

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to analyze the perspectives of Title IX trailblazers noting changes over a 40 year span as identified by participating Mountain West Conference athletic departments. Questions posed to participants focused on Title IX's impact on participants, their personal contributions to gender equity, and how athletic departments have committed to gender equity over the past 40 years by supporting opportunities for women in athletics. Participants were recruited directly by their respective MWC school, and agreed to be video taped for a MWC production shared publicly and submitted for a national competition. Video recordings were transcribed and analyzed. From the transcripts a coding system was developed to identify themes and concepts. Coding was undertaken through comparative analysis and in line with the two part process identified by Charmaz (2006). The data were evaluated using the theoretical framework of distributive justice to view women's experiences in intercollegiate athletics over the 40 year period of Title IX implementation (Mahony & Pastore, 1998). This theoretical grounding was used to illuminate ways in which resource decisions are made which often disadvantage women, and to examine the perceptions of fairness based on equity, equality and need (Mahony & Pastore, 1998) within athletic departments. The integration of the distributive justice framework in the data analysis illuminates the power differentials as well as the challenges women have faced in intercollegiate athletics directly attributable to Title IX. Analysis of the videos compiled revealed three primary themes, 1) Eras / generational differences, 2) Fighting for resources, and 3) Leadership and life skills development, along with several subthemes. Discussion of key themes and the resulting implications are presented.

Keywords: Title IX, distributive justice, generations

Perspectives of Title IX Pioneers: Equity, Equality and Need

The 40th Anniversary of Title IX, celebrated in 2012, provided impetus for reflection on progress made and challenges that remain. An acknowledgement of the significant growth in opportunities for women in higher education must also be paralleled by recognition of the resulting changes in intercollegiate athletics. Common misconceptions of Title IX often rely on an awareness of application primarily to sport, and while this is a narrow view, analysis of this visible department housed and operated within higher education institutions can provide valuable insights (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Edwards, 2010). Prior to this study, the voices of those who experienced the changes resulting from implementation of Title IX over a 40 year period had not previously been captured. Noting the landscape for women in education has changed dramatically following the implementation of this key civil rights legislation, these personal accounts from several who lived through the eras of change serve as a meaningful learning opportunity. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to analyze perspectives of Title IX trailblazers noting changes over a 40 year span as identified by each participating Mountain West Conference school. The following question guided the study: What themes emerged based on perspectives of participants identified as Title IX trailblazers? The theoretical framework of distributive justice provided a lens for this study's examination of the impact of Title IX within intercollegiate athletics.

Theoretical Framework

Distributive justice is the most fitting theoretical framework for this study because it illuminates ways in which resource decisions are made which often disadvantage women. It has been defined as the principles underlying the distribution of resources and the payoffs (outcomes or rewards) to different parties in a system (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994). Distributive justice is

also described as the “distribution of the conditions and goods which affect individual well-being” (Deutsch, 1975, p. 137). Distributive justice has three key principles: equity (allocation based on contribution), equality (all groups receive the same allocation), and need (allocations rewarded based on needs of groups or individuals) (Mahony & Pastore, 1998). Allocations of resources are made based on these principles; however the perceptions of fairness related to distribution remains the key consideration. Equity determinations consider the factors of productivity, effort, or ability. Equality considerations are based on equality of treatment (same resource allocations to all groups), equality of results (over time all groups receive same allocations), and equality of opportunity (all groups have the same chance to receive resources). Need considers the idea that a group that has fewer resources is entitled to more (Mahony & Pastore, 1998). Previously authors (e.g., Hums & Chelladurai, 1994; Patrick, Mahony & Petrosko, 2008) determined that females favor the equality principle over the equity principle, whereas men favor the equity principle over the equality principle. Equality has been identified as an objective principle whereas need is subjective (Mahony, Hums, & Reimer, 2002).

Distributive justice has been applied in previous studies related to Title IX’s impact in college athletics. Mahony and Pastore (1998) utilized distributive justice to examine trends related to women’s sports in comparison to both revenue and non-revenue men’s sports from 1973 to 1993. Although revenue from women’s sports increased over the two decades after the passage of Title IX, women’s sports were not marketed well nor have they been developed by athletic departments to produce revenue (Mahony & Pastore, 1998). Mahony and Pastore (1998) found that the number of women participating in sports increased after Title IX but the percentage of opportunities for female athletes remained low. When women’s sports are not promoted by athletic departments, there is less of a chance for women to produce revenue or

garner a large fan base, thereby affecting the opportunity for resource distribution based on the equity principle of distributive justice.

Regarding females' disposition to the equality principle as it relates to Title IX and leadership development, Patrick et al. (2008) stated,

It is possible that more female athletic directors and senior women's administrators truly adhere to the notion that college athletes are students and that college sports are an integral part of the educational process. In this sense, equal distribution would be no different than, for example, equal access to the library. Denying equal educational opportunities to both men and women would not be possible to justify. (p. 180)

Kim, Andrew, Mahony, and Hums (2008) surveyed student-athletes to gain their perceptions of resource distribution, discovering revenue sport athletes perceived fairness on the basis of equality and need principles more so than non-revenue sport athletes. They concluded differences in fairness of resource distribution were based more on sport status than on gender, thus affirming what Mahony and Pastore determined for men's non-revenue programs (Kim et al., 2008). With justification for the theoretical framework provided by these previous studies, perspectives of Title IX pioneers were explored through the lens of distributive justice. This theoretical grounding was used to illuminate ways in which resource decisions are made which often disadvantage women, and to examine the perceptions of fairness based on equity, equality, and need (Mahony & Pastore, 1998) within athletic programs.

Literature Review

Literature related to the impact of Title IX legislation on women in intercollegiate athletics was reviewed. Prior to the passage of Title IX, female athletes, coaches, and athletic administrators experienced a very different environment. Each era before, during, and after the

implementation of the legislation shows varied experiences and contexts related to opportunities for women, budgets, facilities, numbers of sports, and promotion of women's athletics.

The Early Era: 1970s

According to Edwards (2010), "Title IX legislation as originally written did not even mention sport" (p. 300). In her review of the historical development of Title IX, Edwards (2010) found that sport became its focus "because athletics rose as the primary source of contention" among the policy-making groups (p. 302). In the early 1970s, female athletes like Billie Jean King were gaining media attention, partially due to the women's movement. In 1972, Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments, which stated, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (Title IX, 1972). Interestingly, in 1973 *Sports Illustrated* published a rare series focused on women in sport. Edwards (2010) shared,

One article demonstrated the gross inequity in expenditure and quality of women's versus men's programs. A second disproved the commonly accepted belief that sports were risky and inessential for girls. The third article...argued that limiting girls' access to athletic competition may turn them into underachievers, because without athletics they missed the values of aggressiveness and winning that boys experience. (p. 306)

By 1974, Congress passed the Javits Amendment, which "expanded the meaning of Title IX specifically to include intercollegiate athletics" (Edwards, 2010, p. 318). As institutions began implementing Title IX, men feared efforts to improve equality would negatively affect sport. Women were also concerned that equality would mean women athletes could not play sport using their own specific rules.

Anderson and Osborne (2008) analyzed the history of Title IX legislation since its implementation, discovering 190 cases involving athletic-related claims between 1972 and 2007. Specifically, 109 of these cases “dealt with issues at the collegiate level” (p. 135). Anderson and Osborne (2008) emphasized, “The law did not provide clear guidance as to how to enforce this mandate” (p. 137). The 1974 Education Amendments provided direction for the implementation of Title IX, focusing on “equal opportunity for both sexes,” accompanied by ten factors for programs to assess quality (Anderson & Osborne, 2008, p. 138). Due to continued confusion on how to implement Title IX’s mandate, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) interpreted the policy specifically for athletics programs through three areas: 1) compliance in financial assistance based on athletic ability, 2) compliance in other program areas (e.g., academic support, facilities), and 3) compliance in meeting the interests and abilities of male and female students (Anderson & Osborne, 2008).

According to the authors, “No test has received more publicity than the three part effective accommodation test” (Anderson & Osborne, 2008, p. 141). The three prongs of this test include: 1) whether the opportunities for male and female students are provided in numbers proportionate to their respective enrollments; 2) where members of one sex have been underrepresented in athletics, whether the institution can show a history of expanding opportunities to the interests of members of that sex; 3) and where members of one sex have been underrepresented in athletics in a program that has not historically expanded opportunities to that sex, whether the institution can show the interests and abilities of the members of that sex have been accommodated (Anderson & Osborne, 2008). As educational institutions started to figure out how to implement Title IX and how to determine its impact, Anderson and Osborne (2008) noted that only one of seven court cases in the 1970s found a Title IX violation.

For over 30 years Acosta and Carpenter (2012) have surveyed Senior Women Administrators from every NCAA member institution with a women's athletic program. Since implementation of Title IX, the authors have collected data to show the progression of women in intercollegiate athletics, both as participants and in administrative roles. They reported, "In 1970, prior to the 1972 enactment of Title IX, there were only 2.5 women's teams per school and only about 16,000 total female intercollegiate athletes" (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012, p. 1). They continued, "In 1988, the number had grown to 7.71 and at the turn of the century, the growth continued to 8.14" women's teams per school (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012, p. 1). In 2012, schools reported a record average of 8.73 women's teams per institution (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). This trend was also mirrored in interscholastic athletics, which serves as the pipeline for college programs.

In 1971, about 3.7 million boys and less than 300,000 girls played high school sports. By 2012, about 4.5 million boys and 3.2 million girls played high school sports. The increase in participation has been attributed directly to implementation of Title IX (Massengale & Lough, 2010). The increase in high school participation relates directly to creating a pipeline for qualified collegiate level athletes. As evidenced in the previous paragraph, as the number of women's intercollegiate athletic teams grew, the opportunity for girls' participation in high school athletics also increased.

In contrast, when looking at coaching positions in 1972, more than 90% of women's teams were coached by females. When Title IX mandated compliance began in 1978, the number of women coaches had already declined significantly, with only 58.2% of women's teams coached by women (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). The growth of opportunities for women on a national scale enticed men to take on more leadership roles as coaches and administrators of

women's athletic programs. Before Title IX, women managed the sports programs for female athletes, from coaching to scheduling to training. After the passage of Title IX, the possibilities for women's sport grew which led to the adoption of the male model. As women's sport presented more lucrative opportunities, including paid coaching positions, men became interested in leading women's sport programs, resulting in a decline in female coaches and administrators of women's programs (Blinde, 1989; Hattery, et al., 2007; Hult, 1980).

Utilizing a historical perspective, Thelin (2000) researched the economics and politics of college sports for the first 25 years after the passage of Title IX. Thelin (2000) explained, "In 1979, women's sports were not yet a required part of NCAA Division I programs" and that Title IX enforcement was "modest" (p. 394). From the passage of Title IX through the end of the 1970s, the decade "was characterized in large part by the lack of enforcement for or concern about Title IX" (Thelin, 2000, p. 394). He estimated that women's sports accounted for 14% of the overall athletic budgets in 1977 NCAA Division IA programs (Thelin, 2000).

Thelin (2000) argued that Title IX did not affect the cutting of men's programs, noting that men's non-revenue programs were affected by budget cuts before women's sports were introduced. He offered, "By 1980 numerous Division I universities had dropped established varsity sports—a full year before the NCAA added women's sports to its jurisdiction" (p. 395). By the 1980s, many major conferences began "tiering" men's varsity sports (Thelin, 2000, p. 395). Men's programs "had long benefitted from receiving the proceeds of mandatory student fees (paid for by both men and women students) as regular parts of their exclusively men's athletics operating budget" (Thelin, 2000, p. 395). The NCAA did not incorporate women's sports into its constitution until 1981. Around this time, most institutions had women's sports in a separate structure from intercollegiate athletics departments (Thelin, 2000).

The Advocacy Era: 1980s through 1990s

The 1980s brought a competitive environment, changing the landscape of jobs in intercollegiate athletics. Thelin (2000) emphasized, “Any institution seeking national recognition in either sport would consider specialization—hiring a full-time coach for each sport” (p. 398). He concluded from his historical analysis that women’s sports did not financially affect men’s sports or cause program cuts on the men’s side. Thelin (2000) attested that the lack of full reporting of Title IX compliance by universities participating in intercollegiate athletics demonstrates the need for ongoing litigation and continued federal regulations. He concluded that the future of college athletics and the enforcement of Title IX would likely be decided in court. In support of this speculation, Anderson and Osborne (2008) found “an explosion of litigation” regarding Title IX in the 1980s.

Wilde (1995) also examined legislation to determine the past and future impact of Title IX. In particular, he researched the equitable distribution of athletic participation between female and male students in intercollegiate athletic programs. Wilde (1995) explored this issue guided by the governing principles of Title IX, including exhibiting

equivalent treatment and distribution of benefits and opportunities in terms of equipment and supplies, games and practice schedules, travel and per diem allowances, coaches and tutors, medical and training services, housing and dining facilities and services, locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities, publicity, support services, and the recruitment of athletes. (p. 302)

Through a review of case law, he determined, “Many institutions continue to turn a blind eye to Title IX noncompliance. Yet, based on current case law and NCAA statistics, female athletes are, on average, significantly underrepresented in college athletics” (Wilde, 1995, p. 308).

Looking to the future, he anticipated that institutions and the NCAA would face an enormous amount of litigation regarding gender equity in athletics unless Title IX requirements were met.

Because of litigation, portrayals of women participating in sport during this era shaped predominantly by the media communicated a contentious environment, with terms such as “battle of the sexes,” a dispute, and a “tug of war” (Staurowsky, 1998) commonly used. Kane (1988) “examined the impact of Title IX on media coverage given to female athletes to determine if there [had] been a shift from negative social stereotypes traditionally associated with women’s sports participation” (p. 87). According to Kane (1988), the passage of Title IX “brought about a wave of optimism regarding a potential increase in the social acceptability of female sport participation” (p. 88). She looked at the extent of media coverage, whether the articles emphasized females in athletic versus non-athletic roles, and which types of women’s sports were covered.

Kane’s results demonstrated statistical significance between articles on female athletes and non-athletes in each time period (before, during, and after Title IX). However, as time progressed during and after Title IX, the number of articles about females in athletic roles increased dramatically over articles on female non-athletes. Despite the time frames, Kane (1988) discovered that articles were written more often focusing on women in sex-appropriate sports over sex-inappropriate sports. Kane (1988) concluded that women gained more media coverage over time after the passage of Title IX, but that “15 years after Title IX, female participation in athletics remains heavily influenced by traditional beliefs about what is considered appropriate, ladylike behavior” (p. 97).

Seven years after Kane’s media coverage study, Kane and Buysse (2005) explored gender portrayals in the media at the collegiate level, to contrast the previous studies focused on

Olympic and professional athletes. Guided by the notion that “media coverage of sport offers fertile ground for any investigation that explores images, symbols, and myths related to power,” Kane and Buysse (2005) analyzed pictures on the covers of Division I media guides from the 1990s to the early 2000s seeking differences in gender portrayal, looking at three representations: 1) if the female athletes were in or out of their uniforms, 2) on or off the court, and 3) in active or passive poses. Through the longitudinal analysis, the researchers found “significant shifts in the representations of sportswomen from the early 1990s to 2004, shifts that led to the construction of females as serious, competent athletes” (p. 231). Drawing from expertise in media studies, Kane and Buysse (2005) commented, “In 2003-04, representations of sportswomen that appear in certain areas of intercollegiate athletics stand in stark contrast to those found in mainstream print and broadcast journalism” (p. 234). Over time, the perception of women athletes has started to change, more so due to social shifts in perceptions of women in athletic roles, rather than through sport media (Kane, LaVoi, & Fink, 2013).

At the 1992 convention for the National Association of Collegiate Women’s Athletics Administrators (NACWAA), the members created and endorsed the following definition of gender equity:

Gender equity is an atmosphere and a reality where fair distribution of overall athletic opportunity and resources, proportionate to enrollment, are available to women and men and where no student-athlete, coach or athletic administrator is discriminated against in any way in the athletic program on the basis of gender. That is to say, an athletic program is gender equitable when the men’s sports program would be pleased to accept as its own the overall participation, opportunities and resources currently allocated to the women’s program and vice versa. (NCAA, p. 16)

This definition aimed to clarify the meaning of gender equity to those implementing Title IX and create an understanding of fairness regarding the distribution of resources in the coming decades.

The Present and Future Era: 2000s and Beyond

In the more recent era, the struggles and successes surrounding Title IX's passage seem distant to both genders. Hardin and Whiteside (2009) explored how young men and women narrated their understanding of equality in the realm of sports and gender through explanations of Title IX's impact. They used focus groups of young adults who were at least moderately interested in sport. Students in the study were vaguely familiar with the law, and "the word 'equal' was used in almost every definition" of Title IX (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009, p. 264). One student affiliated it with equal spending on men's and women's sports, and another with equal coverage. All participants were positive about female athletic participation. The authors insisted, "Narrative exchanges about Title IX were driven by shared cultural ideologies about women and gender roles" (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009, p. 267). In this modern era, participants often reflected on the WNBA, calling it "an inferior product to the NBA" and the epitome of failure of women's sports" (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009, p. 267). Yet, professional sports opportunities for women inspire young girls to develop as athletes in youth sport, high school, and college programs with the goal of becoming professional athletes, such as playing in the WNBA. Negative views of women's professional sports among these participants convey that even among the younger generation, women's sports have not achieved the same level of popularity or interest as men's professional sports.

Hardin and Whiteside (2009) gauged what young Americans thought and felt about equality in sports since the passage of Title IX. Some participants complained about listening to female broadcasters' covering men's sports and said providing scholarships to female athletes

was wasteful. A major finding from their study was that “storylines incorporating the frailty myth and gender difference resonated as truthful even among men and women who have grown up and played competitive sports under the law” (p. 270). The researchers even admitted these narratives confirm “the notion that women do not deserve the equality Title IX gives them,” which is startling almost 40 years after the law was passed (p. 271).

In 2011, Staurowsky and Weight discovered that those highly involved in intercollegiate athletics – the coaches – are not fully knowledgeable or aware of the meaning of Title IX. They sought to find out where college coaches got their information about Title IX and what they knew about basic requirements of the law. They surveyed 1098 coaches from a random sample of 100 NCAA institutions from all divisions during 2009 and 2010. The coaches represented 22 different sports. The results showed that coaches had inconsistent understandings of the law, its impact on student-athletes, and if their institutions were in compliance with Title IX.

Staurowsky and Weight (2011) declared,

After 40 years, it is not unreasonable to expect that athletic department personnel, including coaches of male or female athletes, would have a basic foundational understanding of this federal law. The lack of a consistent and systematic education mechanism may explain the tensions that arise so frequently around these issues within college and university athletic departments. (pp. 204-5)

They suggested a comprehensive education program for coaches similar to those already offered to coaches on topics including recruiting, sexual harassment, CPR, nutrition, and fundraising.

Coaches and young adults are not the only groups to have a murky understanding of the legislation, as institutions may not be clear on its purpose. Kennedy (2010) evaluated problems with current Title IX regulations through a review of legal cases and books. After a thorough

review, Kennedy (2010) discussed the future, “This new era of Title IX enforcement is essentially back to the future. It is simply to enforce the current regulations and adhere to the true meaning and intent and spirit of Title IX—to provide equal opportunity for boys and girls and men and women athletes” (p. 88). He also interviewed a female Division III athletic director, who expressed disappointment in the NCAA for not pressuring institutions to comply with Title IX (Kennedy, 2010). However, Anderson and Osborne (2008) determined that in just the first eight years of the new millennium, there were already more Title IX decisions in 89 cases than in any other decade since its implementation, showing evidence of evolution towards more change.

According to Acosta and Carpenter (2012), by 2012, females comprised over 57% of the student population, retained close to 36% of administrative roles in athletics, and held about 20% of athletic director positions in NCAA designated schools. From their extensive longitudinal study, some long-term effects of Title IX were noted, including a positive impact on women’s athletic participation, and some growth in administrative career options, although the overall representation of female coaches has declined (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). As a result of these studies, the impact of Title IX in the future will be important to study as new eras unfold. To examine the comprehensive impact of Title IX over all previous eras, the purpose of the study was to analyze the perspectives of trailblazers in women’s athletics before, during, and after the implementation of Title IX.

Methodology

The study sought to analyze the perspectives of Title IX trailblazers as identified by participating Mountain West Conference athletic departments over a 40 year period. At the time of this request (early 2012), the institutions in the conference consisted of five public institutions,

two private institutions, and a public military academy in the western and southwestern regions of the United States. Four of the public institutions have enrollments between 22,000 and 32,000 students. One of the public institutions has an enrollment of approximately 13,000 students. The private institutions have differing enrollments, one close to 10,000 students and the other close to 30,000 students. The military academy enrolls just over 4,000 students. The sampling procedure was purposive. The Mountain West Conference office sent a request to each conference institution's Senior Woman Administrator to collect interview footage with "former or current student-athletes, administrators, faculty, trailblazers, notable figures" as identified by the institution (C. Coll, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Participants were selected due to their relevant personal experience and ability to generate a variety of perspectives on the impact of Title IX. Participants volunteered to respond to structured questions on video, with the potential for the video to be displayed during the 2012 Mountain West Conference basketball tournament, in celebration of the 40th anniversary of Title IX. Adhering to institutional review board standards, the identity of all participants was protected with pseudonyms and key identifiers were removed from the quotes where necessary. A total of 24 participants representing eight Mountain West Conference institutions and both genders provided responses included in the analysis. Of the three men and 21 women who participated, many have been in different roles over the eras. For example, one participant was a student-athlete before and during Title IX's implementation, then a coach in the late 1970s, an administrator in an athletic department and at a conference office in the 1980s and 1990s respectively, a sport executive in the 2000s and now is an athletic director in 2014.

The interview protocol was developed by each institution, although the questions posed were provided by the conference office ensuring consistency. The interviews followed a similar

structure while also ensuring a free flow of ideas that characterizes qualitative research of this nature. The in-depth interviews lasted between 10 and 45 minutes each. Questions posed to participants included: How has Title IX affected you? What does Title IX mean to you? Why are you considered a Title IX Trailblazer? How have your department/institution and/or female student-athletes benefitted from your efforts/contributions to gender equity? How is your athletic department committed to gender equity, supporting female student-athletes and promoting opportunities for women in athletics?

Video recordings were transcribed and analyzed using a coding system developed to identify themes. Coding commenced through comparative analysis, in line with the two part process identified by Charmaz (2006). In the initial stage open codes were developed by three researchers to establish the broad themes that participants referred to in their discussion of Title IX. This involved line-by-line coding to reveal descriptive codes to establish a preliminary frame. Focused coding followed to synthesize these previous codes. Next, we determined which codes made the most analytical sense and best revealed what was being described by the participants. Member checking was not possible, due to the unique nature of the data collection. The authors individually conducted open coding processes, then met to review initial codes and agree on the relevance of emerging codes from the data. Focused coding revealed the principal themes (including generational eras, fighting for resources and leadership development), and these themes were discussed further between coders to help ensure a true representation of participant responses.

Results

The impact of Title IX legislation on women in intercollegiate athletics over the past 40 years was captured in this study. Three important themes emerged: 1) changes in women's

experiences over the different eras from 1972 to 2012, 2) women's athletics programs fighting for resources, and 3) development of life skills and leadership through college sport involvement. A review of each theme follows, with key quotes substantiating the decision for inclusion.

Eras

Before Title IX, female athletes, coaches, and athletic administrators experienced distinctly different environments. Each era before, during, and after the implementation of the legislation included varied experiences and contexts related to opportunities for women, budgets, facilities, numbers of sports, and promotion of women's athletics. Within the theme of eras, several sub-themes emerged. These sub-themes include the idea of overcoming stereotypes and lack of opportunity marked by the pre-Title IX era in the 1960s and 1970s; the 1980s and 1990s era emerged as advocacy; while the 2000s to 2012 represented the futuristic view of Title IX's impact and women's athletics. Exemplary quotes from the participants illustrate the generational differences and experiences. The following quote encapsulated the early generation's experiences:

I was coaching those four sports, and of course, we were not paid or given any release time for doing that...before Title IX, women were in charge of their own programs...No one sport was elevated above another. Softball was just as important as basketball, and so one sport didn't get more money.

One former coach from the early era lamented about the stereotypes about women's participation in sport:

I was asking for probably the addition of a 100-yard dash, a 440, and probably some relays. I don't remember specifically, but I think the others were probably approved. But they would not allow us to do the 440 because they said the girls will just be too tired.

They'll wear out. We'll see them getting sick, and they're just not ready for it. I said, "That's very strange because every day in physical education, my girls all run the 440, and none of them have ever gotten sick doing it."

These stereotypes limited the opportunities for women to participate in sports, which is the reason most coaches were volunteers and organized competitions on their own time.

For purposes of comparison, participants comprising the era in which Title IX was first implemented, the 1980s and 1990s were referred to as the advocates. A male coach discussed how his role was a jack-of-all-trades:

I remember as an assistant coach, in 1984, not only did I coach the team, but I had to go out and get sponsorships for like the between games two and three serving contest. So I went out and found a pizza company who would give away free pizzas if we do the serving contest between games two and three... While the head coach is in the locker room giving Xs and Os, I'm out on the court, dodging volleyballs... but back in those days, we did it all.

Before there were athletic staff members assigned to support women's teams, the coaches truly did everything from marketing to coordinating with the media to athletic training. Another coach in this era echoed his sentiments:

Women, especially in our time, were never promoted in any way. My assistant coach in the '80s, the early '80s, was response—well, nobody told us to. We knew that if we were gonna get any promotion, we would have to do it ourselves, and so we made little tickets that we sold for \$2.00 I think a ticket. We'd make a batch of them together. If you sold about \$10.00 worth, you'd get to come to all of the games, and at halftime, we would go to the Grizzly Bear Pizza. He would give us maybe \$30.00, and so at halftime, we would

have a contest. Somebody could come down from the audience and see how many dollars they could pick up in the 30 seconds we would give them, those kinds of things to promote the game itself.

In stark contrast, the new millennial generation appeared to feel entitled to resources and expressed an expectation of equality. A recent student-athlete graduate admitted,

I don't think...my generation of athletes really understands the importance of Title IX because we just come into it knowing that we get the same equipment and the same travel.

Yet this viewpoint on equality was also applied to the direction of Title IX going into the future.

A current women's coach has a positive outlook at Title IX's impact:

We're at the point where, for instance, women's basketball Final Four played in huge, huge facilities. It's watched by so many people. And, again, I think a lot of that has to do with Title IX. I look at salaries for coaches. They're getting right up there with a lot of men coaches' salaries, which it's crazy what we're talking, but it's Title IX. If I look at it 40 years from now, I can't even imagine what it's going to be like. I think it's going to be equality across the board in so many ways, and maybe in some places, even better than some of the men's.

The sub-themes of overcoming stereotypes and lack of opportunity, advocacy, and the future are further analyzed in the discussion section. The next section reflects the second major theme from the study.

Fighting for Resources

Prior to Title IX's passage, female athletes, coaches, and administrators struggled to operate college sport programs. Facilities and budgets were limited, the perception of women in

non-feminine roles was negative, and coaches were administrators and teachers unpaid for their duties which were outside of their full workloads. The effects of Title IX and changes that ultimately improved women's athletics at the intercollegiate level were slow to emerge and required women to fight for every resource needed.

A former student-athlete in the early era who became a coach and trainer in the 1970s shared an example of how limited resources were for female student-athletes:

I think we were all kind of trailblazers because we had to fight for things like...we had plastic balls in basketball. We wanted a leather ball, but we couldn't afford it ourselves so we stole one of the men's basketballs. We drew flowers on it so they wouldn't want it back and that was our game ball.

The same lack of equipment issues were spread across all sports. A coach from the early era shared,

When we had to practice like the hurdles, we weren't really allowed to use the boys' equipment; so we would get the softball bats, and two people would hold them end to end. We'd use that for the hurdle to practice hurdling.

Though she did not share why the women had no access to the boys' equipment, she showed that female teams learned to adapt. The most shocking example came from a lack of medical resources and athletic training care. This former student-athlete from the early era who actually became an athletic trainer for her career addressed the lack of basic supplies:

We didn't have any ice. I can remember spraining my ankle and the coach says you need to put it in cold water. The only cold water we had was in the toilet so she moved a chair into the stall. I stuck one foot in the toilet—the sprained ankle in the toilet. I used the other one to keep flushing the toilet so there was a constant supply of cold water.

Sub-themes also emerged in the fighting for resources theme, which are explored further in the discussion of the results. These include salaries of coaches and administrators of women's athletic programs, promotion and marketing opportunities for women's sports, and the equipment and facilities of women's programs. In the next section, the third major theme is explored.

Life Skills and Leadership Development

Women gain a lot more than athletic experience while participating in organized sport, including leadership skills, confidence in abilities, teamwork experience, and managing success and failures. Similarly, the development of leadership through sport was indicated through the interviews. Poignant quotes about life skills and leadership development from interviewees are evidenced in the participants' quotes. A current female coach incorporates the essence of this theme as part of her coaching philosophy:

So we just constantly talk about how there's so many life lessons when it comes to basketball. You gotta fight through adversity. When things get tough, are you gonna go your separate ways or are you gonna stay together and fight through? Same thing in life...I think that's what sports does, not only for women, but for men. Sports, to me, is a life lesson every day.

The importance of the athletic experience for developing women is demonstrated through a female athletic administrator's own experience:

The athletic arena can be yours, too, and that you have the opportunity now to build off that and gain invaluable lessons about teamwork, goal setting, how to deal with failures as well as success, and how those lessons can transcend into your personal life and into your career life, your career path. It is a huge part of who I am today, and character

building, confidence building, in making women stronger as they go out into whatever career path that they choose.

Within the life skills and leadership development theme, several sub-themes emerged. These include new roles of women in athletics, advocacy, and life skills, which will be analyzed further in the discussion. The following section interprets the main themes and findings through the lens of distributive justice.

Discussion

This study sought to answer the following research question: What themes emerged based on perspectives of participants identified as Title IX trailblazers? The most important finding emerging from this study was reflected in the differing perceptions expressed among the generations represented, which incorporated aspects of both resource availability and leadership development. The pre-Title IX generation (1960s and 1970s) communicated a degree of pride mixed with rebelliousness. They appeared to have bonded around a common cause, which was sport. Because they were not “given” opportunity, they were required to create it. This need to carve out their own experience instilled them with a sense of purpose in which sport was the “cause” they were committed to collectively. Need was only a concept, one that would grow and gain clarity as understanding of the intent of Title IX grew throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

The 1980s and 1990s generations were labeled advocates. While Title IX was beginning to create change in college sport, those who were athletes and coaches during this era experienced the backlash of impressions that men’s sports were bearing the burden of change, with some men’s sports facing elimination. Despite data demonstrating most decisions to eliminate some men’s sports were economic, Title IX often was used as the scapegoat for these decisions (Thelin, 2000) further exemplifying the need for their role as advocates. Thus, while

women athletes and coaches shared regret for impacts on their sport brethren, they also were responsible for advocating for resources to advance women's sports. From a distributive justice standpoint, the allocation of resources towards women's sport in these two eras was both a matter of need and equity, as significant disparities existed based upon decades old practices of providing solely for men's sport.

Notably, the pre-Title IX generation's perceptions compared against the new millennium generation shows the starkest contrast. Current student-athletes and coaches appeared complacent with regard to Title IX. Consistently they spoke of resource adequacy, and how they were aware of significant differences in the past, yet their current reality was one in which fairness was expected, representing what some have referred to as a sense of entitlement. The notion of equality was far more prevalent among this group, as they shared impressions of having the resources they needed and expecting opportunities for further resource development. Equality was identified as the ideal for the future impact of Title IX, encompassing both financial resources and leadership opportunities. In the distributive justice framework, equality is evident when all groups receive the same allocation, based on equality of treatment (same resource allocations to all groups), equality of results (over time all groups receive same allocations), and equality of opportunity (all groups have the same chance to receive resources) (Mahony & Pastore, 1998). One female senior athletic administrator emphasized,

I think the birthday of Title IX at 40 years now has been an exciting progress, but what I hope in the next 40 years is that it will only be talked of in terms of an historical context, so all standards...all 13 standards will have been met, all issues will have been equitable, and in a perfect world, equal. Not sure if we'll get there, but I think basically with a birthday of 80 years...I think 80 years is very venerable, very experienced. You learn a

lot from your past, and by the time it's 80 years, I hope it will only be in perpetuity. It's only from a birthday celebration rather than that we're still trying to achieve Title IX 80 years later.

Also, participants like the current female coach with a positive outlook believed that equality was achievable for women's athletic programs in the next 40 years, even noting the possibility that some women's programs would have more opportunities and resources than some men's programs. Resource allocation based on equity examines the contribution by different groups and considers the factors of productivity, effort, or ability (Mahony & Pastore, 1998). As opportunities for women in athletics open, perhaps their contributions will be increasingly valued, based upon ability and effort which will then garner more resources to support them and create additional opportunities for productivity.

Within the theme of resource availability, the results demonstrate that women in the early eras fought for resources yet had limited support. After the passage of Title IX and its implementation, the coaches and administrators of the 1980s and 1990s advocated for more resources, knowing that there was certainly need. Female student-athletes and coaches contributed to athletic programs and deserved better funding, quality staff, and support. Whether resources were distributed based on factors of need, equity, or equality, the advocates pushed for women's programs to receive what they required to successfully operate. Clearly, the generation of advocates was knowledgeable about Title IX, yet the generations that followed seem to have a diminishing awareness of the struggles required for Title IX's implementation and the challenges overcome in acquiring resources for women's athletics programs over the decades. However, the outlook for the future of Title IX's lasting impact is very optimistic from the current generation's perspective. In reflection on distributive justice principles, the concept of equality is

apparent and celebrated in both the current era and possibility for the future of women's collegiate sport.

Continuing the discussion of resources, the next key finding was within the fighting for resources theme. Long before Title IX's passage, female athletes, coaches, and administrators struggled to operate college sport programs. Facilities and budgets were limited, the perception of women in roles not deemed appropriate by society for females was negative, and coaches were administrators and teachers unpaid for their duties, which were outside of their full workloads. The effects of Title IX and changes that ultimately improved women's athletics at the intercollegiate level were slow to emerge and required women to fight for every resource, reflecting the distributive justice principle of need.

With vivid tales depicting lack of resources as basic as ice for treatment of injuries, the early generation shared details of the stark contrast from their era to the millennial generation. Concomitantly, men took greater control of women's sport as more resources were made available during the ensuing decades. As a result, the male model became an accepted standard, with women's sport "adopting" the model or coalescing with the values foundational to it, which encompasses high-pressure recruiting, a premium on winning, and an expectation to produce revenue (Blinde, 1989; Hult, 1980; Lough, 2015). As the transition to a commercialized, win-at-all-costs focus emulating the male model emerged overtaking the education and student-centered focus of the female model, women lost control of their own athletic governance, and had to justify resources required to operate competitive programs every step of the way. Title IX's impact on both resources for programs and program values is summarized by Hult (1980):

Whereas the men see the issue primarily in terms of dollars, spectatorism, and frank territorialism, the women see equality. The real tragedy may rest within women's

governance. Big time men's athletics has long been attached to commercial motives, and Title IX legislation operates under the assumption that the male model of athletics is the *norm* for determining discriminatory action, even when women have opted for a differing model. The educational values, therefore, may be lost in the battle for equality. The women have perhaps failed to fully recognize that Title IX has proven—philosophically—a double edged sword for women. (p. 89)

This powerful explanation demonstrates the conflicts between the values in the male and female models of athletics as well as the effect Title IX has had on women's sport. Hattery, Smith, and Staurowsky (2007) posed, "We ask if the goal of intercollegiate sports is fundamentally about an opportunity to get a college education while simultaneously having the opportunity to have a rich athletic experience, how can we justify investing so much less in the experiences of women than men" (p. 267)? Women were forced to subsume this existing model and culture as they sought equality in college athletics programs. However within this male model, "intercollegiate athletic administrators tend to capitalize on the popularity of certain sports because they generate more revenue, media publicity, and public support for the program" (Hums & Chelladurai, 1994, p. 203). The majority of women's teams rarely receive media attention and profits. Thus, the distributive justice principle of equity reflects administrators' favoring the contribution of men's revenue sport programs when distributing resources. Mahony and Pastore (1998) emphasized, "Athletic departments generally have not been successful at making women's sports into major revenue producers and profit-making entities," which could be from ineffective marketing efforts by departments themselves (pp. 131-33). The move towards the principle of equality may have more to do with the judicial system than a desire for gender equality in collegiate sport (Mahony & Pastore, 1998).

While the equal distribution of resources is the preferred principle favored by females, the principle of need was also important during the adoption of the male model. Information from the interviews showed that women's programs lacked funding and support for promotion and marketing activities, and women were often not paid for coaching or administration before Title IX; and after its passage, salaries remained low, while proper equipment and comparable facilities to the men's programs remained unavailable in the majority of situations. A female coach from the 1980s and 1990s era shared, "I can remember winning a conference championship, and rather than getting a raise or a bonus or anything, I got a bouquet of flowers. I was saying, wow, I'll take the money instead or I'll take the bonus instead." This story is startling because male coaches never would be offered flowers after winning a competition.

Based on this quote, the distributive justice principle of equity was overlooked, as the coach was not compensated based on performance in comparison to other programs during this era. The participant's perceptions regarding resource support convey that only the contribution of male athletic programs was deemed valuable to decision makers, which reflects a skewed version of the equity principle in distributive justice. Hums and Chelladurai (1994) found that administrators and coaches view the principles of equality and need as more just than the principle of equity. However, Mahony and Pastore (1998) determined that this preference is "inconsistent with actual distributions" (p. 148). Though the principle of need is subjective, some participants in this study felt the contribution of women's teams were not valued as highly as the contribution of men's teams, especially with regard to revenue generating sport programs. Of course, placing a value on contribution is very subjective. According to Hattery et al. (2007), "As women gain recognition and status in sport they will threaten the established order of male

dominance” (p. 264). This consideration impacts decision makers who consider distributive justice principles when budgeting resources for athletic programs.

Finally, a paradox was noted in the leadership development theme, which reflected how women athletes increasingly developed leadership skills through their sport participation, yet few aspired to utilize these skills within intercollegiate athletics. This is the diminishing pipeline paradox: with more opportunities for female participation and more female athletes playing sports today, there are fewer female coaches. Our findings suggest women gain a lot more than athletic experience while participating in organized sport, including leadership skills, confidence in abilities, experience working with a team, and managing success and failures. The quotes in this theme express that current female coaches, administrators, and faculty consider athletic participation a training ground for women to develop leadership and life skills and provide an opportunity for women to pursue leadership positions both within intercollegiate athletics and beyond.

An early-era coach commented,

The thing that really—this cracks me up is seeing all of the women athletic trainers down on the football field. I mean that is something that, when I started coaching, no one would have ever believed that women would be down on the field with football players and doing such a great job.

As noted by this coach and Acosta and Carpenter (2012), there are more positions within athletic administration currently opened for women as compared to the early era. Additionally, a female professor/former coach expressed an intent and interest to advocate for and develop more women for leadership roles in athletics: “I would like to see us increase our efforts to recruit qualified

and talented athletes to go into coaching, athletic administration and officiating. All those kinds of fields, we could still use more women.”

Noting several study participants were former athletes and/or coaches now working outside of intercollegiate athletics, it seems the benefits of experience in college sport have not translated to leadership roles directly within college sport. Instead many women have opted for careers where their leadership skills are valued outside of sport. From reviewing research on women leaders in sport, Massengale and Lough (2010) noted, “Title IX does not require gender equity among administrators” (p. 6). Aside from the Acosta and Carpenter (2012) study, there is limited information about the number of women in leadership positions in athletics programs. Several researchers (Burton, Carr, Fink & Bruening, 2009; Grappendorf & Lough, 2006) emphasized that perceptions of sport as a male domain perpetuate the ongoing discrimination of women leaders in sport programs. Until there is a change in the male-dominated culture of intercollegiate sport, women may continue to be less inclined to pursue careers in athletics, and more likely to utilize their leadership skills beyond the sport arena.

According to Hoffman (2010), “There is often only one woman in senior level leadership positions” (p. 54). This is the role of the Senior Woman Administrator (SWA), created to give women a voice in athletic administration and typically designated at all NCAA institutions (Grappendorf et al., 2008; Hoffman, 2010). Though the role started after the passage of Title IX, it still remains today and is almost a roadblock to developing women into administrative roles in athletics. In their study on Senior Women Administrators, Grappendorf et al. (2008) found that women in the SWA position usually did not have financial decision-making authority. The SWA often oversees gender equity issues in the department. In Hoffman’s (2010) SWA study, she determined,

The responsibility of the SWA role while being the only woman at the table has created a narrow path for women leaders who want to advance. If a woman is vocal about Title IX she is often seen as only concerned about women's issues; however, if she is not speaking up enough about Title IX, then she is not fulfilling the SWA obligation. (p. 66)

Hoffman (2010) noted that the NCAA created this role from the mindset that "women's athletics were a separate, distinct entity" (p. 69). However, she emphasized, "the shift in the purpose of educating women to equity has left these strategies inadequate for advancing a critical mass of women to leadership roles" (Hoffman, 2010, p. 69). In fact, it deters women from aspiring to be leaders in athletics and instead perpetuates the masculine culture that causes occupational closure for women in the field.

A connection to an athletic program and network of student-athletes and alumni creates an environment that may serve as a possible starting point for a career in athletics regardless of gender. To be proactive in this realm, athletic administrators should identify leaders among women's athletic programs, such as team captains and student representatives on Student-Athlete Advisory Committees, and encourage participation in the NCAA Career in Sports Forum, which requires nominations from students' institutions. Similarly, coaches should encourage student athletes to consider a career in coaching. Athletic departments can create formal mentoring programs to connect female student-athletes to women in different positions in the athletic department, to expose them to a variety of career opportunities. Another recommendation is to connect female graduate students in Sport Management, Athletic Administration, and Student Affairs masters programs to internships and training opportunities within Athletic Departments.

Future research is needed to uncover why few female athletes aspire to intercollegiate athletic leadership. Arguably, they provide the initial source for a pipeline toward sport

leadership, yet data continues to demonstrate a low representation of women as coaches and athletic administrators (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Lough & Grappendorf, 2007). One potential explanation may be the lack of resources and support perceived by many of the participants in this study. Because coaches and administrators have seen throughout the eras a lack of resources, equivalent facilities, and promotion of women's sport, female athletes who have experienced the pressures imposed on women who work in athletics may be less inclined to consider an athletic career. The current culture of sport, based on the male model, has stressed that women's sports adapt to the expectation of revenue generation. In Ackerman's (2013) White Paper on women's basketball, one of her interviewees commented, "What's right for the men isn't necessarily what's right for the women" (p. 17). Ackerman (2013) noted that the women's game is not perceived "as exciting as the play in men's basketball" (p. 25). One of the most difficult problems is the "head to head nature of the schedules" for both men's and women's teams, leading to diminished interest by the media and fans for the women's game (Ackerman, 2013, p. 26). From the interviews she conducted, Ackerman (2013) determined that "concerns about complying with gender equity mandates have contributed to an escalation of costs in women's basketball programs, even though their revenues represent only a fraction of those generated on the men's side (p. 27). This pressure to compete with the men's programs may seem like an enormous challenge to potential athletic administrators seeking to advance women's programs. Until resources are allocated equally rather than through the principles of equity or need, recruiting former female athletes into careers in college sport may continue to be challenging.

Further complicating the issue, most of the participants in this study had long careers in athletics with deep commitments that went beyond paid positions and earning recognition for

their work. Yet, women in the new millennium are known to leave the field of athletics at different points along the career path (Dixon et al., 2008). Cooky and LaVoi (2012) noted that women may opt out of leadership positions in athletics “in part because of the informal interactions in these male-dominated and male-identified contexts” (p. 45). The male hegemony increases pressure on women in head coach and administrator roles. According to Cooky and LaVoi (2012), women in these roles “often have to perform at higher levels than their male colleagues” and “may feel pressure to conform to organizational norms in order to succeed, rather than to challenge them” (p. 45). Working in a male-dominated environment with intense pressure and its own set of masculine norms could cause women to leave athletic careers prior to attaining leadership roles in athletic departments.

Today’s generation, as evidenced by the Hardin and Whiteside (2009) study, is not as likely to take up equality or even equity for women’s athletic programs as a cause, because there is a lack of Title IX knowledge and a lack of awareness regarding the struggles that have enabled women’s sport to thrive today. The importance of keeping gender equity in the conversation may rest with educators, including faculty and Senior Women Administrators. It is incumbent upon the generations who have experience with advocacy to excite female athletes and future athletic administrators to make strides that will achieve what the study’s participants hoped for – leadership development for women through athletic experiences, equal distribution of resources and opportunities for women, and a focus on the benefits of women’s sport generally. Continued advocacy for women’s sport to gain more resources and support for women sport leaders will be crucial for both the future development of women’s athletics and women college sport leaders.

Conclusion

Perspectives of trailblazers over the 40 year span of Title IX were analyzed through consideration of Title IX's impact on each participant, his or her personal contributions to gender equity, and how athletic departments have committed to gender equity by supporting opportunities for women in athletics. The theoretical framework of distributive justice was incorporated to view participants experiences through the lens of equity, equality and need (Mahony & Pastore, 1998). This theoretical grounding illuminated ways in which resource decisions have been made which have often disadvantaged women athletes and women's sport programs. This was most evident in the second theme, labeled fighting for resources. Similarly the integration of the distributive justice framework illuminated the power differentials experienced over the eras by capturing many of the challenges women have faced when pursuing a career in intercollegiate athletics. The third theme illuminating leadership and life skills development was most directly aligned with this aspect of distributive justice. Lastly, of the three primary themes identified, the first theme, eras and generational differences proved to show the greatest disparity with regard to participant's experiences and interpretations of Title IX's impact. As the landscape of collegiate athletics continues to change and evolve, consideration of how each era and generation experiences and thereby interprets Title IX within their career will hold value for future study. Hearing the voices of Title IX pioneers over the first 40 years has brought to light the significant shifts and societal changes that have transpired, as well as illuminated opportunities for growth going forward.

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