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Biological Sex as a Predictor of Competitive Success in Intercollegiate Forensics

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Authors' Note

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Abstract

This study examines biological sex as a predictor of the level of success in intercollegiate policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking. Secondary data analysis of tabulation sheets from NDT, AFA-NIET, and NFA, revealed three findings. First, there are more male than female competitors in policy debate and males significantly experienced more out-round success than females. Second, there are more males than females in impromptu speaking; however, there was no significance between biological sex and success in out-rounds. Third, there are more male than female competitors in extemporaneous speaking and males significantly experienced more out-round success than females.

Keywords: forensics, success, policy debate, limited preparation, impromptu speaking, extemporaneous speaking, American Forensic Association-National Individual Events Tournament, National Forensic Association, National Debate Tournament

Perception of the activity and the actual participation are two different creatures.

Logue, 1986, p. 70

The forensics community encourages open dialogue about political and social controversies fostering critical thought. For example, Allen, Trejo, Bartanen, Schroeder, and Ulrich (2004) argue, “forensics serves a valuable educational purpose” (p. 173). Competitive forensics rewards students by training competitors to utilize critical thinking skills. As Hinck and Hinck (1998) explain, “Debate topics focus on social problems. Individual events, such as extemporaneous speaking...address current events and controversies” (p. 8). Despite encouragement to think critically about global issues, the forensics community is less critical of internal matters. For example, women continue to experience less success than men in intercollegiate forensics, and this issue continues to be ignored. This study analyzes the trend of biological sex and success in forensics, beginning with previous literature, followed by an explanation of the methodology, the results, and finally, a discussion outlining the study’s limitations and future research.

This study continues research on the participation and success of men and women in policy debate and limited preparation individual events (impromptu speaking and extemporaneous speaking). The researchers have chosen limited preparation individual events over general individual events such as interpretative (e.g., poetry and prose) and platform (e.g., public address and oratory/persuasion) because they more closely resemble intercollegiate policy debate. The purpose of this research is to raise awareness that biological sex contributes to the level of success in continual research-intensive events (e.g., policy debate and extemporaneous speaking). The researchers are interested in the following research question: Is there a difference in competitive success between males and females in intercollegiate policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking?

Literature Review

Since the beginning of intercollegiate forensics in the 19th century, disparities, or rather a divide in success between men and women has been established (see Friedley & Manchester, 1985; Manchester & Friedly, 2003; White, 1997). Over time, the community has worked towards equality for both sexes. Despite advances towards

equality for men and women, a disparity of success between men and women still exists (see Manchester & Friedley, 2003). This literature review will examine the possible reasons for the inequality of biological sexes and the differences and comparisons between policy debate and individual limited preparation events.

Previous studies have proposed possible causes for the inequality of men and women in the forensics activity, especially in policy debate and in limited preparation individual events. Scholars (e.g., Friedley & Manchester, 1985; Manchester & Friedley 2003; Matz & Brusckke, 2006; White 1997) have recognized culture, gender communication styles, harassment, lack of female coaches and judges, an individual vs. collective atmosphere, and attitudes of competitors as possible influences on women's lack of equal success.

Our culture plays a significant role in perpetuating the gender divide. In 1974, Kramer was one of the first scholars to acknowledge the inequality of men and women when stating, "The sex role differences, so important to our culture, seem to have been largely ignored in communication research" (p. 14). Since Kramer's research, scholarship has increasingly recognized the cultural sex role differences and muted voices of women in our society (Rogers, 1997, p. 6). The cultural inequality between males and females influences both the collegiate classroom and the forensics activity. As Sellnow and Treinen (2004) argue, "female students are silenced [in the classroom], whereas their male counterparts receive more and better-quality attention from instructors" (p. 277). Similarly, Rhode (2003) explains this inequality spreads beyond just the classroom and into "debate and the workforce" (p. 37). The inequality between biological sexes in our society impacts the role of women in forensics, as represented by Croucher, Thorton, and Eckstein's (2006) study that investigated male and female apprehension scores. Croucher, Thorton, and Eckstein (2006) found that "female competitors score higher on overall communication apprehension than male competitors" (p. 11) and noted that females scored lower than males on knowing and understanding forensics culture (p. 9). Women in forensics are slightly disadvantaged because of the male dominated culture.

After examining culture and biological sex, this next section will investigate the similarities and differences between biological sex, success, intercollegiate policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking. It should be noted that there is a vast amount of literature that discusses the discrepancy of biological sex and level of success for policy debate (e.g., Friedley & Manchester, 1985; Logue, 1986; Manchester & Friedley, 2003; Matz & Brusckke, 2006; 1993; Pettus & Danielson, 1994; Rogers, 1997; Skarb, 2003; Southworth, 2003; Stepp, 1997; Stepp & Gardner, 2001). The researchers have chosen not to break down the percentages of each study because all

of the studies acknowledge that men significantly experience a higher level of success over females in policy debate and that a greater disparity between men and women exists in policy debate than individual events.

Murphy (1989) explains that individual events may experience greater equality among both males and female competitors because “the activity...has matured and moved away from debate, [and] the traditional norms have been supported even more vigorously” (p. 116). White’s (1997) study notes the disparity between the level of success of males and females in extemporaneous speaking and explains, “the forensics community has known about the problem...for over ten years” (p. 37). Similar to Murphy (1989), Friedley and Manchester (1985) found that the community perceived individual events to have more equality between male and female competitors, however, in overall individual events, they argue, “both sexes are subject to perceptual limitations” (p. 2). Friedley and Manchester (1987) followed up on this and found males have been successful in interpretative events:

Because the level of male success in the interpretive events rises slightly in final rounds at regional tournaments and rises overwhelmingly in elimination rounds at national tournaments while the level of female success in the limited preparation events drops considerably in the final rounds at both regional and national tournaments, it appears that males are rewarded more for violating those sex-role expectations and stereotypes than females. (p. 13)

In comparison, Friedley and Manchester (1985) explain that interpretive events reflect a feminine style of communication, whereas limited preparation events are geared towards a masculine style of communication. Individual events (excluding limited preparation events) have allowed males to more easily break traditional gender roles. White’s (1997) study found women have been equally successful as men in persuasive speaking, an event historically dominated by men. Manchester and Friedley (2003) hypothesize that a possible reasoning for this equality may be because, “original speaking events have come to reflect a ‘blend’ of the logical appeals grounded in argument and critical thinking (often labeled as ‘masculine’) as well as the use of emotional appeals (often labeled as ‘feminine’)” (p. 33).

Historically, females have experienced a disparity in level of success when compared to men in limited preparation events. For example, Friedley and Manchester (1987) note, women have been more successful in impromptu speaking than extemporaneous speaking, despite this disparity. Williams, Carver, and Hart (1993) explain within the limited preparation events, “Impromptu speaking is one of the most frequently entered events in forensics competition...[because competitors view the event as]...fun, thrilling, challenging and open to creativity”

(p. 29). Impromptu speaking does differ from the other limited preparation event, extemporaneous speaking. On a basic level, Preston (1992) notes the “two preparation events...differ mainly in time allowed to prepare the speech”

(p. 19). Whereas, Turnipseed (2005) argues “the information provided...[in an impromptu speech]...comes from within the individuals own interests and compiled knowledge” (p. 40). The differences between extemporaneous and impromptu speaking may be one factor to explain the differences between level of success and biological sex.

Another reason for these differences may be gender communication styles.

Research has acknowledged that the differences in gender communication styles, physical differences such as voice, pitch, and tone, and appeals to argumentation may also influence the inequality of success. As Pettus and Danielson (1994) argue, the “Traditional gender role indicates that a female should be submissive, non-assertive and noncompetitive...these qualities would not lend themselves to success in our field” (p. 50). The male dominated events such as debate and limited preparation all require some use of verbal aggression, which violates gender roles. For example, in debate, verbal aggression may appear in the prepared speeches and in cross-examination which may be directed at competitors, fellow teammates, or the judges (e.g., Colbert, 1993). In addition, Wilkins and Hobbs (1997) discuss sexual metaphors as verbal aggression, which may alienate women in policy debate:

Another example of patriarchal practices is the use of sexual metaphors in the rhetoric of many in the debate community. It would be impossible for us to count the number of times that we have heard that an argument “sucks” or “blows” or that a debater “got screwed” in a round. These expressions are dangerous because they revolve around males and their experiences at the expense of and the exclusion of women. We have heard debaters tell one another to “bend over and take it.” Another example of this is when debaters claim to have been “raped” by the other team or the judge. This is using language to trivialize and to make light of something that is horrific and demeaning. (p. 61)

This verbal aggression is not only limited to debate, as Friedley and Manchester (1985) note, “female participants come closer to meeting sex-role stereotypes and sex-role expectations in individual events; however, perceived barriers of ‘competitiveness,’ ‘aggressiveness,’ and ‘intellectual respect’ in the original speaking events and limited preparation events are apparent” (p. 2). Gendered communication is just one of the potential reasons females may not be as successful as males in forensics events.

Murphy (1989) argues, because of the communication differences, women have adapted their communication styles to compete in forensics, when he states, “women have developed alternative communication

strategies that do not fit the masculine norms or the rational world paradigm. By elevating that paradigm...[the community]...ignore[s] such strategies to the detriment of the activity” (1989, p. 122). Olson (2001) furthers this communication alternative, stating, “...women feel trapped into a need to imitate a masculine style while retaining their femininity” (p. 11). White (1997) even argues extemporaneous speaking does not allow women to “blend” styles:

...extemporaneous speaking parallel[s] many masculine communication traits. A highly confident, criterion based, argumentative, objective, and deductive masculine style works well with the analytical, formulaic, carefully reasoned and synthesized, clearly organized, and powerfully delivered extemporaneous speech. However, the feminine style, inductive reasoning, use of personal experience, and a tentative approach does not meet the criteria for a successful extemporaneous speech. (p. 34)

In an effort to “level the playing field” (Olson, 2001, p. 13), scholars have proposed various tactics to assist in including more women into extemporaneous speaking. One way to overcome this barrier, as White (1997) suggests, is for the forensics community to embrace a compromise between masculine and feminine communication styles. White (1997) encourages more “narrative and example, along with logical reasoning and evidence, as acceptable support material in an extemporaneous speech in order to make the event more palatable to the feminine communication style” (p. 36). White (1997) specifically mentions extemporaneous speaking, impromptu speaking, and debate may benefit from this strategy of allowing for narrative, rather than the strict masculine style of deductive reasoning. Other tactics include changing the format of the event entirely (e.g., Crawford, 1984) to less drastic measures such as Olson’s (2001) suggestion of encouraging the use of narrative style in both writing questions and delivering speeches in order “equalize opportunities” (p. 13). Though these suggestions may allow for a more gendered voice, more needs to be done to overcome this gender inequality.

Kramer, Mulac, Lundell, and Bradac (1986) explain, “The range of language features on which male/female differences in syntax and semantics has been found is substantial” (p. 116). Kramer (1974) argues, “The pitch of the female voice, which is usually higher because of the given physical traits of the vocal cords, is associated with the undesirable trait of timidity” (p. 19). In addition to differences in voice, pitch and tone, Logue (1993) argues that part of the disparity may be influenced by the topic selections, as “topics selected are perhaps going to have more male than female appeal (e.g., military support, terrorism, nuclear war)” (p. 72). Compared to individual events, competitors have more influence on their topics that may suit their interests and communication

styles. In the case of limited preparation events, topics are randomly selected for the competitor to discuss. Though there is no previous research comparing the differences between topic selections for policy debate and random topic selections for individual events, the researchers acknowledge this may be a factor for the greater disparity between men and women in policy debate than limited preparation individual events. The differences between topic selections is one characteristic between limited preparation events and platform events.

Another reason the disparity between success and biological sex exists is sexual harassment (e.g., Jones & Treadaway, 2000; Sulfaro, 2002). Specifically, Jones and Treadaway (2000) argue more harassment occurs towards women than men in the activity (p. 43), and Stepp (2001) argues more “reported harassment [occurs] in CEDA and NDT...than in other general college settings...[and] in AFA and NFA” (p. 40). Sulfaro (2002) argues individuals “in more powerful positions and possessing the greater expertise are more likely to be subjected to harassment” (p. 64). These studies acknowledge the existence of harassment; however, scholars also criticize this research on harassment. Scholars argue that harassment cannot be used as the only reason to explain the disparity between the level of success and biological sex. Matz and Bruschke (2006) explain, “this shameful behavior cannot by itself fully explain the lack of female participation nor does it go very far in explaining why the lack of female participation is generally limited to open divisions at national tournaments” (p.42). As Tuman (1993) explains, there is no sufficient data or evidence that can be used to explain the effects of harassment on forensics and participation (p. 84). To further criticize, Matz and Bruschke (2006), Tuman (1993), and Sulfaro (2002) argue that there is no accurate way to measure sexual harassment in forensics.

In addition to harassment as a possible impact for why there are fewer women in the activity, another potential contribution is the lack of female coaches and judges. Croucher et al. (2009) explain that coaches are significant because they assist in providing a foundation of the community, where competitors seek coaches and teammates with whom they can relate (p. 85). With a lack of female coaches, women may not relate as easily to the program or community. Stepp (1997) argues, “The lack of female and minority coaches, directors and debate organization officers increases the magnitude of this problem” (p. 181). Pettus and Danielson (1994) hypothesize the lack of female coaches and judges is because of the “burden of child-raising traditionally falls upon the woman than the man” (p. 52). Given the lack of female coaches, few female competitors feel included, and therefore few will become coaches. The lack of females competing and coaching also impacts the number of females judging. Friedley and Manchester (1987) explain, “If a qualified judging pool at regional tournaments is selected from those

individuals who have most likely participated and succeeded in the events, a predominantly male judging pool is likely” (p. 17). In events historically dominated by men, such as policy debate and limited preparation events, many forensics scholars recognize the power that judges possess on creating and maintaining expectations for each event (e.g., Billings, 1999; Cronn-Mills & Schnoor, 2003; Gaer, 2002; Kay & Aden, 1984; Rogers, 1997; Stepp 1997; 2001; White, 1997). Forensics literature has proposed possible solutions to overcome the lack of female coaches and judges. Greenstreet (1997) encourages all coaches and judges to take extra measures to promote the positives of the activity: such as mentoring by a coach, recognition of academic excellence, and social awareness” (p.51). In addition, others propose that judges take an active role in accepting other styles of performances that do not follow traditional expectations. Cronn-Mills and Schnoor (2003) argue in extemporaneous speaking, judges need to worry less about counting the number of sources a competitor might cite and focus on the message.

Moreover, the biological sexes of the coaching staff and competitors may contribute to different learning environments and the level of success. Jones and Treadway (2000) have recognized that women succeed in collective atmospheres. Many forensics teams utilize individual over collective atmospheres. The individualistic atmosphere focuses on individual contestants, which promotes the masculine form of learning. For example, Kruger (1956) argues, “...most extemp contestants are left to their own devices, usually whatever success they achieve in this activity is due solely to their own efforts” (p. 214). The feminine style of learning may be illustrated by cooperative learning or through groups where females feel a sense of unity amongst their peers (Croucher, Thornton, & Eckstein, 2006).

In addition, the disparity may be perpetuated through competitors’ attitudes. Gaer (2002) argues the current attitude “promotes competition over education” (p. 54). White (1997) recognizes this current attitude and argues, “more women need to be encouraged to participate in extemporaneous speaking, and they need support if their participation leads to initial failure” (p. 37). Similar to Greenstreet’s (1997) argument for the need of positive reinforcement in forensics and specifically policy debate, White’s suggestion may also have a strong impact on all events that are male dominated that females are less likely to initially succeed. Another suggestion, proposed by Warner and Brusckhe (2001) and Gaer (2002), discuss policy debate and individual events by encouraging competitors to break outside the community norms when competing. Warner and Brusckhe (2001) argue that breaking these barriers is important to make debate “accessible to all” (p. 14).

Method

This study models previous studies (Friedley and Manchester, 1985; Manchester and Friedley, 2003; Matz and Bruschke, 2006; Southworth, 2003; White, 1997) that examine the level of success males and females experience in forensics. The researchers chose to utilize this model to continue the discussion on biological sex and success in intercollegiate forensics. For this study, level of success is measured based on out round appearance and how far a participant reaches such as octo-finals, quarter-finals, semi-finals, and finals. Success is measured based on out round appearance in octo-finals or higher. This study investigates three hypotheses:

H1: There is a difference between biological sex and the level of success experienced in intercollegiate policy debate.

H2: There is a difference between biological sex and the level of success experienced in intercollegiate impromptu speaking.

H3: There is a difference between biological sex and the level of success experienced in intercollegiate extemporaneous speaking.

A secondary-data or content analysis of tabulation sheets was conducted for three tournaments: the National Debate Tournament (NDT), American Forensic Association-National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET), and the National Forensic Association (NFA) national tournament from 2003 to 2010, determining all competitors and breaks in policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking. The researchers chose to only include one policy debate tournament, NDT (excluding the Cross-Examination Debate Tournament), because similar to AFA and NFA, this tournament requires qualifying at prior district or regional tournaments.

The researchers received tabulation sheets from NDT, AFA-NIET, and NFA officials. The researchers coded participants that attended each tournament, by biological sex, event, year, out-round appearance, and the highest level achieved in out-round appearance. For policy debate, octo-finals, quarter-finals, semi-finals, and finals were tabulated. For extemporaneous and impromptu speaking quarter-finals, semi-finals, and finals were tabulated. The researchers decided to not include the double octo-finals results for policy debate to create a more equal comparison between competition levels. If first names were unknown (e.g., gender neutral names such as Chris), researchers contacted members of the forensics community to determine the participant's biological sex. The researchers ran frequencies and Pearson's chi-square tests of this data. Similar to White (1997), the researchers decreased the significance levels to .0125 (policy debate) and .0167 (individual events) to decrease the potential for error for chi-square.

Results

The hypotheses stated that biological sex is a predictor of the level of success experienced in intercollegiate policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking. Similar to White (1997), we conducted “basic frequencies and Chi-square analysis” (p. 25) to test the hypotheses. Chi-square is the most desired test because of the ability to show the difference between biological sexes in the level of success. Chi-square allows a clear comparison to further White (1997) and Manchester and Friedly’s (1985) studies.

Frequency data was calculated to determine the number of total entries by biological sex and event. TABLE 1 shows the total entries by males and females who competed in policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking. With 2928 males and 1541 females (a total of 4496 individuals), the table shows the percentage of males (65.5%) and females (34.5%) who make up the data set. TABLE 2 illustrates the total entries in each event. The data shows entries in policy debate (1080 entries) equates to 16.8% of the data set; impromptu speaking (2359 entries) equates to 38.7% of the data set; and extemporaneous speaking (1909 entries) equates to 29.7%.

Overall, there is a disparity between entries by gender and event. There is a clear divide between the total number of males and females competing in the three events. In addition, impromptu speaking and extemporaneous speaking account for higher percentages of the data set. Both of these disparities are important to acknowledge because they influence how the results may be interpreted. One reason for the disparity between the entries by event is because the two individual events include data from two national tournaments (American Forensic Association-National Individual Events Tournament and the National Forensic Association national tournament), whereas policy debate only includes entries from one national tournament (National Debate Tournament).

TABLE 1
Frequency of Total Entries by
Biological Sex

| Event | Frequency | % of Total Entries |
|--------|-----------|--------------------|
| Male | 2928 | 65.5% |
| Female | 1541 | 34.5% |

TABLE 2
Frequency of Total Entries by Event

| Event | Frequency | % of all Entries |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Policy Debate | 1080 | 16.8% |
| Impromptu Speaking | 2359 | 36.7% |
| Extemporaneous Speaking | 1909 | 29.7% |

A disparity between the frequency of male and female entries has been acknowledged from TABLE 1. TABLE 3 separates the male and female entries by event. By providing this data, a clearer understanding of the discrepancy of the male/female ratio may be further evaluated. Overall, more males qualified and competed in policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking than females. Males alone account for over 79% of the entries in policy debate. Impromptu speaking and extemporaneous speaking show a similar trend. However, the percentage of success for males in policy debate doubles in comparison of success to males in impromptu and extemporaneous speaking. A Pearson's chi-square analysis was conducted against biological sex and event type. Significance was found: $\chi^2(2, N = 5348) = \text{chi-square value}, p < .000$ Separate chi-squares were run by event type and biological sex. Overall, the findings indicate biological sex may predict whether a contestant will compete in policy debate, impromptu speaking, or extemporaneous speaking.

TABLE 3
Frequency of Entries in Each Event by Biological Sex

| Sex | Event | Frequency | % of all Event Entries |
|--------|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Male | Policy Debate | 855 | 79.2% |
| Female | Policy Debate | 225 | 20.8% |
| Male | Impromptu Speaking | 1478 | 62.7% |
| Female | Impromptu Speaking | 881 | 37.3% |
| Male | Extemporaneous Speaking | 1230 | 64.4% |
| Female | Extemporaneous Speaking | 679 | 35.6% |

The inequality in the number of men and women advancing to elimination rounds in policy debate, impromptu speaking and extemporaneous speaking is further illustrated when examining the percentage of all competitors advancing to elimination rounds. Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7 show that the percentage of males who advanced to elimination rounds was significantly higher than females who advanced in all three events. This can best be seen when looking at the percentages of women advancing to the semifinal round in each event: policy debate, 3.8%; impromptu speaking, 32.9%; and extemporaneous speaking, 34.9%.

TABLE 4
Contestants Advancing to the Octo-Final Round

| Sex | Event | # of Contestants Advancing | % of all Contestants Entered | % of all Advancing |
|--------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Male | Policy Debate | 88 | 8.2% | 84.6% |
| Female | Policy Debate | 16 | 1.5% | 15.4% |

TABLE 5
Contestants Advancing to the Quarter-Final Round

| Sex | Event | # of Contestants Advancing | % of all Contestants Entered | % of all Advancing |
|--------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Male | Policy Debate | 49 | 4.5% | 94.2% |
| Female | Policy Debate | 3 | 0.3% | 5.8% |
| Male | Impromptu Speaking | 104 | 4.4% | 61.2% |
| Female | Impromptu Speaking | 66 | 2.8% | 38.8% |
| Male | Extemporaneous Speaking | 130 | 6.8% | 76.9% |
| Female | Extemporaneous Speaking | 39 | 2% | 23.1% |

TABLE 6
Contestants Advancing to the Final Round

| Sex | Event | # of Contestants Advancing | % of all Contestants Entered | % of all Advancing |
|--------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Male | Policy Debate | 16 | 1.5% | 66.7% |
| Female | Policy Debate | 8 | .7% | 33.3% |
| Male | Impromptu Speaking | 53 | 2.2% | 61.6% |
| Female | Impromptu Speaking | 33 | 1.4% | 38.4% |
| Male | Extemporaneous Speaking | 60 | 3.1% | 73.2% |
| Female | Extemporaneous Speaking | 22 | 1.2% | 25.6% |

In all three events men advanced to elimination rounds more than women. Even though frequencies supported hypotheses one, two, and three, further analysis was conducted. Pearson's chi-square was used to examine the number of students advancing to the octo-final (only for policy debate), quarter-final, semi-final, and final rounds. To reduce possible error, the .05 confidence interval was divided by 4 for policy debate resulting in a significance level of .0125 and divided by 3 for impromptu and extemporaneous speaking resulting in a significance level of .0167. For chi-square analysis the dependent variable was level of success and independent variables were sex and event. Table 8 reports the results of the chi-square analysis. These results only partially support hypothesis one that sex is a predictor of competitive success in intercollegiate policy debate. Differences between males and

females success in policy debate at the levels of quarter-final and semi-final round are significant. However, policy debate at the levels of octo-final and final round are not significant. Therefore, these results indicate that a male debater is more likely to experience success in the quarter-final and semi-final round than a female debater. However, a male debater is not more likely to experience success in the octo-final and finals round over a female debater.

These results for impromptu speaking do not support hypothesis two that sex is a predictor of competitive success in intercollegiate impromptu speaking. Differences between impromptu speaking is insignificant which means that male speakers are not more likely to experience success in elimination rounds over female speakers.

These results for extemporaneous speaking partially support hypothesis three that sex is a predictor of competitive success in intercollegiate extemporaneous speaking. Extemporaneous speaking at the levels of the quarter-final and final round are significant. However, extemporaneous speaking at the level of the semi-final round is not significant. Therefore, the results indicate that a male speaker is more likely to experience success in the quarter-final and final round than a female speaker. However, for the semi-final round of extemporaneous speaking, a male speaker is not more likely to experience success in elimination rounds over female speakers.

TABLE 7
Results of Pearson Chi-Square Analysis
(Policy Debate $p < .0125$; Impromptu & Extemporaneous $p < .0167$)

| Event | Level of Success | Chi-Square Value | Degrees of Freedom | Significance |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Policy Debate | Octo-Finals | 2.072 | 1 | .150 |
| Policy Debate | Quarter-Finals | 7.517 | 1 | .006 |
| Policy Debate | Semi-Finals | 4.661 | 1 | .031 |
| Policy Debate | Finals | 2.325 | 1 | .127 |
| Impromptu Speaking | Quarter-Finals | .171 | 1 | .679 |
| Impromptu Speaking | Semi-Finals | .709 | 1 | .400 |
| Impromptu Speaking | Finals | .140 | 1 | .708 |
| Extemporaneous Speaking | Quarter-Finals | 12.624 | 1 | .000 |
| Extemporaneous Speaking | Semi-Finals | .003 | 1 | .957 |
| Extemporaneous Speaking | Finals | 2.855 | 1 | .091 |

The results indicate an imbalance between male and female participants in the elimination rounds of policy debate and extemporaneous speaking. Unlike impromptu speaking where the balance is not severe, males dominate in policy debate and extemporaneous speaking. In order to understand the reasons for this discrepancy, we shall review the characteristics of these three events and the current literature that discusses gender differences in policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking. An overview of this literature may identify explanations for the unequal representation of women represented in national elimination rounds.

Discussion

Findings

This study found that biological sex is a predictor of the percentage of males and females entered in policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking. Individually, each event indicated different levels of success achieved by males and females in forensics. Hypothesis one was accepted: indicating biological sex is a predictor of the level of success experienced in intercollegiate policy debate. Hypothesis two was rejected: indicating biological sex is not a predictor of the level of success in impromptu speaking. However, the statistics show a strong trend for males having a higher level of success than women in impromptu speaking. Hypothesis three

was accepted: indicating biological sex is a predictor of the level of success experienced in extemporaneous speaking.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study, as briefly noted in the method section, is the potential coding error of forensics participants with gender neutral first names. For example, the name “Chris” can be male or female. Many of the participants were known by the authors, however, for the unknown competitors with gender neutral names, the authors’ personal contacts and through the internet. This process did not eliminate the potential for error entirely.

The second limitation is this study only utilized data retrieved from 2003 through 2010. This study did not evaluate prior to 2003 or after 2010, which may influence the results. By incorporating more years of data, the researchers expect the results to reveal even less percentages of women participating in forensics.

The last limitation is that for intercollegiate policy debate, only one national tournament, the NDT, was evaluated, whereas, two national tournaments (AFA-NIET and NFA), were utilized to evaluate impromptu and extemporaneous speaking. Results from two national tournaments may have given different outcomes than if only one individual national tournament was compared to the National Debate Tournament.

Future Research

Based on this study’s findings, many possibilities for future research exist. Future studies could analyze a greater data set. For example, future research may investigate the level of success based on biological sex at the CEDA national tournament, the level of success based on biological sex of other forensics events, the level of success based on biological sex at national tournaments prior to 2003 and after 2010, the level of success based on biological sex at national tournaments on a year by year basis, and the breakdown of individual speaker awards based on biological sex from 2003 to 2010 to model Stepp (1996). Future research may also wish to investigate why the largest disparity occurs in intercollegiate policy debate and extemporaneous speaking, and why there is a difference between regional competitions verse national competitions of the number of women entered (e.g., Friedley & Manchester, 1985).

In addition, future research could elaborate on previous literature to understand why disparity still exists despite attempts by numerous scholars to raise awareness about this issue. Future studies could advance the literature discussing the impact of linguistic styles and language used by males and females in these three events may impact on level of success based on language used by males and females (e.g., Sellnow & Treinen, 2004), why

a discrepancy of female coaches and competitors exists (e.g., Wilkins & Hobbs, 1997, p. 58), whether the lack of female coaches attributes to a lack of female competitors (e.g., Pettus & Danielson, 1994, p. 52), and if the individualist (male) verse collectivist (female) notion does impact the level of success in these events (e.g., Croucher, Thorton, & Eckstein, 2006; Jones & Treadaway, 2000). Furthermore, research could investigate Fugate's (1997) proposal to increase financial scholarships as a means of creating more equality. Scholarships specifically allocated to women competitors and women graduate students who become coaches may assist in overcoming the divide. Additionally, White (1997) proposes hostilities may exist in extemporaneous speaking preparation rooms. A study could investigate potential hostilities to women both in extemporaneous speaking preparation rooms and policy debate rooms.

Solutions

The forensics community is fully aware that there is a difference in the level of success between males and females in forensics and the forensics community (e.g., Friedley & Manchester, 1985; 1987; Logue, 1986; Manchester & Friedley, 2003; Matz & Bruscke, 2006; 1993; Pettus & Danielson, 1994; Rogers, 1997; Skarb, 2003; Southworth, 2003; Stepp, 1997; Stepp & Gardner, 2001; Warner & Bruscke, 2001; White, 1997). So, why hasn't this community done more to overcome this barrier? Overtime, the forensics community has made attempts to embrace women. However, these efforts have been made cautiously over a significant amount of time, which has prevented and continues to prevent the full embracement of women into the forensics community. As a result, the researchers suggest several possible solutions that have been proposed by previous scholars that would assist in overcoming this barrier immediately, on both, an individual and community level. First, the forensics community and individuals can take precautions against gender bias (e.g., White, 1997). Peterson (1991) argues that this change cannot just occur within the forensics community, but has to be embraced in academics as well.

Second, the forensics community should no longer have conceptions of how traditional policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking are stylistically performed (e.g., Gaer, 2002). These traditional styles, though not all bad, may contribute to why women are not as successful as men in these three events. Finally, individuals as participants, coaches, judges, and spectators must reevaluate their views of women in the activity. For example, Roger's (1997) study found "Members of the dominant culture group within the ...forensics community – that all white males...expressed...the majority of women...were deficient in the skills necessary for success within Open Debate Division" (p. 2)

Despite these rewards, the forensics community has not and cannot achieve its full potential as a critical pedagogical community given the inequalities between males and females involved in the activity. Inequality between sexes may stifle voices and ideas of competitors in forensics. Even Friendley & Manchester (1985) argue, “The benefits accrued through participation in the forensic experience should be available to all individuals regardless of gender” (p. 2-3). This inequality of sexes in forensics is noticeable by the lack of and close to non-existent gendered voice in the community.

Conclusion

Know that more is expected of you than women in other fields and men in our own field (and be willing to accept that).

Pettus and Danielson, 1994, p. 51

The findings of this study extend our understanding of the level of success women experience in comparison to men in intercollegiate policy debate, impromptu speaking, and extemporaneous speaking. This study found that biological sex is a predictor of the level of success experienced in forensics. More studies need to be conducted to better understand why there is a difference in level of success based on biological sex. The argument is not that women do not advance to elimination rounds. It is fully acknowledged that women have made progress in advancing to elimination rounds at national forensics tournaments. However, further efforts to include women still need to be made, as our research indicates that in forensics events, men have a significantly larger success rate than women. This disparity in success is inexcusable. It is now time for our community to take action.

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