

Evaluating Title IX Knowledge of Administrators at a Public High School in Southern California

Riya Korde

Calabasas High School, USA

ABSTRACT

This study examines the Title IX knowledge of administrators at a public suburban high school in Southern California through qualitative data gathered via semi-structured interviews. The research addresses the gap in literature regarding Title IX awareness at the high school level, emphasizing the importance of understanding and implementing Title IX policies in educational settings. Interviews with administrators and officials involved in Title IX enforcement reveal sufficient knowledge and awareness from administrators through the thematic analysis of the interview data. This study uncovered key insights into the implementation of Title IX at the researched school, providing a foundation for future policy initiatives aimed at promoting gender equity in public educational institutions. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on Title IX enforcement, emphasizing the significance of ensuring equal opportunities for all students in accordance with federal regulations.

Introduction

Title IX of the Education Amendments was signed into law by former President Richard Nixon in 1972 (Women's Sports Foundation 2019). As a federal policy, Title IX provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance" (U.S. Department of Education 2021). Today, the implementation of Title IX is of interest to nearly all student groups due to its prohibition of sex-based injustice in athletics, academics, and any other parts of school life. However, with recent changes in presidential administration, national guidance regarding Title IX has become unstable. Former President Trump rescinded several of the civil rights advances made by the Obama administration involving Title IX. Such retractions included that of protections for LGBTQI+ students as well as regulations for harassment reporting and investigation (Casey 2017).

At the community level, understanding the effectiveness of Title IX can inform local practices and ensure equal opportunities for all students, yet, "school districts often lack the local expertise and support needed to enforce Title IX effectively" (Meyer et al. 2018). With ever-evolving governmental instructions and a changing political landscape, the Title IX-related knowledge of school and district officials must simultaneously progress. There is often a lack of clarity regarding the relationship between Title IX enforcement and the knowledge levels of educational employees. Therefore, by employing semi-structured interviews with administrators at a specific school, this paper aims to investigate if relevant school and district employees are knowledgeable about Title IX at their institution.

Literature Review

Title IX has been a pivotal policy in shaping gender equity in public educational institutions. This is quantified by researcher Betsey Stevenson's creation of a table determining state high school participation rates (with Title IX as a policy catalyst) and the correlation to several criteria (i.e. urban v. rural hometowns, parents who are homeowners, average family income, etc.) determined from the 2000 Census. While Stevenson's work demonstrated positive effects on female student-athlete participation rates, it also showed an increase in the number of legal proceedings around the policy (Stevenson 2007). In fact, Timothy Epstein's evaluation of several legal cases stemming from high school scheduling conflicts (as they pertain to competition season) found that the scheduling in these cases deprived female student-athletes of equal college recruiting opportunities, marginalized female athletic events, and stunted participation (Epstein 2012). Similarly, authors Moorman and Masteralexis noted some recent Title IX decisions that highlight patterns in the law's shortcomings (i.e. inconsistent case resolutions, restrictions on legal remedies, etc.) involving college athletes in academic settings (Moorman and Masteralexis 2008).

The problems identified by these researchers set the context for further investigation into matters at the high school level. All Title IX coordinators and school officials have certain legal requirements to uphold at their institutions, some of which are described by the "Dear Colleague Letters," published by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights to help guide officials with Title IX enforcement. These documents say that if discriminatory harassment has occurred, it is the school's responsibility to prevent it from recurring, provide counseling for the target and/or perpetrator, and take disciplinary action against the perpetrator, among other actions (Ali 2021). Although these reports clarify enforcement responsibilities, "there have been several settlement agreements that indicate school districts are not adequately upholding these guidelines" (Meyer et al. 2018). Author Michael Lipsky described several conditions that may challenge employees tasked with Title IX enforcement, including insufficient resources, overdemand of services, and undefined institutional goals (Lipsky 2010). He elaborates how, "when taken in concert," the actions of these individuals "add up to agency behavior" (Lipsky 2010). With these barriers, several researchers investigated the extent to which such officials fulfill their described duties within the context of their district or school. Through survey responses from a random selection of Texas principals and interviews conducted with Title IX district coordinators, researcher Sandra Maddox investigated Title IX implementation in Texas public schools. The responses indicated a lack of implementation of Title IX policies due to a deficiency of knowledge by educators in several areas (i.e. that discriminatory practices exist in classrooms, what constitutes harassment, and knowledge of noncompliance consequences), mirroring trends found in some higher education institutions (Maddox 1995). Elizabeth Meyer's team came to comparable deductions through semi-structured interviews with coordinators in K-12 school districts from Colorado and California. An analysis of these interviews determined that these school administrators did have discretion when dealing with these matters, but many felt underprepared for Title IX-related duties, revealing challenges such as a lack of readiness and the need for policy recommendations (Meyer et al. 2018). These studies provide a nuanced understanding of Title IX's influence, emphasizing the ongoing need for research with existing gaps. While several studies have been conducted at the college level for NCAA standards and for K-12th grade, minimal research exists specifically for administrator knowledge at high schools (9th-12th grade). As Title IX complaints are typically minimal at elementary and middle school levels, the researcher concluded that it was important to focus on the evaluation of these criteria at high schools (with the standards identified by the literature) because there is more of an overall emphasis on the importance of Title IX due to the increase in competitive sports teams and the physical and mental maturity of students. Researchers Anderson and Osborne literally state that "Title IX issues are not as well known or discussed involving high schools and high school athletes," a problem that encompasses administrator knowledge of Title IX as well (Anderson and Osborne 2008). A high school in southern California was selected due to the researcher's

access limitations, but as no research has been conducted for this region or the institution itself, the location of the school does not hinder the new impact of the findings upon the existing literature.

Method

To answer the research question effectively, qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews at a suburban high school in southern California. As the referenced institution is a federally-funded public school, Title IX compliance is mandatory, justifying the use of this school in the study. The interviewees included administrators and officials employed by the district or the school itself. To determine the population of the study, the researcher looked for school employees who were previously or are currently involved with the implementation and enforcement of Title IX-related policies at the institution. Because the number of people who met even that one criterion was limited, the researcher attempted to broaden the scope of interviewee possibilities for the selected sample by including district workers who were also involved with Title IX enforcement at the school.

A combination of the methods of authors Maddox and Meyer et al. was utilized. To provide distinctions between the possible methods for this research, structured interviews offer the same questions given in the same order and unstructured interviews resemble conversations with a lack of pre-planned questions. Meyer et al.'s *semi*-structured method, defined as a "schematic presentation of questions or topics to be explored by the interviewer with the purpose of exploring many respondents more comprehensively" was used "to keep the interview focused on the desired line of action" (Jamshed 2014). As Meyer et al. stated regarding their use of semi-structured interviews, "we developed a semi-structured interview protocol to ensure we addressed common themes but allowed room for individual participant's experiences to emerge" (Meyer et al. 2018). This was especially relevant because of the limited sample size of the study. The researcher deduced that more information would be collected if the interviews were somewhat regulated but the interviewees were not limited to certain questions in a certain order.

While Maddox drew conclusions through the survey and structured interview of the participants in her study (methods that were not used in this research), some of Maddox's interview questions were used as a baseline for interview conduction (see Appendix 2). Of the questions that Maddox used, the researcher chose to exclude questions regarding the interviewee's credentials and also added a question about the interviewee's personal opinion on Title IX enforcement at the institution. The justification for these changes was that the credentials of the interviewees were a determining factor in interviewee selection and had already been researched to a significant extent. Additionally, the researcher believed that it would be beneficial to explore matters of personal opinion for this subject to observe any patterns or fluctuations from the thematic analysis of the other interviews. Thus, the methodology of this project consisted of semi-structured (rather than structured or unstructured) interviews guided by several foundational interview questions. This combination allowed the researcher to stick to a general line of inquiry while allowing for deviation based on the interviewee's knowledge, position, or level of Title IX involvement. Regarding analysis, the researcher also followed the path of Meyer et al. with the definition of themes for qualitative evaluation. The themes were also compared to existing Title IX guidance from various sources and legislation to determine whether the interviewees demonstrated knowledge or not. Although various sources from the literature (including Maddox and Meyer et al.'s works) evaluated multiple school districts or schools, for the purpose of this study, only one school from one school district was researched because of time constraints and regional access.

Interviews

Interviews were scheduled through email communication with information found on the district or school websites. Three interviews were in person (including one double interview, an interview with two interviewees at

the same time) and one was conducted online through Zoom (a video conferencing platform) for a total of four interviews and five participants. The potential influences of the double interview will be explored in the limitations section. Four men and one woman were interviewed. Interviewee data including sex, age, and occupation or relation to Title IX implementation can be found in Appendix 3. Before each interview, the participants signed an informed consent form which notified them of their right to withdraw from the study, ensured confidentiality, and obtained their permission to record the interviews for later transcription (Appendix 1). The interview always began with a question about the interviewee's knowledge of Title IX at the institution. Follow-up questions were asked to help the researcher gain a more comprehensive understanding of the interviewees' perceptions, especially when interviewees indicated that they possessed more knowledge or specific details about an aspect of implementation, a certain event, or Title IX itself. While the baseline interview questions derived from Maddox's source (given in Appendix 2) did provide a foundation for interviewing, the questions may have been slightly modified by the researcher throughout each interview or ordered differently depending on the flow of conversation or the interviewee's perceived knowledge of the topic. For example, if the interviewee's first few responses were limited, certain questions may have been skipped due to the researcher's assumption that the interviewee would not be able to provide sufficient or useful answers to those questions based on their previous answers. Other questions may have been skipped based on the interviewee's occupation or experience. For instance, when interviewing an individual from the school, district-related questions were omitted due to the individual's greater perceived understanding of school rather than district affairs. Similarly, if an individual indicated that they were fairly new to their position, questions regarding events that may have preceded their experience were bypassed as well. The length of the interviews depended on the number of questions asked, the depth of interviewee responses, and the number of interviewees per interview which ranged from 10-35 minutes. All interviews were conducted in English and each interviewee was provided with a hard or digital copy (via email) of the baseline interview questions. Not all of the questions provided to the interviewees were asked in each interview. The interviews were recorded using the Voice Memos app (iOS) and transcribed using Google Docs. The interview transcripts can be found in Appendices 4-7.

Thematic Analysis

Once the interviews were transcribed, a thematic analysis of the interview data was performed. A thematic analysis "is a search for themes that can capture the narratives available in the account of data sets" (Dawadi 2020). For a qualitative study, this type of analysis allowed for the identification of themes in the interviewees' responses and their correlation to Title IX implementation. The four themes were defined after the interview process and before analysis. The definition of these themes can be found in Table 1. The criteria described in each definition were used to identify themes in the transcripts of each interview (Appendices 4-7) and classify specific examples or demonstrative general discussion to each theme. Specific examples could include reference to a distinct school policy or action and general discussion could include simply addressing a broader topic without particular relation to the school itself. If an instance met the definition of two or more themes, the thematic grouping was decided by the researcher depending on its nature and specificity. Due to the potential influence of the double interview, the identification of themes was based on each participant's responses (not each interview) because the study was attempting to address the perception of each person. Each transcript was analyzed according to the defined themes to draw parallels and find outliers between the interviewees' knowledge, and overall Title IX implementation at the institution to contribute to the research question's conclusion.

Findings

Table 1. Definition of Themes	
Theme	Definition
Policy Evolution	Discussions with the interviewees often focused on the evolution of Title IX policies. Coordinators expressed insights into changes and adaptations over time, highlighting key amendments and the broader history of the policy.
Impact on Female Athletics	Interviewees shared perspectives on the effects of Title IX policies on female athletics. Insights included discussions on increased opportunities and participation rates, challenges faced, and overall transformations in the landscape of girls' sports at the institution.
Enforcement	The theme of enforcement covered discussions on compliance efforts, teacher and administrator training, challenges in implementation, and the proactive steps taken to ensure adherence to Title IX regulations in promoting equality.
Future	Interviewees shared their forward-looking views for Title IX in their school settings. This theme covered discussions on anticipated changes, areas for improvement and ongoing efforts for Title IX implementation.

Table 2. Interview Summaries		
Interviewee #	Summary of Interview	Themes Present
1	The interviewee acknowledges the importance of efforts to provide equal opportunities for female athletes and mentions the recent addition of a girls' lacrosse team.	Impact on Female Athletics
	The interviewee discusses the school's zero-tolerance policy against any type of harassment.	Enforcement
2	The interviewee emphasizes the importance of gender equity in sports, describing personal efforts to address inequities in practice blocks and the number of girls' versus boys' sports teams.	Impact on Female Athletics
	The interviewee provides insights into the training received by administrators and teachers on Title IX, discussing how such trainings differentiate between job positions.	Enforcement
	The interviewee discusses his ongoing efforts to create new athletic opportunities for girls (if there is interest)..	Future
	The interviewee discusses the history and importance of Title IX and its role in ensuring equal access and rights, particularly in athletics.	Policy Evolution

3	The interviewee emphasizes that disparities for female sports with regard to teams and practice times often stem from coaches' schedules or lack of participants rather than intentional discrimination.	Impact on Female Athletics
	The interviewee discusses an example of regular sexual harassment training for teachers that ensures that teachers are educated and tested annually on the subject.	Enforcement
	The interviewee addresses potential future opportunities for sports like girls' flag football.	Future
4	The interviewee demonstrates an understanding of the historical evolution of Title IX, placing it within the context of her own life experiences. Additionally, she points out that the nuanced changes in Title IX policy are often based on case law.	Policy Evolution
	The interviewee acknowledges the impact of Title IX on the increase in female sports opportunities, noting the addition of girls' lacrosse and flag football. She recognizes the importance ensuring equity for female athletes, while conceding that there is a significantly larger number of male athletes than female athletes.	Impact on Female Athletics
	The interviewee emphasizes the attention that goes into evaluating the severity of incidents that may fall under Title IX. She references the district's sexual harassment policy and describes the process of meeting with complainants, explaining their rights, and providing the complaint procedure.	Enforcement
	The interviewee describes ongoing efforts to improve information accessibility on the district's website for those seeking Title IX-related resources.	Future
	The interviewee discusses the evolution of Title IX policies over the years, describing increased opportunities for girls to address the historical imbalance in sports participation between genders.	Policy Evolution
	The interviewee mentions the introduction of girls' lacrosse and flag football as examples of the positive impact of Title IX on female athletics. He also cites the personal experiences of his children as further evidence.	Impact on Female Athletics

5	The interviewee discusses how topics related to Title IX are addressed at administrative staff meetings and during teacher training sessions. He also underscores the importance of being vigilant about potential Title IX issues,	Enforcement
	The interviewee mentions the upcoming creation of gender-neutral bathrooms as a future Title-IX-related endeavor to provide equity with regard to facilities. The interviewee also expresses gratitude for the impact of Title IX on his own family and envisions a future where his children grow up with a different perspective on gender equity in sports than he did.	Future

Discussion

Policy Evolution

The theme of policy evolution was present in discussions with interviewees 3, 4, and 5. Interviewee 4 reflects on the developments in Title IX legislation, noting, "But there are consistently nuanced changes to Title Nine as a whole... based mainly on case law." This highlights the dynamic nature of Title IX regulations, which evolve in response to legal precedents and societal shifts. Furthermore, Interviewee 3 mentioned how the types of policy changes identified by Interviewee 4 impact teacher training, stating that licensing courses "[evolve] with changes in the interpretations of the laws," thus referencing the impacts of such legal developments upon the administrative side of Title IX. Interviewee 4 also provides a firsthand account of the transformative impact of Title IX, comparing her own high school experience with her daughter's. She reflects, "From 1975 to 1979, there were so few girls sports" and "ultimately, she grew up in a completely different world than I did. Like, she played varsity soccer, she put like, just like, the way she felt about herself, and access was completely different." Her experience highlights the tangible changes brought about by Title IX evolution, especially in expanding athletic opportunities for female students. Similarly, Interviewee 5 observes the progressive evolution of Title IX policies within his own lifetime, noting that he has "[watched] the evolution of [Title IX] since [he] graduated high school in 1994." He also brings up previous experiences with other schools. He mentions how he worked "at another high school that didn't have a softball field on campus. And they had facilities for everything else. And so it was a big deal for the school, to work to build a softball field to create that equity for the students that were playing softball." These personal accounts attest to the enduring impact of the historical evolution of Title IX in fostering gender equality in sports and other domains.

Impact on Female Athletics

All five interviewees provided insights into the tangible effects of Title IX policies on female athletics within the institution, showcasing notable transformations, specifically in the landscape of girls' sports. Interviewee 1 stressed the core objective of Title IX, affirming, "my knowledge of you know, Title Nine and the rights is just trying to make everything in athletics equal for for male and female obviously with an emphasis on the female side, making sure they have equal opportunity and resources to participate in the things that they would like to participate in," underscoring the aim of Title IX to ensure fairness in athletic opportunities regardless of gender. Interviewee 2 elaborates upon this idea by stating that, "say we want to create a new boys sport and then that's uneven, so you have to create a girls sport too at the same time" and also mentions how he "did not feel that

practice times were equitable” which resulted in the restructuring of practice blocks. The addition of new sports teams, such as girls' lacrosse and flag football, was mentioned by all five interviewees as outcomes of Title IX enforcement. As an example, Interviewee 1 remarked that “this is our first year where we've added a girls lacrosse team” and “some of our female programs have grown in size with number of teams and members in the program.” Interviewee 5 also commented on how the school will have “girls lacrosse and flag [football] coming next year.” These types of expansion broaden the scope of athletic offerings to better cater to female students' interests and talents. Furthermore, Interviewee 5 showed the impact of Title IX through personal experiences, stating, “I have a daughter that does track and cross country and flag football at Moorpark. I have another daughter who's a gymnast who knows that that's a great opportunity for tons of girls.” These firsthand encounters highlight the tangible benefits accrued by female athletes due to the enforcement of Title IX, ranging from increased participation in diverse sports to the creation of scholarships, thereby reflecting a shift in societal perceptions regarding gender roles in athletics.

Interviewees 3 and 4 also provided insights into the nuanced challenges faced in ensuring compliance with Title IX. Interviewee 3 noted that in some cases, Title IX violations may appear to exist, but, argues that “Title Nine requires that the opportunity for equal access be there, which we do have, but in some cases, there just aren't enough participants.” Interviewee 4, comparably, stated that in sports, “there's always more boys participating.” These acknowledgments highlight the complexities involved in achieving full compliance with Title IX regulations, with considerations extending beyond mere access to encompass factors such as participation rates for female sports.

Enforcement

Enforcement of Title IX regulations within educational institutions involves a multifaceted approach that encompasses compliance efforts, teacher training, challenges in implementation, and proactive steps to ensure adherence to the law. With the potential for Title IX violations, there were several examples of the school's standard regulatory measures in the interviewee's responses. As Interviewee 1 stated, “the school has obviously a strict but standard policy against sexual harassment, zero tolerance, you know, whether it's physical or verbal.” Interviewee 4 noted, “Enforcement never just differs between elementary, middle or high schools... there the incident of complaint increases with grade level.” She elaborated on the procedures taken with the instance of a Title IX violation, describing, “If there is an incident, and it is concerning that it perhaps is a Title Nine complaint, I actually meet with the student or the family... and give them the complaint procedure.” The details of this process show the school's attentiveness to supporting individuals who may have experienced Title IX violations. Interviewee 5's comments on the school's active procedures in Title IX enforcement further reinforce the trend of vigilance and adherence to regulations. He mentions discussions at administrative staff meetings and teacher training sessions, stating, “And Title Nine is one of the [topics] that we'll always talk about at least once a year and just about what kind of things to be looking out for, as the school leaders.” With this, Interviewee 2 talks about how “admin are trained differently than teachers” with “a lot more training in like, policies and upholding policies, you know, like those type of things” to ensure school-wide compliance. Similarly, Interviewee 3 describes, “sexual harassment training in a video course, provided by its vendor called Keenan Safe Schools. It's long, it's about an hour and you have to pass the test at the end and it shows various situations and whether those situations constitute sexual harassment or not.” This annual training is an example of fulfilling administrative responsibilities to continuously educate teachers as enforcement requirements change. Interviewee 5's comments also reflect the school's commitment to promptly addressing potential non-compliance issues. He emphasized, “If we ever were to get an inkling that we're out of compliance somewhere that would be something that we would immediately approach and address.” These proactive stances accentuate the school's diligence in rectifying any shortcomings in Title IX enforcement swiftly and effectively. Moreover,

Interviewee 4's insights into the rarity of full-blown Title IX complaints within the school provide further context on enforcement efforts. She noted, "It's not commonplace... to have a full-blown Title Nine, something to reach that. Extremely rare." The acknowledgment of the infrequency of serious Title IX violations reflects the school's overall success in maintaining compliance.

Future

The future of Title IX in school settings is shaped by the forward-looking perspectives of individuals involved in its implementation. Interviewee 5 underscores the centrality of Title IX in discussions surrounding equity initiatives, affirming, "And then when I got here, we'll talk about facilities improvements of one nature or the other. And the conversation always centers around Title Nine, how do we make sure we're providing equity?" His mention of Title IX as a focal point was demonstrated by several interviewees who brought up specific instances of ongoing school actions. Interviewee 2's discussion of initiating girls' sports teams exemplifies this vision for ongoing efforts. He emphasized the importance of supporting interests that align with Title IX principles, stating, "So it's that, for me, that is one big layer of the Title IX is, right, to make sure that if there's that interest, we go for it and we support it," which reflects a dedication to meeting evolving needs within the school community. With the same goal in mind, Interviewee 4's efforts to enhance information accessibility for Title IX resources on the district website demonstrates a commitment to fostering a supportive environment. She stated, "We worked on quite a bit last year making sure that if someone felt like there was a Title Nine complaint that they wanted to make, we worked hard to make sure, thinking from a student when a parent lens, a staff lens, where would I find it in the website so that you could search it and find it right away and that you would see who the people were that you can reach out to okay to get assistance and then that's who would meet with you and, and share, you know, share the process with you give you the paperwork to file the official complaint." Interviewee 5's insights into broader societal shifts influenced by Title IX underscored the far-reaching impact of the legislation beyond school policies, mentioning, "specifically, for example, there are gender neutral bathrooms being put in place by the school district." The statement, "They haven't been finished yet, but they're working on that over, hopefully, the summer," suggests ongoing efforts towards enhancing inclusivity within the school. This stresses the enduring relevance of Title IX as a guiding framework for promoting equity in school facilities and reflects its impact on institutional practices.

Interviewee 5 highlighted the lasting impact of Title IX on future generations' perspectives on gender equity and access to opportunities. He mentioned his children growing up in a world where gender equality is increasingly valued, stating, "And then I have two sons who will grow up in a world where they look at things differently than my father. As far as access, that's super important to me, too, that they have that lens of yeah, everybody should have equal opportunities." His example illustrates how Title IX has contributed to shifting societal attitudes towards gender equality for future generations. Overall, interviewees demonstrated awareness of ongoing efforts to address disparities and a commitment to enhancing support mechanisms for Title IX-related issues.

Limitations

While the data analysis and discussed findings provide valuable insights into the awareness of Title IX enforcement among these employees, several limitations of the study must be acknowledged. Firstly, the one double interview that was conducted may have influenced the responses of the two interviewees involved (Interviewees 4 and 5) due to peer pressure or social dynamics. Additionally, conducting interviews with officials from only one high school and district prevents the generalizability of the findings to other institutions. The evaluation of responses, the definition of themes, and any major decisions made for this project may have been biased by the researcher's stake in the topic as a female student-athlete at a public high school. Such biases could, in part, be

due to the subjectivity of thematic analysis for interpretation. This was a major factor in analyzing the transcripts, especially if a referenced part of discussion met the definition of multiple themes. In these cases, the decision of which theme to categorize came down to the researcher's jurisdiction, which, as mentioned, could have been skewed. Other influences could have included the direction and dictation of the conversations (with the open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews) and/or the structure of the study. Interviewee response bias could have also been present, as interviewees may have modified their answers or provided socially desirable responses due to the researcher's position or the sensitive nature of the questions asked and the topic at hand

Conclusion

The initial research question, "Are relevant school and district administrators knowledgeable about Title IX at their institution?" can be answered by the four defined themes: policy evolution, impact on female athletics, enforcement, and future. The presence of the themes meet the identified regulations of Title IX in sources such as the "Dear Colleague Letters." For example, the theme of policy evolution matched up with the fragmented statement "issuance of new policies against harassment and new procedures," enforcement with "schools should have well-publicized policies prohibiting harassment and procedures for reporting and resolving complaints," and future with "responding promptly and appropriately to address continuing or new problems" (Ali 2021). Impact on female athletics correlated with "regulations require institutions to 'provide equal athletic opportunity for members of both sexes'" (Monroe 2020). The themes were echoed in similar statements made by other pieces of literature and legislation and as each theme was consistently demonstrated by multiple participants' interview responses, it can be concluded that the relevant school and district employees interviewed possessed a comprehensive understanding of the principles and policies of Title IX. Drawing from specific examples at the institution and personal experiences of practical Title IX implications, they also portrayed a commitment to ongoing efforts to promote gender equity within the school community.

Referring back to the findings of two of the foundational sources that were mentioned earlier, Meyer et al. found that many school administrators felt underprepared, implying the necessity of policy and training recommendations and Maddox found a lack of implementation of Title IX policies due to a shortage of educator knowledge. The findings of these two studies were similar to each other in the discovery of administrative deficiencies. However, the findings of this research contrasted these two conclusions as it was found that the relevant employees interviewed *were* knowledgeable about Title IX and were well prepared to continue its implementation at the school. There are two possible explanations for these discrepancies, the first being location or region. Maddox's study was conducted for Texas public schools and Meyer et al.'s for Colorado and California. While Meyer et al.'s study did include California schools, the work did not include how much of an effect the California schools had on the conclusion in comparison to the Colorado schools. Thus, demographic polarization could have played into the differences in administrator knowledge across the studies. Another potential factor could be when each study was conducted. Maddox's study was conducted in 1995, nearly thirty years before this study was conducted, and Meyer et al.'s was published more recently, in 2018, about six years ago. For both studies, time could be a significant influencing factor for the difference in results because the overall global emphasis on gender equality has continued to increase, which could have impacted the knowledge levels of the participants in this research.

Implications of this study include potential influence upon the creation and upkeep of gender equity policies at the researched institution and the assurance that these officials have the necessary knowledge of Title IX to effectively enforce its provisions. Interviewees may have been inspired to look further into and review school and district policies following the interviews if curiosity was sparked. Additionally, the findings could guide school policy development and review processes and facilitate the implementation of Title IX regulations in a manner that promotes gender equity and inclusivity. To conclude, while the findings of this study are not

universal across all educational institutions (as mentioned in the limitations), they could have served to provide insights into the implementation of Title IX in a specific educational setting (that being a public high school in the suburbs of Los Angeles), laying the groundwork for future research and policy initiatives aimed at advancing gender equity in schools.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my advisor for the valuable insight provided to me on this topic.

References

- Ali, R. (2021). *Dear Colleague Letter from Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Russlynn Ali*. U.S. Department of Education; Office for Civil Rights. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010_pg3.html
- Anderson, P., & Osborne, B. (2008). A Historical Review of Title IX Litigation¹. *Journal of Legal Aspects of Sport*, 1, 127–168. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jlas.18.1.127>
- Casey, L. (2017). *After Trump rescinds Title IX guidance, what's next for transgender students' rights?* | Brookings. Brookings; Harvard Opinion Research Program. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/after-trump-rescinds-title-ix-guidance-whats-next-for-transgender-students-rights/>
- Dawadi, S. (2020). Thematic Analysis Approach: A Step by Step Guide for ELT Research Practitioners. *Journal of NELTA*, 1–2, 62–71. <https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v25i1-2.49731>
- Epstein, T. (2012). Title IX Requires Consideration of Scheduling, Not Just Participation. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2103879>
- History of Title IX - Women's Sports Foundation*. (2019). Women's Sports Foundation; Women's Sports Foundation. <https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/advocacy/history-of-title-ix/>
- Jamshed, S. (2014). Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy*, 4, 87. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-0105.141942>
- Lipsky, M. (2010). *Street-Level Bureaucracy, 30th Ann. Ed.: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service*. Russell Sage Foundation. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610446631>
- Maddox, S. (1995). Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972: Level of Implementation in Texas Public Schools. *UNT Theses and Dissertations*.
- Meyer, E. J., Somoza-Norton, A., Lovgren, N., Rubin, A., & Quantz, M. (2018). Title IX coordinators as street-level bureaucrats in U.S. schools: Challenges addressing sex discrimination in the #MeToo era. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 68. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.26.3690>
- Monroe, S. (2020). *Dear Colleague Letter: Athletic Activities Counted for Title IX Compliance*. U.S. Department of Education; Office for Civil Rights. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20080917.html>
- Moorman, A., & Masteralexis, L. (2008). An Examination of the Legal Framework between Title VII and Title IX Sexual Harassment Claims in Athletics and Sport Settings: Emerging Challenges for Athletics Personnel and Sport Managers. *Journal of Legal Aspects of Sport*, 1, 1–37. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jlas.18.1.1>
- Stevenson, B. (2007). Title IX and the Evolution of High School Sports. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 4, 486–505. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-7287.2007.00080.x>
- Title IX and Sex Discrimination*. (2021). Home | U.S. Department of Education; Office for Civil Rights. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html