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Original Research

Retention and Attrition Factors for Female Certified Athletic Trainers in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Bowl Subdivision Setting

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Abstract

Context: Organizational effectiveness and the continuity of patient care can be affected by certain levels of attrition. However, little is known about the retention and attrition of female certified athletic trainers (ATs) in certain settings.

Objective: To gain insight and understanding into the factors and circumstances affecting female ATs' decisions to persist in or leave the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (NCAA D-I FBS) setting.

Design: Qualitative study.

Setting: The 12 NCAA D-I FBS institutions within the Southeastern Conference.

Patients or Other Participants: A total of 23 women who were current full-time ATs (n = 12) or former full-time ATs (n = 11) at Southeastern Conference institutions participated.

Data Collection and Analysis: Data were collected via in-depth, semistructured interviews, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed via a grounded theory approach. Peer review and member checking methods were performed to establish trustworthiness.

Results: The decision to persist involved 4 main factors: (1) increased autonomy, (2) increased social support, (3) enjoyment of job/fitting the NCAA D-I mold, and (4) kinship responsibility. Two subfactors of persistence, the NCAA D-I atmosphere and positive athlete dynamics, emerged under the main factor of enjoyment of job/fitting the NCAA D-I mold. The decision to leave included 3 main factors: (1) life balance issues, (2) role conflict and role overload, and (3) kinship responsibility. Two subfactors of leaving, supervisory/coach conflict and decreased autonomy,

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emerged under the main factor of role conflict and role overload.

Conclusions: A female AT's decision to persist in or leave the NCAA D-I FBS setting can involve several factors. In order to retain capable ATs long term in the NCAA D-I setting, an individual's attributes and obligations, the setting's cultural issues, and an organization's social support paradigm should be considered.

Keywords: [job satisfaction](#), [turnover](#), [qualitative research](#)

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