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# Relationship Between Perceptions of Support and Job Satisfaction in BOC-Certified Collegiate Athletic Trainers

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT AND JOB  
SATISFACTION IN BOC-CERTIFIED COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC TRAINERS

by

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B.S., The University of Alabama, 2015

A Research Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Science in Education

Department of Kinesiology  
In the Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
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Approved by:

Dr. Julie Partridge, Chair

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The athletic trainer (ATC) plays a particularly important role in sport. In many cases, a student-athlete's healthcare needs begin and end with an athletic trainer, particularly in the collegiate setting. Unfortunately, as the recognition and need of athletic trainers at the collegiate level increased, the number of ATCs in the profession declined, as was evident by a reduction in the number of National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) members from 2006 to 2011 (Terranova & Henning, 2011). Although recent NATA demographic reports show an increase in membership since 2015, the variance in NATA membership numbers over the last 15 years has led to an increased awareness of job satisfaction, burnout, and professional commitment in the athletic training profession. If athletic trainers are experiencing work-related issues that are causing them to leave the field prematurely, a troublesome problem faces the profession as a whole.

Mazerolle, Bruening, Casa, and Burton (2008) found that working long hours, unaccommodating schedules, feeling under-appreciated, and a lack of resources and staffing can result in job dissatisfaction and job burnout in athletic trainers working in the Division I setting at universities sponsoring football programs. Increasingly, burnout has become a concern for those in the athletic training profession. Research has shown that job satisfaction significantly impacts the professional commitment and career longevity of ATCs (Brumels & Beach, 2008). In order to keep athletic trainers in the profession, issues impacting job satisfaction must be addressed. Therefore, it is important to know what can negatively impact job satisfaction so that those stressors can be reduced. Additionally, it is equally essential to know what positive factors can increase job satisfaction so that those aspects of professional life can be improved. In the



end, steps must be taken in order to increase professional commitment and minimize burnout experienced by athletic trainers in order for the profession to prevent attrition and begin growing again.

## **Review of the Literature**

### **Positive factors affecting job satisfaction.**

#### ***Role identity.***

Role identity is classified as being a “love for the role in the setting” (Mazerolle, Eason, Lazar, & Mensch, 2016, p. 51). A clear and appropriate role identity can increase both job enjoyment and job satisfaction. An ATC with a clear and positive role identity is committed to the job, including all the demands with which it is associated. When role identity is unambiguous, the stressful environment ATCs work in becomes enjoyable and rewarding. Goodman, Mensch, Jay, French, Mitchell, and Fritz (2010) conducted research on 23 current and former female ATCs working in Southeastern Conference at the NCAA Division I level and concluded that the degree to which an ATC enjoys the job and creates positive relationships with student athletes greatly influences job satisfaction and commitment. As role identity is rooted in the feelings of love and enjoyment for the job, the rewarding relationships ATCs build with their student-athletes positively affect role identity. The intrinsic motivation from rewarding, dedicated professional relationships, as well as recognition from student-athletes, colleagues, and supervisors, fosters high job satisfaction and persistence in the athletic training profession (Eason, Mazerolle, & Pitney, 2015). When ATCs feel as though the work they are doing is impactful and beneficial, the work demands become less detrimental to job satisfaction; the same can be true when athletic trainers receive acknowledgement of their hard work.

***Job fit/enjoyment.***

Job fit and enjoyment greatly impacts job satisfaction in athletic trainers; the job responsibilities of an ATC are distinctly unique, and individual personality and workplace fit must match. Mazerolle et al. (2016) interviewed 14 ATCs, both male and female, working in the NCAA Division I setting for at least 15 years and providing coverage for a variety of sports. The authors used one-on-one phone interviews with the participants to assess perceived factors that impacted their persistence in the athletic training profession. The authors reported many ATCs deal with demanding workloads, numerous job responsibilities, and depleted energy and resources, but those with high job satisfaction and commitment are able to be flexible, accept their role as an ATC, and embrace the difficulties of the job (Mazerolle et al., 2016). It is incredibly important that the personality of the athletic trainer aligns with the high demands and expectations of the job. Enjoying the aspects of the job that can be considered demanding, such as frequent travel and the stress associated with the high level of competitiveness of elite-level athletics, is critical in establishing and maintaining a high level of job enjoyment and fulfillment (Goodman et al., 2010). To be satisfied in the job, ATCs must enjoy the perks, as well as accept the demands, of the job more than they felt depleted, hindered, or inconvenienced by those demands; ideally, the demands may even be viewed as perks, which support passion and contentment with the job.

***Work-life balance.***

The importance of maintaining a work-life balance (WLB) has become increasingly well-researched in recent years. Mazerolle and Eason (2016) conducted semi structured one-on-one phone interviews with six ATCs, all of which were working in the NCAA Division I setting, at four different times during the athletic year and determined that, for collegiate ATCs, WLB is

cyclical depending on the time of year, and, for every inhibitor of WLB, an enhancer is also present for ATCs that have high job satisfaction and commitment. In other words, many ATCs make it through the stressful, demanding in-season portion of the year by knowing their schedule will slow down, however slightly, once the off-season begins. Having time to exercise regularly, eat healthy, and simply having the autonomy to schedule personal activities outside of work can all act as enhancers of WLB to negate inhibitors of WLB, such as inflexible schedules and constantly being on-call and available to student-athletes.

Supervisor and coworker support play a role in WLB as well. Eason et al. (2015) found that similar attitudes regarding WLB in the workplace increased group cohesion and job commitment. Having a supervisor that supports taking time for personal activities during the work day gives ATCs a necessary break from the seemingly constant grind athletic trainers experience everyday as professionals. Mazerolle et al. (2016) stated that incorporating personal responsibilities and activities into the work day can reduce stress and increase satisfaction. Additionally, working in an environment that is family-friendly, such as allowing children or pets in the workplace or including family in professional celebrations, has the potential to improve WLB. As Mazerolle et al. (2008) reported, WLB has the potential to improve job satisfaction and life satisfaction, as well as lessen job burnout and intention to leave.

### ***Social support.***

Perhaps the most important factor that can positively affect job satisfaction for athletic trainers is having an effective support network. Harris, Winskowski, and Engdahl (2007) consider social support to include any action taken by a person that is helpful to another person and improves psychological or behavioral functioning. Social support can come from many sources: coworkers, supervisors, administration, coaches, student-athletes, friends, and family.

Preferably, ATCs receive support from both work and non-work sources. However, previous research has shown that the source of support does not necessarily matter, but support in one area can positively impact performance in the other (Mazerolle et al., 2016). Having understanding and supportive coworkers and supervisors creates a strong sense of togetherness and camaraderie in the workplace; in turn, the encouragement and sharing of responsibilities seen in such an environment positively impacts satisfaction. Hendrix, Acevedo, and Herbert (2000) determined that social support and perceived professional stress are negatively associated. In other words, the more social support ATCs receive from work and non-work sources, the less stressful ATCs perceive the demands of the job.

#### **Negative factors affecting job satisfaction.**

##### ***Role conflict and role overload.***

According to Hardy and Conway (1988), role conflict occurs when job responsibilities or expectations are conflicting or contradictory. Role conflict creates stress as it makes it difficult for the opposing responsibilities to be completed effectively. Similarly, Brumels and Beach (2008) described role overload as occurring when all the responsibilities of the job cannot be completed within the amount of time given, usually due to an excess of responsibilities. Athletic trainers constantly shuffle numerous responsibilities, many times simultaneously. Even when working long hours, it is difficult to complete tasks in a timely manner; the addition of travel, pressure from coaches, and lack of an autonomous schedule further increases the role conflict and overload ATCs regularly suffer. Mazerolle et al. (2015) further supported the findings that high workload negatively influences professional commitment and enthusiasm. Particularly for collegiate ATCs, constantly being on-call and juggling many duties diminishes job enjoyment.

***Supervisory/Coach conflict.***

Workplace conflict and lack of support can have a major negative impact on job satisfaction. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for ATCs to have conflicts with the coaching staff with which they work; coaches frequently place pressure on ATCs to get players back to full health and often question ATCs judgement in regard to diagnosis, restrictions, and limitations, which can result in ATCs questioning their commitment to the job (Mazerolle et al., 2015). Conflict can even arise between ATCs and supervisors and administration, leading to feelings of lack of support. Goodman et al. (2010) concluded that professional conflict and lack of supervisor support can lead to role conflict and overload, as well as a lack of organizational support, both of which are a detriment to job satisfaction. Coach and supervisory conflict may also emerge due to a lack of recognition and respect. Any type of professional conflict can adversely impact aspects of work that may positively impact job satisfaction, such as social support and autonomy.

***Role ambiguity and role incongruity.***

Kahn et al. (1964) define role ambiguity as non-specific information, expectations, or responsibilities for a given position and role incongruity as an incompatibility between obligations and skills. Essentially, role ambiguity and role incongruity occur when responsibilities and skills do not match. Previous research has shown that role ambiguity and role incongruity are valuable predictors of job satisfaction in the athletic training population (Brumels & Beach, 2008). Feelings of incompetence can negatively affect self-perception and self-confidence, which can then negatively impact job satisfaction. Research conducted by Defreese and Mihalik (2016) on 154 NATA members further supports the ill-effects of role ambiguity and incongruity in job satisfaction and commitment. The authors used the Perceived

Stress Scale, Social Support Questionnaire, Positive and Negative Social Exchanges, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Services Survey to assess social interactions, perceived stress, workload incongruences, job satisfaction, and burnout. Defreese and Mihalik (2016) determined that workload incongruence and stress are positively associated with ATC burnout. Incongruent skills and job responsibilities alter all facets of role identity. When role identity is in doubt, ATCs have difficulty managing workplace stress and job duties while maintaining enjoyment and satisfaction with work.

### **Perceived organizational support.**

While perceived organizational support has been well researched in other fields, included many medical professions, the impact of organizational support in the athletic training profession is less known. Perceived organizational support exists as a form of reciprocity in which the employee complete workplace responsibilities with the expectation of being rewarded and acknowledged by the employer for their loyalty and productivity (Hellman, Faqua, & Worley, 2006). Simply, the more an employee perceives an employer to recognize and reward hard work and positive results, the more commitment and dedication the employee has for the employer. As such, organization support can be a major factor in job satisfaction, as well as professional commitment and retention.

Previous research from other medical fields has shown a strong relationship between perceived organization support and job satisfaction and intention to leave. While studying social workers, Acker (2004) concluded that organizational support was positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively correlated with attrition from the field. Similarly, Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, and Lynch (1997) found that among employees in a variety of professions, perceived organizational support and overall job satisfaction were highly related, although

discretionary job conditions must be considered as well. In other words, employees valued rewards and recognition from employers, but uncontrollable factors, such as government regulations, contractual rules for pay, and societal norms, can decrease job satisfaction even when high organizational support is present.

Although other medical professions relate to athletic training, the time commitment and responsibilities associated with working in high-level, competitive collegiate athletics present a unique set of circumstances for collegiate ATCs; the current literature does not specifically address the impact that professional demands place on the perceptions of organizational support among collegiate ATCs. Dixon and Sagas (2007) completed research investigating the relationship between organizational support, work-family conflict, and job-life satisfaction in university coaches, and the researchers found that perceived organizational support was positively correlated with both job satisfaction and life satisfaction, while negatively correlated with work-family conflict. These results are of particular interest to ATCs considering the similarities in schedules, work-related stresses, work-life balance challenges, and the overall organizational structure of collegiate coaches and collegiate ATCs. Clearly, social support plays an important role in job satisfaction and professional commitment, but organizational support plays an equally large role. As such, it is an area that deserves further investigating within the athletic training population.

### **Burnout and professional commitment.**

As the negative factors affecting the job satisfaction of ATCs increase, the fear of burnout and attrition from the profession becomes more justified. Maslach (1982) described burnout as consisting of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment. At this time, the daily duties of ATCs, particularly those in the collegiate

setting, are conducive with creating mental weariness, dissociation with student-athletes and colleagues, and feelings of uselessness. These sentiments reduce job satisfaction to the point of burnout, hindering the profession of athletic training in the process. It is more important now than ever to understand the factors that enhance ATCs job satisfaction and professional commitment in order to continue growing the profession with capable, experienced practitioners.

Kahanov, Eberman, and Juzeszyn (2013) found that burnout results when ATCs are unable to manage professional identity roles while maintaining a work-life balance. Similarly, Hendrix et al. (2000) concluded that hardiness and social support were negatively correlated with burnout in ATCs. These findings have major implications in the attrition of ATCs in high-stress, demanding positions. The inability to preserve a personal life outside work while fulfilling the demands of the profession often prompts ATCs to search for work in other fields. Additionally, as role identity becomes compromised due to lofty expectations, lack of social support, demanding job responsibilities, and feelings of inadequacy, ATCs become weary of the profession.

Based on previous research, the important impact social support can have on job satisfaction and the retention of ATCs is well-established. However, little is known regarding the relationship of perception of organizational support and appreciation and overall feelings of job satisfaction in ATCs. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between perceptions of support and job satisfaction in BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers. For the purpose of this study, job satisfaction will be classified as “the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs” (Spector, 1997, p. 2). The following research question and hypotheses are given:



Q1: How do perceptions of support relate to the overall level of job satisfaction in BOC-certified, collegiate athletic trainers?

H1: ATCs will be overall satisfied with their jobs.

H2: ATCs will perceive a lack of support from the organization/institution through which they are employed.

H3: Perceived organizational support will be positively related to overall job satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Participants.**

The participants for this study included only BOC-certified, collegiate athletic trainers. These ATCs were employed at institutions at any level of NCAA athletics (i.e., Divisions I, II, and III). Additionally, no participant was excluded based on age, gender, race, marital status, years of experience, sport assignment, or number of years at current job. The participants were recruited using the NATA member database. Using the NATA membership database, with the assistance of the NATA Research Survey Service, 1,000 current, BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers working at the NCAA level were recruited to participate in this study. Of the 1,000 recruited participants, 122 started the survey, and 100 participants completed the survey fully. The participants participated in the study voluntarily. There was no type of monetary reward or prize for participating in the study.

#### **Data collection.**

#### ***Procedures.***

An approach with an emphasis placed on quantitative data was used in the creation of a survey to determine feelings of appreciation and job satisfaction in the participants. The survey was administered through Qualtrics, and began with an introductory section that informed the participants of the purpose of the study, which was followed by a section that included informed consent and required an electronic signature to continue to the survey portion. The first section of the survey focused on attaining demographic information. The demographic factors served as confounding extraneous variables for this study and were as controlled as possible. The second section of the survey focused on assessing job satisfaction using the Job Satisfaction Survey

(JSS; Spector, 1995). Finally, the third section assessed perceived support using the Survey of Perceived Organization Support (SPOS; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986).

The Human Subjects Committee at Southern Illinois University reviewed and approved this study before any data collection began. Once approved, the survey was distributed to potential participants through email. The survey was active for four weeks, and each participant could take as much time as needed to complete the survey. A reminder email was sent out one time each week that the survey was open. After four weeks, the survey closed, and no other potential participants were allowed to participate in the study. Once the survey window closed, the data was coded and analyzed using Qualtrics software and SPSS software.

### *Measures.*

The opening section included questions designed to describe demographic information. Demographic categories included: age, gender, sport assignment, number of sports covered, years of experience, years at current place of employment, NCAA division, marriage status, and number of kids. The second section included 36 closed-ended questions from the Job Satisfaction Survey. The JSS (Spector, 1985) analyzes job satisfaction using a 6-point Likert scale from (1) Disagree Very Much to (6) Agree Very Much. Examples of questions from the JSS are “My job is enjoyable” and “I do not feel the work I do is appreciated”. The survey can be used to assess both overall job satisfaction and multiple 4-item subscales of job satisfaction, which include pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. According to Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek, and Frings-Dresen (2003), the JSS has a reliability coefficient of 0.91 for internal consistency and 0.71 for test-rest, as well as validity scores of 0.61-0.80 for convergent validity and 0.19-0.59 for discriminant validity. As convergent validity relates to a degree of similarity

with similar tests, and discriminant validity relates to a degree of difference with similar tests, the JSS scored appropriately in all measures to be considered a satisfactory measure of job satisfaction. Although the JSS was originally meant for use in other fields, the survey can be used in the medical field to assess job satisfaction.

The third section contained the Study of Perceived Organizational Support. Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa (1986) developed the SPOS to assess employees' beliefs that the organization they worked for cared about their well-being and valued the employees' commitment to the organization. The SPOS was originally comprised of a 36-item 7-point Likert scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree. The SPOS includes questions such as "My organization values my contribution to its well-being" and "My organization strongly considers my goals and values". For the purposes of this study, the short 16-item SPOS was utilized. Hellman, Fuqua, and Worley (2006) analyzed 58 different studies and determined the reliability coefficient for the SPOS to be 0.88, with insignificant differences between the 36-item SPOS and 16-item SPOS. Much like the JSS, the SPOS was not created to be used in the medical field. However, the 16-item SPOS appropriately addressed the perceptions of support that were of interest in this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESULTS

This study examined job satisfaction and feelings of support BOC-certified, collegiate athletic trainers experience. The impact of support and appreciation on job satisfaction was also investigated. Inclusion in the study required participants to complete a survey consisting of three distinct sections. Section one consisted solely of demographic information. Section two contained the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) and aimed at determining both the overall level of job satisfaction of the participants, as well as the satisfaction level the participants had with different subscales associated with being an ATC. These subscales included: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. Section three addressed perceptions of support using the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS). It was hypothesized that ATCs would be overall satisfied with their jobs but perceive a lack of support from the organization or institution through which they are employed. Additionally, it was hypothesized that perceived organizational support would be positively related to overall job satisfaction. Of the 1,000 participants recruited for this study, 100 participants finished the survey entirely, resulting in a 10% response rate. Only the results for those participants that fully completed the survey are included in the JSS and SPOS results. Participants that fully completed the surveys but skipped 1 or more questions are also included in the results, which accounts for questions on the JSS and SPOS that have slightly less than 100 responses. Aside from marital status and NCAA division, all demographic categories also include responses from all 100 participants. Because the participants that did not fully answer these demographic questions did fully complete the survey information, their answers were included in the results.

This study consisted of a near even distribution of males (46.0%) and females (54.0%). The greatest number of participants were aged 26-30 (32.0%), married (48.5%), and childless (65.0%). Sport assignment was also determined for each participant, but the results varied so greatly they were not included in the results. In total, over 23 sport assignments were reported, including football, archery, bass fishing, softball, and basketball. Number of sport coverages also varied, ranging from a single sport to an entire athletic department of up to 18 sports.

Professionally, most participants worked with an athletic training staff of more than 10 ATCs (18.0%), worked at the Division I level (48.9%), had been working at their current job for 1-3 years (38.0%), and had been BOC-certified for 25+ years (22.0%). The participants provided demographic information on gender, age, marital status, number of children, sport assignment, staff size at current institution, NCAA Division of current institution, number of years at current job, and total years of BOC-certification. Tables 1-8 present the results from the demographic information attained from the participants.

### *Participant Demographics 1-8*

Table 1. *Gender*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	46	46.0%
Female	54	54%

Table 2. *Age*

<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
20-25	7	7.0%
26-30	32	32.0%
31-35	15	15.0%
36-40	11	11.0%
41-45	8	8.0%
46-50	9	9.0%
51-55	10	10.0%
56-60	3	3.0%

61-65	5	5.0%
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Table 3. *Marital Status*

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Never Married	44	44.4%
Long-Term Romantic Partnership	5	5.1%
Married	48	48.5%
Widowed	0	0.0%
Divorced	2	2.0%
Separated	0	0.0%

Table 4. *Number of Children*

<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0	65	65.0%
1	9	9.0%
2	20	20.0%
3	4	4.0%
4	2	2.0%
5	0	0.0%
6+	0	0.0%

Table 5. *Staff Size at Current Institution*

<b>Staff Size</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	3	3.0%
2	10	10.0%
3	7	7.0%
4	8	8.0%
5	17	17.0%
6	10	10.0%
7	7	7.0%
8	9	9.0%
9	7	7.0%
10	4	4.0%
11+	18	18.0%

Table 6. *NCAA Division of Current Institution*

<b>NCAA Division</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Division I	44	48.9%
Division II	24	26.7%
Division III	22	24.4%

Table 7. *Years of Employment at Current Institution*

<b>Years of Employment</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 1 year	8	8.0%
1-3 years	38	38.0%
4-6 years	15	15.0%
7-9 years	11	11.0%
10-12 years	8	8.0%
13-15 years	3	3.0%
16-18 years	3	3.0%
19-21 years	2	2.0%
22-24 years	2	2.0%
25+ years	10	10.0%

Table 8. *Years of BOC-Certification*

<b>Years of BOC-Certification</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 1 year	0	0.0%
1-3 years	10	10.0%
4-6 years	19	19.0%
7-9 years	14	14.0%
10-12 years	8	8.0%
13-15 years	12	12.0%
16-18 years	7	7.0%
19-21 years	2	2.0%
22-24 years	6	6.0%
25+ years	22	22.0%

The Job Satisfaction Survey was utilized to assess overall job satisfaction, as well as nine subscales of job satisfaction. Each question on the 36-item JSS could be answered on a 6-point Likert scale from (1) Disagree Very Much to (6) Agree Very Much. The count, mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, and range were calculated using the Qualtrics and SPSS



software. The mean total for each subscale was also calculated. Tables 9-17 show the statistical values calculated for each of the nine subscales: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. The range for each subscale was from 4 to 24. According to Spector (2007), the full JSS and each subscale can be scored using an absolute approach with logical, cut scores for dissatisfaction, ambivalence, and satisfaction. A score from 4 to 12 represents dissatisfaction, while a score from 16 to 24 represents satisfaction. Ambivalence is considered anything in between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, with a score ranging from 12 to 16. Spector (2007) also described an absolute scoring system for the JSS, with values of 36 to 108 representing dissatisfaction, 108 to 144 representing ambivalence, and 144 to 216 representing satisfaction. The overall total mean for all fully completed JSS portions was calculated as 133.84 and the standard deviation was determined to be 24.34. Therefore, the total mean score for this sample ranks as ambivalent.

Table 9. *Job Satisfaction Survey Subscale 1: Pay*

		<b>Pay (M = 9.65)</b>			
		Question 1: I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	Question 10: Raises are too few and far between.*	Question 19: I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.*	Question 28: I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.
N	Valid	100	99	100	100
	Missing	0	1	0	0
Mean		2.70	4.98	4.48	2.41
Median		2.00	5.00	5.00	2.00
Mode		1	6	6	1
Std. Deviation		1.521	1.348	1.432	1.491
Variance		2.313	1.816	2.050	2.224
Range		5	5	5	5
Minimum		1	1	1	1
Maximum		6	6	6	6

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 7)

Table 10. *Job Satisfaction Survey Subscale 2: Promotion*

		<b>Promotion (<math>M = 10.02</math>)</b>			
		Question 2: There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.*	Question 11: Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	Question 20: People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.	Question 33: I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.
N	Valid	100	99	99	100
	Missing	0	1	1	0
Mean		4.57	2.44	2.72	2.43
Median		5.00	2.00	3.00	2.00
Mode		5	1 <sup>a</sup>	3	1
Std. Deviation		1.289	1.319	1.286	1.320
Variance		1.662	1.739	1.654	1.743
Range		5	5	5	5
Minimum		1	1	1	1
Maximum		6	6	6	6

Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 7)

The pay subscale was composed of questions 1, 10, 19, and 28, while the promotion subscale was composed of questions 2, 11, 20, and 33. Pay and promotion had calculated total means of 9.65 and 10.02, respectively. These means ranked these two subscales as the lowest subscales of the JSS for the participants in this study. The total subscale means placed both pay and promotion in the dissatisfied classification for the JSS.

Table 11. *Job Satisfaction Survey Subscale 3: Supervision*

		<b>Supervision (<math>M = 18.76</math>)</b>			
		Question 3: My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	Question 12: My supervisor is unfair to me.*	Question 21: My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.*	Question 30: I like my supervisor.
N	Valid	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.60	2.03	2.64	4.83
Median		5.00	2.00	2.00	5.00
Mode		6	1	1	6
Std. Deviation		1.518	1.267	1.508	1.326

Variance	2.303	1.605	2.273	1.759
Range	5	5	5	5
Minimum	1	1	1	1
Maximum	6	6	6	6

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 7)

Table 12. *Job Satisfaction Survey Subscale 4: Fringe Benefits*

		<b>Fringe Benefits (M = 17.23)</b>			
		Question 4: I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.*	Question 13: The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.	Question 22: The benefits package we have is equitable.	Question 29: There are benefits we do not have which we should have.*
N	Valid	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.64	4.51	4.55	3.19
Median		2.00	5.00	5.00	3.00
Mode		1 <sup>a</sup>	5	5	3
Std. Deviation		1.630	1.446	1.473	1.502
Variance		2.657	2.091	2.169	2.256
Range		5	5	5	5
Minimum		1	1	1	1
Maximum		6	6	6	6

Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 7)

The supervision subscale was composed of questions 3, 12, 21, and 30. The mean total calculated for the supervision subscale was 18.76, which was determined to be the second highest subscale on the JSS for the participants in this study. The mean total was classified in the satisfied category of the JSS. The fringe benefits subscale was composed of questions 4, 13, 22, and 29. The fringe benefits mean total was determined to be 17.23. This was enough to be classified as satisfied. Fringe benefits ranked as the fourth highest subscale on the JSS for the study participants.

Table 13. *Job Satisfaction Survey Subscale 5: Contingent Rewards*

		<b>Contingent Rewards (<math>M = 12.80</math>)</b>			
		Question 5: When I do a good job, I receive the recognition that I should receive.	Question 14: I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.*	Question 23: There are few rewards for those who work here.*	Question 32: I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.*
N	Valid	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.26	3.35	4.01	4.10
Median		3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00
Mode		4	2	4	4
Std. Deviation		1.440	1.513	1.446	1.314
Variance		2.073	2.290	2.091	1.727
Range		5	5	5	5
Minimum		1	1	1	1
Maximum		6	6	6	6

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 7)

Table 14. *Job Satisfaction Survey Subscale 6: Operating Conditions*

		<b>Operating Conditions (<math>M = 13.51</math>)</b>			
		Question 6: Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.*	Question 15: My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.	Question 24: I have too much to do at work.*	Question 31: I have too much paperwork.*
N	Valid	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.72	3.64	4.25	4.16
Median		2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode		2	5	4	4
Std. Deviation		1.280	1.481	1.373	1.468
Variance		1.638	2.192	1.886	2.156
Range		5	5	5	5
Minimum		1	1	1	1
Maximum		6	6	6	6

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 7)

The contingent rewards subscale was composed of questions 5, 14, 23, and 32. The subscale of operating conditions contained questions 6, 15, 24, and 31. The two subscales has mean total calculations of 12.80 and 13.51, respectively. Both contingent rewards and operating

conditions were considered ambivalent subscales by the participants in the study. Contingent rewards ranked seventh among the subscales, while operating conditions ranked sixth among all JSS subscales for the participants in this study.

Table 15. *Job Satisfaction Survey Subscale 7: Coworkers*

		<b>Coworkers (M = 18.16)</b>			
		Question 7: I like the people I work with.	Question 16: I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.*	Question 25: I enjoy my coworkers.	Question 34: There is too much bickering and fighting at work.*
N	Valid	99	99	100	100
	Missing	1	1	0	0
Mean		5.06	3.16	5.08	2.82
Median		5.00	3.00	5.00	3.00
Mode		5	2	5	1
Std. Deviation		.956	1.543	.849	1.466
Variance		.915	2.382	.721	2.149
Range		4	5	4	5
Minimum		2	1	2	1
Maximum		6	6	6	6

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 7)

Table 16. *Job Satisfaction Survey Subscale 8: Nature of Work*

		<b>Nature of Work (M = 19.21)</b>			
		Question 8: I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.*	Question 17: I like doing the things I do at work.	Question 27: I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	Question 35: My job is enjoyable.
N	Valid	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.70	5.20	5.08	4.63
Median		2.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Mode		2	5	6	5
Std. Deviation		1.501	.816	.895	1.143
Variance		2.253	.667	.802	1.306
Range		5	5	4	5
Minimum		1	1	2	1
Maximum		6	6	6	6

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculate mean – 7)

The subscales of coworkers and nature of work were highly ranked among the JSS subscales for the participants in this study. The coworker subscale was composed of questions 7, 16, 25, and 34, and the mean total for coworkers was 18.16. This mean total ranked coworkers as the third highest JSS subscale for the participants. Nature of work was similarly ranked. Questions 8, 17, 27, and 35 were included in the nature of work subscale. The mean total for the subscale was calculated as 19.21, which ranked first among all JSS subscales. Both coworkers and nature of work fell within the satisfied range.

Table 17. *Job Satisfaction Survey Subscale 9:Communication*

**Communication. (M = 14.50)**

		Question 9: Communications seem good within this organization.	Question 18: The goals of this organization are not clear to me.*	Question 26: I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.*	Question 36: Work assignments are not fully explained.*
N	Valid	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.97	2.84	3.90	2.73
Median		3.00	2.00	4.00	2.00
Mode		1	2	4	2
Std. Deviation		1.521	1.587	1.283	1.406
Variance		2.312	2.520	1.646	1.977
Range		5	5	5	5
Minimum		1	1	1	1
Maximum		6	6	6	6

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 7)

The final subscale of the JSS was communication. The questions in this subscale included question 9, 18, 26, and 36. The mean total calculated for the communication subscale was 14.50. The mean total was classified as ambivalent in JSS scoring. Overall, communication ranked as the fifth highest subscale of the JSS for the participants in this study. Figure 1 shows the total mean score for each subscale of the JSS.

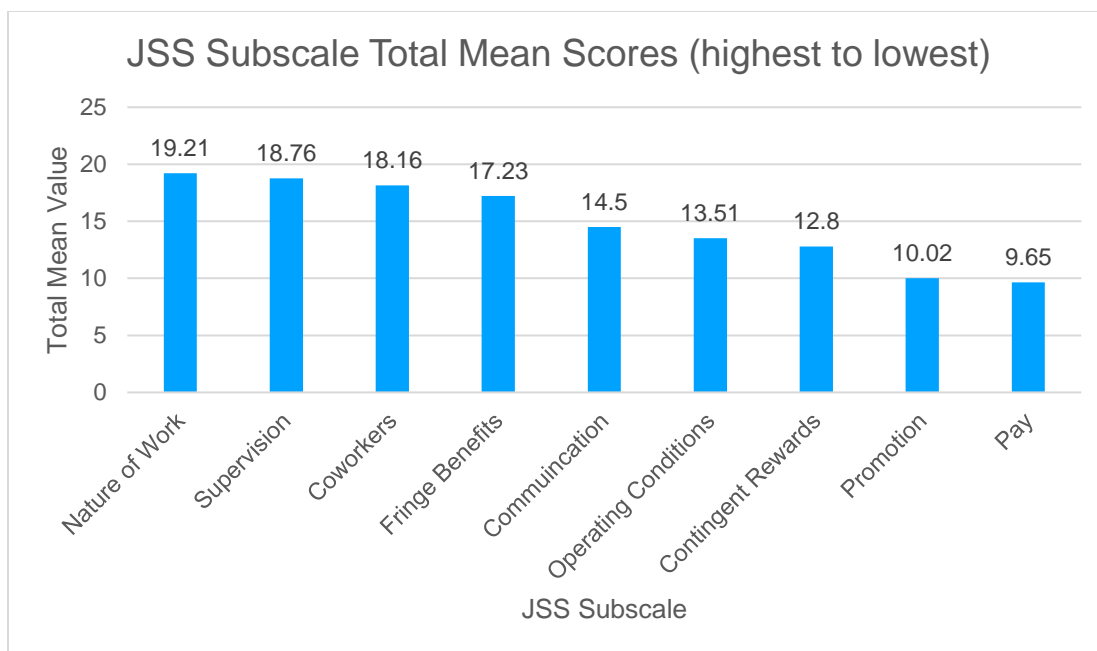


Figure 1. *JSS Subscale Total Mean Scores*

The Survey of Perceived Organizational Support was used to determine the participants' feelings of support, recognition, commitment, and benefit provide by their employer or organization. The modified, 16-item SPOS given to the participants consisted of a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree. The minimum overall score for the 16-item SPOS is 16, while the maximum overall score for the 16-item SPOS is 112. Using the same logical, absolute approach to scoring as that used on the JSS, a score of 12 to 44 represents a lack of perceived organizational support; a score of 44 to 76 represents ambivalence towards perceived organizational support. Finally, a score of 76 to 112 represents the perception that organizational support exists. For all fully completed surveys, the overall mean total for the modified SPOS was calculated as 61.66, indicating uncertainty regarding organizational support from the participants. The standard deviation for the SPOS was determined to be 18.00. Unlike the JSS, the SPOS was not divided into subscales for separate evaluation. Tables 18-20 show the

statistical results, including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, and range, obtained from the 16-items on the SPOS.

Table 18. *Survey of Perceived Organizational Support Questions 1-5*

		<b>SPOS Questions 1-5</b>				
		Question 1: My organization values my contribution to its well-being.	Question 2: If my organization could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary, it would do so.*	Question 3: My organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.*	Question 4: My organization strongly considers my goals and values.	Question 5: My organization would ignore any complaint from me.*
N	Valid	100	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.23	4.51	5.00	3.62	3.76
Median		5.00	5.00	5.00	3.50	3.00
Mode		6	7	7	3	3
Std. Deviation		1.874	1.997	1.670	1.625	1.741
Variance		3.512	3.990	2.788	2.642	3.033
Range		6	6	6	6	6
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		7	7	7	7	7

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 8)

Table 19. *Survey of Perceived Organization Support Questions 6-11*

		<b>SPOS Question 6-11</b>					
		Question 6: My organization disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me.*	Question 7: Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.	Question 8: My organization really cares about my well-being.	Question 9: Even if I did the best job possible, my organization would fail to notice.*	Question 10: My organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor.	Question 11: My organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.
N	Valid	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.37	4.98	4.12	4.44	4.25	4.03
Median		4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	4.00	4.00



Mode	4	6	5	5	4	5
Std. Deviation	1.612	1.407	1.578	1.766	1.388	1.514
Variance	2.599	1.979	2.491	3.118	1.927	2.292
Range	6	6	6	6	6	6
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	7	7	7	7	7	7

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 8)

Table 20. *Survey of Perceived Organizational Support Questions 12-16*

		<b>SPOS Questions 12-16</b>				
		Question 12: If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me.*	Question 13: My organization shows very little concern for me.*	Question 14: My organization cares about my opinions.	Question 15: My organization takes pride in my accomplishm ents at work.	Question 16: My organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible.
N	Valid	100	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		5.00	3.99	3.98	3.81	3.71
Median		5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Mode		7	4	5	4 <sup>a</sup>	4
Std. Deviation		1.869	1.605	1.511	1.587	1.431
Variance		3.495	2.576	2.282	2.519	2.046
Range		6	6	6	6	6
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		7	7	7	7	7

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

\* Indicates reverse scoring is necessary as the question is negatively worded (Absolute value of calculated mean – 8)

Once all data had been analyzed, a scatterplot was created to determine if a linear relationship existed between the JSS and SPOS. Figure 1 shows the initial scatterplot created to visualize the linear relationship between the two surveys. On the scatterplot, JSS totals are on the x-axis, and SPOS totals are on the y-axis. As the figure shows, the data points suggest a linear pattern with a positive slope.

### JSS/SPOS Linear Relationship

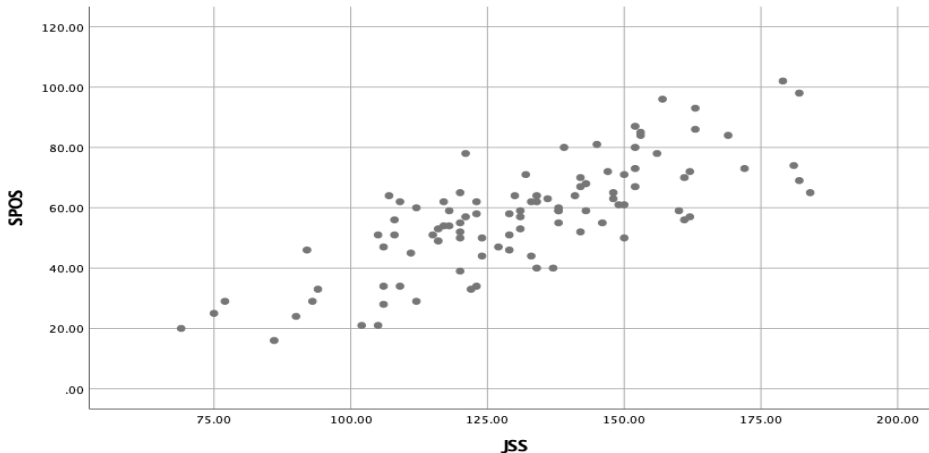


Figure 2. *Job Satisfaction Survey and Survey of Perceived Organizational Support Scatterplot*

After determining that a linear relationship existed between the two variables, the JSS totals and the SPOS totals, the correlative relationship between the two variables was determined. Table 21 shows the correlation coefficient calculated for the two variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient was determined to be  $r = .775$  for the two variables, which was significant at  $p = .01$  level. The  $r$  value calculated suggests a strong linear correlation in the positive direction between the JSS and SPOS. This result is supported by the scatterplot in Figure 1, which shows a positively sloped regression line with points clustered relatively close to the regression line.

Table 21. *Correlation between the JSS total means and SPOS total means*

		JSS	SPOS
JSS	Pearson Correlation	1	.775**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
SPOS	Pearson Correlation	.775**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The strong correlation between perceived organizational support, as determined by the SPOS, and job satisfaction, as determined using the JSS, suggested the data should be analyzed using linear regression. A linear regression was performed using JSS as the dependent variable and SPOS as the independent variable. Tables 22 and 23 show the data obtained from the linear regression. The coefficient of determination was calculated as  $r^2 = .600$ . This suggests that 60% of the variation in job satisfaction can be contributed to perceived organizational support within this sample of athletic trainers.

Table 22. *Linear Regression of the JSS in Relation to the SPOS*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.775 <sup>a</sup>	.600	.596	15.47106

a. Predictors: (Constant), SPOS

b. Dependent Variable: JSS

The regression coefficients for the data were determined using JSS score as the dependent variable and SPOS score as the independent variable. The  $t$  statistic was calculated as 12.13. The  $p$ -value was calculated as .000, or  $< .001$ . The  $p$ -value is less than the  $p < .05$  alpha value chosen for this study. Using the 95% confidence interval, it was determined that the slope of the regression line is between .876 and 1.219, trending in a positive direction.

Table 23. *Regression Coefficients of the JSS in Relation to the SPOS*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	71.573	5.197		13.771	.000	61.259	81.886
	SPOS	1.047	.086	.775	12.129	.000	.876	1.219

a. Dependent Variable: JSS

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between perceptions of support and job satisfaction in BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers. It was hypothesized that the participants would be satisfied with their jobs but would perceive a lack of support from the institution or organization through which they were employed. It was also hypothesized that perceived organizational support would be positively related to job satisfaction. Spector's (1985) Job Satisfaction Survey and the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), created by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa (1986), were utilized to measure job satisfaction and perceived organization support. The results were considered in terms of overall job satisfaction, perceptions of organizational support, and the relationship between the two variables.

#### **Job satisfaction.**

Overall, the BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers included in this study were ambivalent in terms of job satisfaction, with an overall job satisfaction score of 133.84. The overall mean for the JSS did not support hypothesis 1 that the participants would overall be satisfied with their jobs. Additionally, the results of this study differ from previous research concerning overall job satisfaction in ATCs. Barrett, Gillentine, Lamberth, and Daughtrey (2002) conducted research on 95 BOC-certified ATCs working in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) and concluded the participants were satisfied with their jobs, indicated by a mean overall job satisfaction score of 151.34 on the JSS. The difference in the results between this study and the Barrett, Gillentine, Lamberth, and Daughtrey (2002) study could be contributed to the wide range of conferences and NCAA divisions included in this study, as opposed to just the SEC,

which is one of the larger, more lucrative conferences in NCAA athletics. As such, the mean scores for certain JSS subscales, such as pay, promotion, and fringe benefits, could be expected to be higher among those ATCs than those reported by ATCs working in smaller conferences or lower NCAA divisions.

Despite being satisfied with more aspects of the job than not, the participants in this study were not satisfied with their job overall. High total mean scores for nature of work, supervision, and coworkers were not enough to overcome low total mean scores for pay and promotion. This could simply be a sign that the ATCs that participated in this study have been in the profession long enough for the dissatisfying aspects to become impossible to overlook. Although the majority of the participants in this study had been at their current position for 1-3 years, the majority of participants have been BOC-certified for 25 or more years. This indicates that, despite being in the profession for a lengthy amount of time, the ATCs are not staying in the same job for the entirety of their career. In fact, of the 22 participants that reported 25 or more years of BOC-certification, only 10 reported working at their current job for 25 or more years, and 46 percent of all participants reported being at their current job for no more than three years. Typically, love for the job, high social support, and effective leadership can disguise poor pay or little chance for promotion at the beginning of a career. However, as an ATC grows in the profession, those positive aspects conceal the negative aspects less effectively, resulting in lower scores and lower perception of support from the organization with which they work.

While the participants were somewhat undecided on overall job satisfaction, the results show that some of the subscales of job satisfaction did prove to be rewarding for the participants. Of the nine subscales, supervision, fringe benefits, coworkers, and nature of work all had scores indicating satisfaction with that particular aspect of the profession. The findings support the

results Mazerolle, Eason, Lazar, and Mensch (2016), which stressed the importance of role enjoyment, workplace fit, and coworker and supervisory support in maintaining job satisfaction and professional commitment. Barrett, Gillentine, Lamberth, and Daughtrey (2002) also found similar results using the JSS to assess job satisfaction in BOC-certified collegiate ATCs, reporting satisfaction in the subscale of supervision, nature of work, coworkers, and communication. The results of this study, as well as previous research, indicates that BOC-certified collegiate ATCs do find satisfaction in many aspects of the job. However, as was found in this study, those satisfactory subscales may not always be enough to offset the aspects that are considered dissatisfactory or contradictory.

Similarly, the scores for a few of the subscales showed that the participants had inconclusive feelings regarding other aspects of the job. For instance, the participants proved to be undecided on contingent rewards, operating conditions, and communication. In their study on BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers, Barrett, Gillentine, Lamberth, and Daughtrey (2002) also stated that the mean score for the subscales of operating conditions and contingent rewards, as well as fringe benefits, fell in the range of ambivalence. Participants in the study were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the contingent rewards, operating conditions and communication at their institution or organization. Performance-based rewards, workload, organization rules and regulations, and clear communication between all levels of the organization proved to moderately meet the satisfaction of the participants.

Finally, only two subscales had mean totals indicating dissatisfaction: pay and promotion. The participants were unhappy with the salary and chance for promotion at their current institution, which negatively impacted overall job satisfaction. Terranova and Henning (2011) found similar results as poor salary and little chance for promotion proved to be good predictors

of low job satisfaction and intention to leave the athletic training profession. Kahanov and Eberman (2011) also investigated employment trends in athletic training and determined that pay scale influences professional commitment in athletic training. The impact salary and the opportunity for promotion have on job satisfaction in ATCs cannot be overlooked, as dissatisfaction in those two subscales can greatly impact overall job satisfaction. Despite being the only two subscales of the JSS ranked as dissatisfactory among the participants in this study, pay and promotion had low enough mean scores to keep the overall mean total in the ambivalent range.

#### **Perceived organizational support.**

The results of the SPOS indicated that the participants included in the study had ambivalent feelings towards perceived organizational support as well. Again, this finding does not support hypothesis 2, which stated that the participants would lack perceptions of organization support from the institution or organization through which they were employed. Little research has been completed to assess ATCs' perceptions of support from the institution or organization through which they are employed. However, previous literature supports this finding in other professions. Gorji, Etemadi, and Hoseini (2014) reported average perceived organizational support scores on the original 36-item SPOS among the 123 emergency nurses included in their study, which examined perceived organizational support and job involvement in the Iranian healthcare system. Given the similarities between the nursing and athletic training professions, it is not surprising that research conducted on nurses has a similar outcome of perceptions of organizational support to the ATCs surveyed in this study.

Assessing perceived organizational support is important when considering the loyalty, commitment, and hard work an employee gives to the organization or institution through which

they are employed. While studying 315 public primary school teachers, Celep and Yilmazturk (2012) determined that perceived organizational support was positively correlated with employee commitment to their organization. Although the professions of athletic training and teaching vary in many ways, both professions involve a high degree of interpersonal interactions and human services. Additionally, both professions are frequently associated with unsupportive hierarchal structures, a lack of appreciation and recognition, diminished trust in organizational management, and fear regarding professional commitment. Considering attrition becomes increasingly troublesome in the athletic training profession, perceived organizational support could be an area to explore as it relates to professional commitment.

#### **Impact of perceived organizational support on job satisfaction.**

The results supported the hypothesis that perceived organizational support ( $M = 61.66$ ,  $SD = 18.00$ ) effects job satisfaction ( $M = 133.84$ ,  $SD = 24.34$ ),  $t(99)$ ,  $p = .000$ . The scatterplot of the JSS total scores and SPOS total scores show a clear positive linear relationship. The correlation coefficient also shows a strong correlation between total SPOS score and total JSS score. Finally, the linear regression showed a statistically significant p-value,  $p = .000$ . These findings support research hypothesis 3 that perceived organizational support has a positive relationship to job satisfaction. In other words, higher perceptions of organizational control are correlated with higher the overall job satisfaction among the participants. This supports previous research by Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, and Lynch (1997) which suggested that among a sample of 295 employees of diverse professions, perceived organizational support and job satisfaction are related, although distinct entities. Those findings mirror the results of this study, which found a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction; however, the terms are not interchangeable. For the purposes of this study,



perceived organizational support considers the intent and actions of the athletic department and university towards the athletic trainer, while job satisfaction examines the athletic trainer's contentment with all aspects of the job.

Other researchers have also reported similar results in regard to the important impact perceived organization support can have on job satisfaction. While studying job satisfaction in 60 nurses working in long-term nursing home facilities, Al-Hussami (2008) determined that, of all organizational factors impacting job satisfaction, organizational support most strongly impacted job satisfaction, accounting for about 85 percent of variance in overall job satisfaction. Nurses and athletic trainers have many professional responsibilities and characteristics in common, such as a dedication to caring for others, long working hours, lack of appreciation, and inappropriate compensation in relation to the demands of the job. The results of this study had a slightly lower correlation coefficient, measured as 60 percent of the variance in job satisfaction could be attributed to perceived organizational support. Nonetheless, the results support the previous finding of a strong correlation between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction.

Although a cause-and-effect relationship was not established in this study, a strong correlational relationship was confirmed by the results. As such, it cannot be stated that poor perceptions of organizational support cause poor job satisfaction, or that high perceptions of perceived organizational support cause high job satisfaction. Rather, it can be noted that poor perceptions of organizational support correspond with poor job satisfaction, or high perceptions of organizational support are associated with high job satisfaction. Overall, perceived organizational support is useful in predicting job satisfaction among BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers.

### **Limitations and future research.**

As with all research, this study had limitations that should be noted. When considering the total number of potential participants that met the requirements of inclusion in this study, a relatively small sample size was recruited. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the results of this study to the entire population of BOC-certified, collegiate athletic trainers. Self-selection bias may also have impacted the accuracy of the results, considering that ATCs either highly satisfied or highly dissatisfied were more likely to complete the survey. While the gender split for this study accurately represents the gender demographics of all NATA members, it is unclear as to whether the other demographic categories reflect NATA members in general. Differences in demographic norms from the general NATA member database could prove to be a limitation for this study.

Given the wide range of professional settings ATCs are now employed in, these results are also not generalizable to the entire population of ATCs. Additionally, this study had a relatively low response rate as just 10% of the potential participants completed the survey to be able to complete the analysis. This study was also limited by the two surveys, the JSS and SPOS, used to evaluate job satisfaction and perceived organization support. While both surveys have high internal validity and reliability, the questions were not directed to the athletic training population. For instance, the JSS assessed job satisfaction sufficiently, but it does not address many factors, such as work-life balance and role incongruities, that impact job satisfaction in ATCs. In the future, a survey more specific to ATCs, possibly including questions regarding student-athletes, coaches, and work-life balance, might help address more specific factors that impact job satisfaction in ATCs more so than the nine subscales of the JSS. A final limitation of this study is it simply investigated the relationship between perceived organizational support and

job satisfaction. A major issue in the athletic training profession currently involves attrition and professional commitment. Future research could explore the relationship between perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and attrition. While this study was limited by the cross-sectional nature of data collection, future research could be conducted longitudinally to assess if job satisfaction or perceived organization support vary depending on the time of year (pre-season, in-season, post-season, off-season, etc.), or even how much these variables change over the course of an entire year.

The results obtained from this study can be used to direct future research as it relates to job satisfaction, organizational support, and athletic trainers. In particular, the impact job setting has on feelings of support and job satisfaction should be further investigated. ATCs are becoming increasingly in-demand in more non-traditional settings, such as the military and industrial settings, as a cost-effective method of returning injured employees to work (Zimmerman, 1993). Comparing the sense of support and job satisfaction of ATCs working in traditional settings, such as profession athletics, collegiate athletics, and secondary athletics, to that of ATCs working in non-traditional settings, such as clinics, SWAT teams, and industrial sites, could yield interesting results.

In addition, the results from this study may influence future research comparing entry-level bachelor's degree ATCs and entry-level master's degree ATCs. In recent years, a push has been made to transition athletic training education programs to entry-level master's degree programs. In other words, athletic training students would not become BOC-certified until after attaining a master's degree in athletic training. Bowman, Mazerolle, and Barrett (2017) examined professional master's athletic training programs and found that entry-level master's programs better prepare students for professional clinical experience due to immersive clinical

experiences, strong mentorships, and a nurturing of high professional confidence. It is believed that entry-level master's program athletic training students are considered more committed to the profession than bachelor's degree program students, many of whom use the athletic training bachelor's degree to pursue higher education in other medical fields. Bowman, Mazerolle, Pitney, Dodge, and Hertel (2015) found that students completing an entry-level master's program had higher retention rates while in the educational program, as well as greater career placement rates in athletic training, than students completing an entry-level bachelor's program.

Considering entry-level master's ATCs enter the field more mature and with a specific commitment to athletic training, having chosen it over other professions when attaining a graduate degree, higher retention rates and career placement rates are not overly surprising. However, little research has been conducting investigating entry-level master's ATCs' job satisfaction and long-term retention in the profession. Future research should address any possible differences in professional commitment and job satisfaction of entry-level master's ATCs and entry-level bachelor's ATCs.

### **Conclusions.**

This study investigated job satisfaction and perceived organizational support experienced by BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers, as well as the effect organizational support has on job satisfaction in the ATC population. Using the National Athletic Trainers' Association member database, 1,000 potential BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers were recruited for participation in the study, 100 of which completed the survey fully. The results of the study suggest that BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their jobs. Additionally, it was concluded that the participants were ambivalent in their perceptions of organizational support. A strong correlation exists between perceived

organizational support and job satisfaction; a high perception of organization support was associated with higher job satisfaction. When considering the important role ATCs play in the health and well-being of student-athletes, the necessity of assuring BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers are supported, recognized, appreciated, and rewarded for their hard work cannot be overstated. This study aids in advancing the current literature regarding job satisfaction, perceived organization support, and the relationship between organizational support and job satisfaction in BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers.

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A:  
Cover Letter**

Dear Participants,

My name is Hannah Zurhellen, and I am a graduate student in the Sport Studies program at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. Additionally, I am graduate assistant athletic trainer at SIU. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. In order to complete this study, you must be a BOC-certified, collegiate athletic trainer. No minors under the age of 18 are allowed to complete this study.

The purpose of my study is to investigate the impact perceptions of support and appreciation have on job satisfaction in BOC-certified collegiate athletic trainers.

This study is being completed as part of my graduate research project. The questionnaire will be divided into three sections. Section 1 is composed of demographic information. Section 2 includes the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1994), which is comprised of 6-point Likert-like questions for you to rate feelings of appreciation and job satisfaction. Section 3 consists of the 16-item Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), which contains 7-point Likert-like questions pertaining to perceptions of social support. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may stop participating at any time. It is estimated that this survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. Individual responses will not be identified or reported. At the conclusion of the study, the data sheets and corresponding numbers on the questionnaires will be destroyed and disposed. The published and reported results of the study will not be linked to the name of any individual or institution. We will take all reasonable steps to protect your identity.

You may contact me at any time. It is estimated that the research project will be completed in the next few months. If you wish to have a copy of the results, please contact me. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Julie Partridge, at [jpartrid@siu.edu](mailto:jpartrid@siu.edu). Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Hannah Zurhellen, ATC, LAT  
Graduate Student  
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL 62901  
[Hannah.zurhellen@siu.edu](mailto:Hannah.zurhellen@siu.edu)  
901-734-5319

This project has been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Committee Chairperson, Office of Sponsored Projects Administration, SIUC, Carbondale, IL 62901-4709. Phone: (618) 453-4533. Email: [siuhsc@siu.edu](mailto:siuhsc@siu.edu).

## APPENDIX B: Survey

The following demographic questions will help us understand a little about you. Please answer as honestly as possible.

**What is your gender?**

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (please specify) (3) \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your age?**

- 20 - 25
- 26 - 30
- 31 - 35
- 36 - 40
- 41 - 45
- 46 - 50
- 51 - 55
- 56 - 60
- 61 - 65
- 66+

**How many children do you have?**

- No children
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 +

**What is your marital status?**

- Never married
- Long-term romantic partnership
- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated

The following questions are job specific demographics. Please consider your current position when answering these questions.

**What is your sport assignment? Please include all teams with which you currently work.**

---

**How many athletic trainers are at your institution?****Include full-time, part-time, and graduate assistants in your answer.**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- More than 10

**What NCAA Division is your current institution?**

- Division I
- Division II
- Division III

**How long have you been at your current job?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10-12 years
- 13-15 years
- 16-18 years
- 19-21 years
- 22-24 years
- 25+ years

**How many years have you been BOC certified?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10-12 years
- 13-15 years
- 16-18 years
- 19-21 years
- 22-24 years
- 25+ years

**Job Satisfaction Survey****Please indicate the answer choice that best reflects your opinion.****I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**When I do a good job, I receive the recognition that I should receive.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I like the people I work with.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**Communications seem good within this organization.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**Raises are too few and far between.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**My supervisor is unfair to me.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I like doing the things I do at work.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**The goals of this organization are not clear to me.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much



**The benefits package we have is equitable.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**There are few rewards for those who work here.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I have too much to do at work.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I enjoy my coworkers.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**There are benefits we do not have which we should have.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I like my supervisor.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I have too much paperwork.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**There is too much bickering and fighting at work.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**My job is enjoyable.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**Work assignments are not fully explained.**

1. Disagree very much
2. Disagree moderately
3. Disagree slightly
4. Agree slightly
5. Agree moderately
6. Agree very much

**Survey of Perceived Organizational Support**

Listed below are statements that represent possible opinions that you may have about working at your organization. Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by choosing the answer that best represents your point of view about your organization.

**My organization values my contribution to its well-being.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**If my organization could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary, it would do so.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization strongly considers my goals and values.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization would ignore any complaint from me.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**Help is available from my organization when I have a problem.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization really cares about my well-being.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**Even if I did the best job possible, my organization would fail to notice.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization shows very little concern for me.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization cares about my opinions.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**My organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible.**

1. Strongly disagree
2. Moderately disagree
3. Slightly disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree
6. Moderately agree
7. Strongly agree

**HUMAN SUBJECT COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE  
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HSC Approval letter (exempt 2)

To: Hannah Zurhellen  
From: Kimberly K. Asner-Self  
Chair, Human Subjects Committee  
Date: January 8, 2019  
Title: *Impact Perceptions of Social Support and Appreciation have on Job Satisfaction in BOC-Certified Collegiate Athletic Trainers*

Protocol Number: 18279

The revisions to the above referenced study have been approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee. This approval includes all aspects of the project. The study is determined to be exempt according to 45 CFR. 46.101(b)2. This approval does not have an expiration date; however, any future modifications to your protocol must be submitted to the Committee for review and approval prior to their implementation.

Best wishes for a successful study.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the USDHHS Office of Human Research Protection. The Assurance number is 00005334.

KAS:kr

Cc: Julie Partridge|

SIU.EDU

**VITA**

Graduate School  
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Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
Bachelor of Science, Athletic Training, May 2015

Research Paper Title:

Relationship Between Perceptions of Support and Job Satisfaction in BOC-Certified  
Collegiate Athletic Trainers

Major Professor: Dr. Julie Partridge (Ph.D)