

**Frustrated and ignored: An analysis of the female audience of sports journalism in
New Zealand**

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2019

School of Communication Studies

A thesis/dissertation/exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Communication

Abstract

Sport is widely constructed as a male's domain, whether you are an athlete or a spectator. Indeed, research tells us that women's sport and female athletes are often trivialised and sexualised in the measly amount of media coverage they do receive.

Female fans are also reluctant to label themselves as fans, which could be attributed to the hegemonic sporting culture men have created which women are excluded from. Despite this, there are women who consume sport and mediasport, and those were the women who were targeted for this research, in order to find out what they think and how they feel about mediasport in New Zealand and to find out a bit more about their experiences with it.

This research employed a survey methodology to reach the female audience of mediasport all around New Zealand. They were asked about how much journalism they consume, how much women's sport journalism they consume, how the male dominance of sports journalism affects their consumption, whether they see differences in presenting and writing by male and female journalists and whether or not they think mediasport has improved or deteriorated in regards to gender equality. By the completion of the survey, which was live for five months, 72 respondents had completed the survey. Their responses were organised, analysed and discussed in the findings of this research. Overall, there is dissatisfaction and frustration amongst the female audience of mediasport where a majority of respondents said that they would like mainstream media to improve the quality and quantity of their reporting of women's sport and that the male dominance of the industry is turning them off it.

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature:



Date: 8/11/2019

Ethics approval: This research was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 27th February 2019; AUTEK Reference number: 19/02

Acknowledgements

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the following individuals for their support and encouragement throughout this qualification.

Firstly, my parents, Beverley and Grant; your constant love, support and encouragement as I continued my studies never went unnoticed or unappreciated. Thank you for never complaining when I took over the dining room table with paper and for pulling me out of periods of stress with promises of food.

To my sister, Shannon; your support from afar was always felt. Thank you for always being there when I needed you.

Thirdly, thank you to all of the individuals who completed my survey. Thank you to all of you who took time out of your day to share your experiences and thoughts you all provided me with some very insightful data.

Finally, to my supervisor, Dr Gregory Treadwell; I am so appreciative of your guidance, encouragement and support throughout this process. Thank you for providing feedback on what seemed like an endless number of drafts and for pushing me through all the challenges.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It is well known that entering the sporting domain as an athlete or as a consumer means invading a male's territory. History tells us women are treated differently in the sporting world; it wasn't until 1972 when women were allowed to run in the Boston Marathon. In the 2018 US Tennis Open Alize Cornet was given a code violation for taking off her shirt, yet men often change their shirt mid-game. These are just two instances where women have been discriminated against in the sporting arena, but instances that occurred over 45 years apart. It seems New Zealand broadcasters are now airing more women's sport than ever before. All Black Ferns Sevens matches will now be aired, the Black Ferns played more tests than ever before this year and all of them were televised, more Farah Palmer Cup games have been televised, netball's ANZ Premiership is still forging ahead in terms of coverage, with every game aired live on Sky Sport. Even sporting organisations seem to be increasing their support for women's sport. The national women's rugby team, the Black Ferns are now contracted players, as are the national women's cricket team, the White Ferns, who recently signed a landmark deal for their contracts. And yet, there are still few solutions being put in place to include more women across the sporting and mediasport sectors. The New Zealand Government's Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation strategy acknowledges the media's role in creating a space where women and girls are visible and represented in sports media. One of the strategy's outcomes includes making sure that "women and girls in sport and active recreation are valued and visible" (Sport New Zealand, 2018). In order to achieve this outcome, one of the measurements is improving the percentage of media coverage (traditional and social media) dedicated to women and girls (SportNZ, 2018). A recent study by Sport England found the rise in women participating in active sport could be partially attributed to The Telegraph Women's Sport and their campaign "Girls, Inspired" which was aimed at closing the gender gap in school sport. Lisa O'Keefe, the insight director at Sport England, said, "There is visibility and a positive energy around women's sport. This visibility doesn't just extend to elite athletes and events – it goes much broader than that. The work [The Telegraph] are doing in terms of really putting women and girls front and centre is so important in terms of sending messages that sport is an OK place to be, and that women will be encouraged and welcomed. There's an attitude shift among women themselves and also the people delivering sport" (Wilson, 2019). Media visibility of women and

girls in sport can clearly have a significant impact on the sporting community and its growth.

All my life sport has been part of my week, playing netball on Saturday morning, only to go home and watch sport on television in the afternoon. As I grew older and started engaging with more sports, I started reading more sports journalism, and for a long time didn't think anything of the fact that what I read wasn't written by another woman, or even about another woman. It wasn't until I studied journalism that I truly realised the significant lack of female journalists in sport and the lack of women's sport covered by journalists. After that, I started looking more critically at the journalism I was engaging with, noticing that what I was reading was not authored by women. The journalism I read about women's sport did not have the same in-depth detail or information as the journalism I read about men's sport, and that was even if I could find something about women's sport. I began to wonder if other women found the male dominance and lack of gender inclusivity of sports journalism as frustrating as I did? These thoughts were the genesis of this thesis; they guided my way through this research. Researching authentic women's voices, and describing their experiences with and expectations of mediasport helps us better understand the inherent bias that lies at the heart of sports journalism. Understanding the bias and how it affects the audience can help us fix the bias and help us move forward to producing better stories, about women and for women.

The literature tells us women are significantly underrepresented in sports media. Women's sport consistently receives less than ideal media coverage and even when it does, that coverage is often filled with trivialisations and sexualisations of those female athletes. The literature also tells us that women aren't sports fans, or at least they don't generally identify as sports fans. The typical sports fan is a social construct created by and for men, which can mean that women often feel as though they don't fit into this construct. This literature is covered in more detail in chapter 2.

1.1 Research aims and design

The aim of this research is to explore the relationship New Zealand women say they have with New Zealand sports journalism. "Mediasport is an overwhelmingly male and hegemonically masculine domain that produces coverage by men, for men, and about men" (Bruce, 2013, p. 128). The male dominance of mediasport can mean that the female audience is excluded and not considered an authentic audience of mediasport at all. The aim of this research was to delve into the female audience of mediasport and

establish what its members think and how they feel about the mediasport produced in New Zealand, and whether the male dominance of mediasport has affected their mediasport experience and enjoyment of sports journalism.

In order to achieve this, a research question was posed:

In what ways, if any, does the New Zealand women's mediasport audience consider the male framing of sports media impacts its members' experiences and enjoyment of sport?

With the purpose of finding out what New Zealand women thought of sports journalism, an online survey was designed and sent out via Survey Monkey. The questions were primarily qualitative in nature (though there were some quantitative elements), so the survey was a questionnaire style. Following a constructivist-interpretive research paradigm meant that the line of questioning was always open and allowed for the researcher to interpret respondents' answers. This research is targeted at women and draws on feminist social science, which aims to research female problems using women as its evidence (Harding, 1987, as cited in Blaikie, 2007, p. 166.) This feminist underpinning was strengthened by the fact that the researcher is female and researching an issue that placed the researcher on the same critical plane as the subject matter. The survey was distributed using social media and respondents self-selected to complete the survey. The survey contained 29 questions to elicit what respondents thought about different aspects of sports journalism. By the end of the survey period, there were 72 responses. With the use of the data analysis software Nvivo and the principles of thematic analysis, the data was extracted, organised and then categorised to find patterns among the responses. The findings were organised into four categories: consumption habits, engagements, the mediasport landscape, and gender and mediasport. Each category offered distinctive results and made a contribution to answering the research questions, offering details into how the respondents feel about mediasport in New Zealand. Finally, several conclusions have been drawn about mediasport in New Zealand guided by the findings from the literature review, and the findings and analysis of the data. Overall, the respondents seem to be dissatisfied and to a point disillusioned by mediasport in New Zealand.

1.2 Thesis structure

This research report is organised as follows: Chapter 2 provides a critical review of the current literature surrounding women in mediasport and the mediasport audience, as well as providing an overview of audience studies theory. These studies provide a

better understanding of the mediasport landscape and how audiences react to mediasport, as well as highlighting gaps in the literature. Chapter 3 describes the research design and theoretical framework that underpins this research, including an explanation of its constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm and why it fits into feminist social science and the qualitative research approach. This is supported by the justification of the research methodology, an online survey, and then the methods used to collect, analyse, and interpret the data. Chapter 4 synthesises and discusses the findings from the survey, allowing for an in-depth analysis to occur. Chapter 5 draws conclusions based on key findings from the analysis, and discusses the limitations of the research and opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 establishes the theoretical foundations of the study and reviews existing literature on gender issues in mediasport. It explores how women's sports and female audiences are mediated to help us understand why female audiences are disengaged from mediasport production. Firstly, the chapter establishes a gender bias in the news media and that women are disadvantaged by the media's reporting. Then, the concept of mediasport is introduced and the gender issues prevalent in mediasport are highlighted, specifically how female athletes and women's sport receives significantly less coverage than men's sport and male athletes and how female athletes are often trivialised and sexualised by the media. Thirdly, the chapter introduces the New Zealand mediasport landscape and looks at ways it has both championed women's sport and female athletes and upheld the traditional poor treatment of women's sport and female athletes. Fourthly, the researcher outlines audience studies and defines media-effects theory and the uses-and-gratifications model, both of which are often used in audience studies. Fifthly, the researcher discusses sports-audience studies and how sports audiences have been approached in the past. To conclude, key arguments from the literature and gaps within it will be discussed.

2.1 Gender Bias in the media

Most studies that focus on the media's gender bias use politics as their site of inquiry (e.g., Kahn, 1994; Aday & Devitt, 2001; Bystrom et al., 2001; Hooghe, 2015). These studies, which outstrip those into sports audiences in number, demonstrate that a strong gender bias is still inherent in media-production practice. Studies into gender bias in political media revealed two patterns: there is a difference in the volume of media coverage male politicians receive when compared to female politicians, and there is a difference in the substance of the reporting of male and female politicians. Kahn's (1994) study demonstrated how women running for office in the United States systematically received less media coverage than men. Hooghe et al. (2015) found a link between how much speaking time a female politician had in Belgium's parliament and how much media attention they received, and found that male MPs received more speaking time as well as, systematically, more media coverage (p. 406). The substance of the media coverage of female candidates is also evidence of gender bias. A number of studies have found that the way female politicians are represented included a focus on physical appearance and personal life (Bystrom et al., 2001; Ross et al., 2013) instead of focusing on issues and political ideas, thus reducing the ability of women to

represent themselves as viable candidates (Aday & Devitt, 2001, p. 69). Studies have also found that female politicians were more frequently linked with issues such as social policy, rather than topics like foreign policy or finance, in media coverage of politics. (Bystrom et.al, 2001). It is important to acknowledge the impact of this gender bias in the media; with regard to elections, Falk (2008) states that “media bias theory suggests that the media play an integral role in the campaign by framing, shaping, ignoring or presenting the candidates to the public”. How the media report on a candidate has a profound effect on how the public also view that candidate.

Studies that cover the gender bias in sports media tend to fit into a subset of gender-bias literature concerning the lack of coverage of women’s sport and the trivialisation of women’s sport, which is discussed below. This inherent gender bias in the reporting of women’s sport is one of the reasons for undertaking this study – to see if the female audience are affected by the gender bias in their consumption of sports media.

2.2 Gender Issues in mediasport

Lowes and Robillard (2018) define sports journalism as “a mediated experience”; for audiences “sports news works to build an intimate connection between fans, athletes and teams and their live competitions”. In some cases this type of mediated sport experience is labelled mediasport. Mediasport is a term that “encompasses any media coverage that appears in the mainstream mass media” (Bruce, 2008, p. 56) or can refer to “any sport not experienced in the space where it happens but represented through media” (Bruce, 2013, p. 126). Wenner (1998, p. xii) refers to mediasport as “the cultural fusing of sport with communication”, an idea which Bowman and Cranmer (2014, p. 539) say attempts “to explain the increased political, social, economic and cultural influence of spectator sports on society, as well as the fusing of sports as both performance and mediated entertainment”.

McChesney (1989, p. 49) describes the relationship between sport and the media as “symbiotic”. McChesney (1989, p. 49) argues that the relationship is symbiotic because “on one hand, the staggering popularity of sport is due, to no small extent, to the enormous amount of attention provided it by the mass media. On the other, the media are able to generate enormous sales in both circulation and advertising based upon their extensive treatment of sport”. Rowe (1999) explains “media are both the driving economic and cultural force in sport because they provide (or attract) most of the capital that in turn creates and disseminates the images and information, which then

generate more capital and more sport, in an ascending spiral” (p. 65). The digital age has complicated this relationship in that sports organisations are now afforded “the ability to spread their own commercial and promotional messages directly to fans and other markets, effectively bypassing traditional sports journalism as a means of connecting with audiences” (Lowes & Robillard, 2018, p. 316). This has meant that journalists are now “striving to produce analytical and opinion-driven content as a means to separate their stories from those of their media competitors and those produced by the teams themselves . . . The role of sports journalists is changing in ways that no longer position them as information gatekeepers” (Lowes & Robillard, 2018, p. 316). This has happened due to the rise of social media and the citizen journalist: sports fans can now “publish and circulate their own spectator observations of sporting events” (Lowes & Robillard, 2018, p. 316).

Mediasport is important because “its stories and images convey information about ‘who; and ‘what’ matters and ‘in what ways they matter’” (Bruce, 2013, p. 127). When it comes to the reporting of men’s and women’s sport, the differences in coverage and in how men’s and women’s sports are reported clearly show the media — and to some lengths society — considers women’s sport less valuable than men’s sport and therefore doesn’t need to be reported as fully.

There are significant gender issues visible in mediasport, which will be discussed through the next sections. These issues include a lack of coverage of female athletes and sports, the trivialisation of, including the sexualisation of female athletes and a lack of access to women’s sport and mediasport stories relating to women’s sport.

2.2.1 Lack of coverage of female sports and athletes. Extensive quantitative research has been conducted on the coverage of women’s sport, or the relative lack of coverage of women’s sport (McKay, 1999; Knightley, 1999; Tuggle & Owen, 1999; Eastman & Billings, 1999; Bruce, 2008; Horky & Nieland, 2011). Research shows that female athletes and women’s sport receive significantly less coverage than their male counterparts and it is only during major sporting events such as the Olympics or world cups where coverage of female athletes and sports has risen.

Studies (McKay, 1999; Knightley, 1999; Tuggle & Owen, 1999 & Eastman & Billings, 1999) have found that coverage of women’s sport during major events such as the FIFA Women’s Football World Cup and the Olympics increases and in some cases is equal to men’s coverage. These major events and the increased coverage can help to raise the awareness of women’s sport, and the significant rise in the coverage does show

that people are interested in women's sport and female athletes. Usually after these major events, however, the coverage of women's sport falls back to the minimal amount that women's sports usually receive. Bruce (2013) found that in years that did not have a major event women's sport received on average 10% of media coverage in New Zealand. Compared to years that did have a major event women's sport received on average 26% of media coverage.

It is routine coverage where the lack of women's sport and athletes is most prevalent. Bruce (2008) found that women's sport received on average less than 10% of routine sports coverage, compared to the 80% men received, while the other 10% was dedicated to mixed gender sports coverage (p. 58). The International Sports Press Survey conducted by Horky and Nieland in 2011 found that 9% of international print media features female athletes compared to 85% featuring male athletes (p. 12). The Global Media Monitoring Project (2015) found that only 4% of the world's sport content is dedicated to women's sport across all platforms (p. 73). A study by Women in Sport in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2015 found that women's sport makes up 7% of all sports media coverage in the UK. This result was derived from the 10% television coverage, 2% newspaper coverage, 4% online coverage and 5% of radio coverage that is dedicated to women's sport (p. 3).

2.2.2 Trivialisation and sexualisation of female athletes. Extensive qualitative research has also been conducted into the qualities of the media coverage women's sport receives. Bernstein (2002), Rawjee et al. (2011) and Yip (2018) found that the online coverage of women's sport was substandard, and how the reporting of men's and women's sport systematically disadvantages women, sexualises female athletes and uphold the dominant forms of hegemonic masculinity.

Bernstein (2002) compared the coverage of two different female athletes to analyse the media's portrayal of female athletes. She compared the coverage of Marion Jones, a former track Olympic champion, and popular tennis star Anna Kournikova. Bernstein argues that by comparing the coverage of the two athletes it "becomes clear that the appearance and attractiveness of female athletes — from a male perspective — are an important factor in explaining the *type* of media coverage they get" (p. 426).

Yip (2018) compared online media coverage of male and female tennis players to analyse the gender bias within that coverage, and found that the predominant use of gender-specific descriptors and discourses illustrates the presence of hegemonic masculinity. The research showed that media outlets still represent male tennis players

as superior to female tennis players, and that the main themes associated with female athletes include athletic weaknesses, poor skills, mental weaknesses, appearance/attire and non-competitive roles. These types of stereotypical themes surrounding female tennis players demonstrate that the media are, as Bruce states (2013), “conveying information about ‘who’ and ‘what’ matters and ‘in what ways they matter’” (p. 127). The media are saying to the audience that these female tennis players aren’t very good so don’t bother watching, significantly disadvantaging these athletes by removing part of the potential audience.

The type of coverage afforded to women’s sport and female athletes results in them being degraded and undermined in their position as athletes. Even reporting as simple as writing “women’s rugby”, rather than just “rugby”, results in the trivialisation of women’s sport. Bruce (2008) argues that mediasport continues to present men’s sport as the sport while gender-marking women’s sport. By continually stating “women’s sport” rather than just sport, the media has another way in which it can trivialise women in their chosen sports.

In New Zealand, Anderson (1996) found that media portrayals of sportswomen in magazines devalued and trivialised their sporting achievements, and that the portrayal of sportswomen in New Zealand was steeped in stereotypes and traditional notions of appropriation and femininity. Anderson found magazines did this through profiling sportswomen not for their athletic achievements but for their biological or social roles as women. The imagery used reinforced these ideas – sportswomen were pictured predominantly in non-sporting surroundings with symbols of femininity in close proximity. These methods reinforce the idea that sportswomen’s achievements outside sport are disproportionately valued compared to their athletic achievements and serve to undermine their credibility as sportspeople.

There is some evidence that has shown recent improvements in the quality of reporting of female athletes. Petty and Pope (2018) found, when analysing English media coverage of the 2015 FIFA Women’s Football World Cup, that the skill of the players rather than the sexualisation of players was most prevalent in reporting.

The next section introduces and discusses the mediasport landscape in New Zealand.

2.3 New Zealand Mediasport Landscape

The New Zealand mediasport landscape is diverse and increasingly complex (Bruce, 2008). At times sports media have failed to acknowledge the sporting success of female athletes but at other times they have demonstrated the ability to celebrate and take female athletes seriously (Bruce, 2008). During major events, the coverage of sportswomen increases from less than 10% to an average of 26%; however television shows like TVNZ 2's Sportscafe (no longer airing) have done little to challenge cultural assumptions. Instead female athletes were sexualised and men's sports were reinforced as "real" sports (Bruce, 2008, p. 71).

Despite some studies showing an increase in coverage of female athletes during major events such as the Olympics and Commonwealth Games, new research suggests there is still disparity. Research conducted by McNamara et al. (2018) shows that female gold medalists receive less coverage on average across their career than male athletes regardless of the male athletes' success.

2.4 Audience Studies and Theories

The notion of audience is central to communication studies. Indeed, it is "hard to imagine any form of media studies that is not, on some level, about audiences" (Webster, 1998, p. 190). So, by studying the audience we mean "the various methods and techniques used to find out about the audience" (Mytton et.al, 2016, p. 7). Studying the audience provides insights into the relationship between the media and the audience.

Studying sport audiences adds another layer to audience studies: for one, it is a specific and defineable audience with its own set of needs, but there is something unpredictable about a sports audience. "The audience for sport stands out because the contests themselves are live and unscripted with outcomes that matter; because those who follow sport have a vested interest that reverberates through their soul — and, increasingly, through their pocketbook as well" (Gantz & Lewis, 2002, p. 236). It is for this reason, that studying sport audiences is important for media scholars, news organisations, advertisers and sports organisations themselves. To be able to study and understand the audience means that the content that is produced is more likely to be what the audience wants.

2.4.1 Uses-and-gratifications theory and effects theory. There are several different theories that can be used to frame audience research, but the two most relevant

and prevalent in sport audience studies are uses-and-gratifications theory and effects theory. “Effects theories look at what the media do to people [while] uses-and-gratifications studies look at what people do with the media” (Katz, 1959, in Takahashi, 2009, p. 12). The two may seem to be the opposite of each other but together they can provide strong understanding of the audience. On one side, effects research looks at how the media affects and influences the audiences, and on the other side uses-and-gratification theorists identify factors that motivate the audience to consume media. Takahashi (2009) argues that some uses-and-gratifications studies and effects research share not only similar conceptions of the audience (as somewhat passive), purposes of research (administrative) and concepts about the audience (audience member’s individual predispositions) (p. 14). The purpose of uses-and-gratifications research is “to understand people’s interpretations and uses of media in order to find ways to educate them using the media. In other words, underlying this research aim was the assumption that people can be affected by the media” (Takahashi, 2009, p. 14). This was the purpose of media effects research as well, but rather than just stating that media can affect audiences, the uses-and-gratifications model took that research further and sought out how the media affects different people from their interpretation of media.

There are plenty of examples of both effects theory and the uses-and-gratifications model in sport audience studies.

2.5 Sport audience studies

Numerous studies have been conducted into the audience of sport, using both effects theory and the uses-and-gratifications model (Bryant, 1989; Bryant, Comisky & Zillmann, 1981; Sullivan, 1991; Gantz, 1981; Emerson & Perse, 1995; Spinda & Puckette, 2018; Gibbs, O’Reilly & Brunette, 2014).

Within the effects theory framework of sports audience, one line of investigation has been the research into the effects of televised sports violence on viewers.

Bryant (1989) found that “(a) viewers with tendencies toward aggressive behaviour were generally more fond of sport violence; (b) enjoyment of sports violence was dependent upon whom the violence was directed against; (c) ‘hatred’ of a team or player led to especially high levels of enjoyment of violence; (d) sanctioned violence, such as that found in the National Hockey League was preferred by viewers over unsanctioned violence; and (e) committed sports fans, given the above-mentioned factors, seemed to enjoy violence in mediated sport texts” (p. 287–288). Bryant, Comisky, and Zillmann (1981) found that the enjoyment of professional football plays

by male audience members increased as the roughness increased, and that males enjoyed highly violent plays more than female viewers (p. 261). Sullivan (1991) found that the commentary manipulated viewer perception of overt player hostility in men's collegiate basketball games. Neutral commentary resulted in a higher tolerance for violence compared with no commentary (p. 264).

The uses-and-gratifications model tends to lean towards seeking and understanding the motives for watching sport. Gantz (1981) analysed viewer motives associated with televised sport and found that sports audiences were a primarily active audience, one driven by the excitement and rush of emotions associated with live sport, where the yet-to-be-determined outcomes mattered in some ways perhaps as much to the fans as to those on the playing field. Emerson and Perse (1995) explored the gratifications that the audience sought from the 1992 Olympic Games and found that the Olympic Games are considered a special "media event" different from other televised sporting contests. They also identified four major reasons for watching the 1992 Winter Olympics: (1) cultural learning/media events; (2) interest in athletes; (3) rooting for the US, and (4) social utility.

More recently the uses-and-gratifications approach has been used to examine the motives for following sports via social media. Spinda and Puckette (2018) found that there were four main motives for why people use social media (specifically Snapchat) to follow sport: (1) ease and convenience; (2) behind the scenes; (3) vicarious experiences and (4) unique points of view (p. 627). Gibbs, O'Reilly, and Brunette (2014) sought to understand what motivates and satisfies Twitter followers of professional sports teams and found four categories of gratifications sought by sports fans regarding Twitter use: news, promotion, live game updates, and interaction (p. 188).

When it comes to gendered audience studies, much research leans towards the study of televised sport and most have found differences in how the genders approach watching sports and their experience and relationship with fandom.

Multiple studies have compared male and female fan behaviour (Gantz & Wenner, 1990; Dietz-Uhler et.al, 2000; James & Ridlinger, 2002). All found differences between genders in the ways they approached, observed and responded to televised sports. Gantz and Wenner (1990) found that men more than women behaved and reacted like fans, men were more likely to actively watch and participate in the mediasport experience, they more often ate, drank, talked about the action, yelled at the

set and felt the pleasures and pain of victory and defeat. Men also more frequently engaged in preparatory pre-game rituals, such as talking and reading about the upcoming action. They also found that the main reason women watched televised sport was for companionship.

Dietz-Uhler et.al (2000) found that men and women were equally as likely to be sports fans, but women were less likely to identify as such. James and Ridlinger (2002) expanded on Dietz-Uhler et. al found that females had a stronger connection to a specific team than just sport in general. James and Ridlinger's findings were inconsistent with earlier findings in that females did not rate the opportunity to spend time with family or social interaction as the main reasons they watch sport.

It is unclear from the research as to why women are less likely to identify as sports fans or why the research shows that women do not engage in similar pre-game rituals such as reading about the game.

Duncan and Brummett (2000) observed three groups of people watching televised sport which included several women and found that "in contrast to male fans, who showed strong loyalties to specific teams, women viewers refused to adopt the position of fan". This is in line with earlier research by Gantz and Wenner and Dietz-Uhler et.al but contrasts with research by James and Ridlinger, who suggested women do have a stronger connection to one team than others. Duncan and Brummett also suggested that women "refusing to be a wholly committed fan could be considered a refusal of disempowerment or more positively, an empowering act". This is a form of liberal empowerment which lets women participate in a system that may ultimately be disempowering to them, to remain empowered they refuse to give themselves fully to the system. Duncan and Brummett's research showed that just because women are less likely to identify as a fan outwardly or to express their knowledge about sport doesn't mean they aren't invested or interested in the sport or team. However, women who are fans of men's sport tend to learn and privilege male formations of fandom and distance themselves from women's sport and forms of fandom associated with women (Mewett & Toffoletti, 2011).

While this research involves women who consume sports journalism, all of these studies focus on women who watch the live broadcast of mostly men's sports, and there are few studies about men and women who watch women's sport and if there is any difference in how they watch and engage with a women's game. However, there are a

few mainstream sports websites designated for female interest and constructed for the female audiences of sport, including WNBA.com and espnW.com.

In the lead-up to the launch of ESPN-W, ESPN's women's sport platform, McBride (2011) researched the feasibility of a female mediasport market; seven key findings were revealed. "First, watching sports validates masculinity for men, but women must 'prove' they are real sports fans. Second, men prefer in-depth statistics on games and on players' past performances, whereas women prefer basic statistics and personal narratives. Third, similar to past research on sports fandom, men stake more emotions in 'their teams' winning and losing more than women, and fourth, more than half of all men aged 18-34 consider themselves 'serious' or 'super fans,' whereas only 20% of women in that age label themselves as such. Fifth, men watch sports shows three to four times as often as women. Sixth, both men and women are fans of the National Football League (NFL) but diverge in that men like National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCCA) football and the National Basketball Association (NBA) more than women do, and women like figure skating and the Olympics more than men do. Finally, female fans do not necessarily prefer to watch women's sports" (McBride, as cited by Wolter, 2015, p. 346). This research highlights the differences between male and female audiences of both the broadcast of live sport and the mediated sport experience. It highlights the difference in the types of content women prefer and how that content is presented, also crucially, what content women are more interested in seeing.

Some sports have found that women can and do engage with sport as authentic fans this is particularly prevalent in Australian Football. Women have always been part of the culture of Australian Football Hess (2007) researched the history of Aussie Rules, as it is also known, and the ways women have always fitted into the sport. In the early days of the sport it was assumed that women who attended games were passive onlookers, voyeurs and socialites. However, recently, in research done by Smith, Litchfield and Osbourne (2017), it was shown that Australian Football's female fans want to be engaged as knowledgeable, informed and attentive fans. It is likely that due to this example, that other sports could enjoy increased female fandom if women were given the coverage and status of authentic fans.

2.6 Summary

Gender in mediasport remains a popular avenue of research in communication studies. Chapter 2 shows that there is significant proof of a gender bias in media content

and it is not a stretch to assume that there is a bias when considering the audience of that media content, particularly when it comes to mediasport.

Both effects theory and the uses-and-gratifications model are prevalent frameworks within audience studies and are used to study the audience in different ways. Both theories are relevant to this research and this study fits somewhere between both theories. Both the effects of the media and how the audience uses and interprets mediasport content are explored.

There is a lack of studies into the audience of mediasport of the journalistic mode. As discussed, many studies have been conducted into the audience of a live viewing audience, but not so much the journalism surrounding those live sporting events. Many of these studies proved that the male and female viewing audience react and behave in different ways, so it could be assumed that there are also differences in the behaviours of male and female audiences of mediasport and the journalism it encourages. These studies were completed outside New Zealand, and perhaps there could be more similarities between the male and female live viewing audience of sport in New Zealand, as there appears to be in the Aussie Rules fanbase. However, for the purposes of this research, the researcher assumed that due to the previous sport audience research that in New Zealand there were differences between the male and female audiences of sport.

The findings from this literature review have highlighted that there is a particular lack of research on the female audience of sport and its mediated experiences. This study specifically looks at the female audience of sports journalism in New Zealand.

This chapter introduces the theoretical and philosophical framework for the research methodology. It outlines the purpose and aims of the study and further contextualises the research question. It details the researcher's philosophical standpoint and how the project approaches the notions of truth and valid knowledge. It explains the feminist view from which the research emerges, before outlining the reasons for a qualitative research approach and survey methodology. Then the chapter details the process used to recruit participants, and explains how data collection occurred. Then it discusses how the researcher organised and analysed the data with the use of Nvivo software and thematic analysis. Finally, it highlights the ethical procedures considered and employed throughout the research.

3.1 Research Aims

The aim of this research is to explore the relationship New Zealand women say they have with New Zealand sports journalism. "Mediasport is an overwhelmingly male and hegemonically masculine domain that produces coverage by men, for men, and about men" (Bruce, 2013, p. 128). The male dominance of mediasport can mean that the female audience is excluded and not considered an authentic audience of mediasport at all. This research delves into the female audience of mediasport and establish what its members think and how they feel about the mediasport produced in New Zealand, and whether the male dominance of mediasport has affected their mediasport experience and enjoyment of sports journalism.

The insights this research provides into the female audience of sport in New Zealand will provide a clearer picture of the women who consume sports journalism. As well, it will contribute the growing knowledge needed before any move towards a less gendered production of sports journalism.

In order to achieve this, a research question was posed:

In what ways, if any, does the New Zealand women's mediasport audience consider the male framing of sports media impacts its members' experiences and enjoyment of sport?

3.2 Research Paradigm

Research can be strongly influenced by the researcher's philosophical standpoint, which is influenced by their own framing of reality or worldview. This philosophical standpoint is considered a research paradigm; such paradigms are the "broader frameworks of theoretical or philosophical perspectives" (Blaikie, 2007, p. 12) behind the research and provide a "range of possible ways of approaching and investigating a research problem" (Blaikie & Priest, 2017, p. 24). Research paradigms "present different ways of making connections between ideas, social experience and social reality. To a large extent, this is expressed in the ontological and epistemological assumptions they adopt; that is, their particular way of looking at the world, as well as their ideas on how it can be understood" (Blaikie, 2007, p. 13). Ontology "refers to our most basic beliefs about what kind of being a human is and the nature of reality" (Grant & Giddings, 2002, p. 12). The researcher's position in the present research is based on an idealist ontology, in which "the external world consists of representations that are creations of individual minds . . . Reality is what human beings make or construct; it is the activities of creative subjects that constitute the world of objects (Blaikie, 2007, p. 16). Epistemology is a "theory of knowledge . . . of how human beings come to have knowledge of the world around them, of how we know what we know" (Blaikie, 2007, p. 18). Thus the epistemological position the researcher took was a constructivist one. Constructivism claims that "knowledge is neither discovered from an external reality nor produced by reason independently of such a reality. It is the outcome of people having to make sense of their encounters with the physical world and with other people" (Blaikie, 2007, p. 22).

Based on these ontological and epistemological viewpoints, the current study sits within the constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm. A constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm was the most appropriate framework for it, considering its focus was to understand a female perspective on sports journalism in New Zealand. An interpretivist paradigm "obtains knowledge through interpretation or understanding of human action by examining how people make meanings of them (Weerakkody, 2009, p. 27). This research paradigm allowed the researcher to understand and interpret responses from participants. Interpretivist research also allowed for the participants' realities to be understood, as every participant will have a different view on the research topic and interpretivism is a paradigm which accommodates that. "Interpretivist research . . . assumes that the reality is socially constructed; that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single

event” (Merriam, 2016, p. 9). This paradigm assumes everyone sees and interprets events or issues differently.

3.2.1 Feminist social science. This research also draws ideas from feminist social science. According to Harding (1987, as cited in Blaikie, 2007, p. 166), feminist analysis has three distinctive characteristics:

1. To counter the fact that social science has traditionally dealt with questions that are problematic within the social experiences characteristic of men, feminist researchers have insisted that their research must be based on women’s experiences as a source of research problems, hypotheses and evidence.
2. As traditional social research has been for men, feminist research must be designed for women, to deal with what they regard as problematic from experiences.
3. In recognition that the cultural background of the researcher is part of the evidence that enters into the results of the research, the researcher must place herself or himself in the same critical plane as the subject matter.

This research fits into this feminist social science criteria as it is about an issue regarded as problematic by women from their experiences with sports journalism. As women were the only respondents in this research, their voices and their experiences were the only evidence provided to the researcher. The research project was also designed in a way that women could share how they consume and engage with mediasport and then move onto how it is problematic for them and share their experiences with mediasport.

Due to the nature of this research, the researcher employed a feminist epistemology throughout the research. This research stemmed from the researchers own personal experiences with sports journalism, and feelings about the sports journalism being produced. This in turn resulted in a research project that looked into the experiences other women had with sports journalism. Empiricist research has often failed to provide for women, just observing a problem was not enough. In order for this research to be effective, the researcher had to know and understand what women thought and felt, just observing how women consume sports journalism wouldn’t have been of use. In feminist standpoint research “knowledge is supposed to be grounded in experience. However, this is not the experience of the point-of-viewless observation of empiricist researchers. Rather, it is the social experiences of women. Women’s lives

provide the starting point for asking new critical questions about not only those women's lives but also about men's lives and, most importantly, the casual relationship between them" (Blaikie, 2007, p. 168).

3.3 Qualitative Methods

Given the researcher's feminist-interpretivist standpoint, a qualitative research approach was deemed most likely to produce effective data. Qualitative research methods "generate data that are embedded in their context and are non-numerical" (Weerakkody, 2009, p. 14). Simply put, the data that is produced through qualitative research is data that is based in human experience and opinion, and entails procuring detailed responses about a phenomenon and interpreting that information. A qualitative research method was most appropriate as it is "especially well suited for accessing tacit, taken-for-granted, intuitive understandings of a culture" (Tracy, 2019, p. 7). Due to qualitative research having a "focus on the social world instead of the world of nature" (Liamputtong, 2009, xi), this approach allowed the researcher to tap into what female respondents thought and felt about the state of sports journalism in New Zealand. Qualitative research is especially conducive to audience research, as it is "a very useful way of understanding human behaviour" (Mytton et al, 2016, p. 163), which when analysing the audience is crucial to understand why and how audiences are influenced by media.

3.4 Survey Research

Administering a survey is a commonly used research methodology in communication research and is frequently used to gather information about people and their opinions (Weerakkody, 2009, p. 9). Groves (2009) define a research survey as "a systematic method for gathering information from [a sample of] entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the large population of which entities are members" (p. 2).

While regularly used as a quantitative research method, a survey was selected and utilised by the researcher as the most effective tool to gather data, as "survey methods involve gathering information about the current status of some target variable within a collectivity, and then reporting the findings" (Thomas, 2003, p. 41). As traditionally a survey leans more towards providing quantitative responses, the survey was designed as a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a "set of questions that participants in a survey are asked to answer . . . Questionnaires have been used for collection of two principal types of information that respondents are equipped to furnish — facts and

opinions” (Thomas, 2003, p. 66). A questionnaire-style survey allowed the researcher to procure both qualitative and quantitative data.

Administering online surveys does come with some limitations, including potential respondents’ access to the internet. “Internet surveying of households continues to be limited by coverage . . . The lack of broadband access significantly limits the ability of many individuals to be surveyed” (Wolf et al, 2016, p. 259). While access to internet is a disadvantage, the researcher made an assumption that as the respondents being targeted were sports audiences and women who consumed sports journalism that respondents being targeted would have internet access. The researcher does acknowledge that there could have been potential respondents that did not have internet access.

3.5 Participants and data collection

To host the survey, the researcher chose Survey Monkey, a tool often used by social researchers to host online surveys. Survey Monkey’s software allows researchers to create a survey, make it available, collect responses to it and analyse results on one website.

A link to the survey was distributed through social media and by email. The researcher emailed a range of sporting organisations, university clubs and Facebook groups that were likely to have a high number of female members. These included netball clubs, cheerleading clubs, feminist groups, as well as the female development officers for rugby and rugby league. Facebook groups that were approached included the Tania Dalton Foundation, a charity that helps young women and girls from all walks of life unlock their talent and best selves through sport. The foundation is named in honor of the late Silver Fern Tania Dalton. The researcher also contacted The Wonderful Group, a network of people who empower women in sports media. These groups were purposely selected because the membership of these groups is primarily women and as these groups are based around sport, the audience is likely to be interested in sport and sports journalism as well. Respondents were also encouraged to share the survey further, via Facebook posts from the Wonderful Group and the Tania Dalton foundation: the posts were shared eight times in total, but it can not be tracked how many people shared the link of the survey, rather than the Facebook posts. These groups were targeted because they had a high number of female members, in order to ensure only women participated in the survey, the researcher ensured that the call out that was written for social media had that the survey was for women only in the copy. It

was also clear in the participant information sheet in Survey Monkey, that the survey was for women only.

In qualitative research, there are no set rules to determine a sample size (Patton, 2002, p. 244). Mason (2002) argues that the sample size should provide enough data to allow the research questions or aims to be thoroughly addressed (p. 134). In order to address the research question, the researcher needed a meaningful sample this required the use of purposeful sampling . Purposeful sampling “focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). It allows researchers to intentionally select the sample for their research. With this in mind, the researcher decided that anywhere between 50 and 100 survey responses would be an appropriate number to be able to answer the research question. At the completion of the survey, it had 72 responses, which provided ample data to analyse and discuss. This is done in Chapter 4.

3.6 Data Analysis

For this research, a two-pronged data analysis was completed because the data that was produced by the survey was both qualitative and quantitative.

In order that respondents were heard in their own words, the researcher did minimal editing and often used verbatim quotes from respondents in the analysis.

3.6.1 Qualitative data. For the survey questions that produced qualitative data, the data was analysed using thematic analysis, a common qualitative data analysis method. For the purpose of this research, thematic analysis is defined as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). In order for the thematic analysis of the data to occur, the data was downloaded from the online survey website, Survey Monkey, and imported into NVivo which is a software programme that assists in storing, sorting, categorising and coding data.

Once the data was imported, the researcher then familiarised herself with it, and then reviewed, coded and analysed it using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) framework (p. 87) which involves

1. Familiarising yourself with your data: transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.

2. Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to coded extracts and the entire data set.
5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

Coding is the “translation of non-numeric material into numeric data” (Groves et.al, 2009, p. 331). In qualitative research “coding most often centers on the inductive process of searching for concepts, ideas, themes, and categories” (Benaquisto, 2008, p3). This coding process allowed for the themes and patterns among the data to present themselves; the researcher did not use pre-existing codes, rather allowing the data to guide the emergence of themes. The findings from the data then allowed the researcher to draw conclusions to answer the research question.

At times during the coding process the researcher enlisted the use of in-vivo coding, a form of qualitative data analysis that “places emphasis on the actual spoken words of participants” (Manning, 2017, p. 1). This allowed for the respondents’ voices to be heard fully and their responses to not be taken out of context. Some of the in-vivo codes that were used included “women’s [sport] feels like an afterthought”, “awareness” and “female representation”. Guided by these in vivo codes, the researcher then coded other responses that included those words, terms and ideas.

3.6.2 Quantitative data. For the survey questions that were quantitative in nature, the researcher used Survey Monkey’s statistical analysis tools to conduct statistical analysis of the data. The quantitative data was then integrated with the qualitative data to reach the conclusions to answer the research question. The quantitative data was a crucial element of the data to supplement the qualitative data sets, helping to connect the study’s results.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

When conducting research that involves human subjects, it is critical to make sure the process is ethical. For this research, ethics approval was sought and approved through the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEK), prior to sending out the survey. While

the information sought and the methods in which this was done provided low ethical risk, it was still important to recognise there was some risk. In order to address and reduce any ethical concerns this research could pose, the researcher considered and employed a number of ethical procedures throughout the research process.

Before the participants completed the survey, they were asked to read through a participant-information sheet. The sheet provided respondents with the purpose of the research, why the researcher was doing the research, how long the survey would take and how any personal information respondents divulged would be protected, as well as acknowledging that respondents were consenting to have their responses used in the research. The information sheet ensured that the respondents could make an informed decision on whether to participate in the research.

For the purpose of this research and to protect the respondents' identities, any information that made a respondent identifiable was anonymised.

Chapter 4 synthesises and discusses the findings from the research survey. There were 29 questions in the survey and most were answered by every respondent; the lowest response rate was 65 out of 72 respondents and the highest response rate was 72 out of 72 respondents. For some questions, the analysis percentages do not add up to 100 because for some questions the answers provided did not fit into a category or were not useful to the research or answer the question that was asked. For some questions respondents gave more than one answer. As per the coding process explained in Chapter 3, the data was organised into four overarching themes that then produced sub-themes. Section 4.2 discusses the responses to 12 of the questions, those relating to the mediasport consumption habits of respondents. Section 4.3 talks through the findings related to the questions about how women engage with sports journalism. Section 4.4 covers response to the questions on the mediasport landscape both in New Zealand and internationally and what the respondents say they think of the sports media. Finally, section 4.5 covers the questions surrounding gender and the media. For a full list of the questions that were asked in the survey by the researcher, see Appendix 1.

4.1 Consumption Habits

The first question respondents were asked was how many hours of sports journalism they would consume in a week, on average. All 72 respondents answered this question, although two did not put a numerical answer; instead, one put “under an hour” and another said, “less than one hour”. As these were not useable answers they were removed from the line of numerical answers, which took the total number down to 70. The mean number of hours respondents say they consume sports journalism in a week is 5.23 hours. The median was 3 hours and the mode was 2 hours. The lowest number of consumption hours was 10 minutes (treated as a proportion of an hour) and the highest number was 40 hours a week.

Respondents were then asked to select the media platforms on which they consume their sports journalism. Respondents mostly consume sports journalism in online spaces or through television; 96.77% of them selected online as a mode of consumption and 83.10% selected television. However, some respondents do consume sports journalism through other modes; 56.34% of them listen to the radio for sports journalism and 40.85% consume sports journalism through print media.

Following on from which platforms respondents consume their sports journalism on, they were then asked which particular news organisations they used to consume their sports journalism. After analysing the data generated by this question, it

became clear that there were five categories of news organisations the respondents consumed most of their sports journalism from. There was a 100% answer rate for this question with 72 responses; however 31 respondents put more than one media organisation in their answer. The smallest category was sports media from publications focused solely on women's sport; for example, NewsRoom's LockerRoom (www.newsroom.co.nz/lockerroom) and WISP Sports were two of the main platforms that respondents cited. These platforms were mentioned seven times (9.72%). The next smallest category was respondents who went directly to a sports organisation or athletes themselves via social media for news, with 12 (16.67%) of respondents mentioning these platforms. Direct to sports organisations and athletes had an equal number of mentions to international media, which also had 12 (16.67%) mentions. Some of the international news organisations that respondents mentioned included the BBC, The Age, The Guardian, ESPN, ESPNcricinfo and Sky Sports UK. The next category that had the most mentions was social media, 17 (23.61%) respondents mentioned social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in their responses. Finally, the media organisations that had the most mentions were local media, such as the New Zealand Herald, Stuff, NewsHub, One News and Sky Sport these platforms were mentioned 87 times among the 72 responses (120.83%). This tells us that respondents are still primarily going to news organisations for their sports news, despite their inherent bias towards the needs of men. However, almost 17% of respondents say they go directly to sports organisations and athletes for any sports news or journalism. This should be a little concerning for news media organisations. Sports journalism traditionally acts as the go between between sports and athletes and their fans, but in a changing climate more people are going straight to the source for information.

Respondents were then asked why they consume sports journalism. There are five main reasons evident in the data for why respondents consume sports journalism. The most common reason was respondents' like or love of sport, which was the reason for 33.33% of respondents. The next most common reasons respondents said they consumed sports journalism was for information (30.56% of respondents) and out of interest (26.39%). Finally, 6.94% of respondents said they consume sports journalism for enjoyment and 2.78% of respondents said that they consume sports journalism for entertainment. The most common reason for consuming sports journalism was because respondents liked or loved sport, which is interesting, because, earlier research done by Gantz and Wenner (1990) found that women watch sport primarily for companionship. These responses suggest that in the 29 years since Gantz and Wenner did their research

women have become a more engaged sporting audience. No longer are women watching sport because their spouses and family are doing so, they are doing it because they want to. These respondents have their own identity as a sports audience with their own characteristics, and are probably not completely aligned with Gantz and Wenner's sample.

The next question respondents were asked was what proportion of their sports journalism viewing would be about women's sport. There were 72 answers for this question. However 10 respondents did not put a percentage; some of those 10 responses included, "majority as I mostly follow netball", "there is not a lot of articles on women's sport", "not enough sadly", "most of it" and "not much because on the TVNZ news I watch what is provided for me", rather these responses formed part of the qualitative analysis. As these 10 responses were not numerical, they were removed from the line of numerical answers, which took the total number of responses down to 62. The mean proportion of the sports journalism respondents consume that is about women's sport is 37.61%. The median is 30% and the mode is 50%. The mode is the most interesting number here: 10 respondents said that half of the sports journalism they consume is about women's sport. This was more than any other percentage in the responses. This means that the most common answer among the respondents was that they are consuming an equal amount of sports journalism about women's and men's sport. Yet, earlier research on how much coverage women's sport receives on average 10%, which should mean that the 10% of sports journalism women's sport does receive is being heavily consumed. If it is being consumed, is the journalism industry missing an opportunity to develop the market of women's sport.

The next question respondents were asked was if they actively sought out journalism on women's sport, and for what reasons they did or didn't. A large majority (68.06%) of respondents do actively seek out journalism on women's sport. The main reasons they seek out journalism on women's sport is because of interest, because they want to encourage the media to produce more stories on women's sport, because they know someone involved in a sport, or their children are involved in the sport and they want them to see their role models in the media. One respondent wrote that she does seek out journalism on women's sport when she can find it but "there isn't a lot available, the odd thing on the news, or one article in the paper or online and one show on Sky dedicated to netball". Another respondent said that she likes to support women's sport "but the media do not make it easy". Another said, "Yes, because it's usually not

on the front page! So I have to seek it out!”. Those who do not (27.78%), do not seek out journalism on women’s sport because they don’t follow women’s sport or are more interested in men’s sport anyway. There were three respondents (4.17%) who said that they sought out journalism on women’s sport sometimes. They sought out journalism about specific athletes whom they were interested in and seasonal sports, for example “during the softball season”. But one respondent said that she didn’t seek out journalism on women’s sport as a “general rule because it is too hard to find”. Overall, respondents said they needed to seek out journalism on women’s sport; if it was more readily available and easier to find, more people would read it, listen to it and watch it.

Of the 71 respondents who answered Question 7 (*Which sports do you mostly watch?*), 53 put more than one sport in their response. Of all of the sports mentioned, rugby union and netball reigned supreme among respondents, with 40 (55.56%) stating rugby as their main sport they watched and 34 (47.22%) of respondents stating netball as the main sport they watched. Rugby league was the next most popular sport, with 22 (30.56%) of respondents saying league, and then tennis was the fourth most popular with 15 (20.83%) mentions. Cricket was the fifth most popular with 13 (18.06%) mentions. Basketball was another popular sport with 11 (15.28%) mentions, and hockey and football (soccer) come in next, both with seven (9.72%). Australian Rules Football and rugby sevens were also mentioned four times each (5.56%); Commonwealth Games and the Olympics had three (4.17%) mentions as did rowing, sailing and athletics. Sports that had two (2.78%) mentions included ice hockey, triathlon, mountain biking, kayaking, touch, gymnastics, swimming, surf lifesaving, golf and surfing. Finally sports that were only mentioned once (1.39%) include weightlifting, skiing, adventure sports, volleyball, dance, cheerleading, and figure skating.

The most popular sports are relatively unsurprising; rugby, netball, rugby league, tennis and cricket were the top five. However, the range of sports that respondents put is surprising. There is a diverse variety of sports that respondents want to engage with, and while in some cases only one or two respondents put these sports, it is important to note that not all the respondents were interested in some of the more popular sports. One respondent said that the sport that they watch the most was mountain biking “if I can find it”. “But usually just what’s on the news,” she said. These respondents clearly have a wide range of sports they are interested in and in some cases their needs are not being satisfied.

Following on from the previous question, the researcher asked whether respondents watched mostly the men's or women's game in their chosen sports. More respondents (40.28%) said that they watch only the men's games of the sports they mostly watch. However, more respondents (31.94%) said that they watch both the men's game and women's games of the sport, compared to 27.78% of respondents who said that they only watch the women's game of their chosen sports. The reasons that respondents are watching more men's sport over women's included more coverage being available and the men's competitions and games being more exciting. One respondent said that she watched men's sport because it was "more entertaining and [has] better coverage". Another said, "What I grew up watching, and there is more accessible coverage of men's sports". Another said, "While I would prefer to watch women, I would need to go to the actual match due to so little being televised". When it came to why respondents watched women's sport, it was mostly because of relatability; "There are particular women who I look up to and aspire to be like, plus the times achieved for swimmers are more directly relatable to me," she said. Another reason is because respondents wanted to see women's sport grow; one said, "The more eyes they get, the more coverage they receive and the more likely female athletes are to have a pay increase." These responses tell us that most respondents watch men's sport because that is what is available in prime-time viewing and is accessible, but if women's sport was in those slots more would more women be willing to watch women's sport over men's? With some respondents saying that watching men's sport is what they have grown up with, if women's sport was on at a more viewer-friendly time (for example, the 2019 Farah Palmer Cup final between Canterbury and Auckland was played at midday; is this timing conducive to an engaged audience?) and more often, then it would become a normalised sport experience not a novelty one, and the next generation of sport watchers would have grown up in an environment where they watched both men's and women's sport, potentially resulting in some households watching more women's sport than men's. This could also result in more girls and young women participating in exercise and active recreation which are key goals of the New Zealand Government's Girls and Women in Sport and Active Recreation strategy. Media visibility plays an important role in creating an environment where girls and women feel empowered to take up a sport or participate in active recreation (Sport New Zealand, 2018).

When respondents were asked about their consumption habits for sports journalism from international media, 23.95% of respondents said that they do not

consume sports journalism from international media. This is compared to 75.72% of respondents who do consume sports journalism from international media. Of the 75.72% of respondents who do consume sports journalism from international media, nine (16.98%) do so through social media. The international media that respondents singled out included the BBC, The Age, The Guardian, ESPN, Sky Sports UK, The Sydney Morning Herald, CricInfo, and CNN. Clearly the respondents are interested in reading and hearing about international sports news.

When respondents were asked to think about the time of day they consume their sports journalism, the most popular time of day was in the evening with 37.68% (26) of respondents saying they consume their sports journalism then. This is compared to seven respondents (10.15%) saying they consume most of their sports journalism in the morning. There were some (28.98%) respondents who said that they consume their sports journalism at any time throughout the day, and then there were the respondents (23.19%) who said that they consume sports journalism in both the morning and the evening. When it came to whether the time of day impacted the sports journalism they engage with, not everyone put an answer, but of those who did (n=17), nine (52.95%) said that the time of day does not impact what they engage with. One respondent said that the time of day does not impact “what I engage with hugely. I seek out the sources I enjoy regardless”. But peak times on social media does mean some stories get shared into feeds which I may not have seen otherwise.” Another respondent said the time of day does not impact what they consume because “[sports news] is on again at night”. This is compared with eight (47.05%) respondents who said that the time of day does affect what they engage with. One respondent said that the time of day does impact what she consumes as she “wouldn’t read today’s paper at night as the news is already out of date”.

The next two questions were about who respondents watched sport with; this question was in two parts because the researcher also asked whom respondents watched women’s sport with. Most respondents watch sport with their family and/or friends, according to the results of the survey. This question had 71 responses and 33 respondents put more than one answer in their response. Family had 34 (47.98%) mentions and friends had 31 (43.67%) mentions. Partners or spouses were the next most popular companion with 24 (33.81%), and children were next with 11 (15.50%) mentions. Watching alone was also included with eight (11.27%) mentions, sports

teams and clubs and work colleagues each received three (4.22%) mentions and finally pets and flatmates each received one (1.41%) mention.

When it came to with whom respondents watched women's sport, family and friends were again the most popular responses with 26 (36.61%) and 25 (35.22%) mentions respectively. Then compared to the previous questions responses, partners and husbands was significantly lower, with 18 (25.36%) mentions, watching alone received 13 (18.30%) mentions and then watching with children received 10 (14.09%) mentions. Then watching sport with sport teams or clubs received five (7.04%) mentions and finally watching with work colleagues, with a pet all received one mention (1.41%), one person also responded with "everyone".

There were few differences between the responses of the two questions; the most popular responses for both questions was family and friends. However, there was a difference when asked who they watched women's sport with. More respondents said alone; watching alone increased by five mentions between the two questions. There was also a difference in whether respondents watched women's sport with their husbands or partners, there was a drop by six mentions for husbands and partners for the questions whom respondents watched women's sport with. The increase in watching women's sport alone tells us that respondents are independent when it comes to watching women's sport or that the people they live with do not care much about women's sport. However, when it comes to watching men's sport it is more a group activity. Which could potentially mean that the men in the household aren't bothered by women's sport, hence the reason why the group watches men's sport and then why fewer respondents watch women's sport with their spouses and partners. However, it also seems to suggest that the women who participated in the survey are quite happy to watch sport on their own. This has important implications given previous research revealed that most women watched sport for companionship. However, this research suggests that women are revealing themselves as real fans as more women's mediasport becomes available to them. And they are happy to consume it with others or alone.

When asked how the male dominance of sports media impacts their consumption, 16 (23.89%) of the 67 respondents that answered this question said that they consume less because of the male dominance. Six (8.96%) respondents said that they either turn off some sports media or they are less interested in the sport because of the male dominance. 17 (25.37%) respondents said that the male dominance had no impact on their consumption of sports media. However, of that 25.37%, three

respondents (11.82%) said that while the male dominance had no impact on their consumption, they were conscious of it, and that a recent increase in female voices had been great and that they would prefer to see more female representation. One respondent wrote, “I would follow sport no matter what but it is great that more women are being included in men’s sport commentary”, and another said, “I still watch/read it but would prefer to see more female representation”. While there were three respondents who said that the male dominance had no effect on their consumption but did acknowledge that dominance; there were also 14 respondents (20.89%) who said the male dominance had no effect on their sports media consumption, did not acknowledge the increase in female representation and did not state that they would like to see more of it. Clearly the male dominance of sports journalism is affecting the consumption of sports journalism for female audiences, for almost one third of the respondents to the point of consuming less and becoming uninterested in sport. However, these were only some of the responses that fitted into categories; there were some answers that fitted no category, but were still quite revealing. One respondent wrote that the male dominance has made us “more accustomed to hearing a male voice. I actually don’t like listening to female commentators when watching sport which isn’t due to content or skill, it’s just we’ve been brought up listening to male voices”. It is interesting that this female respondent doesn’t like listening to a female commentator; however, in some ways this is a catch 22 situation: how can the audience get used to it and a new generation of sport watcher become accustomed to hearing a female voice if there isn’t one commenting. Another said that the male dominance has made them more critical, “[it] probably makes me more critical of female commentators to be honest. Also [it] probably subconsciously makes me think [that] women’s sport is a waste of time or not as entertaining. Like they are just humouring us letting us have a go”. Two respondents (2.98%) said that the male dominance is frustrating and anger-inducing. One of the respondents said, “It means I don’t read female voices a lot, and in some cases it makes me angry when female stories aren’t told, or told well”.

4.2 Engagement

Respondents were then asked if they actively engage with sports journalism beyond just reading, watching or listening to it. Most (62.5%) respondents do not engage with sports journalism beyond reading, watching or listening to it. The main reasons for this is that they do not have time or they do not think they are expert enough to publicise their opinion. One respondent said, “No real interest in engaging and don’t

consider my self expert enough” and another said, “No, because I often don’t know 100% fact on what I would be commenting on and therefore believe it is better to not be vocal about an opinion based on just my own knowledge”. Another respondent said they do not comment because they are “not confident enough”. While most respondents did not engage, 25% of respondents said that they do engage with sports journalism in this way; the most popular form of engagement was commenting and sharing articles. Interestingly, none of the respondents said they engaged with sports journalism by talking about it with their partners or spouses or even with friends. Then there was the 11.11% of respondents who said that they occasionally or sometimes engage with sports journalism in this fashion; the two main reasons for the inconsistency in engagement was that respondents cannot be bothered engaging, and the other reason was because of online trolls. One respondent (1.39%) said that they used to engage with sports journalism but has since stopped. They said, “I used to comment on articles but I got sick of being abused. It seems there are a lot of people who clearly have multiple accounts and just like winding people up. It’s seriously disturbing.”

Next respondents were asked if they engage with sports journalism on social media. More respondents (55.56%) engage with sports journalism on social media than respondents who do not (36.11%). There were also some (6.94%) respondents who said that they sometimes engage with sports journalism on social media, but not enough to say yes, and then there was one (1.39%) respondent who said that they used to engage with sports journalism on social media, but they no longer do so because of “nasty keyboard warriors”. The main reason for engaging with sports journalism on social media is ease and convenient access to content, whereas the main reason for not engaging with sports journalism on social media was again “keyboard warriors”. One respondent wrote, “It has a tendency to get personal and not about the topic”. Another main reason for not engaging was that respondents didn’t have time to or they just don’t feel the need to engage online. The results of this question were surprising because the researcher initially thought that respondents wouldn’t engage on social media, especially due to the results of the previous question. However, this could mean that respondents do not share and comment on social media, but they do use social media to access news about sport, which is quite common.

The final question surrounding engagement, was whether respondents would engage with sports journalism in an online space that is mediated or female-only. More respondents (44.44%) said that they would not engage with sports journalism in an

online space that is mediated or female only. This compared with 33.33% of respondents who said that they would and 22.22% of respondents who said that they would maybe engage with this kind of space. One respondent said they would engage in this type of space if it was in a “positive framework”. “I can’t stand armchair critics bagging athletes [who] are trying their best — whether or not the score / results reflects their efforts”. Another respondent said, “Doesn’t have to be female-only but mediated properly would be good.” Considering so many respondents do engage with sports journalism on social media already, this result is unsurprising as the set of respondents already have their spaces where they engage with sports journalism. This type of space would perhaps work best for particular sports, say netball, so fans have a space where they can engage with other netball fans, and the space is mediated to block out some of the trolling.

4.3 The Mediasport Landscape

Respondents were asked how strongly they would agree with this statement: “Sports journalism in New Zealand is largely presented for a male audience.” On a scale from 0 (being do not agree) and 100 (fully agree), the average answer was 82. This indicates that respondents strongly agree with this statement.

Figure 1: How strongly would you agree with this statement: Sports journalism in New Zealand is largely presented for a male audience?

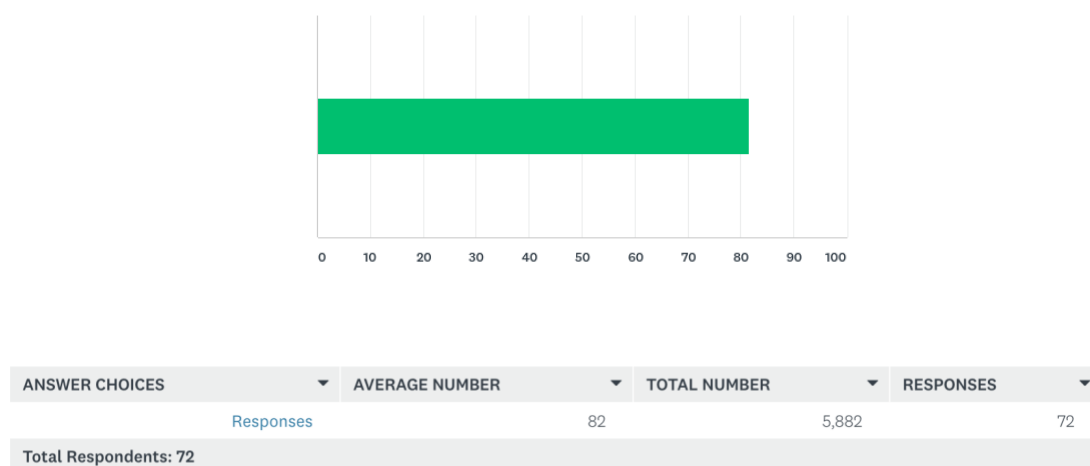


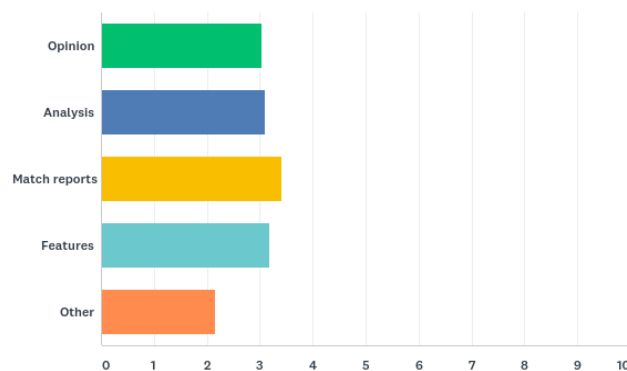
Figure 1: Average number = where respondents selected on the scale from 0 to 100, 0 being do not agree to 100 being strongly agree. Total number = all the numbers of where respondents selected on the scale added up.

Respondents were then asked to rank genres of sports journalism according to how much they consume from most to least. The genres included match reports, opinion pieces, analysis, features and other sports journalism this is shown in Figure 2. Match reports are the most popular type of sports journalism that respondents consumed, with

34.33% of respondents ranking match reports first, match reports also recieved the highest total score, but were second in mentions behind features. The second most popular type of journalism was features as features received the second highest total score and the most number of mentions from respondents. Analysis is third, though 35.94% of respondents ranked match reports second, they had the third highest total score, and the third lowest total mentions. Opinion pieces came in fourth, though they were equal second with features on the total mentions, opinion pieces had a lower total as more respondents ranked them lower in their order. Finally, other types of sports journalism was ranked in fifth, they had the lowest total and the lowest score.

It is interesting that match reports are the most popular forms of sports journalism for respondents, which is a little inconsistent with the research by McBride (2015) into the feasibility of ESPN-W, where she found women are more interested in personal narratives. This could be due to the differences between American female sport fans and New Zealand female sport fans. New Zealand women who are interested in sport could be more knowledgable and engaged than American women. Features, which is the closest style to personal narratives does come in second place in this study.

Figure 2: Rank these genres of sports journalism according to how much you consume them from the most the least in New Zealand sports media? (opinion, analysis, match reports, features....)



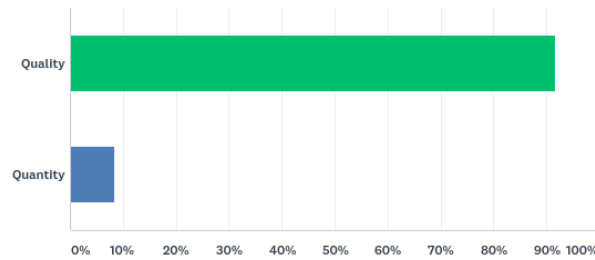
	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Opinion	10.45% 7	20.90% 14	38.81% 26	22.39% 15	7.46% 5	67	3.04
Analysis	4.69% 3	35.94% 23	29.69% 19	23.44% 15	6.25% 4	64	3.09
Match reports	34.33% 23	25.37% 17	7.46% 5	11.94% 8	20.90% 14	67	3.40
Features	23.53% 16	14.71% 10	22.06% 15	35.29% 24	4.41% 3	68	3.18
Other	23.73% 14	5.08% 3	1.69% 1	1.69% 1	67.80% 40	59	2.15

When asked to compare international sports journalism with New Zealand sports journalism, it was an even split between which was better. There were 11 (16.67%) respondents who said that New Zealand sports journalism was better and 11 (16.67%) respondents who said that international sports journalism was better. 15 (22.27%) respondents did say that they were unsure or didn't know of any differences between New Zealand and international sports journalism. When it came to why respondents thought New Zealand sports journalism was better, respondents thought that the reporting of women's sport and our female representation in the media was higher. One respondent said, 'I'd like to think sports journalism in NZ is a leader globally, especially coverage of women's sport from LockerRoom and RNZ podcast Fair Play'. Another thinks the country can still do better. "NZ have a fairer representation of female sports than international media but I think we can still do better". When it came to why some respondents thought international sports journalism was better, multiple respondents said that overseas sports journalism is less biased, there is more variety, is more balanced and less parochial. Finally, seven (10.61%) respondents said that New Zealand and international sports journalism is quite similar.

One respondent thinks that New Zealand sports journalism is behind the rest of the world, mainly due to funding and access, "money/funding, for resourcing, access to athletes, air time, New Zealand is so far behind compared internationally". However, another pointed out that compared to the size of the market, New Zealand sports journalism is quality. "I think that there are some in New Zealand who are of international quality. Overseas, in bigger, more commercialised markets, there are more stories about every aspect of sport, and some of it is quality, but some is just to fill space. I think in general Kiwi sports journalists are more relaxed and that shows in the types of stories we produce".

Respondents were asked to choose what was more important to them as a consumer of sports journalism, the quality of the sports journalism or the quantity of sports journalism available. Nearly all (91.55%) of respondents surveyed stated that the quality of the sports journalism was more important to them than the quantity of sports journalism, which only 8.45% of respondents said was more important to them.

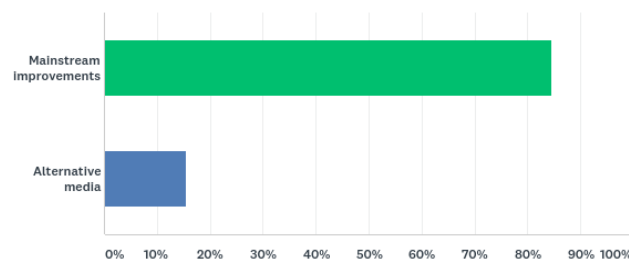
Figure 3: What is more important to you as a consumer, the quality of the sport journalism or the quantity of the sport journalism?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Quality	91.55% 65
▼ Quantity	8.45% 6
TOTAL	71

A majority (84.51%) of respondents said that they would prefer mainstream media to make improvements in the quality and quantity of its reporting of women's sport rather than going to alternative media for women's sport, which 15.49% of respondents said that they would prefer to do.

Figure 4: Would you prefer mainstream media to improve the quality and quantity of its reporting on women's sport, or would you be willing to go to alternative media for women's sport?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Mainstream improvements	84.51% 60
▼ Alternative media	15.49% 11
TOTAL	71

Respondents were asked whether they thought the New Zealand sports journalism landscape could benefit from new forms of media, such as podcasts. Over half (51.47%) of respondents said yes, the New Zealand sports media landscape could benefit from new forms of media. There was a range of reasons why respondents thought this, including the ease of access to content that podcasts provide, and new media platforms would provide a wider range of content. One respondent said,

“Specific podcasts completely for the sport you are interested in, more information, more stories”; another respondent highlighted more platforms meant more exposure and access to new audiences. This compared with 14.70% of respondents who said no, the main reason for this was that respondents didn’t think that they would consume new media, such as podcasts. Then 11.77% of respondents said they weren’t sure whether new media could benefit the sports media landscape. Finally, 10.30% of respondents said that the sports media landscape could maybe benefit from new media. While the majority of respondents said yes to this question, one respondent made a good point in saying that new forms of media could be beneficial but the headlines still need to reach the whole population, “new forms of media are always useful to connect with different audience, but it needs to be on the front page, in the headlines to reach the general population”. The respondents in this study seem largely ready to embrace new forms of media and this could be the market where women’s mediasport thrives. New forms of media could be a place where women’s sport finds its home and creates something that is different from men’s mediasport and unique to women’s mediasport.

4.4 Gender in Mediasport

There were two main differences respondents saw between the reporting of men’s and women’s sport. They were the amount of coverage that men’s sport received compared to women’s sport, and the trivialisation of female athletes through the language used by journalists when writing about them. Over half (58.58%) of the respondents thought the main difference between the reporting of men’s and women’s sport was the amount of coverage men received compared to women. One respondent said, “There is minimal coverage of women’s sport apart from netball. It would be easy to think women didn’t play much sport at all in NZ”, and another said, “There are articles on everything about men’s sport even when there is no game to write about”. Another respondent highlighted specific media: “I think the New Zealand Herald for example sport section should be called Men’s Sport. There is a disgraceful disparity in reporting.” While the majority saw the amount of coverage as the main disparity in reporting, 20 (28.58%) respondents thought that female athletes were trivialised in some way. Three (15.79%) of those 20 respondents that thought trivialisation was the main disparity, and thought that this was done through the language used in reporting of female athletes. One respondent said, “The language is completely different. We hear more about Valerie Adams being a mum than an athlete. It’s astounding just how different the coverage is”, and another said, “The language used to describe

sportswomen compared to men can be different". Yet another said, "The language around women's sport is still skewed towards their looks, family or coach as opposed to being a powerful athlete in their own right". Another respondent said: "Women's coverage is always briefer, less in-depth, except possibly for netball. Less pre-match coverage too, or awareness on how or where to watch". Another respondent said that women's sport is just seen as fun, while "men's sport is seen as competitive, aggressive and hard." Another said, "Women's [sport] feels like an afterthought." Another five (26.32%) respondents said that female athletes were trivialised by media diminishing their achievements or being critical of female achievement. "Men's smaller successes are often portrayed as more important than larger successes achieved by women." Another said, "Women's sport does not get as much recognition for similar or better achievements". Another way of trivialising female athletes that respondents recognised was that media at times uses femininity against female athletes; one respondent wrote, "Men's reporting is often more critical of performance, women's is more of a story about who the athlete is, their life around sport, and children/husbands etc", and another wrote, "Men's reporting usually focuses solely on the sport, whereas women's sports articles have a higher chance of being in her gender and other factors that make no impact to the article". These results are consistent with previous research, but it is disappointing that despite all the research surrounding these issues, the journalism industry doesn't address the trivialisation of female athletes in the language that journalists use, as it one of the biggest and most noticeable issues.

When asked if respondents see any differences between sports media written or presented by a male journalist compared to a female journalist, there was a diverse range of responses. Seventeen (24.63%) respondents said that they hadn't noticed any differences and nine (13.04%) respondents said they weren't sure of any differences. However, among the other responses there was no dominant response; eight (11.60%) respondents had positive things to say about female journalists. One respondent said, "Female journalists tend to focus more on techniques and quality rather than quantity. Females are also more likely to report female athletes than males I would generally find", and another respondent said, "Women journalists on tv are more likely (if it's Melodie [Robinson]) to make a comment highlighting women's achievements. And it feels more genuine when a woman writes/presents a story about female athletes". Six (8.70%) respondents said that they thought that female sports journalists were more balanced. One respondent said, "Female reporting [is] more balanced and less likely to perpetuate outdated female stereotypes", and another said, "I think there's a better

balance/perspective when women are involved, but I also think female commentators and reporters aren't as respected by peers or players". This is compared to seven (10.15%) respondents who were all critical of male journalists. One respondent said, "Male writers tend to bring things like physical aspects, appearance, etc into stories when it is not related to performance", and another said, "Men are more opinionated and negative", while another said, critical and sensationalism by men". Finally, three (4.35%) respondents said that they couldn't compare the two; one respondent said, "It's difficult as there are so so many more male journalists than female journalists, to make a fair judgement", and another said, "There are hardly any female sports journalists to compare with male".

The next three questions ask respondents about where they have seen any gender imbalances in print media, radio, and television sports journalism.

First up, was print journalism. There were 68 responses for this question but not all of them were useable as a few respondents did not appear to understand the question; the question should have been worded differently so that respondents understood what was being asked in terms of where they saw gender imbalances. Perhaps it should have been how they see gender imbalances in mediasport in those spaces. However, of the responses that were usable, 11 respondents said that they weren't sure or didn't notice any gender imbalances in print media. Then 16 (23.53%) respondents said that everywhere in print sports journalism there were gender imbalances. Indeed, a number of respondents just put "everywhere". However one respondent said, "There is an imbalance in the gender of the sports reporters they employ, there is imbalance in the number of stories, and imbalance in the stories the front page". There was also one (1.47%) respondent who said they didn't see a gender imbalance. They said, "I don't think there is – if anything the imbalance is based on code, not gender". One respondent (1.47%) thought the "balance is improving". One respondent didn't state their opinion on where the gender imbalance was but did provide an idea to balance it out. They said, "Would be great to dedicate a page for girls and women's sport only, even a half hour sports show dedicated to female sport around NZ with special guests, competitions and stories from girls teams etc."

Next, respondents were asked what they thought about the gender balance in radio sports journalism; there were 65 responses to this question, though again not all of them were usable. However, of the usable responses 25 (38.47%) respondents said they were not sure of any gender imbalances in radio sports journalism and five (7.70%) said

that gender imbalances were everywhere in radio sports journalism. Then eight (12.30%) respondents mentioned commentary, radio hosts, presenters and reporters being an issue. One respondent said, “There’s not many female hosts. The good ones Radio Sport have had in the past are usually moved on, and I can only think it’s due to backlash from the mostly-male audience, because they’re actually good at what they do”. Eight (12.30%) respondents said that they thought radio sports journalism was very male dominated in coverage. One respondent said, “News on the radio e.g. NewstalkZB has sport reporting of what’s happened in the weekend and it’s always about the bloody Warriors, rugby rugby rugby. It’s so male-focused netball hardly gets a look in even though it’s the sport played mostly by females in NZ.” Another just said, “Much more male dominated”, and another respondent said, “All radio stations could improve women’s coverage greatly”.

Finally, respondents were asked where they thought there was a gender imbalance in television sports journalism, in either news or live sports commentary. There were 67 responses to this question, though not all of them are usable. Of the responses that were usable, nine (13.44%) respondents said that they were unsure or didn’t know of any gender imbalances in television sports journalism; one respondent said they don’t see any gender imbalances. “There seems to be a great deal more women commentators across traditionally male dominated roles (commentating NRL and Union for example).” Then 19 (28.36%) respondents said that the coverage was a major issue in television sports journalism. One respondent said, “I don’t think women’s sport is televised enough especially the male dominated sports such as rugby, cricket, league, they seem to be on not at prime time viewing nor advertised as heavily as men’s sport”, another respondent said there is limited “showing of women’s sports”. However, eight (11.95%) respondents said that they thought that there had been improvements in television sports journalism in regard to gender imbalances. One respondent said, “I think there are a lot of female presenters nowadays so don’t think there is too much of an imbalance”, and another said, “There’s an improvement with the inclusion of female sports reporters and on sports commentary teams such as in rugby union and league, there can be more though. Be great to have all female panels debating sports issues etc...”. Another theme that came up was that five (13.44%) respondents mentioned commentators in their responses. Several said there has been an improvement in the gender balance of commentary recently, but more could be done, particularly in how commentators are treated. One respondent said, “Women in live commentary have to work so hard to get there to be taken seriously. I admire any that make it as a

commentator on live sport as I don't think they are taken serious by men. There are plenty of idiot men commentators out there that other men can't stand but they still keep their job if it was a female they would have been let go", and another respondent said, "In cricket female commentators are often treated with contempt from their male counterparts".

The final two questions asked respondents if they had noticed any improvements in relation to gender inclusivity in sports media or if they had noticed any deterioration. When asked about the improvements, there were four clear categories to start with, seven (10%) respondents said that they saw no improvements in relation to gender inclusivity in sports journalism. One respondent did say, "apart from one women commentating the rugby, not really any". Next, seven (10%) respondents said that they thought the awareness of women's sport had improved; one respondent said, "I think the government's Women and Girls in Sport strategy has created a better awareness of the gender imbalance and all media organisations are talking about including more womens coverage". But respondents also think the awareness of how women are reported has also improved, with one respondent saying, "I think journalists are now much more aware of how they portray female athletes compared to male". For 23 (32.86%) respondents they said that there was more coverage for female sports and athletes. One respondent said, "More reporting on women's sport", and another said, "There's LockerRoom which does a great job of sharing women's sport stories, especially about women who aren't household names. Some organisations might be thinking of it as a token thing, but that still puts more women in sports than before. I think companies are willing, it's just the audiences that need to accept it". Finally, 25 (35.72%) respondents said that the increase in female commentators, presenters and pundits has been a major improvement. One respondent said, "There does appear to be more women in sports journalism these days but we are still very much underrepresented. If it is a women's sport I want to hear commentary or articles written by someone with personal insight and experience". Another respondent said "a few more commentary teams for women's sports have started having female ex-or current players on them rather than just old male ex-players".

When asked if they had noticed any deterioration, most respondents, 34 (53.85%), said that they hadn't noticed any deteriorations in sports journalism in relation to gender inclusivity. However, 4 (6.16%), respondents said that gender inclusivity in sports journalism hasn't gotten worse but it hasn't got better. One

respondent said, “Have not noticed but it is not on par with men’s”, and another said, “No worse than it always had been but sadly no better either”. Interestingly, six (9.23%) respondents said that coverage of women’s sport has got worse and women’s sport is still largely ignored; one respondent said, “[There] is less space devoted to women’s sport in major newspapers”, and another said, “Since Dana Johannsen left the NZ Herald reporting has declined. They hardly even bother to write up ANZ Premiership games and if they do the report is pathetic. One tiny column to 10 about male sport”. Another respondent said that, “with the increase of women’s performance they still rarely and briefly mention significant achievements of women”. Finally, two (3.08%) respondents said that male journalists have focused on promoting male stories. One respondent said, “There have been more opinion pieces from other journalists like Mike Hosking, weighing in with his opinion on women’s sport e.g. the US women’s soccer team, which is really disappointing. He’s just sharing his reckons, anyone can do that, I’d rather hear from someone actually interested/qualified in this space. So I feel like ‘the men’ have almost doubled down on promoting/writing strongly manly stories to ‘balance it out’ which is bullshit”.

4.5 Summary

Chapter 4 synthesises, analyses and discusses the results from the survey. In order to comprehensively analyse the data, the questions were organised into thematic categories, which make up each section of the chapter. The sections were consumption habits, engagement, the mediasport landscape and gender in mediasport. Consumption habits revealed that respondents consume on average just over 5 hours of sports journalism a week, which is mostly on men’s sport, mostly on online platforms and through mainstream media, and because they love sport. The consumption habits section also revealed that respondents are becoming sick of the male dominance within mediasport and because of this male dominance some respondents have ended up turning off sport and not engaging with as much mediasport as they have done in the past. The engagement section offered some interesting results; a majority of women do not engage with sports journalism except reading it, but then a majority also engage with sports journalism on social media. The mediasport landscape section revealed that the most popular type of sports journalism among respondents is match reports and features and that the quality not the quantity of the journalism is most important to them. Respondents also revealed that they would like mainstream media to make improvements in their reporting of women’s sport and that they were ready to embrace

new forms of media for mediasport content. Gender and mediasport revealed that respondents see the trivialisation of female athletes and the amount of coverage offered to women's sport as two of the biggest differences between male and female sports. Interestingly, respondents also thought that there had been improvements in mediasport, respondents thought there had been more coverage offered to women's sport and there has been an increase in the amount of commentators, presenters and pundits. However, the tone of the responses still seems quite unsatisfied and at times frustrated, as respondents think that there could still be more improvements made and it doesn't seem like they are happening.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Chapter 5 completes this research report by drawing conclusions from the analysis, outlining the limitations of this research, highlighting its contribution to the literature and identifying opportunities for future research.

This study has been conducted in order to answer the research question:

In what ways, if any, does the New Zealand women's mediasport audience consider the male framing of sports media impacts its members' experiences and enjoyment of sport?

A short answer to the research question might be: Disillusioned and unsatisfied. The content many respondents are looking for is difficult to find, and the male dominance of mediasport has turned almost one third of respondents off. Not only that, but the trivialisation of female athletes is still apparent to the audience, as is an obvious lack of coverage of women's sport.

These conclusions, explained in detail below, were derived from the overarching themes and the subthemes found in the data. The overarching topics that were found in the data were: consumption habits, engagement, the mediasport landscape and gender in mediasport. Within these overarching themes several key topics emerged including: the growing autonomy of female audiences of sport, the growth of online and social platforms for consumption and the commitment for sport respondents have. Other themes include the obvious lack of coverage of women's sport and the trivialisation of female athletes and the frustrated tone of the respondents' answers. These topics were then used to guide the conclusions.

Respondents indicated that there is a growing autonomy among female sports fans, particularly when consuming women's sport. Respondents seemed happy to watch women's sports alone, not waiting for their male companions to turn on the sports channel. Women are becoming more independent sports fans, especially as more women's sport is being televised. The social construct of a female sports fans is changing as female fans grow more independent and separate from male sports fans.

Respondents also have their own commitment and passion for the sports that they consume. Women now have their own reasons for consuming sport and mediasport. Rather than consuming sport and mediasport to stay connected with their male partners, they do so because they have their own love of sport and their own interest in it. This can also be seen in the number of hours respondents spend consuming

sports journalism. The average number of hours was 5.23 hours per week, which is arguably a considerable amount. To put that number in perspective, if one person watches only the six o'clock news every night that is 7 hours of news a week, so for the average to be 5.23 hours of just sports journalism a week it is a lot. The mean number of hours was 3 hours per week, which is two hours less than the average. Though there were two outliers that could have skewed the data. One respondent said that they consume 21 hours of sports journalism a week, and another 40 hours (both stated that it was part of their job).

This research has also found that the growth of online and social media as a mode of consumption is important for mediasport. Respondents stated that they mostly consume sports journalism through online channels with social media channels featuring significantly as well. Local news organisations are still the most visited for mediasport and most respondents do so through online. But the use of these channels by women in particular allows them the freedom to consume sports content relevant to them at the times and in the places that work for them and their lives.

Social media seems to be an important tool for respondents to engage with sports journalism. Social media gives respondents a voice and an opportunity to have a voice. Over half of the respondents said that they do engage with sports journalism on social media. The main reason for this was ease of access to content and the subject the content was about. Respondents also said it allowed them to share their opinion this may be because they don't share their sporting opinions in their real life interactions, and social media allows respondents to share their opinions with other likeminded people. Respondents seem ready to acknowledge improvements and changes from mainstream media in regards to their reporting on women's sport. They are still keen to consume their sports journalism from mainstream media, but need for there to be improvements, some respondents have already admitted that they are consuming less sports journalism due to the male dominance in the industry. Respondents prefer local media to international media, but clearly they need the local mainstream media to make improvements to their content to better serve their needs.

The lack of coverage of female sports and the trivialisation of female athletes is still a reoccurring issue in mediasport. Issues surrounding the lack of coverage of female sports and athletes, the trivialisation of those athletes through the language used and the rhetorics used for female athletes are still hugely prevalent in the sports journalism that is being produced and are issues that are noticed by audience. These aren't small issues

within the content that are difficult to spot. These are issues that are obvious and are affecting the audience. Eventually, these issues will result in fewer women consuming mediasport, with some respondents admitting that they already do consume less.

It was in this gender in mediasport section where the tone of the respondents in some ways changed from the other sections. When asked to think about the relationship mediasport has with gender and how that impacts on them as consumers, the tone of the responses did alter to one of frustration. One respondent started their answer to a question “Where to start?!” , another ended their answer in frustration with, “. . . which is bullshit”. One of the things that seems to come out in the frustration is that despite the research, and the awareness of the issues surrounding female mediasport, these issues still haven’t been dealt with, and female audiences are sick of it.

5.1 There’s Still Much to Do

The findings from this study show that New Zealand women are an intelligent, responsive and aware audience of sport. They take note of how female sports are reported on, the differences in reporting, and how the male dominance has affected their viewing, which some respondents said means they are now turned off certain sports. Their awareness of these issues shows that how the media treat women’s sport is clearly no longer good enough. Some women are turning off sport and not bothering with sports journalism because it does not appeal directly to them, but they wouldn’t do so if it did. Media organisations should not keep believing that these issues are only noticed by academics and professionals in the field; they should give their audience the respect it deserves and recognise that these issues are now also noticed by and having an impact on the female audience. Women form an important part of the New Zealand sports journalism audience and should receive equal respect for their participation in it. In New Zealand women watch sport for sport’s sake and not just to enjoy the company of their male friends and partners as they watch sport.

There have been plenty of improvements in the realm of women’s sport: the New Zealand Cricket Players Association and New Zealand Cricket reached a landmark deal in 2019 for women’s cricket and the national women’s team, the White Ferns. This increased the amount of money White Ferns players can earn, increases the number of contracted players to 17 from 15, as well as contracting domestic players for the first time (Stuff, 2019). Sky Sport recently signed a four-year deal to broadcast the men’s and women’s Sevens World Series, where previously they only broadcast the men and on the odd occasion the women (Stewart, 2019). Yet, mediasport coverage of women’s

sport still languishes in both the amount of coverage and the type of coverage, each of which female respondents identified as one of their main issues with sporting coverage. It is time for media organisations to invest time and effort into the mediasport on women's sport. The audience in this study is demanding it.

5.2 Access, Availability and Ease

More respondents engage with sports journalism on social media than those who don't. This makes sense, given 95.71% of women surveyed said that they consumed their sports journalism in online spaces. The women surveyed said that the main reasons for engaging with sports journalism on social media is because of ease and convenient access to content. However, a majority of women surveyed said that they sought out journalism on women's sport because the media did not make it easy to find, and over 85% of respondents said that they want mainstream media to improve their reporting on women's sports. Respondents do not want to be hunting for sports journalism on women's sport. Rather, what they are after is content they are interested in being delivered in an easily accessible form. Women who don't want to consume any journalism on women's sport still probably won't, but it is the high percentage of women who do seek it out that should be targeted and ensuring they do not have to hunt for the journalism they are interested in. It could also mean that they are exposed to more or different sports that they previously knew nothing about. Currently the content respondents actually want to see is not easily accessible, and so respondents reveal their frustration at mainstream media.

One respondent, when asked about gender imbalance, suggested a solution in the form of a women's sport section. This is already something that has been done in other parts of the world; in the United States they have espn-W and in England they have The Telegraph Women's Sport. Espn-W launched in 2010 and more recently The Telegraph Women's Sport was introduced in March 2019, and in New Zealand, Newsroom launched Lockerroom in 2018. The Telegraph Women's Sport is aiming to 'transform the profile of women's sport and its visibility in the media' (Telegraph Sport, 2019). While one of potential issues of having a platform dedicated to women's sport is that it risks segregating women's sport, the ease of access and knowing where the women's sport content is surely outweighs the negatives.

5.3 It's a Family Thing . . . or is it Now?

Watching sport seems to be a family event, something families do together, but New Zealand women don't watch sport only for their family's benefit. As outlined above, more respondents watch sport for their own love of it rather than for any other reason. Of course, that doesn't mean that companionship isn't part of the whole experience. Nearly all respondents said that they watched sport (both men's and women's) with someone else. More respondents said they watch women's sport alone than those who watched men's. However with almost everyone watching with someone, makes watching sport a real family event, which you could argue strengthens Gantz and Wenner's (1990) earlier findings in which women watched sport for companionship as clearly respondents from this study mostly watch sport with others. However, the reason why respondents consume mediasport, which are elements outside of the live event, are different. The main reasons respondents consume sports journalism is because they like or love sport, because they are interested in it, for information or because they enjoy sport. This directly contradicts earlier research done by Gantz and Wenner (1990), who found that women mainly watch sports for companionship. This research found that 59.72% of respondents surveyed consumed sports journalism because they liked, loved or were interested in sport. The respondents here in New Zealand are genuine sports fans, they watch and interact with sport because of the sport. With this in mind it becomes even more baffling as to why New Zealand mainstream media continue to deny the female audience of sporting content.

5.4 Women are Turning off Sport

This research has displayed that the male dominance of every facet of sports journalism has had some women turning it off or affecting them negatively in some way. A third of respondents either consume less sports journalism or turn sport off because of the male dominance. This is exactly what the New Zealand Government says it doesn't want to happen. Its Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation strategy makes a case for the value and visibility of women's sports; one of the rationales included is that "value and visibility are closely linked. Women and girls need to see themselves reflected in all types of media and identify with the images used" (Sport New Zealand, 2018, p. 17). Recent research by Sport England found that a recent rise in how many women are participating in exercise can be partially attributed to the work The Telegraph does to increase the media coverage of women's sport, because showing women that they have a place in sport inspires women to get out and try a sport

and it shows them that sport is a place for everyone (Wilson, 2019). However, this is clearly not coming across in New Zealand, because this research shows that the male dominance of the industry is still having an effect and not enough women are seeing themselves reflected in the media they see. This is more than likely due to the commercial priorities of mainstream media where the government is trying to emphasise social value.

5.5 Just because this is about women doesn't mean it's not everyone's problem

This research focused on women and their relationship with, and thoughts and feelings about sports journalism in New Zealand. But just because women were the focus of this research, doesn't mean the problems they face with sports journalism are theirs alone. It also doesn't mean that this is a problem that only women can fix. Feminist social science tells us that feminist research should be about women's problems, with female subjects, but it doesn't tell us that the problems should be fixed by women. In such a male-dominated industry, where the male dominance has had an effect on some women and how they consume and engage with sports journalism, it cannot just be the female journalists and editors who fix this problem. Male journalists and editors need to be aware of the dominance they have and assist in fixing the gender issue in mediasport. Male journalists are the ones producing most of the content, and ensuring that they are aware of the content they produce and the implications it can have on the audience consuming it is crucial. Male journalists and editors cannot assume that their content is only consumed by a male audience. This is an issue that male journalists and editors contribute to whether they realize or not, and it's time they were a little more aware of how they contribute to these issues and what they can do to be part of the solution rather than sticking with the status quo and maintaining the hegemonic status of men's mediasport.

5.6 Contribution to research

Before this study, audience interpretation of mediasport was an underdeveloped area of research, particularly in New Zealand, and even less so the area of the female audience of mediasport. This is where this current study fills that gap. This research builds a foundation of the female audience of mediasport in the country. It also moves sport audience studies forward from the area of fanship, and, rather than questioning whether women can be fans of sport this research, shows that women were sport fans from the beginning, and worked to find out whether the sporting content they consume satisfies their needs as sports fans.

5.7 Limitations and opportunities

There were a few limitations of this research. The scale of this research was largely limited by how many respondents there were who fit into the targeted sample. As this research was targeting women, who are sports fans and consume sports journalism, this limited the amount of respondents. The survey being online and the process of finding respondents also taking place online also limited the sample size for the research.

As stated there is limited research in the area of female sport audiences and their interpretation of mediasport. It was anticipated that this study would encourage this area to be looked into further. Based on the findings of this study there is a recommendation for research into the female interpretation of mediasport to be delved into further. Each area of mediasport could be researched individually as this research was quite broad and could be narrowed down.

There were three questions towards the end of the survey which some respondents did not fully understand. These asked respondents to state where they saw gender imbalances in print, radio and television journalism. This limited the amount of useable responses to these questions.

This particular study focused on the female audience of mediasport and how they respond to it. However, there could be a possibility for the exact same research to be conducted with male respondents. To be able to compare the responses to the same questions and how male and female audiences see mediasport in New Zealand could make for an interesting project. This project was confined to New Zealand, conducting the same or similar research in other countries could provide data that could be compared geographically.

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Appendix 1

Survey questionnaire:

1. How many hours of sports journalism would you consume in a week, on average, on all media platforms, including social media?

2. On what platforms do you consume your sports journalism?

- ☐ Print
- ☐ Online
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Television

3. Through which particular news organisations do you consume most of your sports journalism?

4. Why do you consume sports journalism?

5. What proportion of your sports journalism would be about womens sport

6. Do you actively seek out journalism on women's sport? Why, why not?

7. Which sports do you mostly watch?

8. Do you watch mostly the men's game or the women's in this sport? Why?

9. How strongly would you agree with this statement: Sports journalism in New Zealand is largely presented for a male audience?

10. What differences if any, do you see between the reporting of men's and women's sport?

11. What differences, if any, do you see a difference in the sports media written or presented by male journalists to female journalists?

12. Rank these genres of sports journalism according to how much you consume them from the most to the least in New Zealand sports media? (opinion, analysis, match reports, features....)

☰	Opinion
☰	Analysis
☰	Match reports
☰	Features
☰	Other

13. Do you consume sports journalism from international media, and if so where?

14. How do you think international sports journalism compares to New Zealand sports journalism?

15. What is more important to you as a consumer, the quality of the sport journalism or quantity of the sport journalism?

☐ Quality

☐ Quantity

16. Would you prefer mainstream media to improve the quality and quantity of its reporting on women's sport, or would you be willing to go to alternative media for women's sport?

☐ Mainstream improvements

☐ Alternative media

17. Do you think the New Zealand sports journalism landscape could benefit from new forms of media such as podcasts? Why, why not?

18. At what time of day do you consume sports journalism and why? Do you think the time of day impacts what sports journalism you consume and engage with?

19. Do you engage with sports journalism, beyond just reading, watching or listening to it? (e.g. commenting on articles, tweeting at shows, calling in on radio stations), why, why not?

20. Do you engage with sports journalism on social media? Why, why not?

21. Would you engage with sports journalism in an online space that is mediated or is a female-only space?

22. With whom, if anyone do you watch sport?

23. With whom, if anyone do you watch women's sport?

24. Where, if anywhere, do you think there is a gender imbalance in print sports journalism?

25. Where, if anywhere, do you think there is a gender imbalance in radio sports journalism?

26. Where, if anywhere, do you think there is a gender imbalance in television sports journalism? (this can be on the news or in live sports commentary)

27. How do you think the male dominance of sports media has impacted your consumption of sports media?

28. What improvements, if any, have you noticed in sports journalism recently in relation to the inclusivity of women?

29. What deterioration, if any, have you noticed in sports journalism recently in relation to the inclusivity of women? What did you notice?

Participant Information Sheet

Survey Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

28/11/2018

Project Title

Female sports audiences: Who are you?

An Invitation

Hello, thank you for clicking through to this survey. My name is Tayla Mitchell, and this research is part of my Master's degree, I previously completed my Bachelor of Communication in journalism before continuing my studies. This research is about female sports audiences in New Zealand, and what they are looking for when engaging with sports journalism. I love sport, watching, listening, reading about it, and I want to eventually work as a sports journalist. This research has come about from my own love of sport and sports journalism, and wanting to better understand the Kiwi audience. If you would like to be involved in this research, please click through to the survey. It will take you 20-30 minutes, but it is greatly appreciated. To show my thanks, the survey includes a draw to win a monetary voucher. There is also an option to participate in a focus group in Auckland which will further explore New Zealand women's responses to this survey.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to better understand the female audiences of sports journalism. Which will be of benefit to the sports journalism community while adding to the literature on sports journalism. I also benefit from this research, it is part of my qualification and will potentially be published in an academic journal on completion.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

This research is aimed at New Zealand women who consume sports journalism and if you have clicked through to this survey it is because you self-identify as a woman who consumes sports journalism. If you do identify as a woman who consumes sports journalism, you are the target of this research because I would like to know more about what you see in sports journalism in New Zealand and what you are looking for in sports journalism.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible. Please

note: By completing and submitting this survey, you are giving me consent to use your answers in my research.

What will happen in this research?

This research involves this survey. By participating in this survey, you are giving me consent to use the data from the answers you have provided. The results from this survey will only be used to complete this research project and will not be used for anything else.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are minimal risks involved in this research. Hopefully you feel no discomfort whilst filling out this survey, we have designed this survey to not take up too much of your time but to also be comprehensive to be able to gain a better understanding of you as an audience.

How will my privacy be protected?

The survey is anonymous, and any personal identification information revealed in the answers will be anonymised in the results. Sharing any personal details is completely optional, and should only be done if you wish to do one of the following: a) go into the draw to win a gift voucher, b) receive the results of this survey or c) go on the list to participate in a focus group. You may wish to do all three, which is fine or you may wish to not do any, and that is fine too.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

This survey is free to complete, the only thing we ask for is 20-30 minutes of your time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

This survey will be open for 2 months so there will be plenty of time for you to complete this survey.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like to receive the results of this survey please select so. You will be asked to provide your name and email address, and we will email the results to you.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Greg Treadwell*, Gregory.treadwell@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Tayla Mitchell

Taylamitchell96@gmail.com

0224064490

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Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*,
AUTC Reference number *type the reference number*.

