





SPURRING CHANGE: COVERAGE OF GENDER IN COLLEGE RODEO

CARLY LEAVITT-HULLANA | RILEY LOPEZ | DR. JAMES BINGAMAN | DR. ERIN GORTER

INTRODUCTION

Trends in media frame and coverage of the non-traditional sport of rodeo tend to focus on a single gender despite being a mix-gendered competition (Bushy, 1990). Often this coverage, from youth to professional divisions, will frame males as “rowdy risk takers” (Bushy, 1990, pp. 76) and, if at all, females as a “beautiful object of desire” (Thatcher, 2023, p. 128). We sought to investigate the representation of female intercollegiate rodeo athletes on Instagram and analyze how it aligns with broader trends in media framing. We anticipate uncovering active, dominant male athlete representation and passive, sexualized underrepresentation of female athletes.

METHODOLOGY

-  Visual framing of 2023 Top 10 National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA) teams with men’s and women’s teams.
-  20% (n = 48) coded by 2 researchers finding acceptable intercoder reliability (Gwet’s AC).
-  Explored passive, active, and sexualized framing of posts.
-  Chi square analysis to compare frequencies where statistical significance alpha level was at $p < .05$ a priori.

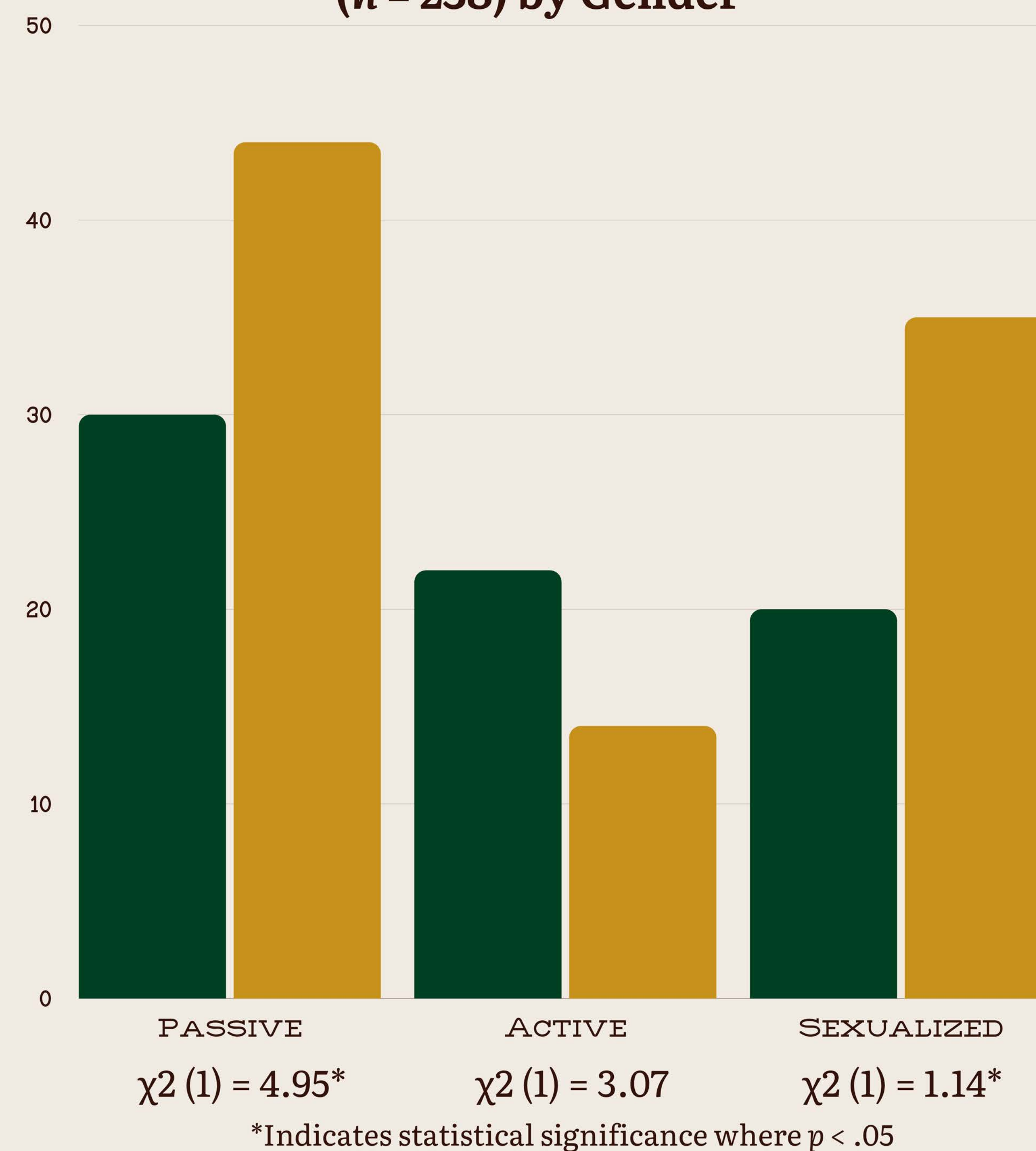
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This project extracts the sociological accounts of framing theories (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; Gitlin, 1980), where frames refer to the “central organizing idea or story line...the essence of the issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 143). Frames comprise of metaphors, catchphrases, visual images, and moral appeals (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Gitlin (1980) explains framing as cognitive, interpretive and presentative organized discourse patterns of emphasis and/or exclusion. Albeit framing has explored gender in sports (Billings & Hundley, 2010), this study investigates framing of female intercollegiate rodeo athletes in social media.

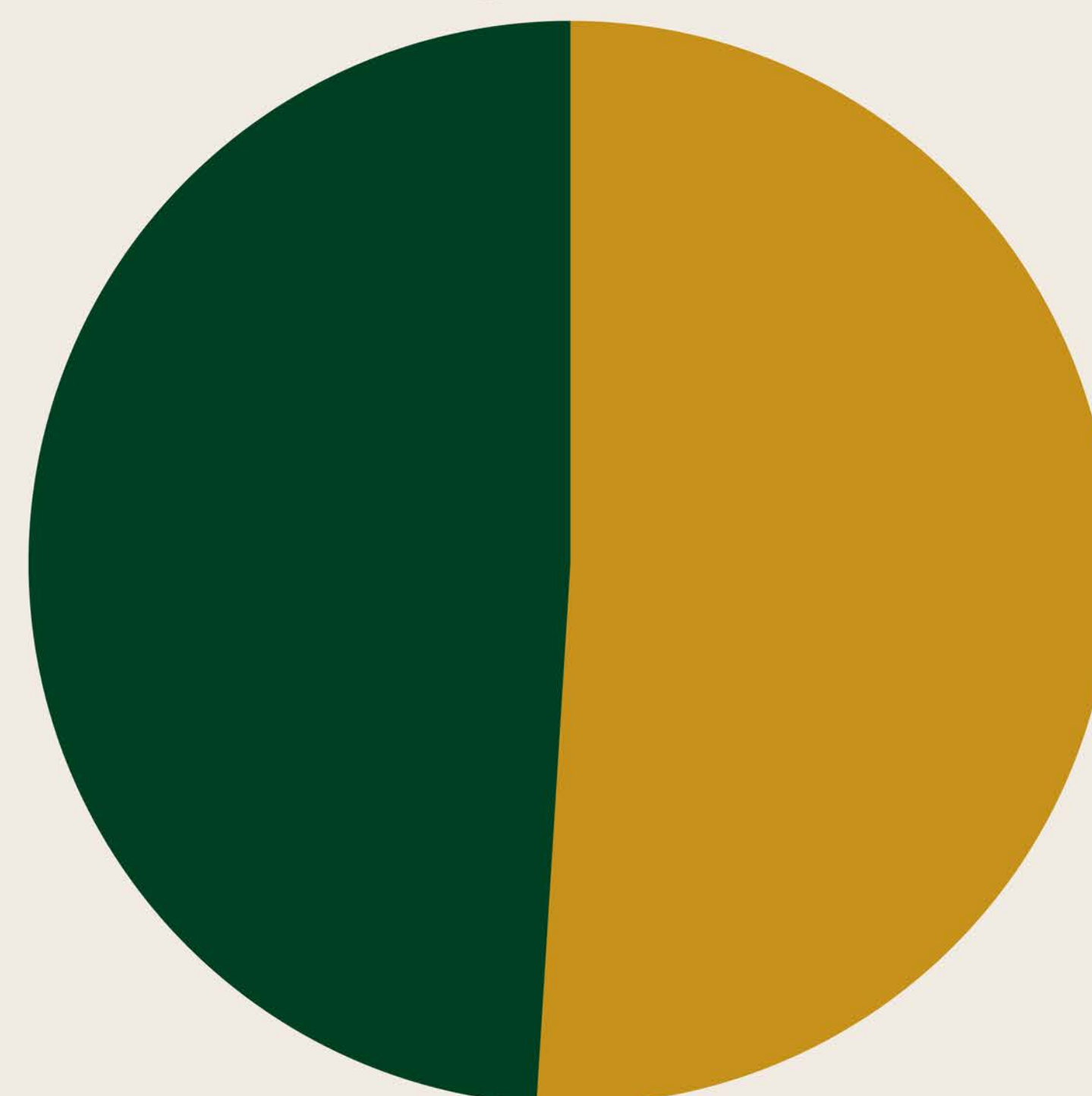
RESULTS AND FINDINGS

■ FEMALE ■ MALE

Prevalence of Visual Framing in Intercollegiate Rodeo Instagram Posts (n = 238) by Gender



Representation of Gender Across Instagram Posts



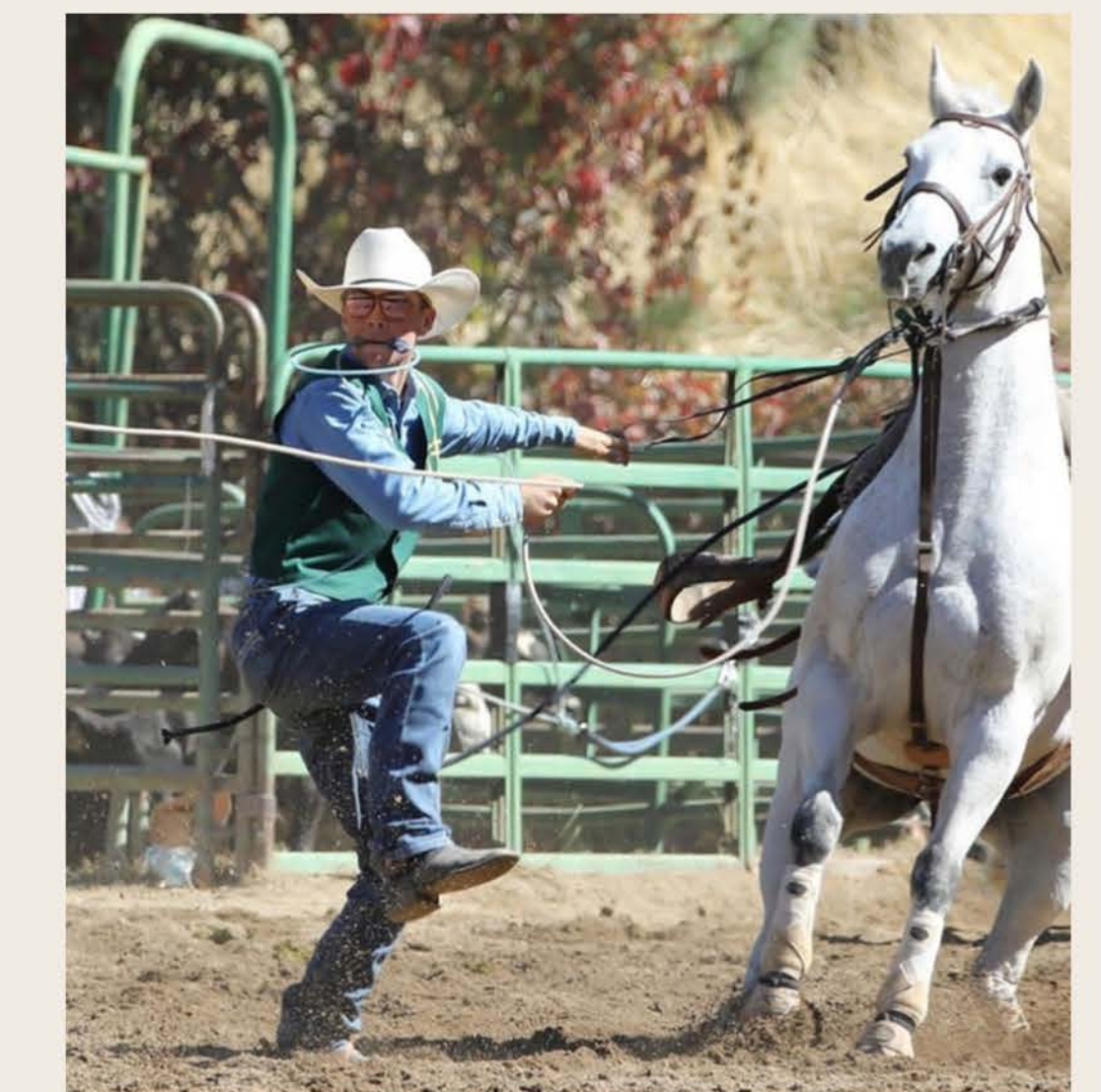
CONCLUSIONS

Representation of males and females is equitable across Instagram platforms for top 10 NIRA teams from the 2023 CNFR season. There is a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) in how females are portrayed concerning passive and sexualized framing. Females are portrayed more passively, meaning they are not physically active or are not currently participating in their respective area of competition when represented. Females are also portrayed more sexualized where representation regards their appearances rather than their skill, talent, and successes.





PASSIVE & SEXUALIZED



ACTIVE & NOT SEXUALIZED



IMPLICATIONS

-  Sheds light on the framing and coverage of female rodeo athletes through their respective teams’ social media platform.
-  Those should heed caution with coverage as repercussions can impact quality of performance, self-perception, and others’ perception within the rodeo community.
-  Achieving equity, not equality, is predominant not only in the realm of rodeo and sports but agriculture as well.
-  Further research should seek to determine how female intercollegiate rodeo athletes view how they are framed and how they would like to be framed in social media posts, further impacting all women in media in sports and agriculture.



CAL POLY
Agricultural Education & Communication
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

REFERENCES

