VISUAL FRAMING AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

THEORY IMPACTS ON PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF
TRANSGRESSIVE FEMALE ATHLETES

by
DYLAN G. TEAL

LANCE KINNEY, COMMITTEE CHAIR
WILLIAM GONZENBACH
JENNIFER HOEWE

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Advertising and Public Relations in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2018
ABSTRACT

U.S. sports pages, sports-dedicated websites, sports-talk radio and sports television often seem like police blotters. Scores, game reports and athlete profiles are featured alongside reports of athletes committing domestic abuse, drug arrests, sex assaults and many other socially unacceptable behaviors. Sports managers and public relations theorists have developed various theories about how athletes and/or teams should respond to these events. However, female athletes are not often researched in this area, and the general public’s response is often overlooked. This research reports the results of a 2 (athlete race: Black or White) x 2 (athlete appearance: threatening or non-threatening) experiment incorporating Visual Framing Theory, Social Identity Theory, Social Categorization Theory and mass media stereotyping to investigate public responses to a female athlete accused of using steroids. A total of 382 participants read a simulated media report, then provided responses concerning an appropriate punishment for the athlete, as well as the likelihood of the athlete maintaining a favorable public image. Each participant also reported his/her personal strength of racial identity. Racial identity was used as a control variable in subsequent statistical analyses. Results indicate that participants reporting high levels of personal racial identity recommend significantly harsher punishments to athletes of other races, especially if the athlete appears visually threatening. Interaction effects were also observed regarding recommended punishment based upon the participant’s personal racial identity and the athlete’s appearance. Few significant results were observed regarding the athlete’s post-transgression image. Some sex effects were also observed, with female
participants differing significantly from male participants. White female participants suggested a significantly longer mean suspension for the white female athlete with tattoos.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Kinney, Dr. Hoewe, and Dr. Gonzenbach for their continuous help throughout this process. I would like to give extra thanks to Dr. Kinney for everything he has done to progress this thesis. Without Dr. Kinney I would not be where I am today, and words cannot express how thankful I am for everything he has done for me during my time in this program.
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>Degrees of freedom: number of values free to vary after certain restrictions have been placed on the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>A ratio of two variances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>The number of valid (i.e., non-missing) observations used for calculating statistical tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>Significance level: the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis given that it is true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sd</td>
<td>Standard deviation: a measure that is used to quantify the amount of variation or dispersion of a set of data values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>Computed value of t-test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the committee, my friends and family who have helped me through my time at the University of Alabama.

First, I would like to express my greatest appreciations to Dr. Kinney. There was never anything I could not go to Dr. Kinney with. Whether it was personal or professional his knowledge and advice were always spot on. It is difficult to put into words how thankful I am for everything Dr. Kinney has done for me as he has done everything to help me obtain my highest of goals. His vibrant personality, jovial humor, and the ability to make his lectures more than informative made my time in this program incredibly enjoyable while also being able to learn a great deal of content.

Second, I would like to thank my mother, father, and fiancé who kept my spirits high when times were extremely stressful in the program. Thank you for making me strive to be the best person I can be and helping me finish one of my greatest accomplishments thus far in my life.

Finally, to the Department of Advertising and Public Relations and the College of Communication and Information Sciences for giving me the opportunity to better myself by allowing me into this program. It truly is an honor to be a part of The University of Alabama, and the opportunities it continuously provided.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A: INDEPENDENT VARIABLE TREATMENTS - RACE AND VISUAL FRAME</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX B: DEPENDENT VARIABLE OPERATIONALIZATIONS – RACIAL IDENTIFICATION SCALE, PERCEIVED ATHLETE IMAGE SCALE, RECOMMENDED GAME SUSPENSION</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

1. Mean Game Suspension Length by Treatment Group.............................................25
2. Mean Athlete Perceived Image by Treatment Group...........................................26
3. Mean Game Suspension Length by Treatment Group, White Participants Only.........26
4. Mean Athlete Image Perceptions by Treatment Group, White Participants Only.......27
5. Mean Game Suspension Length by Treatment Group, Black Participants Only.........28
6. Mean Athlete Image Perceptions by Treatment Group, Black Participants Only.......29
7. Mean Suspension Length by Treatment Group, Female Participants Only...............30
8. Mean Suspension Length by Treatment Group, Male Participants Only..................30
9. Mean Suspension Length by Treatment Group, Female Participants Only...............31
10. Mean Suspension Length by Treatment Group, Female Participants Only..............32
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

While issues surrounding the race and sex of athletes, as well as the transgressive acts of athletes, are frequent mass media research topics and are fervently discussed in sports media, the recent intersection of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and subsequent high-profile protests by U.S. athletes has focused attention toward enduring issues of racial concern regarding sports fans and athletes. This research experimentally investigated issues surrounding American spectators’ racial attitudes, the spectator’s sex, an athlete’s race and the athlete’s sex to determine if race impacts perceptions of female athletes committing transgressive acts. Theory bases for this research include Visual Framing Theory, Social Identity Theory, Self-categorization Theory and mass media stereotyping of Blacks.

Hartman (2000) called sports “contested racial terrain, a social site where racial images, ideologies and inequalities are constructed, transformed and constantly struggled over” (p 230). The state of American race relations is often reflected in the prism of sports (Dickhaus & Kinney, 2014). While separate but equal was still US law, heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis was the country’s biggest celebrity. Before the US Supreme Court required public schools to integrate, Jackie Robinson broke Major League Baseball’s color barrier. In 1970, Jim Plunkett became the first Mexican-American to win the Heisman Trophy recognizing America’s best collegiate football player. Tom Flores became the National Football League’s first Mexican-American head coach in 1979. Doug Williams became the first black quarterback to play in and win the Super Bowl in 1988. Art Shell became the first Black NFL modern-era head coach when
the Oakland (now Los Angeles) Raiders promoted Shell to the position 14 years before the NFL’s Rooney Rule required teams to interview at least one Black head coach candidate for open positions.

Reports in contemporary sports media often resemble crime scene reports. Fans are daily besieged by reports of athletes committing improprieties, including assault and battery, domestic abuse, financial misdeeds, drug abuse, cheating scandals, sexual offenses, gun violence and even murder. Sports commentary broadcasts feature extensive discussion of these topics. Bleacher Report and Deadspin, websites specializing in sports coverage and commentary, document athletes’ transgressions in minute detail while simultaneously offering fans opportunities to comment on the site’s discussion board. Another sports-specific website, TMZ Sports, was launched with the objective of providing salacious coverage of athletes’ crimes and other misdeeds.

While most media sports coverage focuses on male athletes, prominent female athletes have received negative media coverage for transgressions more often associated with male athletes. In 2014, US soccer star Hope Solo was arrested and charged with fourth-degree assault of her half-sister and nephew. Allegations included drinking and abusive language from Solo. After prolonged legal appeals, charges were dropped after Solo’s half-sister and nephew withdrew the complaint. US Olympic track and field star Marion Jones was ensnared by a federal investigation of a sports lab accused of supplying illegal steroids to athletes. Jones admitted to obtaining and using Erythropoietin (EPO) and Tetrahydrogestrinon (“The Clear”) through the lab. Jones admitted to misleading investigators and being involved in a case of financial fraud. Following her admissions, the US Olympic Committee and the International Olympic Committee demanded that Jones return all medals, money or other prizes won after
2000. Jones was sentenced and served six months of federal detention in Carswell Prison, Fort Worth, TX. (Douglas, 2014; Kramer, 2013). US soccer player Abby Wambach was arrested for driving under the influence in 2016 soon after her Women’s World Cup Championship with the US team. As a result, she lost her endorsement deal with automaker MINI. Wambach’s subsequent autobiography detailed her years-long struggle with drug and alcohol addictions. Women’s National Basketball Association players Britney Griner and Glory Johnson were both suspended from the WNBA following domestic violence arrests in 2014 at the couple’s home. Griner was required to complete anger management classes and domestic violence counseling.

Academic research investigating sports media’s coverage of athletes and crime usually focuses on high-profile male athletes, often from a public relations perspective. The major concern seems to be rebuilding the athlete’s public reputation or protecting the team from further taint from continued association with the athlete. Areas that are under-researched relative to athletes and crime concern fans’ pre-conceptions, visual imagery and transgressive female athletes. Numerous researchers have advocated addressing these gaps (Abraham & Appiah, 2006; Dixon, 2007; Duncan, 2006; Entman, 1994; Grainger, Newman & Andrews, 2006; Grano, 2010; Greer, 2005; Holt, 2013; Jones, Dickhaus & Davis, 2016; Leonard, 2014; 2006; 2004; Messaris & Abraham, 2001).

In the following chapters of this thesis, several theory areas are reviewed and integrated to produce hypotheses that were investigated with an experiment manipulating the athlete’s race and appearance. In Chapter 2, Framing Theory is reviewed. The main tenet of Framing Theory is that how journalists present information, either textually, verbally or visually, can activate schemata that influence subsequent processing and judgments. Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-categorization Theory (SCT) are used to illustrate how people develop and maintain positive
self-images. SIT describes how people select preferred self-images and bolster self-esteem. A person’s group alliances produce preferred ingroups. Competitive identity groups are called outgroups. People opposed to the preferred ingroup identity are presumed threats to preferred ingroup identities. SCT describes the operation of extreme bias for ingroup members while simultaneously motivating extreme prejudice for outgroup members. Discussion then moves to mass media’s ability to produce and strengthen group-related stereotypes. Often, powerful stereotypes are generated for Blacks via crime-related reporting. A frequently observed effect of this pairing is the tendency of White media consumers to associate criminal activity with Black perpetrators. Chapter 2’s last section catalogs stereotypes associated with Black and White, male and female professional athletes. Chapter 2 concludes with hypotheses predicting how Black and White sports fans will respond to media reports of Black and White female athletes accused of the same transgression. However, the athletes will be portrayed in both threatening and non-threatening visual frames. The participant’s pre-existing racial identity is accounted for in the participant’s assessments.

Chapter 3 details the methods used to conduct this experiment, including independent variable manipulations and dependent variable assessments. In Chapter 4, statistical analysis is conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. A discussion of the research’s findings, limitations and future research suggestions are presented in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing Theory hypothesizes that editorial decisions regarding how media content is organized and presented, verbally or visually, affect how content is perceived and comprehended (Ryan, 1991). In this section, Framing Theory is discussed, followed by research on verbal and visual framing effects.

Goffman is noted as the primary framing theorist (1993). Specifically, media frames have been defined as “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (Reese, 2001, p.11). Media content frames develop longitudinally via frequent media exposure, peer interactions and personal experiences (Newman, Just & Crigler, 1992). Media content frames provide efficient patterns for information processing (Schuefle, 2004). All cultures contain a collection of widely understood, standard frames. According to Entman (1993), “… culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping” (p53). Media gatekeepers select frames based upon professional judgment, assumptions about the intended audience and the vehicle’s editorial policies (Brantner, Lobinger & Wetzstein, 2011; Ettema & Peer, 1996; Kim & Telleen, 2017), as well as perceived cultural norms, resources available to cover events and professional socialization (Edelman, 1993; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Scheufele, 1999; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). An important feature of media framing is its ability to go unnoticed despite its influence: “…the impact of framing is crucially dependent on its being taken for granted…” (Messaris &
Abraham, 2001, p215), while simultaneously activating existing schemata and influencing the recipient’s interpretation of the content (Abraham and Appiah, 2006; Arpan et. al, 2006; Grimes & Dreschel, 1996). Activated schemata can be reinforced or modified by the frame’s contents (Brantner, Lobinger & Wetzstein, 2011; Price, Tewksbury & Powers, 1997).

Media framing effects research investigates how competing frames impact recipients. Media framing research is divided into different areas (Entman, 1993; Scheufele & Scheufele, 2010). Communicator perspective framing research examines choices made by originating journalists and other gatekeepers. Public discourse and social movement framing research investigates media texts framing important actors in the public sphere and how those frames influence political action. Media effects framing research examines how recipients process, perceive and comprehend content presented via differing frames. Consider media discussion regarding the American coal mining industry, for example. Several schemata may be activated, such as excessive environmental regulation versus free-market economy ideals (public discourse and social movement frames). Sierra Club publications are likely to include frames advocating environmental concerns, while coal industry publications advocate competitive mining industry frames (communicator perspective).

**Visual Framing Effects**

The framing paradigm has expanded beyond textual content to include visual content and other symbols (Abraham & Appiah, 2006; Entman, 1993). Media gatekeepers pair visual and verbal content for several reasons (Garcia & Stark, 1991; Gibson, 1991). While visual content adds variety and interest (Rivers & Matthews, 1988; Wanta & Roark, 1993), visual content serves as more than “mere décor” (Zillman, Gibson & Sargeant, 1999, p225). Visual content attracted readers to verbal content (Brantner, Lobinger & Wetzstein, 2011; Bucher &

If verbal framing’s influence resides in its ability to subtly affect perceptions without raising the recipient’s awareness, then accompanying photographs may frame content even more subtly than text (Abraham & Appiah, 2006; Fahmy & Kim, 2008; Messaris & Abraham, 2001) by activating non-logical, emotional responses (Barry, 1997; Pfau et. al, 2006;), especially empathy for people depicted in photographs (Wanta & Roark, 1993; Wolf & Grotta, 1985). Zillman, Knobloch & Yu (2001) asserted that photos “amount to additional storytelling that can greatly influence and predictably shift the interpretation of the news text proper” (p302).

Messaris & Abraham (2001) used the term “indexicality” (p217) to describe a photograph’s framing potential. Unlike illustrations or other visual elements (charts, graphs, etc.), photographs suggest credibility and realism unequalled by other visuals; “… photographs come with an implicit guarantee of being closer to the truth than other forms of communication… (and) diminish the likelihood that viewers would question what they see” (p217). The documentary nature of photos suggested a picture-superiority effect when compared to verbal presentation alone (Madigan, 1983; Paivio, Rogers & Smythe, 1968). Readers may be on guard for verbal frames, thereby processing verbal content more skeptically, but the inclusion of realistic, true-to-life photos circumvented these safeguards and reduced counter arguments about accompanying verbal content (Coleman, 2010; Estrada, 1997; Graber, 1990; Kepplinger, 1991).
While verbal language includes syntax to guide formal processing strategies, photos lack systematic processing strategies. Therefore, viewers individually interpret photos based upon individual experiences, including interpretations drawn from exposure to prior frames. Messaris & Abraham (2001) suggested “… visual propositions are more reliant on the viewer’s ability to make intuitive sense of implicit meanings on the basis of contextual or other cues” (p219). Visual frames can shape problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993). Visual framing effects research indicated that visual frames function independently of verbal frames, and may exceed verbal content’s impact (Brantner, Lobinger & Weitzstein 2011; Pfau et al. 2006). Emotional responses to photos may circumvent rational consideration of the text because the photo lured readers to the text’s content (Mendelson & Thorson, 2004).

Zillman, Gibson & Sargeant (1999) demonstrated visual framing effects. Participants read news reports regarding the safety of amusement park rides, along with a report about agricultural economics. Participants were randomly assigned to various treatment conditions, including a control condition (no photos), photos representing one side of the report (threatening or non-threatening photo) or a balanced condition with photos representing both sides of the report. Results indicated that more threatening, one-sided photo presentations influenced immediate and delayed content assessments. Gibson & Zillman (2000) reported visual framing results in a public health context. Participants were presented with a fictitious media report concerning a tick-borne disease. Accompanying photos included images of ticks and photos of children of varying ethnicities (ethnically balanced/White and Black children, Black children only, White children only). Single-ethnicity photos resulted in higher estimates concerning the likelihood of that race of children contracting the disease, especially when photos of ticks were
paired with the children’s photos. Zillman, Knoblach & Yu (2001) reported significantly different results for information acquisition and time spent reading print media reports containing photos of victims as compared to no-photo or non-victim photo conditions.

In an investigation of the impact of war casualty photos, Pfau et al. (2006) reported that photos with captions undermined war support by triggering strong emotions among readers. Brantner, Lobinger & Wetzstein (2011) held report copy constant while varying photos concerning the contested Gaza Strip. Human-interest photo frames elicited more emotional response and were also rated as more communicative. Yan & Liu (2016) conducted experimental, longitudinal research comparing visual treatments among Chinese media consumers while simultaneously controlling for prior beliefs regarding controversial relationships between Chinese vendors and regulatory officials. Yan & Liu demonstrated immediate and delayed consequences of visual frames, even when controlling for prior beliefs.

Social Identity Theory

Tajfel (1974) and Tajfel & Turner’s (1986; Dumont & Louw, 2009) Social Identity Theory (SIT) describes how individuals establish multiple social identities, as well as how individuals maintain and bolster social identities. Tajfel (1974) described social identity as “that part of an individual’s self-concept that is derived from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership” (p69). These identities and emotions coalesce to produce positive self-esteem. All social identities have both positive and negative characteristics. Individuals judge their social identities, as well as the social identities of others, in relation to these positive and negative characteristics (Korte, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).
Preferred social identity groups are called ingroups, while competing social identity groups are labelled outgroups. Sharing characteristics and identity with preferred ingroups reduces feelings of alienation and social isolation. Individuals prefer ingroups that make them feel good about themselves, even at the expense of other groups (Brewer, 1979). Social identity is malleable and multiple, and an appropriate social identity can be triggered by social context cues as to which identity is most salient under differing contexts (Brewer, 1979; Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi & Ethier 1995; Fink, Parker, Brett & Higgins, 2009; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Shinnar, 2008). When a need to assert social identity is perceived, individuals will select the preferred identity providing the most positive self-concept in that context (Shinnar, 2008). Common social identities include a person’s race, sex, occupation, familial relationships, hobbies or other interests (Dickhaus & Kinney, 2014; Turner, 1982).

Tajfel & Turner (1986) described selecting and maintaining social identity as a multi-stage process (Dickhaus & Kinney, 2014; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Hornsey, 2008; Scott, 2007). In the categorization stage, individuals identify with preferred ingroups based upon observed similarities between themselves and the preferred ingroup, while simultaneously rejecting differences with competing outgroups (Tsui & Gutek, 1999). During the identification stage, the preferred ingroup identity is distinguished from outgroups, thereby solidifying self-esteem via ingroup membership. The comparison stage bolsters individual self-esteem by contrasting the preferred ingroup’s perceived superior characteristics to those of competitive outgroups. Social identity and strong positive self-esteem are established by positive feelings for preferred ingroups along with negative, hostile feelings for maligned outgroups, a trait called ingroup bias effect (Brewer, 1979, Hogg & Abrams, 1999; Negy, Shreve, Jensen & Uddin, 2003; Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner & Clark, 1981). Ingroup bias is solidified in the distinctiveness stage. SIT
provided the initial basis for investigating positive and negative intergroup relationships, as well as interactions between individual members of competing groups (Hornsey, 2008).

SIT was expanded to include a Self-categorization Theory (SCT) process (Horsey, 2008; Mastro, 2003; Trepte, 2006; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). While SIT most accurately describes how individuals establish social identities, SCT more effectively describes intergroup relationships based upon established social identities (Trepte, 2006). SCT hypothesizes that self-categorization occurs “through the accentuation of similarities within groups and differences between groups in comparisons with a prototype member” (Harwood & Roy, 2005, p191; Mastro, 2003; Ortiz & Harwood, 2007). Positive social identity is dependent upon favorable intergroup comparisons (Brown, 2000). The SCT prototype member construct has provided a research basis for stereotyping (Reid, 2012).

**Race as Primary Social Identity**

Blacks are not a monolithic population; “There is a great deal of diversity and variety with respect to the meaning of being African American” (Sellers et al., 1997, p. 806). However, a person’s racial identity is often a central component of social identity, especially for minority-group members (Elias, Appiah & Gong, 2011; Jaret & Reitzes, 1999; Phinney & Onwughalu, 1996; Shinnar, 2008; Martin, 2014; Sellers et al, 1997). Stryker (1987) considered race-based identity the “master status” identity (Deaux et. al., 1995, p. 280) subordinating all other identities. Deaux et al. (1995) used the term “ascribed identity” to describe groups “you are born into” (p282). Phinney & Onwughalu (1996) suggested that ethnic social identity is composed of race and ethnicity components. The race component is denoted by observable genetic features such as skin tone. The ethnicity component is derived from perceived differences between cultural ingroups. Phinney (2005) later defined ethnic identity “as a self-constructed
understanding of oneself in terms of one’s cultural and ethnic background and attitudes and feelings associated with that background” (p13). Increasingly high levels of minority racial identity and ethnic background correlated with preferences for others within the same racial group (Brewer, 1979; Deaux, 1995; Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish & Hodge, 1996; Sellers et al, 1997; Tsui, 1992), enrollment at historically Black colleges and universities and willingness to enroll in Black studies courses (Sellers et al, 1997). Same-race minority group preference has been noted for media characters (Appiah 2001, 2004; Elias, Appiah & Gong, 2011), counseling preferences (Morten & Atkinson, 1983; Parham & Helms, 1981), interpersonal communication behaviors (Hecht, Larkey & Johnson, 1992), role model selection (Karunanayake & Nauta, 2004) and evaluations of celebrities and sports figures (Dietz-Uhler et al, 2002; Jones, Dickhaus & Davis, 2017; Knight, Giuliano & Sanchez-Ross, 2001).

Brewer (1991) noted that minority membership results in lowered power and status relative to the racial majority. These conditions produce strong motivations to maintain high levels of racial identity and ethnic self-esteem. Elevated levels of esteem for one’s preferred ingroups produced extreme bias for ingroup members. Extreme ingroup bias produced ethnocentric attitudes of strong hatred, resentment or disdain for outgroup members (Beebe & Beebe, 2003; Harrington, 2003; Verkuyten, 2002). Race-based ingroup preferences were reported for celebrities accused of violent crimes (Knight, Giuliano & Sanchez-Ross, 2001). Similarly, young Black athletes were more accepting of bad behavior from professional Black athletes (Jones, Dickhaus & Davis, 2017).

This research concerning SIT, SCT and the previously reviewed framing research suggests hypotheses regarding evaluations of same-race and different-race athletes.
H1: Participants reporting high levels of self-reported racial identity will suggest a significantly more severe penalty for athletes of another race. White participants will suggest a significantly more severe penalty for Black athletes. Black participants will suggest a significantly more severe penalty for White athletes.

H2: Participants reporting high levels of self-reported racial identity will report a significantly higher mean athlete image rating for same-race athletes. White participants will report a significantly higher mean athlete image rating for White athletes. Black participants will report a significantly higher mean athlete image rating for Black athletes.

**Mass Media and Stereotype Development**

Stereotypes are cognitive structures or categories that affect the encoding of information (Dixon, 2007; Graber, 1988; Hamilton & Trollier, 1986; von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa & Vargas, 1995). Stereotypes include negative behaviors and characteristics applied to all members of negatively perceived outgroups (Curseeu, Stoop & Schalk, 2007; Fiske, 1998). Dixon (2007) suggested “cognitive misers” (p179) rely on stereotypes to avoid comparing specific instances of racial minorities (Macrae, Milne & Bodenhausen, 1994) and to reduce uncertainty about how to respond (Tajfel, 1981). Rather than comparing individuals, cognitive misers efficiently processed information by placing all members into a single, stereotyped group (Entman, 1994; Smith, 1998; Iyengar, 1987; Lasorsa & Dai, 2007; Wicks, 1992). Researchers identified stereotyped, race-based prejudices as schemata for interpreting information presented via mass media (Grimes & Dreschel, 1996; Hamilton & Trolier, 1986). Stereotypes can be consciously or unconsciously activated (Bargh, 1994; Blair, 2001; Devine, 2001; Devine & Monteith, 1999). In the case of race-based stereotypes, all members of a negatively perceived minority outgroup are assumed to embody the stereotype, and even brief media exposures activated negative
associations (Dixon, 2007; 2006; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Givens & Monahan, 2005; Mendelberg, 1997). Once a stereotype is activated, subsequent content will be assessed in terms of the activated stereotype (Grimes & Dreschel, 1996).

Media are frequently cited as sources of race-based stereotypes (Entman & Rojecki, 2000; Ford, 1997; Givens & Monahan, 2005; Mastro, 2002; Ramasubramanian, 2007; Tan, Fujioka & Tan, 2000). Browne, Firestone & Mickiewics (1994) wrote that mass media produce powerful, pervasive stereotypes “because they extend throughout society, and frequently serve as trend-setters, taste-makers, labelers, and the raw material for daily conversation” (p8). Despite journalists’ efforts to avoid deliberate stereotyping (Korzybski, 1958; Morgan, Pifer & Woods, 2006), frequent, consistent media portrayals link positive and negative behaviors to all members of the race. Frequent stereotype activation reinforces the stereotype, resulting in deeply ingrained associations that can be accessed consciously or unconsciously during subsequent media exposures (Entman, 1994; Banaji, Hardin & Rothman, 1993; Blair, 2001; Wittenbrink, Judd & Park, 2001). Unconsciously using media-derived stereotypes to form evaluations is called automaticity (Bargh, 1994; Devine, 1989). Even participants reporting no racial prejudice responded to media content based on deeply ingrained stereotypes (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Bargh, 1984).

Most framing-based stereotypes research examined the impact of textual (print) or verbal (broadcast) content. However, additional research demonstrated that visual content also activated stereotypical frames (Campbell, 1995; Entman, 1994). These indirect racial cues activated “… symbolic racism (that) allows for subtlety, indirectness, and implication…” (Van Dijk, 1988, p18). These non-textual, nonverbal cues can include visuals depicting stereotypical physical and behavioral features. Research demonstrates that stereotyped responses were
activated even in the absence of visual cues (Abraham & Appiah, 2006; Devine, 1989; Cowen, 1991; Dixon, 2007; Johnson, 1997).

News media are often investigated as the major source of negative Black stereotypes. Gilliam & Iyengar (2000) described mass media news content as a “principal window on the world”, that overwhelmingly shows a view “conflating Blackness with criminality, and present(s) the idea that crime is an inherent trait of Blacks” (p560). Other researchers documented stereotypical news media content linked to Blacks (Abraham, 2003; Devine, 1989; Dixon, 2008; 2005; Dixon & Maddox, 2005; Dixon & Linz, 2000; Entman, 1994; Ford, 1997; Gibbons, Taylor & Phillips, 2005; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Gilliam et al, 1996; Gray, 1989; Martindale, 1996; Mastro, 2003; Oliver et al., 2004; Oliver & Fonash, 2002: Peffley, Hurwitz & Sniderman, 1997; Peffley, Shields & Williams, 1996). The presence of stereotypes influenced attitudes about suitable punishments for offenders of different races (Dixon & Linz, 2000; Peffley, Shields & Williams, 1996).

**Stereotypes of Black Athletes**

Athletic success is often assumed to be race neutral. Merit, acclaim and financial success accrue through direct, skill-based competition with other athletes. It is assumed the athlete’s race doesn’t influence the outcome. Former National Basketball Association league commissioner David Stern said fans respond to superior performances, rather than racial biases (quoted in Wynter, 2002 in Leonard, 2004). Alternatively, Carrington (2001/2002) described the implications of sports events and associated media coverage as far more than frivolous entertainment. Carrington suggested ever-present racial undertones, describing mass media sports coverage as “signifier for wider questions about social identity within racially demarcated societies” (p94). Sports media often present subtle racial cues regarding athletes of different
races, most notably “White brains/Black brawn narratives” (Grano, 2010, p256) stressing biological essentialism (Andrews, 1996; Bruce, 2004; Davis, 1990; Denham, Billings & Halone, 2002; Douglas, 2005; Entine, 2001; Long & Hylton, 2002; Sailes, 1993; Simons, 2003; Smith, 1990). This brains/brawn narrative supported stereotypes that White athletes triumph over Black athletes because hard work (Hoberman, 2000; Shropshire, 1996), intellect and character (Grano, 2010) trump the superior physical advantages of Black athletes. Since Black athletes lack the intellectual ability to defeat White athletes, a Black athlete’s success is ascribed to “natural and primitive physicality” (Grano, p271) harnessed and managed by White coaches.

For whites, character and the body are unified so that the white athletic body signifies proof of character (a triumph of inborn, interior will over bodily limits), while for African American athletes, a body wired with primal drives is essentially conditioned against characterological controls and becomes redeemed for civic life not by force of an independent will, but through a contingent relationship to external disciplinary structures (p256).

The athletic Black body becomes a “fetish object” (Banet-Weiser, 1999, p 403) and a site of difference signifying physical menace and threats to civil order and polite society (Andrews, 1996; Grano, 2010; Kawash, 1997; Leonard, 2006; 2004; Soar, 2001; Wenner, 1995). The Black male body becomes viewed as “… angry, violent…ultimately, as criminal” (Leonard, 2004, p300). Crimes frequently associated with athletes include assault and brawling (Branch, 2007; Wilbon, 2005).

Numerous critics noted associations between the National Basketball Association, hip-hop culture and stereotyped ‘Blackness’ (Cunningham, 2009; Leonard, 2009). Andrews and Silk (2010) described professional basketball’s “ghettocentric logic” (p1626), that uses “stereotypical
signifiers of the urban African American experience... attire, music, hair style... verbal and non-verbal communication” (p1627) as key promotion tactics to attract attendees, broadcast audiences and brand marketers. Grainger, Newman & Andrews (2006) called these efforts the “commodification of Blackness” (p459). Associating urban, criminal street culture with the NBA is assumed to provide White audiences with an impression of “authentic Blackness” (Grainger, Newman & Andrew, 2006, p459). Ultimately, these stereotypes are transferred to the general Black male population (Andrews & Silk, 2010). According to Hoberman (1997), media have aggregated the “athlete, the gangster rapper, and the criminal into a single Black male persona that the sports industry… made into the predominant image of Black masculinity” (p. xvii).

Black female athletes compete under similarly stereotyped burdens, along with the addition of gender stereotyping (Hall, 1996). While Black men generally occupy stereotypically criminal mass media frames, Black women are also stereotyped into narrow representations, such as the compassionate, nurturing mammy, the aggressive, sexually predatory jezebel and the independent, bossy sapphire (Givens & Monahan, 2005; Plous & Neptune, 1997). While female athletes of all races are often trivialized for their appearance, the Black female athlete is judged against White heteronormative beauty standards stressing European physical features like long, straight hair, light complexion, thin nose and a traditionally feminine physique (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Plous & Neptune, 1997). Venus and Serena Williams were ridiculed for not meeting these appearance standards (Douglas, 2005; Leonard, 2014; Schultz, 2005). Black female athletes occupy a status beyond acceptable social standards. Black female athletes are often portrayed as simultaneously unattractive and hyper-masculine. Black female athletes are denied both femininity and womanhood (Leonard, 2014). One particularly memorable media example was the controversy surrounding radio personality Don Imus and his remarks concerning the Rutgers
University women’s basketball team. Imus and his guests referred to the women’s tattoos while also calling them “rough girls,” “hard-core hos,” “nappy-headed hos,” and “jigaboos.” Imus and guests compared the women’s appearance to those of male basketball players competing for the Toronto Raptors and the Memphis Grizzlies (Leonard, 2014, p225).

The preceding review of framing research, SIT, mass media stereotypes generally and mass media athlete stereotypes specifically suggest the following hypotheses:

H3: A significant interaction effect will be observed between self-reported racial identity and visual frame. Participants with high levels of racial identity will suggest a significantly more severe penalty for athletes of another race when the athlete is presented in a threatening visual frame. White participants will suggest a significantly more severe penalty for Black athletes. Black participants will suggest a significantly more severe penalty for White athletes.

H4: A significant interaction effect will be observed between self-reported racial identity and visual frame. White participants will report significantly lower mean athlete image scores for Black athletes in negative visual frames. Black participants will report significantly lower mean athlete image scores for White athletes presented in negative visual frames.

The research reported here involves transgressive female athletes of varying races. However, there is no comprehensive theory suggesting that a viewer’s sex influences attitudes toward transgressive male or female athletes. Therefore, the following research questions are submitted for investigation:

RQ1: Does the viewer’s sex, male or female, influence the recommended penalty for transgressive female athletes?

RQ2: Does the viewer’s sex, male or female, influence the perceived athlete image for transgressive female athletes?
CHAPTER 3 METHOD

In this chapter, the details of the research method are described and operationalizations are reported. Participants sampling and group assignment are also described.

Research Design

The research method is a 2 (race: White female athlete/Black female athlete) x 2 (visual frame: athlete with tattoos/athlete without tattoos) experiment. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the following groups:

a. White female athlete, no tattoos
b. White female athlete, with tattoos
c. Black female athlete, no tattoos
d. Black female athlete, with tattoos.

The athletes with-tattoos conditions are assumed to be more threatening than the no-tattoos conditions. Previous research revealed that tattoos are perceived as threatening beginning in childhood (Durkin & Houghton, 2000). Social critics reported that tattoos are often used by Black athletes, especially National Basketball Association athletes, as markers of street credibility and urban authenticity. White sports commentators often assumed the tattoos signify a rejection of conventional behavior and social norms (Andrews & Silk, 2010; Cunningham, 2009; Greer & Jewkes, 2005; Kornheiser, 2003; Leonard, 2014; 2006; 2004).

To assess the impact of the athlete’s race and appearance, text was held constant across the treatment conditions. No racial signifiers were included in the text. The simulated media
The report described the athlete’s involvement in a performance-enhancing drug (PED) scandal and subsequent arrest. The report also included a mortification statement attributed to the athlete. Mortification involves accepting responsibility and apologizing for the offense. Mortification is best used in a crisis situation when the transgression’s circumstances were under the athlete’s control (Benoit, 1995). Mortification has proved to be more influential than other personal crisis response strategies (Brown, Billings & Devlin, 2016). The mock media report looked like a standard screen from The Bleacher Report, a leading sports news website. The treatment conditions can be reviewed in Appendix A.

**Participant Sampling**

Participants were nationally recruited via Qualtrics in order to ensure sex and race balance among conditions. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four treatment conditions. Each condition contained nearly the same number of Black and White males and Black and White females. When a demographic group reached its quota for the condition, data collection ceased for that demographic. Data collection continued until race and sex balance was achieved across all conditions. Data were collected locally using the University of Alabama’s Qualtrics survey software.

**Dependent Variables Operationalizations**

The Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Thomas & Speight, 1999) was used to assess all participants for strength of racial identity following the participant’s review of the media report. The scale consisted of eleven statements rated on a five-degree scale anchored by strongly disagree/strongly agree. Higher scores indicated increasingly high levels of racial identity. Scholar.google.com indicates the scale has been cited by more than 200 researchers working on
similar issues. The mean score was used as a control variable in subsequent hypothesis tests.

The Racial Identity Attitude Scale items can be reviewed in Appendix B.

Post-exposure athlete image was assessed with a modified five-item Athlete Image Scale. The scale was modified to refer to a “drug scandal” consistent with the proposed experimental treatments. The five statements were assessed with Likert-type scales (strongly disagree/disagree/neither agree nor disagree/agree/strongly agree). Higher scores indicated increasingly higher levels of perceived athlete image. Previous research demonstrated acceptable reliability levels for this scale when used to assess the reputation of athletes of different races (Brown, Billings, Mastro & Brown-Devlin, 2015). The mean score was treated as an interval-level variable in subsequent hypothesis tests. The Athlete Image Scale statements can be reviewed in Appendix B.

Following exposure, participants determined how severely the athlete should be punished. Participants read statements informing them that WNBA policy requires arrested athletes to be suspended, however there are no details regarding the suspension length. Participants were instructed to “Imagine that you are the WNBA league commissioner and must recommend a suspension for this athlete. If you were the commissioner, for how many games would you suspend this athlete?” The participant then entered a number from 0 - 34 (a full WNBA regular season is 34 games). The recommended suspension length was treated as a ratio-level variable in subsequent hypothesis tests. Participants also provided an assessment of how severely they considered the steroid use transgression to be. Each participant completed the following item: “I think steroid use is a severe crime.” Agreement was assessed with a five-point, Likert-type scale (strongly disagree/disagree/neither agree nor disagree/agree/strongly agree).
In addition to strength of racial identity, perceived athlete image, perceived severity and recommended suspension length, participants also reported race (White or Black), sex (male or female) and year of birth (used to calculate age in years).
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

A total of 382 participants were randomly assigned to one of four treatment groups. Efforts to ensure equivalency of sex and race dispersion among the groups, as well as group size, were successful. The number of men and women, both Black and White, are nearly identical among the groups. Key variables were tested prior to hypothesis testing to confirm equivalencies between conditions. No significant mean differences were observed for strength of racial identification between Black and White participants (mean White = 2.64 (sd = .51); mean Black = 2.72 (sd = .57); t = -1.46, p = .15, two-tailed) nor were racial identity scores significantly different among groups (F = 1.59, p = .19, df = 3, 378, two-tailed). Men and women differed significantly in terms of racial identification. The racial identification mean for men is 2.76 (sd = .53), while the racial identification mean for women is 2.60 (sd = .54) (t = 2.79, p = .005, df = 380, two-tailed). Perceived transgression severity was not significantly different between races (White mean = 3.28 (sd = 1.18), Black mean = 3.27 (sd = 1.14), t = .16, p = .88, two-tailed), nor were significant severity effects observed among groups (F = 1.46, p = .23, df = 3, 378). Means for men and women regarding the severity of steroid use were compared. An a priori test of variances indicated that equal variances could not be assumed (F = 5.68, p = .02). Men and women did rate the transgression significantly different from one another (male mean = 3.07 (sd = 1.22), female mean = 3.48 (sd = 1.04); t = -3.55, p = .000, two-tailed, equal variances not assumed).
H1 predicted a significant relationship between the participant’s strength of racial identity and recommended punishment (suspension length). White participants in the Black athlete treatment conditions reported a racial identity mean of 3.50 (sd = 1.04) while suggesting a mean suspension of 6.0 games (sd = 8.0). A positive, significant bivariate correlation was observed. As strength of racial identity increased, the recommended suspension length also increased at a significant rate ($r_p = .22$, $p = .01$). Black participants exposed to treatments featuring White athletes reported a racial identity mean of 3.50 (sd = 1.20) with a recommended suspension of 7.73 games (sd = 9.31). A positive, significant bivariate correlation was observed ($r_p = .20$, $p = .02$). H1 is confirmed: For these male and female, Black and White participants, increasingly high levels of racial identity produced significantly longer recommended suspensions for athletes of the other race.

H2 predicted a significant relationship between the strength of the participant’s racial identity and the participant’s perceptions of the athlete’s image. White participants in the Black athlete treatment conditions reported a racial identity mean of 3.50 (sd = 1.04) while suggesting an athlete image mean of 3.23 (sd = .80). A non-significant, positive, bivariate correlation was observed. As strength of racial identity increased, the recommended athlete image perceptions also increased at a marginally significant rate ($r_p = .22$, $p = .06$). Black participants exposed to treatments featuring White athletes reported a racial identity mean of 3.50 (sd = 1.20) with an athlete image perception mean of 3.37 (sd = .58) A negative, nonsignificant bivariate correlation was observed for Black participants ($r_p = -.01$, $p = .45$). H2 was not supported.

H3 predicted a significant interaction effect between the visual portion of the treatment and the participant’s strength of racial identity as they relate to recommended suspension length. It is expected that participants reporting higher levels of racial identity will recommend
significantly longer suspensions for athletes of other races, especially if the athlete’s appearance is threatening (the with-tattoos conditions). As a first step, the full dataset was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA with suspension length as the dependent variable (not accounting for participant race or sex). Means for the four groups are reported in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black no tattoos</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black with tattoos</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White no tattoos</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White with tattoos</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Levene’s Homogeneity of Variances Test indicated that the homogeneity of variances assumption is satisfied (F = .91, df = 3, 378, p = .44). No significant differences were observed among the groups (F = 1.71, df = 3, 378, p = .44). The full dataset was then analyzed with a MANCOVA statistic controlling for strength of racial identity. A significant interaction effect was observed for strength of racial identity and treatment group on recommended suspension length (F = .81, df = 3, p = .02). H3 is supported. A participant’s recommended suspension length is significantly impacted by the visual treatment observed by the participant (with tattoos or without tattoos) interacting with the athlete’s race (Black or White).

H4 predicted a significant interaction effect between the visual portion of the treatment and the participant’s strength of racial identity as they relate to perceptions of the athlete’s image. It is expected that participants reporting higher levels of racial identity will hold significantly higher image perceptions for athletes of the same race, especially if the athlete’s appearance is threatening (the with-tattoos conditions). As a first step, the full dataset was
analyzed using a one-way ANOVA with perceived image as the dependent variable (not accounting for participant race or sex). Means for the four groups are reported in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black no tattoos</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black with tattoos</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White no tattoos</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White with tattoos</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>382</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.31</strong></td>
<td><strong>.57</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Levene’s Homogeneity of Variances Test indicated that the homogeneity of variances assumption is satisfied ($F = 1.34, df = 3, 378, p = .26$). No significant mean differences were observed as a result of the one-way ANOVA ($F = .67, df = 3, 378, p = .57$). The full dataset was analyzed with a MANCOVA statistic controlling for strength of racial identity. A significant interaction effect was observed for strength of racial identity and treatment group on the athlete’s perceived image ($F = .81, df = 3, p = .02$). H4 is supported. Generally, a participant’s recommended suspension length is significantly impacted by the visual treatment the participant observed (with tattoos or without tattoos) and the athlete’s race (Black or White) interacting with the participant’s strength of racial identity.

After the full dataset was analyzed, analysis proceeded to determine if race-specific interaction effects were present for recommended suspension length. A total of 190 White participants were distributed across the four treatments. Mean suspension lengths by group for these White participants are reported in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Mean Game Suspension Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black no tattoos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black with tattoos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White no tattoos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White with tattoos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.31</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26
A Levene’s Homogeneity of Variances Test indicated that the homogeneity of variances assumption is satisfied (F = 1.97, df = 3, 186, p = .12). A significant difference was observed, however the difference is contrary to the hypothesis. These White participants recommended a significantly longer suspension for the White athlete in the with-tattoos condition. Following this test, these White participants-only means were analyzed with a MANCOVA statistic controlling for strength of racial identity. A significant interaction effect was observed for strength of racial identity and treatment group on the recommended suspension (F = 3.36, df = 3, p = .05). Contrary to the hypothesis, for these White participants, the athlete’s race and appearance interacted to produce the longest recommended suspension for the White athlete with tattoos.

As with recommended suspension length, White participants were assessed for significant differences concerning athlete image perceptions. A total of 190 White participants were distributed across the four treatments. Mean athlete image perceptions by group for these White participants are reported in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black no tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black with tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White no tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18.8a</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White with tattoos</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25.6b</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Means with differing superscripts are significantly different at p = .05
A Levene’s Homegeneity of Variances Test indicated that the homogeneity of variances assumption is satisfied (F = 1.10, df = 3, 186, p = .35). No significant differences were observed among the groups. Following this test, these White participants-only means were analyzed with a MANCOVA statistic controlling for strength of racial identity. For these White participants, no significant interaction effect was observed for strength of racial identity and treatment group on athlete image perceptions (F = .91, df = 3, p = .44).

Mean suspensions recommended by Black participants were also analyzed. A total of 192 Black participants were distributed across the four treatments. Mean suspension lengths by group for these Black participants are reported in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black no tattoos</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black with tattoos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White no tattoos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White with tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Levene’s Homegeneity of Variances Test indicated that the homogeneity of variances assumption is satisfied (F = 1.12, df = 3, 188, p = .32). No significant differences were observed among the groups (F = 1.16, df = 3, 188, p = .33). Following this test, these Black participants-only means were analyzed with a MANCOVA statistic controlling for strength of racial identity.
No significant interaction effect was observed for strength of racial identity and treatment group on the recommended suspension (F = 1.17, df = 3, p = .32).

As with recommended suspension length, Black participants were assessed for significant differences concerning athlete image perceptions. A total of 192 Black participants were distributed across the four treatments. Mean athlete image perceptions by group for these Black participants are reported in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black no tattoos</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black with tattoos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White no tattoos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White with tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Levene’s Homogeneity of Variances Test indicated that the homogeneity of variances assumption is satisfied (F = .47, df = 3, 188, p = .70). No significant differences were observed among the groups. Following this test, these Black participants-only means were analyzed with a MANCOVA statistic controlling for strength of racial identity. For these Black participants, no significant interaction effect was observed for strength of racial identity and treatment group on athlete image perceptions (F = .43, df = 3, p = .73).

RQ1 considered a possible sex influence on the recommended punishment. Do men and women differ significantly on recommended punishment? Does the sex of the participant interact with the treatment variable to influence the recommendation? This research question was initially investigated with an independent samples t-test of the full dataset. Men suggested a mean suspension length of 19.19 games (sd = 11.27), while women suggested suspending the
athlete a mean of 19.64 games (sd = 11.70). A Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances indicates that this assumption is satisfied (F = 1.26, p = .71). The independent means t-test result was non-significant (t = -.38, df = 380, p = .71). Generally, the participants’ sex does not significantly affect the recommended suspension.

RQ1 was further investigated by comparing the responses of women from different treatment groups. Table 7 reports the mean suspension length for each treatment group.

TABLE 7
Mean Suspension Length by Treatment Group, Female Participants Only*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black no tattoos</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black with tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White no tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17.0a</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White with tattoos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24.1b</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Means with differing superscripts are significantly different at p = .05

These means were then tested with a one-way ANOVA. A Levene’s Test for Homogeneity of Variances indicates that this assumption is satisfied (F = .70, df = 3, 187, p = .55). The one-way ANOVA indicates a significant difference (F = 3.45, df = 3, 187, p = .02). The women participating in this study suggested a significantly longer mean suspension for the White female athlete with tattoos when compared to the White female athlete with no tattoos. A MANCOVA test revealed a significant interaction between the treatment viewed and the female participant’s strength of racial identity (F = 3.80, df = 3, p = .01).

RQ1 was similarly analyzed for male participants from different treatment groups. Table 8 reports the mean suspension length for each treatment group.

TABLE 8
Mean Suspension Length by Treatment Group, Male Participants Only

---

30
These means were then tested with a one-way ANOVA. A Levene’s Test for Homogeneity of Variance indicates that this assumption is satisfied (F = .58, df = 3, 187, p = .63). The one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference in mean suspension length (F = 3.45, df = 3, 187, p = .02). A MANCOVA test revealed no significant interaction between the treatment viewed and the male participants’ strength of racial identity (F = .67, df = 3, p = .58).

RQ2 considered a possible sex influence on the image perceptions. Do men and women differ significantly about the athlete’s image as a result of the reported transgression? Does the sex of the participant interact with the treatment variable to influence the athlete’s image? This research question was initially investigated with an independent samples t-test of the full dataset. Men reported a mean athlete image perception of 3.30 (sd = .57), while women reported a mean of 3.33 (sd = .58). A Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances indicated that this assumption was satisfied (F = .006, p = .94). The independent means t-test result was non-significant (t = -.53, df = 380, p = .59, two-tailed). Generally, the participant’s sex does not significantly affect the athlete’s perceived image.

RQ2 was further investigated by comparing the responses of women from different treatment groups. Table 9 reports the mean suspension length for each treatment group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black no tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black with tattoos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White no tattoos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White with tattoos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 9
Mean Suspension Length by Treatment Group, Female Participants Only
These means were then tested with a one-way ANOVA. A Levene’s Test for Homogeneity of Variances indicates that this assumption was satisfied ($F = 1.13, df = 3, 187, p = .34$). The one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences ($F = 1.63, df = 3, 187, p = .18$). The women participating in this study did not differ significantly on perceptions of the athlete’s image. A MANCOVA test revealed no significant interaction between the treatment viewed and the female participants’ perceptions of the athlete’s image ($F = 1.78, df = 3, p = .15$).

RQ2 was similarly analyzed for male participants from different treatment groups. Table 10 reports the mean suspension length for each treatment group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black no tattoos</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black with tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White no tattoos</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White with tattoos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These means were then tested with a one-way ANOVA. A Levene’s Test for Homogeneity of Variances indicates that this assumption was violated ($F = 3.73, df = 3, 187, p = .01$). The one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences in mean athlete image perceptions ($F = 1.10, df = 3, 187, p = .38$, equal variances not assumed). A MANCOVA test revealed no significant
interaction between the treatment viewed and the male participants’ strength of racial identity (F = .73, df = 3, p = .54).
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

As Hartman (2002) noted, sports are indeed “contested terrain (p94)” fraught with implications for race relations. The research reported here highlights important differences between Black and White participants, while simultaneously demonstrating effects suggested by Visual Framing Theory, Social Identity Theory, Self-categorization Theory and mass media stereotyping. In this section, each hypothesis test is discussed for its implications. Research limitations are reviewed and future research areas are suggested.

H1, predicting significantly more severe punishments for athletes of the other race, not accounting for athlete appearance, was derived from Social Identity and Self-categorization Theories. This hypothesis was confirmed: As strength of racial identity increased for Black and White participants, the length of the suggested punishment for athletes of the other race increased at a significant rate. The confirmed hypothesis suggests that participants strongly identifying with their race used positive ingroup bias to bolster and protect individual self-esteem and group distinctiveness at the expense of the outgroup (Brewer, 1991; Brewer 1979, Hogg & Abrams, 1999; Negy, Shreve, Jensen & Uddin, 2003; Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner & Clark, 1981). The bivariate correlations for Black and White participants were statistically significant, however both coefficients were small. These results confirm previous research investigating media stereotypes. Participants self-reporting low levels of racial prejudice subconsciously responded to stereotypes without realizing that stereotyped schemata were activated (Bargh,
While the result was as hypothesized, it is interesting to note that Black and White participants’ racial identity means were just below the midpoint of a five-point scale. The modest means suggest a strong ingroup bias effect is observed here. Black and White participants reported low levels of racial identity. But when the participants were offered a chance to assess an athlete of another race, both Black and White participants suggested suspensions indicating high levels of racial identity. This result can be explained by considering the difference between implicit racism and explicit racism. Participants read the media report, suggested a suspension length and assessed the athlete’s image prior to completing the Racial Identity Attitude Scale. The Racial Identity Attitude Scale assessments are likely capturing the participant’s implicit racism, described as “stereotypical thoughts about outgroups (that) are readily activated at the implicit level even though they are not applied consciously at the explicit level” (Ramasubramanian, 2007, p250). Activating implicit racism “can influence judgments in subtle, subconscious ways, even among persons who believe they are not overtly racist (Ramasubramanian, 2007, p258). Conversely, the Racial Identity Attitude Scale requires the participant to explicitly consider and reveal racial attitudes, including racial animosities. These participants may have been unwilling to self-report high levels of racial animosity. Future research should assess self-reported racial identity prior to media treatment exposure to determine if an explicit race identity measure impacts subsequent assessments.

H2 regarding the athlete’s image was not confirmed. Racial identity level did not significantly impact the athlete’s perceived image. However, at p = .06, White participants very nearly reached the conventional p = .05 significance level. It appears that the athlete’s
appearance was influential for White participants. This research’s Black participants actually produced a counter-hypothetical, negative non-significant relationship very near 0.00. The athlete’s appearance had no effect on the Black participants’ athlete image perceptions. There is a viable explanation for this result based upon this research’s method. The photos used in this research were those of WNBA players active in the league several years ago. Two of the photos were unaltered, while two photos were altered to add tattoos to produce a threatening appearance. However, neither athlete was widely known. Participants were asked to report perceptions of the athlete in light of the arrest. It is unlikely that these participants, Black or White, had any pre-existing attitudes regarding these athletes. With no prior image to serve as a baseline, participants may have had difficulty assessing the consequences on the athlete’s post-transgression image.

Black participants may have considered another factor unlikely to be considered by White participants. As members of a minority group, Black participants may be sensitive to judgments based solely on appearance. The Black participants of this research may have been previously victimized by appearance-based judgments:

In addition to receiving unequal treatment and having distinguishing physical and cultural characteristics, racial minority groups in America also share a sense of solidarity… The shared experience of oppression, direct or indirect, historical or contemporary, is the tie that binds (Martin, 2014, p4).

Black participants may have also recalled crimes involving both Black and White athletes from which the athletes recovered personal and professional reputations. Previous research reported that Blacks have different perceptions for athletes involved in the U.S. legal system (Dickhaus & Kinney, 2014; Jones, Dickhaus & Davis, 2017). The treatments used here referred
to the athlete’s arrest following a drug scandal. For the Black participants assessed in this research, the impact of the activated racial bias may not be strong enough to overcome Black participants’ perceptions of a racially biased legal system. Therefore, Black participants may reconcile a lengthy recommended suspension and the possibility of an athlete maintaining a positive public image.

H3 predicted a statistically significant interaction between a participant’s reported level of racial identity and the athlete’s appearance such that athletes of other races received longer punishments, especially if the athlete had a threatening physical appearance. Previous analyses indicated a significant main effect for the racial identity variable and a non-significant main effect for the appearance variable. However, a statistically significant interaction effect was observed for these two variables, consistent with previous research. Visual Framing Theory demonstrated that visual images activated negative schemata for Blacks associated with crime reports. Activating negative schemata resulted in unconscious stereotyping. The significant results observed for H3 are consistent with this explanation. Images perceived as negative for Black athletes subtly activated schemata that influenced stereotyped assessments for athletes in the threatening conditions. Negative assessments were enhanced by increasingly strong levels of racial identity.

H4 predicted a statistically significant interaction effect for visual treatment and strength of racial identity on the athlete’s perceived image. While a significant effect was observed, the effect contradicted the hypothesis. The most negative effects were observed for the White female athlete with tattoos. White participants were significantly more punitive toward the White female athlete with tattoos, especially if the participant reported a high level of racial identity. SIT and SCT suggest that White participants would be more likely to protect their identity by
levying harsher punishment on the Black female athlete with tattoos. However, other research has suggested that ingroup members may protect the value of the ingroup membership by distancing the group from a transgressive member. This distancing response is called the black sheep effect (Brown, Billings, Mastro & Brown-Devlin, 2015; Dietz-Uhler et al., 2002; Fink, Parker, Brett & Higgins, 2002; Greer & Jewkes, 2005; Ortiz & Harwood, 2013; Yzerbyt, Yzerbyt & Leyens, 1988). This effect occurs “when group members derogate the guilty ingroup member and label him/her as ‘different’ than the rest of the group… (and) no longer consider the black sheep as representative of the group” (Fink, Parker, Brett & Higgins, 2002, p.145). As previously noted, Black participants were less likely to associate negative perceptions with the White, tattooed athlete based solely upon her appearance. White participants reporting strong racial identity showed animosity toward the Black athlete in the non-threatening and threatening conditions. However, the White participants may have been protecting a preferred White racial identity by punishing the White female athlete for adopting a negative appearance stereotypically associated with Blacks. Alternatively, expectancy violation theory suggests an explanation for the counter-hypothetical result (Burgoon & Jones, 1976). This alternative suggests that White participants were not surprised to see a Black female athlete with a threatening appearance, but the threatening White female athlete violated acceptable norms for White females, especially among participants reporting high levels of White racial identity. Additional research is required to determine the source of this anomalous effect.

While no strong theory basis is available to assess the impact of the participant’s sex, this research did investigate potential sex effects on recommended suspension and athlete image. Women suggested a significantly longer mean suspension than men, and a significant interaction was observed for a woman’s level of racial identity and the threatening condition. No sex effects
were observed for the athlete’s image. A black sheep effect may have produced these results. Women may have protected a feminine identity by distancing themselves from a female athlete perceived as masculine and threatening (Bruce, 2012; McKay & Johnson, 2008). Alternatively, expectancy violation theory suggests that a Black female athlete with a threatening appearance is acceptable, and that the threatening White female appearance violated expectations. The participant’s self-perceptions of her personal femininity may have played a role here, as well. Women who considered themselves more feminine may have suggested longer suspensions for a woman perceived as non-feminine. The female athlete’s appearance interacted with the female participants’ implicit racism. In an examination of racism and sexism in sports, Schultz (2005) called this type of interaction “the logic of coupling… a double bind” reflecting “the inextricable combination of both racism and sexism, not to mention hetero-normative values” (p341). Future research should account for the potential impact of perceived femininity.

Limitations and Future Research

Efforts were made to assure gender and race balance among the treatment groups. Additionally, the participants were American adults, rather than the more conventional college-student sample. However, the participants participating in this experiment do not represent a genuinely random sample. A commercial research firm solicited participants from various databases. Potential participants contacted by the firm self-selected to participate. The research firm was compensated for recruitment efforts, and a portion of that compensation was provided to the participant. This raises generalizability concerns. Different results might be observed for a nationally representative random sample. This research also involved deception. Participants were told that the research objective was to determine how people respond to media reports concerning athletes. Race was not mentioned as part of the informed consent process.
Participants were debriefed as to the research’s genuine objective just prior to data submission and offered the opportunity to withdraw from the research and delete their responses. Some participants may have used this option after seeing the racial implications of this research. The sports interests of these participants were not accounted for. Interest in sports, generally, or basketball, specifically, may have influenced these results but are not investigated here.

This research suggests several possibilities for additional research. In this research, a mortification statement (apology) is attributed to the athlete, but mortification is not the only possible strategy. Future research should investigate the impact of other response statements. Also, the transgression used in this research, a steroid drug arrest, could be changed. Other, more extreme interpersonal transgressions could be investigated, including domestic abuse, child abuse or infliction of life-threatening injury. Sports-related transgressions, such as point shaving and cheating, could also be investigated. The athlete’s visual image could be made more menacing by including additional cues that signal danger, such as mugshots, showing the athlete in police custody, showing the athlete in court, etc. Perhaps the most obvious future research area involves changing the athlete’s sex from female to male. Media stereotypes research reviewed in Chapter 2 noted the prevalence of male images, especially for transgressive athletes. Future research should compare the same transgressions for male athletes and female athletes to determine if the athlete’s sex produces different responses.
REFERENCES


42


47


Kepplinger, H. M. (1991). The impact of presentation techniques: Theoretical aspects and


APPENDIX A

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE TREATMENTS

RACE AND VISUAL FRAME
Black no tattoos

Black with tattoos
White no tattoos

WNBA Star Arrested for Using Illegal Steroids.

Seattle (AP) – Rising WNBA star Hannah Moore was arrested yesterday after testing positive for steroids, also known as performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs). Athletes take PEDs to gain an illegal advantage over competitors.

Moore admitted to taking a steroid called “the clear” for two years. The powerful steroid helps athletes recover from intensive workouts, increases muscle mass and allows muscles to regenerate faster. Side effects can include excessive facial hair, acne and high blood pressure.

Moore was released on bail and issued a statement apologizing to her fans. “I am deeply sorry for my actions. I represented myself in a truly unacceptable manner and caused great harm to myself and others. I regret my actions and apologize for setting a horrible example,” Moore was ranked among last season’s top 20 WNBA scorers. Moore has won two league titles as a member of the Sonics.

White with tattoos
APPENDIX B

DEPENDENT VARIABLE OPERATIONALIZATIONS

RACIAL IDENTIFICATION SCALE, PERCEIVED ATHLETE IMAGE SCALE, RECOMMENDED GAME SUSPENSION
Racial Identification Scale

1. A person’s race influences how comfortable I feel around them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. I believe that Black people are more trustworthy than White people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. I believe that White people are more trustworthy than Black people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I believe that people of my race are most trustworthy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. The people I respect the most are Black.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. The people I respect the most are White.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I respect people of my own race the most.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. The most important thing about me is my race.
Strongly
Disagree Strongly
Agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. A person’s race influences how much I trust them.
Strongly
Disagree Strongly
Agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. A person’s race has little to do with whether they are a good person.
Strongly
Disagree Strongly
Agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. I prefer to socialize with people of my own race.
Strongly
Disagree Strongly
Agree
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I am (check one) _____ Male _____ Female

My race is ---.
_____ Caucasian
_____ African-American/Black
_____ Hispanic
_____ Asian
_____ Other (please describe)

Perceived Athlete Image Scale
From: K. Brown et al., 2015
(Coombs & Holladay, 1996, adapted from McCroskey, 1966)

1. I trust this athlete told the truth about her involvement in this drug scandal.
2. In this circumstance, I am likely to believe what the athlete is saying.

3. I would prefer not to trust this athlete’s statement about this drug scandal (reverse code).

4. In the light of this incident, this athlete would still have a good reputation.

5. The athlete is being honest about her involvement in this drug scandal.

Responses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Strongly disagree/disagree/neither agree nor disagree/agree/strongly agree

**Recommended Game Suspension**
You just read a press report about a Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) female athlete and her involvement in a drug scandal.

WNBA regulations require that all arrested athletes must be suspended. The WNBA league commissioner decides how many games the athlete will be suspended for.

Imagine that you are the WNBA league commissioner and must recommend a suspension for this athlete.

The WNBA regular season consists of 34 games.

If you were the commissioner, for how many games would you suspend this athlete? (Enter the number of games in the space below.)

_________ games
APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL
March 2, 2018

Lance Kinney, Ph.D.
Department of Advertising & Public Relations
College of Communication & Information Sciences
The University of Alabama
Box 870172

Re: IRB # 17-OR-184-A “Female Athlete Transgressions”

Dear Dr. Kinney:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has reviewed the revision to your previously approved expedited protocol. The board has approved the change in your protocol.

Please remember that your protocol will expire on May 29, 2018.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the assigned IRB application number. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Carpenttato T. Myles, MSM, CCM, CIP
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTIONS PROGRAM

Research Invitation

Dr. Lance Kinney, Principal Investigator from the University of Alabama, is conducting a study called "How Fans Respond to Athletes in Crisis." He wishes to learn how the public perceives media reports concerning athletes.

Taking part in this study involves reading a media report of an athlete, then completing a web survey. It should take about 15 minutes. This survey contains questions about what people think about athletes portrayed in media reports.

We will protect your confidentiality by summarizing all the results so no one can be identified. We will not ask for your name, address, etc. Only Dr. Kinney will have access to the data. The data are protected on Dr. Kinney’s computer, and he is the only person with access to the computer.

The results of this research will be useful to athletes, sports organizations, other businesses, etc., as the results can help them understand how to communicate with news media.

The chief risk of this research is that some of the questions may make you uncomfortable. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer.

If you have questions about this study, please contact Dr. Kinney at (205) 348-7706, or by email, kinney@apr.ua.edu. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant, contact Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at (205) 348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. If you have complaints or concerns about this study, file them through the UA IRB outreach website at http://osp.ua.edu/site/PRCO_Welcome.html. Also, if you participate, you are encouraged to complete the short Survey for Research Participants online at this website. This helps UA improve its protection of human research participants.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. You are free not to participate or stop participating any time before you submit your answers. There is no penalty for refusing to participate, and you can stop at any time without penalty.

If you understand the statements above, are at least 18 years old, and freely consent to be in this study, click on the _____ (I AGREE) button to begin.