

**The Gender Disparity of Interscholastic Athletic Directors in Kansas Class 4A,
Class 5A, and Class 6A High Schools**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of high school athletic directors related to women serving as athletic directors in the state of Kansas. This was an explanatory sequential mixed methods survey using an electronic survey via Google Forms and qualitative interviews. The study was limited to 108 high school athletic directors serving in Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A high schools, and focused on three research questions. The first research question examined survey respondents' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of a Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school athletic directors, and to what extent the respondents perceived these roles and responsibilities being potentially impacted by the gender of the athletic director. Findings indicated that the perceptions of males and females varied based on the survey question. The percentage of agreement or disagreement by gender, however, did not vary. The second research question focused on whether females perceived that they faced different obstacles than their male counterparts in obtaining and retaining Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school athletic director positions in Kansas. Results showed the sentiment of it being a "man's world" and that the "good old boy network" was very much alive. The respondents reported the importance of informal social networks and gender ideologies not serving as a deterrent for applying for the position. Specifically, the respondents reported that a candidate does not have to be a male to perform the job duties; rather, it was more important that a candidate possesses the necessary qualifications and skills. The final research question examined strategies that had been employed by Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions. The most common strategies were maintaining a strong work

ethic, proving oneself, providing support for one another, and fostering relationships with those whom they served.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the following individuals:

To God, thank you for your love and blessings of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

To my mom, Linda, and my dad, Bob, thank you for setting the example of hard work and having pride to all that you commit yourself. As a child, young adult, and now adult, the two of you have shown me an insurmountable amount of encouragement, relentless support, and unconditional love. Thank you for always believing in me, especially when I didn't believe in myself, and for guiding me to be the best I can be. Thank you and I love you both very much.

To my sister, Nicole, thank you for serving as a pillar of strength for me throughout my life. At a very early age, you taught me what it means to love and to support and to care for others and, as we continue to navigate the highs and lows of life, you have shown me the importance of faith, family, and friendship. Thank you and I love you, Sissy.

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Finally, to the coaching staffs and student-athletes that I have had the opportunity to work alongside, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your Athletic Director. Every day, I try to match your competitive spirit and strong passion for high school sports. Thank you for showing me the impact a positive attitude, determination, and unshakeable perseverance can have on others.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Background	3
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose of the Study	5
Significance of the Study	6
Delimitations	6
Assumptions	7
Research Questions	7
Definition of Terms	8
Organization of the Study	10
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature	11
Organizations Serving the High School Athletic Director	13
The High School Athletic Director	16
Obstacles in the Obtaining the High School Athletic Director Position	21
Theoretical Barriers to Females Serving in Leadership Positions	26
Strategies for Females to Obtain the High School Athletic Director Position	29
Summary	32

Chapter 3: Methods.....	34
Research Design.....	34
Population and Sampling	36
Measurement instruments.....	36
Data Collection Procedures.....	39
Data Analysis and Synthesis	41
Reliability and Trustworthiness	42
The Role of the Researcher.....	43
Limitations	44
Summary	45
Chapter 4: Results	46
Quantitative Phase	47
Qualitative Phase	64
Summary	75
Chapter 5: Interpretation and Recommendations	77
Study Summary.....	77
Overview of the Problem	77
Purpose Statement and Research Questions	78
Review of the Methodology.....	79
Major Findings.....	79
Findings Related to the Literature.....	82
Conclusions.....	87
Implications for Action	87

Recommendations for Future Research	87
Concluding Remarks.....	89
References.....	90
Appendices.....	101
Appendix A. NIAAA’s Administrative Responsibilities of an AD.....	103
Appendix B. Permission to Use Welch (2012) Adapted Version of Survey.....	104
Appendix C. High School Athletic Directors’ Perception Survey.....	109
Appendix D. Qualitative Interview Questions for Purposive Population.....	119
Appendix E. Baker University IRB Approval Letter to Conduct Research.....	121
Appendix F. Email to Sample Population for Survey Participation.....	123
Appendix G. Email to Purposive Population for Interview Participation.....	125
Appendix H. Transcription of Qualitative Interviews.....	127

List of Tables

Table 1. Student Enrollment for the KSHSAA's School Classifications.....	13
Table 2. Kansas Athletic Directors by High School Classification and Gender for 2019 and Gender for 2019.....	14
Table 3. NIAAA Certifications by Gender in 2019.....	15
Table 4. NIAAA's Administrative Responsibilities of an Athletic Director.....	20
Table 5. Frequency and Percentage of Survey Respondents by Gender and Classification.....	48
Table 6. Frequency and Percentage of Survey Respondents by Gender and Age Range..	49
Table 7. Years of Experience for Class 4A, 5A, and 6A Athletic Director Survey Respondents.....	50
Table 8. School Setting Category for Class 4A, 5A, and 6A Athletic Director Survey Respondents.....	51
Table 9. Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Organizational Structure Survey Items.....	52
Table 10. Percentage of Respondents by Gender on the Hiring Process Survey Items....	53
Table 11. Percentage of Respondents by Gender Athletic Director Position Survey Items.....	55
Table 12. Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Discrimination Survey Items.....	56
Table 13. Percentage of Respondents by Gender on the Future Female AD Survey Items.....	57
Table 14. Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Professional Development/Formal Mentorship Survey Items.....	58

Table 15. Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Most Critical for Hiring an AD.....	59
Table 16. Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Essential Hiring Requirements for Future ADs.....	61
Table 17. Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Reasons for Lack of Female ADs.....	63

Chapter 1

Introduction

Gender inequality is woven throughout the fabric of America's workforce. In 2017, women held 38.3% of the Fortune 500 Board of Director seats (Zillman, 2017). In 2019, Business Insider reported that a woman earned 80.7 cents to a man's dollar, and a woman's median annual income was \$9,099 less than a man's salary (Sheth, Gal, & Kiersz, 2019). In 2019, the United States had nine female Governors (National Governors Association, 2019) and 25 female U.S. Senators (U.S. Senate, 2019). The five professional sports that dominate American culture – Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, The National Basketball Association, The National Football League, and The National Hockey League – employed ten female executives (out of a possible 67 positions) in upper management (Major League Baseball, 2017; Major League Soccer, 2017; National Basketball Association, 2017; National Football League, 2017; National Hockey League, 2017). Of the 1,101 athletic directors at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) governed universities, 269 are female – 55 in Division I programs. In the 'Division I Power Five' conferences – the ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, and SEC – there are four female athletic directors. In Division II college programs, there are 57 female athletic directors, and in Division III college programs, there are 157 female athlete directors. In the article, "Women in Athletic Departments - Welcomed or Marginalized" Penn State Athletic Director Sandy Barbour said, "The world of intercollegiate athletics is coming to understand more and more the value of different voices and perspectives" (Voepel, 2017, p. 1). Of the athletic directors that lead NCAA-

governed Athletic Programs, the 24% who are female seem to play a role in providing these different voices and perspectives.

Women were being overlooked for athletic leadership positions because of a lack of experience in playing a sport that they were unable to play due to their gender (Gordon, 2017). In Tucker's 2008 article, "Female Athletes Break Barriers; Front Office Progress Slower," Debbie Yow, former Athletic Director at the University of Maryland stated, "Leadership is not a gender issue. It is a reflection of education, experience and a propensity for the work. Athletics are visceral, but the fact is that as an athletic director, I don't have to block or tackle" (p. 2). The likelihood of women administering athletic programs at the high school level is bleak as the number of female athletic directors has decreased since the passing of Title IX. A 1972 congressionally-amended law to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Civil Rights Act, 2017, p.1), Title IX states "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (NCAA, 2017, p. 1). One possible reason for the decrease in the number of females serving as athletic directors is that, for decades, athletic director positions have traditionally been held by men.

In a 2016 interview conducted by Miller, female high school Athletic Director Lippy stated, "Historically, the athletic director position has been male-dominated. It's a gender ideology. People expect athletic directors to be male; it's a societal predetermination. Just like people expect elementary school teaching positions to be held by women" (p. 1). To defy the societal predetermination and ensure gender equality in high school athletic director positions, it is imperative that females be afforded the same

opportunities as their male counterparts to obtain and retain athletic leadership positions. The selection of more women to serve high school communities as athletic directors could help break down the stereotypical hiring barriers that have traditionally existed.

Background

Having a gender balance in athletic leadership contributes to a better work environment, providing both the male and female perspectives for a well-rounded sample of qualities generally associated with gender (Senne, 2016). Despite the increase in female participation on athletic teams at the high school and collegiate levels, there has been a sharp decline in the number of women in athletic leadership positions, both as coaches and athletic directors. The number of female coaches at the high school level peaked before the 1970s. Between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, the percentage of girls' teams being coached by women at the high school level experienced a decrease of 50% (Hart, Hasbrook, & Mathes, 1986). In 1990, men coached more than 40% of the girls' high school teams, with only 2% of the boys' high school teams coached by females; consequently, 80% of all high school teams were coached by males (Feminist Majority Foundation, 1995). Historically, men have dominated the athletic arena; as a result, the number of women in athletic leadership positions has been limited (Cashmore, 2000; Coakley, 2001). This may be due to the existing social stereotypes that women have always faced. An example of these stereotypes, provided by Senne in 2016, is that women are fragile, less capable, passive, and intruding on a world that has always been seen as a masculinized entity.

Statement of the Problem

Research has provided little information about women who have been able to obtain and retain leadership positions in high school athletic leadership positions. As women continue to be underrepresented in athletic administration relative to their involvement in sports, hiring school districts have a responsibility to ensure that applicants are provided with an equal opportunity to secure a high school athletic director position, regardless of age, gender, or race (Kotschwar & Moran, 2015). In the study, “Women in Athletic Leadership,” Moore, Gilmour, and Kinsella (2005) discussed the notion that a “good old boy network” in the profession has continued and created a significant barrier to women obtaining positions in athletic leadership. The “good old boy network” refers to an “informal system of friendships and connections through which men use their positions of influence by providing favors and information to help other men” (Nelson, 2019, p. 1). Whether in the business world, the medical field, or athletic leadership, these networks provide preferential treatment to males who are connected to those in a position of power. Specifically, athletic leaders reported that more has been expected of women than of their male counterparts, and that women have been required to prove themselves competent and capable, whereas males do not have to work as hard at proving themselves (Moore, et al., 2005). Females have been required to work harder to earn the acceptance, authority, trust, and respect necessary to lead (Moore, Gilmour, & Kinsella, 2005). Hoff and Mitchell (2008) found that women did not fit the stereotypical image displayed by many school athletic departments, thus creating inequitable barriers to their ability to advance to the athletic director or other leadership positions. Hoch, 2009, reinforced this belief when determining that although females were capable of

performing the tasks required of a head coach, women were frequently viewed as not having the skills in the areas necessary to lead an entire athletic department, such as business, budgeting, or leadership skills.

To defy the societal predetermination of the ‘good old boy network,’ and ensure gender equality in high school athletic leadership positions, it is imperative that females have the same opportunities as their male counterparts to obtain and retain athletic leadership positions. The available research literature in this area lacks essential information regarding why this gender inequality exists, and there is a need for possible strategies to mitigate the issue and bring more equality. Women serving their high school communities as athletic directors could provide useful perceptions and insights based on their personal experiences which could help break down the stereotypical barriers that have existed for years.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study was to investigate the perceptions of high school athletic directors pertaining to women serving as athletic directors. The gender-disaggregated perceptions of athletic directors serving the three largest school classifications in Kansas, Class 4A, 5A, and Class 6A, collected via quantitative survey, helped identify the perceived barriers faced by males and females in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. The survey results identified obstacles women faced in athletic leadership positions, which informed the development of a semi-structured interview protocol. The interviews provided an opportunity to better understand the experiences of current female high school athletic directors and how they overcame the barriers, obstacles, or stereotypes they faced.

Significance of the Study

The role of the high school athletic director is critical to the operational success of an interscholastic athletic program, which has a direct effect on the educational experience of student-athletes (Schneider & Stier, 2001). This explanatory sequential mixed methods study adds to the body of knowledge related to the gender inequalities that exist between male and female athletic directors at the high school level. The results of this study could provide insight and guidance for women considering a position in high school athletic leadership. Findings could also inform curricular adjustments to graduate programs' leadership coursework to improve the training and preparation of female students wanting to obtain and retain athletic leadership positions. Additionally, building- and district-level educational administrators charged with hiring athletic directors could gain a greater understanding of the obstacles females perceive in obtaining and retaining positions as athletic directors.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to restrictions determined by the researcher applied to narrow the purpose and scope of a study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). The first delimitation placed on this study was Kansas Classes 4A, 5A, and 6A, the three largest school classifications in the state consisting of the 108 largest public and private high schools, were chosen to participate in this study. Furthermore, the population for this study included athletic directors for high schools comprised of grades 9-12, where the athletic director worked in the building. Finally, the data collection included a quantitative survey administered to the 108 Kansas Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A athletic directors, and invitations

asking for their permission were extended to the ten female Kansas Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A athletic directors to participate in qualitative interviews.

Assumptions

According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), “Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research” (p. 135). This explanatory sequential mixed methods study included the following assumptions: (a) the individuals who participated in the study understood the questions presented for both the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, (b) the individuals who participated in the study were truthful in their responses for both the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, and (c) the survey instrument and interview protocol included the appropriate questions to collect the perceptions of the respondents.

Research Questions

Research questions are used to formulate and focus a study and should be generated to evaluate the relationships between the variables (Creswell, 2009). The research questions should be specific, measurable, and relevant to the study, providing clear results for the researcher. The following research questions guided the study:

RQ1. What do male and female athletic directors at Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools perceive as being their roles and responsibilities, and do their perceptions differ by gender, according to an electronic survey?

RQ2. To what extent do females perceive they face different obstacles than their male counterparts in obtaining and retaining Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school athletic director positions in Kansas, according to individual interviews?

RQ3. What strategies have been employed by Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions, according to individual interviews?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used frequently throughout the study. The reader may not be familiar with these terms, or the way in which the terms have been operationalized for the current study. In order to provide clarification and avoid confusion, terms that will be used repeatedly are defined.

Athletic Director (AD). A term associated with the school administrator whose primary responsibility is to lead and supervise the school's athletic department (Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA), 2019).

Class 4A. Class 4A is comprised of the high schools ranked 73rd-108th in student enrollment for grades 9-12 in the state of Kansas as determined by the Kansas State High School Activities Association. The enrollment of these schools ranges from 679 students (73rd) to 317 students (108th) (KSHSAA, 2019).

Class 5A. Class 5A is comprised of the high schools ranked 37th-72nd in student enrollment for grades 9-12 in the state of Kansas as determined by the Kansas State High School Activities Association. The enrollment of these schools ranges from 1,313 students (37th) to 748 students (72nd) (KSHSAA, 2019).

Class 6A. Class 6A is comprised of the high schools ranked 1st-36th in student enrollment for grades 9-12 in the state of Kansas as determined by the Kansas State High School Activities Association. The enrollment of these schools ranges from 2,395 students (1st) to 1,320 students (36th) (KSHSAA, 2019).

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information (EEOC, 2019).

National Federation of High School Sports (NFHS). The National Federation of State High School Sports serves its members, related professional organizations, and students by providing leadership for the administration of education-based interscholastic activities, which support academic achievement, good citizenship, and equitable opportunity (NFHS, 2020).

National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA). The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association is a professional organization that preserves, enhances, and promotes educational-based athletics through the professional development of interscholastic athletic administrators at the middle and high school levels (NIAAA, 2019).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The National Collegiate Athletic Association is a member-led organization dedicated to the well-being and lifelong success of college athletes (NCAA, 2019).

Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The Office for Civil Rights enforces several Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2019).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contained the introduction, background, and statement of the problem. Additionally, the significance of the study was described along with providing the purpose statement, as well as the delimitations and assumptions underlying the study. The chapter concluded with the listing of the research questions that guided the study and the definitions of terms used throughout the dissertation. Chapter 2 includes a historical review of gender equity in high school athletics, the role and responsibilities of athletic directors, as well as the obstacles and strategies employed by females in obtaining high school athletic director positions. The methodology employed for the current study is described in Chapter 3, while the results of the study related to the research questions are discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of these results, implications for practice, as well as suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

According to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS News, 2018), the number of boys participating in high school sports in the 1971-1972 school year was 3,666,917, while only 294,015 girls participated. During the 2018-2019 school year, the number of boys participating had increased to 4,534,580, while the number of girls participating increased to 3,401,733. During this time, the percentage of boys participating grew 20%, while the percentage of girls participating grew at a rate of over 900% (NFHS News, 2020). While Title IX legislation had done wonders to increase the number of females participating in sports and to level the playing field with their male counterparts, the same cannot be said for increasing the number of females serving as high school athletic directors. In “Pitching a Level Playing Field: Women and Leadership in Sports Policy Brief” for the Peterson Institute for International Economics, Kotschwar and Moran (2015) stated,

Accomplishing greater gender balance in sports is essential, not just for general arguments for equality but because of the importance sports have in furthering women's potential and their ability to bolster their society. If playing sports has positive health, education, and workforce effects for girls, then encouraging their role in sports is also essential. (p. 10)

Even though Title IX legislation required schools to create more opportunities for females to participate in athletics, it has done very little to reduce the stereotypical image of women in athletic leadership positions. Furthermore, Title IX legislation has done little to help establish equal opportunities in athletic leadership and the pressures women

face in male-dominated professions (Senne, 2016). Fewer still have noted the gender makeup of interscholastic athletic directors (Martin, Kelley, & Dias, 1999), and unfortunately, within the academic community, very few studies have examined athletic directors at the high school level (Schneider & Stier, 2001).

Whisenant (2008) surveyed 480 high school athletic departments to determine the gender assignment of the principal, athletic director, and head coaching positions for girls' tennis, girls' basketball, girls' volleyball, and girls' softball. The reason for those four sports being selected was other sports have been pre-dispositioned as "masculine" or "feminine" and are stereotypically coached by a coach of the same gender. Using a random systematic cluster sampling technique to gather ten sample schools from 48 states where only one public high school from each city was surveyed, Whisenant found 76.5% of high school principal positions were held by males, 82.5% of high school athletic director positions were held by males, and all four of the selected coaching positions were held predominately by males. As a whole, females comprised 36% of the three identified positions.

This chapter is divided into five sections that present a review of the literature about the high school athletic director. The first section reviews the organizations serving the high school athletic director. The second section reviews the role of the high school athletic director. The third section reviews obstacles in obtaining the high school athletic director position. The fourth section reviews theories related to females serving in leadership positions. The final section reviews strategies to obtain and retain the high school athletic director position.

Organizations Serving the High School Athletic Director

The Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) categorizes its school classification system into six classes outlined in Table 1 based on student enrollment. The assignment of schools to each classification is completed after September 20th, when schools are required to submit their total student enrollment to the State of Kansas. The data was collected for the study in 2019.

Table 1

Student Enrollment for the KSHSAA's School Classifications

Classification	Number of Students (Grades 09-12)
Class 6A	1,320-2,495
Class 5A	748-1,313
Class 4A	317-679
Class 3A	174-315
Class 2A	105-172
Class 1A	14-104

Note: Adapted from the “KSHSAA Website, 2019.” Available at <https://www.kshaa.org>

The disparity of gender equality exists at the high school athletic director position level in the three largest Kansas state-classifications, Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A, whose 108 schools have the highest enrollment in grades 9-12. Table 2 illustrates the number of males and females whose primary job assignment is athletic director. The ratio of male to female athletic directors for Class 4A is 35:1, Class 5A is 8:1, with a Class 6A ratio of 5:1.

Table 2

Kansas Athletic Directors by High School Classification and Gender for 2019

Classification	Number of Male Athletic Directors	Number of Female Athletic Directors
Class 4A	35	1
Class 5A	32	4
Class 6A	30	6

Note: Adapted from the “KSHSAA Membership Directory, 2019.” Available at <https://www.kshsaa.org>

The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrator Association (NIAAA) is a national association for district-level, high school, and middle school athletic directors. The NIAAA and its three-pronged mission serves as a governing-board for those in athletic leadership positions.

1. The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association preserves, enhances and promotes the educational values of interscholastic athletics through the professional development of its members in the areas of education, leadership, and service.
2. The NIAAA’s commitment to leadership programs, resources, and services support the athletic administrator’s efforts in providing quality athletic participation opportunities for students.
3. The NIAAA promotes a positive working relationship with state athletic administrators and state and national athletic/activity associations in addition to developing strategic alliances with other education-based agencies. (Blackburn, Forsyth, Olson, & Whitehead, 2013, p.1)

According to the NIAAA, the self-reported membership for district-level and high school athletic directors in 2019 was comprised of 1,516 females, compared to 7,912 males, with 2,172 members not reporting a gender. Table 3 illustrates the gender breakdown of members who have received the available certification offered through the NIAAA's Leadership Institute.

Table 3

NIAAA Certifications by Gender in 2019

Certification	Male	Female	No Gender	Total
High School Athletic Director (AD)	7,912	1,516	2,172	11,600
Registered Athletic Administrator (RAA)	119	543	32	694
Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA)	395	1919	75	2389
Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA)	100	464	4	568

Note: Adapted from "NIAAA, 2019." Available at <http://www.niaaa.org/niaaa-programs/niaaa-certification-program/about-niaaa-certification/>

The level of certification is based upon the number of successfully completed courses offered by the NIAAA's Leadership Institute. The most basic certification, the Registered Athletic Administrator (RAA), requires the completion of three courses; whereas, the most advanced certification, the Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA), requires the completion of twelve courses and a practical written or oral exercise.

In 1996, the NIAAA Leadership Institute established its certification program to achieve the six objectives listed below.

1. To promote the professional standards, practices and ethics of athletic administration.
2. To encourage administrator self-assessment by offering guidelines for achievement.
3. To improve administrator performance by encouraging participation in a continuing program of professional growth and development.
4. To identify levels of educational training essential for effective athletic administration.
5. To foster professional contributions to the field.
6. To maximize the benefits received by the school community from the leadership provided by certified athletic administrators. (p.1)

The High School Athletic Director

In its 2013 publication, the *NIAAA's Guide to Interscholastic Athletic Administration*, the national association identified the basic role of the athletic director, “to provide leadership to the overall athletic program, as well as to manage the details necessary for its successful day-to-day operation. The athletic administrator establishes the professional expectations and provides vision” (Blackburn et al., p.5). Expounding on that, the NIAAA noted the important role an athletic director and the various tasks he/she is responsible for on a daily basis. Examples of these responsibilities include scheduling and event management, budget-related items, hiring and evaluating staff, etc. Furthermore, the authors go on to say the myriad of responsibilities an athletic director is tasked with requires patience and the ability to multi-task.

Constructed using employee handbooks from Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A districts in Kansas and personal experience, checked with current athletic directors in the surrounding area (High School Athletic Directors, personal communication, 2020), the following definition describes the primary role of the athletic director in a 4A, 5A, and 6A high school in Kansas. The athletic director manages the day-to-day operations of a high school's athletic program, including the implementation of policies enacted by a district's board of education, while ensuring that the athletic department is always in alignment with the school's mission and vision. On a day-to-day basis, the athletic director is charged with any or all of the following responsibilities: (a) hiring a competent coaching staff, (b) reprimanding or firing a coach if he or she is not meeting expectations, (c) developing competition schedules for all levels of play for each sport, (d) completing and submitting paperwork required by the state activities association, (e) performing an evaluation of all coaches, (f) attending and supervising games and activities, (g) scheduling transportation for teams to and from competition, (h) facilitating professional development opportunities for coaching staff, (i) maintaining a budget for the entire athletic department, (j) scheduling officials for all contests, (k) ensuring the athletic department is operating with the policies established by the local board of education, and (k) purchasing equipment.

Stating the importance of the role of the athletic director, the NIAAA believes the following to be the minimum requirements of an athletic administrator:

- A task-oriented individual who is committed and dedicated to education-based athletics for all students.
- A person with a varied knowledge of sports, and experience in coaching.

- An individual with an undergraduate degree in education, as well as some measure of administrative background.
- Certification from the NIAAA is highly recommended. This would include either a RAA, RMSAA, CAA or CMAA designation (see Professional Development section).
- If the individual has coursework toward an advanced degree or academic certification in athletic administration, it would greatly enhance the position.
- Some experience in finance, budget preparation and fund raising would be a great addition to any individual serving in this position.
- Able to communicate effectively with wide variety of constituents.
- NIAAA and state athletic administrator association membership. (Blackburn et al., 2013, p.6)

The NIAAA stressed the importance of the athletic director adopting a “Code of Ethics” that is based upon a commitment to the student-athlete, education-based athletics, and the profession (Blackburn et al., 2013). In addition to having these three areas at the forefront of all daily decision-making, the NIAAA cited six goals for those serving in an athletic leadership position.

1. The high school athletic administrator shall establish an athletic program that ensures a cooperative, supportive, and participative environment for all students, coaches, faculty, and parents.
2. The high school athletic administrator shall be visionary and innovative, and will create the short and long-range goals for the school athletic program in

cooperation with the students, coaches, community, board of education, state association, and the NIAAA.

3. The high school athletic administrator shall provide leadership that is proactive and positive. This leadership will place utmost emphasis on the physical, mental and social benefits of interscholastic athletics to the student-athlete.
4. The high school athletic administrator will successfully perform and show accountability for managerial functions that reflect knowledge and organizational competence.
5. The high school athletic administrator, with the cooperation of the coaching staff, shall provide an athletic program for students that promotes positive sportsmanship and citizenship.
6. The high school athletic administrator shall be responsible for ensuring that all policies and rules of the NFHS, the state high school athletic/activity association, the board of education and the school administration are listed, updated, and adhered to. (Blackburn et al., 2013, p.15-17)

Finally, the NIAAA's 2013 publication, *A Profile to Athletic Administration*, outlined the administrative responsibilities of an interscholastic athletic director. A selection of the responsibilities is denoted in Table 4, with the full list accessible in Appendix A.

Table 4

NIAAA's Administrative Responsibilities of an Athletic Director

Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership for the athletic department while placing emphasis and perspective on its educational role in the school. • Prepare and monitor a calendar of school athletic events. Communicate this calendar and a list of activities to all facets of the school. • Attend as many contests, meets and events as possible, making sure all are supervised properly. • Transmit all pertinent information for state association and conference/league competition to the principal and coaches. • Pro-actively resolve conflicts that may develop affiliated with the athletic department. • Provide a system to maintain pertinent and permanent records for each sport. • Plan and supervise all athletic awards programs with the cooperation of the booster club, coaches and other administrators. • Coordinate the organization and operation of the media areas providing information and service. • Serve as the liaison between the coaches and the athletic booster club. • Coordinate the annual review of the athletic policy, student code and staff handbook. Evaluate the program, always seeking ways to improve interscholastic athletics opportunities. • Emphasize to coaches the need for professional appearance, language and conduct. • As the host, provide dressing rooms and hospitality for visiting teams and game officials. Keep informed of the rules and regulations of the total athletic program school district and state association. • Lead with a philosophy of education-based athletics.

Note: Adapted from *NIAAA's Guide to Interscholastic Athletic Administration. (1st ed.)*. Available at

<http://www.niaaa.org/assets/Final-Profile-document-for-print..pdf>

Schneider and Stier (2001) conducted a national study of 400 high school principals to define the importance of the role of athletic director. The study discovered that a successful high school athletic program is dependent on the role of the athletic director for two reasons: one, the impact high school athletics plays on the overall well-

being of student-athletes; and two, the need to have a qualified and able body to oversee the intricate day-to-day management and operation of the athletic department. As the leader of the athletic department, the athletic director is regarded as the authority of all things sports related. With the ability to make decisions and implement policies regarding the day-to-day operation of the athletic department, the athletic director must possess accurate information to make important decisions, and then effectively communicate this with all stakeholders, including principals, superintendents, and boards of education (Schneider & Stier, 2001).

An athletic director must always keep in mind that the mission of his or her program is to provide a meaningful experience for student-athletes. It is imperative that he or she does not get caught up in the day-to-day minutia and that the primary focus is teaching student-athletes the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual facets of playing sports.

Obstacles for Females in Obtaining the High School Athletic Director Position

Even though the characteristics of leadership and managerial abilities required to be a successful athletic director are not male-only traits, factors such as society's stereotypes of a "strong female leader may be considered overbearing and a quiet one viewed as weak" (Hoch, 2009, p. 1) oftentimes lead to the misconception that women cannot fulfill the job requirements. The research related to female leaders in athletics tends to concentrate on the obstacles women face (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Schneider, Stier, Henry, & Wilding, 2010; VanDerLinden, 2004), job inequities (Shaw & Frisby, 2006) and perceptions regarding competency (Burton & Peachey, 2009; Pedersen & Whisenant, 2005). The most apparent obstacles women face in athletic leadership

positions are a lack of strong networking opportunities (McKay, 1999), the minimal influence of these networks (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012; Sagas & Cunningham, 2004) and a lack of mentors (Abney, 1991). Additionally, women in athletic leadership are more likely to be hired into positions with less power, earn less than their male counterparts, and have fewer opportunities for advancement (Burton, Grappendorf, & Henderson, 2011; Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

Researchers have explained the relatively limited number of women in athletic administration, "by looking at the individual and her motivation, leadership ability, and skills" (Slack, 1997, p. 8). Hegemonic Masculinity, a practice that accepts males' dominant position in society and validates the subservience of females, is a principal obstacle in a female obtaining the high school athletic director position. Athletics have been labeled "men's work" because many sports organizations, including the management of those organizations, have been dominated by men (Diacin & Yup Lim, 2012). The predetermined opinion of society is that men are born leaders, especially in the world of athletics (Whisenant, 2008). Pedersen and Whisenant (2005) studied 423 high school male and female athletic directors in two states to determine prominence and success rate as related to gender. The results of the quantitative study conveyed that despite hegemonic masculinity being deep-seated within the role of the athletic director as 90% of those surveyed were male, the success rate of the female athletic directors who had achieved positions within athletic leadership were as effective as their male counterparts. The findings indicated that when given the opportunity to serve in administrative positions, females found success in the role of a high school athletic director.

In a study conducted by Parks, Russell, Wood, Robertson, and Shewokis (1995), the focus was on the paradox of females in athletic administration as it related to job satisfaction. The study included 143 women and 371 men at 106 NCAA Division I-A institutions. Having used the “Job Descriptive Index” and “Job in General” scales, the findings suggested that even though female athletic directors were making far less in salaries and had fewer advancement opportunities than males, females still rated job satisfaction as “high.” Furthermore, the findings suggested that the females possessed such high job satisfaction as a result of dismantling the “good old boy network” ideology that only males could hold leadership positions in athletic administration (Parks, Russell, Wood, Robertson, & Shewokis, 1995).

In a 2012 study, Diacin and Yup Lim used semi-structured interviews of eleven females employed at three NCAA Division I schools located in the Southern states to investigate social role theories. The low number of females holding leadership positions in athletic administration was found to be due to several factors, including familial responsibilities, gender ideologies, and informal social networks. Furthermore, the idea of the “good old boy network” has negatively influenced female representation within athletics.

Another obstacle females may face in obtaining a position in athletic leadership is the idea of role congruity theory, which suggests that the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions may be the result of gender role stereotyping (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Social role theory, a precursor to role congruity theory, helps explain gender-role stereotyping in the evaluation of leaders. The theory suggests there are qualities and behavioral tendencies believed to be desirable for each gender, as well as expectations as

to which roles women and men should occupy (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Eagly (1987) and Eagly and Karau (2002) state that females are more likely to exhibit more communal characteristics. Specifically, women are generalized as being affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturing, and gentle (Eagly 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Conversely, males are more likely to display more masculine characteristics, such as aggressiveness, dominance, forcefulness, self-confidence, and self-sufficiency.

Therefore, gender role stereotypes suggest that women should embody more communal characteristics and roles, while men should display more masculine qualities (Eagly & Karau, 2002). It is argued that females may be at a disadvantage in securing leadership positions because of a preconception that they do not possess the stereotypical skills necessary to be leaders. Adding further barriers, the role congruity theory suggests that, even if women are in leadership positions, they may not be evaluated positively because they may be perceived as violating the gender norms delegated to females (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Shaw and Hoeber (2003) noted that, even though athletic leadership has become loosely defined as, “whatever works effectively” within the sports world, the authors noted that when women engage in “masculine” leadership, it is often perceived poorly. After evaluating organizational documents and transcripts from interviews with 35 employees from three national sport organizations in England, the researchers revealed that, even though women working in athletic administration were perceived as less threatening, gentler, more organized, kinder, and more loyal than their male counterparts, these characteristics were viewed as unfavorable for the highest-level positions within the organization. Furthermore, women were over-represented in support positions instead of being the leader of the organization that one male executive

described as a job that men would not pursue because they would never carry such a heavy workload without being compensated for doing so (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003).

Within the athletic world, women face ongoing organizational practices that serve to extend male dominance (Whisenant, Pederson, & Obeour, 2002). Despite the gains women have made through various gender equity policies, these policies are not fundamentally valued within a male-dominated sports arena and therefore fail to reflect a deeper valuing of gender equity within athletic leadership (Hoeber & Frisby, 2001; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Coakley (2001) outlined seven reasons why women are under-represented in athletic administration. The majority of those reasons are related to the networking capability males have within the athletic world, precisely the significant number of head coaching positions that are occupied by men and the professional relationships formed as a result of these opportunities. Another reason is the selection criteria frequently posted for athletic director positions that may eliminate females before applying for the position (Hoyden, 2000). An example of this is the 2005 study by Whisenant, Miller, and Pedersen that describes the correlation of an athletic director having had the experience of being a head football coach and listing it as a prerequisite to obtaining the position. Additionally, very few support systems and professional development opportunities exist for women as the ideology of the “good old boy network” has dominated the athletics world and the influence of females is, traditionally, unwelcome (Pastore, Inglis, & Danylchuk, 1996). Finally, issues surrounding sexual discrimination exist within the athletics world as many organizations are not open to the traditionally-assigned familial responsibilities typically held by females (McKay, 1999). An example of this is women being looked over for an athletic leadership position

because of a preconceived need to be at home with their children every night. These traditional beliefs about gender may not allow people to view women outside of the role they (women) typically serve within the family unit (Hochschild, 1989, 1997). These expectations may influence people to believe that work and family responsibilities are conflicting and that a female would be less committed to a job; whereas, a male candidate may be perceived as having fewer family obligations and therefore more qualified for the job. In other words, females are “gendered” and males are “normalized” in traditional hiring practices (Inglis, Danylchuk, & Pastore, 2000). While each of these issues may individually act as an obstacle to the entrance and advancement of females in athletic administration, the totality of these barriers suggests, according to Coakley (2001), “unless there are changes in the cultures of sport organizations, gender equity will never be achieved in the [administrative] ranks” (p. 220).

Theoretical Barriers to Females Serving in Leadership Positions

Theoretical barriers are ideas grounded in research that explain the reason an individual is unable to receive a desired outcome. Oftentimes, the barrier is out of the individual’s control and are centered upon individual characteristics that cannot be altered (i.e., gender, age, race). Hegemonic Masculinity, Social Role Theory, Role Congruity Theory, and the “good old boy network” are four theoretical barriers that singularly or combined may have an impact on females serving in leadership positions.

Hegemonic Masculinity is a practice that accepts males’ dominant position in society and validates the subservience of females. It can be an obstacle for females obtaining the high school athletic director position. The hegemonic masculine image of resilience, violence, physicality, emotional control, competitiveness, dominance over

women, and other marginalized groups is generally associated with power, control, and privilege. The over-emphasis on competition, a win-at-all-costs attitude, and poor relationships with competitors oftentimes associated with hegemonic masculinity have devalued and limited athletics (English, 2017). The devaluation and limitation are most prevalent as the traditional image of women is females are subordinate and always possessing a lower hierarchical positioning or social status (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Athletics have become the pillar of hegemonic masculinity within society today, as evidenced on the playing field, in the media, and athletic leadership positions at every level. Females who have been able to break through the participation barrier have often been given lower salaries and under-represented coverage by the sports media (Kinkema & Harris, 1998).

The Social Role Theory, which is the foundation of the role congruity theory, explains gender-role stereotyping in the assessment of leaders. The theory suggests there are talents and behavioral predispositions believed to be associated with each gender, as well as expectations as to which functions women and men should embody (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Aspects of gender roles that are especially relevant to understanding leadership pertain to agentic and communal attributes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). In a study that included 2,874 females and 6,126 men, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) claimed, agentic attributes, which are ascribed more strongly to men than women, describe primarily an assertive, controlling, and confident tendency—for example, aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, daring, self-confident, and competitive. Communal attributes, which are ascribed more strongly to women than men, describe primarily a concern with the welfare of other people—for example,

affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturing, and gentle. The study participants were asked to rank their supervisor on nine behaviors that are typical of transformational leaders (five behaviors), transactional leadership (three behaviors), and laissez-faire leadership (one behavior). In employment settings, agentic behaviors might include speaking assertively, competing for attention, influencing others, initiating activity directed to assigned tasks, and making problem-focused suggestions. Whereas communal behaviors might include speaking tentatively, not drawing attention to oneself, accepting others' direction, supporting and soothing others, and contributing to the solution of relational and interpersonal problems in employment settings.

Role Congruity Theory suggests that the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions may be the result of gender role stereotyping (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Whisenant, Lee, and Dees (2014) measured whether the perceptions held by head coaches toward their athletic director differed based upon the gender of the athletic director or the coach. One hundred twenty-two high school coaches across the nation responded to the survey, ranking perceptions about distributive, procedural, and interpersonal justice on a six-point Likert-type scale. Of the 122 participants, 72% were male and 62% of the participants also served as the high school athletic director. The results indicated the perceptions held by the coaches differed depending upon the gender of the coach and the athletic director; thus, supporting the theory of Role Congruity.

Finally, the "good old boy network" is an informal system in which wealthy men with the same social and educational background help each other (Merriam-Webster, 2019, p.1). The "good old boy network" provides an avenue for people to hire, promote, and surround themselves with people of similar gender and background. A lack of an

“old girls club” combined with the success of the “old boys club” was identified as one of the greatest challenges confronting women working in intercollegiate athletics (Kanter, 1977; Lovett & Lowry, 1988; Moore & Konrad, 2010; Quarterman, Dupree, & Willis, 2006; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Young, 1990). In 2003, Whisenant conducted a study focusing on the gender makeup of high school athletic directors at the state level and how those numbers compared nationally. Twenty-two states provided the demographic information of their high school athletic directors, reporting 6,142 (87%) were males and 899 (13%) were females. According to Whisenant (2003), the findings indicated that the girls involved in athletics are competing on teams that are organized and coached by men. A study by Bower, Hums, and Grappendorf (2015) focused on the following two questions: what are the profiles of females working in athletic administration, and what are the gender specific greatest challenges that women working in intercollegiate athletic administration face? After surveying 1,834 women working in intercollegiate athletic administration listed by the National Directory of College Athletics in 2012, a lack of support for women athletic administrators, including the lack of role models and networking opportunities, was prevalent.

Strategies for Females to Obtain and Retain the High School Athletic Director Position

With the ever-increasing pressure to provide a successful athletic experience to high school student-athletes, it is crucial schools hire a highly qualified and skilled athletic director. Regardless of the size of the school, the job responsibilities remain the same and therefore the ability, aptitude, and characteristics required of the athletic director remain the same. In their 2001 quantitative study, Schneider and Stier conducted

a national study of 400 high school principals to define the importance of the role of athletic director, including necessary attributes. Using a Likert scale, the principals rated 19 items related to the formal or informal education necessary for an athletic director. The respondents articulated three common elements a person must embody when applying for the position of athletic director. First, they possess exceptional professional skills and positive personal qualities. Second, they have had some form of formal and informal education in the discipline of sports management/athletic administration. Finally, they have had some type of real-life experience regarding managing sports programs, typically through internships or practical experiences as part of their university work.

In a 2014 qualitative study, Lovelin and Hanold studied what female leaders considered critical to their development and advancement within the athletic field. Through the use of semi-structured interviews, the researchers interviewed ten female administrators from a myriad of sports-related positions to determine how they identified the set of skills that helped them attain and maintain success. First and foremost, female athletic leaders need not only possess a sophisticated skill set but more importantly, the ability to use the right skill at the appropriate time. Second, the findings suggested that management and leadership skills can be learned and that these skills as related to athletic administration are not tied to the gender of an individual.

In their mixed methods study, Grappendorf and Lough (2006) surveyed 23 females who held the position of athletic director at an NCAA Division I university. The findings revealed that women should focus on real-time experiences that provide on-the-job training and leadership exposure applicable to the role of the athletic director.

Furthermore, the study exposed the need to have women who are currently serving as athletic directors promote and recruit females to available athletic director positions actively. The authors stressed the importance of networking with other women in athletic administration to increase the number of females serving in similar positions (Whisenant et al., 2002).

Fowler, Smith, and Croskery (2017) investigated educational and career experiences of high school athletic directors. Using survey results of 112 Washington State high school principals and the resumes of 37 athletic directors, the results revealed two main elements when hiring an athletic director. First, the principals preferred to hire an athletic director with coursework in law, ethics, budget, and finance. The courses are required of all higher education programs and therefore are a non-factor when hiring an athletic director also fulfilling the role of assistant principal. The completion of the coursework would need to be verified if a candidate had not completed a higher education program. The importance of college courses for high school athletic directors as reported by high school principals was as follows: (a) legal aspects of sport, (b) ethics in sports management, and (c) budget and finance in sport. Second, the principals expressed the importance of a candidate having head coaching experience. Having served as a head coach serves as the closest example of the day-to-day job responsibilities of an athletic director, and therefore the on-the-job-training is invaluable. The importance of professional experiences for high school athletic directors as reported by high school principals is as follows: (a) head coach at the high school level, (b) developing and enforcing the athletics department policy handbook, and (c) serving as a certified teacher at the high school level. The high school principals reported the

importance of accomplishments for high school athletic directors as follows: (a) successfully working with parents, (b) successfully working with others, and (c) record of successfully preventing/solving problems. Next, the results from the athletic directors' resume content analysis showed the following three experiences as being important: (a) a certified teacher at the high school level, (b) successfully work with others, individuals/groups, and (c) assistant coach at the high school level. Finally, the researchers were able to rank the specific experience, accomplishment, or course as indicated on the athletic directors' resumes concerning the importance indicated as "extremely or very important" on the principals' survey. Of the resumes used in the study, 86.5% of the athletic directors indicated successful completion of coursework prior to seeking out such positions as most important. The authors of the study emphasized the importance of education and experience for an individual seeking a high school athletic director position. Specifically, completing coursework that will strengthen a candidate's knowledge of the legal, ethical, and budgetary aspects of high school sports. In addition to having experience serving as a high school head coach, which will also enhance one's knowledge of the aforementioned areas.

Summary

A review of the literature relevant to the high school athletic director was presented in Chapter 2. A historical explanation of the impact of Title IX legislation on female participation in interscholastic sports was reviewed. An overview of the organizations serving the high school athletic director was provided. The role of the high school athletic director was outlined. The obstacles females face in obtaining the high school athletic director position was discussed. The theoretical barriers females face

while serving in leadership positions was reviewed. The chapter concluded with the identification of strategies for females to obtain and retain the high school athletic director position.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology utilized in this study and is divided into sections that outline the research design, setting, population, sampling procedures, and measurement instruments. The data collection procedures, as well as the methods used for data analysis and synthesis, are presented in depth as they apply to the research questions. The limitations of this study are also stated.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study was to investigate the perceptions of high school athletic directors pertaining to women serving as athletic directors. The gender-disaggregated perceptions of athletic directors serving the three largest school classifications in Kansas, Class 4A, 5A, and Class 6A, was collected via quantitative survey, helped identify the perceived barriers faced by males and females in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. The survey results identified obstacles women faced in athletic leadership positions, which informed the development of a semi-structured interview protocol. The interviews provided an opportunity to better understand the experiences of current female high school athletic directors and how they overcame the barriers, obstacles, or stereotypes they faced. The methodology utilized for conducting the current study is divided into sections that discuss the research design, setting, population, sampling procedures, and measurement instruments. The data collection procedures, as well as the methods used for data analysis and synthesis, are presented as they apply to each of the three guiding research questions. The limitations for the current study are also stated.

Research Design

Creswell (2009) stated that research design, “involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods” (p. 5). An explanatory sequential mixed methods research design was employed for the current study. In the quantitative phase of the study, an electronic survey was administered to collect data from 108 male and female athletic directors at Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools. The qualitative

phase of the study was conducted as a follow-up to the quantitative results. The quantitative results were used to create the semi-structured interview protocol. After the interviews were conducted, the responses were analyzed for themes. Using the combined quantitative survey results and qualitative results, key findings were generated.

According to Creswell (2009), a survey research design creates a "quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 145). Therefore, claims can be made regarding a larger population using the sample's data. To collect data for this study, an online survey consisting of 38 items was utilized. The independent variables of this study were the responding athletic directors' experiences and gender, and the dependent variables were the survey responses and interview data themes of perceived obstacles and strategies for females to obtain and retain athletic leadership positions. Responses collected using a quantitative survey of Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A male and female athletic directors were analyzed using descriptive statistics and disaggregating results by gender to examine differential trends. The quantitative survey results identified obstacles faced by females in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. Additional explanation of these obstacles was needed to better understand the gender inequality around athletic leadership positions. Subsequently, female athletic directors were asked to participate in a qualitative interview to further explain the following: (a) the roles and responsibilities of a high school athletic director and how the gender of the athletic director could impact those responsibilities, (b) the obstacles females have faced in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director, and (c) the strategies that have been used by female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions. The female

athletic directors in Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools who took part in individual interviews had the option of participating through a recorded telephone call, conference video, or a face-to-face meeting. Once the interviews had been transcribed and the participants had the opportunity to validate the transcription, the interviews were coded and analyzed for prevailing themes. The final phase of the study was synthesizing the quantitative and qualitative results, which led to the key findings.

Population and Sampling

The target population for the quantitative survey portion of the study consisted of all athletic directors in Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A high schools. Purposive sampling procedures were employed as the survey was distributed to the entire population, resulting in a response rate of 54%. A total of fifty-eight responses to the electronic survey were received from 50 male and 8 female athletic directors in Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools. The target population for the qualitative portion of the study consisted of ten female athletic directors in Kansas Class 5A or Class 6A high schools. From this population, homogeneous sampling was used and all female athletic directors in Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools were invited for interviews. The data sample included three Class 6A female athletic directors who agreed to participate in a recorded telephone call, conference video, or a face-to-face interview.

Measurement Instruments

Quantitative. The High School Athletic Directors' Perception Survey was adapted from Welch (2012), whose study was designed to examine high school athletic directors' perceptions of the future of women as athletic directors in the state of Missouri. Permission was obtained from the author of the survey to slightly modify the

original instrument for more appropriate use in the current study. The letter of permission received from Wahlstrom to use and modify the survey is located in Appendix B. The content of the survey was not changed regarding what data was being collected; however, the wording was changed to make it suitable for the target population. For example, the word "Missouri" was changed to "Kansas." Moreover, two questions that did not fit the parameters of this research due to their focus on an administrative structure that is offered only at the collegiate level were omitted from the original survey.

Furthermore, the participants for the current study were Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A male and female athletic directors; whereas, the participants in the original study were superintendents, principals, and athletic directors in Missouri. The first eleven questions of the electronic survey gathered demographic information. Participants were asked the classification of the school where they currently worked (Item #2), their gender (Item #3), race/ethnicity (Item #4), age (Item #5), highest education degree attained (Item #6), other degrees/certificates/licenses obtained (Item #7), current position (Item #8), number of years in current position (Item #9), type of district for which they currently worked (Item #10), and the setting of the school district in which they worked (Item #11). Additionally, participants were asked about their professional networking experience prior to their first administrative experience (Item #12), whether or not they were a District Athletic Director (Item #13), and whether they had been an Athletic Director prior to their current position (Item #14).

The next nineteen questions, Items #15-33, were based on a 4-point Likert-scale of Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree on which participants rated statements regarding

females as high school athletic directors. For item #34, participants were asked to rate characteristics they felt were currently the most critical requirements for hiring someone as an athletic administrator at the high school level on a 5-point Likert-type scale from Least to Most Important. Specifically, the survey respondents were asked to rate what they felt would be the essential requirements for hiring someone as an athletic administrator at the high school level in the future on a 5-point Likert-type scale from Least to Most Important in item #35. Participants were asked to rate the reasons more women do not enter into high school athletic administration on a 7-point Likert-type scale from Least Common to Most Common in item #36. The survey participants were asked to record their responses to open-ended questions related to females serving as athletic directors in items #37-38. An electronic survey was developed and administered through Google Forms (see Appendix C). The Google Forms website was used to record responses on a password-protected computer, and raw data were downloaded for analysis.

Qualitative. Merriam (1998) defined semi-structured interviews as those that evolve from inquiry composed of both structured and unstructured questions. The semi-structured questions were open-ended to allow the respondents flexibility when responding to the questions, and also allowed follow-up questions for clarity of participants' responses. Furthermore, the interview questions provided an opportunity for deeper exploration of the trends seen from the quantitative survey results, and the collection of female athletic directors' perceptions based on their own experiences. Of the ten female athletic directors representing Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A high schools in the state of Kansas, three Class 6A athletic directors volunteered to participate

in the semi-structured interviews. The interview questions (see Appendix D) were created after the data collection and analysis of the quantitative survey, as those results were used to determine the types of questions explored during the interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

Before conducting research, permission was obtained from Baker University. An Institutional Review Board (IRB) request was submitted to Baker University. The Baker University IRB committee approved the research study on April 18, 2019 (see Appendix E).

Quantitative. The modification and administration of the electronic quantitative High School Athletic Directors' Perception Survey (adapted from Welch, 2012) was completed through the online survey system, Google Forms. An email was sent to the target population, including a link to access the survey, on April 20, 2019, with a closure date of April 28, 2019 (see Appendix F). Reminder emails were sent out to the target population on April 24, 2019 and April 28, 2019. The participants received no incentive, and provided consent prior to voluntarily participating. The participants had one week to anonymously complete the survey. All responses were kept confidential and not connected to individuals in any manner. The data from Google Forms was downloaded and imported into IBM® SPSS® Version 25. The data was kept secured on a password-protected computer for three years and then destroyed.

Qualitative. The results from the quantitative survey were used to develop the semi-structured interview protocol for the qualitative portion of the study. The interviews were video- or audio-recorded with participants' permission. The recordings were transcribed, and the data was analyzed for themes within each interview question

surrounding topic areas discussed during the interviews. The identity of all participants was kept confidential and names were changed to maintain anonymity. The creation and administration of the semi-structured open-ended questions allowed the respondents flexibility when responding to the questions, and also allowed follow-up questions for clarity of participants' responses or further explanation. Of the ten female athletic directors representing Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A high schools in the state of Kansas, three Class 6A athletic directors participated in the interviews. The remaining seven female athletic directors, representing Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A, were unwilling to participate. The semi-structured interview protocol questions, informed by the quantitative survey results, and can be found in Appendix G.

Research Questions

The current explanatory sequential mixed methods study was conducted to address three research questions. The quantitative survey during the first part of the study addressed RQ1. Both the quantitative survey and the qualitative interviews conducted during the second part of the study addressed RQ2 and RQ3.

RQ1. What do male and female athletic directors at Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools perceive as being their roles and responsibilities, and do their perceptions differ by gender, according to an electronic survey?

RQ2. To what extent do females perceive they face different obstacles than their male counterparts in obtaining and retaining Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school athletic director positions in Kansas, according to individual interviews?

RQ3. What strategies have been employed by Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions, according to individual interviews?

Data Analysis and Synthesis

The analysis for the quantitative and qualitative data worked communally, as the results of the quantitative survey provided topic areas to be further explored through the qualitative interviews. The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistical procedures which provided cross-tabulations of frequencies and percentages by respondent gender for the response categories associated with the survey items. The quantitative survey results were analyzed to determine barriers faced by females in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. The ten females currently serving as athletic directors were asked to participate in semi-structured individual interviews to further explore the different obstacles they had experienced in obtaining and retaining their position as a high school athletic director, and to describe the various strategies they had used to obtain and retain their positions as a high school athletic director. Of the ten female athletic directors representing Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A high schools in the state of Kansas, three Class 6A athletic directors participated in the interviews.

Quantitative. The data analysis for the quantitative survey consisted of general descriptive statistics including respondent frequencies and percentage of respondents' answers by category for each item disaggregated by gender. The survey responses were analyzed using cross-tabulations of frequencies and percentages for the response categories associated with each survey item. For the quantitative portion of the study,

informal comparisons between the percentages of responses per category by gender were made for specific survey items or groups of items. However, no statistical tests were conducted. The similarities and differences by gender were examined and those results were used to create the interview questions for the qualitative portion of the study.

Qualitative. The quantitative survey results were analyzed to determine the barriers faced by females in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. Subsequently, for the qualitative portion of the study, female athletic directors were asked to participate in semi-structured interviews to further explore the different obstacles they had experienced in obtaining and retaining their positions as high school athletic directors (interview questions #1, #2, and #3). Furthermore, the interviewees were asked to describe the various strategies they had used to obtain and retain their positions as high school athletic directors (interview question #4). Interviews were conducted with three participants, and the qualitative data were analyzed to address research questions two and three. Each interview was recorded using a digital recording device, and transcripts were generated from the recordings. The qualitative data from these transcripts was coded, and themes emerged pertaining to the obstacles participants experienced, as well as the strategies they employed to mitigate those obstacles in obtaining and retaining their high school athletic directors' positions. The resulting themes from the interviewees' responses were synthesized with the quantitative survey results.

Reliability and Trustworthiness

Mixed methods research is “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches,

concepts, or language into a single study” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). The study was thoroughly explained to participants, and two methods of data collection were employed. The first part of the study consisted of a quantitative survey. The second part of the study consisted of qualitative interviews that allowed for further explanation and a deeper understanding of the quantitative survey results. Reliability is the “degree to which an instrument consistently measures whatever it is measuring” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 182). For this study, a previously published survey instrument entitled, “The Study of High School Administrators’ Perceptions of the Future of Women as Athletic Directors in the State of Missouri” (Welch, 2012) was adapted for use in the quantitative phase. Credibility is “the quality of being believed or accepted as true, real, or honest” (Merriam-Webster, 2020). The three qualitative interviews were conducted via digital device and transcribed using the online Google transcription software, Cloud Speech-to-Text. Each participant received a transcript of their interview to verify its accuracy. No requests to change or edit their interview transcripts were made by any participant. The interviews were reviewed for common themes, and then the findings were summarized in alignment with the study’s research questions.

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher was a female Assistant Principal/Athletic Director in a Class 6A high school in the state of Kansas. The researcher held a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Studies Comprehensive in Secondary Education, a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership, and was a Doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership. The researcher had worked in education for 19 years, specifically, teaching at the secondary level for ten years, during which time she served as a varsity head coach. The researcher spent the

next nine years serving in the capacity of Assistant Principal/Athletic Director in a Class 6A high school in the state of Kansas.

Measures were taken toward the goal of reflecting perceptions accurately during both phases of the study. During the quantitative phase, respondents completed the survey with total anonymity, increasing the likelihood of honest item responses. During the qualitative phase, interviewees had the opportunity to check their own transcripts for accuracy and make any necessary corrections. Having worked in the same field as the setting of the current study, the researcher had her own biases about the topic. As one of the eleven female athletic directors currently serving in Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A high schools in Kansas, the researcher had experienced her own obstacles in obtaining the position and has faced challenges and sexual discrimination throughout her daily work experiences. The structure of the study, however, reduced bias from influencing the results through examining different types of data, including the objective quantitative survey and qualitative interviews for details of participants' personal experiences. An honest attempt was made by the researcher to remain objective while interpreting the qualitative data to control for researcher bias.

Limitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated, "limitations of a study are not under the control of the researcher" (p. 133). One limitation of the current study was the lack of generalization of the study results to other classifications of high schools in Kansas besides 4A, 5A, or 6A, or any other schools outside of Kansas. Additionally, the participating high school athletic directors had received their leadership training at a myriad of educational institutions, which may have prepared them differentially for their

future role as an athletic director. The final limitation of the current study was that participating high school athletic directors had vastly diverse backgrounds, which may have influenced or supported them differently to pursue the role of an athletic director.

Summary

The methodology employed for the current study was discussed in Chapter 3. The research design, setting, population, and sampling procedures were presented. The data collection procedures were provided, as well as a description of the quantitative and qualitative instruments employed to collect data. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis and synthesis procedures were outlined. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the reliability and trustworthiness regarding the study's methodology, the researcher's role, and the limitations of the study. Chapter 4 includes the results of the quantitative survey, the qualitative interviews, and the synthesis of these different types of evidence to address the research questions posed for the study.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study was to investigate perceptions of high school athletic directors currently working in the three largest school classifications, Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A, in the state of Kansas, related to women serving as athletic directors. Collected using a quantitative survey, the perceptions of Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A athletic directors in the State of Kansas helped to identify barriers faced by females in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. From this population, homogeneous sampling was used and all female athletic directors in Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools were invited to complete a qualitative interview to further explain the following: (a) the roles and responsibilities of a high school athletic director and how the gender of the athletic director could impact those roles, (b) the barriers females have faced in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director, and (c) the strategies that have been used by female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions. Included in this chapter is a presentation of the survey data analysis and a synopsis of the themes that emerged during the three semi-structured, open-ended question interviews. IBM® SPSS® Version 25 for Windows was used for data analysis of the quantitative survey responses. A voice-to-text application was used for producing transcripts of recorded interviews, with the qualitative analysis of those interviews being conducted by hand.

Research Questions

The study was conducted to address three research questions.

RQ1. What do male and female athletic directors at Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools perceive as being their roles and responsibilities, and do their perceptions differ by gender, according to an electronic survey?

RQ2. To what extent do females perceive they face different obstacles than their male counterparts in obtaining and retaining Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school athletic director positions in Kansas, according to individual interviews?

RQ3. What strategies have been employed by Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions, according to individual interviews?

Quantitative Phase Results

The population for the quantitative portion of the current study was 108 Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A high school athletic directors in the state of Kansas, and 58 of those completed the survey for a response rate of 54%. The demographics of the sample identified by the 58 respondents included 50 males, comprising 86.2% of the sample population, and 8 females, comprising the remaining 13.8% of the sample population. Forty-six, or 92% of all male respondents and six females, or 75% of all female respondents identified as White; whereas, four, or 8%, of all male respondents and two, or 25%, of all female respondents identified as representing a Minority race (Black, Hispanic, or Multi-Racial). Table 5 illustrates the total number of Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A athletic directors who responded to the electronic survey.

Table 5

Frequency and Percentage of Survey Respondents by Gender and School Classification

Classification	Male		Female		Total within Class	
	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc
Class 4A	17	34.0%	1	12.5%	18	31.0%
Class 5A	30	26.0%	2	25.0%	15	25.9%
Class 6A	20	40.0%	5	62.5%	25	43.1%
Total within						
Gender	50	86.2%	8	13.8%	58	100.0%

Of the 58 respondents, the largest age group represented by both genders was ages 46-55, with 39.7% of the sample population falling within that range. The age range of 36-45 included 27.6% of the respondents, ranking second for all males and third for all females. The age range of 56-66, represented the second highest range for all female respondents and third for all male respondents. Table 6 shows the age categories of the Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A high school athletic directors who responded to the electronic survey.

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage of Survey Respondents by Gender and Age Range

Age Category	Male		Female		Total within Age	
	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc
25-35	6	12.0%	0	0.0%	6	10.3%
36-45	15	30.0%	1	12.5%	16	27.6%
46-55	18	36.0%	5	62.5%	23	39.7%
56-66	10	20.0%	2	25.0%	12	20.7%
66 or Older	1	2.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.7%
Total within Gender	50	86.2%	8	13.8%	58	100.0%

For 81.0% of the survey respondents, the highest education degree attained was a Master's Degree for males and females, with 6.9% having earned a Bachelor's Degree, and 6.9% having earned a Doctorate, and the remaining 5.2% having earned a Specialist Degree. In addition to serving as Athletic Director, the additional positions held by the respondents varied, with 53.4% of the sample population also serving as an Assistant Principal and 22.4% classifying their position as "Other." Moreover, 10.3% responded as serving as a Full-Time Teacher, 8.6% as a Coach, 3.4% as a Part-Time Teacher, and 1.7% as an Assistant Principal and Coach. In addition to serving as a high school athletic director, 26% of the males and 12% of the females also served as the district athletic director. Prior to serving in their current position, 28% of the males reported having

previously served as a high school athletic director; whereas, 25% of the females reported the same experience. Table 7 displays the number of years Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A athletic directors who responded to the electronic survey have served in the position.

Table 7

Years of Experience for Class 4A, 5A, and 6A Athletic Director Survey Respondents

Years of Experience	Male		Female		Total within Years	
	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc
1-5	23	46.0%	3	37.5%	26	44.8%
6-10	13	26.0%	2	25.0%	15	25.9%
11-15	6	12.0%	1	12.5%	7	12.1%
16-20	4	8.0%	2	25.0%	6	10.3%
21-30	2	4.0%	0	0.0%	2	3.4%
31 or More	2	4.0%	0	0.0%	2	3.4%
Total within Gender	50	86.2%	8	13.8%	58	100.0%

The most frequent response for number of years spent in their current position was 1-5 years and included 44.8% of all respondents; with 46.0% of all male respondents and 37.5% of all female respondents within this range. The second highest range of experience in their current role was 6-10 years, which encompassed 25.9% of all respondents; with 26.0% of all male respondents and 25.0% of all female respondents in this range. For the remaining 29.2% of all respondents, 12.1% had 11-15 years of

experience, 10.3% had 16-20 years of experience, and 6.8% had 21 or more years of experience. Table 8 illustrates the school setting for Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A athletic directors who responded to the electronic survey.

Table 8

School Setting Category for Class 4A, 5A, and 6A Athletic Director Survey Respondents

Setting Category	Male		Female		Total within Setting	
	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc
Suburban	22	44.0%	4	50.0%	26	44.8%
Urban	12	24.0%	2	25.0%	14	24.1%
Rural	16	32.0%	2	25.0%	18	31.0%
Total within Gender	50	86.2%	8	13.8%	58	100.0%

Of the 58 respondents, 96.6% worked at a public school. Of those, 48 were male respondents and eight were female respondents. The remaining two male respondents, or 4% worked at a private school. The highest percentage of respondents, 44.0% of all males and 50.0% of all females, worked in a suburban setting. The second highest percentage of respondents, 31.0%, worked in a rural setting; and of those, 32.0% were males and 25.0% were females. The remaining 24.1% of all respondents worked in an urban setting, comprised of 24.0% male respondents and 24.1% female respondents. Of the eight female respondents, three, or 13.8% of the sample, participated in the semi-structured interviews, comprising of 37.5% of the female survey respondents.

Table 9

Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Organizational Structure Survey Items

Survey Items	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Our organizational structure or administration encourages/promotes more women in athletic leadership roles.	Male (n=50)	18.0%	62.0%	20.0%	0.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	15.5%	60.3%	24.1%	0.0%
Our organizational structure or administration should encourage/promote more women into athletic leadership roles.	Male (n=50)	18.0%	72.0%	8.0%	2.0%
	Female (n=8)	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	22.4%	67.2%	8.6%	1.7%

Survey participants were asked to rate their level of agreement regarding their respective district's promotion of women into athletic leadership roles. These items included statements about the organizational structure, hiring process, role of the athletic director, and existence of gender discrimination in respondents' districts. Table 9 displays the percentages of survey responses, disaggregated by gender, to items regarding their districts' organizational structure. Of the 58 respondents, 80% of males strongly agreed or agreed that their organizational structure currently encourages/promotes more women in athletic leadership roles, whereas 50% of females strongly agreed or agreed. The two genders, however, were more in alignment with the premise that districts should be encouraging/promoting more women into athletic leadership roles with 90% of males and 87.5% of females strongly agreeing or agreeing.

Table 10

Percentage of Respondents by Gender on the Hiring Process Survey Items

Survey Items	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Women in my school district do not apply for leadership roles as athletic directors.	Male (n=50)	8.0%	16.0%	62.0%	14.0%
	Female (n=8)	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	10.3%	20.7%	56.9%	12.1%
There are a limited number of women who apply for leadership positions in athletic administration because of how job announcements for these positions are currently written.	Male (n=50)	2.0%	6.0%	62.0%	30.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	1.7%	5.2%	67.2%	25.9%
There would be more opportunities for women to apply for leadership positions in athletic administration if job announcements for these positions were written differently.	Male (n=50)	2.0%	8.0%	60.0%	30.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	1.7 %	10.3%	62.1%	25.9%
My district does not hire more women as athletic directors due to their lack of experience as head coaches.	Male (n=50)	4.0%	0.0%	58.0%	38.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%
	Total (n=58)	3.4 %	1.7%	58.6%	36.2%
My district does not hire more women as athletic directors due to their lack of education or administrative experience.	Male (n=50)	2.0%	6.0%	60.0%	32.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	12.5%	62.5%	25.0%
	Total (n=58)	1.7%	6.9%	60.3%	31.0%
I know of qualified females who do not apply for job openings in athletic administration.	Male (n=50)	2.0%	38.0%	52.0%	8.0%
	Female (n=8)	12.5%	37.5%	25.0%	25.0%
	Total (n=58)	3.4 %	37.9%	48.3%	10.3%
The most qualified applicants are being hired in high school athletic administration regardless of the applicants' gender.	Male (n=50)	26.0%	66.0%	6.0%	2.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	62.5%	25.0%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	22.4 %	65.5%	8.6%	3.4%

The percentages of responses for districts' hiring process items further clarified survey responses to questions as to why there may or may not be females serving as high school athletic directors in respective districts is displayed in Table 10. Seven statements asked survey respondents to rate their level of agreement with the hiring practices of females as athletic directors, and there was a noteworthy difference in responses to the statement, "Women in my school district do not apply for leadership roles as athletic directors." Of the 58 respondents, 75% of females strongly agreed or agreed, while 24% of males strongly agreed or agreed. When looking at the level of disagreement with the statement, the numbers reversed with 76% of male and 25% of females disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Another statement with varying responses by gender was, "There would be more opportunities for women to apply for leadership positions in athletic administration if job announcements for these positions were written differently." Ninety percent of the 50 male respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, while only 75% of the eight female respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The final statement, "The most qualified applicants are being hired in high school athletic administration regardless of the applicants' gender," also revealed a disparity in responses by gender as 92% of males either agreed or strongly agreed, and only 62.5% of females agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 11

Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Athletic Director Position Survey Items

Survey Items	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The time commitment of an athletic director plays a significant role in the low numbers of women as athletic directors.	Male (n=50)	6.0%	42.0%	42.0%	10.0%
	Female (n=8)	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	10.3%	43.1%	37.9%	8.6%
Male traits or characteristics dominate leadership roles in athletic administration more than female traits or characteristics.	Male (n=50)	2.0%	20.0%	60.0%	18.0%
	Female (n=8)	50.0%	25.0%	12.5%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	8.6%	20.7%	53.4%	17.2%

The perceived reasons for females not applying for high school athletic director positions are illustrated in Table 11. The first of these athletic director position survey items focused on the time commitment required to be an athletic director and the responses of the 58 survey participants showed a noteworthy difference in perspective. Almost 89% of female respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the time commitment required was a factor; whereas, 50% of the male respondents strongly agreed or agreed. The second statement for this section of the survey also showed great variance when respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement for the male traits or characteristics dominating leadership roles in athletic administration. Seventy-five percent of the females, but only 22% of the males strongly agreed or agreed. The numbers were almost reversed for the other end of the scale, with 78% of males and 25% of females disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Table 12

Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Discrimination Survey Items

Survey Items	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There is currently an underrepresentation of women in athletic administrative roles in secondary education.	Male (n=50)	18.0%	64.0%	16.0%	2.0%
	Female (n=8)	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	25.9%	58.6%	13.8%	1.7%
My school district will continue to be limited from obtaining and retaining positions as athletic directors.	Male (n=50)	2.0%	20.0%	68.0%	10.0%
	Female (n=8)	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	3.4%	20.7%	67.2%	8.6%
There is gender discrimination in high school athletic administration.	Male (n=50)	0.0%	10.0%	66.0%	24.0%
	Female (n=8)	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	1.7%	12.1%	65.5%	20.7%
Something should be done regarding sexual discrimination in the hiring of athletic leadership positions.	Male (n=50)	64.0%	26.0%	0.0%	10.0%
	Female (n=8)	37.5%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	60.3%	31.0%	0.0%	8.6%

Survey respondents' views on the lack of representation of female athletic directors, and whether or not gender discrimination and sexual harassment existed within their district's organizational structures is addressed in Table 12. All 58 survey respondents were in accord on the four statements pertaining to gender discrimination in their districts, with balanced representation for the strongly agree/agree and disagree/strongly disagree ratings. Of the four statements, the one with the greatest level in differencing opinion was, "There is gender discrimination in high school athletic administration." For this survey item, 90% of the male respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed; whereas, 62.5% of the female respondents agreed or strongly agreed. The

other discordant statement for this set of survey items was that 10% of the 50 male respondents strongly disagreed that, “Something should be done regarding sexual discrimination in the hiring of athletic leadership positions,” while 90% of the male respondents agreed or strongly agreed. One hundred percent of female respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 13

Percentage of Respondents by Gender on the Future of Female AD Survey Items

Survey Items	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The number of women as athletic directors in my district or the state of Kansas will increase during the next five years.	Male (n=50)	12.0%	70.0%	16.0%	2.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	62.5%	37.5%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	10.3%	69.0%	19.0%	1.7%
The number of women as athletic directors in my district or the state of Kansas will increase during the next ten years.	Male (n=50)	18.0%	70.0%	10.0%	2.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	15.5%	67.2%	13.8%	3.4%

The percentages of respondents by agreement rating category and gender for survey items regarding the future of female athletic directors in their districts and in the state of Kansas are presented in Table 13. Of the 58 respondents, 82% of males either strongly agreed or agreed that the number of women serving as high school athletic directors in the state of Kansas will increase during the next five years. Furthermore, 88% of males strongly agreed or agreed that the number will increase during the next ten years. While females shared similar beliefs, their percentages were slightly different. Almost 63% of female respondents strongly agreed or agreed that there would be an

increase in the number of women athletic directors in the state of Kansas during the next five years, and 50% agreed an increase will occur during the next ten years.

Table 14

Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Professional Development/Formal Mentorship

Survey Items

Survey Items	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school district offers professional development/formal mentorships for any individual interested in athletic administration.	Male (n=50)	6.0%	26.0%	54.0%	14.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	37.5%	25.0%	37.5%
	Total (n=58)	5.2%	27.6%	50.0%	17.2%
I would like the opportunity for there to be professional development/formal mentorships for any individual interested in athletic administration.	Male (n=50)	24.0%	72.0%	4.0%	0.0%
	Female (n=8)	37.5%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	25.9%	70.7%	3.4%	0.0%

Table 14 presents the percentages of respondents by agreement rating category for survey items regarding the professional development/formal mentorships of individuals interested in athletic administration. The 58 respondents were in alignment with their agreement ratings of statements as to whether or not their school districts offered professional development/formal mentorships for any individual interested in athletic administration, with 68% of males and 62.5% of females having disagreed or strongly disagreed. The second survey item with which participants rated their agreement pertaining to professional development/formal mentorship opportunities revealed an inverse of responses to the prior statement. One hundred percent of females and 96% of males strongly agreed or agreed that they would like the opportunity to be available for

professional development/formal mentorships for any individual interested in athletic administration.

Table 15

Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Most Critical Requirements for Hiring an AD

Survey Items	Gender	Least Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important	Most Important
Certification by the NIAAA	Male (n=50)	40.0%	18.0%	24.0%	14.0%	4.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	34.5%	19.0%	27.6%	15.5%	3.4%
Master's Degree in Athletic Administration or Sports Management	Male (n=50)	28.0%	20.0%	24.0%	18.0%	10.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	24.1%	19.0%	25.9%	20.7%	10.3%
Head Coaching Experience of No Less than Five Years in Any Sport	Male (n=50)	4.0%	10.0%	20.0%	34.0%	32.0%
	Female (n=8)	12.5%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	62.5%
	Total (n=58)	5.2%	8.6%	20.7%	29.3%	36.2%
Administrative Internship or Mentorship with Athletic Director	Male (n=50)	10.0%	18.0%	30.0%	34.0%	8.0%
	Female (n=8)	12.5%	0.0%	62.5%	12.5%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	10.3%	15.5%	34.5%	31.0%	8.6%
Administrative Experience as a High School Assistant Principal	Male (n=50)	20.0%	20.0%	26.0%	26.0%	8.0%
	Female (n=8)	12.5%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	19.0%	17.2%	25.9%	29.3%	8.6%

The percentages of respondents, by gender, rating the most critical requirements for the hiring of an athletic director, on a 5-point Likert-type scale from Least Important to Most Important, are presented in Table 15. The ratings of the requirements critical to hiring an athletic director from least to most important varied amongst the 58 male and female respondents. While the number one most important critical requirement was the

same for both genders, with 66% of males and 62.5% of females rating that head coaching experience of no less than five years in any sport was the most important requirement for hiring an athletic director. The order of the critical requirement items rated as important or most important for the male respondents were:

- administrative internship or mentorship with athletic director (42%);
- administrative experience as a high school assistant principal (34%);
- a Master's Degree in Athletic Administration or Sports Management (28%);
- certification by the National Interscholastic of Athletic Administrators Association (18%).

The critical requirement items rated as important or most important for female respondents had a slight variation and in order were:

- administrative experience as a high school assistant principal (62.5%);
- a Master's Degree in Athletic Administration or Sports Management (50%);
- certification by the National Interscholastic of Athletic Administrators Association and administrative internship or mentorship with athletic director (25% each).

Table 16

Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Essential Requirements for Future ADs

Survey Items	Gender	Least Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important	Most Important
Certification by the NIAAA	Male (n=50)	34.0%	16.0%	22.0%	20.0%	8.0%
	Female (n=8)	37.5%	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	34.5%	13.8%	20.7%	24.1%	6.9%
Master's Degree in Athletic Administration or Sports Management	Male (n=50)	28.0%	16.0%	24.0%	12.0%	20.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%
	Total (n=58)	24.1%	15.5%	24.1%	15.5%	20.7%
Head Coaching Experience of No Less than Five Years in Any Sport	Male (n=50)	4.0%	12.0%	20.0%	40.0%	24.0%
	Female (n=8)	12.5%	0.0%	37.5%	0.0%	50.0%
	Total (n=58)	5.2%	10.3%	22.4%	34.5%	27.6%
Administrative Internship or Mentorship with Athletic Director	Male (n=50)	10.0%	12.0%	42.0%	26.0%	10.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%
	Total (n=58)	8.6%	10.3%	43.1%	25.9%	12.1%
Administrative Experience as a High School Assistant Principal	Male (n=50)	24.0%	16.0%	32.0%	24.0%	4.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
	Total (n=58)	20.7%	17.2%	31.0%	24.1%	6.9%

The percentages of respondents, by gender, ranking essential requirements for the hiring of an athletic director in the future, on a 5-point Likert-type scale from Least Important to Most Important, are presented in Table 16. The requirements essential to hiring an athletic director rated as important or most important varied amongst the 58 male and female respondents. The order of important or most important essential requirements for hiring an athletic director in the future for male respondents were:

- head coaching experience no less than five years in any sport (64%);
- administrative internship or mentorship with athletic director (36%);
- a Master's Degree in Athletic Administration or Sports Management (32%);
- administrative experience as a high school assistant principal (28%);
- certification by the National Interscholastic of Athletic Administrators Association (28%).

The top-rated important or most important essential requirement for hiring an athletic director in the future for female respondents was a Master's Degree in Athletic Administration or Sports Management (62.5%). The other four categories of future requirements for hiring athletic directors - certification by the National Interscholastic of Athletic Administrators Association, head coaching experience no less than five years in any sport, administrative internship or mentorship with athletic director, and administrative experience as a high school assistant principal – received the same percentages of females rating them as important or most important garnering 50% each.

Table 17

Percentage of Respondents by Gender on Reasons for Lack of Female ADs

Survey Items	Gender	Least Common						Most Common
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Job Availability	Male (n=50)	10.0%	10.0%	14.0%	28.0%	22.0%	6.0%	10.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	12.5%	12.5%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	8.6%	10.3%	13.8%	25.9%	22.4%	8.6%	10.3%
Burn Out	Male (n=50)	10.0%	22.0%	14.0%	22.0%	16.0%	12.0%	4.0%
	Female (n=8)	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	12.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	10.3%	19.0%	13.8%	20.7%	19.0%	12.1%	5.2%
Lack of Benefits	Male (n=50)	20.0%	28.0%	24.0%	16.0%	6.0%	4.0%	2.0%
	Female (n=8)	25.0%	37.5%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
	Total (n=58)	20.7%	29.3%	20.7%	15.5%	5.2%	3.4%	5.2%
Time Requirements	Male (n=50)	8.0%	8.0%	10.0%	8.0%	14.0%	28.0%	24.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	75.0%
	Total (n=58)	6.9%	6.9%	8.6%	8.6%	12.1%	25.9%	31.0%
Higher Salary Required	Male (n=50)	18.0%	18.0%	22.0%	20.0%	10.0%	10.0%	2.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	15.5%	17.2%	19.0%	19.0%	12.1%	13.8%	3.4%
Unfavorable Stereotyping of Women in Athletic Administration	Male (n=50)	26.0%	26.0%	26.0%	8.0%	20.0%	4.0%	2.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%	25.0%	12.5%
	Total (n=58)	22.4%	25.9%	12.1%	10.3%	19.0%	6.9%	3.4%
Knowledge of Female AD Unhappy in the Position	Male (n=50)	40.0%	18.0%	16.0%	8.0%	6.0%	10.0%	2.0%
	Female (n=8)	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
	Total (n=58)	34.5%	19.0%	17.2%	12.1%	6.9%	8.6%	1.7%

The percentages of respondents, by gender, ranking the reasons for a lack of female athletic directors, on a 7-point Likert-type scale from Least Common to Most Common, are presented in Table 17. These rankings of the reasons for a lack of female

athletic directors from Least Common to Most Common on the 7-point scale were varied amongst the 58 male and female respondents. The order of the reasons for a lack of female athletic directors that were ranked as 6 or 7 toward the Most Common end of the scale for the male respondents were:

- time requirements (52%);
- job availability and burnout (16%, respectively);
- higher salary required and knowledge of female athletic directors who are/were unhappy in the position (12%, respectively);
- lack of benefits and unfavorable stereotyping of women in athletic administration (6%, respectively).

The reasons for a lack of female athletic directors that were ranked as 6 or 7 toward the Most Common end of the scale had a slight variation for the female respondents and in order were:

- time requirements (87.5%);
- higher salary required (50%);
- job availability (40%)
- unfavorable stereotyping of women in athletic administration (37.5%);
- burnout and lack of benefits (25% each).

Qualitative Phase Results

In addition to the quantitative data, female athletic directors were selected through a homogenous sampling process to participate in a qualitative interview to further explain the following: (a) the roles and responsibilities of a high school athletic director and how the gender of the athletic director could impact those roles, (b) the barriers females face

in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director, and (c) the strategies that have been used by female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions. The researcher extended invitations to all Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A female athletic directors, and received consent from three Class 6A participants.

Recorded interviews were transcribed using the Google voice-to-text application, then reviewed and corrected when following the transcript while listening to the interviews again. The interview transcripts were sent to the female athletic directors who participated in the interviews for validation, and no edits were requested. A complete transcription for all three interviews can be found in Appendix H. Qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts was conducted for the prevalent themes amongst the interviewees when responding to the questions. The researcher coded and analyzed the transcripts to determine themes by identifying and deducing the interviewees' perceptions noting the repetitious topics, common verbiage and phrases, and differences between interviewees' responses for each of the five questions. The resulting themes and participants perspectives are outlined by interview question.

Qualitative Interviews

QIQ1. Please tell me about the process of earning your current position as a high school athletic director.

Participant 1: I was a high school head coach, and my master's degree is a specialist in secondary school administration, and the position came open to become an athletic director several different times in the district I was working in at the time.

Participant 2: Well, it just ended up being circumstances. Ironically, I was an Associate Principal and our District AD asked if I was interested in the position. He told me to think about it and talk to the Building Principal. I made sure they would not cut my salary as an Associate Principal - that was very important to me - and everybody said it looks like it's her decision - you don't have to move if you don't want to, you can stay in your current position. So, it was really my choice.

Participant 3: I started out as a teacher and coach and in a district in Johnson County. I moved to another district in the county, also as a teacher and coach, but with the understanding with the principal that I went to work for, my ultimate goal was to move into administration. So, after one year of teaching and coaching in the building where I'm currently the athletic director, I had the opportunity to apply for the athletic director job when it opened up and was hired after that first year.

To summarize the themes in question one, two of the three participants shared similar paths to becoming an athletic director, noting they had previous experience serving as a head coach at the high school level. While not a requirement to earning the position of a high school athletic director, the two interviewees spoke to the advantage of having served as a head coach and the understanding that experience provided them when transitioning into the position of a high school athletic director. The third interviewee's path of becoming an athletic director was different than the others as she did not actively pursue the position. Instead, the interviewee was asked by the District Athletic Director to transfer from one administrative position to another.

QIQ2. What specific challenges have you faced in reaching your current position?

Participant 1: I was blessed, and I didn't have any challenges becoming an AD, but the challenges that I have currently in this position are sometimes earning the respect of the men just because it's a man's world that we live in. When it comes to being an athletic director at a high school, we are in the minority, and so sometimes you run into those old school folks that don't really want to listen to you because they believe that they know best. And certain administrators I don't believe respect you as much. I think what has earned me respect more so than maybe somebody young starting out that is having to prove themselves is my experience. However, for me, probably for the first time in many, many years, the lack of respect has been more from other administrators.

Participant 2: Number one would be that I am working with adults now. Really as an associate principal, you work mostly with students. As an athletic director, staff see you as their boss. I think there's a bunch of other factors there that coaches have to deal with and, for me personally, I was approachable as an administrator and now they see me as an athletic director.

Participant 3: I tried on several occasions to get into what was considered kind of a grassroots administrative program within that district and was turned down for those openings in a previous district but was told not to worry that I had everything that it takes to be an administrator. Yet I didn't feel like there was going to be that opportunity to advance. In the district that I'm currently in, I felt very much encouraged and supported in my goal, and I think the fact that I had a

principal who was a former coach himself, really had a vested interest in me having that opportunity to move into administration. So as far as challenges, I think it was just being able to show that I'm right for the position. I'm a big believer in being in the right place at the right time and networking with the people around you, and I think I was surrounded by people who believed in me and thought that I was a good fit for that opportunity.

For question two, the participants provided different examples of specific challenges they had faced in reaching their current position based on their own personal experiences. There wasn't one specific challenge that each interviewee had faced in reaching their current position of athletic director; rather, the challenges for each participant were personal and experienced at different times throughout their careers. These ranged from the interviewees having to prove themselves amongst their male counterparts, earning respect from coaches, and encountering gender discrimination.

QIQ3. Do you think these challenges are different for men pursuing/maintaining similar positions?

Participant 1: Absolutely. Being a high school athletic director and a woman - there are those that are shocked, and they wonder why, so yeah, I would agree.

Participant 2: When we got here, someone asked a female AD and colleague of mine, "Does your husband coach or is your husband here?" She's like, "No, I'm one of them." and so I think just the perception is number one. Perception, as much as things have changed in our society, has not changed at the higher levels. They are changing, but there are still not as many women athletic directors at the Division I level. It's the stereotype that only a man can do this job and

there's a reason - we both know that - it is because football and basketball revenue. Sometimes it does feel like it's a man's world - it is either sink or swim.

Participant 3: Even though I hate to say this, but it's 2019 and I think there still is very much a good old boy network in athletic administration. I still today could pick up my phone - if somebody calls to speak to the athletic director - I can pick up my phone and they will say I was calling to talk to the athletic director and I will say you got her and they'll be taken aback by the fact that there's a female on the other end of the phone. So, I think yes, I think there are still some challenges that go along with it. I don't think once you're in and establish yourself and develop a good reputation that there is necessarily an effort on the part of anybody for you to not maintain that position. I think that I am respected enough in my job, and I don't think that there is anyone who would not want me to maintain the position.

To summarize the themes in question three, the participants responded in agreement that their challenges were different from men pursuing/maintaining similar positions. Each interviewee shared a situation in which they had each experienced occupational gender discrimination, and they all echoed the sentiment of it being a “man’s world” and the “good old boy network” very much being prevalent in their present work environments. The three participants were able to provide real-life examples of gender bias in their day-to-day job, centered around people’s dismay when they find out that they (females) are a high school athletic director.

QIQ4. How do you mitigate the most challenging aspects, or what strategies have you used, to retain your position as a high school athletic director?

Participant 1: I would be out there trying to prove who I am, what I believe in, and support the coaches because to them that's my job - to support the coaches and to defend them when they get questioned by my parents and student-athletes. I think that's probably what saved me is that I value them and I think they realize that I value them as coaches and they don't get paid enough to put up with a lot of crap. So, when I have supported them and defended them when parents want them fired or they want their jobs, it has paid off in the long run and I think that's how I've been able to earn the respect of the coaches. It has been a process.

Participant 2: Well, I think I'm a hard worker. Whatever role or position that people put me, people cannot outwork me. My principal has said to me that he doesn't worry about me - that I am going to get my work done and I am going to do what I am supposed to do. The most challenging aspect is that there are all of those things out there that I want to accomplish, but it is a matter of trying to follow a process to get there. Trying to get more time to accomplish so much.

Participant 3: As an athletic director, I think first and foremost I have tried to be fair and I've tried to be consistent. I think it's important for all of our coaches, regardless of what sport they coach and at what level they coach, that they understand me that they can trust me and that there is a level of respect there, whether they agree or disagree. I think that they know me well enough to know that I'm going to shoot straight with them - they're going to get an honest answer - and I'm going to support them. I have told them that if they ever lose their job because of wins or losses that I will walk out the door with them because I don't

believe that high school athletics should be all about winning and losing. So, I think establishing good relationships with them, letting them know that they have your support.

To summarize the themes in question four, the participants stated work ethic, proving oneself, providing support to coaches, and fostering relationships with all stakeholders as ways to mitigate the most challenging aspects and retain their position as a high school athletic director. The minutia of the job – i.e., daily administrative tasks that are required by the district and/or state – were not stated as reasons for the female interviewees believing they had been able to retain their position. Rather, it was the relational aspects of the job that they felt had allowed them to retain their positions as high school athletic directors.

QIQ5. Given the following choices, how could a woman who is interested in pursuing a career as a high school athletic director best prepare herself? Please rank in importance and explain why you ranked #1 as most important, and why you ranked #5 as least important. The choices are:

- coaching experience;
- job shadowing/mentoring/networking with current high school athletic directors;
- obtaining the appropriate building-level certification;
- previous administrative experience;
- applying for positions.

Participant 1: Coaching experience is most important as they have to know you walked in their shoes in order for you to mentor them because that is the biggest part of your job - helping your coaches and dealing with the families that they are

servicing. Obviously just to even apply for the job, you have to get the certification. I was an assistant principal before I was an athletic director and I don't know that prepared me because I did discipline and I did teacher evaluations. To be a successful athletic director, you may have to do that in your job, but I don't think that prepares you for the really hard part of running tournaments and doing schedules. I don't know that to me that would be last, of course mentoring and shadowing always helps.

Participant 2: I do think that there's no one answer. I've got a few - people seeing you, how you carry yourself, and what committees you are serving on - that's really important. Being approachable and being fair. Having the appropriate previous experience and applying for the position - they are all important.

Participant 3: So coaching experience, job networking with current high school ADs, having the appropriate building level certification, previous admin experience, and applying for positions. I think, and I can really only say for myself, I think previous coaching experience has been huge for me and so I would probably rank that up there first. Although I think you have to have a degree in the appropriate certification or obviously you won't get hired. I think in some school districts, the athletic director, for example in our district has other hats that they wear, whereas in some school districts and in some states, you are purely just an athletic director and that's all that you oversee. So, you may not have to have the administrative certification that that *[sic]* we have to have because of our responsibilities that go along with it. But I would say probably the first for me,

what's been the most important in my job, has been my previous coaching experience. I think that gives me a little bit of an edge with some of our coaches based on the fact that they know that I have been in their shoes. As far as the least important, I'm going to say probably applying for positions. I think getting a job in administration is very much networking and being in the right place at the right time.

To summarize the themes in question five, the participants responded the top-ranking choice for the most important way in which a female can prepare herself for a career as a high school athletic director was coaching experience. The respondents commented on the impact shared experiences amongst the athletic director and coaching staff can have on the overall operation of the athletic department. Having a first-hand, shared experience of what head coaches experience in their role helps to create a trusting relationship fostered on having walked in their shoes. Furthermore, having been a head coach provides credibility to the athletic director when interacting with coaches, student-athletes, and parents.

The interviewees also commented on an individual obtaining the appropriate certification in order to serve as an athletic director as a requirement for a woman who is interested in pursuing the position to prepare herself. Depending on the size and location of the school in which a candidate applies, the individual may or may not need to have a Master's Degree in School Leadership or Athletic Administration to earn the position of high school athletic director. On the contrary, school districts may require more than a Master's Degree in order to earn the position. For example, some school districts may

require that applicants have high school head coaching experience, or that the individual must have experience serving as a Department Chair.

Finally, the interviewees discussed the advantage of a candidate having previous administrative experience in preparation for pursuing the position of high school athletic director. A candidate with experience working in a different community, with a variety of administrators and coaches, can be invaluable when establishing yourself in a new position. Having the opportunity to bring past experiences with them can establish immediate credibility, provide reassurance that they can handle the job responsibilities, and can offer a different perspective to the new community/school.

Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Results. Combining the results of the quantitative data and the qualitative interview responses, the researcher synthesized the overarching themes of the current study. The first prevailing theme was the importance of preparing for the position of high school athletic director prior to applying for it. Whether serving as a high school head coach or as an administrator in another school district, the interviewees discussed the importance of having first-hand experience of the job. Not only does this establish immediate credibility with a coaching staff, it also makes for a smoother transition into the position.

The second prevailing theme of the current study was presence of gender discrimination/bias in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. When discussing the challenges they faced when applying for the position of high school athletic director, all three interviewees echoed the sentiment of it being a “man’s world” and the “good old boy network” is very much alive. Furthermore, they talked about not allowing informal social networks and gender ideologies to serve as a deterrent for

applying for the position. The three interviewees were able to provide real-life examples of gender bias in their day-to-day job. The interviewees reinforced that you do not have to be a male to perform the job duties; rather, you have to be a qualified candidate.

The final theme of the current study was the set of skills and characteristics a person needs to retain the position of high school athletic director. In addition to the three interviewees having discussed the importance of fostering relationships with coaches, establishing credibility with a coaching staff, and networking with other athletic directors, the quantitative survey respondents echoed the same sentiments. The idea of having a strong work ethic and possessing organizational and time management skills were also frequently highlighted in both the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews.

Summary

Chapter 4 consisted of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis results regarding the perceptions of high school athletic directors currently working in Kansas Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A high schools, as they related to women serving as athletic directors. Collected using a quantitative survey, the perceptions of Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A athletic directors in the State of Kansas identified barriers faced by females in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. A summarization of the descriptive statistics, including the demographic information of the survey respondents was included. Subsequently, female athletic directors were asked to participate in a qualitative interview in order to further investigate and explain the quantitative survey results. The themes arising from the qualitative interview transcript analysis were described for each interview question.

The interpretations and conclusions of the results for the current study are discussed in Chapter 5. Furthermore, a summary is provided of the study, including an overview of the problem, the purpose statement and research questions, a brief review of the research methodology, and the major findings as they relate to the previous research literature surrounding the topic. Finally, implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

Chapter 5 presents the interpretations of the findings and recommendations related to the study. A summary of the current study, including overview of the problem, the purpose statement and research questions, and a review of methodology is included. The results of the analysis as they relate to the research, and the major findings for the study are discussed in Chapter 5. The chapter concludes with implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Study Summary

The study summary provides an overview of the explanatory sequential mixed methods study that explored the perceptions of male and female Kansas athletic directors serving in Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools regarding the roles, responsibilities, and obstacles faced in obtaining and retaining their respective positions. The study summary begins with an overview of the problem, and a review of the purpose for the current study, and the guiding research questions. Next, it provides a review of the methodology. Finally, a report of the major findings is provided in the study summary.

Overview of the problem. Gender inequality is woven throughout the fabric of America's workforce. Women are being overlooked for athletic leadership positions because of a lack of experience in playing a sport that they were unable to play because of their gender (Gordon, 2017). To defy the societal predetermination and ensure gender equality in high school athletic director positions, it is imperative that females be afforded the same opportunities as their male counterparts to obtain and retain athletic leadership positions. The selection of more women to serve high school communities as athletic

directors could help break down the stereotypical hiring barriers that have traditionally existed. Having more of a gender balance in athletic leadership contributes to a better work environment, providing both the male and female perspectives for a well-rounded sample of qualities generally associated with gender (Senne, 2016). Research has provided little information about women who have been able to obtain and retain leadership positions in high school athletic leadership positions. As women continue to be underrepresented in athletic administration relative to their involvement in sports, hiring school districts have a responsibility to ensure that applicants are provided with an equal opportunity to obtain a high school athletic director position, regardless of age, gender, or race (Kotschwar & Moran, 2015).

Purpose statement and research questions. The purpose of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study was to investigate the perceptions of high school athletic directors pertaining to women serving as athletic directors. The gender-disaggregated perceptions of athletic directors serving the three largest school classifications in Kansas, Class 4A, 5A, and Class 6A, collected via quantitative survey, helped identify barriers faced by females in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. The survey results identified obstacles women faced in athletic leadership positions, which informed the development of a semi-structured interview protocol. The interviews provided an opportunity to better understand the experiences of female high school athletic directors and how they overcame barriers, obstacles, or stereotypes they have faced.

The current explanatory sequential mixed methods study was conducted to address three research questions. First, the quantitative part of the study addressed RQ1.

Both the quantitative survey, and the qualitative interviews conducted during the second part of the study, addressed RQ2 and RQ3.

RQ1. What do male and female athletic directors at Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools perceive as being their roles and responsibilities, and do their perceptions differ by gender, according to an electronic survey?

RQ2. To what extent do females perceive they face different obstacles than their male counterparts in obtaining and retaining Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school athletic director positions in Kansas, according to individual interviews?

RQ3. What strategies have been employed by Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions, according to individual interviews?

Review of the methodology. An explanatory sequential mixed methods research design was used for this study with the participation of male and female athletic directors serving in a Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school. Guided by three research questions, the researcher collected quantitative data (RQ1) which led to the creation of semi-structured interview questions (RQ2 and RQ3) for the qualitative phase of the study. The quantitative survey was completed by 58 male and female athletic directors serving in a Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school. The qualitative interviews were completed by three female athletic directors. After the interviews were conducted, the responses were coded and analyzed for themes. Using the combined quantitative survey results and interview themes, key findings were generated.

Major findings. Of the possible 108 Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A athletic directors, 58 responded to the invitation to participate in the quantitative portion of the

study. Of the 58 respondents, 86%, or 50, were males, and the remaining 14%, or 8, were females. All 58 completed the electronic survey, and three of the ten possible female athletic directors participated in the qualitative interviews.

RQ1. What do male and female athletic directors at Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools perceive as being their roles and responsibilities, and do their perceptions differ by gender, according to an electronic survey?

The findings resulting from the quantitative study revealed that the perception of males and females varied based on the survey question. The percentage of agreement or disagreement by gender, however, did not substantially vary. Specifically, the percentage of males who strongly agreed or agreed with a statement was always proportionately higher than males who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Similarly, the percentage of females who strongly agreed or agreed with a statement was always proportionately higher than females who disagreed or strongly disagreed. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview participants were in agreement that even though there is a substantial disparity in the gender of Kansas high school athletic directors, the roles and responsibilities of the job are the same regardless.

RQ2. To what extent do females perceive they face different obstacles than their male counterparts in obtaining and retaining Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school athletic director positions in Kansas, according to individual interviews?

Having had previous head coaching experiences, two of the three interviewees shared similar paths in obtaining the position of an athletic director. While not a requirement to earning the position of a high school athletic director, both went on to comment on the benefits of having served as a head coach and the benefits that

experience provided them when transitioning into the position of a high school athletic director. When asked to identify specific challenges the interviewees have faced in reaching their current position, each participant provided a different response based on their own personal experiences. There wasn't one specific challenge that each had faced in reaching their current position of athletic director; rather, the challenges were all personal and experienced at different times throughout their careers. The participants' responses, when asked if they felt their challenges were different from men pursuing/maintaining similar positions, all were in agreement with one another and echoed the sentiment of it being a "man's world" and that the "good old boy network" is very much alive. The three interviewees were able to provide real-life examples of gender bias in their day-to-day job, centered around people's dismay when they find out that they (females) are high school athletic directors.

RQ3. What strategies have been employed by Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions, according to individual interviews?

Participants were asked to discuss how they have mitigated the most challenging aspects, or what strategies have they used, to retain their position as a high school athletic director in the fourth qualitative interview question. The foundation of the responses was built upon work ethic, proving oneself, providing support to coaches, and fostering relationships with coaches. The minutia of the job – i.e., daily administrative tasks that are required by the district and/or state – were not stated as reasons for the females believing they have been able to retain their position. Rather, it was the relational aspects of the job that they felt had allowed them to retain their position. Finally, according to

the interviewees, coaching experience was the best way in which a female could prepare herself for a career as a high school athletic director. The respondents commented on the impact the shared experience amongst the athletic director and coaching staff can have on the overall operation of the athletic department.

Findings Related to the Literature

The association between the findings of the current study and the studies presented previously in the literature review are provided in this section. The similarities and differences in research results are discussed according to the study's association with research questions presented in the current study. Quantitative and qualitative results are included.

In 2008, Whisenant determined that 76.5% of high school principal positions were held by males, 82.5% of high school athletic director positions were held by males, and all four of the selected coaching positions were predominately male. As a whole, females comprised 36% of the three identified positions. Similarly, the gender makeup of the males and females who were serving as athletic directors in Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A high schools participating in the current study was also disproportionate. Specifically, 10% of the Kansas athletic directors are female and 90% of the athletic directors are male. For the current study, there were 58 survey respondents, comprised of 50 males (86%) and eight females (14%).

RQ1. What do male and female athletic directors at Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high schools perceive as being their roles and responsibilities, and do their perceptions differ by gender, according to an electronic survey?

Schneider and Stier (2001) conducted a national study of high school principals to define the importance of the role of athletic director. The results of the study concluded that a successful high school athletic program is dependent on the role of the athletic director for two reasons: one, the impact high school athletics plays on the overall well-being of student-athletes; and two, the need to have a qualified and able body to oversee the intricate day-to-day management and operation of the athletic department. The participants of the current study provided their perceptions of the specific roles and responsibilities of a high school athletic director. Different than Schneider and Stier's 2001 study, the participants were able to identify specific examples of the "intricate day-to-day management of and operation of the athletic department" instead of the general categorization. Furthermore, the current study differed from Schneider and Stier (2001) in that the survey participants' responses varied based on gender.

RQ2. To what extent do females perceive they face different obstacles than their male counterparts in obtaining and retaining Class 4A, 5A, or 6A high school athletic director positions in Kansas, according to individual interviews?

Parks et al. (1995) comprised of 143 women and 371 men at 106 NCAA Division I-A institutions, the findings suggested that female athletic directors were making far less in salaries and had fewer advancement opportunities than males. The study was later reinforced by Shaw and Frisby in 2006 and in a 2011 study conducted by Burton et al., with the assertion that women in athletic leadership are more likely to be hired into positions with less power, earn less than their male counterparts, and have fewer opportunities for advancement. In the current study, the participants did not discuss

salary inequities among genders. Nor was the idea of career advancement discussed once the position of high school athletic director had been secured.

According to McKay (1999), the most apparent obstacles women face in athletic leadership positions are a lack of strong networking opportunities, the minimal influence of these networks (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012; Sagas & Cunningham, 2004), and a lack of mentors (Abney, 1991). In 2001, Coakley outlined seven reasons why women are under-represented in athletic administration. The majority of those reasons are related to the networking capability males have within the athletic world, precisely the significant number of head coaching positions that are occupied by men, and the professional relationships formed as a result of these opportunities. A 2015 study by Bower et al. found that a lack of support for women athletic administrators, including the lack of role models and networking opportunities, was prevalent when focusing on the following two questions: (a) what are the profiles of females working in athletic administration, and (b) what are the gender-specific greatest challenges that women working in intercollegiate athletic administration face? Similar to Bower et al. (2015), McKay (1999), Claringbould and Knoppers (2012), Sagas and Cunningham (2004) and Abney (1991), the current study acknowledged a lack of support at the district-level for females serving as athletic directors as one of the reasons females are not pursuing the position. Additionally, the participants in the current study identified the importance of networking opportunities for females preparing to apply for the position of an athletic director.

In a 2012 study by Diacin and Yup Lim, it was reported that the low number of females holding leadership positions in athletic administration was found to be due to several factors including familial responsibilities, gender ideologies, and informal social

networks. Furthermore, the idea of the “good old boy network” has negatively influenced female representation within athletics. Similar to Diacin and Yup Lim (2012), the responses of the current study cited examples of familial responsibilities, gender ideologies, and informal social networks as being barriers to females obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. Moreover, the findings from the qualitative interviews support Diacin and Yup Lim’s (2012) findings regarding the “good old boy network.” All three female participants provided first-hand examples of the impact the “good old boy network” has played on their ability to obtain and retain their positions.

RQ3. What strategies have been employed by Kansas Class 4A, 5A, or 6A female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions, according to individual interviews?

In 2006, Grappendorf and Lough surveyed 23 females who held the position of athletic director at an NCAA Division I university. The findings revealed that women should focus on real-time experiences that provide on-the-job training and leadership exposure applicable to the role of the athletic director. Furthermore, the study exposed the need to have women who are currently serving as athletic directors to recruit or promote females to available athletic director positions. The authors stressed the importance of networking with other women in athletic administration to increase the number of females serving in similar positions (Whisenant et al., 2002). The findings of the current study indicated that, while on-the-job training, mentorship, and networking are all invaluable experiences for those wanting to serve as an athletic director, those opportunities were recognized to be beneficial to both males and females. The current

study supports Grappendorf and Lough (2006) by reinforcing the idea that these real-time experiences further prepare females who are considering a job as an athletic director.

In a 2014 qualitative study, Lovelin and Hanold studied what female leaders considered critical to their development and advancement within the athletic field. The findings revealed that female athletic leaders need not only possess a sophisticated skill set but more importantly, the ability to use the right skill at the appropriate time. Additionally, the findings suggested that management and leadership skills can be learned and that these skills as related to athletic administration are not tied to the gender of an individual. The findings of the current study supported Lovelin and Hanold's study; however, there was a difference in perceptions by gender on survey questions related to these areas.

Fowler et al. (2017) investigated educational and career experiences of high school athletic directors, revealing two main elements principals look for when hiring an athletic director. First, the principals preferred to hire an athletic director with coursework in law, ethics, budget, and finance. Second, the principals expressed the importance of a candidate having head coaching experience. Having served as a head coach serves as the closest example of the day-to-day job responsibilities of an athletic director, and therefore the on-the-job-training is invaluable. The findings of the current study support Fowler et al. as the male and female participants reported the importance of completing coursework and experience of serving as a high school head coach as the top most important requirements to complete prior to applying for the position of high school athletic director.

Conclusions

The explanatory sequential mixed methods study was intended to investigate the perceptions of high school athletic directors pertaining to women serving as athletic directors. This section includes implications for action and recommendations for future research. The chapter culminates with concluding remarks.

Implications for action. The amount of research and literature focusing on women serving as high school athletic directors across the United States is lacking. This explanatory sequential mixed methods study adds to the body of knowledge related to the gender inequalities that exist between male and female athletic directors at the high school level and provides insight and guidance for women considering a position in high school athletic leadership. As a result of this study, building- and district-level educational administrators charged with hiring athletic directors could gain a greater understanding of the obstacles females perceive in obtaining and retaining positions as athletic directors. Furthermore, the acknowledgment of the “good old boy network” and the negative impact it has on a female’s ability to obtain and retain a position as a high school athletic director is a barrier that must be removed to eliminate the gender disparity. The findings could also inform curricular adjustments to graduate program leadership coursework to improve the training and preparation of female students wanting to obtain and retain athletic leadership positions.

Recommendations for future research. The explanatory sequential mixed methods study was intended to investigate the perceptions of high school athletic directors pertaining to women serving as athletic directors. This study adds to the body of knowledge related to the gender inequalities that exist between male and female

athletic directors at the high school level. The following recommendations for future research related to this topic are suggested.

1. Replicate the study to include all Kansas Class 1A, 2A, and 3A high school athletic directors. Researching the perceptions of all Kansas athletic directors may impact the results as it would provide a representation of athletic directors across the state, not just those in densely populated areas.
2. Replicate the study to investigate Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A high school athletic directors over a five-year period to identify the hiring trends of male and female athletic directors.
3. Expand the study to include the perceptions of high school head coaches working in the athletic department of surveyed athletic directors. Including their perceptions could further explain the gender inequalities and differences in leadership styles according to gender.
4. Replicate the study to include all high school athletic directors in states bordering Kansas (i.e, Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Arkansas, Oklahoma). Investigating the demographics and perceptions of high school athletic directors serving in close geographic proximity may impact the findings.
5. Include a review of the hiring practices of school districts to measure females' interest in serving as high school athletic directors.
6. Expand the number of people interviewed, male and female, to gain a more thorough perspective of how each gender views the position.

7. Increase the sample size to determine statistical significance of responses instead of a percentage of response to survey items.

Concluding remarks. The current study was developed to investigate the perceptions of high school athletic directors pertaining to women serving in similar roles. The data collected via quantitative survey, helped identify barriers faced by females in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director. The survey results identified obstacles women faced in athletic leadership positions, which informed the development of a semi-structured interview protocol. The interviews provided an opportunity to better understand the experiences of Kansas female high school athletic directors and how they overcame the barriers, obstacles, or stereotypes they have faced. The synthesis of the quantitative data showed that there is a difference in the perception of high school athletic directors pertaining to women serving as athletic directors. Furthermore, there is a substantial disparity in the number of women serving as athletic directors in Kansas Class 4A, 5A, and 6A high schools. The findings of the current study provide insight and guidance for women considering a position in high school athletic leadership, and consequently, could help equalize the playing field for both male and female applicants.

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[boards-women/](http://fortune.com/2017/06/19/fortune-500-boards-women/)

Appendices

Appendix A: NIAAA's Administrative Responsibilities of an Athletic Director

NIAAA's Administrative Responsibilities of an Athletic Director

- Grow professionally through Leadership Training Institute courses, achieving NIAAA certification, becoming involved in local, regional, state and national opportunities, and through writing and teaching.
- Provide leadership for the athletic department while placing emphasis and perspective on its educational role in the school.
- Assist the principal in securing competent personnel for athletic staff. Seek to have input in the interview process and the selection of staff.
- Prepare and monitor a calendar of school athletic events. Communicate this calendar and a list of activities to all facets of the school.
- Assign facilities for all school athletic practices, contests, activities and community usage.
- Attend as many contests, meets and events as possible, making sure all are supervised properly.
- The athletic administrator should participate in the entire school program offering.
- Transmit all pertinent information for state association and conference/league competition to the principal and coaches.
- Arrange school approved transportation for athletic events.
- Pro-actively resolve conflicts that may develop affiliated with the athletic department.
- Act as a tournament manager for league/conference and tournament playoff activities that are assigned to the school district.
- Provide a system to maintain pertinent and permanent records for each sport.
- Establish procedures for the supervision, development and proper use of the athletic training room.
- Plan and supervise all athletic awards programs with the cooperation of the booster club, coaches and other administrators.
- Coordinate with the maintenance department the repair and care of athletic fields, tracks, pools, courts, courses and gymnasiums.
- Coordinate the organization and operation of the media areas providing information and service.
- Attend and serve as school liaison at athletic booster club meetings.
- Serve as the liaison between the coaches and the athletic booster club.
- Assist the administration in the distribution of complimentary passes for the school district. Check the school district's policy regarding implementation.
- Coordinate the annual review of the athletic policy, student code and staff handbook. Evaluate the program, always seeking ways to improve interscholastic athletics opportunities.
- Prepare and monitor contest contracts, if appropriate.
- Emphasize to coaches the need for professional appearance, language and conduct.
- Examine all equipment and facilities before use.
- As the host, provide dressing rooms and hospitality for visiting teams and game officials. Keep informed of the rules and regulations of the total athletic program school district and state association.
- Serve as financial manager for the athletic department in all areas of spending and income. Perform such other duties as the principal and/or superintendent of schools may direct. Utilize and monitor technology as a tool of the department.
- Lead with a philosophy of education-based athletics.
- Oversee the hiring and communication with contest officials.
- Be the bridge of information regarding sports law, and state and federal law, regarding interscholastic athletics, best practices and facilities.
- Promote coaches' education and certification.

Note: Adapted from NIAAA's Guide to Interscholastic Athletic Administration. (1st ed.).
Available at <http://www.niaaa.org/assets/Final-Profile-document-for-print..pdf>

Appendix B: Permission to Use Welch (2012) Adapted Version of Survey

Permission to Use Welch (2012) Adapted Version of Survey

RE: Request to Use Survey for Dissertation Study

Tomi Wahlstrom <twahlstrom@ussa.edu>

Mon 10/22/2018 3:19 PM

To: Amanda J Faunce; cromartie@ussa.edu

I have discussed this with Dr. Cromartie and we agree that we cannot, as a school, give a permission on behalf of Dr. Welch. Only Dr. Welch can give this permission. However, we do feel that it is acceptable for you to use Dr. Welch's survey as an example and modify it to your needs. As long as you do not use her exact survey, and as long as you cite her appropriately, it should be fine.

From: Amanda J Faunce [mailto:AmandaJFaunce@stu.bakeru.edu]

Sent: Monday, October 22, 2018 3:04 PM

To: Tomi Wahlstrom <twahlstrom@ussa.edu>; cromartie@ussa.edu

Subject: Re: Request to Use Survey for Dissertation Study

Good Afternoon Dr. Wahlstrom,

In case it is helpful to you and Dr. Cromartie, attached is a draft of my study for you to review while making a decision as to whether or not I am approved to use Dr. Welch's survey. Please let me know if I may provide you with anything further.

Thank You,
Amanda

From: Amanda J Faunce

Sent: Friday, October 19, 2018 3:31 PM

To: Tomi Wahlstrom; cromartie@ussa.edu

Subject: Re: Request to Use Survey for Dissertation Study

Thank you very much, Dr. Wahlstrom; I sincerely appreciate it. Please let me know if you would like for me to provide you with a draft of my study and/or the changes I am proposing to make if I am approved to use Dr. Welch's survey.

Sincerely,
Amanda

From: Tomi Wahlstrom <twahlstrom@ussa.edu>
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2018 3:19 PM
To: Amanda J Faunce; cromartie@ussa.edu
Subject: RE: Request to Use Survey for Dissertation Study

Amanda,

Let us discuss this a bit before I get back to you. Dr. Cromartie is not in at the moment so we will get back to you Monday.

Tomi

From: Amanda J Faunce [<mailto:AmandaJFaunce@stu.bakeru.edu>]
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2018 9:10 AM
To: cromartie@ussa.edu; Tomi Wahlstrom <twahlstrom@ussa.edu>
Subject: Re: Request to Use Survey for Dissertation Study

Good Morning Dr. Cromartie and Dr. Wahlstrom,

I just wanted to check in and see if you have feedback for me regarding my request to use a survey in my dissertation?

Thank You,
Amanda

From: Amanda J Faunce
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2018 3:45 PM
To: cromartie@ussa.edu; twahlstrom@ussa.edu
Subject: Fw: Request to Use Survey for Dissertation Study

Good Afternoon Dr. Cromartie and Dr. Wahlstrom,

My name is Amanda Faunce and I am student in the Doctoral Program at Baker University. The reason for my email is to request permission to use the survey administered in Dr. Christine Welch's dissertation, *The Study of High School Administrators' Perceptions of the Future of Women as Athletic Directors in the State of Missouri*. The survey will be altered slightly to fit the parameters of my study and to fall in alignment in the current athletic leadership positions offerings available in high schools in the State of Kansas. I have attempted to contact Dr. Welch and her faculty advisory, Dr. Esposito; however, both emails were returned. I would appreciate any assistance you may provide me with this request. Please let me know if there are any questions I may answer for you.

Thank You,
Amanda J. Faunce

From: Amanda J Faunce
Sent: Monday, September 24, 2018 2:25 PM
To: cwelch@students.ussa.edu
Cc: esposito@ussa.edu
Subject: Request to Use Survey for Dissertation Study

Good Afternoon Dr. Welch,

My name is Amanda Faunce and I am student in the Doctoral Program at Baker University. The reason for my email is to request permission to use the survey administered in *The Study of High School Administrators' Perceptions of the Future of Women as Athletic Directors in the State of Missouri*. The survey will be altered slightly to fit the parameters of my study and to fall in alignment in the current athletic leadership positions offerings available in high schools in the State of Kansas.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. Please let me know if there are any questions that I may answer for you prior to your final decision.

Thank You,
Amanda J. Faunce

Appendix C: High School Athletic Directors' Perception Survey

High School Athletic Directors' Perception Survey

The reason for the High School Athletic Directors' Perception Survey is to collect feedback from a diverse population of males and females who are currently serving as high school athletic directors. The data collected will be used in a study that will add to the body of knowledge related to the inequality that exists between male and female athletic directors at the high school level. The results of this study provide insight to women considering a position in high school athletic leadership. Findings could also be used during graduate coursework to improve the training and preparation of female students to obtain and retain athletic leadership positions. Additionally, building-and district-level administrators charged with hiring could gain a greater understanding of the barriers females perceive in obtaining and retaining positions as athletic directors. The questions of the survey are organized as follows. The participant's consent (number 1), instructions, the participant's demographics (numbers 2-14), instructions, Likert-type items (numbers 15-33), rate/rank items (numbers 34-36), and open-ended items (numbers 37-38). Thank you in advance for your participation. If you have any questions, please contact me via email at AmandaJFauncec@stu.bakeru.edu.

1. I consent to participate in the High School Athletic Directors' Perception Survey. I understand that my answers are confidential and will not be shared. I have the right to withdraw at any time and any data collected will not be used for this research.

Agree
Disagree

2. Classification of high school at which you currently work:

4A
5A
6A

Instructions: Please indicate your responses to the following demographic questions.

3. Gender

Male
Female
Other

4. Race/Ethnicity

American Indian/Alaskan Native
Asian
Black
Hispanic
Multi-Racial
Native American/Pacific Islander
White

5. Age

25-35
36-45
46-55
56-65
Older than 65

6. Highest education attained:

Bachelor's Degree
Master's Degree
Doctoral Degree

7. Other degrees, certificates, and licenses attained or awarded.

8. Current positions in addition to Athletic Director (check all that apply):

Assistant Principal

Principal

Superintendent

Assistant/Associate Superintendent

Athletic Coach

Full-Time Teacher/Athletic Director

Part-Time Teacher/Athletic Director

If other, please specify.

9. The number of years as Athletic Director:

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 years

21-30 years

31 or more years

10. Type of school district in which you currently work:

Public

Private

11. The setting of school in which you currently work:

Urban

Rural

Suburban

12. Did you experience any district mentoring before your first athletic leadership position?

Yes

No

If yes, what was the gender of your mentor during the experience?

Male

Female

Other

13. Are you the district Athletic Director?

Yes

No

14. Have you been an Athletic Director before your current position?

Yes

If yes, how many years?

No

Instructions: Please indicate the level of agreement with the following statements.

15. Women in my school district do not apply for leadership roles as athletic directors.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

16. Our organizational structure or administration encourages/promotes more women in athletic leadership roles.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

17. Our organizational structure or administration should encourage/promote more women into athletic leadership roles.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

18. There are a limited number of women who apply for leadership positions in athletic administration because of how job announcements for these positions are currently written.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

19. There would be more opportunities for women to apply for leadership positions in athletic administration if job announcements for these positions were written differently.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

20. My district does not hire more women as athletic directors due to their lack of experience as head coaches.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

21. My district does not hire more women as athletic directors due to their lack of education or administrative experience.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

22. The time commitment required of an athletic director plays a significant role in the low numbers of women as athletic directors.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

23. Male traits or characteristics dominate leadership roles in athletic administration more than female traits or characteristics.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

24. There is currently an underrepresentation of women in athletic administrative roles in secondary education.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

25. My school district will continue to be limited from obtaining and retaining positions as athletic directors.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

26. I know of qualified females who do not apply for job openings in athletic administration.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

27. The most qualified applicants are being hired in high school athletic administration regardless of the applicants' gender.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

28. There is gender discrimination in high school athletic administration.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

29. Something should be done regarding sexual discrimination in the hiring of athletic leadership positions.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

30. The number of women as athletic directors in my district or the state of Kansas will increase during the next five years.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

31. The numbers of women as athletic directors in my district or the state of Kansas will increase during the next ten years.

Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

32. My school district offers professional development/formal mentorships for any individual interested in athletic administration.

Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

33. I would like the opportunity for there to be professional development/formal mentorships for any individual interested in athletic administration.

Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree

34. Please rate the following characteristics (from 1 as least important through 5 as the most important) you feel are currently the most critical requirements for hiring someone as an athletic administrator at the high school level.

Certification by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association
 Master's Degree in Athletic Administration or Sport Management
 Head coaching experience of no less than five years in any sport
 Administrative internship or mentorship with an athletic director
 Administrative experience as a high school assistant principal

35. Please rate the following characteristics (from 1 as least important through 5 as the most important) that you feel will be the essential requirements for hiring someone as an athletic administrator at the high school level in the future.

Certification by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association
 Master's Degree in Athletic Administration or Sport Management
 Head coaching experience of no less than five years in any sport
 Administrative internship or mentorship with an athletic director
 Administrative experience as a high school assistant principal

36. Please rate the following reasons (from 1 as least important through 7 as most common) more women do not enter into high school athletic administration.

Job availability
 Burn out
 Lack of benefits
 Time requirements
 Higher salary required
 Unfavorable stereotyping of women in athletic administration
 Knowledge of female athletic administrators (current or former) who are/were unhappy in her position

37. What do you see as the future of women in Kansas high school athletic administration as athletic directors by the year 2023?
38. How could a woman who wanted to pursue a career as an athletic director in the state of Kansas best prepare herself to compete for this position?

Appendix D: Qualitative Interview Questions for Purposive Population

Qualitative Interview Questions for Purposive Population

1. Please tell me about the process of earning your current position as a high school athletic director.
2. What specific challenges have you faced in reaching your current position?
3. Do you think these challenges are different for men pursuing/maintaining similar positions?
4. How do you mitigate the most challenging aspects, or what strategies have you used, to retain your position as a high school athletic director?
5. Given the following choices, how could a woman who is interested in pursuing a career as a high school athletic director best prepare herself? Please rank in importance and explain why you ranked #1 as most important, and why you ranked #5 as least important. The choices are as follows: (a) coaching experience, (b) job shadowing/mentoring/networking with current high school athletic directors, (c) obtaining the appropriate building-level certification, (d) previous administrative experience, and (e) applying for positions.

Appendix E: Baker University IRB Approval to Conduct Research Letter

Baker University IRB Approval to Conduct Research Letter



Baker University Institutional Review Board

April 18th, 2019

Dear Amanda Faunce and Sharon Zoellner,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at npoell@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,

Nathan Poell, MA
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee

Scott Crenshaw

Jamin Perry, PhD

Susan Rogers, PhD

Joe Watson, PhD

Appendix F: Email to Sample Population for Survey Participation

Email to Sample Population for Survey Participation

To: Kansas Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A High School Athletic Directors

From: Amanda Faunce

Date: Saturday, April 20, 2019

Good Afternoon,

As a current Kansas Class 4A, Class 5A, or Class 6A high school athletic director, you are invited to participate in a survey that is being conducted under the supervision of Baker University for my Doctoral dissertation. The purpose of this study is to investigate perceptions of high school athletic directors currently working in the two largest school classifications, Class 4A, Class 5A, or Class 6A, in the State of Kansas, related to women serving as athletic directors. For this survey, I am requesting you to complete a short survey that may be accessed via the following link:

<https://forms.gle/fdHY4fcSWcZR5MHk8>.

Please note by completing this survey, you are willingly consenting to being a part of this study. The survey may be completed with anonymity, including the data retrieved will be unidentifiable to you. The data collected from this survey will be used only for this study, and no data will become part of any individual's permanent record that could be made available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer. Furthermore, the data collected is confidential and no individual respondent will be identified when results are published as individual names will not be recorded or reported in the survey or results of this study.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the option discontinuing participation at any time without penalty or loss.

If you choose to participate, please complete the (approximately) 10 to 15-minute survey by Sunday, April 28, 2019. Again, the survey may be accessed via the following link:
<https://forms.gle/fdHY4fcSWcZR5MHk8>.

Please feel free to contact me with concerns/questions via email (AmandaJFaunce@stu.bakeru.edu) or by phone at 913.484.7297.

Your participation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Amanda J. Faunce

Appendix G: Email to Purposive Population for Interview Participation

Email to Purposive Population for Interview Participation

To: Kansas Class 4A, Class 5A, and Class 6A High School Female Athletic Directors
From: Amanda Faunce
Date: November 06, 2019

Good Morning,

As a current Kansas Class 4A, Class 5A, or Class 6A high school female athletic director, you are invited to participate in a semi-structured interview that is being conducted under the supervision of Baker University for my Doctoral dissertation. The purpose of this study is to further investigate (a) the roles and responsibilities of a high school athletic director and how the gender of the athletic director could impact these responsibilities, (b) the obstacles females face in obtaining and retaining the position of high school athletic director, and (c) the strategies that have been employed by female high school athletic directors to obtain and retain their positions.

Please note by completing this interview, you are willingly consenting to being a part of this study. The interview may be completed with anonymity, including the data retrieved will be unidentifiable to you. The interviewee will have the right to check the accuracy of the transcript. The data collected from this interview will be used only for this study, and no data will become part of any individual's permanent record that could be made available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer. Furthermore, the data collected is confidential and no individual respondent will be identified when results are published as individual names will not be recorded or reported in the interview or results of this study.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the option discontinuing participation at any time without penalty or loss.

If you choose to participate, please contact me via email (AmandaJFaunce@stu.bakeru.edu) or by phone at 913.484.7297 to schedule the (approximately) 15 to 30-minute interview by Wednesday, November 27, 2019.

Your participation and assistance are greatly appreciated; please feel free to contact me with concerns/questions.

Sincerely,
Amanda J. Faunce

Appendix H: Transcription of Qualitative Interviews

Transcription of Qualitative Interviews

QIQ1. Please tell me about the process of earning your current position as a high school athletic director.

Participant 1: I was a high school head coach, my master's name is a specialist in secondary school administration, and the position came open to become an athletic director several different times in the school district I was working in at the time. I kept saying no, I am still coaching, I'm not interested in applying and then finally one day, I realized that honestly my kids - I have a boy and two girls - were each playing three sports in high school and so I was going to miss a lot of things if I remained the head volleyball coach. As AD, I would be coming and supporting every program and sports, so that's kind of how I got interested in it - I wasn't looking to it.

Participant 2: Well, it just ended up being circumstances. Ironically, I was an Associate Principal and our District AD asked if I was interested in the position. He told me to think about it and talk to the Building Principal. I made sure they would not cut my salary as an Associate Principal - that was very important to me - and everybody said it looks like it's her decision - you don't have to move if you don't want to, you can stay in your current position. So, it was really my choice.

Participant 3: I started out as a teacher and coach and in a district in Johnson County. I moved to another district in the county, also as a teacher and coach, but with the understanding with the principal that I went to work for, my ultimate goal was to move into Administration. So, after one year of teaching and

coaching in the building where I'm currently the athletic director, I had the opportunity to apply for the athletic director job when it opened up and was hired after that first year.

QIQ2. What specific challenges have you faced in reaching your current position?

Participant 1: Current challenges or just specific challenges in general? Okay, I was going to say I didn't have any - I was blessed, and I didn't have any challenges becoming an AD, but the challenges that I have currently in this position are sometimes earning the respect of the men just because it's a man's world that we live in. When it comes to being an athletic director at a high school, we are in the minority, and so sometimes you run into those old school folks that don't really want to listen to you because they believe that they know best. And certain administrators I don't believe respect you as much. I think what has earned me respect more so than maybe somebody young starting out that is having to prove themselves is my experience. However, for me, probably for the first time in many, many years, the lack of respect has been more from other administrators.

Participant 2: Number one would be that I am working with adults now. Really as an associate principal, you work mostly with students. As an athletic director, staff you see you as their boss. I think there's a bunch of other factors there that coaches have to deal with and, for me personally, I was approachable as an administrator and now they see me as an athletic director. So, number one, trying to navigate that and knowing when it's a good time to visit with them about

certain items. I think just trying to manage coaches is different than teachers - you have to manage them. Becoming an athletic director - the game planning and event planning and all that wasn't scary to me. Now the budget, the budget was like oh my gosh. I saw all the details that the former AD had done, but there are so many different ways to manage a budget.

Participant 3: I tried on several occasions to get into what was considered kind of a grassroots administrative program within that district and was turned down for those openings in a previous district but was told not to worry that I had everything that it takes to be an administrator. Yet I didn't feel like there was going to be that opportunity to advance. In the district that I'm currently in, I felt very much encouraged and supported in my goal, and I think the fact that I had a principal who was a former coach himself, really had a vested interest in me having that opportunity to move into administration. So as far as challenges, I think it was just being able to show that I'm right for the position. I'm a big believer in being in the right place at the right time and networking with the people around you, and I think I was surrounded by people who believed in me and thought that I was a good fit for that opportunity.

QIQ3. Do you think these challenges are different for men pursuing/maintain similar positions?

Participant 1: Absolutely. Being a high school athletic director and a woman - there are those that are shocked and they wonder why, so yeah, I would agree.

Participant 2: When we got here, we were going to get a drink at the social and someone asked a female AD and colleague of mine, "Does your husband coach or

is your husband here?" She's like, "No, I'm one of them." and so I think just the perception is number one. Perception, as much as things have changed in our society, has not changed at the higher levels. They are changing, but there are still not as many women athletic directors at the Division One level. It's the stereotype that only a man can do this job and there's a reason - we both know that - it is because football and basketball revenue. Sometimes it does feel like it's a man's world - it is either sink or swim.

Participant 3: Even though I hate to say this, but it's 2019 and I think there still is very much a good old boy network in athletic administration. I still today could pick up my phone - if somebody calls to speak to the athletic director - I can pick up my phone and they will say I was calling to talk to the athletic director and I will say you got her and they'll be taken aback by the fact that there's a female on the other end of the phone. So, I think yes, I think there are still some challenges that go along with it. I don't think once you're in and establish yourself and develop a good reputation that there is necessarily an effort on the part of anybody for you to not maintain that position. I think that I am respected enough in my job, and I don't think that there is anyone who would not want me to maintain the position. However, I will say that I think this is a young person's job and I think that, more than my gender, my age at times will be a frustration for some of the younger coaches that I've hired. In fact, just a couple weeks ago, I said to one of our coaches, "Maybe your next athletic director will let you break the rules, but I'm not going to." So, you know, while I do think the gender disparity is there and I think it's real, I think also in athletics there is an expectation or an

assumption that, while things are different now than they were when you were coaching, therefore you don't understand me.

QIQ4. How do you mitigate the most challenging aspects, or what strategies have you used, to retain your position as a high school athletic director?

Participant 1: I would be out there trying to prove who I am, what I believe in, and support the coaches because to me, that's my job - to support the coaches and to defend them when they get questioned by my parents and student-athletes. I think that's probably what saved me is that I value them, and I think they realize that I value them as coaches and they don't get paid enough to put up with a lot of crap. So, when I have supported them and defended them when parents want them fired or they want their jobs, it has paid off in the long run and I think that's how I've been able to earn the respect of the coaches. It has been a process.

Participant 2: Well, I think I'm a hard worker. Whatever role or position that people put me, people cannot outwork me. My principal has said to me that he doesn't worry about me - that I am going to get my work done and I am going to do what I am supposed to do. The most challenging aspect is that there are all of those things out there that I want to accomplish, but it is a matter of trying to follow a process to get there. Trying to get more time to accomplish so much.

Participant 3: As an athletic director, I think first and foremost I have tried to be fair and I've tried to be consistent. I think it's important for all of our coaches, regardless of what sport they coach and at what level they coach, that they understand me that they can trust me and that there is a level of respect there, whether they agree or disagree. I think that they know me well enough to know

that I'm going to shoot straight with them - they're going to get an honest answer - and I'm going to support them. I have told them that if they ever lose their job because of wins or losses I will walk out the door with them because I don't believe that high school athletics should be all about winning and losing. So, I think establishing good relationships with them, letting them know that they have your support. At the same time that they have your support, there are expectations that they have to meet day in and day out in order for you to be able to support them.

QIQ5. Given the following choices, how could a woman who is interested in pursuing a career as a high school athletic director best prepare herself? Please rank in importance and explain why you ranked #1 as most important, and why you ranked #5 as least important. The choices are as follows: (a) coaching experience, (b) job shadowing/mentoring/networking with current high school athletic directors, (c) obtaining the appropriate building-level certification, (d) previous administrative experience, and (e) applying for positions.

Participant 1: Coaching experience is most important as they have to know you walked in their shoes in order for you to mentor them because that is the biggest part of your job - helping your coaches and dealing with the families that they are servicing. Obviously just to even apply for the job, you have to get the certification. I was an assistant principal before I was an athletic director and I don't know that that prepared me because I did discipline and I did teacher evaluations. To be a successful athletic director, you may have to do that in your job, but I don't think that prepares you for the really hard part of running

tournaments and doing schedules. I don't know that to me that would be last, of course mentoring and shadowing always helps. I mean I don't know what I would have done without the District AD that I had in the school district I previously worked - he was terrific and he always used to say to us either, "What can I do to help you or I'm here to support you." He was a phone call away. If you don't have a District AD, being able to call your friends or other people that are doing the same job and asking them how do you handle this, what do you do in this situation, etc. is very beneficial.

Participant 2: I do think that there's no one answer. I've got a few - people seeing you, how you carry yourself, and what committees you are serving on - that's really important. Being approachable and being fair. Having the appropriate previous experience and applying for the position - they are all important.

Participant 3: So coaching experience, job networking with current high school ADs, having the appropriate building level certification, previous admin experience, and applying for positions. I think, and I can really only say for myself, I think previous coaching experience has been huge for me and so I would probably rank that up there first. Although I think you have to have a degree in the appropriate certification or obviously you won't get hired. I think in some school districts, the athletic director, for example in our district has other hats that they wear, whereas in some school districts and in some states, you are purely just an athletic director and that's all that you oversee. So, you may not have to have the administrative certification that we have to have because of our

responsibilities that go along with it. But I would say probably the first for me, what's been the most important in my job, has been my previous coaching experience. I think that gives me a little bit of an edge with some of our coaches based on the fact that they know that I have been in their shoes. And yes the game has changed, and yes you know we live in a different world now, but I think the fact that I have coached multiple sports - even if I haven't coached their sport - I've been a head coach and I think that that helps us maybe find common ground when we're talking about things that might be controversial or philosophically different. So, I think there is a respect that comes along with having coached, so I'm going to put that as the most important and I think that the short answer for the reason of that is the respect that you are given by your coaches and even parents you know. I'll have parents who say, I know where you used to coach, so they equate that with you've been there, you've done that, you get what worked, and understand what our coaches and kids are going through. As far as the least important, I'm going to say probably applying for positions. I think getting a job in administration is very much networking and being in the right place at the right time. For example, I think anybody that is going to apply for that job, their resumes are all going to look fairly similar because the district is going to weed through them. When hiring, they are going to want someone that has experience, that has some background already in that area, so I don't know that applying for the position is as important as some of the other networking and that the soft skills. I guess maybe the reputation that you have, the references - you know the people who may be calling and put in a good word for you. For example, even

just today there was a comment made that when I get ready to retire there will be a ton of people who apply for my job and I don't think that's because of the job that I've done, I think it's just the school that I'm in and the reputation of the athletic programs and the school itself. I think that is what will make that an attractive job. Maybe it is more about who you know, rather than what you know. I think I'm a believer that, when I was young, I could go out and get that job, but I quickly learned that it's a lot of who you know and who can help you get to where you want to be.