



THE GLASS WALL PHENOMENON IN MOTORSPORTS

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Abstract: Ana Carrasco's victory in the 2018 Supersport300 World Championship is a revolution (Wahid Ooi, 2018). She became the first female rider to win an international motorcycle championship, a historical accomplishment for women in motorcycle racing and motorsports generally.

Keywords: motorsports, first female rider, GLASS WALL

I. INTRODUCTION

Ana Carrasco's victory in the 2018 Supersport300 World Championship is a revolution (Wahid Ooi, 2018). She became the first female rider to win an international motorcycle championship, a historical accomplishment for women in motorcycle racing and motorsports generally. Moreover, the 2016 Petronas AAM Malaysian Cub Prix Championship became the platform for four female riders competing in the open racing class (mstar, 2016). Subsequently, the theme of women in motorsports became a widely discussed topic among racers and other industry professionals.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW ON GLASS WALL

Research on the career of women in male-dominated industries showed that career confidence in a given field depends on professional education, socialization, and commitment to remain in that industry (Singh et al., 2018). Wang dan Degol (2017), Ganley et al. (2018), and Vanderbroeck and Wasserfallen (2017) studied about women in male-dominated industries such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Meanwhile, Sherwood et al., (2018) highlighted the issues of women in sports, specifically in sports organizations. However, there is little academic research on the professional careers of women in motorsports (Gray, 2020; Matthews dan Pike, 2016; Papafilippou dan Bentley, 2017; Kochanek et al., 2021).

Bower et al. (2015) explained that the domination of male leadership in the sports industry creates gender inequality, as women are stuck in supporting roles with little opportunity for career advancement and leadership. A past research indicated that some obstacles that hinder women from achieving executive level positions include different career development opportunities, gender stereotype for workplace assignments, and choosing roles with little risk and responsibility (Barlow et al., 2020). The same study also recommended educating top management professionals about initiatives to improve the support for gender equality in professional sports organization. Mudrick et al. (2017) also supported the fact that women are excluded when participating in masculine sports. Additionally, issues related to gender equality also play an important role in sports organizations (Taylor & Wells, 2017). There are also studies on women in male-dominated fields of sports organizations, sports media, and sports coaching (Soler et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2018; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). In the case of sports journalism, research showed that while women are generally satisfied with their work, discrimination, sexual harassment, and disappointment are the main reasons if they decide to leave the industry (Whiteside & Hardin, 2016).

This study investigates the glass wall phenomenon based on the literature gap, as stated by Anderson (2018), Henderson et al. (2017), and Matthews and Pike (2016), and explores the life experience of women in the male-dominated field of motorsports, as it relates to professional career. Therefore, the aim of this article is to understand the experience of women in the male-dominated field of motorsports.

III. WOMEN AND SPORTS

The subject of women who continue their careers in male-dominated industries, especially in athletic development, sports organizations, sports journalism, and women in sports media coverage, has received increasing attention from academic research in recent years (Miller, 2015; Laucella, Hardin, Bien-Aime, dan Antunovic, 2016; Schmidt, 2013; Soler et al., 2016). High exposure to research enables women to obtain knowledge and information about successful entry into male-dominated sports.

Women in Athletic Coaching

Women keep looking for coaching opportunities in various sports; however, equality obstacles and challenges are still present for women in the industry. Specifically, women lack opportunity in athletic development, coaching leadership position, and formal development education (Harvey, Voelker, Cope & Dieffenbach, 2018; Taylor & Wells, 2017; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). The step towards gender equality in the male-dominated sports industry is advancing along with the population growth of women. Even so, there is significant decline in the number of women coaches as a professional career (McCarthy, 2015). Miller (2015) stated that women have made great progress in male-dominated careers, including healthcare, legal, politics, and academia. However, there is little progress in coaching career opportunities in male-dominated sports. Research showed that the small number of women in basketball coaching positions is because the sport is masculine, resistant to change, and gender exclusive (Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Women leave their careers earlier, make time for family, lack financial opportunities, and have lower employment capability (Aicher & Sagas, 2013).

Women in athletic coaching have declined in male and female student sports since college (Machida-Kosuga et al., 2017). Research showed that men express more interest towards the head coach position and have higher self-efficacy to obtain this position compared to women (Darvin et al., 2018). Other factors that push males to seek the head coach position at a higher rate than females include sociological factors, structural challenges, and differences between males and females in career intentions and long-term aspirations (Harvey et al., 2018; Taylor & Wells, 2017). Norman (2012) stated that it is rare for women to achieve a leadership position or the highest coaching position in sports organizations. Nevertheless, the study also showed that women also assume a personal responsibility to guide other women to achieve a leadership role.

Traditionally, the values of women in their work and home environment and personal lives differ from men. Compared to their male colleagues, female coaches value work-life balance, positive relationship with colleagues, and better job security (Didymus, Norman, & Hurst, 2016). Female coaches tend to surpass males in education, training, and experience related to talent development. However, women have fewer opportunities in this human capital investment (Taylor & Wells, 2017). There is evidence that compared to men, only a small portion of women who enroll in formal coaching education will pursue a career in sports training (Fielding-Lloyd & Mean, 2011). Part of this is caused by the domination of males in sports coaching education, which is disposed towards certain desired characteristics, such as assertiveness (Fasting & Pfister, 2000). Norman (2012) stated that women experience a dissimilar coaching status because of perceived gender difference; they currently have fewer opportunities in sports talent development and leadership.

The opportunities for women in athletic development at the college and professional levels are still unequal to their male counterparts. With a higher rate of female participation in coaching leadership, coach leadership, and formal leadership, the share of women in male-dominated industries is expected to increase (Harvey et al., 2018; Miller, 2015; Taylor & Wells, 2017; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Women who are interested in formal sports education courses are more likely to enroll if all of the class participants are women (Lewis, Roberts, & Andrews, 2015). Further research on the subject of women in male-dominated industries, including sports development, is needed to continually increase awareness, support, and progress of female professionals.

IV. IMPLICATIONS

This article focuses on the insignificant representation of women in Malaysian motorsports. It provides several theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical Implications

Two fundamental theories used to observe the glass wall phenomenon are social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994) and social role theory (Eagly & Steffan, 1984). The social cognitive career theory suggests three interrelated processes, including how a career goal may be developed, how career interests are established, and whether one would endure and succeed in his career (Lent et al., 1994).

Gushue and Whitson (2006) explained that the social cognitive career theory posits that social factors like gender, race, and culture influence an individual's self-efficacy and outcome expectations, which eventually determine the individual's career interest, goal, and behavior. Findings from this study also showed that the level of family and peer support, interest towards motorsports, and culture are the determinants for women to pursue a career in male-dominated motorsports.

The social role theory demonstrates the differences in gender behavior linked to male and female social roles, as it is related to the distribution of task (Eagly et al., 2000). The social role theory is shown by gender and social role stereotypes, where women tend to be housewives and hold a lower position and authority at the workplace, while men are seen as assertive, capable, authoritative, and tend to hold leadership roles (Eagly & Steffan, 1984). The authors' reading and observations have shown that women's gender stereotypes are still present in motorsports. Strong determination, perseverance, and persistence to participate in races are critical to face gender challenges and obstacles.

Practical Implications

Relevant implications include education and awareness programs targeting adolescent girls and young women to sow early interest in careers in motorsports. Another practical implication is to support past studies on women in male-dominated fields. This practical implication is also consistent with Carr et al. (2017), who showed that men occupy academic leadership positions at a higher rate than women because of the support of various institutions. Additionally, women who are exposed to female role models in a male-dominated industry will feel a higher sense of belonging and identity compatibility (Rosenthal et al., 2013).

A relevant practical implication is the introduction of motorsports, which plays an important role for women to eventually pursue a career in motorsports. Anderson (2018) recommended future research to examine various motorsports, the culture within the motorsports industry, and the communities involved in racing. Matthews and Pike (2016) called for more research on women in motorsports related to professional career, motorcycle and car racing, and the perception of women in the motorsports industry. Additionally, it is necessary to explore the role of women in motorsports in their capacity as both professional racers and leadership and support (Henderson et al., 2017). When investigating the reasons for women to pursue a career in motorsports, it is important to consider other factors, such as motivation and social role expectations. Moreover, research founded on social role theories based on the social roles of men and women allows further study of women in non-dominated careers (Eagly & Steffan, 1984). Specifically, this article provides insight into how to influence the decisions of women to take part in motorsports.

V. CONCLUSION

Past studies have shown that women must have certain characteristics and background experiences to become professional motorcycle racers. However, there is a need to further explore women in motorsports to gain better understanding of their personal characteristics and background experiences that form their decisions. The authors also suggest further research to better understand the life experience of professional female race car drivers to include empirical research on the female demographic. This includes understanding the benefits of women working in motorsports and coaching other women in the sports, including perspectives to improve education and awareness programs to remove the glass wall from the male-dominated field of motorsports.

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