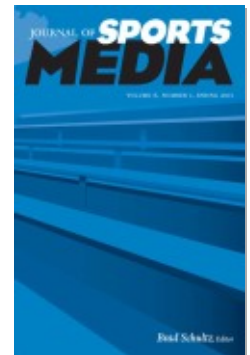A Comparison of Online Media and Traditional Newspaper Coverage of the Men's and Women's U.S. Open Tennis Tournaments

Edward M. Kian, Galen Clavio

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A Comparison of Online Media and Traditional Newspaper Coverage of the Men's and Women's U.S. Open Tennis Tournaments

EDWARD M. KIAN AND GALEN CLAVIO

The purpose of this study was to determine any significant differences in how reporters for newspapers and online sites framed men's and women's tennis. Articles on the 2007 U.S. Open in The Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, USA Today, and online sites produced by ESPN, Fox Sports, and Sports Illustrated were examined. Results showed newspapers were more likely to minimize the athleticism of female athletes, thus strengthening hegemonic masculinity more than the newer medium of online journalism, which produced mixed results.

New media are changing the way news is gathered, distributed, portrayed, accessed, and consumed (Schultz & Sheffer, 2007). The Internet has easily surpassed newspapers among dominant news sources in the United States and is tied with television as the top U.S. news source for those under 30 ("Pew Internet," 2008). Internet readers tend to be younger individuals who focus their information-gathering more than those who still receive their news predominately from the more traditional and more broad-based media of newspapers and television ("Gallup," 2009).

The increasing popularity of the Internet as a primary news source, coupled with the declining influence of newspapers and television in the U.S., could represent major changes to the traditional ways in how sport news has been defined, covered, and

framed by media. Historically, sport media have focused attention on men's sports, often ignoring women in sport unless they offered sex appeal (Daddario & Wigley, 2007; Eagleman, Pedersen & Wharton, 2009; Fink & Kensicki, 2002). Moreover, when covering women's sports, media are more likely to delve into the personal lives of female athletes, and minimize women athletes' accomplishments and skill by regularly comparing their abilities to men, who are often set as the standard (Eastman & Billings, 2000; Hardin, Simpson, Garris & Whiteside, 2007; Kinnick, 1998).

However, it is uncertain if these gender differences will continue to be prevalent in the future, since an increasing number of sports fans now receive more information from online sources and less from traditional media, particularly newspapers. Scholars have argued the communal nature of the Internet is more accommodating to news on women and women's interests than other forms of communication (Royal, 2008; Spender, 1995; Turkle, 1995). However, research on Internet sport media coverage is in its infancy (Kian & Hardin, 2009). Furthermore, no published articles have directly compared gender framing on Internet sport sites with similar content published in a traditional medium. This exploratory study attempted to fill those voids by comparing the framing of a men's and women's sport by newspapers and Internet sport sites.

Literature Review

Framing

Framing is a term regularly employed to describe the means through which journalists make sense of news events by selecting facts and embedding them in storylines (Kuypers, 2002; Lind & Salo, 2002). In news content, scholars have argued frames are discernible in such content as photographs, words, subjects, sources, themes, and repetition of themes (Lane, 1998).

Thus, frames help media consumers assign meaning to events (Kuypers, 2002). Once media consumers define issues, often unknowingly with assistance from media framing, it is difficult to redefine those interpretations (Bronstein, 2005; Lind & Salo, 2002). Historically, media have framed sport as a masculine domain and men's sporting events as historically significant, while minimizing or ignoring the importance of women's sport (Hardin & Shain, 2005; Kane, 1996). Of course, men have long dominated the ranks and power structure of traditional sport media, where a sport hierarchy placing the most popular men's sports at the top has seemingly become ingrained in the production of sport media content and this rewards reporters who cover men's sport (Creedon, 1994; Hardin, 2005; Kian, 2007; Pedersen, Whisenant & Schneider, 2003).

Media Coverage of Women in Sport

A plethora of research analyzing sport media content over the past 30 years has mostly shown men receive more overall coverage than women at all levels of sport, regardless of the sport or medium (e.g., Billings, 2008; Duncan, Messner & Williams, 1990, 1991; Pedersen, Miloch, Fielding & Clavio, 2007; Tuggle, 1997). Content and textual analyses of magazine, newspaper, and television sport coverage have generally shown both quantitative and qualitative gender differences in sport media content that favor men and reinforce the notion that sport remains a masculine domain (e.g., Hardin, Lynn, & Walsdorf, 2005; Messner, Duncan, & Cooky, 2003; Pedersen, 2002). In the rare times when female athletes do receive coverage in mainstream sport media, they are often portrayed as sex objects, and regularly have their athleticism and skill level compared unfavorably with male athletes (Messner et al., 2003). Moreover, sport media are more likely to discuss family members and personal relationships, and employ denigrating humor in content on female athletes (Billings, Halone & Denham, 2002).

Several authors have claimed sport and media are two of the primary forces helping to preserve and maintain hegemonic masculinity in Western societies (e.g., Connell, 1990; 2005; Miloch, Pedersen, Smucker & Whisenant, 2005; Vincent & Crossman, 2008). Connell (2005) defined hegemonic masculinity as the configuration of gender practices, strengthening societal dominance of men and the subordination of women. Media assist in the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity in sport by using descriptors that often frame physiological differences between female and male athletes, whereas also minimizing the athleticism and accomplishments of women in sport (Duncan, 2006; Kane & Parks, 1992). For example, in a textual analysis of British tabloid sport coverage, tennis player Anna Kournikova was continuously described by her physical appearances, and other female athletes had their athletic weaknesses emphasized instead of athletic prowess and their skill level, which were commonplace in descriptors of male athletes (Harris & Clayton, 2002). Similarly, Eastman and Billings (2000) found CNN and ESPN sport news shows were more likely to comment on the families and dating lives of female athletes. Hegemonic masculinity is constantly challenged throughout society, but it is rarely changed without the consent of men in power (Connell, 2005), and men have long dominated all ranks of sport media personnel (Hardin, 2005; Kian & Hardin, 2009).

Media Coverage of Men's and Women's Tennis

In general, men's sports receiving the most media coverage emphasize traditional masculine qualities like strength and speed (Kane, 1996). Women who participate in sports considered more feminine generally receive far more media attention than those competing in sports construed as more masculine in nature, such as rugby and softball (Vincent, Imwold, Masemann & Johnson, 2002). Tennis, though, marks the only professional sports where male and female athletes generally receive similar

amounts of overall broadcast media coverage during the major tournaments, in large part because all tennis Grand Slam tournaments are simultaneously-held men's and women's events.

However, print coverage of men's and women's tennis by traditional media has been far from equitable. In one of the first studies on tennis content, Hilliard (1984) found articles exclusively on men's tennis in major magazines from 1979–1983 outnumbered those on women's tennis by more than 2 to 1. Furthermore, tennis players were associated with stereotypically feminine and masculine gender roles for women and men, respectively. Textual analyses of British newspaper coverage of the 2000 Wimbledon Championships (Vincent, 2004; Vincent, Pedersen, Whisenant & Massey, 2007) found that accomplishments and athleticism of female tennis players were generally marginalized and trivialized by often comparing their efforts to men, and much of the coverage focused on their physical appearances. In contrast, British newspaper narratives regularly portrayed male players as athletic, skilled, independent, and psychologically tough. More recently, Crossman, Vincent and Speed (2007) found newspaper articles on the 2004 Wimbledon Championships published in three different countries all provided more coverage to male tennis players than female players.

Internet Media Coverage of Women in Sport

A challenge to traditional framing of men's and women's sport by mainstream media, and thus a threat to hegemonic masculinity in sport media coverage, may be emerging from the Internet. However, there is little published research in this area compared to more established media (Real, 2006). Moreover, it is not yet fully established who the primary audiences are for sport-related new media content, although initial scholarly forays into this area point to the online sphere being dominated by male audiences. Clavio (2008), in a demographic examination of college sport-oriented message boards, found that participants and audiences were overwhelmingly male, with men outnum-

bering women by a nearly 9-to-1 margin on some sites. Independent research by professional web organizations has also uncovered similar audience trends in sport-related new media sites ("Quantcast," 2009).

The few studies comparing Internet coverage of female and male athletes have produced mixed results, and none of those directly compared Internet content of female athletes to coverage of the same women's sport(s) through more traditional media. Initial studies of gender-based differences in content focused on university-sponsored coverage of sports offered to both sexes. Sagas, Cunningham, Wigley and Ashley (2000) found university Internet sites posted more detailed coverage of men's baseball than women's softball, whereas Cunningham (2003) discovered university Web sites provided more coverage of women's tennis than of men's tennis teams at the same schools. A more recent and broader examination of the amount of content provided by National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) colleges. Web sites showed mostly equitable coverage of female and male athletes in the same sports (Cooper, 2008).

The first study to examine private Internet sport media gender-related content focused on coverage of the 2000 Olympic Games by the Web site for the Australian Broadcast Company (ABC). Jones (2004) found that hegemonic masculinity was reinforced as stereotypical descriptions portrayed adult females as emotionally instable adolescents, and that media framed few female role models. However, male athletes were less likely to have their outward emotions described and were never infantilized. In a more recent study on Internet coverage of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division I men's and women's basketball tournaments (i.e., March Madness), Kian, Mondello and Vincent (2009) found that ESPN Internet coverage was significantly less likely to uphold hegemonic masculinity through the usage of stereotypical descriptors of female athletes compared to CBS SportsLine. In addition, ESPN.com provided more balanced coverage to the two tournaments than CBS SportsLine, which virtually ignored the women's tourna-

ment (Kian et al., 2009). Furthermore, the authors found the examined Internet sites were less likely to use gender-specific descriptors that trivialized the accomplishments of female athletes or write about their personal lives than previous content analyses on traditional media coverage of March Madness (e.g., Billings et al., 2002; Messner, Duncan & Jensen, 1993).

Overall, though, there remains a lack of research on how Internet sport sites frame men's and women's tennis content compared to more traditional sport news media. The relative nascence of new media sites specifically devoted to sports coverage, combined with the still-developing audience for this media's content, have not afforded scholars with the opportunity to perform appropriate inquiries into the effects of Internet-based media on gender-related content and framing issues in sport.

Purpose

Although exploratory in nature, this research compared descriptors in stories written for newspaper sport sections to those written for online sport journalism sites. More precisely, this study attempted to determine if any significant differences were present in how more traditional media (i.e., newspapers) and new media (Internet) outlets covered the same men's and women's sport at the same level of competition, in this case the U.S. Open Tennis men's and women's tournaments. Moreover, these results can serve as an introductory gauge to see if the increasing popularity of the Internet as a sport news source poses a threat to traditional notions of masculinity that usually have been maintained and strengthened by coverage from mainstream sport media.

Research Questions

Research questions were employed rather than hypotheses for this exploratory study. Four overriding research questions guided this study:

RQ$_1$:   How much coverage of men's and women's tennis was provided by Internet and newspaper sport media outlets?

RQ$_2$:   What significant differences, if any, existed in how newspapers framed U.S. Open men's and women's tennis articles, and articles on both sexes, through the use of descriptors?

RQ$_3$:   What significant differences, if any, existed in how sport Internet sites framed U.S. Open men's and women's tennis articles, and articles on both sexes, through the use of descriptors?

RQ$_4$:   What significant differences, if any, existed between how newspapers and sport Internet sites framed U.S. Open men's and women's tennis articles, and articles on both sexes, through the use of descriptors?

Methodology

The methodology for this study was a content analysis of the descriptors used in articles on the U.S Open.

Sampling Selection

This research examined media framing of athletes by analyzing descriptors used in all 192 byline print media articles on the 2007 U.S. Open men's and women's tournaments published in three mainstream newspapers and three popular Internet sites. Professional tennis was selected because it is one of the only professional sports in the Western world where the women's game is nearly or as popular as the men's version (Spencer, 2004; Vincent, 2004). Moreover, the men's and women's U.S. Open Tennis championships run simultaneously, with many journalists assigned to cover both tournaments. Furthermore, some media outlets combine daily coverage on both tournaments into one

article, which provided another basis for comparison in this exploratory study.

At the time this data was collected, the three newspapers selected for examination, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, and *The Los Angeles Times* ranked first, third, and fourth among U.S. newspapers in average weekday print circulation ("Editor & Publisher," 2007). The second most-circulated newspaper in the U.S., the *Wall Street Journal*, is a business-focus publication that does not offer thorough sports coverage to the extent of the other three, and was therefore not included in this study.

For September 2007, when the majority of this data was collected and most of the U.S. Open was played, online sport news sites produced by ESPN, Fox Sports, and SI.com (Internet site for *Sports Illustrated*) ranked second, fourth, and ninth, respectively, among the most popular U.S. Internet sport sites as compiled by ComScore Network ("The Big Lead," 2007). Among the most popular sport sites at that time, No. 1 Yahoo Sports and No. 7 AOL Sports were not included because in 2007 neither assigned writers to attend and cover sporting events to the extent of *Sports Illustrated* or the other two sites, although both have since expanded their ranks of sports writers. The other four sites among the 10 most popular, NFL (National Football League) Internet Group, MLB.com, College Sports TV, and the WWE (World Wresting Entertainment) do not cover professional tennis and thus were not included.

Units of Analysis

A graduate student regularly checked for all byline (name of author(s) included) articles focusing on the U.S. Open published in the six outlets over a 16-day period (August 26 through September 10) that included all 14 days of tournament play for the main men's and women's singles draws as well as the single days prior to and after the tournaments. Articles not attributed to an individual author(s) were omitted. Without having spa-

tial limitations, Internet sites, including the three in this study, often publish hundreds of non-attributed stories, such as those from press releases and wire services like the Associated Press. These are nearly identical to articles without bylines published in daily newspapers. However, our goal was to compare framing by newspaper sports writers with those writing specifically for new media, because there is little research on this new medium. Including non-byline articles would have saturated our sample and thus not offered a true comparison. Only the text of articles was coded for descriptors. Headlines were included, but photos, charts, photo captions, and reader comments (after Internet articles) were not, because Internet sites often incorporate videos instead of photos and are less likely to include photo captions than traditional newspapers.

The Internet sites were checked thoroughly twice a day for new articles, because articles were often removed from pages and replaced by new ones. Attempts were made to access any articles relating to the men's and/or women's tournaments by checking under multiple-page headings and looking under columnists' archives. Included among the online articles for examination were subscriber-only stories. Subscriptions allowing access to all content for ESPN.com were obtained for this research. ESPN.com was the only one of the three sites that did not freely make all content available and many articles by ESPN.com columnists are only accessible to subscribers.

Coding Procedures

Two graduate students read through several research articles that employed content analyses to study gender in sport media coverage. They were then trained in coding for specific gender-related categories during four-hour daily sessions over a two-week period. After their training, both coders examined 20 selected articles on the French Open tennis tournaments in a pretest, and coded them for nine specific categories that fol-

lowed some of the procedures used by sport media researchers (Harris & Clayton, 2002; Kian, Vincent & Mondello, 2008; Vincent, Pedersen, Whisenant & Massey, 2007). Intercoder agreement between coders in the pretest was 80% or higher for all nine categories, using Holsti's reliability formula (Holsti, 1969; Stacks & Hocking, 1998).

Working independently, each coder then read and coded all byline articles on the U.S. Open published in the six media outlets for the frequency of the following descriptive categories: (1) physical appearance, sexuality, attire; (2) athletic prowess, strength; (3) athletic weakness, limitations; (4) positive skill level, accomplishments; (5) negative skill level, failures; (6) family role, personal relationships; (7) psychological strength, emotional strength; (8) psychological weakness, emotional weakness; (9) humor. These exact categories were used by Kian et al. (2009) in their content analysis of framing of college basketball. Those authors stated they developed their coding schema based on similar categories employed by previous authors (e.g., Harris & Clayton, 2002; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991; Vincent et al., 2007). Whereas they are subjective by nature, some of these categories require more explanation. For example, writing about a "powerful" serve would be classified as athletic prowess or strength, whereas writing about a player's "deft touch at the net," would constitute positive skill level. Moreover, commentary on an athlete's resolve in the face of adversity would fall under psychological strengths. In contrast, writing that "nerves" got the better of a player would be classified as a descriptor under psychological/emotional weakness. It should be noted that coders were trained to search for what they perceived to be writers' attempts to inject humorous commentary—not for what the coders themselves found amusing. Statistical information was not coded unless it included a descriptor. Findings from previous research on sport media coverage indicated articles would be significantly more likely to describe female tennis players with descriptions of their physical appearances, family roles, athletic weaknesses,

negative skill level/failures, psychological/emotional weaknesses, or by adding humor. In contrast, previous research indicated men's tennis articles would have a higher proportion of descriptors on athletic prowess, positive skill level/accomplishments, and psychological/emotional strengths than articles on women's tennis (e.g., Billings et al., 2002; Vincent, 2004). However, no assumptions were made for articles on both genders, since no previous sport content analysis compared such articles to those only focusing on a men's or women's sport.

Results

A majority of overall articles focused on men's tournament (43.8) or included content on both tournaments (35.4%), with just 20.4% of articles focusing entirely on the women's tournament (See Table 1). The intercoder reliability rate between the two coders was 83.6%, with agreement ranging from 72% for psychological/emotional weaknesses to 98.5% for family roles/personal relationships. The lead author determined final coding results for the 938 differences between the two student coders. Where appropriate, chi-square tests were calculated to compare differences between observed and expected frequencies under the null hypothesis of independence in newspaper and Internet articles devoted to men's and women's tennis (See Table 2). Since three distinct categories were compared when analyzing the use of descriptors, coding results were entered into Microsoft EXCEL and an ANOVA randomized block design was used to determine if there were any significant differences per category among articles focusing on men's tennis, women's tennis, and articles containing information on both the men's and women's tournaments (alpha = 0.05). Pairwise comparisons were used to see which attributes significantly differed from others, and any significant differences in descriptors within the three types of articles (only on male players, only on female players, articles on both) (See Tables 3–4). In addition, binomial tests for propor-

TABLE 1. **Focus for all articles by medium**

CATEGORY	NEWSPAPERS		INTERNET		ALL ARTICLES		Z VALUE	P VALUE
Number and percentage of articles on men's tennis	57	41.9%	27	48.2%	84	43.8%	-0.7998	0.4257
Number and percentage of articles on women's tennis	26	19.1%	14	25.0%	40	20.8%	-0.9150	0.3624
Number and percentage of articles on both sexes	53	39.0%	15	27.8%	68	35.4%	1.4749	0.1434
Total articles (including on both sexes) and percentage of articles in total population	136	70.8%	56	29.2%	192	100%		

Note: Z values are calculated by subtracting the second column from the first.

tions were calculated to analyze differences between descriptors on men's tennis, women's tennis, and both sexes in newspaper and online articles (See Tables 5–7).

RQ$_1$: How much coverage of men's and women's tennis was provided by Internet and newspaper sport media outlets?

The six examined outlets combined to publish 192 articles on the U.S. Open men's and women's tennis tournaments. Of those, 136 (70.8%) were published in the three newspapers. Among newspaper articles, 57 (41.9%) focused on the men's tournament, 26 (19.1%) on the women's tournament, and 53 (39%) covered both tournaments. For Internet articles, 27 (48.2%) were on the men's tournament, 14 (25%) on the women's tournament, and 15 (27%) on both. As shown in Table 2, Z Values and p Values were used to compare differences between articles exclusively on men's tennis and on women's tennis. The chi-square test and binomial tests for proportions showed no significant differences in the number and percentage of articles on men's tennis, women's

TABLE 2. **Total codes and pairwise comparisons for newspaper articles**

CATEGORY	MEN. TENNIS 57 ARTICLES		WOM. TENNIS 26 ARTICLES		BOTH SEXES 53 ARTICLES		Z VALUE			P VALUE		
	TIMES USED	% OF DESC.	TIMES USED	% OF DESC.	TIMES USED	% OF DESC.	M/W	W/B	M/B	M/W	W/B	M/B
Phys. app., attire	63	5.4%	70	10.9%	107	10.0%	-4.2704	0.6051	-4.0678	0.0000	0.5465	0.0001
Ath. prowess	73	6.3%	40	6.2%	73	6.8%	0.0398	-0.4693	-0.5102	0.9684	0.6399	0.6110
Ath. weaknesses	78	6.7%	51	8.0%	92	8.6%	-0.9759	-0.4643	-1.6719	0.3315	0.6434	0.0977
Pos. skill level	507	43.7%	228	35.6%	394	36.8%	3.3494	-0.5215	3.2927	0.0011	0.6031	0.0014
Neg. skill level	143	12.3%	78	12.2%	133	12.4%	0.0920	-0.1592	-0.0809	0.9269	0.8738	0.9357
Psy. strength	112	9.6%	47	73%	87	8.1%	1.6583	-0.5951	1.2551	0.1004	0.5531	0.2124
Psy. weaknesses	62	5.3%	29	4.5%	65	6.1%	0.7573	-1.3625	-0.7481	0.4506	0.1761	0.4562
Family/ relationship	83	7.1%	91	14.2%	102	9.5%	-4.8491	2.9517	-2.0397	0.0000	0.0039	0.0440
Humor	40	3.4%	7	1.1%	17	1.6%	3.0006	-0.8457	2.7765	0.0034	0.3997	0.0066
Total for all articles	1,161	100%	641	100%	1,070	100%						

Note: Z values are calculated by subtracting the column listed second from the first (e.g., M/W = subtract Women from Men). M/W = Comparisons between articles exclusively on men's tennis and articles on women's tennis. W/B = Comparisons between articles exclusively on women's tennis and articles on both sexes. M/B = Comparisons between articles exclusively on men's tennis and articles on both sexes.

TABLE 3. **Total codes and pairwise comparisons for internet articles**

CATEGORY	MEN. TENNIS 27 ARTICLES		WOM. TENNIS 14 ARTICLES		BOTH SEXES 15 ARTICLES		Z VALUE			P VALUE		
	TIMES USED	$ OF DESC.	TIMES USED	$ OF DESC.	TIMES USED	$ OF DESC.	M/W	W/B	M/B	M/W	W/B	M/B
Phys. app., attire	35	3.9%	21	4.1%	40	7.9%	-0.1670	-2.5568	-3.1791	0.8677	0.0121	0.0020
Ath. prowess	62	7.0%	34	6.7%	23	4.6%	0.2175	1.4538	1.8049	0.8282	0.1491	0.0741
Ath. weaknesses	47	5.3%	26	5.1%	17	3.4%	0.1516	1.3629	1.6384	0.8798	0.1760	0.1045
Pos. skill level	392	44.0%	206	40.3%	241	47.7%	1.3418	-2.3790	-1.3442	0.1827	0.0193	0.1819
Neg. skill level	111	12.5%	63	12.3%	80	15.8%	0.0706	-1.6098	-1.7677	0.9439	0.1106	0.0802
Psy. strength	112	12.6%	69	13.5%	40	7.9%	-0.5013	2.8747	2.6797	0.6173	0.0049	0.0086
Psy. weaknesses	72	8.1%	39	7.6%	23	4.6%	0.2995	2.0490	2.5139	0.7652	0.0431	0.0135
Family/ relationship	47	5.3%	48	9.4%	28	5.5%	-2.9529	2.3316	-0.2147	0.0039	0.0217	0.8905
Humor	13	1.5%	5	1.0%	13	2.6%	0.7693	-1.9279	-1.4810	0.4436	0.0567	0.1418
Total for all articles	891	100%	511	100%	505	100%						

TABLE 4. **Total codes for all men's tennis articles based on medium**

CATEGORY	NEWSPAPERS		INTERNET			
	57 ARTICLES		27 ARTICLES			
	TIMES USED	$ OF DESC.	TIMES USED	$ OF DESC.	Z VALUE	P VALUE
Physical app., attire	63	5.4%	35	3.9%	1.5793	0.1174
Ath. prowess	73	6.3%	62	7.0%	-0.6340	0.5276
Ath. weaknesses	78	6.7%	47	5.3%	1.3142	0.1918
Pos. skill level	507	43.7%	392	44.0%	-0.1358	0.8923
Neg. skill level	143	12.3%	111	12.5%	-0.1364	0.8918
Psy. strength	112	9.6%	112	12.6%	-2.1600	0.0332
Psy. weaknesses	62	5.3%	72	8.1%	-2.5446	0.0125
Family/relationships	83	7.1%	47	5.3%	1.6591	0.1002
Humor	40	3.4%	13	1.5%	2.6894	0.0084
Total for all articles	1161	100%	891	100%		

tennis, or both sexes based on the medium of publication, $X^2(2) = 2.68$, $p = 0.26$).

RQ$_2$: What significant differences, if any, existed in how newspapers framed U.S. Open men's and women's tennis articles, and articles on both sexes through the use of descriptors?

For all newspaper articles examined, pairwise comparisons showed results mostly reinforcing previous sport media research, since 3 of the 4 significant differences between articles exclusively on men's or women's tennis were expected based off past research. As shown in Table 2, the exception was humor, which was significantly more likely to be used in articles on men's tennis. Humor was also more prevalent in men's articles when compared with those on both sexes. The other significant differences emerging were expected. Physical appearance descriptors were significantly less likely to be used when writing about men's tennis than either in articles exclusively on women's

TABLE 5. **Total codes for all women's tennis articles based on medium**

CATEGORY	NEWSPAPERS 26 ARTICLES		INTERNET 14 ARTICLES			
	TIMES USED	$ OF DESC.	TIMES USED	$ OF DESC.	Z VALUE	P VALUE
Physical app., attire	70	10.9%	21	4.1%	4.2511	0.0000
Ath. prowess	40	6.2%	34	6.7%	-0.3439	0.7317
Ath. weaknesses	51	8.0%	26	5.1%	1.9580	0.0530
Pos. skill level	228	35.6%	206	40.3%	-1.6355	0.1051
Neg. skill level	78	12.2%	63	12.3%	-0.0514	0.9591
Psy. strength	47	7.3%	69	13.5%	-3.4741	0.0008
Psy. weaknesses	29	4.5%	39	7.6%	-2.2180	0.0288
Family/relationships	91	14.2%	48	9.4%	2.4848	0.0146
Humor	7	1.1%	5	1.0%	0.1661	0.8684
Total for all articles	641	100%	511	100%		

tennis or in those on both sexes. Positive skill level descriptors were significantly more prevalent in articles on men's tennis than in stories on women's tennis or on both sexes. Unsurprisingly, physical strength was significantly more likely to be framed in articles about men's tennis than about women's tennis. Finally, family roles and personal relationships were more prevalent in articles about women's tennis when compared with those on men's tennis or both sexes. Family or relationship descriptors were also significantly more likely to appear in articles on both sexes than in men's tennis articles.

RQ$_3$: What significant differences, if any, existed in how sport Internet sites framed U.S. Open men's and women's tennis articles, and articles on both sexes through the use of descriptors?

Coding and pairwise comparisons of Internet articles shown in Table 3 offered mixed results, in large part because 8 of the 9 significant differences that emerged came from comparisons

TABLE 6. **Total codes for all tennis articles on both sexes based on media**

CATEGORY	NEWSPAPERS 53 ARTICLES		INTERNET 15 ARTICLES			
	TIMES USED	$ OF DESC.	TIMES USED	$ OF DESC.	Z VALUE	P VALUE
Physical app., attire	107	10.0%	40	7.9%	1.3371	0.1842
Ath. prowess	73	6.8%	23	4.6%	1.7033	0.0916
Ath. weaknesses	92	8.6%	17	3.4%	3.7949	0.0003
Pos. skill level	394	36.8%	241	47.7%	-4.1158	0.0001
Neg. skill level	133	12.4%	80	15.8%	-1.8415	0.0685
Psy. strength	87	8.1%	40	7.9%	0.1361	0.8920
Psy. weaknesses	65	6.1%	23	4.6%	1.2097	0.2293
Family/relationships	102	9.5%	28	5.5%	2.6924	0.0083
Humor	17	1.6%	13	2.6%	-1.3550	0.1785
Total for all articles	1070	100%	505	100%		

involving articles that focused on both sexes. Not surprisingly, family roles and personal relationships were more likely to be used in women's tennis stories than those on men's tennis or both sexes. Positive skill level attributes were significantly more likely to appear in articles on both sexes than those focusing on women's tennis, although negative skill level was more prevalent in articles on both sexes than on men's tennis. Psychological strengths and weaknesses were more likely to be used in articles on men or women than those on both sexes. Finally, physical appearances were significantly more prevalent in articles on both sexes, as opposed to articles focusing on either sex.

RQ$_4$: What significant differences, if any, existed between how newspapers and sport Internet sites framed U.S. Open men's and women's tennis articles, and articles on both sexes through the use of descriptors?

The binomial tests for two proportions shown in Table 4 revealed that online men's tennis articles were significantly more

likely to use descriptors on psychological strengths and physical weaknesses, whereas newspapers significantly had more descriptors on humor.

For articles which focused solely on women's tennis, as shown in Table 5, newspapers were significantly more likely to employ descriptors on physical appearances and family roles when compared to stories on the Internet. Online articles were significantly more likely to mention attributes of both psychological strengths and weaknesses on women's tennis than were newspapers. In articles focusing on both sexes, the binomial tests for two proportions showed newspapers were significantly more likely to use descriptors of athletic weakness and family roles. Table 6 shows Internet sites had a higher proportion of descriptors for positive skill level in articles on both sexes.

Discussion

The most significant findings of this exploratory study were differences in coverage of women's tennis by newspapers and the new media sites. Essentially, stories written for newspapers were more likely to uphold hegemonic masculinity by being significantly more likely to describe physical appearances, attire, and personal relationships in articles on women's tennis than stories written for online sites. These expected results from newspaper framing re-enforced previous findings from many studies on traditional media content (e.g., Higgs, Weiller & Martin, 2003; Vincent, 2004). In contrast, the online sites examined challenged hegemonic masculinity in at least one respect by being significantly more likely to use descriptors on psychological strengths in articles on women's tennis than those published in newspapers on women's tennis.

What are the potential reasons for this shift in compositional methodology between the two mediums? Part of that answer may have to do with the very nature of the media in question. While there is little existent academic research into the quali-

tative differences between professional journalism destined for the printed page and that destined for the computer screen, it is a subject that has been touched upon by practitioners recently (e.g., Ballard, 2006). Cohen (2009), in a profile of popular ESPN.com columnist Bill Simmons, noted the paradigm shift of writing as exhibited by Simmons and other Internet-focused writers. Whereas Cohen (2009) focused primarily on the opinion-based writing that Simmons is known for, the subtext of the article pointed to a reconfiguration of traditional journalistic mores in the online sphere, which emphasize a connection with the audience over the post-Watergate skepticism of the recently prominent sports media.

It is quite possible that the aforementioned shift in content emphasis would lead the sports journalist assigned to write a Web-only story about women's tennis away from the traditional hegemonic practices that have consistently been demonstrated in print media. Whereas we often think of writing as a singular process, the editing and publishing process for Internet-based publications are almost certainly different than their print counterparts, due simply to the variance in space constraints (or lack thereof), layout, and target demographics. Furthermore, whereas as the actual variations are dependent on the decision-making processes of each individual publication, the physical realities listed above would indeed require a shift. Hence, a finding that the Internet-only articles examined in this study were significantly more likely to utilize descriptors of physical strength when writing about women's tennis could be due to a desire on the part of the writers to make a closer connection with the audience for their articles.

Another possible explanation of this observed difference can be found in the field of uses and gratifications research as related to the Internet. Ruggiero (2000) noted the Internet is the domain of the active user, and that each user is given the choice of functional alternatives when making usage decisions in the online sphere. Unlike a traditional newspaper, where the purchas-

er of the physical copy of the paper has immediate access to all stories regardless of the purchaser's interest in those stories, the Internet sports site is comprised of a series of links, which require user activation in order to access the content therein. An Internet user would not simply stumble upon an Internet-based article written about a women's tennis match; he or she would have to actively select that article, thereby implying some degree of pre-existing interest in the subject matter. As such, authors may be more willing to extend their descriptions and accounts of the subject(s), because of the predisposed attitudes of those who will be reading the story.

However, results from coding and pairwise comparisons between articles published on Internet sites in this study were mixed, showing both the fluidity of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) and the unpredictability of this new form of media. The only significant difference when comparing online articles that focused exclusively on men's tennis with those on women's tennis conformed to past research, in that descriptors on family roles or personal relationships were significantly more likely to appear in women's tennis articles than those focused on men's tennis, or on both sexes.

In addition to upholding hegemonic masculinity through the use of gender-appropriate descriptors in men's and women's tennis articles, the three newspapers in this study showed the importance they placed on the men's tournament, because more than twice as many total newspaper articles were published exclusively on men than on women. This gender-based hierarchy of coverage was also evident in online articles, because an even higher percentage of the overall Internet articles focused only on the men's tournament (48.2%) than the percentage of newspaper articles focused solely on the men (41.9%). Of course, some of the differences in the overall number of stories could be attributed to the world's No. 1-ranked men's player at the time of this study, Roger Federer, becoming the first player in modern history to win four consecutive U.S. Open titles. This im-

balance in coverage also may have been more pronounced because the two dominant U.S. women's tennis players of this era, sisters Serena and Venus Williams, were both eliminated before the women's final, marking a then-record fifth consecutive U.S. Open women's final without a U.S. participant.

What these results mean for the future of print media is unclear. Newspapers will likely continue to focus their content on the most popular men's sport and frame women's sport in stereotypical ways that minimize and trivialize the accomplishments of female athletes. Newspapers, though, are increasingly becoming irrelevant in the 21st Century due to precipitously declining circulation figures and a lack of readership from younger Americans, who are accustomed to attaining their news information online ("Gallup Research," 2009). Whereas results from this study were mixed, they did not refute the notion that the Internet can be more accommodating to women and feminist issues than traditional media (Royal, 2008). It is possible that, while the frequency and total number of Internet-based articles may continue to be skewed towards men's sport, the actual qualitative content of the articles related to women's sport may alter in favor of women's issues and concerns. Since the most likely readers of Internet-based articles that focus on women's sport will be predisposed to be interested in both the sport itself and the issues surrounding the sport, editors and publishers of these Internet sites would do well to ensure that their writers approach the topics in a manner that satisfies the needs of these readers. This type of "niche" writing fits quite well within the technological boundaries and usage realities of the Internet, and could allow Internet-focused media companies to take advantage of marketing opportunities within the field of sport media, by employing writers who are both sympathetic to feminist issues and able to express those issues in a way that is lacking in their online and offline counterparts.

Ironically, 8 of the 9 significant differences emerging from analyzing articles exclusively published on the Internet in-

volved comparisons with articles on both sexes, an area that had not been analyzed by previous sport media researchers who performed content analyses and was not a focus of this research. This study did not attempt to analyze the level of focus on either gender within articles that featured content on both tournaments, so that is an area where future exploration is needed.

Limitations

Results from this exploratory study should not be generalized, as it only examined three newspapers and three online sites. Additionally, all six outlets were U.S.-based, media organizations with national outlets, and thus may not be indicative of results from smaller, regional U.S., or international-based newspapers and online sites. Moreover, only one sport was examined, and that sport has historically ranked as one of the only widespread, popular women's professional sports (Rader, 2009). In addition, articles were categorized as focusing on men's tennis, women's tennis, or both sexes without any breakdown by gender in articles that featured content on both male and female athletes, which was not a focus of this exploratory study. Moreover, photos and photo captions were not analyzed in this study. Finally, despite the training of student coders and a pretest, the intercoder reliability rate of 83.6% was not very high and the agreement range between coders for specific categorical variables (72%–98.5%) was also a limitation of this study.

Directions for Future Research

This same study or one similar could be replicated with other sports, events, and time periods. A longitudinal study on multiple tennis tournaments could provide better insight. Subsequent research on Internet sport media is needed in multiple areas, including message boards, social networking sites, Twitter, and blogs.

While these areas differ in many ways from more traditional type sports journalism examined in this paper, the reality of this era of media is a rapidly changing landscape, where traditional hegemonic news sources are being replaced and mitigated in importance by broad-scale interpersonal communication systems, such as the social media mentioned above. Examining the roles that both these media and their intrinsic messages play in the distribution of traditional and non-traditional gender stereotypes and hegemonic principles could yield some illuminating findings. In addition, researchers have not yet examined visual depictions of female and male athletes in online sport journalism content.

Furthermore, it would behoove researchers to examine the qualitative differences between online-only and print-destined sports reporting to see how the new medium alters the various aspects of sports journalism. Additional gender-focused research on global Internet coverage on a variety of men's and women's sports at all levels of sport is needed before conclusions can be drawn about the medium of online journalism and its potential long-term effect on hegemonic masculinity in sport media coverage. However, results from this exploratory study indicate new media outlets may be less likely to re-enforce the traditional stereotypes of male and female athletes than newspapers, which appear set in their ways.

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