

**REPRESENTATION OF OLYMPIC ATHLETES IN  
A MALAYSIAN ONLINE NEWSPAPER**

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**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS  
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Field of Study: **Discourse Analysis**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how genders are represented in selected sports news during the 2008 Olympics. The sports news of the 2008 Olympics from *The Star* online newspaper were selected as the corpus of the study, focusing on reports of selected female-appropriate sports. These female-appropriate sports were classified by Vincent et al. (2002) based on categories proposed by Metheny (1965) and Kane (1988). A discourse analysis was conducted to investigate how gender is portrayed in today's sports media. A concordance software was used to study the data to obtain terms referring to male and female athletes. Visual images were also analysed to examine how the media portray male and female athletes on the selected articles. Results indicate that female athletes were under-represented in terms of word and photograph count. Although women were competing in the so-called 'female-appropriate' sports, they were negatively portrayed compared to their male counterparts. Some of the terms used for women tend to focus on appearance rather than their achievement and skills. Interestingly, the photographs attributed to male athletes were more likely to be featured as being competitive compared to the female counterparts. This study tends to support the notion that gender bias and stereotyping still exist in today's newspapers reporting of sports.

## ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk selidik bagai mana gender di gambarkan dalam berita sukan yang terpilih ketika sukan Olympics 2008. Berita sukan tentang sukan Olympics 2008 dari akhbar atas talian '*The Star*' telah dipilih sebagai corpus. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada sukan yang sesuai untuk wanita. Sukan yang sesuai untuk wanita telah diklasifikasi oleh Vincent et al. (2002) berdasarkan kategori yang dicadangkan oleh Metheny (1965) dan Kane (1988). Satu analisis wacana telah dijalankan yang melihat bagaimana gender digambarkan dalam media sukan hari ini. Satu perisian concordance telah digunakan untuk mengkaji data bagi memperolehi terma-terma yang merujuk kepada atlet-atlet lelaki dan wanita. Gambar-gambar juga dianalisa untuk memeriksa bagaimana media menggambarkan atlet lelaki dan wanita dalam artikel-artikel terpilih. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa atlet-atlet wanita kurang ditonjolkan dari segi bilangan perkataan dan gambar. Walaupun wanita bersaing di dalam sukan yang dilihat sebagai bersesuaian untuk mereka, namun mereka masih dipandang negatif jika dibandingkan dengan keupayaan atlet-atlet lelaki. Seterusnya, ada terma yang digunakan untuk wanita yang lebih menumpukan kepada penampilan dan rupa mereka berbanding dengan kejayaan dan kemahiran mereka. Gambar-gambar yang menonjolkan atlet-atlet lelaki menunjukkan mereka sebagai lebih berdaya saing daripada rakan-rakan wanita mereka. Kajian ini menjuru kepada menyokong wujudnya bias dan stereotaip wanita dalam laporan sukan oleh akhbar hari ini.

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