

ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL FEMALE ATHLETICS: THE LESBIAN LABEL, HOMOPHOBIA, AND SPORT PARTICIPATION

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the possible existence of homophobia and the lesbian label in female high school athletics. If homophobia and lesbian labeling were found to exist, the secondary purpose of this study was to examine the impact of this on sport participation of high school females. A questionnaire was developed and administered to female college students who were asked to reflect on their high school experiences, specifically about perceptions of female athletes. Almost half of the participants (49.5%) were college freshmen and most graduated from a high school located in central California. It was found that 28% of the respondents indicated homophobia existed, while 44% noted labeling had occurred, and only 1% actually quit or avoided sport.

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