UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FRAMING OF FEMALE ATHLETES IN GHANA: A STUDY OF TWO

SELECTED NEWSPAPERS

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A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

STUDIES, FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION AND

COMMUNICATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE

STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA, IN PARTIAL

FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF THE MASTER OF

PHILOSOPHY (COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES) DEGREE.

JULY, 2017

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, GABRIEL KUSI declare that this Dissertation, with the exception of quotation and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To you my parents, Mr. Gabriel Raphael Kusi and Mrs. Felicia Yeboah for the sacrifices you have both made towards my academic goal. Thank you mom and dad for your financial, emotional, psychological and spiritual support during the course of my studies. Thank you and God bless you.

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ABSTRACT

This research examines how female athletes in Ghana are framed by local sports newspapers and investigates the perceptions of the female athletes towards the frames used. The study was based on the framing and feminist theories. The study used qualitative method for the data collection and analysis. Two major local sports newspapers with the highest circulation- the *Graphic Sports* and the *90 Minutes* were selected for the study. In addition, interviews were conducted with six female athletes to complement the analyses of stories from the newspapers. The major findings in this research revealed that the field of sports is clearly a gendered profession that not only welcomes men enthusiastically than women but also serves as a site for celebrating skills and values clearly marked as masculine. This study also showed that female athletes are often overlooked and marginalised as they are deemed inferior in skills and knowledge to their male counterparts. Furthermore, the study showed that, in the area of sports, women are treated as "outsiders" by virtue of their gender but "insiders" by their adherence to athletic norms and values. The study concludes that men in Ghana continue to dominate and have all the authority in the field of sports and this eventually leads to the underrepresentation of women in the profession.

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter provides an introduction to the study, focusing on the background, statement of problem, objectives and research questions. The significance of the study and the delimitation of the study are also outlined.

1.0 Introduction

Many reasons may contribute to how the sports media portray female athletes. Within these media portrayals, which are presented to the public through media frames, biased messages may emerge that are spread throughout the society. According to United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007, p.2) "Female athletes are often given little recognition and unfairly framed in the media when compared to their male counterparts, which may be interpreted by the mass audience as an indication that women are inferior in the field of sport."

One of the reasons surrounding the framing of female athletes is the historical or physiological myth about women and sports. "Centuries of discrimination shaped by cultures and beliefs of a number of societies has deemed it 'unladylike' for women to partake in numerous physical activities" (Harris, 1999, p.97). Throughout the years society has sought to legitimise the argument that sports are "natural" domains of men due to innately different biological and psychological natures of men and women (George, Hartley & Paris, 2001).

A dominant belief in the 1800s was that each human had a fixed amount of energy. If this energy were used for physical and intellectual tasks at the same time, it could be hazardous (Park & Hult, 1993). Horseback riding for pleasure, showboating, and

swimming became fashionable, but women were not encouraged to exert themselves, such physical activity for a woman was thought to be especially hazardous because during menstruation she was "periodically weakened" (Clarke, 1874) as cited in (Bell, 2008). Lee (1992) as cited in (George et al, 2001)   lists a number of physiological myths concerned with harmful effects of sport participation for women including damage to reproductive organs, menstrual problems, the high likelihood of injuries due to the "fragility" of women's bone structure and the risk of breast cancer from being hit in the breasts. So historically sports have been perceived as male domains.

1.1. Women's Penetration into Sports

 In ancient Greece (with the exception of Sparta) women were virtually excluded from sports and were forbidden to even watch the Olympic Games (Volger & Schwartz, 1993). In the UK, only upper class and noble women were able to participate in sports such as riding, hunting and tennis (George et al, 2001). During the Victorian era a few pioneering women broke away from traditional female role to take part in dangerous sports such as mountaineering. These women were however hampered by having to wear conventional clothing-full length dresses with bustles (Dutot, 2000). Prior to 1870, activities for women were recreational rather than sport- specific in nature. They were noncompetitive, informal, rule-less; they emphasized physical activity rather than competition. (Geber, Feshin, Berlin, & Wyrick, 1974) as cited in (Bell, 2008).

 In the first modern games in 1896, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of modern Olympic movement, resisted the idea of female participation, envisioning the Games as "an exaltation of male sport" (Rosen, 1996) as cited in Kinnick (1998). He stated: "No matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain

certain shocks" (UN Division for the Advancement of Women Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007, p.2). Despite opposition by some members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Olympic Games of 1900 included women's golf and tennis. In 1908, archery and figure skating were added events. In 1928, women's track and field was introduced. However, as more traditionally masculine sports were added to the Olympic roster, an increasing emphasis was placed on the feminine appearance of female athletes (Guttmann, 1991). The decision of whether women can participate in the event or not was up to the men who operated the Olympic Games. The events that were considered being a "feminine sport" were recognised as women's sport event. "There was a decided tendency to publish pictures of women Olympians posed like beauty queens" (Blue, 1988) as cited in (Dutot, 2000, p.2).

1.2. Traditional Expectations of Female Athletes

An emphasis on the feminine appearance of female athletes continued into the 1940's and 1950's (Dutot, 2000). As men were fighting in World War II, women were recruited into the labour force to cover the labour shortages in industry. It was during this time of women's increasing involvement in male-dominated activities that female softball players from across the United States and Canada were recruited to form the All American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) (Weiller & Higgs, 1994). Although, wearing the traditionally masculine labourer attire of pants or overalls became a national symbol (Browne, 1993), the women of the AAGPBL were required to uphold a feminine image, athletes were taught how to put on make-up, enunciate correctly, and maintain correct posture.

The AAGPBL operated from 1943 to 1954, continuing after World War II. However, following the War, society demanded a different kind of woman than had begun to emerge in the years between the Wars. The housewife and mother role prescribed for women was a natural reaction for a society that wished to integrate a large number of men back into its work force (McDonald, 1995) as cited in Dutot (2000). This attitude carried over to create a decreased acceptability of women's participation in a traditionally male sport such as baseball (Weiller & Higgs, 1994). According to Dutot (2000), many researchers have referred to the period after World War II, as the Dark Age in women's sport.

For female athletes, their role as an athlete must be secondary to their traditional role as a woman. As a result, the status of woman, wife, mother and caregiver must be demonstrated. As Kinnick (1998) suggests, the socialization of women into selective roles legitimates the ideology of patriarchy and reinforces the power to control what is considered 'appropriate' for females by males." the mass media, including magazines, newspapers and television commentary, play a vital role in "reproducing dominant interpretations of femininity. In contrast with male athletes, profiles of female athletes often include stories of husbands and children in order to project a heterosexual image and show their athletic role is secondary (Griffin, 1998).

1.3. On the Ambivalence of Women's Participation in Sports Dominated by Men

The starting point of all works regarding women in typically male sports is the basic assumption that despite the great variety of gender constructions that exists today the participation of women in these sports requires them to transcend traditional gender boundaries (Bell, 2008). This is not only due to the fact that still mostly men engage in

historically male sports. It is also because the structure of these sports is defined by specific requirements attached to traditionally male stereotypes, such as toughness and aggressiveness, strength and endurance, competitiveness, and the willingness to take risks (Bruce, 2012). Especially because of the physical changes brought about by intense involvement in a sport and the changing body image connected with it, female athletes violate existing gender norms and come into conflict with the socially dominant image of woman (Tanner, 2011). This becomes particularly apparent in the negative judgment these athletes receive from the public. Being labeled as a "mannish", or "exotic", or constantly being mistaken for male makes these women feel severely insecure. Moreover, some athletes report difficulties in their relationships or in the search for a significant other respectively. Women's penetration into a male domain challenges the domain itself and threatens clearly defined areas and situations for the social formation of masculinity (Kinnick, 1998).

According to Bell (2008), female athletes only receive their male colleague's recognition for their athletic efforts if they distance themselves from "normal" women and adopt the male behaviours prevalent in their immediate environment. Putting emphasis on feminine appearance or asking male colleagues help is interpreted as a sign of incompetence and weakness. As this ultimately causes a lack of acceptance on the level of being an athlete, the women aim to suppress such demeanor and adapt to male behaviour (Dutot, 2000). Bruce (2012) also describes a lack of recognition of women in sports traditionally dominated by men: The performance and athletic competence of these athletes get very little to no attention in the media and from the public and are even depreciated by male colleagues and officials.

1.4. Presentation of Female Athletes in the Media

Harris (1999) states that the paucity and the negative portrayal of coverage afforded to women's sport stems from the widely held belief that sport is just for men. This unfair coverage has several important characteristics, with unfair coverage itself being defined as "coverage displaying a set of gender based attitudes which systematically disadvantage women's position in society" (Hartley, 1996, p.25) as cited in (George, et al, 2001, P. 95). Female athletes are still regarded by a large portion of the general population as trespassing on male property, and in order for these women to be held in high regard there is pressure on athletes to maintain traditional characteristics and expectations of behaviour in spite of their athletic status (Kinnick, 1998). These constraints are necessary in order to reserve sport as a male activity and maintain the importance of sport as an institution of masculine definition.

As noted by Kinnick (1998), sport-feminist analyses suggest that male attempts to control women's participation in sport is connected to linking of physical activity and sexuality. Female athletes who participate in more traditional feminine sports and present images of "femininity" are treated as sex symbols. In contrast, female athletes participating in traditionally masculine sports face being labeled unfeminine. Griffin (1998) suggests that the presentation of feminine image has become necessary to reassure the public, and possibly the athletes themselves, that they are still women despite their athletic interests.

According to (Tanner, 2011), language used by journalist reinforces these ideas. So little attention is given to women's sports as it that coverage they do receive stands out, but not far for the right reasons. This coverage entails using language that lessens the importance of female athletes-Gender marking, which is the denotation of male or female,

emphasizes the idea that there is a difference between men's and women's sporting events (Tanner, 2011). Gender marking contributes to demoting women's sports and female athletes to the role of "other." Men's sports, therefore, are viewed as the dominant and how the standard for sports should be.

Bruce (2012) posits that there is unequal representation of women in sport media, and the negative portrayal of women athletes and women's sports remains a persistent problem. In addition, women's sporting events remain marginalised from the mainstream multi-billion dollar sport-media industry and while many local, national and international competitions include both men's and women's events, the men's events invariably dominate media coverage. Media representation and portrayal of men's and women's sport are also significantly different. Media coverage of women's sport continues to be influenced by gender stereotypes, which reinforce traditional images of men and women (Lopiano, 1998).

The value of the female athlete is often determined in terms of her body type, attractiveness and sex appeal, rather than in terms of the qualities that define her as an athlete (Dutot, 2000). Lopiano (1998) says that the sports media culture is deciding what sells, and they are not willing to sell legitimate female athletic achievement. Hilliard (1984) as cited in (George et al, 2001) argues that the media reinforce the myths surrounding women participation in sport by giving them little recognition and framed them unfairly, while Hall, (1984) as cited in Bruce, (2012) says the media plays an important role in setting the boundaries with which people can make sense of their culture; telling them what to think about rather than exactly what to think. Tanner (2011) also contends that the media influences audiences, the media choose what and who to

televise and also how to package it. Most often their decisions are based on what will benefit them the most financially. Coverage denotes importance, the more prominence an athlete or sporting event receives, the more an audience views it as being important. The media are also able to give less importance to women's sports by allowing production quality to subpar in comparison with men's sports.

1.5. Influence of Media Frames

The significance of studying media frames of female athletes is best illustrated by the influence these frames have on children and young female athletes. Media frames can damage children's athletic promise by discouraging them from participating in seemingly gender inappropriate sports (Baker & Horton, 2003). According to (Tanner, 2011), women are frequently portrayed as "girls", no matter what their age, and described in terms of their physical attributes and emotional responses, often in ways that stress their weakness, passivity and insignificance. Such gender stereotyping can have a powerful influence on younger generation's perceptions and attitudes towards women and may cause young women to concentrate more on looks than athletic ability, which will obstruct their potential to become successful athletes.

The most frightening aspect of media frames is that oftentimes, the audience is unaware the media define and frame the issues and information they are exposed to, which amplifies the power and influence the media have over the generally uniformed public (Reber & Berger, 2005). The frames used in sports newspapers have the ability to influence an individual's opinion about female athletes and women's sports by emphasising or reducing the amount of focus given to certain areas of information (Nelson, Clawson, & Oxley, 1997). The influence the frames have on the public is often

undetected because the portrayals are so commonly shared and accepted in today's culture. The frames learned and originated in sports newspapers are often conveyed to other areas of the audience's lives, which affect how they view women in sports, as well as in other social domains (Eastman & Billings, 2001).

1.6. Female Athletes and Women's Sports in Ghana

Ghanaian's women's participation in sport has a long history. It is a history marked by division and discrimination but also one filled with major accomplishments by the female athletes and important advances for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in Ghana.

Among the many remarkable achievements are those of Alice Anum and Rose Hart, the first Ghanaian athletes to win gold medals at the 1965 All African Games-the maiden edition of the competition which was held in Congo-Brazzaville. The national senior female football team, the Black Queens, became the first senior national team to qualify for the FIFA World Cup tournament in 1999 in USA, seven years later before their male counterparts qualified for the men's version of the tournament.

Former Black Queens defender, Mercy Tagoe-Quarcoo became the first female Ghanaian referee to wear the FIFA badge. In 2008, she became the first Ghanaian referee to officiate a final match of any organised CAF competition for senior national teams, after she officiated the final match of the 2008 African Women Championship between Equatorial Guinea and South Africa. In July 2016, she was appointed as a head coach of a male first division team (Amidaus Professionals) - became the first female coach to handle a male team in the country. Other former female athletes such as Christian

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Enyonam Zigah, Theresa Beremansu, Emmanuella Aglago and Beatrice Thaud have also risen to become FIFA referees. It was during the reign of the late, Madam Theodosia Okoh as president of the Hockey Federation of Ghana, that Ghana first qualified for both the Hockey World Cup and the Olympic Games.

In 2014, Martha Bissah became the first Ghanaian athlete to win Olympic gold medal at any level in the Olympic Games. Alberta Ampomah became the first Ghanaian to compete in the weightlifting competition at the Olympic Games-London 2012. In the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, Kaya Adwoa Forson became the youngest Ghanaian athlete to compete at the Olympic Games, she and a male swimmer Abeiku Jackson became the first Ghanaians to compete in swimming at the Olympic Games. With a total of six gold medals won at major international competitions; Margaret Simpson has won more gold medals than any Ghanaian athlete. With four appearances at the Olympic Games, Vida Anim has appeared in the competition more than any Ghanaian athlete. More and more women have also taken up employment opportunities in all areas of sport, including managers and sport journalists.

These achievements were however made in the face of numerous barriers based on gender discrimination. Women were often perceived as being too weak for sport, particularly endurance sports such marathons, weightlifting, football and cycling, and it was often argued in the past that sport was harmful to women's health, particularly their reproductive health-females who do sports cannot give birth or have children (Attah, Awuni & Kpeglo, 2004). Besides, female athletes participating in traditionally masculine sport were labeled as "mannish." Such stereotypes prevented women from showcasing their talents at the local and international stage (Attah, et al, 2004).

Ghana's first participation at a major sporting competition was in the 1952 Summer Olympic Games under the name Gold Coast, but all the seven athletes that represented Ghana were males and again in the country's second participation of the Games in 1960 which was first after gaining independence all the fifteen athletes that represented Ghana were males. It was until the 1964 edition of the Game that three female athletes-Rose Hart, Christiana Boateng and Alice Anum had the opportunity to be part of the forty-two competitors that represented the country.

In 1958, the Ghana Football Association (GFA) organised a national football league and FA Cup respectively for the male teams in the country. It was forty-eight years later that some regional areas had active women's football league. In 2012, the GFA organised the first national women's league in Ghana, and in 2016, the women's version of the FA Cup was organised, despite the fact that the senior female national team first qualified to play in the 1999 FIFA World Cup.

Despite the hurdles that they have faced, there is no question that Ghanaian women have made gains in the sporting arena. There has been a dramatic rise in participation rates in female sport which has brought about new optimism for young girls in the country. We can now pick up a paper and read about the local female weightlifting champion. We can turn on television and watch a professional women's football league game. We can watch a medal game involving Ghana's national female team at a FIFA tournament.

However, the positive outcomes of women sports in Ghana are still constrained by gender-based discrimination in all areas and at all levels of sport and physical activity, fuelled by continuing stereotype of women's physical abilities and social roles. Women

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are frequently segregated involuntarily into different types of sports, events and competitions specifically targeted to women. Women's access to positions of leadership and decision-making in Ghana is constrained from the local level to the international level. The value placed on women's sports often lower, resulting in inadequate resources and unequal wages and prize; women's sport continues to be controlled by patriarchal ideals. In the media, women's sports is not only marginalized but also often presented in different style that reflects and reinforce gender stereotype. Violence against women, exploitation and harassment in sport are manifestations of the perceptions of men's dominance, physical, which are traditionally portrayed in male sport.

1.7. Gender Situation in Ghana

Many governments, including that of Ghana have endorsed various United Nations conventions and declarations to promote gender equality and to mainstream gender perspectives in all spheres of society (Marie-Antoinette, 2006). In addition, the 1992 constitution of Ghana provides constitutional protection for all persons before the law. Section 17 prohibits discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, creed or social or economic status. Sub-section 3 of section 27 provides that women shall be guaranteed equal rights without any impediments from any person (Constitution of Ghana, 1992).

Despite these international conventions and constitutional changes, relatively little has changed in terms of Ghanaian women's life experiences. They still continue to experience gender-based discrimination, powerlessness and occupying inferior positions in their various societies (Bottah, 2010). The gender-based discrimination and the inferior position of women in Ghana is reinforced by socialisation process, where women are taught to be obedient and submissive to men and they are not expected to compete in

activity that are seen as male domain (Marie-Antoinette, 2006). Abbam (1991) states that right from birth, the Ghanaian society instills the idea of male superiority and female inferiority on the mind of the child. Men undermine the self-esteem of women by subjugating them. Women therefore overplay their feminity by accepting that they are the weaker sexes. This is prevalent in some modern societies of which Ghana is no exception (Allah-Mensah, 2005).

Though noticeable improvements have been made, inequalities between men and women in terms of employment in Ghana are still common. This gender discrimination in employment occurs through unequal access to work, unequal payment for equal work, unfair privileges in favour of men pertaining to parental authority and access to leadership positions (Braimah, 2015). Women in Ghana are still employed in undervalued positions even when they have higher levels of education (Thompson, 2008). One reason why this inequality may persist is because of the culture that exists in the professions women find themselves and the lack of women in decision-making (Hardin & Shain, 2005). This inequality is dramatic enough that Hardin (2006) suggested that women comprise a 'token' status within the area of sports.

The gender division of labour in Ghana is evident across the country. There are strong divides between work that is acceptable for women and work that is acceptable to men traditionally. The field of sports is therefore seen as a field acceptable to men than women because of the masculine traits assigned to sports. Women who find themselves in professions seen as a masculine preserve of men often have to go through a great deal of frustration and discrimination and dissatisfaction.

1.8. Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that women have and continue to move upscale in all walks of life, they are still disempowered and misrepresented by the print media (Blaha, 2009; Ranchod, 2007). Hamilton (2006) adds that such negative portrayal of women contributes negatively to their development; limits their career aspirations, and even influences their personality characteristics. Nonetheless, the media portray stories or images that negatively stereotype the female athletes. One would assume that with the level of achievement made by women in the field of sports they would no longer be limited by their gender or steered into traditional roles (Nicely, 2007). However, studies by Anderson and Hamilton (2005), Diekman and Murnen (2004), show that the media continue to portray images which stereotype women negatively.

In Ghana, there is evidence that a number of female athletes such as Margarete Simpson, Vida Anim, Janet Amponsah, and Martha Bissa are making strides in the sporting arena and have gained media attention from time to time. Yet no studies have been focused on media framing of female athletes in Ghana. While past research has been conducted on media frames in Ghana, it has mainly focused on general issues such as politics and health (Amevor, 2014; Azanu, 2012; Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). This has therefore created a lacuna in the study of how the media frame female athletes in Ghana. There is therefore a gap in the study of how the media frames female athletes in Ghana.

This study examines media framing of female athletes in Ghana. The main goal of this study is to understand exactly how female athletes are framed in sports newspapers in Ghana.

1.9. Research Objectives

The study sets out a number of objectives to aid in the discovery of answers to questions on highlight issues relating to the topic under review. This study's main objective is the framing of female athletes in two selected Ghanaian sports newspapers.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the frames used to portray Ghanaian female athletes in newspapers.

2. To analyse the perceptions of female athletes on newspaper frames.

1.10. Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the frames used by newspapers to portray female athletes in Ghana?

2. What are the perceptions of female athletes in Ghana towards newspaper frames?

1.11. Significance of Study

In examining the framing of female athletes in Ghana, this study will inform and equip the general public with a better understanding of the frames that are used to portray female athletes and women in sports newspapers. The study also aims to increase public awareness concerning the framing issue, counteract these damaging frames, and change the public opinion regarding female athletes and women's sports because they are the ones being exposed to these frames, and they are most often consciously unaware of the influence these frames may have on their opinions of women in sports.

The findings and the recommendations of this study will also help these women on how to succeed in the profession whenever they are faced with challenges in their line of

work. It will also guide the sports journalists and sports journalism students to understand how women are framed in sports and to educate themselves on ways to avoid utilising these frames and patterns in their own reporting. Finally, it will be useful in checking the representations of female athletes in Ghana as well as curb the negative postulations surrounding the field concerning women.

1.12. Delimitation

This study is focused on analysing the framing of female athletes in Ghana. That is, to examine the frames used to portray Ghanaian female athletes in sports newspapers and the perceptions of female athletes on newspaper frames. The study will be limited to Ghanaian female athletes. The study will border on two selected print newspapers (*Graphic Sports and 90 Minutes newspapers*). With the aim of finding out how the media frame the female athletes and their perceptions towards these frames, female athletes who have been in the profession for five years and above were chosen. I find it prudent to believe that athletes who have been in the profession for that long would have gathered adequate experiences to facilitate the writing of this thesis.

I define female athletes as professionals or amateurs athletes who compete in one or more sports that involve physical strength, speed and/or endurance such as running, jumping, throwing, swimming etc.

1.13. Organization of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one embodies the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations and the organisation of the study. The second chapter presents

a review of literature on the study and outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Chapter three presents the methods and procedure used for the collection of data for analysis. issues discussed under this chapter comprises research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling technique, data collection instruments, reliability and validity, data collection procedure and method of data analysis. The fourth chapter is dedicated to the findings and discussions of the study. Chapter five presents the summary, conclusions from the findings and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This chapter reviews what other writers have said in relation to the important aspect of this study. Many authorities and writers have expressed their views in various ways in which the media uses framing theory to portray female athletes.

2.1. Media and Sports

Sports and the mass media enjoy a very symbiotic relationship McChensney (1989) as cited in Beck & Bosshart (2003). Thus both media and sports are interdependent on each other. The "very symbiotic relationship" between the media and sports has profoundly affected both participants, and the advertising industry forms part of the relationship (Beck & Bosshart, 2003). Both sports and mass media keep trying to reach people as spectators, fans, and consumers; both actively affect the audience. According to Sohr (2013), the media industries and sports teams are connected by mutual interest, convenience and need. For the media sport is a source of successful television programs and sales-promoting newspaper sections. Sports broadcasts provide television with high ratings and increased revenues from advertisers and pay-per-view audiences. Sports organisations on their part win essential exposure and royalties, and media coverage helps to increase their popularity (Williams, 1994) as cited in (Sohr, 2013). Both sides depend on one another to maintain their commercial success and their prominent place in popular culture. Koppet (1994) describes this symbiotic interdependence as circular: Exposure to sports events increases public interest in these events, which in turn increases the demand for more exposure.

The interdependence between sports and the media is reciprocal, but it is by no means symmetrical. The dependence of sports organisations on the media is usually higher. Newspapers and television can exist without the broadcasting of sports events, but sports in their current commercial form cannot survive without media financing and exposure (Bellamy, 1999). This increased dependency on the media reduces sports organisations control over the broadcasting and coverage of the events they produce (Sohr, 2013).

In today's globalised, corporatised sporting environment, the media ensures the transmission of sporting events whether via the traditional mainstream media formats of radio, television, and newspapers or the increasing diversity of internet- based options such as online news, live streaming video, blogs, tweets, YouTube, mobile phone apps, and sport and athlete websites (Bruce, 2012).

2.1.1. Sports and the Press

The press is the oldest medium regularly informing people about sports (Beck & Bosshart, 2003). From the beginning, sports teams showed keen interest in print media coverage: Newspapers formed the principal means of bringing news of coming events built audiences for sporting contests and, together with the results of past events, helped to sell newspapers (Lever & Wheeler, 1993).

According to Beck & Bosshart (2003), the first newspapers were published in the beginning of the 17th century and about 150 years later the first sports-related articles appeared. In the middle of the 18th century sports became a topic in newspapers of the United States: In 1733 the Boston Gazette described a local boxing match between the athletes John Faulcomer and Bob Russel. Such reports about sporting events originally

formed a part of the newspapers' local section. The first newspaper with a special sports section was the *Morning Herald* in England (1817), followed by other English and American papers: *The Globe* (England, 1818), *The American Farmer* (USA, 1819), and *Bell's Life* (England, 1824). *The Times*, the conservative London paper, introduced its sports section in 1829 (Oriad, 2001). All these sports sections contained local news, as telegraph transmission was not yet available.

With the rising popularity of sports such as baseball in the U.S. or football and cycling in Europe after 1870, the sports sections became more important. At that time, telegraph transmission made it possible to report sports news instantaneously from outside the local area, thus allowing for the first time in history collective involvement in distant sporting events (Lever & Wheeler, 1993). The telegraph was not only used by print media journalists, but also by sports fans themselves-bettors went to pool rooms and saloons equipped with receiving sets (Cellini, 1997). At the same time, very fast rotary press techniques came along with lower production costs and therefore lower consumer prices. Newspapers became a good for everybody.

After the introduction of electronic media, especially television, the function of the sports pages changed. Other media were able to report the results and the course of a match or a race much faster than the newspapers (Garrison & Sabljak, 1993) as cited in (Beck & Bosshart, 2003). However, the sports pages did not become useless. Live reporting on radio and television increased the general interest in sports, but due to a lack of time TV and radio reporters could not give enough background information (MacCambridge, 2010). So it became the newspaper journalists' task to provide this kind of news: analyses, comments, and from within and outside the field, track or arena. Sports

journalism in newspapers became more demanding and achieved a higher level of professionalism than before (Wernecken, 2000).

Sports reporting in newspapers seem to be quite successful today: whereas television remains the leading medium for sports, the daily and weekly sports sections are also popular, especially among young readers (Beck & Bosshart, 2003). There are eight sports newspapers in Ghana- *All Sports, Graphic Sports, Kotoko Express, The Phobian, Ball, Africa Sports, Guide Sports* and *90 minutes.* The dailies and weeklies newspapers in Ghana also carried sports stories but these are usually found at the back pages of the newspaper.

2.1.2. Sports and Radio

Up to the early 20th century, the only way to share immediate drama of a sports event was either to play or attend (Boyle & Haynes, 2000). But radio came. The added value of the radio-compared to the printed media is the opportunity of live reporting. From the very beginning the radio took advantage of this asset. Live radio reporting gave the impression of being there, of being a witness of something emotional and suspenseful (Smith, 2001). Announcers learned very quickly to give the impression of dense and dramatic events. Another advantage of the radio was and still is its very fast speed. Results and scores can be diffused instantaneously in a very flexible program. And the radio medium can reach people at any time anywhere.

According to Cashmore (2000, p.61), "Several sporting events have been midwives for the commercial and social breakthrough of radio and television-a birth that led to the co-existence of several kinds of sports with the media." In the USA it was boxing that via

live transmissions on radio made that medium and itself popular (Gilmore, 1993) as cited in (Beck & Basshort, 2003). On April 4, 1921, the radio station KDKA broadcast for the very first time a sporting event, namely a boxing match from the Pittsburgh Motor Square Garden (Boyle & Haynes, 2000). On July 2 of the same year two New York radio stations (WJY and WJ2) broadcast the heavyweight world championship fight between Jack Dempsey and Georges Carpentier in New York. In the late 1930s the fight between two heavy-weight boxers, Joe Louis and Max Schmeling, scored a 58% rating among American households-radio and boxers, hand in hand, fighting their way through the market (Castis, 1996).

At first, though, the media establishment proved very hostile to the radio pioneers (Leever & Wheeler, 1993). Newspaper publishers in various countries pushed through governmental measures in order to protect themselves. As a result, laws or policies limited news reporting on the radio. This also affected the sports section. In Great Britain, for example, the BBC radio channel forbade sports news before 7 o'clock in the evening until 1926. Even in 1928, during the Olympic Games in Amsterdam, BBC sports reporters were only allowed to read news agency bulletins-and only after 6 o'clock in the evening (Llines & Moreno, 1999).

Live reporting on the radio increased the number of people that could follow a sports event at the same time. But the organisers feared that it could also prevent some people from going to the stadium and paying the entrance fee (Gilmore, 1993) as cited in (Beck & Basshort, 2003). Whereas in the very beginning of radio broadcasting, some organisers had even paid the broadcasters for having their event on the radio, there was soon a switch of roles. Sports organisers obligated the radio broadcasters to pay license fees to

them, as a compensation for the organiser's lower income due to the possible decrease of the audience in the stadium (Cashmore, 2000).

In the beginning several radio stations avoided the payment by using an illegal method: The reporters listened to the programs of other stations, which had paid the fees, and transmitted the information to their own audiences (Cellini, 1997). But the payment of license fees soon became commonplace (Castis, 1996). The radio stations reporting the heavy-weight fight between Joe Louis and Max Schmeling in 1935 had to pay US$27,500 license fees. Still, everybody made a profit. Despite the reporting on the radio, 88,000 spectators went to the fight and paid entrance fees, so radio proved to be no treat to sport arenas' attendance (Cashmore, 2000). And because of the high audience rating, advertisers were willing to pay more than usual rates for a radio spot before, during, or after the live broadcast of a sports event. In Ghana, virtually all the radio stations satisfy the masses by broadcasting proceedings of live football matches to the public. Others such as Joy FM and Happy FM are noted for their live coverage of important local boxing fights.

Even if it has to compete with television, radio remains an important medium for news today. Not all professional contests are televised, but radio can provide results from these contests instantaneously (Beck & Basshort, 2003). Furthermore, radio sets can are small and portable and can be used in place where watching TV is impossible.

2.1.3. Sports and Television

TV has clearly become the leading medium in the context of sports. Like the radio, this medium allows live reporting, but because it transmits not only sound but also live

images, the feeling of "being there" is even stronger for television spectators than for radio listeners (Barnett, 1990). So, with TV, major sporting contests are no longer available just to spectators witnessing the event but, also to many millions more who can view the spectacle in their own homes, to their TV sets.

TV seems simultaneously to support, popularise, and dominate sports. It has contributed to the globalisation of sports (Bryant & Rayney, 2000). By the world wide transmission of sports traditionally popular only in certain countries-baseball in America, cycling in France, sumo in Japan, TV has fueled new sporting fashions elsewhere, and live reports from international events like the Olympics and Football's World Cup have introduced audiences across the world to new sports (Cellini, 1997). As a result, some sports owe their popularity in any part of the world almost entirely to TV exposure. But some countries fear that by this development, glamorous TV sports could obliterate indigenous sporting traditions (Barnett, 1995). Quite similar is the fear that opportunity to watch major international sports events on TV could prevent sports fans from attending local games. After all, it can be said that TV has conferred its favours on only a few sports, leaving the majority with insufficient resources and exposure (Rowe, 1996).

To be part of the party, athletes and sports managers are ready to accept interference from the side of TV (Cashmore, 2000). Media managers decide, for instance, at what time a sporting event starts. Several sports have accepted changes in their rules just to make the sport more suited to TV. The marriage between sports and TV is so tight in some countries that a divorce would mean bankruptcy for athletes and clubs (Milik, 2009). But it is a love-hate relationship with the medium in the stronger position. No TV-no publicity; no publicity-no sponsors!

The beginning of TV broadcasting was, as well already related to sports. As a test for the new medium, promoters established a TV program at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin (Castis, 1996). The program could be received within a distance of 10 miles from the sender. But as there were yet no TV sets, the organisers also provided 21 auditoriums with large screens (Llines & Moreno, 1999). In Great Britain the BBC started its TV test program at the end of the same year, 1936. In the following year, the BBC produced the first live report on TV from a sports event; it transmitted 25 minutes of a tennis match from the men's single in Wimbledon on June 21, 1937 (Cashmore, 2000). On April 9, 1938, the BBC televised the first football match, a game between England and Scotland (Boyle & Haynes, 2000).

According to (Cashmore, 2000), early television sports had several technical problems. The cameras were immobile, and close-ups were impossible. Therefore, boxing seemed to be an ideal sport for TV in the beginning because of the small dimensions of the ring. The 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s brought smaller, more mobile cameras with more functions, worldwide satellite transmissions, and, finally, colour TV. These developments were a breakthrough for sports on TV.

Like the radio broadcasters before them, TV broadcasters soon had to pay license fees if they wanted to send live transmissions from sporting events. As sports programs soon proved to be very popular with the audience, and therefore also for advertising these license fees for TV broadcasters became higher and higher. The prices for advertising spots before, during, or after a sports program also rose (Morgas, 1995). Commercial broadcasters tried to outbid their competitors for TV rights to high profile sports, in order to create wider audiences and to secure lucrative advertising revenue. As a result, athletes

can earn tremendous amount of money, if broadcasting deem their sport fits TV. "Fit" means that the respective sport creates drama, risks, sensations, and thrills-and enough breaks for commercials (Rowe, 1996). The athletes can bring some more news and entertainment value into the game by opening their private lives to a big audience. Human interest sells as well as scandals.

In Ghana TV stations such as GTV, TV3, Metro TV and Max TV broadcast some live and highlights of local and international sporting events.

2.2. Framing Theory

Framing is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterised in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences. To Gamson (1996), framing means to place emphasis on certain features of the new to denial of others whiles Gitlin (1980, p.6) describes the framing process as: "Frames as principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exits, what happens and what matter".

Framing is an influential way of forming and shaping public opinion. Since its evolution, framing has been widely used in communication research of media content and also studies of relationship between the media and public opinion (de Vreese, 2005). According to Cissel (2012), Goffman (1974) was the first to give attention to framing as a form of communication. The theory was first put forth by Goffman in 1974 under the title of Frame Analysis. According to Goffman (1974), people interpret what is going on around their world through their primary framework. This according to Botan and Hazelton (2006) places Goffman as the founder of Frame Analysis. Goffman's

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underlying assumption is that individuals are capable users of these frameworks on a day to day basis, whether they are aware of them or not.

Framing may be considered as a "schemata of interpretation" that enable individuals to "locate, perceive, identify and label" occurrences or life experiences (Goffman, 1974) as cited in (Cissel, 2008). This definition was later revised by Entman (1993) to entail a specification of framing as a way of communicating text or message which is purposed to promote certain facets of a 'perceived reality' and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or a treatment recommendation.

2.3. Media Frames

Media frames have the ability to influence public opinion in the way they transfer information from a media source to social and individual awareness (Entman, 1993). These frames serve as the structures through which individuals understand and organise information (Reber & Berger, 2005; Scheufele, 2004). Media framing involves the selection and salience given to various pieces of information, allowing certain attributes to be highlighted and others to be excluded in a communications context (Chyi & McCombs, 2004; Entnam, 1993; Knight, 1999). Increasing the salience given to certain attributes influences the audiences' personal opinions regarding a given issue by making it more likely they will process and store it to memory (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 2000).

Frames can also be used to divert attention to or even omit select pieces of information, which is just as powerful as highlighting specific areas or characteristics of a story (Entman, 1993). The danger in understanding or omitting information is that it limits the

alternatives or knowledge the public is exposed to (Entnam, 1993). The way the media frame a sport and/or athlete has the potential to impact the audiences' beliefs and attitudes regarding that sport or athlete (Hardin, Lynn, Walsdorf, & Hardin, 2002).

It is unusual to see open measures of sexism in sports coverage, but through framing it is still possible for biased messages to slip through media filters (Eastman & Billings, 2001). According to framing theory, the three functions of media frames are: selection (who/what to show), emphasis (how much to show), and exclusion (what not to show) (Billings, 2004). The framing theory also stresses that media have the power to shape a story in a positive or negative manner, with the negative portrayals having a stronger influence on the audience than positive portrayals (Billings, 2004; Eastman & Billings, 2001). The theory recognises that information can be presented in several ways, and that how it is organized and disseminated through the media impacts how the public understands and uses the information they have been given (Terkidsen & Schnell, 1997).

Media frames can be found in four areas of communication process (Entman, 1993). First, frames can be found with information communicators who are influenced by their own frames and schemas when deciding what information to publish and highlight. Secondly, frames can be found in presence or absence of certain attributes within the actual text. The simple placement or repetition of certain frames in a text is enough to increase the likelihood that an individual will store it to memory. The third location in the communication process where frames can be found is with the receiver. Frames can affect the thoughts and insights generated by the public by determining what information they are exposed to and confirming or disconfirming previously stored beliefs. Lastly,

today's culture is overwhelmed with frames commonly shared and accepted by the social majority (Entman, 1993).

Many of these frames have been spread throughout society due to the consistent exposure and omission of information in the media. One reason media frames have become so common within social culture is because they can be found in all levels of communication process (Nicely, 2007). Media producers and editors do not necessarily utilize media frames to purposely pervert or manipulate the public, but instead to concisely and effectively report a story using a limited amount of space (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997). Members of the media use familiar frames to help the public make sense of the information they are being given (Bronstein, 2005). Frames allow the media to report a story that requires little or no effort by the public to understand because the consumers automatically identifies the commonly used frames, which prevents journalists from having to explain new or unfamiliar information. Media decisions on what aspects of female athlete or women's sport to highlight or exclude, and the way in which these subjects are featured influence the gender messages being portrayed.

2.4. Media Frames in Sports

Sports fans are exposed to numerous articles and images concerning athletes throughout the course of a season (Rada & Wulfemeyer, 2005). Therefore, the media frames of these athletes are passed on to the viewing audience and consciously or subconsciously stored in their memories (Eastman & Billings, 2001). If these messages include gender misrepresentations, the audience may take this perceived "general knowledge" regarding the sports world and apply it to their general attitude about these groups in societal context (Rada & Wulfemeyer, 2005). The repetition of biased media frames has a

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negative influence on passive viewers who may transfer these portrayals from a sports context into the real world.

The impact media framing and portrayals have on sports fans moves into a real world context. This is particularly dangerous because the sports media are in a position to frame an issue or portrayal that will be broadcast to a mass audience (Rada & Wulfemeyer, 2005). The way an issue or athlete is portrayed may influence viewers and subconsciously affect the way they feel about different gender groups in a non-athletic context (i.e. business or educational environment) (Eastman & Billings, 2001). The specific ways in which a member of the media frames a message or athlete will impact how the message is perceived and used by the audience.

Mainstream media frames are often blamed for contributing to the way society views marginalised groups and its members (Ward, 2004). The "hidden racism and sexism" found in media portrayals has an impact on younger generations who look to the media for socialisation (Eastman & Billings, 2001). Young adults and children are the most vulnerable consumers because they have fewer social experiences and a weaker ability for critical thinking than adults (Hardin, Lynn & Walsdorf, 2002; Ward, 2004). So they are more likely to be socialized and affected by sports media frames of female athletes (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee, & Sebastian, 2002). They are also more likely to adopt the biased messages implanted in these portrayals (Nathanson, 2002).

Media messages, such as the ones offered in the framing of female athletes, can shape how children develop their ideas about gender roles (Nathanson, 2002). As early as first grade, children develop ideas about the "gender-appropriateness of athletics," which

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influences their "perceptions of participation in athletic activities" (Harrison & Lynch, 2005, p. 228). Boys are more likely than girls to believe they are skilled athletes, make sports a higher priority, and have a higher overall enjoyment of sports (Harrison & Lynch, 2005). This trend has also been found in young adults at the high school level. A survey of high school students found that only about 9% of girls, as compared to 36% of boys, wanted to be remembered as a star athlete (Harrison & Lynch, 2005). These results show that not only are children are aware of gender roles at an early age, but they are also aware of how these roles apply to athletes and athletic participation.

2.5. Media Frames Regarding Female Athletes and Women's sports

Sports media producers often frame sports coverage based on gender. From high school athletics to the Olympics, there is a favoritism shown to male athletes through the significant amount of media recognition and coverage their sports receive when compared to their female counterparts who are often underrepresented in sports media (Eastman & Billings, 2001; Knight & Giuliano, 2001; Fink, 2002). The audience may see this under-representation of female athletes as a sign that women's sports are not as significant or exciting as men's sports (Knight & Giuliano, 2001). This imbalance portrays the idea that female athletes and women's sports are inferior when compared to men's sports and male athletes (Knight & Giuliano, 2001). Past research has found consistent inadequacies in the media coverage of female athletes in various mediums, such as television, newspapers, and magazines (Fink & Kensicki, 2002; Billings & Angelini, 2007).

In the summer of 1995, an analysis of ESPN's *Sports Centre* and CNN's *Sports Tonight* found that only 5% of analysed media coverage featured women's sports (Billings,

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Angelini, & Eastman, 2005). Five years later, the same basic analysis was conducted, and the only change was a slight increase in Sports Tonight's coverage of female athletes and women's sports from 5% to 7% (Billings Denham, 2012). There is still a significant difference in the amount of coverage allotted to male and female athletes.

The trivialisation of women's sports extends to the importance given to women's sports in layout and visual dominance. Silverstein (1996) compared *The New York Times'* coverage of the 1995 women's and men's NCAA basketball tournaments and found that the Times framed the women's event as trivial through visual elements including fewer articles on the sports cover page, shorter article lengths, fewer photos, fewer cover page "teasers," and fewer and smaller graphic elements.

The sport an athlete plays will also influence the way he/she is perceived and framed in the sports media (Harrison & Lynch, 2005). Sports have broken down into three different categories: male appropriate (e.g. basketball, football), female appropriate (e.g. ice-skating, gymnastics) and neutral (e.g. golf, softball) (Jones, Murrell, & Jackson, 1999). When female athletes are featured in a publication, the most coverage goes to those in more so-called female appropriate sports, which often emphasize elegance and poise, such as ice-skating and gymnastics (Eastman & Billings, 2001; Hardin, 2002). An analysis of NBC's coverage was given to women's sports that are required a large exertion of power or extensive physical contact, which are actions traditionally thought of as male appropriate (Fink & Kensicki, 2002). The media tend to over-represent women who participate in supposedly female appropriate sports, while under-representing women in what are considered more male appropriate sports (Kinnick, 1998).

Newspaper and magazine articles often treat female athletes differently depending upon whether they participate in female appropriate or male appropriate sports. Athletes who violate the traditional gender appropriate roles are likely to be perceived in relation to the sport they play (Harrison & Lynch, 2005). Women who play football and basketball are perceived to be more 'rigid' than women in female appropriate sports. In contrast, men who participate in cheerleading are likely to be viewed as more communal than men in male appropriate sports (Harrison & Lynch, 2005). Despite athletic success, females who participate in male appropriate sports are still described in the media with more task irrelevant than task relevant comments when compared to female athletes in female appropriate sports (Jones, Murrell, & Jackson, 1999). For example, a journalist may emphasize a female lacrosse (male appropriate sport) player's scholastic achievements (task irrelevant). While a gymnast (female appropriate sport) would be praised for her athletic ability (task relevant). These differences in media coverage may have an impact on how a female athlete views herself or her sport.

A number of sports and media scholars have found that female athletes tend to be described in media according to their physical appearance and perceived desirability to men, rather than their athletic ability (Bruce, 2013; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Messner, 1988; Nicely, 2007; Tanner, 2011; Vertinsky, 1994). While physical descriptors of male athletes typically relate to their athletic build and strength, descriptors of female athletes often relate to their sexual attractiveness and desirability from the perspective of male gaze (Daddario, 1994, Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). Recent studies of the types of praise given to male and female athletes by sports journalists continue to show that female athletes are more likely to be praised for their appearance than their athleticism (Bruce,

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2013; Crouse, 2013; Tanner, 2011). By contrast, attributes applied to male players often related to mental deftness, such as "brilliant shots" or "smart fouls." No similar references to intellectual ability were made during the equivalent women's game.

Tanner (2011) found a large difference in the descriptors used by sports journalists when talking about male and female athletes. According to Tanner, women were often described using words like "girls," "young ladies," and "women." Men were described using "men," "young men," and "young fellas" but were never described as "boys". This infantilisation of athletes is another way in which the media marginalises female athletes. By describing women athletes as "girls," sports journalists are giving them a lower status than male athletes.

Some research has also discovered that sports journalists have a tendency to emphasise a female athlete's mental health as a contributing factor to her athletic performance (Kinnick, 1998). Scholars have recognised a trend in the sports media that portray female athletes as weak (i.e. mentally, emotionally, and/or physically). An analysis of media coverage of the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games by (Dutot, 2000) revealed that journalists often associated female athletes' weaknesses with a mental or emotional issue, such as lack of self-confidence. Members of the sports media highlight this mental weakness by emphasising female athletes' dependency on others, emotionality as opposed to mental toughness, past failings.

In regard to failing, previous research found that when a man lost an athletic competition it was attributed to strength or intelligence of his opponent, but sports journalists blamed a female's loss on mental flaws (i.e. lack of confidence or aggression) (Kinnick, 1998). In

comparison to male athletes, when a female athlete is recognised for her success, it is less likely to be attributed to talent and commitment, which is another mental aspect of athletics (Billings & Eastman, 2003; Billings & Angellini, 2007). This portrayal implies that female athletes are less committed to sports than their male counterparts. These findings illustrate a tendency for the sports media to highlight mental weaknesses, such as lack of confidence and lack of commitment, in female athletes.

Previous research have found that the used of linguistic sexism is a way that journalist portray female athletes. Renzetti and Curran (1995) define linguistic sexism as the ways in which a language devalues members of one sex, usually through defining women's "place" in society as a secondary status or by ignoring women entirely. Linguistic sexism associated with sports coverage includes gender marking, hierarchical naming practices, and martial metaphors. Women's athletic performance is marginalised through the practice of asymmetrical gender marking, whereby women's athletic events are consistently labeled as "women's events," while men's events are simply athletic events (Duncan, 1990; Halbert & Latimer, 1994). For instance, in media coverage, men's NCAA championship basketball games were called "the national championship," while the equivalent women's match-up was gender-marked as the "women national championship" (Kinnick, 1998; Bruce, 2013).

Hierarchical naming practices also suggest that female athletes are accorded less status than males. Kinnick (1998) found that female athletes were more likely to be called by their first names by the sports journalists. In her study of the 1996 Olympic Games female athletes were by their first names in more than half of references, while male athletes were called by their first names in less than eight percent of references. Our

cultural history suggests that first names are used for children, servants and those whom we are very familiar; referring to someone by a last name suggests greater social distance (Kinnick, 1998).

Martial metaphors are those that apply the imagery of war to sport (Trujilo, 1995). Kinnick (1998) founds that sports journalist used martial metaphors much more frequently when describing male athletes than female athletes. Jansen and Sabo (1994) argue that sport/war metaphors valorise strength and aggression, characteristics which are inconsistent with femininity. Because war is a "quintessentially masculine activity", one would expect to see martial metaphors used frequently to describe men's sports. Conversely, their absence as descriptors of women's sports contributes to portrayals of female athletes as passive and unaggressive.

2.6. Effects of Media Framing on Female Athletes and Women's Sport

Media frames can affect the gender attitudes youth have regarding sports participation. Children are in the process of being socialized, and with that come stereotypes regarding the gender appropriateness of certain sports (Baker & Horton, 2003). If young girls become familiar with stereotypes that suggest females are less athletic than males, they may feel discriminated against or choose not to participate in athletics for fear of failure (Johnson, Hallinan, & Westerfield, 1999). This is an especially damaging effect because it prevents both boys and girls from even attempting to participate in certain sports.

Looking to successful athletes for social comparisons can have a negative effect on the youth's self-esteem because they will see how these athletes are framed and feel inadequate in comparison (Ward, 2004). Young girls may see the media's emphasis on

female athletes' attractiveness versus athletic achievement and become more critical of their body image and appearance as opposed to actual skill. Women may also feel cheated and inferior due to the under-representation of female athletes in media. Finally, women who participate in a male appropriate sport may suffer from decreased self-esteem due to the challenges (i.e. stereotypes, discrimination) that may arise from the masculine connotations associated with these sports. These represent a few of the ways media frames of female athletes and women's sports may affect self-esteem.

Role conflict is another concept affected by how female athletes and women's sports are framed. Approximately 25% of female athletes may also feel some type of role conflict due to the challenges of fulfilling both a typically masculine role and a feminine social role (Martin & Martin, 1995). Female athletes are constantly balancing their identities between those of a female athlete and those of a traditional female ideal (Kauer & Krane, 2006). Those athletes who fail to comply with the feminine identity are faced with stereotypes and discrimination (Kauer & Krane, 2006). Currently, there is slightly more acceptance of female athletes, but there is still a media focus on femininity and heterosexuality over athletic achievement (Carty, 2005).

In dealing with role conflict, female athletes use defense mechanisms to narrow the gap between fulfilling the role of a traditional athlete and a traditional woman. For instance, female athletes may try to fulfill a traditional feminine role by wearing make-up on the field or emphasizing their heterosexuality (Kauer & Krane, 2006; Greendorfer & Rubinson, 1997). Those athletes who are lesbians or bisexual often try to avert their sexuality by lying about whom they are dating or limiting the amount of information they share with others (Kauer & Krane, 2006; Lenskyj, 1997). These are mechanisms female

athletes utilize to handle the role conflict associated with the media frames of the female athletes and women's sports.

Sports-related texts are highly consistent in how they frame female athletes and women's sport. While male athletes are portrayed as masculine and powerful, female athletes are presented in a more sexualized manner, which emphasizes their beauty over their athleticism. Media coverage of women is also influenced by the gender appropriateness of the sport or athlete being featured. These media coverage has negative influence on female athletes and the overall general attitude regarding women's sports. This is why it is so important to study the media frames being used in sport's newspapers. The results from this project will help educate individuals, especially female athletes, on how women are framed in these newspapers.

2.7. Feminist Theory

According to Brantley and Legermann (2004) feminist theory is a genaralised, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from a woman-centered perspective. Casey et al., (2008) on the other hand see the feminist theory as a political and social important aspect of social identity. To Birrel (2000) feminist theory is a continually dynamic evolving complex of theories that take as their point of departure the analysis of gender as a category of experience in society. Brewer (2002) seeks to explain feminism as how women find their own power especially in the world grounded on patriarch and stereotypes. The theory is woman-centred and according to Brantley and Lengermann (2004) it is woman centred in three ways. Firstly, the experiences of women in the society are the major object for investigation. The second is to see the world from the distinctive vantage points of women as they are the central

"subject" of the investigation. The third is to seek and produce a better world for women. Feminist theory could therefore be a movement to liberate the subordination of women in patriarchal society which will eventually lead to the empowerment of women worldwide. This according to Birrel (2000) is because all feminists share an assumption that women are oppressed within a patriarchy society and have the commitment to change those conditions.

Sports is clearly a gendered profession, that is, a profession that not only welcomes boys or men enthusiastically than women but also serves as a site for celebrating skills and values clearly marked as 'masculine' (Birrel, 2000). This clearly goes against the beliefs of feminist theory as women are not treated nor seen as the central 'subjects' in sports.

2.7.1. Basic Theoretical Questions Underpinning the Feminist Theory

Brantley and Lengermann (2004) underline four basic and important questions that underpin the feminist theory which produce a revolutionary switch in the understanding of the world. The questions lead us to discover how women have taken for granted and lead to an absolute knowledge of the world; knowledge derived from the experiences of women living in a society where men are seen as the "masters."

The first question is: *"And what about women?"* In other words, where are

the women in any situation being investigated? If they are not present, why?

If they are present, what exactly are they doing? How do they experience the

situation? What do they contribute to it? What does it mean to them? (p.437)

To Brantley and Lengermann (2004) in any situation being studied if the women are not there it means there has been a deliberate effort to exclude them. The field of sport is not seen as a field for women and they are not encouraged to enter into the field. This according to Wilde (2007) is because in a patriarchal society, males are expected to demonstrate certain characteristics and behaviours that are "masculine" while females are held accountable for "feminine". Women are therefore not in sports not because they lack the ability or interest but because society does not see the field of sports as a place for women, thus the deliberate effort to exclude them as opined by Brantley & Lengermann (2004).

The second question Brantley & Lengermann (2004) ask is that:

> *"Why is all this as it is?"* As the first question calls for description of the social world, the second question requires an explanation of that world description, and explanation are two facts of any sociological theory. Feminism's answers to these questions give us a general social theory
>
> (p. 437).

In explaining the reason for the second Wilde (2007) says people are bombarded with gender stereotypes right from birth until death and females are expected to live up to these specific gender roles that are held by both men and women in the mainstream society. Hardin and Shain (2005), thus gender stereotypes ingrained in culture is very difficult to change. Sports has become a male dominated field because of stereotypes that have formed over time especially through the media.

The third question according to Brantley and Lengermann (2004) for all feminists is:

"How can we change and improve the social world so as to make it a

more just place for women and for all people?" This commitment to

social transformation in the interest of justice is the distinctive

characteristics of social theory, a commitment shared in sociology by

feminism (p. 437).

According to Scraton and Flintoff (2013) the challenges women face once they go into sports can only change if they are treated with respect and seen as having the credibility and knowledge about sports as male colleagues. Chandler (2010) on her part opines that the field of sports can be a better place for women once the negative postulations surrounding the field as preserve of men are changed.

The fourth question probe by feminist according to Brantley and Lengermann (2014) is:

"*And what about the differences among women?"* The answers to this

question lead to a general conclusion that the invisibility, inequality, and

the role differences in relation to men which generally characterise

women's lives are profoundly affected by woman's social location-that

is by her class, race, age, affectional preferences, marital status, region,

ethnicity, and global location (p. 438).

Gender plays a very key role in the way women are treated in a profession that is considered a male stronghold. A central theme in sports is male superiority and female inferiority where the standard for which performances or knowledge about the profession is measured becomes maleness (Creedon, 1998). In sports, male hegemony has been more complete and more resistant to change than in other areas of culture and this ultimately oppresses them in their profession (Hargreaves, 1994).

2.7.2. Liberal Feminism Response

According to Scraton and Flitton (2013), modern liberal feminism bears the legacy of early pioneers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, and Harriet Taylor, who challenged essentialists notions of femininity and dichotomy that posited rationality as masculine/male and emotionality as feminine/female. Second-Wave liberal feminism since the 1960s and 1970s has focused on equality of access and opportunity, different socialization practices, gender stereotyping, and discrimination.

The underlying assumption of all liberal sports feminism is that sport is fundamentally sound and represents a positive experience to which girls and women need access. Differences in female sports participation are seen to be the result of socialisation practices carried out by institutions such as the family, the media and the school (Greendorfer, 1995). For example, girls are socialised into feminine activities such as netball, gymnastics, or hockey and into a female physicality, and boys are socialised into masculine sports such as football, rugby, or cricket and into a male physicality (Scraton, 1996). Furthermore, discriminatory practices prevent women from having equal access to sporting opportunities including facilities and resources. Liberal feminist research also focuses on the underrepresentation of women in decision making positions in sport and in

higher coaching and leadership posts (Knoppers, 1997). The early feminist critiques of male stream sport are valuable for their rejection of biological explanations for women's subordination in sport, and for establishing that gender is socially constructed (Scraton & Flintoff, 2013).

Liberal feminism has placed these issues on the agenda of sports organisations, governing bodies, schools, and other institutions involved in delivering, providing, and developing sports. Pressure from activists working on women and sports initiatives such as Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, Women's Sports Foundation, and International Association of PE and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW), has resulted in a number of statements targeted at governments as well as national and international organisations (Scraton & Flintoff, 2013). These statements argue for the vital importance of sport and physical education for girls and women (e.g., 1994 Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport; 1998 Windhoek Call for Action; 2008 IAPESGW "Accept and Respect" Declaration). Although there is little doubt that the liberal feminist agenda and the work of activists and pressure groups has opened up opportunities for some women, more radical sports feminists argue that this superficial change has simply hidden more complex gender inequalities that continue to impact on many women and some men.

2.7.3. Radical Feminism Response

Radical feminism developed out of radical politics in the 1960s and 1970s which saw the development of women's consciousness-raising groups and the beginnings of a women's movement with women campaigning publicly against domestic violence, pornography, and for their rights over reproduction and health matters (Scraton & Flintoff, 2013). Fundamentally, the radical feminist explanation is concerned with underlying structural

power relations that are the result of the systematic maintenance of male power through patriarchy, whereby men as a group dominate women as a group. Radical feminists explore the nature of oppression in the media portrayal of sportswomen through an emphasis on their appearance, sexuality, and their motherhood/domestic role in family (Writght & Clarke, 1999). This takes place in our print and broadcast media and is supported by the use of women as displayed in male sports such as motor racing and boxing.

A radical sports feminist approach emphasises the importance of consciousness rising about violence and sexual abuse supports the development of anti-discriminatory policies challenging homophobia and discrimination against lesbians and gays (Scraton & Flintoff, 2013). Radical feminism tests unequal gender relations in sports mainly by manipulating institutional understanding of male violence and homophobia as well as the significance of women-only and gay and lesbian space. This separate provision ranges from local initiatives (e.g., women-only sessions in leisure and sports centres) to large-scale, international sporting events (e.g., women's sports organisations and the Gay Games). Radical sports feminism further encourages the reconstruction of sport into forms that celebrate women's values rather than those more traditionally associated with masculine aggression (Mitten, 2009).

Radical feminism is criticised for its tendency to essentialism and biological reductionism. Essentialism suggests that there is an essence to being a woman, thus emphasising women's perceived natural or biological explanation (Scraton & Flintoff, 2013). In addition, the concentration on patriarchy and the shared oppression of women

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by men fails to fully explore the divisions between women based on class, race, and ethnicity and homogenises all men as oppressors.

2.7.4. Marxist/Socialist Feminism Response

According to Scraton and Flintoff (2013), Marxist feminism identifies gender inequalities as deriving from capitalism, class, and economic exploitation. The sexual division of labour is fundamental to this approach and focuses on how capital benefits from women's unpaid domestic labour, maintenance of the future labour force (childcare), and the day-to-day care of male labourers.

Within sport, socialist feminism highlights the part played by women in servicing both men's and children's sports. For example, women often provide the refreshments at male sporting events; they wash sports clothing for their partners or for the men's team; and they transport their children to sports events and support them in their activities often to the detriment of their own leisure and sporting activities (Thompson, 1999). This sexual division of labour extends into employment in sports organisations and sports clubs, where women are often found in servicing and supporting roles. Women's dual role in the paid labour force and domestic labour impacts on their time and energies for sport and recreation, socialist feminism is critical of the disparities between men's and women's opportunities for sponsorship, prize money, and sporting careers (Hall, 1996).

2.8. Summary

In reviewing the literature, there is an indication that gender exists in sports all over the world. Feminist scholars see sport as a powerful institution which contributes to the social construction of a male-dominated gender order. Female athletes in Ghana cannot

be exempted from this discovery because of the media generated stereotype that has made sports the preserve of men. Gender issues therefore exits in the media hence the reason why female athletes continue to face unnecessary challenges, discriminations and stereotypes. Some of the issues identified from the literature are bias in graphic elements, mental/emotional weakness, appropriate femininity, linguistic sexism and so on. This study is grounded on Framing and Feminist theories to investigate how the media frame female athletes in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter is an outline of the research methods and the procedures I used to collect and analyse data aimed at examining how two selected newspapers frame Ghanaian female athletes. This chapter elaborates on the methodology that was used for the study by discussing the research approach, research design, population, data collection techniques, as well as the analysis of data.

3.1. Research Approach

A qualitative approach was adopted for the study. The qualitative approach to research forms part of the three main approaches and these are Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Method approach to research (Creswell, 1998). In qualitative approach, knowledge claims are based on constructivist perspectives or different meanings of individual experiences (Creswell, 2006). Qualitative studies interpret the qualities of social phenomena rather than predict relations between predefined variables (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Qualitative approach is typically used to explore new phenomena and to capture individual's thoughts, feelings, or interpretations of meaning and process (Given, 2008). A qualitative approach was the best to use for this study because the research was focused on the interpretation of data. It was also not necessary to use quantitative methods because the purpose of the project was not to determine how many times a frame was used, but to describe what those frames were.

3.2. Research Design

The research design that I used for the study is content analysis. Content analysis is the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes (Given, 2008). In qualitative research, content analysis is interpretative, involving close reading of text. Qualitative researchers using a content analytic approach recognize that text is open to an individual explanation, reflects multiple meanings, and is content dependent (Given & Olson, 2003).

Krippendorf (2004) thinks of content analysis as frequently used in the media to analyse units of news articles such as headlines, leads and paragraphs in the context of framing theory and Tankard (2001) also considers content analysis as a method for analyzing message content in an orderly manner; a tool for observing and analyzing message of certain communicators instead of resorting to interview or the use of questionnaire as a survey research or observation, which are also useful tool for gathering information.

This in effect, means that for me to examine how the frames are used by newspapers to portray female athletes, there was the need for me to content-analyse the news articles that I selected, concentrating on the paragraph as the unit of analysis in this study and filter large volumes of phrases and words into fewer categories to convey meaning (Cavanagh, 1997).

My work looked at the actual content of the two newspapers; the *Graphic Sports* and the *90 Minutes* newspaper, so content analysis was the best research design that enabled me to analyse the text and the data that I collected.

3.3. Period of Data Collection

This study considered the period spanning from January 2012 to December 2015. The reason for the three years period is that sports newspapers in Ghana do not cover a lot of stories about female athletics. Female athletes get high publicity when they are engaged in international competitions such as the Olympic Games, African Athletics Championship, international qualifying matches and FIFA World Cup tournaments.

January 2012 to December 2015 was the period of major sporting activities for the Ghanaian female athletes. It was around this period that some female athletes represented Ghana at the London 2012 Olympic Games, the Youth Olympic Games, Africa Athletics Championship, World Athletics Championship, World U-20 Female tournament, Africa Women Championship, National Unity Games and Commonwealth Games.

3.5. Sampling and Sampling Technique

Sampling is the method of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Tuckman, 1999). According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), qualitative researchers adopt sampling in order to direct their choice of observation and respondents to particular characteristics to consider.

The effectiveness of a sampling strategy would be how it enables researchers to methodically collect the necessary information without wasting time and resources, and it means making sure that the sampled texts are the ones that are needed in order to answer the research questions (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

This research made use of the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling involves the choice of subjects who possess the information the researcher needs. The purposive sampling strategy was suitable for this study as qualitative studies are often guided by purposive sampling strategies (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Through a purposive sampling technique, issues in both *Graphic Sports* and *90 minutes* newspapers were selected for this study from January 2012 to December 2015. The *Graphic Sports* was selected because it is distributed nationwide and receives reports from different parts of the country. According to Moehler and Singh (2011), the people of Africa democratic states tend to trust state-owned media. This makes the *Graphic Sports* suitable for this study as it is a state- owned newspaper, published three days in a week, and is also the oldest existing sports newspaper and the most widely circulated sports paper with a weekly circulation of about 80,000.

90 Minutes newspaper is a privately owned Ghanaian newspaper published in Accra by Arcadia Publications Limited. The paper began publication in 2005, and is published two days in a week. The paper has become the third largest sports newspaper in Ghana after the *Graphic Sports* and *Kotoko Express* with a weekly circulation of about 9000. The reason why I chose *90 Minutes* ahead of *Kotoko Express* is that the latter only reports on issues about Kumasi Asante Kotoko. Selection of *Graphic Sports* and *90 minutes* news stories were based on news items containing the portrayal of female athletes.

3.6. Sample Size

The sample size is the number of data sources that are actually selected from the population (Given, 2008). In qualitative studies, researchers must make a sound decision

on the number of data to choose which is known as the sample size (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) citing Schwandt (1997) assert that 'most qualitative studies are guided by purposeful sampling sites or cases are chosen because there may be good reason to believe that 'what goes on there' is critical to understanding some process or concepts, or to testing or explaining some established theory'. Thus, field research is carried out according to criteria of selection that flow logically from the objectives of the project.

Therefore, the use of purposeful sampling enabled me to understand the concepts and also test the theory that I used. Using a sampling method, I selected 83 issues comprising 787 paragraphs from the *Graphic Sports* and 47 issues comprising 501 paragraphs from the *90 Minutes*, and a sample size of 130 issues comprising 1,288 paragraphs was obtained and analysed for the study.

3.7. Data Collection Method

This is the process used to collect information needed to answer the research questions. The main source of data collection used in this research is documents, specifically newspapers were used as an investigative tool to examine news stories published in the newspapers selected for the study. I wrote letters to the editors of the *Graphic Sports* and the *90 Minutes* newspaper to seek their permission to gain access to their libraries. After the request was approved, I went there to obtain hardcopies of the newspapers. I did manual searching to select only the newspapers with stories that portray the female

athletes. Afterwards, I categorised the ideas into themes and proceeded with my coding and analysis.

Materials such as note pads, pens and sheets of paper were used to code and tally themes that were derived from the newspapers.

3.8. Data Collection Instruments

3.8.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis has been defined by Krippendorff (2004) as a research technique that is used for making replicable and valid references from texts to the context of their use. According to Windhauser (1991), content analysis is a systematic process used to compress many words of a text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. Stemler (2001) asserts that content analysis enables researchers to shift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion while Berelson (1971) as cited in Johnson (2009) describes content analysis as a research method which focuses on the real content and features within a media text and he goes on further to say that content analysis actually helps in the determination of the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters or words, within a text and this helps to quantify their presence, in an objective manner.

Wimmer and Dominick (2003) citing Kerlinger (2000) are of the view that content analysis is "a method of analyzing and studying communication in an objective, quantitative and systematic manner for the purposes of measuring variables" (p. 141). Bryman (2001) posits that content analysis is an approach to the analysis of documents and texts (which may be printed or visual) that seeks to quantify content in terms of

predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable content. Content analysis has been employed extensively in analysing printed texts and communication media to be precise.

So in my quest to analyse how newspapers framed the coverage of Ghanaian female athletics, there will be the need to content-analyse selected news articles. To Krippendorf (2004), content analysis is mostly used in media studies to analyse units of news articles such as headlines and paragraphs in the context of framing theory.

This means that for me to examine how frames are used there was the need to content-analyse the selected news articles by focusing on the paragraph as the unit of analysis in order to sort out larger amount of phrases and words into fewer categories to be able to convey meaning.

3.8.2. Frames and Categories

The data obtained for this study were coded into 4 frames and 16 sub-topic categories. All the 18 sub-topic categories have been grouped under the 4 different frames. The following are the frames and their clustered sub-categories:

Characterisation of weakness: e.g. *inability to take pressure, lack of self-confidence, lack of focus, lack of motivation, lack of drive* and *intensity.*

Masculine Apron Strings: e.g. *managers support, coaches' influence, role of husband and dedication to fiancé.*

Linguistic Sexism: e.g. *national women's league, women's league board, and women's hockey tournament.*

Motherhood: e.g. *pregnancy, the role of a mother, reference to athlete's mother.*

3.8.2.1 Operational Definitions for the Frames:

All four frames that emerged from the reading were operationally defined to facilitate the coding process. The definitions are as follows:

Characterisation of Weakness: These involve the use of descriptive words and phrases to suggest mental and emotional weakness in female athletes. The articles use many descriptions and/or quotations that imply a female athlete is not mentally or emotionally prepared or capable of handling the mental/emotional stress involved in athletic competition. These mental/emotional references range from questioning an athlete's motivation and desire to commenting on a female's loss of confidence and/or focus. The themes and expressions that define this frame include inability to take pressure, lack of self-confidence, lack of focus, lack of motivation, lack of drive and intensity.

Masculine Apron Strings: These are news stories on recognising/referencing male figures that are known to the female athletes. The male recognition/reference most often ranges from a boyfriend, husband to coach. Sometimes the writers introduce these men as mere references, while other times they portray them as having a significant influence on the athletic performance of these athletes. Themes and expressions that define this frame include managers' support, coaches' influence, role of husband and dedication to fiancé.

Linguistic Sexism: These are news stories that devalue or ignore women entirely. Linguistic Sexism is a way in which language devalues members of one sex, usually through defining women's "place" in society as a secondary status or by snubbing women entirely. Linguistic sexism associated with sports coverage includes gender

marking, hierarchal naming practices and martial metaphors. Themes and expressions that capture this category include *national women's league, women's league board, women's hockey tournament, and an Olympic female athlete.*

Motherhood: These are news stories about the state of pregnancy of the women/female athletes, their role as parents' etc. themes and expressions that describe this frame include *pregnancy, role of athlete as mother, and reference to athlete mother.*

3.8.3. Interviews

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002) interviews are particularly well suited to "understand the social actor's experience and perspective" (p.173). To them, qualitative interviews are conducted on persons whose experience is central to the research problem in some way, sometimes, on participants who are usually asked to express themselves on an issue or situation, or to explain what they think or what they feel about their social world.

To Boyce and Neale (2006), in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants with the aim of exploring participants' views or perspectives on a particular idea, programme or situation. This definition is not so much different from the earlier definition given by Lindlof and Taylor (2002) as they both focus on eliciting participants' view on a situation. Guion (2006) also see in-depth interview as open-ended, discovery-oriented method that enables the researcher to explore perspectives and points of view of study participants.

The reason for my choice of in-depth interview, with the type of interview being semi-structured as the second data collection is based on the importance of the technique as argued by Lindolf and Taylor (2002), which enables me to elicit participants' views or perspective on a particular idea or situation, who in this research are Ghanaian female athletes. Their views enabled me to analyse the second research question.

3.8.3.1. Setting for the Interview

I began the interview process by first booking appointment with the participants, in order to interview them on their perspectives toward the kind of newspaper frames used on female athletes.

I later on designed a semi-structured interview guide, largely open-ended in nature aimed at confirming and validating information otherwise provided by the participants (see Appendix A).

Interviews were conducted at the respondents' own convenience. Two of the interviews were conducted at the homes of the athletes, the rest of them requested telephone interviews because of their busy schedules. With the participants' knowledge and consent, each interview was audio-taped. Interviews ranged in duration from 15 minutes to 25 minutes, with an average length of 19 minutes.

3.9. Unit of Analysis

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2003), unit of analysis is the smallest element of content analysis and it is the basic unit of the text to be classified during content analysis. Unit of analysis refers to the basic or smallest unit which would be analysed during content analysis. According to Weber (1990), one of the important decisions any

researcher must make is to define the coding unit. According to Tankard (2001), the means of identifying and measuring news frames are: headlines, leads, subheads, photographs, photo captions, source selection, quotes, statistics and charts, concluding statements, quote selection, pull quotes, logos and paragraphs. It therefore means assigning a code to a text of any size, as long as that text represents a single theme or issue of relevance to research questions.

This study used paragraphs as the principal unit of analysis in investigating how newspapers framed the coverage of the female athletes in Ghana.

3.9.1. Data Analysis Process

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) are of the opinion that the first systematic effort at data analysis usually comes with the creation of categories and a coding scheme.

Two graduate students in Basic Education Department from University of Education, Winneba, were trained as independent coders to help me to code articles based on the generated coding scheme. We started the coding process by first designing a coding sheet which provided space for the name of the newspaper, date story was published, paging of the news articles and thematic categories for the coders (see Appendix B). The coding sheet also provided space for the recording of vital information in the news articles that was suitable for direct quotes, the total number of paragraphs in all the news articles that were coded.

Windhauser (1991) proposed that any good researcher who wishes to undertake a study using content analysis has to deal with four methodological issues: selection of units of analysis, developing categories, sampling appropriate content, checking reliability of

coding, while Krippendoff (2004) is of the opinion that categories must be mutually exclusive so that a word, a paragraph or a theme belongs in one and only one category. Also, the categories must be exhaustive so that all units examined fit in an appropriate category.

As a first step in the analysis, we went through the newspapers and identified all the news relating to the portrayal of female athletes in both newspapers. The coding process began by designing coding categories and coding schemes that helped in the content analysis. The columns that were included on the instrument were; name of newspaper, date of publication, issue number, and thematic categories. Relevant themes were categorised according to their likeness for the discussion (see Appendix C). In this regard, the thematic type of qualitative analysis was used for the study. Themes generated were *Emotional Weakness, Male Recognition, Linguistic Sexism, and Motherhood.*

The coding instrument also provided space for recording direct quotes where necessary and the total number of paragraphs in each news story as well as specific themes under which the categories were classified.

The final step of the data collection process was the transcription and coding of the interviews. We transcribed the audio-taped interviews on my personal computer. The transcripts were then stored on the computers' hard drive. Once individual transcripts were completed, hard copies were printed.

In interpreting the data, we identified emergent issues as they were reported by participants, how the issues connected or related to each other, and meanings were drawn

and discussed from these. We also identified and extracted significant statements which I quoted to support my claims in the analysis and discussions of issues.

3.10. Validity and Reliability

Commenting on issues relating to validity and reliability, Creswell (2014) observes that validity in qualitative research does not carry the same connotation it does in quantitative research. He asserts that in qualitative research, "validity is used to determine whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers account" (Creswell, 2014, p.201). For their part, Cohen and Crabtree (2006) remark that validity might be addressed through richness, depth, honesty and scope of data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000) broadly equivalent concepts can be found and applied to qualitative research. These could be: credibility, trustworthiness-internal validity; fittingness-external validity and audibility-reliability. In line with the above suggestions, I gave back copies of typed transcripts of the female athletes to validate whether or not their views were captured as they were expressed. Records on dates for the interviews have been documented for audit and verifications.

This study again provided an account of field experiences through rich and thick description. According to Holloway (1997) "Thick description" is the in-depth interpretation of field experiences; in other words, paying attention to contextual details when observing and interpreting social meanings in qualitative research. I obtained a rich and thick description of the perception of the female athletes towards the framing of female athletes by playing a subordinate role, allowing the participants to do much of the talking on open-ended questions posed to them. It also facilitated the descriptive,

contextual and exploratory nature of the study by providing detailed accounts of the perceptions of the female athletes.

I acknowledged that subjectivity of participants, their opinions, attitudes and perspectives together contribute to a degree of bias. However, Glense (1999) states that subjectivity can be considered an attribute if monitored appropriately. Therefore, as Gronlud (1981) as cited in Cohen, et al (2006) postulates, the issue of validity in this study was seen as a matter of degree rather than an absolute state.

In ensuring the reliability of the instrument, I was in agreement with Silverman (1993) who suggested that it is important for each interviewee to understand the question in the same way. According to him, the reliability of the interview is enhanced by careful piloting of interview schedules, and the use of closed questions alongside open-ended questions. In this case, a semi-structured interview guide guided the interviews among all six (6) female athletes. Questions were made simple and self-explanatory, without any ambiguities, which aided equal understanding by interviewees.

Creswell (1998) suggests prolonged engagement and observation of the research phenomenon, triangulation, peer review and debriefing, negative case analysis, clarification of research bias, member checking, rich-thick description as well as external audits as methods of checking validity in a qualitative research but he agrees, that in qualitative research, at least two of these verification procedures must be used.

This research made use of prolonged engagement and observation of the research phenomenon by making sure that the time period for the research is relatively long enough so as to make sure that the phenomenon to be studied would have enough time to

occur (Wimmer & Dominick, 2002). This informed the choice of the time frame of January 2012 to December 2015 for the study. Multiple theoretical methods as proposed by Cohen et al (2006) is when multiple methods are used to enhance deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study and that is why I used both the framing and feminist theories in order to analyse and understand all the data collected.

Also, king, Morris and Fitz-Cubbob (1987) as cited in Cohen et al (2006) suggest that consistency in the use of instruments to catch accurate, representative, relevant and comprehensive data aids in the attainment of reliability in qualitative research. I employed the same instruments: document analysis and interviews, for data gathering in the research.

3.11. Summary

This chapter presented the methodology employed to assess newspaper framing of female athletes. The approach to the study was qualitative and the data was obtained through semi-structured respondent interviews and content analysis. The *Graphic Sports* and *90 Minutes* were two selected newspapers for the study owing to their credibility and wide circulation. The unit of analysis was paragraphs on female athletes and these were collected from the period spanning from January 2012 to December 2015. An effort was also made to ensure that the data obtained for the study was valid and the processes were reliable.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, discussion and analysis of data collected, using content analysis from news stories from the *Graphic Sports* and *90 Minutes*. The discussion is also based on in-depth interviews conducted with female athletes in Ghana to find out the perceptions of the female athletes who find themselves in what is considered a male dominated field. For the purpose of ensuring participants' anonymity I used pseudonyms for all the participants (female athletes). Below are the research questions that guided the data collection:

1. What are the frames used by newspapers to portray female athletes in Ghana?
2. What are the perceptions of female athletes in Ghana towards newspaper frames?

4.1. RQ1: What are the frames used by newspapers to portray female athletes in Ghana?

This research question seeks to identify the frames used to portray female athletes in Ghana from January 2012 to December 2015. The content analysis of *Graphic Sports* and *90 Minutes* sports newspapers disclose some important information pertaining to the themes and patterns found within the two newspapers. I discovered four emergent themes: *characterisation of weakness*, *masculine apron strings*, *linguistic sexism*, and *motherhood*. The findings, as derived from the themes under which the newspaper stories were coded are presented in the table below:

Table 3: *Frequency distribution of newspaper frames on female athletes by the two newspapers from January 2012-December 2015.*

Frames	*Graphic Sports*	*90 Minutes*	Overall Total
Characterisation of Weakness	33 (41.25%)	19 (42.2%)	52 (83.5%)
Masculine Apron Strings	27 (33.75%)	13 (28.8%)	40 (62.5%)
Linguistic Sexism	13 (16.25%)	9 (20%)	22 (36.3%)
Motherhood	7 (8.75%)	4 (8.8%)	11(17.5%)
Total	**80 (100)**	**45 (100)**	**125 (100)**

4.1.1. Characterisation of Weakness

Characterisation of weakness emerged the highest of the four frames used by newspapers to cover female athletes from January 2012 to December 2015. Characterisation of weakness involves the use of descriptive words and phrases to suggest mental and emotional weakness in female athletes. The articles used many descriptions and/or quotations that imply a female athlete is not mentally or emotionally prepared or capable of handling the mental/emotional stress involved in athletic competition. These mental/emotional references range from questioning an athlete's motivation and desire to commenting on a female's loss of confidence and/or focus. These are all implications that a female athlete cannot handle the mental/emotional pressure or is not in the right mental state of mind to successfully compete in athletics.

Characterisation of weakness secured 52 thematic codes with overall percentage of 83.5% as illustrated in Table 3. The *Graphic Sports* recorded the highest thematic code in terms of number of frames with 33 out of 52 representing 41.25%, while the 90 *Minutes* had 19 out of 52 representing 42.2%.

This comes with some indicators making reference to the frame of characterisation of weakness such as: *inability to take pressure, lack of self-confidence, lack of focus, lack of motivation, lack of drive* and *intensity.* Below are excerpts from the two newspapers that illustrate how characterisation of weakness is used to portray female athletes:

> Table Tennis player Cynthia Kwabie is climbing up the ranks of the Ghana Table Tennis Association (GTTA) rankings; this may be because the rest of the tennis players are 'choking'. (Kofidze (2014, February, 3) *Graphic Sports*, p. 11)

In the excerpt above, Table Tennis player Cynthia Kwabie is noted for her rising success in the GTTA rankings and selection into the national team, the Black loopers. But the writer suggests that her success could be because the rest of the female tennis players are 'choking'. This implies that Cynthia is not having strong competition from her opponents, hence her success. Instead of simply applauding her athletic success, the writer credited her success with the inability of her opponents to handle the pressure.

When women athletes fail, sports writers fall on stereotyped attributions; female athletes are nervous, not being aggressive enough, being too emotional or uncomfortable. Women's failure is thus almost attributed to the women's incompetence, rather than to their opponents' skill. In contrast when men fail, sports writers tend not to mention the

losing team's shortcomings, but instead focus on the great strength, power, or talent of the winners.

On the other hand, when women succeed, sports writers often tend to attribute their success to luck, and incompetence on the part of their opponents, while, sports writers attribute men's success to their raw talent, power, intelligence, quickness, discipline and risk-taking.

Articles like these imply women do not have ability to take control and work under pressure to become successful in sports.

The *90 Minutes* newspaper article that about discuss thrower Beatrice Arhin also provides many references to characterisation of weakness:

> Now that her father is gone, it will be difficult for Beatrice to rediscover her form because
>
> she doesn't seem to dream that big, and she is too reserved, too laid back and too shy. (Ampong (2015, June, 1) *90 Minutes*, p. 9.)

Some of the reasons the writer listed in the above article related to the athlete's state of mind; for instance, the author suggests Beatrice may be too reserved, too laid back, and too shy. The implications one may reach from these descriptions suggest that Beatrice does not have the mental strength required of a successful athlete. The writer also states that the public is anxious to see Beatrice in that year (2015) All African Games tournament and possibly win medal for the nation. However, with her father gone, that may not happen because Beatrice doesn't seem to dream that big as a woman.

This conclusion implies that without her father, Beatrice lacks the mental capacity to strive for a goal as big as the All African Games tournament. The perception is that she lacks the motivation and mental strength to achieve athletic success by herself. This article illustrates the concept of mental weakness that is often associated with female athletes. When the sports media highlights weaknesses in female athletes they are implying that women do not have what it takes to be well-rounded athletes.

Words and phrases associated with characterisation of weakness are also used to describe sprinter Martha Bissah. One of the first statements concerning Bissah states that:

> Martha is yet to overcome the impasse between her and the Ghana Olympic Committee. She is still preoccupied with the GHC 10,000 and the scholarship saga, the situation is having   adverse effect on her performance. (Zurek (2015, August, 24) *Graphic Sports,* p. 10.)

 In the above extract, the writer mentioned the failings or drop in performance of the world 800m Olympic Youth champion Martha Bissah when the athlete failed to qualify for the 2015 All African Games Championship in Brazzaville, Congo.

The writer indicates Martha has dropped form, and the impasse between her and the Ghana Olympic Committee is due to her inability to take the pressure of being successful in sport. This is an implication that a female athlete cannot handle the mental pressure or is not in the right mental state of mind to successfully compete in athletics.

In taking a retrospective view of Team Ghana performance at the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London, the *90 Minutes* newspaper wrote an article about the performance of all the nine competitors at the Games. The writer questions the mental strength of all the

three female athletes in the team. However, that was not the same case for the male athletes in the team. A classical example was that of sprinter Vida Anim where he states that:

> It is so pathetic that Vida Anim has failed again to progres to the semifinal of the 200 metres sprint event, lack of focus and confidence is her 'Achilles heels'. (Agyei (2012, August, 3) *90 Minutes*, p. 5.)

In the above extract, the writer blamed sprinter Vida Anim's failure to qualify for the 200 metres semifinal of the 2012 London Olympic Games on lack of self-confidence and motivation after her time of 23.71 was only the eighth and last time of her heat, causing elimination. The writer indicates that her lack of success in the competition was due to lack of self-confidence and motivation. Absence of self- confidence and motivation are both expressions that are associated with emotional weakness or a weaker mind set. By highlighting these two mental weaknesses, the writer is insinuating that Anim was not mentally prepared to compete at the games.

The statements of intent in the extracts above on characterisation of weakness are congruent with Dutot (2000) assertion that sports journalists often associate female athletes' weakness with a mental or emotional issue, such as lack of self-confidence and focus.

Emphasising mental/emotional weaknesses in female athletes is incredibly belittling because it suggests they do not have the mental toughness required to be successful athletes. In the sports articles, women's dedication and intensity are often questioned, which may lead readers to believe that females are not mentally prepared or capable of

reaching the full potential of successful athletes. These references may also influence individuals to believe that females do not have as much desire to play sports as male athletes. The newspapers examined during the content analysis were not shy about questioning the mental/emotional toughness of the female athletes featured in the articles. If these opinions are presented regularly, they may have a strong influence on how readers view female athletes as a whole. This theme calls into question the desire, motivation, confidence, and mental toughness of female athletes as it pertains to sports.

Demotivation, lack of self-confidence, intensity and focus are all emotional aspects that affect a female athlete's ability to successfully compete in sports. When the sports media highlights mental/emotional weakness in female athletes, they are implying that women do not have what it takes to be well-rounded athletes.

These emotional references range from questioning an athlete's motivation and desire to commenting on a female's loss of confidence and/or focus. These are all implications that a female athlete cannot handle the emotional pressure or is not in the right emotional state to successfully compete in athletics.

4.1.2 Masculine Apron Strings

In the newspapers, it is not uncommon for an article that features a female athlete to make a reference to a close male figure in her life. The male reference most often ranges from a boyfriend, husband to a coach. Sometimes the writers introduce these men as references, while other times they portray them as having a significant influence on the athletic performances of the female athletes.

The male reference (masculine apron strings) frame appeared as the second highest frames among the four frames employed by newspapers to represent the Ghanaian female athletes from January 2012 to December 2015. Out of 40 thematic codes with overall percentage of 62.5% as shown in Table 3, the *Graphic Sports* produced 27 thematic codes amounting to 33.75% while the *90 Minutes* also recorded 13 thematic codes representing 28.8%.

Among the thematic codes in the two newspapers- the *Graphic Sports* and *90 Minutes*, which make up the masculine apron strings (male reference) frame include: references to male managers, boyfriends, husbands, coaches etc. Below is an excerpt that illustrates the frame of male reference:

> She [Nadia Eke] raises her left hand to display the word LOVE, which she has written on her palm as a message to her boyfriend (Shola (2016, June, 20) *90 Minutes*, p. 8.)

In the above extract, the writer chooses to include a few statements pertaining to the personal life of Nadia Eke. He mentions that after she broke the Ghanaian record in female triple jump competition on June 19, 2016 at Chula Vista, USA, she raised her left hand to display the word LOVE, which she had written on her palm as a message to her boyfriend. The writer also discusses the boyfriend she had during the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow when she wore a t-shirt displaying his name. The writer references Eke's ex-and current boyfriends in conjunction with acknowledgements concerning her talent as a competitive triple jumper. The emphasis placed on her dedication to her boyfriend overshadowed her achievement of breaking a national record

and makes her seem juvenile and childish. After reading about these references to her personal life, it will be hard for readers to appreciate her success as a Ghanaian triple jump record holder without relating it to her relationship with her boyfriend 's' than her support.

Another article in the same newspaper with regard to male reference was a story about a judoka Szandra Szogedi which states that:

> Her [Szandra Szogedi]   husband, also a judoka Alex Amoako must be   proud of her, for securing qualification slot to represent the nation at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. The training he has given to his wife over the years has brought dividends to the nation. (Tetteh (2015, December, 18) *90 Minutes*, p. 5.)

 The male reference in this instance comes at the beginning of the segment. This was after Szandra Szogedi, a judoka, had secured a qualification slot to represent Ghana in 50kg judo competition at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. The article does not mention only her relationship with Amoako, but it also notes the role of the husband as a judoka athlete. Among other things, the writer claims Szogedi has a lot of the same mental qualities found in Amoako and the way he plays the game.

 The first sentence in the segment is a reference to her husband, as opposed to reference to her success as a judoka. The sentence not only mentions that he is her husband, but also states that he is a professional judoka, which to an extent places his athletic achievements before Szogedi's. As short as the segment already is, it would have been more complimentary if the sentences had focused on Szogedi and her achievements.

An article about 800m Olympic Youth Champion, Martha Bissah in the *Graphic Sports* newspaper makes reference to her manager in a similar manner:

> Martha would have quit athletics without his [Mikki Osei Berko] Support after she was "abandoned" after winning gold at the World Youth Olympics. (Zurek (2015, August, 24) *Graphic Sports*, p. 12.)

 In the above extract, the writer emphasises the role the manager [Mikki Osei] had on the athlete [Martha Bissah]. The writer states that the athlete was neglected by the Ghana Olympic Committee (GOC) and the Ghana Athletics Association (GAA) following the fallout between the athlete and the GOC. However, her manager was able to give all the necessary support needed to push her up. This clearly indicates that without the support of the male manager the athlete's dream of continuing her profession as an athlete would have been in tatters.

The excerpts above are compatible with Dutot (2000) and Nicely (2007) view that sports journalists tend to relate male subjects to female athletes as a relationship that is grounded on dependency.

The inclusion of male references in articles about female athletes make it appear that women cannot be successful without a male support system and that they depend on that support to achieve success in their sports. The references do not allow these women to stand alone as legitimate athletes because they are rarely mentioned as stand-alone successful athletes. Eliminating the male reference in sports articles would also eliminate the suggestion that female athletes need male influences in their lives to achieve athletic success.

4.1.3 Linguistic Sexism Frame

The theme of Linguistic Sexism placed third out of the four frames used to cover female athletes from January 2012 to December 2015. Linguistic Sexism is a way in which language devalues members of one sex, usually through defining women's "place" in society as a secondary status or by ignoring women entirely (Renzetti & Curran, 1995). Linguistic sexism associated with sports coverage includes gender marking, hierarchal naming practices and martial metaphors.

Out of the overall total of 22 thematic codes under Linguistic Sexism frame, the *Graphic Sports* recorded 13 thematic codes representing 16.25%, while the *90 Minutes* scored 9 thematic codes translating into 20%. Key indicators that allude to the frame of Linguistic Sexism include: National Women's League, The Women's League Board, and the Women's Hockey Tournament etc. Below are excerpts that illustrate the frame of linguistic sexism:

> Most of the National Women League clubs use the same venues as the National Premier League and Division One clubs and since the issue of women playing curtain-raiser has still not been resolved the Women League Board had no option than to push the date forward. (Amoh, (2015, June, 15) *Graphic Sports,* p. 11.)

In the article above, the writer labeled the 2015 Women's Football League as the National Women League while the equivalent men's league was simply called the National Premier League. Again, the board responsible for organising the men's league is called the "The Premier League Board," while the equivalent women's match-up was

gender-marked as the "The Women's League Board" By making the men's event "the norm," women's events, by implication, are framed as the other.

Another article concerning the frame of linguistic sexism is a story about Ghana's male and female hockey teams and below is an excerpt from the article:

> Defending champions South Africa's technique and Ghana's passion will be on test in tomorrow's final of the 10th Hockey Africa Cup of Nations as the Black Sticks Ladies seek to produce the tournament biggest upset by dethroning South Africa. Meanwhile, the senior hockey team the Black Sticks will battle it out for a third place glory against their Egyptian' counterparts this afternoon. (Asare (2013, July, 26) *Graphic Sports*, p. 12.)

The above article has elements of asymmetrical gender marking. The female hockey team and the male hockey team both participated in the 2013 African Hockey Championship tournament in Nairobi, Kenya. However, the female hockey team was gender marked and they were called the Black Sticks Ladies while the male counterparts were referred to as the senior hockey team. This means that the men's and women's team are differentiated through gender marking.

The final article cited under the frame of linguistic sexism is a feature story of the 2013 National Unity Games. The first paragraph states:

> The final four of this year's National Unity Games Volleyball Championship is made up of Court Winners, Army team, Police team and Immigration team while the women's final four is made

up of Prisons team, Immigration team, Police team and Hydro

Spikiers. (Obuor, 2013, August, 23) *90 Minutes*, p. 4.)

In the article above, the final four of the women's volleyball competition was gender marked while the men's version was unmarked. Gender marking women events or games imply that sports media cast female athletes in a derivative, secondary role.

The asymmetrical gender marking of sports emphsises sport as the natural domain of the male rather than the female athlete. When women are mentioned, they are always referred to as 'the women' players, 'the female' coaches etc. So the participation of women in sports is "socially constructed as alternative to their male counterparts, who play the version of the sport that the media see to really count" (Kinnick, 1998). This means sports writers have a habit to discriminate against women sporting events, making women sports events appear inferior.

4.2.4 Frame of Motherhood

The frame of motherhood was the least of the four frames used by the newspapers with a total of 11 thematic codes representing 17.5%. The *Graphic Sports* recorded the highest number of thematic codes of 7 accounting for 8.75%, while the *90 Minutes* had 4 thematic codes translating into 8.8%.

The representation of motherhood is one of the themes that emerged during the content analysis. Many articles relating to female athletes and women's sports either highlight the women's personal role as a mother or mention the athletes' mothers. The concept of motherhood is a common theme in most articles concerning female athletes.

An article on a page dedicated to the Ghana's youth athletics team performance at the 2014 World Youth Olympic Games in China had a paragraph that discusses Martha Bissah and her mother it states that:

> Martha's mother, who was an athlete and a footballer in her school days a teenager, was in a dilemma to either abort a one month old pregnancy for greener pastures abroad, or to keep the baby and choose to endure the hustles of life in her third world country, Ghana. (Amoako (2014, August, 15) *Graphic Sports,* p. 11.)

In the above article, the writer somehow diverts the focus of the remarkable achievement attained by youngster Martha Bissah after she became the first Ghanaian to win a gold medal at any Olympic Games to the pregnancy of her mother during her secondary school days. By this the writer limits the amount of praise and respect she gets for her athletic talent. Eliminating references to non-relevant feminine aspects of a female athlete's life and re-focusing media coverage to only include sports related information may help characterise female athletes as genuine competitors worth as much respect as male athletes. Howeveer, this was not the case in the excerpt above.

Another article about the frame of motherhood discusses a national volleyball player and the state of her pregnancy:

> National volleyball star, Janet Amoah, is approximately five month pregnant but she will still continue to attend practices until her doctor tells her otherwise. (Boateng, (2012, December, 21) *90 Minutes,* p. 4.)

The reference to motherhood in these newspapers is not limited to pregnancy and giving birth. A segment concerning the 2013 annual golf awards states that:

Victoria Mensah is the first mother to win the 2013 most promising golfer award.

(Appiah, (2013, May, 27) *90 Minutes,* p. 4.)

In the above two articles, the references were made to female athletes state of pregnancy and their roles as mothers. This allowed the women to be portrayed as more feminine because they were being described in their maternal roles. Both Janet Amoah and Victoria Mensah were mentioned in their roles as both a mother to be and a mother. Highlighting the role of motherhood in sports newspapers is a way for sports writers to include a feminine spin on the female athletes described in their newspapers. It is uncomfortable for the public to view males and females outside of their gender roles, so these newspapers describe female athletes in their maternal and familial roles in order to balance the masculine nature of athletics.

International success of women's sport is generally not considered newsworthy by the media. A "milestone" for a female athlete (marriage, pregnancy or the birth of a child) or a scandal in women's sport is more likely to generate media interest. The emphasis on motherhood as opposed to athleticism, gives these athletes a sense of femininity that is more conducive and familiar to cultural perceptions of gender roles. Such emphasis on motherhood enables the sports media to portray a feminine side of female athletes that is not always present in athletic competitions.

4.2. RQ (2): What are the perceptions of female athletes in Ghana towards the newspaper frame?

This part of analysis focuses on the interviews conducted with selected female athletes in Ghana. The purpose of the interview was to find answers to the second research question

that seeks to investigate the perspectives of the female athletes towards the newspaper frames. The perceptions of the participants are categorised into the following themes: *stereotype*, *underrepresentation*, *credibility*, and *social acceptance.*

4.2.1 Stereotypes

There is a general perception that the idea of sports being a male profession is ingrained in general culture which is mostly a patriarchal one (Kian, 2007). Women are therefore not seen as capable of surviving in the world of sports and are treated differently. Following from Casey (2008) and Kanahara (2006), stereotypes which come in many forms are often used to oppress and discriminate against people who are marginilised in any given situation, society or a profession which in this case are women in sports. Stereotypes could also be a negative idea or image thought to be true of every member of a specific group. In this study, the most common stereotype identified and shared by all the respondents were "weaker traits" and "sexualisation/objectification". Agnes had this to say:

> Emphasizing mental weaknesses such as lack of focus, motivation and
>
> confidence in us [female athlete], when we failed is incredibly belittling
>
> because it suggests that we do not have the mental toughness required to
>
> be successful athletes.

 In sports articles, writers often blame female athletes failings on mental/emotional issues, therefore their dedication and intensity are often questioned, which may lead readers to believe that female athletes are not mentally prepared or capable of reaching the full potential of being successful athletes. These references may also influence individuals to believe females do not have as much desire to play sports as male athletes.

Felicia added:

> I become disturbed when the newspapers portray us as weak especially
>
> when they described us as emotionally weak when we failed to succeed.
>
> Sometimes they even published stories with accompanying pictures/
>
> images showing us crying, presenting to the world that we not strong
>
> enough to take defeat.

In sports articles, female athletes are often shown in tears or being consoled by others after defeat than male athletes. Even camera angles function to suggest strength and weakness; more women are photographed in below-eye-level angles (connoting vulnerability in relation to the viewer); more men are photographed in above-eye-level angles (connoting strength in relation to the viewer). Consistent with this emphasis on female athletes is the symbolic suppression of strength; attribution that might call the power or control of female athletes into question.

Female athletes given media coverage are stereotyped by being sexualised and objectified. Sports journalists do not focus solely on their skills or athletic ability but their appearance and attractiveness to the male viewer (Tanner, 2011).

Nancy added:

> The coverage and promotion of women's sport are often highly sexualised.
>
> The value of the female athlete is often determined in terms of our body
>
> type, attractiveness and sex appeal, rather than in terms of qualities that

define us as athletes. The newspaper culture is deciding what sells, and

they are not willing to sell legitimate female athletic achievement. This

puts us in a very bad situation.

The enhanced sexualisation of female athletes in newspapers diminishes or reduces women accomplishments and reinforces the image of women as sex objects. If this occurs on regular basis in sports newspapers the focus will soon be taken off female's athletic talent and solely on their looks and sexuality, which detracts from their genuine athletic talent which is harmful to all women.

The response above affirms the radical feminism response theory which states that women's objectification in sport is evidenced in the media portrayal of sportswomen through an emphasis on their appearance, sexuality and their domestic role in the family (Wright & Clarke, 1999).
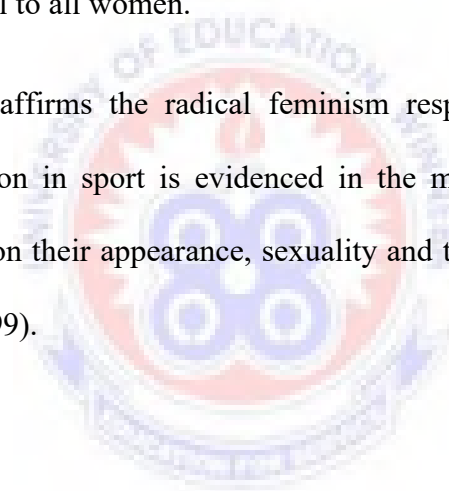
4.2.2 Underrepresentation

Sports media producers often frame sports coverage based on gender. From high school athletics to the Olympics, there is favouritism shown to male athletes through the significant amount of media recognition and coverage male sports receive when compared to their female counterparts who are often underrepresented in sports media (Eastman & Billings, 2001; Knight & Giuliano, 2001; Fink, 2002). The audience may see this underrepresentation of female athletes as a sign that women's sports are not as significant or exciting as men's sports (Knight & Giuliano, 2001). This imbalance

portrays the idea that female athletes and women's sports are inferior when compared to men's sports and male athletes (Knight & Giuliano, 2001). Past research has found consistent inadequacies in the media coverage of female athletes in various mediums, such as television, newspaper, and magazines (Billings & Angelini, 2007; Fink & Kensicki, 2002).

Mary had this to say:

Our achievements in sport are considered less newsworthy by the press.

The press gives the readers an impression that our sport is less competitive

and unimportant, resulting in disproportionately less coverage than male

athletes. This is a worrying situation looking at what we have achieved

for this country.

Another respondent, Anita shared a similar view:

The scant coverage given to us affects us because it makes us feel less

important if we compared ourselves to the kind of coverage given to the

men's league. Because of the scant coverage, and low publicity some

people do not even know we play women's league in this country and

this affects our chances of getting call up into the national teams.

The media do not simply report news; they actively construct it by framing it, that is, by offering context for viewing or understanding an event. In sports newspapers, framing

may start weeks before the competition begins in the form of hyping the event. In the coverage of men's league in Ghana, the sports newspapers drum up interest in upcoming league fixtures with numerous print ads as the games approach, how exciting it would be, who the important players are, transforming particular athletes into stars, who become media "personalities," and draw the attention of fans. While the newspapers systematically create an audience for the men's league games by employing all the strategies listed, they fail to use any of them to build audience for the women's league games. This failure, coupled with scant coverage of women league games, virtually guarantee less audience interest in the women competition. These types of media "neglect" are used by sports writers to discriminate against women. The absence of women from sports media is not inconsequential. The implicit message, when women are absent or underrepresented, is that female athletes either do not exist, or have no achievements that are newsworthy.

Another respondent, Felicia had a different view on this:

> I think the cause of our low publicity can at least be partially attributed to the
>
> fact that the sports audience is predominately male. Therefore, it is important
>
> for the newspapers publishers to please their target audience and write about
>
> topics that will appeal to male subscribers. Culturally, men's sports and male
>
> athletes are more popular among the general public, so in order to make sales
>
> the publishers have to print what their readers demand.

One typical justification for showing less coverage of women's sports relates to "demand and supply." The sports audience is composed mostly of men who are not interested in women's sports, therefore, sports writers are simply giving viewers what they want by devoting more resources to the men's games. However, I also think that women's sports are less interesting because of the inferior production qualities and lackadaisical framing of women sports. At present the media appear to be giving audiences the impression that women's sport is less competitive, exciting and interesting than men's sport. The media seem to be either unaware or not prepared to acknowledge the role it plays in constructing and maintaining the overall sports gender order.

4.2.3 Credibility

Research suggests that there is a gender bias towards female/women athletes, with female athletes being seen as less credible than male athletes. Women have fought for acceptance in what is considered as an "all-boys club" and have persevered until sports media give at least some benefit of doubt that they do belong in a man's world (Clifton, 2012). However, regardless of achievements made by these women as athletes, even the most talented and accomplished ones continue to be challenged because of the gender (Gunther, 2011). A study done by Hardin and Shain (2005) determined that 85% of females feel as though they are not seen as equals because of their gender. Most women interviewed in Hardin and Shain's (2005) work indicated that they felt constant pressure to "prove themselves" to the general public and the media. Barikisu a participant said:

> The press do not warm up to and do not believe in you and in your capabilities
>
> because you are a woman and so it is challenging. You are pushed because

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some of the sports writers think that you are just there to add to the numbers

so invariably you are always pushed to prove to them that you have what it

takes to accomplish laurels.

Hannah added:

Yes, I feel I have to put in extra effort than some of the male athletes. I

constantly prove myself to the sports journalists that I am in the profession

because of my capabilities and understanding of the profession and not

because of any other reason as some people usually think. No matter what

you do in this profession, your credibility is always going to be questioned

so far as you are a woman. I do not know any female athlete who feels

otherwise.

The participants indicated that the credibility of female sports athletes are always going to be an issue simply because they work in a profession dominated by men who think they should not be there in the first place. The issue of female sports athletes' credibility being questioned goes beyond this. One respondent shared her experience where she encountered a top male journalist who refused to grant her interview because he had the perception that the interview was not going to get public attention. For this reason, female sports athletes constantly have to work extra hard to prove themselves credible not only to the media but also to the public as their credibility is constantly scrutinised.

This goes on to confirm Hardin and Shain's (2005) work which purports that female/women athletes feel they have to prove themselves as competent more than the male athletes. Most repondents in Hardin and Shain (2005) findings believe that opportunities for women are better than ever but female sports athletes have a tougher task than men and that women in sports are not taken seriously by sports writers and the fans compared to their male counterparts.

4.2.4 Social Acceptance

The socialisation process of attitudinal formation towards sports is similar for all women. This is because society is structured so that males are steered into sports while females are not (Kian, 2007). This has created the general perception among sports journalists that the sports profession is a male bastion. For women in sports which is typically dominated by men, the acquirement of social acceptance is generally precarious due to the discrepancy between the specific demands of these sports and the socially embedded norms of femininity (Heckemeyer, 2011). Because of the physical changes brought about by intense involvement in a sport and the changing body image connected with it, female athletes violate existing social norms and come into conflict with the socially dominant image of a woman (Kunzendorf, 2003). This becomes particularly apparent in the negative judgment the athletes receive from the public and the press. Mary said:

The public image of female athletes is defined to a large degree by the media

We are sometimes labeled by the press and the general public as a "mannish",

"lesbian", or "exotic" or constantly being mistaken for male, makes us feel

severely insecure. The men see our body especially those of us who are

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weightlifters as unappealing and unattractive.

Barikisu stated:

> Most women do not go into sports right from onset because of the masculine nature of the profession and we grow up thinking that   sports is a place   for men and the woman's place should be the kitchen, and be a good wife to the husband, so the society finds it forbidding to accept us in the field of sports, and I am sure the press   reinforces this and portray us as such, but   I think it is time such notion must change, because it puts us at a disadvantage position.

Female athletes tend to be described in the media according to their physical appearance and perceived desirability to men and the society at large, rather than their athletic ability. This goes on to confirm Kinnick (1998) assertion that the socialisation of women into selective roles legitimates the ideology of patriarchy and reinforces the power to control what is considered 'appropriate' for female by males. The mass media play a vital role in reproducing dominant interpretations of femininity. In contrast with male athletes, profile of female athletes often includes stories of husbands and children in order to project a heterosexual image and show their athletic role is secondary.

It appears that in order to gain coverage women must fit the accepted female persona; they must emphasise their femininity. Women who do not conform to these unwritten rules are often ridiculed and both their gender and their sexual orientation may be questioned.

4.2.5. Summary

This chapter focused on the findings of this study by discussing the research questions that sought to investigate the frames used by newspapers on female athletes in Ghana from January 2012 to December 2015. The content analysis of the news stories discovered four frames used by journalists and these are: *Characterisation of Weakness, Male reference (masculine apron strings) Linguistic Sexism,* and *motherhood.* Six female athletes were interviewed to find out their perception towards these frames and four emergent themes came up- *Stereotype, underrepresentation, credibility and social acceptance.*

Areas where gender bias against women was evident related to the more frequent mentions of female athletes' marital status, dependency on others and emotionality. These areas of reporting practices suggest that women, even when they are the greatest athletes in the world, cannot escape gender stereotyping; and journalists, even those at the nation's most prominent newspapers, still see marriage, appearance and emotions as relevant descriptors of female athletes, more so than of males.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter includes the summary and conclusions drawn from the study that aims at examining newspapers' framing of female athletes in Ghana from January 2012 to December 2015. It also provides a discussion of the limitations of the research study and offers recommendations for future studies in this area.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The study examines how newspapers framed Ghanaian female athletes from January 2012 to December 2015. The findings of the study are grounded on data collected through content analysis of two sports newspapers- the *Graphic Sports* and the *90 Minutes*. Data was also collected through in-depth interviews with six female athletes.

The study identified four frames used by newspapers to portray the female athletes in Ghana. The frames identified in the content analysis of the two newspapers are based on cumulative thematic codes, with overall total percentage and rankings as follows: Characterisation of weakness 52(83.5%), male recognition/reference 40(62.5%), linguistic sexism 22(36.3%), and motherhood 11(17.5%).

A set of in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted on the female athletes on their perspectives towards the frames used by newspapers on them revealed the following findings: In the first place, the study revealed that most of the participants expressed concerns about the negative stereotypic images used by the newspapers to portray them. They believe that this belittles their achievements and reinforces the image of women as

sex objects which is harmful to all women. Another concern raised by the athletes is the paucity coverage given to them by the media, they are of the conviction that the low publicity of the women competitions/tournaments affect their chances of getting sponsorships/support from co-operate bodies or other organisations. This means the women's achievements in sport are considered less newsworthy by the press. This informs the general public that their competitions are not important.

Another finding revealed by the research was the question of women's credibility in the profession. Female athletes are seen as less credible than their male counterparts because of gender bias towards female sports athletes. The research revealed that female sports athletes have to work hard and constantly prove their worth before they can be respected in the profession. Participants revealed that their credibility is always questioned. The press only praises them when they put on an exceptional performance such as breaking a national record or setting/equaling international record.

The issue of social acceptance was also discovered during the findings. Society sees the field of sports as male bastion and the woman's place should be the kitchen and be a good wife to the husband. As such society finds it disinclined to accept the female athletes in the field of sports. Female athletes who violate the existing social norms come into conflict with the socially dominant image of a woman.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine newspapers' framing of female athletes in Ghana from January 2012 to December 2015. This was done by content-analysing of

news stories to find out the frames used on the female athletes, and their perceptions towards the frames used by the newspapers.

One clear limitation of this study is that I chose to examine only two newspapers-the *Graphic Sports*, and the *90 Minutes newspapers*. Notwithstanding the fact that these two media are regarded as the leading sports newspapers in Ghana, and believed to be credible sources of sports news by the larger cross-section of the Ghanaian public, their contents, nonetheless, may not be enough to represent the total view of all newspapers in the country.

It is also modest to admit that though the result of this study is credible and valid in giving the public an idea of how newspapers framed female athletes in Ghana from January 2012 to December 2015 through the contents of the two newspapers sampled, this result would still not be enough to represent the totality of the views of the general print media in Ghana. In order to achieve a more holistic result, future studies can be done on this topic, using more than just the *Graphic Sports*, and the *90 Minutes* as used in this study, to have a more inclusive media such as other sports newspapers and magazines in the case of the print media, or electronic media such as television, radio and the internet.

Apart from the above mentioned limitations, I also had difficulty in getting the women for the interview because of their busy schedule of travelling for tournaments/competitions, attending residential/non-residential trainings. Therefore, instead of ten interviews I had planned conducting, I was able to conduct only six.

However, the six interviews adequately represented the female athletes in Ghana. In spite of the above limitations, the study has critical implications for further studies.

5.3. Conclusion

The findings of this research revealed many characteristics about the way female athletes in Ghana are framed in the Sports newspapers. The study found four themes; characterisation of weakness, masculine apron strings, linguistic sexism and motherhood. Collectively, these are the four frames that emerged in terms of how newspapers portray females in Ghana. Unfortunately, these frames do not highlight the talent and athleticism of female athletes, and this omission can have a negative impact on how the general public views women and their sports.

 Not only are female athletes negatively framed as regards to their roles as athletes, but in some publications, especially in the *90 minutes* newspaper, they are barely mentioned. This prevents readers from learning about female athletes, and this negligence makes them less likely to view these women as legitimate athletes because they are not exposed to articles about their athletic accomplishments. It is disappointing that readers of *90 minutes* newspaper do not have enough opportunity to familiarize themselves with the athletic talents and accomplishments of so many female athletes. Therefore, it is hard to encourage the support and recognition of female athletes if some sports newspapers hardly acknowledge their existence.

The cause for both the gender gap in coverage and the thematic framing differences among female and male athletes can at least be partially attributed to the fact that the

sports audience is predominately male (Kinnick, 1998). Therefore, it is important for the newspaper publishers to please their target audience and write about topics that will appeal to male subscribers. Culturally, men's sports and male athletes are more popular among the general public, so in order to make money and sell sports newspapers, the publishers have to print what their readers demand.

Again, the research revealed that women's career as sports athletes are profoundly affected by their social location where they are seen as "outsiders" by virtue of their gender and "insiders" by virtue of their adherence athletic norms and values as well as their marital status. The study revealed that the profession becomes extremely difficult for women because the society finds it forbidding to accept female athletes in the field of sports.

The research revealed that it is easier to stereotype less powerful groups in the society than it is to stereotype those with greater power. There is therefore no doubt that women in sports are categorised as members in the minority group hence the prejudicial treatment meted out to them. In sports women are pushed to change or negotiate their identities by either being very assertive or acting as one of the guys in order to survive in the field. This has led to female athletes being called out of their names and stereotyped as being too "masculine" or exhibiting "manly traits".

The priority given to traditional female roles and the expectation that female athletes display a sexually appealing appearance reinforces the secondary status accorded female athletes and their accomplishments. The emphasis placed on their roles outside of sport sends a message to young athletes that participation in sport is acceptable as a pastime,

but should not be taken seriously. This perception has managed to control women's participation and limit their opportunities in sport.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

As a spin-off of this project it would be interesting to have a similar analysis of photographic elements found in newspapers. There are many photographs in the newspapers that could have been analysed in this research work. An analysis of photographs would provide a separate understanding of what themes and patterns emerge from the photographic elements used to accompany the texts and provide a comparison to what themes emerged in the written portions of the newspapers.

Another research suggestion is to focus on different segments of the media industry (i.e., internet, radio, T.V) to see if the same frames used in the published newspapers are also utilised in these media.

5.5 Recommendations

Despite the general male dominance in sports coverage, I present some suggestions to help alleviate some of the negative frames used to portray female athletes and women's sports. It is important for sports journalism students to understand how women are framed in sports and to educate themselves on ways to avoid utilising these same frames and patterns in their own reporting. The general public should also be aware of the way women are portrayed in sports newspapers because they are the ones being exposed to these frames, and they are most often consciously unaware of the influence these frames and patterns may have on their opinions of women in sports.

The media should increase awareness and appreciation of differences between men and women as well as decrease the stereotypes surrounding female sports athletes and promote inclusions rather than highlighting the differences between men and women.

The ability of the athlete should be the criterion by which an athlete is judged. The gender of the athlete should not affect the quality and quantity of coverage that an athlete receives. The characteristics of sportswomen emphasised by the media should not be based on physical characteristics and sexual desirability, thus trivialising the achievements of female athletes and reducing them to sexual objects, but rather it should be based on their track records.

When women are represented, existing societal norms are highlighted through stereotypical portrayals. The media instead of maintaining the status quo so effectively can challenge it by providing positive images of female athletes and equity in terms of coverage. The media should reflect the fundamental equality of women and men both on and off the field.

In an attempt to further develop women's sport and provide opportunities for more girls and women, public education and the media should be utilised to strengthen the argument that females are able to achieve excellence in sport. In addition, attention needs to be focused on promoting the idea that it is acceptable for girls and women to be physically aggressive and participate in all sports, including those with body contact.

One of the findings in this study was the inadequate reference to female athletes and women's sports in the *90 Minutes* newspaper. I would suggest that the newspaper would

have to abide by professional norms of fairness, accuracy, balance and objectivity, and routines designed to prevent such a large gender gap from occurring in its newspaper.

Drawing from the feminist theory, the radical feminist belief, women's consciousness need to be reworked so that each woman recognises her own value and strength; see herself as a strong and independent person by rejecting patriarchal pressures and work in unity with other women regardless of the differences between them.

It is my hope that the result of this study will encourage the general public, especially sports fans, to become more educated media consumers and pay more attention to the frames that may subconsciously influence their attitudes toward female athletes and women's sports.

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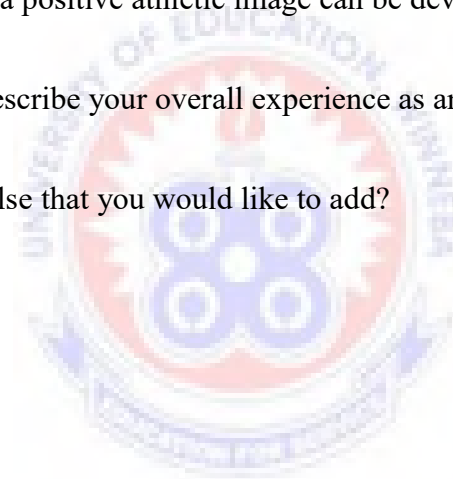
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Name:

2. Sports participated in:

3. At what age did you become involved in organised sport?

4. How do you think the media view women's sports?

5. Have you seen a change since you started in sports

6. Do you think sports are generally still viewed as male territory by the media?

7. Are certain sports still considered 'mens' sports?

8. Is your sport viewed as 'mens' sport?

7. Do you think female athletes are still considered unladylike or masculine?

9. Do you think the print media highlights femininity over skills?

10. Do you think looking feminine is important for a female athlete?

11. In your opinion, how do the print media portray female athletes and female athletics?

12. How do you feel about the portrayal of female athletes by the print media?

13. Have you ever read/seen a story in newspapers about diminishing of accomplishments of female athletes/ or women's sports?

14. How do you think being a woman affects your athletic ability?

15. In your opinion, are femininity images still attached to women's sport?

16. How do you think the image is handled by female athletes?

17. How do you think a positive athletic image can be developed for female athlete?

18. How would you describe your overall experience as an athlete?

19. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

16. How do you think the image is handled by female athletes?

17. How do you think a positive athletic image can be developed for female athlete?

18. How would you describe your overall experience as an athlete?

19. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

APPENDIX B

<u>FEMALE ATHLETES STUDY CODING GUIDE</u>

1. Name of Newspaper:

    1= Graphic Sports   2= 90 Minutes

2. ………………….. Title of article

3. - -/- -/- - Date of article

4. …………………….. Location of article

5. …………………….. Page number

6. …………………….. Thematic Categories

    1= Yes   2= No

…………………….. Inability to take pressure

…………………….. Lack of self-confidence

…………………….. Lack of focus

…………………….. Lack of motivation

…………………….. Lack of drive

…………………….. Lack of intensity

…………………….. Managers support

…………………….. Coaches influence

……………………..Role of husband

…………………..Dedication to fiancé

…………………..National women's league

…………………..Women's league board

…………………..Women's hockey tournament

………………….. Pregnancy

………………….. Role of a mother

…………………..Reference to athlete's mother

7. Frames

……… Characterisation of Weakness: *lack of self-confidence, lack of focus, lack of drive*

………. Masculine Apron Strings: *managers support, coaches influence, role of husbands*

………. Linguistic Sexism: *national women's league, women's league board*

………. Motherhood: *pregnancy, role of a mother, reference to athlete mother*

1= Characterisation of Weakness

2= Masculine Apron Strings

3= Linguistic Sexism

4= Motherhood

…………………….Coaches influence

…………………..Role of husband

…………………..Dedication ton fiancé

…………………..National Women's League

…………………..Women's league board

…………………..Pregnancy

…………………..Role of a mother

…………………..Reference to athlete's mother

7. Frames

……….Characterisation of Weakness: *lack of self-confidence, lack of focus, lack of drive*

………...Masculine Apron Strings: *managers support, coaches influence, role of husbands*

…………Linguistic Sexism: *national women's league, women's league board*

………...Motherhood: pregnancy, *role of a mother, reference to athlete mother*

1= Characterisation of Weakness

2= Masculine Apron Strings

3= Linguistic Sexism

4= Motherhood

APPENDIX C
CODING PROTOCOL

Instructions

Please, find below explanation for expressions and symbols used for the different items on the coding sheet. Beside each item is a blank space which is an answer space. Please, indicate your answer in that space. Please, indicate your answer in that space provided by indicating the corresponding digit/number beside the item.

Title of Article: Write down the title of the article exactly as it appears in the newspaper

Newspaper: Choose the number beside the name of the newspaper that is being coded. If you are coding for The *Graphic Sports* indicate the number "1" in the blank space, and for *90 Minutes* indicate "2"

Date of article: This indicates the date the newspaper article was published. The date should be designated as **Month** followed by **Day** and followed by **Year** as in the sample below:

Date of article: 01/12/12

Page Number of Article: Indicate the page number of the article

Thematic categories: this refers to the various themes that are noted in the news story. Indicate "1" for "yes" if the article discusses that theme and "2" for "No" id if there is no discussion. Please, note that there may be more than one theme in a news story.

Frames: This item corresponds to the frame under which the thematic category is discussed. Once you have identified a thematic category, check the frame cluster to which the category belongs and indicate the frame by checking the choice listed. Indicate in the blank space the digit that corresponds to the frame of choice. In other words for the frame of **Characterisation of weakness** indicate "1"; for **Masculine apron strings** "2"; for **Linguistic sexism** indicate "3" and for **Motherhood** indicate "4".