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Areas of Worklife and Job Burnout among Sport Industry Professionals: The Case of Athletic Academic Support Professionals

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The current study examined factors in the work environment that contribute to job burnout among sport industry professionals. Leiter and Maslach (2000) Areas of Worklife Model was applied to theoretically guide the exploration of job burnout among academic support professionals who serve college student-athletes. Additionally, the extent to which job burnout had an impact on individuals' turnover intentions was explored. The sample ($n = 244$) consisted of academic advisors and learning specialists affiliated with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I programs. Results indicate academic support professionals experience depersonalization and high levels of emotional exhaustion related to an incongruence in job-fit in the areas of perceived job control, community, rewards, values, and workload. Additionally, higher levels of emotional exhaustion were found to impact participants' intentions to leave their current jobs. Practical solutions for addressing job incongruences along with theoretical implications of the results are provided.

Keywords: job burnout, areas of worklife, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, turnover

In 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) classified job burnout as a syndrome that results from chronic work stress (WHO, 2019). Known as a workplace phenomenon, it is a manifestation of the result of uncontrolled stressors within a work environment. When an employee reaches the stages of burnout, they become emotionally exhausted, detached from their work, and doubt their abilities to perform their job duties. Ultimately, if job burnout goes unaddressed, employee physical and mental health concerns and decisions to leave their jobs becomes the ultimate sacrifice.

Unrealistic work demands combined with a lack of support in various work areas are the major culprits that result in burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2006). Specifically, in the context of sport, organizations come with their own unique set of work demands and stressors. For instance, evidence of workaholism, relational conflicts, abnormal and long work hours, and lower than average wages have all been found related to burnout (Bicalho & da Costa, 2018; Huml, Taylor, & Dixon, 2020). In addition, certain identities face stressors due to their marginalized statuses within sport organizations. As a result, the sport industry has much to learn about unique work stressors impacting job burnout in order to enhance work cultures and retain employees. Leading scholars on the topic of burnout, Maslach and Leiter (2006), suggest managers need to first pinpoint areas in which job incongruences lie and work to implement resources and solutions to improve congruence within those respective areas. For these reasons, Leiter and Maslach (2000) Areas of Worklife Model was the framework applied to take a closer look at these designated incongruences.

The current study surveyed academic support professionals who work in collegiate athletic departments. Athletic academic support professionals are often regarded as a team's "academic coach" and play an instrumental role in the off-court and off-field successes of student-athletes. Their jobs are to provide support in three key areas: (a) academic guidance, (b) athletic eligibility, and (c) life skills development (Rubin, 2017). Hence, they are instrumental resources that help student-athletes navigate dual roles on campus. For these reasons, it is concerning that Rubin (2017) found 91% of student-athlete academic support professionals reported witnessing colleagues in the profession experience job burnout, while an additional 60% reported considering leaving the profession. Further, in a follow-up study on job burnout, authors Rubin and Moreno-Pardo (2018) interviewed academic support professionals on their experiences with stress at work. One participant stated,

I came to a point where I didn't know if I could do it anymore. I sometimes would come home and start crying. Sometimes I would break down in the middle of the day, and I didn't even really know why. It would just be a sense of exhaustion, overwhelmed. Just pressure when you're working with high-profile teams and high-profile sports (p. 11).

Findings in Rubin and Moreno-Pardo's (2018) study was a tipping point on research dedicated towards examining emotional exhaustion among academic support professionals working in collegiate athletic departments. Job burnout among academic support professionals may include, but are not limited to, overwhelming caseload management of student-athletes and taking on multiple job roles and responsibilities. Additionally, individuals face mounting pressure to aid student-athletes in maintaining athletic eligibility by meeting certain standards set by institutions and the NCAA (Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to better understand the predictors of job burnout from an Areas of Worklife Model, and (2) to explore the impact job burnout had on turnover intention among sport industry professionals in collegiate athletics. In particular, the current study tested the Areas of Worklife factors of community, control, fairness, rewards, values, and workload on the dimensions of job burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion and depersonalization). In addition, the study tested the impact emotional exhaustion and depersonalization had on individuals' turnover intentions.

The recent WHO's designation of burnout as a syndrome added emphasis on the opportunity to learn from the match between employee expectations and job realities. Similar to any industry, the future of college athletics culture is dependent upon a healthy and vibrant workforce. Employee morale, perceived value, and sense of community are integral in creating a healthy work environment and work culture. Employee turnover, on the other hand, can be costly to the organization's bottom line. Thus, the current study's findings will equip leaders with an understanding of what job factor mismatches lead to forms of burnout and which indicators of burnout lead to turnover. This information will also contribute to the field's on-going understanding of worklife and the antecedents and outcomes of job burnout. The following section provides the hypotheses for testing the relationships between the major constructs identified above.

Theoretical Framework

Areas of Worklife Model

The Areas of Worklife Model created by Leiter and Maslach (2000) is a specific framework developed to examine workplace fit and its relationship to job burnout. The model specifically captures the perceived congruence of an employee's fit within six areas of a job: community, control, fairness, rewards, values, and workload. The greater the perceived match/congruence perceived by employees in these six areas of their jobs, the more engaged they are and conversely, the more mismatch/incongruence perceived in the six areas the greater the risk of increased burnout and other negatively related factors (Maslach, Leiter, & Schaufeli, 2008). Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) concluded, "...the challenge is to extend the job person paradigm to a broader and more complex conceptualization of the person situated in the job context" (p. 101). The Areas of Worklife Model and its constructs have been found to be associated with both positive and negative employee outcomes such as work engagement, life satisfaction, workplace stress, job burnout, and intentions to leave a profession (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011; Graham, Shier, & Nicholas, 2016). Since the sport industry certainly has elements of chronic work stress that can cause job incongruences (McCarthy, 2015), the Areas of Worklife model was chosen to guide the current study's investigation of factors that impact job burnout. See Figure 1 for a conceptual and visual representation of how the Areas of the Worklife factors potentially impacts job burnout which potentially impacts turnover intention. Each factor of the of the Areas of Worklife Model is briefly discussed below and has been extensively researched and applied among a variety of populations in service industries from healthcare workers (Bridgeman, Bridgeman, & Barone, 2018), teachers (Mojisa-Kaja, Golonka, & Marek, 2015), and law enforcement (McCarty, Aldirawi, Dewald, & Palacios, 2019).

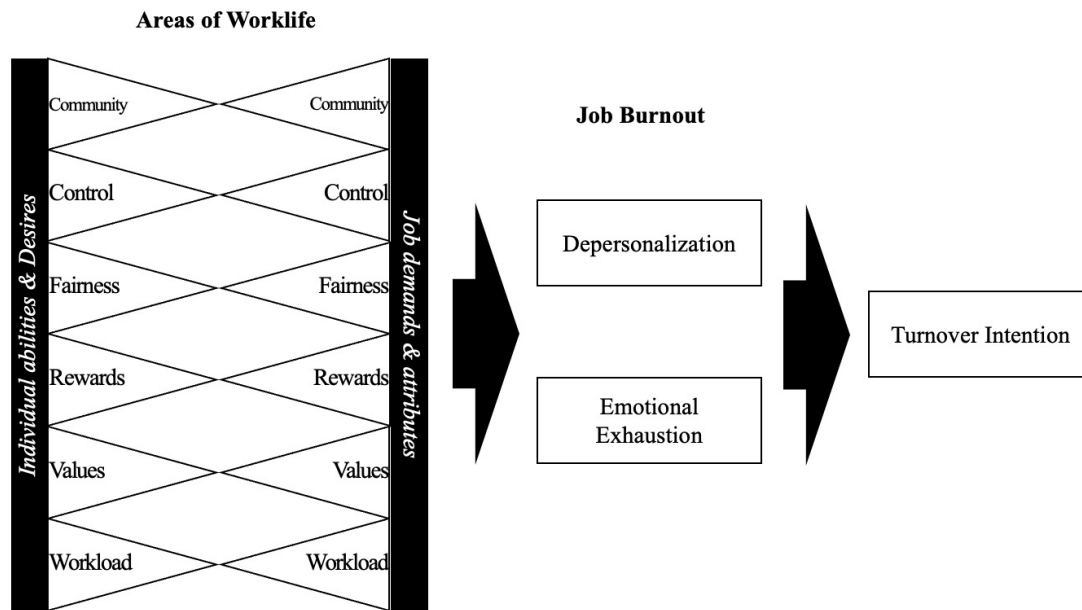


Figure 1.

Proposed model of Areas of Worklife Model impact on job burnout and job burnouts impact on turnover intention.

Community. Employees' social support system at work is developed through engagement and interconnected relationships with others. A culture of working together towards achieving common goals builds a trusted work community. Conversely, a lack of belongingness and social isolation at work can be a major culprit of burnout. When this area is out of alignment, emotional exhaustion can take its toll on individuals and create interpersonal conflicts (Leiter & Maslach (2003). Specific to this study, a mismatch in community may result if they feel at odds with one another (i.e., academic and athletic goals) when working towards their common purpose of serving the student-athletes in their collegiate experience. For example, coaches who want to win athletically and advisors who want to win academically.

Control. Control is an employee's autonomy to participate in making his or her own decisions at work. Lack of control has also been found to result in individuals' personal role conflict. Leiter, Gascón, and Martínez-Jarreta (2010) posit, "the more control employees exert at work, the more they can shape work demands to manageable levels" (p. 59). Leiter and Shaughnessy (2006) applied Leiter and Maslach's (2000) model to explore the role of control. The results suggested not only does control have a direct relationship with the five other areas in the model, but it also has an indirect relationship with outcomes of work value, job burnout, and change. Specific to this study, an example of a mismatch in the area of control for academic support professionals may arise when their job responsibilities in regard to who, how, and when they advise the student-athletes the way they do come into conflict with one another.

Fairness. Fairness describes how individuals perceive his or her organization to be equitable in their policies and procedures for all employees. Leiter and Maslach (2003) explain, "unfairness can occur when there is inequity of workload or pay, or when there is cheating, or

when evaluations and promotions are handled inappropriately” (p. 99). In a longitudinal study, Maslach et al. (2008) discovered that employees who reported a mismatch in fairness moved towards higher levels of job burnout over time. Additionally, a study conducted with teachers, Mojsa-Kaja et al. (2015) found incongruence among teacher's expectations of fairness in the workplace led to the burnout dimension of depersonalization. This finding demonstrates that the more teachers felt that the work environment was unfair, the more they became detached from their work and the students whom they taught. Specific to this study, academic support professionals may experience a mismatch in job fairness if they perceive resources are allocated disproportionately or a perceived mistreatment of employees by administration based on departmental job roles (i.e., academic support and coaching staffs).

Reward. Reward is related to employees' expectations of intrinsic and/or extrinsic recognition for performing job duties. Social recognition for work performed would be considered an intrinsic reward while a monetary bonus would be considered an extrinsic reward. Leiter and Maslach (2003) state, “when people feel neglected by the material and social reward system of an organization, they feel out of sync with its values” (p. 97). Therefore, if an employee is not being recognized for all of their efforts in either a tangible or intangible way, they could become less confident in the work they are doing and experience burnout. Specific to this study, academic support professionals may perceive a mismatch in the area of rewards if they do not feel recognized by coaches or administrators for student-athletes achieving success academically or holistically outside of their respective sports.

Values. Employee beliefs about work and organizational purpose resemble their values. Values can often be found in the mission and purpose that draw an employee to fulfill meaningful work within that organization. A compromise between an individual's values and the organizations can cause an internal conflict for employees (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). An example how academic support professionals may perceive a mismatch in the area of values would be if an advisor values supporting student-athletes in pursuing a particular major but is at odds with progress towards degree and academic institutional/NCAA eligibility standards or athletic success.

Workload. Workload pertains to the physical work demands an employee is expected to meet. An increase in workload occurs when job demands exceed the limits in which an employee can accomplish given their time and resources (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). When workload limits become overwhelming over an extended period of time, an individual's emotional energy can become depleted. For this reason, researchers consider workload to be the biggest factor that results in job burnout, especially in the dimension of emotional exhaustion for those who work in human services jobs (Jimenez & Dunkl, 2017; Lindén et al., 2018; Mojsa-Kaja et al., 2015). Studies have also used workload to mediate the relationship among the remaining five worklife factors and job burnout. This means that a mismatch in the other five areas of worklife have been found to result in an increase in workload, which in-turn, can lead to increased levels of reported burnout. Specific to this study, academic support professionals may perceive a mismatch in workload if they feel they did not have enough time to accomplish the amount of work assigned to them under a certain amount of allotted time.

While the Areas of Worklife Model has not yet been applied in the context of the sport industry, job burnout among athletic trainers and coaches in collegiate athletics have been related mostly to the factors of workload and social support of administrators (Barrett, Levin, Nissly, & Lane 2016; DeFreese & Mihalik, 2016, Taylor, Huml, & Dixon, 2019). Authors Olusoga,

Bentzen, and Kentta (2019) in their scoping review of literature on coach burnout discuss how other factors of work commitment, motivation, and work-life conflict have all been related factors to burnout among collegiate coaches.

Job Burnout

Job burnout was first an anecdotal and observable workplace phenomenon at the turn of the industrial period. However, over the last 40 years it has been examined in more systematic and empirical ways (Freudenberger, 1974; Leiter & Maslach, 2003, 2017). Situational (e.g. work conditions, job demands, lack of resources) and individual (e.g., demographics, personality) factors have been found to contribute to employee burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Maslach and Jackson's (1981) definition is the most widely recognized definition of job burnout. The authors define job burnout as, "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (a.k.a. cynicism), and low personal accomplishment (a.k.a. inefficacy) that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind" (p. 1). In a second proposed model of job burnout, Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli, (2001) suggested job burnout can be measured with just the two dimensions of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Demerouti et al. (2001) exclude low personal accomplishment based on studies that have found emotional exhaustion and depersonalization to be the core dimensions in how job burnout manifests itself and that low self-efficacy may just be a byproduct of the core dimensions rather than a measurement of the phenomena of burnout itself. For these reasons, only Leiter and Maslach's (2016) emotional exhaustion and depersonalization factors were used to measure job burnout which underpins Demerouti et al.'s, (2001) theoretical justification to exclude low personal accomplishment from the measurement of job burnout.

Emotional Exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is one way job burnout manifests itself. It occurs when employees feel that their personal physical and emotional resources have been depleted. Over time, employees may feel they have "nothing left" to contribute to their job. Ultimately, they end up feeling emotionally and physically drained and unable to perform their work duties to an optimal level (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). According to Maslach et al. (2001), emotional exhaustion is the most widely reported dimension of job burnout, hence, it has also been the most analyzed by researchers. Emotional exhaustion has been found to be most impacted by workload, lack of job control, and community (Aronsson et al., 2017; Leiter & Maslach, 2003). Based on this previous work and the demand placed upon athletic academic support professionals, the following hypotheses were developed to test the impact of the Areas of Worklife factors on emotional exhaustion:

- Hypothesis 1 (H₁): A greater perceived job *community match* will negatively impact *emotional exhaustion*.
- Hypothesis 2 (H₂): A greater perceived job *control match* will negatively impact *emotional exhaustion*.
- Hypothesis 3 (H₃): A greater perceived job *fairness match* will negatively impact *emotional exhaustion*.
- Hypothesis 4 (H₄): A greater perceived job *rewards match* will negatively impact *emotional exhaustion*.

Hypothesis 5 (H₅): A greater perceived job *values match* will negatively impact *emotional exhaustion*.

Hypothesis 6 (H₆): A greater perceived job *workload match* will negatively impact *emotional exhaustion*.

Depersonalization. Depersonalization is the second way job burnout manifests itself. It is the result of becoming withdrawn and detached from another person who serves in a human service position. Maslach et al., (2001) describe depersonalization as, “an attempt to put distance between oneself and service recipients by actively ignoring the qualities that make them unique and engaging people” (p. 403). Consequently, employees who work in human services and experience depersonalization can lose their personal work identity and begin to dehumanize their respective clients. Specific to this study, academic support professionals’ who develop the dimension of depersonalization may distance themselves from student-athletes and not see them as individuals with real problems and issues that need to be supported. Negative interpersonal relationships and social conflicts at work have been found to have the greatest impact on the dimension of depersonalization (Aronsson et al., 2017; Leiter & Maslach, 2003). As a result of this potential, the following hypotheses were created to test the impact of the Areas of Worklife factors on depersonalization:

Hypothesis 7 (H₇): A greater perceived job *community match* will negatively impact *depersonalization*.

Hypothesis 8 (H₈): A greater perceived job *control match* will negatively impact *depersonalization*.

Hypothesis 9 (H₉): A greater perceived job *fairness match* will negatively impact *depersonalization*.

Hypothesis 10 (H₁₀): A greater perceived job *rewards match* will negatively impact *depersonalization*.

Hypothesis 11 (H₁₁): A greater perceived job *values match* will negatively impact *depersonalization*.

Hypothesis 12 (H₁₂): A greater perceived job *workload match* will negatively impact *depersonalization*.

Turnover

One outcome of experiencing job burnout is when employees contemplate leaving their respective jobs or in other words, turnover intention. Turnover is defined by Abrams, Ando, and Hinkle (1998) as “an employee’s intention to leave their current organization.” Job burnout at work has been found to directly impact intentions to leave a position (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). In a quantitative review of literature, Swider and Zimmerman (2010), found turnover intention to be the highest correlated variable with job burnout when compared to employee absenteeism or job performance. While there are limited studies on sport professionals and

turnover intention based on the evidence and correlation of job burnout and turnover intention, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were used to examine employee turnover intention. Thus, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 13 (H₁₃): Higher levels of *emotional exhaustion* will positively impact *turnover intention*.

Hypothesis 14 (H₁₄): Higher levels of *depersonalization* will positively impact *turnover intention*.

Job Burnout in Sport

Job burnout on athletic departmental employees (Taylor et al., 2019), coaches (Schaffran, Altfeld, & Kellmann, 2016), athletic trainers (DeFreese & Mihalik, 2016), and athletes (Bicalho & da Costa, 2018) have all been investigated. Workplace stressors that can lead to burnout are defined as the conditions or events that occur at work (Bliese, Edwards, & Sonnentag, 2017). These stressors resonate when job demands exceed employees' personal and organizational resources (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Stressors are often examined as a multilevel phenomenon. For instance, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) discuss three distinct theoretical ways of arriving to job stressors: individual (i.e., the role of intrapersonal processes), interpersonal (i.e., the role of the disconnect between employees and those they serve), and organizational (i.e., the role of the wider workplace context). Specifically, in sport management research, chronic workplace stress has been reported by several factors (Copeland & Kirsch, 1995; Dabbs, Graham, & Dixon, 2016; Taylor & Hardin, 2016; Taylor et al., 2019). For example, Copeland and Kirsch (1995) found college athletic directors experience job stress at all three NCAA divisions related to budget demands and job security. Additionally, Taylor and Hardin (2016) found that female athletic directors often feel scrutinized or judged based on their qualifications compared to their male counterparts. Added pressure for females in these high-profile sport industry positions could contribute to chronic work stress in the long run.

Academic Support Professionals

One-way universities prevent student attrition is by employing academic support professionals who work with students on a multitude of academic and personal matters (Drake, 2011). While working in academic support services can be a rewarding career, professionals are leaving the profession at an alarming rate across higher education institutions due to the stressful work conditions. For instance, Marshall, Gardner, Hughes, and Lowery (2016) sampled student affairs professionals who left their careers and found 63.4% left their career within the first 10 years of employment. Job stress and burnout were the top reasons for their turnover. Participants also reported leaving due to having a non-competitive salary, more attractive career alternatives, and working long hours and weekends.

Student-athletes are one sub population that academic support professionals serve. Since its inception, the NCAA has had a big impact on the reform and educational standards required for athletic competition. In 1991, the NCAA mandated Division I institutions make available academic support and tutoring services to all student-athletes. Since, the NCAA has continued to make legislative changes and regulate academic standards within college athletics. Most recently, in 2003, the NCAA implemented major academic reforms instituting the Academic Progress Rate (APR) and Graduation Success Rate (GSR) (NCAA, 2017). These standards and

regulated measures have continued to go through legislative changes ever since. According to the NCAA (2017), “the goals of the academic reforms that were initially implemented in 2003 were to “maximize graduation rates while minimizing adverse impact on low-income and minority student-athletes.” (p. 33).

Given the athletic and academic commitments of student-athletes, academic support professionals are crucial support for this vulnerable student population to succeed in and outside their sport. Specific to their roles, Parham (1993) indicated

unique work stressors for athletic academic support professionals as, balancing athletic and academic endeavors, balancing social activities with the isolation of athletic pursuits; balancing athletic success or lack of success with maintenance of mental equilibrium; balancing physical health and injuries with the need to keep playing; balancing demands of various relationships, including coaches, parents, family, and friends; dealing with the termination of an athletic collegiate career (p. 412).

Additionally, Rubin and Moreno-Pardo (2018) found athletic academic support professionals who report feeling burned out from work oversaw many student caseloads and experienced alleviated workloads outside of their designated job descriptions. In their study, the themes that arose were, not seeing a career path, health issues of physical and emotional exhaustion, time demands, low compensation for required work, and being in a thankless profession. Specifically, in relation to Leiter and Maslach’s (2003) Areas of Worklife Model, Rubin and Moreno-Pardo (2018) found evidence that individuals felt more of a mismatch between their values, workload, compensation, and social recognition. Additionally, Vaughn and Smith (2018) found academic advisors take on an overwhelming amount of job roles that have potential to lead to increased work demands and job stress. The initial studies on this population identifying the stressors and burnout levels warrant further empirical investigation.

Method

Participants and Instrumentation

The target population for the present study were NCAA Division I academic advisors and learning specialists who serve college student-athletes. As reported by the NCAA in 2017-2018 the last report at the time of data collection for the current study, there were a total of 1,488 administrators from the NCAA Division I conferences listed as “administrative” role titles in regards to “academic advisor/counselor.” These demographics are collected annually from each member institution by the NCAA Certification of Compliance Form (NCAA, 2018). This report also indicates academic support professionals from NCAA Division I institutions are mostly female (64%) and white (68%). It was estimated that 80% of all administrators in this category would be academic advisors and learning specialists given the proportion that these roles make-up within most Division I academic support units.

A convenient and purposeful sampling method was utilized to recruit participants who are members of the National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals (N4A). All registered N4A members were asked to take-part in the current study solicited through the organization-wide email listserv. The researcher was a current member of N4A at the time and received prior permission from the N4A research committee chair to conduct research through the organization’s listserv. The online survey consisted of 88 items including demographic questions and scaled items. The survey was hosted by Qualtrics.

Areas of Worklife. The six subscales of the Areas of Worklife instrument measured job mismatches in the work environment. Reliability measures have been reported from a normative sample ($N = 22,714$) published in the Areas of Worklife manual and sampler set developed by Leiter and Maslach (2011). The six subscales are (a) community match, consisting of five items, (b) control match, consisting of three items, (c) fairness match, consisting of six items, (d) rewards match, consisting of four items, (e) values match, consisting of four items and (f) workload match, consisting of six items. All items on each subscale were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The higher the score above the mean of three, the greater the match in this job area and vice versa.

Maslach Burnout Toolkit for Human Services. The MBI-HSS was used to measure the job burnout outcomes of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The MBI-HSS was developed specifically for populations who work in human services professions and consists of three subscales, two of which were used for the current study: (a) emotional exhaustion, which consisted of nine items, and (b) depersonalization which consisted of five items.

All items are measured on a seven-point Likert-type frequency scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*daily*). Job burnout is indicated by higher scores of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009). Authors Wheeler, Vassar, Worley, and Barnes (2011), who conducted a meta-analysis on the MBI-HSS scale, reported internal reliability measures from 84 studies and reported the emotional exhaustion subscale Cronbach's alphas ranged in the high .80s while the depersonalization ranged in the mid .70s. In the MBI-HSS manual, internal consistency scores reported from early studies using the measure reported internal consistencies in Cronbach's alphas averaging .90 for emotional exhaustion, and .79 for depersonalization (Leiter & Maslach, 2016). The 22-item MBI-HSS and the 28-item Areas of Worklife survey are copyrighted instruments, but are available for a licensing. To obtain a license, visit mindgarden.com.

Turnover Intention. Turnover intention is the measure of organizational turnover intention that consists of four items (see the Appendix). A higher score indicates a higher intention to leave the organization. In its development, it showed internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha of .88 (Abrams et al., 1998) and has been used since in other studies with reported Cronbach's alpha of .77 (Barak, Levin, Nissly, & Lane, 2006). All items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Job Content and Hierarchical Career Plateau. Job content and hierarchical career plateau were utilized as control variables, as it was plausible individuals in the sport industry and academic support professionals, in particular, leave the profession due to a plateauing job experience or perceived lack of career advancement. Thus, controlling for these variables to isolate the independent variables of importance was deemed necessary. The current study utilized Millgram's (1992) job content and hierarchical career plateau instruments. Both scales are six-item (see Appendix) and reported reliable scores in development ($\alpha = .86$; $\alpha = .90$) and in more recent use ($\alpha = .86$; $\alpha = .94$) (Hurst, Kungu, & Flott, 2012).

Procedure

After Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was received, data collection began and concluded in January 2019. One reminder survey was sent out a week after the initial survey was

sent. Qualtrics software was used to develop and administer the online survey. Remote licenses were purchased through MindGarden survey products. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to voluntarily provide their email address for a chance to win a Kindle Fire and one of 50, \$25 gift cards to Amazon.

Data Analysis

To test the hypotheses, three unique hierarchical multiple regressions were analyzed. In block one, age, gender, and the number of years in the profession were added first. In block two, the Areas of Worklife dimensions were added as the predictor variables of interest in relation to the outcomes of emotional exhaustion (H₁-H₆) and depersonalization (H₇-H₁₂). For the last two hypotheses, one unique hierarchical multiple regression was analyzed with age, gender, and the number of years in the profession, job content plateau, and hierarchical job plateau added in block one. In block two, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were added as the predictor variables of interest in relation to the outcome of turnover intention (H₁₃-H₁₄).

Results

A total of 350 participants began taking the online survey and 292 participants completed it. This resulted in a 16% response rate. There were 244 usable responses used in the analysis based on inclusion criteria if participants reported being affiliated with NCAA Division I and reported being an academic advisor (67%), learning specialist (16%), or a combination of multiple roles of being an academic advisor and/or learning specialist (17%). Table 1 provides an inclusive list of sample demographics.

Table 1
Sample Demographics (N = 244)

Gender	<i>n</i>	%	Education	<i>n</i>	%
Female	178	73.0	Bachelor's Degree	10	4.1
Male	69	27.0	Master's Degree	210	86.1
			Doctoral Degree	20	8.2
			Professional Degree (e.g., J.D.)	4	1.6
Race	<i>n</i>	%	Salary	<i>n</i>	%
Asian	1	.4	Under \$30,000	15	6.
Black	42	17.2	\$30,000-\$40,000	36	14.8
Hispanic	5	2.0	\$40,000-\$50,000	80	32.8
Native American	3	1.2	\$50,000-\$60,000	54	22.1
Other	14	5.7	\$60,000-\$70,000	29	11.9
Pacific Islander	1	.4	\$70,000-\$80,000	16	6.6
White	178	73.1	\$80,000-\$90,000	8	3.3
			\$90,000 or more	6	2.5
Age			Unit Reporting Structure	<i>n</i>	%
Mean	37		Report to Athletic Department	136	55.6
Standard Deviation	8.8		Report to Student Affairs	79	32.3
Range	25-68		Report to Other*	29	12.1
Former Student-Athlete?	<i>n</i>	%			
Yes	130	53.3			
No	114	46.7			

Note. *Participants who self-reported a different reporting structure other than "athletic department" or "student-affairs"

Internal consistency and reliability for each measure can be found in Table 2. and were assessed by Cronbach's alpha. All scales were above the threshold of .70 considered good for measurement of internal consistency (Acock, 2016). Bootstrap analysis was used to correct for non-normality of residuals for the second hierarchical multiple regression results. To be consistent, bootstrap analysis was used for each of the three unique hierarchical multiple regressions. Wu (1986) recommends determining a moderate to large number where 200 resamples is large enough to bootstrap standard errors and 1,000 is large enough to bootstrap confidence intervals. Therefore, for the current study, 1,000 samples with replacement bootstrapping were conducted for each unique hierarchical multiple regression. Based on Wu's (1986) recommendations for bootstrap analysis, all variables were standardized to compute Z scores to be consistent. Regressions were then run again to compute standardized beta coefficients.

Table 2
Pearson's r bivariate Correlation Coefficients

	Cronbach's Alpha	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
1. Age		-												
2. Years in profession		.75*	-											
3. Hierarchical Job Plateau	.91	.27*	.18*	-										
4. Job Content Plateau	.79	.11	.02	.41*	-									
5. Community Match	.87	.05	.02	-.24*	-.25*	-								
6. Control Match	.74	.06	.05	-.28*	-.29*	.41*	-							
7. Fairness Match	.83	-.04	-.10	-.43*	-.34*	.53*	.58*	-						
8. Rewards Match	.85	-.18*	-.17*	-.45*	-.36*	.46*	.50*	.56*	-					
9. Values Match	.72	-.03	-.04	-.31*	-.45*	.52*	.53*	.67*	.50*	-				
10. Workload Match	.72	-.07	-.17*	-.22*	-.11	.16*	.18*	.28*	-.25*	.20*	-			
11. Emotion Exhaustion	.92	-.02	.05	.25*	.10	-.27*	-.30*	-.24*	-.28*	-.25*	-.34*	-		
12. Depersonalization	.76	-.13*	.13*	.13*	.13*	-.25*	-.30*	-.19*	-.32*	.28*	-.39*	.53*	-	
13. Turnover Intention	.80	-.18*	.26*	.26*	.26*	-.41*	-.39*	-.46*	-.35*	.56*	-.24*	.29*	.24*	-

Notes. * Indicates significant relationships $p < .05$

Hypotheses 1-6

The first hierarchical multiple linear regression was statistically significant ($F [9, 224] = 3.962, p < .001$). The incremental change in the adjusted R^2 from step one to step two was .33 and explained a corresponding 44% of the total variance in emotional exhaustion. The covariate age was a statistically significant negative predictor, as were the worklife variables of community match, control match, rewards match, and workload match. In other words, when controlling for the age of participants, the lack of certain job match characteristics or perceived incongruence with expectations resulted in higher levels of emotional exhaustion. See Table 3 for the final regression model including regression coefficients and standardized beta weights.

Hypotheses 7-12

The second hierarchical multiple linear regression was also statistically significant ($F [9, 246] = 12.759, p < .001$). The incremental change in the adjusted R^2 from step one to step two was 0.25 which explained a corresponding 33% of the total variance in depersonalization. The covariates of age (*neg*), gender, and number of years in the profession (*pos*) were all significant

Table 3
Hierarchical Multiple Regressions Predicting Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization

Predictor	Emotional Exhaustion					Outcomes of Job Burnout				
	R ²	B	SE B	β	95% CI	R ²	B	SE B	β	95% CI
Step 1	.11					.08**				
Age		-.01	.01	-.15	[-.04, .01]		-.04	.01	-.33**	[-.35, .11]
Gender										
Males		.69	1.49	-	[-2.60, 4.29]		2.46*	.76	-	[-.80, 4.10]
Years in the Profession		.02	.01	.17	[-.01, .05]		.05	.02	.27*	[-.01, .39]
Step 2	.44**					.33**				
Age		-.01	.01	-.10	[-.03, .01]		-.04	.01	-.27**	[-.37, -.11]
Gender										
Males		.96	1.41	-	[-1.67, 3.51]		2.21**	.71	-	[-.97, 3.62]
Years in Profession		.01	.01	.10	[-.02, .04]		.03	.02	.18*	[-.01, .27]
Worklife Factors										
Community Match		-.16	.07	-.16*	[-.29, -.03]		-.14	.09	-.10	[-.23, .02]
Control Match		-.25	.09	-.20*	[-.41, -.08]		-.30	.12	-.17*	[-.31, -.08]
Fairness Match		.05	.08	.05	[-.12, .23]		.26	.11	.08	[-.02, .16]
Rewards Match		-.08	.07	-.11*	[-.28, .06]		-.29	.09	-.22*	[-.46, -.11]
Values Match		.07	.10	.05	[-.16, .33]		-.15	.13	-.22*	[-.42, -.03]
Workload Match		-.30	.07	-.27**	[-.43, -.17]		-.51	.09	-.33**	[-.48, -.16]

Note. $n = 232$ for Emotional Exhaustion. $n = 232$ for Depersonalization. Both regressions used bootstrap analysis with 1,000 sample replacements. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$. $R^2 =$ Adjusted R-squared. $B =$ Unstandardized Coefficients. $SE B =$ Standard Error. $\beta =$ Standardized Beta Weights. Age is continuous. Years in the Profession is continuous. Males = 1. Community Match, Control Match, Fairness Match, Values Match, and Workload Match 1 = extreme mismatch, 5 = extreme match.

predictors. The worklife variables of control match, rewards match, values match, and workload match were statistically significant negative predictors of depersonalization. Once again, see Table 3 for the final regression model including regression coefficients and standardized beta weights.

Hypotheses 13-14

The last hierarchical multiple was statistically significant ($F [7, 248] = 9.513, p < .001$). The incremental change in the adjusted- R^2 was .08 explaining a corresponding 31% of the total variance in turnover intention. The control variables age (*neg*), gender, job content plateau (*pos*), and hierarchical job plateau (*pos*) were all statistically significant predictors. Emotional exhaustion was statistically significant positive predictor, or in other words, as one expressed higher levels of emotional exhaustion, their intention to leave the organization increased as well. Depersonalization, however, was not statistically significant. Table 4 shows the final hierarchical regression model with regression coefficients and standardized beta weights. Nine of the 14 hypotheses were supported. See Table 5 for a summary of each hypothesis and the result.

Table 4
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Turnover Intention

<i>Predictor</i>	R^2	B	$SE B$	Turnover Intention	
				β	95% CI
Step 1	.17**				
Age		-.04	.01	-.34**	[-.21, -.07]
Gender					
Males		1.45*	.46	-	[.54, 2.32]
Years in Profession		.02	.07	.10	[-.09, .12]
Job Content Plateau		.18	.07	.17*	[.05, .21]
Hierarchical Job Plateau		.19	.05	.27**	[.06, .18]
Step 2	.31**				
Age		-.03	.01	-.28*	[-.16, -.02]
Gender					
Males		1.30*	.43	-	[.46, 2.12]
Years in Profession		.01	.01	.06	[-.03, .09]
Job Content Plateau		.18	.07	.17*	[.02, .14]
Hierarchical Job Plateau		.15	.05	.21*	[.02, .14]
Outcomes of Job Burnout					
Emotional Exhaustion		.22	.08	.18*	[.05, .16]
Depersonalization		.04	.06	.05	[-.10, .11]

Notes. $n = 226$ with 1,000 sample replications bootstrap analysis. R^2 = Adjusted R^2 . B = unstandardized coefficients. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$. $SE B$ = standard error of unstandardized coefficients. β = standardized beta weights. CI = confidence intervals. Age is continuous. Years in profession is continuous. Males = 1.

Table 5
Results of Hypotheses

Hyp.	Relationship	Result	Dir.	p-value	f ²
H ₁	Community match will negatively impact emotional exhaustion	Supported	-	.045	.013
H ₂	Control match will negatively impact emotional exhaustion	Supported	-	.013	.021
H ₃	Fairness match will negatively impact emotional exhaustion	Not Supported	N/A	.361	.003
H ₄	Rewards match will negatively impact emotional exhaustion	Supported	-	.028	.018
H ₅	Values match will negatively impact emotional exhaustion	Not Supported	N/A	.666	.001
H ₆	Workload match will negatively impact emotional exhaustion	Supported	-	.001	.070
H ₇	Community match will negatively impact depersonalization	Not Supported	N/A	.238	.004
H ₈	Control match will negatively impact depersonalization	Supported	-	.025	.014
H ₉	Fairness match will negatively impact depersonalization	Not Supported	+	.004	.024
H ₁₀	Rewards match will negatively impact depersonalization	Supported	-	.003	.025
H ₁₁	Values match will negatively impact depersonalization	Supported	-	.043	.011
H ₁₂	Workload match will negatively impact depersonalization	Supported	-	.001	.110
H ₁₃	Emotional exhaustion will positively impact turnover intention	Supported	+	.001	.039
H ₁₄	Depersonalization will positively impact turnover intention	Not Supported	N/A	.079	.011

Discussion

The current study examined antecedents to two forms of job burnout from the Areas of Worklife Model. In addition, the impact of the indicators of job burnout on turnover intention were sought. From a sport and organizational management perspective, this study contributes to what we know about job congruence and burnout among sport industry personnel. Specifically, the current study found that mismatches in perceived job community, control, rewards, values, and workload for academic support professionals in collegiate athletics significantly impacted both dimensions of job burnout. Additionally, emotional exhaustion positively impacted turnover intention where depersonalization had no impact. See Figure 2 for the final model. See Table 5 for a summary of each hypothesis and the result including the direction of the relationship, *p*-value and effect size. The effect size (*f*²) for each supported hypothesis was small to medium according to Pituch and Stevens (2016).

Workload

The area of workload had the largest impact on both dimensions of job burnout. It measured employees' perceived expectations of job duties given the number of appropriate resources to get a job done. Hence, the more academic support professionals perceived incongruences in workload, the higher levels of both emotional exhaustion and detachment from their work they experience. This finding is consistent with previous literature that has found greater perceived mismatches in the areas of workload, effects increased levels of experienced job burnout in sport industry jobs (Clapper & Harris, 2008; DeFreese & Mihalik, 2016; Hardin, Zakrajsek, & Gaston, 2015; Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018).

Outside of peak times of an academic year, academic support professional need to be encouraged to take time off. Rubin and Moreno-Pardo (2018) discuss that supervisors should provide encouragement and support employees to take vacations during downtimes to regain energy levels. This phenomenon is obviously not limited to academic support professionals.

Other professions within the industry work uneven cycles of very busy and dead periods. As a result, all sport professionals should seek strategies to balance workloads to avoid burnout during peak seasons of an academic year.

Another strategy a supervisor can implement is to encourage employees to establish more defined worklife boundaries. One specific example would be for supervisors to support their staff members to “un-plug” at the end of each workday to better consciously separate home and work lives (Dixon & Bruening, 2007). Ultimately, supervisors will want to confront the workload issue by having intentional meetings with their academic support professionals and utilize an open dialogue between supervisors and subordinates about workloads. Oftentimes, making sure the work just gets done can become a top priority. However, checking-in and reevaluating workloads needs to be taken seriously to make sure workloads are compatible with employees’ expectations of what they can feasibly accomplish. Ultimately, Leiter and Maslach (2003) suggest that organizations should work to make workloads more compatible if their goal is to reduce job burnout. Jansen and Kristof-Brown (2006) suggest organizations should investigate workload fit as early as the interviewing and onboarding processes.

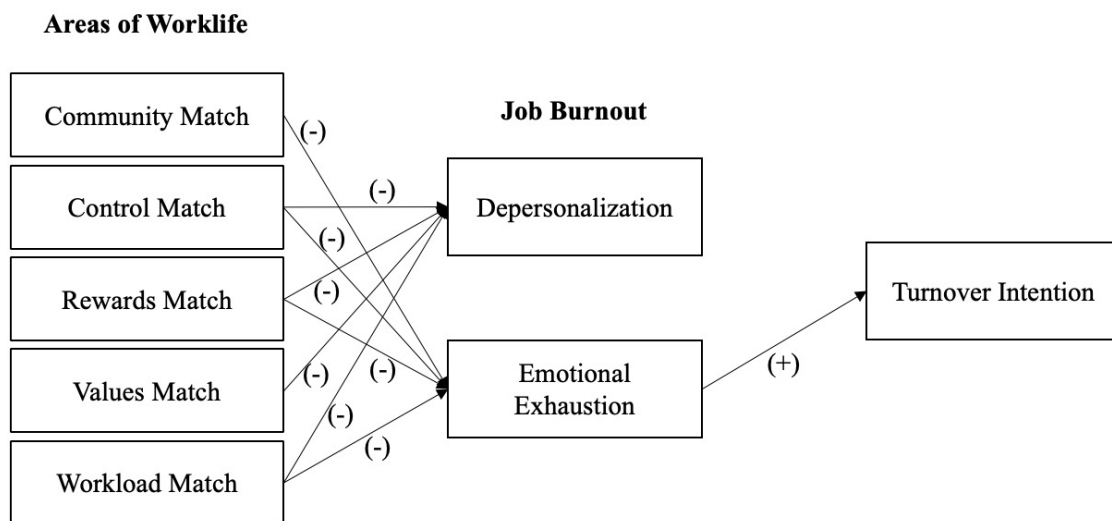


Figure 2.

Final model of Areas of Worklife Model impact on job burnout and job burnouts impact on turnover intention.

Control

The area of control had a significant impact on both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Greater support of an employee’s job autonomy is one cost-free way to reduce job burnout. Additionally, the literature suggests that a congruence in job control can increase congruence in all other areas (fairness, community, rewards, and workload) (Maslach, 2001). While athletic departments may not be able to decrease workload, they should find ways to increase individuals’ job autonomy over their workloads. For example, supervisors should take the time to understand more employee motivation related to the control over the work that they do and how they do it. Would they like to work with particular sport teams? Advise athletes in

the morning or in the evening? These questions may help in the reduction of supervisory micro-management practices and provide room for more flexible work and/or work-from-home options. The ultimate question administrators need to ask themselves, is where in the organizational structure there could be opportunities to increase job control among employees that provides them with more ownership and decision-making over the work they perform daily. Investing in employee development could help individuals feel valued and gain autonomy over their career. Jansen and Kristof-Brown (2006) discussed the importance of skill-based job training during employees' integration into the organization to strategically develop a greater perceived job congruence. Supervisors looking to foster strong, independent workers, should value professional development as a strategy to build culture and sense of belonging and reward employees by investing in their career growth.

Community

The area of community had a significant impact on the dimension of emotional exhaustion. A lack of social support at work has been found to lead to burnout among coaches and athletic trainers as well (Barrett et al., 2016; DeFreese & Mihalik, 2016). Academic support professionals in particular work with a lot of different constituents throughout their workdays (i.e., athletes, other advisors, and coaches). For this reason, it makes sense that there could be a lack of congruency among these different stakeholders would cause a mismatch in community and become overwhelming. One solution for managing the area of community would be to establish relational boundaries and expectations. Not only is this important at work but also helping employees manage familial relationships as well to avoid work conflict (Taylor, et al. 2019). Most importantly, athletic department culture has been noted as a top-down investment from athletic directors to lead effective departmental relations to avoid toxic work cultures (Powers, Judge, & Makela, 2016).

Rewards

The area of rewards had a significant impact on both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. While rewards at work can be financial, a different cost-free solution to increase congruence within the area of rewards is to focus on intangible social recognition. It is unlikely that sport professionals and academic support professionals go into the profession for the perks of the salary, especially in entry-level positions however, they often feel unrecognized for the hard work they put in (Rubin, 2017; Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018). For this reason, a lack of match in rewards could be due to the lack of recognition for the hard work put into supporting teams, coaches, and athlete's success. One example of how athletic directors have been known to shown social recognition is by blocking-off time in their schedules to visit coaches and team practices. Not only should athletic directors be doing this for sport teams, but they should be making time to do the same schedule blocking visits to all other support units. This would send a clear message that academic support professionals and support various roles within athletic departments are valued for the work they do but it would also indirectly send a message to student-athletes that the athletic director values academic success just as much as team practices and games.

Fairness

Fairness was one Area of Worklife factor that did not signal a statistically significant impact on either dimension of job burnout was the area of fairness. Perceived fairness pertains to equitable treatment as it relates to available resources in the workplace (Leiter & Maslach, 2003). This differs from results gleaned by Mojsa-Kaja et al. (2015), who found depersonalization was impacted by perceived fairness. Additionally, in a longitudinal study, Maslach et al. (2008) found participants who perceived a greater mismatch in job fairness reported higher levels of burnout over time. It could be concluded that academic support professionals' perception of fairness in the workplace is not an area of concern in relation to emotional exhaustion or depersonalization. Job fairness seems to meet the expectations of staff members in these roles. It could be that academic support professionals understand where and how the resources in college athletic departments are allocated and do not question this equity. Whether resources and fair treatment *are* actually equitable would be an area for future research to explore.

Depersonalization, Emotional Exhaustion, and Turnover

Depersonalization measures the phenomenon of employees becoming detached from their work and the recipients they serve. While the dimension of depersonalization was present, it did not have a statistically significant impact on turnover intentions among this population. This finding is consistent to Leiter and Maslach (2003) who have reported the outcome of depersonalization which often manifests itself less in comparison to emotional exhaustion. There may be something unique in regard to academic support professionals that becoming detached and jaded from work occurs, but not to the point of wanting to leave a job. This could be possibly due to the unique fluctuations of an academic year or the new faces of athletes and coaches' personnel they get to work with on a year-to-year basis.

Emotional exhaustion had a statistically significant impact on turnover intentions. Working directly with student-athletes within the college athletics environment is a human service role that can quickly become overwhelming if gone unmanaged. This is important to address among athletic administrators because of the negative health concerns involved with burnout in this area. Bakker, Le Blanc, and Schaufeli (2005) have even indicated emotional exhaustion can be contagious among coworkers and in-turn, can get rooted in an organization's work culture. Recent work by Taylor et al., (2019) found job burnout to be an area of concern in college athletic departments across the country. The authors' found collegiate administrators have a high association with workaholism which is defined as an uncontrollable need to work incessantly. Further, they found that workaholism among this population leads to job burnout. For this reason, the job burnout outcome of emotional exhaustion may be college athletic culture problem. By addressing the Areas of Worklife factors in the environment addressed above, athletic administrators can begin to reduce emotional exhaustion which in-turn, would reduce turnover.

Job burnout may ultimately cause turnover within athletic departments. Hom, Lee, Shaw, and Hausknecht's (2017) article titled, "One hundred years of employee turnover theory and research" makes practical suggestions for managerial practices in retaining employees. Specifically, the authors urge practitioners to focus on selective hiring practices, the socialization and training process of newly hired employees, and tracking who leaves and where they go to better understand the type of employees leaving and for what reasons. By gleaning advice from Hom et al., (2017) research on how athletic directors take a proactive approach in addressing

contextual factors in the work environment, may impact burnout and turnover among employees who work in academic support roles and should be examined more closely.

Future Directions

The Areas of Worklife model is a multifaceted framework analyzing job burnout. Maslach et al. (2001) have discussed how job burnout is a social phenomenon that impacts individuals embedded within larger work environments. For example, Swider and Zimmerman (2010) found relationships between certain personality traits and job burnout. Specifically, related to sport, Schaffran et al. (2016) found collegiate coaches have tendencies of perfectionism-related personalities which increased their the chances of experiencing job burnout. Further, personal and contextual investigation is needed in order to explore how personality and individual characteristics impact job burnout among specific populations within athletic departments and the broader sport industry. In addition to personality, the current study found age to significantly predict lower levels of emotional exhaustion. As individuals age, reported levels of emotional exhaustion decreased. This finding is similar to Leiter and Maslach (2003) who reported that older individuals are more likely to experience greater congruence in his or her work roles and Taylor, Lee, Huml, and Lopez (2022) who found individuals in senior leadership positions compared to entry-level positions were less likely to turnover and change jobs. Could it be that older academic support professionals who have stayed longer have learned how to cope with the specific job demands and therefore make their jobs better? Additionally, research is needed exploring the interaction between age and job burnout among professionals in sport specific roles.

In conclusion, almost every NCAA Division I athletic program places student-athlete academic success and excellence at the forefront of their athletic mission statements. Since most athletic departments follow a top-down leadership structure, athletic directors have the ability to make an impact that permeates the different sub-units within an athletic department throughout the different Areas of Worklife examined in this study. Athletic directors should ask themselves, what does it “look-like” for my athletic department to live-out the mission that supports the academic excellence of student-athletes and best support all units, in all of these areas to achieve this mission?

Limitations

The current study utilized a self-administered survey-based instrument. While the researcher took careful consideration into the survey design for participant comprehension, lack of comprehension or failure to answer truthfully was a possibility. Purely quantitative data was also, a limitation of the current study. Qualitative data would possibly have been able to contribute to the depth of data on the behavioral construct for the worklife factors, outcome of job burnout, and intentions to leave the profession. Error due to non-respondents was also a limitation of the current study, as those who completed the web-based survey could differ from those who did not take the survey. Lastly, measurement error and social desirability were potential limitations of the current study given respondents were asked to answer questions on job burnout which could have been considered a sensitive topic for some respondents.

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Appendix

Survey Items*

Turnover Intentions¹

In the next few months, I intend to leave this institution.

I occasionally think about leaving this institution.

In the next few years, I intend to leave this institution.

I'd like to work at this institution until I reach retirement age.

¹ Measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree

Job Content Plateau²

I expect to be constantly challenged in my job in the future.

I will learn and grow a lot in my job.

My job will continually require me to extend my abilities and knowledge.

My job tasks and activities will become routine for me in the future.

I will be challenged in my job.

My job responsibilities will increase significantly in the future.

Hierarchical Career Plateau²

I expect to be promoted frequently in the future in my organization.

My opportunities for upward movement are limited at my present organization.

I have reached a point where I do not expect to move much higher in my organization.

The likelihood that I will get ahead in my organization is limited.

I am unlikely to obtain a much higher job title in my organization.

I expect to advance to a higher level in the near future in my organization.

² Measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree

* MBI-HSS and the Areas of Worklife survey are copyrighted instruments and the items cannot be included.