

ABSTRACT

GERUSO, JOSHUA THOMAS. Job Satisfaction of Full-Time Atlantic Coast Conference Board of Certification Certified Athletic Trainers. (Under the direction of Dr. Edwin Lindsay.)

Despite research indicating high levels of job satisfaction reducing turnover in the working community, there is limited research regarding the factors which attribute to job satisfaction of athletic trainers. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors affecting athletic trainers. Full-time Board of Certification certified athletic trainers of the Atlantic Coast Conference were sent a copy of the Job Satisfaction Survey electronically. The results show that athletic trainers are more satisfied than the average American and the average medical professional. They also show the most important factors to job satisfaction of athletic trainers are amount of help, hours worked, and institution type. This research and accompanying recommendations will decrease the level of turnover in the athletic training population.

Job Satisfaction of Full-Time Atlantic Coast Conference Board of Certification
Certified Athletic Trainers

by
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DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my parents Thomas Paul Geruso, the best man who ever lived, and Kathleen Mary Geruso, the toughest woman on the planet.

BIOGRAPHY

Joshua Thomas Geruso was born in Woonsocket, Rhode Island on August 25, 1981.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
METHODS	4
Subjects	4
Demographics	4
Scale	5
Limitations	6
Analysis	6
RESULTS	8
Demographics	8
Overall Job Satisfaction	9
Overall Job Satisfaction by Gender	9
Overall Job Satisfaction by Age	10
Overall Job Satisfaction by Education Level	10
Overall Job Satisfaction by Experience	11
Overall Job Satisfaction by Type of Institution	11
Overall Job Satisfaction by Annual Salary	13
Overall Job Satisfaction by Perceived Relationship With Coaching Staff	13
Overall Job Satisfaction by Average Hours Worked Per Week In-Season	14
Overall Job Satisfaction by Average Hours Worked Per Week Out-Of-Season	15
Overall Job Satisfaction by Presence of Undergraduate Athletic Training Education Program	16
Overall Job Satisfaction by Amount of Help	16
Overall Job Satisfaction by Employer	17
Overall Job Satisfaction by Number of Primary Team Responsibilities	18
DISCUSSION	18
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	27
REFERENCES	28

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Internal Consistency Reliability for the Job Satisfaction Survey	5
Table 2	Internal Consistency Reliability for Job Satisfaction of Full-Time Atlantic Coast Conference Board of Certification Certified Athletic Trainers	6
Table 3	JSS American Norms	26
Table 4	JSS Norms: Medical Samples	26
Table 5	Overall Job Satisfaction of BOC Certified Full-Time ACC Athletic Trainers.....	26

LIST OF FIGURES

RESULTS

Figure 1.	Overall Job Satisfaction	9
Figure 2.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Gender	9
Figure 3.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Age	10
Figure 4.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Education Level	11
Figure 5.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Experience	12
Figure 6.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Type of Institution	12
Figure 7.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Annual Salary	13
Figure 8.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Perceived Relationship With Coaching Staff	14
Figure 9.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Average Hours Worked Per Week In-Season.....	15
Figure 10.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Average Hours Worked Per Week Out-Of-Season	15
Figure 11.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Presence of Undergraduate Athletic Training Education Program	16
Figure 12.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Amount of Help	17
Figure 13.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Employer	17
Figure 14.	Overall Job Satisfaction by Number of Primary Team Responsibilities	18

INTRODUCTION

Attrition and turnover are well-documented problems in allied health care professions, including the nursing, physician assistant, physical therapy, and athletic training fields.¹⁻⁷ Attrition is “a reduction in numbers usually as a result of resignation, retirement, or death.”⁸ Retirement and death are unavoidable, even inevitable. Resignation, however, is a personal choice which can be avoided. Attrition and turnover, by definition, invite inexperience into the workplace. Exchanging knowledgeable staff with neophytes raises obvious concerns, not the least of which is inexperience. Replacing seasoned individuals for novices in an American Medical Association (AMA) accredited allied health profession, such as athletic training, has potentially hazardous results.⁹ Do not make the mistake of concluding that the new Board of Certification (BOC) certified athletic trainer is an unqualified individual. He or she has met very strict National Athletic Trainer’s Association Board of Certification (BOC) guidelines, including graduation from an entry-level Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) Accredited Athletic Training Curriculum and passing the national test set forth by the Board of Certification (BOC).¹⁰ However, the competencies gained through experience are invaluable.

As previously mentioned, attrition is a concern of numerous allied health care professions. Research has shown between only 25 % to 50% of nursing school graduates will still be practicing only five years after graduation.⁶ Research has also demonstrated a 20% attrition rate in physical therapy.⁷ The authors of the studies express a concern over sustaining an active workforce for both professions.⁶⁻⁷ If the high attrition rate of athletic trainers continues its current trend, the athletic training profession may soon be experiencing similar problems of sustainability.

Therefore, retaining individuals in the athletic training profession, especially in the major athletic conferences, would benefit the athletic trainer's student-athletes, the new athletic trainers entering the profession, and the profession as a whole. Turnover and intention to leave have been proven to be negatively correlated to high job satisfaction in allied health care professions.¹¹⁻¹³ Also, a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and intent to stay has been demonstrated in the allied health care professions.¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Increasing job satisfaction is a solution to prevent individuals from leaving the profession, and thereby decreasing turnover. By increasing overall job satisfaction of athletic trainers attrition from turnover would decrease, leading to fewer inexperienced athletic trainers and more knowledgeable mentors for entry-level athletic trainers.

One of the various work settings for athletic trainers is collegiate athletics. These individuals work at institutions which are members of either the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) or the better known National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Member institutions of the major athletic conferences of the NCAA are included in The Bowl Championship Series (BCS). The BCS is a collection of the eleven major NCAA conferences and the University of Notre Dame, an NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision independent. The eleven conferences are the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), the Big East Conference, the Big Ten Conference, the Big XII Conference, Conference USA, the Mid-American Conference, the Mountain West Conference, the Pac-10 Conference, the Southeastern Conference (SEC), the Sun Belt Conference, and the Western Athletic Conference. These conferences are included in the BCS based on guidelines set forth by the BCS.¹⁶ In short, the conferences are included based upon the strength of their

football programs. These conferences are considered the major conferences in the NCAA. Based upon this information, it is reasonable to presume that the pressures and expectations of certified athletic trainers in these conferences is equal to, if not greater than, the demands placed upon BOC certified athletic trainers in the entire NCAA, therefore, one of these conferences was studied – the ACC.

Although similar research has been conducted on athletic trainer job satisfaction in the SEC, 46 of 95 (48%) respondents were graduate assistant athletic trainers.¹⁷ The act of simultaneously taking classes and working does not paint an accurate depiction of working as a full-time certified athletic trainer. These professionals were limited in the number of hours they can work, travel responsibilities, etc. based on a variety of factors, including class schedules. Additionally, these individuals do not work in a completely autonomous environment, they answer to the staff athletic trainer to whom they were assigned. Also, graduate assistants are not paid a full-time salary, they are compensated through various other means including tuition reimbursement/waiver, room and board, stipend, etc. The inclusion of graduate assistants clearly fogs the true findings of a staff athletic trainer's feelings of job satisfaction.

Furthermore, Barrett's research concentrated solely on the SEC. The member institutions of the SEC are all public universities with the exception of Vanderbilt University, limiting the ability to distinguish between public and private school differences. In fact, only three of the eleven BCS conferences have at least 25% membership of private institutions – the Big East, Conference USA, and the ACC. The ACC has four members which are private institutions– the University of Miami, Boston College, Wake Forest University, and Duke

University. With 25% of the population being from private institutions this unique facet can be investigated.

Due to minimal research specific to full-time athletic training staff, the factors effecting overall job satisfaction of full-time certified athletic trainers at the collegiate level are unknown. The purpose of this study was to determine which factors effect overall job satisfaction of full-time Atlantic Coast Conference Board of Certification Certified Athletic Trainers.

METHODS

Subjects

Every full-time BOC certified athletic trainer from the twelve institutions in the ACC was sent an e-mail requesting participation in the study. Each individual's name and e-mail address was obtained through the university's Sports Information Department and/or the university's website. These addresses were then entered into the database and a mass e-mail was sent. This research was approved by the institution's Institutional Review Board.

Demographics

The initial section of this study's survey contained thirteen questions. These questions concentrated on various aspects of athletic training. These demographics were then used to determine which aspects of the profession were most important to overall job satisfaction of athletic trainers. The characteristics studied were gender, age, education level, experience, type of institution, annual salary, perceived relationship with coaching staff, average hours worked in-season, average hours worked out-of-season, presence of undergraduate athletic training education program, amount of help, employer, and number of primary team responsibilities.

Scale

The instrument used was the Job Satisfaction Survey developed by Spector.^{18,19} The JSS consists of 36 Likert type items. The survey examined nine facets of job satisfaction, in addition to overall job satisfaction. The nine facets were pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. Four statements were aligned to each facet, with two statements written positively and two statements worded negatively. Each statement had a range of six options from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The coefficient alphas for reliability of this survey ranged from .60 for coworkers to .91 for the total scale and test-retest reliability ranged from .37 to .74 (see Table 1).¹⁸ Validity correlations ranged from .61 to .80. Although some of the correlations may seem low, this scale has been used in over thirty studies of job satisfaction.²⁰

Also, Table 2 shows the internal consistency of the study itself. Eight of the ten subscale reliabilities for the study were equal to or greater than those of the JSS, including an identical .91 for total. Operating conditions (0.62 and 0.53) and nature of work (0.78 and 0.68) were the two subscales below the study's reliability.

Table 1 - Internal Consistency Reliability for the Job Satisfaction Survey

Subscale	Coefficient Alpha	Test-Retest Reliability
Pay	0.75	0.45
Promotion	0.73	0.62
Supervision	0.82	0.55
Benefits	0.73	0.37
Contingent Rewards	0.76	0.59
Operating Conditions	0.62	0.74
Coworkers	0.60	0.64
Nature of Work	0.78	0.54
Communication	0.71	0.65
Total	0.91	0.71

Table 2 – Internal Consistency Reliability for Job Satisfaction of Full-Time Atlantic Coast Conference Board of Certification Certified Athletic Trainers

Subscale	Coefficient Alpha
Pay	0.86
Promotion	0.88
Supervision	0.89
Benefits	0.75
Contingent Rewards	0.87
Operating Conditions	0.53
Coworkers	0.86
Nature of Work	0.68
Communication	0.73
Total	0.91

Limitations

Of the 104 BOC certified athletic trainers in the ACC only 38 responded to this study for a response rate of 36.5%. Consequently, several of the subsets did not have many respondents, for example in the 20-25 years old age group and the poor perceived relationship with coaching staffs N=2.

Also, this research cannot be accurately inferred to the entire athletic training profession. This research concentrated on collegiate athletic trainers in an extremely demanding, competitive conference. Therefore, the recommendations made based on the data obtained from the results can only be inferred to similar conferences at the Division I level. For example, the concerns of certified athletic trainers working at the high school level or in a clinical setting may be different to the concerns of the certified athletic trainers in this research.

Analysis

The total score from each respondent’s survey was tallied. A mean score for the entire group was then calculated and compared to averages of other occupations from

Spector's book and updated Website. This showed whether athletic trainers were satisfied with their jobs.

The thirteen questions from the demographics section were then grouped accordingly and analyzed. For example, the overall job satisfaction of all the individuals who make between \$40,000 and \$49,999 was compared with the mean from Spector's findings. This showed which subgroup of the population was the most and least satisfied with the profession. It also showed which of the demographics were most important to job satisfaction to athletic trainers.

If an individual skipped one or more questions from the JSS the answers were filled in based on Spector's recommendations. "If some items are missing you must make an adjustment otherwise the score will be too low. The best procedure is to compute the mean score per item for the individual, and substitute that mean for the missing items. For example, if a person does not make a response to 1 item, take the total from [the sum of responses to that facet], divide by the number answered or 3 for a facet or 35 for total, and substitute this number for the missing item by adding it to the total [sum of responses for that facet]." ²¹

If an individual did not answer any questions in the JSS he/she was excluded completely from the results.

After all of the factors were compared, recommendations were made so as to improve the job satisfaction of athletic trainers. By improving job satisfaction, attrition and turnover will decrease.

RESULTS

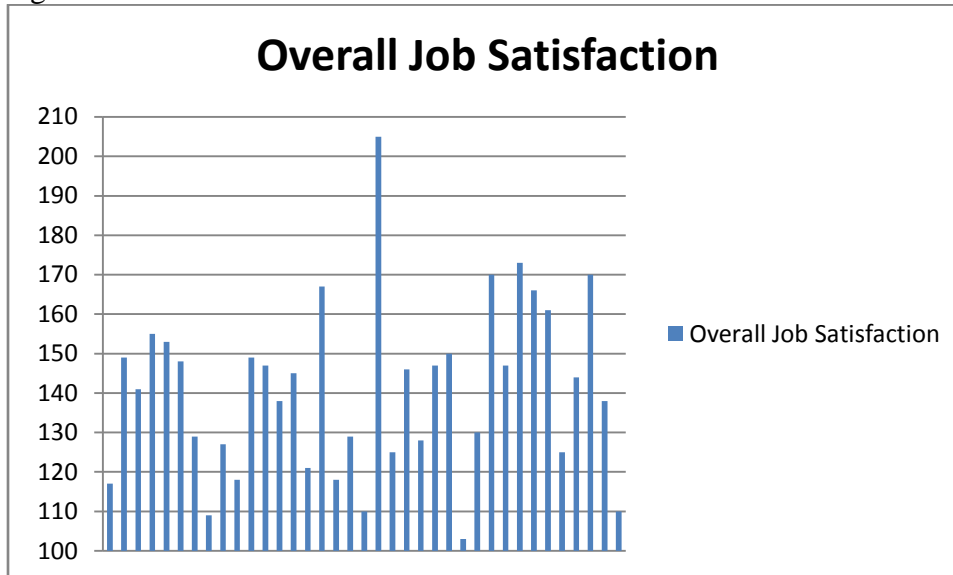
Demographics

Of the entire population (N=104) 38 individuals responded, resulting in a response rate of 36.5%. The respondents consisted of 27 men and 11 women. The average age of all participants was 35.3 years. The average years of experience was 10.5. Four respondents had bachelor degrees, 32 held master degrees, and two had doctorates. Undergraduate athletic training programs were present at nine respondent's institutions, meaning 29 participants worked at institutions without an undergraduate athletic training program. Eleven participants worked at private schools while 27 worked at a public institution. The athletic department employed 33 individuals and five worked for the student health service. Primary team responsibilities ranged from zero to nineteen with an average of 2.0. Graduate assistant/intern help ranged from one to nine, for an average of 3.1 while student athletic trainer assistance ranged from one to 42 for an average of 5.2. The "help" category was calculated by adding the number of graduate assistants/interns and student athletic trainers working directly with an athletic trainer's teams. Average in-season hours worked per week ranged from 50-60 hours per week to more than 70 hours per week. Average out of season hours worked ranged from less than 40 hours per week to between 60-70 hours per week. Salaries ranged from between \$30,000 - \$39,999 per year to more than \$100,000 per year. The perceived relationship with coaching staffs ranged from poor to good. One male participant was not included in the final results because he did not answer any questions from the JSS.

Overall Job Satisfaction

The overall job satisfaction of all respondents (N = 37) ranged from 103 to 205, for a mean of 140.8 ± 21.4 .

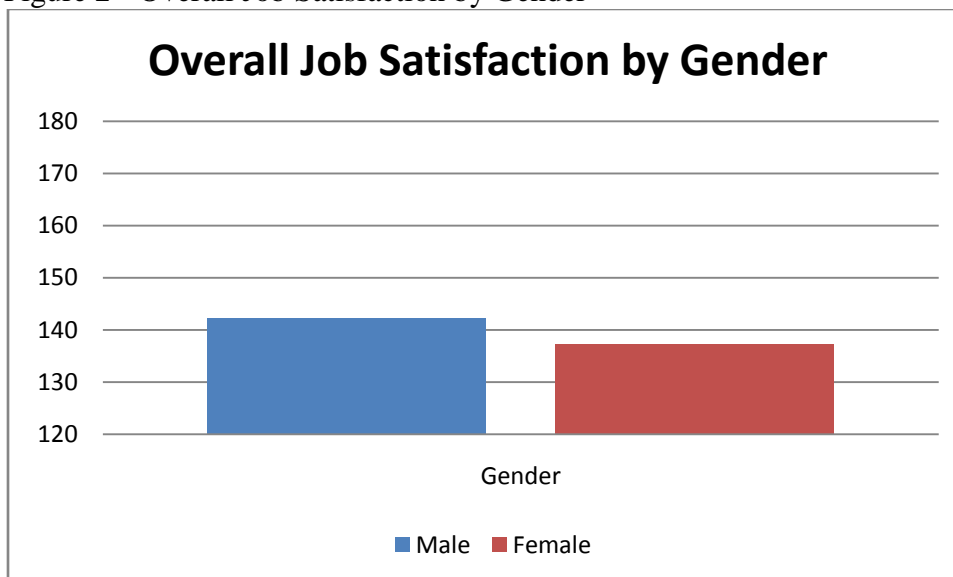
Figure 1 - Overall Job Satisfaction



Overall Job Satisfaction by Gender

Men and women had varying degrees of overall job satisfaction. The male mean (N = 26) was 142.3 ± 16.7 and the female mean (N = 11) was 137.2 ± 31.3 .

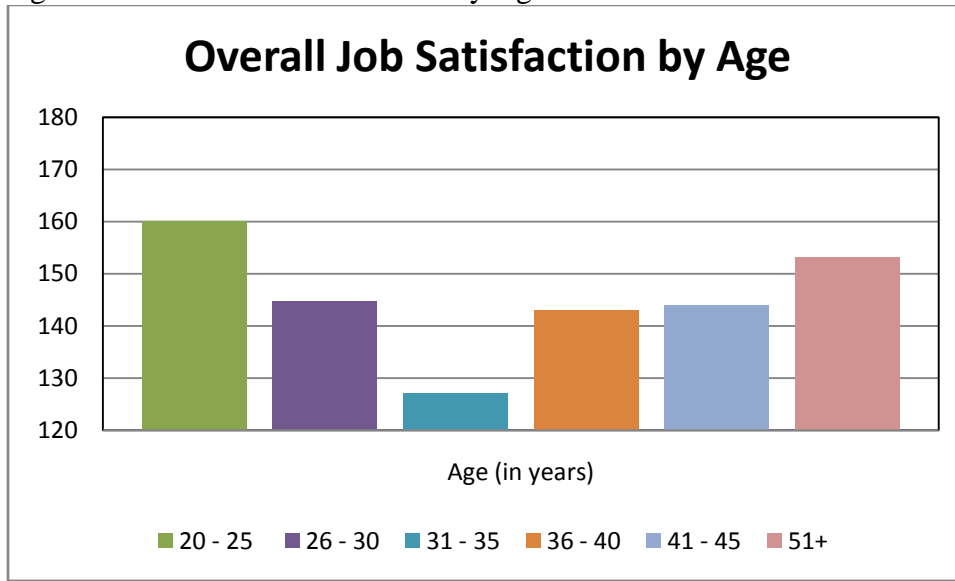
Figure 2 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Gender



Overall Job Satisfaction by Age

Respondents ages 20-25 (N = 2) had a mean overall job satisfaction of 160.0 ± 14.1 . The subgroup between the ages of 26-30 (N = 10) had a mean of 144.8 ± 30.8 . The mean overall job satisfaction of individuals aged 31-35 years (N = 12) was 127.2 ± 15.3 . BOC certified athletic trainers from 36-40 years old (N = 4) reported a mean score of 143.0 ± 9.4 . The 41-45 years old group had a mean overall job satisfaction rating of 144.0 ± 18.7 . The mean score for individuals aged 51+ years old (N = 5) was 153.2 ± 10.1 .

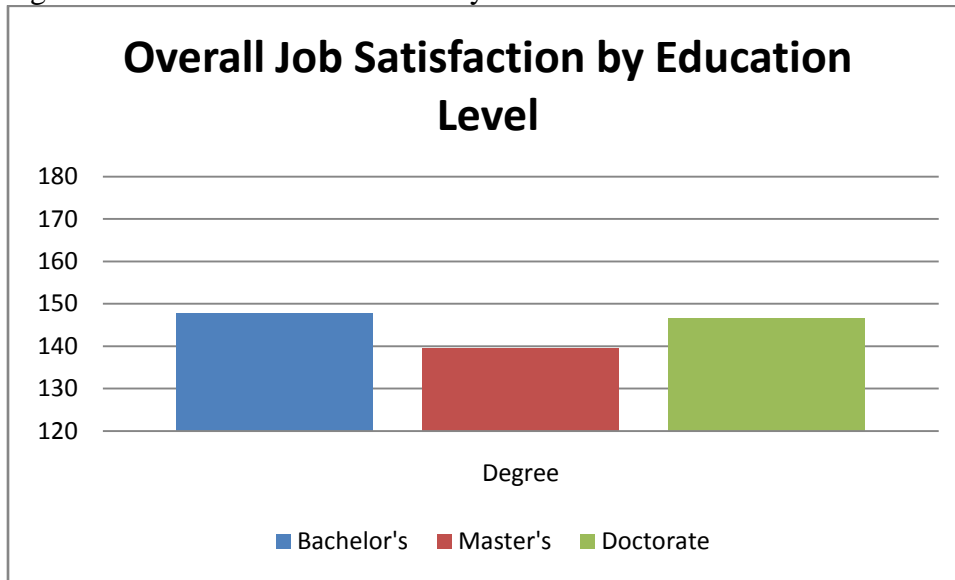
Figure 3 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Age



Overall Job Satisfaction by Education Level

Respondents holding bachelor's degree (N = 4) reported a mean overall job satisfaction of 147.8 ± 16.9 . Those with a master's degree (N = 31) had a mean score of 139.5 ± 22.9 . Subjects with a doctorate degree (N = 2) had a mean overall job satisfaction rating of 146.5 ± 12.0 .

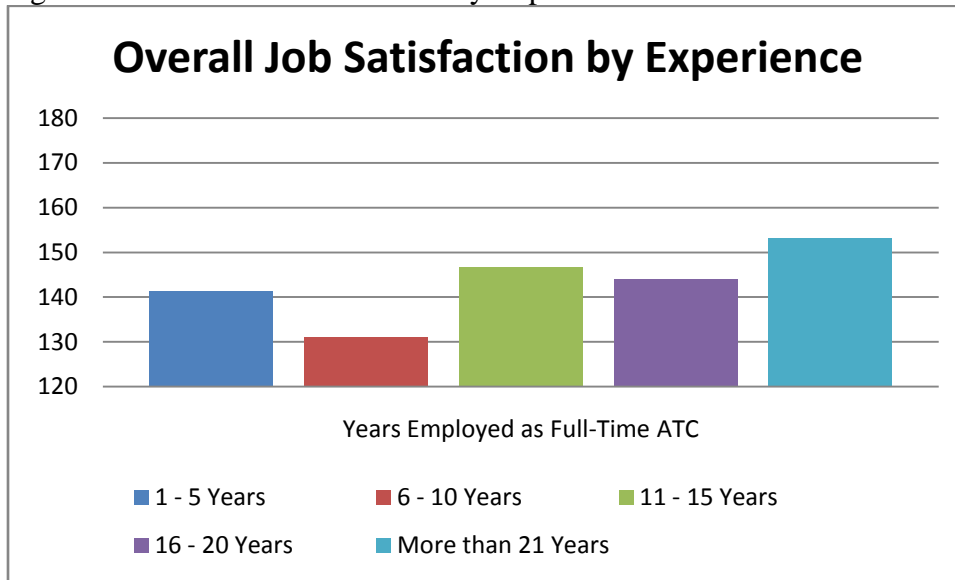
Figure 4 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Education Level



Overall Job Satisfaction by Experience

BOC certified athletic trainers with between 1 and 5 years experience (N = 13) reported a mean overall job satisfaction of 141.3 ± 27.5 . Individuals with 6-10 years experience (N = 11) had a mean score of 131.1 ± 21.1 . Respondents with 11-15 years experience (N = 4) described a mean score of 146.8 ± 2.2 . Subjects having 16-20 years of experience (N = 4) had a mean overall job satisfaction rating of 144.0 ± 18.7 . The group with 21+ years experience (N = 5) reported a mean overall job satisfaction rating of 153.2 ± 10.1 .

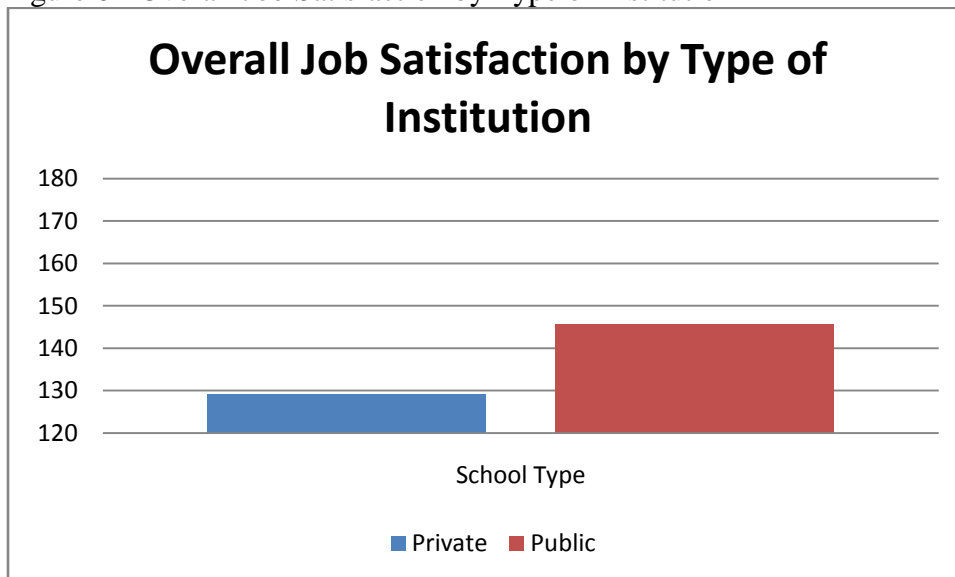
Figure 5 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Experience



Overall Job Satisfaction by Type of Institution

Respondents employed at public institutions (N = 26) reported a mean score of 145.7 ± 22.5. The subgroup from private institutions (N = 11) had a mean overall job satisfaction rating of 129.2 ± 14.8.

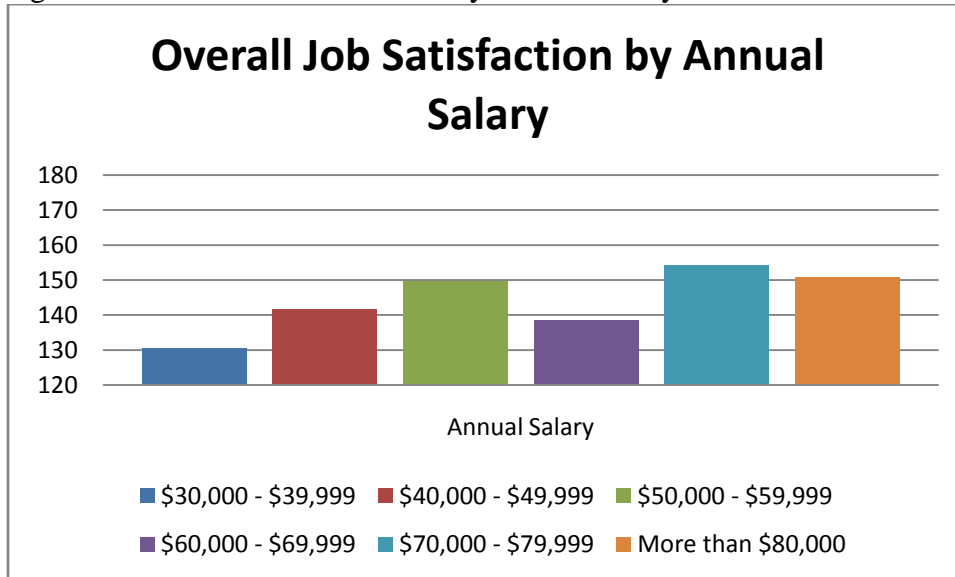
Figure 6 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Type of Institution



Overall Job Satisfaction by Annual Salary

The mean overall job satisfaction score of respondents with an annual salary of \$30,000 - \$39,999 (N = 12) was 130.3 ± 26.8 . Individuals making \$40,000 - \$49,999 annually (N = 11) reported a mean score of 141.5 ± 22.2 . BOC certified athletic trainers earning \$50,000 - \$59,999 per year (N = 6) had a mean overall job satisfaction rating of 149.5 ± 13.5 . The subgroup earning a \$60,000 - \$69,999 annual salary (N = 2) described a mean of 138.5 ± 14.8 . Individuals making \$70,000 - \$79,999 per year (N = 3) had a mean overall job satisfaction score of 154.0 ± 13.9 . Those making more than \$80,000 annually (N = 3) reported a mean rating of 150.7 ± 3.8 .

Figure 7 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Annual Salary

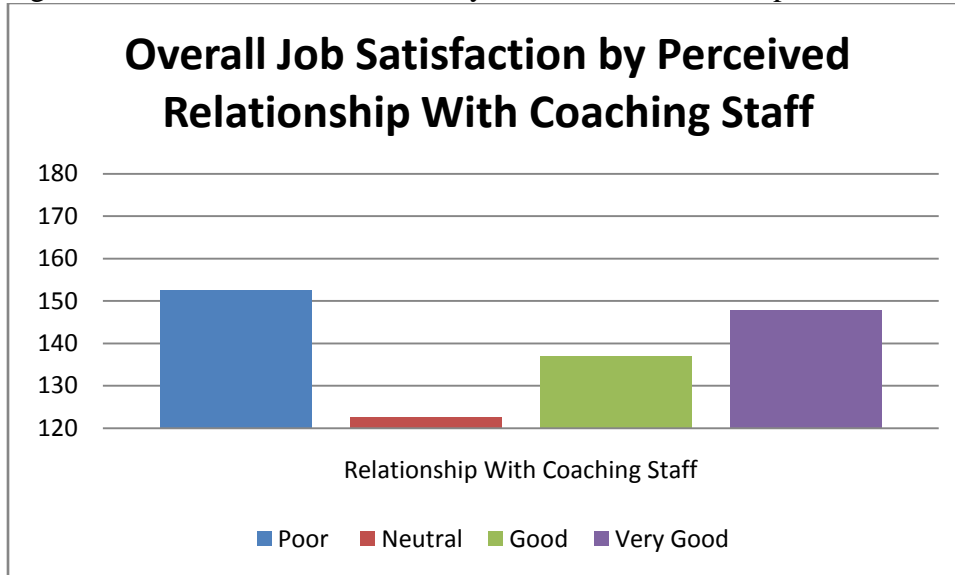


Overall Job Satisfaction by Perceived Relationship With Coaching Staff

Respondents with a poor relationship with coaches (N = 2) had the highest mean overall job satisfaction of this group at 152.5 ± 12.0 . The subgroup with a neutral relationship with coaches (N = 4) reported a mean value of 122.8 ± 5.9 . A mean job satisfaction of score of 137.1 ± 19.9 was reported by individuals with a good relationship

with coaches (N = 16). BOC certified athletic trainers with a very good relationship with coaches described a mean rating of 147.9 ± 24.3 (N = 15).

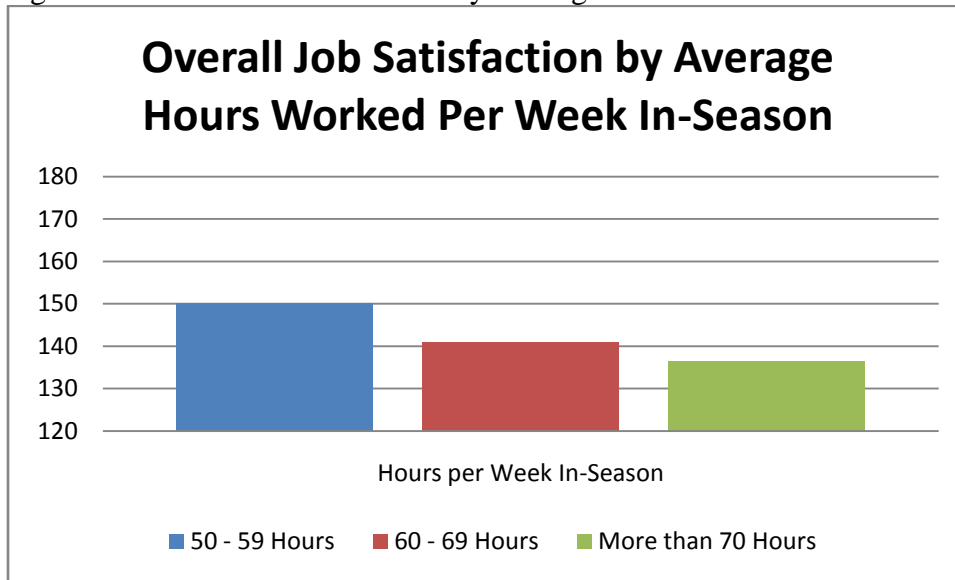
Figure 8 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Perceived Relationship With Coaching Staff



Overall Job Satisfaction by Average Hours Worked Per Week In-Season

The subgroup working an average of 50-59 hours per week in season (N = 6) reported the highest mean overall job satisfaction score of this group at 150.0 ± 36.5 . The respondents working an average of 60-69 hours per week (N = 11) had a score of 140.9 ± 18.1 . The lowest rating of 136.4 ± 17.6 was reported by those individuals working 70 or more hours per week while in season (N = 19).

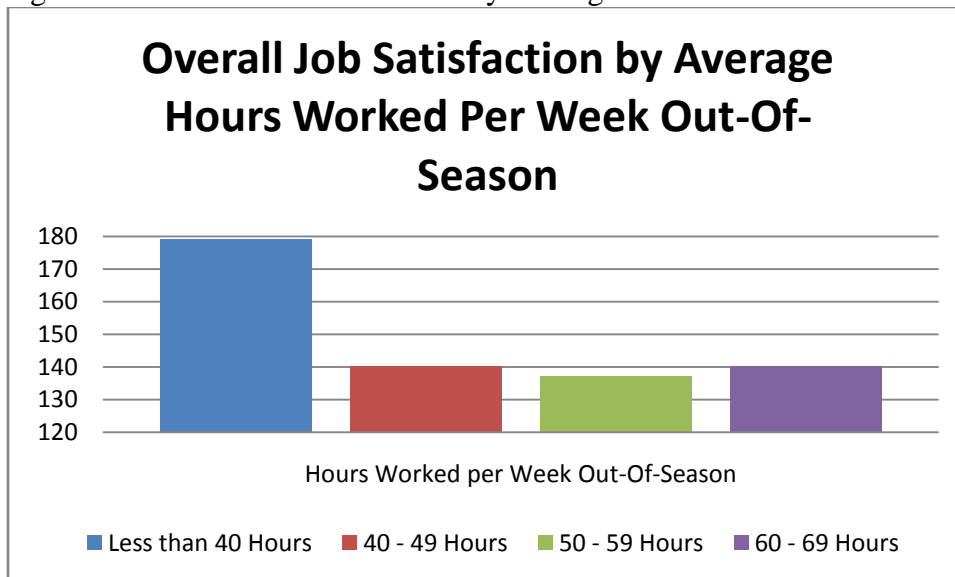
Figure 9 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Average Hours Worked Per Week In-Season



Overall Job Satisfaction by Average Hours Worked Per Week Out-of-Season

Respondents working less than 40 hours per week while out of season (N = 2) had a score of 179.0 ± 36.8 . The subjects working 40 – 49 hours per week (N = 12) reported a mean overall job satisfaction of 140.2 ± 20.2 . The lowest reported score of 137.2 ± 19.6 was from individuals working 50 – 59 hours (N = 19). The subgroup working 60 – 69 hours per week (N = 4) described a mean score of 140.3 ± 18.5 .

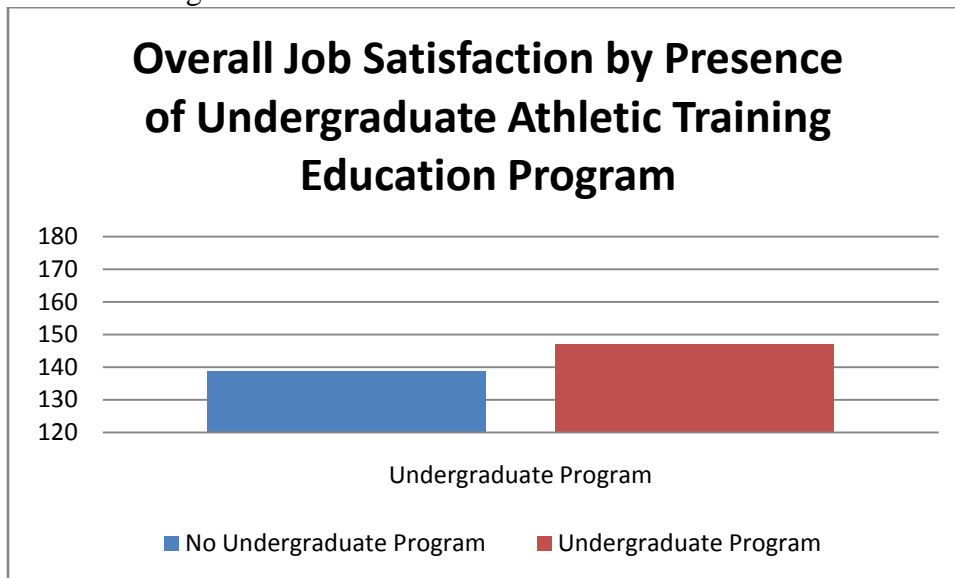
Figure 10 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Average Hours Worked Per Week Out-Of-Season



Overall Job Satisfaction by Presence of Undergraduate Athletic Training Education Program

A mean overall job satisfaction score of 138.7 ± 22.7 was reported by BOC certified athletic trainer's employed at an institution without an undergraduate athletic training education program ($N = 28$). The subgroup working at a school with an undergraduate athletic training program ($N = 9$) had a mean score of 147.1 ± 18.0 .

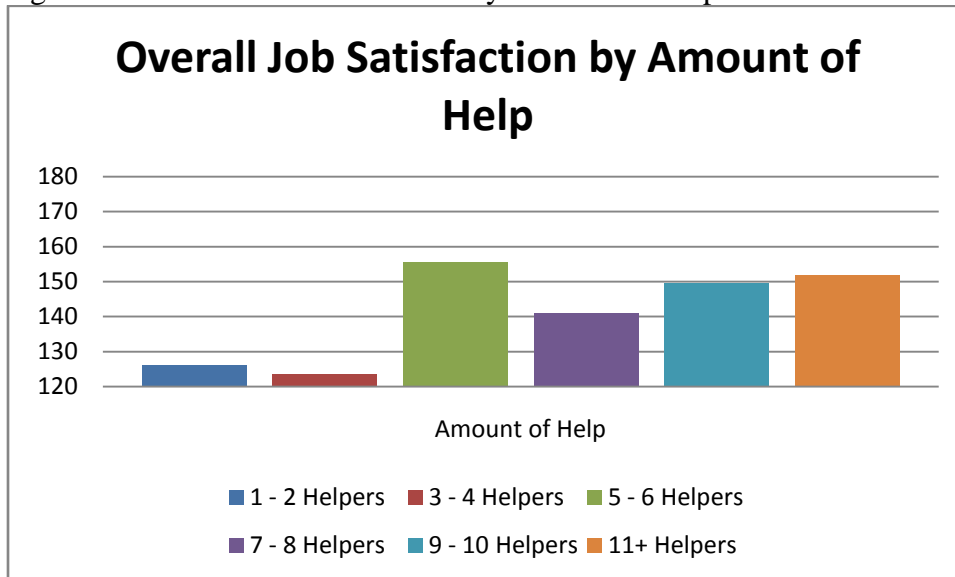
Figure 11 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Presence of Undergraduate Athletic Training Education Program



Overall Job Satisfaction by Amount of Help

A mean score of 126.1 ± 11.7 was reported for subjects with 1-2 assistants ($N = 9$). The subgroup receiving help from 3-4 people ($N = 6$) reported a mean result of 123.7 ± 12.0 . The highest mean value of 155.4 ± 26.3 was described by those with 5 – 6 helpers ($N = 9$). Subjects with 7-8 assistants ($N = 3$) had a mean overall job satisfaction score of 141.0 ± 28.8 . Those individuals with 9-10 helpers ($N = 4$) had a mean score of 149.5 ± 18.1 . A mean overall job satisfaction score of 151.8 ± 7.7 was reported by the subgroup with 11+ individual's help ($N = 6$).

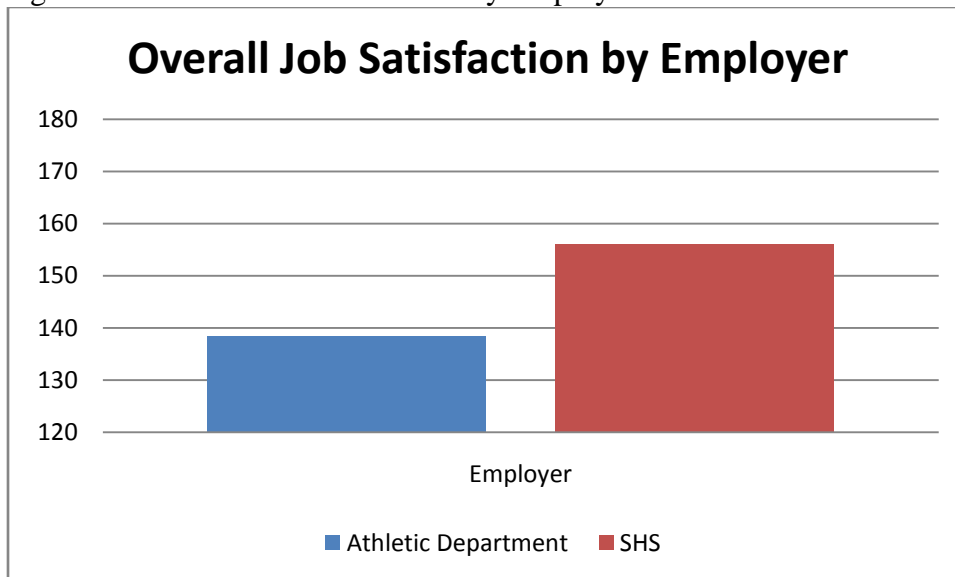
Figure 12 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Amount of Help



Overall Job Satisfaction by Employer

Individuals working for the athletic department (N = 32) had a mean score of 138.4 ± 21.6 . The subgroup working for the student health service (N = 5) had a mean score of 156.0 ± 17.5 .

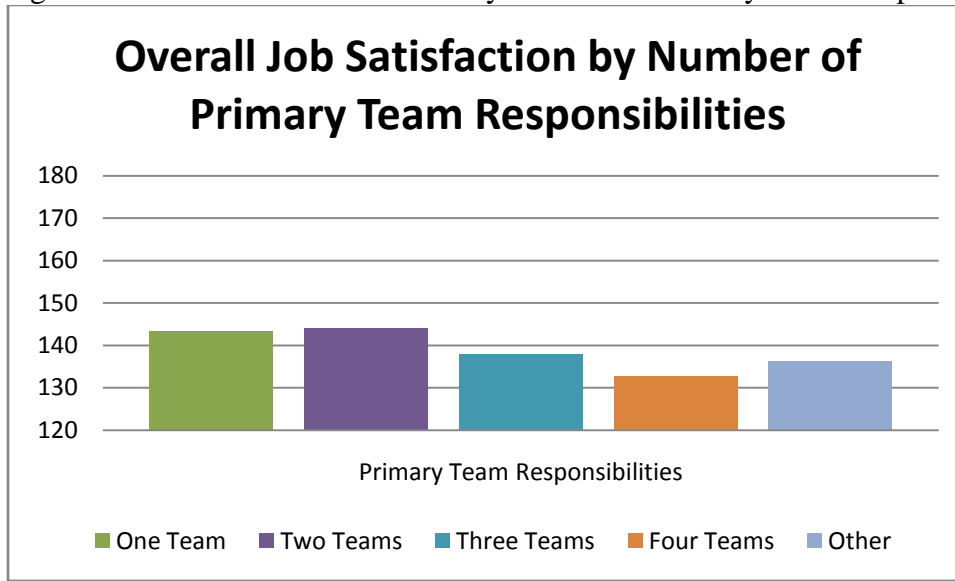
Figure 13 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Employer



Overall Job Satisfaction by Number of Primary Team Responsibilities

ACC athletic trainers working primarily with one team (N = 10) reported a mean score of 143.4 ± 13.8 . Those working with two teams (N = 13) had a mean result of 144.2 ± 25.8 . Individuals working primarily with three teams (N = 7) described a mean of 137.9 ± 29.4 . The lowest overall job satisfaction mean score of 132.7 ± 11.6 came from the subgroup working primarily with four teams (N = 3). The other category (N = 3) had a mean value of 136.3 ± 24.2 .

Figure 14 - Overall Job Satisfaction by Number of Primary Team Responsibilities



DISCUSSION

Full-time BOC certified athletic trainers working in the ACC were more satisfied with their jobs than the average American norm (see Table 2) and the average American working in the medical profession (see Table 3).

Both men and women in this study have a greater level of satisfaction than the American norm and the medical profession. However, the females in the study were less satisfied than the male population and the overall mean of the population, which is consistent with data concerning athletic trainers.¹⁷ Previous studies, however, have found women have

a higher level of job satisfaction than men.²²⁻²³ Women may be less satisfied due to the “good old boy” network still present in college athletics. Also notable is the fact that only eleven of 37 qualifying respondents (29.8%) were women. Despite the implementation of Title IX into law in 1972 there seems to be a lack of hiring equality in the collegiate athletic training profession.

Every age group of ACC athletic trainers were more satisfied with their profession than the overall mean of the population, American norm, and medical norm with the exception of 31-35 year olds. Consequently, every group except those with between 6-10 years of experience was also more satisfied than the three aforementioned population means. These two groups appear to be related. Between the ages of 30 and 35 an athletic trainer would have about 6-10 years of experience following completion of both an undergraduate athletic training program and a master’s program, as 89.1% of the entire study population did. Of the 50 subsets examined, these were two of only seven subsets that are below both the overall study satisfaction mean and American mean. Also, of the entire population those individuals with a master’s degree are least satisfied and are the only subgroup of the education facet with a mean overall job satisfaction rating less than the mean of the entire population. All three education levels, however, were more satisfied than average American and the medical norm. Although the most current research in athletic training suggests that experience is not affected by years of certification, this study demonstrates otherwise.¹⁷ Around 6-10 years of experience, or 31-35 years old, individuals hit a low as far as overall job satisfaction. The individuals with 11-15 years experience have a 10.7% increase in overall job satisfaction compared to those with 6-10 years experience, while overall job

satisfaction drops 7.2% from the first five years of employment, indicating a lull during a career.

Of the four facets with only two options, institution type had the second largest variance between options (16.5). 70.3% of the population work at a public institution and have a mean overall job satisfaction score (145.7 ± 22.5) greater than the overall population mean, American norm, and medical norm. The 11 individuals currently employed at one of the four private institutions of the ACC had a mean rating (129.2 ± 14.8) less than the overall mean and American norm. These factors are possibly explained by the amount of money a public school has compared to a private school. More money allows for better facilities; better capital equipment; larger, more extensive inventories; larger staffs; and more help. The better facilities simply make coming to work more enjoyable. Working in a state-of-the-art, or at least modern, athletic training facility feels better than coming into archaic facilities. The better facilities also accommodate individual offices, rather than sharing a small space with two or three coworkers. The current equipment allows athletic trainers the ability to perform newer practices, rehabilitation techniques, and evaluation techniques, such as biofeedback and underwater treadmills. Similarly, more money allows for more “tools” and less worrying about running out of crucial supplies. The larger budget allows for unnecessary, yet valuable, items such as McConnell tape and comforting shoe insoles. Larger staffs and more help afford the athletic trainer benefits such as greater professional resources and diminished hours worked.

The two groups of respondents with the greatest salaries had the highest overall mean job satisfaction and are above the overall mean rating, as are those making between \$50,000 - \$59,999 and \$40,000 - \$49,999. Those earning \$60,000 - \$69,999 annually, however, were

less happy than the overall population, as were those making between \$30,000 and \$39,999. These findings were contrary to a previous study investigating job satisfaction of athletic trainers.¹⁷ This indicates annual salary was not an effective measure of overall job satisfaction.

The respondents with the worst and best perceived relationships with coaching staffs were the two most satisfied groups, respectively. Those with a poor rating had a mean score of 152.5 ± 12 and those with a very good rating had a mean score of 147.9 ± 24.3 . They were also the only two groups above the overall mean score of the population. In fact, those with a “neutral” rating were the least satisfied subset of any facet investigated. In addition, the difference between the means of the highest and lowest subset of this facet was the fourth largest difference of any facet (29.7). This data indicates that perceived relationships with coaching staffs was not a good indicator of overall job satisfaction.

The presence of an undergraduate program affects the overall job satisfaction of athletic trainers. The group with an undergraduate program is more satisfied than the overall population, while the group without an undergraduate program is less satisfied than the overall population. This may be attributed to a variety of factors. Individuals working at an institution with a program have a set of responsibilities which the other group does not. They are expected to educate students, possibly as professors, approved clinical instructors (ACIs), or clinical instructor educators (CIEs). Also, when athletic training students (ATs) are present more help is available. The ATs may not possess the abilities to perform complete assessments or create and implement complex rehabilitation protocols, but they can assist with more common injuries, such as ankle sprains or patellar tendonitis. The ATs can also offer support while setting up and breaking down setup for practices and games as well as

help with some of the more mundane aspects of athletic training such as cleaning and paperwork.

All individuals with at least five “help,” defined as the number of graduate assistants/interns and student athletic trainers working directly with an athletic trainer’s teams, have overall job satisfaction scores higher than the overall job satisfaction mean of the entire study population. Those with less than five help are two of only three subsets of the 13 facets examined with overall job satisfaction ratings lower than the overall mean and American and medical norms. This may be due to a variety of factors. As aforementioned, ATs can help with simple assessments and rehabilitations, as well as setup, breakdown, cleaning, and paperwork. Graduate assistants/interns, possibly, are also certified athletic trainers, allowing for greater freedom and autonomy. In addition to assisting with the same tasks as ATs, these individuals can cover practices, games, or tournaments alone, something ATs, by law, cannot do. They are also more qualified to perform more complex assessments and rehabilitation protocols. Hiring a graduate assistant/intern for each team a certified athletic trainer is primarily responsible for would greatly improve help. This would afford the certified athletic trainer the ability to supervise all his/her responsibilities without having to be physically present at each team’s practices, games, road trips, tournaments, conference championships, and NCAA postseason. At the very least, hiring one graduate assistant/intern for all but one primary sport would allow the certified athletic trainer to concentrate primarily on one team while only supervising the graduate assistant/intern administering the everyday health care of the other teams. Although not every school has an undergraduate program becoming an approved clinical site would allow the opportunity to borrow other schools’ undergraduate ATs. Schools without undergraduate programs could

also offer incentives, possibly in the form of scholarships, to the general student population in return for help. Although these students would not be allowed to evaluate or rehabilitate, they could help with cleaning, setup, breakdown, paperwork, and driving athletes to doctor appointments, among other things—all time consuming activities pulling the certified athletic trainer away from his/her main function. The amount of help an individual receives is the strongest facet indentified effecting overall job satisfaction.

The only group below the overall mean score with regards to average hours worked per week while in-season was the group working 70 or more hours per week, although the score is above both the American and medical norms. Conversely, the only group above the overall mean score when average hours worked per week out-of-season is considered was the group working less than 40 hours. In fact, this subset is the most satisfied of the 50 subsets analyzed and has the highest difference between the most and least satisfied subsets of a single facet. The average number of hours worked per week, especially out-of-season average hours worked per week, has a great effect on overall job satisfaction. Conversely, literature shows that other allied health care professions are satisfied with hours worked.²⁴ Therefore, if this aspect of athletic training can be addressed, overall job satisfaction will increase. Decreasing hours worked can be achieved through a variety of means. Hiring additional staff would decrease the primary team responsibilities of each athletic trainer, lessening his/her hour commitment. Increasing help, as aforementioned, would reduce the number of practices, games, and travel situations the full-time staff member would experience. A reduction in the number of “clinic hours” the individual works would lessen the work load. When there is no work to be done, requiring the athletic trainer to sit in his/her office or the athletic training facility is unnecessary. Limiting coverage to only in-

season sports would afford the athletic trainer more time off. Requiring all coaches and strength and conditioning staff to be CPR and first aid certified would lessen the demand for the athletic trainer to be present during lifts, conditioning sessions, or individuals while still ensuring the safety of all student-athletes. Setting athletic training room working hours would reduce the number of hours worked by every athletic trainer on staff. For example, the athletic training staff works from 9 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday and any game coverage. If a team does not practice during these times or is not finished practice before 5 PM an athletic trainer could be on-call for emergencies only. Appointing or hiring a long-term rehabilitation coordinator to oversee any surgical cases and any rehabilitation that will require more than six weeks recovery would reduce the number of hours worked by the certified athletic trainer, both in and out of season.

Although every participant worked at an ACC member institution some individuals were hired primarily by the student health service as opposed to the athletic department. The former had a higher satisfaction rating than the overall study population and the latter. Athletic department employees have a lower overall job satisfaction rating than the overall population, but have higher mean than the American and medical norm.

The subset with either one or two primary team responsibilities were the most satisfied subset of this facet. They are both more satisfied than the overall study population. Individuals with three, four, or “other amounts” of teams are less satisfied than the overall population but report scores higher than the American and medical norms. This can be attributed to time commitments and number of athletes for which the athletic trainer is responsible. Presumably, the more athletes and teams an athletic trainer has the greater

number of practices and games attended, the more hours worked, the more paperwork necessary, the more rehabilitation performed, and the more injuries he/she experiences.

Four of the demographics investigated in this study relate directly to Barrett's research (salary, experience, age, and education level). Both studies confirmed that age was related to job satisfaction. Both studies also concluded education level was not an accurate indicator of job satisfaction.¹⁷ The two studies, however, differed with respect to experience and annual salary. Barrett concluded experience did not affect job satisfaction.¹⁷ The results of this study demonstrated otherwise. There was a significant lull in job satisfaction for individual's with 6-10 years of experience. Also, Barrett indicated that salary was related to job satisfaction, however, the results of this study showed that salary was not related to job satisfaction.¹⁷

When subset norms were compared (JSS American norms and the norms of this study) opportunity for promotion (12.0 and 11.8), contingent rewards (13.7 and 13.6), and coworkers (17.9 and 18.2) were almost identical. Athletic trainers had higher ratings in supervision (18.7 and 19.6), benefits (14.4 and 15.1), conditions (13.6 and 15.0), work (18.9 and 19.5), and communication (14.5 and 17.0). The only subset that was obviously less was pay (12.1 and 10.6).²⁵ Although athletic trainers were less happy with this facet than the American norm the aforementioned pattern demonstrated that by simply increasing an athletic trainer's annual salary does not ensure an increase in overall job satisfaction.

Table 3 – JSS American Norms²⁵

Facet	Mean	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation
Salary	12.1	10.6	2.4
Promotion	12.0	11.8	1.8
Supervision	18.7	18.9	1.8
Benefits	14.4	13.7	2.2
Contingent Rewards	13.7	13.0	1.9
Conditions	13.6	13.2	2.0
Coworkers	17.9	17.9	1.5
Work Itself	18.9	19.1	1.8
Communication	14.5	13.9	2.0
Total	136.0	132.0	11.6

Table 4 - JSS Norms: Medical Samples²⁶

Facet	Mean	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation
Salary	12.2	11.6	2.5
Promotion	11.7	11.2	2.1
Supervision	17.9	17.1	2.2
Benefits	13.7	13.0	2.4
Contingent Rewards	13.3	12.7	2.3
Conditions	13.2	12.9	2.3
Coworkers	17.3	16.5	2.1
Work Itself	18.9	18.0	2.2
Communication	14.7	14.1	2.2
Total	132.2	126.7	15.3

Table 5 - Overall Job Satisfaction of BOC Certified Full-Time ACC Athletic Trainers

Facet	Mean	Standard Deviation
Salary	10.6	4.7
Promotion	11.8	4.6
Supervision	19.6	4.1
Benefits	15.1	3.7
Contingent Rewards	13.6	4.4
Conditions	15.0	2.9
Coworkers	18.2	3.9
Work Itself	19.5	2.8
Communication	17.0	3.7
Total	140.8	21.4

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine which factors effect overall job satisfaction of full-time Atlantic Coast Conference Board of Certification Certified Athletic Trainers. Although the mean overall job satisfaction of the study population was greater than the American and medical norms, several areas of concern were identified. In order to increase job satisfaction and decrease turnover rates of certified athletic trainers, the amount of help one receives and the average work week hours, both in and out of season, need to be addressed. The concerns of those individuals aged 31-35 and with between 6-10 years experience warrants further exploration.

The collegiate athletic trainer is a valuable member to the athletic program(s) for which he or she works. The service athletic trainers perform is invaluable to the success of an athletic team. Consistently integrating a new member to the team costs the institution, program, and coaching staff time, money, and energy. If the job satisfaction facets identified by this research can effectively be addressed and resolved, the entire athletic department, and therefore the university, will benefit.

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