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## **Incivility in the Workplace: The Experiences of Female Sport Management Faculty in Higher Education**

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Access to higher education for women has dramatically increased in the United States during the past 50 years. Female college graduates have reversed the figures and gone from being outnumbered by their male counterparts 3 to 2 in the 1970s, to now outnumbering male college graduates 3 to 2 (Becker Hubbard, & Murphy, 2010). Women also graduate from masters and doctoral programs at a higher rate than men. Statistics show that in 2016, 57.4% of master's graduates and 52.1% of graduates of doctoral programs were female (Perry, 2017).

However, increases in the number of women obtaining college and advanced degrees and advanced degrees has not translated to comparable representation in faculty positions or leadership roles in higher education (Lennon, 2014). Only 26% of college presidents were women in 2012, which is a noticeable increase from just 10% in 1986, but still equates to men holding a large majority of such positions. This imbalance is also evident at the lower levels of academia. Women hold more positions as lower ranking faculty than men, including 56% of instructor/lecturer positions (American Association of University Professors, 2014). Additionally, although women held nearly half (48%) of tenure-track positions in 2013, women only represented 35% of tenured faculty (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2013). Women face additional challenges once they secure a position within a higher education institution as well. The Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey found that 31.4% of women feel they must work harder than their colleagues to be perceived as a legitimate scholar (Eagan et al., 2014). This study also found nearly four out of 10 female faculty (37.6%) felt they had been discriminated against or excluded because of their gender, compared to 11.7% of their male counterparts (Eagan et al., 2014).

The aforementioned lack of women in leadership positions and perceived discrimination against female faculty may be even more of a concern in sport management programs. Sport is considered a male domain and women are often seen as intruders in this realm (Anderson, 2008; Kamphoff, 2010; Taylor & Hardin, 2016; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Thus, female faculty in sport management programs face gendered challenges in academia in general, in addition to the layer that is present due to the male-dominated nature of the sport-related discipline. Women working in male-dominated industries also face increased rates of bullying, incivility, and harassment (Vogt, Bruce, Street, & Strafford, 2007). Female sport management faculty members have many obstacles to negotiate in the higher education environment. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to examine

the manifestation of incivility from colleagues and superiors experienced within a sample of female sport management faculty members utilizing social identity theory as a guiding framework. Incivility was conceptualized for the current study as deviant behavior that is not necessarily intended to physically harm the target (e.g., belittling others, showing disdain to someone while they are talking, engaging in outside tasks during meetings; Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson, Andersson, Wegner, 2001; Porath & Pearson, 2010).

### **Social Identity Theory**

Social identity theory attempts to explain decision-making processes and behaviors as they relate to group membership and dynamics (Treppe, 2006). It suggests individuals have a personal identity as well as a social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Personal identity encompasses specific abilities and interests while social identity consists of group categories such as demographics or organizational membership (Turner, 1982). Social identity theory postulates individuals form categories of “us” and “them” or the “in” and “out” groups based on shared characteristics (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This separation between the in and out groups is dependent on boundaries set and whether the relationship within each group is stable and secure (Rees, Haslam, Coffee, & Lavalley, 2015).

There is an adoption of group identity and goals when an individual becomes part of the “in” group. This embracing of overall group identity also causes coordinated behavior and motivations to match the group identity (Rees, Haslam, Coffee, & Lavalley, 2015). Individuals are motivated to embrace these “in” group behaviors because of their desire to increase self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Becoming part of an “in” group necessitates an individual’s actions and reactions are altered by the shared norms of that group (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Tajfel, 1979).

Professions that are male-dominated illustrate the existence of “in” group harassment on “out” group members as women in these professions have been found to experience a greater number of issues with unethical or unprofessional conduct (i.e., incivility; Vogt et al., 2007). This may be attributed to the high value placed on masculine characteristics such as power, dominance, competitiveness, and aggressiveness (Vogt et al., 2007). Women are perceived as intruders in these professions potentially reducing the benefit of being part of the hegemonic group (i.e., men), which triggers higher rates of harassment-type behaviors (Bergman & Henning, 2008). It is not uncommon for women working in male-dominated professions to attract increased attention, be evaluated more critically, and experience less support, especially when they are new to their organization (Embry, et al., 2008; Kanter, 1977; Taylor & Hardin, 2016; Walker, & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Efforts to change gender inequity may be unsuccessful if employees and administrators are passive or accepting of this unequal treatment of female employees (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012). Women working in male-dominated professions may come to expect and accept discriminatory treatment, such as incivility, as part of the territory (McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2012; Taylor, Hardin, & Rode, 2018; Taylor, Siegele, Smith, & Hardin, 2018). Thus, women may accept their membership within the “out” group in terms of their place within sport organizations and sport management academic programs.

Social identity theory was used to guide this study in attempts to discover if “in” groups and “out” groups existed within sport management programs in higher education settings. Social identity theory was utilized as research suggests gender is a salient identity and it is

challenging to avoid identifying oneself or being identified by others based on gender (Hajek, Abrams, & Murachver, 2005). Hajek et al. (2005) also postulate that understanding one's gender identity often occurs through the comparison to the "other." An interesting power dynamic is created for female faculty due to the fact that the majority of sport management programs have male-dominated faculty and a male-dominated student bodies (Chen, Adams-Blair, & Miller, 2013; Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008; Mahoney, Mondello, Hums, & Judd, 2006). The male-dominated nature of sport and sport management programs within higher education institutions provides a potential location for unethical or unprofessional behavior to occur (Taylor, Hardin et al., 2018; Taylor, Smith, Rode, & Hardin, 2017).

Research has examined the experiences of student harassment (i.e., contrapower) aimed at female sport management faculty members (Taylor et al., 2017; Taylor, Hardin et al., 2018) however, research investigating experiences of incivility from colleagues and superiors (e.g., department chairs, deans) is lacking. It is important to assess these experiences from colleagues and superiors because of the power dynamic that often occurs within these relationships, especially in male-dominated departments. Not only does a male colleague or superior have societal power, due to traditional societal norms, they may also have organizational power within the department because of their seniority.

### **Incivility**

Similar to most forms of harassment, incivility can take place in a variety of forms (e.g., illustrating a lack of respect for others, poor etiquette, rude behaviors) and can be seen in all facets of life (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Research on workers in North America found an astonishing 99% of employees have witnessed behaviors they classified as incivility in their workplace (Porath & Pearson, 2010), while 98% indicated they have been on the receiving end of incivility (Porath & Pearson, 2013). Incivility can be found across genders, races, and organizational ranks (Namie, 2003). Thus, making the workplace an area of interest for scholars who study uncivil behaviors and their negative consequences (Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001).

This discourteous or rude behavior is often in violation of norms for respect toward others in social interactions. This workplace aggression operates on a continuum with incivility at the beginning and physical violence at the end, with additional bullying, hostile, or sexually harassing behaviors as intermediate points (Nydegger, Paludi, DeSouza, & Paludi, 2006). These uncivil behaviors are often provoked by thoughtlessness as opposed to intentional malice (Porath & Pearson, 2013). Incivility has been identified as one of the most common forms of anti-social behavior engaged in by employees in the workplace (Cortina, 2008).

In the male-dominated realm of sport management departments in higher education, women face incivility in the form of written messages, non-verbal behaviors, verbally, unwanted attention, and added criticism (Embry, Padgett, & Caldwell, 2008; Kanter, 1977; Taylor et al., 2017; Taylor, Hardin et al., 2018; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Non-verbal incivility can be expressed through eye rolling, sighing, or complete lack of attention. Verbal incivility can occur as interrupting a faculty member in a meeting or in classroom discussion, teasing, making jokes, or questioning credentials in regards to content knowledge (Burke, Karl, Peluchett, & Evans, 2014; Clark, Olender, Kenski, & Cardoni, 2013; DeSouza & Fansler, 2003; Grauerholz, 1989; Johnson-Bailey, 2015; McKinney, 1990; Miller & Chamberlin, 2000). Lampman (2012) found 91% of female faculty members had experienced at least one

occurrence of student incivility. Taylor, Hardin et al. (2018) found female sport management faculty members experienced incivility from both female students (49%) and male students (76%). The incivility found was predominantly in the form of questioning content knowledge (51.4%), physical aggression (80%), and distracting behavior (80%).

### **Women in Sport Management Academia**

The field of sport management within higher education faces similar challenges of academia and the greater sport industry workforce when it comes to the underrepresentation of women. The majority of sport management programs across the United States have fewer than 40% female faculty members and female students (Barnhill, Czekanski, Pflieger, 2018; Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008). Jones et al. (2008) suggests the small number of female faculty may contribute to the low number of female students. It is necessary for female students to have the opportunity to observe women who exhibit managerial and leadership skills that result in potential career mobility (Moore & Huberty, 2014). Even more concerning are findings from Sosa & Sagas' (2008) investigation of perceptions of female sport management faculty. It was found students perceived female faculty as less capable than their male peers. Additional research on student-female faculty interactions indicate more than half of female sport management faculty have experienced sexism, while more than 80% have experienced incivility from students (Taylor et al., 2017). In turn, women who witness discrimination may hesitate to pursue a role as a member of sport management faculty in the future (Ilgen & Youtz, 1986). Also, a "women-less faculty could signal the wrong message to students and professionals that the 'good ole boys' networks' are standard practices" (Moore & Huberty, 2014, p. 22).

Academia is a ripe area for workplace incivility due to the high stakes involved in establishing social capital, duration of working relationships between faculty members, and the pressures of tenure (Faria, Mixer, & Salter, 2012; Keashly & Neuman, 2008; 2010; McKay, Arnold, Fratzel, & Thomas, 2008). Keashly and Neuman (2008) found colleagues were more likely to be identified as bullies by faculty (63.4%), while superiors were more likely to be identified as bullies by frontline staff (52.9%). Simpson and Cohen (2004) found women working in higher education were more likely than men to be bullied, and asserted bullying needs to be explored in a gendered power relation context to further understand the behavior. Therefore, it is important to understand key organizational contexts such as position and number of women working in the organization, which much of the research on bullying in the work place has failed to do (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). The aforementioned research and theoretical foundations led to the investigation of the experiences of female sport management faculty in relation to incivility from colleagues and superiors.

### **Method**

A qualitative research design was utilized in order to gain insight into the experiences and inner thoughts of the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gratton & Jones, 2004). This approach allowed participants to tell their stories by responding to questions surrounding the topic of workplace incivility. The responses were then used to create themes and codes (Gratton & Jones, 2004). This qualitative research design was selected because it allows for meaning to

be drawn from participant interviews by placing common experiences and thoughts into themes and expressing them in a narrative format in the results and discussion (Dittmore, 2011).

Interviews are grounded in discussion and allow for a continuous dialog with a question-and-answer format (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Interviews also aid in finding the meaning of fundamental themes in the subject's life (Kvale, 1996). The participants "work life" (i.e., experiences of incivility in the work place) was the central focus of the study, and interviews were utilized to allow researchers access into the participant's perspective and experiences (Yin, 1994). It would be impractical to observe all female faculty working within sport management programs in their work setting and interviews provide a more intimate perspective. Interviews also allow for probing and clarification of responses via follow-up questions due to their personal and conversational nature (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 female faculty members working within sport management programs at higher education institutions in the United States. Purposive, criterion based sampling was utilized as the participants needed to be tenure-track female faculty members in sport management programs (Creswell, 2014). The institution type and department classification could varied between participants, but all women who participated in the study were employed by a higher education institution performing assigned duties as a faculty member. The participants were purposefully selected because it was believed they would be able to provide the most accurate information to address the nature of the study (Creswell, 2014). Each participant offered a unique perspective due to different demographic characteristics including age, relationship status, years in position, departmental/college affiliation (e.g., kinesiology, business, education), and institution classification (i.e., teaching or research intensive). Interview questions were fashioned with the participants' personal and social identity (e.g., gender identity and "otherness") in mind and addressed female faculty members' experiences while working in a sport management program.

The recruitment process was based on Taylor, Hardin et al.'s (2018) study on contrapower harassment. Initial recruitment occurred at an international, professional sport management academic conference as potential respondents were asked to participate in the study. Initial recruitment secured seven participants. To gain a larger sample size, an e-mail inquiry was sent via the Women in North American Society for Sport Management listserv. This listserv was chosen because it was likely to have the largest number of female members who were teaching in sport management programs. The e-mail included a general description of the research, including the nature of the project, as well as the contact information for the principal investigator. The e-mail also specified the target audience was female faculty members who are currently teaching in sport management programs. The e-mail recruitment garnered an additional seven participants for a total of 14 study participants.

The average age of participants was 42-years old, with a range of 30 to 61 years. Four of the female faculty members identified working at a research intensive university (i.e., universities with high research activity expectations), while 10 identified their university as teaching intensive (i.e., universities with emphasis placed on teaching and lower expectations on research activity). Six of the participants identified as having a faculty rank of assistant professor, five had the faculty rank of associate professor, and three identified as full professor. The average time in their current position was 6.6 years with a range of 1 to 18 years, and the average time as a faculty member was 11.5 years with a range of 1 to 32 years. Half of the participants ( $n = 7$ ) identified as lesbian and half ( $n = 7$ ) identified as heterosexual. Ten of the participants identified as married; one identified as in a domestic partnership, and three

identified as single. All 14 participants identified as White. This lack of racial diversity in a small sample of women working within higher education is not surprising. The Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac (2015) reported that 72.1% of all faculty members self-identify as White. Taylor et al. (2017) found this to be true in sport management as well, as more than 75% of their population of female sport management faculty members self-identified as White. Participants were given pseudonyms in order to protect their identity. See Table 1 for demographic information.

Table 1. Self-Identified Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	University Type	Faculty Rank	Years: In current position / As faculty	Sexual Orientation	Relationship status
Ashley	45	Research intensive	Associate Professor	11 / 13	Lesbian	Married
Beth	36	Teaching intensive	Assistant Professor	1 / 7	Heterosexual	Married
Catie	34	Teaching intensive	Assistant Professor	1 / 5	Heterosexual	Single
Demi	55	Teaching intensive	Professor	12 / 10	Lesbian	Married
Ellie	36	Teaching intensive	Assistant Professor	1 / 1	Lesbian	Married
Felicia	30	Teaching intensive	Professor	5 / 10	Heterosexual	Married
Gigi	31	Teaching intensive	Assistant Professor	1 / 1	Heterosexual	Single
Hallie	55	Research Intensive	Associate Professor	18 / 18	Heterosexual	Married
Izzy	51	Teaching intensive	Associate Professor	8 / 19	Heterosexual	Married
Phoebe	34	Teaching intensive	Assistant Professor	4 / 4	Heterosexual	Single
Kim	38	Teaching intensive	Assistant Professor	4 / 10	Lesbian	Domestic Partnership
Lola	41	Teaching intensive	Associate Professor	10 / 13	Lesbian	Married
Maggie	43	Research intensive	Associate Professor	3 / 18	Lesbian	Married
Nora	61	Research intensive	Professor	14 / 32	Lesbian	Married

The utilization of semi-structured interviews allowed participants to fully explain their unique experiences with incivility. The open-ended structure of the interview questions permitted participants to put their perceptions, emotions, and feelings into words. Follow up questions were also used based on participant responses, which allowed for auxiliary clarification and increased detail. Topics of questions included: challenges of female faculty

(e.g., What is your biggest challenge as a female faculty member?), experiences of harassment (e.g., Can you give an example of a time a colleague or superior acted verbally disrespectful, challenge you, continually roll his/her eyes, or otherwise show disdain while you were talking?), knowledge of university policies on harassment (e.g., Can you tell me anything you know about your university's policies about harassment, or who you should contact if you receive harassment of any nature from a colleague or superior?), and how to combat incivility from a colleague or superior.

Interviews were conducted via telephone and were recorded for transcription purposes. The average interview length was 48 minutes. Researchers should attempt to achieve data saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and saturation was deemed to have occurred after 14 interviews, which is similar to other sport researchers using specific populations (see Sutherland, et al., 2014; Owton, Bond, & Tod, 2014; Taylor & Hardin, 2016; Taylor, Siegele et al., 2018). Interviews were transcribed and formatted for analysis. Transcripts were then returned to participants for member-checking. Member-checking allows for participants to review the transcript from their interview to ensure accuracy of the transcription (Andrew Pedersen, & McEvoy, 2011; Gratton & Jones, 2004). Three researchers then individually coded the transcripts for codes and themes and met to discuss their findings. Researchers reached agreement on all themes.

A constant comparative methodology was utilized for data analysis. In a constant comparative analysis, one section of the data is compared with another in attempts to uncover similarities and differences (Merriam, 2009). Themes emerge when related dimensions of data are grouped together. The overall goal of constant comparative analysis is to expose patterns. "Meaningful and manageable themes" were formed through grouping of quotes of related experiences and forms of academic bullying and incivility discussed by participants (Patton, 1987, p. 150). Themes and codes were discovered inductively, rather than deductively; during inductive analysis researchers make inferences from many elements of discourse from the interviews (Lindloff & Taylor, 2011).

## **Findings and Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the prevalence of incivility and the manner in which it was manifested toward a sample of female sport management faculty. Incivility from colleagues and superiors was found to be profoundly prevalent in sport management programs as all 14 participants had experienced this behavior. Research has examined the experience of incivility aimed at female sport management faculty from students (see Taylor et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2017); however, research on incivility from superiors and colleagues of this population is limited. The presence of workplace incivility is extremely high as 98% of employees report experiencing incivility and 99% report witnessing it within the workplace making the topic of this study extremely relevant (Porath & Pearson, 2010; 2013). Analysis indicated this incivility manifested itself in three ways: (a) female incompetence, (b) female irrelevance, and (c) female hostility. Female incompetence and female irrelevance occurred when the participants' gender influenced their treatment from male colleagues and supervisors. These forms of incivility are often subtle, and hard to pinpoint. Male colleagues and superiors were found to offer disrespectful commentary as it relates to female faculty's competence in the field. The unforeseen theme of female-on-female hostility (e.g., aggressive bullying) also arose. Despite the fact that participants indicated the importance of acting as a support system



for female junior faculty within their departments, especially when the department was male-dominated, the female faculty in this study indicated experiencing high levels of incivility from their female colleagues and superiors.

### **Female Incompetence**

Participants discussed experiencing a perceived lack of competence from their male colleagues and superiors, similar to that experienced from students in previous research (see Taylor et al., 2017; Taylor, Hardin, et al., 2018). Male colleagues and superiors were found to frequently question the knowledge, expertise, and ability of female faculty working in sport management departments. Several faculty members discussed being instructed to cover specific material in their courses while acknowledging none of their male colleagues received such instructions. Further, participants indicated receiving public, demeaning remarks regarding their promotion and tenure. This downplaying of female faculty's knowledge, expertise, and ability illustrates the existence of women as the "other," as described by social identity theory, within sport management programs. This "othering" of female faculty works to uphold the classic power structure within sport management programs where men find themselves in the "in" group holding positions such as department chair.

Ashley, who has experienced a great deal of professional success, discussed how her department chair would devalue her and other women during departmental faculty meetings. She referenced a specific meeting where the department chair randomly announced to the entire faculty how her promotion and tenure process was "definitely touch-and-go for a while." She added these types of comments became commonplace during faculty meetings, and were often directed at her and her two female colleagues. She said,

(We are) pretty accomplished women in sport management, and we were incredibly marginalized within our department. It was very difficult for us not to believe part of the reason why we were marginalized was because we were three strong women who asked a lot of questions and didn't just kind of go along to get along.

She also mentioned how she had never heard her department chair make degrading or devaluing comments to her male colleagues. In Ashley's case, her department chair was utilizing his organizational power to demonstrate Ashley and her female colleagues' "otherness" within the department. Despite the professional success experienced by Ashley and her colleagues, her (male) department chair was unwilling to accept them into the "in" group and had placed them into an "out" group together due to their gender, which social identity theory suggests is difficult to avoid identifying others with.

Ashley was not the only participant who experienced this type of incivility during meetings. Felicia discussed being singled out in a meeting, similar to the experiences of Ashley. During a faculty discussion about course assignments for the following semester, Felicia's department chair instructed her to cover specific topics in her course that were not currently being included in her course content, which was previously approved. Although Felicia acknowledged her department chair, who was also the associate dean, was in a position to offer guidance on course materials, she had never heard him openly instruct any of her colleagues on what topics should be included in their courses. Lola described a similar experience with the graduate coordinator in her department. She discussed how he would micromanage her and

"second guess just about everything that I said and did." She went on to say, "I've often had the thought (that) if a guy or some other male in my department had suggested something it wouldn't have been questioned. I just find that upsetting. It's very frustrating." Ashley, Felicia and Lola's experiences demonstrate a male who is in a power position asserting his organizational power over female faculty members and placing them into the "out" group as all of these women have male colleagues, but have never witness them being disrespected or micromanaged in this manner.

This type of incivility also manifested itself in a hostile nature at times. Nora discussed experiencing discrimination from her department chair based on her gender and sexual orientation (lesbian) that resulted in a university-level hearing where Nora had to fight to keep her job. Nora claimed her department chair was making false statements about her actions as a teacher and scholar; criticizing the way she taught classes, traveled to and from conferences, and conducted herself as a professional. In addition to these claims, Nora's department chair was continuously degrading toward her about her work as both an educator and scholar. He would try to embarrass her in front of her students and colleagues and pressure her to quit behind closed doors. After hiring a lawyer and successfully defending herself in the academic, university level hearing, Nora was still punished with no travel funding, no salary increases, and she was not allowed to teach summer courses which would have resulted in supplemental pay. Nora was hospitalized, medicated for depression, and forced to have a lawyer represent her. These events depict an extreme form of incivility, bullying, meant to intimidate the victim into engaging in certain actions wanted by the bully (e.g., Nora's department chair was perhaps hoping she would leave the university).

Workplace bullying is typically found when there are repeated and systematic accounts of social aggression in the workplace (Inceoglu, 2002). Examples of bullying in the academic setting include work overload, unfair criticism, excessive monitoring, intimidation, and humiliation, all present in Nora's case (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). The Workplace Bullying Institute (2007) reported approximately half of American workers have either been targets of workplace bullying or witnessed a co-worker being bullied. It was found that the majority of bullying came from superiors (72%), perpetrators were mostly men (60%), and women were the targets of majority of the bullying (57%; The Workplace Bullying Institute, 2007). Research has found 20% of faculty victims reported bullying lasting more than five years, and 32% of victims reported bullying occurring for more than three years (Keashly & Neuman, 2008, 2009; McKay et al., 2008). This continuous bullying works to show the victim they are in the "out" group and signals to anyone else in the department or organization who possess similar characteristics they need to engage in specific "appropriate" behavior as controlled by the individual who is in power.

Nora discovered several other women had suffered the same treatment as she had after the hearing concluded. Not all of these other women fought to keep their position like Nora; one had left the university and took a position at another academic institution and one had left academia completely and moved across the country to start a new life. This illustrates an acceptance in this type of hostile incivility behavior and the effectiveness of creating "in" and "out" groups within the department. This aligns with research that suggests there is a relationship between tolerance of harassing behaviors by organizational leadership and prevalence of harassment (Gallivan Nelson, Halpert, & Cellar, 2007; Miner-Rubino & Cortina, 2004). Nora's male department chair discovered he was able to bully certain members of the department without facing punishment from administration and continued to use his power until

Nora was unwilling to accept this unprofessional treatment. Previous attempts from Nora's department chair were successful in forcing members of the "out" group to leave the organization in order to escape the bullying so he continued to engage in this incivility in attempts to control the behavior of those in the "out" group.

Ellie discussed experiencing this type of harassment from other graduate assistants when she was completing her doctoral degree. She described how a fellow doctoral student, who was male, who would, "interrupt (us), cut us off, (thought he) always knew better, and (thought) we were never right." Ellie's experiences show these behaviors can be learned. This male doctoral student may have learned uncivil behavior from watching male faculty interact with female faculty. The perpetuation of "in" and "out" groups begins much earlier than when faculty begin their careers. Gigi experienced similar hostility from a male faculty member while she was completing her doctorate. After talking to fellow (male) doctoral students within her program she realized the male faculty member was treating her differently. This faculty member would "call her out" and attack her about her experience and expertise. Gigi felt he was perhaps, "threatened by (me as) a potentially successful female. Him thinking he should be a dominant male and questions how good I could be because I'm female. And maybe even being surprised that I was doing as well as I was because I was a woman."

The female incompetence theme was typically an assertion of power as male colleagues and superiors were attempting to assert their gendered and organizational power over the participants. Demi illustrated this phenomenon when discussing how one male colleague would "say at least one derogatory comment in my direction at every program meeting." She went on to discuss how she knew he was just "looking for a fight" so she would ignore the comments and not engage. The incivility itself was an illustration of the assertion of organizational power, while the sexist nature of the behavior was the demonstration of gendered power men have over women in a male-dominated industry.

### **Female Irrelevance**

Male colleagues and superiors engaged in uncivil behavior that illustrates they believe their female colleague's opinions are not as important or ignore her presence all together. Catie discussed how she received "loud, verbal attacks" from a colleague during a search committee meeting. She talked about how her colleague wanted a specific candidate and became hostile toward her when she disagreed and supported another. Again, this type of behavior illustrates how someone with gendered, or organizational, power will attempt to use their power and intimidate a member of the "out" group into engaging in a desired behavior. This exchange ended with disciplinary action for her colleague because her department chair was also in attendance at this meeting. However, this was not the first time her colleague had been hostile toward her, just the first time her department chair had witnessed the behavior.

Although many of the women talked about instances of verbal incivility, others discussed their encounters with nonverbal incivility. Demi discussed the hostile environment within her department stating, "A friend who is at another school and I had a contest to see who could go the longest without one of their cohorts saying good morning. I won, it was two months." She went on to say other faculty and staff within her college interact with her, but her colleagues within sport management are often aloof. While some member of the "in" group may utilize their status and power to intimidate members of the "out" group, others may cut off all ties to "out" group members as a manner in illustrating they are not welcome. Several participants

discussed receiving eye rolls or hearing “groans” from colleagues during faculty meetings when they voiced their opinions or made suggestions for change, something they believed occurred because of their gender. Research has suggested this idea of female irrelevance as well. Taylor et al. (2018) found when female faculty voiced concerns about contrapower harassment (i.e., harassment from students) their male colleagues did not take their concerns seriously. Participants indicated colleagues would make light of the situation and express a mocking jealousy for “flirtatious,” sexual harassing comments. Several faculty in the current study discussed being hesitant to report sexist incivility from colleagues and superiors for fear of being disregarded.

### **Female Hostility**

Participants in this study suggested in addition to experiencing incivility from male colleagues and superiors they also face this type of behavior from other women within the department and university setting. Workplace incivility is believed to operate on a continuum ranging from relatively non-harming, disrespectful behaviors such as eye rolling or snide commentary up to more aggressive forms such as bullying aimed to intimidate or dominate, which is what was found to exist in the current study from female colleagues and superiors. The general consensus of the participants can be summarized by Kim when she stated, "I've been burned by female colleagues far more frequently than I have (by) male and I don't know how to explain that, but that's the truth." Social identity theory posits a female faculty member who witnesses her male colleagues exhibiting harassing behaviors toward female colleagues may begin to engage in these harassing behaviors in attempts to gain entry into the “in” group in order to increase their self-esteem. The uncivil behaviors become adopted into the department’s or university’s organizational culture, thus normalizing them and suggesting they are acceptable.

Phoebe had several negative experiences with female incivility surrounding her research productivity. She explained how a female colleague told her conference attendance wasn't enough because, "you've got to present or no one gives a shit [sic]." Phoebe went on to discuss how she had a course overload (i.e., teaching additional courses beyond a typical semester load) during this time period and could not maintain a productive research line while prepping for all her courses, but felt her colleague “didn’t care about her work life balance or burnout level.” Phoebe continued to describe her relationship with this female faculty member who would repeatedly make, "digs about my workload, or my production, or my research, my scholarly work," and it was clear she was conflicted about this colleague. Although this colleague would sometimes bully and belittle Phoebe, other times she was overly supportive and praised Phoebe for her great work.

Felicia described an uncomfortable encounter with a female colleague while she was pregnant. While in the lunchroom of her building during her second pregnancy a female colleague said, "Whoa, your husband sure does keep you busy." Despite the fact it had been two years since her first child was born she felt as though many of her colleagues only saw her as the professor who had children. Although Felicia had come to expect this type of comments from her male colleagues, she was surprised to hear them coming from a woman. The idea of work-life integration served a continuous problem for Felicia as she was unable to find supportive colleagues and supervisors within her department.

Maggie discussed experiencing hostility from the (female) department chair at her first institution. Maggie described the following encounter:

When I questioned this individual (her department chair) about something she said, 'I'm the fucking [sic] department chair and if I want to make a God damned [sic] policy I can make a God damned [sic] policy.' That is one of the most horrific situations I've ever been in. The lack of, not just the lack of support, but the overall demeaning method in which she talked to me.

As Maggie was going through the promotion and tenure process this hostile behavior continued. Maggie remembers receiving her dossier after review and seeing comments such as, "you sound pathetic, like you are begging for tenure," written in the margins. Maggie knew the department chair was treating other faculty in the same hostile and abusive manner, but thought she probably received the brunt of it because she would question or challenge her. Maggie suffered from anxiety and took medication for depression and said, "I recognize it now as being completely verbally abused", but was hesitant to report her behavior because she feared this department chair would attempt to ruin her reputation. Eventually, formal complaints were filed, however, punishment was never given out and this department chair never changed her behavior. The behaviors of Maggie's department chair are consistent with literature on "Queen Bee" syndrome, which suggests female rather than male employees are particularly critical of the career commitment, assertiveness, and leadership skills of their female colleagues (Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra, 2006; Mathison, 1986; Parks-Stamm, Heilman, & Hearn, 2008).

The presence of female-on-female incivility may illustrate an instance where women are attempting to gain entry into the "in" group of their male colleagues and superiors as they see them possessing the organizational power. An individual's actions are driven by the need for high self-esteem, which is established, in part, by being a member of a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Men are commonly accepted as the norm for leadership positions within sport organizations because women are thought to lack the masculine qualities valued and perceived as necessary to be a successful leader such as toughness, strength, aggressiveness, and confidence (Anderson, 2008). Male employees who exhibit these qualities are privileged in sport organizations because they are thought of as superior (Kamphoff, 2010; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Women working in male-dominated organizations may experience a threat to their social identity when their gender is devalued by their male colleagues and superiors (Derks, Ellemers, Laar, & Grott, 2011). Women can react in two ways when this threat is experienced. They can attempt to improve the standing of the group (e.g., women supporting women in a collective mobility) or psychologically dissociating with the group that negatively affects their own identity (i.e., women; Derks et al., 2011). Engaging in psychological dissociation causes women to stress the difference between themselves and other women in the organization in attempts to improve their personal outcome. Women may then begin to engage in bullying behaviors to illustrate they believe other women are inadequate. Consequently, female faculty are experiencing incivility from both "in" group members, as well as, fellow "out" group members, creating a hostile work environment. This can be explained by one of the respondents who said, in describing her actions as they relate to her relationship with a male colleague and department chair, "We say things that friends would say to each other, so I think that if I'm going to be really honest, if other people were around we'd probably be creating a hostile work environment." She went on to say, "We say it to each other in our offices but we

don't say it publicly. But I think if anybody walked in, we would be creating a hostile work environment." This particular female faculty member discussed being bullied by a female faculty of more tenure, and the distress it caused her, however, she herself engaged in bullying behavior toward other female faculty members. Holm, Torkelson, and Backstrom (2015) found people who experienced uncivil behaviors from colleagues and superiors, as well as witnessed incivility in the workplace, would likely instigate behaviors of incivility themselves. The accepting culture toward this discriminatory and harassing behavior may pressure women into engaging in bullying as a way to gain access into the "in" group in hopes of securing acceptance from their male colleagues and potentially promotions such as tenure.

### **Conclusions**

It was no surprise the respondents indicated experiencing incivility in the workplace. Research suggests women working in male-dominated professions and organizations may experience higher levels of uncivil behaviors such as sexual harassment and bullying because of their minority status (Vogt et al., 2007). What was surprising was the intensity and prevalence of this type of behavior directed at the female faculty. The women in the current study discussed experiencing anxiety, depression, and even stress-related hospitalization as a result of the uncivil behaviors they experienced. There is a negative correlation between workplace satisfaction and harassment, which is clearly illustrated in this study (Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, & Magley, 1997). Women in some male-dominated organizations may come to expect and even accept this treatment as part of the working environment (McLaughlin et al., 2012). The findings of the current study suggest a harsher reality to the outcomes and negative side effects of workplace incivility.

This high prevalence of incivility, in addition to the gender skewness of sport management programs, causes female faculty members to be placed into the "out" or "them" group and may also work to limit career mobility as well. Individuals prefer to work with those who are similar to themselves (i.e., people of a similar race and gender, or have a similar cultural background) and therefore recruit, hire, and promote those individuals to and within their organization (Ramirez, 2004; Stafsudd, 2006). With only 26% of university presidents and 35% of tenured faculty being female, it may be difficult for women to be hired or get promoted to decision-making positions due to male leaders wanting to hire and promote faculty and administrators similar to themselves (i.e., homologous reproduction). Homologous reproduction occurs because individuals prefer to work with those who are of a similar race, gender, and cultural background (Ramirez, 2004; Stafsudd, 2006). Leaders then recruit these individuals to their organizations, decreasing the likelihood of a woman getting recruited into male-dominated industries. Women are more likely to remain in the "out" group if they are unable to climb the ladder into leadership positions. Additionally, male leaders may be more accepting of this incivility, creating an organizational culture accepting of these behaviors.

Department and university leaders must be aware of the areas where these types of behaviors are occurring and work to change the culture. The longer these behaviors go without consequence, the more difficult it will be to remove them from the culture of the organization. Employee perceptions of tolerance at the organizational level have been found to have greater influence on employee behavior and attitudes than the creation or existence of formal organization policy (Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Drawsgow, 1996; Lim & Cortina, 2005; Pryor, Giedd, & Williams, 1995). The creation of an inclusive environment is not only important for the

benefits associated with such a culture (e.g., increased workplace satisfaction, productivity, diversity of thought), it is also necessary to create a diverse workforce and give students role models and mentors. Female student may witness female faculty being mistreated by their male colleagues and superiors and begin to feel as though they are not welcome in the field, while male students will adopt those behaviors as acceptable.

Findings from the current study confirm the existence of uncivil behaviors ranging from non-verbal abuse to bullying in sport management programs within higher education institutions. This aligns with previous research that suggests higher levels of harassment behaviors within male-dominated organizations and industries. What has not been found in previous research is the same-gender, woman-on-woman, uncivil behaviors described by participants in this study. Social identity theory suggests both men and women will attempt to gain, and keep, membership to the “in” group, even if that means engaging in uncivil behavior. Although women in the current study expressed experiencing bullying from both male and female colleagues and superiors the small sample size and diversity within the sample does not allow for generalization. Future research should attempt to secure larger samples of women from similar institutions (i.e., teaching versus research intensive) or with similar demographics (e.g., white versus racial minority, age) in attempts to discover if more specific patterns exist.

Employees who work in environments that lack inclusivity and may be deemed unsafe can experience lower job satisfaction, as well as, lower productivity. Additionally, those employees who face high levels of harassment may leave jobs prematurely, leading to increased spending on the part of the organization to recruit and train new employees. Finally, if students witness these uncivil and bullying behaviors aimed at female faculty, they may deem these behaviors as acceptable and begin to engage in harassing behaviors toward female faculty, as well as, female students. If students consider this unethical behavior as acceptable, the cycle of harassment will continue and organizational culture will not change. The incivility is often manifested in subtle ways and is not always easily recognizable. Ashley described how the behaviors are “more difficult to name,” she went on to say, “you can't put your finger on it and go, 'look, see, that's harassment; that's incivility' ... it's created over time and it's a lot more difficult to name and then respond to.” Beth echoed this experience saying the harassment she most often encounters is, “incivility, or benevolent sexism, the more underground type of conflict.”

The findings of this study shed light onto the need for sport management programs to change their organizational culture, norms, and behaviors associated with bullying. Department chairs, deans, and higher level administration must begin to implement policies that work to deter faculty from engaging in all forms of workplace incivility including bullying and encourage them to begin practicing behaviors and establishing norms rooted in inclusion.

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