Ghanaian women in sports: Barriers and strategies for improving participation in sports leadership positions in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the barriers that hinder women's participation in sports leadership in Ghana and the effective strategies to overcome the obstacles. Interpretivist research paradigm was adopted. Sample frame was made of women leaders in Ghanaian sports organizations. Data was collected using interview guides, and analyzed with the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The study revealed that institutional barriers and individual mindsets of women in sports were among the most significant factors limiting women's leadership involvement. The study emphasized that promoting girls' education and fostering a broader shift in organizational culture can lead to increased female representation in professional sports organizations. In conclusion, further quantitative and qualitative research is needed to understand why women's participation in sports leadership is not adequately reflected in current legislation or outdated sports policies.

KEYWORDS

1. INTRODUCTION

There are still more questions than answers, even though several studies have looked at female leaders and how leadership is exercised and experienced across time (Burton, 2015; Njororai, 2015; Tsikata & Ampofo, 2015). According to several surveys, there are extremely few women in executive positions in business (Dean, 2016; Lyness & Grotto, 2018; Sanchez & Frey, 2019). The contribution of women in leadership positions has well been researched.

For instance, Desvaux et al. (2007) discovered that women in leadership positions are associated with better decision-making procedures, a diverse perspective, a larger range of ideas, and improved financial performance (i.e., increased return on equity, stock price growth, and operating result). Research demonstrates that having women on boards of directors enhances company innovation, dispute resolution, readiness, and participation in board meetings (Torchia et al., 2018). According to Yang et al. (2019); Yang et al. (2008); Ashkanasy & Humphrey (2019), contemporary leadership theories also advocate for a better capacity for emotional connection to one's experiences. Research shows that women typically exhibit these abilities more commonly than men (Lee & Chelladurai, 2018; Zheng et al., 2018). Leadership theorists also place a high priority on these abilities, which are frequently more common in women (Khattab et al., 2018; Seierstad et al., 2017; Torchia et al., 2018).

Despite the great advantages of having women in leadership roles and the skills they have acquired, data for sports organizations shows a tendency for low representation of women. Men outnumber women in many sports-related professions, including sports training (Mazerolle et al., 2015), sports medicine (Stern et al., 2013), sports coaching or head coaching (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Recent studies have shown that there is a disparity at the highest levels of leadership in a variety of fields, including business, academia, and sports (Burton, 2019; Hideg & Shen, 2019; Seo & Huang, 2017).

Even if there are more women on sports executive boards, there are still disparities in representation, particularly in the sports sector in developing nations (Seierstad et al., 2017; Torchia et al., 2018). This is hardly shocking considering how historically the sports world has been characterized as being predominately or exclusively a male endeavor (Pfister, 2010). The modern sports world is a domain that is dominated by men and masculinity, and this privilege is frequently maintained through objectifying women in sports (Burton, 2015).

Government rules have mandated the implementation of employment fairness and affirmative action laws within corporations, yet progress is still being made at a slow rate (Lough &

Grappendorf, 2007; Moore et al., 2001). However, parents, schools, and society all play important roles in guiding women into leadership positions in sports (M'mbaha, 2012). Marriage and parenthood have also been considered obstacles to women's advancement in sport leadership (Robertson, 2010). This study demonstrates the variety of reasons that seem to work against women's efforts to establish themselves once again in leadership roles in sports. Practical measures are required for women to express themselves once again and take on leadership roles in a sports leadership environment that is predominately male.

A policy paper by Tsikata (2009) offers a roadmap for the empowerment of women throughout the broad social, political, and economic spectrum within the framework of Ghana and creates a space for them to comprehend and show their proficiency in every area of life. This is crucial because it encourages a team effort to construct the nation.

Despite a rise in female athletes in Ghana, there are still comparatively few female leaders in the sports sector. This lack of representation substantially hinders the growth and development of women's sports as well as the sports industry as a whole. So, it is essential to identify the specific obstacles that prevent women from holding leadership positions in Ghanaian sports organizations and to develop doable solutions that would boost the involvement of women in these roles. According to the International Working Group on Women in Sport, Ghana has one of the lowest proportions of women in leadership positions in sports in Africa (Hovell & Riedi, 2019). A survey by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Ghana revealed that women hold only 16% of leadership positions in sports organizations in Ghana, despite recent advancements in increasing female participation in sports as players and coaches (Ghana Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2018). Research has identified several barriers to women's engagement in sports leadership, including discrimination and gender stereotypes, a lack of visibility for women in leadership roles, and restricted access to chances for leadership development (Kihl & Richardson, 2014).

According to studies, Ghanaian cultural and socioeconomic conventions restrict women's participation in public life, particularly in leadership roles in sports groups (Yelome, 2018). These hurdles have been identified as important obstacles for women in senior leadership roles, particularly in the United States, to overcome to develop their careers (Eason et al., 2014; Hancock & Hums, 2016; Mazerolle & Eason, 2016). Similar conclusions have been reached regarding the participation of women and girls in sports in Canada (The Rally Report, 2020), women in Canadian sports (Demers et al., 2019), Canadian Sport Center Partnerships (Babiak & Thibault, 2004), race in Canadian sport (Darnell et al., 2012), and the challenges women face as coaches and administrators

in intercollegiate sports (Inglis et al., 2000; Wells & Kerwin, 2016). Efforts to promote women's involvement in sports leadership, such as mentoring programs and leadership development seminars, have been proven to be successful in raising the proportion of women in these positions (Sethna & Laird, 2016). The underrepresentation of women in sports has an impact on both the general expansion of the sports sector in Ghana as well as gender equality in sports. It has been demonstrated that diverse leadership teams are more productive and more suited to handle the difficulties presented by a sports environment that is changing quickly (Burton & Doherty, 2014).

A more inclusive and encouraging sports culture may be created by increasing the number of women in leadership positions in the sports industry by serving as mentors and role models for the next generation of female athletes and coaches. As few works exist in Ghana on women's leadership in the sports business, this research attempts to identify the hurdles standing in the way of women's involvement in sports leadership in Ghana and suggest ways to get through them. We can develop solutions that promote gender equity and give more possibilities for women to obtain leadership roles in sports organizations in Ghana by identifying the reasons that restrict women's engagement in sports leadership.

1.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hindrances to Women's Aspirations to Lead

Most women aspire to lead in various arenas; industry, politics, commerce, religion, and sports. These aspirations slowly grow from time to time. Women, like men, require the support of others to aspire to a leadership position. Generally speaking, women face a lot of constraints/hindrances as they aspire to lead. Some of these hindrances end up cutting short the journey of women to leadership positions. Cunningham (2007) and other researchers identified these hindrances as a lack of administrative support, women's barriers, and cultural roles, identity, and expectations.

Lack of Administrative Support

A study conducted by Wentling (1996) through a face-to-face interview with middle management women revealed that obstacles that hindered women's careers as managers were superiors who did not inspire the career advancement of women, gender discrimination, and lack of political shrewdness on behalf of the women. Based on those results, it is clear that for change to occur, the administration of an organization needs to support equal and fair opportunities for all represented groups. Abney & Richey (1991) explored obstacles to black women as sports

administrators and/or coaches in the USA, considering race, and gender, and came out with inadequate salary, lack of support groups, and being a woman, hindrances to women in leadership positions both in black and white institutions do occur. These researchers (Abney and Richey) went ahead to categorically state that employer discrimination and low expectations by administrators were predominant in black institutions while lack of cultural and social outlets in the community was blockage predominant in white institutions. The researchers attest to it that indeed women lack administrative support that can aid them in vying for and achieving leadership positions. In the Ghanaian setting; however, there are little or no scientific research findings on constraints to women's leadership in sports. Hence, this calls for a pragmatic study of the experiences of women in sports leadership positions in Ghana.

Women's' Own Barriers

In contrast to previous studies related to administrative structure and its effects on an organization, the following studies identified barriers that have been imposed by women themselves that prevented them from gaining leadership positions in sports. These barriers were created through a lack of action, determination, confidence, and/or communication from the same women who are negatively affected (Marback et al., 2005). Identified within the literature were obstacles that were self-imposed by the population under study. This included self-identity, lack of self-confidence, cultural roles, and expectations (Cui, 2007; Marback et al., 2005; Sartore & Cunnigham, 2007; Walseth, 2006).

Women's lack of self-confidence was identified as a factor that works against them in achieving leadership positions in sports. Marback et al. (2005) surveyed 187 intercollegiate coaches regarding their confidence in coaching. The authors reported that female university coaches were less confident than males in in-game strategy efficacy, coaching during competition, knowledge of strategies and tactics, and ability to motivate their athletes. Gender differences were found in performance-oriented coaching roles. Males reported higher than women in those duties required for successful team performance such as strategizing and motivation. Women reported lower levels of confidence and accomplishments.

The authors suggested that a person's confidence will impact their intention to apply for a job, resign from a job, and their motivation while on the job. According to a statement made by Ghana Olympic Committee (GOC) president Ben Nunoo Mensah at the Women in sports colloquium 2019, Ghana has few women sports leaders. He said this problem could be attributed to their self-imposed barriers, such as lack of self-confidence, time, home chores, and self-identity (Mensah, 2019).

Although his statement might be true, there has been no study to ascertain it, creating the need for a study into this phenomenon.

Cultural Roles, Identity, and Expectations

Culture and the roles and expectations it upholds influence internal and external factors. Culture influences how people think and their beliefs. Those people work within organizations and establish an organizational culture that is influenced by the culture in their society. Therefore, decisions and actions taken by people who are part of administrative structures are influenced as well. An important aspect of culture is the family and the influence the family has on each member. Stakeholders in every organization are influenced by values embedded in their upbringing, such as family responsibilities and feminine traits (Yartey, 2012; Bari, 2005).

Another study regarding an individual's identity effect on sports involvement was that of Walseth (2006). The researcher sought to study the relationship between the source of identity and involvement in sports and physical activity among young Muslim women living in Norway. Participants ages ranged from 16 to 25 years and were sampled through sports clubs or their former status as pupils at one elementary school. After analyzing interviews of 25 participants, there was evidence that their participation in physical activity was related to their source of identification (e.g., ethnicity, religion).

Results of Walseth's study (2006) revealed that engaging in behaviors not accepted by the participants' culture (i.e., jogging or playing football, or having friends who are in the dominant culture) may lead to harassment or sanctions by those who uphold different boundaries for behavior related to ethnicity or religion. On the contrary, when the Muslim women's sense of identification was religion (e.g., Islam) they viewed health and physical activity as important, and involvement in those activities was accepted by their parents. Accordingly, a person's source of identity may influence a person's decisions and actions (Yogest, 2014).

Socio-culturally, the subordinate status of women to men is a universal phenomenon though with a difference in the nature and extent of subordination across countries. Gender role ideology does not only create a duality of femininity and masculinity, but it also places them in a hierarchical fashion in which the female sex is generally valued less than the male sex because of their socially ascribed roles in the reproductive sphere. The gender status quo is maintained through low resource allocation to women's human development by the state, society, and the family. This is reflected in the social indicators that show varying degrees of gender disparities in education, health, employment, ownership of productive resources, and politics in all countries. The purpose of this

study is to explore the barriers that hinder women's participation in sports leadership in Ghana and to develop effective strategies to overcome these obstacles.

2. METHODS

2.1. Design

The study adopted an interpretive research philosophy. It employed a phenomenological approach to qualitative research. It is based on paradigms of personal knowledge and subjectivity and also emphasizes the importance of personal perspectives and interpretations.

2.2. Population and Sample

According to the National Sports Authority (NSA), there are forty-four (44) legally registered Associations/Federations under its umbrella. There are also three tertiary institutional sports associations in Ghana (Ghana University Sports Associations [GUSA], Colleges of Education Sports Association [COESA], and Ghana Technical Universities Sports Association [GHATUSA]); hence, the total Sports Associations in Ghana stand at forty-seven (47). Currently, according to National Sports Authority (2021), 85 women are holding executive positions in the various associations/federations in sports.

The study utilized purposive and convenience sampling methods to select 13 participants from a total of 85 executives. The 13 participants were chosen due to their confirmed availability for the study, and the purposive sampling approach allowed the researcher to focus on a specific characteristic of the population, which was women executives from legally registered associations under the NSA. This enabled the researcher to answer research questions related to the phenomenon of interest. Additionally, snowballing and convenience sampling techniques were used to identify other leaders who were available for the study.

Initially, 8 respondents were selected for the focus group discussion based on the suggestion by Akyıldız & Ahmed (2021) that focus groups should consist of approximately 5 to 8 respondents. However, some respondents had schedule conflicts and withdrew from the interview, leaving only 5 respondents who met the criteria.

To gather data, an interview guide designed by M'mbaha (2012) was adapted and modified for the present study. The questions were open-ended to allow participants to express themselves freely and share their experiences, which would enable the researcher to obtain in-depth information.

2.3. Data Processing and Analysis

The data that were gathered from the interviews were transcribed, coded, themed, and triangulated before being analyzed. The data were organized in different data files to facilitate easy

retrieval (McLellan, MacQueen &Neidig, 2003; Boeije, 2010). The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was utilized to transcribe the interview. The first stage of IPA which is transcribing and coding was performed by listening to the audio recording of the interview which was replayed severally for clarity. This was followed by writing out the conversation verbatim. Also, member-checking was used for accuracy, and meeting with the participant's experiences. The written document enabled the researcher to code common words, concepts, and suggestions stated by the participants.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Barriers

Structural barriers are one of the most notable elements that hinder women's involvement in sports leadership positions. According to Babic & Hansez (2021), historical sexism and gender bias have prevented women from climbing the rungs of the corporate ladder. In Ghana, past sports policies and legislations arguably possess hints of historical sexism and gender bias. The formalization of Ghanaian sports in the colonial era via the Sports Council Ordinance No. 14 of 1952 and the Sports Act Supreme Military Council (SMC) Decree 54 of 1976 (LI 1088) during the precolonial era did not provide adequate consideration to matters of gender inclusivity in sports. Although literature reveals that the 1992 constitution sparked interest in increasing women's involvement while significantly eliminating gender disparities, and discrimination in sporting activities via the National Sports Policy (NSP) of 1994, the overwhelming support given to the "Black Stars'" image at the time overshadowed other pressing matters like women's engagement (Charway & Houlihan, 2020).

An assessment of the Sports Act 2016 (Act 934), which was expected to modernize Ghanaian sports to include contemporary trends and meet global sports standards, has little to show since the Ghana Statistical Service (2020) SDG report still shows that women are generally underrepresented in a wide range of professions including sports. These findings corroborate reports from the UNDP's (2018) Gender Inequality Index (GII) which rates Ghana 131st of 161 countries (Charway & Houlihan, 2020).

Although the foregoing findings are mainly linked to women's general involvement, and participation in national sporting activities, and less about their leadership prospects, accurate deductions about the structural barriers towards women's sports leadership could be inferred from the study's extracts. The interview excerpts again hammered home the ineffectiveness of laws and

policies that erroneously claim to provide significant consideration to women's involvement. For instance, according to an extract from the focus group discussion:

> *"Most of the time, the policies do not work to put women in power, the men in power are the ones who facilitate women to be placed in top positions to add to the mirage that women have equal opportunities to lead when it comes to sports. The truth is that when you look at these sports in the women's head, they are mostly women-related sports that men have no interest in heading; even with that, you sometimes see some men in the lead because the policies are not encouraging other women to step up."*

Another respondent described the Sports Act 2016 (934) as "compromised" since it originally sparked interest, and hope for gender equality in sports engagement and leadership, particularly since the Act centers a lot on the appointment of leaders in the sports industry, but it appears the subject of women engagement garnered less governmental attention since no direct provisions for gender equality in appointments were stipulated. Another significant point of interest was emphasized by a respondent from the WOSPAG who suggested that: *"Gender-themed issues are lumped with issues regarding the youth and the disabled which ends up affecting matters of prioritization".*

It is further highlighted that on matters of disability, concrete policy guidelines for the recognition and implementation of the rights of women, girls, and female children with disabilities to participate in para-sports "falls short of the expectations of the UNCRP, and fails to reflect the promises of the Person's with Disability Act 715".

Another major structural barrier is that it is perceived to hinder women's involvement in the absence of developed formal leadership networks. The historical dominance of men, and the cultural and gender bias that encircles leadership in Ghana, have affected organizational networks. This is equally evident in the Ghana sports industry. The study discovered that while aspiring leaders easily network with the men who officially "call the shots", they can easily access several forms of sponsorship, mentorship, or even leadership roles. A respondent indicated that:

> *... you [an aspiring female leader] could tell him [the male leader] the same thing another man [seeking a leadership position] would tell him and he will ignore you and support the man. That is how it is, not just here, but everywhere else.*

4.2. Institutional Barriers

A potential for prejudice exists when social perceivers hold a stereotype about a social group that is incongruent with the attributes that are thought to be required for success in certain classes of

social roles. It is well known that women are falsely perceived as unfit for some leadership positions, including sports leadership, and this case is reportedly higher in developing countries. In the context of the Ghanaian sports industry, the study identified that the majority of the interviewees believe that the sportswomen who possess the relevant qualifications to occupy leadership positions within the industry are not only looked down upon by some male superiors but by male colleagues or employees as well. This may stem from women being culturally perceived to be the weaker sex and therefore being aligned to activities that do not involve any sporting pursuit, especially at the management level (Aman et al., 2019).

According to Women and Girls Empowered (2022), in developed regions in Africa, there are strong social perceptions that dictate that women are best fit for subordinating roles. Despite the vast resources and time dedicated to promoting gender equality, the cultural hurdles that encircle women in leadership still exist, and it is no different in the Ghanaian case.

It is important to note; however, that not all women held this notion. A respondent and member of WOSPAG noted that assertiveness, competitiveness, and exuberating domineering behavior like men get others to perceive you as adequate to lead. She expressed her disdain saying, "*This is not who I am, but since it gets the job done I do it.*" A similar view from another respondent was that:*"Men, and even other women in the industry, value you as a leader when you act like the men they are used to seeing lead"*.

Sadly, this does not only push women to the point where they alter their leadership styles but also puts them in a paradox. De Keyser et al. (2019) define a paradox as a person or a thing that combines contradictory features or qualities. In this case, the women who aspire to lead attempt to combine their natural leadership qualities with the agentic traits of male leaders because it is expected of them. The result is a paradoxical leadership style where female executives are expected to be warm and nice, as well as tough and stern or demanding, yet laissez-faire. One respondent attested to being passively called "too soft" and by someone else "too hard" or even sometimes "presumptuous".

4.3. Transcending Perceived Barriers to Advancement

This theme assessed the opinions of the female leaders operating in sports organizations in Ghana concerning the perceived barriers in the sports industry in Ghana, and how these challenges were transcended. Primarily, work-life balance, social issues and perceptions, and hiring practices of organizations, were identified as the predominant codes in the collected data.

With regards to work-life balance, the studies by Pfister & Radtke (2009); LeRoux (2009) have pointed out how time and energy-demanding the sports industry generally is. Assuming a leadership position in this industry is associated with making further sacrifices in favor of your work schedule that can impact the social life of an individual. In the study, all three participants of the focused group discussion expressed their challenges in maintaining a strong balance between their working life and their social life.

The gathered data side with the assertions of Presley (2000); Johnson & Long (2001) about Cultural Libertarian Feminism. Per the authors, the culturally dictated roles that women are expected to fulfill have been instrumental in limiting their abilities to assume leadership positions. During the focused group discussion, a participant asserted that:

> *"From the start of assuming this position, I have had to juggle between my responsibility as a family woman and my responsibility as a senior manager in my sporting organization. Whilst one may argue that it should not be a standard for women to play certain positions, our culture dictates that women execute the home-keeping duties dutifully. This cripples their ability to fully immerse themselves in leadership-advancing opportunities".*

Also, a respondent from the interviews indicated that they felt a sense of irresponsibility should their work schedule take them away from their families;

> *With my experience in the field, I know female colleagues with the required capabilities to occupy leadership positions who opted out of such opportunities because they could not manage the demands of keeping their homes and their professional duties. Together with other female colleagues, we found out that there was an underpinning sense of irresponsibility, guilt, and incapability that drove these capable women from such positions.*

Of such instances, Lieberman & Shaw (2012) pointed to the absence of support for such women leading to them forfeiting promising leadership opportunities early in their careers. It can therefore be inferred that if women can benefit professionally from assuming leadership positions, and will progress in their careers as leaders, substantial social support would have to be provided to assist them with their roles.

Aligned to this opinion, is Hielman's (2001) explanation of the Role Congruity Theory. The explanation highlights how social constructs facilitate actions and notions of bigotry against females

who attempt to assume or have already assumed leadership positions. Consistent with these explanations, the thematic analysis revealed that most of these female leaders were subjected to various manifestations of bigotry, and discrimination as a result of their decision to be female leaders in the sporting fields. It was gathered from the interview that: *"Not everyone in our organization is fully sold on the idea of having a woman occupying the topmost position. Most opine that it would be best if leadership in these sporting organizations predominantly consists of men".*

For women to overcome such occupational handicaps, Heilman (2001) argues that these women are required to put in extra work to achieve some of these benefits related to the hiring practices of their sporting firms.

4.4. Strategies to Improve Women's Participation in Sports Leadership Positions in Ghana

4.4.1. Leadership and Leadership Style

Having a competent approach to leadership has been identified as correlating with positive leadership. As part of improving female participation in sporting institutions in Ghana, the theme, "leadership" and "leadership style" recommend that organizations assess and develop the leadership capabilities of females, advocate for the retention of feminine traits in leadership, employ efficient leadership styles, and increase the engagement of females in the sports-related decision-making process.

An essential component of increasing the participation of a minority group is to first assess their capabilities, and develop these**.** The same can be said of the female leadership situation in Ghana. Lee & Chelladurai (2017) suggest that capability assessment would reveal where the strengths, and weaknesses of women are and undertake efforts to mitigate these weaknesses while improving the strengths. As stated by a participant from the tertiary institutional sports associations:

> *"Although adopting the general aptitude tests used in various job interview recruitments. I suggest that we come up with a streamlined test that allows for a detailed assessment of the competencies and deficiencies of women. This would go a long way to help identify the best role fit to associate with the candidates".*

Following the role congruity theory, Kawakami et al. (2000) explain those female leaders who utilize masculine leadership styles, and traits when they assume positions of power, are susceptible to situations of bigotry and dislike by both their male and female counterparts. Confirming this situation, the data analysis revealed that leveraging a masculine approach to

leadership has not supported the cause of including more women in sports leadership in Ghana. A respondent from the interview explained that:

> *"Imagine a woman behaving like a man in our culture. To be frank, this would not rub off well with our people, especially with how our culture dictates women should act. There has been an advocate for fellow women to be much more flexible and relational in the execution of their duties. While some might argue this would increase instances of disrespect, it doesn't go to say that we are not advising fellows to be firm as well."*

In effect, if women are exposed to leadership settings, and situations where decisions are made, it is expected that career-wise, they would select pathways that will put them in similar positions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The research uncovered three key themes that were used to describe the obstacles women experienced while trying to obtain or participate in leadership roles in the sports industry, namely structural barriers, institutional barriers, and individual mindsets. The social and political structures that prevented women from holding leadership roles in sports comprised structural barriers. These included a lack of formal networks for women to advance in management roles, the ineffectiveness of policies, and legislation like the National Sports Policy of 1994, and the Sports Act 2016 in addressing the backlog of women's involvement, and the absence of informal networks that stem from male authorities by isolating themselves from women outside of the workplace. The outdated sports policies and current sports legislation do not significantly account for women's involvement in sports leadership although significant focus has been directed to women's participation in sporting activities. Since there is no strong policy mandate in promoting women's involvement in leadership, top-level management in the sports industry is saturated with male leadership while women still struggle to establish leadership parity in mid, and low-level management positions.

Moreover, the institutional barriers were deemed to be the most significant since they are the most apparent, yet most neglected challenges. Institutional barriers stem from societal, and cultural perceptions that women do not possess the adequate capabilities to lead, especially in a sporting environment. One of the most fascinating discoveries from this challenge was that women's leadership techniques are still criticized, even, if they yield positive results simply because they deviate from typical male leadership tactics. This results in a paradoxical approach to leadership where women have to adopt leadership styles that do not only support the idea of what is expected of

them as female leaders but also encompass male leadership qualities. Consequently, these female leaders have to conform to stereotypical leadership styles while displaying agentic leadership behaviors.

Individual mindsets of women in sports professions hinder their involvement in sports leadership. The most prominent feature within this theme is that most women do not believe there can be a work-life balance when they take up leadership positions, due to the associated increase in career demands alongside domestic, and family duties at home.

For the organizational culture, the study identified the need for a general change in organizational culture to enhance the number of women who are represented in leadership positions in professional sporting organizations. There ought to be mass education in the sporting community of Ghana on the importance of including female leaders in the leadership of such firms. Also, the study suggested that there should be organizational policy reforms, particularly in sporting organizations where males dominate in leadership. This would encourage gender diversity in sports leadership in such organizations, and Ghana in general, and grant equal access to leadership opportunities in professional sports organizations to women. In the case of social support, the study findings emphasized girl-child education as an instrument for improving female representation when it comes to leadership in professional sports organizations in Ghana. The study stressed the need to intensify sports-related education for females at all levels of the educational ladder in Ghana. In the long term, it is expected that such an approach would result in a shift in male-dominated leadership to one which equally favors women for steering sports organizations in the intended direction. Further, allowing brilliant females to actively participate in sporting activities, is seen as a key instrument that could be used in inculcating the desire to pursue sports-related careers and the prospective assumption of leadership positions in the future. Although women's participation in sports has received enough attention, quantitative and qualitative research should be conducted to understand why women's involvement in sports leadership is not significantly accounted for by either the current sports legislation or outmoded sports policies.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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