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Original Research

Attractors to an Athletic Training Career in the High School Setting

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Abstract

Context: Employment opportunities for athletic trainers (ATs) in the high school setting have increased greatly in the past few years and will most likely continue to increase. Understanding what attracts individuals to become ATs and work in the high school setting is a complex process.

Objective: (1) To examine attractors to the athletic training profession and the high school setting, (2) to determine what, if any, differences exist between attractors to the profession and those to the high school setting, and (3) to identify whether differences in attractors can be attributed to sex, time of decision, or job status.

Design: For this descriptive study, we designed the survey using the existing socialization literature. A pilot study was conducted and distributed by e-mail.

Setting: Survey e-mailed to participants.

Patients or Other Participants: High school ATs (n = 124) in South Carolina.

Main Outcome Measure(s): Overall mean scores for attractors to athletic training and to the high school setting were calculated. Overall mean scores were compared with individual attractor mean scores to determine the most influential attractors. Effect sizes were used to determine differences in sex, time of decision, and job status.

Results: Of the total population of South Carolina high school ATs, 92 (74%) returned surveys. High school ATs in South Carolina had similar demographics with regard to age, sex, and race. Attractors to athletic training and to the high school setting were similar and included statements consistent with the continuation, service, and interpersonal themes identified in the existing socialization literature. We noted differences, however, between early and late deciders and between full-time and part-time ATs.

Conclusions: The findings surrounding attractors to athletic training and the high school setting contribute to the existing socialization literature and help in our

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understanding of how and why individuals choose to become ATs and to work in the high school setting.

Keywords: [socialization](#), [occupational choice](#), [attractors](#), [secondary school athletic trainers](#)

Alison Gardiner-Shires, PhD, ATC, contributed to conception and design; acquisition and analysis and interpretation of the data; and drafting, critical revision, and final approval of the article. James Mensch, PhD, ATC, contributed to conception and design; analysis and interpretation of the data; and drafting, critical revision, and final approval of the article.

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