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One Day National Seminar on "Best Practices for Physical Education and Sports Faculty Development in the College"

Organized by:

Yashwantrao Chavan Mahavidyalaya, Karmala, Distt. Solapur,
Maharashtra, India

& Punyashalok Ahilyadevi Holkar Solapur University, Solapur,
Maharashtra, India

Held on 15th February 2020



THE PLACE OF JOB EXPERIENCES OF ATHLETIC RUNNING SHOES IN THE PROFESSIONAL SPORTS PLACING

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ABSTRACT:

Previous literature has reported that athletic trainers in the professional sports setting (PSS) experience role strain from extreme organizational expectations and demands, resulting in perceived limitations in patient care and work-life balance. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of athletic trainers working in the PSS. We recruited 18 participants from various professional sports who partook in a semi-structured, one-on-one phone interview. A 3-person data analysis team used a multi-phased process to identify emerging domains and core ideas, ultimately developing a consensus codebook. Trustworthiness was established with member checking, multiple researcher triangulation, and external auditing. Three domains emerged: 1) job attractors, 2) feeling valued, and 3) characteristics of the workplace environment. Participants reported being attracted to athletic training in the PSS to work with elite athletes, because of supportive coworker relationships, having a network of athletic trainers, and increased access to resources and education. Athletic trainers reported feeling valued by employers through increasing professional responsibilities and increasing compensation or recognition. They also reported having trusting relationships with their patients. Participants described mutual organizational and employee loyalty in their workplace environment. Participants detailed examples of inappropriate behaviors and a sub-culture of acceptance, whereby these workplace experiences were accepted as a byproduct of the PSS. Participants discussed common coworker tensions related to miscommunication. Although participants were overall positive about their workplace's experiences, they acknowledged sacrifices to acquire and retain their positions, including significant time commitments, regular travel expectations, family compromises, and fewer opportunities for promotion. Athletic trainers in the PSS feel valued for their work despite the long hours, family and promotional sacrifices. Positive coworker environments and access to resources continue to attract athletic trainers to the PSS. A sub-culture of accepting inappropriate workplace behavior within the PSS should be further



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explored. Athletic trainers in the professional sports setting feel that they have added job attractors that may include access to resources and education. The professional sports setting may include a sub-culture of acceptance, where inappropriate behavior is overlooked as a result of the setting.

Key Words: Worth, Harassment, Payment, Consensual Qualitative Research

INTRODUCTION

Health care professionals in all settings are predisposed to work-life imbalances due to the nature of healthcare, and athletic trainers are no exception. Athletic trainers in various settings have reported working on average forty plus hours a week that does not include traveling. These long hours are brought on by attending to patient needs, administrative duties, athlete supervision, and travel to contests. Due to the long hours, athletic trainers in various settings are succumbing to burnout in the workplace. The burnout is often attributed to role overload, stress, and personal perception of being undervalued or underappreciated in the workplace. Previous research has been completed exploring the secondary school and college/university athletic trainers' work experiences; however no such investigation has occurred within professional sports setting (PSS). Although only 3% of the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) membership database identifying as working within the PSS, it is a setting that many athletic training students and young professionals' may be drawn into the profession, simply based on its media exposure. Settings have such variability, it is important for future athletic trainers to have a better understanding of each. The athletic trainers that work in a rehabilitation or clinical setting seem to have a more consistent schedule (about 40 hours per week); however those in the secondary school, college/university, and PSS are reporting working more than 40 hours a week accompanied by frequent travel. The role of the athletic trainer in the collegiate setting can be very demanding due to the travel requirements, obligations to multiple teams, teaching duties, supervision of students, and various other administrative duties. Literature has also revealed that finances at institutions play a role in the access to, expectations of, and priorities for athletic training services.

The culture of college/university and PSS has typically focused on the athletic team's success rather than high-quality, independent health care to athletes. When patient care and sport performance are misaligned, which is not always the case but often is in competitive athletics, athletic trainers face conflicting priorities. Previous literature stated that athletic trainers in the PSS indicate they experience moderate to high levels of role strain and role overload, which



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create work-life imbalances. Athletic trainers have also become accustomed to the time demands which have become “long-standing” within competitive athletics and seen as indistinguishable with commitment and productivity. A recent NATA Position Statement further elaborated on the work-life balance that is associated with an increase in quality of life for athletic trainers and the various outcomes which include burnout, job satisfaction, professional commitment, health and wellness, and career intention. Therefore, we sought to evaluate the experiences of athletic trainers working in the PSS.

METHODS

Design

We used a qualitative design with one-on-one interviewing to describe the workplace experiences of athletic trainers in the PSS. The Institutional Review Board approved this study.

Data Collection and Analysis

All interviews and verbal consent were audio recorded using a video conferencing platform (Zoom, San Jose, CA). Each interview was performed by the primary investigator (AAA). The interviews were audio recorded and field notes were taken. We used participant numbers to protect the identities of the contributors, and then coordinated pseudonyms to represent each. The primary investigator then reviewed the interview transcripts between 48 and 72 hours after conducting the interview and then transcribed using a web-based transcription company (Temi, San Francisco, CA). Once the interview was transcribed, it was then sent back to the participant to allow for “member checking” where the participant was allowed to read the transcript and ensure that everything stated was correct. Interview data was analyzed using the consensual qualitative research (CQR) approach. (15,16,17) The CQR approach has 5 essential components: 1) open-ended questions in semi-structured data collection that allows for a consistent collection of data across all participants and a more in-depth investigation of individual experiences; 2) a 3-member code team to analyze the data using individual perspectives; 3) the data analysis team meets to come to a consensus on the meaning of the data; 4) the use of an auditor to check the work of the data analysis team; and the 5) development of domains, categories, core ideas, and cross analyses.

CONCLUSIONS

Athletic trainers in the PSS feel valued for their work despite the long hours, family and promotional sacrifices. The work environment, as cited by our participants, created positive coworker interactions, mutual loyalty, and access to resources is what continues to attract them



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to this setting. Positive coworker environments and access to resources continue to attract athletic trainers to the PSS. Despite feeling valued, some athletic trainers in PSS reported leaving the profession altogether because they regarded family time more than the time spent at work. A sub-culture of accepting inappropriate workplace behavior within the PSS should be further explored.

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