Work-Life Factors that Impact Job Burnout and Turnover Intention among Athletic Academic Support Professionals

Jennifer Gellock, Virginia Commonwealth University
Brendan Dwyer (Advisor), Virginia Commonwealth University

Management - Work-Life (College Sport) 20-minute oral presentation (including questions) Saturday, June 1, 2019 8:55 AM Room: Napoleon D3

Research on job burnout in sport management has been limited to coaches (Schaffran & Kellmann, 2016), athletic trainers (DeFreese & Mihalik, 2016), and athletes (Bichalo & Costa, 2018). However, new evidence supports other professionals who work in the sport industry also experience job burnout. Job burnout has been found to not only negatively impact employee well-being but overall organizational success.

In a recent study, Rubin (2017) surveyed 277 student-services professionals who work in college athletics and found 91% of respondents reported they have noticed colleagues in the profession experience job burnout, while an additional 60% of respondents have considered leaving the profession themselves. In a follow-up qualitative study, Rubin and Moreno-Pardo (2018) discovered the following themes that have led to health issues and job burnout among these professionals: time and work demands, feelings of being undercompensated, lack of professional growth, lack of supervisor support, and feelings of being undervalued.

Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to expand off previous literature to investigate specific factors in the work environment that impact job burnout among athletic academic support professionals. Additionally, this study will investigate which dimensions of job burnout impact academic support professionals’ intention to leave their current role. The current study applies Leiter and Maslach’s (2001) job burnout framework and its outcomes of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment. Person-Environment Fit framework and work-life factors of workload, values, fairness, rewards, and community will be applied as the theoretical lenses to holistically examine job burnout.

Data collection for the current study will begin and conclude in January 2019. The target population are academic support professionals who serve student-athletes. An online survey, hosted by Qualtrics, will be sent to the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals’ (N4A) listserv. The researcher is an active member of N4A and has received permission from the research committee chair to send out the survey via the listserv.

The online survey will consist of 58 items. The Maslach Burnout Toolkit for Human Services will be used to examine the variables of interest which consist of the Maslach Burnout Inventory - Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) and Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS), along with Turnover Intention (Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998). The study will also control for Hierarchical Job Plateau, Job Content Plateau (Millman, 1992), demographic, and participant job characteristics. The proposed data analyses are four unique hierarchical multiple regressions.

Findings from the current study will directly contribute to the organizational behavior and managerial research within sport management. Athletic administrators and employees will be able to use results from the current study to make systematic changes within the athletic department to improve factors in the work environment impacting job burnout among this population. By better understanding job burnout, athletic directors can help improve employee job satisfaction, work engagement, and productivity, while limiting chronic work stressors that lead to job burnout and turnover. Future research will be able to apply this study design to investigate job burnout among various sport industry jobs.