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Female NCAA Division I Women's Ice Hockey Head Coaches: Keeping Women in the Game

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by

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Abstract

In 1972, the federal law Title IX altered the path toward equity and equal opportunity for girls and women in education and sport. Despite this legislation, the journey towards equality continues forty-seven years later. While support, opportunity, and growth for women in sport has increased, the decline and underrepresentation of female head coaches in collegiate athletics has decreased. Similar to the overall decline of collegiate female head coaches, women's collegiate ice hockey at the NCAA Division I level has also experienced a decline and underrepresentation of female head coaches. While there is research on the decline of women coaches, there is little specifically on female collegiate head women's ice hockey coaches. This research study will add to the literature on female coaches currently available.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. Six female coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs agreed to participate in this study. Findings from this study, connected to the research questions, revealed themes of personal and professional career trajectories; personal and professional costs or barriers; personal and professional benefits and advantages; experiences with institutions and athletic administrators; insight on the decline of women coaches; and mentorship opportunities. The study ends with suggestions and recommendations for female coaches, aspiring female head coaches, and female athletes who desire to become coaches. In addition, insight is provided to athletic administrators and institutions regarding the importance of female role models, and ways in which they can support, retain, and mentor female coaches.

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I want to thank the women coaches who were willing to trust me to share their experiences. Your honesty and willingness to participate in my research study is something I will always be grateful for. Learning about your experiences provided me with hope for the next generation of female head coaches.

I also want to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for their support, understanding, and encouragement throughout the past few years. I am very appreciative of the support from everyone around me through this journey. I want to thank my parents Lori and Jay, and grandparents Vern and Joyce Fryklund, for encouraging me to pursue an education and inspiring me to become a teacher.

I am thankful for the many women who came before me and fought for opportunities and equality for women, women in education, and women in sport. I am inspired to make a difference for the next generation of women through education and sport.

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Table of Contents

Chapter Page

Chapter Page

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter One

In 1972, the landmark federal law Title IX of the Education Amendments Act transformed the landscape for women in athletics by providing equity and equal opportunity for girls and women in sport. The growth in forty-six years has been significant regarding opportunities and participation for females in athletics. Despite this growth, the decline of women coaches since 1972 is discouraging. Various researchers have been studying this phenomenon over the years to understand the decline, make progress towards equal opportunities for female coaches, and increase female coaches in head coach positions of women's teams.

Similar to the overall trend in the decline of female head coaches in all sports since Title IX was enacted, NCAA Division I women's ice hockey has experienced the same decline in female coaches. Since the 2001-2002 season, when women's ice hockey became an NCAA sanctioned sport, the percentage of female head coaches has declined. Acosta and Carpenter (2014) identified that in 2002, 58.8% were women head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey teams, yet in 2014, 15.8% of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey teams had a female coach, a decline of 38.5% over the course of twelve years. In 2018-2019, 10 of 35 (29%) NCAA Division I women's ice hockey teams had a female head coach.

Statement of the Problem

A comprehensive national longitudinal study conducted by Acosta and Carpenter (2014) from 1977-2014 tracked the decline of women in NCAA collegiate coaching. Their study revealed the decline of women coaches since the inception of Title IX. Since their study, the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, along with other researchers, has been studying female coaches in collegiate athletics.

Most notable is prior to the enactment of Title IX in 1972, a female coached 90% of women's teams. Fast-forward to 2014, about 43% of women's teams were coached by a female (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Following Title IX's implementation, there was a decline of female head coaches and by 1990 there were more male head coaches of women's teams than female head coaches of women's teams (NCAA, 2017a). This trend has continued over the last thirty years. The NCAA (2017a) report indicates that in 2016, 40.2% of head coaches of women's sports are females. While there is research about the decline of women coaches in general, there is little specifically focused on female head coaches of women's ice hockey programs at the NCAA Division I level.

Female head coaches are important for many reasons. LaVoi (2016) identifies several reasons why women coaches matter. First, female coaches are role models to female athletes. Having a female role model particularly allows young female athletes to relate to someone who has been through their athletic experience. Second, female coaches matter to other female coaches, as having a support system is important for insight and success the coaching profession. Third, female coaches help grow the number of female coaches in the profession, "if girls and young women see females in coaching roles, they will more likely think about coaching as a legitimate and viable career, and so may aspire to become a coach" (p. 4). Fourth, female coaches add a different perspective to coaching, which provides a diverse work environment in general. Finally, female coaches advocate for equity and inclusion to improve the workplace environment for all women. These reasons are the beginning of why it is important for us to understand the decline.

Current and future coaches can benefit from research about the experiences of the ten female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey head coaches featured in this study. The future

looks bright, as many former female women's ice hockey players have the playing experience and knowledge to be successful coaches, role models, and leaders, and this study will give those women in the pipeline more guidance and information to succeed. This study will also provide female coaches of other sports the insight into the experiences of these female coaches.

Description of the Research

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "four characteristics are identified by most as key to understanding the nature of qualitative research: the focus is on the process, understanding, and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive" (p. 15). They go on to state that, "qualitative researchers are interested in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 15).

A qualitative approach allows the researcher to be the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. As explained by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), "since understanding is the goal of this research, the human instrument, which is able to be immediately responsible and adaptive, would seem to be the ideal means of collecting and analyzing data" (p. 16). They add that the researcher is able to check for understanding by, "nonverbal and verbal communication, process information (data) immediately, clarify and summarize material, check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation, and explore unusual or unanticipated responses" (p. 16). A qualitative approach also allows for rich description, "words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has leaned about a phenomenon" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 17).

Research about the decline of female collegiate coaches suggests many reasons for their underrepresentation since Title IX was enacted in 1972. This qualitative study will investigate

the experiences (N=6) of six female head coaches in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. The researcher will use semi-structured interviews to collect information and understand the coaches' experiences.

Theoretical Framework

Kanter's (1977) theory on homologous reproduction will be used to frame this study. This framework is used in other significant research studies (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Darvin & Sagas, 2016; Lovett & Lawry, 1994; Sagas, Cunningham, & Teed, 2006; Stangl & Kane, 1991) to explain the continued underrepresentation of women's coaches, and for the purpose of this study can be applied to the underrepresentation of female NCAA Division I women's head ice hockey coaches. Homologous reproduction, when applied to coaching, suggests that the gender of an athletic director impacts the selection of how head coaches are hired for a department (Stangl & Kane, 1991). They define homologous reproduction as a, "process whereby dominants reproduce themselves based on social and/or physical characteristics" (p. 47). Knoppers (1987) is credited with applying Kanters (1977) theory of homologous reproduction to the coaching profession. She reviewed Kanter's (1977) three structural variables of opportunity, power, and proportion and applied the variables to women in coaching. Knoppers (1987) explained opportunity as how women see coaching opportunities. If they opportunity is seen as impossible to attain, then they are unlikely to apply for positions or leave their current position. She explained power as having access to resources. If female coaches are not in major coaching positions, they will lack resources and power. Finally, she explained proportion as how many other women coaches are in the profession, because having a support system of other women coaches is important to other women coaches. The three variables will be used to explain

the underrepresentation of women in coaching (Stangl & Kane, 1991), specifically female head ice hockey coaches.

Research Questions

1. What were the personal and professional trajectories of current NCAA Division I head women's ice hockey coaches?
2. What are/were the personal and professional costs or barriers for these women?
3. What are/were the personal and professional benefits or advantages for these women?
4. What experiences have these head coaches had with their institutions and athletic administrators?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose this study is to investigate the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. Understanding the experiences of female head coaches is valuable to university administrators, athletic directors, and institutions in terms of recruitment, hiring, and retention. In addition, understanding their experiences will assist in providing support and professional development, and foster diverse hiring practices throughout the profession to move women through the pipeline into head coach positions. Exploring the experiences of female head coaches is also valuable for future aspiring female head coaches in the sport of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey, as it will give them the insight and tools to aid in their success. Learning from the experiences of current female head women's ice hockey coaches will provide understanding into career advancement, strategies used to conquer barriers, and plans of action used to hire and retain female head ice hockey coaches in the future. Understanding and learning from the experiences of female head coaches of women's NCAA

Division I ice hockey programs will also add valuable insight to female coaches of other sports, as the lessons learned in this study may be transferable.

Assumptions of the Study

I accept the following assumptions related to this study:

1. The female coaches will be honest and forthright about their experiences.
2. The coaches will tell their own story, in their own words, and from their own perspective.
3. The decline of female coaches has been and continues to be problematic in women's collegiate athletics based upon the review of literature.
4. Based on the review of literature, female coaches are important to female athletes and other coaches.

Delimitations

Currently, there are 35 NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs in the country, 10 of which are headed by female coaches. This study will focus on those ten coaches. I will not interview female assistant or associate coaches, with the exception of the pilot study, which will include one female women's ice hockey assistant coach. In addition, this study will not include male assistant, associate, or head coaches, or former female head coaches in women's ice hockey. Finally, only female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey will be interviewed, not Division II or III, or club hockey head coaches, or female head coaches of other collegiate sports.

As a current associate head women's ice hockey coach at a Division I institution, the researcher is currently a member of the Division I women's ice hockey community. As a researcher, I bring an understanding to this coaching community. I aspire to be a head coach in a

Division I women's ice hockey program and desire to learn from and share the experiences of these female coaches to help the next generation of female coaches.

Summary

This qualitative research study investigated the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs using semi-structured interviews with the entire population of 10 women. The theory of homologous reproduction was used to frame the study. Homologous reproduction is defined as a "process whereby dominants reproduce themselves based on social and/or physical characteristics (Stangl & Kane, 1991, p. 47). When applied to coaching, Kanters (1977) theory, homologous reproduction, proposes the gender of the athletic director influences how head coaches are hired and who is hired (Knoppers, 1987; Stangl & Kane, 1991).

Since the 1972 enactment of Title IX, women coaches overall in collegiate athletics have continued to decline from 90% in 1972 to approximately 43% in 2017 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). The decline of women coaches presents a contrast to many other Title IX outcomes that have had a positive outcome on girls and women in sport. For example, support and participation opportunities for women in collegiate athletics have all increased, yet the decline and underrepresentation of women's coaches continues. Researchers Acosta and Carpenter (2014) have documented the decline of women coaches in collegiate athletics since the implementation of Title IX in 1972. Since their longitudinal study, other researchers have continued the examination of the underrepresentation of women coaches. While research exists on the decline of women coaches in general, there is little research specifically focused on female head coaches of women's ice hockey programs at the Division I level.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature and the theoretical framework. The review of literature includes the history of Title IX and women's sports, women's collegiate ice hockey, female collegiate coaches, collegiate hiring practices, and athletic directors. The theoretical framework used in this study is Kanter's (1977) theory on homologous reproduction, as it applies to coaching.

Chapter 3 describes the study methodology. This qualitative research study will use semi-structured interviews to understand the experiences of female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey coaches. In addition, Chapter three provides information on the research design, participants, data collection, analysis, data and study quality, institutional review board (IRB), and procedures and timelines.

Chapter 4 examines the research findings, which include the study results, participants, and synthesis of the study. This chapter will assist the reader in gaining a fuller understanding of the phenomenon.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, discussion of the results, limitations of the study, implications for theory, implications for practice, and the implications for research. This chapter also identifies reflections on the study and areas for future research.

Definition of Terms

Division I- Division I schools typically consist of large student bodies, have the largest athletic budgets, and give the most athletic scholarships. About 350 colleges and universities are in this category, with about 170,000 student-athletes competing on over 6,000 athletic teams (NCAA, n.d.).

Division I Football Subdivision (FBS) – Division I FBS schools are based on football sponsorship and that participate in bowl games. The second subdivision of football is the

NCAA= run Football Champion Subdivision. The subdivisions are only for football and all other sports are just Division I. (NCAA, n.d.)

Division II- Division II institutions do not have the financial resources for athletics like the Division I institutions but provide a balanced experience in the athletic field, community, and in academics. More than 300 NCAA colleges and universities are a part of the NCAA Division II level (NCAA, n.d.)

Division III- The 450 Division III institutions are the largest of the NCAA divisions in participants and numbers of schools. The focus is on academics with shorter practice and playing seasons. Athletic scholarships are not offered at Division III institutions. (NCAA, n.d.)

Chapter Two – Literature Review

The literature review will examine the history related to Title IX, female collegiate athletics, female collegiate coaches, women's collegiate ice hockey, collegiate hiring practices, athletic directors, and the theoretical framework. Kanters (1977) theoretical framework, homologous reproduction, will be used to frame this study. Homologous reproduction, when applied to coaching, proposes that the gender of an athletic director impacts the gender of coaches appointed (Stangl & Kane, 1991). Also highlighted is the importance and impact that female coaches have on female athletes and other female coaches.

Since the inception of Title IX (1972), the influence on educational and athletic practices, policies, and opportunities for women continues to evolve. The impact of Title IX on women's athletics has been significant, with more female athletes participating in sports than ever before. In 2017, there were over 211,000 female athletes involved in collegiate sports (NCAA, 2017b; Wolverton, 2012) compared to 16,000 female athletes in 1970 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014, p. 1). In 2016, there was an average of 9.5 women's teams per school (NCAA, 2017b) compared to 2.5 women's teams per school in 1970 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014, p. 1). In addition, the total number of women's NCAA intercollegiate teams from member schools is currently 9,581, which is the highest number in history. Before Title IX legislation in 1972, 2% of university athletic budgets went to women's sports and no athletic scholarships were given to female athletes (National Coalition for Women & Girls in Education [NCWGE], 2012). In comparison to 2009-2010, 40% of budgets were spent on women's sports, and female athletes received 48% of the total athletic scholarships (NCWGE, 2012).

While opportunity and participation for female athletes in collegiate athletics has increased since 1972, collegiate women's athletics still fall short in intended outcomes and

equality, specifically, as women's sport's at the Division I level fall short in total expenses, recruiting budgets, scholarships, head coaches compensation, and assistant coaches compensation compared to collegiate men's athletics at the Division I level (NCAA, 2017a). See Figure 1.

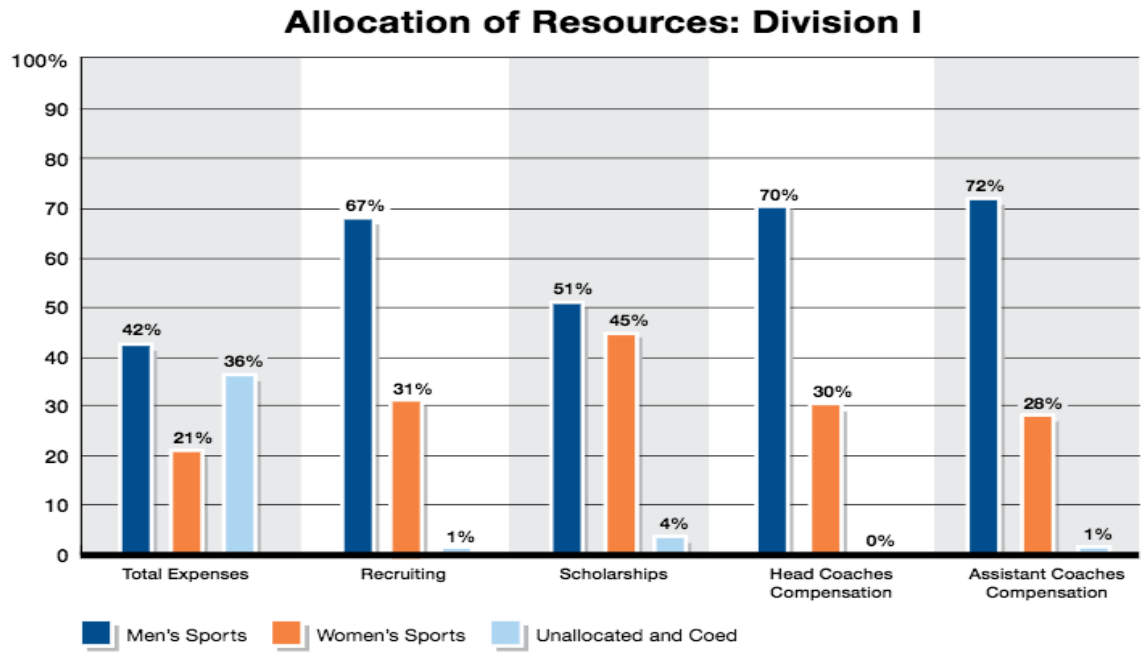

Figure 1. Allocation of Resources: Division I (NCAA Financial Reporting System, as cited in NCAA, 2017a, p. 28).

Additionally, female athletes still have approximately 60,000 fewer opportunities to participate in NCAA collegiate athletics than male athletes (Dusenbery & Lee, 2012; Women's Sports Foundation, 2013). According to the NCAA (2017a) 45 Years of Title IX Report, "Since the early 2000s, men's championship participation opportunities have grown at a slightly faster rate than women's even though colleges and universities are fielding on average one more women's team than men's in their athletic programs" (p. 18). Across all Divisions (Division I, II, and III),

males account for 56.5% of athletes and females account for 43.5% of athletes (NCAA, 2017a, p. 18). In addition, in Division I, females represent 46.7% of athletes and males represent 53.3% of athletes. It is important to note that in all Divisions, women represent 54% of the student undergraduate population and at the Division I level represent 53% of the student undergraduate population (NCAA, 2017a). Specifically, "women's overall sport participation rate is 10.5% lower than the average percentage of women undergraduates" (NCAA, 2017a, p.18). Kane (2012) notes that at the NCAA Division I collegiate level, women's sports make up just 36% of the recruiting budgets and 39% of the operating budgets (p. 8). NCAA Division I women's sport coaches salaries are also far below that of their male counterparts with the median salary for head women's coaches at $646,000, compared to a $916,000 median salary for men's head coaches (p. 8). Female college athletes also receive $183 million less than male athletes in NCAA athletic scholarships (Women's Sports Foundation, 2013).

Most noteworthy is the decline of female head coaches in women's collegiate sports since the inception of Title IX. Prior to 1972, more than 90% (N= 2.5 teams per school) of women's teams were coached by females (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Kane & LaVoi, 2018). Today, approximately 43% (N= 4154) of women's teams are coached by females (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Sabo, Veliz, Staurowsky, 2016). Sabo et al. (2016) also highlight, "less than 23% of all coaching positions across all NCAA sports are held by females, and there is virtually no other employment sector in which the percentages are so low for women" (p. 5-6). In addition, they document that "women's presence expanded in medicine, law, and business, but they lost ground in coaching" (p. 5-6). A study by LaVoi (2016) also supports those findings, highlighting that there has been an increase of women as professors, physicians, attorneys, members of US Congress, and Fortune 500 CEOs since 1972.

In addition to the decline of collegiate female coaches, there has been a decline of female collegiate athletic directors. Before Title IX, “more than 90% of athletic directors for women’s programs were female” (NCAA, 2017a, p. 43). By 1980, female athletic directors accounted for less than 20% of the combined men’s and women’s athletic departments and 36 years later, in 2016, represent 19.6% (N = 1135) of athletic directors (NCAA, 2017a). In 2016, 10.5% of athletic directors were female at the Division I level which is the lowest across all NCAA Divisions (NCAA, 2017a). However, this is an increase from 1996 when 6.7% of Division I athletic directors were female (NCAA, 2017a). The NCAA demographics database (2018) reports that in 2018, 21.3% (237) of females hold director of athletic positions and males hold 78.7% (877) of director of athletics positions across all NCAA Divisions (N = 1114). Specifically, in NCAA Division I, females account for 11% (39) of director of athletics positions and males account for 89% (317) of director of athletic positions (N= 356.)

The underrepresentation of women in coaching and sport leadership roles is problematic, for many reasons, including that athletes need female coaches as role models. As indicated by LaVoi (2016), female role models provide young female and male athletes with the experience of having a female in a leadership position in sport. These experiences can help influence the way female athletes perceive themselves and also inspire them to become a coach. In addition to the positive effect on female athletes, male athletes also benefit from the experience of having a female coach in regard to respect for women in leadership positions. Female coaches are also important to other female coaches as, “women coaches need to see and interact with other women coaches for friendship, networking, support, career advice, mentorship, counseling, and help in navigating a male dominated workplace” (p. 3). LaVoi also added that having more women in a workplace environment creates a positive work environment for women and

promotes gender equality. Knoppers (1989) explains that female athletes need female role models who, "model leadership skill and competence and serve as an advertisement that similar people can function in that environment" (p. 39). She credits the success of women and minorities in male dominated professions to the experience of having a role model.

As a result of Title IX's impact on athletic opportunities for girls and women over the past forty-five years, one would think there would be an increase of female coaches and administrators, rather than a decline of females in key coaching and leadership positions. This regression in female coaches and administrators specifically at the collegiate level indicates a problem that can be attributed to many factors. Buzuvis (2015) states, "discrimination, motivated by stereotypes about women and their compatibility for leadership in competitive athletics, is believed to erect significant barriers for entry to women seeking to advance into head coaching or senior administrative positions in athletics" (p. 276). Kane (2016) notes that the continued underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, "is the result of ideological and structural barriers created – and vigilantly maintained – by gender role stereotypes" (p. 37).

A study by Acosta and Carpenter (1985) examined the differences in perspectives between male and female athletic directors on the cause for the underrepresentation of women coaches. They found that female and male athletic director perspectives to be different. Female athletic directors reported, "success of the old boys club, weakness of the old girls club, unconscious discrimination, and lack of qualified women coaches and administrators" (p. 35). Male athletic directors reported, "lack of qualified women coaches and administrators, unwillingness of women to recruit and travel, failure of women to apply for job openings, and time constraints due to family duties" (p. 35). While both male and female athletic directors identified a lack of qualified women coaches and administrators, female athletic directors

attributed that to networking opportunities, while male athletic directors did not (Acosta & Carpenter, 1985). In addition, female athletic directors perceived unconscious discrimination by male athletic directors in the hiring process of female coaches, whereas male athletic directors perceived female coaches unwilling to apply for coaching positions.

History of Title IX and Women's Sports

Title IX is federal legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sex in education programs that receive federal money (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Title IX states, "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 educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (US Department of Labor, n.d. para 1). Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was passed due to issues in higher education regarding the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Title VI, which addressed sex discrimination in federally funded programs, and the Equal Pay Act (Sandler, 2000). Sandler also noted that Title IX and the impact on women's athletics were not realized until the regulations of Title IX were brought into law in 1975.

Following the initial implementation of Title IX, numerous lawsuits, amendments, and challenges rose from around the country. For example, in 1975, a bill was introduced to the Senate that would, "exclude revenue-producing sports from Title IX coverage" (Women's Sports Foundation, 2011a, para. 8). The intent of the bill was to exclude football and men's basketball to the Title IX provisions. This bill never made it to the Senate floor but was one of many challenges brought forth by the implementation of Title IX. Even though Title IX was signed into law in 1972, the compliance for Title IX athletics requirements was not enforced until 1978 (Women's Sports Foundation, 2011a).

When constructed and implemented, Title IX was not specific legislation directed at equality for women in collegiate athletics. Title IX is often thought to only pertain to athletics, but it applies to all education programs (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). According to Buchanan (2012), Title IX compliance in athletics uses the following three-pronged test:

- males and females participate in athletics in numbers substantially proportional to their enrollment numbers; or
- the school has a history and ongoing practice of adding programs which shows that the school has invested in developing interests and abilities of members of the unrepresented sex; or
- the institutions existing programs fully and effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex. (p. 92)

Institutions are required to meet one of the three prongs to be in compliance with Title IX in athletics. The first prong is the easiest to measure and it's used most often by schools to measure their compliance, while the second and third prongs are challenging to measure (Kane, 2012). Acosta and Carpenter (2014) describe the thirteen most common ways to look at Title IX compliance in athletics as:

- accommodating the interest and abilities of members of both sexes;
- equipment and supplies;
- scheduling of games and practice;
- travel and per diem allowance;
- opportunity to receive coaching;
- academic tutoring assignments;

- compensation of coaches and tutors;
- provision of locker rooms;
- practice and competitive facilities;
- medical and training facilities and services;
- housing and dining services;
- publicity;
- recruitment;
- support services;
- financial assistance. (n.p.)

This is also referred to as the "laundry list" (Women's Sports Foundation, 2011b, para. 5). Over the last forty-six years many lawsuits, court cases, and policy updates have strengthened the application and interpretation of the law.

Before Title IX was passed in 1972, women's participation in college athletics started making progress as a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the second wave of the feminist movement (Bell, 2008). The Commission on Intercollegiate Sports for Women (CISW) was formed in 1966 to govern and organize intercollegiate competitions for women (Bell, 2008). As the CISW governed and added women's sports such as gymnastics, track and field, swimming, badminton, volleyball, and basketball, women's athletics wanted to have an organization like the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which governed men's collegiate sports (Bell, 2008). In 1971, the CISW was replaced with the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) (Bell, 2008). The AIAW and Title IX were the catalyst for the growth of women's participation in collegiate athletics (NCAA, 2017a). The AIAW had 278 charter

institutions when it started and as a result of the popularity of women's participation, in 1981 800 member schools were a part of the AIAW (Bell, 2008). The AIAW had a significant impact on the growth of women's collegiate sport and in 1980 became, "the largest sport governance association in the country, with nearly 1,000 members (NCAA, 2017a, p. 10).

In 1981-1982, women's collegiate championships became a part of the NCAA as a result of the battle between the AIAW to maintain control and governance over women's sports over the NCAA (Bell, 2008). The movement of women's sports governance from the AIAW to the NCAA was a difficult process, as the AIAW did not want to give up its authority or control, but it could not compete with the power and resources of the NCAA (Bell, 2008). This process included a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) that was filed in 1976 by the NCAA, "challenging the validity of the Title IX regulations" (2017a, p. 10). The NCAA lawsuit was unsuccessful and subsequently, "the NCAA intently pursued starting its own women's athletic programs, and by 1982 was hosting women's championships in all three Divisions" (2017a, p. 10). The NCAA wanted power and the ability to control women's collegiate athletics as it, "observed the growth of women's athletics and looked to the increased financial base and political power to be gained from exerting control over women's intercollegiate athletics" (Bell, 2008, p. 4). The NCAA showed no interest in women's collegiate athletics prior to Title IX, yet, "began to sense that the idea of equal opportunity for women in intercollegiate athletics was the direct aim of the Federal Government" (Bell, 2008, p. 4). Once the NCAA offered women's championships and provided money to support women's championships, the AIAW could not continue to compete with the NCAA and lost the governance of women's collegiate athletics in 1983, thus ceasing operation (Bell, 2008).

A common myth of the impact of Title IX is that participation opportunities have been reduced for male athletes due to the increase in opportunities for female athletes (Women's Sports Foundation, 2013.). While participation opportunities have increased for female athletes, the opportunities for male athletes have also increased. The National Coalition for Girls & Women in Education report, Title IX and athletics (2017), states that, "male participation in both high school and college athletics has continued to increase since Title IX's enactment, and males continue to have more opportunities to participate in sports at all school levels" (p. 4). Also, Title IX does not require a reduction in male opportunities to increase female opportunities (Women's Sports Foundation, 2013).

In recent years, due to college budget constraints, many college athletic departments are implementing budget reductions that include the elimination of both men's and women's sport programs. For example, in March 2017 the University of North Dakota eliminated their NCAA Division I programs of men's baseball, men's golf, men's and women's swimming, and women's hockey. One common misconception is that men's sports should not be eliminated because they bring in revenue, but in reality, fewer than 12% of college athletic departments actually bring in any revenue (Women's Sports Foundation, 2013). Furthermore, Title IX does not require equal spending on male and female athletes and does not require comparison of men's programs to women's programs of the same sport, but it does require that athletic scholarships are proportional to the participation rates. For example, women's hockey is not compared to men's hockey, but rather all women's athletic programs are compared to all men's athletic programs (Women's Sports Foundation, 2011b). To meet the requirement of the scholarship policy, schools must provide scholarships to female athletes in proportion to one percent of their level of participation (Buchanan, 2012). Other than athletic scholarships, the only

requirement of equality is that of equal opportunities for male and female athletes (Women's Sports Foundation, 2011b; Women's Sports Foundation, 2013).

The march towards equality continues forty-six years after the landmark enactment of Title IX. Recently, high profile female head coaches have been fired for gender discrimination and in retaliation for fighting for equity within their athletic departments and programs (Christiansen, 2018). For example, Shannon Miller, the head women's ice hockey coach at the University of Minnesota-Duluth won her court battle against the university in March 2018 and the jury ruled that the University of Minnesota-Duluth, "discriminated against her based on her gender and retaliated against her for making equity complaints" (Christiansen, 2018, n.p.). Similar to Miller's case, Iowa State University field hockey coach, Tracey Grisbaum,, and San Deigo State University basketball coach Beth Burns, both recently (2017 and 2016 respectively) sued their universities for discrimination and also won their cases (Christiansen, 2018). These are a few examples of women coaches who have lost their positions due to discrimination and their fight for equality for women's athletics.

LaVoi (2016) states that an ageist bias in women's sports has also affected many female coaches, but suggests there is little empirical evidence to support this idea. She identifies a common belief that veteran female coaches, over the age of 45, are more likely to be fired for advocating for resources and equity. In addition, "a novice coach with little coaching experience will not experience, reflect, or respond to colleagues, inequality, marginalization, discrimination, institutional policies, or societal stereotypes in the same way as a 25-year veteran" (p. 25). Examples such as Miller, Grisbaum, and Burns, who were all successful veteran coaches in their respective sports, were fired or non-renewed based upon discrimination and their fight for equity and resources.

Women's Collegiate Ice Hockey

According to Acosta and Carpenter (2014), women's ice hockey ranked the thirteenth most popular women's varsity sport of the twenty-four sports that women play in NCAA women's collegiate sports (p. 8). They go on to state that in 1978, 1.3 institutions offered women's ice hockey, compared to 11.2 schools offering women's ice hockey in 2014 (p. 14-15). In 2018-2019, 35 institutions offered NCAA Division I women's ice hockey, and 66 schools offered Division III women's ice hockey.

The history of women's collegiate ice hockey goes back to 1962, when Brown University created the first team (NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Tournament, n.d.). Subsequently, the first Ivy League women's ice hockey tournament began in 1971 with Princeton, Yale, Brown, and Cornell as participants and competitors. The continued growth of collegiate women's ice hockey continued through the 1980s with the first East Coast Athletic Conference (ECAC) women's collegiate ice hockey championships in 1984 (NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Tournament, n.d.). In 1997-1998, the American Women's Collegiate Hockey Alliance (AWCHA) began governance of the women's national ice hockey championships; this governance continued until 2000-2001 when women's collegiate ice hockey became an NCAA sanctioned sport.

The history of head coaches in women's collegiate ice hockey is similar to the history of Title IX's overall impact on collegiate women's athletics. A similar decrease can be seen in the percentage of head female coaches after the year 2000, when women's ice hockey became a sanctioned Division I NCAA sport. Prior to women's ice hockey becoming a sanctioned NCAA Division I sport in 2000, collegiate women's ice hockey programs were independent of the NCAA. Women's collegiate ice hockey had the highest percentage of female coaches in 1999, across all Divisions (Division I, II, and III) at 52.9% (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014, p. 24). In

Division I women's ice hockey, 58.8% of head coaches were women in 2002, yet in 2014, 15.8% of head coaches were women. In 2018-2019, NCAA Division I women's ice hockey, females were head coaches in 10 out of 35 programs, or 29%

LaVoi's (2018a) report provides grades by sport for percentages of female head coaches for select NCAA Division-I Conference programs. These conferences include: American Athletic Conference (AAC), Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Big 12, Big East, B1G Ten, Pacific -12 (Pac-12), and Southeastern Conference (SEC). The 86 select programs that are included in the select conferences are considered "big time" Division I athletic programs. The Division I women's ice hockey programs in these select institutions are University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin, Ohio State University, Penn State University, Boston College, Syracuse University, and University of Connecticut. Specifically, in these select programs, women's ice hockey received a D because only 25% of head coaches were female (p. 3). The grading scale used by LaVoi is similar to a typical grading scale but modified to account for the mean percentage of female head coaches for all schools (40%). LaVoi's (2018a) grading scale follows: A = 70 - 100%; B = 55 - 69%; C = 40 - 54%; D = 25 - 39%; F = 0 - 24% of female head coaches of women's teams (p. 18). (Table 1). During the 2018-2019 season in all of the NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs, ten of the thirty-five programs had female head coaches (29%).

Table 1

Grade by Sport for Percentage of Female Head Coaches for 2017-2018 (LaVoi, 2018a, p. 4).

Grade	%	Sport
A	70-100	field hockey (-95.7%), lacrosse (+86.7%), golf (81.3%), equestrian (75%), softball (-71.8%)
B	55-69	basketball (-59.3%), gymnastics (55.9%)
C	40-54	nordic skiing (50%), tennis (+45.3%), rowing (↑ 43.6%)
D	25-39	rifle (37.5%), volleyball (+38.1%), bowling (33.3%), fencing (27.3%), soccer (26.2%), ice hockey (25%)
F	0-24	beach volleyball (↓ 20%), cross country (+19.8%), swimming (17.2%), water polo (+12.5%), track & field (12%), diving (+8.6%), alpine skiing (0%), triathlon (0%)

↓ Sport decreased percentage of women head coaches and moved down a grade from 2015-16 to 2016-17
- Sport decreased percentage of women head coaches, but did not move down a grade
+ Sport increased percentage of women head coaches, but did not move up a grade
↑ Sport increased percentage of women head coaches and moved up a grade

A recent report by LaVoi and Breen (2018) on head coaches of women's collegiate teams provides a comprehensive report on female coaches by sport at NCAA Division I Institutions. This report includes the percentage of female coaches at 349 Division I institutions and of 26 women sports teams. In this comprehensive report, female head women's ice hockey coaches account for 29.2% (7) of coaches and male head coaches of women's ice hockey teams account for 70.8% (17) of coaches (N= 24). (Table 2).

Table 2

Grade by Sport for Percentages of Female D-I Head Coaches for 2017-18 (LaVoi & Breen, 2018, p. 3).

Grade	%	Sport
A	100-70	Lacrosse (91.2%), Rugby (85.7%)*, Field Hockey (84.2%), Equestrian (76.5%)**
B	69-55	Softball (65.3%), Golf (64.4%), Basketball (59.8%)
C	54-40	Gymnastics (54.0%), Bowling (51.4%), Triathlon (50.0%)*, Volleyball (46.8%), Rifle (43.8%)**
D	39-25	Beach Volleyball (38.5%), Rowing (38.4%), Tennis (37.3%), Ice Hockey (29.2%), Soccer (28.1%)
F	24-0	Fencing (23.1%), Diving (22.9%), Water Polo (21.9%), Cross Country (20.2%), Nordic Skiing (20.0%)*, Squash (20.0%)*, Swiming (17.9%), Track (17.7%), Alpine Skiing (9.1%)**

*Offered by ten or fewer schools; **Offered by twenty or fewer schools

Female Collegiate Coaches

Title IX's impact on women in collegiate athletics is significant as more women have the opportunity to participate than ever before. Since Title IX, the number of women playing varsity sports in college has increased from 29,972 in 1971 (Wulf, 2012) to over 211,000 in 2016 (NCAA, 2017a). In 1972, nine out of ten coaches (90%) of women's teams were females. In 1978, the percentage dropped to 58.2%, which can be attributed to the increase in the number of women's teams offered (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014, p. 18). From 1972 to 1978, an increase from 2.5 teams to 5.61 teams offered per school was a significant increase in short period of time (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). These immediate changes, brought forth by Title IX, had an effect on the decline of female leaders in women's sport that continues today. (Figure 2).

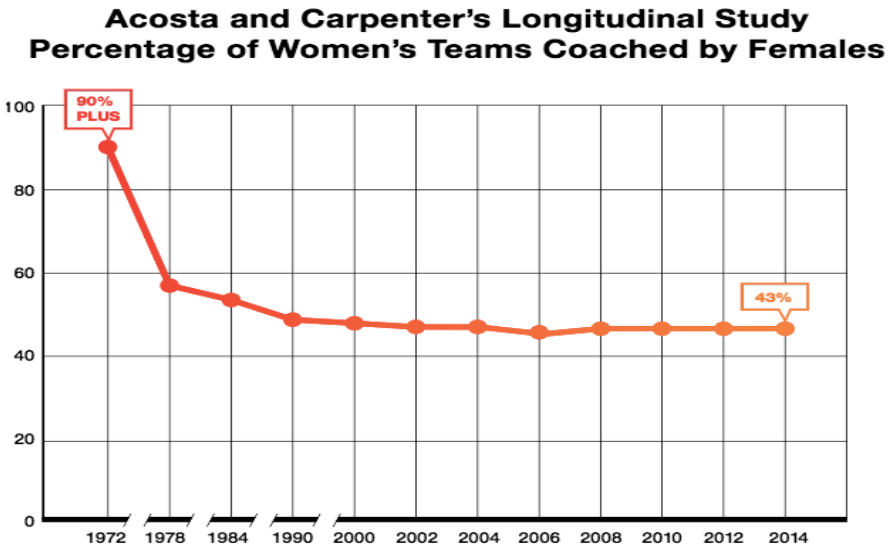

Figure 2. Acosta and Carpenter's Longitudinal Study Percentage of Women's Teams Coached by Females (as cited in NCAA, 2017a).

With the increase of more teams and thus more coaching positions, male coaches started pursuing coaching positions in women's sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Buzuvis, 2015; Welch & Sigelman, 2007). The increase in interest by men in women's coaching positions after

Title IX can also be attributed to support, resources, and the NCAA's oversight of women's athletics (Buzuvis, 2015; Welch & Sigelman, 2007). Prior to Title IX, male coaches had little interest in coaching women's sports. Welch and Sigelman (2007), explain this phenomenon by stating, "coaching women's sports became a more desirable job after 1972, with higher pay, status, and visibility – the opposite of the situation in many fields where women have advances such as education, insurance, and banking" (p. 1418). Before Title IX, female physical education teachers typically were the coaches of the women's teams and they were typically not paid for coaching. Following Title IX, women's coaching positions became paid positions, which opened the door for men (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Title IX's impact on women's sport precipitated female coaches vying for positions with male coaches (Buzuvis, 2015; Welch & Sigelman, 2007).

The decline of female coaches continues to be examined by various researchers. The Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota, along with the Alliance of Women Coaches, began a series of longitudinal research studies on women coaches in 2012. These longitudinal studies are, "a partnership between the Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota - the first research center of its kind in the world - and the Alliance of Women Coaches, an organization dedicated to increasing the number of women in the coaching profession" (LaVoi & Heffernan, 2016, p.1).

According to LaVoi & Heffernan (2016), the purpose of the longitudinal study is, "to document the percentage of women collegiate head coaches over time and add to our own work as well as work conducted by colleagues (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick, Fox, Guiao, & Simpson, 2015; Sabo, Veliz & Staurowsky, 2016; Wilson, 2012)" (p. 6). Over the past six years, this research series has tracked the percentage of female coaches in NCAA Division I, II, and III

athletic programs. The purpose of this research and partnership with other organizations and groups is to, “reverse the trend and increase the percentage of women college coaches, generate awareness and start a national dialogue on this issue, support and retain women coaches, and recruit more women to join the coaching profession” (LaVoi & Heffernan, 2016, p. 7).

Due to the Tucker Center’s research and publications, a national discussion has occurred in many athletic departments and universities. Athletic programs are taking notice of the Tucker Center’s research on female coaches and the report cards that are given to institutions based on the percentage of women coaches in an athletic department. The Tucker Center research advocates for changing the narrative of blaming women for the lack of women coaches and create awareness to promote change for the way female coaches are hired, perceived, and supported (LaVoi, 2016, LaVoi & Heffernan, 2016). The research will also help bring awareness and education to the importance of young women and men having female coaches as positive role models (LaVoi, 2016). A study by LaVoi (2013) highlighted why female coaches matter, “if the stereotypes about gender and leadership - that privilege male coaches - are to change, male and female athletes need to be coached by women” (p. 2).

A report by LaVoi and Breen (2018) on head coaches of women’s collegiate teams, indicates 41.7% of women were coached by women coaches, compared to 58.3% of male coaches coaching women’s teams. (Table 3). This report sample included a total of 3517 head coach positions of women’s teams from 349 institutions in NCAA Division I sports (N = 3512, accounting for 5 unfilled positions at the time of data collection). By comparison, this was slightly higher (.2%) than the percent of women head coaches in the select seven NCAA Division I conferences. These select seven NCAA Division-I conferences include 86 “big time” athletic programs and the “Power 5” (LaVoi, 2018a). These Power 5 conferences are the ACC,

B1G Ten, Big 12, Pac12, and the SEC, which are considered the powerful football conferences in NCAA Division-I football.

Table 3

Percentage of Women Head Coaches for Women's Teams (LaVoi & Breen, 2018, p. 3)

Position	Schools	Female		Male		Total Coach-es
	N	%	*n*	%	*n*	*N*
2012 - 13 Heach Coaches*	76	40.2	356	59.8	530	886
2013 - 14 Head Coaches*	76	39.6	352	60.4	536	888
2014 - 15 Head Coaches*	86	40.2	390	59.8	579	969
2015 - 16 Head Coaches*	86	41.1	397	58.9	570	967
2016 - 17 Head Coaches*	86	41.2	397	58.8	567	964
2017 - 18 Head Coaches*	86	41.5	403	58.5	567	970
2017 - 18 All Head Coaches	**349**	**41.7**	**1463**	**58.3**	**2049**	**3512**

*Notes head coaches of select 7 NCAA D-I conferences in previous reports (AAC, ACC, BIG 10, BIG 12, Big East, Pac-12, SEC)

Women Coaches Matter

The coaching positions available for women's sports are at an all-time high, along with more girls and women participating in sport than ever before, particularly given, "females represent 50% of the student body on college campuses, girls and young women state they value and need female role models, the number of women leaders in nearly all occupations is rising, and women are interested in coaching" (LaVoi, 2013, p. 2). In 2016, there were nearly 212,000 female student athletes participating on NCAA teams and specifically at the Division I level 83,036 female athletes participated in NCAA sports (NCAA, 2017a). Today, many former male and female athletes become coaches (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014), and there are qualified women who have the knowledge and training to coach, along with experience playing women's athletics; yet, despite this knowledge, training, and experience, female coaches are underrepresented (LaVoi, 2013).

Women in leadership and coaching roles have an impact on female athletes in many significant ways. For example, girls and young women indicate that having female role models is important to them and female coaches in these positions provide young female athletes a female role model that can inspire them to be leaders and perhaps pursue a career in coaching (LaVoi, 2013). LaVoi (2013) also highlights that female role models are important in changing the views about women in positions of power and leadership. In a study by Everhart & Chelladurai (1998), "women with a female coach found coaching more attractive than those with a male coach" (p. 195). Furthermore, they found that women who had a female coach, "perceive greater valence in coaching" (p. 195). Everhart & Chelladurai (1998) identified women who had female coaches had more interest in being a head coach than an assistant coach. Similarly, Acosta and Carpenter (2014) reported, "access to female role models in positions of decision making and leadership is particularly important for females" (p. 18). In addition, "intercollegiate athletics is a very intense and challenging enterprise for the participant and having female role models available with such an enterprise is even more useful" (p. 18). Having more females in a work environment can limit the negative workplace experiences for women and provide same-sex role models who can mentor other female athletes and coaches (LaVoi, 2013).

Assistant Coaches

Today, there are 13,222 paid assistant coaching positions in women's collegiate athletics, which is the highest in the history of women's sports (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Of the 13,222 paid assistant coaching positions, 7,503 (56.7%) are held by women, compared to 5,719 (43%) held by men (p. 31). They add that overall, female coaches hold more assistant coach positions than male coaches in women's sport programs. This trend of women holding more assistant coach positions would indicate a future increase of women as head coaches as these positions

should create career advancement into head coaching positions, yet that does not seem to be the case.

In addition, at the NCAA Division I level, women hold 54% of the paid assistant coach positions, compared to 57.5% and 59.5% (N = 13,222) of the paid assistant coach positions at the Division II and III level respectively (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014, p. 33). While these numbers are encouraging, the decline of women in head coach positions continues. In 2018 - 2019, there were 38 female assistant coaches in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey, compared to 19 male assistant coaches. In addition, 6 women and 7 men held associate head coach positions. The number of female assistant coaches in Division I women's ice hockey outnumbers the male assistant coaches, which should be an indication that current female assistant coaches are in the pipeline and should be viable head coaches in women's ice hockey in the future.

Wells (2016) highlights the importance of the role of the assistant coach, "the assistant coach is a vital position in the recruitment, selection, and development of the team culture and individual athletes" (p. 140). She adds that an assistant coach, "is one of the first individuals of authority athletes typically approach with questions, issues, and problems" (p. 140). Specifically, female assistant coaches provide a role model to female athletes, are able to relate to female athletes, and are an integral part of the program (Wells, 2016).

Collegiate Hiring Practices

In collegiate athletics, the lack of diversity in athletic administration and the coaching body has been a topic of conversation among researchers. A 2016 College Sport Racial and Gender Report Card (CSRGC) by Lapchick (2017), in conjunction with the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, declared, "college sport had the lowest grade for racial and gender hiring practices among all of the college and professional sport covered by the Racial and

Gender Report Cards" (para. 3). The RGRC and Lapchick have been tracking the hiring practices in college athletics and other professional organizations in the United States for the last 25 years. The report was known as the Racial Report Card until 1998 when it became the CSRGC. This report "considers the composition, assessed by the racial and gender makeup, of student-athletes, coaches, and athletic department staff and leadership in collegiate athletic departments" (Harrison, Lapchick, & Jansen, 2009, p. 95). The C+ rating in college athletics was the lowest grade of all the CSRGC in hiring practice (Lapchick, 2017 para. 2). In addition, Lapchick (2017) goes on to say, "college sport, which has had difficulty increasing opportunities for women and people of color, faced further challenges in this reporting period as it experienced decreases in both gender and racial hiring" (para. 3).

The NCAA (2006) developed a "Best Practices Manual" in collaboration with the National Association of Collegiate Women Athletic Administrators (NACWAA), the Black Coaches Association (BCA), and the Division II Presidents Council to enhance more diverse hiring practices across collegiate athletics. The Manual (2006) lists institutional policies for promoting diverse hiring practices:

- Inform search committee of any campus, state, or federal affirmative action or equal opportunity practices.
- Explain and discuss subtle and covert forms of discrimination.
- Actively involve the CEO in the hiring process.
- Have a higher administrative level review the search committee itself before it is authorized to do business.

- Ensure that the search committee is diverse (diversity of ethnicity, gender, age, and rank)
- Network with professional organizations to acquire diverse candidate pool.
- Subscribe to diverse publications.
- Encourage and reward faculty for nominating candidates or diversifying theirs staff or both.
- Systematically review hiring processes to maintain accountability.
- Document the ethnicity, gender, and dates hired of all staff members. (p. 13)

In 2016, the NCAA implemented a diversity hiring pledge that is meant to address the lack of diversity in hiring at the collegiate athletic level (New, 2016). The NCAA Pledge and Commitment to Promote Diversity and Gender Equity in Intercollegiate Athletics was developed out of concern for the lack of racial and ethnic minorities and women in coaching and athletics administration at all levels (NCAA, 2018). Since the pledge was distributed, "nearly 30 percent of the NCAA 1,200 members schools have not signed the pledge in the seven months since the NCAA announced it" (Hobson, 2017, para. 4). The pledge is completely voluntary, and institutions are not held accountable if they choose not to participate by signing the pledge.

Additionally, the NCAA (2017c) released the Diverse and Inclusive Hiring and Workforce Development Guide in September 2017. The guide was expanded on the previous work done by the NCAA to, "suggest promising practices that will assist hiring managers and decision-makers in intentionally embedding the principles of diversity and inclusion in the talent management life cycle" (NCAA, 2017c, p. *i*). The guide highlights the importance of diversity and inclusion in collegiate athletics. As described by Bernard Franklin, Executive Vice President

for Education and Community Engagement/Chief Inclusion Officer, “an inclusive leadership team not only puts people of color and women ‘at the table’ – it also gives them a voice, incorporating multiple perspectives and identifies as added value, enhancing the learning and working environment” (p. *iii*).

Also identified by the NCAA (2017c), “a key element in developing a diverse pipeline for future candidates is through exposing current student-athletes to potential careers in athletics” (p. *viii*). Student-athletes, who experience diverse administrators and coaches at the collegiate level, have much to gain as, “the most effective and long-lasting impact tends to come from direct exposure of having administrators and coaches reflecting the diverse identities and backgrounds of our student-athletes” (p. *viii*).

The institutional policies provided by the NCAA are many of the same policies institutions already have in place for hiring practices, yet institutions that sign the pledge may be more aware or willing to enhance diverse hiring policies and implement additional policies to create a more diverse hiring process for collegiate athletics. The updated NCAA Diverse and Inclusive hiring and Workforce Development Guide is an example of the acknowledgement of the continued underrepresentation of diversity in collegiate athletics, yet research has shown that despite these efforts, women are still underrepresented as coaches and administrators in collegiate athletics.

Athletic Directors

While opportunities for participation have increased since Title IX, “women who wish to pursue careers in college sport encounter hiring and promotion issues, pay equity concerns, and issues associated with fair treatment” (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2017, para. 3). Female sport administrators have had a similar decline as female coaches since Title IX. Prior to Title IX,

women were the sport administrators of women's sports. For example, in 1972, 90% of women's sport administrators were women, whereas in 2013-2014, women accounted for 32.4% of women's sport administrators (Women's Sports Foundation, 2017). Following Title IX, many athletic programs merged from separate men and women's athletic departments to one athletic department. In most athletic departments, it was the male athletic director who took over the oversight of both men's and women's sports. According to data from a 2012 NCAA report, 19% of athletic directors are women (Wilson, 2012). In 2012, females accounted for only 10.2% of the 350 of athletic directors at the Division I level, 15.7% (57/323) at the Division II level, and 30.7% (135/458) at the Division III level (p. 23). In 2013-2014, of the 1,131 athletic directors across all divisions, women accounted for 20.2% (229) (Women's Sports Foundation, 2017, n.p.). Acosta and Carpenter's (2004) study (*N*=3350) reported that 18.5% (187) of women athletic administrators across all NCAA was an increase from 17.9% (171) in 2000 (*N*=2928), but a decrease from 1998 (*N*=2510) when 19.4% (188) of women's programs had female administrators. Moreover, they report that that Division I athletics has the smallest percentage of female athletic administrators. In 2018-2019, female athletic directors account for 21.3% of athletic director positions and male athletic directors account for 79% of athletic director position across all NCAA divisions (N = 1114) (NCAA Demographics Database, 2018). Additionally, in NCAA Division I, female athletic directors account for 11% of the athletic director positions and male athletic directors account for 89% of the athletic director positions (N= 356). In comparison, at the NCAA Division III level, female athletic director's account for 32% of athletic director positions (N = 446) (NCAA Demographics Database, 2018).

According to Acosta and Carpenter (2006), 14.5% (*N*= 3547) of women's athletic programs do not have any female athletic administrator in their departments. Their study

concludes that the gender of the athletic director plays a role in the gender of the coaches. For example, at the Division I level, when there is no female athletic administrator in the athletic administrative structure, only 38.5% of coaches in the department are female. This is in comparison to 48.5% of female coaches when the athletic director is female. In 2008, the percentage of female athletic directors was the highest since the Title IX era, with 21.3% females holding athletic director positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). They found that Division I had 29 female athletic directors, which was the lowest of all the divisions. Division III had the most female athletic directors with 142. In 2012, 91.8% of schools had at least one female athletic administrator within the athletic department, which is the highest ever (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012).

According to Stangl and Kane's (1991) study on interscholastic athletic director hiring practices, 63.38% of female head coaches were hired by female athletic directors, compared to 56.22% of women head coaches hired by male athletic directors (p. 54). The results of their study suggest that the gender of the athletic director plays a significant factor in the hiring of coaches at the public-school level, which they refer to as homologous reproduction. Similar to Stangl and Kane's (1991) study, Lovett and Lawry (1994) examined homologous reproduction in Texas High School athletic programs to, "determine if significant differences exist between types of administrative structure and the number of head coaches by gender" (p. 28). Their study concluded that Knoppers (1987) application of Kanter's (1977) theory of the three structural determinants of organizational behavior (opportunity, power, and proportion) can explain the decline of women coaches.

Similarly, a study conducted by Acosta and Carpenter (2014), 23 years after the Stangl and Kane study; found that the gender of the athletic director makes a difference in hiring of

women coaches at the collegiate level. They found, specifically, across all sports at the Division I level, when there is a female athletic director, female coaches account for 46.8% of the coaches, compared to 43% of female coaches when there is a male athletic director (p. 18). Similarly, at the Division II level, there is an average of 40.6% of female coaches when the athletic director is female and 35.9% when the athletic director is male. Comparable to Division I and II , Division III female coaches account for 53.9% when the athletic director is female and 44.4% when the athletic director is male (p. 18)

LaVoi (2016) explains phenomenon that she refers to as, “blame-the-women”, an idea that athletic directors, or those in hiring positions in sport, “consciously or not, sometimes employ various methods to suggest the victim (female coach) is responsible for her own demise” (p. 20). She adds, in many cases of the blame-the-women narrative, it is the male athletic director who has the authority to make hiring decisions. According to Lavoi (2016), a few of the common blame-the-women narratives include, women don’t apply for positions, the quality of women in the labor pool is low, women choose other professions, women lack expertise, women aren’t confident and assertive enough, women lack experience, and female athletes prefer male coaches (p. 21). These examples, along with other similar examples, highlight that these narratives continue to act as barriers for women in coaching.

Due to the double standards, gender bias, and a lack of power within the structure of coaching, LaVoi (2016) describes how women tend to also “self-blame” or think they are responsible for the lack of women coaches or inequities women face in collegiate athletics. A few common examples of the self-blame narratives highlighted in her study include, “if I just work harder, if I don’t ask for too much, if I don’t rock the boat, if I graduate my athletes, and if I play along, etc.” (p. 24). These narratives demonstrate a double standard and gender bias within

collegiate athletics. In addition to the blame-the-women and self-blame narratives, LaVoi (2016) identified common institutional double standards that female coaches experience that include but are not limited to, paying winning female coaches less than male colleagues; paying women less than coaches of men's teams with comparable experience; paying women less for coaching more athletes in the same sport; giving additional compensation to male coaches, hiring male coaches with less experience, education, wins, qualifications; expecting the same outcome with less or poorer quality resources, and expecting the same outcome with more work responsibilities (p. 28).

Another essential point highlighted in the literature includes the occupational trend that women don't get hired because they lack qualifications or experience, when in reality, women have experience playing women's sport (Kane, 2016). Kane adds that past playing experience is often a qualification required for coaching positions. With the opportunities and playing experiences in collegiate athletics since the implementation of Title IX, women are qualified for coaching positions. She reported, "beyond this larger pool of qualified women based on their playing experience, we have empirical data which show that when compared to their male counterparts, women are often *more* qualified on any number of relevant variables" (p. 38). Similarly, LaVoi (2016) adds, "it is simply not possible that as each new generation of females becomes increasingly involved in and shaped by their experiences – especially at the most elite levels of competition – that they simultaneously become *less* qualified to enter the coaching profession" (p. 7). For instance, LaVoi (2018b) explains how the narratives on the underrepresentation of women coaches matters in how women coaches are framed, defined by her as, "*how* something, someone or group of people are presented to the audience which influences the choices people make about how to process that information" (para. 7). The

narrative that women are not interested in coaching is an example of how the decline of women in coaching is being framed.

Male and female athletic directors generally view the decline of women in coaching differently. Kane and LaVoi (2018) replicated a study by Acosta and Carpenter (1988) in which they surveyed intercollegiate athletic directors regarding their perceptions on the decline of women coaches since Title IX. The original study was done sixteen years following the landmark amendment Title IX and signified that the decline was a rapid change in the representation of women coaches. The original study by Acosta and Carpenter (1988) as cited in Kane & Lavoi (2018), "found significant gender differences whereby male ADs focused on the attributions of individual women (e.g they are unqualified), while female ADs highlighted organizational factors (e.g. success of "old boys' network")" (p. 3). Kane and LaVoi (2018) also found similar results to the original study in that female administrators attributed the decline of women coaches to, "institutional variables such as unconscious discrimination as key attribution factors, while male administrators attributed the absence to individual variables such as time constraints due to family obligations" (p. 3).

A study by Sagas et al. (2006) examined how homologous reproduction plays a role in female head coaches hiring practices of their assistant coaches, since head coaches typically hire their own assistant coaches. They also highlight that assistant coaches are in the pipeline for possible head coach positions and can be studied to understand the decline of women coaches. This study expanded on a previous study by Stangl and Kane (1991) in which they used homologous reproduction theory in their study on the decline of women coaches at the interscholastic level. The study by Sagas et al. (2006), "aimed to extend previous research by

exploring the practice in (a) employment patterns of assistant coaches, and (b) environments in which women are actually the dominant gender doing the hiring" (p. 503).

The Sagas et al. (2006) study found that, in general, the gender of the head coach does play a role in the gender of the assistant coaches hired in all sports examined. The study included basketball, soccer, volleyball, and softball, which are the four most popular team sports in collegiate athletics. The head coaches of three of these four sports all have a majority of female head coaches, with soccer having a minority of female coaches in head coach position. The results showed, "the relationship was most notable when the head coach was female, as female head coaches were much more likely to hire female assistant coaches than male head coaches were to hire male assistant coaches" (p. 503). Their study revealed, "that men were as likely as women were to hire female assistant coaches fails to support the work on homologous reproduction in coaching from other studies (e.g., Acosta & Carpenter, 2002, unpublished manuscript; Lovett & Lawry, 1994)" (p. 510). Previous studies by Stangl and Kane (1991), Lovett and Lawry (1994), and Acosta and Carpenter (2002) concluded homologous reproduction played a factor in hiring by both men and women in leadership roles.

However, in Sagas et al. (2006) study, they concluded "much of our data fail to support Kanter's (1977) model of homologous reproduction in the employment practices related to collegiate assistant coaches" (p. 508). They provide possible reasons for the outcome of the data that did not support the homologous reproduction theory. For example, they highlight the possibility that male head coaches hire female coaches "to identify with their players" (p. 508). They add that, "men are more willing to hire women for entry-level positions; yet, they appear to be less likely to hire women as head coaches, therefore keeping women at the margins" (p. 509).

Darvin and Sagas (2016) replicated the study by Sagas et al. (2006), using homologous reproduction as the framework. They found similar results in which female head coaches hired more female assistants, yet male head coaches also hired more female assistant coaches. As female assistant coaches are increasing there is a decline in female head coaches. They content that female assistant coaches now represent the majority of assistant positions; therefore the future looks promising as more women are gaining experience as assistant coaches (Darvis & Sagas, 2016). They also highlight the increase of women in assistant positions may have to do with, "women may be found in more traditionally feminine roles with sport organizations (e.g., assistant coaching, lower level administration), while men maintain the majority of leadership positions both coaching (e.g., head coaches) and administration (e.g., athletic director)" (p. 182).

Theoretical Framework

Kanter's (1977) theory on homologous reproduction will be used as the theoretical framework for this study. Homologous reproduction, when applied to coaching, suggests that the gender of an athletic director impacts the selection of how coaches are hired in a department (Stangl & Kane, 1991). They define homologous reproduction as, "a process whereby dominants reproduce themselves based on social and/or physical characteristics" (p. 47). The theory of homologous reproduction has been used in a variety of quantitative studies, over the past 40 years (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Darvin & Sagas, 2016; Lovett & Lawry, 1994; Sagas, et al., 2006; Stangl & Kane, 1991). In addition, other researchers have applied the concept of homologous reproduction to both their quantitative and qualitative research studies (Buzuvis, 2015; Everhardt & Chelladurai, 1998; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; LaVoi, 2016; Sagas & Cunningham, 2004; Taylor & Hardin, 2016).

Kanter's (1977) theory identified three variables that, "contain the roots of an integrated structural model of human behavior in organizations, one that builds on but enlarges other frameworks, one that can point out dilemmas and guide change efforts" (p. 246) The three variables are opportunity, power, and proportion. The first variable, opportunity, is defined as, "expectations and future prospects", specifically how opportunity for growth in an organization can impact an individual's motivation and satisfaction (p. 246). The second variable, power, is defined as, "the capacity for the person to act efficaciously within the constraints of the wider organizational system – is determined by both formal job characteristics and informal alliances" (p. 247). The third variable, proportion, is defined as, "the social composition of people in approximately the same situation" (p. 248). She explains proportion as how many people there are in an organization who are similar.

Knoppers (1989) relates Kanter's (1977) three structural determinants of opportunity, power, and proportion to coaching. She explains that if the opportunities in coaching or administration seem unattainable or inequitable, women might not apply for positions or leave their current positions. She describes power as having access to resources. She adds that since most women's sports are classified as minor sports, female coaches have limited power. Also, if the gender proportion is low, women are often, "perceived as tokens and representatives of all women" (p. 41). Finally, the lack of other women in the coaching profession hinders women having a support system and networks of other women.

Mullane and Whisenant (2007) identified Knoppers (1987) as, "the first researcher to apply the organization structure model of homologous reproduction to sport by exploring the effects of opportunity, power, and proportion on women in coaching" (p. 262). Stangl and Kane (1991) investigated how homologous reproduction has had an impact on the decline of women

coaches since Title IX, specifically, how the sex of the athletic director directly influences the hiring of coaches at the interscholastic (high school) level. They applied this theory and the three structural variables to explain the underrepresentation of women in coaching and athletic professions that are male-dominated. Kanter's (1977) theory of homologous reproduction can be used to explain the underrepresentation of women in coaching (Stangl & Kane, 1991), and specifically female head ice hockey coaches for the purpose of this study.

Summary

In forty-six years, Title IX has provided many female athletes opportunities in athletics that women did not have prior to 1972. While some opportunities increased, female head coaches of women's teams has decreased (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Kane & LaVoi 2018; Sabo, Veliz & Staurowsky, 2016). Title IX has paved the way for the next generation of female athletes and coaches, yet despite all of the strides made for women in athletics, the reality is that equality is still eluding female coaches. The decline of women as head coaches of women's teams since the inception of Title IX is significant as it is an area of continued inequity despite the growth of opportunities for females in athletics. The review of literature demonstrates the need for continued study on the underrepresentation of female coaches since Title IX was implemented 46 years ago.

As the literature highlights, the influence and impact female coaches and administrators have on female athletes is significant. Female coaches and administrators are important role models for female athletes and provide inspiration to become coaches and leaders in athletics (LaVoi, 2013). The underrepresentation of female coaches and administrators since Title IX contradicts the growth of women's athletics and the increase in participation opportunities female athletes have today. As young female athletes continue to benefit from participation in

athletics, more female coaches will have a direct impact on them (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; LaVoi, 2013). With an increase of female coaches as role models, they can be the inspiration to young female athletes to be the next generation of female coaches (LaVoi, 2013).

There are many factors that can contribute to this decline and the literature reviewed has brought forth some of the issues. The decline of women as athletic directors is a significant factor, yet that does not imply that women will only hire women in head coaching positions. Resources, education, and professional development opportunities foster support for anyone in the coaching profession. Uncovering the experiences of current coaches could identify valuable information for hiring and retention practices for athletic departments. This study will provide data to support increasing women in head coaching positions, specifically in women's Division I ice hockey.

Chapter 3 will describe the study methodology, provide details of the study, and include the role of the researcher. In addition, human subjects approval, participants, method of data collection, the research design, analysis, procedures, and timeline will be included in this chapter.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter presents information on the details of the study, the research questions, and the role of the researcher. The selection of participants, data sources, research design, analysis, timeline, and a summary of the methodology are also included in this chapter.

The purpose of this qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews, is to describe the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. Understanding the experiences of female head coaches is valuable to university administrators, athletic directors, and institutions in terms of recruitment, hiring, and retention. In addition, understanding their experiences will assist in providing training and professional development, and foster diverse hiring practices throughout the profession, to move women through the pipeline into head coach positions. Exploring the experiences of female head coaches is also valuable for future aspiring female head coaches in the sport of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey, as it will give them the insight and tools needed to succeed. Learning from the experiences of current female head women's ice hockey coaches will also provide understanding about career advancement, strategies used to conquer barriers, and possible plans of action used to retain female head ice hockey coaches in the future.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define qualitative research as, "based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience, or phenomenon" (p. 23). They also add that since all qualitative studies are interpretive, the term they use to label this type of study is a basic qualitative study. Additionally, they state that, "qualitative researchers conducting a basic qualitative study would be interested in (1) how people interpret their experiences (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute their experiences" (p. 24). Creswell (2007) states that

qualitative research, “begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 36). Furthermore, “qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes” (p. 36).

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What were the personal and professional trajectories of current NCAA Division I head women’s ice hockey coaches?
2. What are/were the personal and professional costs or barriers for these women?
3. What are/were the personal and professional benefits or advantages for these women?
4. What experiences have these head coaches had with their institutions and athletic administrators?

Research Design

A qualitative research approach was used to describe the experiences of current female NCAA Division I head women’s ice hockey coaches. This qualitative research approach used semi-structured interviews to allow me to explore the experiences of the female head coaches. Qualitative research provides an environment in which the researcher can speak directly to participants and hear their personal stories to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences (Creswell, 2007).

A qualitative approach allows the researcher to describe the experiences of current female NCAA Division I women’s ice hockey head coaches. Creswell (2007) notes that collecting data

about the experiences of people creates an overall description of a group of individuals. Moustakas (1994) describes this as, “the how and what” of an individual’s experience. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain, “all qualitative research is interested in how meaning is constructed, how people make sense of their lives and their worlds” (p. 25).

The research design includes semi-structured interviews to acquire information from the participants. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to obtain detailed information and understanding of the coaches’ experiences. Leddy and Ormond (2005) describe interviews in qualitative research studies as, “open-ended, perhaps addressing one or few central issues but otherwise going in different directions for different participants” (p. 184). The authors note that structured interviews prevent the researcher from asking questions other than the standard set of research questions. During semi-structured interviews, “the researcher may follow the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or prove a person’s reasoning” (p. 184). The use of semi-structured interviews to acquire information from the participants will allow the researcher to use probing questions for clarification and further understanding.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with one NCAA Division I women’s ice hockey assistant coach using the interview questions designed for the study. The pilot study participant was contacted by email and the purpose of the study was explained. The participant was asked to sign a consent form prior to the interview. The interview was audio recorded, lasted approximately 60 minutes, and was transcribed verbatim. I also took field notes during the interview. The pilot study indicated that no changes were needed to the interview questions and protocol.

Participants

The entire current population of 10 female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey coaches were invited to participate in the study. A letter of introduction explaining the purpose of the research study and an invitation to participate was sent by email to all 10 women. A follow-up email was sent to coaches who did not respond to the initial letter of introduction and invitation. Six head coaches (60%) responded to the email and confirmed participation. This study focuses on the descriptive responses of six current female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey head coaches.

Once each coach committed to participating in the study, a formal letter explaining the purpose and details of the study was distributed by email and the interview was scheduled and conducted once the participants signed a consent form. Prior to the start of the research process, a pilot study was conducted and did not reveal any necessary changes to the interview protocol. The interviews took place in person when possible – if not possible, the participants were interviewed online and recorded via Zoom. Online and recorded interviews were only conducted if personal schedules did not permit for an in-person interview, due to travel costs or proximity of location, or the hockey season schedule.

The participant interviews were scheduled based on availability of the coach. Five interviews at approximately 60 minutes per interview were conducted via Zoom and one interview was conducted face-to-face. All interviews were recorded digitally and followed the interview protocol. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Upon completion of the transcriptions, each participant was given the opportunity to edit her transcript. None of the participants provided edits to their transcript. To protect the identity of participants, demographic

information about the participants is not included. Each participant in the study was assigned a pseudonym for the purpose of this study, to maintain confidentiality.

Data Collection

The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. Face-to-face or online and recorded semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather information and create themes in relation to their experience. The only tool needed to conduct the interviews was a recording device. An interview guide was developed for the study (see Appendix A) and was used with a pilot participant (one female assistant women's ice hockey coach) prior to interviewing the study's participants. Interviews took approximately 60 minutes. The interview questions were open-ended allowing for probes when necessary.

Once the interviews were complete, the audio recording of each interview was transcribed by the researcher and given to each participant with a deadline to review and edit. Once the participants reviewed and edited their transcript, the researcher considered the edited transcripts the primary data source for the study. The information from the edited transcripts were aggregated into themes in the analysis and results section.

Analysis

Creswell (2007) defines the general process of data analysis in qualitative research as, "preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally presenting the data in figures tables, or a discussion" (p. 148). Each participant had the opportunity to read, revise, and edit her transcript. Using this strategy will verify if the transcribed interviews are correct by allowing the participants to make edits.

The edited interview transcripts were analyzed and aggregated by coding emerging themes across the interviews. Creswell (1994) describes this process as, “taking volumes of information and reducing it to certain patterns, categories, or themes and then interpreting the information by using some schema” (p.154).

Creswell (1994) emphasizes that data analysis should be, “conducted as an activity simultaneously with *data collection, data interpretation, and narrative reporting writing*” (p. 152). As further described, “the process of data collection, data analysis, and report writing are not distinct steps in the process – they are interrelated and often go on simultaneously in a research project” (Creswell, 2007, p. 150). While interviews were conducted, other interviews were analyzed, transcribed, and coded once reviewed and edited by each participant. Reviewing transcriptions after each interview was useful for future interview protocols and procedures.

While reviewing transcripts, codes or categories emerged from the data. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define coding as, “the process of making notations next to bits of data that strike you as potentially relevant to answering your research questions” (p. 204). Creswell (2007) recommends about ten codes and that codes have, “multiple forms of evidence to support each” (p.151). Coding the data will establish how categories are assigned (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain how categories emerge from codes by stating, “these patterns and regularities become the categories or themes into which subsequent items are sorted” (p. 206). Creswell (2007) also recommends, “writing memos in the margins of fieldnotes or transcripts or under photographs helps in this initial process of exploring a database” (p. 150).

Once all of the interviews were coded, the researcher manually analyzed the data and developed initial themes. In the early phases of data collection and analysis categories will emerge (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Furthermore, the authors state that as the process continues

into the later stages of data collection and analysis, “you are very much operating from a deductive stance in that you are looking for more evidence in support of your final set of categories” (p. 210). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) highlight the process of data collection and analysis as a continuous process until saturation, “when nothing new is coming forth – you will be in a deductive mode” (p. 210). Once saturation is complete the findings will be interpreted and presented. Creswell (2007) describes the process of interpretation as, “researchers step back and form larger meanings of what is going on in the situations or sites” (p. 154).

The interview questions were categorized by research question. The interview responses of each participant were coded. Six major themes emerged from the interviews and each theme included sub-themes. The first four themes relate to the four research questions: personal and professional paths, costs and barriers, benefits and advantages, and experiences with institutions and athletic administrators. The fifth and sixth themes included the decline of women coaches, and mentorship of female athletes and coaches. The data is presented with direct quotes from the participants to provide in-depth descriptions of their experiences, including how the findings relate to literature and the theoretical framework.

Data and Study Quality

Regarding internal validity, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state, “a second common strategy for ensuring internal validity or credibility is *member checks”* (p. 246). They add that member checking is also called, *“respondent validation*, the idea here is that you solicit feedback on your preliminary or emerging *findings* from some of the people that you interviewed” (p. 246). In addition, “the process involved in member checks is to take your preliminary analysis back to some of the participants and ask whether your interpretation ‘rings true’” (p. 246).

Data collection methods included semi-structured one-on-one interviews with the participants and reviewing literature about the topic and population. In addition, each coach had the opportunity to read, verify, and edit her interview transcript, after which the edited transcripts became the primary data source. Throughout the study, member checks were applied during interviews and also after transcription of interviews in order to check for interpretation. The researcher is a member of this group, which also allows for a more in-depth and informed interpretation of the results.

Regarding external validity, also known as transferability, a peer review was conducted by the researcher with a collegiate coach from another sport outside of women's ice hockey. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state, "peer review/examination includes discussions with colleagues regarding the process of study, the congruency of emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative interpretations" (p. 259). In addition, the researcher intends to provide a rich, thick description of the findings to ensure they are transferrable to other female head coaches in other collegiate sports. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) go on to say that a rich, thick explanation provides, "enough description to contextualize the study such that readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situations match the research context, hence, whether findings can be transferred" (p. 259).

Human Subject Approval – Institutional Review Board (IRB)

An Institutional Review application was submitted to St. Cloud State University's Institutional Review Board prior to inception of the study. The purpose of the IRB is to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects in research activities being conducted under its authority. All participants are referred to by a pseudonym in all recordings, notes, and interviews to maintain confidentiality. Using a name pseudonym (Ellie, Dani, Flynn, Beth, Cam, Amy) will

allow for anonymity of participants. The transcribed interviews were given to the participants for review and edit. The edited transcripts were considered the primary data source for the analysis. Data is presented in aggregate form and direct quotes are presented using pseudonyms. Demographics of participants are not included to protect confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. With the small population of female coaches, every effort to protect the identity of participants were made.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to describe the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. Describing the experiences of these coaches may help future female head coaches in career development and administrators in hiring practices to increase the percentage of female head coaches.

The use of semi-structured one-on-one interviews to acquire information from the participants allowed the researcher to obtain detailed information and understanding of the coaches' experiences. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants, which included six of ten current (60%) female NCAA Division I head women's ice hockey coaches (n=6).

Once the interviews were conducted, recorded, transcribed by me, and then edited by the participants, the information was analyzed, and the results were presented. The transcribed and edited interviews were analyzed by coding emerging themes across the interviews and findings were presented in aggregate form in the results section. The study followed all IRB ethical considerations, and best practices in regard to confidentiality was throughout the research process.

Chapter 4 examines the research findings, which include the study results, participants, and synthesis of the study. This chapter will assist the reader in gaining a fuller understanding of the phenomenon.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, discussion of the results, limitations of the study, implications for theory, implications for practice, and the implications for research. This chapter also identifies reflections on the study and areas for future research.

Chapter 4 – Results

This chapter presents the research findings and study results. The data is presented in six major themes that emerged from the study. The chapter also assists the reader in gaining an understanding of the research problem and the purpose of the study.

The decline of female coaches, since the implementation of Title IX in 1972, continues to be studied by researchers to bring awareness to the underrepresentation of female coaches in women's athletics. Collegiate women's ice hockey at the NCAA Division I level has experienced this decline including the underrepresentation of female head coaches. While research has focused on the decline of female coaches in general, this study is focused specifically on female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey head coaches.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. There were four research questions:

1. What were the personal and professional trajectories of current NCAA Division I head women's ice hockey coaches?
2. What are/were the personal and professional costs or barriers for these women?
3. What are/were the personal and professional benefits or advantages for these women?
4. What experiences have these head coaches had with their institutions and athletic administrators?

This section includes a detailed description of themes that emerged from the data. There are six themes, four that relate to each of the four research questions, the fifth theme includes the decline of women coaches, and the final theme relates to the mentorship of female players and coaches. The sub-themes are presented in detail under each theme.

The first research question described the personal and professional trajectories of the coaches. Five sub-themes emerged: playing career, family influence, boys youth hockey, female coach/female role model, and coaching path.

The second research question revealed the personal and professional costs and barriers associated with their position. Five sub-themes emerged: sacrifice/work life balance, family support, moving for jobs, gender, and transition from assistant coach to head coach.

The third research question reflected on the personal and professional benefits and advantages as a head coach. Five sub-themes emerged: staff, salary, respect, power/opportunity, and flexibility.

The fourth research question uncovered the relationships the women have with their institutions and athletic administrators. Four sub-themes emerged: female athletic administrator support, relationship with athletic administrator, support from athletic administrator and institution, and challenges.

The fifth theme relates to the decline of women coaches and the sixth theme relates to the conversations about mentorship of female players and coaches. The sub-themes include overall thoughts on the decline of women coaches, mentorship/role models, and final advice for future coaches.

Personal and Professional Trajectories

What were the personal and professional trajectories of current NCAA Division I head women's ice hockey coaches? All six study participants were former women's collegiate hockey players and some participated beyond collegiate women's ice hockey at different levels.

Family Influence

All participants stated they began playing a variety of sports, and specifically hockey, at an early age. Five participants highlighted the influence their family, and specifically their siblings, had in their desire to participate in hockey. One participant described her early experiences of playing boys hockey because her brothers played and dad coached. Flynn stated, "my four brothers all played and my dad actually coached at the youth level so I just grew up around hockey." Amy described the influence her older brother had in her start in hockey, "I grew up with an older brother and that sparked my interest. Whatever he did, I wanted to do, and hockey was a big part." Cam also highlighted the impact her older brothers had on her start in hockey, "I grew up with two older brothers and that's how I got involved in hockey and started playing." Dani also referenced her older brothers influence on her participating in all sports, "I played every sport possible and I had two older brothers' so I followed them around playing a bunch of sports."

Boys Hockey

Participants described playing boys hockey when growing up because girl's hockey was not competitive or was not available. They followed their brothers' path in boys hockey or girls played ringette at the time. Beth responded:

> I tried women's hockey very briefly because our town didn't have a women's team until a little bit later, and I grew up in a time where it was a big hockey town so there was a lot of opportunity to play boys, but there wasn't any opportunity to play girls until about three years after I started. So I jumped in and played a different position with the girls team, lasted about half a season, and realized it wasn't my cup of tea. It wasn't

> competitive enough at that point, so I was playing boys at the same time and didn't play girls after that until I entered college.

Cam recounted her experience playing boys hockey until she was in high school, "I played boys hockey in my town until I was in 10th grade, then I made the switch to women's hockey. There really weren't a lot of options at that point." Flynn detailed her experience of not being allowed to play boys hockey because she was a girl. She reported:

> I was the leading goal scorer of my team and of the league and I got kicked out simply because I was a girl. I was lucky in the fact that girls' teams had just really begun to emerge in our area, so I was able to switch to a girls' team, but to be competitive I had to play with girls that were basically four years older.

Dani participated in ringette because girls didn't play hockey in her area, "I played ringette until I was 17 which was a girl's game on ice because girls didn't play hockey."

Female Coach/Role Model

Four of the six participants described not having a female coach in their youth hockey experience and many did not have a female coach until high school or college. They also indicated they lacked female role models, and many described their role models as male athletes. Two participants highlighted the importance of seeing other female hockey players playing at the national team level as inspiration. Cam recounted:

> I remember watching, I think it was the very first world championship… and I remember seeing those women and I remember being so excited. I can't remember how old I was, maybe 11, and I was so excited when I realized that there was a National program and I could try to do that. I didn't have female role models, but I had phenomenal role models

> who were men who helped me believe in myself and pushed be to be a hockey player not a girl playing hockey.

Literature reveals that female coaches inspire female athletes to be become coaches. LaVoi (2016) asserts, "if women see females in coaching roles, they will more likely think about coaching as a legitimate and viable career, and so may aspire to be a coach" (p. 4). She added, "you can't be what you can't see." Three of the six participants in this study had a female head collegiate coach. They expressed the importance of seeing a female in a head coaching role and the impact it had on them becoming a coach. Cam said, "It was everything. I just think about pivotal points in your life where you grow, and you get attached to that time in your life. Honestly, it's the reason I sit here today as a head coach." Another participant said that the importance of having a female role model in a head coaching position goes beyond just exemplifying that a female can be a head coach, but also that a female can be a leader in any field. Dani reflected:

> …when I thought about going into coaching, and I would talk to other coaches who were mostly men, about what it was, and they would describe how difficult the path is and how difficult it is on family life. I didn't get that because I saw my college coach do it - I saw my coach do it! That's where it became extremely influential. She made us believe females can be leaders in any field. You could be a CEO, you could be the principal instead of the teacher, you could be the chief medical surgeon instead of the nurse. That's what she did, she made us believe we could be leaders.

Amy had a similar response to the importance of seeing a female head coach:

> I just didn't see it until I went to [institution] and saw my female coach and what she accomplished and how inspirational she was... But after being around the culture of

> women's hockey and believing maybe I can do what my coach did it started to spark my interest. I had no clue how to accomplish it, but I just saw what she had done for me personally, and players on my team, and she was a coach and she was a huge mentor and role model for setting us young women up for success for the future, and I really wanted to be a part of that.

One participant described the lack of female coaches during her playing time and not seeing coaching as a viable career. Beth responded, "I never thought I would have the opportunity because I just never looked at it as a possibility. There weren't a lot of female coaches at the time." Flynn had a male collegiate head coach and shared, "in college, I remember thinking I wish I could have his job one day but that it would be a full-time job because he was just basically volunteering at that time."

Coaching Path

The participants each had different but similar paths to their current head coaching position. Three of the participants were high school or prep coaches prior to coaching at the collegiate level. Three of the participants had experience as a coach at the NCAA DIII level. Five of the participants were assistant or associate head coaches before becoming a head coach.

Participants described the importance of their female coach as a mentor and someone who inspired them, which is consistent with the literature. Again, LaVoi (2016) highlights the importance of female coaches to other female coaches, "women coaches need to see and interact with other women coaches for friendship, networking, support, career advice, mentorship, counseling, and help in navigating a male dominated workplace" (p. 3). Two of the participants characterized the importance their female collegiate coach had in encouraging them to apply for

coaching positions, providing guidance, and promoting them for the position to the hiring coach. Dani stated:

> …I think it was sparked because my college coach called me…and said there's a job for you at [institution] you need to take it. She called the head coach and said I know who you need and she's in…and she kind of set it up and so the head coach called me to talk about it…and then I decided to apply and I came out and I saw the campus and I tried to figure out what it would look like for my family. I thought it looked like something I would like to try to see how it worked.

Amy had a similar response to securing her first coaching position and first collegiate coaching position:

> My female prep coach called me and said there is a position open at [institution] I think you would be fantastic for the position. And then when the collegiate position opened up, it was my female collegiate coach, another female head coach, who reached out to me. So I had two of my mentors, the only two females that I have ever had in my life, both had my back and got me my first jump in my career…

Flynn reflected on the mentorship she received from other female coaches, and how mentors were valuable in her development and career path in her role as an assistant coach and in other coaching roles. She stated:

> It's been so valuable. I don't know if I would be where I am today without that experience without having somebody who believed in me and was able to not only mentor me but provide me with the extra resources that I needed to be able to grow as a coach.

Cam highlighted the importance of her coaching path and valuable experiences as an assistant that prepared her for a head coaching position:

> I love the path that I took because it gave me experience and opportunity. I didn't jump right to the top and maybe I could have. Maybe I could have gone right to Division I, but I'm really excited because I got experience in different elements of the game before I got into the Division I level, which made me feel better when I got here…I was given a lot of flexibility from my head coach in systems and in decisions, there's a lot that was mine. I would plan practices even as an assistant, I would plan the week, I would run pre-game meetings, I would run video sessions, I got to do everything and I think that was really important for my development.

The personal and professional trajectories described by the six participants provided similar paths to their head coaching role. The similarities among the participants include; started in sports at a young age, playing boys hockey, the lack of female role models, not having a female coach until high school or college, and the coaching path to their current position. Three of the six participants highlighted the influence that their female collegiate coach had on them to be a coach.

Personal and Professional Costs and Barriers

What are/were personal and professional costs or barriers for these women? The six participants reported some similar costs and barriers associated with being a head coach. The impact on family and work-life balance was mentioned by all participants, and each of the participants discussed how their family or personal life is impacted by their job. In addition, the importance their family has in supporting what they do, the challenge of work-life balance, how

their gender impacts them, and the transition from assistant to head coach were also themes. Amy stated:

> …I like to use the word sacrifice a lot. And there is no way for me personally that as a mother who bears children that this job comes easy. Because not only is it physically demanding where the kid literally relies on you, it's emotionally draining, it's mentally draining, and it's physically draining. Having…children trying to balance being a mom, and a coach, and a spouse, and usually in that order, I have a great spouse who supports me all the way…I'm fortunate that I have family support.

Cam had a similar response:

> I've been fortunate enough that it has worked really well for me in my relationship with my spouse. It has worked really well that I've been able to continue my job as a head coach and have children. From a personal standpoint, I'm also in an institution that has supported me. They've believed in me and they have supported me and they've really said, how do we make this work for you to balance this as a mother, to make it a good experience.

Dani described the importance of her family valuing what she does:

> The cost is the job itself and there is a tradeoff when you're a spouse and a mother because it's a real demanding job as in it's not a job you can leave in the office. Our job is a lifestyle…it's 24/7. It's hard balancing the time commitment and the energy level between your personal family and your hockey family, but the benefits are worth that trade-off and when you frame it correctly with your children…they really value what I am doing, which makes it better.

Dani also provided encouragement and insight to women who may avoid coaching because of being, or wanting to be, a mother:

> They are held back when they think about being mother because of societal pressures of what it takes to be a mother. Understanding that balance and letting go of the guilt and realizing your kids are going to be ok and they maybe don't need you 24 hours a day like you thought. When you let go of the guilt and you understand the benefits it makes the job better than other jobs you can have.

Three of the participants revealed they were willing to move locations early in their career for a coaching position, but that children and family had an impact on those decisions as they have progressed in their career. Cam recounted:

> When I was in that period where I knew it was time to make the jump I almost moved to [institution] I was offered that job…but this was a better fit for me and I was fortunate I got to stay here, but in that moment I was ready to go. I was pregnant so I didn't have a child yet. It might be different now. I don't know who I would be if I had to move at this point. With children established it would be much more difficult.

Beth was not willing to move her family out of a radius of where they lived for other coaching positions. She stated, "…one of my stipulations as I went through my coaching career was that I geographically wasn't going to move my family."

Gender

The participant responses in relation to different perspectives about gender stereotypes, gender differences, and how gender has an impact in the coaching profession are consistent with the literature. Kane (2016) reports the occupational trend that women don't get hired because they lack qualifications or experience, but in reality, the increased opportunities and participation

in collegiate athletics since Title IX, women have the experience and are qualified for coaching positions. Additionally, data shows that when compared to their male counterparts, women are often more qualified than male coaches (p. 38). LaVoi (2016) added, "it is simply not possible that as each new generation of females becomes increasingly involved in and shaped by their experiences – especially at the most elite levels of competition – that they simultaneously become *less* qualified to enter the coaching profession" (p. 7).

Dani commented that her gender might have been a factor during job interviews. She stated, "…it ended up working for me, but when I would go on interviews there were definitely times when I found it could be beneficial or detrimental being a woman."

Beth said that being a female was never a barrier in her current position. She expressed:

> In terms of the professional barrier I would say gender wasn't a huge barrier to start out because there was a female head coach so when I was hired understanding was that there was already a female in the role so I didn't feel like I was excluded or I didn't feel like I wasn't a part of any of the practice planning because of my gender.

Amy reflected on why women may not apply for head coaching positions. It is her opinion that women are not applying for jobs because most are mothers, but also because of a lack of confidence and self-doubt. She stated:

> …this is just my opinion, women don't pursue coaching, besides trying to be a mother, is confidence. I think women in general lack confidence, and I could be more qualified than this man over here, but he will just walk in to the room oozing confidence and I will doubt myself and who I am. There are a lot of qualified women who can be head coaches, but I think some hesitate because I don't think they think they are a strong enough candidate. We have lived it, we have played it, we can connect to these young women,

> we know what they are going through, we know all the personal and professional things that go on in a 20 year old's mind as a female and who better to relate than someone who has lived it so I don't know why we can't do this.

Beth added thoughts on how stereotypes about male and female coaches are perceived:

> You're looked at as the bad guy and I would say the difference between men and women in that regard is the old adage, men are respected, and females are bitches. And so, there's no other good way of saying that. Our controlling looks different than a male in control and that's just something that we've actually talked with our athletes about, so we've had an open conversation about it because I think it's important for them to understand that as they grow up and as they become leaders…they are going to have to understand how they are perceived.

One participant described the importance of her involvement with national programs in development as a coach and the opportunities she received in coaching because of that involvement. Flynn stated, "I really think that somehow my involvement with the national program lead to my marketability…that I otherwise wouldn't have had because I'm female." Ellie expressed the fight for equity in regard to the costs associated with the ascent into a head coaching position:

> …we're all right in the middle of a big equity movement right now, and I have been fighting for my salary, fighting for resources for my program, fighting for staffing. And I think it's an enormous amount, and I would do it again in heartbeat, and I think it's for all the right reasons, I think the enormous amount of time and effort that women spend battling for things that men get automatically…it's a lot of time that could be directed somewhere else. At the end of the day, you're trying to move your program forward,

> you're trying to move women's athletics forward, so these fights are really important. But they're not without a cost.

Ellie said that an issue currently being addressed at their institution is equity regarding compensation of women's coaches compared to men's coaches. She went on to outline equity in pay differences between coaches of men's and women's sports:

> I think that equity is an issue here. We need to make sure that we are compensating people for the job they are doing not whether they are a men's coach or women's coach. It's on the front burner right now so it is something that we have been addressing for the past few years here.

This is consistent with a few of the common institutional double standards that female coaches experience including, paying women less than coaches of men's teams with comparable experience; paying women for coaching more athletes in the same sport; giving additional compensation to male coaches; and hiring male coaches with less experience (LaVoi, 2016, p. 28).

Transition

Some participants reflected on the transition from being an assistant coach to a head coach. Three participants described how the interaction with players changed as a result of the transition from assistant to head coach. Dani recounted:

> The transition was fairly smooth. The difference was the administrative work that comes along with it. The hardest part with transitioning from assistant to head coach is that you almost get to do less and less of the stuff you love. You have to answer 400 emails a day, you have alumni relations, you have administrative work, and you have fundraising so

> there are 10,000 things that distract you from what you love, which is the players and the hockey.

Similarly, Cam expressed not realizing the transition from assistant to the head coach would be so hard. She responded:

> I was able to be tough on kids as an assistant, more so than I am as a head coach. They took it differently because I was the assistant, and now when I have high expectations it's just different. It's different because I'm the voice. I'm the boss at the end of the day, you don't realize your power. In your position, your voice is heard differently. That's been the most difficult thing for me to adjust to.

One of the costs and barriers described by the participants includes work-life balance, and the sacrifice it takes on their family and personal life to be in their position. The importance of family support, in the ability be a coach, was a key point made by the participants. Gender stereotypes and differences were also discussed by participants, which included how female and male coaches are perceived by athletes. The fight for equity was described as a cost by one of the participants, as was transitioning from assistant to head coach.

Personal and Professional Benefits or Advantages

What are/were the personal and professional benefits or advantages for these women? The participants name many of the same personal and professional benefits and advantages. Five of the six participants highlighted the ability to hire their own staff. All of the participants have at least one female assistant on staff. Two participants have all female coaching staffs and expressed being deliberate in hiring female assistant coaches. Ellie detailed the importance of hiring female coaches as a way to give back to the sport. She stated:

> And when you find people who are really passionate about that, you want to give them an opportunity, and again I've been fortunate. I've had some fantastic women work with me and I love it. I just feel like it's a way to give back to a sport that's given me so much.

A study by Sagas, et al. (2006), found that, generally, the gender of the head coach does play a role in the gender of the assistant coaches hired in all sports examined. Additionally, Ellie highlighted the importance of hiring the right people and specifically hiring female coaches:

> It's very important to me to give women opportunities in a sport in which those opportunities are dwindling. You've got to get the right people together so that you have a really positive dynamic that is good for the coaches but is also really obvious to the players.

Similarly, Dani expressed the benefit of hiring her own staff, "Being able to choose the staff. I'm very particular about that and personally I think I did a great job hiring."

Salary

Additionally, five of the six participants indicate the increase in salary as being one of the biggest benefits, which is important in supporting their family. Cam said, "my salary has almost tripled from being an assistant when I first started. Becoming a head coach has given me the freedom to do the things I need to do to provide for my family." Dani also expressed the increase in salary as important in the support it provides her family:

> The salary…because you had given years where you're in the red trying to raise a family on a salary to where you feel like maybe it was worth it to get through. You feel finally comfortable that you can support a family on this position.

Beth also reported the increase in salary as a benefit to her family, “I was able to have a little bit more freedom in choosing childcare and making sure that I take care of my family, and not worrying quite as much about the financial piece of it.”

Respect

Two participants specified the increased level of respect that was gained after becoming a head coach. Cam stated:

> People see you and instantly you have a different level of respect as a head coach. And it's nice, you feel like your voice is heard, but it's also an incredible responsibility to be sure you have an opinion at times.

Amy had a similar response about the increased level of respect but adds the pressure to be successful. She responded:

> I think the respect, getting and gaining respect was given after becoming a head coach. But then there's the negative with the pressure that comes with trying to be a head coach and you have this self-doubt. And then you take a head coaching job and all you are thinking is you don’t want to fail. I don’t want to let my family down, but if you do well as a woman then it opens up opportunities for other women to apply and feel confident.

One participant detailed receiving more opportunities to coach with national programs, and having other professional development opportunities, because she is a head coach. Dani stated:

> National programs wanted to see me as a head coach, to put me into higher levels rather than an assistant or an associate head, so that was a big professional advantage. I think more opportunities come from outside and I think being a head coach makes that step a little bit easier. I think professionally, it just gets you one step closer to the next level of goals, which is usually Olympics or some sort of pro-level.

Beth also described how her influence on campus and in the community has increased in her head coaching role, specifically with an initiative on her campus to increase and support women's athletics and women in leadership positions. She said:

> …the initiative on our campus has been really big. They've actually brought me on board just recently to have me on a panel. I was one of the representatives of our school and there were two outside representative females. That was part of the initiative, so they've supported me and put me in a position of leadership.

Power/Opportunity

Two participants described the benefit of having a more involved relationship with their athletic director as a head coach, which increased mentorship opportunities, and provided closer relationships with administrators. Beth reflected:

> I went to my first head coaching job at the Division III level, I had a female administrator, and I was able to get a little closer with her and have a lot of valuable conversations about her role and how she challenged herself to work with a female president. There were a lot of women in leadership positions and it put me in a position that I felt I could be successful right off the bat. And I was supported so I felt that that was a big professional benefit to have somebody there who understood what I was going through as a female leader.

Flynn had a similar relationship with her athletic administrator in her head coach role:

> I do think that you probably have closer relationships with your athletic directors as a head than you do as an assistant. You probably spend more time with your direct report when obviously an assistant coach deals with their head coach versus administration, so there are definitely those benefits.

Flexibility

Two participants explained that being a head coach gave them more flexibility and control of their schedule which benefits family and work-life balance. Beth expressed being in the head coach position allowed more control of her work schedule, which was a benefit to her family. She stated:

> One of the biggest benefits jumping from an assistant or associate head coach to a head coaching role was that I controlled the schedule a little bit more. That was probably one of the biggest benefits to my family. As an assistant coach you are at the mercy of your head coach in terms of scheduling. As a head coach didn't need to go on the road quite as much, therefore I could be home more often than when I was an assistant.

Cam also commented on the benefit of having control and flexibility over her schedule, which helps her balance her family, but the expectation to win games brings challenges to having balance. She expressed, "I do have flexibility in my schedule, I do work to maintain balance with my family, but at the same time I have to win."

Hiring their own staff was an important benefit to the participants, specifically two participants having an all-female coaching staff. The participants revealed the importance of hiring the right people and providing opportunities for female coaches. Increased salary was also highlighted as an added benefit as this provided financial stability to their family. Other participants discussed the increase of respect, receiving more opportunities in coaching, more flexibility in their schedule, an increase in influence on campus, and a more involved relationship with athletic administrators as benefits.

Institutions and Athletic Administrators

What experiences have these head coaches had with their institutions and athletic administrators (athletic director, deputy athletic director)? Four participants were hired by a male athletic administrator and two participants were hired by a female athletic administrator. Two participants express the importance of their female athletic administrator as someone who has been a mentor to them in their position. Amy explained how involved her female athletic administrator is, how often they communicate, and how supportive she is to her personally and to her family. LaVoi & Heffernan (2016) report that having female role models is important to female athletes, provide role models to inspire them to be leaders and possibly enter the coaching profession. Similarly, LaVoi (2016) discusses importance of female role models in changing the stereotypes about women in positions of power and leadership. Amy highlighted how much attention and support her female athletic administrator provides to the program and players, and also serves as a strong female role model and mentor to the athletes. She stated:

> …she is very invested because it takes a village. And we are family. She is very present, very vocal. We have four girls on our team right now who aspire to be an athletic administrator, because they see me and our athletic administrator in her position. And they see that it can happen, and they have that direct relationship with both of us.

Dani also described her relationship with her female athletic administrator as a friend, role model, and mentor. She responded, "she's actually great because she's a mentor too…so I'd say I probably have the best relationship with a boss you can have."

Relationship with AD

All of the participants described their relationship with their athletic administrators as being positive. The participants made clear that their athletic administrators were supportive and

involved with them and their programs. Five of the six participants discussed direct involvement and communication on a consistent basis with their athletic administrator. Beth reported:

> I talk to him every other week if not every week about what's going on in our program. I consistently have conversations with him about what our needs are, but also about what's going on. We usually get a text from our administrators after the games just to give a quick congratulations or just to touch base, so I would say that they are very involved.

Cam also detailed the trust she has in the athletic director and being comfortable communicating with him. She highlighted the importance of the relationship with her deputy athletic director as well:

> I feel like if I need something I can ask, I feel like if there is a problem, they will tell me. I have trust there, which is good. He has a good pulse of what's going on with my team and he stays close to that. I have probably a closer relationship with our deputy athletic director and I'm really fortunate to have her - I feel so supported because of the combination of the two relationships.

Support

Amy outlined how supported she feels on a daily basis by the involvement her athletic administrator has with her, her family, and her program:

> My athletic administrator is always sending texts, knows everyone on the team, knows what they are studying, knows who we are playing, and what their records are. She is very involved. She knows about my kids and what they are involved in, she comes to our banquets, she comes to every home game, and talks to the players.

She went on to compare the relationship she had with the athletic director as an assistant coach at a previous institution to her experience at her current institution:

> At my previous institution - I didn't have any connection with my athletic director.
>
> Where I am now with my athletic director – that relationship comes from being the head coach where. I'm very fortunate with my athletic director to have build that relationship.

Flynn described receiving feedback and having consistent and daily communication from her athletic administrators:

> It's constant. Not just my direct report, but there is also another athletic director that I deal with daily. They are giving feedback, which is great, versus not knowing. There is more than one person to go to as well, which is great.

The participants also make apparent that professional development opportunities are supported by their athletic administrators and institutions. Amy commented, "my athletic director said any professional development that you want – we will pay for." Flynn also details the ability to participant in professional development opportunities with the women's coaches academy programs which other female coaches in her athletic department participate in, "I know a lot of female coaches in the department are a part of that, and that's something they have opened the door for, for me to participate and join that program." Cam also communicated the support she feels around professional development opportunities on her campus and beyond:

> Our human resources department is good in terms of professional development as well. I yearly probably do about 3 or 4 different professional development things through the programing they have on campus. I feel like its ok to go, it comes from within our budget to go to different events professionally.

Challenges

All six participants report positive institutional support for their programs. While three participants revealed they feel supported by the institution and athletic department, the hindrance

they feel comes from being understaffed in the athletic department. Dani reported, “one drawback is we are understaffed so we don’t have big marketing, we have two people who run our marketing, we could do better. It's because we are understaffed.” Beth expressed how supported she feels at her institution and anticipates increased support with the recent additions to the administrative structure, however, she revealed how tasks don’t always get completed in a timely manner, “The structure of our administration has been light in terms of the personnel to get things done at the pace that I would like them done.

While participants reported amplified expectations and responsibility in their head coaching role in comparison to an assistant coaching position, one participant revealed that there is an expectation from their athletic administrator and institution to win games. With that expectation she also expressed the personal expectation to win as being a self-hindrance. Cam stated:

> The stress and pressure to win is there, but it's an expectation and it's been verbalized. But it's hard. It's a constant mental challenge, you know you’re being evaluated at times on results. I'm sure if they heard me say this they would say you are putting more on yourself to win than we are, but at the end of the day I don’t know if I agree with that. That is probably the only thing that I think is hindering based on what comes from them - the great thing is that they do support me through that.

Collectively, the six participants portrayed their relationships with their athletic administrators and institutions as supportive and engaging. Specifically, two participants described their relationship with their female athletic administrator as providing mentorship and support. Additionally, participants stated that professional development opportunities are encouraged and supported. An area of hindrance revealed by participants include the

understaffing for the marketing and promotion of events and getting administrative things done in a timely manner.

Decline of Women Coaches

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. When the head coaches were asked about their thoughts on the decline of women coaches since Title IX, the participants responded with disappointment in the decrease. Some participant responses were consistent with the research, specifically about male athletic directors and hiring practices. A study by Acosta & Carpenter (2014) found, "across all sports at the Division I level, when there is a female athletic director, female coaches account for 46.8% of the coaches, compared to 43% of female coaches when there is a male athletic director" (p. 18). The six participants each had specific thoughts on the decline of women coaches and the current state of women's ice hockey coaches. Amy commented:

> …you know you have your own speculations, but I don't have any hard facts or data to back that up. But I don't know if it's because they don't have a female AD who supports them and so they move on, and men really know men so they hire men, right? That's what they know. I don't know too many AD's who are women...I don't know of any institution's that have women's college hockey and have a female AD…I don't know how many are women who are hiring, so that would be interesting to know.

Ellie also shared her thoughts on the decline of female head coaches in women's ice hockey and compared women's hockey to the evolution of women's basketball. She highlights the importance of athletic directors who are doing the hiring:

> I think what we are experiencing is what women's basketball experienced. When the money came into our game, and salaries are going up, why wouldn't a guy want to be a head women's Division I coach instead of being the 3rd assistant or the 2nd assistant on the men's team, having to be on the road 90-100 days not making anywhere near the same amount of money? I understand that, however, I'm a big if there is a competent female - that responsibility lies on the desk of the athletic directors.

When asked what she thought the answer is to increasing female coaches, and how the decline can be changed, Ellie responded, "I think we collectively need to continue to develop young women coaches because if you don't, they're not going to be confident head coaching candidates." Beth commented on her experience almost leaving the coaching profession, and questions the support young female coaches are receiving from assistant coaches, head coaches, and administrators in educating, mentoring, and retaining young female coaches:

> I see more young females getting in and then I see them getting out. I wonder what their support was like both as a head coach supporting the young female coaches. If I had more mentorship in my first experience, I would have never thought about leaving coaching. I had a lot of moments where I would have been out of the game if somebody didn't pull me back in because I really never had the support at the beginning. I think the critical component is who is teaching these young assistants, and who is mentoring these young assistants, and where are they getting mentorship.

Beth also provided insight into the question about young female coaches and what can change the pattern for these coaches to ascend to head coaching positions in the future:

> Head coaches have a responsibility to do a better job, whether you're a male or female, to do a better job of setting up your assistants for success. You need to create a mentorship

> program or you need to mentor them yourself in order to be a more impactful head coach. You need to designate that role to somebody who is a good mentor if you don't feel you are that person but somebody has got to take control of the person who comes in and give them on the job training.

Flynn also provided insight regarding the decline of women coaches and the importance of having female assistant coaches:

> I think it's unfortunate that there has been a decline. I think some of the greatest coaches I've ever had have been female. I'm not too sure exactly why that is, is it because we don't have enough female representation on boards that are doing the hiring? Females who are coming out of college are more than ready to take on these roles and I think the same is true for head coaching positions. For a young female athlete, I just think that it is really important to see women in those roles. Not only are they seeing women in these roles, but women are succeeding in these roles.

This perspective on the importance of female assistant coaches is consistent with the research on the impact women coaches have on female athletes. Wells (2016) reported, "the assistant coach is a vital position in recruitment, selection, and development of the team culture and individual athletes" (p. 140). Additionally, female assistant coaches are role models, are able to relate to female players, and are an important part of the program.

Cam provided perspective on the decline and specifically focused on the turnover of coaches in women's ice hockey. She referenced programs in which coaches have been fired and never return to coaching. Her insight included:

> I'm frustrated and angry about it honestly…I think that in hockey if you are a male head coach and you've been doing this for years you're looked at as experienced. If you're a

> female and you've been doing this for years you're looked at as the game has outgrown you. We don't have women who have been doing this for a long time. They have been fired – all of them. You're expected to win. If you don't, nobody wants you after that because you don't win and you're fired.

Dani also shared her thoughts on the decline of women coaches and the impact her female coach had on her coaching career:

> I think it's devastating. When I was a player it was all female head coaches and it was because they made no money. And then Title IX was fantastic for female athletes and terrible for women's coaches because as soon as they started paying the men decided they wanted to come in and have those jobs. The most disappointing thing is when there is a qualified female candidate and they get bypassed by a man who was assistant coach on the men's side…I think it's really sad because I probably wouldn't be coaching if it wasn't for my coach – if you look around – a lot of us who are coaching are women who had female coaches.

Providing Mentorship

Research on female coaches includes data on the impact female coaches have on female athletes and other female coaches. According to LaVoi (2016), female role models, such as female coaches, provide female athletes with the experience of having a female in a leadership role in sport. Throughout these experiences of having a female coach, female athletes can see themselves as a coach. Additionally, female coaches are also important for mentorship of other female coaches.

When asked how they provide mentorship to girls/women who show interest in coaching, many of the participants described approaches they take including being encouraging,

supportive, a mentor/role model, and by deliberate actions in hiring female coaches on their staff. Dani explained:

> First of all, by hiring them…there aren't enough of us and it's up to women in leadership to bring other women on board and if you don't give them opportunities how are we going to get more women in?

She also added insight on her approach with other coaches who ask how she does it as a coach with a family:

> Just trying to always talk about the positive things that you get from coaching instead of focusing on the negative things. I know that a lot of women are scared once they start having children. At our convention when all the coaches are together, they'll come up and say how do you do it with your family, and I try to point out that almost every male at this convention has a family, so, again, I just try to point out all the benefits. I think it's a great profession for a mom.

Ellie had similar comments, "I just think providing opportunities and letting people be exposed to what we do, and giving them a voice, and listening to what they have to say. I think that that's the best way I can mentor." Amy discussed her approach of bringing in women leaders from the community to speak with her team about leadership, and always being available to talk with her players. She said, "I always bring in women of power or women who have struggled through some kind of adversity to talk about how they overcame it." In regard to female coaches, she added the importance of preparing her female assistant coach to be a head coach in the future:

> I don't know how many of the male head coaches are providing the right opportunities or mentorship or leadership for these females to be ready for an interview, to be ready to make that jump. I don't know what they are providing within their team, their coaching

> staff, what they are doing. I just wonder, in all truth, how male coaches and female coaches we're held accountable. What are we doing, what am I doing to prepare my female assistant to be a head coach. That's my goal – for my assistant coach to be a head coach in five to seven years.

Beth also included the importance of preparing her assistant coaches by providing mentorship and opportunities for them to run practices:

> I have a female assistant coach and I would say we mentor each other. I don't actually think that I look at it as a hierarchal situation and that's been a big positive. I don't run every practice, a lot of times they run practices, and I chime in and I'm the assistant coach, and I have conversations with them and pull individual kids aside. That's really important for our staff and it's really important for our players to hear their voices.

The NCAA (2017c) reported that, "a key element in developing a diverse pipeline for future candidates is through exposing current student-athletes to potential careers in athletics" (p. *viii*). In addition, "the most effective long-lasting impact tends to come from direct exposure of having administrators and coaches reflecting the diverse identities and backgrounds of our student-athletes" (p. viii). Similarly, Acosta and Carpenter (2014) described that the impact of female role models in decision making and leadership positions can be profound on female athletes, "intercollegiate athletics is a very intense and challenging enterprise for the participant and having female role models available with such enterprise is even more useful" (p. 18).

Consistent with the research on female coaches, Flynn commented on the importance of the female assistant coaches to provide female role models in positions of power and authority to young female athletes:

> Absolutely, yes, I do have a female assistant coach and I think that is really important. Could I choose to have two males - yes - but I think it's more important to have that female mentors and role model in place. I think it's really important for young females to see other females in positions of power and authority so that they are not always seeing men in those positions. They are also seeing women in those positions so that they grow up not even questioning whether or not they can do whatever it is that they want to do. I think it is absolutely critical in all female sports to have female mentors and role models in place on your staff.

Participants discussed former players who have moved to ice hockey coaching at various levels – youth, high school, and collegiate. Ellie said, "I think it comes about because they have passion for the game, they have passion for teaching the game, and they've had a great experience or great examples as they grew up at many levels." She also commented on the reward of having former female assistant coaches move on to head coaching positions at different levels, "…that's the way it should be, that's what it's like on the men's side, that's the way it should be on our side of things." Beth discussed how she fosters conversations with current players who show interest in coaching:

> I think the more we have conversations, including individual personal conversations with our players, the more they see the personal side of it and the more excited they get about coaching. The less we have of those conversations the less interest they have in it.

Flynn reflected on her experience with former players who are now coaching:

> That's probably the most rewarding and they tell you that you challenged them in ways that they never thought. They tell me 'I'm so grateful you pushed me to continue and not

> to give up.' That is so rewarding. Then they say, 'I want to do that for someone else.' That's the ultimate.

Advice

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. These six female coaches provide valuable insight and advice to other sport coaches, aspiring coaches, and to future female head coaches. When asked what insight and advice they have for future female coaches and aspiring female head coaches, the participants shared positive and encouraging advice. Cam highlighted the importance of preparation and finding your voice:

> Get as ready as you can possibly be. And that is x's and o's – that's more than anything being willing to make mistakes and admit them. I think as women it's so hard to be a head coach and truly find your voice if you want balance. If you want to be you, if you want to be authentic, it's really difficult as a female head coach to be seen as a disciplinarian, as someone who has a strong voice. You get labeled really quickly in one direction or the other. and I think to recognize that and be honest and be authentic about who you want to be as a coach, is important.

Dani responded with words of encouragement, suggested getting out of your comfort zone, and advised to stop using excuses to not apply for head coaching positions:

> Just go for it…you have to have realistic expectations. I think one of the things we do, and again when I was looking at head coaching jobs I did the same thing, is think of every reason why you shouldn't or every reason why it won't work…I just feel like there's that toss up where it's easy to say – well you know we should just be happy with

> what we have, and there is value in that, in being content and happy with where you're at, but I sometimes feel like we use that as an excuse to hold ourselves back.

Ellie highlighted the importance of networking, being a student of the game, and making sacrifices to work camps in the summer in order to gain valuable experiences and relationships in the coaching world:

> They need to get out there and start working camps, and reach out to other people and be a student of the game, and watch people's practices. Casting a wide net so that you have an opportunity to get to know a lot of people. Be willing to work a camp somewhere that even though you might want to do something else in the summer. It will probably add value in many ways not just in the information that you gain but in the networks you create.

Flynn referenced the rewards of coaching and the importance of continuing to mentor the next generation of female coaches to continue to grow the game and grow the number female coaches:

> I would say it's one of the most rewarding things you could get in to, that you could ever do. Are there challenges – yeah – but again the rewards are incredible, so we need younger, energetic, passionate female coaches to continue to mentor the next generation. It's something we always talk about in growing the game – we need to also grow the mentorship.

Amy responded with words of encouragement for players who have interest in coaching or leadership:

> Go for it. I don't care if it's coaching or anything in life, go for it. So that they see women as CEOs…or their head coach is a female, or their AD is a female. They are around it all

of the time. Seeing women in power. But, then they also see me be a mom and see me be a wife…it's great that these young women are like, I can be a coach and still be a mom, that's wonderful.

When asked what comes next in their careers, the six participants all described being supported and happy in their positions and location right now. Overall, their experiences and insights were positive, encouraging, and promoted the importance of increasing female coaches within women's ice hockey.

Summary

There were four research questions developed for this study to assist in understanding the experiences of current female head NCAA Division I women's ice hockey coaches. Kanter's (1977) theory of homologous reproduction is used as the theoretical framework for this study. When applied to coaching, homologous reproduction states that the gender of an athletic director influences how coaches are hired (Stangl & Kane, 1991). Within Kanter's (1977) theory, three variables are identified that, "contain the roots of an integrated structural model of human behavior in organizations, one that builds on but enlarges other frameworks, one that point out dilemmas and guide change efforts" (p. 246). These variables are opportunity, power, and proportion. Kanter (1977) defined opportunity by how growth in an organization can impact an individual's motivation and satisfaction. Power is defined by, "the capacity for the person to act efficaciously within the constraints of the wider organizational system – is determined by both formal job characteristics and informal alliances" (Kanter, 1977, p. 248). Finally, proportion is explained by how many people in an organization who are similar.

Knoppers (1987) applied these structural determinants of opportunity, power, and proportion to coaching. These variables were applied and connected to themes that emerged from the data in this research study.

The first research question was: What were the personal and professional trajectories of current NCAA Division I head women's ice hockey coaches? The experiences of these head coaches were similar - especially in their sport playing experiences. The participants described their early years with limited female athlete role models and having to play boys hockey because girls hockey opportunities were limited or not available where they lived. They articulated the importance of family support and encouragement – specifically the influence siblings had on their aspirations to play hockey at an early age. The participants all played collegiate women's hockey, some played professionally, and some played with national programs. Most of the coaches described not having a female coach until their collegiate experience. The participants who had a female head collegiate coach revealed how that experience shaped them and inspired them to be a coach. All of the coaches had coaching experiences (assistant coach, associate head coach, head coach) at different levels – youth, high school, prep school, Division III, or Division I before ascending to their current head coach position. All six participants expressed happiness in their current position and feel support from their athletic administrator and institution. The variables of opportunity and proportion can be identified and related to the participants who experienced a female collegiate coach. This is consistent with female athletes seeing a female coach and wanting to be a female coach because of that experience, as cited in the literature.

The second research question was: What are/were the personal and professional costs or barriers for these women? The participants disclosed the impact their career had on their personal or family life. Some of the participants discussed their spouse and children and expressed the

importance of the support they receive from their family as a main reason they are able to be successful in their position. Participants revealed freedom and a willingness to move locations for a coaching position early in their career, however, once children or families were in place, the willingness or flexibility to move changed their perspective. Some participants also described the transition from an assistant coach to head coach as a cost because of the impact it has on their relationships with players. As an assistant coach, the participants felt they had an easier relationship with players. Some participants also discussed the added responsibilities of the head coach position as a cost in relation to the added pressure to win, relationships with players changing, and the add administrative work.

The third research question was: What are/were the personal and professional benefits or advantages for these women? The participants stated that increased salary was a benefit of their head coach position. The ability to hire staff members were also listed as a benefit. Some participants revealed flexibility to control their schedule, which provides more time with families and some work-life balance control, however, increased responsibilities and pressure to win were also described by some participants. Participants also described a more engaging relationship with their athletic administrator and increased opportunities for leadership on their campus and throughout the hockey community. One participant felt she received more opportunities to coach in national programs because she was a head coach, whereas another participant felt she received more opportunities for head coaching positions because she had experience in national programs before serving as a head coach. The variables of power and opportunity are consistent within the themes listed. Specifically, salary, flexibility of schedule, relationships with athletic administrators, and increased opportunities for leadership relate to an increase of power and

opportunity. Opportunity also links to the increase of other coaching opportunities because of their head coaching position.

The fourth research question was: What experiences have these head coaches had with their institution and athletic administrators? Overall, participants discussed supportive and positive relationships with their athletic administrators and institutions. Participants described feeling supported both personally and professionally. The participants also described feeling supported by their athletic administrators in their work-life balance. The participants with a female athletic administrator discussed the mentorship they receive as important and beneficial.

A hindrance revealed by some participants included limited support staff to market and promote women's hockey on their campus. Only one participant stated that equality in pay for coaches was an issue on her campus (and overall), including the idea that female sports coaches should be paid what male sports coaches are paid. Additionally, only one participant revealed the pressure to win as a hindrance, however, with the expectation of winning, she feels supported and is provided the resources necessary to be successful. The variable of power can be related to the increase in relationships the coaches have with athletic administrators once they become a head coach, which provides opportunities for having access to resources. Power also connects to equity in pay issues as described by a participant, as female sports coaches are paid less than their male counterparts.

All of the participants expressed frustration and disappointment in the decline of female coaches. Some participants made reference to athletic directors (mostly male) who hire coaches as a source of the decline. One participant referenced the historical similarities to women's basketball, in the decline of female coaches in women's ice hockey. Specifically, when women's hockey and basketball became NCAA sanctioned sports, and financially funded by institutions,

more male coaches had interest in coaching a women's sport, and female head coaches declined in both sports. Another participant's perspective revealed female coaches in collegiate women's ice hockey who have been fired by an institution usually do not stay in coaching and have a difficult time gaining employment at another institution after being fired. The variables of power, opportunity, and proportion can be associated with participant perspectives on the decline of women coaches. Specifically, the three variables in relation to male athletic administrators hiring male coaches.

The participants expressed the importance of their role in mentoring female athletes, encouraging female athletes who show interest in coaching, and providing opportunities for female coaches. Preparing assistant coaches and providing mentorship to female coaches on staff was highlighted by all participants. They also had words of encouragement for female athletes who have an interest in coaching or in a leadership role. Participants provided some final advice for future coaches, including that coaching is an incredible opportunity, one in which women can be successful, even with a family. The variables of opportunity and proportion connect with the participant descriptions of how they provide mentorship and what advice they have for future coaches. In particular, how they hire, prepare, mentor, and encourage female coaches.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of current NCAA Division I female head ice hockey coaches. Four research questions were developed to assist in understanding their experiences:

1. What were the personal and professional trajectories of current NCAA Division I head women's ice hockey coaches?
2. What are/were the personal and professional costs or barriers for these women?
3. What are/were the personal and professional benefits or advantages for these women?

4. What experiences have these head coaches had with their institutions and athletic administrators?

Through analysis of the interview data collected, six major themes relating to the experiences of female head coaches were revealed. The first four themes are related to the four research questions, the fifth theme is related to the decline of women coaches, and the sixth theme relates to mentorship of female athletes and female coaches.

The following chapter will include results, conclusions, discussions, limitations, implications for theory, implications for practice, and research based on this study.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

The history of Title IX and the decline of female coaches over the past forty-seven years is addressed in-depth in chapter 1. The information presented also includes the decline and underrepresentation of female coaches in NCAA women's collegiate ice hockey, which specifically supports the purpose of this study. In addition, there is research embedded throughout on the decline of female coaches in general, while there is a little research that specifically includes female head coaches of NCAA Division I ice hockey programs. The purpose of this qualitative research study was to investigate the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs. There were four research questions.

1. What were the personal and professional trajectories of current NCAA Division I head women's ice hockey coaches?
2. What are/were the personal and professional costs or barriers for these women?
3. What are/were the personal and professional benefits and advantages for these women?
4. What experiences have these head coaches had with their institutions and athletic administrators?

Chapter 2 presented a review of literature on the history of Title IX and women's sports, including women's collegiate ice hockey. The literature review also focused on female collegiate coaches, collegiate hiring practices, and the role of athletic directors. The theoretical framework that guided this study is also explained in chapter 2. Kanters (1977) theory on homologous reproduction, when applied to coaching, is the idea that the gender of the athletic director influences how coaches are hired. The three structural variables in Kanters (1977) theory

include: opportunity, power, and proportion. These three variables "contain the roots of an integrated structural model of human behavior in organizations" (p. 246) and were used in the analysis section of the study.

Chapter 3 provides the methodology for the study. This qualitative research study used semi-structured interviews to investigate the experiences of female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey coaches. The research design of semi-structured interviews allowed for the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences. The participants were invited to participate in this study based on their current status as head women's' coaches. A total of 10 coaches, the entire population, were invited to participate in the study and six responded affirmatively stating they would take part. Data collection included interviews that were conducted in person or by Zoom. The analysis of the data was completed after transcription of the interviews and coding of the transcripts. The data and study quality, and institutional review board considerations, are also included in this chapter.

Chapter 4 reports the research study findings. The six themes that emerged from the data included: personal and professional trajectory; costs and barriers; benefits and advantages; experiences with institutions and athletic administrators; the decline of women coaches; and mentorship of female coaches and athletes. The synthesis of the data is also included in this chapter.

Discussion

While there is research about the decline and underrepresentation of women coaches since Title IX, there is little specifically focusing on female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey coaches. This study exclusively centered on investigating the experiences of female Division I women's ice hockey coaches.

Research question one described the personal and professional trajectories of the coaches. The five sub-themes that emerged from this research question: playing career; family influence; boys youth hockey; female coach/female role model; and coaching path. The participants reported similar paths to their current head coaching position. All participants stated they played youth hockey and boys hockey, lacked female youth coaches/role models, and played collegiate women's hockey. The women had coaching positions at various levels (youth, high school, Division I and III) and were assistant coaches, associate head coaches, or head coaches before ascending into their current head coach position. Three participants described having a female head collegiate coach and how that experience inspired their coaching aspirations. Two participants stated that their female collegiate coach had a direct impact on them securing coaching positions because of their support, guidance, networking, and encouragement to apply for head coaching positions.

What resonated with me is the impact that the three participants' collegiate female head coaches had on their interest and career path to becoming a coach. The influence female coaches had on the three participants was evident in their reflections and descriptions of their female collegiate coaches as role models. The literature highlights the importance of female role models for female athletes and the importance of being able to "see it to be it." This is a great example of the impact that female head coaches can have on female athletes. My experience mirrors the responses of the participants and the literature. Having a female role model and being able to "see it to be it" gave me the inspiration to become a coach.

Research question two investigated personal and professional costs and barriers associated with being a head coach. The personal and professional costs and barriers the participants revealed include work-life balance issues; the importance of family support; the

reluctance to move locations for coaching positions once they had children; gender; and challenges faced when transitioning to the head coach role. Some participants highlighted the importance of the support they receive from their family as a key aspect of their success in the profession. A few participants said they were willing to move locations for coaching positions, but once they had children and a family, moving locations was more difficult. Some participants also described how gender impacts female coaches, specifically why women don't apply for coaching positions, how stereotypes about males and females impact female coaches, and the fight for equity in women's athletics.

The overall responses were consistent with what the literature says about barriers that women coaches experience. As a female collegiate coach, I resonated with the responses of the participants. In my own experience, I have encountered gender stereotypes and double standards along with a familiarity of the continued fight for equity in women's athletics throughout my lifetime as a player and coach.

Research question three examined the personal and professional benefits and advantages of being in a head coach position. Five sub-themes that emerged include staff; salary; respect; power/opportunity; and flexibility. The personal and professional benefits and advantages described by the participants were similar. The ability to hire their own staff was a benefit most participants discussed. Two participants revealed being intentional about hiring an all-female coaching staff and all six participants highlighted the importance of a female assistant coach on staff. Two participants reported an increased level of respect by colleagues and the university once they moved into a head coach position, and one participant revealed more opportunities to coach within national programs once she became a head coach. Two participants also described their relationship with female athletic administrators as positive and supportive, which

subsequently increased mentorship opportunities. Flexibility and control of their schedule was also a benefit and advantage listed by two participants and was connected to work-life balance and time with family. I have not experienced many of the benefits and advantages of being a head coach as described, however, I recognize these benefits and advantages through my experience as an assistant and associate head coach.

The fourth research question inquired about the experiences with athletic administrators and institutions. The themes that emerged include female athletic administrator support; relationship with athletic administrator; support from athletic administrator and institution; and challenges. The participants' experiences with their athletic administrators and institutions were generally positive. Two participants were hired by a female athletic administrator, while four participants were hired by a male athletic administrator. All participants described a positive relationship with their athletic administrators and feeling supported, and the participants with female athletic administrators revealed the importance of having a female role model and mentor, in a leadership position, who supports them. The challenges presented by some of the participants revealed understaffing in marketing and promotion of events, including challenges with completing administrative tasks in a timely manner. It was clear that participants had generally positive experiences and felt supported by their athletic administrators and institutions.

I was pleased to hear that these female coaches described feeling supported by their institutions and athletic directors. The participants describe feeling supported by both male and female athletic administrators and report positive support for their teams. This is consistent with the experiences I have as a coach. Noteworthy to me was the relationships with female athletic administrators described by two of the participants. The importance of a female role model and support system in a leadership position was highlighted as meaningful. I have not had the

mentorship of a female athletic director. The opportunity to have a female role model in a leadership position would provide mentorship opportunities that I look forward to experiencing in the future.

The fifth theme relates to the participants' thoughts on the decline of female coaches. When asked about this, all responded with disappointment, and each had specific thoughts on the decline. In particular, three participants referenced the role of male athletic directors in hiring of coaches. Specifically, they described the idea that male athletic directors hire male coaches, a tendency that can be applied to all sports. Some participants reflected on the significance of head coaches providing mentorship of assistant coaches, and they also highlighted the importance of hiring female assistant coaches so they can be mentored and then enter the pipeline leading to coaching positions.

The responses about the decline of female coaches were similar among the participants and consistent with the literature. The insight provided resonated with my experiences as a female coach. The coaches were passionate about increasing opportunities for female coaches through mentorship opportunities, hiring female assistant coaches, and being role models for their athletes. I was surprised to hear that many of the coaches made reference to the decline of women coaches being related to the role athletic directors have in the hiring coaches, as this is included in much of the literature about the decline of female coaches.

The sixth theme revealed how participants provide mentorship to female athletes and female coaches. Participants highlighted their supportive and encouraging approach to athletes who show interest in coaching. Additionally, they described the importance of providing opportunities for female assistant coaches by hiring them and providing them mentorship. Also, they gave some final advice for future female coaches, which included thoughts by one

participant about the ability to be a mother, spouse, and a coach. Many stereotypes about women coaches suggest that it is not possible for women be mothers and coaches. I was encouraged by the coaches addressing this stereotype as untrue. They described having supportive families, institutions, and athletic administrators who provide support and resources to be successful as a coach and a mother. This is encouraging for current and aspiring head coaches who wish to be a mother and have a career in coaching.

This research study has reinforced what is in the literature and what I have read about the decline and underrepresentation of female coaches. The study results also support my own experience and what I have learned through conversations with other coaches, at coaching symposiums, and during coaching conferences. It is important to note that all of the participants expressed being supported as a coach and the general backing their programs receive from their athletic department and institution. In addition to the overall feeling of support for these specific women's hockey program, the participants also indicated that all women's athletic teams at their respective institutions are supported. The participants also described positive relationships with their athletic directors and athletic administrators. Two participants with female athletic administrators stressed how much they appreciate that relationship, mentorship, and support system. The research shows the importance for female coaches to have female mentorship and a support system, which was echoed by these two female coaches.

Additionally, three participants reflected on the impact their female head collegiate coach had on their aspirations to be a coach. The research and literature state the importance of female role models and the idea that you cannot be what you cannot see. The importance of female role models, female coaches, the mentorship, and encouragement of other female coaches was also echoed by the participants. Each coach discussed the importance of female assistant coaches on

their staff, and two of the participants have all-female coaching staffs, which they highlight as important to them to provide opportunities for female coaches.

Of the six participants, four of them talked about their children and families. They described the ability to be able to be a coach, mom, and partner, and they felt confident they are successful in all three areas. A stereotype about female coaches is that they are unable to be a coach, have a spouse, and be a mother, but these four women revealed that it is not impossible.

The results from this study do not support the homologous reproduction theory; in this case two participants revealed they were hired by a female athletic administrator and four participants indicated they were hired by a male athletic administrator. The fact that four female head coaches were hired by male athletic directors is a positive step in the right direction, however, as data has revealed that male athletic directors hire male coaches. In spite of this, when looking at all 35 NCAA Division I women's hockey programs, 3 of the 4 female athletic administrators of athletic departments with women's ice hockey employ male head coaches, which also does not support the homologous reproduction theory. In addition, 9 male athletic directors of athletic departments with women's ice hockey employ female head coaches.

Homologous reproduction, when applied to the hiring practices of the female head coaches in this study, can be minimally supported. Specifically, 2 female head coaches hired an all-female coaching staff. The other 4 female head coaches hired 1 male assistant and 1 female assistant to complete their coaching staff. When applying this theory to all 35 programs in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey during the 2018-2019 season, a total of 5 programs had an all-female coaching staff. In addition, 1 program had an all-male staff and the other 24 programs with male head coaches consisted of 1 female assistant and 1 male assistant coach. This data supports the statistic that female assistant coaches out-number male assistant coaches

at the NCAA Division I level across all sports and indicates the presence of female assistant coaches in the pipeline.

Limitations

There are three limitations to the current study that should be addressed. The first limitation is that not all current female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey head coaches are represented in the sample of participants, as four did not respond to the invitation. The entire population may have provided more complete data, more or different themes, or themes identified could have been strengthened.

The second imitation is about me being a novice researcher. While my skills improved with each interview, more experience may have gleaned more in-depth responses. The interview protocol provided a guided interview; however, additional probing questions may have revealed more descriptive responses. Based upon this limitation, and because there is a lack of research in general on female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey coaches, a recommendation for future research would be to strive to obtain the entire population of female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey coaches.

The third limitation relates to my choice about limiting this study to current female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey head coaches, which excluded the population of former female head coaches. Investigating the experiences of former NCAA Division I women's ice hockey head coaches would have furthered the scope of experiences described and provided added perspectives to the study results.

Implications for Theory

In 2018-2019, among the 35 Division I women's ice hockey programs, 31 programs had male athletic directors and 4 programs had female athletic directors. Of 35 programs, 10 have

female head coaches. A review of the athletic department websites also indicates 22 of women's ice hockey programs have male athletic directors and male head coaches. Of the 35 programs, 9 male athletic directors employ 9 female head women's ice hockey coaches. There are 3 female athletic directors that oversee 3 male head coaches, and 1 female athletic director with 1 female head women's ice hockey head coach. Of significance, of the 4 female athletic directors in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey, only 1 female athletic director has oversight of a female women's ice hockey head coach.

However, since data is unavailable to indicate who in the athletic department actually hired the coaches, it cannot be assumed that the athletic director is responsible for the hiring. For example, in this study, two of the participants stated they were hired by a female athletic administrator, even though one of the participants athletic director is male. The theoretical framework, homologous reproduction, when applied to coaching suggests that athletic administrators hire coaches who look like them. Specifically, in Division I collegiate athletics, male athletic directors make up 90% of the population. Therefore, the research indicates male athletic directors typically hire male coaches. In this study, two participants were hired by a female athletic administrator (33%) and four by a male athletic administrator (66%); the notion that homologous reproduction applies to women's collegiate hockey is not supported in this small sample. The idea that four women in this study were hired by a male athletic administrator is a step in the positive direction. Overall, in NCAA Division I women's collegiate hockey, 9 male athletic directors and 1 female athletic director employ female head coaches. The other 22 male athletic directors and 3 female athletic directors of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs employ 25 male head coaches.

The structural determinant, opportunity, is minimally supported within this study. Specifically, two of the participants stated they have received more opportunities in coaching because of their head coaching role or other coaching roles with national programs. Additionally, one participant described that females, in general, have a lack of confidence and hesitate in applying for positions even if they are qualified and have more experience as a male coach.

The structural determinant, power, is minimally supported within this study. According to Knoppers (1987), power relates to access to resources and since women's sports are typically considered "minor sports", they have limited access to resources. In this study, the six participants described feeling supported in their position. They indicate support from their institution and from their athletic director. Overall, the participants provided a positive description of the resources and support they receive as a coach and for their programs, however, one participant revealed that there was an equity in pay issue in her athletic department. Additionally, two participants described an issue with a lack of staff in their athletic department to complete tasks, and in marketing and promotion of their sport.

The structural determinant, proportion, is supported within this study. The participants who discussed the positive mentorship with their female athletic administrators indicate that having a female leader in a supportive role is important to them. Additionally, participants described the importance of their female assistant coaches. Two of the participants have an all-female staff and indicated deliberate actions to hiring and mentorship of female assistant coaches. Four of the participants indicated they were hired by a male administrator, however one of those participants revealed the support and mentorship of the female administrator in her department.

While the participants discussed mentorship of female athletes and assistant coaches, they did not reveal much regarding mentorship amongst other female women's ice hockey coaches. When using probing questions, some participants made reference to talking with other female hockey coaches, but generally, there was not much revealed about mentorship with other female head women's ice hockey coaches. This may have been impacted by the researcher not asking direct questions about this topic.

Recommendations for Practice

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the experiences of female NCAA Division I women's coach head coaches. The descriptive experiences the six presented provides valuable insight, perspective, information, and advice for future coaches. The findings of this study may be useful to aspiring female coaches, current and future female assistant coaches, current and future female head coaches, and male coaches. This study demonstrates the value of female coaches as role models, the positive impact female coaches have on female athletes, and the ability of female coaches to inspire the next generation of female coaches. Three of the participants indicated the positive influence their collegiate female head coach had on their aspirations to become a head coach. Furthermore, they described their female coaches as mentors, role models, and advocates as they ascended into their coaching positions.

The participants also described the value of having female assistant coaches on staff to provide another layer of mentorship and female role models in their programs. The participants who highlighted their ability to be a mother, a spouse, and a coach provided inspiration and proof to aspiring female coaches that holding these roles simultaneously can be accomplished. The participants reflected that support of families, support of their institution, and support from the athletic administrator as key aspects in their role as coaches.

This study may be helpful to female and male athletic administrators, as the data from the study indicates that support, mentorship, and professional development opportunities from athletic administrators are important aspects of the position described by participants. Participants note feeling supported as a person and as a coach by both male and female athletic administrators. The participants with a female athletic administrator highlighted the importance of that relationship, the mentorship it provides, and support system. Providing female coaches with a support system and network that includes other female coaches and female athletic administrators is an important aspect of female coaches feeling supported.

Implications for Research

Since there is a lack of research on NCAA Division I women's hockey coaches, there are many future studies worth investigating. There is the opportunity to further this study and include the entire population of female NCAA Division I women ice hockey coaches. This could provide more descriptive data on this particular group of coaches.

A second suggestion for future research is to investigate the experiences of female assistant coaches in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey. A qualitative study on female assistant coaches could provide important data on female assistant coaches' aspirations to be a head coach, the importance of female role models and mentorship, and the overall experience that female assistant coaches have at the NCAA Division I level.

A third suggestion for future research is to explore the experiences of athletic directors – male and female. While there is research about collegiate athletic directors, investigating the ways athletic directors support female coaches, what approaches are taken in the hiring process for female sport programs, and how they support, and mentor female coaches would provide

important data to the literature and research on athletic directors and the decline of women coaches.

A fourth area of study could include the attitudes of current female collegiate hockey players, and their thoughts and feelings about female coaches. This could provide added data to the literature about female athlete's perceptions of female coaches and investigate female athletes interest in coaching.

A fifth and final suggestion for future research is to investigate the experiences of former female head coaches in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey. A qualitative study on former female head coaches could provide in depth information on the history on women's collegiate hockey described by the coaches, allow for comparison of experiences between former female head coaches and current head coaches, and could tell the stories of pioneer female head coaches in the game of women's collegiate hockey.

Summary

This qualitative study investigated the experiences of female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey head coaches. The participants described their experiences through semi-structured interviews. Research describes that female coaches matter and are important to female athletes and other female coaches. Additionally, female coaches are role models, provide mentorship, show women in leadership and power positions, and inspire female athletes to be leaders. The findings in this study are important to coaches, athletic administrators, and current female athletes with aspirations to become a coach.

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Appendix A – Interview Questions

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What were the personal and professional trajectories of current NCAA Division I head women's ice hockey coaches?

2. What are/were the personal and professional costs or barriers for these women?

3. What are/were the personal and professional benefits or advantages for these women?

4. What experiences have these women had with their institutions and athletic administrators?

THEORETICAL FRAME (Kanter, 1977, p. 246-248):

PO. Power – "Capacity to mobilize resources."
OP. Opportunity – "Expectations and future prospects."
PR. Proportion – "Social composition of people in approximately the same situation."

****

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Please tell me about your personal path as it pertains to sports in general and ice hockey specifically (R1).
   PROBES: role models growing up, sports experience, family, partner, high school, college playing experiences…

2. Please tell me about your professional path and how that led to the position you currently hold (R1, PO, OP, PR).
   PROBES: K-12 and collegiate coaching positions held, position responsibilities, mentor opportunities, graduate assistantship, volunteer opportunities…

3. Are/were there any personal costs or barriers as you ascended into the head coaching position (R2)?
   PROBES: work/life balance, family, partner, children, friends…

4. Are/were there any professional costs or barriers as you ascended into the head coaching position (R2, PO, OP, PR)?
   PROBES: young female coaches not taken seriously, assistant to head coach, moving locations for jobs, family life…

5. Are/were there any personal benefits or advantages as you ascended into the head coaching position (R3)?
   PROBES: salary, freedom, status in the community, opportunity to stay in the game…

6. Are/were there any professional benefits or advantages as you ascended into the head coaching position (R3, PO, OP, PR)?

PROBES: leadership role, role model, ability to hire staff, status on campus, relationship with the athletic director…

7. Please tell me about your institution (R4, PO, OP, PR).
   PROBES: rural/urban, private/public, athletics, policies supporting females/female athletes, Title IX compliance at institution…

8. How does your institution support you as a person and coach (R4, PO, OP, PR)
   PROBES: policies and procedures, support for women's athletics, visibility of administrators at games, budget requests, social media coverage, community support…

9. How does your institution hinder you as a person or coach (R4, PO, OP, PR)?
   PROBES: policies and procedures, flexibility to work from home, time on the road, budget, work/life balance…

10. Please tell me about the Athletic Director who hired you. Is this person still your Athletic Director (R4, PO, OP, PR)?
    PROBES: male/female, describe the hiring process, were you able to hire your own staff, what decisions are you able to make for your program…

11. How does your Athletic Director support you as a person and coach (R4, PO, OP, PR)
    PROBES: professional development funds, standing meeting with AD, budget…

12. How does your Athletic Director hinder you as a person and coach (R4, PO, OP, PR)?
    PROBES: lack of support, declining budget, no time off, unreasonable expectations…

13. How do you provide mentorship to girls and women interested in coaching? (R3, PO, OP, PR)
    PROBES: if not - are you open to serving as a mentor in the future, female staff members, other female coaches…

14. What are your thoughts regarding the decline of female head coaches in women's ice hockey? (R1, R4, PO, OP, PR)
    PROBES: where do females get caught in the pipeline, what is the answer…

15. What advice do you have for future female head coaches? (R2, R3)

16. What advice do you have for players who want to pursue a coaching career? (R2, R3)

17. What comes next for you? (R1)
    PROBES: where do you imagine yourself in the next five years, AD,

18. Is there anything else you think I should know?

Appendix B – Consent to Participate

Title: Female NCAA Division I Women's Ice Hockey Head Coaches: Keeping Women in the Game
Primary Investigator: Amber N. Fryklund
Telephone: 218-310-0444

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
You are invited to participate in a research study about NCAA Division I women's ice hockey female head coaches. This dissertation research study is being conducted by Amber Fryklund (researcher) from the Department of Educational Leadership and Higher Education at St. Cloud State University. The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey programs.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?
Understanding the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey is valuable to university administrators, athletic directors, and institutions in terms of recruitment, hiring, and retention. Understanding experiences will also assist in providing coaches support and professional development, and foster diverse hiring practices throughout the profession, to move women through the pipeline into head coach positions. Exploring the experiences of female head coaches is also valuable for future aspiring female head coaches in the sport of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey, as it will give them the insight and tools to aid in their success. Learning from the experiences will also provide understanding into career advancement, strategies used to conquer barriers, and plans of action used to hire and retain female head ice hockey coaches in the future. Understanding and learning from the experiences will also add valuable insight to female coaches of other sports, as the lessons may be transferable.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?
To help protect the identity of participants, all 10 female head coaches will be interviewed, but two interviews will not be included in the aggregated results or analysis. Random selection will include numbering each participant, putting those numbers in an envelope, and picking out two numbers (interviews) to exclude.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE STUDY?
During the study you will be asked to review an informed consent document. This document outlines all the steps, benefits, and risks associated with the study. Once an agreement has been made to participate in the study, the consent form must be signed and submitted to the researcher. If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to schedule an in-person or Zoom interview. The interview will last approximately 2 hours and will be audio recorded. The in person interview will take place at a location and time agreed to by the researcher and participant. The Zoom interview will be scheduled at an agreeable time for the researcher and participant. The interview protocol consists of 18 open-ended questions. You are free to decline to answer a particular question if you choose. Once the researcher transcribes the interview, you will have the opportunity to read and edit your interview transcript. The edited transcript will be

considered the primary data source for the study.

HOW WILL THE RISKS OF THE STUDY BE MIMIMIZED?
It is understood that there are only 10 female head coaches in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey. To help protect the identity of participants, the study will consist of a maximum of 8 female NCAA Division I women's ice hockey head coaches. All 10 female head coaches will be interviewed, 8 will be randomly selected for inclusion in the study. Participants will not know if they were excluded or included. With this small community of coaches, every effort to protect the identity of participants will be made. You will be referred to by pseudonym in the study, and you may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time.

IS THE DATA COLLECTED CONFIDENTIAL?
Data collected will remain confidential. Data will be reported and presented in aggregate (group) form or with no more than two descriptors presented together. Responses will be kept confidential; your name will not be disclosed with direct quotes, direct quotes will be used with a pseudonym. During the interview you may refuse to answer any question. After the completion of the interview you will receive your transcript. At that point, if you wish to expand responses or note omissions to the transcription you may do so.

ARE MY RECORDS CONFIDENTIAL?
The records associated with this study will be kept confidential. In any report about this study that may be published, or any presentation, you will only be identified by pseudonym. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of securely archiving the data on a computer that is password protected and paper documents will be locked in the researcher's home office. Names will not be used in the written documentation.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with St. Cloud State University or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

If you have questions about this research study you may contact Amber Fryklund by phone at 218-310-0444 or by email anfryklund@stcloudstate.edu. You may also contact her Faculty Advisor, Dr. Steven McCullar, by email at slmccullar@stcloudstate.edu. Results of the study may be requested from the researcher or the St. Cloud State University Repository.

Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read the information provided above, and you have consented to participate.

_____ _____

Signature

Appendix C – Participant Invitation Letter

October 1, 2018

1233 Averi Circle NW
Bemidji, MN 56601

Dear Coach _____,

I am currently a doctoral student at St. Cloud State University, in the Higher Education Administration program. I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation research study about NCAA Division I women's ice hockey female head coaches.

Understanding the experiences of current female head coaches of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey is valuable to university administrators, athletic directors, and institutions in terms of recruitment, hiring, and retention. Understanding experiences will also assist in providing coaches support and professional development, and foster diverse hiring practices throughout the profession, to move women through the pipeline into head coach positions. Exploring the experiences of female head coaches is also valuable for future aspiring female head coaches in the sport of NCAA Division I women's ice hockey, as it will give them the insight and tools to aid in their success. Learning from the experiences will also provide understanding into career advancement, strategies used to conquer barriers, and plans of action used to hire and retain female head ice hockey coaches in the future.

You will be asked to participate in one face-to-face interview or videoconference interview at a time that is convenient for you. The interview will take approximately 2 hours and will be audio recorded. The researcher will transcribe the interview and provide the transcribed interview to you for review and edit. The edited transcript will be considered the primary source of data for the study. All participants will be referred to by a pseudonym protect their identities.

If you are willing to participate in this study, or would like more information or clarification, please contact me in one of the following ways.

Email: anfryklund@stcloudstate.edu
Phone: 218-310-0444

Thank you for considering participation in this study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Amber N. Fryklund

Appendix D – IRB Approval Form

ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION FOR LIFE.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

720 4th Avenue South AS 210, St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

Name: Amber Fryklund

Email: anfryklund@stcloudstate.edu

IRB PROTOCOL DETERMINATION: Expedited Review-2

Project Title: Female NCAA Division I Women's Ice Hockey Head Coaches: Keeping Women in the Game

Advisor Steven McCullar

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your protocol to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: **APPROVED**

Please note the following important information concerning IRB projects:

- The principal investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of participants in this project. Any adverse events must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible (ex. research related injuries, harmful outcomes, significant withdrawal of subject population, etc.).

- For expedited or full board review, the principal investigator must submit a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated on this letter to report conclusion of the research or request an extension.

-Exempt review only requires the submission of a Continuing Review/Final Report form in advance of the expiration date indicated in this letter if an extension of time is needed.

- Approved consent forms display the official IRB stamp which documents approval and expiration dates. If a renewal is requested and approved, new consent forms will be officially stamped and reflect the new approval and expiration dates.

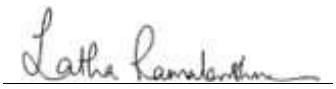
- The principal investigator must seek approval for any changes to the study (ex. research design, consent process, survey/interview instruments, funding source, etc.). The IRB reserves the right to review the research at any time.

If we can be of further assistance, feel free to contact the IRB at 320-308-4932 or email ResearchNow@stcloudstate.edu and please reference the SCSU IRB number when corresponding.

IRB Chair:

Dr. Benjamin Witts
Associate Professor- Applied Behavior Analysis
Department of Community Psychology,Counseling, and Family Therapy

IRB Institutional Official:



Dr. Latha Ramakrishnan
Interim Associate Provost for Research
Dean of Graduate Studies

OFFICE USE ONLY

SCSU IRB# 1840 - 2357	**Type:** Expedited Review-2	**Today's Date:** 10/16/2018
1st Year Approval Date: 10/16/2018	**2nd Year Approval Date:**	**3rd Year Approval Date:**
1st Year Expiration Date: 10/15/2019	**2nd Year Expiration Date:**	**3rd Year Expiration Date:**