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Women and girls continue to participate in sport at lower rates than men in New Zealand (Sport NZ, 2025). Sport media research has documented the under-coverage and stereotypical framing of women in sport within media, and how women in sport are represented may influence participation intentions among female audiences (Antunovic & Bruce, 2025). Framing refers to the way media selectively present and emphasise particular aspects of women in sport, such as their athletic performance, appearance, or leadership, shaping how audiences interpret and respond to what they see. (Naraine & Parent, 2017). However, most research has focused on traditional media such as television and newspapers. The role of National Sport Organisations' (NSOs) own digital platforms in framing and covering women in sport, and whether this influences participation intentions, has received limited research attention (Naraine & Parent, 2017). This presentation will introduce research addressing this gap, outlining the existing literature, and the aims of the research.

The research will employ a multi-method design comprising three studies. Study 1 is a content analysis of the digital media content of New Zealand NSOs over a 12-month period. Study 2 involves semi-structured interviews with NSO staff, exploring the factors that shape their framing decisions regarding women in sport. Study 3 is an online survey examining whether exposure to different frames of women in sport influences sport participation intentions among women aged 16 years and older.

Together, these three studies will provide empirical evidence on whether, and how, NSOs' digital media content featuring women in sport influences participation intentions among female audiences in New Zealand. Findings are expected to contribute theoretically, by extending media framing scholarship into the sport context, and practically, by offering insights to help NSOs develop more inclusive digital engagement strategies for women and girls in sport.

Keywords

Digital media, Women in sport, National sport organisations, Sport participation, Sport media

References

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