

The Issue of Gender Inequality in Sports Through a Survey of Different Sports Programs in America

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Abstract. This study focuses on a topic and argument at the heart of society: the issue of gender inequality. Focusing primarily on the sports industry, it explores how gender inequality is manifested in various aspects of various sports programs in the United States. The paper provides an in-depth exploration of the unequal treatment that men and women receive in sports by collecting the salaries of men and women in each program and analyzing the data in comparison. Finally, the result shows that there is definitely a payment gap and a reporting gap between male and female athletics among all programs including basketball, soccer, golf etc. The emergence of such gender inequality issues affects the sports climate and athletes' social perceptions, as well as exacerbating the severity of social issues such as gender inequality. The reason of that is the instinctive physical differences between man and woman. The recommendation is to challenge this traditional norm quickly to ensure a better and purer competitive atmosphere.

Keywords: Sports, gender inequality, wage, media.

1. Introduction

Gender inequality is a serious issue among the world for a long time, which covers most areas. As an important role in our daily life, sports provide us ways to relax and exercise, and further influence the culture norms. However, there are inevitable and potential relationships between gender inequality and sports. According to a statistic, 40-41% women have faced gender discrimination in sports in 2015 [1]. Moreover, there only 18% of competent coaches and 9% of senior coaches are women. Therefore, it is crucial for people to pay attention to the gender inequality in sports in order to ensure the fairness of sports and get more comprehensive understanding of the society. This research will focus on the various sports programs in America to investigate the current situation, using precise data to analyze this social problem.

Sports play a crucial role in shaping an individual's role perception and gender perception. Title IX is an amendment published in 1972. The amendment explicitly prohibits gender discrimination in educational programs. Although the situation became better in recent years since the announcement of Title IX, the problem remains. The research aims to reveal the social issues underlying the glitz and glamor of competitive sports and provide ways to promote the equivalence in sports.

Through the investigation of gender inequality of various sports programs in different fields, such as unequal payment, lack of funding, and unbalance media reporting, detailed information of the prevailing gender dynamics is provided in this research. This can help people to find the problem effectively and develop strategies to challenge these traditional norms. Ultimately, this study endeavors to contribute to the ongoing conversation around gender equality in sport and to galvanize the attention and focus of all on this topic. This is not only for sport, but also for the sport community.

2. Background Information

According to Cora Burnett, gender inequality in sport can first be seen in the Summer Olympics [2]. Figure 1 under the paragraph can directly show the situation of the program that allow for males and females.

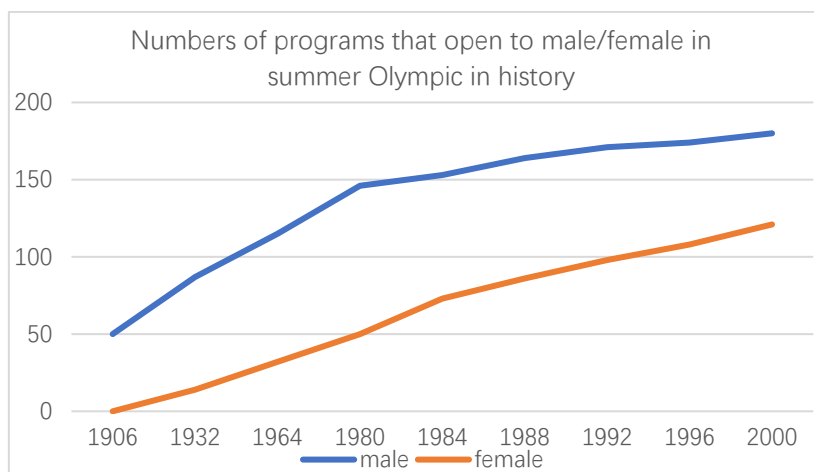


Figure 1. Numbers of programs that open to male/female in summer Olympic in history [2]

According to the Amy Wilson, who is the report's author and managing director for inclusion at the NCAA, before Title IX unlocked the floodgates to academic and physical possibilities for girls and women, sports in the US were dominated by boys and men throughout a number of generations [3]. In the past twenty years, chances for male collegiate athletics have increased more rapidly than those within female athletics. Between the year 2002 and the year 2020, engagement possibilities for male undergraduate athletes increased by about 73,000, whereas those for female athletes increased by in excess of 67,000. It is quite obvious to see that there is still a gap between male athletics and female athletics.

This same issue is reflected in the level of media exposure. Referring to Shor, Eran, et al 2015 [4], by the conclusion of the time frame under investigation, the proportion of men to female names remains close to 3:1. Male identities historically received at least four times as much publicity as female surnames. Small amount of media coverage of women athletics will lead to, according to Sena Christian, families neglect girls and young women sufficiently, there are not sufficient inspiring female athletes in the public eye, or these athletes are not respected since their accomplishments are minimized and their sports and experiences are disregarded or misrepresented in the press [5].

3. Basketball in America

According to Gitnux, the Players in the National Basketball Association (NBA) receive a standard base pay of \$7.7 million annually, roughly 8 times as much as Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) players, who earn only \$75k on median [6]. This is a huge payment gap between men and women who are in the same profession.

Table 1. The comparison between NBA and WNBA [7]

	NBA	WNBA
Revenue	\$10 billion	\$60 million
Average Salaries	\$9.6 million	\$102,751
Ticket Price	\$94 USD	\$47 USD
Highest-Paid Player	Stephen Curry \$48 million	Jewell Loyd \$228,094
Average Viewership	2022 NBA Finals 12.4 million	In 2022: 412,000 viewers
Average Attendance	17,184	5,679

The table 1 shows the exact difference treatment that NBA and WNBA received. Furthermore, referring to Janvrin, NBA games are broadcast in 96 countries and 8 continents in real time, which proves the globalization of the NBA [7]. Compared to the NBA, the WNBA has very few broadcast channels, with only 24 countries carrying WNBA broadcasts. Take China as an example, there are multiple platforms in China where you can watch NBA live streams and replays, and even sports TV

stations that specialize in showing live games of some popular teams. But there are very few channels to see WNBA games. In addition, NBA stars are often endorsed by some well-known sports brands and other brands, such as Jordan endorsement Nike, Curry endorsement andromeda. However, WNBA players rarely have such opportunities. This is also a manifestation of the fact that girls are not valued in sports programs, and they don't get as many opportunities and attention as male athletes.

The same situation happens in NCAA too. Research shows that the financial discrepancy among the NCAA men's and women's basketball championships in 2019 was a total of \$35 million [8]. Moreover, only 5.8% of senior teaching jobs for masculine teams are occupied by women, compared to 58.7% of head coaching positions for women's teams. Women occupy roughly 25% of NCAA administrator and top training roles.

4. Soccer

Women's National Soccer Team's (USWNT) is the only women's sport in the United States that has better ratings than men's sports. But despite this, salaries for male and female soccer players are not equal, with male athletes receiving higher salaries, perks, and opportunities than their female counterparts. Women's soccer has been persistent in its pursuit of pay equity. According to Kelley L. Flint, the total salary of the 1,693 female players in the most lucrative seven football divisions come to \$41.6 million, which is simply marginally less than the \$41.7 million that Paris Saint-Germain gave Brazilian forward Neymar [9]. Furthermore, according to the Gitnux, the overall prize pool awarded to the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2019 approximately \$30 million, compared to \$400 million for the FIFA Men's World Cup in 2018 [6].

5. Other Sports

Table 2. Average payment that male/female athletic get in 2019 [10]

Sport	men	women
Golf (PGA & LPGA)	\$1,235,495	\$48,993
Soccer (MLS & NWSL)	\$410,730	\$35,000
Softball / Baseball (MLB & NPF)	\$4,031,549	\$6,000
Tennis (ATP & WTA)	\$335,946	\$283,635

The table 2 shows the average payment that men players and women players got in 2019. There were huge wage gaps between male and female athletics especially for softball/ baseball and golf. These growing and unresolved wage and treatment inequalities also inhibit the development of women's sport.

These campaigns have the same problem of uneven media coverage. It is clear that there is far more coverage of men's sports than that of women. The lack of reporting may also cause serious effects. According to Bubel, major repercussions result from failure to disclose. While mixed competitions are preferred by 72% of women and 69% of men, respectively, there is a significant absence of enthusiasm among both genders in feminine only athletics [11].

On the other hand, actually, referring to Sena Christian, girls and women who participate in athletics possess greater optimism and trust scores as well as fewer depressive disorders [5]. The Women's Sports Foundation claims that female athletes have a more positive perception of their bodies. Players who use drugs less frequently are women. Girls in secondary school who participate in athletics are fewer inclined to become pregnant unintentionally, are prone to achieve higher academic standards, and are greater likely to go on to college. Therefore, the society should encourage women to participate in sports. In order to reach this target, the gender equality is the basic thing that needs to fix.

6. Conclusion

By comparing and analyzing the above data, it can be seen that unequal gender treatment, pay, and media coverage exists in all different sports in the United States. This situation may occur because at the beginning of the sport, men are more physically fit than women in terms of fitness, endurance and strength, so men are less afraid of getting hurt, which also means that male athletes are involved in games that are more enjoyable to watch. However, women's games have a softer beauty and are equally deserving of attention and encouragement. It is recommended that people focus more on the female side of the sport and gain more voice for women's sport through public opinions and social issues, which helps to fight for benefits such as pay equality. The issue of gender equality in sport is critical, and working on this issue also helps to address gender inequality in society as a whole.

The research spotlights on America and analyzes the issue of gender inequality from multiple perspectives in multiple athletic programs. Oppositely, there are several drawbacks that still need to improve. Firstly, since all data are secondary data, and thus they cannot make sure that all data are 100% reliable and ethical. Besides, there may have been some repetition of content, as well as a lack of thorough dissection of issues. These issues need to be further addressed in the future.

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