

AN EXPLORATION OF THE POSSIBLE ADOPTION AND ENFORCEMENT OF GENDER  
EQUITY POLICIES IN NIGERIA TO HELP DEAL WITH MATTERS OF SEX  
DISCRIMINATION IN ATHLETICS

BY

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## **ABSTRACT**

Sport plays an integral part in forming Nigeria's identity. Most Nigerian men either engage actively or passively in sport; however, the same cannot be said for Nigerian women. There are inherent paternalistic structures institutionalized in Nigeria that frown upon women who participate in athletic activities. Despite the United Nations (UN) call to use sport as a catalyst for development and change, Nigerian athletic institutions have been unable to promote gender equality through increased sport involvement. Nigeria's National Gender Policy (NGP) was developed to reach the UN's millennium developmental goals and promote women empowerment, eliminate discriminatory practices, endorse women's rights, and provide opportunities for Nigerians regardless of sex.

Also, sport participation enhances self-esteem and promotes self-determined values that help buffer against life's challenges. It also provides a setting to escape the feelings of depression and alienation, while fostering feelings of belonging and self-worth. Despite all of these benefits, women's athletics in Nigeria is underdeveloped. In direct response to the lower rate of female sport participation, a study was conducted to explore the possibility of adopting and enforcing appropriate gender equity athletic policy directives in Nigeria to combat matters of sex discrimination within athletic programs and activities.

Using Oliver's (1992) pressures for deinstitutionalization model as a theoretical framework, this study explored conditions under which athletic policy directives similar to Title IX's may be employed. Also, this study outlined factors that may inhibit or encourage the enforcement and implementation of gender equity policies to deal with sex discrimination in educational institutions. Five research questions guided this study: what factors will act to pressure the deinstitutionalization of institutionalized practices, norms and behaviors that promote sex discrimination? What factors contribute to sex discrimination and inequity within

educational athletic programs and activities in Nigeria? What key elements may strengthen the possibility of implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity policy like Title IX's athletic directives? What key elements may debilitate the possibility of implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity policy like Title IX's athletic directives? How can a law similar to Title IX help deal with matters of sex discrimination and inequity in educational athletic programs and activities?

Thirty Nigerians provided information on prevailing sex discrimination practices and perceptions of gender equity policies utility in Nigeria. Audio and video recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed with NVivo8. Constant comparison was used to analyze data. This method of data analysis allowed the researcher to continuously compare and contrast the contents of participants' conversation. This study found that adoption and enforcement of an athletic gender equity policy akin to Title IX will help deal with issues of discrimination. However, enforcing such a policy may be difficult because of socio-cultural and psychological factors. In order for Nigeria to reach its NGP objectives and the MDGs, it is critical to deinstitutionalize discriminatory practices and behaviors that impede women and girls from sport.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination is harmful to a nation's identity, development and growth (Bloom & Canning, 2012). It affects social cohesion and creates inequality, as well as inhibits women's independence or involvement in social, economic, and political facets of any country (Bloom & Canning, 2011; Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). Over the years, great interest has been placed on limiting sex discrimination, promoting gender equity and empowering women (Bloom & Canning, 2011; Otiye-Igbuzor, 2006; United Nations Millennium Project, 2006). One particular advocate is the United Nations (UN). This global organization was founded in 1945 after World War II to maintain worldwide peace and security, develop sociable relations among nations, promote social progress, improve standards of living, and fight for equitable human rights (United Nations, 2013). The UN is a strong ally for initiatives and policies targeted at eradicating sex discrimination, as well as promoting women's empowerment and gender equality.

To fulfill the UN's overall mission, eight Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) were developed following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in year 2000 (United Nations, 2013). These goals focus on: dealing with issues of poverty and hunger, improving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering more women, reducing child mortality, enhancing maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development (United Nations, 2013). Also, these goals provide the entire UN system with a plan to work effectively towards a shared objective for improving the standard of living of all individuals (Otiye-Igbuzor, 2006).

### *Nigeria's Contribution to the MDGs.*

Nigeria, like other nation-states, is a signatory to the UN's MDGs (Otiye-Igbuzor, 2006); and as a participant, Nigeria is responsible for reaching the eight goals (United Nations, 2013). As a result of Nigeria's aspiration to deal with pertinent issues affecting the country and its desire to be among the top 20 economies of the world by 2020, government sponsored innovations and initiatives were created for the purpose of development and growth (National Planning Commission, 2011). Although some countries are on track to achieve part of the MDGs by the appointed year of 2015, most African countries are far off course (United Nations Millennium Project, 2006). For instance, the early objective to promote gender equality and empower women through girls' equal enrollment in primary and secondary school, literacy parity between women and men, and women's equal representation in national parliaments with a deadline of 2005 was missed by many African countries, including Nigeria (United Nations Millennium Project, 2006).

In a statement at the United Nations' General Assembly in September 2012, President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria admitted to the country's inability to achieve its goals:

“While our efforts have been strong and determined, progress on the MDGs to-date has been mixed. Although real progress has been made compared to where we were in 2000, significant challenges remain... Relatedly, there has been a gradual improvement in the proportion of girls enrolled in primary school, but not enough to meet set targets.

Equally, although few women currently hold political office, this is growing steadily and the implementation of a new policy framework is poised to address gender equality and women empowerment...Skepticism of whether we can achieve the MDGs has also been widespread, generated by the relative nature of the targets which place a huge burden on

countries like Nigeria that started from a very weak baseline...” (National Planning Commission, 2011).

One of those efforts addressed by President Jonathan is Nigeria’s National Gender Policy (NGP). The NGP was developed to help achieve the UN’s MDGs. In 2006, the Federal Executive Council drafted the NGP to promote women empowerment, eliminate discriminatory practices, endorse human rights, eradicate discrimination and provide opportunities for Nigerians regardless of sex (National Gender Policy Strategic Framework, 2008). This policy was established to bring change and usher in the new democratic Nigeria (National Gender Policy Strategic Framework, 2008; Otiye-Igbuzor, 2006). It also showed the government’s commitment to national and international conventions and laws, in support of gender equality and women’s human rights (National Gender Policy Strategic Framework, 2008). For the guiding principles of Nigeria’s National Gender Policy refer to Appendix A.

In 2008, a strategic implementation plan was drafted by the Federal Executive Council and placed under the supervision and control of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (FMWASD). This plan will be used to achieve the UN’s MDGs and Nigeria’s NGP objectives. The strategic implementation framework had a five year plan (2008-2013) to tackle five of the 16 problematic areas identified within the NGP. A comprehensive list of the 16 problematic areas can be found in Appendix B. These areas include: (1) culture re-orientation and sensitization to change gender relations, (2) promotion of women’s human rights, (3) empowerment of women and integration within different sectors, (4) women’s political participation and engendered governance, (5) and supporting institutional development.

Although education and training is one of the 16 problematic areas identified within the NGP, as

of 2013 Nigeria is yet to create, implement or enforce proper directives to effectively deal with any of these areas.

Sport has the potential to contribute to the attainment of the UN's MDGs and NGP objectives, as it can promote an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding, and can be used as an instrument for education that fosters collaboration, commonality, and social inclusion at the local, national and international levels (Darnell, 2010; Schulenkorf, 2010). Furthermore, sport can be used to improve participants' health and mental clarity (Pollock & Wilmore, 1990; Seefeldt & Vogel, 1986; Wann, 2006), enhance healthy socialization and interaction (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Watson, 1977), develop communities and build the economy (Coates & Humphreys, 1999; Hylton & Totten, 2008), and improve national unity and identity (Chalip, 2006). In fact, the UN's perspective on sport, as articulated by Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, is that: "Sport has a crucial role to play in the efforts of the United Nations to improve the lives of people around the world. Sport builds bridges between individuals and across communities, providing a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of development and peace" (United Nations, 2013).

The Olympic movement has also demonstrated the possibility of promoting peace and development through sport and athletics. Other organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), have also demonstrated the usefulness of sport for development and change. In Africa, AMANDLA EduFootball, a South African organization aimed at using a union of football [soccer] and education to tackle social inequality, established a best-practice model for violence prevention and reduction. In addition, UNICEF in partnership with SCORE (Sport Coaches Outreach) and the Namibian Football Association (NFA) formed the NFA Galz & Goals project to use sport

participation as a platform to promote and empower girls to make healthy and responsible choices.

Sport plays an important role in forming Nigeria's identity (Ojeme, 1989), but in contrast to countries such as the United States, Canada and South Africa, that have established specific directives to ensure both males and females have equitable opportunities to participate in sport at amateurism level (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Beaubier, 2006; Shook, 1996). Nigeria is lacking in its enforcement and has insufficient directives to deal with sex discrimination in educational sport programs or activities. Rather, there are paternalistic structures institutionalized that frown upon women who participate in athletic activities (Nnaemeka & Korieh, 2011; Okonkwor, 2012). In certain regions of Nigeria, men can easily engage actively or passively in sport but women are severely limited (Akindutire, 1992; Okonkwor, 2012; Saavedra, 2003). Also, there are socio-cultural, religious, and structural constraints that contribute to the discriminatory treatment many Nigerian women and girls experience when they pursue sport (Adedeji, 1978; Okonkwo, 2012). Women and girls in Nigeria are expected to be at home, away from school and work, nurturing the family, and participating in restricted occupations (Adedeji, 1978; Saavedra, 2003). From birth, the lives of Nigerian females are shaped to fit the Nigerian ideology which specifies gender privileges and rights (Otive-Igbuzor, 2006).

#### *Statement of Problem.*

Despite the UN and researchers' (e.g. Beutler, 2008; Chalip, 2006; Donnelly, 2011) call to use sport as a catalyst for development and change, Nigeria has been unable to promote gender equity by implementing and enforcing policies to increase women's sport participation (Okonkwor, 2012; United Nations Millennium Project, 2006). The potential for Nigeria implementing and enforcing athletic gender equity policies similar to the United States' Title IX

athletic directives remains to be debated. Title IX is a sex discrimination and equal opportunity law which states that “no one person shall, on the basis of sex, be omitted from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance, to increase female involvement in sports or athletics”.

Based on this legislation, both females and males within primary and secondary institutions, as well as colleges and universities that receive grants and funds from the government should have equal access and opportunities to educational programs and activities including sport.

After Title IX’s implementation in 1972, the number of girls involved in school sport, the number of female-student athletes, and the number of female sport teams and programs increased tremendously (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). This study attempts to discover whether or not Nigerians will be willing to adopt and enforce policies and laws comparable to Title IX as a way of dealing with matters of sex discrimination. An adoption and proper enforcement of appropriate laws and policies may or may not be suitable for reorienting current gender relations, promoting women’s rights, and empowering women and integrating them into different sectors.

This study attempts to address matters of sex discrimination pertaining to women’s sport participation and the inability of Nigeria to employ sport as a tool to accomplish its NGP objectives and the UN’s MDGs. The apparent lack of sex equity and equality in Nigeria, particularly with regards to how girls are marginalized from sport programs and activities, questions Nigeria’s commitment to its NGP objectives and the UN’s MDGs. Although education and training was one of the 16 problematic areas to be addressed by 2015, there has been no specific legislation or educational athletic policies in Nigeria drafted to deal with matters of sex discrimination. To address this, there is a need for fair athletic directives to be in place to ensure people have the liberty to make sport participatory choices as they please. Therefore, research is

needed to gauge the possibility of adopting and enforcing legislation similar to the U.S. Title IX and its athletic policy directives (Beaubier, Gadbois, & Stick, 2008).

*Purpose of the Study.*

The issue of sex discrimination should be of concern to Nigerians (Okonkwor, 2012; Otive-Igbuzor, 2006; Saavedra, 2003). Okonkwor (2012) and Otive-Igbuzor (2006) have advocated for precise anti-sex discrimination policies developed, implemented and regulated to ensure every person is treated justly and has the same opportunity as well as access to educational athletic programs and activities. Policies akin to Title IX of the Education Amendment Act athletic policies may be adopted and enforced by Nigeria to lessen sex discrimination in education institutions. As a result, the purpose of this study is to explore the possibility of adopting and enforcing appropriate gender equity policies similar to U.S. Title IX of the Education Amendment Act to deal with matters of sex discrimination and increase sport participation.

*Research Questions.*

Using Oliver's (1992) pressures for deinstitutionalization model as a theoretical framework, this study explores conditions under which Title IX's athletic policy directives may be employed and outlines factors that may inhibit or encourage its adoption and adaption to deal with sex discrimination in Nigeria's educational institutions. Four major research questions guides this study:

Research Question 1: What factors will act to pressure the deinstitutionalization of institutionalized practices, norms and behaviors that promote sex discrimination?

Research Question 2: What factors contribute to sex discrimination and inequity within educational athletic programs and activities in Nigeria?

Research Question 3a: What key elements may strengthen the possibility of implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity laws like Title IX's athletic directives?

Research Question 3b: What key elements may weaken the possibility of implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity law like Title IX's athletic directives?

Research Question 4: How can a law similar to Title IX help deal with matters of sex discrimination and inequity in educational athletic programs and activities?

*Significance of Study.*

The current study extends the existing body of research because it is the first study to explore the possibility of Nigeria's educational system adopting gender equity policies to deal with issues of sex discrimination and inequity in sports. Although there are a few studies that have explored constraints limiting women's participation in sport (Okonkwo, 2012; Oyelere, 2007), there are no studies that have investigated the possibility of Nigeria adopting and enforcing functional athletic laws like the U.S. Title IX that have worked to limit issues of sexism, gender discrimination and inequity. Further, this study adds new knowledge and information on the implementation and acceptance of U.S. laws and policy in other countries. Also, the study expands the literature by combining multiple disciplines (Sport, Law, and Gender Women Studies) to further advance the dialogue on using sport as a tool to enhance gender equity and women's empowerment. Moreover, this study continues the discourse on Title IX into a global context. Prior to this study, only Beaubier, Gadbois, and Stick (2008) had investigated the possibility of adopting and adapting Title IX policies in Canada.

Additionally, this study is significant in relation to finding ways to actualize the UN's MDGs and Nigerian's NGP objectives. By adopting gender athletic policy directives, Nigeria

like the U.S., may be able to minimize sex discrimination, increase participation levels, and empower women through sport involvement (United Nation, 2013). The outcome of this study will demonstrate the possibility or lack thereof, that comparable policies and laws may or may not be adopted and enforced to demonstrate Nigeria's commitment to its NPG and the UN's MDGs.

Finally, this study demonstrates that the issue of sex discrimination in sports should be seen as important as other problems in Nigeria, such as AIDS/HIV, corruption, poverty, hunger, and war, because athletics and sport participation is a catalyst for economic development, improved mental, emotional and physical health, and national growth (Beutler, 2008; Chalip, 2006; Donnelly, 2011). People who participate in sports, particularly females, are believed to experience more positive psychological, social, environmental, physical, and economic benefits than non-participants (Chalip, Thomas, & Voyle, 1992; Pollock & Wilmore, 1990; Seefeldt & Vogel, 1986). Hence, if Nigeria develops, implements, and enforces a policy or law akin to Title IX, its constituents, particularly females may have better quality of life.

#### *Delimitations.*

The major delimitation of this study was the decision to focus on the athletic policy directives and ignore other non-sport programs and activities or directives such as education. Specifically, the study focused on the Regulation and the Policy Interpretation. Therefore, this study focused on the part of Title IX, which states that no person on the basis of sex shall be excluded from participation in any interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics offered by an institution receiving government funding. Another delimitation of this study was the choice not to conduct interviews or focus group discussions in Nigeria. This was because

people living in Nigeria may not be familiar with Title IX and its athletics policy directives, as well as the outcomes in the U.S.

## CHAPTER 2

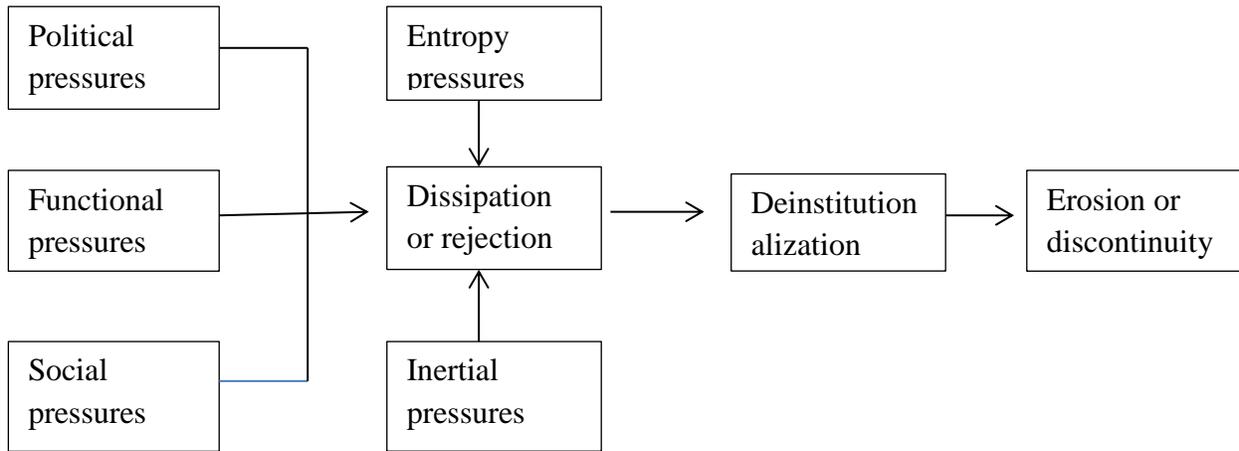
### LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review chapter contains information about the theoretical model employed for this study and how it and relevant literature guided the formation of the research questions. Oliver's (1992) pressure for deinstitutionalization model highlights factors that motivate change. According to Oliver's (1992) model, institutions are likely pressured politically, functionally, or socially to initiate policies that strive to enhance diversity. In the case of this study, change or deinstitutionalization is likely motivated by phenomenological reason to eliminate practices and behaviors that hinder the implementation and enforcement of diversity. Also, within this chapter is a review of sport management literature that have employed Oliver's (1992) model as a guide to examine sport institutions is presented. Furthermore, this chapter provides historical information of Title IX, its regulation and policy interpretation. Also, information on important developments that have influenced Title IX over the years is presented. This chapter ends with a discussion of Title IX's contribution is detailed and how it has impacted participation levels.

#### **Oliver's (1992) Pressures for Deinstitutionalization Model**

Although this model is from the field of institutional change, it is suitable for this study. The goal of this study was to determine the possibility of Nigeria adopting and adapting policies similar to US Title IX athletic directives to deal with issues of sex discrimination, and in order to do that, there needs to be a realization of existence of such problems and clamor by people to develop solutions. Employing Oliver's model as a framework for this study is useful because it identifies pressures that lead to the change of unfavorable institutionalized sex discrimination ideas, practices and behaviors.

Figure 1. Oliver Pressure for Deinstitutionalization Model.



Oliver's (1992) pressures for deinstitutionalization model is a graphic representation of institutional change theory. This model provides immense insights into the causes of “institutionalization in organizations and the process by which organizations acquire social acceptability and endorsement as a consequence of conformity to the norms and expectations of the institutional environment” (Oliver, 1992, p. 564). Also, this theory is useful in explaining change (Kikulis, 2000; Oliver, 1992), and enhancing understanding of “how actions and structures become taken-for-granted” (Kikulis, 2000, p. 295). Moreover, institutional theories have been successful in framing comprehensive explanations of organizational change on the foundation of changing interpretive schemes and institutional resistance central to organizational transformations (Oliver, 1992). Organizations in some cases institutionalize unfavorable practices and behaviors to deal with certain problems, and through repetition they attain a rule-like status even after solving the specific problem for which it was created (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Scott, 1987).

Though Oliver's model was used as a guide, other theories and literature helped inform this study. DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) work brought attention to institutional change

literature, particularly on what organizations should do and “how to do it from a variety of sources (e.g., government and regulatory agencies, professions, interest groups, and public opinion)” (Kikulis, 2000, p. 300). This process is known as institutional isomorphism. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggest that coercive, mimetic, and normative institutional pressures are exerted within organizations that are not doing so well. Coercive pressures are applied “to an organization by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function” (p. 150). Mimetic pressures are typical in an uncertain economy and used by organizations that are not doing well to mimic successful organizations’ practices and behaviors. Normative pressures are applied through training, affiliation or associations, and networks (professionalism) which define an organizations typical standard of operation.

In addition to DiMaggio and Powell’s contribution, Tolbert and Zucker (1996) have suggested three stages of institutionalization. These stages include: pre-institutionalized, semi-institutionalization, and full institutionalization. The pre-institutionalized stage is where people develop new structures and practices in response to particular problems. These structures and practices then become formalized as policies and procedures through repetition in the institution and other institutions that have similar problems (Kikulis, 2000). The next step is the semi-institutionalization stage where these structures and practices that are dispersed and “becomes objectified as accepted and appropriate, yet still subject to change” (Kikulis, 2000, p. 296). The final step is the full institutionalization stage and this involves sedimentation. This is when institutionalized structures and practices created to deal with specific problems facing an institution is completely spread across the entire institution and accepted as how things are done over a long period of time (Tolbert & Zucker, 1996).

The first research question fits within the context of institutionalized practices and behaviors because the question is meant to examine what practices and behaviors Nigerians believed constituted as discrimination and the reasons for inequities within educational sport programs and activities in Nigeria. Prior to the British colonializing Nigeria, the country was not as paternalistic as is now (Afigbo, 2011; Nnaemeka & Korieh, 2011). However, it was as a result of the colonizer handing power, resources, and status to men before independence that led to the proliferation of discriminatory ideas and the structure currently in place today (Nnaemeka & Korieh, 2011). These practices and behaviors attain rule-like status, are wide-spread and shared with all Nigerians including those who were not involved in its creation (Kikulis, 2000; Oliver, 1992). Also, the first research question provides Nigerians the opportunity to offer their own definition of sex discrimination and what it means by sharing their personal experiences. Nigerians should be able to discuss whether they feel discrimination and inequity exists or does not exist within athletic programs and activities, and why it does if it exists. Defining and identifying whether sex discrimination and inequity exists or does not was a critical step for this study, because if sex difference does not exist then there is no use for a policy like Title IX to combat issues of discrimination or inequity.

*Research Question 1: What factors will act to pressure the deinstitutionalization of institutionalized practices, norms and behaviors that promote sex discrimination?*

*Deinstitutionalization.*

The role of human agency cannot be overlooked in elucidating the institutionalization process (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Kikulis, 2000). Human agency plays an influential role in determining which and how ideas, actions, practices and behaviors are institutionalized (Kikulis, 2000). Likewise, human and organizational actors play an active part in deinstitutionalizing

already institutionalized structures and practices. Deinstitutionalization is “a process by which the legitimacy of an established or institutionalized organizational practice erodes or discontinues” (Oliver, 1992, p. 564). Institutions that undertake transformations lose prevailing ideas and values and delegitimize restrictive discriminatory practices and behaviors. In place of those delegitimized practices and behaviors, “an interpretive scheme emerges carrying with it a different pattern of structural arrangement” (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988, p. 306). There are three pressures according to Oliver that begin the process of deinstitutionalization. Institutions, organizations or countries are likely pressured politically, functionally, or socially to initiate change to delegitimize existing institutionalized policies and practices for new ones (Oliver, 1992).

#### *Political Pressures.*

According to Oliver’s model, deinstitutionalization may occur as a result of state or governmental pressures to conform to public policy, demands and expectations once institutionalized as acceptable practices, activities and policies (Oliver, 1992). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX are prime examples of political pressures designed to offer equality of opportunity and treatment to all people regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, or nationality. There are four conditions Oliver (1992) provides under political pressures that start the process of deinstitutionalizing practices and behaviors: (a) illegitimate practices and behaviors are less likely to occur when institutions, organizations or government face tough performance crises; (b) set clear goals and objectives, as well as limit intra-stakeholder conflict; (c) provide incentives and heightened extrinsic and/or intrinsic motivations for stakeholders to adopt practices that promote equity and diversity; and (d), “a lessening in the dependence on the institutional constituents that have encouraged or enforced continuing procedural conformity

with their expectations” (p. 568). The first two conditions are considered intra-organizational factors that “erode political agreement on the value or validity of an institutionalized organization practice or behavior” (Oliver, 1992, p. 568). The latter two are considered external pressures that lead organizations to question the need or relevance of maintaining a traditional organization practice or behavior in response to specific environmental changes.

The concept of political pressure can be applied to this study. Although this is an institutional change theory, Negandhi and Reiman (1972) suggested that change, institutional and contingency theories can be used to examine countries because they operate similar to business enterprises. For instance, the first political mechanism of deinstitutionalization which is mounting performance problems discussed above, indicated that intra-organizational crises erode institutionalized structural practices and create internal political. This can easily be applied to situation of discrimination and inequity in Nigeria. Nigeria and its leaders acknowledges that performance crises have a tendency to ignite internal struggle, which in turn act to deinstitutionalize institutional practices, policies and activities (Bloom & Canning, 2011; Saavedra, 2003). For instance, Nigeria has been unable to improve its demographic economic dividend (Bloom & Canning, 2011), in that if more women have access and opportunity to education or governmental sponsored activities and programs as their male counterpart, more women will be able to contribute locally and nationally to Nigeria’s future development. Because institutionalized practices lead to crises which create performance problems in Nigeria, people, including leaders are concerned and are beginning to raise important questions regarding the appropriateness of these institutionalized practices or behaviors. They believe that such practices and behaviors should be abandoned or revised in order to rectify existing problems affecting

Nigeria's growth and development (National Gender Policy Strategic Framework, 2008; National Planning Commission, 2011; Otive-Igbuzor, 2006).

Additionally, the development of political disagreements or conflicting interests that interrupt the harmony of agreement among organizational stakeholders on the value of a particular practice may act as performance problems (Oliver, 1992). The increased “representation and promotion of women in a traditionally male-dominated organization will tend to deinstitutionalize institutionalized policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical roles and behaviors” (Oliver, 1992, p. 569). This is similar to what this study is attempting to explore, in that, increasing representation and involvement of women in sport in traditionally male-dominated country will lead to deinstitutionalization of institutionalized policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical roles and behaviors and impact participation.

Furthermore, political pressures such as laws and mandates can press athletic programs to conform and deinstitutionalize norms and practices that lead to sex discrimination (Aberson, 2007; Massey & Mooney, 2007; Salancik, 1979). There should be proper legislation and policy implemented and enforced that demonstrate Nigeria's commitment in reaching its NGP objective and the UN's MDG (Otive-Igbuzor, 2006). Nigeria is connected and somewhat dependent upon the UN and other global associations for aide and support. In order to maintain these relations, Nigeria may have to evolve and begin to deinstitutionalize practices and behaviors that hinder sex equality and women rights.

#### *Functional Pressures.*

Similar to political pressures, functional pressures that initiate deinstitutionalization are additional intra-organizational motivators that lead to the removal of long-lasting unfavorable institutionalized practices and behavior. The process to change is usually ignited because of a

lack of institutional failure and disappointment. This typically results to changing practices, ideas, and behaviors that are perceived to be unfavorable (Kikulis, 2000; Oliver, 1992). Also, deinstitutionalization may occur when rewards that support unfavorable institutionalized organizational activity are withdrawn. Therefore, when certain “social and economic criteria of success begin to conflict with one another, and when the organization experiences an increase in its technical specificity or goal clarity” (Oliver, 1992, p. 571). Moreover, environmental changes, such as “intensified competition for resources and the emergence of dissonant information or unexpected events in the environment that directly challenge the advisability of sustaining an institutional activity” (Oliver, 1992, p. 571).

Organizations maintain institutionalized activities, behaviors and policies in anticipation of attaining and sustaining a range of specific remunerations that are influential to their success (Oliver, 1992). These remunerations include organizational legitimacy and prestige, greater ease of access to critical resources, and social support and approval. The loss or projected loss of organizational success or incentives will probably lead to the deinstitutionalization of these practices, activities or policies (Kikulis, 2000; Oliver, 1992). For example, if a state is not willing to confer lucrative subsidies and social endorsement on organizational contractors that preserve and sustain discriminatory personnel practices, the acumen of continuing these practices is likely to be reevaluated (Oliver, 1992). The same can be said with regards to Nigeria, in that, sustaining and preserving discriminatory practices and policies may prompt international organizations such as the World Bank and the UN to consider discontinuing providing remunerations, social support and endorsement to the country.

Additionally, the utility of institutionalized policies and practice may be reevaluated if or when unfavorable discriminatory policies and practices affect and influence organizational task

performance and efficiency (Kikulis, 2000; Oliver, 1992). Practices, behaviors or policies that act to escalate an organization's technical specificity and reduce ambiguity of processes and outputs will eventually lead to the deinstitutionalization (Oliver, 1992). Therefore, there is that likelihood that institutions discontinue or decay institutionalized activities and practice when they are no longer rewarding. Moreover, unfavorable institutionalized practices and policies breed goal ambiguity and technical uncertainty (Selzinck, 1957). To overcome goal ambiguity and technical uncertainty, institutions must have clear goals and objectives, which Nigeria is beginning to recognize with the creation and drafting of its national gender policy.

Additionally, functional pressures also motivate change because of institutional performance measures which are initiated by heightened competition for scarce resources (Oliver, 1992). Thus, increased competition for resources motivates or pressures institutions to seek out new methods of separating themselves from competitors. In an attempt to distinguish one institution from competitors, organizations are pushed to reject, challenge or reevaluate existing policies, practices and behaviors that hamper their ability to be competitive (Kikulis, 2000). Just as institutions are push to reject institutionalized ideas and actions because they are no longer favorable to success, Nigeria and some Nigerians are pushing to deinstitutionalize discriminatory practices and behaviors to become a top 20 economy by 2020 (National Planning Commission, 2011). Because of competition from other countries, Nigeria will have to seek out functional and new ways of separating themselves from the pack.

#### *Social Pressures.*

Unlike political and functional pressures, social pressures are most promising when members recognize and acknowledge the need to reject "institutionalized practices and then act on this recognition" (Oliver, 1992, p. 575). Also, social pressures are most promising under

certain circumstances when institutions are neither pro-active agents of deinstitutionalization nor resolved on deserting or refusing specific institutional traditions (Oliver, 1992). Some conditions that acknowledge the need to deinstitutionalize institutionalized practices and activities under social pressures include normative fragmentation (increasing workforce diversity and turnover), institutional mergers, change in law or societal norms that prohibit or discourage practice, and structural and environmental changes within the organization.

Normative fragmentation as a social pressure is caused by a loss of cultural agreement amongst stakeholders of an institution (Oliver, 1992). Also, normative fragmentation occurs when the meanings and interpretations stakeholders attach to their job duties and activities are absent (Oliver, 1992). When unfavorable behaviors, activities and practices are institutionalized, they sometimes seem as objective or fact-like. This makes them “seemingly invulnerable to skepticism or even conscious recognition among existing institutional members” (Oliver, 1992, p. 575).

Consequently, there are six factors according to Oliver (1992), that are likely to give rise to consensual fragmentation or historical disruptions. These include (a) high turnover or the change and movement of people, (b) increase in workforce diversity and leader succession, (c) new member with different backgrounds and experiences that differ from existing member, (d) weak socialization or interactions amongst members, (e) organizational mergers and vertical integration, and (f) temporary strategic alliances, for instance joint ventures.

Furthermore, deinstitutionalizations can occur from structural changes and interaction patterns in an institution. According to Oliver (1992) “disaggregating changes, which include diversification, geographic dispersion and parochial differentiation, apply to deinstitutionalizing changes both within and across organizations that occupy the same institutional field” (p. 577).

This can affect how things are done. If major stakeholders are geographically dispersed, institutionalized practices and behaviors will become delegitimized. Thus, institutionalized practices and behavior will begin to dissolve until it deteriorates. In most cases the legitimization of unfavorable practices and behaviors rely on proximity of institutional constituents to one another, but when these stakeholders are separated the legitimization of such practices and behaviors get questioned. Oliver (1992) indicated that people's common understanding of reality is shaped because of social interaction, imitation and observation. It is easier to discontinue unfavorable institutionalized norms and practices when organizational stakeholders are independent, non-interacting or geographically dispersed.

The second research question fits within the context of pressures that influence deinstitutionalization because sports benefits such as improved national and communal development, enhanced mental and emotional health, as well as physical health improvement have been attributed to increased sport participation (Chalip, 2006; Chalip, Thomas, & Voyle, 1992). The second research question will provide Nigerians the opportunity to discuss the potential advantages that may encourage Nigerian leaders, athletic administrators, politicians and sport manager to deinstitutionalized discriminatory practices and behaviors that encourage sex inequity and discrimination in school sport programs and activities.

*Research Question 2: What factors will act to pressure the deinstitutionalization of institutionalized practices, norms and behaviors that promote sex discrimination?*

*Organizational Entropy and Inertia, and Dissipation.*

Oliver's model provides insights to two additional critical features of change that serve to quicken (entropy) or impede (inertia) the process of deinstitutionalization. Examples of institutional entropy includes support from organizational leadership, support for a diverse

culture and climate, whereas, examples of institutional inertia includes lack of support, cynicism and apathy. These factors (inertia and entropy) along with political, functional, and social pressures for change determine the dissipation or rejection of unfavorable institutionalized practices and behaviors.

According to Oliver (1992), dissipation is a situation where negative homogenous practices and behaviors are slowly deteriorated because of the influence of high institutional entropy and low institutional inertia. Also, dissipation denotes a slow weakening in the acceptance and utility of a specific institutionalized practice. On the other hand, rejection is a situation where change is influenced by noncompliance that attacks the integrity and the process for implementing and enforcing new policy, practices and behaviors. Unlike dissipation, rejection is a straight attack on the legitimacy of an established tradition or activity (Oliver, 1992). The success or failure of the process of change is dependent upon the ability to erode discriminatory practices, while re-orienting stakeholders and constructing a culture of diversity integration (Kikulis, 2000).

The third and fourth research questions fit within the contexts of entropy, inertia, dissipation and rejection. Research participants will be able to discuss the potential disadvantages and negative outcomes of implementing and enforcing a gender equity policy similar to Title IX. In addition, they may be able to share potential changes needed by sport organizations and athletic departments in Nigeria to deal with issues of sex discrimination. Further, these research questions will also enable participants discuss the utility and benefits for adopting and adapting Title IX's athletic directives within Nigerian athletic programs.

*Research Question 3a: What key elements may strengthen the possibility of adopting and adapting a law like Title IX and its athletic policies?*

*Research Question 3b: What key elements may debilitate the possibility of adopting and adapting a law like Title IX and its athletic policies?*

*Research Question 4: How can a law similar to Title IX help deal with matters of sex discrimination and inequity in educational athletic programs and activities?*

### **Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972**

The year 2012 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of Title IX. No other federal law has had a greater impact in dealing with issues of sex discrimination with regards to collegiate and high school athletics (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Bauer, 2001). The intent behind Title IX was not initially focused on intercollegiate or interscholastic athletics, but one that emerged out of the women's civil rights movement of 1960s and 1970s (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Samuels & Galles, 2003). The women's movement was partly initiated because of stereotypical inhibitions and discriminatory practices women experienced in the area of education (Bauer, 2001; Samuels & Galles, 2003). As a result of such experiences, women were forced to go into less rigorous programs or careers paths in comparisons to men (Bauer, 2001).

With time, Americans, particularly liberal feminists, began to voice their dissatisfaction, and file lawsuits in response to the sex gap and inequalities present in higher educational institutions. Liberal feminists, amongst others, wanted equality for women "through social change and mandates that accommodate women in the same structures and processes as men" (McDowell & Hoffman, 2012, p.144). In effect a hearing on biases against women before a special House Subcommittee on Education was initiated in 1970. This Subcommittee was headed by House of Representative member Edith Green of Oregon, and as a result of this hearing, in 1971 a higher education bill with provisions regarding sex equity in the hiring and employment in federally funded institutions was introduced by Representative Edith Green (Carpenter &

Acosta, 2005; Passeggi, 2002). This bill was the first time Title IX was proposed. It was later drafted by Congresswoman Pasty Mink and Representative Edith Green (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana was the Senator who introduced and sponsored Title IX (Passeggi, 2002) which simply states:

*“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (20 U.S.C. § 1681).*

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 Act was later enacted on June 23, 1972 by President Richard M. Nixon along with the United States Congress to eradicate sex discrimination in educational institutions and modify the nature of gender hierarchy in the United States.

#### *Title IX and Athletics.*

The effects of Title IX were not immediate because of a combination of sociocultural and political resistance, as well as issues of language ambiguity. For many athletic administrators, the law was difficult to understand and antagonists expressed that Title IX would lead to an end of resources offered to men’s educational athletic and sport programs, particularly financial assistance towards revenue generating sport programs (Bauer, 2001; Passeggi, 2002).

There were several prominent bills proposed in the early 1970s aimed at amending Title IX legislation. The Tower and Helms amendments proposed by Senator John Tower and Senator Jesse Helms sought to exempt revenue generating education athletic programs from Title IX (Beaubier, 2006; Passeggi, 2002). Although both bills were denied, as a consolation Congress did pass Senator Jacob Javot’s bill, proposing that the Department of Health, Education and

Welfare, commonly referred to as the Department Education, be responsible for dealing with issues of sex discrimination in federally assisted educational institutions (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Beaubier, 2006; Passegi, 2002). The Department of Education created a division called the Office of Civil Right (OCR) to be accountable for providing federal monetary support, issuing rules, offering guidance, handling complaints, and providing support to schools and other education programs that fair under Title IX (Beaubier, 2006; Passeggi, 2002).

*Title IX Regulations.*

The OCR was instrumental in developing the regulations that helped clarify and enforce Title IX. The regulation requires that education institutions (a) offer male and female students the same opportunities to participate in sports; (b) fairly allocate athletic scholarships; and (c) treat both male and female students equally in all aspects including athletics (Bauer, 2001; Passeggi, 2002; Samuels & Galles, 2003). Although the Title IX regulations were written in 1974, it did not become part of the law until 1975. President Gerald Ford signed the regulations on May 27, 1975, and submitted it to the United States Congress for analysis pursuant to Section 431(d) (1) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA).

The biggest opposition faced by Title IX came when colleges and male athletic administrators realized the law will not only affect education but sports as well. Although Title IX is mainly referred to as a law that supports women's involvement in sport, the law initially made no reference to sport at all. The main reason for the creation of the Regulation was to provide clarity to the term "recipient" of federal financial assistance:

*"A recipient which operates or sponsors interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics shall provide equal athletic opportunity for members of both sexes. In determining whether equal opportunities are available, the Director will consider,*

*among other factors... Whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes” (34 C.F.R.*

*§106.41(c))*

Despite Title IX regulation, educational institutions were unable to comply with the above directives. The OCR received complaints alleging discrimination in athletics against more than 50 education institutions (Beaubier, 2006; Passeggi, 2002; Samuel & Galles, 2003). The lack of compliance by education institutions, in particular intercollegiate athletics, led to the creation of policy interpretations in 1979. These interpretations were drafted to provide educational institutions, particularly colleges, universities, and intramural and club sports guidelines on ways to comply with Title IX.

*Title IX Policy Interpretation.*

The proposed policy interpretation is a standard to guide Title IX and its regulation. These interpretations are guidelines the Department of Education reviews when determining whether education institutions or athletic departments are in compliance with Title IX (Title IX: A Policy Interpretation, 43 Fed. Reg. at 71,414). The policy interpretations were first proposed on December 11, 1978 and are divided into three discrete areas. If education institution or athletic departments are capable of adhering to one of these three prongs, they will be in compliance (Samuel & Galles, 2003).

- *Compliance in Financial Assistance (Scholarships) Based on Athletic Ability: Pursuant to the regulation, the governing principle in this area is that all such assistance should be available on a substantially proportional basis to the number of male and female participants in the institution's athletic program.*

- *Compliance in Other Program Areas (Equipment and supplies; games and practice times; travel and per diem; coaching and academic tutoring; assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors; locker rooms, and practice and competitive facilities; medical and training facilities; housing and dining facilities; publicity; recruitment; and support services): Pursuant to the regulation, the governing principle is that male and female athletes should receive equivalent treatment, benefits, and opportunities.*
- *Compliance in Meeting the Interests and Abilities of Male and Female Students: Pursuant to the regulation, the governing principle in this area is that the athletic interests and abilities of male and female students must be equally effectively accommodated.*

The current policy interpretation has been revised multiple times from the original and is based upon two approaches: first, equal opportunity for participants in education and athletic programs, and second, a true commitment to effectively accommodate education, and athletic interests and abilities of both sexes on a continuing basis (Title IX: A Policy Interpretation, 43 Fed. Reg. at 71,414).

Under the first approach, athletic programs, departments, and the institutions in which they are housed can establish compliance if they can demonstrate that the average per capita expenditures for men and women athletes are substantially equal in the area of readily financially measurable benefits and opportunities, or if not, that any disproportions are the result of nondiscriminatory factors, and that benefits and opportunities for men and women athletes in areas which are not financially measurable are comparable (Title IX: A Policy Interpretation, 43 Fed. Reg. at 71,414).

Under the second approach, they are required to either follow a policy of development of its women's athletic programs, to provide the participation and competition opportunities needed to accommodate the growing interest and ability of women; or demonstrate that they are effective and equally accommodating the athletic interests and abilities of students, particularly as the interests and abilities of women students development (Title IX: A Policy Interpretation, 43 Fed. Reg. at 71,414).

There were a number of reasons to effect changes, but there were three main reasons for drafting Title IX's policy interpretations. First, institutions were uncertain with what constituted compliance because some athletic programs and departments did not directly received funding from federal or state government. Second, institutions were unable to understand the presumption of compliance or its meaning and they presumed that a failure to provide convincing reasons for incongruences in per capita expenditures would result in a finding of noncompliance (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Bauer, 2001; Samuels & Galles, 2003). Although a failure to comply with Title IX would only have deprived institutions of benefits received, colleges and universities still would have had the burden of demonstrating that it was not engaged in unlawful discriminations. Finally, the OCR made changes to the regulation and provided policy interpretations because the Department of Education was concerned that the per capita test did not offer an adequate way of determining discrimination or documentation of injustice. Refer to Appendix C for detailed information on the OCR's policy interpretation.

In addition, the policy interpretations offer new ways to enforce Title IX (Title IX: A Policy Interpretation, 43 Fed. Reg. at 71,414). The OCR administers and conducts compliance reviews, where institutions are selected at random and investigations are conducted to determine whether they are in compliance or not with Title IX. Also, the OCR can enforce Title IX through

complaints claiming discrimination on the basis of sex. With regards to complaints, the OCR has 90 days to conduct investigations and notify education institutions of the outcome. The case closes if institutions are in compliance; however, if the investigation nets discrimination, the violations are documented and an extra 90 days are provided to resolve the issue through negotiations between all parties involved. The negotiations usually include precise plans on ways to deal with discrimination and a precise timeline provided to institutions to become complaint with Title IX. If the institution however, fails to comply in spite of numerous attempts, federal assistance provided will be redrawn.

#### *Important Title IX Cases and Developments.*

Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972 was drafted and implemented to deal with issues of sex discrimination experienced by women in educational programs and activities receiving federal funding. This law was modeled after Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, or national origin (Passeggi, 2002). The drafters of Title IX anticipated that it would be interpreted and implemented like Title VII. Similarly to Title VII, Title IX has had a good amount of difficulties in its implementation with regards to its use of quotas as a means of attaining stated goal (Passeggi, 2002), as well as its vague, broad, and somewhat confusing language. Over the years, numerous cases have led to important developments. A review of some of the significant cases that shaped how Title IX was interpreted and enforced is discussed below.

There were two significant cases in the 1970s that led to important Title IX outcomes: the 1979 *Cannon vs. the University of Chicago* case and that of *Donald M. Gomes vs. the Rhode Island Interscholastic League*. In 1979, Ms. Geraldine Cannon took legal action against the University of Chicago claiming that she was denied admission into the university because of her

sex. On the contrary, University of Chicago claimed that she was not offered admittance because of her age. University of Chicago had an age policy and at that time Ms. Cannon was 39 years old. The case was later dismissed and affirmed by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois and the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (*Cannon v. University of Chicago*, 406 F. Supp. 1257, N.D. Ill. 1976). However, an important development was reached after the case was dismissed. The United States Supreme Court decided that plaintiffs alleging a “Title IX violation did not have to exhaust administrative remedies, such as an internal grievance procedure or filing with the Office for Civil Rights, before filing a private lawsuit” (*The Connecticut Women’s Education Legal Fund*, 1998, p.38).

The other prominent case in the 70s was that of *Donald M. Gomes vs. the Rhode Island Interscholastic League*. Mr. Gomes sued the league because he was denied admittance to compete in an all-female interscholastic volleyball league. The District Court ruled in favor of Mr. Gomes, stating the league violated Title IX’s regulation 45 C.F.R. § 86.41R: (a) No person shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in any interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics offered by a recipient, and no recipient shall provide any such athletics separately on such basis; and (b) if an institution sponsors a team in a particular sport for members of one sex but does not sponsors such for members of the other sex, and athletic opportunities for members of that sex have previously been limited, members of the excluded sex must be allowed to try out for the team offered unless the sport involved is a contact sport. Although, Mr. Gomes was unable to compete during that season because of time spent in the litigation process, the court ordered the league to make accommodations for the plaintiff.

There were two significant outcomes from these cases. First, the Supreme Court announced that plaintiffs could now personally bring a claim under Title IX to court. Prior to this

announcement, people filed complaint with the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (Anderson & Osborne, 2008). Second, this case led to development of Title IX's Regulations and Policy Interpretations that provides institutions with guidelines with which grievances could be heard and resolved (Anderson & Osborne, 2008). Also it provided institutions with supplementary procedures or directions on the requirements for compliance. For additional information on Policy Interpretation: Title IX and Intercollegiate Athletics please check Appendix C.

The Regulation and Policy Interpretation resulted in a spike in the number of lawsuits in the 1980s. Between the years 1980 to 1989, there were 25 Title IX lawsuits recorded (Anderson & Osborne, 2008). One prominent case brought to the District Court was that of *O'Connor vs. Board of Education of School District 23 a-384*. Karen O'Connor, represented by her parents, filed a case against MacArthur Junior High School on October 22, 1980. Karen, an 11-year-old who had competed with and against boys in organized basketball programs, was repeatedly denied access to try out for her school's boys' basketball team. After a series of request refusals, Karen's family sued seeking an injunction that would allow her to participate in the tryouts and a permanent relief allowing her to play interscholastic competition if successful at the tryouts.

Another significant case during the 1980s was that of *Grove City College vs. Bell*. In July of 1976, when the Department of Education's OCR began to secure Assurances of Compliance, they discovered that Grove City College refused to execute an Assurance of Compliance, claiming that they did not receive federal funding. As a result, there was an administrative hearing presided by an Administrative Law Judge who found Grove City College to be in violation of Title IX because its students received financial aid. After the judge's decision, the Department of Education began the process to terminate the Basic Educational Opportunity

Grants (BEOGs) and Guaranteed Student Loans (GSLs) from Grove City College and its students (*Grove City College v. Bell*, 465 U.S. 555, 1984). Although, the court agreed that both BEOGs and GSLs constituted as federally funded aid to Grove City College, in June 1980, the District Court disallowed the Department of Education's OCR from terminating the BEOGs and GSLs to Grove City College students because of the college's refusal to sign an Assurance of Compliance.

The court provided a number of conclusions; however, the most significant was that the Department of Education unlawfully terminated Grove City College's federal financial assistance based solely upon their refusal to sign the Assurance of Compliance. Further the court asserted that such dissolution can only be sanctioned by an actual finding of sex discrimination, a finding which had not been previously made. In addition, the court added that the Department of Education misunderstood the meaning behind the phrase "federal financial assistance" to include educational grants provided to students (*Grove City College v. Bell*, 465 U.S. 555, 1984).

The Department of Education disagreed with the courts conclusion and appealed the ruling claiming that Grove City College ought to be considered a recipient of federal financial assistance by definition, because students received BEOG monies used to pay their education expenses. Grove City College likewise appealed- challenging the Department of Education insertion that BEOG money was within the scope of federal financial assistance. Grove City College claimed that the term recipients referred only to direct payments to institutions or athletic programs, and thus, does not include educational grants paid to students. Furthermore, Grove City College contended that Title IX was never implicated because BEOGs are provided to students based on eligibility requirements determined by the federal government.

As a result of the *Grove City College v. Bell* case, there was a momentary setback for Title IX. The Supreme Court's decision held that only the actual program or activities directly supported by the federal government were to be regulated under Title IX. In response to the cases that occurred in the 1980s, the United States Congress drafted the Civil Rights Restoration Act (CRRA) of 1987. Congress was determined to restore and clarify the application of Title IX, stating that certain aspects of the courts assessments and opinions have discredited the utility of Title IX (Civil Rights Restoration act, 20 U.S.C. § 1687, 2007). According to CRRA, Title IX should be understood through an institution wide, rather than program or activity specific approach (Anderson & Osborne, 2008), and the term program means all of the operations of –

“(1)(A) a department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of a State or of a local government; or (B) the entity of such state or local government that distributes such assistance and each such department or agency (and each other State or local government entity) to which the assistance is extended, in the case of assistance to a State or local government; (2)(A) a college, university, or other postsecondary institution, or a public system of higher education; or (B) a local educational agency ( as defined in section 198(a)(10) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965), system of vocational education, or other school system” (Civil Rights Restoration act, 20 U.S.C. § 1687, 2007).

One significant development as a result of the cases in the 1980's was the drafting of the Title IX investigation manual. In 1990, OCR issued the Title IX Investigators Manual which led to the first real spike in litigation involving Title IX and athletics (Anderson & Osborne, 2008). The Department of Justice acclaim the investigators manual is simply an outline of general principles proposed to provide a wide-ranging directory for federal agencies responsible with

implementing Title IX and not to provide an all-inclusive directory of all cases or problems related to Title IX. Further, the manual is not envisioned to be a guide for Title IX enforcement with regards to traditional educational institutions such as colleges, universities, and elementary and secondary schools, but it provides direction for investigators to conduct a comprehensive inquiry from receiving of a complaint through the issuance of a letter of finding (Anderson & Osborne, 2008).

The 1990s experienced its fair share of cases that led the OCR in 1996 to introduce the Clarification of Intercollegiate Athletics Policy guidance; The Three Part Test. Some of these cases worth mentioning because of the rulings include the *Cohen vs. Brown University*, *Favia v. Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP)*, and *Kelley v. Board of Trustee* cases.

In 1991, universities across the United States, including Brown University, planned to drop sport or athletic programs because of financial strains. Brown planned to drop four programs from its intercollegiate athletic roster but would permit these programs to exist as club teams. These programs included the women's volleyball and gymnastics, as well as men's goal and water polo teams. These cuts were anticipated to equalize the substantial proportionality ratio of women versus men athletic opportunities. At that time, Brown University's student body comprised approximately 48% women and 52% men. However, the cuts did not affect the athletic opportunity ratios; men compiled 63.4% of the opportunities and women 36.6% (*Cohen v. Brown University*, 809 F. Supp. 978, D. R.I. 1992).

After Brown University announced the cuts, members of both the women's volleyball and gymnastics teams sued the university, claiming that it violated Title IX. The District Court judge after hearing the case granted a preliminary injunction that obligated Brown University to reestablish the women's teams pending the outcome of a full trial. Afterwards, a panel of the

court confirmed the district court's judgment and ruled that Brown University violated Title IX because it was unable to effectively accommodate female students' sport interests and abilities (Cohen v. Brown University, 809 F. Supp. 978, D. R.I. 1992).

In addition to the above case, the *Favia vs. Indiana University of Pennsylvania* (IUP) is a prominent litigation during the 1990's. In 1991, IUP desired to cut down the size of its athletic department; they planned on terminating four of its programs including men's tennis and soccer teams, and the women's gymnastics and field hockey teams (Favia vs. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 812 F. Supp 578, 584 (W.D. Pa. 1992)). In October, 1992, three members of the women's gymnastics team and one member of the women's field hockey team sued IUP, seeking a ruling that would make the university comply with Title IX and eradicate the difference between men's and women's intercollegiate sports programs. At that time IUP had a total undergraduate population of 10,793 and female students made up 55.6% while male students were 44.4%. However, men teams had a total number of 313 student-athletes in comparison to 190 women, a 62% to 38% ratio. Also, IUP gave only 21% of its athletic scholarship money to women, and for each \$8.00 spent on men's athletics it spent only \$2.75 on women's athletics. On November 2, 1993 the court determined that the university and its athletic department failed to adhere to Title IX. Although IUP also discontinued equal number of men's and women's sport programs, the evidence presented showed that the act increased the discrepancies of opportunities and gap between men and women. As a result, the district court granted a preliminary injunction and ordered IUP to reinstate both the women's teams.

IUP filed a motion in January, 1993 to modify the district court's ruling. The university suggested replacing the women's gymnastics program with a soccer team because having a women's soccer program will increase the percentage of women's participation from 39% to

43% and that the national trend at that time found more women to be involved with soccer. The court denied the motion, claiming doing so would affect the original plaintiffs who had prevailed.

These cases influenced the *Kelley v. board of Trustee* case. The University of Illinois on May 7 1993 announced its intention of terminating four varsity athletic programs, one of which was the men's swim team. After the announcement, members of the men's swim team sued the University of Illinois, claiming that a termination of their program violates Title IX. After hearing testimony and receiving affidavits, the district court granted judgment in favor of the University of Illinois (*Kelley v. Board of Trustees*, 832 F. Supp. 237, C.D. Ill. 1993).

These cases influenced the drafting of the OCR 1996's Clarification of Intercollegiate Athletics Policy Guidance: The Three Part Test. This policy guidance consisted of "updated interpretation and clarification of the three part test by making clear that it provides schools with three separate ways to provide nondiscriminatory opportunities for both sexes" (Anderson & Osborne, 2008, p. 146). To be complaint with Title IX, the Clarification endorses that institutions need to meet the terms of only one of the three-part test.

On September 20, 1995, the OCR circulated over 4500 copies of the proposed Clarification to help clarify the objectives and explain the malleable nature of the three-part test (Samuel & Galles, 2003). There were 200 people who responded; some suggested that the Clarification did not go far enough in protecting women's right and sports. Opponents of the Clarification argued that the three-part test inaccurately established arbitrary quotas and operates against the intent of Title IX because it measured sex discrimination by underrepresentation and required the full accommodation of only one sex. The letter from the OCR clarified peoples misunderstanding by reporting the avenues for compliance in the 1996 Clarification.

To address this, the OCR established the three-part test published in January 16, 1996, as a clarification for intercollegiate athletic policy guidance. According to Passeggi (2002), the third prong of the policy interpretation or the effective accommodation section provides its own three-pronged test for determining whether an educational institution is complying with equal opportunities requirement of the regulation” (p. 15). As a result, the 1979 Policy Interpretation provides that as part of this determination OCR will apply the following three-part test to measure whether an institution is providing nondiscriminatory participation opportunities for individuals of both sexes:

1. *Whether intercollegiate level participation opportunities for male and female students are provided in numbers substantially proportionate to their respective enrollments; or*
2. *Where the members of one sex have been and are underrepresented among intercollegiate athletes, whether the institution can show a history and continuing practice of program expansion which is demonstrably responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the members of that sex; or*
3. *Where the members of one sex are underrepresented among intercollegiate athletes and the institution cannot show a history and continuing practice of program expansion, as described above, whether it can be demonstrated that the interests and abilities of the members of that sex have been fully and effectively accommodated by the present program.*

Further, the Clarification provides examples to show stakeholders ways to comply with any part of the three-part tests. With regards to part one (substantial proportionality) of the three-part tests, the Clarification posited that opportunities should be proportionate to student body

enrollment and that colleges and universities should consider all athletes receiving benefits (Anderson & Osborne, 2008). In a situation where acts of discrimination occur, universities and colleges could cap or eliminate opportunities for overrepresented sexes. With respect to part two of the test, the Clarification explains that colleges and universities should be aware of the interests of students and to be in compliance with part two of the three-part test, institutions need to demonstrate that the underrepresented sex is provided adequate accommodation without necessarily reducing opportunities for overrepresented sex alone. As for the third prong of the three-part test, the Clarification explains if an institution believes that its female students are not interested but are capable of participating in intercollegiate sport, that school can continue to provide more athletic opportunities for men, as long as they can continue to prove that school female students are not interested or denied any opportunity.

In addition to the clarification, OCR introduced their Sexual Harassment guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students or Third Parties. Published in March of 1997, the manual was created to abolish discrimination based on sex in education programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance, and that institutions are liable to have grievance procedures by which students can file complaints of sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For additional information on this and sexual harassment cases refer to Appendix D.

### **Benefits of Title IX**

There has been no greater influential law that has provided opportunities for U.S. women and girls to be included in athletics. Within the first few years after the United State Congress enacted Title IX, the proportion and number of female athletes increased tremendously (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Anderson & Osborne, 2008; Carpenter & Acosta, 2005). The number of girls

participating in school sport increased by 500 percent (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005; Shook, 1996), and the number of female participants in athletics “rose from 1 in 27 females in 1972, to 1 in 4 by 1978” (Stevenson, 2010, p. 2). Also, the total number of women’s teams per school increased from 2.5 to 5.61 between 1972 and 1978 due to Title IX (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Shook, 1996). This change did not affect boys’ involvement in sports or athletics. Although Title IX led to a compositional shift on some sports with male participants, for example, more women now participate in gymnastics than boys, it did not cause a significant proportional change in the percentage of boys involved with sport (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005; Stevenson, 2007). The 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79) sample of 12,686 men and women between the ages of 14 and 22 reported that 49% of boys and 38% of girls participated in sport. The results demonstrated that Title IX did not lead to a decrease number of boys’ involvement in sport. Likewise, Stevenson (2007) examined sport participation rates for both boys and girls, and found that the increase in sporting access and opportunities for high school girls did not in any way be at the expense of opportunities and access for boys. Stevenson explained that in 1969, 1 in 2 boys participated in sports and this fifty-percent participation rate as of 2007 had not changed.

Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972 continues to provide people living in the United States with equitable opportunity to participate in athletics. This law enables people with an interest in athletic to pursue their desires with limited inhibitions (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005; The Connecticut Women’s Education Legal Fund, 1998; Stevenson, 2010). Moreover, Title IX provides female student-athletes, like their male counterparts, an avenue to earn an education and attain certain interpersonal skills valued by society without experiencing inequity (Stevenson, 2007; 2010). Research has also shown that people who participate in school athletics

have a lesser chance to use illicit drugs or abuse alcohol, and develop good self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth when compared to non-athletes (Chen, Snyder, & Magner, 2010; Crabbe, 2000; Lipscomb, 2007; Stevenson, 2007; 2010).

Additionally, athletics and sport participation has been shown to enhance circulatory health, provide mental clarity, promote successful aging, and enhance social interaction (Pollock & Wilmore, 1990; Seefeldt & Vogel, 1986). Wankel (1993) reported in a study that the principal advantage of sport is that it provides the incentive for people to be physically active. This offers “hedonistic rewards” absent from other forms of leisure activities. Further, athletics and sport participation has been reported to not only build self-esteem or promote social interaction, but teach relevant life skills (e.g., Watson, 1977) and promote self-determined disposition and social support that buffer against life’s challenges (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993). A study that examined the benefit of sport was Wann’s (2006) study on team identification and social psychological health. Wann utilized the model of team identification-social psychological health to account for the positive relationship between identification with a local sport team and social psychological health. It was discovered that two forms of social connections are developed through team identification: enduring and temporary. These forms of social connections were determined to have the greatest impact on social psychological health.

Likewise, studies have shown that sport and athletics enhance economic development—through the production, distribution, and consumption of sport services and products (Ahlfeldt & Maennig, 2010; Chalip 2006; Coates & Humphrey, 1999). Ahlfeldt and Maennig (2010) indicated that facilities constructed as a result of athletics and sports can increase land values within communities. Whereas, Chalip (2006) suggested that the development of sport can stimulate other urban development, and that sport tourism and national athletic or sport successes

can be leveraged to promote export sales. Typically, there is a tremendous impact when athletic institutions vacate a community. For example, Coates and Humphreys (1999) study sought to capture the interactions between levels of growth rate of real per-capita income in a metropolitan area with the area's sport environment. They found that when a sport organization leaves a host city to another the former experiences negative measurable impact on the growth of real per capita income.

Furthermore, studies have reported that athletics and sports empower participants by providing opportunities, skills and resources to initiate effective changes within their communities (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Hylton & Totten, 2008). Some of these skills, opportunities, and resources are the ability of athletic and sport team participants and fans to have an enhanced mental health and demonstrate active social behavior that promotes a sense of attachment to the team's community. Hylton and Totten (2008) argued that community sport development (CSD) is a "form of practice that arose as a response to enduring concerns about issues around equal opportunities and participation in sport" (p. 77). In Branscombe and Wann (1991), the researchers argue that because of strong sport team identification, people involved with sports are able to buffer feelings of depression and alienation, while fostering feelings of belonging and self-worth.

In addition, studies have reported that sport is one of a few positive spectacles that reinforce a country's sense of national identity and pride (Horak & Spitaler, 2003; Smith & Seokho, 2006). National identity is the "force that holds a nation together because it shapes relationships within the family and positively affects the public attitude towards their country" (Smith & Seokho, 2006, p. 1). Multiple countries use different athletic activities as mechanisms

to impact their values, beliefs and norms onto other nations as a way to define the uniqueness of their country.

### **Women's Participation after Title IX**

The benefit of sports to women due to Title IX has also been reported by several other research studies (Chen, Snyder, & Magner, 2010; Crabbe, 2000; Stevenson, 2010). Sport is a system governed by rules and regulations and because of such, participants including women are more inclined to submit to societal edicts and restraint from illicit or deviant behaviors such as underage drinking, violence, consuming illegal drugs, and cheating (Chen, Snyder, & Magner, 2010). Also, studies have shown that women who participate in athletics display positive societal values (Crabbe, 2000; Stevenson, 2010). For example, Stevenson (2010) examined relationships between female athletic participation, educational and work attainment, and found that females who are involved with athletics earlier on in life have “better outcomes later in life either because students who choose athletics have skills that are valued by the market or because athletics fosters the development of such skills” (Stevenson, 2010, p. 5).

Additionally, athletics participation builds character, particularly when participants are challenged by adversity (Stevenson, 2007; 2010). Knowing how to deal with adversity in life is essential, especially for “girls who must try to maneuver their way through traditionally male occupations later in life” (Stevenson, 2010, p. 6). Moreover, research by Chen et al., (2010) showed that females involved with athletic activities learn how to function within groups and compete with others. Such skills provide a medium for participants to interact, expand life experience and make friends, as well as develop life-skills. All of these factors lead to an improved quality of life. Both Hanson and Kraus (1998) and Stevenson (2010) examined the

benefits of women's athletic involvement and concluded that sport improves overall quality of life when compared to women who do not participate.

Further, research studies have shown that girls who participated in high school athletics achieved more in school. For instance, Hanson and Kraus (1998) reported that girls who participate in high school athletics have a strong and positive link with their achievement in science during their sophomore and senior years of high school. Also, Darling, Caldwell, and Smith (2005) reported that high school female athletes receive better results in school, have greater educational and professional ambitions, and have deeper appreciation for doing school work than non-athletes. Likewise, Lipscomb (2006) suggested that athletic participation impacted female student's test scores and degree attainment. Lipscomb found that participation in athletics was linked to a two percent increase in math and science test scores, and participation in sport activities was associated with a five percent increase in earning a bachelor's degree. Moreover, Lipscomb reported that sport and extracurricular in shaping the lives of female participants and in building skills that are valued in workplace.

### **Consequences of Title IX**

Over the years, Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972 has been a major force and contributor in limiting sex discrimination in the United States (Anderson & Osborne, 2008; The Connecticut Women's Education Legal Fund, 1998), but prior to its enactment, major forms of discrimination had been dealt with because of law such as the Civil Rights Act of 1967 (Stevenson, 2007). For example, most male-only colleges and universities had become coeducational (Stevenson, 2007). Athletic participations were an exception as "this was a domain in which the women's movement had made little impact prior to Title IX" (Stevenson, 2007, p. 2). Title IX made it compulsory for schools and institutions receiving federal financial assistance

that had previously not had women's athletic programs or female participants, to develop women's programs and activities alongside that of men (Carpenter & Acosta, 2005; Shook, 1996).

Prior to the creation of Title IX, women's physical education leaders established the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (CIAW) in 1966 to deal with the increased number of women competitor and the demand for competition among women students (Whisenant, Pedersen, & Osbenour, 2002). The institution formerly known as the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) was introduced in 1971 by members of the CIAW. The AIAW was responsible for providing intercollegiate participatory, coaching and governance opportunities for women (Whisenant, Pedersen, & Obenour, 2002). The Association at one point had over ninety percent women administrators responsible for the programs and activities of more than a thousand member universities and colleges (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Whisenant, et al., 2002).

Although Title IX led to increased participation levels for girls and women, it also encouraged competition amongst athletic governing bodies. Whisenant et al., (2002) reported that Title IX enabled the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) gained control over women's athletics and transform its philosophy from an education-based one to a philosophy based on spectator-oriented competition (Whisenant, et al., 2002). This eventually led to the dissolution of the AIAW. The NCAA is the governing body that is responsible the day-to-day activities of member college athletic departments (Whisenant, 2008). A major concern since the NCAA took over control over women's intercollegiate athletics is that women have been unsuccessful in occupying upper management positions within athletic programs (Whisenant, 2008; Whisenant, et al., 2002, p. 486). Whisenant (2008) study in search for evidence of

hegemonic masculinity within interscholastic athletics sought to understand whether organizational structure at high schools advocated homologous reproduction of masculinity. He found that men were more likely to be hired as high school principals, athletic directors, and head coaches of girls' teams than women. He also discovered that the gender of the principal was correlated with that of the athletic director, and that the gender of the athletic director was the same to that of head coaches for girls' sports. Whisenant (2008) stated that interscholastic athletics is dominated by a structure that lacks heterogeneous diversity and by men controlling leadership positions, hegemonic masculinities will continue "to permeate sports at the grassroots level of athletics" (Whisenant, 2008, p. 773).

In spite of the implementation of Title IX, women were dissatisfied with their experiences after graduation, due to the presence of male hegemony in sport (Hargreaves, 1990). Homologous reproduction of masculinity and male dominance is at all levels- grassroots, interscholastic and intercollegiate levels. Whisenant, et al., (2002) argued that the position of athletic director is similar to that of a CEO, and with numerous yearly vacant positions for qualified candidates, one would hope that the most qualified candidate will be hired for any position. There are "major barriers for women to overcome before they can join the ranks of upper-administrative individuals who make the critical decisions in intercollegiate athletics" (Whisenant, et al., 2002, p. 485). One of the barriers discussed by Whisenant and colleague is gender stereotyping.

Research studies have examined gender stereotyping and sports (Burton, Barr, Fink & Bruening, 2009; Whisenant et al., 2002). For instance, Burton, et al. (2009) examined the effect of gender stereotyping of high level positions within intercollegiate athletic. Specifically, they examined gender typing of managerial sub-roles within intercollegiate athletic departments.

They found that males held upper management position such as athletic director, life skills coordinator, and compliance coordinator. They also discovered that masculine sub-roles such as allocating resources, motivating and inspiring, delegating, strategic decision making, and managing conflict were of greater importance for the position of athletic director than less masculine sub-roles such as life skills and compliance coordinators. The results of their study proposed that people who exhibit feminine characteristics will have a difficult time securing an athletic director position. Although women are capable of performing masculine roles and in most cases can exude masculine characteristics, tenets of gender role theory suggest that most women are not perceived as having the ability of performing the behaviors and roles of an athletic director comparable to men (Burton, et al., 2009).

In addition to studies that have examined the homologous reproduction of hegemonic masculinity and gender stereotyping, there are others that focus on people's perceptions and attitudes towards Title IX (Fink & Pastore, 1997; Jacob & Mathes, 1996). Fink and Pastore's (1997) study examined the differences in student-athletes perceptions toward equity in sport. The study identified three different sub-groups of student-athletes: (a) football players, (b) female student-athletes, and (c) male student-athletes of nonrevenue sports. They found that there were major differences in student-athletes perceptions of gender-equity issues. Male athletes of non-revenue sports were more responsive to gender-equity issues than football players. Fink and Pastore (1997) supported this finding by stating that, it is conceivable that the increase in the quality of women's athletic programs and activities has been to the disadvantage of the male non-revenue sports. Because some football programs in Division 1 institutions are revenue-generating sport, "it is unlikely that effort towards gender equity would result in any type of cutbacks in football, but may in less popular non-revenue men's sports" (Fink & Pastore, 1997,

p. 139). They also supported the result by asserting that female athletes have historically experienced lesser quality athletic activities and programs, and as a result have lower expectations than their male counterparts. Although, female and male student-athletes of non-revenue generating sports may have similar experiences, male-athletes may have different perceptions of quality in comparison to female-athletes.

Also, Jacob and Mathes (1996) study sought to determine women athletes' knowledge about Title IX and to assess their perceptions of their schools' athletic programs and activities compliance with Title IX. What these researchers discovered was that women-athletes were not very knowledgeable of Title IX. The results supported that "athletes are most knowledgeable about equitable treatment of women athletes in terms of fact most directly associated with their personal involvement (athletic benefits, student interest) and least about general and financial aid concerns" (Jacob & Mathes, 1996, p, 38). In terms of athletes' perception of Title IX compliance, athletes' perception of their programs compliance displayed satisfaction, with most satisfaction relating to student interests and least relating to financial aid.

### **Sport Organizations and Pressures for Deinstitutionalization Model**

Several research studies within the sport literature have employed Oliver's (1992) pressure of deinstitutionalization as a model to examine sport organization. Cunningham (2008; 2009) utilized Oliver's model to examine and investigate factors that pressure sport organizations to deinstitutionalize institutionalized practices and policies while embracing a diverse culture. The common culture and climate within the sport industry marginalize women through institutionalized norms, policies and practices (Cunningham, 2008). However, the ideal culture for sport organization should be one that "values diversity and capitalize on the benefits that differences can bring to the organization" (p. 136). For that reason, it was necessary for

Cunningham to examine stakeholder's reasoning or justification for deinstitutionalizing such practices and behaviors.

Prior to Cunningham's studies, previous sport management research mainly examined the outcomes and benefits of managing diversity within sport organizations. They focused mainly on the ideal state of diversity management initiatives (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Fink & Pastore, 1997). Cunningham claimed that most studies ignore the processes and steps taken to initiate deinstitutionalization. As a result studies by Cunningham (2008; 2009) and Gonzalez (2010) investigated necessary steps to deinstitutionalize practices, norms, policies or behaviors that do not favor diversity.

Cunningham's (2008) study sought to determine factors that influence the inclusion or exclusion of women within sport and athletic organizations. The researcher developed a model that details the process of deinstitutionalization. This model includes concepts from Oliver's (1992) pressures of deinstitutionalization model: political, functional, and social pressures. Also included in the model are moderating variables (i.e., team change, education, and top management systemic integration), commitment to gender diversity initiatives, and behavioral support of gender diversity initiatives, Cunningham's multilevel diversity-related change process model takes into account both environmental pressures and psychological dynamics that influence the outcome of the change process. The study likewise suggested that sport organizations' that value similarity marginalizes women through institutionalization. Unfavorable organizational practices and policies are unquestionably accepted as the way things are run and are institutionalized through habit, history, and tradition (Scott, 1987). As organizations and their stakeholders continue to practice unfavorable actions, "behaviors become

further embedded and perpetuated” and women continue to be marginalized (Cunningham, 2008, p. 137).

Cunningham (2009) designed the diversity change process model to examine steps and processes taken by intercollegiate athletic departments willing to deinstitutionalize discriminatory practices and behaviors that hinder a diverse culture. The study examined the diversity-related change process of university’s athletic department, which housed four cultural centers, concentrating on the needs of African Americans, Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American students. Further, the study included Oliver’s (1992) pressures for deinstitutionalization theory to determine motivations for instituting change. Organizations strive to initiate diversity management policies because they are motivated by some phenomenological reasoning that includes Oliver’s (1992) antecedent for deinstitutionalization: a) political, b) functional, and c) social pressures. These pressures were the main reasons for instituting change from a culture that values similarity to one that values diversity. Similar to Oliver, Cunningham (2009) indicated that organizational entropy pressure quickens the process of deinstitutionalization, whereas, organizational inertia pressure impedes it.

In addition to constructs from Oliver’s model, Cunningham’s model highlighted additional constructs from Agars and Kottke’s (2004) model such as social perception and social identities, perception of threat, perception of justice, and perception of utility. These factors impede or enhance the progress of changing institutionalized practices or behaviors within institutions. All of this factors of change are directed at the peripheral aspects and not predetermined to alter the “fundamental strategy, mission”, or makeup of organization (Cunningham, 2009, p. 423).

Research studies infer that in order for change to be successful, it is necessary to consider the manner in which change will impact the organization as a whole, stakeholders' perception, and managerial support included. As a result of such statement, this current study surmises that it is important to understand how Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 has impacted athletics and its stakeholders.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The impetus behind this research inquiry was to advance knowledge about the possibility of Nigeria adopting gender equity policies similar to United States' Title IX. This research study sought to gather explicit information from Nigerians with the objective of elaborating on (a) factors that contribute to sex discrimination, (b) factors that may potentially deinstitutionalize gendered practices and policies, and (c) elements that debilitate or strengthen the possibility of adopting an athletic gender equity policy similar to Title IX and its athletic policy interpretations. Hence, based on the research questions and stated objectives for this study, a qualitative research methodology was deemed suitable. Employing a qualitative methodology allowed for a logical and yet a systematic research process that afforded the researcher to interact personally with research participants (Yin, 1994). Also, employing this method allowed the study to explore ways in which Nigerians understood, accounted for, took action, and otherwise managed their day-to-day situations in terms of sport and sex discrimination.

Qualitative research is referred to as a naturalistic inquiry because of the emphasis placed on the naturalist nature of most investigations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Typically, naturalistic inquiries are used to understand how social phenomena and human interactions unfold in real-world settings (Guba, 1978). This project was naturalist in nature because it analyzed conversations and interactions of Nigerians and how they make sense of institutionalized sexism. Furthermore, through conversations the researcher had to become familiar with the lives of his participants because part of his responsibility was to gain a "holistic overview of the context

under study: its logic, its arrangements, its explicit and implicit rules” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 6).

Under the naturalistic paradigm, the approach chosen for this particular study was an interpretive social science approach (Neuman, 2006). Interpretive social science “emphasizes meaningful social action, socially constructed meaning, and value relativism” (Neuman, 2006, pp. 87-88). Thus, through social interactions, such as the ways people act and react in interpersonal relationships, people learn what is acceptable and what is not, and understand how meaning is created. The goal for interpretive social science is to be able to understand social life and how individuals make sense of their community, society and world (Neuman, 2006). Therefore, social reality is what people perceive it to be and meaning is created because people interpreted it as so.

The role of researchers conducting interpretive social science research is to gather data from research participants through processes of “deep attentiveness, empathetic understanding, and suspending or “bracketing” preconceptions about the topic under discussion” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.6). Under this approach, facts are fluid and entrenched with meaning, not objective or neutral. Interpretive social science insists that commonsense is a framework that guides ordinary people through the interactions of daily life, and that everyday theories are what people use daily to make sense of the world (Newman, 2006). These theories are applied consciously or subconsciously by people to understand different and in some cases multiple realities.

#### *Reflexivity.*

For this particular study, a reflexive position was taken to secure scientific veracity (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2012). The researcher refrained from asking leading questions. To

avoid asking influential questions, Oliver's pressures for deinstitutionalization model and Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory approach were employed to frame and guide the interview questions, conversations during the focus group discussion and interviews, and the data analyses. Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggest researchers to refrain from influencing participants opinions. Reflexivity is as a viable appraisal and application of the researcher's biases, and thus, should generate stronger evidence to the inquiry.

The researcher in this study is also aware that his position as a Nigerian scholar and a researcher who is multi-cultural may have influenced questions asked, the way the questions were asked, and how he chose to interpret the responses provided (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The researcher's views about interpretive ontology, epistemology and axiology shaped this research and the way he went about conducting it. Interpretive ontology infers that reality is subjective, in that every person is unique, and when people interact through conversations they create their own meanings, feelings, intentions and motivations (Frisby, 2005). Thus, participants' feedback, social interaction, and dialogue provided this study with a deeper understanding of the current gender hierarchy and discrepancies in Nigeria and within schools. Meanwhile, interpretive epistemology according to Guba and Lincoln (2005) is concerned with the nature of knowing how the world is viewed, what is knowledge, and how knowledge is acquired or achieved through interaction between the inquirer and what is known. Through interactions and communications with research participants the researcher was able to understand how sex discrimination and inequity in Nigeria is institutionalized. This does not mean the conclusions and findings from this study are final or the truth because this approach states that meaning is fluid and changes are dependent on how people interpret it. Finally, interpretive axiology is simply the process of inquiry. In other words, this describes ways by which knowledge is gained

and what can be understood from it. The process by which knowledge was gain was through a focus group discussion and personal interviews. After multiple interactions and conversations were had, data was analyzed which in turn leads to information on sexism and recommendations to improve gender equity.

### *Grounded Theory.*

Data collection and analysis followed grounded theory procedures advanced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). These researchers recommend that research questions be established to guide the creation of interview questions and the progress of the study. Research questions can be used throughout the project or augmented dependent upon the progress of the study. In order to generate appropriate research and interview questions that fit the purpose of the study, a thorough review of literature was conducted in areas that include: institutionalization and deinstitutionalization, sport for development, Nigerian sport and experiences of participants, and laws and policies. Further, this approach was beneficial because of its capacity to create meaning for complex phenomena and its ability to accommodate social issues (Jones & Alony, 2011). Because issues of gender inequity and discrimination are topics of a social nature, a full understanding requires the handling of many interwoven and overlaying issues and themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory provided the researcher great liberty to explore matters of sex discrimination and examine issues that emerged because of grounded theory's nature to be a comprehensive (Jones & Alony, 2011). Moreover, by employing Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory approach, the researcher was able to gain a better understanding of participants' interpretations of the influence of sex discrimination and other societal actors on sport participation

Strauss and Corbin (1990) provide a couple of requirements for approaching grounded theory. First, research questions are created to guide the progress of the study. These questions can either be used throughout the study or reassessed and reconstructed while data collection is still in progress because (a) the researcher might discover more pressing questions that are relevant to the study, and (b) may realize previous research questions do not appropriately apply to the phenomenon under study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Second, data collection and analysis is simultaneous and interconnected, in that data analysis begins immediately after the first interview is conducted. This process enables better understanding of critical elements or concepts used to make sense of social phenomenon.

In addition, the premise the grounded theory approach is to construct theories in order to make sense of phenomena. Theory is created during data analysis process when old and new concepts repeatedly reported by participants are used to explain specific phenomenon (Inglis, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The resultant theory is unique to the particular experience and cannot be used to explain any other phenomenon or experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Grounded theory according to Glaser and Strauss is a method concerned with generating, elaborating, and validating social science theory (Haig, 1995). A good theory is one that is “inductively derived from data, subjected to theoretical elaboration, and judged to its domain with respect to a number of evaluative criteria” (Haig, 1995, pp. 1-2). Moreover, theory is a linguistic device needed to organize the complex empirical world and answer the questions “how, why, and when” (Inglis, 2000). Also, a good theory is one that can truly explain how concepts that are related through a series of statements capture what is currently known about related concepts and assumption (Inglis, 2000).

Grounded theory as a method mandates that the foundations of theory arise from data that is categorized in a hierarchical manner of concept and presented as the main output of the research (Langley & Abdallah, 2011). For theory to be created, the researcher first develops codes through open coding of data excerpts using words of participants. Coding is a process of converting raw data into theoretical constructions (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Specifically, open coding is a way to “generate an emergent set of categories and their properties which fit, work and are relevant for integrating into a theory” (Glaser, 1978, p. 56). After codes are identified they are grouped into first order (participant-based) concepts through a process of constant-comparison of different excerpts. Constant comparison is “an amalgam of systematic coding, data analysis and theoretical sampling procedure which enables the researcher to make interpretive sense of much of the diverse patterning in the data by developing theoretical ideas at a higher level of abstraction than the initial data descriptions” (Haig, 1995, p. 6). Relationships between first-order concepts are then investigated through axial coding. Axial coding is a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways, by making connections between categories and this is done using a “coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies, and consequences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). Where open coding breaks data into a hierarchy of categories, axial coding consolidates data together by assembling connections between categories and subcategories (Kendall, 1999). Axial coding is focused on the circumstances that give rise to a “category, the context in which it is embedded, the action/interactional strategies by which the processes are carried out, and the consequences of the strategies” (Kendall, 1999, p. 747). Conceptual saturation is typically reached when all possible categories have been exhausted and no new categories are created. These categories are further explored for any additional relationships. Afterwards, a narrow number of “aggregate

dimensions” or “core categories” which are the basis of grounded theory are used to explain a particular phenomenon (Kendall, 1999; Langley & Abdallah, 2011).

### **Justification of Research Context**

The goal of this study was to explore the conditions under which a U.S. inspired gender equity policy can be implemented and enforced in Nigeria. Nigeria stands out from other African countries in terms of its diversity and size (Coleman & Coleman, 1971). Nigeria has the largest population of any African nation and is the seventh most populous country in the world, with an estimated population of 162.5 million people (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). Nigeria is comprised of 389 ethnic groups spread throughout 36 states and the federal capital territory (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). There are three major ethnicities, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa/Fulani, and these are divided geographically to the eastern, western, and northern regions of the country, respectively. Northern Nigeria is predominantly Muslim, and the south is occupied predominately by Christians.

In a country where almost half of its population is women, Nigeria was ranked 118 of 134 countries in the Gender Equality Index (GEI) (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). GEI was developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to measure situations of inequalities in achievements between women and men in different countries across dimensions of labor market participation, empowerment, and reproductive health (UNDP, 2010). Approximately 43 million Nigerian women cannot read or write, and girls make up 62% of the 8 million school-age children not enrolled in school. Moreover, women hold less than 30% of job positions in the public sector and only 17% of senior positions. Women also earn less income than men, as women make on average 89.49 Naira while men earn 142.64 Naira (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). Although, women make-up 60 to 79 percent of rural workforce, men are

five times more likely to own land than women (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012; Otiye-Igbuzor, 2006; Oyelere, 2007). Also, in a country where almost fifty percent of the population is comprised of women, only nine percent of delegates to be elected to the National Assembly during the April 2011 elections were women; and of the 360 members of the House of Representatives, only 25 members are women (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). Undoubtedly, Nigerian females have shoddier chances or opportunities and are more disadvantaged than men. Okonkwo (2012) reported that in Nigerian females are repeatedly denied opportunities provided to their male counterpart, and one of these opportunities includes sport participation.

This gender disparity was not always the case according to Nnaemeka and Korieh (2011). It is important to note that this patriarchal version of Nigeria is not rooted in Nigerian tradition (Oyewumi, 1997), and Nigerians once embraced women's independence and freedom to accumulate capital pre-colonialism (Nnaemeka & Korieh, 2011). During this period, Nigerian women played important economic roles (Afigbo, 2011). They were responsible for and monopolized local retail trade, and because of marrying outside their clans and villages, women were able to create new contacts in other communities which benefited trade (Afigbo, 2011). Also, whatever these women acquired through trade they could retain and use to benefit their respective families or their own individual selves (Afigbo, 2011).

In addition to the economic roles Nigerian women had during this time period, they also had major prominent social roles, and none were as important as the responsibility for the early education of children (Afigbo, 2011). Within local communities, children were edified by women and were in exclusive care of their mothers. These women's fundamental social responsibility was inducting the children to be part of the culture and community through teaching (Afigbo, 2011). Also, women were the main stabilizing force for their husbands, family

and communities. They “were inclined to insist on rigorous observance of any rules and regulations whose observance society saw as the *sine qua non* for a peaceful, ordered and prosperous existence” to ward off failure and premature deaths (Afigbo, 2011, p.19).

Nigeria inherited a paternalistic structure, from the British, where women and girls are to be subservient, and this structure was later institutionalized at all levels. For instance, it is easily acceptable for Nigerian men to participate in physically active athletic activities, whereas it is not acceptable for women. Unlike men, it is commonly the woman’s responsibility to take care of the family’s needs (Okonkwo, 2012). Colonialism, particularly the creation of unfavorable colonial policies by the British, lead to displaced gendered roles, mechanisms of exploitation, and ethnocentrism (Nnaemeka & Korieh, 2011). Also, it established male-oriented bureaucracy, which in turn, restricted women’s economic responsibilities and excluded them from acquiring new privileges. After Nigeria’s independence in 1960 the homologous reproduction of male superiority remained institutionalized. Although the British departed, they left behind a lasting societal structure where males headed institutions, including the family and governance (Afigbo, 2011; Nnaemeka & Korieh, 2011).

Women’s sport participation was one of a few privileges that were not encouraged because of the paternalistic structure in place (Saavedra, 2003). In certain regions of Nigeria, athletics and sports participation were still seen as a right for men and should only be admired by women (Okonkwo, 2012; Saavedra, 2003). In almost every Nigerian ethnicity, women are more disadvantaged than men, and therefore denied more opportunities to participate in sport (Okonkwo, 2012). Research on sport participation constraints by Adedeji (1978), Anaza and McDowell (2013) and Okonkwo (2012) posited that there are traditional, physical, socio-cultural, psychological and religious reasons that contribute to the discriminatory treatment that

many Nigerian girls and women experience when they pursue sport or athletic opportunities. For instance, Anaza and McDowell (2013) studied the experiences of Nigerian women's recreational sport constraints and found that some Nigerian women were unable to be involved with sport because of inadequate facilities and management, financial constraints, gendered norms and expectations, ethic of care towards children and husband, fear and safety, and interpersonal psychological constraints. Though some Nigerian women are able to participate in sport activities, institutionalized practices and norms make it very difficult.

### **Data Collection**

Focus group discussions and personal interviews were the two techniques used to gather data for this study. The researcher believed that by having conversations with participants, the study will be able to get to the underlying issues that lead to sex discrimination and uncover ways to fix it. By having conversations and interactions amongst the research participants and researcher, meaning and understanding was created. For example, people in the focus group discussion (pilot study) were able to uncover that sex discrimination was widespread in Nigeria and reasons why it remains prevalent within school sport programs.

#### *Focus Group Discussion.*

The researcher had multiple interactions with each participant in the focus group. Each participant was contacted at least two months prior to the focus group discussion and several months afterward until data analyses were completed. This was beneficial for the study because it enabled the researcher to receive clarifications from participants when recordings were inaudible. The focus group discussion provided this study with insightful and in-depth information that answered the research questions. This technique was also useful because it was effective and allowed for general background information about the research topic to be

retrieved. The focus group discussion permitted participants to provide their perceptions and attitudes towards sex discrimination in Nigeria and opinions about the utility of adopting and adapting Title IX athletic policy directives in Nigeria. Participants diagnosed the possibility of potential problems and advantages during the focus group discussion and there were times where they had disagreements, agreements and rebuttals. Through these conversations, new ideas, creative concepts, and practical recommendations were generated for implementing and enforcing gender equity policies in Nigeria.

Each individual conversation between the researcher and participants was analyzed separately and conclusions reached were due to similar themes or comments across participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Because there was only one focus group discussion, the researcher was unable to compare data from one focus group with another. This led the researcher to compare participants' comments, and through this the researcher could evaluate perceptions and attitudes towards the possibility of adopting and adapting gender equity policies in Nigeria. However, it is critical to remember that the information and responses provided by participants are perceptions or beliefs; and thus, they are not absolute conclusions, but opinions.

#### *Semi-Structured Interviews.*

Personal interviews were also used as a technique for data collections because of its appropriateness for exploratory and theory-building research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This technique allowed the researcher to gather information that expressed the firsthand knowledge and expertise of research participants. Each participant was able to provide rich in-depth information on the possibility of Nigeria and Nigerians adopting and accepting Title IX athletic policies. Also, participants provided insight to how Title IX athletic policies can help lessen discrimination and empower women. Unlike survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews

provided a good response rate (Floyd, 2009). Furthermore, this technique allowed for one-on-one interaction which enabled the researcher to recognize participants' non-verbal cues (Kelley, 2010). The researcher had multiple interactions with each participant prior to the interviews; however, because all the recordings for the interviews were clear and audible, the researcher only contacted participants to show gratitude. These interactions took place over the phone, via Skype, and in person.

### **Participant Recruitment**

Nigerians were chosen to participate in this research because of the project's goal and objectives. There were two sample groups in this study. A focus group discussion was first conducted as a pilot study to gather information on the possibility of Nigeria adopting and enforcing policies and/or a law similar to Title IX to deal with issue of sex discrimination in athletic programs. The focus group discussion helped: (a) access comprehension of questions asked, (b) check the relevance and suitability of interview questions and interview procedures, and (c) determine whether the study's objectives are relevant enough to pursue or not to pursue. Information gathered from the focus group discussion were analyzed and used to modify or revise the delivery of interview questions, as well as guide subsequent interviews. In addition, the pilot study help streamline the length of interview recruitment script. The information below will expand upon how participant were recruited for the focus group discussion and personal interviews.

### **Focus Group Discussion Recruitment**

*Almighty Assembly Church (pseudonym).*

To recruit participants for the focus group discussion, the researcher visited Almighty Assembly Church (AAC). This church is located in a midsize town in Midwest United States of

America. The researcher chose to establish contact with Nigerians through AAC because religion is an important part of the Nigerian culture (Anaza & McDowell, 2013; Coleman & Coleman, 1971; Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). The high reverence for religion in Nigeria stresses that on holy days, Nigerians attend their respective religious obligations (Coleman & Coleman, 1971; Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012).

In AAC, there were approximately forty people in attendance the first day the researcher visited. Based on the languages spoken and clothing worn, at least half of the congregation were Nigerians. According to the head pastor, the other half of the congregation included people from other West African countries such as, Ghana, Togo and Sierra-Leon. Afterwards, the researcher approached the head pastor who is Nigeria and requested a meeting. In the meeting, the researcher discussed his intention to recruit participants for a focus group discussion (pilot study) and the purpose of the study. The head pastor granted the researcher permission to speak with the congregation before next Sunday's service.

The researcher returned to AAC the following Sunday and informed the congregation of his intention to recruit participants. At the end of service, the researcher along with the congregation moved to the lobby for refreshments. The researcher approached a few people from the congregation and two people were interested in participating in the study. Two subsequent visits to the church resulted in the recruitment of seven more participants- of which only four participated in the focus group discussion. He collected five email addresses on his second visit and two on his third. However, of the seven people showed interest, only four people participated in the focus group discussions. The remainder of the three never responded to email messages.

*FAITH (pseudonym).*

In addition to recruiting at AAC, research participants were recruited for the focus group discussion through a community fellowship called FAITH (Pseudonym) located in the same Midwestern town as AAC. While recruiting participants for the focus group at AAC, several members of the congregation suggested that the researcher also visit FAITH- a non-denominational fellowship where people with different religious faiths and affiliations attend. The attendees at FAITH were made up of students from Nigeria, the U.S., and other countries in Africa. The researcher attended one of these meetings where he discussed his interest to recruit participants for a pilot study. Out of fourteen people in attendance, two showed interest with one following up and participating in the focus group.

*African Cultural Association (pseudonym).*

Participants for the focus group discussion were also recruited from two other associations in the same Midwestern town: African Cultural Association (ACA) and African Student Organization (ASO). ACA is an African undergraduate student association. Through the webpage, the researcher sent a message to ACA. In the email, the researcher identified himself as a Nigerian Ph.D. student conducting research and seeking participants to be involved in a pilot study. The secretary of ACA replied a few days later informing the researcher of a general meeting which meets the last Thursday of every month. These meetings are opened and free for anyone to attend. The researcher attended the last meeting in May, 2013 and was provided an opportunity to speak to the members in attendance. There were approximately twenty people in the meeting. Three ACA members approached the researcher and he collected their email addresses. Two of the three people that approached the researcher attended the focus group discussion.

*African Student Organization (pseudonym).*

While ACA's goals are about creating cultural awareness, ASO is known for hosting conferences, seminars, brownbag events and coffee hours. The researcher found the past ASO president's email address on ASO's webpage and sent a message that expressed his intentions to attend a meeting and recruit participants for a focus group discussion. The researcher received a reply several days later informing him of the next meeting. In this meeting, the researcher spoke individually with members of ASO. Several ASO members were approached, but four members showed interest in being part of the focus group discussion. In total, eleven email addresses were collected. Each person received an email message which was accompanied with the focus group discussion recruitment script (Appendix F). In addition, the message informed participants to look out for a doodle page that will be created for them to pick convenient times and dates to hold the focus group discussion. After the doodle page was created, two reminder messages were sent. The first was sent three days after the initial doodle page was setup, whereas the second reminder was sent a week afterwards.

Eight out of the eleven people filled out the doodle page; however, all participants received an email from the researcher informing them of the focus group discussion time and date. Two additional email messages were sent by the researcher, one informing participants of the venue, date and time for the meeting and the second was a reminder sent five days later.. Though eight participants had responded to the doodle page and eleven people were recruited, the focus group discussion had a total of thirteen participants. Two people were not recruited by the participants; however, they came along and contributed immensely to the discussion. These participants were visiting from Nigeria and were welcomed to participate in the discussion.

## **Personal Interview Participant Recruitment**

After the focus group discussion was completed, data transcribed and analyzed, recruitment began for the interviews. The researcher recruited participants for the interviews from Nigeria's National Gender Policy Framework Implementation Plan Report, Ndi-Nigeria Alliance (NNA), Nigeria Fest at a major metropolitan area in the Midwestern region of the United States, and Almighty Assembly Church (AAC).

*Nigeria's National Gender Policy Framework Implementation Plan Report.*

Under the supervision of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, a strategic implementation framework was put in place to accomplish Nigeria's National Gender Policy objectives. The researcher found a report that included a list of 115 names, titles, and contact information of consultants, offices, and stakeholders involved with Nigeria's NGP. The researcher sent out a bulk email to every email address on this list to enlist research participants to be interviewed. Attached to the email was an interview recruitment script (Appendix G). Initially no person responded. This prompted the researcher to send reminder email messages. The first was sent five days after the initial email message and the second was sent five days after the first reminder. There were four replies, all of which came after the first reminder. The researcher responded to all four, two people did not respond and the other two that did were interviewed over the phone. Following these interviews, a third and final email reminder was sent, but no person, organization, department or stakeholder from the list of 115 replied.

While conducting research on Nigeria's NGP, the researcher stumbled across the names of two Nigerian senators who were reported to be involved and in support of Nigeria's NGP. Multiple phone calls were made to the phone number found online, but there were no answers or

replies. Eventually, the researcher called the offices of these senators and spoke with the office managers/personal assistants. After multiple calls, the researcher was permitted to communicate with the senators. Multiple conversations were had between the researcher and both senators to schedule convenient times and dates for a phone interview, but it was difficult to schedule telephone interviews with these senators because of the different time zones and according to both senators they were “extremely busy”. In one particular occasion, one of the senators reminded the researcher of how busy he was and hung up the phone, while the other agreed to be interviewed. However, he stopped the interview after the first question was asked (What are your thoughts of Nigeria’s NGP). The researcher persisted and called back several times and on different days, but both senators never answered or replied.

*Almighty Assembly Church and African Student Organization.*

The researcher revisited Almighty Assembly Church (AAC) and African Student Organization meetings to recruit participants to be interviewed. The researcher got the phone numbers of six people during his visit back to AAC. Each received two calls from the researcher. The first was to schedule a convenient time and date to be interviewed, and the second, was a reminder. In person interviews were conducted with each of these five at locations they picked. In addition, the researcher revisited an ASO meeting where he collected Olusegun’s phone number. Likewise, the researcher communicated multiple times with Olusegun before a convenient time, date, and place was set for his interview.

*Ndi-Nigeria Alliance (pseudonym).*

Four of the participants interviewed were recruited through Ndi-Nigeria Alliance (NNA) (pseudonym). On NNA’s website, it was reported that the organization was founded and based in the heart of a major metropolitan Midwestern city and is a dynamic organization with a cultural

focus, comprised primarily of professionals and students. NNA membership includes Nigerians in the Diaspora, but they embrace and support individuals and communities of all cultural backgrounds. According to their webpage, there are over 1,500 members. To recruit participants, the researcher sent an email message to Sabrina (pseudonym), an active member and officer of NNA. In the email the researcher introduced himself and informed Sabrina of the research project. She responded immediately and posted the researchers contact information and the purpose of the study on NNA webpage. Also, Sabrina informed the researcher to send email messages and to communicate with NNA members and officers personally to solicit potential research participants. Four participants communicated with the researcher and showed interest. Several email messages were exchanged by the researcher with each participant to schedule interviews. Personal face-to-face interviews were conducted with three participants, while one was interviewed over Skype.

*Nigerian Fest (pseudonym).*

Sabrina also informed the researcher of an event called Nigerian Fest (pseudonym). This event is hosted by NNA once every year to celebrate Nigeria's culture in the diaspora. Thousands of people attend from different countries in the world and different states in America. The particular event the researcher attended was held at a park in a major metropolitan city in the Midwestern region of the United States. The researcher arrived at 4 o'clock in the evening and stayed for three hours. During the event, the researcher walked around the venue communicating and recruiting people to be interviewed. The researcher collected the email addresses and telephone numbers of four participants. He sent text messages to all four participants the following afternoon requesting to communicate via phone call. Each of these participants accepted to be part of the study and to be interviewed via Skype because they lived in different

states. Following their acceptance consent forms were sent via email, they signed, scanned and sent them back to the researcher.

## **Procedures**

### *Focus Group.*

There were thirteen Nigerians involved in the focus group discussion and the meeting lasted for two hours. The discussion was unstructured which allowed for the stories and opinions of most participants to be told and heard. The focus group was audio and videotaped to allow the researcher to accurately collect and analyze the data, but also to limit interpretation biases. Moreover, the discussion was transcribed verbatim. There were some Nigerian-Americans within the group that all self-identified as Nigerians. They were fluent in English but also were able to understand Pidgin English. The majority of these people spent most of their lives in Nigeria; some either went to school in Nigeria or have parents who went to school in Nigeria. As a result, they were familiar with issues pertaining to gender hierarchy and sex discrimination in Nigeria and in the United States.

### *Interviews.*

The sample for which the data was drawn for the personal interview phase was also purposeful but with an aspect of expert sampling. Purposeful sampling was employed to solicit research participants who would be able to provide responses that will help answer the research questions and expert sampling in that the researcher assembled people who have discernible experience and specific expertise on Nigeria and the NGP (Trochim, 2004). Seventeen Nigerians served as participants in the one-on-one interviews. The interviews varied in length; some interviews lasted 1.5 hours, while others were between 25 minutes to an hour long because some participants were concise, while others were more informative and/or knowledgeable about the

topic. The interviews were semi-structured; hence the interviewees received the same questions but different follow up questions dependent upon their response to the initial questions. This format allowed participants to express and tell their stories however they wanted. Most of these interviews were conducted in person, but some were conducted through Skype and over the phone with participants who were geographically distant from the researcher. These primary means of data collection is appropriate for the exploratory nature of this research where limited research studies have been conducted. It also provides the researcher with flexibility to explore areas of interest that had never been explored, save time and cost of travel (Kelly, Kerr, & Drennan, 2010). Scholars such as Kelly et al., (2010) and Inglis (2001) have surmised that interviews have higher response rate than survey questionnaire requests. Moreover, this method of data collection enables researcher to gather firsthand knowledge and expertise from research participants.

### **Sample and Participant Characteristics**

Thirty participants were involved in this study. Participants were selected for this study for a couple of reasons. First, participants were selected because of their direct experiences and knowledge of Nigeria, and second, because they represented different ethnicities, religions and social economic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polkinghorne, 2005; Tongco, 2007). Research studies have shown that a diverse group of individuals provide insightful and in-depth discussion (Stewart, Rook, & Shamdasani, 2006). People of different demographic categories provide different information and make decisions differently depending on the composition of the group (Andreoni & Vesterlund, 2001; Eckel & Grossman, 1998). Furthermore, the presence of diversity influences group dynamics, whether in providing information or making decisions (Dufwenberg & Muren, 2006). For example, men and women that participated in this study

included Nigerians and Nigerian Americans living in the U.S. and in Nigeria who had different professions, tribal affiliations and social class statuses (see Table 1 for more information on each of the participants). The choice to sample participants based on sex, religion, income and occupation, whether they had visited Nigeria or not, and how many times within the last ten years was based on previous research that showed having a diverse group allows for multiple viewpoint (Andreoni & Vesterlund, 2001). Also, because Nigeria is an ethnically diverse, it was important for the major ethnic groups to be represented.

Participants in the focus group discussion included seven graduate students, two undergraduate students, one residence hall director, one lawyer, one nurse, and one surgeon. Of the nine students in this group, six were international students and three were native students whose parents immigrated to the United States when they were young. Also, two of the three students were second generation immigrants who had never visited Nigeria, but had plans to visit. All the participants resided in the United States except for two who were visiting. The two participants in the group were visiting the United States from Nigeria and came along with family members who had been recruited by the researcher. Six of the participants were of the Igbo ethnicity, six were Yoruba, and one was Urhobo. Eight of the participants were female and five were male. Also, two of the participants were Muslims while the rest were Christians. This group was made up of people whose income ranged from \$20,000 to \$100,000; low to middle class statuses.

There were a total of seventeen participants that were interviewed in this phase of the study-six females and 11 males whose ages ranged from were 19 to 54. Also, there were a total of nine students in this group, three undergraduate and six graduate students. In addition, six of the participants were of the Igbo ethnicity, nine were Yoruba, one was Akwa-Ibom, and one was

Benin. Further, two people were Muslims and the rest Christians. Finally, people interviewed fit under different social class statuses- income ranged from \$2,000 to \$200,000 (see Table 1 for further details on participants interviewed).

Table 1. Participants Demographic Profile.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Tribe	Religion	Resident	Education Level	Income	Occupation
FOCUS GROUP								
Ajigun**	24	Male	Yoruba	Christian	USA	Masters	\$100,000.00	Student
Anwuli**	25	Female	Igbo	Christian	Nigeria	BA/BS		Lawyer
Bayo**	25	Male	Yoruba	Muslim	USA	Ph.D	\$25,000.00	Graduate Student
Chichi**	29	Female	Igbo	Christian	USA	Ph.D	\$24,000.00	Graduate Student
Crystal**	31	Female	Igbo	Christian	Nigeria	MD		Surgeon
Efe**	19	Male	Urhobo	Christian	USA	BA/BS		Undergraduate Student
Ibeano**	23	Male	Igbo	Christian	USA	Ph.D	\$20,000.00	Graduate Student
Joy*	22	Female	Igbo	Christian	USA	JD	NA	Law Student
Lola**	23	Female	Yoruba	Christian	USA	Masters	\$90,000.00	Graduate Student
Michelle**	28	Female	Yoruba	Muslim	USA	Masters	\$40,000.00	Residence Hall Director
Olumide**	20	Male	Yoruba	Christian	USA	BA/BS	NA	Undergraduate Student
Tola**	26	Female	Yoruba	Christian	USA	Ph.D	\$24,000.00	Graduate Student
Uchechi**	26	Female	Igbo	Christian	USA	Masters		Nurse
INTERVIEWS								
Amy**	30	Female	Igbo	Christian	USA	Ph.D	\$91,000	Assistant Professor
Babajide**	27	Male	Yoruba	Christian	USA	Ph.D	\$200,000	Graduate Student
Bamidele**	28	Male	Yoruba	Christian	USA	Ph.D Credits	\$20,000	Graduate Student
Chizoba**	25	Female	Igbo	Christian	USA	Masters Credits	\$8,000	Graduate Student
Idemudia**	29	Male	Benin	Christian	USA	Masters		Medical Student

Table 1. (cont.)

Ifeanyi**	19	Male	Igbo	Christian	USA	BA/BS	\$12,000	Undergraduate Student
Ifeoma*	27	Female	Igbo	Christian	USA	Ph.D	\$32,000	Resident Director
Iyabo**	56	Female	Yoruba	Christian	Nigeria	BA/BS	\$200,000	Civil Servant
Kayode**	29	Male	Yoruba	Christian	USA	Ph.D.	\$20,000	Graduate Student
Kehinde**	20	Female	Yoruba	Muslim	USA	BA/BS	none	Undergraduate student
Nwanye**	32	Male	Igbo	Christian	USA	Masters	\$40,000	Brain Injury Specialist
Olusegun**	26	Male	Yoruba	Christian	USA	MBA	\$40,000	Graduate Student
Oluwa**	30	Male	Yoruba	Christian	USA	Ph.D	\$47,000	Assistant Professor
Omo**		Female	Yoruba		USA	Masters		NGO Director/Former Nigerian woman's basketball player
Prince**	30	Male	Igbo	Christian	Nigeria	Law School	\$20,000	Sport & Entertainment Lawyer
Robert**	32	Male	Akwa Ibom	Christian	USA	BA/BS	40,000	Health Consultant
Taiwo**	22	Male	Yoruba	Christian	USA	BA/BS	\$2,000	Undergraduate Student

(\*) Born in the U.S.

(\*\*) Born in Nigeria

## Measures

Because the goal of this study was to explore the possibility of adopting appropriate gender equity policies, it was necessary to base the research on a framework that explored institutional change. Thus, Oliver's model for deinstitutionalization (1992) that highlighted pressures which lead to the breakdown of institutionalized policies and practices was chosen to guide this research project. A review of tenets for Oliver's model, research and interview questions that guided this study and the development of focus group and interview questions can be found in Table 2 (Table format of RQ and RI).

The questions asked during the focus group discussion and interviews were broken into two sections. The first section was used to retrieve and measure relevant demographic information, background material, and participants' thoughts and experiences about sex discrimination and inequity, school sport programs, reasons for discrimination, advantages for dealing with sex inequity, and changes that participants felt needed to be made as to improve sex differences in schools sport programs. To understand how sex discrimination and inequity are institutionalized or socially accepted and endorsed as consequences of conforming to social norms and traditional expectations (research question 2), the researcher asked participants to define sex discrimination and inequity, and later discuss whether they felt sex discrimination exists or does not exist in school sport programs in Nigeria based off their definitions. There was a follow-up question which asked participants to provide some examples and reasons why they felt there was sex discrimination. Their responses allowed for a deep understanding of factors that contribute to sex discrimination and inequity within school sports programs in Nigeria (research question 2).

Also, to identify factors which may motivate change or the deinstitutionalizations of practices that promote sex discrimination (research question 1), participants were asked to

discuss potential factors that can pressure sport administrators, managers and leaders to deal with sexism in school sports. In addition, participants were asked to discuss the potential outcome, advantages, or benefits for tackling issues of sex discrimination and inequity in school sports programs. Lastly, to understand what key elements may debilitate or strengthen the possibility of adopting and adapting a law similar to Title IX’s athletic policy directives (research question 3a and 3b), participants were requested to discuss what changes are needed to improve issues of sex discrimination and inequity in school sports programs.

The second section of the focus group discussion and interviews began with the moderator or interviewer reviewing and providing necessary information about Title IX and its athletic policy interpretation directives. Following this, participants were asked to discuss whether they felt a comparable policy to Title IX’s athletic policies is needed in Nigeria. Also, participants were requested to provide information on how gender policies similar to Title IX’s athletic directives can help deal with matters of sex discrimination and inequity in school sports programs. Later on, the researcher asked participants to report of the potential advantages and disadvantages attributed to adopting, adapting, and enforcing policies similar to Title IX. The final question asked, likewise were attributed to research questions 3a and 4 because it focused on changes needed to encourage the possibility of the Nigerian government adopting and adapting Title IX athletic polices. Finally, there were follow-up questions which inquired if research participants were in a position to create change, what would be their first step and plan of action?

*Table 2. Table format for Tenets of Oliver’s Model, RQs, and IQs.*

Tenets of Oliver’s (1992) Model	Research Questions	Section 1: Interview Questions
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Table 2. (cont.)

<p>Institutionalization is a process by which organizations acquire social acceptability and endorsement as a consequence of conformity to the norms and expectations of the institutional environment” (Oliver, 1992, p. 564),</p>	<p>RQ2. What factors contribute to sex discrimination and inequity within educational athletic programs?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does sex discrimination and inequity mean to you?</li> <li>2. What was your experience with Nigerian schools sport programs?</li> <li>3. Please discuss whether you think sex discrimination exists or does not exist in government sponsored sport programs.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Probes: Interests, abilities, equipment, facilities, practice times, locker rooms, coaching staff</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. What are some reasons for these inequities?</li> </ol>
<p>Deinstitutionalization is “a process by which the legitimacy of an established or institutionalized organizational practice erodes or discontinues” (p. 564). Organizations that undertake transformations lose prevailing ideas and vales that delegitimize practices and behaviors. In place of those delegitimized practices and behaviors, “an interpretive scheme emerges carrying with it a different pattern of structural arrangement” (Greenwood &amp; Hinings, 1988, p. 306).</p>	<p>RQ1. What factors will act to pressure the deinstitutionalization of institutionalized practices, norms and behaviors that promote sex discrimination?</p> <p>RQ3a and 3b. What key elements may debilitate or strengthen the possibility of adopting and adapting a law like Title IX and its athletic policies?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Do you think that there will be any advantages or benefits for dealing with issues of sex discrimination and inequity in school sports programs?             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Probe: In your opinion, do you think these advantages will lead Nigeria to improve sex inequity and discrimination in schools sport, why or why not?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Table 2. (cont.)

<p>Organization entropy (e.g., top management support, diverse culture and climate, etc.) that quickens the process of deinstitutionalization and organizational inertia (e.g., lack of top management support, cynicism, apathy, etc.) that impedes progress (i.e. national development and growth).</p>	<p>RQ3a and 3b. What key elements may debilitate or strengthen the possibility of adopting and adapting a law like Title IX and its athletic policies?</p>	<p>6. Do you think that there will be any disadvantages or negative outcomes for dealing with issues of sex discrimination and inequity in school sports programs?</p> <p>7. Discuss changes that need to be made to improve the issues in sport that you discussed earlier?</p>
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**Section 2**

<p>Dissipation and Discontinuity</p>	<p>RQ4. How can a law similar to Title IX help deal with matters of sex discrimination and inequity in educational athletic programs and activities?</p>	<p>8. Please discuss whether you think a law similar to Title IX is needed in Nigeria?</p> <p>a. Probe: Would this law help reduce sex discrimination? How?</p>
<p>Please refer above</p>	<p>RQ1. What factors will act to pressure Nigeria to deinstitutionalize institutionalized practices, norms and behaviors that promote sex discrimination?</p> <p>RQ3a and 3b. What key elements may debilitate or strengthen the possibility of adopting and adapting a law like Title IX and its athletic policies?</p>	<p>9. Do you think that there will be any advantages or positive benefits for Nigeria to adopt, adapt and maintain a law similar to Title IX?</p> <p>a. Probe: In your opinion, do you think these advantages will lead Nigeria to improve sex inequity and discrimination in schools sport, why or why not?</p>

Table 2. (cont.)

Please refer above	RQ3a and 3b. What key elements may debilitate or strengthen the possibility of adopting and adapting a law like Title IX and its athletic policies?	<p>10. Do you think that there will be any Advantages and disadvantages or negative outcomes for Nigeria if they adopted, adapted and enforced a law similar to Title IX’s athletic directives?</p> <p>11. What changes are necessary to be made to adopt, adapt and enforce a law similar to Title IX’s?</p> <p>a. Probe: what should be the first step in trying to do so?</p>
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The focus group discussion helped access comprehension of questions asked, check the relevance and suitability of interview questions and interview procedures, and determine whether the study’s objectives are relevant enough to pursue or not to pursue. More importantly, information gathered from the focus group discussion were analyzed and used to modify or revise the delivery of interview questions asked during subsequent interviews. For example, during the focus group discussion the researcher asked three probing questions on the political, functional, and social reasons that may motivate Nigeria or Nigerian institutions to consider or pursue adopting and enforcing a gender equity policy. These questions were difficult to comprehend and too lengthy; thus, during subsequent interviews, the probing questions were revised to “Do you think that there will be any Advantages and disadvantages or negative outcomes for Nigeria if they adopted, adapted and enforced a law or policies similar to Title IX’s athletic directives?”

**Data Analysis**

While data was being collected, it was transcribed and exported into NVivo 8 which helped streamline data organization. Data analysis began after the focus group discussion and a couple of interviews were conducted. This processes continued until the last interview was

completed. During data analysis the researcher read through the entire transcripts multiple times, and while reading the transcripts, the researcher began grouping together common words, phrases, and/or sentences shared by research participants into common identifiable themes (first-level codes). The process of grouping common words, phrases, and/or sentences together is called open coding. Open coding according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) is a systematic way the researcher uses to interact and become familiar, as well as make sense of the data. For this study, open coding ended when all data had been analyzed. All participants' responses were able to fit into first-level codes. There were a total of a 165 first-level codes identified during open coding. These first-level codes were identified because research participants (at least four) repeated or expressed similar words, phrases, and/or sentences multiple times during the focus group discussion and during individual personal interviews. Some examples of first-level codes included sex discrimination exists because men run sport and school sport, sex discrimination exists because part of the culture does not encourage women participating in sport, and sex discrimination exists because there has been no historical relevance to women sport. These are first-level codes because when research participants were asked to discuss why they felt sex discrimination exists in school sport programs, they responded with similar words, phrases, and/or sentences.

After identifying the first-level codes, the researcher read through the transcripts again for any new first-level codes. Once it was established that there were no more new first-level codes, the researcher consolidated all the first-level codes into 16 categories (first-order categories) using Strauss and Corbin's (1990) axial coding process. Axial coding according to Kendall (1999) is a process used to consolidate data together by assembling connections. For example, all remarks on the reasons why sex discrimination exists was group/coded into a first-

order category titled “sex discrimination exists because”. Also, the first-order category entitled “corrupt governance breeds discrimination” was made up of the following first-level codes: sex discrimination exists because the government is corrupt, change may be difficult because administrators and government agencies embezzle money for women’s sport, and lack of political practices that encourage equity and equality in sport. Other examples of first-order categories included, “women’s sport is not financially rewarding” and “the development of women’s sport is not a priority”.

After appropriately fitting all 165 first-level codes into 16 first-order categories, the researcher went through the data again to consolidate similar first-order categories together into more comprehensive/core conceptual categories (selective coding). For instances, the first-order categories “implementing laws and policies”, “education and grassroots programs”, “funding and facilities”, and “ideological changes” were grouped together under the comprehensive/core conceptual category called “ways to improve matters of sex discrimination”.

After establishing appropriate comprehensive core conceptual categories, the researcher felt conceptual saturation was reached because all possible codes had been exhausted; no new categories or themes were created from open codes. All the data fit accurately into categories, and there were sufficient interviews conducted to form a good understanding of the scopes of different themes and concepts that emerged from the analyses of the data. As a result, the researcher decided to stop sampling research participants to be interviewed.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

The following chapter will discuss the major themes that emerged from the focus group discussion (pilot study) and personal interviews. After the completion of the data analyses, there were comparable findings reported by participants in the pilot study with participants interviewed, students versus non-students, men versus women, and participants living in the U.S. versus those who live in Nigeria. For the purpose of clarity, findings and excerpts from the focus group discussion will be presented prior to that of participants interviewed. Although the names of the research participants have been changed to protect the anonymity, certain demographic descriptors (i.e. sex and occupation) are employed to compare and contrast responses. The information provided in this findings section is useful in determining how to deal with issues of sex discrimination in Nigerian school athletic programs and activities.

There were a total of six major themes that emerged in this study. The first theme was associated to this group of Nigerians' understanding of sex discrimination and whether they believe it exists or does not exist. If sex discrimination within athletic educational programs does not exist, it defeats the purpose for adopting, implementing and enforcing athletic gender equity legislation and policies similar to Title IX. However, if it does exist, there is justification. The second theme was related to ways to deinstitutionalize sex discriminatory practices and behaviors within Nigerian athletics so as to deal with issues of discrimination. The third theme was on influences that deleteriously limit participation, growth and development of women's sports. The fourth theme was connected with factors that may improve participation, growth and development of women's sports. The fifth theme that emerged after analyses dealt with the possible usefulness of implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity law in Nigeria. The

sixth and final theme was associated with potential road blocks for implementing and enforcing a law similar to Title IX in Nigeria.

### **Defining Sex Discrimination**

The first major theme was on defining sex discrimination. Each person involved in this study explained what sex discrimination means. After analyses were completed by the researcher, it was determined that this group of Nigerians agreed that sex discrimination was centered on differences and unfairness towards one sex over the other. Both groups, participants in the plot study and those interviewed had similar understanding and comparable definitions of sex discrimination.

In the focus group discussion, the researcher asked the group if they “could please explain what sex discrimination meant.” Tola who was a Ph.D. student responded with the statement, “gender inequality!” The researcher asked Tola what she meant by gender inequality and she responded with the following: “I see sex discrimination or bias towards a particular sex. I do not want to say male or female because it could be either way.” Joy who was in law school agreed with Tola. She made the following comment: “I agree with her. When I see sex discrimination, I think sex discrimination against females.” Following her comment, the researcher then said, “Discrimination against females? Is that what the guys think as well?” Olumide who at the time was a senior in college answered saying, “it is usually that! That is what happens when I hear sex discrimination.” However, not everyone in the group felt sex discrimination was targeted towards females. Michelle, who at the time of the focus group discussion was a resident hall director, agreed with the previous statements shared by Tola, Joy and Olumide, but Michelle felt that sex discrimination affected both sexes. She made the following comments:

I agree with the statements that have been made ahead of time, but I also think because of my line of work, I also see discrimination against males. So, I feel that it goes both ways. However, I think we are conditioned to think about discrimination as it relates to women because those are examples that are usually in front of us. The same question was asked to participants interviewed.

Similar to the pilot study, participants interviewed also felt that sex discrimination dealt with treating one sex different from the other. For instance, Bamidele, who at the time of his interview was earning his doctorate degree in mechanical engineering, had the following to say on what sex discrimination meant to him: “Sex discrimination is treating people differently based on their sex and denying them opportunities in particular sporting opportunities because of their sex.” Also, he felt there is a double standard when women’s sports are compared to men’s sports. He described this in the following way: “It is a double standard when it comes to sport because males, unlike females, have more opportunities.” Bamidele’s comments resonated with others. For instance, Nwanye, who at the time of his study was a brain injury specialist, stated during the interview that sex discrimination is “bias towards women.” He made the following comments:

It is all about being fair—you want to do things equally irrespective of sex, gender, nationality or state of origin. All humans are created equal and everyone is entitled to have rights and freedoms, particularly the right to life. So if you decide to do anything contrary to that, then I think it is a bias.

Other participants, including Oluwa and Idemudia, defined sex discrimination differently. These participants firmly stated that sex discrimination constitutes providing access, opportunities, and favor for one particular sex and not for the other. They further insisted that sex discrimination is centered around favoritism of one sex over the other. Oluwa, who at the time of his interview was a college professor of political science, stressed that sex discrimination was about “giving one gender opportunities over the other or closing doors for one gender in the name of promoting another.” During his interview, Oluwa provided numerous examples and cases including his

own experiences in high school where, unlike the boys, girls had no sport programs and participated in limited sport activities. Idemudia likewise had a similar definition to Oluwa. Idemudia, who at the time of his interview was in medical school, shared that sex discrimination is about “giving opportunity and providing access to one sex compared to the other.” He was adamant that the basic rubric in determining sex discrimination is the provision of less opportunities and access to females over males.

In addition, sex discrimination was referred to as inhibitions that restrict a particular sex’s ability to contribute back to the society, particularly women. For instance, during Bamidele’s interview, he asserted that sex discrimination was about treating people differently based on their sex. He made the following comments during his interview: “Sex discrimination is about denying them [women] jobs and other opportunities, in particular sport, which influence their ability to provide for their families and to contribute to the economy.” Bamidele’s comments resonated with others, in particular Omo, who was a former Nigerian woman basketball player, but at the time of the interview ran a non-governmental organization (NGO). She defined sex discrimination as denying women certain opportunities because she felt personally inhibited as a woman in Nigeria. This impacted her ability to give back and do more for her society. She discussed this in the following statement:

When you are discriminating against a woman, a gay person or whomever, you are just limiting their right to own, to earn, to do, to live. It is a human right, right? It is their human right to be established and to realize their ought-most potential. When someone takes your rights away because of your sex, you are being denied the opportunity to contribute as a human.

#### *Sex Discrimination Exists.*

A majority of participants in this study, whether they were students or non-students, those living in the U.S. or in Nigeria, and those interviewed or in the focus group claimed that sex

discrimination exists in Nigeria and within government sponsored and non-government sponsored athletic programs. However, it was specifically suggested during the focus group discussion that peoples' loyalty to Nigeria and pride as Nigerians, made it difficult for members in the focus group discussion to acknowledge that sex discrimination is rampant in the country. These people felt that agreeing and stating that sex discrimination exists, would be a negative portrayal of Nigeria. However, as the as the discussions continued and evolved, the same participants were able to provide examples and reasons why they felt sex discrimination exists and is widespread.

There were a lot of reasons why these participants believed sex discrimination exist within Nigerian athletics or sport programs and activities. Participants felt sex discrimination exists because: (a) there is limited visibility and exposure for women sport, (b) women's teams received unfavorable treatment when compared to that of men, particularly in soccer (Nigeria's national sport), (c) schools favor males over females, (d) men's teams have better coaches while women's teams sometimes have no coaches, (e) lack of corporate sponsorships for women sports, men run sports, and (f) a lack of historical relevance for women's sports. All of these predictors of sex discrimination will be discussed in the following paragraphs, and be grouped into three different topics: (1) lack of visibility and exposure; (2) differential treatment; and (3) rationalization- selective social comparison (participants in the focus groups discussion evaluations that downwardly compare issues of sex discrimination in Nigeria to countries that are worse off).

#### *Lack of Visibility and Exposure.*

Participants in pilot study believed sex discrimination exists because women's athletics and sport involvement was almost nonexistent. In other words, these people hardly saw or heard

of Nigerian women's athletics. Most participants reported that sex discrimination exists because there are limited visibility and exposure for women's sport. For example, women were not shown or documented in the media as athletes or sportspersons. Additionally, women were not glorified as athletes; rather they were seen as home makers. During the focus group discussion, Michelle, a resident hall director, explained that females are not seen as athletes because of negative perceptions that most Nigerian parents have towards sports and traditional gender role expectations. She made the following comment during the focus group discussion: "Parents do not encourage their daughters' interest in athletics and sports." Also, Efe, an undergraduate student, shared similar thoughts with Michelle. He stated that, although there were sport programs/teams for boys and girls, "There wasn't really that much attention paid to female teams and girls did not get a lot of support."

Similarly to participants in the pilot study, participants interviewed such as Amy, Taiwo, and Oluwa, likewise felt that sex discrimination exists because of a lack of visibility. Amy, who at the time of her interview was an assistant professor, mentioned that there is a lack of visibility, encouragement, or support for women athletics. She also made the following comment during her interview: "I don't believe that there is any visibility encouraging or supporting women's sport because there has been no historical relevance to women's sporting events over time in Nigeria." Amy felt that Nigerian women and girls do not experience similar visibility and exposure to men, and until similar opportunities and access are provided to both sexes, there will continue to be sex discrimination against females. Amy's opinion was well represented by other participants interviewed in this project. During Taiwo's interview he was unable to recall any information or a particular interscholastic female team or athlete when he was in primary or secondary school. Although his schools had women's soccer and basketball programs, he

informed the researcher that he never saw an advertisement or promotion for a game or competition like he did for the boys' programs. Taiwo, who at the time of the interview was a senior at college studying engineering, was asked to explain what he meant. He said: "Nobody really took them [women's teams] seriously. People hardly went to watch or support them like the boys." He concluded the discussion on issues of visibility and exposure by saying that "the boys were like the sports stars, so I guess you could say there's sort of discrimination."

Similarly, Oluwa, a college professor also reminisced of his time in high school and compared experiences and opportunities for males to that of females. The following statement below by Oluwa reverberated Taiwo's comment on why people felt women's sports are not well exposed by school and athletic administrators as that of men:

The girl's teams traveled but generally they didn't have as many athletes as the boys. So while the boys traveled and competed in track and field, soccer, basketball, handball, and many other sports, the women's teams also traveled but generally you will find maybe only one or two sports. Maybe track and field and volleyball.

For these participants and many others involved in this study, visibility and exposure were the most practical way of determining whether men and women have the same opportunities and access to athletic programs and the only way of determining that sex discrimination exists.

#### *Differential Treatment in Financial Support and Emotive Encouragement.*

Along with the perception of inadequate exposure and visibility, participants interviewed felt sex discrimination exists in the different treatment women's athletics and athletes received in comparison to men's athletics and athletes. There were two significant areas of contention expressed by these participants that defined differential treatment. These areas include financial and emotional support.

*Financial support.* A majority of the participants interviewed felt that there is not enough financial resources allocated to grow and develop women's athletics. Some participants

including Omo, who ran a non-governmental organization and Nwanye, who was a brain injury specialist, both mentioned during their interviews that women athletes receive little to no financial encouragement. For instance, Omo described the different treatment received by women, particularly with regards to financially funding women sports:

When I think about the national team, which is the highest level you can be... I mean the Super Eagles and the Super Falcons are the premiere story of what sex discrimination looks like. I mean the Falcons until like two years ago were the best team that represented Nigeria in anything. They get like one in one hundredth of the budget; they get treated like animals when they win.

Nwanye had a similar perspective to that of Omo. He shared during his interview that the “Super Eagles are celebrated when they win and given a lot of money, but the same fanfare is not shown to the Super Falcons when they win.” Also, Nwanye and other participants felt that sex discrimination exists in sport because of the lack of financial support with regards to sponsorship. Women’s athletics do not receive an adequate amount of sponsorship in comparison to that of men’s athletics in all levels of sport. For example, Olusegun, a graduate student, who at the time of the interview was earning an MBA, emphasized the lack of financial support as sex discrimination. During his conversation with the researcher, Olusegun shared that men’s athletics are more visible and dominant. However, women’s sport is “up and coming”. The researcher proceeded to ask what he meant, Olusegun said that: “Women’s sport is up and coming because they don’t have as many teams as the men which is caused by women’s sports not having as many sponsorships.” When asked why women’s athletics do not have as many sponsors as the men, Olusegun responded by stating that: “it is just the nature of that industry at the present moment. Why it occurred or developed that way, I don’t know, but that is the reality right now.” Olusegun the MBA student’s opinions and comments were similarly echoed by Omo. She

explained how girls receive no support from corporations such as Shell Petroleum and Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) in Nigeria:

I don't know how much you've researched all the mini-competitions that go on, because if you think about it only boys get sponsored. MTN, UBA, Shell, whoever... if you look at it, you will be like where is the girl's side of it.

For Omo and many other participants, sex discrimination exists because female athletes and athletic programs or activities do not receive the financial backing required to build and sustain sports unlike that of men.

*Emotive encouragement.*

The study found that participants felt sex discrimination also exists in the ways in which most men are encouraged to participate in sport and most women are discouraged. For instance, during the focus group discussion when the researcher said the following: "based on those definitions of sex discrimination, do you feel discrimination exists when it comes to school sports?" Michelle, a director of a resident hall, expressed that sex discrimination exists in school sport programs in Nigeria because of the support her "male counterparts received." She made the following comments: "Just looking at my male counterparts and the support they would get, and where schools place value, I generally think that women's sport is discriminated against."

Participants were further asked by the researcher why the lack of encouragement, they asserted that issues related to gender roles and paternalistic structures in Nigeria were reasons for the lack of encouragement. During the focus group discussion, Joy, a female law student and Ibeano, a male doctoral candidate asked the group why the lack of emotive support? Michelle, a resident hall director, responded first, stating that "it is part of socialization." She felt that girls' athletics and girls interested in athletics do not receive support because Nigerian parents do not consider sport as an activity for girls. Ibeano responded with a personal example. He shared that

his younger sister who is interested in track and field may not receive the emotive support she needs “because once she is old enough to use the microwave or tall enough to get into the kitchen sink, it will be time for her to learn how to cook.”

Similar to participants’ comments and opinions in the pilot study, participants interviewed shared some insight to this topic. For instance, Iyabo, a 54 year old woman who worked in the office of the commissioner of youth, sport and social development in Nigeria, pointed out during her interview that “girls are not encouraged from home or at school to be involved in sport.” Although there are some women in Nigeria that participate and are involved with sports, Iyabo stated that “in terms of encouraging our girls from the house and in school, they don’t get that or as many opportunities.” Nwanye, a brain injury specialist during his interview shared that: “Nigeria and most of other Africa are male dominated societies unlike most Western countries where people are encouraged regardless of sex to participate to their full potential.” He felt that females are not encouraged to be or seen as athletes because “they are supposed to bear you a child, take care of the child, and take care of the house.” Similarly, Babajide a doctorate student studying chemical engineering had similar thoughts and perceptions with Nwanye. Babajide was shocked when he saw coed sport and recreation being played in United States universities, because in Nigeria the thought never crossed his mind. He relayed this in the following statement: “It is one thing not to see girls or women participate, but it is another thing to see women play alongside guys and have fun.” For Babajide and others with similar responses, they felt discrimination exists in Nigeria because of the different treatment towards females and athletics when compared to male in terms of encouragement and financial support.

*Rationalization- Selective Social Comparison.*

Although the majority of participants had shared that sex discrimination was present in athletics and sport programs in Nigeria, some people in the focus group discussion and others interviewed also felt that Nigeria, compared to other countries, is accepting of women and girls competing in athletics. For example, Uchechi, who was a nurse at the time of the focus group discussion, stated that she had a different perspective than others in the focus group who felt sex discrimination was prevalent in schools sports because she attended “Federal Owerri, an all-girls secondary school.” She made the following comments after other participants had finished stating that discrimination was prevalent in Nigerian school’s sport programs:

We were really into sports. We didn’t have like boys or girls’ teams because everyone was a girl. We played sport at least twice a week and it was very intense. The runners [students who ran track] were stars. We had a culture of sport.

After Uchechi finished, Chichi, who at the time of the focus group discussion was a doctoral candidate in Engineering, asked the following question: “Do you think like Queen College [Federal Government Secondary School] which is a day school was the same?” Uchechi responded saying “yeah they probably were because whenever we had the Inter-federal School competition, they competed as well.”

Later on during the focus group discussion, participants attempted to distinguish between discrimination and opportunity. Some participants, for instance Uchechi, a nurse, felt that although girls may not have the amenities or be encouraged to participate in sport, if high school girls “really want to” pursue athletics, there were opportunities to do so. She repeated the following statement numerous times: “but if you [high school girls] want it and you want it, you can make it happen.” Following Uchechi’s comments, Ajigun, who at the time of the focus group discussion was a graduate student, asked the group the following question: “I would like to throw [ask] this question, in sport in general, not just in Nigeria, is men sport highlighted more than

women sport?” A majority of the participants responded with a resounding yes. Ajigun went on to say, “So why are we talking about Nigeria? I want to use that global scale example to match Nigeria. As a result, I would say it is normal [for women sport not to receive equitable treatment], right?”

In addition to comments made during the focus group discussion, some participants interviewed also felt in comparison to other countries, sex discrimination in Nigerian school sport programs is not as bad of a problem. Omo said “Nigeria is not like Afghanistan where you [females] are not allowed to play a sport.” She had traveled to different regions of the country, including Northern Nigeria where Sharia (moral code and religious Islamic law) is practiced. Specifically, she had visited Kaduna and said “that females there do play a lot of sport, so that extremism part isn’t there.”

In addition, most of the participants in this study attempted to down play issues of gender differences between men and women with comments such as “discrimination in Nigeria had improved unlike in the past.” For instance, Bayo, a student earning his doctorate in chemical engineering who was in the focus group discussion, made the following comments: “These newer generations of men have started accepting the issue that women too are stakeholders and they have their parts to play.” This comment exemplifies that men have to begin accepting women’s involvement in sport and that women interested in sport is an issue. Bayo also reminded the group that, though he is more accepting of women’s involvement and participation in sport, his grandparents and older Nigerians may not be as accepting. He further made the following comments: “Although the newer generation is more accepting, people like my grandpa may not be comfortable with that. But, for me I think we are now in the time and age that we the guys have accepted that women too are stakeholders.” These concepts of “the new generation”

and “the change in times” also resonated with Uchechi, who was a nurse at the time of the study. During the focus group discussion, she used the Nigerian music industry to rationalize how sex discrimination is not as bad in in Nigeria. Uchechi shared that in the past it was not suitable for young girls to be involved with the music industry. She stated that, “it was not seen as lady-like [music] and most of the women who were successful had to sleep with music producers.” She further expressed her opinion in the following sentence:

It is generational too. Just like the music industry in Nigeria that is blowing up now, I remember when I was younger, maybe when I was 5 or 6 years old. If you say to your family you want to be a musician, people will spit on your face and ask whether you are high. However, now things are being more accepted and encouraged.

An additional reason why some people rationalized the existence of sex discrimination was because they felt sex discrimination was not as bad in Nigeria when compared to other countries. They believed this because there were opportunities—albeit limited—for women and girls to get involved with or participate in sports in Nigeria. For example, Crystal, a surgeon visiting her sister in the U.S., expressed during the focus group that unlike girls in other countries, she and her female friends participated in different sport activities including “football, basketball, long jump, gymnastic, high jump and everything.” They competed at different levels, both locally and nationally. She also said that, “there were opportunities for those that wanted to go into sports internationally.” Also, Crystal acclaimed that there are financial resources and encouragement available for females who are interested in sports and these resources are made available when needed. During the focus group discussion she kept saying that if “girls want it, they can have it.” For Crystal, girls who had passion and interest in sport, despite constraints, would be able to participate in sport. Uchechi, who moved to the U.S. as a teenager, agreed with Crystal. She made the following comments after Crystal’s comments:

So we [her and her school friends] were really into sports. We played sports twice a week and it was very intense. The runners [track athletes] were stars because we had a good culture of sports... In addition, we also participated in the inter-federal school competition every year.

A few other participants in the pilot study and others interviewed agreed with Crystal and Uchechi's opinions about girls having opportunities and access to participate in inter-house sports. Inter-house sports, according to participants' explanations, are a series of contests between students in different dormitories in primary and secondary school. These inter-house sports allowed students who wanted to compete to do so. Further, these inter-house sports are similar to track and field meets in the United States. However, rather than compete with different schools, in Nigeria students in different dorms (houses or hostels) competed against each other, and at the end of the event one house, dormitory or hostel is declared champion. Babajide, a doctoral candidate who was interviewed and Olumide, the senior studying engineering who was in the pilot study both defined inter-house sport in the following comments:

We had different houses [hostels]; different places where you lived. So there was something called Sowun house also called yellow house. We had Sowun house for boys and for girls and we had inter-house sport where different houses compete on different levels. (Babajide)

When I went to school all we had were the four houses so everyone had their schoolhouse and they wore their colors and we have the sports... I believe it used to be Wednesday morning's for us and we will go out and they have balls so if you wanted to play soccer you can; and I think that they had basketball, but that's really it. It was really basic and then they had entire house sports. (Olumide)

Although girls and boys competed, some participants like Chichi and Uchechi in the focus group and Babajide, who was interviewed, indicated that girls were not as encouraged to participate in many activities as the boys or in activities that are considered stressful. Chichi, a doctoral student, discussed how she did not play football and basketball like the boys but was involved with marching. After her remarks, most of the participants in the room laughed. She then asked,

“Isn’t marching a sport?” Uchechi, a nurse answered with the following: “I don’t know oh if marching is or isn’t a sport, what I know is I was forced to do marching and be in the band.”

In addition, Kehinde, who was interviewed, had similar experiences with Uchechi. Kehinde felt that sports like football was a masculine sport meant for boys. Although she did take part in sports, she said the following: “Nobody at home really forced me to go to soccer practice, but when it came to my brothers they were encouraged to always watch and play soccer, tennis and box.” She ended the conversation saying she felt that sports for her “is always a masculine thing; I will always categorize sports as a boy’s thing.” Babajide had similar opinions with Kehinde. Babajide who was also interviewed could not recall throughout the interview strong participation of girls in Nigerian school sport in comparison to the boys. He asserted:

I remember that many of the sport were mainly for the men. There was high jump and we had chance and things like that but I don’t really remember... we had basketball, we had soccer. You know soccer is a big sport but I don’t really remember there being a strong participation of women in the inter-house sports. I don’t really remember but mainly the men or the boys.

Hence, unlike boys who had more access, opportunities and were encouraged or forced to participate in sports, girls were less encouraged and when they did participate they were involved in less stressful and more feminine activities such as cheerleading, marching and band.

### **Motives to Deinstitutionalize Sex Discriminatory Practices and Norms**

The second theme that originated from this study focused on motives to deinstitutionalize sex discriminatory practices and norms that impact women’s participation in athletics.

Participants revealed several factors that may help break down or begin to erode sex discrimination. These factors include: international pressure from other side bodies, positive public image and reputation, women’s prospective economic contribution/social mobility,

potential for positive role models for Nigeria girls to emulate, and international success or recognition in sports and athletics. Of these factors international pressures help motivate change, while positive public image and reputation, positive role models, and economic contributions are outcomes that can as well influence change

*International Pressure from Outside Groups.*

According to participants interviewed, deinstitutionalization or change of discriminatory ideas, actions, practices and behaviors can be initiated if other countries and organizations demand gender equality and woman's rights. Nigerian institutions, including athletic associations will be pressured to deal with matters of sexism if other countries and organizations refuse to provide aid to Nigeria. For instance, Amy, an assistant professor, shared during her interview that international pressure from developed countries can influence Nigerian athletic establishments to be more equitable. She also stated that international associations such as the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organization can place restrictions on Nigeria that will motivate the country to develop women's athletics and equity. Other participants in this study including Nwanye, Oluwa and Kayode had similar opinions as Amy. Participants felt that western countries that provide Nigeria with financial and other types of aid have leverage to pressure the country to deal with issues of sex discrimination. For example, during Nwanye's interview he opined that: "the western world has a lot of power to make good changes in terms of the aid given to Africa. Countries like the U.S. can lobby and pressure the Nigerian government to improve women's sport." Likewise, Oluwa, an assistant professor suggested during his interview that Nigeria is dependent on aid from big western countries and the withdrawal of these support can serve to motivate change. He further stressed that countries such as Nigeria

have to meet specific conditions in order to receive the aid promised. He shared the following comments:

A lot of African countries are dependent on aid from big western countries, If you look at your Francophone West African countries, a lot of them get large sums of aid from France and if you look at your Anglophone West African countries, a lot of them get aid from either the US or England. However, these aids come with conditionalities [conditions] and they just don't give money away. They say you must do something to get this money. So if these large western powers notice gender discrepancy, they may withhold aid. They may say unless you change something we will not give you this amount of money. Unless your ministry of education makes concrete changes, we will not release this amount of funds. Africa in general, especially West Africa, we are always looking for aid.

Kayode, a doctoral student, also had similar opinions with Oluwa. In addition to the fear of loss of aid, he stated that celebrities (e.g., Oprah Winfrey and Condoleezza Rice) and famous athletes (e.g., Serena and Venus Williams) also can withhold grants promised to Nigeria and only release them when improvements are made.

#### *Positive Public Image and Reputation.*

Public image and reputation were shared by participants interviewed to be another reason that may serve to motivate sport administrators, managers and leaders in Nigeria to deinstitutionalize sex discriminatory practices and behaviors that hinder participation and the development of women's athletics. If Nigeria can display to other countries and organizations that the country and its people are for women and girls' emancipation, participants including Kayode, Ifeanyi and Chizoba felt it will "paint the country in a positive light."

Kayode, a doctoral student, shared the following during his interview with the researcher: "Nigeria may have a good image and reputation if it's known for women and girls emancipation." Kayode's opinions represented what many other interviewed participants felt. For instance, Ifeanyi, an undergraduate student, believed that breaking and eroding down discriminatory practices and behaviors that hinder women's athletic participation "can only bring

good and build a better reputation for the country.” During his interview, Ifeanyi said that he “believed that developing women sport and athletics can only bring good because our women and men can compete as opposed to just men competing.” Further, he insisted that other countries and people may view Nigeria as a place where sex equity and justice is promoted instead of a country where women are not liberated. Chizoba, a graduate student, had similar thoughts with Kayode and Ifeanyi. She shared the following: “I think it will have a good public image for Nigeria.” She felt that Nigeria wants a good public image; thus, breaking down and eroding participation constraints for women may enhance the country’s negative international reputation and image of the country.

*Prospective Economic Contribution/Social Mobility.*

Similar to the outcome of positive image and reputation, the prospective economic contribution/social mobility factor is a potential outcome which may lead to breakdown institutionalized practices and behaviors. Participants in this study believed that upward social mobility and women’s economic contributions are potential benefits that may motivate Nigerian sport administrators and leaders to deal with issues of sex discrimination that hinder female participation in educational athletic programs. From the focus group discussion, participants believed that sports can significantly transform and positively impact people lives. Participants provided examples of current Nigerian athletes whose lives and statuses have been transformed because of their participation in sport. Specifically, they shared that girls and women who are able to succeed in athletics and sport may change their social economic status and be able to improve the lives of their families. Ajigun, a graduate student, shared during the focus group discussion that breaking down and eroding discriminatory practices and behaviors that inhibit female participation in athletics “will get more females into colleges and create more job

opportunities for women.” Women who graduate may be able to take care of their families and contribute financially back to the society. Ajigun also felt that girls will be more excited and willing to remain in school because of their involvement in sports.

Ajigun’s opinion was also expressed by participants who were interviewed. Kayode, a Ph.D. student, believed if women were provided with similar access and opportunities to sports as their male counterpart, they may be able to contribute back to the economy and do more for the country than men. According to him, women may be able to attain sport leadership positions after retirement from sport and thus, contribute back to Nigeria which can serve as a motivator to deal with sex discrimination. Similar to Kayode, Omo insisted that investment in the development of women can only benefit the country. During her interview, she informed the researcher of two former campers in her NGO who earned scholarships to play basketball in the United States. These girls, according to Omo, “are motivated in school to succeed not for themselves, but to go back to Nigeria and help other girls.” She felt that unlike men, women are “loyal and want to see things done the right way”. Further, she said that “Nigerian men have had opportunities to become rich through sport, but how many of these millionaires like Jay Jay [successful male soccer player] have done anything for Nigeria?” She also insisted that unlike women who are “nurturers”, Nigerian men athletes, particularly soccer players, are unwilling to contribute back to Nigeria, and when they do, they mainly support education athletic programs or sport activities that exclude girls. According to Omo, male athletes have not been good role models for young girls to emulate.

#### *The Potential for Positive Role Models for Nigerian Girls.*

Participants mentioned that young Nigerian girls’ interest and participation rate in athletics may increase, if people responsible for sport and athletics in Nigeria encourage sex

equity. Increased participation of women and girls will increase the likelihood of having more successful women athletes who not only win international athletic and sport contests, but are positive role models for young Nigerians. Having more successful women athletes who young girls in Nigeria admire may serve as motivation for sport administrators and leaders to deal with issues of sex discrimination. Participants in this study felt this potential outcome will prompt change in the Nigerian educational athletic system. Robert, a health consultant, made the following comments during his interview. He said:

Having people to look up to is a good thing to aspire for. It is a good way to set an example, even when a lot of girls do not go that route. It will help them figure out there is another option to look at if other things are not working out. So I think it will help keep the younger generation more focused because I know most of them have the talent and are gifted.

Likewise, Prince, a Nigerian sport and entertainment lawyer, who is knowledgeable about Nigerian sport and NGP, was shocked that more efforts had not be taken to discontinue discriminatory practices and behavior within Nigerian athletics because of past success of some Nigerian female sports icons like Falilat Ogunkoya, Mary Onyali and Ann Chiejine. These women, who are now retired, were very successful and good role models because they were able to overcome life difficulties and succeed as athletes. According to Prince, these women “made quite a bit of fortune and anywhere they went, they attract recognition”.

Also, participants explained that participation in athletics lead to success in other areas in life (i.e., personal, academic and professional). For instance, Joy shared during the focus group that she is able to deal with the nerves of exams and challenges because she participated in athletics. She shared the following comments: “I’ve been a competitor my whole life and that is how I approach everything and it comes from sports. Knowing that I’ve been tense and high-stress situations in the past keeps me levelheaded, and it infiltrates everything I do.”

Additionally, other participants shared that participation in athletics may keep young Nigerian girls busy; and thus, prevent early pregnancies and illegal drugs and alcohol use and abuse. Omo shared that athletics may serve as a motivator to deal with sex discriminatory issues because sports serves to enhance goal oriented values which “keeps girls from falling prey to prostitution.” For Omo, athletics and sport involvements enables girls to make informed choices on ways to deal with life challenges.

#### *International Success and Recognition in Sports and Athletics.*

In addition to role models, breaking down and eroding discriminatory practices and behaviors within Nigerian educational athletic programs may provide added opportunities for more female athletes to represent Nigeria in international contests. A majority of the participants involved in this study agreed that athletic success and recognition in international competitions (e.g., Olympic Games, IAAF Championship, women’s World Cup, etc.) are outcomes that may serve to motivate Nigerians to deal with discriminatory practices and behaviors that inhibit women and girl’s involvement in athletics. Other participants mentioned that Nigeria may even win more medals in competitions if women received similar access, opportunities and encouragement as their male counterpart.

During the focus group discussion, the researcher asked participants to discuss “benefits for dealing with issues of sex discrimination in school sport” and Uchechi, a nurse, responded stating that Nigeria has “untapped potential”. She felt that girls are discouraged from sport because of more concerning matters such as “marriage, education and family.” Tola, a doctoral student supported Uchechi statement, saying that “there are no incentives” for Nigeria women and girls to participate in athletics. Following Tola’s comments, Efe, an undergraduate student, also suggested that Nigerian women athletes have the potential to dominate in the world stage, if

women's sport and athletics can be well developed. While Efe attempted to better articulate his words, Bayo interrupted and said, "I think what he is trying to tell us is that we can get more medals in the Olympics."

In addition, participants interviewed shared similar thoughts and comments as those offered during the focus group discussion. For instance, Kehinde, an undergraduate student, during her interview, made the following comments:

As far as sports, we are not the best. We are not doing good as we should be doing. So maybe this may help push them a little bit more. Maybe the case is that the guys are not that good and we've been paying too much attention and maybe if we start paying an equal amount of attention to the women, we can be successful in something.

Another reason why this group of people believed that athletic success and recognition in international contests may serve to influence change is because of amount of positive attention Nigeria received from other African countries when Nigeria's "Golden Child" Chioma Ajunwa became the first and only gold medal winner in an individual event from West Africa. Babajide, like many other participants, also mentioned that dealing with matters of sex discrimination may improve Nigeria's success rate in competitions. He felt that change may lead other Nigerian women to have similar success in competitions as did Chioma Ajunwa. Babajide, a doctoral student, made the following comments during his interview: "I know the first gold medal was from a Nigerian woman, maybe we would have had more gold medals if women are encouraged." Babajide and Kehinde's thoughts resonated with non-students Oluwa and Omo as well. Oluwa mentioned that perhaps Nigeria may have better outcomes in international competitions if issues of sex discrimination are limited and women athletics is developed more. Also, during his interview, he assured that Nigerian women athletes will perform better than the men and win more medals in the Olympic Games. Oluwa, a college professor, shared the following comments:

Nigerian women teams have been somewhat successful in the last four, five or six Olympic Games. We may not win but of the eight nation's competition, usually a Nigerian women's team is there, whether in track and field, shot put or discus. These women are succeeding in spite of gender disparity. So even though we have disparity, we have cases where we see Nigerian women competing at a national and international stage, how much more if we are to implement a law that encouraged more equity? Would we see more representation in the world stages? Would we see Nigerian women throwing javelins, boxing, or would we see a Nigerian women's team competing in basketball in the Olympics?

Oluwa believed that in spite of sex discrimination and difference experienced by Nigerian female athletes, they efficaciously represent Nigeria because of their talents. Implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity policies may lead to "exponential amount of successes." According to Oluwa, these successes can serve as potential motivators to encourage the government and sport administrators to improve matters of sex discrimination within Nigeria's athletics programs. Similarly, Omo likewise insisted that Nigeria "will win more medals" and the potential for this should serve as a motivator to breakdown and erode discriminatory practices and behaviors that restrict Nigerian girls from participating in sport. She shared that the best chances for Nigeria to succeed in the international level, is if they focused more attention to women's sport development. She said that "we will win more medals. It is just that simple."

### **Roadblocks Hinder Participation and the Growth of Women's Athletics**

The third major theme discovered in this study focused on identifying factors that limit participation and hinder the growth of women athletics in Nigeria. In order for discriminatory practices and behaviors within Nigerian athletic programs to change, there needs to be a realization that there is a problem. Thus, it was important to identify systemic factors that encourage sex discrimination and inequity within athletic programs in educational institutions. The predominant sociocultural and socio-psychological factors identified included: 1) gender ideologies and stereotypes, such as think sport think football, think football think man; females

are the weaker sex and their skills and strength are inferior to men; 2) women's sport lack media attention, role models and women's sports are perceived as not interesting; 3) traditional gender role expectation; 4) women's athletics and sports is not seen as rewarding; 5) corrupt system of governance leads to sex discrimination and inequity and 6) women's athletics and sports is not a priority.

*Think Sport Think Man.*

Think sport think man was the most prominent issue discussed by all the participants in this study. They felt that sport, particularly football [soccer], which is the most common sport in Nigeria, is an activity reserved for males. Further, participants insisted that at every level, whether elementary school, high-school or college, you find more men and boys actively playing football than females. During the focus group discussion, Joy, a law student, recollected conversations she had with her mother when she played sports in high school. Her mother told her that "women do not play sports because your body needs to be soft". Joy was perplexed by her mother's comments, but eventually stopped playing sport as a result of constant family pressure. Crystal, a Nigerian surgeon, likewise shared similar thoughts on Joy's comments. During this conversation, Crystal insisted that sport and athletic activities should be left for men because women, who intend to get married, should not participate in athletics. She said that "Nigerian females should be feminine, curvy, soft, not muscular or sport-like. Sports-women are never going to married". In addition to Joy and Crystal, Michelle, a resident hall director, shared during the pilot study that Nigerians are socialized to think males when it pertains to sports. She made the above comments after Joy asked the following question during the focus group discussion "why are there fewer women athletes in Nigeria?" Ibeano, a doctoral student, joined the conversation and he discussed how unlike the United States who "do a better job in

promoting the beauty of women athletes, Nigerians are doing nothing.” Ibeano like a few others explained that there were fewer women who are involved and participate in athletic or sport in Nigeria because such activities were perceived as masculine in nature.

Participants interviewed likewise contributed their insight into matters think sports think man. For example, during Prince’s interview he stressed that football was the main sport and it was mostly played by boys. Whenever he saw kids that played sports around the neighborhood, girls were not involved and included. Other participants echoed Prince’s sentiments that football is a man sport. For instance, Olusegun, who was a MBA student at the time of his interview, shared that, “soccer is primarily a male dominant sport. So it wasn’t anything ladies or girls wanted to participate in.” Likewise, Bamidele, a doctoral student insisted that males playing football is institutionalized as the norm. It is a way of thinking that is historically grounded in football tradition. Bamidele shared this opinion in the following statement: “When soccer was founded, women were not allowed to participate.” In addition, Amy, who at the time of her interview was a professor, likewise shared that sport in Nigeria was male dominant. She said: “When you think sport in Nigeria you think football and when you think of football, we don’t think of females, but of males. So sometimes we don’t even think of women playing sport.” The following statement reiterates Amy’s point:

So first of all it is just a cultural view or conception that when we think sport, we immediately think football with male players. When you talk about fairness, you are talking about men and women here. There is no such thing as fairness because they don’t think sports as something that women should participate in. So growing up, I never perceived the government supporting women’s sport because it was just always football for men.

#### *Females are the Weaker Sex with Inferior Skills and Strength*

In addition to the concept of think sport think football, think football think man, there is a widespread perception that women are weaker and their sports skills are inferior to men in

Nigeria. Participants insisted that sport in Nigeria is seen as masculine and unladylike for women to be involved. In an interview with Kehinde, for example, she shared her opinion on how school administrators in high-school did not pay attention to the girls' teams and programs because "they didn't think that girls could play as well as the boys." She also shared that: "these same administrators who didn't think that girls could play paid more attention to the people that are good [boys] because girls are not doing anything serious." Other participants, including Babajide maintained that Nigerians are socialized to view sport as masculine; something not lady-like which requires a lot of strength. Babajide raised similar concerns as Kehinde. He pondered whether cultural and traditional implications led to such orientations in the following statement:

I wonder if culturally there is something in the way we've [Nigerians] been raised, in our background, and our history. Yes they've [women] participated in economics and they've been a main stake for developing our economy, but when I think of the village square, there were men wrestling, I wonder what women were doing.

He further stated, "Maybe they [women] have their own sport, but I don't know if they were physical in nature?" This perspective was commonly expressed by the participants in this study, because for most Nigerians, sport is viewed as an activity meant for men and to be admired by women due to its physicality, masculinity, and non-feminine characteristics. Babajide was not the only participant pondering why things were the way they were. During Amy's interview she asked a rhetorical question: "How are people going to look at me knowing that I play sport or are boys going to look at me nice?" The researcher responded by stating "I don't know, what do you think"? She responded by saying, "probably not good; there is not such a positive stigma attached to women participating in sport." Because of the perception that she may be too frail to play sport and stigmas/labels associated with athletic participation, Amy did not play football growing up in Nigeria.

Moreover, most participants in this study acknowledged that sports, particularly football, had the perception of being an exceptionally strenuous and undesirable activity for Nigerian women. The researcher was curious whenever participants expressed such statements and often times asked why? Kayode, a mechanical engineering doctoral student, responded with the following comments:

My own perspective first of all is that soccer is a man's game and that is probably due to the pressure required and probably due to the extra energy required for football. Also, I think the societal norm you know the acceptance of it; the picture we have from our childhood is of Yekini [famous Nigerian male soccer player] doing sangalo [Bicycle Kick] into the net. I guess that backdrop was carried into our [Nigerian men] time. First of all I feel the physical energy that is required for it is mostly expected from a male. It was strange to find a girl having muscle, having calves, having chest you know back then.

Kayode and others felt sex discrimination exists because sports and athletic activities in Nigeria are for strong men with great skills, characteristics that did not define Nigerian women. Other participants reported that rather than giving females an opportunity to prove themselves equally, Nigerians are quick to reference the history of football that barred women from participation because of their fragility. For example, Idemudia stated that, "from the creation of football in Europe, playing sport was not ladylike." He said during his interview that "playing sport is not ladylike if you think of Europe, a lady is gentle; she is like a dove. You want to protect her because she is like an egg." Idemudia also said that, "sport is something for a man to remove [relieve] all his aggression." Thus, women who take part in sport are seen to be aggressive.

#### *Lack of Media Attention, Role Models, and Women Sports are Perceived as not Interesting.*

The findings also suggested lack of media attention as a factor that impedes participation, growth and development of women's athletics. Participants in the focus group and interviews noted that women's athletic events are not regularly broadcast, and when the games are broadcast, people tend to compare and contrast them to that of men's games. Based upon this,

many perceive women's athletic games or events as boring to watch. For there to be better participation and enhanced growth in women's athletics, there should be more female athletic games positively portrayed in the media and not compared or contrasted to male athletes.

Many participants including undergraduate students Olumide and Efe from the focus group discussion, as well as Nwanye, a brain injury specialist, and Olusegun, the MBA student, who were interviewed pointed out that the media plays an important role in broadcasting sports and portraying men as dominant participants in sport. For instance, during the focus group discussion, Olumide mentioned that even when women's sports are broadcast it is not interesting to watch mainly because it is being compared to that of men. Television networks do not want to broadcast games and events their customers perceive as not interesting. Olumide who was about to graduate college, shared during the focus group discussion that "men's sports get more exposure because people don't consider women's sport interesting." Efe, who also participated in the focus group discussion, added to the conversation stating that: "female sports are not watched because it is not interesting." For Olumide, Efe, and many others in the focus group discussion, women's sports and athletics is perceived as not interesting to watch because there are not as many role models or super stars showcased on televisions for young people to get excited about.

Participants interviewed had similar opinions to share. Nwanye asserted that women's athletics when compared to men "do not get the same treatment or the same exposure". Other participants, including Olusegun, likewise discussed the differences between women and men's athletics. During Olusegun's interview, he and the researcher got into a conversation in which he compared and contrasted the success of the Super Falcons with that of the Super Eagles to determine which national team deserved more broadcast. Although, the Super Falcons had enjoyed more victories within the last ten years, the Super Eagles games, according to Olusegun,

have “more national and international broadcasts.” He also added that: “it is all about publicity, right? How much publicity was given to the females?” Olusegun contended that female participation in athletics can only increase when female sports are provided equitable coverage as men’s sports.

In order to improve matters of sex discrimination and break down or erode discriminatory practices and behaviors in women’s sports, participants insisted that the media had a role to play. The media should portray Nigerian women athletes “in more of a positive light.” They also shared that women may serve as role models inspiring younger females to get involved in sport. If these roles models can showcase their skills and benefits received from athletic participation, maybe younger people will be more interested in participating, irrespective of constraints. With increased interest, maybe television networks will be willing to broadcast more women’s sports and events.

Moreover, female research participants involved in this study shared that they hardly watched female athletes or athletics on television. Men received more television time and were glorified. For example, Amy, a college professor, shared her experience of when she was a child and how she was inspired by Mary Onyali, but hardly watched her on television. Mary Onyali was a Nigerian track and field athlete, who represented the country in local, national and international contests. Amy mentioned that she was only able to watch her idol for 20 seconds every four years during the Olympic Games. She stated that, “there were no publications of her accomplishments and no discussion of events.” For people like Amy, Mary Onyali was the only positive female role model who was an athlete. Amy described Mary Onyali as “a beautiful woman who always ran and who was such a pride for the whole country, and the only one I can remember.” Amy and many other participants believe that if more female successful role models

like Mary Onyali were broadcast, there may be change in how women's athletics and sports are perceived. She further relayed this in the following comment:

I think that Nigerian women themselves don't understand that there are benefits to sport. They don't see what sport can do for them. If a Nigerian woman tomorrow can become JayJay Okocha [former Nigerian male soccer player] and be as wealthy, travel all over the world, I assure you more Nigerian women will want to participate in some kind of sport... Maybe then they [the success of female athletes who are role models] can pressure the government to encourage more female sport participation or equality.

Participants also believed that in order to improve issues of sex discrimination, the Nigerian government needs to figure a way to understand the benefits of sport and inform Nigerians of the benefit through different media services because of its influence on the masses. By doing so, Nigerians may be more willing and accepting of female participation in sports. For instance, Amy felt that the government could invest in marketing campaigns and infomercials on television networks to encourage equal treatment of all regardless of sex within athletic and sport programs or activities. She said this in the following:

Again I think that Nigerian women themselves don't understand the benefits to sport and don't see what sport can do for them... Right now women cannot see what their getting from sport. So why would they care about it... Then one thing the government can do to encourage equal treatment is marketing campaigns. I remembered back in the 90s when family planning became the point of discussion, there were advertisements on television about family planning. If they can talk about family planning on NTA [Nigerian Television Authority], why can't they do it for women's sport?

Similarly, Nwanye, a brain injury specialist, commented during his interview that the media should broadcast and transmit positive messages regarding women's athletics for Nigerians. He said this in the following, "the media needs to put positive female friendly messages out there that are going to touch [positive influence] legislation, the government, and make people turn around to support women." Also, Prince had the following to say on the government investing on campaign through the media. He said that "the media has a huge role to play that is the way to affect the thoughts of the people." According to most of these participants, the media was the

most effective way for the government to create more awareness of benefits affiliated with sport participation and change people perception that discouraged females from getting involved with athletics and sport.

*Traditional Gender Role Expectation.*

In addition, participants in the focus group discussion and those interviewed felt that tradition plays a critical role in the differential treatment women experienced. There are certain traditional roles expected of men and women. Bamidele, who was a doctoral student at the time of his interview, felt that traditional gender roles impact participation rate and inhibit the development of women's athletics. Bamidele discussed how people who are responsible for athletics are more likely to discriminate against women's athletics because women and girls are expected to be at home and not active in sport. In the comments below Bamidele addressed the impact of traditional gender roles:

It will be hard for women and girls because mainly if you are a woman, your role is seen as a wife and as a mother. Someone who takes care of the home, not someone working out, and definitely not someone who is very strong or physically fit.

Traditional expectations are what people, particularly young Nigerian girls presume as the ideal life of a woman. According to Bamidele, "people expect you [women and girls] to be cooking and to get married. People don't expect you to be strong, working-out or to be very athletic." He felt that, "women who are involved in some athletic events in some sense are defying the expectation that people have for an average woman." Thus, girls and women who go against or challenge gender expectations may experience discrimination because athletics are not ideal activities for women to perform. Babajide, another doctoral student, and two college professors, - Oluwa and Amy also provided additional support to this particular concept during their interviews. Babajide and Oluwa both indicated that the Nigerian traditions impact the way

people view gender roles. For example, during Oluwa's interview he shared that the lack of participation and lethargic development of women's athletics is attributed to gender role expectation. He mentioned this in the following comment:

Women are generally the ones who take care of the children and dedicate themselves to the household and given this institutionalized mind frame it may be possible that athletic teachers push the males to be more engaged in athletic activities, while in the back of their minds women are going to end up being wives and home makers. (Oluwa)

Also, Amy spoke very strongly about traditional role expectations of women. She insisted that the inability of the government to fund, sponsor and improve women's athletics is because of what people in leadership positions perceive to be the role of a Nigerian woman. At one point during her interview, Amy pondered, "Why would the government want to support anything that has to do with women sporting events if they [the government] don't see women in that kind of role?" She later answered the question stating that, "a woman's role is domesticated. As a young girl your job is to learn to cook, clean, and just be at home".

Amy further explained that Nigerian women are also unable to participate in athletics because they are having "dual roles". They take care of the home, but also work to support their families. The concept of dual roles is instilled in people and it influences young girls who have the potential to be great athletes. She made this point in the following statement:

When I was growing up, a large percentage of Nigerians and Nigerian households depended on the man to be the economic provider and the woman's role was just to be the domestic nurturer... anything apart from that was not acceptable. Fast forward twenty years, women are not only nurturers and domesticated wives, but they are now economic providers in conjunction with their husbands. I think it is just the cultural norm; the perception of a woman which goes from the lowest [least and poorest] Nigerian, all the way to the government. You know the government is still made up of Nigerian men who believe that a woman's role is supposed to be in the household and not in sport.

The expectation that woman and girls are to be homemakers performing domesticated chores is ingrained and socialized in most of the participants involved in this study.

During the focus group discussion, Ajigun, a doctoral student studying engineering, highlighted the impact of gender roles expected from women. He said that “women are generally seen as housewife material and when growing up they are usually trained to be a good wife, to learn to cook and to learn how to take care of kids.” Such gender roles inhibit women and girls who desire to actively participate in sport. Ajigun insisted that because of such ideologies the chances of girls being involved with athletics are pretty low. Ibeano, another doctoral student, also provided some comments regarding gender ideologies after Ajigun finished talking. He shared that: “once girls get to a certain age, their expected roles are to cook, clean, and care for the family.” Further, Ibeano mentioned that “whether his younger sister liked it or not, she would eventually give up her passion for running because once she gets older she begins performing domesticated chores unlike the boys.” He also shared the following comments: “By the time she can use the microwave and reach the sink, it becomes time for her to learn how to cook.” These roles are institutionalized so that Ibeano’s younger sister and other young Nigerian girls can “find somebody [man] they can be compatible with [married to].”

*Women’s Sport is not Rewarding.*

A majority of the participants also felt that sex discrimination exists because women’s athletics are not financially rewarding and lucrative as that of men. During the focus group discussion, Uchechi, a nurse, felt women and girls are less likely to be involved with athletic activities because as she put it “everything boils down to money.” Though she felt somewhat embarrassed after making the comment, she went on to say the following:

I’m sorry to say that, but that’s the truth. If my mom thought I could run and make money [make a living], she will probably say, go for it. If someone tells you that your daughter has talent, I will respond with a let’s do it; sign her up. However, look at those people that are in Nigeria now, how much money do they make. For instance, is a woman going to raise her kids to suffer because she is passionate about running? Again, it just boils down to money

Tola, a doctoral student, concurred with Uchechi. After Uchechi was done, Tola made the following comment which was also a question. She said, “but let’s be candid, there is an athlete who is a famous Nigerian star and you have a typical Nigerian [non-athlete] who is married with kids, which of these two would you prefer your daughter to be like?” Uchechi spoke afterwards with the following: “or a minister that is making money, rather stealing all the money from the government.” After Uchechi’s comment, Tola said, “so even though I agree there should be incentives, the culture doesn’t really favor it.”

Michelle, a resident hall director, also shared a different perspective during the focus group discussion that women’s athletics are generally discriminated against because, “they [women’s sports and athletics programs] are incapable of generating as much revenue as men’s athletics.” If anything, women’s sport will take resources away from men’s athletics which may impact the amount of revenue generated for the programs and the country. Michelle shared the following comments: “In order to have women’s sport, they [government, investors and school leaders] must invest money into these girls, taking away money from the men.” She felt that money for men’s athletic programs, such as soccer and/or track and field may be redirected to fund women’s athletic programs that do not generate any revenue or fan fair.

Participants interviewed likewise shared similar thoughts. For instance, Amy, a college professor, mentioned during her interview that Nigerian leadership and investors do not devote time and resources in the development of women’s athletics because it is not financially rewarding. She said: “they [government and school leaders] don’t see it [women’s sport] as something that will bring in money”. Also, other participants who were interviewed such as Idemudia, a medical student and Oluwa, a college professor, both felt because males have a better chance than females for earning money and representing Nigeria in competitions, and

because male's sports are more lucrative, boys are more likely to be encouraged to be involved with athletics than girls. Idemudia and Oluwa's comments below demonstrated how boys' interests are met over females:

Number one, there are various reasons why the boys interest will be met. A guy in a country like Nigeria where we are not as rich or developed will take soccer as an outlet to go to Europe to play. Number two, in terms of who has a higher chance for representing the country? The better the men are, the better our country looks... There is hardly a girl that will play soccer in Africa for a living. There are girls who play but how much do they make compared to Alex Morgan or Abby Wambach [United States women soccer players]. (Idemudia)

I think encouragement came from those who supervise athletic activities. So from our sport teachers to those faculties who were somehow invested in the athletic activities of the school. It is usually the case that these teachers will go out and find the males to compete in certain events. Those who they felt were athletically gifted, those who they felt will be able to contribute somehow. usually these teachers went out of their way to tell them to either continue to play a certain sport or they were encourage to delve into another sport. (Oluwa)

Further, these findings suggest that people are only willing to initiate and enforce social changes if it benefits them. For example, Taiwo, an undergraduate student, reverberated Idemudia and Oluwa's opinions and stated that the only way social change can occur is if it affects people in power. He shared this in the following statement: "It has to affect you [government, leaders, etc.] on a personal level for something like this to happen in Nigeria. It can't just be because somebody wants to be a Good Samaritan." People, particularly men in administrative and leadership position, will have to receive personal gains so as to initiate processes, and practices that may begin to break down or erode discriminatory practices and behaviors that affect women's participation and involvement in athletics. Further, Taiwo alleged that the perceptions of most leaders, sport managers, administrators and people capable of creating change is that, "men will not benefit from helping women." It will be difficult to initiate change with such perceptions.

Ifeoma, a resident hall director, supported Taiwo's opinions, stating that: "if you look at the political structure most who hold positions are men and if you cannot do something that is of interest then they will less likely not accept change." Ifeoma further explained the concept of interest convergence in the comments below:

The reason for diversity is because you want to sit next to a White or Black person in the classroom, but because of the benefits of inclusivity and diversity... Corporate America and the Military do not necessarily care about diversity but because they understand that they need people who are culturally competent in order to help sell and run their day-to-day business. For instance, you need someone who speaks Spanish to better tap into the Spanish market... I think this same understanding needs to be taken into account when you are discussing about sex discrimination and inequity regarding women's athletic participation and growth.

*Corrupt System of Governance Leads to Sex Discrimination and Inequity.*

Another important finding of this study is that participants interviewed believed that sex discrimination exists because of corrupt governance. Corruption and immoral structural systems in Nigeria make it possible for people responsible for women's athletics to embezzle funds meant for women. During Amy's interview she asked, "why would a government that is already corrupt, already strapped for money and greedy, go and sponsor something that is not financially viable?" She was adamant that the government and people responsible for athletics are corrupt because unlike the United States, corrupt people are not held accountable for their crimes against women. Amy's opinions were well represented by others including Nwanye and Omo. Omo said the following during her interview: "First of all, Nigeria is phony. Everybody knows that Nigeria is the biggest baloney country ever. Having laws are different from implementation... Just because there is a law does not mean they're going to act on that." Likewise, Nwanye suggested that people have to be held accountable for their actions, or else, women and girls will not have resources, grants, buildings, tools, and equipment like men and boys for athletic participation. Further, Nwanye said "unlike down here [United States] where you have a lot of laws that are

put in place to prevent abuse from happening, there is nothing in Nigeria... people do things and get away with it.” He also said that, “the Nigerian government does not care and they don’t allocate that much resources to women’s sports and even when they do people are going to embezzle the money for their self-interest.”

*Women’s Sport and Athletics is not a Priority.*

In addition, participants interviewed expressed that there are perceptions amongst Nigerians that women’s athletics should not be a priority or of any significance because of other important concerns affecting Nigeria. Participants felt that expenses and time associated with participating in athletics or sports detracts resources away from more important aspects of life such as hunger, education, homelessness, etc. For example, Amy, a college professor, said, “I don’t even think that people have the income to be involved with athletics.” What she alluded to was that athletics was expensive because kids have to practice in schools and pay for additional practice time outside of schools. There are also other additional expenses attributed to participation. For Amy, it was difficult to imagine Nigerians who do not earn much money to spend it on athletics. She shared the following comments: “You [Nigerians] cannot use your hard earned money that you are going to use to pay the electricity bill, water bill, generator [fuel], and feed your children for athletics.” Also, Amy insisted that because Nigerians do not understand the benefit of sport, it is difficult for the government, investors and others to devote adequate resources for the growth and development of women’s athletics. Similar to Amy, Idemudia had the same opinions. He said that, “people [politicians, senators, leaders, etc.] are going to feel that we are not making use of our resources well.” What he meant was, people’s attitude may be negative, if more resources are devoted to develop and grow women’s athletics, because issues of hunger, safety, power, etc. are perceived to be more important than increasing women’s

participation in athletics. Further, Idemuida, a medical student shared the following comments: “people are going to be like why are we caring about women’s sport when we have not eaten or when people are starving.” Idemudia comments resonated with Iyabo, who worked in Nigeria for the office of youth, sport and social development. She asserted that Nigeria’s “terrible economy” is a main reason why people perceive women’s participation in athletics and the growth of women’s sport as irrelevant. She said “if you take a look at the economic situation in the country, women that have maybe two or three kids, who do not have enough, will see sports as a plague.” When people do not have enough to eat and survive on, matters of sex discrimination becomes a secondary issue. Because of this perception, most Nigerians parents deemphasize participation of athletics. For parents, education is a way out of hardship and poverty. Bamidele, a doctoral student, said that “playing soccer is not going to be fruitful... For parents the main thing is getting an education. Playing football wasn’t a good thing because playing football will not look bright.” Likewise, Babajide, a doctoral student, said “sport is not really encouraged... our education system is typically you read your book, take your exams and do well... Not many people have the exposure to encourage their kids to pursue sports.” These perceptions have impacted ways in which sports and athletics are funded. Moreover, it influences the number of female participants programs can have. Kayode said:

... it is also attributed to funds because if you don’t even have money to sponsor a standard stadium for taking care of a male team, where does the money want to come from to take care of a female team? And I say that because the male team is the number one priority.

These comments were well echoed by other participants. For example, Joy, a law student, said during the focus group that “there is discrimination when it [athletics] is not funded the same, especially with college sports like track and basketball programs. Likewise, Idemudia and Nwanye during their interviews insisted that lack of funding to build facilities for women to

perform athletics impacts participation. Idemudia said “most times there are no soccer fields for women to play.” Similarly, Nwanye alleged that, “the stadiums are horrible and the pitches are crappy. Thus, in terms of sponsorship, sponsoring teams, providing good equipment, and good facilities, that does not exist in Nigeria.”

### **Factors that Promote Participation and the Growth of Women’s Athletics**

The fourth major theme found in this study focused on factors that can enhance the growth and development of women’s athletic programs, as well as increase participation and equity in sport. Under this theme there were four subthemes identified. In order to improve matters of sex discrimination and grow women sports, research showed that: first, cultural and traditional ideologies which dictates women’s roles should be deinstitutionalized; second, participants shared that Nigeria and Nigerians should develop and enforce appropriate gender discrimination and equity laws/policies to combat sex discrimination within athletic programs and recreation activities; third, establish additional grassroots and educational programs/activities; and fourth, adequately fund women’s sport and invest in informing Nigerians on the benefits of sports.

#### *Perceptions, Roles, and Embracing the Right Mentality for Change.*

The findings indicated that there were several factors responsible for defining men and women’s performed roles within Nigerian societies. For example athletics activities, according to research participants, are activities that should be performed by men because such activities are seen as masculine or not lady-like. This perception influences women participation and the growth/development of female sport in Nigeria. In order to improve matters of sex discrimination, research participants felt that it is necessary for Nigerians to realize that such a perception is problematic. In other words, the first act to improve matters of sexism within

athletics and increase girls' participation will be to debunk such perceptions. During the focus group discussion, Joy, a law student stated that she believed that the ideology was problematic and in order to improve issues of sex discrimination it is important for Nigerian to have an accepting perspective. Joy compared sex discrimination to other types of discrimination. She said that the following:

The issue is the ideology. So if you set up all these laws but you don't break the people's psyche, it is just like racism in America. You have all these laws stating that Black people should be here, but racism is just still prevalent because it is an ideology we are fighting against.

Regardless of what laws are implemented to deal with sex discrimination, if the ideology that athletic activities are too masculine or not ladylike, then it will be difficult to enforce the law.

Perceptions, roles, and embracing the right mentality for change were expressed in length by participants interviewed. For instance, Kayode, a Ph.D. student, felt that people who are responsible for athletics and sport in Nigeria do not realize that the "masculine not ladylike perception" is a fallacy. He said that "it [matters of sex discrimination in sport] should first be tackled from the mental level... if these people who are mostly men understand that they should allow females do what they want to do, things will improve." Kayode also provided example of statements Nigerian men make when they see girls participating in sport. He said that, "when these men see girls jump, they are like don't do that and close your skirt. The world is getting smaller and if Nigeria intends to be part of the bigger picture, we should first embrace the right mentality." So many other participants shared similar opinions with Kayode. For example, Oluwa stated the following:

I think that is our biggest issue which is identifying that we have a problem that is called discrimination... If people who make decisions can begin thinking that maybe this is a problem we do need to start rectifying. This will then lead those people who are capable of making changes, such as the government, officials, policy makers, decision makers, and the political elite to begin thinking of ways changes could be made.

Oluwa, a college professor, believed that Nigerians need a “reorientation of the mind” on how they view sport and athletics. Although he said that “it may not necessarily be viewing men and women as equal because that is too ambitious, but a reorientation that mandates women and men can be on a similar playing field.” Oluwa felt that it will take time for Nigerians to accept equality of gender; however, they may be more accepting of equity of opportunities and access in terms of provisions for athletics and recreation programs and activities. Likewise, Nwanye, a brain injury specialist, had similar opinions about reorienting people’s perception and acceptance of girls participating in athletic activities during his interview. He said that, “there has to be a lot of de-stigmatization. This de-stigmatization needs to happen in order for things to change.” In addition, other participants felt that it is necessary for Nigerians to change their perceptions and begin to accept women and girls involvement in sport. For example, participants like Amy, a college professor, and Idemudia, a medical student, were adamant during their interviews that changes in the way people think about traditional roles will help reduce discrimination against women and girls. Amy said the following during her interview: “yes there must be changes in the ideology.” Likewise, Idemudia mentioned that, “it is just our mentality we need to change. If they can do that [change their mentality] I think discrimination will reduce.”

Additionally, all participants involved in this study recommended changes and that the changes should be initiated by “having a meeting of people with like-minds.” For example, Babajide, a doctoral student, insisted during his interview that the first step towards change should be “attracting like minds or pitching this point to pliable minds of people in power and giving them the information and letting them see the benefits of athletics.” Educating and informing sport managers and athletic administrators on the true pros and cons associated with athletic participations may initiate the process of change. According to Babajide, these people

need to be well informed so that the process of dealing with issues of sex discrimination and growing women's athletics in Nigeria can be initiated. Babajide explained this when asked how such change can happen. He replied, "That is sort of the highest level of approaching change. Hopefully, once the leaders are on board, it can trickle down to individuals and grassroots programs; so taking not just a top-down but a bottom-up approach."

In addition, edification was another reported by participants that can help improve sex equity and reduce sex discrimination in Nigeria. Because of ideologies that frowns upon women and girls' athletic participation, participants in the study suggested that people will have a different perception of female athletic participation if and only when Nigerians are educated on the immediate and long-term benefits attributed to athletic participation. For instance, Kehinde, an undergraduate student, asserted during her interview that the only way to deal with issues of sex discrimination is to educate "stubborn Nigerians parents, principals, and teachers" to stray slightly away from views that constrain females from participating in athletics. She said that, "people need to be educated on the benefits of sport and stray away a little from their culture and what they've learned growing up." Also, Babajide, Ifeanyi and Amy had similar points of view to Kehinde during their interviews. Although Babajide did not use the term education, rather knowledge, he felt that educating females at an early age on the importance of athletics, will allow them to continue participating later on in life, regardless of traditional views. He said, "I think that females need to know from a young age that they can be physically active and competitive... you start early and hopefully at the end... it carries on to the university level". Likewise, Ifeanyi, an undergraduate student, stressed during his interview the importance of education when dealing with sex discrimination within athletics programs in Nigeria. He said, "I think it comes down also to education. When they tell you knowledge is power most people say

knowledge is power without knowing exactly what it means. People need to be more educated...” He felt that knowledge is power and by empowering people through educating them of the benefits of athletics, they will be more likely to make the right decisions in life. Similarly to Babajide and Ifeanyi, Amy, a college professor, said during her interview that “the first thing to do is education. There should be the understanding that no matter your sex, sport is beneficial”. Further, Amy felt that dominant male perspective that lead to sex discrimination can be discouraged by using the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) as a catalyst for spreading knowledge and educating people on the benefits of sport. She said “because every Nigerian must go to NYSC for boot camp, they [government] should institutionalize athletics as part of the one year long service”. Nwanye, a brain injury specialist, likewise talked about how it was important to empower women through education. He insisted when people are empowered they feel entitled to make informed choices that benefit them. Thus, these choices fueled by empowerment enable women not to adhere to the status quo or traditional expectations, but freely perform activities of choice. Nwanye described the concept of empowerment when he said the following during his interview:

Like I said in the beginning, knowledge is power. Empower these women to make the right decisions. Empower them and give them choices. It should be your choice of what you want to do and not someone forcing you to do whatever.

In addition to educating people using NYSC, other participants interviewed felt that parents should also be responsible in educating and informing their kids to be more involved in extracurricular activities and sports. Participants like Chizoba and Idemuida during their interviews suggested girls will be more likely to participate in athletic, in spite of constraints, if parents encouraged them when they were young. Chizoba, a graduate student, said that “parents can talk to their kids about extracurricular activities and express their opinions to the school’s

superintendent about providing opportunities for their kids”. Similarly, Idemudia, a medical student, said that “parents are a big factor; it is the biggest factor actually because parents need to encourage” He continued the conversation by sharing a story of how he, a boy, was never encouraged to play sport by his parents, and how much less his sister:

My dad never encouraged me to play soccer more or less my sister. If he didn’t encourage the boys, where is he going to get the liver [don’t have the intention] to encourage my sister. So parents need to encourage by knowing that this is not just a sport for touts [irresponsible people] as they say, but is actually beneficial.

*Implement and Enforce Appropriate Athletic Gender Equity and Equality Policy/Law.*

The findings also suggested that there should be enforceable anti-sex discrimination athletic policies in place in Nigeria. However, for such policies and laws to be effective in Nigeria, participants believed that there is a need to have law abiding and honest Nigerians with integrity to be responsible for initiating change and enforcing gender equity policies/laws. For example, during the focus group discussion, Efe, an undergraduate student, was in support of having enforceable laws and policies to deal with some issues of sex discrimination within athletic programs. However, he shared that “right people” responsible for holding those who break the laws and policies accountable. Many others in the focus group discussion also felt implementing appropriate laws and policies will be a good way to deal with sex discrimination, but they felt that enforcing such policies and laws was more crucial. Similar to Efe, Ajigun, a graduate student, had the following to say during the focus group discussion:

“For me, I feel the major reason why any law in general may not be adhered to is if there is no enforcement of the law. If there aren’t any bodies that ensure that people that break these laws pay the right fines or penalties... If a law is adopted it will have to be followed up with some form of enforcement that is reliable.

Immediately after Ajigun’s statement, Joy said “I agree with that”. She referenced the court system in Nigeria and the need for it to be accountable. Also, she used laws against racial

discrimination in the United States as an example to explain how enforcing appropriate sex discrimination laws and policies are extremely important: “so if you set up all these laws but you don’t break the people’s psyche, it is just like racism in America. You have all these laws stating that Black people should be here, but racism is still prevalent.”

Likewise, participants interviewed also believed implementing and properly enforcing appropriate laws and policies is important for social change; however, they likewise perceived most sport managers and athletic administrators as corrupt. Honest, responsible and beneficent leaders will need to be in charge of making changes or implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity and equality policy or law. For example, Taiwo, an undergraduate student, felt that some laws were not being obeyed by Nigerians, law makers and leaders. Thus, it will be difficult to obey or adhere to appropriate athletic gender equity policies. Taiwo shared during his interview that, “the first thing we need to do to change is start taking the laws we [Nigerians] already have seriously.” Also, he added that “in order for new policies and laws that combat sex discrimination to be implemented and enforced, we need to obey the ones we have.” Chizoba, a graduate student, had similar opinions about lawmakers. She said that, “we need lawmakers that will make laws and stand firm on it, instead of the ones that go behind closed doors and make deals.” Chizoba felt that with law abiding people, particularly lawmakers who care about the best interest of Nigerian people, matters of sex discrimination in school sports can be reduced. She further suggested that, “instead of going behind closed doors, we need lawmakers who are not fraudulent and want what is best for the people.”

While conducting an interview with Ifeanyi, an engineering undergraduate student, he made the following statements about implementing a law similar to Title IX. He said:

I feel that one big problem we have when it comes to change is the fact that Nigeria is filled with anarchy. The fact that there are no laws being obeyed is a problem. If we can

change that, then we can get a law like Title IX to help with women's sport. This law will guarantee that it is obeyed and it will not just be about making a law.

Ifeanyi understood the parameters of Title IX and how it is enforced by the NCAA. He felt if something similar was enacted in Nigeria, there is that possibility for change to occur within schools athletics systems. Ifeanyi's comments also resonated with Nwanye. During his interview, he insisted that such policies and laws should be enacted by "God-fearing" people. He said, "I think for beginners we need to get people who are honest, God-fearing, and are willing to make the right decisions".

Also, the findings demonstrated the possibility of change if there are equitable systems in place to enforce strict gender equity policies. Several participants interviewed, including Ifeanyi and Prince, discussed the need to enforce appropriate rules and regulation to deal with sex discrimination. Ifeanyi said that, "there needs to be rules set to perpetuate equity. Gender equity and these rules need to be strictly followed, not just set but strictly followed." Similarly, Prince said the following during his interview: "You know the government, especially in this part of the world have huge responsibilities in terms of infrastructural development. You can have policies, even if you are not working with laws, but have policies that take gender equality into consideration". He and many others in this study insisted that having enforced gender athletic policies will be a starting point for the government in dealing with sex discrimination.

#### *Education and the Establishment of Additional Educational Athletic Programs.*

In addition to implementing and enforcing gender equity policies, the findings revealed that participants believed that matters of sex discrimination within athletic programs and activities in Nigeria can be dealt with through education programs, in particular the development of grassroots educational athletic programs. Participants in this study suggested that gender equity within educational athletic programs will be encouraged if there are grassroots awareness

programs in place. For most of the participants, education and acquiring knowledge were important catalyst for dealing with sex discrimination. Nwanye said, “I think it comes down to also education... Knowledge is power... People need to be more educated, especially in the North.” He felt that there are factors in Nigeria that restrict women’s autonomy and a critical way to breakdown such constraint are through education. In the following comment, Nwanye, a brain injury specialist, discussed how females are treated differently from males and because of this, are unable to participate in athletics and sports.

People need to be more educated, especially up there in the northern part of the country which is predominantly Islam. They have young girls getting married at a young age... and they can’t go to school with guys. They need to break this whole thing apart through education. They put females in a little box unlike the males who are free... They are going to keep these ladies down here [inferior to men], they are going to do what we tell them to do, when we tell them to do it, and how we tell them to do it, rather than giving them that opportunity to go out there and be like their male counterpart.

Nwanye’s comments and opinions were echoed by some other participants. But unlike Nwanye and a few others who mainly focused on elaborating constraints that impede women and girls, and not on breaking the masculine hegemonic structure or constraints, other participants such as Olusegun and Amy expounded on the idea of providing educational grassroots programs that “create enabling environments” for women and girls to participate in athletics. Olusegun, who was a graduate student, shared during his conversation with the researcher that, “things like this always have to start in the grassroots with kids. You should institute programs in schools to develop girls and get them more involved in whatever sport.” Likewise, Amy, a college professor, was in support for using a grassroots approach to create ideal environments for females to participate in sport. She felt that these programs will provide equitable access and opportunities into sports for females. Amy shared during her interview that, “using a grassroots

approach will create the ideal situation where boys and girls must be equally allowed to participate in sport.”

Additionally, the focus group discussion also touched on this point. For example, Olumide, an undergraduate student, insisted during the focus group discussion that not only are such programs important, but having “prominent female athletes” be involved will inspire girls to stay involved regardless of participation constraints. He said the following:

Anyone who goes to talk at a grassroots program should be a prominent female star or someone who has at least made it to the top. Even though they [girls and women in program] may not know them, they may at least know that someone has done it.

Many of the participants interviewed, including Idemudia and Chizoba insisted that sport programs in Nigeria are male dominated and not appropriate for females. For instance, Idemudia, during his interview, said that, “there is sex discrimination because during PE at schools, boys are usually more active than the girls because boys are running or playing soccer, while girls usually are not as active.” He maintained that rather than girls playing sports, they play games such as “te-ten or doing ladylike games”. Te-ten is a children’s game that can be played with two or more players. Te-ten is a popular game where kids rhythmically clap and jog in a spot. The goal is to guess what position one’s opponent will perform by the end of rhythmic clapping. In addition, Idemudia, a medical student, felt that because males and females are separated during leisure or recreational sports times at school and other institutions (i.e., summer camp, church camps, etc.), girls do not get to participate in sport. He added that having coed sport in Nigeria may increase girls’ interest in sport. He said that, “girls should not be separated from boys, and not having coed sport is what is killing us.”

Similarly to Idemudia’s thoughts on establishing more programs that accommodate males and females, Chizoba, during her interview, insisted that public schools in Nigeria should

establish additional sport programs for women. She said that the schools “can create more afterschool activities for girls.” Chizoba, who moved to the United States from Nigeria when she was 11, talked about her experiences and how she was introduced to activities such as “track and field, volleyball, soccer, basketball, and other intramural sport”. However, unlike the United States, she said that, “Nigerian girls are stuck with one sport [soccer] or something they would not want to do.” She felt if schools created more athletic programs and activities, girls would have more options of activities to participate, which will in turn increase the participation level and begin the process of growing women’s athletics in Nigeria.

Also, participants insisted that those who run athletics should be informed that sport can be financially rewarding (interest convergence). The perspective that sport provides participants, managers and institutions (i.e. universities and sport franchises) an opportunity to generate revenue was discussed in length by research participants. Participants interviewed including Kehinde, Amy and Twaio, believed that sports are and can be used as tools to move upward to a different socio-economic status. According to Amy, “people are looking for ways to grow financially in Nigeria.” She also stated during her interview that, “the idea that sports can become something lucrative” is a way to develop and grow women’s athletics in Nigeria. Likewise, Kehinde, an undergraduate student, made the following comments during her interview: “everyone is looking for money because it gives them a way out, especially people in the villages.” Similarly, Taiwo, an undergraduate student, explained ways in which interest convergence can be used to deal with matters of sex discrimination. He said:

I feel like Nigerians mostly look out for what can benefit them... Nigerians would support and have a more positive attitude towards women’s athletic if it is seen as something that can help increase ones monetary gain because that is what most Nigeria care about.

Participants in the focus group discussion had similar opinions with participants interviewed concerning interest convergence. For instance, Ibeano, a doctoral student, mentioned that people will be more supportive of women and girls involvement in sport if women's sport was financially rewarding. He stated how it is all about "resources and money." Uchechi, a nurse, also contributed during the discussion, and stated that "everything boils down to money." She felt her family would be more supportive if she was good enough to make money off of being an athlete. When the researcher asked the group, "what changes need to be made to improve inequity in school sports", Uchechi shared that, "there is nothing Nigerian parents and culture identify more than money."

Additionally, the finding showed that matters of sex discrimination may be reduced if the government's Ministry of Education can provide incentives to schools that promote gender equity. Participants including Oluwa, a college professor, and Kayode, a Ph.D. student, during their interviews felt that the ability to change issues of sex discrimination rested mainly on the government's ability to reward schools that display a history of sex equity. During the interview with Oluwa, he said, "such change should come from the government because they have the ability to make these changes if they are interested in seeing them happen... and they can happen with incentives and rewards." Oluwa felt that schools that encourage girls' participation and willing to have their female sports program compete should be compensated to motivate repetition and grow women's athletics. Kayode also insisted upon this perspective. He stated that Nigeria is an incentive driven society and the main way to deal with issues of discrimination is to have rewards for programs willing to invest in women and girls. Kayode had the following to share. He said, "Maybe for every female child that participates in sport, the school's taxes be

reduced or their federal funds be increased. You know Nigerians respond to money.”

*Commitment to Invest in Women and Girls.*

For women and girls to be able to participate in athletic activities, Nigeria will have to invest in female athletic programs and activities. According to participants, there is a lack of infrastructure and equipment available to grow and develop female athletic programs and activities. Unlike males, Nigerian women and girls interested in sports are hindered and unable to participate. These discriminatory practices restrict athletic performance. One suggestion provided by participants to increase female participation is for government and non-government agencies to adequately increase funds and investments for women and girls’ athletic programs. For instance, during the focus group discussion, Uchechi, a nurse, insisted that the government should provide more funds for infrastructure and coaches for women’s athletic programs and activities. She said that, “the first thing to do I would say is to fund everything. Have coaches, spend money, and get people that are qualified to train these girls.” She also discussed how Nigerian women and girls may be less restricted but more willing to participate in athletics if the government can “pump more money into it and stop hiding the money someplace else.” Later on during the discussion, she told a story of her female friend who was a very talented track and field athlete, but left Nigeria to compete for the Ukraine because of the lack of funds, infrastructure, and discrimination. Uchechi had the following to share:

I am thinking of one of my friend who is in the Ukraine. She was a track and field girl and she was really good, but there was no support in Nigeria. She had to go to Ukraine and now she is competing for Ukraine... because that is the only way they [Nigerian women and girls like her friend] can actually showcase what they have.

Ibeano, a Ph.D. student, contributed to Uchechi’s comments when he said, “everything honestly it all comes back to culture and money.”

Interviewed participants also had some opinions on increasing government involvement of promoting and funding women's athletics. For instance, Kayode, a Ph.D. student, argued that female's athletic participation will increase if the government is willing to allocate reasonable resources. He said that, "the government has to keep it [the development and growth of women's sport] as part of their agenda, the same way the government assigns money to education and assign money to health. They need to assign money to female sport programs to entice participation". Similarly to Kayode's comments, Bayo, a Ph.D. student, mentioned during the focus group discussion that "they [Nigerian government] needs to pump a little bit more money...probably by increasing allocations to sport so it doesn't seem as though male athletes are getting more than females." It is a common perception that sport is a masculine activity that women do not participate in. In order to change this view,

Other participants, including Babajide, Prince and Nwanye, likewise insisted that an investment in infrastructural support is needed to deal with issues of discrimination. Babajide, a Ph.D. student, had the following to say during his interview, "We should invest in our young girls by providing infrastructure, whether it is the most or least expensive, they should have proper infrastructure to engage them early." He felt that the government should be responsible for "disseminating infrastructure" from the primary school level to the university level. Likewise, Prince said that, "when you talk of sport now you need facilities and if they are not there, there is only an extent to which it can grow or develop." Further, in terms of infrastructural support for women's athletic programs and activities, Nwanye, a brain injury specialist, contrasted Nigeria's inability to develop women's with the United States success. He insisted that women's athletics will not grow or develop without adequate resources. He further said the following during their interviews:

There is a need to invest in infrastructure instead of waiting for the last minute to overhaul everything... Unlike the U.S. where they believe in a building culture... they build programs and infrastructure... Nigeria will have to invest in the facilities, programs, coaches, academies... I mean there is money in Nigeria, but I don't know really why these guys are not investing?

### **The Usefulness of an Athletic Gender Equity Law Similar to Title IX**

The fifth major theme found focused on the possible usefulness of implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity law in Nigeria to deal with sex discrimination. Before the second half of the interviews and focus group discussion began, the researcher handed out the abstracts with information on Title IX to research participants. Most of the participants, particularly those who attended school in the United States were familiar with Title IX's athletic policy, whereas others were either ill-informed or unaware of Title IX. The information on the abstract distributed by the researcher included the definitions of Title IX, its regulation, and the three prongs within the handouts provided to research participants (A copy of the interview abstract can be found in Appendix E). Also, the researcher verbally explained how Title IX's athletic directives are implemented and enforced in the United States. Afterwards, the researcher proceeded with asking participants to discuss the potential usefulness of having similar policies and/or laws and whether such will work or not work in Nigeria. During the focus group discussion, Ajigun, a graduate student, stated that implementing and properly enforcing a law similar to Title IX may help deal with issues of discrimination. He made the following comments:

It will create and provide opportunity to get more female students in colleges because if these laws are set down, colleges have to meet a certain quota of female athletes. It will push [motivate] them [those responsible for college athletics] to search for these athletes.

Ajigun further went on to say that he believes that "firstly, it will get more females into college and secondly, it will create more opportunities for women." Additional information was provided

by participants interviewed. Their responses covered three areas: desire to achieve fairness, desire to achieve equitable resources, and the desire to deinstitutionalize unfavorable ideologies.

*Desire to Achieve Fairness (NGP/MDGs).*

Participants interviewed insisted that a law similar to Title IX athletic directives is needed and has the potential to help deal with matters of sex discrimination within Nigerian sport systems. For example, Nwanye, a brain injury specialist, and Iyabo, who worked at the office for youth, sport, and social development, felt that an athletic gender equity law may be advantageous because they believed everyone should be treated fairly regardless of sex. Legislation similar to Title IX would place men and women on the same level in terms of opportunities for athletics programs or activities. Thus, when people think sport in Nigeria, they do not only think of males, but female as well. Others agreed with them. For example, Kehinde, an undergraduate student, said that “if we have this and it is enforced then everybody knows it and we are on the same level; there is no more hierarchy.” Similarly, Chizoba, an undergraduate student, had the same opinions. She felt that, “males will see females in almost if not the same level.” Likewise, Nwanye and Iyabo indicated a gender equity laws and policies will be advantageous because it creates fairness in Nigeria. Nwanye said that, “I think that there are so many advantages for such a law; one being fairness. I think everyone should be treated to the same standard.” As well, Iyabo asserted that “there should be a policy to reduce differences. The benefits are so enormous that everybody should do something.” According to her, there should be laws and policies in place to reduce differences between males and females athletics.

Most participants like Nwanye, Ifeoma and Bamidele, felt this way about the implementation and enforcement of a gender equity athletic law. Nwanye made the following statement during his interview: “a law will help because it will help stop most of the

discrimination that is going on.” Ifeoma, a former basketball college athlete, likewise felt that implementing and enforcing a comparable athletic gender equity law will display Nigeria’s commitment to its NGP. She had this to say about the gender equity law:

I think from the national stage, it [adopting and enforcing a comparable law to Title IX] will show that Nigeria is moving to a place where it will be about equity and that they are moving forward. Also, [adopting and enforcing a comparable law to Title IX] that gender equity is necessary for any progress to be made.

People and institutions that fail to comply with the athletic gender equity law and policy will be reprimanded. For example, Bamidele said that, “it [a gender equity athletic policy/law] will be helpful to stop people from discriminating when you have rights.” He felt that people and institutions will be held accountable for not adhering to the directives of such a law.

#### *Desire to Receive Equitable Resources.*

During the focus group discussion Ajigun, a graduate student, mentioned that women and girls who have access to improved facilities, coaching, equipment will be motivated to be involved in sport. Ajigun made the following comments during the focus group discussion after the researcher asked for participants to discuss the potential outcomes of implementing and enforcing factors that promote participation and the growth of women’s athletics. He said, “If a law similar to this is encouraged, adopted, adapted and maintained in Nigeria, it will create opportunities to get more female students in colleges because colleges have to meet a certain quota of female athletes”. Also, Ajigun suggested that such a law will provide greater opportunities to get more girls involved in sport, thus, increasing the number of female students in schools.

Ajigun’s opinions about the usefulness of implementing and enforcing a gender equity athletic law and factors that promote female participation and the growth of women’ sport resonated with other participants too, particularly participants that were interviewed. These

people felt all four factors (embracing the right mentality, perceptions, and roles for change; implementing and enforcing appropriate anti-sex discrimination laws and policies; education and establishing more educational athletic programs; and investing in women and girls) will improve governance and administration of Nigerian athletics because it permits the government and its Ministry of Education to cease providing financial support to institutions that fail to comply with its gender equity directives. For example, Omo indicated during her interview that schools that do not have female sports programs should not receive funds from the government. She also felt that corporations that receive tax subsidies but discriminate and sponsor programs for men only should likewise be reprimanded. Omo runs a non-governmental organization for girls between the ages of 12-18 and she shared a story during her interview on discrimination and struggles experienced for funding a women's basketball camp. She stated:

To all schools that want to participate in certain sports and that are government funded, they should have a female versions. You should not be allowed to enroll your men's teams if you don't have a female team. Such schools should be penalized for not having female teams... and that includes if the school wants to participate in the youth sport festival... Corporations cannot sponsor or cannot support males' sports unless they sponsor the female version. Corporations should not get tax benefits unless they sponsor both male and female sport.

Additionally, the majority of participants in this study believed that having opportunities and access to athletics for girls will positively impact their self-worth and self-esteem. For example, Ifeanyi said, "I think a law like this will do Nigeria a lot of good because it will help the women build their self-esteem." Similarly, Taiwo added that not only does sport help build people's confidence, it also improves their physical health. For Taiwo, "sport participation is a really important aspect of growing up in any culture because it builds you up mentally, physically and emotionally." Likewise, Oluwa discussed during his interview that Nigerian women and girls may have improved athletic access and opportunities as an outcome of dealing

with issues of sex discrimination. For example, Oluwa, a college professor, believed that athletic gender equity policies will not only provide sport opportunities but additional ones. He said that “this law will open more doors for future attainment.” He further discussed that “women will be able to attain athletic scholarships from universities [either in Nigeria or abroad] and it will be possible that they can compete for the country on a national scale.” Oluwa also mentioned that a law similar to Title IX, if implemented and enforced in Nigeria will encourage girls to pursue athletics. He stated that, “a law like Title IX will encourage females to pursue athletics”. Further, the law will increase the number of girls involved with athletics and begin the process to reorient people’s perceptions on traditional role expectations.

During Ifeoma’s interview, she mentioned that the success of Title IX in the U.S. can be used as predictor to gauge the usefulness of implementing and enforcing a gender equity athletic law in Nigeria. Ifeoma, a resident hall director, shared the following about the usefulness of a gender equity athletic law in the following comments:

If I look at the benefits that has happened here [the US], I would say that you will see more scholarships being sent to women, you will see more women graduate and have opportunities, you will see more women go and pursue other professional opportunities, and then you will see that the way people think of women change and I would say that it is because of Title IX.

Ifeoma was also adamant that such a law will influence how people view women in sport and leadership roles. She said that, “Title IX has a big influence in the way people have thought of women accomplishing responsibilities in leadership roles.” Similarly, Bamidele, a Ph.D. student, had analogous opinions with Ifeoma. He felt that policies and laws akin to Title IX may influence the way women are viewed as weak and subordinate to men, and thus, provide them with encouragement to pursue leadership positions. When the researcher asked Bamidele to explain what he meant, he said that “I think it is the same philosophies of letting the best people

get the best jobs. I guess women being able to do whatever they want in terms of sport in some sense can influence leadership roles.” The researcher further asked Bamidele to explain how

Title IX may impacts women’s leadership roles and positions, he said the following:

For example, like in sport right, if you are a sport person you are eventually going to retire and after retirement an opportunity is to become a coach. A coaching position is a leadership role. I think women being able to participate in sport and being encouraged can improve their chances for getting leadership positions.

*Desire to Deconstruct Restrictive Ideologies.*

Moreover participants believed that adopting and enforcing policies and laws similar to Title IX will be useful for dealing with issues of sex discrimination and growing women’s athletics, but in order for such a law to be effective, there is a need to break down or erode Nigeria’s socialized ways of viewing gender. Most of the participants insisted that there are institutionalized points of view ingrained through socialization that allow for sex discrimination and gender discrepancies in Nigeria. Most participants compared freedom experienced in the United States with that of Nigeria and indicated that people, particularly men are less willing to stand against discrimination. During Oluwa’s interview, he insisted that in countries like the United States, women and men are willing to fight against sex discrimination, but in Nigeria both sexes accept the gendered role expectation, sex discrimination and gender discrepancies. Also, he added that “because its [gendered role expectations, sex discrimination and gender discrepancies] so institutionalized, even women grow up believing their place is at home”. He felt breaking down and eroding such institutionalized conviction and mindset will be difficult. Although such a law will not have an immediate impact, Oluwa shared that a law like Title IX in Nigeria will have a long-run impact in breaking down gendered role expectations, sex discrimination and gender discrepancies in Nigerian athletics.

## **Factors that Hinder Social Change or the Enforcement and Implementation of an Athletic Gender Equity Law**

The sixth major theme identified deals with potential road blocks that may hinder the implementation and enforcement of a gender equity athletic law similar to Title IX in Nigeria. Participants mentioned several factors that will impact the adoption of a similar law including: (a) Nigeria's paternalistic structures or traditional role expectations that frown upon women's participation in athletics; (b) literacy and the inability to truly understand the nuances of a gender equity athletic law by the masses and athletic administrators; and (c) lawlessness, corruption, and the inability to hold people accountable for breaking rules.

### *Systemic Discriminatory Practices and Behaviors.*

Participants believed that the issue of sex discrimination is not about whether an athletic gender equity policy or law is needed, but if it can truly lead to change. During the focus group discussion some of the participants expressed that it will be difficult to enforce an athletic gender equity policy or law in Nigeria because Nigerians are socialized to accept discriminatory practices and behaviors against females concerning sports. Girls from a young age, according to Ajigun, are "discouraged from having interests in sport." Right after Ajigun finished sharing his insight, Crystal, a surgeon, said that "Nigerian women do not want to be professional athletes and if they wanted to, they will find a way to be involved with sport and athletics". Joy rebutted, insinuating that Nigerian women are socialized from a young age not wanting to be athletes because of factors that include lack of female athlete role models and pressures to get married to raise children. Joy made the following statement:

I don't know if the question is what women want to be professional athletes; it should be why do women not want. If you survey women who want to be professional athletes there might not be that many. Maybe we should take a step back and question whether this is fair. Do women not inherently want to be professional athletes or are they socialized that

way? No one should tell you that you shouldn't play sport. I don't think women are born not wanting. If this is not inherent but told by other that this is how it is, then if that is not discrimination, what is?

Michelle, a resident hall director, joined the conversation supporting Joy's comments. She too felt that Nigerians are socialized to accept sex discrimination in sports. She insisted that parents influence their children to think male when they think sport. She made the following statement during the discussion, "I think that it is part of socialization. We are socialized to think males and socialized to think only males play sports by our parents who tell us we should not consider it as part of our life". Some other participants mentioned that adopting and implementing policies or appropriate law may not change matters of sex discrimination because it is more important to alter people's ideologies about gender in order for there to be change.

Because of these reasons, participants in this study began to doubt the utility of a gender equity law in Nigeria. They felt that there will be resistance and opposition against an athletic gender equity policy or law. For instance, Amy, a college professor, said "even if it [athletic gender equity policy/law] exists, will it make a difference? There is nothing wrong with just having a policy or the law there, but it will be useless if it cannot be executed." According to Amy and other interviewed participants, an athletic gender equity law will not be effective in dealing with issues of sex discrimination in Nigeria unless, "people's perceptions and behaviors" change. Amy felt that Nigerians will have to be responsible in creating social change by first changing themselves. Also, Amy shared the following during her interview: "They can implement this law or policy but it is not going to change perceptions and behaviors people have." The law or a policy that states women and girls should not be discriminated against in terms of athletic participation will not be obeyed by people who have the perception that females should not be participating in athletic competitions. Babajide, a Ph.D. student, corroborated

Amy's statement when he made this comment: "People that are more classical [traditional] might not understand, but with change there is always opposition. I do believe that there will be some resistance; however, it is worth it."

Furthermore, participants insisted that females' participation in athletics and inclusion into leadership roles in sport organizations, as a result of a gender equity law or policy, may threaten men. During his interview, Idemudia, a medical student, discussed how there may be resistance and opposition because as he said "males will not love that at all". Although Idemudia has lived in America for over ten years, he still exudes paternalistic ideologies that disapprove of girls participating in athletics like boys. Further, he believed that females had inferior skills and strength to males.

Additionally, Idemudia and other participants believed that there will be negative consequences for passing an athletic gender equity law or policy in Nigeria. He made the following comments during his interview:

I don't think a point guard in the WNBA can score me. I don't know if that is possible, but I believe as a guy no girl will be able to dunk over me because she will go down. I live in America and that is my mentality. What about someone who lives in a male dominated country? So there are going to be injuries of course; terrible injuries. In order to pass such a law, blood has to be spilled. If they are going to pass a law that is radical or that changes mindset, people are going down.

While Oluwa, a college professor, was not as expressive as Idemudia, he likewise believed that passing a law and enforcing a policy similar to Title IX in Nigeria will be difficult. He mentioned that people will fight against the law, stating that the law "will be fought tooth and nail because Nigeria has a cultural structure that promotes males over females". He did not think that "legislators and high ranking officials would want to see a law that promotes equity of males and females because culturally that is not how most Nigerians think." Undergraduate students, Ifeanyi and Chizoba also made similar comments during their interviews. Ifeanyi mentioned that

“males will not be receptive of an equity policy or law as you want them to be and they’ll try to go against it.” Chizoba likewise discussed how Nigerian males may not be willing to support a policy or law that will give women greater opportunity than they have received in the past. Specifically, she asserted that “Nigerian males want to be in charge. So for a female to be ahead might make males feel incapable”.

Also, only Ifeoma, a resident hall director, felt that Nigerians may find implementing and enforcing a law similar to that of the United States problematic. She indicated that there may be “backlash, particularly from people including women who are resistant to change and who do not understand the need of something like that.” She added that Nigerians may not want to follow the lead of America, “even though in many ways we adopt a lot from the west.”

Additionally, only Robert, a health consultant during his interview, and Bayo, a Ph.D. student during the focus group discussion, mentioned that implementing and enforcing an athletic gender law will provide additional avenues for corruption and nepotism. Sport administrators and manager will find ways to extort money from women and girls willing to do whatever it takes to earn a scholarship to participate in athletics. Robert said the following during his interview, “one problem is when people try and benefit from it. They will also try to make only a certain people benefit from it.” Likewise, Bayo mentioned during the focus group discussion that “people will create loopholes by creating ghost female student athletes”. He felt that school administrators will fabricate numbers of girls and women participating in athletics to continue to receive moneys from the government and to avoid punishments of noncompliance. Later on during the focus group discussion Bayo reinforced his opinion by saying, “the main negative problem I see is the ghost female student athlete thing that I said earlier. Some people will just turn this as an avenue to defraud the system further.”

### *Lack of Enforcement and Accountability.*

In addition, enforcing a gender equity athletic law in Nigeria will be problematic because there are no punishments for those who do not adhere. During Bamidele's interview, he stated that establishing a law will not be useful if it cannot be enforced. He said, "The law does not matter. Enacting it is a step in the right direction, but the key issue is enforcing the law. If you can't enforce it, the law will not be helpful." Also, Iyabo, who worked at the office of youth, sport and social development, made similar comments about enforcement and implementation. She surmised that "the major problem we have in Nigeria is that even if there is a law, who makes sure that it is enforced? You might find laws but how much of it would be enforced or operationalized?" Kehinde and Idemudia made similar statements during their interviews as well. Kehinde, an undergraduate student, shared her concern for enforcement in the following statement: "That is another problem in Nigeria because you can have a rule and if it is not enforced it is just a rule that is just there." Kehinde insisted that, in order for laws to be enforced, there needs to be punishment and consequences for disobeying laws. Like Kehinde, Idemudia discussed the potential difficulty of enforcing a gender equity athletic law in Nigeria. According to Idemudia, a medical student, it will be difficult because Nigeria is a country that allows and sometimes encourages practices and policies that discriminate against women. He made the following comments:

Implementing Title IX in Nigeria is like saying if you go to space you are not allowed to sit on the floor of the moon or on the ground when you get there. That is a law but who goes to the moon every time. It is like you put a law that does not apply.

The adoption of an athletic gender law may be difficult to obey because there are incompetent agencies and people to enforce the law. During the focus group discussion, Ajigun, a Ph.D.

student, made the following comments concerning enforcement of policies in Nigeria: “For me I feel the major reason why any law will not be adhered to, will be if they don’t enforce it”.

Other participants including Taiwo, Amy and Ifeanyi during their interviews discussed how the enforcement of a law similar to Title IX may be difficult and problematic because of the lack of respect for authority. The term lawlessness was commonly used by participants in this study to describe Nigeria and different athletic associations. For example, Amy, a college professor, stated that Nigeria “is a lawless country. Laws are useless if it cannot be executed and administered.” She insisted that enforcing and implementing any policies or laws in Nigeria will be problematic because people living in the country fail to respect the law. Amy’s thoughts resonated with others including Taiwo, an undergraduate student. Though he believed an athletic gender law was needed, he reported that Nigerians do not obey laws. He felt “it [gender equity law] is needed but people don’t obey laws. I feel like if the law is there it will help, but I don’t know if it will work—but it’s needed.” Similar to Taiwo and Amy’s comments, Ifeanyi, an undergraduate student, believed that proper laws and policies are needed but insisted that Nigeria is filled with people who do not obey laws; and the only effective means of implementing and enforcing an athletic gender law is if people begin to adhere to laws and the government strictly penalizes offenders. He shared this:

I feel the one big thing is we have to change the fact that Nigeria is filled with anarchy; there are no laws being obeyed. If we can change that, then we can get a policy or law like Title IX in motion, and we will be guaranteed that it will be obeyed and it is not just about making a law.

Likewise, Ifeoma, a resident hall director, also insisted that an athletic gender equity law will be helpful, but did not believe that such a law will fit within the social structure of Nigeria. Upon explaining why, she referenced other policies and laws in Nigeria that are drafted but not enforced.

## **Chapter 5**

### **General Discussion**

To develop research questions for this study, past literature on social change, institutional change and theory, Title IX, and Title IX cases were extensively reviewed. Based on these reviews, Oliver's model for deinstitutionalization was employed to guide this study which also helped in the generation of research questions. Five questions were developed and aimed to understand conditions under which an athletic gender equity policy and/or law similar to Title IX may be adopted, implemented and enforced in Nigeria to deal with matters of sex discrimination in athletics. These questions were also drafted in an attempt to define potential moderators that may undermine or encourage the implementation and enforcement of such policies and/or laws.

#### **Perceptions of Sex Discrimination**

Based on participants' discussions and interviews, there are clear differences of access and opportunities in athletics afforded to male and female Nigerians. As a result of these differences, a majority of participants strongly declared that sex discrimination exists in Nigeria. Discrimination exists because of the "differential treatment or double standard and lack of visibility and exposure of women's athletics." Though a majority of participants agreed that discrimination exists, a few unenthusiastically affirmed that sex discrimination exists because male athletes and athletics were provided greater opportunities and better access than their female counterparts.

Although participants in the focus group discussion (pilot study) and those interviewed were reluctant to portray Nigeria in a negative light, they adamantly stated that sex discrimination exists in Nigeria and that in most cases boy's athletic interests are met ahead of girls. Participants perceive that educational athletic programs in Nigeria are viewed as a space

for male camaraderie; where men can identify with other men. Otive-Igbuzor (2006) and Okonkwo (2012) assert that such discriminatory actions influence women's positions in Nigeria and have the potential to hinder women's abilities to contribute to their community and economy.

Females who are hindered as a result of institutionalized discrimination or gender role ideologies and expectations will not enjoy the benefits attributed to sport participation, such as social upward mobility, improved circulatory health, mental clarity, successful aging and social interaction (Stevenson, 2010). Moreover, people who participate in team sports form social connections that develop through team identification (Watson, 1977; Wann, 2006). Therefore, Nigerian females that are unable to participate in sport because of societal constraints may have to establish social connections through other non-sport or recreation avenues.

Additionally, sex discrimination exists in Nigerian athletics and sport because most Nigerians accept sexism as the way things are done. These discriminatory actions and practices are commonly institutionalized, socialized, and accepted through habit, history and tradition. Though many participants agreed that sexism is how things are currently done in Nigeria, these same people also insist that sexism should be seen as unnecessary and unjust, instead of accepted. Unlike Calabresi and Rickert's (2011) study on the roles of discrimination that deemed sexism as natural and necessary, the participants in the current study view sex discrimination as unnatural and a practice that should be evaded. This viewpoint is not surprising because a majority of the participants involved in this study were born in Nigeria, but currently live in the United States- a country with proper anti-sexism and discrimination laws and policies. Hence, their exposure to equitable practices and behaviors in the United States may have influenced their perspective on the supposed necessity and innate characteristics of sex discrimination.

In addition, participants' perspective may have changed because of their level of education and other categorical factors such as socio-economic status, geographical location, and age. These factors may help explain why participants suggested adopting a gender equity policy to deal with issues of sexism in spite of corruption in Nigeria. Research shows that people who are educated or committed educators are opened to transformation of educational policies and practices. According to Apple (2001), the "transformation of educational policies and practices- or the defense of democratic gains in our schools and communities- is inherently political" (p. 410). Apple (2001) also suggested that "the mere fact that people recognize the connections between, say, education and differential power does not guarantee that acting on such knowledge inevitably leads to progress transformations" (410). The outcome of adopting and enforcing a gender equity policy to deal with sexism may be uncertain; however, these participants are opened to the idea of transformation policies and practices that lead to change.

Further, because most of these participants were born after 1972, the year Title IX was passed and are educated in the United States, it is not surprising that they are not against the adoption and enforcement of an athletic gender equity and/or law similar to Title IX. This explains why they sincerely aspire for transformational change in Nigeria and are eager to support the adoption and enforcement of laws or policies that may help develop and grow sports. These groups of people, particularly female participants are unhappy with issues of sexism in Nigeria and are willing to support "a proven remedy" of transformational change that they believe works in the United States.

With that said though, the creation and enforcement of an anti-sex discriminatory policy or law was just one of many recommendations suggested by participants as a way to reduce sexism within athletic programs in Nigeria. In addition to establishing and enforcing a law and

policies comparable to Title IX, participants suggested embracing the right mentality, perceptions, and roles for change, establishing more athletic educational programs, and increasing public and private financial and emotional investment in women and girls.

### **Motivators which Initiate the Process of Change**

In addition to determining whether sex discrimination exists or does not and why it does in Nigeria, this study sought to understand predictors that may motivate transformational change. The second research question focused on factors that motivate the deinstitutionalization of ideas and actions that promote sex discrimination and inequity. Knowing motives or motivators for change may inspire Nigerian educational athletic programs to initiate a transformation process where prevailing discriminatory ideas and actions are changed. In place of discriminatory ideas and actions, an interpretive scheme may emerge carrying with it a “different pattern of structural arrangement” (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988, p. 306).

Oliver’s (1992) model surmised that political, functional and social pressures are factors that lead to change. Factors that pressure change found in this study support Oliver’s (1992) categorization of pressures that lead to deinstitutionalization of unfavorable practices and behaviors. There are five factors revealed in this current study that may motivate the process of change: (1) pressure from outside groups and associations; (2) positive public image and reputation; (3) increased economic development; (4) increased female role models; (5) and athletic and sport success or recognition. Two of these five predictors can be categorized as political pressures: pressure from outside groups and athletic/sport success or recognition. These two factors are political in nature because they provide incentives and have the potential to increase extrinsic and/or intrinsic rewards amongst stakeholders who are willing to adopt new practices that promote equity and diversity. Also, these factors are political in nature because

they may be categorized as external pressures that make institutions question the relevance of maintaining discriminatory practices or behaviors.

In chapter two of this dissertation, it was reported that mounting performance problems may cause institutionalized ideas and actions that promote discrimination to discontinue and erode (Oliver, 1992). This study supports this statement. For example, recent international athletics failures by Nigerian athletes and the country's inability to adhere the UN's MDGs and Nigeria's NGP objectives are performance problems that may persuade Nigeria to begin changing old ideas, practices and behaviors that restrict women's involvement in athletics. Therefore, to be more successful in sport contests and to realize the UN's MDGs and Nigeria's NGP objectives, Nigeria, its athletic leaders, and sport administrators may consider adopting gender equity policies and laws that will encourage deinstitutionalizing discriminatory ideas and practices that impact women, particularly with regard to athletic participation.

In addition, positive public image and reputation and the need for role models may also act as predictors for change. These predictors are similar with Oliver's social pressures for deinstitutionalization. The findings of this current study show that Nigerians are concerned that Nigeria may have a negative image and reputation because of its inability to enhance women's rights and its inability to deal with issues of gender discrimination. As a result, Nigeria and its leaders may be persuaded to deal with issues of sex discrimination in order to improve its public reputation or international image. With respect to role models, the current study shows that Nigerian girls lack positive female sport role models to emulate. Thus, sport administrators, managers and leaders should be willing to fund good amenities and provide equitable access as well as opportunities for women athletes similar to their male counterpart, so as to have more roles models who young girls can emulate.

Additionally, in the past few decades, more organizations and associations are demanding gender equity throughout Africa. For example, both the World Conference on Women in Sports' and the Nigerian Association of Women in Sports' primary purposes are to determine strategies to empower Nigerian women through participation in sport. Likewise, celebrities also recognize and acknowledge the need to reject discriminatory ideas and actions. For example, Funmi Iyanda, a sports journalist demanded the government be more involved and concerned about sexism, while professional women tennis players Serena and Venus Williams spoke at a conference in 2012 in Lagos, Nigeria on women empowerment and equal opportunity for girls in sport.

Furthermore, economic motivators identified in this study serve as intra-institutional factors that can be responsible for the discontinuity and/or erosion of long-lasting ideas and actions that lead to sex discrimination. Economic motivators may be categorized as a functional pressure from Oliver's (1992) model. Institutions may begin breaking down and eroding old institutional discriminatory ideas and behaviors when such ideas and actions are no longer rewarding (Oliver, 1992). Implementing and enforcing athletic gender policies or laws to combat issues of discrimination may increase the number of female athletic programs and female student athletes who graduate and earn jobs, thus, increasing Nigeria's economic dividends (Bloom & Canning, 2012). This potential outcome may persuade leaders, politicians and athletic administrators, who are responsible for sports in Nigeria, to consider initiating changes and deal with issues of sex discrimination. Moreover, the concept of interest convergence is satisfied, because dealing with issues of sex discrimination and combating discriminatory practices and behaviors do not only benefit Nigerian females, but the nation as a whole.

Surprisingly, it is difficult to determine which one of these five predictors (pressure from outside groups and associations, positive public image and reputation, increased economic development, increased female role models, and athletic and sport success or recognition) is most persuasive in initiating the process of change because each one was well supported by findings. Until further research studies are conducted, it will be difficult to determine which single predictor is most influential. Future research may employ quantifiable methods that rate people's concerns regarding these five pressures. Until then, all five are considered important determinants for change.

### **Sociocultural and Socio-Psychological Pressures**

The likelihood of proposing, adopting, and enforcing athletic gender policies similar to Title IX, will be difficult in Nigeria because of the presence of sociocultural and socio-psychological factors such as: institutionalized discriminatory practices and behaviors, lack of enforcement and accountability, gender stereotypes, gender role ideologies and expectations, lack of media attention, corrupt system of governance, and lack of priority placed on women's sport or athletics. These factors have been referred to by Oliver (1992) as inertial pressures that impede the process of change. Also, these factors influence one another and embolden sex discrimination and inequity.

Systemic discriminatory practices and behaviors were identified as the most central factor restricting women's access to equitable sport opportunities. This was not surprising given that most Nigerians are socialized to accept sports and athletics as a male preserve. Nigerians from a young age understand, and in some cases, accept constraints inhibiting female involvement in athletics as the way things are done (Saavedra, 2003). Nigerians typically conform and accept discriminatory ideas and actions that place females outside the field of sport and into the

homemaker role. It is not uncommon to hear that women athletes and athletics should not receive equitable opportunities and access as their male counterpart because “they should be at home.” Providing equitable access and opportunities for females may erode male privilege and destabilize historical gender role expectations of women.

Lack of enforcement and accountability was also identified as a sociocultural constraint. In spite of Nigeria’s NPG, people responsible for administering and managing sports and athletics discriminate against women. They are hardly punished or held accountable for their actions. Also, a few of these people, according to some of the participants, do not respect legislation and policies because of the lack of enforcement and accountability. As long as people are not held accountable for discriminatory practices and behaviors that hinder female participation and are against the law, women and girls in Nigeria may continue to experience sexism within educational athletic programs. It is not uncommon for sport administrators and managers to make necessary provisions to accommodate males’ athletics; however, they embezzle resources meant for female athletes.

In addition, there are masculine dominated ideologies in Nigeria that make it difficult for women and girls to be involved with sports. Historically, sport was served as an arena for males to exhibit power and dominance (Ojeme, 1989; Okonkwo, 2012). Including females into an otherwise male arena may threaten male dominance and manhood (Messner, Dunbar, & Hunt, 2000). Women and girls who participate in or are interested in sport in Nigeria, often find themselves losing their interest and instead succumb to accept a role as a homemaker. The acceptance of such ideas and practices continue to expand the gap between men’s and women’s athletics and athletic involvement in Nigeria.

Similarly, lack of media attention is linked to sociocultural constraints that impede the participation, growth and development of female athletes and athletics. The media plays an important socialization role, particularly in the way Nigerian men and boys are portrayed as dominant, whereas women and girls are depicted as subservient. Also, women's athletic games, contests and events are perceived as not interesting when compared to men's events. Television networks hardly broadcast women sport activities, and when they do, it usually short and not during pristine hours. Historically, Nigerian men have enjoyed privileged positions in the country-creating male superiority in different professions and industries, particularly within sports. Similar to Messner, Dunbar, and Hunt's (2000) study on the sport manhood formula, this study demonstrates that sport in general and their complementary advertisements, regularly present boys with a narrow portrait of masculinity. Broadcasting images and messages on television plays a significant socialization role in Nigeria, because it legitimizes and reinforces the current dominant ideology of the male role in society (Blinde, Greendorfer, & Shanker, 1991). For Nigerians, sport is portrayed as a man's activity in the media, whereas images or discussions on women athletes and athletics are rarely seen or heard. These images discourage females interested in sport.

Although, Nigerian female athletes have had great accomplishments and past successes in sports, women's sports are not seen as a priority. Nigerians perceive that there are more important duties and activities for females than performing sports (Otive-Igbuzor, 2006). They also perceive that participating in sport will make women more masculine and unable to give birth (Okonkwor, 2012). Such perceptions continue to impede young Nigerian girls' involvement in sport. People accept these perceptions which make it difficult for women and girls interested in sport to participate. Moreover, Nigerian girls and women do not envision any recompense for

performing sport. Rather than participate in athletics, women are more concerned with “putting food on their tables.” This outcome is similar to Anaza and McDowell’s (2013) findings. Anaza and McDowell explored factors that constrain Nigerian females from performing recreational sport activities. They found that rather than performing sports, some Nigerian women felt that there were more important concerns (e.g., famine, poverty, health care, etc.) than their desires to participate in athletics (Anaza & McDowell, 2013).

Think sport think football, think football, think man, perception of weakness and inferiority, gender role expectations, and women’s sport is not rewarding are socio-psychological constraints that were shown to impact social change and contribute to sex discriminatory practices which hinder women and girls athletic participation. These factors reinforce the link between sport and masculinity. This study shows that people perceive women’s athletics as not rewarding because females’ expected roles should be at home taking care of children and not participating in athletics. Nigerian girls are to be trained by their mothers to be good wives and parents (Okonkwor, 2012), while sport activities are to be left for boys. According to Kimmel (1990), boys who partake in athletics are transformed into men. However, sports participation does not convert girls into women, but instead learning to cook, clean, and be nurturing are central tenets that transform girls into women.

The above factors have been documented by other researchers as well. For instance, Okonkwor (2012) discussed gender issues of women participating in competitive sport and sport leadership in Nigeria and stated that “in almost all the cultures in Nigeria, women are more disadvantaged than men and therefore denied opportunities given to men to be great, while unjust laws and attitudes are arrayed against women” (p. 2). Some Nigerian women’s disadvantaged positions are as a result of people’s acceptance of their roles. Okonkwor (2012)

further insisted that issues of discrimination cannot be fixed without reexamining the impact of sports for Nigerians. Likewise, Saavedra (2003), who addressed the lack of development of African women's athletic games, insisted that obstacles such as indigenous cultures and politics impact the development of women's sport in Nigeria. Saavedra (2003) felt that people, particularly females, are dissatisfied and seeking ways to change current issues facing women.

### **Social Outcomes**

This study suggests that if a law or gender policies comparable to Title IX is proposed, adopted, and enforced it will be useful in dealing with matters of sex discrimination and inequity within educational athletic programs despite potential constraints because it may help: (1) create equitable treatment, (2) create equitable funding, (3) institute the right mentality, perceptions, and roles for change, (4) establish additional grassroots and educational athletic programs, and (5) reinforce the government's commitment to invest in Nigerian women and girls. These potential outcomes spark transformation and quicken the process of change.

Of all these outcomes, embracing the right mentality, perceptions, and roles for change was most pronounced. This is understandable because without deconstructing or eroding discriminatory ideologies that reinforce discriminatory ideas, practices and actions, new policies and laws will fail to be enforced. Thus, it is necessary to breakdown constraining traditional and cultural ideologies for a more holistic structure that promotes gender equity and equality to be created. Having a structure that promotes gender equity and equality may allow for the adoption and enforcement of proper sex discriminatory policies and laws to deal with matters of sex discrimination within athletic programs. Further, the potential adoption and enforcement of anti-discriminatory policies and law may help institute a climate of diversity and a culture of inclusion within sport organizations. Having specific athletic gender equity laws and policies

may demonstrate the country's commitment to invest in women and girls. Moreover, this may help transform Nigeria's sports and athletics industry into a space where both males and females can equally be involved.

Overall, Nigerians living in Nigeria or the U.S., Nigerian men and women, and students and non-students in this study believe that an athletic gender equity law and anti-discriminatory policies may be useful but difficult to enforce because of ideologies and stereotypes, influence of the media, traditional gender roles, lack of reward, corrupt systems of governance, and sport is not a priority. However, the study also found that an athletic gender equity law and anti-discriminatory policies will be useful if they are well enforced, because it may lead to fairness in treatment and resource allocations, as well as help limit ideological, traditional and socio-cultural constraints that restrict female participation in athletics. More importantly, this study found that people believe that enforcing appropriate laws and policies, embracing the right mentality, perceptions, and roles for change, and establishing more athletic educational programs, will reinforce the government gender equity policy commitment to the UN's MDGs. This finding supports what other researchers such as Beutler (2008) and Donnelly (2011) have proposed. Because athletic and sport organizations in Nigeria are used as mechanisms to reinforce inequalities and discrimination, as well as male domination, it is understandable for people in this study to favor the idea of initiating change through sport and athletic spaces. Eroding discriminatory ideas, practices and behaviors that are restrictive to women and girls in such spaces will provide access and opportunities to sport that elude them.

However, some people caution that the adoption and enforcement of a law and/or athletic policies similar to Title IX may create the perception that female athletes and athletics programs will take resources and opportunities from male athletes and athletic programs. Others, likewise,

insist that men may perceive this as aggressive; giving women an upper hand over men. These were the same fears expressed in the early 1970's after Title IX was passed in the United States. Both Senators Tower and Helms proposed amendments to augment Title IX and exempt revenue generating education athletic programs from adhering to Title IX (Beaubier, 2006).

Also, there is a possibility for a backlash that may arise if more women and girls have access and opportunities to sport programs. People believe that being athletic and strong is contradictory to the traditional codes of feminine identity in Nigeria (Okonkwo, 2012; Otiye-Igbuzor, 2006). Athletics are believed to be a male preserve and stigmas are fashioned to keep women from venturing into male territory. An athletic gender equity law and athletic policies similar to Title IX may be helpful in getting more females to participate in sports, but it will be difficult to erode ideologies that restrict participation. Just as how amendments were drafted by Senators Tower and Helm in the United States to restrict the reach of Title IX, people in Nigeria may do the same. However, the findings demonstrate that an effective way to curtail resistance is to create better awareness through education. Informing people about the benefits of an athletic gender equity law for both males and females may help reduce resistance.

Undoubtedly, implementing and properly enforcing an athletic gender equity law and/or policies will create greater opportunities and access for women and girls, but should not be at the expense of males. Gender equity policies and/or laws will afford females some autonomy to pursue athletics; however, there may be a price to pay. Unfortunately though, women and girls who perform sport, whether as serious leisure, student-athlete or as profession, may continuously be stigmatized and labeled as not conforming to gender norms and behaviors greater than before (Blinde & Taub, 1992).

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

Oliver's (1992) pressure for deinstitutionalization model was helpful in understanding the commentaries and narratives explored in this study. This study explored factors and moderators that impact the possible proposal, adoption, and enforcement of athletic gender policies to deal with issues of discrimination. The study was created to reveal potential factors that may initiate, impede and enhance social change in Nigerian sports. This study also describes that the impetus for social change in Nigerian sports are external pressures and the desires to enhance Nigeria's image and economy. However, transformational change is dependent on the erosion of sociocultural and socio-psychological constraints that are endemic to Nigerian. This study supports the call by Olafson (1995) for sport management researchers and the field of sport to take a new direction that emphasizes theory development and transformational change. Although there are a number of diversity and social change studies in the field of sport and management (e.g. Agars & Kottke, 2004; Cunningham, 2009; Cox, 2001; Cox & Blake, 1991; Powell, 1993), these studies are developed within the context of North American culture. This study promotes firsthand understanding of transformational change from a Nigerian perspective which takes into consideration the social and political contexts of Nigeria.

Although Nigeria and the U.S. have significantly different cultures, this study supports Oliver's (1992) pressures for deinstitutionalization model. This study shows an existence of institutionalized discriminatory ideas, practices and behaviors. These institutionalized discriminatory ideals impact female athletic involvements in Nigeria. Also, these institutionalized practices and behaviors originate through habituation (Berger & Luvkmann, 1967). In other words, through repetition, people within institutions accept discriminatory ideas and actions. Once, these ideas and actions spread or "pass onto others who were not initially involved in their creation, they become objective realities" (Kikulis, 2000, p. 295-296). Such

“realities” suggest that athletics and sports are activities women ought not to perform because they are not ladylike or feminine in nature (Okonkwor, 2012). These ideas and actions become fully institutionalized through historical continuity and human agency (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Kikulis, 2000).

Akin to Oliver’s (1992) model, this study found pressures that may likely motivate institutional changes. Oliver (1992) had contended that functional, social and political mechanisms within and beyond organizations are factors that initiate the process of deinstitutionalization. Though not categorized as functional, social or political, this study discovered five motivations or pressures for change or deinstitutionalization that include: pressures from outside groups, success and recognition, positive public image and reputation, role models and economic motivators. These moderators are central tenets that begin the eroding of institutionalized ideas and actions that impact Nigerian women and girls’ athletic participation. Moreover, similar to Oliver’s (1992) models, these factors, determine whether or not dissipation and rejection of institutionalized ideas and actions occur. In order to erode or discontinue institutionalized practices and behaviors, old ideas and actions should be replaced with new ones (Kikulis, 2000). For example, Nigerian girls want to participate in sports and are gifted with the necessary talents (Okonkwor, 2012), but they are socialized to believe that participating in sports and athletic activities are not what females ought to do. Implementing and enforcing legislation similar to Title IX and athletic gender policies to deal with issues of discrimination may be necessary to break such ideologies.

In addition to Oliver’s (1992) model, this study also provided support for the concept of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). DiMaggio and Powell identified coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures are applied when an institution is not doing well. Of

these three institutional pressures, mimetic pressures best explain people's positive attitude and response towards implementing and enforcing a law similar to Title IX. According to DiMaggio and Powell, mimetic institutional pressures occur in an uncertain economy and are used by institutions that are not doing well to imitate successful ones. Similar to DiMaggio and Powell, a majority of participants in this study were willing to consider the possibility of adopting and adequately enforcing an athletic gender equity law and policies similar to Title IX in Nigeria.

Participants, particularly the women, felt if such a law and varying athletic gender policies are enforced adequately by people with integrity, there will be fair treatment, equitable appropriation of resources to men and women's athletic programs, and an erosion of roadblocks that hinder participation and the growth of women's athletic in Nigeria. They felt because matters of discrimination are extensive, participants were optimistic that Nigerians will be willing to accept the adoption and enforcement of gender athletic policies to help deal with issues of discrimination. Most of the people involved in this study were aware of the impact of gender athletic policies and Title IX in the U.S., and thus, willing to accept the possibility of having a comparable law or athletic policies initiated and enforced in Nigeria. Further, the study found that negative images and reputations, economic failures, lack of role models, and athletic and sport contest failures are additional motives for the willingness of Nigerians to accept the adopting and enforcing a sex discriminatory law and athletic policies. Overall, this study demonstrates that there are numerous factors that need to be taken into consideration when attempting to deal with issues of sex discrimination within Nigerian athletic and sports programs.

#### *Tradition and Expectations.*

Past research studies on Nigerian women and sports have shown that tradition and culture are determinants that impact women and girls' participation in sport (Okonkwor, 2012; Saveedra,

2003). There are traditional gender roles expected of Nigerian females (Okonkwo, 2012), and when they get involved with activities that do not fit the norm or when they become involved with sport, people, particularly men, take it upon themselves to “fix” such nonconformities. In doing so, men knowingly or unknowingly discriminate and restrict access and opportunities for females’ involvement in sports.

Women and girls who perform athletic activities are perceived as resisting tradition. This is why Shaw (1994) categorizes sport activities as being gendered in nature. Sport and recreation activities are perceived as masculine. As a result, women and girls who participate experience the gendered nature of sport. In Shaw’s (1994) study, she examined women’s leisure experiences and provides valued insights to understand the gendered factors that hinder women’s leisure and recreation activities. Similarly, in this current study, Nigerian women and girls’ sport experiences and the gendered nature of sport were explored. Females are not expected to be athletic because it is seen as masculine; rather they are expected to be good wives, mothers, and nurturers, which are consistent with previous research study findings (Anaza & McDowell, 2013; Okonkwo, 2012). A woman or girl who is active, strong, muscular, aggressive, and/or athletic will be perceived as infertile. Moreover, a woman who is perceived as infertile will have a difficult time getting married.

It is not uncommon for Nigerian girls and women to be afraid of being perceived as not conforming to their expected roles. For instance, “females are scared to be rich, own property, and be independent for the fear of being considered tough and the fear that men will be “afraid to ask their hand in marriage” (Otiye-Igbuzor, 2006, p. 6). There are paternalistic perspectives in Nigeria that pressure girls to show that they can be controlled, not just by their father or older brother, but by all men in their community (grandfather, uncles, brothers, and male cousins)

(Otiye-Igbuzor, 2006). Additionally, this study demonstrates that both male and female Nigerians are socialized to consent to these and other types of stereotypical gender typing. For females, stereotypes, male dominance, and lack of autonomy negatively impact their participation in sport. Similar to Culp's (1989) study on constraints impacting girls' recreational participation, this study found that stereotypical gender typing, peer and family expectations, differences in opportunities for males versus females and restricted access to sport participation affect female participation in sport.

Furthermore, this study reinforces the need for sport administrators, managers and leaders in Nigeria to have a reorientation and a clear understanding of sport and its benefits, as athletic participation empowers participants and enhances mental and physical health (Pollock & Wilmore, 1990; Watson, 1977). With a clear understanding of sport and its benefits for females, Nigerian may stop believing that females will be "rude or masculine" as a result of participating in athletics, or that such participation will create "barren women or undisciplined ones". Rather, athletics participation can build self-esteem, teach participants relevant life skills and promote self-determined principles and practices that help buffer against life's challenges (Pollock & Wilmore, 1990; Seefeldt & Vogel, 1986). In addition, sports and athletics provide a setting for participants to escape from feelings of depression and alienation, while fostering feelings of belonging and self-worth (Pollock & Wilmore, 1990; Seefeldt & Vogel, 1986). Moreover, sport empowers individuals and groups by providing opportunities and resources that initiate effective changes within their communities, such as AMANDLA EduFootball and the Galz and Goals project (Hylton & Totten, 2008).

Additionally, sport can be employed as a tool for social intervention, particularly the pursuant of change, peace, and development in less developed nations of the world (United

Nations, 2013). The United Nations (UN) millennium developmental goals (MDGs) and International Day of Sport for Development and Peace were established in part to promote gender equality and empower women. As previously mentioned, Nigeria is a signatory to the UN's MDGs and as a stakeholder that aspires to reach the MDGs; athletic gender equity policies and/or laws may allow the Nigerian government to tackle issues of sex discrimination against girls within educational athletic programs and activities. For Nigeria to reach the UN's MDGs and Nigeria's NGP objectives of gender equity and women empowerment, men, people in power, athletic administrators, and sport managers, should cease being apprehensive whenever the words equality or equity are mentioned (Otive-igbuzor, 2006). Women and girls should have the autonomy to be active participants in athletics.

Knowing that culture and traditional gender role expectations impact sport access and athletic opportunities for females in Nigeria (Okonkwo, 2012; Saavedra, 2006), it was surprising to discover that culture and tradition did not affect people's acceptance for implementing and enforcing gender equity policies similar to Title IX to deal with matters of discrimination within educational athletic programs and activities. Based on this current study, Nigerians realize that athletic gender equity policies may help erode ideologies that reinforce the perception of women and girls as subordinate and weaker. Additionally, such policies may help create additional educational athletic programs that will not discriminate against Nigeria females interested in sport participation. Furthermore, implementing and enforcing athletic gender equity policies may increase public and private interest and investment on Nigerian women and girls, helping fulfill Nigeria's commitment to the United Nations. Just as the number of female athletes and female sport participants in the United States increased after the enactment of Title IX, there

is hope that a similar law in Nigeria will increase female participation levels (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Stevenson, 2010).

*Additional Challenges Facing Nigerian Females.*

During the focus group discussion and in a majority of the interviews, participants frequently compared male versus female athletes and athletics participation in Nigeria with that of the United States. They suggested that female athletes and athletics in Nigeria experience enormous challenges including having multiple responsibilities and jobs, religious governing laws, and a lack of proper checks and balances. In most Nigerian families, more women than men are responsible for nurturing children. These women wear multiple hats and some work outside of the home to financially support the family's needs (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000). Although men are seen as the breadwinners and women are mostly responsible for domesticated duties, the economic conditions in Nigeria demand that both men and women financially contribute in sustaining the household (Bittman & Wajcman, 2000). Due to these overwhelming double-duty responsibilities, many people, in particular females are discouraged from athletic programs and activities. Females would rather replace their leisure time with work. This includes having two to three odd jobs. Females who pursue athletic activities, in spite of the harsh economic conditions, are condemned or labeled as lazy. Unlike males, females are subjected to uphold a higher ethic of care for the family. This ethic of care sometimes makes it difficult for females to participate in athletics (Culp, 1998).

Religious laws, like Sharia, that govern some Nigerian towns and communities, serve to deter women from performing sport as well (Saavedra, 2003). It should be emphasized that this study suggests religion does not impact women's sport involvement; however, people reported that sections of the Sharia are responsible for prohibiting women and girls involvement in

athletics. For instance, females in regions that are ran by Sharia must be accompanied by a male to venture out of the house. This study also supports what other research studies have reported on Sharia law. For instance, Saavedra (2003) reported that Sharia law disregards secular activities and institutes of Islamic practices that restrict women from participating in sport.

In addition, the theme of inadequate checks and balances was found in this study as a challenge. Hardly are administrators and managers held accountable for breaking already established laws and policies in Nigeria. This lack of accountability and checks and balances may make enforcing any athletic gender equity policy difficult, but not impossible. Also, local, regional and national athletic associations and sport governing bodies are known to be corrupt. They are unable to adequately and fairly administer sports in Nigeria. Similar to Saavedra's (2003) comments regarding corruption in Nigeria's sport and athletic associations, this study found that widespread corruption leads to the diversion of resources for the development of women's sports and athletics for personal use and to men's sports.

#### *Areas of Compliance.*

There are two specific areas in which this study shows there will be improvements. Title IX's athletic gender policy implementation three-prong test is used by the Department of Education to prove whether an education institution or an athletic department is in compliance with Title IX. These include: compliance in financial assistance (scholarships) based on athletic ability, compliance in other programs areas, and compliance in meeting the interests and abilities of male and female students (Beaubier, 2006). Only two of these three can be implemented and enforced in Nigeria because student-athletes in Nigeria do not receive scholarships per se based on their athletic ability. Though people were not certain whether or not male student-athletes in Nigeria receive financial athletic scholarships, however, the study determined that male student-

athletes received other forms of support. Unlike compliance with financial scholarships, compliance in other program areas such as providing equipment and supplies, establishing preferential games and practice times and per diem and so on, and compliance in meeting the interests and abilities of male and female students could be implemented and enforced in a gender equity athletic law similar to Title IX.

Furthermore, the three prong test states that if a school or an athletic department can show compliance in only one of these three areas, then they are compliant with Title IX (Beaubier, 2006). A similar standard of compliance may be established in Nigeria. Implementing and enforcing even one prong would significantly increase the number of girls interested in sports. In turn, girls who are athletically active will have good health, better social interaction skills, enhance self-image and self-esteem, employ skills earned from athletics to contribute back to their communities, and a better quality of life.

This study provides practical implications and offers a detailed description of factors that contribute to sex discrimination, moderators that lead to institutionalized change, and key elements that act to debilitate and strengthen the implementation and enforcement of an athletic gender equity law.

#### *Recommendations for Change.*

Women and girls in Nigeria are denied athletic opportunities and access provided to males (Otive-Igbuzor, 2006). For many years, the number of Nigerian female athletes and their success in athletic competition continues to decline (Okonkwo, 2012). This is not surprising because of the lack of growth and development, as well as constraints that impact participation. This lack of access and opportunities are not as a result of the unstable economic conditions in Nigeria, but is as a result of institutionalized discriminatory practices and behaviors, as well as a

lack of proper enforcement and accountability. For years now, Nigerians have hoped for change. Breaking down discriminatory practices and behaviors and enforcing proper athletics policies and laws to improve access and opportunities for all people regardless of sex may encourage greater success in athletic competitions and increased female participation. There were five recommendations as a result of this study.

First, the only way institutionalized practices and behaviors that restrict participation can be deconstructed or eroded is if outside groups that provide monetary aid and support pressure sport managers, athletic administrators and leaders to change. Global institutions that advocate equality for all are aware of the importance and need for women to be involved in sport there are more calls for greater participation that may force Nigeria to act. Further, the threat of losing aid and support from these institutions (e.g., the United Nations, the International Olympic Committee, and the African Union) may pressure Nigerian athletic departments and administrators to initiate processes for transformational change.

Second, the desire to have a positive public image and good reputation for being a gender equitable country may also motivate Nigerian athletic departments, education institutions and administrators to begin the process of change. Nigeria is currently ranked high in the gender equality index (GEI). As mentioned earlier, GEI measures inequalities in achievements between women and men. To improve upon the country's image and reputation, it is necessary to demonstrate that Nigerians is committed to equity and having equitable access and opportunities to educational programs and activities including athletics and sports.

Third, Nigerians are always willing to invest in people and new ventures, if the investment will have a financial return. The potential economic return for investing in women's athletics and athletes may serve as a motivator to erode institutionalized practices and behaviors

that impede participation. Athletics will open doors for women to compete and earn a living. More girls will have the opportunities to attend college, graduate, earn jobs and contribute to Nigeria's economic growth. This eventually will impact Nigeria's economic dividend.

Fourth, unlike young Nigerian males who have a few sports roles models, Nigerian girls do not have sports role models to emulate. Young girls dream to become like their mothers, married and raising children, dependent on their husbands and unable to contribute to Nigeria's economy. The desire to have more positive and successful Nigerian females to serve as role models for young girls, may pressure Nigeria to begin the process of eroding discriminatory practices and policies that hinder females athletic participation and development of women's sport.

Last, practitioners such as athletic administrators and sport managers in Nigeria may be motivated to initiate changes to buttress success in athletic contests. The first Nigerian to win a gold medal in the Olympic Games was a woman. Nigerians believe if the Nigerian University Games Association (NUGA), the Nigerian Athletic Association (NAA) and the Nigerian Football Association (NFA) invest and provide more opportunities for female athletes, there is a possibility they will win more contests.

#### *Inhibitors and Facilitators to Change.*

Change that is emphasized in this study is the adoption of appropriate athletic gender equity policies comparable to Title IX's athletic gender policy. This change can be initiated to help deal with issues of sex discrimination within school athletic programs and activities. Implementing and enforcing gender equity athletic policies in Nigeria may increase the number of girls who participate in athletics. Also, this may provide greater access and opportunities for girls in other areas other than athletics, and help focus Nigeria in reaching its NGP objectives

and the UN's MDGs. While it is agreed that gender equity policies lead to change (Beaubier, 2006), there needs to be continuity in their governance and decision making structures in Nigeria (Kikulis, 2000). Athletic leaders, administrators and managers should be aware of factors that impede and enhance social change.

To have successful and equitable educational athletic programs, constraints that impede change will have to be limited. Pronounced constraints including old institutionalized ideas and actions, as well as a lack of enforcement and accountability by athletic administrators and managers should be curtailed. Doing so will enable new holistic practices and behaviors to thrive. In addition, an athletic legislation if adopted and enforced to deal with sex discrimination may fail to improve equity if old institutionalized ideas and actions co-exist with new discriminatory ideas.

Furthermore, the inability to correctly enforce policies and laws because of corruption within Nigerian educational athletic programs may impede the process of change. In order for change to occur, people who fail to adhere to gender equity laws and policies have to be held accountable and punished for their wrong doing. Also, administrators of education athletic programs should be willing to invest resources, including time and finances to accurately implement and enforce athletic gender equity policies that promotes change. Once these factors are controlled, it may be easy to establish equitable athletic programs and activities.

### **Limitations**

Like any other research project, there are limitations to this study. Though this study gathered explicit information from thirty Nigerians who elaborated on factors that contribute to sex discrimination, debilitate and strengthen the possibility of implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity law, and lead to deinstitutionalizing gendered discriminatory practices and

policies, these findings are mainly interpretations made by the researcher of these participants' experiences and opinions. However, to limit interpretation biases, participant verification and informant feedback were used. These were employed to validate interpretations, experiences and opinions expressed by participants (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2008). Data retrieved and information documented was confirmed by restating information provided by participants during the focus group discussion and interviews. Furthermore, the researcher was able to build and maintain rapport with each participant, by having repeated in-person and virtual communications. This rapport allowed participants to feel comfortable in disclosing information (Creswell & Miller, 2000) and enabled the researcher to look beyond his bias to objectively present participants' statements and thoughts as they intended.

Additionally, triangulation was also employed to improve the validity and limit researcher's bias on this research study (Denzin, 1978). Data triangulation was the main type of triangulation employed in this study. Multiple data was retrieved from multiple people at different time periods. There were a total of 30 participants in this study, all sharing their perspective on the topic. In addition, the data for this study was collected at different times and under different conditions. There were some participants that were interviewed in the beginning stages of this study, while others towards the end. Also, there were people interviewed in the United States and others in Nigeria. This supports Denzin (1978) explanation that data triangulation includes the concepts of time and space, in that social phenomenon needs to be examined in a variety of different conditions and times.

Another issue regarding legitimacy of the study is the level to which participants' replies to questions asked by the researcher were determined by similarities shared with research participants and similarities shared between participants in the focus group (group think). The

researcher was aware of this and as a result reminded participants multiple times to express their thoughts and experiences regardless of opinions of others or similarities shared with the researcher. Moreover, the researcher encouraged every participant to speak freely without judgments. A few times during the focus group discussion, it was difficult to control participants from chastising others because of the opinions. However, everyone was given an opportunity to speak and respond, regardless of their opinions.

One additional limitation of this study was the sample's lack of heterogeneity. There was a relatively high number of student participants in comparison to other categorical groups (e.g. participants 40 years and older or Nigerians living in Nigeria) in both the focus group discussion and personal interviews. Eighteen of the 30 total participants were students, in particular nine out of the 13 participants in the focus group and nine out of the 17 participants interviewed. Moreover, there were only four participants who lived in Nigeria at the time the study was conducted. Of the four, only two were stakeholders knowledgeable of Nigeria's NGP objectives. In spite of this, participants in both the focus group discussion and those interviewed were aware of Nigeria's NGP which enabled them contribute. It should be noted that proportionality was never an objective of this study because the goal was to sample Nigerians who were knowledgeable with conditions in Nigeria. Participants were selected for this study for a couple of reasons. First, participants were selected because of their direct experiences and knowledge of Nigeria, and second, because they represented different ethnicities, religions and social economic classes. As a result, purposeful sampling was considered appropriate for this study. However, in this study, purposeful sampling which is a non-scientific and a non-random sampling technique, lead to selection bias or the sample's lack of heterogeneity (Cortes, Mohri, Riley, & Rostamizadeh, 2008).

In addition to the type of sampling conducted, the locations (of the church, fellowship, and associations) in which participants were sampled likewise affected the heterogeneity or diversity of research participants. The researcher recruited all the research participants for the pilot study and some participants for the personal interviews in the same mid-sized Midwestern town who attend church services at Almighty Assembly Church (AAC), and were members of African Student Organization (ASO). A majority of the congregation of AAC and members of ASO were Nigerian students. This led to the sample's lack of diversity and concerns of selection bias.

Additional participants, in particular, senators, politicians, athletic administrators, and sport managers who work in Nigeria would be desirable respondents because they will be able to add a different perspective and dimension on the possibility of implementing and enforcing an athletic gender equity law similar to Title IX in Nigeria. It should be noted that there were two senators who had shown interest to participate in this study, however, due to different time zones and conflicting schedules with the researcher, these senators were unable to be involved in this study. Perhaps future research will endeavor to include senators and politicians.

Furthermore, there was only one focus group discussion conducted. Although participants who were involved were diverse, there may be different discussion or outcomes from an all-women or all-men focus group. Also, because there was only one focus group discussion, the researcher was unable to compare and contrast data from one focus group with another. Instead the researcher analyzed individual participants' comments, and through this the researcher could evaluate perceptions and attitudes towards the possibility of adopting and adapting Title IX's athletic policies in Nigeria. Moreover, the findings of this study cannot be generalized as the experiences and opinions of all Nigerians. These findings are interpretations of the experiences

and opinions of thirty Nigerians. Thus, the outcomes of the study are not representative of all Nigerians views. However, the study successfully explained how concepts are related and what is known about these relationships of concepts (Inglis, 2000). Also, the aim of the methodological approach employed in this study was not to generalize findings, but to understand how social phenomena, human interactions, and social experiences unfold in real-world setting.

### **Future Research**

There were a lot of data retrieved in this study that provided rich information about deinstitutionalizing discriminatory practices within Nigerian educational athletic programs in order to implement and enforce appropriate athletic gender equity policies in Nigeria to help deal with issues of sex discrimination. However, none of the information was from law makers, community leaders, athletic administrators, or coaches. Therefore, future research studies should be conducted to explore the opinions and perceptions of law makers, community leaders, and politicians on sex discrimination and the possible implementation and enforcement of athletic gender equity policies in Nigeria. Information on these people's experiences and attitudes will add insight into the possibility of adopting and adapting policies and laws that limit sex discrimination within Nigerian athletic programs and activities.

Although a few of the participants in this study were not initially aware of Nigeria's legislation on gender, most of them were well informed of the United Nations MDGs, particularly the UNs perspective on employing sport for development and peace. There are not many research studies that have examined the effectiveness of grassroots NGO sport programs in Nigeria. Perhaps future research studies should be conducted to observe the outcomes of these organizations. It is necessary to determine the utility of these programs and to understand

whether or not they help with reaching the objectives of NGP and the MDGs. Perhaps proper athletic gender equity policies or legislations may help buttress the utility of NGOs. If these NGOs are not useful in dealing with issues of discrimination or increasing the number of female participants involved with athletic programs and activities, alternative solutions should be adopted.

In addition, future research should create and test theoretical models of social change for Nigerian sport. Such models will be able to adequately present people's thoughts and experiences on factors that can help change discriminatory practices and behaviors in Nigeria. Future research studies should attempt to test prospective model in different research settings. Further, testing of models will determine its usefulness and generalizability. Moreover, the only accurate way to determine whether the pressures of change model can be applied to a variety of situations is for it to be tested and verified.

Also, additional research is needed to understand how and why Nigerians are socialized to view sport as an activity for males to perform and for females to admire. Identifying how and why people are socialized this way will help sport educational programs and marketing campaigns to better edify Nigerians on the true effects and outcomes of athletics and sport activities. Additionally, future research studies should analyze administration of sport educational programs and marketing campaigns because if administrators of these programs are socialized to view sport as activities for males and to be admired by females, then it will be necessary to edify such administrators on the importance, benefits, and usefulness of sports. Such analysis and future research studies may identify effective ways and practices to reach Nigeria's national gender policy and the United Nations' millennium development goals through sports and athletics.

Lastly, numerous research studies have explicitly discussed the importance of diversity and inclusion, however, the topic on how to initiate diversity and inclusion-related changes in sport institutions and departments in lesser developed countries, like Nigeria, are rarely discussed or debated within the sport literature. Thus, additional research studies are needed to examine athletic department's motivations for deinstitutionalization and enforcement of a diversity and inclusion culture. Perhaps, research studies on this topic may show precise steps on how to create and sustain an environment of diversity and inclusion for every person regardless of sex.

### **Conclusion**

Gender differences influence how people in Nigeria interact, and in some cases, may lead to injustice, inequality and inequity. Such discriminations are restrictive and may stifle economic productivity. Gender discrimination in any society makes it is impossible to attain growth or development because half of the populations are subdued (Bloom & Canning, 2012; Gender in Nigeria Report, 2012). In order to curtail discrimination, there is a need to change the way people perceive sport as male-centered activities. Sport and athletic participation improves participants overall quality of life, and in order to enhance Nigerians' quality of life through participation in sport and athletics, it is important that people do not discriminate against females' participation.

Because of this research, it is clear what Nigerians consider as sex discrimination, the usefulness and roadblocks of an athletic gender equity law, and factors that can either enhance or disrupt social change. However, this study has not even begun to scratch the surface of sex discrimination issues that plague athletic associations and programs in Nigeria. There is a further need to advocate, in publications and presentations, the need for establishing suitable athletic gender equity policies in Nigeria to combat sex discrimination. More NGOs and educational

sport programs should advocate for Nigerians to enable them to understand the health, social, financial, and community-based benefits attributed to athletic participation. In the long-run, current and future research studies on this particular topic will continue the dialogue on implementing and enforcing suitable athletic gender equity policies similar to Title IX. Furthermore, this study may be useful by legislators, senators, and athletic administrators to gauge Nigerian's opinions and attitudes about adopting and adapting athletic gender equity policy and laws.

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## Appendix A

*The guiding principles of Nigeria's National Gender Policy include:*

- Making examination of gender an important part of all policy development, implementation and evaluation undertaken by Government and Private Stakeholders;
- Having government, the private sector, civil society organizations, community based organizations, development partners and individual women and men have a role to play in the achievement of gender equity and equality;
- Instituting a gendered culture that brings about cooperative interaction of women and men, recognizing human rights of all persons a culture which respects women's and men's capabilities and entails cooperation and interdependence;
- Reorienting people's cultural perceptions that will be supported by policies and programs of gender education, sensitization, dialogues, incentives, motivation and responsiveness, rather than only through legislations;
- Transforming policy environment within which gender equity programs are to be implemented, supported by resources- financial and technical, demonstrating political will;
- Reforming of the existing structures of the national gender management system with a view to strengthening their capacity for a more robust mandate;
- Promoting the empowerment of women through the bridging of existing gender gaps will be considered integral to the achievement of gender equality, and using policies and legislation of affirmative action if necessary and would no way be deemed discriminatory;
- Building upon existing structures and practices as well as draw from international experiences and practices

## **Appendix B**

### *The 16 Problematic Areas Identified within the NGP*

- 1. Culture, Family and Socialization
- 2. Gender-based Violence
- 3. Education and Training
- 4. Poverty and Economic Empowerment
- 5. Employment and Labor Issues
- 6. Agriculture and Rural Development
- 7. Environment and Natural Resources
- 8. Health and Reproductive Services
- 9. Gender and HIV/AIDS
- 10. Politics and Decision Making
- 11. Gender, Peace and Conflict Management
- 12. Information, Communication, and the Media
- 13. Other forms of Social Inequalities (Vulnerable Groups and Inequalities in Society)
- 14. Gender, physical and Social Services
- 15. Legal and Human Rights
- 16. National and International Partnership for Development

## Appendix C

### *Title IX Policy Interpretations*

The current Policy Interpretations further explains and simplifies requirements beneficiaries of federal financial assistance have under Title IX. In particular, the policy interpretations provide a means to assess compliance with the equal opportunity requirements of the Regulations which are set for at 45 CFR 88.37(c) and 88.4a(c).

A. The Regulation. Section 86.37(c) - Athletic Financial Assistance (Scholarships).

Institutions must provide reasonable opportunities for scholarships for member of each sex in proportion to the number of students of each sex participating in intercollegiate athletics.

B. Equivalence in Other Athletic Benefits and Opportunities. Regulation C entails that recipients that operate or sponsor interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics should provide equal athletic opportunities for men and women. To determine compliance athletic departments consider the following factors:

- 1) Whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes;
- 2) Provision and maintenance of equipment and supplies;
- 3) Scheduling of games and practice times;
- 4) Travel and per diem expenses;
- 5) Opportunity to receive coaching and academic tutoring;
- 6) Assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors;
- 7) Provision of locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities;
- 8) Provision of medical and training services and facilities;

9) Provision of housing and dining services and facilities;

10) publicity

C. Effective Accommodation of Student Interest and Abilities- the regulation requires universities and colleges to effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of students to the extent necessary to provide equal opportunity in the selection of sports and level of competition available to members of both sexes.

## Appendix D

### *OCR's Sexual Harassment Guidance*

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances which causes an unreasonable interference with work or creates an offensive environment, occurs when someone is either terminated because of retaliation for refusing sexual advances, and ensues when an individual is promoted or hired as a result of accepting sexual advances (Gutek & Koss, 1993).

There are two major types of sexual harassment, quid pro quo and hostile environment. Quid pro quo occurs when an employer or decision makers within a company either promises benefits in exchange for sexual favors or threatens to take away employment benefits if an employee fails to give in (Gutek & Koss, 1993). Hostile environment occurs when sexual conduct in the workplace creates an offensive and unpleasant environment for employee (Gutek & Koss, 1993). In other words, hostile environment exists when a harasser makes a work environment impossible for the harassed to work in. Working environments that depict such hostility can interfere with not just an employee's output, but can also affect personal life.

There were several important sexual harassment litigations during the 1990; one particular was the *Franklin versus Gwinnett County Public School case*. Christine Franklin was a high school student at North Gwinnett High School who filed a complaint with the OCR in August of 1988 claiming she was sexually harassed by her teacher Coach Andrew Hill. Ms. Franklin was responsible for grading Coach Hill's class papers, and during one of their meetings he initiated sexual discussions. Ms. Franklin was subjected to continual sexual harassment and according to the complaint filed, they both engaged in multiple episodes of sexual intercourse on school grounds.

Ms. Franklin notified school authorities, but she was persuaded not to file a suit or press charges because of negative publicity. North Gwinnett High conducted investigations, after which Coach Hill resigned on the condition that the matters are dropped (Anderson & Osborne, 2008). The OCR conducted an investigation and found North Gwinnett High to have violated Title IX because of the actions of Coach Hill. A major development as a result of this case already discussed earlier was the Supreme Court ruling that plaintiffs should be provided with the availability of proper remedies unless Congress has specified otherwise. In other words, ruling fortified the incentive for females affected by sex discrimination to file a private law suit instead of making complaints to the OCR (Anderson & Osborne, 2008).

Appendix E  
Focus Group and Interview Abstract and Sample Questions  
Interview Abstract

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Gender equity:

Gender equity is the principle and practice of fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities to both females and males. Gender equity eliminates practices that are barriers to full participation of either gender. A primary goal of gender equity is to provide all individuals with access and opportunity to a full range of activities, thus enabling them to realize their human potential.

Title IX:

States that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Title IX regulation:

States that a recipient which operates or sponsors interscholastic, intercollegiate, club or intramural athletics shall provide *equal* athletic opportunity for members of both sexes. In determining whether *equal* opportunities are available, the Director will consider, among other factors... Whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes.

1979 Policy Interpretation:

- Compliance in Financial Assistance (Scholarships) Based on Athletic Ability: Pursuant to the regulation, the governing principle in this area is that all such assistance should be available on a substantially proportional basis to the number of male and female participants in the institution's athletic program.
- Compliance in Other Program Areas (Equipment and supplies; games and practice times; travel and per diem, coaching and academic tutoring; assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors; locker rooms, and practice and competitive facilities; medical and training facilities; housing and dining facilities; publicity; recruitment; and support services.
- Compliance in Meeting the Interests and Abilities of Male and Female Students: Pursuant to the regulation, the governing principle in this area is that the athletic interests and abilities of male and female students must be equally effectively accommodated.

Sample Interview and Focus Group Questions

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In your opinion: Section 1

1. How is the overall gender hierarchy, equity or equality climate or culture of Nigeria?
2. What is sex discrimination?
  - a. How would you define sex inequity?
3. What was your experience with Nigerian school sport programs and activities?
  - a. Did you participate in sport? If yes, what sports programs and activities were you involved with? If no, why not?
  - b. How was your experience with sport stakeholder? For example coaches, players, and administrators?
4. Please discuss whether you think sex discrimination and inequity exist or does not exist in school sport programs in Nigeria

- a. Do you feel male and female student interests in sport are being met? If yes or no please explain.
  - i. For instance, would you say that there is equity in terms of equipment and facilities provided for male and female student-athletes or students interested in sport? If yes or no, please explain.
5. What would you say are some reasons for these inequities and discrimination in school sport programs?
6. What will be the advantage or benefit (social, functional, or political) for dealing with sex discrimination and inequity in sports?
7. What changes need to be made to improve sex inequity and discrimination in school sport programs and activities in Nigeria?
8. What may pressure Nigeria to improve matters of sex inequity and discrimination in school sport programs?

#### Section 2

9. Do you think a policy similar to Title IX's athletic directive and a law similar to Title IX is need in Nigeria?
  - a. Can this law help deal with sex discrimination and inequity?
  - b. How will this law help deal with sex discrimination and inequity?
10. What will be the advantages or benefits and disadvantages for Nigeria adopting, adapting and maintaining a policy similar to Title IX?
11. What changes are needed to be made for the adoption, adaptation and implementation of a policy similar to Title IX?

## Appendix F

### Focus Group Discussion Recruitment Script

Hello! My name is Emeka Anaza and I am a Doctoral student at the University of Illinois. I am conducting a research study that will examine reason for sex discrimination in Nigerian school sport programs and explore the adoption of appropriate gender equity policies. I am contacting you because you will be able to provide your insight, perceptions and attitudes towards the current national gender policy, sex discrimination, inequity and inequality in Nigeria. In order to participate in this study, you must proof that you are at least 18 years of age, Nigerian and have been to or visited Nigeria. Also, you have to be able to communicate in English and consent to be recorded. If you have time, I'd like to include you to participate in the group discussion which will last approximately an hour. Would you like to participate?

## Appendix G

### Interview Recruitment Script

Hello! My name is Emeka Anaza and I am a Doctoral student at the University of Illinois. I am conducting a research study that will examine reason for sex discrimination in Nigerian school sport programs and explore the adoption of appropriate gender equity policies. I am contacting you because you will be able to provide your insight, perceptions and attitudes towards the current national gender policy, sex discrimination, inequity and inequality in Nigeria. In order to participate in this study, you must proof that you are at least 18 years of age, Nigerian and have been to or visited Nigeria. Also, you have to be able to communicate in English and consent to be recorded. If you have time, I'd like to interview you. The interview will approximately half an hour. Would you like to participate?