

CAREER EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS AT
NCAA DIVISION III INSTITUTIONS

by

Catherine M. Conroy

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements of the Master of Science in Exercise Science Degree

Kinesiology Department

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK COLLEGE AT CORTLAND

Approved:

Date

Thesis Advisor

Date

Thesis Committee Member

Date

Thesis Committee Member

Date

Associate Dean of Professional Studies

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the career experiences of female athletic trainers at the NCAA Division III setting. This research examined women's experiences working within the field. More specifically, the research examined: (a) the effect (if any) of the participant's sex on their work experience, (b) common obstacles females faced in their career, (c) the relationship women had with other women in the profession, and (d) the appeal (if any) of the NCAA Division III setting. The participants consisted of 22 female certified athletic trainers employed in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III setting. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants from March 2008 to May 2008. The audiotaped interviews were transcribed verbatim. The interviews were analyzed with the use of open and axial coding. The findings were organized into three major themes. The three major themes categorizing the participants' interviews included: (a) A Need for Balance, (b) Working in a Male Dominated Profession, and (c) Relationships with other Female Athletic Trainers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is important that I recognize those individuals that helped guide me throughout the research process and completion of this study. Without your knowledge, support, and patience, this research would have never been completed and I will forever be thankful for all your help.

Thank you to the Kinesiology Department at SUNY Cortland for their support and direction throughout the years. Particularly I would like to thank Dr. Katherine Polasek, Dr. Peter McGinnis, and Dr. Joy Hendrick, without whom this project would never have happened. I thank you for all your wisdom, guidance, and patience as you helped with the successful completion of this research. This project has been greatly enhanced by the collective contributions of these three outstanding professionals.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for all their love and support throughout the years. Thank you for always believing in me and in my passion for this research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| ABSTRACT | ii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | iii |
| LIST OF TABLES | vi |
| CHAPTER | |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Statement of the Problem | 3 |
| Research Questions | 3 |
| Significance | 3 |
| Assumptions | 4 |
| Limitations | 4 |
| Delimitations | 5 |
| Summary and Rationale | 5 |
| Definition of Terms | 6 |
| 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE | 8 |
| Profession of Athletic Training | 8 |
| Women in Athletic Training | 9 |
| Stress and Burnout within the Profession | 10 |
| Women at Work | 13 |
| Women Working in Athletic Training | 13 |
| Importance of Role Models | 17 |
| The Division III Setting | 17 |
| Relationships Among Women | 20 |
| Summary and Rationale | 21 |
| 3. METHODOLOGY | 23 |
| Research Design | 24 |
| Participants | 25 |
| Procedures | 27 |
| Interviews | 29 |
| Trustworthiness | 30 |
| Data Analysis | 32 |
| Bias Statement | 33 |

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 4. | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION | 36 |
| | Need for Balance | 37 |
| | Family Obligations | 37 |
| | Pay and Hours | 41 |
| | Male Dominated Field | 43 |
| | Proving Yourself | 43 |
| | Limited Opportunities | 47 |
| | Relationships with Other Female Athletic Trainers | 53 |
| | Social Support | 53 |
| | Discussion | 56 |
| 5. | SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH | 61 |
| | Summary | 61 |
| | Conclusion | 62 |
| | Recommendations for Future Research | 66 |
| | REFERENCES | 67 |
| | APPENDICES | |
| A. | LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS | 71 |
| B. | DEMOGRAPHIC FORM | 72 |
| C. | INFORMED CONSENT | 74 |
| D. | INTERVIEW GUIDE | 75 |
| E. | INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL | 77 |

LIST OF TABLES

| TABLES: | PAGE |
|---|------|
| 1. Demographic Information of Participants..... | 26 |
| 2. Themes of Data Analysis..... | 36 |

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The field of athletic training was developed between the 1930's and 1940's (Hillman, 2000). However, it was not until 1966 that the first woman was able to join the National Athletic Trainer's Association (NATA). Since the passage of Title IX, in 1972, the opportunities for women within the field of athletic training have grown immensely (Women in Athletic Training Committee, 2005). Some of the advances include: accessibility of leadership positions, induction into the NATA hall of fame, and the development of the Women in Athletic Training Committee (WATC).

Arnheim and Prentice (2000) described the profession of athletic training as one that involves providing continuous care and attention to athletes. As such, the profession may result in some athletic trainers experiencing feelings of heightened stress levels while working. Arnheim and Prentice also suggested that the helping professions had a tendency to cause workers to experience chronic levels of arousal and anxiety.

Nino (2006) determined that women who work are faced with common stressors such as: difficult adjustment into professional roles, omission into the working inner circle, and conflict balancing personal and professional lives. Furthermore, Nino suggests that as a result of these stressors women's stress levels are increased and their personal lives suffer.

Similar to Nino's (2006) findings, the Women in Athletic Training Committee study (1996) found that women working within the field of athletic training are faced with challenges such as: lack of opportunities, diminished credibility, and inadequate salaries. Along those same lines, Shingles (2001) argued that women tend to go

unnoticed and unrepresented within the field. Shingles (2001) also discussed the lack of research focusing on the contributions that female athletic trainers bring to the profession.

In their longitudinal study examining women in intercollegiate sport, Acosta and Carpenter (2008), noted that 97.7% of all National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I, Division II, and Division III schools had full time athletic trainers employed. However, only one out of four institutions have a female head athletic trainer. Most female athletic trainers are employed within the NCAA Division II and Division III setting (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). According to Acosta and Carpenter (2008), only 27.3% of full time, head athletic training professionals were women. The highest percentage (36.8%) was found at the NCAA Division III setting while the lowest (15.2%) was found at the NCAA Division I setting. Based on these findings, one could surmise that more job opportunities exist for female athletic trainers at the NCAA Division III setting. These opportunities offer females the potential for further advancement (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008); however, due to a lack of research in this area further examination is necessary.

According to Brabeck and Brabeck (2006), women, compared to men, are more likely to have the ability to form and hold various relationships within their professional and personal lives. Women that build collaborated relationships with one another are more likely to build and bring teamwork and trust into the work place (Brabeck & Brabeck, 2006; Tanenbarum, 2002). In order for forward progress in the workplace to continue, it is necessary for women to view themselves as allies and not enemies (Hoke, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the career experiences of female athletic trainers at the NCAA Division III setting. More specifically, the research examined: (a) the effect (if any) of the participant's sex on their work experience, (b) common obstacles females face in their career, (c) the relationship women have with other women in the profession, and (d) the appeal (if any) of the NCAA Division III setting.

Research Questions

The research questions were as follows:

1. How does sex play a role in the career experience of certified female athletic trainers?
2. What are the common obstacles that females face in the field of athletic training?
3. How do female athletic trainers view their relationship with other women in the field?
4. Does the NCAA Division III setting appeal more to female athletic trainers than compared to other NCAA settings and the professional athletic setting?

Significance

Perez, Cleary, and Hibbler (2003) discussed the lack of research conducted on women working in the field of athletic training. Further examination is needed in order to identify the challenges that women are facing in the profession of athletic training. Women in athletic training experience higher levels of perceived stress and burnout, which may cause them to take a less involved role in athletic training or change professions (Perez, Cleary, & Hibbler).

This study will attempt to identify the key factors that influence the career experiences of female certified athletic trainers working within the NCAA Division III setting. Since the career experiences of women have not been thoroughly examined this study will be significant in identifying the professional and personal challenges that are playing a role in the success and satisfaction of female certified athletic trainers career experiences at the a NCAA Division III setting.

Assumptions

The following are assumptions made within this study:

1. Female athletic trainers experience similar issues while working at the NCAA Division III setting.
2. Females at the NCAA Division III setting deal with both personal and situational variables (i.e., juggling family and work, little financial gains, and little opportunity for advancement of higher positions).
3. Participants will answer interview questions honestly.

Limitations

The study was limited by the following:

1. It is never certain that all participants are purely honest in their responses.
2. The researcher of the study, with limited experience, managed the interviews and the data analysis.
3. It is impossible to completely eliminate researcher bias.
4. The percentage of female certified athletic trainers in the NCAA Division III setting.

Delimitations

The study was delimited by the following:

1. The participants were all certified female athletic trainers working in the NCAA Division III setting.
2. Each of the participants was required to have a minimum of five years experience within the profession, a minimum of two years at the NCAA Division III setting, and a minimum of one year at the current institution they were employed at.
3. The participants were recruited through the Internet or through snowball sampling and contacted by electronic mail (e-mail).
4. The researcher is a Caucasian female with previous experience working at the NCAA Division III setting.
5. All participants were asked the same interview questions.
6. The semi-structured interviews were conducted over the telephone.
7. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

Summary and Rationale

Perez, Hibbler, Cleary, and Eberman (2006), determined that the levels of stress and burnout in female athletic trainers are affected by inadequate leadership opportunities, difficulty balancing one's personal life, and limited financial gains. It is expected that by examining professional and personal challenges that female athletic trainers are experiencing at the NCAA Division III setting, factors that have the greatest impact on their career experience can be identified. It is important to identify the reason why the largest numbers of full time head female athletic trainers are found at the NCAA Division III setting.

By examining the aforementioned factors additional awareness and insight can be brought to the career experiences of female athletic trainers. Through hearing the participants stories, it will be possible to examine and identify the common variables that are affecting women on both a personal and professional level while working within the profession of athletic training. By identifying the variables, future research can be conducted that examines steps that institutions, as well as the National Athletic Trainer's Association, can take in order to improve the personal and professional lives of female athletic trainers.

Definition of Terms:

Barrier: Serves as a barricade, demarcates, or separates something (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1995).

Burnout: Feelings of exhaustion and disinterest in relation to work (Arnheim & Prentice, 2000).

Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC): Credentials indicating membership in the National Athletic Trainer's Association and level of expertise of sports medicine profession in the United States (Hillman, 2000).

Coding: Procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments (Schwandt, 2001).

Interview: Technique similar to a questionnaire except that participants are questioned and respond orally rather than in writing (Thomans, Nelson, & Silverman, 2005).

National Athletic Trainer's Association (NATA): The governing body for athletic trainers in the United States (Hillman, 2000).

Professional: one engaging in an activity professionally. One that participates in an activity often engaged in by amateurs (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 1998).

Qualitative Research: Research that is used to gain a better comprehension on the meaning of action taken by humans (Schwandt, 2001).

Saturation: Can be defined as the point in research when no new information is obtained within the data (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Semi-structured Interview: Similar to open-ended questions that allow the participant to express their feeling and elaborate on their ideas while the researcher follows a guideline (Thomans, Nelson, & Silverman, 2005).

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study is to provide a rich, thick description of the career experiences of female athletic trainers at the NCAA Division III setting. More specifically, the research will examine: (a) the effect (if any) of the participant's sex on their work experience, (b) common obstacles females face in their career, (c) the relationships women have with other women in the profession, and (d) the appeal (if any) of the NCAA Division III setting to female athletic trainers.

Within this review of literature the following sections will be addressed: (a) The Profession of Athletic Training, (b) Women at Work, (c) Relationships Among Women, and (d) the NCAA Division III Setting.

Profession of Athletic Training

According to Hillman (2000), athletic trainers began to form a national organization during the 1930's and 1940's, which would later be established as the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA). The organization has continued its work of providing an outlet for athletic trainers to share information and gain knowledge on new ideas and techniques (Hillman). Around the time of World War II, in 1944, the NATA began to have financial and organizational struggles and the organization started to decline (Hillman). However, by 1947 schools began reemploying athletic trainers and the NATA was able to re-establish itself as the premier professional organization. "In 1969, the medical profession fully recognized the significance of the NATA when the American Medical Association (AMA) acknowledged the important role of the athletic trainer" (Hillman, 2000, p.14).

Throughout the 1970's standards for certification for athletic trainers were established. During the 1980's, there was an additional focus placed on developing the education of athletic trainers. According to Hillman (2000), one of the greatest accomplishments in the history of the profession of athletic training happened during the 1990's when it became officially recognized as a member of the allied health profession.

Arnheim and Prentice (2000) defined athletic trainers as individuals that play an important role in bringing all phases of health care into an athletic setting. Arnheim and Prentice (2000) highlighted the health care phases that athletic trainers are commonly involved in: (a) preventing injury from occurring, (b) providing first aid and management of injury, and (c) designing and implementing rehabilitation programs that will ultimately return the athlete to activity.

Women in Athletic Training.

According to the Women in Athletic Training Committee, a subsection of the National Athletic Training Association, when the NATA was founded there were no women members (2005). It was not until 1966, that the first woman joined the NATA. In April of 1970, the first woman became certified by the NATA (WATC, 2005). With the passing of Title IX in 1972, female athletic trainers began to see possible advances within their profession (WATC). According to the WATC, the following advances were made due to the passing of Title IX: (a) more women were provided with the opportunity to join the NATA, (b) a section of the NATA journal was specifically designated to women, and (c) athletic training clinics specifically for women were made available.

Between 1973 and 1974, women began serving as members of the NATA Board of Directors Committee. Additionally, there was an increase in the number of

undergraduate programs that allowed women to enter their programs. According to the WATC (2005), by 1976 there were approximately 60 certified female athletic trainers working within the profession. During that time, the first woman was permitted to serve as a member of the sports medicine staff for the United States Olympic team.

According to the Women in Athletic Training Committee (2005), throughout the 1970s and 1980s women continued to slowly gain leadership roles (i.e., head athletic trainer positions and directors for the NATA Board). During the latter 20th century and early 21st century the following advances were seen for women: (a) women played larger roles within the organization (i.e., the first female president of the Certification Board of the NATA), (b) women began being inducted into the NATA Hall of Fame, (c) the Women in Athletic Training Committee was established, and (d) by 2000, the first woman to ever serve as president of the NATA was elected. However, while these times brought great successes and advances for women, it is important to note that women were still making, on average, \$10,000 less than males working within comparable positions (WATC). Even still, women have come a long way in developing a place within the athletic training profession.

Stress and Burnout within the Profession.

According to Arnheim and Prentice (2000), personal qualities possessed by many athletic trainers include: empathy, a sense of humor, the ability to communicate well with others, intellectual curiosity, good ethics, stamina, and the ability to adapt without difficulty. However, despite these positive attributes, certified athletic trainers tend to remain at higher emotional arousal and anxiety states as they do their job on a daily basis (Arnheim & Prentice). As Scriber and Alderman (2005) asserted, “Certified athletic

trainers work in a time-intensive profession and are at risk for high levels of stress” (p.14).

Athletic training is a profession that requires continuous care and attention of athletes. And as such, burnout commonly affects athletic trainers since they tend to remain at high levels of emotional arousal and anxiety throughout the work day (Arnheim & Prentice, 2000). Despite these findings, McChesney and Peterson (2005) noted that “Athletic trainers, as a whole, value helping others, athletics, and the athletic arena. As such, they might be willing to put up with more abuse related to workload and lack of appreciation than the average person” (p.7).

There are many reasons why athletic trainers become frustrated within their career that may cause stress and lead to burnout within the profession. Burke (1989) and Maslach (1981) found that females working within the sport environment tended to have higher levels of emotional exhaustion due to their sex. However, further examination of gender roles in various sports and situations is necessary (Hendrix, Acevedo, & Herbert, 2000). According to Scriber and Alderman (2005), some common stressors that athletic trainers are faced with can include (but are not limited to): (a) a disproportionate ratio of athletic trainers to athletes and/or students, (b) long hours, (c) little control over scheduling, (d) minimal financial compensation, (e) dual role responsibilities as an athletic trainer and a teacher, and (f) relationship issues found in their work and personal life.

According to Arnheim and Prentice (2000), due to the occurrence of burnout, athletic trainers tend to become dissatisfied and uninterested with the profession of athletic training. McChesney and Peterson (2005) found that there are a large number of

athletic trainers that have decided to leave the profession, due to the following factors: (a) discontentment with job, (b) relocation of job, (c) stress, and (d) burnout. Arnheim and Prentice (2000) noted how this finding is unfortunate, as most athletic trainers have devoted most of their education and working lives to the field.

Burnout in athletic trainers may also evolve due to decreased resources and increased hours of work (Hendrix et al., 2000). As stress from the job increases, athletic trainers tend to enter the stages of burnout (Hendrix et al.). According to McLaine (2005), these stages of burnout are based on variables of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. McLaine found that athletic trainers who were emotionally exhausted became fatigued and detached from their work and personal life. This detachment may cause them to become depersonalized, less involved in work, and therefore more conservative in their treatment options (McLaine). Furthermore, McChesney and Peterson (2005) discussed the role that job satisfaction and burnout play in job performance. “Although fundamentally different, both job satisfaction and burnout can interact to affect perception and performance of one’s job” (p.6).

It is important to note that detachment can affect both men and women working within the profession of athletic training (Anderson, 1993). Even still, Anderson also noted that women have a more difficult time working long hours and developing a social life or family life than men within the profession.

It is imperative that researchers continue to examine the factors and variables that cause athletic trainers to become dissatisfied in their job and ultimately force them to make the decision to leave the profession. Staurowsky and Scriber (1998) noted that the profession of athletic training does not take the initiative to look and question the

conditions that athletic trainers experience and/or the situations that are affecting their lives.

Women at Work

Nino (2006) examined feminism, sexuality, and equality in the work place among women. She found that women have a harder time adjusting to the circles that men form within a business. In her study, Nino (2006) discussed the importance of women finding a way into these circles in order to “build rapport, commonality, and friendship that will aid them on the business floor” (p.5). She found that women who held executive positions tended to have to surrender much of their personal lives due to high demands of their position within the business. Therefore, women who are searching for a balance between business and family life need to start lobbying in order to make the possibility more achievable (Nino).

Murray (2006) examined women’s job opportunities in sport. She found that although women have come a long way in terms of opportunities to work in sports, women who choose to pursue a career in sports tend to be paid less than men. Additionally, she noted that women have greater difficulty advancing within the field. “Women are still making less than men for comparable work and continue to bump up against a glass ceiling when attempting to make their way to the upper echelons of their professions” (Murray, 2006, p. 1).

Women Working in Athletic Training.

Anderson (1991) conducted a study that examined the structural and individual barriers of White female athletic trainers. He found that White women were suffering from structural barriers such as: a void in the number of academic programs available,

lack of coverage to sports that were high risk (i.e., football), and lack of adequate supervision of clinical experiences. Additionally, Anderson (1991) discussed individual barriers that women were facing (e.g., lack of qualifications and poor self-esteem).

Shingles (2001) found that with the increase in the number of women entering the athletic training field and the advances that women are making in the sport environment, advances in society and sports have been demonstrated. This, in turn, has had a positive impact on female athletic trainers (Shingles). Even still, Shingles noted a void in the research pertaining to personal and situational variables that affect female certified athletic trainers. According to Shingles (2001) there has been a lack of research and literature on female athletic trainers that have made them virtually invisible within the field. Shingles (2001) stated, “Just as there was little recorded regarding the contributions of women to the athletic training profession, there is less recorded research and scholarship on women athletic trainers” (p. 36). One variable that needs to be examined further is sex and the role (if any) it has on the career experiences of females.

Straurowsky and Scriber (1998), examined the factors that affect the work lives of athletic trainers in accredited educational programs. They found that women earn salaries that were considerably lower than that of men with equal experience. Results found within the study determined that the average salary for female athletic trainers was \$35,790, while the average salary for male athletic trainers was \$44,030. Furthermore, Perez et al. (2003) stated that, “females experience many barriers to advancement, including less compensation, exclusion from leadership opportunities, and greater difficulties balancing their career and family life” (p. 1).

The Women in Athletic Training Committee (1996) found most of the challenges that women face are: (a) conflicts of balance with family and personal life, (b) lack of opportunities, (c) a network that is principally composed of men and their loyalty towards other men, and (d) inadequate salaries. According to Walk (1999), “Women only make up 2% of the athletic training staffs for professional baseball, basketball, football, and ice hockey, and about 20% of head athletic trainers in intercollegiate sports programs” (p. 31). Perez et al. (2006) stated that professions that are male-dominated tend to form dominant groups among themselves forcing those lower in the hierarchy to have less input in the matter. Perez et al. also noted that family concerns continue to be an important factor to career women due to the stresses that often accompany work obligations. In a study conducted by the Women in Athletic Training Committee (1996) researchers found 86% of female certified athletic trainers felt that they had more conflict between family and professional responsibilities than that of males holding the same position or title. These conflicts and responsibilities may cause an increased level of stress and burnout and thereby create a decline in the level of personal accomplishment women feel.

According to Perez et al. (2006), women tend to find the most clashes between their personal and professional lives when they are working in high-stress settings. Nussbaum and Rogers (2000) found that “issues of gender equality, discrimination, and barriers to advancement are major concerns for women in athletic training” (p. 68). However Perez et al. (2006) concluded that it is possible for women to have a fair balance of family and work and still be able to remain in the profession of athletic training. This provides optimism for the career experiences of female athletic trainers.

Numerous researchers have suggested that women have been socialized into their roles differently than males and often have special expectations placed on them (Hart, Hasbrook, & Mathes, 1986; Pastore & Judd, 1993; and Weiss & Stevens, 1993). This may provide a better understanding as to why females have increased levels of stress and burnout in their professions.

According to Perez et al. (2006), the 1996 survey by the WATC determined that the number one obstacle that women faced in the profession of athletic training was quality-of-life. Female athletic trainers felt that it was difficult to find personal time. Without having the luxury of personal time there is a decrease in the level of personal accomplishment, which, in turn, may cause females to become more likely to experience emotional exhaustion (Pitney, 2006). According to Pitney, work factors such as high demands, decreased control over organizational structure, and low administrative support contribute to an increase in stress and strain, which commonly leads to burnout among people working within the allied health professions (2006). Burnout that affects health care providers, such as athletic trainers, allows health care providers to create barriers between their personal life and professional life (Pitney).

In their research, the Women in Athletic Training Committee Survey (1996) determined several other key obstacles and challenges that women felt they faced within the profession of athletic training. These included: family and personal life, lack of opportunities, sex specific issues, the “good old boy network,” credibility, and salary. Almost half of the female athletic trainers (45.6%) stated that they would have liked the opportunity to take on more leadership roles, but felt that not enough opportunities were presented to them (WATC, 1996).

Importance of Role Models.

According to Acosta and Carpenter (1985), males are more likely to view their role models in positions that they can see achieving one day, which allows men to be goal-oriented and make decisions that will enable them to further their career. “The abundant presence of these role models has an impact on the decisions, both personal and professional, which the participants make as well as the development of their own self-images” (p. 33). Furthermore, Acosta and Carpenter found that men who have role models tend to value their career experiences.

The Women in Athletic Training Committee (1996) found that 62.8% of women in the field felt that there was a lack of female mentors and role models. Additionally, the WATC concluded that women felt that the presence of more role models and mentors would have helped them to be more successful in the profession. With the presence of role models, females may learn to be proactive in reaching their professional goals. Further examination of the absence or presence of female role models within the field of athletic training was recommended in the report (WATC, 1996).

The NCAA Division III Setting

There is a lack of research that examines athletic trainer’s career experiences within the NCAA Division III setting. The studies that do exist, examine the experiences of athletic trainers at the NCAA Division I setting. Within the research that examined the NCAA Division I setting, only a small portion of female participants are acknowledged because there are few women found within the setting (Hendrix et al., 2000; Malasarn, Bloom, & Crumpton, 2002). Furthermore, there is an additional void in research that has examined the career experiences of female athletic trainers at the NCAA Division II and

Division III settings. According to Acosta and Carpenter (2008), a majority of female athletic trainers that are employed in an intercollegiate setting are found within the NCAA Division II and III settings. Hence, the need for further examination at the NCAA Division II and Division III. Kelley and Gill (1993), found that females working in NCAA Division III athletics had higher levels of emotional exhaustion, higher levels of depersonalization, and lower levels of personal accomplishment. Based on these findings, more research needs to be conducted examining what contributed to females at this particular setting experiencing these issues.

According to Anderson (1993), research indicates that women are more likely to gain employment as head football athletic trainers within the NCAA Division III and Division II setting. This is a promising trend, since there was a time in the profession where women were solely assigned to work as athletic trainers for women's athletic teams (Anderson). However, the researcher also noted that additional pressures do exist for females working as athletic trainers in men's athletics. More specifically, he discussed how female athletic trainers are faced with additional job demands such as: gaining respect from coaches, staff, parents, and athletes (Anderson).

“Like sports journalism, the profession of athletic training is characterized by a gender hierarchy” (Walk, 1999, p.31). Walk (1999) examined the role of female student athletic trainers in male intercollegiate sports. He found that female student athletic trainers' consistently played the role of the protective mother, the sister that needed to be protected, or the lady that deserved an apology for words or actions that could be construed as offensive. These roles commonly played by the female athletic trainers' have the potential to affect the career experiences of female athletic trainers and the

comparisons to male colleagues they consistently face. Walk (1999) also found that it was difficult for women to be viewed as members of the professional staff that are there to provide care and prevention to athletes that are injured. The researcher surmised that this may be due to conflict based on the aforementioned roles the female student athletic trainers' played and their responsibilities as athletic trainers (Walk, 1999).

According to the Women's Sport Foundation, (2004) only 30% of female athletic training professionals are full time, head athletic trainers. The highest percentage (38.9%), was found at the NCAA Division III setting while the lowest (20.3%), was found at the NCAA Division I setting. Based on their data, it would appear that the NCAA Division III setting provides the most opportunities for females to take on upper level positions, such as head athletic trainers. However, there is a lack of research that examines female athletic trainers experiences working in a setting in which they have the most representation (i.e., the NCAA Division III setting). Furthermore, research that examines the working conditions that affect the lives of female athletic trainers within their career or personal lives has yet to be explored (Staurowsky & Scriber, 1998).

Working women, unlike men, are more likely to have to carry responsibilities of both career and family, which often results in women having to decide between the two (Anderson, 1993). Women that choose to put their family life first are at times portrayed as non-team players (Perez et al., 2006). In addition to familial responsibilities, women also have to worry about pleasing coworkers (Perez et al.). This may cause females to feel alienated as they work to ensure others, as well as themselves, that they can handle the responsibilities of both work and their personal life.

According to McLaine (2005), stress within one's job will increase if they feel that their own values are different than others or different than the group they are working with. A lack of community and support among athletic trainers can cause isolation and increased levels of stress (McLaine, 2005).

Relationships Among Women

Brabeck and Brabeck (2006) stated that "Our ability to maintain relationships is a critical aspect of our humanity" (p. 208). Being able to have a relationship provides an individual with a source of strength. The authors also determined that it is important for women to establish relationships in order to develop independence and individuality. They found that women, compared to men, were more likely to have the ability to build and hold various relationships. Furthermore, the authors discussed how relationships are an important part of women's lives. For women, relationships can be a form of social orientation and can create benefits such as making one feel happy, strong, and fulfilled (Brabeck & Brabeck). However, within relationships women tend to experience role conflict; should they do what is best for them as an individual or do what is best for others. Women often have a more difficult time distinguishing their place in these roles (Brabeck & Brabeck, 2006).

Tanenbaum (2002) discussed the importance of females working in the sports environment to understand and practice working together and building trust. According to Tanenbaum, collaboration and competition work in conjunction with each other in the sports environment. The competition that is present within the atmosphere compels females to prove that they can be superior to others while still having to maintain a sense of teamwork. Collaboration can be very difficult for some females because women, as

competitors, can be cruel in the manner in which they pursue their goals (Tanenbaum, 2002).

Hoke (2005) stated that when in conflict, women often resort to gossip and rumors as a way of dealing with competition. When in competition with others, women can also be hostile in their approach to achieving their goals (Tanenbaum, 2002). This may be due, in part, to the fact that women have been excluded from the world of sports in the past and they feel pressured to make themselves emerge as the best person for the position (Tanenbaum). This puts additional pressure on women to find ways and characteristics that distinguish them from others (Tanenbaum).

Hoke (2005) stated that it is imperative that women continue to work together in the workplace and not view each other as enemies. In society, women have been taught to compete with one another in their lives and in the workplace, to make them more distinguishable to men (Tanenbaum, 2002). Furthermore, when women become frustrated with the inability to gain power, women tend to take their aggravation out on each other instead of those that are in positions of power. Tanenbaum (2002) also found that while lashing-out in frustration, women tend to hold grudges and provide less social support for one another.

Summary and Rationale

The purpose of this study was to provide a rich, thick description into the career experiences of female athletic trainers working within the NCAA Division III setting. In order to gain knowledge on this subject matter, it was crucial that there is a basic understanding of the role athletic trainers' play within sports. Furthermore, was imperative for researchers to comprehend women's experiences and their involvement

into the roles that they play within the profession. Shingles (2001), determined that there was a need for awareness to be brought to the roles that female athletic trainers play in the sports field.

There are a large percentage of female athletic trainers found at the NCAA Division II and Division III setting (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). Due to the large numbers of females working within the NCAA Division II and III setting, a basic understanding of the attractions (if any) the NCAA Division III setting could provide some insight into the reason(s) for the increased female population. As a result of the large numbers of females working within the NCAA Division III setting it is also important to examine at the relationships they form with one another while working in the field. As Hoke (2005) contested, it is essential for women to learn to work collectively and form relationships so they may achieve their professional goals.

Shingles (2005) stated that researchers need to start examining the experiences of female athletic trainers working within the profession in order to gain a better understanding of factors that impact both their personal and professional career experiences. By examining the experiences of female athletic trainers working in the NCAA Division III setting, the females involved in this study will provide a voice that is often unheard. Their experiences may provide the athletic training organization with a better understanding of how being a female athletic trainer has affected their career experiences while working within the NCAA Division III setting.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the career experiences of female athletic trainers at the NCAA Division III setting. This research examined women's experiences working within the field. More specifically, the research examined: (a) the effect (if any) of the participant's sex on their work experience, (b) common obstacles females faced in their career, (c) the relationship women had with other women in the profession, and (d) the appeal (if any) of the NCAA Division III setting.

This methodology chapter includes the following sections: (a) Research Design, (b) Participants, (c) Procedures, (d) Interviews, (e) Trustworthiness, (f) Bias Statement, and (g) Data Analysis.

Research Questions

The research questions were as follows:

1. How does sex play a role in the career experience of certified female athletic trainers?
2. What are the common obstacles that females face in the field of athletic training?
3. How did female athletic trainers view their relationships with other women in the field?
4. Does the NCAA Division III setting appeal more to female athletic trainers than compared to other NCAA settings and the professional athletic setting?

Research Design

The purpose of using qualitative research is not to solve answers or evaluate, but to gain an understanding of other's experiences and the meaning of the experience (Siedman, 1991). Patton (2002) described qualitative data as the ability to "capture and communicate someone else's experience of the world in his or her own words. Qualitative data tells a story" (p. 46). According to Siedman (1991), this type of methodology, allows researchers to be able to gain a better understanding of human behavior and human experience through the use of language. Within qualitative research, there is no predetermined hypothesis. The hypothesis is carefully developed through observations (Thomas, Nelson, & Silverman, 2005). According to Thomas et al. (2005), "The researcher does not manipulate variables through experimental treatments but takes more interest in process than in product" (p. 347).

A semi-structured method of interviewing was employed throughout the research. According to Scheandt (2001), "qualitative studies make greatest use of unstructured, open-ended, informal interviews because they allow the most flexibility and responsiveness to emerging issues for both respondents and interviewees" (p. 135). The semi-structured approach allows for a more formal and sequential process and can lead to a variety of objectives (Glesne, 1999).

The interviews for this research were conducted using a semi-structured approach inquiring about the impact of sex (if any) on a female athletic trainer's career experiences while working within the NCAA Division III setting. Additionally, the role that sex plays on barriers and opportunities presented to the participants was examined. The interviews were conducted in a manner that was comforting and sensitive to the

participants, but also allowed the researcher to efficiently cover all the material. The researcher was able to build trust through her tone and empathy with participants, to ensure that information was not to be disclosed to others.

Participants

The participants were 22 female certified athletic trainers who were employed in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III setting. Snowball sampling was utilized. Upon completion of the interview, participants were asked if they would be willing to provide contact information of other potential participants for the study. According to Patton (2002), snowball sampling can be highly effective in acquiring additional participants, “By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases” (p. 237).

Participants included head athletic trainers and full-time assistant(s) on staff. One participant was no longer employed as an athletic trainer at her institution but had been in the field for fifteen years and wanted to participate in the research. All participants had a minimum of five years experience within the profession, a minimum of two years working at the NCAA Division III setting, and a minimum of one year at the current institution.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants

| Name (Pseudonym) | Age | Race | Education Level | Professional Experience | Salary Range | Marital Status | Children |
|---------------------|-----|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|
| Jan | 31 | A.A. ¹ | M.S. | 5 | 40-44,999 | Married | No |
| Rose | 34 | Caucasian | M.S. | 9 | 40-44,999 | Partner | No |
| Jill | 28 | Caucasian | M.S. | 7 | 50,000+ | Partner | No |
| Mary | 28 | Caucasian | M.S. | 3.5 | 25-29,999 | Single | No |
| Tina | 43 | Caucasian | M.S. | 24 | 50,000+ | Single | No |
| Ann | 26 | Caucasian | M.S. | 20 | 50,000+ | Divorced | Yes |
| Amber | 35 | Caucasian | M.S. | 6 | 40-44,999 | Single | No |
| Lisa | 30 | Caucasian | M.S. | 8 | 35-39,999 | Married | Yes |
| Amanda | 27 | Caucasian | M.S. | 3 | 30-34,999 | Married | No |
| Alice | 31 | Caucasian | M.S. | 11 | 30-34,999 | Married | Yes |
| Jessica | 31 | Caucasian | M.S. | 9 | 35-39,999 | Single | No |
| Sophie | 27 | Caucasian | M.S. | 5 | 35-39,999 | Single | No |
| Marcy | 29 | Caucasian | M.S. | 6 | 40-44,999 | Single | No |
| Jodie | 29 | Caucasian | M.S. | 8 | 25-29,999 | Married | No |
| Addison | 27 | Caucasian | M.S. | 6 | 35-39,999 | Married | No |
| Stacy | 35 | Caucasian | M.S. | 14 | 45-49,999 | Single | No |
| Cheryl | 44 | Caucasian | M.S. | 21 | 30-34,999 | Single | No |
| Jamie | 29 | Caucasian | M.S. | 6.5 | 35-39,999 | Single | No |
| Barbara | 34 | Caucasian | M.S. | 11 | 40-44,999 | Partner | No |
| Patty | 30 | Caucasian | M.S. | 9 | 35-39,999 | Single | No |
| Eve | 26 | Caucasian | M.S. | 4 | 30-34,999 | Single | No |
| Tara | 30 | Caucasian | M.S. | 7 | 30-34,999 | Single | No |

¹ A.A. is for African American

Procedures

The National Athletic Trainer Association contacted an undisclosed number of possible participants from their database. Of the 437 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division III colleges and universities listed on the NCAA database located on the World Wide Web (<http://www.ncaa.org>), there were 310 institutions that had at least one female certified athletic trainer as part of the faculty and staff. An undisclosed number of potential participants were contacted via electronic mail (e-mail) if their institution met the following criteria: (1) participants must have been employed at a NCAA Division III institution that had at least 8 male and 8 female varsity sport programs and (2) football must have been included among the programs to ensure that at least one high-risk program was present at the institution.

According to Prentice (2003) “Sports are usually classified according to the risk, or chances, of injuries occurring under similar circumstances and are broadly divided into contact or collision, limited contact, or noncontact” (p. 68). Pfeiffer and Mangus (2005) stated that “Sports, such as tackle football and ice hockey, are by their very nature classified as contact/collision activities” (p. 12).

A letter explaining the nature of the study (See Appendix A) was sent to the participants via e-mail. Participants were asked to contact the researcher regarding their willingness to participate in the study. Additional recruitment procedures were not needed. Twenty-two participants responded to the email sent by the National Athletic Trainer Association and participated in the study.

Once potential participants were identified a follow-up letter was sent to them. The letter included a more detailed description of the study. In addition, a demographic

form and a consent form were also included. The demographic form (See Appendix B) was used to determine the characteristics of the population. The consent form (See Appendix C) ensured that the participants allowed for the interview to be audiotaped and to guarantee participants that the interview remained confidential. The participants were given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym to use throughout the research process.

Once the consent form was returned, each participant was contacted to determine a convenient date and time for the interview to take place. Before the interview took place the participants were informed that they could contact the researcher regarding questions or concerns about the research and/or research process at any time. Interviews were conducted over the telephone and took place in a quiet and private location.

According to Thomas et al. (2005), one of the advantages of conducting a telephone interview is that it can be less expensive than having the researcher travel to the respondent's location. Another advantage is that the interview can be conducted in less time than that of a face-to-face interview and it can provide researchers with the opportunity to contact a larger geographic area while increasing the validity of the sample. An additional benefit is that it allows the participants to be more candid and truthful about their responses (Thomas et al., 2005).

All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The participants were informed before the interview began that the interview was going to be audiotaped. At that time the participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study. No participants chose to withdraw from the study. Prior to the interview process, participants were informed that upon transcription of the interview they would be provided with an electronic copy of the interview transcription. Participants were

allowed to make comments or expand upon the interview. When saturation occurred, the interviews ceased. Saturation can be defined as the point in research when no new information is obtained within the data (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Once participants begin to repeat their responses and thoughts, interviews were ceased.

Interviews

The interviewing process can be seen as a technique that generates and analyzes data from a group of participants that can either be performed in a semi-structured or unstructured approach (Schwandt, 2001). Siedman (1991) stated, “At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals’ stories because they are of worth” (p. 3).

Purposeful sampling was used throughout the interviewing process. Patton (2002), defined purposeful sampling as, selecting cases “because they are ‘information rich’ and illuminative, that is, they offer useful manifestation of the phenomenon of interest” (p. 40). Purposeful sampling creates an in-depth understanding and helps build informative-rich cases (Patton, 2002). As stated by Patton (2002), “an interview guide is prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed” (p. 343). The interview guide was designed with the help of a faculty member in the Kinesiology department who also acts as a member of the thesis committee. This member had experience working with qualitative research and interviewing. The interview guide was revised by other members of the committee as well as selected Athletic Trainers who were familiar with the characteristics of the profession.

The semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix D) investigated the following areas relative to female certified athletic trainers' experiences working within the NCAA Division III setting: (a) the effect (if any) of the participant's sex on their work experience, (b) common obstacles females faced in their career, (c) the relationship women had with other women in the profession, and (d) the appeal (if any) of the NCAA Division III setting.

Trustworthiness

Glesne (1999) stated, "The credibility of your findings and interpretations depends upon your careful attention to establishing trustworthiness" (p. 151). Trustworthiness is created by combining quality time spent interviewing and building relationships with the participants (Glesne).

Several different approaches were taken throughout the research process to ensure trustworthiness. One approach consisted of prolonged engagement, as discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This method of establishing trustworthiness includes spending adequate time on developing the research by frequently engaging in discussion with the participants. This approach also allows the researcher to focus on details that will create credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

All efforts were taken by the researcher to be consistently aware of the researcher's personal bias. By being aware of researcher bias, and the limitations of the study, there is an increase in the trustworthiness of one's interpretations (Glesne, 1999). Since the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection in a qualitative study, it is important to define where the bias comes from and how they will control it (Thomas et al., 2005). The researcher of the study acknowledged that personal bias was present, as

she was a female certified athletic trainer who was currently working in a NCAA Division III setting. However, before the onset of the interview process the researcher did take part in a bracketing interview. The bracketing interview provided the researcher an opportunity to “bracket out” her personal bias. A bracketing interview is important because it ensures that everyday judgments and or attitudes are withheld within research. It ensures that assumptions are not made so that inherent thoughts or actions can be established (Schwandt, 2001).

Peer review was also used as a way to ensure trustworthiness throughout the research process. By allowing outside members to analyze the data, additional perceptions and interpretations were present (Glesne, 1999). A faculty member familiar with qualitative research, as well as the career experiences of female athletic trainers was employed. By including peer review the researcher was able to identify areas that may have been difficult for personal or political reasons and were able to help the researcher expand on ideas (Glesne, 1999).

Two pilot interviews were conducted prior to the onset of the research. Interviewees include a female athletic training graduate assistant and a faculty/staff female athletic trainer at a NCAA Division III institution in the North East. The pilot provided the researcher with insight on how to effectively conduct the interview. This also allowed the researcher the ability to reflect on the outcome of the study. Additionally, the researcher discussed techniques and outcomes with members of the committee, and made revisions that enhanced the success of the study.

Data Analysis

The participants were provided a copy of their transcript via e-mail so they could make changes and provide feedback. This ensured that there was no misinterpretation or miscommunication between the researcher and the participant. Participants were informed that they could contact the researcher at any time to discuss their experience and the study.

Coding schemes were used throughout the collection of data to create an organized framework. Coding helped the researcher to become familiar with the findings of the research. It also allowed the researcher to verify common trends that occurred during data collection and helped determine if information was missing. This allowed the researcher to shape, define, and manage the data collected (Glesne, 1999). According to Bradley, Curry, and Devers (2007), code types (e.g., relationships, participant characteristics, perspectives, and concepts) help to highlight and create themes. It is the relationship and perspective codes that help to further develop themes (Bradley, Curry, & Devers, 2007). The researcher read and analyzed the transcripts to determine preliminary codes. During the coding process, the research initially used the method of open coding, which looked at the data in detail and then developed categories from the information that emerged (Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2006). The next process included selective coding which helped to develop the core themes and draw attention to the sub-themes. Selective coding requires the researcher to analytically code the information based on the idea of a core concept or research topic being the focus (Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2006). After rereading the transcripts, selective detailed codes were

determined and primary themes were then developed. This process was performed throughout the data collection.

Two people were involved in the data analysis process. Besides the novice researcher, a faculty member who had experience with qualitative research assisted with the data analysis. Each person developed their own coding schemes. The two participants then compared, discussed, and determined the main themes and sub-themes that emerged. The conclusions were then structured and presented in a reasonable manner.

Bias Statement

At the time of the study I was a 25 year old, Caucasian, female Master's candidate in the Kinesiology Department at the State University of New York at Cortland. I had worked as a Certified Athletic Trainer working as a Graduate Assistant for Athletic Training in the Kinesiology Department. During my time as a graduate student, I worked as a Graduate Assistant to the football team, the women's ice hockey team, and the track and field team.

My mother, Doris Ann, is retired from a career in advertising. I have not had a relationship with my father. I am the youngest of three children. My sister, Jessica, is 34 years old and is an elementary school teacher. My other sister, Sara, is 30 years old and is a sustainable food advocate, entrepreneur. My husband Michael, is 30 years old and is an assistant athletic trainer at a college.

I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Athletic Training from the State University of New York at Cortland in 2004. While attending SUNY Cortland, I played for the Varsity Women's Soccer team for four years. During the fall of 2003, I was the captain of the team. As an accomplished athlete, I possess considerable experience and

knowledge in conditioning and training. Following four knee operations spanning from my high school into my collegiate career, I gained a deep appreciation for the key role that athletic trainers play. My personal experience within sports and my ability to relate to athletes on various levels, has helped to stimulate my passion and desire for the field of athletic training.

Before entering graduate school I continued to pursue my goal of athletic training. I earned an internship as an athletic trainer at a high school and as an intern at a physical therapy office. However, after one year I decided to go back to school to further my education within the field of Kinesiology and to expand on my knowledge base in Athletic Training.

During the time of investigating possible thesis ideas for a research class, I found that I was drawn to the topics dealing with athletic trainers' experiences within the profession. I wanted to gain additional insight into what others thought about the profession. I was interested in hearing about other people's experiences. As I continued to examine the existing research I became troubled by the limited amount of research that had been conducted solely examining the experiences of female certified athletic trainers. Additionally, there was a lack of research conducted at the NCAA Division III setting. Thus my interest was born. I wanted to gain a better understanding of the female experience in athletic training. I began to wonder about what draws females to this profession. I also began to wonder how being a female may have influenced and/or impacted their experience. Furthermore, I wanted to examine the types of relationship females have formed among themselves within this profession.

While some research has examined areas such as stress and burnout within the profession, all of the research has been conducted at the NCAA Division I setting. Since women tend to be outnumbered by males at this setting, there were only a few female participants involved in the studies. I began to wonder what their experiences were like. Thus began my desire to learn more about females working within this profession. As I am a female, having worked with the NCAA Division III setting, I decided to begin there.

It was difficult to reduce the amount of researcher bias within this study. However, the proper steps were taken to recognize the researcher's bias and the effects that it could have on the study. All attempts were made to limit any misconceptions that occurred throughout the study due to the researcher's bias.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide a rich, thick description of the career experiences of female athletic trainers at the Division III setting. More specifically, the researcher examined (a) the effect (if any) of the participant's sex on their work experience, (b) common obstacles that the participants faced in their career, (c) the relationship that the participants had with other women in the profession, and (d) the appeal (if any) of the Division III setting.

Within this chapter, the results and discussion are presented in the following sections: (a) Themes and Sub-themes, and (b) Discussion.

Presentation of Results

The three major themes categorizing the participants' interviews included: (a) A Need For Balance, (b) Working in a Male Dominated Profession and (c) Relationships with other Female Athletic Trainers (see Table 1).

Table 1

Themes and Sub-Themes of Data Analysis

| Themes | Sub-Themes |
|---|---|
| A Need for Balance | Family Obligations Pay and Hours |
| Working in a Male Dominated Profession | Proving Yourself Limited Opportunities |
| Relationships with Other Female Athletic Trainers | Social Support |

Theme # 1: A Need for Balance

All of the participants were asked to discuss quality of life in regards to their career as an athletic trainer. Each of the following sub-themes will be discussed separately: (a) family obligations, and (b) pay and hours.

Family Obligations.

All of the participants discussed how the field of athletic training affected their personal lives. As Sophie stated,

Probably the stress, or stress, the time, um especially if women want to have families it's (it's) a hard profession to do it in. (Um) It's a hard profession to whether you're single or married. It's long hours, different hours, (um) obscure hours.

By not being in control of life balance there is a continued feeling of, "Playing catch-up for the whole school year." Lisa discussed how the inability to maintain a balance strongly affected her personal life. It is the little things like not being around to help her children with their homework that made her question, "Did I make the right decision, am I doing the right thing, the best thing for my family." The profession can also take a toll on an individual's health and well-being. Tina explained how the demands of her job made her feel like she always way being pulled in different directions and it took a toll on her physically and mentally. She stated, "Because you drive yourself as an athletic trainer to do to be there all the time, I think it really took a toll on my health."

Female athletic trainers, like many other women working within various fields of athletics, tend to face a more difficult challenge when it comes to having children, taking care of children, and balancing a profession. Within the field of athletic training it is a common struggle that many women face.

As Amber noted,

Um I think that's you know it is easier for a guy to leave home, come in, work, and the wife takes care of the kids while it's the other way around when you're a female athletic trainer. You've got to put the kid in daycare, you know it's just it's ah it's more of a challenge just plain and simply plainly by being a female in this field. Especially at this level, I think more so at the Division III level than any other level.

In addition, Marcy stated that she did not,

Have time to (you know) go out and meet people and so you start to think into your future well if I ever want to have (you know) a family someday, is (you know) my passion for athletic training enough to overcome these other things of burnout and (you know) am I going to be able to push through even (you know) having a family.

Another concern of some of the participants was when and if there is a good time for female athletic trainers to start a family. As Rose stated,

The opportunity to have a family (you know) realistically is probably not there for me um so I (you know) obviously (you know) it's not a profession in the typical idea of a profession because it does take away so much from (you know) your personal life.

The lack of balance has affected many individual's ability to participate in activities they enjoyed doing, including time with their family and friends. As Rose stated, "It's that kind of stuff you know you miss those family functions and you don't get that back." Without having some form of personal life or being able to have time to concentrate on oneself, the chances of burnout increase and the desire to stay in the field decreases.

In viewing relationships among female athletic trainers there appeared to be several participants that experienced or had seen a division between females that had a family and those that did not.

As Amanda stated,

I think again I think there's kind of a division amongst those who have chosen to have family amongst those who haven't. I think sometimes the ones with families are somewhat seen as ok you're you know not doing what you need to be do here because your going to go do that.

She went on to state, "I shouldn't be looked down upon because this is, I'm choosing to live mine."

Of the participants, 16 of them stated that the meaning of quality of life was about having a sense of balance. For many, that balance is a constant pull between their personal and professional lives. As Marcy stated, "I think quality of life to me is having a balance between your professional career, your personal life, your spiritual life, um and being able to stay mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy." In listening to the participants it appeared that most felt that they had some sense of quality of life and balance or they felt that it was not great but that it had been improving. However like many other professions athletic training can easily consume someone with the amount of hours that they put into their job. The long hours and few days of personal time diminishes their ability to have a personal life and increases their chance of experiencing burnout.

Jan's response to the question was, "That is because (you know) people want us to be in certain areas and do certain things but they are getting worked to the bone and they are angry about it." For many finding the balance is hard because it seems like athletic trainer are always having to make sacrifices when it comes to their personal lives and they tend to get little reward in return. As Rose stated, "If you're going to come into this profession (um) and you want to have a family you are going to have to make some significant sacrifices and your partner will have to make some significant sacrifices."

However, it is very important that athletic trainers learn not to let their jobs consume them and take over their personal life or get in their way from wanting certain things out of life. As Jamie stated,

Having an equal balance of don't let your job consume you, and athletic training can often consume people, so just you need to have a balance between work and outside of work and (and) taking the time when you have time off get away.

Athletic trainers, have to learn to be able to put themselves first before their job.

However, that also comes from having others within athletics realize what athletic trainers do and how valuable personal time is for them.

It is common that athletic trainers, who are not able to achieve balance in their lives, begin to question their place within the field. As Rose noted:

I think there are fewer women pursuing ah this career because they kind of see the big picture and good for them that they see it you know ahead of time that you don't get in a situation where they are miserable but um I think it's definitely affecting the profession as a whole and I have seen many people get out of the profession because of the time requirements.

Not having some form of balance cause individuals to be at a higher risk of burnout in a field where burnout is already prevalent. Another participant felt that the reason women walked away from athletic training was because of how quickly the balance between personal and professional life disappears once you begin working in the field. Ann stated, "Athletic trainers tend to be married to their jobs and I think maybe that is why some women walk away." However a lot has changed from the past and women are more likely to stay in the field even if they get married and have children because they learn how to balance both and have seen other women be able to balance it. Ann went on to add, "The generation above me tended to be women who did not marry and who do not have children and we're kind of a new breed those of us who married with

children and still do this for a living.” Lisa went on to discuss how the long demanding hours took a toll on her personal life and her marriage. She stated, “I will just be honest it is just about lead to divorce between me and my husband. Yes it did. So it has definitely impacted my life and my ability to do my job well at times.”

Pay and Hours.

In addition to struggling with balance, 16 of the participants faced problems with balance due to the long hours and insufficient pay. Rose discussed how she would look at the hours she was working and realized that she would, “Never have a quote on quote normal life.” Similarly, Jessica stated, “I should have picked something where I could have worked a nine to five job and I could have made twice what I’m making now.” It is a combination of long hours and little pay that fuel numerous challenges with balance. As Rose mentioned,

It is not like you get reimbursed for working these many hours, you should, we don’t make a lot of money either so. If I am going to work as many hours and never see my family it would be nice to be compensated and such.

Athletic trainers also have to be very flexible with their schedules because numerous factors change throughout the day (i.e., times of practices, practice location, and duration of practices). As Tina stated,

Everybody asks me what is the toughest part of your job and it’s balance. It’s saying ok I am going to go in at this time, I am going to leave at this time you know, somebody decides to have a practice without telling me, then they are on their own. You know I can’t be responsible for everybody.

In response to the challenge of inadequate pay Jodie stated, “I’ll never get rich even though I’m doing something that I think is a very valuable service.” Overtime, long hours and insufficient pay takes a toll on individuals and affects their passion towards what they are doing. As Amber stated, “And it’s hard to maintain that same intensity

every single time when you know you're working sixty hours a week and you're lucky to get a day off once a month." As Jan stated, when initially considering becoming an athletic trainer "I knew that this has to be something that you love you don't do it for the money because some of us are getting paid quite a bit but not all of us. Most of us aren't."

Another growing challenge contributing with to the need for balance is the additional job responsibilities that are being added to individual's workload. As Rose stated,

I was moving to a 12 month position (um) I was pretty much told that these things (responsibilities) would occur and (one of the one of the um) when I got my move to 12 month obviously they increased my pay rate but the (you know) three years before that when they added additional responsibilities, I wasn't even compensated for the additional work load.

A lot of athletic trainers, male and female, may feel that they simply do not get compensated the way they should. As Mary stated, "What I'm not satisfied with is the financial part. I feel like I'm I don't get paid the way that I should get paid." As Marcy added, "Salary wise you're not usually paid accordingly to your credentials."

In talking about what could help maintain a sense of balance, Addison stated, "As I think if I made more money, and we made more money and we work the amount of hours that we work I don't think it would be that big of a deal." One of the reasons why many athletic trainer end up leaving the field is because there are other health care professions out there that are willing to pay more. As Patty stated, "Right now I'm about fifteen thousand dollars under what I should be making. And with today's economy the way that it is and for me to achieve some personal goals, I would need a better salary."

Theme # 2: Male Dominated Field

All of the participants were asked to discuss if they felt that being a female in the field of athletic training was a barrier to their career. In conducting this study, 21 of 22 participants felt that as women they faced some type of barrier in the field whether it was within their current setting or in wanting to pursue other areas (i.e., higher settings). The most common barriers perceived by participants dealt with having to prove themselves as equal to men and the barrier of not having enough opportunities available to pursue higher settings.

Proving Yourself.

In a field that was once primarily dominated by men, female athletic trainers tended to feel that they had to prove to others that they could do the same job that a male athletic trainer could do. In conducting this study, 16 of the participants felt that one of the biggest barriers they faced in the field was they had to fight to prove themselves as equal individuals.

In reference to why women have to deal with this barrier Jill stated, "I think some are old-school and they are use to guys." During the time of the study she talked about how she was currently dealing with an issue with one of the male coaches and she referred back to a conversation she had with an assistant athletic trainer and stated, "What will it take. You know you sit there and you don't want a worse case scenario going have I proved myself now." In discussing how she came to terms with it she stated,

And it just might be one of those I'm going to accept the fact that I'm female and you are a male and I'll do my job and you will either one day appreciate it or no and if you don't great. You know I am not going to let you affect my job.

She went on to describe another issue she was having with one of her male coaches when he forgot to include her in on reporting information to the team and she stated, “Am I imagining this or is that why (you know) you chose to forget me. You know is it, (you know) because he never forgot the guy who was before me.” She felt that the coach was forgetting to include her in regards to important team information because he had a hard time accepting a female in her position.

While being interviewed for a position as an athletic trainer, Ann was asked during the interview how she as a female was she going to be able to do the job she applied for. Her capability to fulfill the job requirements were being determined based on her gender rather than her abilities as an athletic trainer. During the interview they discussed how the school was going to make arrangements for her to be able to work with the male teams, by allowing her proper access to the athletic training room without coming in contact with male athletes in the locker room. Ann went on to state,

The biggest obstacle has been to kind of put aside your femininity and do your job and the other biggest part is that (um you know) men often times are given, (given) positive words like assertive and whatever and women we we're given more negative words for our strengths.

During the study Jessica discussed a position she had at a high school as an athletic trainer where she took over for a male athletic trainer. The football coaches were used to only working with a male and had felt more comfortable with having a male athletic trainer and so for the coaches it was very hard for them to adjust to a female. She went on to state, “You just have to prove yourself to the coaches that you're confident and you're a professional person and um I think over the year that I was there I think I did that.” She went on to mention that it was very hard for the coaches to understand why they had a female on staff but by proving herself they were eventually accepting of it.

When discussing doubts that females have to deal with and why it is so important for females to prove themselves early on in their careers, Ann stated,

I didn't work that hard for four years fighting prejudice to then get (get) a job at a Division I institution or a Division III (or division whatever) to take care of shin-splints and menstrual cramps on female athletes. I did this so I could take care of head injuries and dislocated shoulders and that kind of stuff.

Whether the pressure is coming from females themselves or the pressure if coming from colleagues it is important to define yourself as the type of female athletic trainer that can be just as successful as a male athletic trainer. As Amber stated,

I think it takes that time to prove that they (females) are just as good as if not better than some male certifieds out there. I think there's that extra pressure to prove yourself and then once you do, there is certainly no questions asked.

For several individuals it is the fact that they have to prove themselves that influences them to stay in the field. As Sophie stated,

If I definitely stick with something you know I can't control what other people think of me but if I stick with it and I continue to prove myself that I can maybe help change someone else's mentality of it.

She went on to add that by having to prove herself that it has made her a better athletic trainer. She stated, "I think that those in the end have turned out to be positive because it's made my skin a little thicker, made me a little more determined."

Besides having to prove themselves to coaches and other athletic administration, female athletic trainers have to prove themselves to colleagues. During the study Marcy discussed an issue that she had with her male head athletic trainer at the time and how she had to overcome the barrier of having him watch every move and decision she made. She went on to state,

I just think that he wasn't sure about me right away so games I was covering I was suppose to cover by myself, he would be there and sort of like you know watching over my shoulder everything I did.

This made her feel very restricted and held her back from being the athletic trainer she knew she was. For many female athletic trainers it is having to prove you should be treated equal that is a challenging process. Marcy went on to add,

There have been several times this year where I've had a coach just ah blowup in my face. And I just don't really feel like that would have happened if I was a man standing in front of them. I think sometimes they think that they can sort of walk all over me because (you know) I probably come across as (you know) a nice female and so there's not that (um just sort of) innate respect that I feel should be there.

Some female athletic trainers felt they had the barrier of having to prove themselves to athletes. This may be because many male athletes may not be use to having a female athletic trainer in the athletic setting or it can come from how they see others treat female athletic trainers. Addison stated,

I've had football athletes (you know) tell me to go get the male athletic trainer because their hurt and you know that's kind of when I get my face on and I'm like no I'm the one you go get, I'm going to take care of you, this why I'm here. If you don't like it, you don't like it.

She went on to mention how she felt that sometimes having to prove yourself comes from people not thinking that you as a female are qualified for the job or that you might be too hesitant in your job. For female athletic trainers there are so many individuals that are in the athletic network that you have to battle to prove that you are just as qualified as the next male athletic trainer.

For many participants it has been a long process in having to prove themselves as equals. Many of the participants felt that the reasons were because it is difficult to change the past and to change people's minds. Eve stated, "It was engraved for so long that it wasn't acceptable and (and) so it just takes time for (for) the different minded people to get in the position to hire other people." Many participants stated that it is very important

that newly certified athletic trainers that are coming into the field need to come into the field as strong driven individuals. In talking about her experience Barbara stated, “I have to establish myself a little bit more professionally and be a better advocate for myself because I’m female.”

In further discussing obstacles she faced to prove herself Ann added,

We had people back in the eighties looking us in the face and saying you know as a young (as a young) woman in athletic training you’re here for one or two things. You are either straight and after the men or your gay and after the women.

Ann went on to state, “So what I kind of had to do is go someplace where I didn’t have to face that.” She also chose Division III because she liked the idea that a female could walk into higher positions. She stated,

I thought my dream job was Division III athletics because I thought there a woman could walk in and be the head athletic trainer and work the sports she wanted to work and not have to deal with the politics of Division I. I also felt that Division III had more of a commitment to the student part of the student-athlete.

As Amber stated,

Well depending on where you are at, you are often times told when you can have kids and you know as a female you’ve got a small window there and it’s (it’s) difficult that way um I think there’s more pressure on you because you’re in a profession that is dominated a lot by the old boy network.

Limited Opportunities.

When the participants were asked about current opportunities for females to work in higher settings, 15 of the participants felt that there were still not enough professional sports opportunities out there for women to pursue and it deterred them from considering higher settings. The most common responses as to why there were not enough opportunities were because: (a) athletics is seen as a male dominated field, (b) the athletic training facilities are commonly found in male locker rooms, (c) the idea of the old-boys

network is still common within athletics today, and (d) opportunities appear to be available based on who you know and not what you know. As Addison noted:

I think professional sports and some of the more male dominated sports (um I think that can I think) you kind of get into the good-old boy system the who knows who um (you know) this person knows somebody who knows somebody that can get you type thing (um) and I think that maybe a lot of it's who you know.

In examining ways in which opportunities could become more present for women in the field, one of the most common responses was determined when participants stated that the availability of opportunities would change when the old-boys network retires or no longer exists within the field. As Susie stated, "I think it's probably still old school thinking it's prevalent." She went on to talk about how it could change, "Hopefully because a woman can do a job just as well as a guy could, if not better." As Sophie stated,

Go back again to the good old-boys club. Um where again you take me who is this small 5'5'' female, you put them on a football field and right away you sometimes get that ego, then a male if you want to call it a male ego who immediately thinks I'm not capable. Um and unless we somehow find a bunch of Amazon ATC's.

It appears to be a waiting process for men within athletics to finally realize that it is not about having a male or female athletic trainer but that it should be about having a quality athletic trainer. As Cheryl stated,

Because until the NFL and pro baseball and some of those other things (organizations) allow women to be a part and that they realize that they can have a quality (um) athletic trainer that isn't a man I think our opportunities are limited.

In discussing what would have to change in order for women to have more opportunities, some of the participants felt that it had to do with the fact that females are beginning to dominate the field and it will inevitably force people and situations to change. As Alice stated, "I think ah the more female athletic trainers that enter the

workforce is what's going to determine it." In addition as Eve stated, "Because I know how much harder it is to get a national a professional position when you are a female. It it's just kind of known." She went on to say,

Um just the way that it's (you know) it was engraved for so long that it wasn't acceptable and (and) so it just takes time for (for) different minded people to get in the position to hire other people. And or are to be open-minded about hiring other people.

In discussing prejudices in the field Stacy discussed her graduate school experience and stated, "Positions were set up that the females did field hockey and women's lacrosse and the males did (um) men's soccer, football, and then baseball." She went on to talk about how they eventually got them to change the positions so that they were equal. She stated,

While I was there we actually adjusted the positions so that (you know) it was set up for the person who was best fit for the position rather than (you know) this is the boy's job this is the girl's job.

When the participants were asked about if they would consider working in a professional setting 15 of the participants described having some type of hesitation in pursuing that setting. The most common response as to why they would not want to pursue that type of setting was because those areas tend to still be male dominated or the idea of the old-boys network are still present. Some participants described that their hesitation was due to people within the athletic setting telling them to their faces that women will never have a place in higher setting athletics (i.e., professional sports).

In discussing a past experience Mary stated, "We weren't allowed to do internships with the Bengals or the Reds because of the way the training room was set-up and because we had the incorrect anatomy, we were female." Several other participants added that they were told the reason why they couldn't have female athletic trainers was

because of the location of the athletic training and that it was too close to the men's locker room. In discussing her experience Sophie stated, "I think it's (it's) the fact that people still want to go with that excuse of well facilities aren't set up for females or this and that." In describing her own personal experience Alice stated,

My (ah) first defeat was when I thought I wanted to go into the NHL and I had a referee tell me right away that there's no way they are going to allow a female athletic trainer in (in) there (referring to locker room) and don't even consider it.

In discussing how the old-boy's network deters women from pursuing the professional setting many participants felt that they would not want to put themselves through the hassle and discrimination that is associated with the setting. As Rose stated, "I think you have to be able to put up with a lot of garbage that a lot of women are not willing to put up with." For some participants it is knowing that the old-boy's networks still exist in that area that turn them off from even trying to pursue the setting. As Lisa discussed why she would not want to consider the professional setting she stated,

It seems to be anyway (um) an old-boy's club kind of deal. It's not what you know it's whom you know. The females could get very good opportunities there with a female sports you know the WNBA and the soccer and softball. And there (are just) aren't as many women's professional sports then there are men.

One participant described that since males have always been at that setting that females get deterred from it more easily. Jessica stated, "Working at the professional level has always been sort of a male dominated thing and so I think that women kind of see that and they say well that's not for me so I'm not even going to try."

In examining the discrimination that goes on now compared to what it was like when females first entered the field Cheryl stated,

I think that Title IX has helped and I think that the enforcement of Title IX has helped everything. You know opportunities for women in the professional ranks and (you know) that kind of stuff, stuff that's somewhat out of our control. I think

in the college setting it's not as (um) prevalent but (I) I still think there are settings where it is very prevalent.

In examining why there are not enough females pursuing the setting Patty stated, "There is only a handful a small handful of female athletic trainers in (in like) the professional setting for the major sports that are recognized in this country because it's mostly male dominated." She went to add, "It's probably still old school thinking it's prevalent. It's probably more old school thinking, old boys clubs. That (that) might be a reason why."

In discussing what it would take to make more opportunities present and what would cause women to be less hesitant in pursuing the professional sport setting, many of the participants felt that it came down to having a few good female role models present that would be able to go into these settings and change people's minds. As Cheryl began to talk about her experience during her first year that she worked football at a college she stated,

I was walking and I had a wonderful group of very old coaches and at the same time very young coaches there was nobody in the middle and I was walking back from practice with my defensive coordinator and he said well you changed my mind, and I (I) said why and he said well he goes I just had a bad idea of having a female in charge of football that you would coddle them and he said you do anything but.

Because the higher settings (i.e., Division I and the professional setting) were and still are male dominated, females are less likely to even try and pursue the areas. In looking as to why women may not approach the opportunities Jessica stated, "Working at the professional level has always been sort of a male dominated thing and so I think that women kind of see that and they say well that's not for me so I'm not even going to try." Maybe if more females were present in areas such as the NFL, NHL, and MLB, women would be willing to go for the challenge of getting themselves into the setting. As Sophie stated,

In my undergrad we had (um) an alumnus come and speak to us who at the time was the head ATC for the Minnesota Twins and he was very frank with us. One of the other (ah) students asked when do you think a female will become (you know) a female ATC will be in the MLB. And he goes as long as things stay the same they will never be.

Besides having some influential women go through the system the participants were not sure what it would take to get more women involved in those types of settings.

Until more people are exposed and become more comfortable with having a female around, women will continue to have to fight this discrimination.

Some participants stated that they chose Division III because it gave them more of an opportunity to have a family. In describing why she chose Division III Lisa stated, “The ability to have the family life. You know the personal life outside of work.” She went on to add,

You’re not working with the athletes who are on scholarship (you know) they tend not to have quite the attitude that the Division I players have about (you know) well you better get me better or I’m not going to have my scholarship next year and it’s going to be your fault.

Although it is based on the institution and the resources that are available at the institution, there appears to be more time to have personal time and family time at the Division III level than compared to other areas.

A few participants added that they felt that with Division III they had more opportunities to work with the teams that they wanted to. At a lot of higher settings, most athletic trainers are assigned to one or two sports and provide little coverage for other sport teams. Division III gives them the opportunity to work with a variety of sports. As Sophie stated, “I knew I wanted to work in a smaller setting um I wanted to work somewhere where there was a large range of sports. I wanted to work somewhere where I

could work with both male and female athletes.” Another opportunity that may be more likely to be present at Division III is the ability to have more independence.

As Addison stated,

I think the independence and the autonomy that you do get at Division III I think that’s one of the biggest things. Um and I think just the athletes that you get to work and even some of the coaches that you get to work you know.

Theme # 3 Relationships with Other Female Athletic Trainers

All of the participants discussed the types of relationships that they had with their colleagues, both at their current workplace and those they had formed and established with other members of the field. As stated by Jan, “I know women in general are trying to in this field, trying to be able to do what the male athletic trainers are able to do. They are going where they are trying to go.” In further discussing how women view their relationships she added, “If everyone is professional and you can work with others in general in a setting then it shouldn’t really be an issue.”

Social Support.

Ten of the participants suggested that women in the field tend to have a sense of camaraderie together. They also determined that they were more likely to be involved in their female colleagues lives socially and personally than compared to their male colleagues and other male professionals. Some of the participants described their relationships with female colleagues as being sister-like. As Jill stated,

You know there is that (you know), I’m not a sorority person at all but, a sorority of females. You know being able to succeed and work hard and bounce ideas off each other and not feel like you can’t ask for help.

As the number of female athletic trainers entering the field continues to grow, it is important for women to recognize how important it is to see other women in the field that are successful at their jobs and what it symbolizes for future female athletic trainers.

As Jill added,

I think for our students, get to see women and some of our females are starting to get more involved in into because they see women be successful and it's nice to work with people who are involved and you know females who are involved.

In talking about her experience as a head athletic trainer Marcy stated, "I think that we there is a lot of camaraderie among us (um) especially between head athletic trainers." In discussing how females are the majority in the type of medical field and that there are few professions like that she added, "I think we really encourage (ah) females especially (you know) our female athletic training students to keep going and (and you know) persevere through all the hours and things."

In addition to the sister-like relationship that women form among each other, the participants also noted that they tended to strengthen their sister-like relationship by hanging out more socially with females than compared to their male colleagues. They also noted that they were more likely to be involved in other female's personal lives. As Jill also stated,

We definitely talk about different things and other, you know we'll joke about, and it is more life things that you know girls are going to talk about things that they wouldn't talk to guys about. But that is kind of nice kind of having that sisterly relationship with some people but it doesn't take away from the relationship I have with the guys.

Within athletics, women have come a long way in establishing themselves within the field and many women recognize how those difficult times have brought women's

relationships among each other to a stronger level. As Jodie stated, “Females are more willing to give females respect in this profession that males are willing to give females respect.” It is always important for women to recognize how far their gender has come within the field and learn to appreciate those that have continue to fight obstacles to make a change. As Lisa stated, “It is a male dominated field (athletics) and for us to be taken seriously and for us to make life easier for females that come behind us, we need to know how to be professional in all situations.”

Patty stated that women, “Do see each other as competition but that’s just the female nature.” She went on to discuss how women help support each other in the field by saying,

We ask each other questions like, how do you deal with going into maternity leave, how do you deal with coming off maternity leave, and how do you deal with child care and or like ah maneuvering your hours so your not spending so many hours at work and not with your child. So even though we are very competitive we (we) can band together pretty well.

In the field of athletic training there is a balance between being competitive in the work place that drives individuals to do better at their job, but women also need each other to support each other and guide each other to be able to make their personal and work lives coincide best.

It is important to recognize how far females have come within the field and to continue to be supportive in every progress that is made. As Tara stated,

It’s a field where you don’t get a whole lot of recognition and I would hope that (um) as athletic trainers that we learn to recognize each other and that something that as a conference we are doing as athletic trainers.

Looking at her experience, she was able to find some type of balance because she learned to use what resources were around her. She stated, “I think that the biggest thing is

you've (you've) got to look around at your support system first." However, many institutions might not those types of resources set up to help females be able to balance their two lives.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the career experiences of female athletic trainers at the NCAA Division III setting. More specifically, the researcher examined: (a) the effect (if any) of the participant's sex on their work experience, (b) common obstacles females faced in their career, (c) doubts or concerns they experienced while being in the field, (d) the relationship that the participants had with other women in the profession, and (d) the appeal (if any) of the NCAA Division III setting. Within this section each of the major themes and sub-themes will be discussed in relation to existing research.

Theme # 1: A Need for Balance

Ten of 22 participants discussed how they were continually struggling to balance their professional lives with their personal desires and responsibilities. Family obligations played a significant role in the overall need and desire to have balance in female athletic trainer's lives. Consistent with the participant's experiences in their 2006 study, Perez et al., noted how female certified athletic trainers have a greater conflict when it comes to balancing family and professional obligations than compared to male colleagues.

According to Perez et al. (2006), the 1996 survey by the Women in Athletic Training Committee determined that the most common obstacle women faced was the need to find quality-of-life. Consistent with the research, six of the participants discussed how they must have a quality-of-life in order to have balance in their lives. In a study

conducted by Lawrence, Poole, and Diener (2003) it was determined that females in other health care professions change their work and or occupational setting in order to find one that was more conducive to allow them to perform their parenting responsibilities.

According to Kahanov (2010), the greatest conflict women faced when compared to males in similar positions, was the struggle between professional and family obligations.

Hosick (2006) examined the concept that athletic training is no longer a male dominated field and females are becoming more consistent in the profession. She found that many female athletic trainers employed at the collegiate setting stated that it was both difficult and sometimes impossible to be able to raise a family while working in the profession. “The 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year nature of any athletics job often drives women-and anyone interested in having a life outside of their job-away from the field” (Hosick, 2006, p. 2).

Similar to Hosick’s findings, 18 of the participants in the researcher’s study discussed the doubts and challenges associated with their job, which were attributed to long hours, lack of personal life, and the need for balance. These types of challenges and obstacles are present throughout any of collegiate settings.

In the study of balancing professional and personal lives in athletic training, Scriber and Alderman (2005) noted, common stressors athletic trainers were faced with are: (a) long hours, (b) insufficient financial compensation, (c) understaffing, and (d) relationship issues on a professional and personal level. Consistent with Scriber and Alderman’s, the common stressor the participants faced were: (a) family obligations, (b) lack of social support, (c) extensive hours, and (d) insufficient pay. These stressors continue to affect athletic trainers on both professional and personal levels.

All of the participants discussed the types of challenges that they faced in the field of athletic training. In particular, 9 of the participants suggested that the most demanding challenge that they had faced was trying to find some form of balance between their personal and professional lives. The most common doubt stated was finding and maintaining a sense of balance between their personal and professional life as well as working to establish a sense of quality of life. Tina stated, “You know everybody asks me what is the toughest part of my job and it’s balance.” Additionally they noted struggles with successfully utilizing time management strategies.

Without having some form of balance, the burnout rate at which athletic trainers experience becomes more prevalent. In discussing why burnout happens in the field and how it could change Jessica stated,

I think we have come in at a time when it wasn’t all that popular (um you know). Thirty years from now absolutely, I have no doubt, but I think it’s a slow frustrating process for those of us that are in it right now trying to get through it.

As people become more familiar and appreciate the roles of Athletic Trainers, burnout may become less prevalent.

Theme # 2: Working in a Male Dominated Profession

According to Kahanov (2010), the greatest conflict women faced when compared to males in similar positions, was the struggle between professional and family obligations. It was also determined in their study that 32% of the females that participated felt that family and personal life, lack of opportunities, presence of the “good old boys” network, and salary were the most common struggles they faced. These findings are consistent with the current research. Six of participants noted, a lack of opportunities

available to them due, in part, to the male dominated field of athletics where the “good old boys network” still exists.

The current research supports the findings of The Women in Athletic Training Committee (1996) research, which illustrated that the key obstacles and challenges that women faced in the profession were lack of opportunities, “good old boy network”, and credibility. Consistent with the findings of the WATC, 6 of the participants felt that the limited employment opportunities at the professional level was due to the presence of an old school boys network. Although the exact number was not tallied, a few of the participants discussed how athletics is and continues to be a male dominated field.

According to Hosick (2006) one of her participants felt that in the athletic field there will always be challenges ahead for females. Because of these gender issues there will always be obstacles to overcome; women need to continue to demonstrate that they can provide the same care as a male athletic trainer can provide. Eight of the participants noted the need to continue to fight in order to prove themselves.

Theme # 3 Relationships with Other Female Athletic Trainers

Brabeck and Brabeck’s (2006) study that examined females’ relationships within the work place, researchers found that women struggled with doing what is best for them as compared to what is best for others. Consistent with Brabeck and Brabeck’s study, the researchers found that women experienced conflict with their roles with each other. More specifically, the participants were split in defining their relationships with other females. Eight of the participants felt that females in the field built their relationship based on supporting one another, providing respect, and camaraderie while the remaining five

participants felt that in order to establish themselves and to successful they must have a relationship that is competitive and one that keeps them driven.

Summary

In conclusion it was determined that females are facing barriers in the profession. This included struggling to prove themselves as equal to others and conflict between family obligations and professional lives. The lack of ability to establish and maintain a sense of balance and quality-of-life are challenges that lead female athletic trainers to have doubts about being in the field. It was also determined that female athletic trainers view their relationships with other women in the field in a positive, supportive, and respectful manor. It was also concluded that females view the NCAA Division III setting as an area that allows them to have more opportunities in both their personal and professional lives. The researcher determined that females have a decreased desire to pursue higher settings (i.e. Division I &II, professional sports) due to an decrease in ability to have and maintain a quality-of-life as well as not enough opportunities available for women to pursue.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the career experiences of female athletic trainers at the NCAA Division III setting. More specifically, the researcher examined: (a) the effect (if any) of the participant's sex on their work experience, (b) common obstacles females faced in their career, (c) doubts or concerns they experienced while being in the field, (d) the relationship women had with other women in the profession, and (d) the appeal (if any) of the NCAA Division III setting.

To attempt to explore such issues, the following research questions were examined:

1. Does sex play a role in the career experience of certified female athletic trainers
2. What are the common obstacles that females face in the field of athletic training?
3. How do female athletic trainers view their relationships with other women in the field?
4. Does the NCAA Division III setting appeal more to female athletic trainers?

Summary

The participants consisted of 22 certified female athletic trainers that worked at the NCAA Division III setting. Females at the NCAA Division III setting were purposefully chosen for this study because little research exists solely examining women working within this setting.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in an attempt to identify the working experiences of females as the NCAA Division III setting and to bring awareness to issues

or concerns that participants were facing in the field. The time frame of each interview varied from 30-120 minutes depending on when the participants felt they had answered the questions and discussed all that they had wanted regarding their experience.

Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. After this process was completed, the transcripts were then studied and examined in order for the researcher to familiarize herself with each participant. During this process, notes were taken to help the researcher highlight themes and develop thoughts. Even though there were many similarities among the interviews, each participant's interview was different in the discussion of their experiences.

The researcher and a member of the thesis committee analyzed all data. Coding schemes were utilized throughout the research. The emerging themes were arranged into a hierarchical structure for analysis. The findings were then organized and presented in a logical manner. The following three major themes highlighted from the participant's interviews were: (a) A Need for Balance, (b) Working in a Male Dominated Profession, and (c) Relationship with Other Female Athletic Trainers. The data collected is a rich description of female certified athletic trainer's work experience in the NCAA Division III setting.

Conclusion

The following conclusions are based upon in-depth interviews with the 22 female certified athletic trainers at the NCAA Division III setting.

According to the 22 participants in this study 21 of the participants felt that because of their sex they had faced some type of barrier within their experience in the field. Eight of the participants concluded that it was do to the feeling that they had to

continually prove themselves to others (i.e., male and female colleagues, coaches, athletes, and other athletic administration). Four of the participants felt that the desire to have a family was a barrier for them in the field. Other factors that were mentioned by a few participants were location of facilities, age, and the presence of an old-boys network.

Of the 22 participants 13 of the participants stated that they had recently faced obstacles that lead them to have doubts about being in the field. In discussing the types of obstacles that they faced, six of the participants felt that it was due to difficulty establishing and maintaining a balance and sense of quality of life. Seven of the participants also mentioned having difficulty with time management, while four mentioned facing doubts because of being understaffed, and being under acknowledged by administration and coaches. It was when the participants realized they had a lack of personal life and balance that the doubt was noticed. Five of the participants noted that it was the extensive hours that created doubts as well as four of the participants attributed it to insufficient salary.

In examining how female athletic trainers view their relationship with other females in the field, overall, it appeared that six women viewed each other in a positive and respectful manner. Eight of the participants felt that women in the field tended to have a sense of camaraderie among each other. Several of the participants labeled this relationship similar to that of a “sisterly” one. Many of these participants discussed that it was the respect and professionalism that females establish among one another that helped to form this tight relationship and bond them together. Several of the participants also felt that it was the desire for women to be more involved in each other’s lives personally and socially that helped to further develop a sisterly relationship. Of all the participants five

of the females felt that women didn't always view each other in a positive relationship but more so as their competition. These participants mentioned the possibility that intimidation and cattiness may play a role in this view. In a field that was once predominately males, this attitude that women have towards other women may come from the drive to establish themselves in order to be successful.

All of the participants appeared to be very happy and content with working at the Division III setting. Of the 22 participants, 15 of them felt that Division III provided more opportunities for them. These types of opportunities included working with a variety of different sports teams (i.e., male and female teams, contact vs. non-contact sports), allowed them to have other roles within their institutions (i.e., teaching and administration), and allowed them to have more personal time compared to what they would experience at higher settings. Of all the participants, 14 of the females felt that Division III allowed them to be more involved in decision processes and allowed them to be able to take on additional job responsibilities. Reasons why they felt more involved included the ability make more decisions within their own position, to be more involved in decisions that affected the institution, and their job responsibilities grew to either teaching or administrative responsibilities.

When asked about working at a setting higher than Division III, 11 of the participants said they would not want to pursue other levels. The 11 participants had no desire to move up because they believed they would have even less balance in their personal life. The participants also stated that there was not enough focus in treating and viewing athletes as students rather than individuals who were there to perform and bring in money to the institution. Seven participants who said they would be interested in

pursuing a higher setting stated it contributed to the fact that there would be more staff members available to divide the workload and that it would be more likely for each athletic trainer to have their own team they are assigned to and would create a more enjoyable workload.

When further investigating female athletic trainers desire to pursue the professional setting, 16 of the participants stated that they do not have any desire to pursue that level. The two most common responses were because at that setting there are too many politics involved and that females would have to deal with a lot of struggles and obstacles in order to be successful. The other response was that the participants would not want to give up the chance to have a family and personal life for that type of setting. In examining if there were enough opportunities for females at the professional level, 12 participants felt there were not enough opportunities. Responses as to what contributed to the lack of opportunities included: the old-boys network still being present in many athletic settings, it is who you know as opposed to one's experience or qualifications, and athletics is still a male dominated field so it is harder for women to pursue job opportunities.

Six of the participants expressed hope in that someday, maybe for future female athletic trainers, the lack of opportunities would change. Most felt that this issue would change as soon as the old boys network retired and new individuals that have worked with and are comfortable with having females around the athletic setting being to take over. Another reason why more opportunities could become present is because as the number of growing females entering the field continues to develop, professional sports will have to change and allow more females to be involved.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study recommend the following directions for future research:

1. A replication of the present study is needed with additional NCAA Collegiate settings including Division I and Division II.
2. A replication of the present study is needed with a more diverse group of female certified athletic trainers.
3. A replication of the present study is needed with male certified athletic trainers that work with other females at the Division III setting.
4. A replication of the present study is needed in examining females working in professional sports.
5. Additional research examining the rate that females athletic trainers are leaving the profession and the reasons as to why.
6. Additional research examining the duration of females' careers in the profession versus males.
7. Additional research examining what (if anything) the National Athletic Trainer Association has done to help develop a better balance and quality-of-life for athletic trainers.

References

- Acosta, R., & Carpenter, L. (2004). Women in intercollegiate sport a longitudinal, national study twenty-seven year update: 1997-2004. *Women's Sport Foundation*. Retrieved on April 22, 2007, from <http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/part/article.html?record=906>
- Acosta, R., & Carpenter, L. (2008). Women in intercollegiate sport a longitudinal, national study thirty-one year update: 1977-2008. *Women's Sport Foundation*. Retrieved on July 4, 2001, from <http://webpages.charter.net/womeninsports/2008%20Summary%20Final.pdf>
- Acosta, R., & Carpenter, L. (1985). Women in athletics: A status report. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance*, 56, 30-37.
- Anderson, M. (1993). Women in athletic training. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 63, 42-44.
- Arnheim, D., & Prentice, W. (2000). *Principles of athletic training* (10th ed.). Boston: MA: McGraw Hill.
- Brabeck, M., & Brabeck, K. (2006). Women and relationships. In J. Worell & C. Goodheart (Eds.), *Handbook of girl's and women's psychological health* (pp.208-217). New York: NY: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Bradley, E., Curry, L., & Devers, K. (2007) Qualitative data analysis for health services research: Developing taxonomy, themes, and theory. *Health Services Research*, 42(4), 1758-1772
- Burke, R.J. (1989). Toward a phase model of burnout: Some conceptual and methodological concerns. *Group Organizational Study*, 14, 23-32.
- Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York: NY: Longman Inc.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough?: An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18 (1), 59-82.
- Hart, B.A., Hasbrook, C.A., & Mathes, S.A. (1986). An examination of the reduction in the number of female interscholastic coaches. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 57, 68-77.
- Hendrix, A., Acevedo, E., & Herbert, E. (2000). An examination of stress and burnout in certified athletic trainers as the division I-A universities. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 35(2), 139-144.

- Hillman, S. (2000). *Introduction of Athletic Training*. Champaign: IL: Human Kinetics.
- Hoke, W. (2005). Women and the workplace wars. *The Plain Dealer*. Retrieved on January 29, 2008, from <http://www.cleveland.com/books/index.ssf?/books/more/103105.html>
- Hosick, M. (2006). Athletic training as a career is no longer a man's domain. *The NCAA News*. Retrieved on June 1, 2010 from http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/NCAANewsArchive/2006/Association-wide/athletic+training+as+a+career+is+no+longer+a+man_s+domain+-+8-14-06+ncaa+news.html
- Kahanov, L., Loeb sack, A., Masucci, M., & Roberts, J. (2010). Perspectives on parenthood and working of female athletic trainers in the secondary school and collegiate settings. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 45(5), 459-466.
- Kelly, B. (1994). A model of stress and burnout in collegiate coaches: Effects of gender and time of season. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 65(1), 48-58.
- Kelly, B., & Gill, D. (1993). An examination of personal/situational variables, stress appraisal, and burnout in collegiate teacher-coaches. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 64(1), 94-102.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills: CA: Sage Publications.
- Malasarn, R., Bloom, G., & Crumpton, R. (2002). The development of expert male national collegiate athletic association division I certified athletic trainers. *The Journal of Athletic Training*, 37(1), 55-62.
- Manigold, L., & Hunt, V. (2007). The great balancing act: Motherhood and athletic training. *NATA News*, 13.
- Maslach, C., & Jackson S.E. (1981). *Maslach Burnout Inventory: Manual*. Palo Alto: CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- McChesney, J., & Peterson, M. (2005). There is no off-season anymore. *Athletic Therapy Today*, 10(6), 6-10.
- McLaine, A. (2005). An overview of burnout in athletic trainers. *Athletic Therapy Today*, 10(6), 11-13.

- Merriam-Webster dictionary: The home and office edition.* (1998). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.
- Murray, S. (2007). Posting up in the pink ghetto. *Women's Sport Foundation*. Retrieved on October 8, 2007, from <http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/disc/article.html?record=884>
- Nino, L. (2006) Women: Feminism, sexuality, and equality in the work place. *E-Leader*, 1-9. Retrieved on December 28, 2007, from http://www.g-casa.com/download/nino_women_s_sexuality.pdf
- Pastrone, D. L., & Judd, M.R. (1993). Gender differences in burnout among coaches of women's athletic teams at two year colleges. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 10, 205-212.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage Publications.
- Perez, P., Cleary, M., & Hibbler, D. (2003). Women in athletic training: Striving for equity. *Women in Athletic Training*, 1, 1-6. Retrieved on April 22, 2006, from http://www.fiu.edu/~athltn/Research_Information/Current_Research/Streit-Perez%20COERC%20paper.pdf.
- Perez, P., Hibbler, D., Clearly, M., & Eberman, L. (2006). Gender equity in athletic training. *Athletic Therapy Today*, 11(2), 66-69.
- Pfeiffer, R. & Mangus, B. (2005). *Concepts of athletic training* (4th ed.). Sudbury: MA: Jones and Barlett Publishers.
- Pitney, W. (2006). Organizational influences and quality-of-life issues during the professional socialization of certified athletic trainers working in the national collegiate athletic association division I setting. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 41(2), 189-195.
- Prentice, W. E. (2003). *Arnheim's principles of athletic training: A competency-based approach* (11 ed.). Boston: MA: McGraw Hill.
- Research Methods Knowledge Base (2006) *Qualitative approaches*. Retrieved on July 4, 2011 from. <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualapp.php>.
- Roper, E., Fisher, L., & Wrisberg, C. (2005). Professional women's career experiences in sports psychology: A feminists standpoint approach. *The Sports Psychologist*, 19, 32-50.

- Schwandt, T. (2002). *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed.). CA: Sage Publications.
- Scriber, K., & Alderman, M. (2005). The challenge of balancing our professional and personal lives. *Athletic Therapy Today*, 10(6), 14-17.
- Shingle, R. (2001). *Women in athletic training: Their career and educational experiences*. Doctorial dissertation: University of Oregon.
- Siedman, I.E. (1991). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: NY: Teachers College Press.
- Staurowsky, E., & Scriber, K. (1998). An analysis of selected factors that affect the work lives of athletic trainer employed in accredited educational programs. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 33(3), 244-248.
- Tanenbaum, L. (2002). *Catfight: Women and competition*. New York: NY: Seven Stories Press.
- Thomas, J., Nelson, J., & Silverman, S. (2005). *Research methods in physical activity* (5th ed.). Champaign: IL: Human Kinetics.
- Walk, S. (1999). Moms, sisters, and ladies: Women student trainers in men's intercollegiate sport. *Men and Masculinities* 1(3), 268-283.
- Weiss, M.R., & Stevens, C. (1993). Motivation and attrition of female coaches: An application of social exchange theory. *The Sport Psychologist*, 7, 244-261.
- Women in Athletic Training Committee. (1996). *Women in athletic training survey*. Retrieved on April 22, 2007, from http://www.nata.org/members1/committees/watc/watc_historywomen/member_surveys.htm
- Women in Athletic Training Committee. (2005). *A historical timeline of women in athletic training*. Retrieved on January 22, 2008, from http://www.nata.org/members1/committees/watc/watc_historywomen/watc_timeline.htm

APPENDIX A

February 6, 2008

Dear Female Certified Athletic Trainer,

My name is Catherine Hutnick and I am currently a second year Master's student in Exercise Science at the State University of New York at Cortland. I am also a Graduate Assistant working in the Kinesiology Department as an Athletic Trainer for several sports teams on campus. I am writing to inquire about your willingness to participate in my master's thesis research.

I am currently conducting a study examining female athletic trainer's experiences while working within the NCAA Division III setting. Your institution was found on the NCAA database allowing for you to be a potential participant for this study.

If you volunteer to participate in the study, you will be asked to take part in a 30-45 minute telephone interview. The interviews will be recorded (with your consent). ALL interviews (and interview content) are confidential.

To be eligible to participate, one must currently be a head athletic trainer or a full-time assistant at a NCAA Division III college or institution. Participants must have a minimum of five years experience within the profession, a minimum of two years working at the NCAA Division III setting, and a minimum of one year at the current institution.

If you fit the requirements stated above and would be interested in participating I would love to hear from you. Please respond back to me via email. The attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of female athletic trainers are very important to me and to the profession. Your experiences and perceptions are a valuable resource. I would greatly appreciate your participation.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Catherine Hutnick

Catherine Hutnick, ATC
(914) 714-3345
Hutnick80@cortland.edu

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Katherine Polasek
(607) 753-4893
polasekk@cortland.edu

APPENDIX B

Demographic Form

Name: _____

Age: _____

Telephone No.: _____

E-mail address: _____

Race: Black/African American Hispanic White/European Asian/Pacific Islander Native American Other _____**Marital Status:** Single Married Committed/Partnered Divorced Widowed**Children:** Yes

If yes, how many and their age(s): _____

 No**Level of Education:** Bachelors Doctorate Masters Other _____**Certifications Held:** _____**Date Received BOC Certification:** _____**Number of Years of athletic training paid experience:** _____**Current Position/Title:** _____**Years at Current Institution:** _____**Name of College/University Associated with: (optional)** _____**Salary Range:** \$15,000-\$19,999 \$20,000-\$24,999 \$25,000-\$29,999 \$30,000-\$34,999 \$35,000-\$39,999 \$40,000-\$44,999 \$45,000-\$49,999 \$50,000-more**Do you plan on remaining in the profession until you retire? Please briefly explain.**

Which of the Following NATA Districts is the Institution That You Work With Located:

- District 1 (ME, NH, VT, RI, CT, MA, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia)
 District 2 (NY, NJ, PA, DE)
 District 3 (MD, VA, NC, SC, WV, DC)
 District 4 (IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI, Manitoba, Ontario)
 District 5 (IA, KS, MO, NE, ND, OK, SD)
 District 6 (TX, AR)
 District 7 (AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY)
 District 8 (CA, HI, NV)
 District 9 (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, TN, MS)
 District 10 (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan)

Number of People on Staff:

- males on staff
 females on staff

Varsity Sports Programs at the Institution: (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Lacrosse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Soccer | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Soccer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Ice Hockey | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Ice Hockey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Track and Field | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Hockey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Cross Country | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Track and Field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Golf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Gymnastics | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Cross Country |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Gymnastics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wrestling | <input type="checkbox"/> Softball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Volleyball | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Volleyball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Tennis | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Basketball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Lacrosse | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Lacrosse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men's Swimming & Diving | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Swimming & Diving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Is there a CAATE Accredited Program at Your Institution:

- Yes
 No

If so, what percent of the students are female?

If you have any questions regarding this investigation, please contact Catherine Hutnick at (914) 714-3345 or Hutnick80@cortland.edu

APPENDIX C

ADULT CONSENT
State University of New York College at Cortland

The research in which you have been asked to participate is being conducted by Catherine Hutnick of the Kinesiology Department at SUNY Cortland. We request your informed consent to be a participant in the project described below. *Please feel free to ask about the project, its procedures, or objectives.*

Information and Procedures of This Research Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the career experiences of female athletic trainers at the NCAA Division III setting. More specifically, the research will examine: (a) the allure of the NCAA Division III setting to female athletic trainers, (b) the effect (if any) of the participant's sex on their work experience, (c) common obstacles females face in their career, and (d) the relationship women have with other women in the profession.

Before agreeing to participate you should know that:

A. Freedom to Withdraw

You are free to withdraw consent at any time without penalty. Even if you begin answering questions and realize for any reason that you do not want to continue, you are free to withdraw from the study. Additionally, you may ask the researcher to destroy any responses you may have given.

B. Protection of Participants' Responses

Your responses are strictly confidential. Only the presiding faculty member and research assistants will have access to your responses. **You will use a pseudonym throughout the course of this study. Only your pseudonym will be connected with your responses. Your name will not be connected with your responses. All responses are kept in a locked cabinet in the principle investigator's office and any identifying information will be destroyed at the end of the study.**

C. Length of Participation and Remuneration

The study should take approximately one hour.

D. Full Disclosure

This study does not use deception. The researcher will answer any questions or address concerns that participants may have over the course of the study.

E. Risks Expected

Although you should not experience any discomforts or risk due to participating in this study, in rare cases individuals may learn something about themselves that might make them uncomfortable. In the event this occurs, please discuss this with the person conducting the study. In the event this is not sufficient, please contact SUNY Cortland Counseling Center at (607) 753-4728.

F. Benefits Expected

From participating in this study you should expect to come to a greater understanding of the way in which research is conducted. Your participation should greatly enhance your understanding of research design and how scientists answer theoretical and practical research questions.

G. Contact Information

If you have any questions concerning the purpose or results of this study, you may contact Catherine Hutnick, ph: (914) 714-3345 or Katherine Polasek, ph: (607) 753-4893. **For questions about research or research participants' rights, contact Leslie Eaton, IRB Administrator, Psychology Department, SUNY Cortland, at (607) 753-2079.**

.....

I _____ have read the description of the project for which this consent is requested,
 (print name) understand my rights, and I hereby consent to participate in this study.

 Signature

 Date

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide

(Semi-Structured)

Talk to me about how you became involved in Athletic Training.

- How did you determine that you wanted to do this as a career? *What influenced you the most? What steps did you take in knowing that this was the right profession for you (i.e. Shadowing, Internship)?*
- Did you have a mentor that helped or influenced you in your choice of career?
 - What was he/she like?
 - *Are they currently in the field?*

Describe any doubts you may have had about your decision to enter the field.

What is your biggest doubt and why?

- Do you remember specific instances or moments when the doubts had arisen? *(i.e. conflicts with another ATC, coach, specific situation)?*
- Do you still have doubts?
 - Why?

Talk to me about your passion/interest for the profession.

- Has your passion or interests in the profession remained unchanged?
 - If yes, what keeps you motivated, excited, or enthused?
 - If no, why?
 - What do you think has contributed most of your change in feelings about the profession?
- Do you intend to remain in the profession until you retire?
 - If yes, why?
 - If no, what other career paths are you considering?
 -

In one or two sentences describe what “Quality of Live” means to you and what incorporates it?

Talk to me about your current job position

- How long have you been in this position?
- How did you decide what level you wanted to work at?
- Are you satisfied with your current position?
 - Why or why not?
- *Do/Did you have the opportunity to work with the teams that you wanted to-male or female?*
- *Did you have a say in the decision process-more available to make decision at DIII?*
- Have you ever considered working at a setting higher than the NCAA Division III level?
 - If yes, what levels?
 - Why?
 - If no, why not?

Talk to me about being a female working within the Athletic Training profession.

- Are there any perks/benefits because you are a female working in this field?
- Have you faced any obstacles/barriers as a result of being a female in this field?
 - Do you have any stories?
 - You pointed to negative one, how about positive ones (or vice versa)?
- *What types of roles/relationships do you or did you have with the athletes (Mother, Sister, Lady)?*

Talk to me about the relationships you have with other women in the field?

- Are you happy with the relationships you have?
 - Why or why not?
 - If not, what would the type of relationship that you would prefer look like?
- Are these relationships different than your relationships with men in the field?
 - How so?

What advice would you give female athletic trainers that are new to the profession?