

Study on the Social Consideration of Women in Athletics: Repeating the Stereotypes of Gender of the 21st Century

Estudio sobre la consideración social de la mujer en el atletismo: repitiendo los estereotipos de género del siglo XXI

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Abstract. If we try to focus on the analysis and understanding of females in the world of sports, particularly female athletes, we face major challenges. The main objective of this work is to analyse the gender stereotypes regarding the social consideration of women in athletics. The sample is made up of 362 undergraduate students of three universities in Andalusia, Spain. Nowadays, despite the progress made in recent years, women continue to be discriminated against in sports generally, and in high-performance sports specifically. 31.4% the response presented a gender stereotyping towards the assertion that athletic clubs and federations do not have more women coaches because they do not trust their dedication and performance. 31.9% of the students responded that male competitions provide more entertainment than female competitions.

Key Words: Stereotypes, Gender, Athletics, Physical Education, Sport Sociology.

Resumen. Si intentamos centrarnos en el análisis y la comprensión de las mujeres en el mundo del deporte, en particular las atletas femeninas, nos enfrentamos a grandes desafíos. El principal objetivo de este trabajo es analizar los estereotipos de género sobre la consideración social de la mujer en el atletismo. La muestra está formada por 362 estudiantes de grado de tres universidades de Andalucía, España. Hoy en día, a pesar de los avances logrados en los últimos años, las mujeres continúan siendo discriminadas en el deporte en general y en los deportes de alto rendimiento en particular. El 31.4% de las respuestas presentó un estereotipo de género hacia la afirmación de que, los clubes y federaciones de atletismo no tienen más entrenadoras porque no confían en su dedicación y desempeño. El 31.9% de los estudiantes respondió que las competencias masculinas proporcionan más entretenimiento que las competencias femeninas.

Palabras Claves: Estereotipos, Género, Atletismo, Educación Física, Sociología del Deporte.

Introduction

In an anthropological sense, we can understand culture to be the totality of the human experience accumulated and transmitted from generation to generation – that is, everything that is not mere nature but social construction (Brullet, 1996). As human beings, we learn to develop individual and social selves within the culture and the social group we are born and raised in. It is through interaction with those in our own social context that we learn language, norms, values, and beliefs. The world of sports is a very productive venue in which to learn and to understand cultures. On the one hand, the world of sports is an identity-building mechanism, according to its form of practice: in the neighbourhood, school, and professionally. In each of their forms, sports activities become socialising tools for excellence. In this regard, sports are not only

socialising tools in their obvious character as a pastime, but in a deeper sense: they are a way of learning rules that homogenise those involved, whether they play the sport or not, in the learning–practice of regulations, which ultimately extends beyond the space where the sport is practiced. On the other hand, the world of sports can mark social distinctions; it can become an instrument of social mobility and access to education, capital and, eventually, social recognition. (Haro Navejas, 2007). It is important to address the concept of gender as a cultural construction in the world of sports and its role as a socialisation strategy.

If we try to focus on the analysis and understanding of females in the world of sports, particularly female athletes, we face major challenges. Traditionally, it has been assumed that women are different than men and, thus, have different experiences in sports than men. Studies such as those of Flores Paredes & Amaru (2022) show how the inclusion of women in soccer has been treated by indifference and inequity, causing it to have little participation in political, economic, sports and social settings.

Feminist scholars have greatly contributed to this discussion, addressing the social construction of womanhood and femininity, which guides the consideration of sports closer to being viewed as a social construct that privileges men and excludes women (Felshin, 1974). It was in the 1970s that the ground breaking monograph *Sports and Gender: A Feminist Perspective on the sociology of sport* (Hall, 1978) evidenced how the behavioural, cultural, social, and psychological traits associated with a particular sex were socially constructed. This work facilitated the position of gender as the core of theoretical debates and methodological innovations in the historical analysis of sports (Struna, 1984; Parratt, 1994).

As shown by Walker and Sartore-Baldwin (2013), researchers have begun to include women in the study of sports more frequently during the past two decades. These authors note that sources of information regarding women in sport are scarce and the history of women's sports is a poorly developed field of study, generally, with no rigorous cultivation. Most of the work carried out, according to Dunning (1992), has focused on discrimination against women in sports and on the analysis of the existing forms of male domination through sports, as well as the transformations that have occurred in this aspect (cited above, in Martin, 2006). From an institutional perspective, there have been various studies on sports and their relationship to citizens. 'The State and the sporting establishment have determined diverse surveys on the massive practice of sports... the interest of sociologists for the organizations and institutions, for the ways of life and mechanisms of cultural distinction which translate into a regular flow of research and considerations on everyday sports.' (Norman, 2010, p.90). The case of women's soccer shows ways in which the participation of women in this sport comes into tension with the dominant social representations, practices and relations of gender, sexuality and sport (Alvarez Litke, 2018). In these investigations, the relationship between women and sports and their social status has been addressed.

Let us focus, therefore, on the sphere of sports management and direction. Analysis of the participation of women in management positions within institutions and organisations shows a lack of women in the sports management field. As such, relevant decisions are in the hands of men. Undoubtedly, there exist obstacles to the recognition of women's capabilities being equal to those of men within the field of sports management, although, legally, there are no barriers. In the Sports

Law of the Junta de Andalucía (Law 5/2016, July 19), sports practice is decreed as a right, in all its manifestations, under conditions of equality and freedom from discrimination. Despite the fact that there are no legal barriers, women are faced with a phenomenon described as 'the glass ceiling'. Public policies on physical culture and sports must take into account both internal and external barriers that prevent the participation of women in physical activities and competitive sports (Flores Fernandez, 2020).

This glass ceiling is used to describe the difficulties that women face as they attempt to move up in positions of responsibility professionally. It also describes the barriers they are met with in their quest to achieve professional goals for which they are trained (Valcárcel, 1997). In the case of this study, we focus on this phenomenon with respect to female elite athletes, managers, and trainers.

Gender stereotypes around social consideration recreate limitations produced and reproduced within everyday practices, power relations, and institutional arrangements of the social order in general. These also affect and take root in sports. By opening up the field of sports management to certain self-reflective questions about the challenges of gender equality and the changes that are supposedly under way in sport, we can position it within a broader sphere of critical management studies (Alvesson & Willmott, 2012).

In sum, the issues raised by these authors encourage a deeper examination of how or whether gender management practices have changed to create a more inclusive culture for women, as well as if they have a privileged masculine history rooted in the norms of sports. Whether recognised or ignored, gender power relations are an every-day issue in sports research, education, and organisations, and these have the ability to inhibit or promote change (Fullagar & Toohey, 2009). The cost of not coping with the effects of gender norms, structures, and relationships within sports organisations is significant, because it causes a potential loss of more productive and equitable possibilities for the future of sports.

Each and every one of these investigations contribute to and address the challenges of gender equality, emphasising the existing potential of greater consideration in terms of sports management, research, and organisational practices. These can be considered in different ways, which will ultimately offer greater opportunities for participation and decision-making through the inclusion of women.

Regarding the social consideration of women as coaches or training directors, the existing literature has investigated the scarce representation of women trainers and women in other leadership positions within the realm of sports. Norman conducted studies (2010, 2014) which examined high-level female coaches in the United Kingdom and their relational experiences with men within their profession. Using a study consistent with the feminist cultural approach, the ways in which sports maintain an unfavourable gender order for these women was revealed. The women showed a continuing need to demonstrate their professionalism as coaches, often within hostile and intimidating cultures. Participants reported that because they apparently proved threatening to the existing patriarchal structure, they had to gradually reduce this type of unwelcoming behaviour from men. In turn, this study highlights the need to critically explore the world of sports training in order to better understand how the male hegemony leads to the powerlessness of women as coaches. Additionally, the results of this study present the need to include socio-cultural education in the sports training curricula of the United Kingdom. In the same line, LaFontaine & Kamphoff, (2016) argue in their studies that a minimum number of women serve as head coaches of men's teams around the world. When coaching men, coaches have reported that they have difficulty establishing credibility, are one of the only coaches, and do not feel supported by administrators. The coaches stated that they enjoyed coaching the children, however, they believed that they needed to be physically competent to prove themselves while coaching a team of children. They also described the struggle to be respected and often felt that they needed to use masculine characteristics to be successful.

This hegemony described by Norman is evident not only in the overarching culture but also in the face-to-face interaction between women coaches. Walker & Sartore-Baldwin (2013) conducted a study on this hegemony in NCAA basketball in the United States, where they found that women coaches in male college basketball were rare. Women occupy 58.3% of the head coach positions in women's collegiate basketball teams, whereas they occupy only 0.01% of the head coach positions in men's basketball. The purpose of that study was to investigate the perceptions of basketball coaches and the general attitude towards female basketball coaches within the culture of the organisation, which is dominated by men. The authors offer a conclusive picture of the main participants (i.e., men's basketball

coaches of the NCAA Division I) which reinforces the hyper-masculine institutional norms that form impervious institutions. Based on previous research, eight male basketball coaches were sampled using semi-structured survey methods. Considering these findings, the authors proposed that sports managers must consider the organisational culture and individual actions in the development of policies sensitive to gender equality.

Adding to this discussion, Burton, Borland, and Mazerolle (2012) state that, in the United States (US), within Division I intercollegiate athletics, women occupy 46.4% of assistant teacher positions and 47% of athletic assistant coach positions; however, they only occupy 18.8% of management positions and head coach positions. The purpose of their study was to explore whether power issues and gender stereotypes contributed to the lack of women in leadership positions within athletic training in intercollegiate sports. Data were collected from 14 athletic coaches in Division I universities through semi-structured interviews and follow-up questions based on those interviews. The results revealed that male trainers use gender stereotypes to challenge the professional competence of the participants and, thus, reinforce masculine power over the professional life of these women. The researchers explain the struggles of female coaches at this level, demonstrating that only a small number of women achieve the position of head athletics coach.

On the contrary, the results obtained by Gomez-Gonzales, Dietl & Nessler (2019) that describe the performance of soccer teams coached by women, don't show significant differences from soccer teams coached by men in three European leagues (France, Germany and Norway). In the same way, Darvin, Pegoraro & Berri (2018) assures that women head coaches in basketball in the United States are reaching the same levels of success of male head coaches.

This allows us to see and analyse the inequality faced by female coaches and managers in athletics, and that we are all agents of intervention in each of the manifestations that we allow or obviate, which we are ultimately condemned to perpetuate or resist with our actions and opinions. For this reason, it is important to know the beliefs and attitudes of future professionals in the world of sports regarding the stereotypes around the social consideration of female athletics. Knowing this will allow us to propose and plan actions to eliminate these stereotypes, and build a more flexible, consistent, and active sports training approach. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to analyse the gender

stereotypes regarding the social consideration of women in athletics.

Methodology

This study is framed within a descriptive and transversal methodology, with an ex-post facto design. From the point of view of the data collection technique, this research is framed within survey-type studies, oriented towards the description of a given situation.

The sample under study was obtained through incidental sampling. It is made up of 362 students who are in the last year of the Bachelor of Science in Physical Activity and Sports (BPE) programme of three universities in Andalusia, Spain, enrolled in the subject of athletics. Out of the total number of participants, 71.6% are men and 28.4% are women.

Regarding the age of the participants, 90.4% are between 20 and 25 years old; 6.6% between 26 and 30 years old; 2.1% between 31 and 36 years old; and 0.9% are over 36 years old.

Instrument

An ad hoc questionnaire was designed for this investigation, to collect data within the specific field of athletics. This questionnaire was prepared with a total of 72 items, around five dimensions: 1) Gender stereotypes about the female body in athletics; 2) Gender stereotypes regarding the competences and capacities of men and women in athletics; 3) Stereotyped conceptions of gender with reference to different athletic specialties; 4) Gender stereotypes regarding behaviour profiles of men and women in athletics; 5) Gender stereotypes regarding the social consideration of women in athletics.

In order to determine the validity of the questionnaire, a validation was carried out using four expert judgments (1 in Athletics; 1 in Research, methodology and data collection processes; and 2 in Gender & Sport), construct validity, and reliability using the Pearson correlation coefficient. A Likert-type scale was also used, with a scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). For reliability analysis, we used Cronbach's alpha, which is based on the average inter-element correlation, as a reliability model; this gave a result of 0.746 for dimension 5 analysed in this work 'Gender stereotypes regarding the social consideration of women in athletics', indicating a high level of reliability (George & Mallery 2003, p.231).

The factorial analysis used was a Varimax rotation,

which is an orthogonal rotation method that minimises the number of variables with high saturations in each factor, simplifying the interpretation of the factors.

Finally, the nonparametric Mann–Whitney U test was used for the contrast or hypothesis test.

As a result of all the tests mentioned above, which were applied to dimension five of the ad hoc questionnaire, three factors were obtained for this dimension. Procedure

The research project was presented to the academic authorities of the university who gave their approval for its execution. Later and during the sessions with the athletic subjects, the project was presented to the students, along with its purpose, encouraging their participation. Its voluntary nature and the anonymous treatment of the data obtained were highlighted. Finally, the students accessed the questionnaire online; it was made available on the network, independent of the presence of the main researchers. The response time of the entire questionnaire did not exceed 20 minutes (72 items, 5 dimensions). The data obtained online was entered into the statistical program.

From the answers, the mean scores for the total scale were calculated. Subsequently, descriptive statistical analysis of the items and factor analysis of the scale were carried out using the statistical package SPSS 20.0.

Results

A set of items grouped around the dimension 5 'Gender stereotypes and social consideration of women in athletics' was presented, extracting – through the multivariate factorial analysis technique – three factors whose self-value was greater than one and explaining the variance of 57.070%.

The resulting factors are as follows:

- **Factor 1:** Gender stereotypes about the social consideration of women in athletics and the levels of mistrust of their nature and qualifications necessary for athletic training and management: composed of Items 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, and 56 of the questionnaire.

- **Factor 2:** Gender stereotypes about the social consideration of women in athletics and public and private support of sports institutions: composed of Items 54, 57, and 59 of the questionnaire.

- **Factor 3:** Gender stereotypes about the social consideration of women in athletics and their appreciation through the media: composed of Items 47, 48, and 49 of the questionnaire.

Table I.

Percentages means and median 'Gender stereotypes regarding the social consideration of women in athletics'

Gender stereotypes regarding the social consideration of women in athletics	Completel y disagree	Quite disagree	Agree	Quite agree	Completel y agree	means/ median
Factor 1: Gender stereotypes about the social consideration of women in athletics and the levels of mistrust on their qualifications and nature necessary for athletic training and management.						
50. Economic prizes in athletics must be higher for men than for women, because they offer less spectacle and performance.	86%	7,40%	2,70%	2,10%	1,80%	1,26/1
51. It is logical that society shows distrust towards the qualification of women as managers in athletics.	82,50%	10,40%	5%	1,20%	0,90%	1,28/1
52. The absence of women in athletic management and direction is due to their lack of availability.	64%	20,80%	10,10%	3,30%	1,80%	1,58/1
53 Athletic direction and management are more typical of the social nature of man, than of women.	73,30%	16,90%	5,60%	3,90%	0,30%	1,41/1
55. It is logical that society shows greater distrust towards the ability of women as athletic trainers.	82,30%	11,70%	3,60%	1,50%	0,90%	1,27/1
56. It is logical that the absence of women as athletic trainers is something socially accepted as "normal".	70,90%	17,20%	8%	3,30%	0,60%	1,45/1
58. It is logical that society grants more professional recognition to a male coach than to a female coach.	86,70%	7,50%	2,70%	2,40%	0,60%	1,23/1
Factor 2: Gender stereotypes about the social consideration of women in athletics and Public and private support in sports institutions.						
54. Athletics clubs and federations do not have more women coaches because they do not trust their dedication and performance.	37,70%	30,90%	17,20%	7,70%	6,50%	2,15/2
57. Public support programs are needed to promote the increase of women as athletic trainers.	12,50%	19,30%	28,80%	19,60%	19,90%	3,15/3
59. It is necessary to take measures for the incorporation of women in decision-making and positions of responsibility in athletics sports.	11,60%	19%	22,60%	17,90%	28,90%	3,33/3
Factor 3: Beliefs around gender stereotypes on the social consideration of women in athletics and their appreciation as a sports spectacle.						
47. I like more male athletic competitions because they offer more spectacle than the female ones.	29%	22,70%	16,40%	20,30%	11,60%	2,63/2
48. The technical level of female athletics has more appeal than male ones.	56,10%	25,50%	12,50%	3,90%	2,10%	1,7/1
49. The main media idols in athletics must be male because there are greater athletes among them than among females.	64,60%	19,60%	9,20%	5,40%	1,20%	1,59/1

Furthermore, and to give a better understanding of the data, we present the percentages, means, and median of the results obtained in each of the items:

Factor 1

As can be seen in Table I, approximately 86% of respondents do not agree with the affirmation of Item 50, highlighting a general comprehension of equality with regard to such a statement. Nowadays, despite the progress made in recent years, women continue to be discriminated against in sports generally, and in high-performance sports specifically. Most public organisations accept the idea of equality and their subsidies help men and women equally; however, in competitions and in private organisations, economic reparations are often to the detriment of women.

On the other hand, the results of Item 53 in Table I are worth mentioning; these demonstrate a less commonly accepted view of the sample because, although there is a large percentage of responses between 'quite disagree' and 'completely agree' (26.7%), the direction and management of athletics is still appreciated as being something more typical of the social nature of men than of women.

Similarly, this attitude was also manifested in Item 56; the sample generally accepted that it is logical that the absence of female athletic coaches is socially accepted as 'normal': approximately 30% of responses were 'quite disagree' and 'completely agree', making it seem normal.

The question of availability of women in the world of athletic management is also relevant, as exhibited by the data in Table I, which indicate that 36% of respondents maintain a stereotyped view.

Factor 2

Given the data provided in Table I, it should be noted

that the sample surveyed presented a gender stereotyping towards the assertion that athletic clubs and federations do not have more women coaches because they do not trust their dedication and performance. The response percentages show that 31.4% support this question: that is, the population studied maintains the belief that there is no trust in the work of female athletic coaches, because their performance and dedication are not up to the standards required by such institutions and organisations.

On the other hand, high response levels were given in relation to the need to take measures towards the incorporation of women into decision-making and positions of responsibility in athletics. The results obtained in Item 57 define the orientation of the sample. Ultimately, BPE students value reinforcing and encouraging the incorporation of women into decision-making and positions of responsibility in athletics by establishing positive public support measures.

Factor 3

The responses to Item 47 are particularly noteworthy in this factor because they show how respondents agree (approximately 31.9%) that male competitions provide more entertainment than female competitions. Thus, it can be inferred that the students have a strong stereotype level. On the contrary, 56.1% responders disagree with the statement of the item 48 (completely disagree) that believe that both male and female athletics demand same technical level. Finally, the students are completely disagree (64,6%) that the main media idols must be male.

Variables that Mark Gender Differences in Terms of the Social Consideration of Women in Athletics

In order to understand the differences between men and women regarding the perception of gender

Table II.
Contrast between genders in the answers on "Gender stereotypes about the social consideration of women in athletics".

Item	U de Mann-Whitney	W de Wilcoxon	Z	bilateral asymptotic significance
47. I like more male athletic competitions because they offer more spectacle than the female ones.	2864,500	6185,500	-8,763	,000*
48. The technical level of female athletics has more appeal than male ones.	7873,500	11194,500	-,695	,487
49. The main media idols in athletics must be male because there are greater athletes among them than among females.	6341,000	9581,000	-3,474	,001*
50. Economic prizes in athletics must be higher for men than for women, because they offer less spectacle and performance.	6947,000	10187,000	-3,333	,001*
51. It is logical that society shows distrust towards the qualification of women as managers in athletics.	7413,000	10734,000	-2,061	,039*
52. The absence of women in athletic management and direction is due to their lack of availability.	7425,000	10746,000	-1,575	,115
53 Athletic direction and management are more typical of the social nature of man, than of women.	6745,000	10066,000	-3,182	,001*
54. Athletics clubs and federations do not have more women coaches because they do not trust their dedication and performance.	7593,000	10914,000	-1,114	,265
55. It is logical that society shows greater distrust towards the ability of women as athletic trainers.	7734,000	11055,000	-1,091	,275
56. It is logical that the absence of women as athletic trainers is something socially accepted as "normal".	7525,500	10846,500	-1,481	,139
57. Public support programs are needed to promote the increase of women as athletic trainers.	6315,000	27225,000	-3,179	,001*
58. It is logical that society grants more professional recognition to a male coach than to a female coach.	7168,000	10408,000	-2,474	,013*
59. It is necessary to take measures for the incorporation of women in decision-making and positions of responsibility in athletics sports.	5642,000	26552,000	-4,279	,000*

stereotypes with respect to the social consideration of women in athletics, a contrast analysis was established using non-parametric tests (table II).

Table II details the existence of significance in this statement.

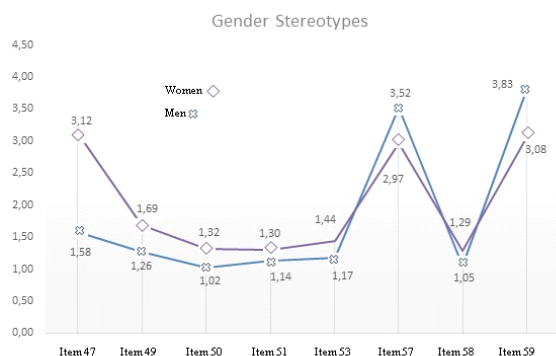


Figure 1. Significant differences between genders in the scale 'Gender stereotypes about social consideration of women in athletics' (means)

Based on the results shown in Figure 1, women show a lower profile of gender stereotyping in terms of gender stereotypes about the social status of women in athletics, whereas men manifest a higher stereotype view for all of the items. Their responses regarding Item 47 are particularly noteworthy: this item specifies that male competitions are more highly valued than female ones, and the former offers more entertainment than the latter.

As for the items which record intentions with regard to the granting of public support for the promotion of women in training management and positions of responsibility within sports (Items 57 and 59), men give less supportive responses, showing a gender-based stereotype once again.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that BPE students do not seem to have gender stereotypes regarding aspects such as: 'It is logical that society shows distrust

towards the qualification of women as managers and athletic coaches.' (Items 51 and 55) Also, they are reluctant to grant more professional recognition to a male coach than to a female coach (Item 58). However, the influence that society has on the construction of every individual and, therefore, on the place that they can or should occupy within it, is vital. If we examine the managerial positions within sports institutions and organisations, the lack or absence of women in this area is verified. The existence of obstacles is real and the skills of women are not recognised on equal terms as those of men. There are gender stereotypes around social consideration, which recreate and reproduce power relations and affect the world of sports. Management and sports management, in terms of gender, have deep roots in a privileged male history and patriarchal society. Studies like those by Walker & Sartore-Baldwin (2013) in basketball or those by Burton, Borland, & Mazerolle (2012), show how, in the US, within Division I intercollegiate athletics, women occupy 46.4 % of assistant teacher positions and 47% of athletic assistant coach positions, but only occupy 18.8% of management positions or head athletic coach positions. The reality we find perpetuates a social distrust towards the female trainer and manager and, although our future professionals from the world of sports are not part of this trend, they maintain low profile stereotypes when the establishment of support programmes is proposed to promote increasing the number of women athletic trainers (Item 57). Their thinking also converges when taking measures to incorporate women into decision-making and positions of responsibility within sports (Item 59) is proposed, with surveyed females always showing the lowest tendency towards stereotyping.

This type of thinking converges with other discourses where gender neutrality is advocated; thus, the problem becomes increasingly invisible rather than resulting in recognition of the problems of equality. Following Shaw and Allen (2009), organisational support is vital for the

creation of professional development opportunities for women in sports. Furthermore, as Hartzell & Dixon (2019) propose, the first and most obvious need for advancement in women's sport leadership representation is for research in other contexts beyond American collegiate athletics. It does not represent the vast majority of sport systems across the globe.

Beyond this, if all this is transferred to the institutions that build and organise sport, such as clubs and sports federations, we find stereotyped answers in terms of gender. The students surveyed maintain, in a high percentage, that clubs and athletic federations have fewer women coaches because they do not trust their dedication and performance (Item 54). To this statement, we must add the results of Item 52: a large percentage agree that the absence of women in management and direction positions in athletics is due to their lack of availability. Studies such as those by Burton, Borland, & Mazerolle (2012) show how male coaches use gender stereotypes to challenge the professional competence of participants and reinforce their power over the professional life of these women. These researchers explain the fragility of women coaches at this level, showing that only a small number of women achieve the position of head athletics coach.

When this type of gender stereotype is found, it is foreseeable that the woman who enters the world of sports management maintains a social consideration based on the roles or profiles assigned. The scarce representation of women coaches and women in other leadership positions in sports happens, at best, due to situations such as those raised by Norman (2010, 2014), Flores Paredes & Amaru (2022), who show that sports maintain an unfavourable gender order for these women. Studies in the world of soccer indicate that female coaches are significantly more likely to be hired as new coaches after a team's poor performance in terms of wins and percentage of wins (but not losses) over the course of a season, which provides some empirical support for a crystal cliff in coaching. Wicker, Cunningham & Fields (2019, p.). The women interviewed presented a continuous need to demonstrate their professionalism as coaches, often in a hostile and intimidating environment.

All of the above helps us to understand the logic of the students surveyed. Respondents ratify their beliefs as logical by using a stereotype that posits the absence of female athletic trainers as something socially accepted as 'normal' (Item 56). The data highlight the success of the male hegemony in the sports world; women are

reluctant to advance in their careers as coaches through a lack of self-confidence and lack of motivation as a result of their culturally and historically marginal positions. The results illustrate the urgent need for a review of the dominant values of professional sports, in order to attract and retain the largest possible number of women leaders.

Finally, we examine gender stereotypes relating to the social consideration of women in athletics and their appreciation throughout the media. The sample surveyed shows a high degree of gender stereotyping regarding preference of male athletic competitions over female ones, claiming that male competitions offer more entertainment (Item 47). This statement is linked to the idea of the 44% responders (quite disagree and completely agree) that the technical level of male athletics has more appeal than female athletics in Item 48. Hence, the question we must ask ourselves is: how does the sample arrive at such conclusions? There is no scale on which it is certified that the technical requirement for females is lower. Women perform the same tasks and develop the same biomechanical principles applied to sports as men. Therefore, where is the gap? The presence of women in sports media is almost completely non-existent. News programmes in Spain do not reflect the social change that has taken place in sectors where the role of women has acquired significant relevance, as it has in sports. However, a recent publication by Bruce (2015) shows how, in the world in general, this is change, and women are gaining more prominence in the media. In Spain, in general, sports occupy 20% of air time on the news on public television. Of the athletes involved in the news, 98.3% are men versus 1.7% women (Audiovisual Council of Andalusia 2008). In 2012, less than 4% of all athletes interviewed on Andalusian television news were women, despite the fact that the time dedicated to sports in the news has been growing in the last six years (CAA and Haca 2014). In social media, the Spanish sports media representation of female athletes on Twitter of the top communication channels barely reaches 2.07% (Adá Lameiras, 2019). Surprisingly, this figure only rises to around 3.2% in the United States. Taking into account the fact that all of them are media focusing on sports (Romney & Johnson, 2019). Therefore, it can be assumed that what is not seen is not known, and what is not known is not appreciated. However, it must be said that students in BPE should be considered more than pure spectators, because they are knowledgeable in this subject area.

The above demonstrates the need to promote training plans; this is corroborated by previous research, such as the study conducted by Humberstone (2001) in which changes in the university curriculum emphasising critical thinking concerning gender issues was highlighted. Humberstone argues that, paradoxically, this conservative shift in sports education will do little to help future professionals – both men and women – in their responses to leading change in the increasingly complex world of sports, global control of media, changing economic conditions, and the changing agendas of governments. Norman (2010, 2014), in turn, raise the need to make a critical exploration of the world of sports training, in order to understand how the male hegemony leads to the impotence of women as coaches. Additionally, the results present the need to include sociocultural education in the curricula of sports training in the United Kingdom. The studies of Greenhill, et al., (2009), as in previous studies, again show the systemic barriers that sustain the institution and the strong roots of the coaches in the marginalisation of female coaches, all based on the organisation and socially acquired attributes. Similar to the studies of Norman (2010), they propose a rethinking of the development of the formative career of sports training, providing new behavioural models in gender equality.

The results obtained in the response analysis conflict in terms of training in gender and sports, both regulated and non-regulated, as well as motivations regarding this type of training. This is very diffuse and not sufficiently linear to indicate that those students who have received gender training have overcome the stereotypes examined. Their answers with regard to how much truth there is with regard to such inequalities in sports and athletics were disjointed. If we add to this preferences against increasing the curriculum (Item 62 of the questionnaire, which is not part of the dimension studied), these respondents also presented higher rates of gender stereotype, compared with those who thought about improving professional practice or enriching personality. They do not see the need to study such issues. To them, importance is only given to the instrumental contents of the professional and university curricula. To this we must add that university sports training programmes in Spain have no gender equality or gender perspective education within their curricula.

Conclusions

The results obtained from this study allow us to

formulate the following conclusions regarding the objective of this investigation.

1. There are gender stereotypes regarding the vision of third parties (associations/federations) and the trust they place in the performance of women coaches and managers concerning their dedication, performance, and availability.

2. Respondents do not deem it necessary to have public support or take measures to incorporate and promote women coaches and managers in athletics.

3. Gender stereotypes linked to the entertainment value of female athletics, where there is a lack of appreciation of their technical level, and the priority of male media idols are evident in the respondents' social consideration.

4. Gender stereotypes were not perceived by participants in the logic that society distrusts the qualifications of women as athletic managers and coaches. The direction and management of athletics is considered to be something more typical of the social nature of men than of women; the absence of women coaches is a social norm and the professionalism of women coaches is not recognised.

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Data Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author [Author 1], also, the complete survey format. The data are not publicly available due to [their containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants].

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