)	Requiring a process (akin to a "Rooney Rule") to increase the number of qualified women interviewed as candidates for hire in Michigan sport leadership positions.
Practices to Improve the Status of Michigan Women in Sport Leadership	
1)	Implementing a statewide marketing campaign to celebrate girls/women in sport throughout Michigan.
2)	Offering state-sponsored events to recognize/celebrate girls and women in sport throughout Michigan.
3)	Promoting state-encouraged partnerships between sport entities and colleges/universities throughout Michigan to create 'Athlete to Leader' pipeline programs (with a specific focus on internships and other experiential learning opportunities for female student-athletes).
4)	Establishing a "Michigan Women in Sport Leadership Network."
5)	Establishing a "Michigan Sport Mentorship Database" for girls and women with sport leadership aspirations.
6)	Creating, producing, and disseminating a Michigan "Best Practices for Gender Equity in Sports" manual or guide.
7)	Developing a statewide measure of 'Organizational Culture' to assist Michigan sport organizations with identifying and addressing elements of a masculinity in the workplaces.
8)	Offering state-supported training, seminars, and speaker series on topics related to Sport Leadership. Such topics could include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gender Equity in Sport Leadership ✓ Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Leadership ✓ Unconscious Bias Training for Sport Leaders (in Recruitment, Hiring, Promotion, Compensation) ✓ Health and Wellness and Work-Life Balance for Women in Sport Leadership ✓ Careers in Sport Leadership ✓ Conflict Resolution for Women in Sport Leadership ✓ Risk Management for Women in Sport Leadership



Sport Leaders' Expressions of Gratitude

The sport leaders who participated in this research offered very thoughtful responses and insightful comments. Many of them were grateful to have been given the opportunity to participate in this research and to share their thoughts on this topic of sport leadership in Michigan. Many of them offered words of thanks and gratitude to the Governor of Michigan and to the Women in Sports Task Force for undertaking this endeavor. A small sampling of the many comments of gratitude included the following:

- *"I truly believe the start of the Women in Sports Task Force is an amazing start as it's igniting the conversation and one of the first steps in my opinion to recognizing that there are some inequalities present. We are stronger together and the more of us that are engaging in the conversation only continues to take steps forward."*
- *"I would thank the Governor for beginning this long and painful process of reducing gender bias in sport. It can (and has) felt like an uphill battle...."*
- *"This survey was great, but it was almost traumatic. I've had the pleasure of working in the sports world since I was 17 and going through this survey reminded me of how many times I was discriminated against, harassed, ignored, and not taken seriously. I'm hoping this is a small step to tackle a huge obstacle. I am excited that this is top of mind and a priority."*
- *"I am at a ... institution and 3 of my 4 administrators have been women. They have done an excellent job, and I have the utmost respect for the work they do to support us. My answers in this survey reflect our environment. I am concerned that they may not be reflected in other institutions. Thank you for studying this."*
- *"Thank you for taking the time to send this and hopefully the responses will help women in sport in MI."*
- *"I just wanted to say thank you so much for taking the time to look into this. As a young woman in the sports industry, it is inspiring to see people care about gender equality in such a male-dominated industry. I am looking forward to seeing what comes out of this. Thank you!"*
- *"I want to applaud the Governor of Michigan for organizing this Task Force. I hope that this survey is the beginning of a movement in sport - a movement to support, encourage, and make sport/sport leadership a safe and welcoming place for ALL women."*



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