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**CAUSES OF BURNOUT AND JOB DISSATISFACTION AMONG MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS EMPLOYEES**

A dissertation submitted to
Marshall University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
in
Leadership Studies

by

Ricky L. Ray

Approved by

Dr. Bobbi Nicholson, Committee Chairperson

Dr. Ron Childress

Dr. Paula Parker

Marshall University
May 2023

Approval of Dissertation

We, the faculty supervising the work of Ricky L. Ray, affirm that the dissertation, *Causes of Burnout and Job Dissatisfaction Among Marketing and Communications Intercollegiate Athletic Employees*, meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the EdD Program in Leadership Studies and the College of Education and Professional Development. The work also conforms to the requirements and formatting guidelines of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.



Dr. Bobbi Nicholson, Department of Education Committee Chairperson

3/27/23

Date



Ronald Childress (Mar 27, 2023 17:52 EDT)

Dr. Ron Childress, Department of Education Committee Member

3/27/23

Date



Dr. Paula Parker, Department of Exercise Science Committee Member

3/27/23

Date

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to better understand the role burnout plays in turnover intention and job dissatisfaction among marketing and communications employees in intercollegiate athletics. A secondary aim was to identify to what extent were job requirements, compensation, and expectations of administrators and coaches driving burnout in these employees. Study participants came from those currently working in marketing and/or communications at various levels of intercollegiate competition. The study used the Oldenberg Burnout Inventory, as well as specific questions related to the profession to uncover major causes of burnout in this particular occupation. Findings from this study supported the majority of the literature reviewed for this research and uncovered several key findings. The research showed that: (a) higher burnout scores lead to turnover intention, (b) the number of hours of work required is the main reason to leave the industry, (c) younger workers are struggling with the demands of the profession, and (d) the expectations of coaches are more detrimental than those of administrators. The findings suggested several areas of future research, including: (a) time of the academic year in which burnout is highest, (b) individuals who have already left the profession, (c) statistical differences between males and females, (d) the relationship between age and burnout, and (e) the level of disengagement at the various levels of competition.

Chapter 1: Overview of Study

The changing face of intercollegiate athletics has placed increased demands on marketing and communications employees. Massive amounts of revenue required to operate have added new burdens on marketing departments and ticket sellers to fill seats in stadiums and arenas. Creative content and communications professionals are finding their workloads growing as they assist with fundraising efforts and fulfill advertising contracts and other requests. As higher education faces a continuing enrollment crisis (Whitford, 2021), content creators are not only faced with working games to produce engaging content and telling the stories of their student-athletes but also assisting with recruiting and promotion of the institution as a whole.

Budget issues and hiring freezes have slowed the process of replacing positions that are vacant. Sport seasons, however, continue to move forward. Those still employed, who are already working challenging hours must distribute the extra work among themselves for extended periods of time (Sutton, 2021). The resulting mental fatigue and burnout still exist when empty positions are finally refilled, forcing administrators to rebuild morale and trust among staff members.

With these new challenges, there is simply not enough time in the day for demands to be met by understaffed athletics departments. These employees continue to do as much work as possible, but current structures, low pay, and increased responsibilities are driving these dedicated workers out of the profession. Data are needed to assist administrators in finding ways to prevent burnout and make these positions more appealing.

Background

Research in the area has focused on three primary issues: the evolution of marketing and communications positions in athletics departments, employee burnout in general, and burnout in the sports industry in general. Each will be examined in what follows.

Intercollegiate Athletics Marketing and Communications Positions

Marketing and communications positions have evolved over the years. The position of the sports information director (SID) can be traced back to the 1950s. The role now often includes the terms “media relations” or “communications” and started as the individual(s) tasked with keeping statistics, working with the media, and producing publications (Bielak, 2004). With the advent of the world wide web and then social media, the job has changed tremendously, and to the detriment of those who entered the business years ago. Many of those SIDs who have enjoyed long careers in the business feel as if they serve in an underrated position that offers no opportunity for upward mobility into the athletic department (Swalls, 2004).

In 2015, Washington and Lee University sports information director Brian Laubscher performed an informal year-long study into the number of hours logged by his staff, and what tasks they spent the most time performing. During the academic year, his staff averaged working almost 55 hours a week, collectively logging work on 309 of the 364 days tracked. Seventeen percent of the workload was focused on multimedia and online tasks, or parts of the job that have only existed in the last two decades (Laubscher, 2016). Most certainly, that number has grown with the importance and time consumption of social media.

The marketing department, which also can include promotions or fan experience in the title, covers several facets within the overall athletics operation. These positions gained traction in the 1980s and further grew with National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators (NACMA) being founded in 1990. On game day, marketers are in charge of the game-day experience – writing scripts, selecting music, and entertainment pre-game, in-game and post-game. In the leadup to game day, however, marketing professionals wear many other hats. These employees are tasked with preparing plans to put people in seats – promotions that appeal to students, donors, families, and groups. They must allocate limited time and dollars to promoting sports equitably while concentrating on those sports that generate revenue (Greenwell et al., 2007). Two of the largest perceived challenges of the role are lack of financial resources and size of staff. College marketers are often unable to utilize research findings and best practices because of a lack of financial resources, over-worked employees, understaffed departments, and excessive staff turnover (Benedek et al., 2021).

Marketing professionals have seen their job descriptions change over the years as well. Ticket revenue continues to be one of the top-generating revenue sources in intercollegiate athletics, but historically, colleges have been slow to embrace a pro sports model in ticket sales. This is changing quickly, however, as athletics departments hire sellers instead of managers or outsource ticket sales much like multimedia rights (Popp, 2014). The additional focus on revenue takes time and capital away from non-revenue sports, and there are many outside forces that play a role in promotional decision-making as well, such as legal issues that require marketing decisions to be

made based on equality (e.g., Title IX), or donors and administrators exerting pressure that affects promotional expenditures (Greenwell et al., 2007).

Marketing professionals have the same demands on their time as their counterparts in communications. Time is allocated over the course of a normal workday, with additional nights and weekends for games. Even when there are no games or matches scheduled, however, time can be spent on efforts to promote the department in the community (Greenwell et al., 2007).

Additionally, social media have prompted many changes in external operations by creating staffing positions devoted to social media management, many times replacing a traditional sports information or marketing position. Athletics departments now not only rely on social media as a marketing and branding tool, but social media are used for recruiting, distributing game information, providing promotional information, as well serving as the main storytelling mechanism. The addition of social media to the day-to-day workflow has allowed departments to become their own news source but has also further exposed staffing issues and work-life balance problems (Blaszka et al., 2018).

Burnout Defined

The concept of burnout was introduced in the 1970s to describe the emotional depletion and loss of motivation observed among those working for aid organizations (Demerouti et al., 2021; Schaufeli et al., 2009). It is defined as overwhelming exhaustion, interpersonal detachment or cynicism, and a sense of reduced professional efficacy and measured by assessing symptoms of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Hewitt et al., 2020). A relatable definition to intercollegiate athletics

employees is that burnout is the state of fatigue and frustration arising from unrealistic and excessive demands on personal resources which leads to physical and mental exhaustion (Brewer & Clippard, 2002). Thousands of books, articles and dissertations have been written on the subject (Schaufeli et al., 2009), and in 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) classified burnout as an occupational phenomenon caused by stress in the workplace and defined burnout as a distinct syndrome, rather than a form of exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2021).

A byproduct of burnout is a lessened commitment to one's current employer. Absenteeism, job turnover, low productivity, and overall ineffectiveness are also outcomes of workplace burnout arising from stress. Heavy workloads, limited resources, and unrealistic expectations contribute to stressful working conditions that eventually lead to burnout (Abate et al., 2018; Ahola et al., 2017; Brewer & Clippard, 2002; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Maslach et al., 2001; Schneider & Hite, 2017). There is continuous pressure on employees to handle more job demands with fewer resources, forcing organizations to consider which policies help to protect employee well-being and prevent burnout, while ensuring work engagement and productivity (Demerouti et al., 2021; Maslach et al., 2001; Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014). Exacerbating this is that work is not only a way to make a living for many, but also an element of social status, causing many employees to personalize every success or failure. This contributes to work-related stress and burnout, which then adversely affects daily life (Iacovides et al., 2003).

Role strain and role conflict are added stressors that can contribute to burnout. Role strain is defined as an individual's inability to complete the requirements of the job,

and this often occurs as a result of poorly defined measures of performance. Role conflict arises when an employee's job description does not align with the actual tasks required of the position. An employee may be expected to perform multiple roles for various reasons, making it challenging to complete all job duties (Al-Kahtani & Allam, 2016; Oglesby et al., 2020).

Studies have found that burnout leads to increased depression, anxiety disorders, tension complaints, overexertion and chemical dependence while also contributing to poor physical health (Ahola et al., 2017; Armon et al., 2014; Bakker & de Vries, 2020; Wolvetang et al., 2022). Physical health complaints have been as mild as sleep disturbances, headaches, cold and flu symptoms, and gastrointestinal issues (Armon et al., 2014; Bakker & de Vries, 2020). There is also, however, a pattern of elevation of health issues that features symptoms such as coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, chronic joint pain, weight loss, diabetes, infections, and even premature death (Ahola et al., 2017; Armon et al., 2014; Morris, 2021).

There is also a lack of consensus on the subject of burnout development and prevention. There is no consensus on whether burnout development is long-term or short-term, but one theory is that employees can show fluctuations in burnout symptoms (Demerouti et al., 2021). While evidence exists that a lack of resources to meet job demands is a primary cause of burnout, there is little agreement on the actions employees can take to prevent this feeling when faced with that situation (Otto et al., 2019), and researchers point out that the blame for burnout ultimately rests on the organization, and not its employees (Garton, 2017; Moss, 2021).

If the human cost is not enough to encourage organizations to make changes, the financial burden could be. Burnout has been estimated to cost the global economy \$332 billion a year in lost revenue because of absenteeism, premature retirement, and constant availability expectations (Parker & Tavella, 2021). Organizations, however, have been slow to provide changes. Between 2019 and 2020, the number of meetings at work increased by almost 13%, and in 2020 workers increased the amount of time spent working by three hours a week (Morris, 2021), leading to an almost three-year decrease in average tenure at work (Fellay, 2021).

Research into turnover and turnover intention predates the study of burnout. One of the earliest theories dates back to 1958, when March and Simon concluded that when workers perceive their value to an organization exceeds the value they receive in return, turnover intention begins. Intention is influenced by two factors: the desire to move, which reflects dissatisfaction with the work environment, and the ease of movement, which is determined by employability. Turnover intention progresses in stages that workers go through when deciding to quit their job. Burnout and turnover intention have been found to be related, especially when workers are experiencing a high level of role stress and low levels of autonomy and social support (Kim, 2018). Turnover intention directly leads to actual turnover and can be costly, both in financial profits and many other ways. For example, the direct relationship of burnout to turnover in K-12 teachers is a teacher shortage, which leads to a negative outcome on student learning (Califf & Brooks, 2020).

More recently, research has looked at generational differences in burnout and turnover intention in other industries such as banking, health care, hospitality, social

work, teaching and law enforcement, among others (Abate et al., 2018; Akar, 2018; Brewer & Clippard, 2002; Califf & Brooks, 2020; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Oglesby et al., 2020). Members of Generation X, those born between 1965-1980, have lived both with and without digital tools and these workers believe in continued professional growth. This generation now maintains more than 50% of leadership positions in the workforce (Reshwan, 2019). Generation X members have paid their dues professionally to obtain these positions but appear to be the last generation willing to do so (Ng et al., 2010).

Millennials, born between 1981-1996, are currently the largest generation in the workforce and will make up 75% of all employees by 2025. The challenge with this population is retention, as studies have shown that millennials do not prioritize the role of work in their lives as much as previous generations, instead placing more value on leisure and work–life balance (Buzza, 2017; Morrell & Abston, 2018). This generation is already showing a higher percentage of burnout, due to having less autonomy in their positions, lower seniority, financial stress, and feelings of loneliness (Morris, 2021). As Anne Petersen explained in her 2022 book, *Can't Even: How Millennials Became the Burnout Generation*, this generation is trying to make the next steps in their career, pay student loans while saving for their children, and balance skyrocketing prices for housing, childcare, and healthcare. The “promised security of adulthood never seems to arrive, no matter how hard we try” (Petersen, 2022, p. xxi).

Generation Z is the youngest group in the workforce and has been most mentioned with post-COVID movements such as “quiet quitting”, or doing the bare minimum at work. Over 50% of 18–24-year-olds are planning on changing jobs in the

next year and already drawing attention to burnout caused by repetitive tasks and the feeling of being on call at all hours of the day (Wingard, 2021).

Burnout and Job Dissatisfaction in the Sports Industry

The sports industry has failed to evolve and remain competitive in terms of salaries and expectations (Sutton, 2021). While academic sport management programs continue to grow and students say the prospective salary does not weigh in their decision (Barnhill et al., 2018), these attitudes can change after students are exposed to the realities of the field. Athletics departments are already limited in the numbers of staff devoted to marketing and communication efforts, forcing many to rely on student workers (Pate & Bosley, 2020). Most undergraduates considering a career in sports are required to complete an internship, where they are subjected to the requirements of entry-level jobs before graduation, and many are choosing other fields (Mathner & Martin, 2012). Sport management graduates are shifting to other opportunities that provide better compensation and are less structured; careers that do not require attendance at games or events on top of a normal work week (Sutton, 2021).

There is stress in all facets of intercollegiate athletics, and marketing and communications employees are not immune. The constant turnover at entry-level positions slows down the growth of departments, affects budgets, and causes more pressure on middle and upper management. In the past decade, research has begun to investigate burnout and turnover intention among employees in intercollegiate athletics. Industry veterans bemoan the fact that entry-level employees are often out of the business as quickly as they started, usually for more money, fewer hours, and more control of weekend schedules. Near the end of 2021, an athletics marketing staff

member described success in intercollegiate athletics as “survival” (Benedek et al., 2021, p. 591). Another survey respondent noted “the business is completely and totally out of control” (Athletic Director U, 2022b, para. 7).

There has been some research conducted into how to prevent burnout and job dissatisfaction among athletics staff and coaches, offering several solutions that could apply to most professions, such as proper work-life balance and protecting personal time off. Morrell and Abston (2018) suggest three improvements for organizations to help recruit and retain millennial employees: improving opportunities for leisure and time off, rewarding employees in ways other than financially, and providing frequent feedback. These ideas, however, can be difficult to implement due to the nature of the intercollegiate athletics business and the reality that athletics administrators show a similar or higher percentage of burnout as lower-level employees. As one respondent to the Athletic Director U survey noted in his comments, “I try to stay optimistic for my team, but it is too hard to hide the burnout anymore” (Athletic Director U, 2022a). Another staff member noted the demands of coaches have “become almost unmanageable. I heard this saying, and it’s applicable to the world of athletics, today’s favor becomes tomorrow’s expectation” (Athletic Director U, 2022b, para. 10).

Problem Statement

Intercollegiate athletics constitutes a demanding atmosphere in which student-athletes, coaches, and support staff operate under high levels of pressure and stress. As Ott and Beaumont (2020) noted, “No scholarly consideration has been given to the thousands of employees holding mid-level jobs in intercollegiate athletics departments,

although they play a critical role in maintaining and managing the massive college sports enterprise” (p.88).

The athletics enterprise plays a vital role in institutional advancement and maintaining and increasing enrollments and must be staffed properly to not only engage and provide for current student-athletes, but to generate revenue and recruit student-athletes, donors, and fans (Huml et al., 2020; Kelderman, 2020; Oglesby et al., 2020; Ott & Beaumont, 2020; Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018). Due to this essential role to athletics and the institution as a whole, it is important to learn whether there are ways to mitigate burnout in marketing and communications intercollegiate athletics employees.

Purpose of the Study

The importance of intercollegiate athletics to institutions was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The cancellation of the NCAA men’s basketball tournament alone led to a loss in revenue for each school involved, ultimately causing some sport programs to be cut, students to be displaced, and athletics employees to be furloughed or laid off (Chun et al., 2022). As noted above, high-functioning athletics programs are vital to institutional advancement, as well as to the overall experience for student-athletes. The purpose of this study is to examine an under-researched employee group in that enterprise: the marketing and communications employees who interact not only with coaches, staff, and student-athletes, but with fans, donors, and members of the media as well. Findings from this research can contribute to the overall study of burnout in intercollegiate athletics employees and provide guidance to administrators in the field as they develop job descriptions and work with these employees on a daily basis.

Research Questions

Based on the existing research in the field, briefly examined above, this study examined the specific reasons that lead marketing and communications employees in intercollegiate athletics' operations to suffer burnout and the effects of these stimuli on their career choices.

Research Question 1: To what extent are job requirements a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 2: To what extent is compensation a factor in marketing and communications employee turnover intention in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 3: To what extent are the expectations of administrators a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 4: To what extent are the expectations of coaches a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 5: To what extent does job burnout predict an employee's planned longevity with his or her current institution?

Population

The population for the study included all members of the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators (NACMA) and College Sports Communicators (CSC). The sample was derived from the 317 individuals that responded. The sample was not limited by location, institution, or any other measure. This sample was targeted to identify the causes of burnout early and to provide more information on corrective measures that can be employed to retain quality workers in the field.

Method

This was a non-experimental, descriptive study the primary instrument for which was the Oldenberg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), a public domain, validated test instrument with two sub-scales. The inventory measured disengagement and exhaustion and used both positively worded and negatively worded questions (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005). The OLBI has been used previously to identify burnout in intercollegiate coaches and other support staff professionals (Adams, 2009; Lundkvist et al., 2014).

Questions specific to issues facing marketing and communications employees were asked and demographic information was collected. Information obtained included hours worked per week, the quality of relationships with coaches and administrators, compensation, appropriate staffing, factors affecting work-life balance and the desire to continue working in intercollegiate athletics. Demographic information included age, sex, years in the profession, and classification of institution.

These specific questions were asked as representative of Brewer and Clippard's (2002) definition of burnout: an attempt to identify whether there are unrealistic demands, or simply not enough staff and resources for excessive demands.

Limitations

All research is bound by limitations beyond the control of the researcher. The following were identified as limitations within this study.

First, a non-experimental study provides no allowance for the random assignment of participants to groups. The perceptions reported by survey respondents may be considered subjective in nature and these responses limit the accuracy of the collected data (Kerlinger, 1986). Both may affect the generalizability of the results.

Second, the employees who chose to respond to the survey may have done so because they may have a bias, either positive or negative, toward the subject. Additionally, the research may not apply across all age and experience levels of marketing and communications employees.

The timing of the survey could have been a potential limitation as well. Intercollegiate athletics employees' level of burnout can be affected by the calendar. For example, intercollegiate sports have two major crossover segments. The first is in November, when fall sports and winter sports intersect. The other begins in late February and lasts into March, as the vast number of spring sports begin during the end of basketball schedules. If the survey had been deployed in June or July when no intercollegiate contests are taking place, response rates could have improved.

The responses provided by current intercollegiate athletics employees can be generalized only to a similar population and not to all intercollegiate employees, coaches, or administrators. Additionally, the researcher's professional experience may provide an additional source of bias.

Significance

This study attempts to add to the research into burnout and turnover among employees in intercollegiate athletics. Specifically, this examination looks at marketing and communications employees, a segment of the intercollegiate workforce has not been studied in depth.

The amount of time committed to this kind of work and the fast pace required are similar among all who work in the field. Each department, however, also has varying stressors. This study identified those stressors that inhere in the jobs particular to

marketing and communications employees to establish why turnover among these employees takes place and uncover strategies that could be useful in their retention.

Additionally, it is becoming harder to recruit individuals to enter the field. The additional time added to the search process forces other employees to work harder and requires more effort, which contributes to quicker burnout and dissatisfaction. This study has provided ways to make these positions more appealing for entry-level workers in hopes that they will choose to pursue a long career in the field.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Intercollegiate athletics is not a highly researched topic as it relates to positions in administration. Some research has focused on senior leaders and coaches, but minimal study has been undertaken on the thousands of employees that make up the entry and middle levels of athletic departments (Ott & Beaumont, 2020). These are the individuals who carry out tasks such as keeping student-athletes healthy and eligible, promoting their achievements, maintaining athletic facilities, managing relationships with donors, and generating revenue. They also represent the greatest area that requires research (Benedek et al., 2021; Bielak, 2004; Graham & Smith, 2022; Ott & Beaumont, 2020; Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018).

Most positions in higher education as a whole require overtime, and success in the intercollegiate athletics industry has long been measured by work in excess of 40 hours per week, including responsibilities that include games and competitions in the evening and on weekends, along with significant travel demands (Athletic Director U, 2022a; Ott & Beaumont, 2020). The industry has established a difficult work environment, with administrators expecting employees to prioritize their work over other life commitments (Huml et al., 2022), and employees do not have complete control over their schedules. Any number of things, from as serious an issue as a student-athlete getting in trouble, to as mundane as a coach adding an evening practice, can take away personal time from employees. There has also been a decrease in “off-season,” as many student-athletes are now on campus year-round (Brown, 2022). Individuals who have left the business have said that over-committing to requests and working under destructive leadership leads to workaholism, which is a leading cause of burnout (Huml

et al., 2020). Moss (2020) reported that the responsibility for developing preventative and coping measures for burnout is often placed on the individual, and thus the industry itself remains unchanged.

In a 2020 article in *The American Journal of Health Promotion*, Jennifer Moss provided a metaphor shared by Dr. Christina Maslach, an expert on burnout. Maslach described burnout as the canary in a coal mine. “On their way into the coal mine, these birds are healthy and thriving. When they come out, sick and dirty and diseased, they are telling us something — that we are in danger if we go back in” (Moss, 2020, p. 566). This shows that more research into the causes and prevention of burnout and the resulting turnover intention should become an organizational priority.

This chapter begins with a review of the literature related to the definition and history of burnout, as well as the health issues resulting from burnout. This section also includes a review of job dissatisfaction and turnover intention and the effects of COVID-19. The following section reviews the effects of burnout on various intercollegiate athletics employees, including coaches, student-athlete service professionals, and marketing and communications workers.

Burnout

Herbert Freudenberger is credited with conceptualizing burnout in the 1970s when he noticed his coworkers were increasingly exhausted and lacked the motivation to be successful at work. His initial description of burnout was “becoming exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength or resources” (1974, p. 159). The term “burnout” was based on the metaphor of a candle flame being extinguished after time and the original term was borrowed from the illegal drug scene (Moss, 2020).

Maslach and Leiter (2016) defined burnout as a “psychological syndrome emerging as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job” (p. 103). This leads to three main symptoms: overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. The first, exhaustion, is defined as energy draining that affects an individual as mental, emotional, or physical depletion and/or overextension all of which is triggered by prolonged work stress (Maslach et al., 2001; Parker & Tavella, 2021). Cynicism, the second symptom, is a negative attitude that can be described as a gradual loss of concern about work which leads to detachment and is the major aspect in predicting turnover (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014). The third, lack of personal accomplishment or inefficacy, is characterized by feelings of ineptitude, lack of achievement, and low levels of productivity. This reduced sense of personal accomplishment impedes effectiveness and motivation (Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Parker & Tavella, 2021). The presence of these three symptoms is important, as individuals suffering from only exhaustion are not generally diagnosed as feeling burnout. Cynicism and inefficacy justify studying burnout separately and open the possibility of relationships playing a larger role in the diagnosis (Day & Leiter, 2014).

Much of the early research into burnout was taken from social and clinical psychology. The social perspective utilized concepts involving interpersonal relationships, including concepts of motivation and emotion, while the clinical perspective framed burnout more in terms of a psychological disorder. More recent studies have examined work attitudes and behaviors, which allowed burnout to be conceptualized as a form of job stress (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Burnout study began

and ultimately focused on the service industry and helping professions but has shifted to include all vocations as the focus on the quality of relationships and those effects have increased (Day & Leiter, 2014; Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014).

There have been many attempts to identify the causes of burnout, leading to similar results across different fields. Most academic research has been based on six causes determined by Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1997):

- workload;
- perceived lack of control;
- lack of reward;
- poor relationships;
- lack of fairness; and
- values mismatch.

More than 20 years later, these causes are still the basis of most studies. A Wigert and Agrawal (2018) survey for *Gallup* found that five factors were to blame for burnout:

- unfair treatment at work;
- unmanageable workload;
- lack of role clarity;
- lack of communication and support from managers; and
- unreasonable time pressure.

Both sets of factors described workload and lack of fairness as a cause of burnout. The perception of unfair treatment at work remains the number one contributor to burnout and should be a priority for managers and administrators (Moss, 2020). This

includes behaviors such as favoritism, mistreatment, and unfair compensation or policies, which lead to employees who do not trust coworkers or management, and “breaks the psychological bond that makes work meaningful” (Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). There are several policies that managers can engage in to combat unfair treatment, including having a complaint mechanism in place, responding to grievances promptly while investigating each matter seriously, and providing a healthy work environment during an investigation (Moss, 2020).

When employees sense that their workload is unmanageable, they look to coworkers and managers to help correct the problem, as supervisor and colleague support and understanding have been found to reduce burnout (Day & Leiter, 2014; Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). Sixty percent of workers believe work-related pressure has increased, pointing to excessive workloads and tight deadlines as their biggest concerns. One of the biggest factors in workload management is the added use of portable technology, such as laptops and smartphones. Maintaining boundaries between work and personal life now requires deliberate action from employees (Leiter et al., 2014). Individuals are expected to check work messages during the weekend and after work hours, simply because they can (Moss, 2020).

There is no consensus on whether burnout development is long-term or short-term, but one theory is that employees can show fluctuations in burnout symptoms (Demerouti et al., 2021). Leiter and Maslach (1988) offered that burnout progresses over time, often draining an individual’s physical and emotional resources without their awareness or recognition that anything is wrong. The goal of eliminating, or curing burnout fails to specify what the actual outcome will be (Leiter et al., 2014). Studies

have concluded that long-term burnout, however, can result from continuous exposure to demanding work conditions, with some individuals showing signs of burnout for a decade or more (Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014).

Burnout can be assessed and measured in various ways (Bakker & de Vries, 2020; Demerouti et al., 2021; Hewitt et al., 2020). The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was published in 1981 to assess the three dimensions mentioned earlier of the burnout experience and has been the most widely used for research in this field (Maslach & Leiter, 2016, Moss, 2020; Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014). Other assessments are available, including the Bergen Burnout Inventory (BBI), which also monitors three dimensions of burnout and was originally validated in Norway in 1992, and the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) which researches the two dimensions of exhaustion and disengagement from work and was validated in 1995 (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The OLBI is the most prominent alternative to MBI and presents questions on exhaustion and disengagement both positively and negatively (Xu et al., 2021).

Prevention methods have been explained in the three categories of primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary intervention reduces risk factors among all employees to prevent burnout from developing. Secondary interventions aim at high-risk employees, in order to prevent burnout from starting, and tertiary interventions are advised for employees already suffering from burnout (Ahola et al., 2017). Many of these interventions have been adapted from other research done on coping with stress. The most common recommendations have included changing work patterns, developing coping skills, obtaining social support, utilizing relaxation strategies, promoting good

health and fitness, and developing a better self-understanding (Demerouti, 2014; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Of the many coping mechanisms available for an individual, the most relevant is to recover from work each day. This includes detaching mentally from the job, engaging in social activities, relaxation, and humor (Demerouti, 2014; Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014). Detaching after work includes a mental reset that eliminates fatigue, thus not allowing it to affect the next day's work and beginning the exhaustion cycle, leading to longer bouts of exhaustion and chronic burnout (Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014). At work, individuals can also engage in job crafting, which is making allowable changes to their role on their own to curb burnout symptoms by seeking new resources or challenges and removing hindrances (Demerouti, 2014).

In organizations where burnout is an issue, interventions created to prevent burnout are designed and implemented across entire departments. Decisions are generally made about how to manage burnout with the needs of the organization in mind, not the individual (Maslach et al., 2011). Many organizations, when sensing there is a problem, will create an organization-wide response to attempt a solution as quickly as possible. Research recommends starting with a smaller test, focused on one department or group, allowing for quicker feedback (Moss, 2020). Day and Leiter (2014) reported one of the quickest areas for organizations to address is the lack of civility in work relationships; correcting this issue has mediated the relationship between exhaustion and increased social motivation.

Health Issues Resulting from Burnout

Health problems related to burnout can be mental, physical, or both, and are often dependent on the vulnerabilities of the individual (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014). The

physical health issues stemming from burnout did receive greater attention after the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2019 designation of burnout as an "occupational phenomenon", but the WHO then issued a clarification separating it from "medical condition," causing confusion (Moss, 2019). While the mild symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, gastrointestinal disorders, muscle tension, and sleep disturbances have always been assumed to be part of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016), excessive stress in the workplace is now being blamed for over 120,000 deaths each year (Moss, 2019; Moss, 2020). A study in Israel that followed workers over eight years and determined a relationship between burnout and increased heart disease, while another Israeli study also noted an increased risk of diabetes in subjects with burnout. Musculoskeletal issues have been discovered as another symptom, directly correlated to an individual's inability to unwind after work and the muscular tension created by job demands (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014).

The conversation continues about the order in which this relationship takes place. Suffering burnout may predispose workers to other health issues, as the effect of stress on the immune system makes individuals more vulnerable to illness. Those suffering from burnout and exhaustion, however, may be more likely to engage in adverse health behaviors, such as low physical activity, which could be the actual reason for the increased risk of disease (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014).

Symptoms of burnout may overlap with symptoms of depression and mental health issues, such as feelings of worthlessness, cynicism, and possessing negative internal views (Ahola & Hakanen, 2014). Research exploring the connection between burnout and depression has revealed a reciprocal relationship, with individuals who

displayed symptoms of burnout also showing depressive symptoms (Young, 2021). This suggests that depression could be both a contributing factor and a result of burnout (Ahola et al., 2017; Young, 2021). Some research has claimed that burnout and depression are indistinguishable at the highest level (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Schonfeld & Bianchi, 2015), however, other research shows that burnout is related to the job, while depression is more general (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The WHO agreed with this approach, saying that burnout refers to “phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life” (Moss, 2020, p. 471). While results show that burnout mediated the path from job strain to depressive symptoms, this is not the same when depression is diagnosed first. The similarities in symptoms have led researchers to investigate the relationship more closely and attempt to determine how burnout at work can indirectly lead to reciprocity in an individual’s personal life (Ahola et al., 2017; Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014).

With this in mind, most interventions that have been suggested have included only the workplace and excluded factors that could contribute to burnout that may be present at home (Otto et al., 2019). Current guidance is for individuals to use self-care as a tool to manage their way out of burnout, practicing meditation, better sleep habits, healthy eating, and an active lifestyle. Most of these methods are prescribed for coping, as opposed to prevention (Moss, 2020). One intervention that crosses over from the office is an improved quality of work-life balance, which allows employees to create organizational identities, increase their work performance, and enjoy higher levels of job satisfaction. Employees with a low quality of work-life balance are more likely to experience professional burnout (Akar, 2018), and providing employees with more

flexibility over their time and work-life policies can help support commitment to the job (Schneider & Hite, 2017). Similar to other mental health issues, there is variance in the length of time individuals are affected and experiences may vary within the same individual from day to day, making intervention difficult (Xanthopoulou & Meier, 2014).

Health issues, both physical and mental, have become expensive for organizations financially and led to a decrease in productivity (Ahola et al., 2017). The job performance issues, such as dissatisfaction, low organizational commitment, absenteeism, and turnover (Maslach & Leiter, 2016), that result from burnout are extremely important to study, as the average worker in the United States spends 50 percent of her/his waking hours at work (Moss, 2021). A Gallup study found that about two-thirds of full-time workers experience burnout on the job. Additionally, employees suffering from burnout are 63% more likely to take a sick day, resulting in 550 million sick days taken (Moss, 2019) and are almost three times more likely to be searching for a new job (Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). In 2019, 42% of all sick days recorded by employees in the Netherlands were attributed to mental illness (Wolvetang et al., 2022).

Lost productivity due to burnout registers in the billions, and in some cases, trillions of dollars per year in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States (Moss, 2019; Russell et al., 2020; Wolvetang et al., 2022). Workplace stress causes healthcare spending of \$190 billion per year (Goh et al., 2016; Moss, 2021). Some countries have declined to give burnout the designation of a clinical diagnosis, due to concerns about the cost of disability coverage. This causes treatment and disability coverage to be inaccessible, and inaccurate diagnoses reduce the possibility for successful recovery (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The workplace atmosphere is a contributor to high healthcare

spending and poor health. As health care costs climb and health insurance premiums increase, employers have lessened coverage or increased the cost to the employee, which then increases stress (Goh et al., 2016). While burnout results in absenteeism and increased turnover for individual workers, burnout can also spread throughout organizations through employees' interactions at work (Maslach et al., 2001).

Employee commitment and retention should be an organizational priority for many reasons, as the retention of employees can offset the costs of replacement (Schneider & Hite, 2017). An example of the tremendous cost to employers can be found in the medical field. The cost to replace a physician can range from \$500,000 to more than \$1 million per doctor, which includes recruitment, sign-on bonuses, lost appointments, and onboarding costs for replacement physicians. This does not include indirect costs such as medical errors, higher malpractice risk, and reduced patient satisfaction among others (Berg, 2018; Dyer, 2019). For the health care industry, the cost of physician burnout is estimated at \$4.6 billion a year, or \$7600 per physician in the United States per year (Dyer, 2019). In other organizations, the average cost of replacing an employee can cost two times an individual's annual salary, which can drive total costs into millions of dollars (Fellay, 2021). All of this research shows that organizations must try to address burnout with better data, timely and relevant research, and budgeting for wellness offerings to be included as part of an overall well-being strategy (Moss, 2019).

Job Dissatisfaction and Turnover Intention

Employee turnover has been studied for over a century, representing recognition of how turnover materially affects organizations. Turnover disrupts optimal

organizational performance, costs money, and can alter competitive advantages (Hom et al., 2017). Turnover intention is defined as an individual's willingness to pursue other opportunities, the final step in the decision-making process before leaving a job (Gilani & Rabbani, 2020; Russell et al., 2020). While turnover results from the act of actually leaving a company, turnover intention is the final step before the resignation, including an individual's desire to leave an organization along with the search for alternatives (Gilani & Rabbani, 2020).

William Mobley (1977) created a turnover model that describes the turnover process as a sequence of events starting with dissatisfaction, followed by thoughts of quitting, evaluation of the cost of quitting, search intentions, evaluation of alternatives, comparison of the alternatives with the current job, and quit intention, which leads to actually separating from the role.

Burnout is one of the most important predictors of turnover intention and job satisfaction (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Job satisfaction is defined as the "pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values" (Locke, 1969, p. 316). The relationship between job satisfaction and burnout has been confirmed, as has burnout's direct impact on turnover intention (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). A 2011 study of physicians in China indicated that several dimensions of job satisfaction and burnout affect turnover intention (Zhang & Feng, 2011), and a 2020 study of 855 educators in the United States found that there is a direct link between job demands and burnout and between burnout and turnover intention, among other categories (Russell et al., 2020).

There is some disagreement in the research as to the role generational differences play in turnover intention (Moreno et al., 2022). Many believe that generational characteristics and thoughts on values, attitudes, and preferences constitute a factor in the relationships among burnout, job satisfaction, and turnover intention (Gursoy et al., 2013; Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Others suggest that disparate generations are more similar than different, and the differences are inconsistent (Moreno et al., 2022). Baby boomer employees, for instance, are said to appreciate the importance of job security and stability, and value good work ethics. Boomers are more driven by goals and rewards in the workplace and are more loyal to their organizations, believing that hard work will pay off. Because of this, there is a reluctance to move around, which may mitigate some of the symptoms of job dissatisfaction and turnover intention (Lu & Gursoy, 2016).

Generation X employees, on the other hand, are seen to be more independent and more likely to be skeptical, placing more importance on their careers over being loyal to a job. These employees have typically looked for other opportunities based on salary improvements, more flexibility, or increased opportunities for advancement. Corporate culture, empathy from management, and team engagement are viewed as important parts of combating turnover intention now (Fellay, 2021). The millennial generation takes these traits one step further, placing the greatest importance on individual aspects of a job such as these. They seek rapid advancement and development opportunities, while also concentrating on life outside of work (Moreno et al., 2022; Ng et al., 2010). Millennials have higher expectations about rapid promotions, pay raises, and feedback from their managers (Kellison et al., 2013; Lu & Gursoy,

2016). This expectation for instant rewards rather than earning them over time is the largest difference from previous generations (Ng et al., 2010).

A 2016 study found that millennials experience lower job satisfaction and higher turnover intention than boomers when they are displaying symptoms of burnout (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). In 2018, a study by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics noted that the average tenure of millennial employees was three times less than that of previous generations (Elian et al., 2020), and a 2021 study revealed that tenure at a job has shrunk from five years to around 1.8 years (Fellay, 2021). Moreno et al. (2022) studied Latin American millennial employees working in public relations who reported higher turnover intentions; but they also showed significantly lower job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational trust than older generations. With this sample, salary correlates with turnover intentions and satisfaction, but shows little effect on engagement and trust. Thus, the conclusion is that burnout leads to more job dissatisfaction and turnover intention for millennials because of their weaker commitment to their jobs compared with boomers (Lu & Gursoy, 2016). Using this information, organizations could develop incentives and human resources policies based on different generations (Gursoy et al., 2013). Providing a sense of job security for boomers is more critical while offering millennial employees plenty of opportunities for work variety is more appropriate since they value personal development (Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Moreno et al., 2022).

Effects of COVID-19 on Burnout and Turnover Intention

The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the way workers and workplaces approach business. Individuals were divided into new categories, such as essential employees, work-from-home employees, or furloughed (Kniffin et al., 2021).

Work from home, or remote work, has changed the way workers look at job opportunities. Many individuals find working from home challenging, as it becomes difficult to maintain mental boundaries, while others may struggle logistically without an actual place to work, managing household chores, or raising a family (Galanti et al., 2021; Kniffin et al., 2021). Social issues, such as loneliness and loss of connection, have negatively affected many remote workers (Kniffin et al., 2021). Galanti et al., (2021) showed that using technology to communicate does not replace face-to-face communication and that social isolation can have an effect on productivity.

Other evidence suggests, however, that those that have trained and prepared to work remotely voluntarily both enjoy the freedom it offers and are productive, and that the large numbers of employees forced to work remotely by the pandemic are affecting research results negatively (Wang et al., 2020). Employers are struggling with adjustments to out-of-office employees as well. There is a lack of control over employees that are out of sight, managers and coworkers are unable to have personal and creative conversations, and while videoconferencing is convenient, it provides privacy issues (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Kniffin et al., 2021). Despite these challenges, employees are asking for, and being increasingly provided with, the opportunity to work remotely. Almost 70% of organizations are offering the opportunity for individuals to work away from the office, citing the benefits financially and to the environment (Chatterjee et al., 2022).

Burnout in Intercollegiate Athletics

Research has been limited as it relates to burnout and job satisfaction in intercollegiate athletics marketing and communications employees. Just six years ago, only 48% of employees at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) institutions acknowledged that they felt emotionally drained by their job and only 63% admitted that working on their job tasks is a strain (Schneider & Hite, 2017). Intercollegiate athletics employees that participated in a 2019 study, however, described experiencing higher levels of emotional exhaustion, work-related stress, and reduced energy at work. These individuals felt an increase in guilt when leaving work, pressure to overcommit to job responsibilities, and constantly feeling behind while trying to complete their work (Taylor et al., 2019).

A 2021 study examined over 4,300 staff members in intercollegiate athletics, finding that at all levels (i.e., early-career, mid-career, and senior level), employees have felt overworked, underpaid, and undervalued. This is problematic for the industry as research suggests that the demanding climate of intercollegiate athletics leads to burnout, which is leading to retention issues for the profession (Weight et al., 2021). A 2022 study of over 4,100 college athletics employees found that many respondents are pushed to workaholism, which clearly leads to burnout. There has been further research, however, that shows that increased job flexibility can help create numerous benefits (Huml et al., 2022). Also in 2022, a meta-analysis of 89 articles on work-life balance in sports concluded that the leading sources of work-life conflict or reduced levels of work-life balance were organizational factors, such as work demands and climate, lack of autonomy, travel, low salaries, managerial incompetency, role strain,

work hours and inadequate staffing (Graham & Smith, 2022). An intercollegiate athletics employee summed up the overall thoughts on what the personal costs of the job are:

I enjoy what I do, and I am proud to say that I've succeeded in the industry, but it has certainly cost me on the personal side of my life. I signed up for this, and I knew what I was getting into, but loving something isn't the same as living something, and I am beginning to constantly question how long I can do this as a profession because of the work-life balance. The months on end without a single day off (including nights and weekends) are frustrating. I have no relationships, friendships, or children because I work twice the average person with no days off for months, so I don't have time to cultivate a personal life. I've missed too many weddings, funerals, baptisms, or birthdays of family and friends ... It's mind-numbing to think about. (Weight et al., 2021, p.371)

A growing recognition that burnout, exhaustion, and disengagement are indeed a problem in the industry can be gauged by the fact that industry publications are now studying the trend. In June 2022, websites Athlete Viewpoint and Athletic Director U published a two-part series based on questions posed to almost 1,400 NCAA Division I employees. Ninety-five percent of employees fell within the medium or high-risk category of overall burnout risk, while 85% were in the high-risk category of suffering from exhaustion and agreed with the statement that there "are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work" (Athletic Director U, 2022a). Three main themes emerged as key triggers of burnout: the COVID-19 pandemic, culture, and compensation. While the pandemic and compensation are self-explanatory, the culture theme related to complaints about work-life balance, sense of purpose, leadership, and the changing

landscape of intercollegiate athletics (Athletic Director U, 2022b). Staff members who are disengaged cannot think critically or be innovative, but getting athletic departments staffed properly is proving to be complicated (Brown, 2022).

Most employees, however, still admit that they love the work. Over 75% find “the work to be a positive challenge” and 54% say that college athletics is the “only type of work I can imagine doing” (Athletic Director U, 2022a). The benefits of working with student-athletes are a key component in many employees’ choice to stay. Student-athletes have higher graduation rates, advanced character development, and enhanced marketability upon graduation, providing employees a sense of pride in their role in this development. The cost to provide this support, however, can be substantial (Osborne et al., 2019). As the industry continues to evolve, there is fear that younger generations working in the industry will look past the positives and be difficult to retain because of time commitments and low compensation (Kellison et al., 2013).

Role strain is defined as an individual’s inability to complete the requirements of the job. Some research pointed to excessive workload and insufficient staffing as a predictor of role strain. These issues have been found in other helping professionals, such as educators and coaches (Alley, 2012; Graham et al., 2019; Oglesby et al., 2020). For example, intercollegiate athletics strength and conditioning coaches struggle with their positions becoming a landing spot for various tasks. While the main focus of the profession is to develop a training program to improve physical attributes and decrease the risk of injury, strength and conditioning coaches can be involved in budgeting, recruiting, team discipline, establishing nutritional programs, and serving as liaisons to various campus entities (Carter, 2019). Athletic trainers have also dealt with

role strain, especially those who have teaching responsibilities along with institutional care assignments, prevalent at the lower divisions of NCAA competition (Alley, 2012). These individuals have also expressed a desire for more professional socialization, defined as one's growth and development in a chosen field. This included concerns about their place in the department hierarchy, gender bias among supervisors, and once again the quality-of-life concerns due to workloads (Oglesby et al., 2020).

Each of the studies referenced above included various positions on athletics staff. Respondents included athletic administrators, coaches, athletic trainers, strength and conditioning coaches, event managers, ticket sales staff, marketing staff, academic support, financial managers, and administrative assistants. Each of the studies also included participants from all levels of NCAA competition – Divisions I, II, and III (Athletic Director U, 2022a; Huml et al., 2022; Schneider & Hite, 2017; Taylor et al., 2019; Weight et al., 2021). Two groups in intercollegiate sports have been studied more than any other as it relates to burnout and work-life balance: coaches and athletic trainers (Graham & Smith, 2022).

Burnout in the Coaching Profession

The coaching profession induces stressors that include long and irregular working hours, insecure employment based on team and athlete performance, the time demands of travel and training, and the pressures of working with student-athletes and their parents (Ackeret et al., 2022; Knight et al., 2015; Graham & Smith, 2022; Lee & Cho, 2021; Short et al., 2015; Won et al., 2021). Additionally, coaches have many of the same pressures as athletics staff members, such as budget responsibilities and relationships with donors that take time and commitment (Lundkvist et al., 2014).

Burnout in coaches can be identified in three areas: emotional and physical exhaustion, sports devaluation, and lack of personal accomplishment. While exhaustion and a reduced sense of accomplishment are traits that are consistent with other athletics staff members, sports devaluation occurs when coaches lose interest in their role and sport (Ackeret et al., 2022). Other stressors, such as dealing with criticism and unrealistic expectations, as well as lack of administrative support, are reasons cited for coaches' leaving the profession. While multiple factors influence turnover intention by coaches, the work environment is a consistent theme across all studies (Knight et al., 2015).

More so than in other positions, burnout in coaches can have a direct negative effect on student-athletes. Team members have experienced less teaching of skills, a diminished team structure, and a withdrawal of team interactions (Short et al., 2015). Coaching turnover leads to many of the same issues and increases student-athlete anxiety and turnover (Lee & Cho, 2021; Short et al., 2015). Turnover in the profession has increased across all levels of competition in the NCAA. Following the 2016-2017 academic year, coaches' turnover increased from 5% to 17% in men's sports and from 7% to 21% in women's sports (Won et al., 2021).

Some studies have examined traits of coaches and how those relate to the possibility of burnout. Male and female coaches from all levels of intercollegiate athletics were surveyed, and the findings showed that transformational leaders and those that exhibit a higher emotional intelligence show fewer signs of burnout (Ugrenovic et al., 2020). Efficacy, or the extent to which coaches can affect the learning and performance of players, has also been studied in relationship to burnout. Coaching efficacy can be related to game strategy, techniques, or motivation, and those with a higher efficacy

show lower signs of burnout (Short et al., 2015). Other research has focused on how coaches' perception of support from the department and whether or how it affects turnover intention. Coaches who felt supported by their organization or viewed their organization as familial were willing to commit to the extra effort needed to be successful. This has significantly reduced turnover intention (Won et al., 2021). Organizations that align with a coach's personal values and goals also increased job satisfaction (Lee & Cho, 2021).

Burnout Among Athletic Trainers

From intercollegiate athletics support staff, the most research available is in the athletic training field (Graham & Smith, 2022). These employees spend more time with student-athletes than any other non-coaching staff member and are often called upon to perform a multitude of duties not included in their job description (Adams, 2009). In intercollegiate athletics, athletic trainers can be placed in a challenging position as the department emphasizes athletic and financial success, which could be at odds with the health and welfare of the athletes. Athletic trainers also lack control over their schedules and must adapt to the demands and requirements of coaches and administrators (Graham & Smith, 2022). Barrett et al. (2016) surveyed 251 participants from the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) and concluded that athletic trainers suffer from moderate burnout with organizational factors playing a greater role in that condition. Organizational factors included a 60-hour work week and little to no control over their work schedule combined with in-season required travel. This was found to contribute to burnout more than an individual athletic trainer's personality traits.

In 2020, Oglesby et al., reviewed 51 articles on burnout in athletic trainers, finding that burnout was prevalent at all skill levels of the discipline. Three particular causes were identified – work-life conflict, role strain, and challenges with professional socialization. Work-life conflict issues were present whether the athletic trainer in question was married or not and tied back to the number of hours worked and travel schedules, both of which are prevalent in intercollegiate athletics.

Social interactions and personal relationships play a large role in burnout research in athletic trainers. These individuals engage with student-athletes and coaches regularly but also are required to interact with administrators, medical professionals, and student-athletes' parents. Negative interactions, such as unwanted advice, failure to provide adequate help, unsympathetic behavior, and neglect exacerbate the effects of stress (DeFreese & Mihalik, 2016).

Burnout Among Other Intercollegiate Athletics' Professionals

Other areas of intercollegiate athletics have been studied as well. Rubin and Moreno-Pardo (2018) researched those that work in student-athletes services as academic advisors. Interviews were conducted with 38 members with over a decade of membership in the National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals (N4A), with multiple themes emerging from the interviews conducted. Many of the professionals interviewed indicated that a heavy workload led to feelings of burnout. This led to health issues, and one example given was of an academic professional who passed out in a meeting with an entire football team and staff because "he had not eaten or slept in two days" (Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018, p. 11). Another

pointed out that nights and weekends were no longer off limits to coaches and student-athletes, which led to a quicker burnout.

A lack of professional growth was also attributed to high turnover. Some respondents felt punished for trying to set boundaries, while others could not visualize a career path in their current role and were resistant to moving around the country to take the next step up the ladder (Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018). Post-pandemic evidence is showing that professionals are less likely to relocate for an entry-level or mid-level opportunity or opportunities that do not offer hybrid options (Leff, 2021). One employee explained that the profession was “burning you out, but it was also your comfort zone” as a reason for not seeking other opportunities (Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018, p. 9). The turnover rate for these employees was high before the COVID-19 pandemic and the stress and uncertainty of that period exacerbated these feelings. The pandemic forced students to learn in a new way, and many support services professionals had to invent new avenues to help them achieve online (Chun et al., 2022).

Burnout in Communications Employees

There has been limited research into burnout, job satisfaction, and work-life balance among intercollegiate athletics marketing and communications professionals. There have, however, been articles as far back as 1995 that show sports information directors (SIDs) and communications professionals felt that they were not respected, that the communications office was a “dumping ground” for unassigned tasks, and burnout was becoming prevalent (McCleneghan, 1995). Studies in 2012 and 2013 examined work-life conflict in sports information professionals at the NCAA Division I, II, and III levels, as well as those working at National Association of Intercollegiate

Athletics (NAIA) institutions. SIDs are the link between sports programs, the media, and fans at large, and are responsible for producing content daily, while handling media needs, compiling statistics, and managing budgets. In Division I, 86% of respondents felt high levels of work-family conflict, with those having 20 or more years of experience reporting less such conflict than those with fewer years of service. Forty-one percent felt some level of burnout (Hatfield & Johnson, 2012), and similar numbers were found at Division II, III, and NAIA levels (Hatfield & Johnson, 2013). SIDs with children indicated higher levels of work-family conflict than those without (Hatfield & Johnson, 2012).

Burnout in Marketing Employees

Marketing professionals have been studied less than their communications counterparts. The available research, however, does point to issues that can lead to burnout. In a study of marketing directors in the Big 10 Conference, an NCAA Division I league, lack of resources was identified as a major challenge in the profession. Participants in the survey noted that the lack of human capital forces employees to prioritize one area of the job over another. In addition, intercollegiate athletics marketing departments are responsible for the game-day experience, as well as growing attendance, which is different from the same job in professional sports (Benedek & Pederson, 2022). Athletics departments are not operated as “profit maximizers, but win maximizers,” and as such decisions are made with different goals in mind (Baumer & Zimbalist, 2019). Another potential challenge for marketing directors is the struggle with internal culture, including issues with working with other departments, third-party multimedia rights holders, administrators, and coaches (Benedek & Pederson, 2022).

A 2022 study on administrator burnout in athletics that grouped those in marketing and communications and revealed that only 1.2% of those surveyed displayed a low risk for exhaustion. The overall risk for burnout in this group scored at just under 98%, with over 34% falling in the high-risk category. There is some room for optimism however, as those in the field reported finding some enjoyment in their work. Over 77% cited “new and interesting aspects” of their job and 71% viewed their practice to be a positive challenge each day (Athletic Director U, 2022a). Still, an occupation whose employees face a 98% burnout rate is one which requires some further investigation. Chapter 3 will explain how this investigation is to be conducted.

Chapter 3: Method

Burnout and turnover intention in intercollegiate athletics employees are industry problems that continue to hinder the potential of athletics departments to maintain the continuity of their personnel while continuing to adjust to the ever-changing landscape of intercollegiate athletics. While research into the attrition of senior leaders and coaches has been undertaken, there remains an absence of focus on the effects of burnout in the marketing and communications sector of the business (Bielak, 2004; Ott & Beaumont, 2020; Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018). Although this is just one component of a healthy athletics department, these are individuals who contribute to keeping student-athletes healthy, maintaining athletics facilities, managing relationships with donors, and generally operating as the face of the department to many in the public – and many are leaving the campus to pursue opportunities in the private sector (Sutton, 2021, Weight et al., 2021). This chapter details the plan for the study to examine the causes of burnout in this segment of intercollegiate athletics, and the effects of burnout on these individuals.

Research Questions

To examine the specific reasons that lead marketing and communications employees in intercollegiate athletics operations to suffer burnout, the following five questions were asked:

Research Question 1: To what extent are job requirements a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 2: To what extent is compensation a factor in marketing and communications employee turnover intention in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 3: To what extent are the expectations of administrators a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 4: To what extent are the expectations of coaches a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 5: To what extent does job burnout predict an employee's planned longevity with his or her current institution?

Research Design

This was a non-experimental, descriptive study that utilized the Oldenberg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), a public domain, validated test instrument with two subscales. The inventory measured disengagement and exhaustion and uses both positively worded and negatively worded questions (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005). One question was removed by the researcher for the purposes of this study. Eleven questions specific to issues facing marketing and communications employees in intercollegiate athletics were asked to identify information, including hours per week spent on work; the quality of relationships with coaches and administrators; compensation; appropriate staff numbers; factors that affect work-life balance; and the desire to continue work in intercollegiate athletics. Responses were assessed by using Likert-like scales, multiple-choice items, and open-ended statements to gather data from respondents.

Population

The population surveyed was individuals who work in marketing and communications in the intercollegiate athletics sector and were members of either the

National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators (NACMA) or the College Sports Communicators (formerly College Sports Information Directors of America). The sample was derived from those individuals who responded. The sample was not limited by location, institution, or any other measure. This sample was targeted to identify the causes of burnout early and to provide more information on corrective measures that can be employed to retain quality workers in the field.

Data Collection

After acquiring approval from Marshall University's Institutional Review Board, the link to the Qualtrics survey was sent to all members of NACMA and CSC. The survey itself began with a cover letter that clearly stated the purpose, addressed confidentiality concerns, and provided directions for consenting to participate in the study. Additional follow-up emails were sent to members working at various institutions around the country.

The survey began by administering the OLBI. The OLBI contained 15 statements to measure burnout using a Likert scale ranging from one to four, with one representing strongly agree and four representing strongly disagree, producing both a disengagement sub-scale and an exhaustion sub-scale. The next 11 questions, designed by the researcher, were specific to working in marketing and communications in intercollegiate athletics. These questions focused on the intricacies of working in this arena: hours worked in a week, overtime compensation, compensation related to market value, respect for hours away from work by multiple constituencies, adequate staffing to perform tasks, appreciation shown by coaches and administrators, interactions with the general public, intention to remain in the field and for how long,

adjustments that could be made to promote healthy work-life balance, and what factors have increased the likelihood of turnover intention. The final five questions were used to collect demographic information including age, sex, years in the profession, and the division served.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28, chosen because of its wide selection of data analysis and presentation tools (Stehlik-Barry & Babinec, 2017). Responses from the instrument items regarding the five research questions were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential methods. Analysis of responses from the survey's open-ended questions followed the steps outlined by McMillan (2016): Data was organized, and families of codes created that were used to identify and discuss categories or themes.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Analysis of Data

This chapter discusses the findings, provides statistical analysis, and describes the research population and sample. The survey instrument (see Appendix B) began with the Oldenberg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), a public domain, validated test instrument with two sub-scales. Additionally, eleven questions specific to issues facing marketing and communications employees designed by the researcher were asked. The instrument was administered using Qualtrics survey software and analyzed using Qualtrics, IBM SPSS Statistics 28 and Microsoft Excel. The survey instrument addressed five research questions:

Research Question 1: To what extent are job requirements a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 2: To what extent is compensation a factor in marketing and communications employee turnover intention in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 3: To what extent are the expectations of administrators a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 4: To what extent are the expectations of coaches a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 5: To what extent does job burnout predict an employee's planned longevity with his or her current institution?

Population and Sample

The population surveyed included individuals who work in marketing and communications in the intercollegiate athletics sector and are members of either the

National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators (NACMA) or the College Sports Communicators (formerly College Sports Information Directors of America). The survey was shared via email to the membership of the CSC and posted on the NACMA membership message board. The instrument was also shared by members with other colleagues via email and/or social media.

At the end of the two-week data collection period, 317 responses were recorded. After reviewing the responses, the researcher found 33 (10.41%) of the surveys were not completed fully, although those responses that were submitted were included where appropriate.

The survey was divided into three sections. Following the informed consent page, participants began with the Oldenberg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) which measures disengagement and exhaustion and uses both positively worded and negatively worded questions (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005). The second section contained eleven questions specific to issues facing marketing and communications employees in intercollegiate athletics, and the third section asked for demographic information.

Table 1 shows the age range of participants. The age group 26-30 years was most represented with 70 (25.36%) respondents, closely followed by the 31-35 years age range with 61 (22.10%) respondents and the 41-50 years age range with 49 (17.75%). The youngest age group, 21-25 had 37 (13.41%) respondents; while the two oldest age groups, 51-60 years and 61 years and over had 23 (8.33%) and seven (2.54%) participants respectively.

Table 1*Participants' Age Groups*

Age Group	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
21-25	37	13.41%
26-30	70	25.36%
31-35	61	22.10%
36-40	29	10.51%
41-50	49	17.75%
51-60	23	8.33%
>60	7	2.54%
Total	276	100%

The second demographic question asked participants to select their sex. Table 2 shows 194 (70.04%) male participants and 80 (28.88%) female participants. One respondent identified as non-binary (0.36%) while two (0.72%) chose not to respond.

Table 2*Participants' Sex*

Sex	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Male	194	70.04%
Female	80	28.88%
Non-Binary	1	0.36%
Prefer not to answer	2	0.72%
Total	277	100%

The third demographic question asked for the number of years in the profession. Table 3 shows that a total of 78 (28.16%) participants have been in the business for five years or less, while 85 participants (30.69%) reported working in intercollegiate athletics

for 6 to 10 years. The next largest group of respondents was those that have 21 years or more of service, with 50 (18.05%) responding. Participants in the 11-15 years range totaled 35 (12.64%), while 29 (10.47%) participants have served in the profession for 16-20 years.

Table 3

Participants' Years in Intercollegiate Athletics

Years Worked	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
1-5	78	28.16%
6-10	85	30.69%
11-15	35	12.64%
16-20	29	10.47%
>20	50	18.05%
Total	277	100%

The final demographic question asked participants to select the classification or division in which their institutions compete. Table 4 shows that 178 (64.96%) participants worked for NCAA Division I institutions. Thirty-five participants (12.77%) were employed by an NCAA Division II institution; 46 participants (16.79%) worked at an NCAA Division III school. Of the remaining 15 participants that answered the question, 14 participants (5.11%) served at a National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) school and one (0.36%) is currently at a National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)-affiliated institution.

Table 4*Classification of Institution*

Classification	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
NCAA Division I	178	64.96%
NCAA Division II	35	12.77%
NCAA Division III	46	16.79%
NAIA	14	5.11%
NJCAA	1	0.36%
Total	274	100%

Descriptive Findings

The survey began by utilizing the Oldenberg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), a public domain, validated test instrument with two sub-scales that measure disengagement and exhaustion (Halbesleben & Demerouti, 2005). Disengagement refers to distancing from work, while exhaustion manifests in feelings of physical fatigue and feelings of emptiness (Sinval et al., 2019). In addition, it provides high-scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.63) as well as on its subscales, exhaustion (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87) and disengagement (Cronbach's alpha = 0.81) as well (Tipa et al., 2019).

The OLBI scores show that respondents' answers were clustered in the upper end of the burnout continuum, with means all above a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. While the total burnout score falls in the 67th percentile, the exhaustion subscale percentage is over four points higher than the disengagement subscale.

Table 5*Overall Burnout Scores*

Scale	Score	Percentile	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Disengagement	17.85	63.75	2.55	0.39
Exhaustion	21.78	68.06	2.72	0.45
Total	39.63	66.05	2.64	0.42

Table 6 breaks down the overall burnout score by age group. Both the overall score and the mean stay consistent in the 21-50-year-old age brackets, but there is a noticeable decline in burnout among individuals 51 years old and above.

Table 6*Burnout Scores by Age Group*

Age Group	Score	Percentile	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
21-25	35.78	59.63	2.52	0.49
26-30	37.59	62.65	2.51	0.49
31-35	37.80	63.00	2.52	0.43
36-40	36.17	60.28	2.41	0.40
41-50	36.94	61.57	2.46	0.40
51-60	32.70	54.50	2.18	0.27
>60	30.29	50.48	2.02	0.46

Similarly, Table 7 shows the peak burnout score occurs with individuals who have worked in the industry for 6-10 years and decreases gradually to its lowest point with professionals who have worked in the field for 21 years or more.

Table 7*Burnout Scores by Years Worked*

Years Worked	Score	Percentile	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1-5	36.38	60.63	2.43	0.48
6-10	37.76	60.27	2.52	0.45
11-15	36.91	61.51	2.46	0.34
16-20	36.66	61.10	2.44	0.45
>20	34.51	57.51	2.30	0.28

Finally, female respondents scored higher for burnout than their male counterparts. Table 8 displays these data.

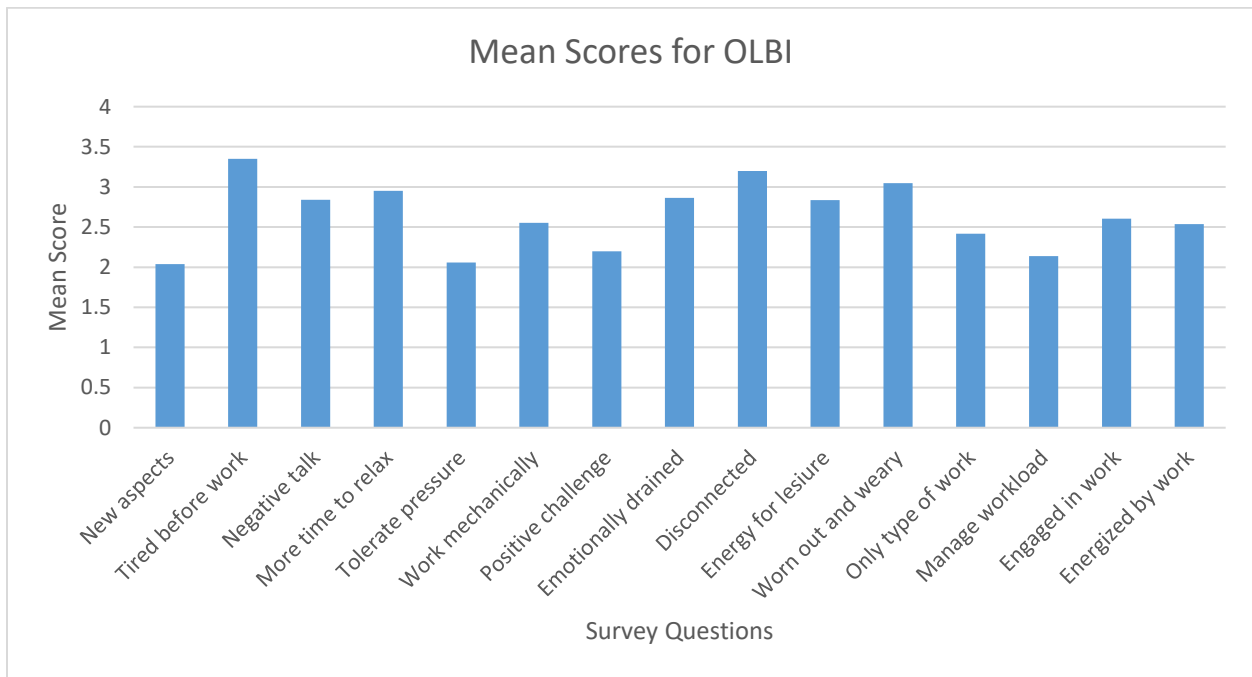
Table 8*Burnout Scores by Sex*

Sex	Score	Percentile	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male	36.25	60.41	2.42	0.39
Female	37.78	63.00	2.52	0.49

When viewing the items on the OLBI separately, a pattern does emerge. The highest score was recorded on SQ2 (fatigued before work starts), while two others, SQ9 (disconnection from work) and SQ11 (worn out at the end of the day) scored a mean of over 3.00. Table 5 showed a substantially higher score on the exhaustion subscale, and two of those three questions fall into that category.

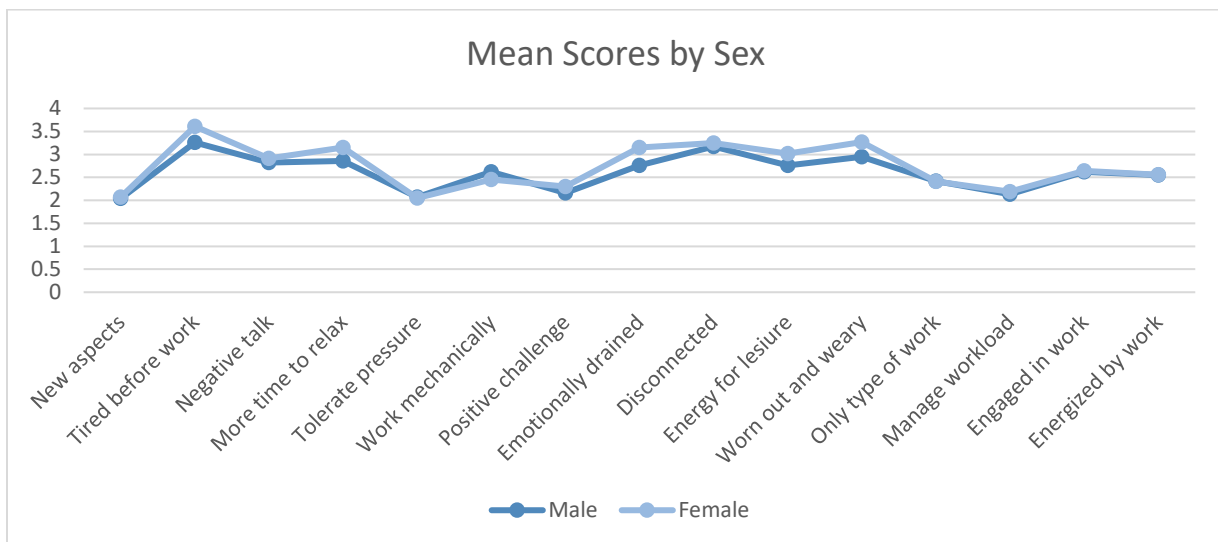
The two lowest scores, however, were recorded on SQ1 (finding new aspects of the job), which falls on the disengagement subscale, and SQ5 (tolerating the pressure), which is on the exhaustion subscale. These data are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1



As shown in Table 8 above, females scored higher on the burnout inventory than males. Figure 2 shows that five particular questions (SQ2, SQ4, SQ8, SQ10, and SQ11) showed the largest differences. All five of these questions are found on the exhaustion subscale.

Figure 2



Findings Related to Research Question 1: *To what extent are job requirements a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?*

One of the primary motives for this study was to identify the parts of the job that are driving burnout and leading to job turnover. SQ16 asked about the number of hours worked in-season and gave participants five options. Of the 278 responses, only six individuals (2.16%) worked 40 hours or less per week, and just 37 respondents (13.31%) worked between 41-50 hours. Table 9 highlights that the majority of individuals (84.53%) worked 51 hours or more during the academic year.

Table 9

Hours Worked In-Season

Number of hours worked	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
35-40 hours	6	2.16%
41-50 hours	37	13.31%
51-60 hours	105	37.77%
61-70 hours	87	31.29%
70 hours or more	43	15.47%
Total	278	100%

SQ21 asked individuals if their respective departments had adequate staff to meet the expectations of coaches and/or administrators. By using a Likert-type scale, participants were able to indicate responses ranging from 1) strongly agree to 4) strongly disagree. Only six (2.17%) responded that they strongly agreed with the statement, and 39 others (14.08%) agreed that they were adequately staffed. The

majority of individuals either disagreed (108; 38.99%) or strongly disagreed (124; 44.77%). These data are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Department Adequately Staffed

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	6	2.17%
Agree	39	14.08%
Disagree	108	38.99%
Strongly disagree	124	44.77%
Total	277	100%

These data show a striking similarity when comparing how few individuals work under 50 hours a week and how few believe their departments are adequately staffed. Eighty-four percent of respondents ($n = 235$) reported working over 50 hours a week and believed their departments are understaffed ($n = 232$). There is a positive and significant relationship between both age and feeling tired before work, and age and feeling worn out and weary at the end of the day.

Table 11

Bivariate Correlation: Age and Tired Before Work

	Age	Tired Before Work
Age	--	.342**
Tired Before Work	.342**	--

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It is interesting to note that the older respondents were not as likely to report feeling tired before work. Those between the ages of 31-50 were less like likely to select

strongly agree, while only two of the 30 respondents over the age of 51 responded with strongly agree. These data are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Tired Before Work by Age Group

Age Group	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21-25	16	20	1	0
26-30	47	21	2	0
31-35	29	29	3	0
36-40	11	16	2	0
41-50	20	21	7	1
51-60	2	15	5	1
>60	0	3	4	0
Total	125	125	24	2

Additionally, a significant relationship was found between how many years respondents had worked in the industry and becoming disconnected from this type of work. These data are displayed in Table 13.

Table 13

Bivariate Correlation: Years in the Industry and Disconnection

	Years in the Industry	Disconnection
Years in the Industry	--	.229**
Disconnection	.229**	--

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Those respondents who have worked in the business for up to 20 years mostly agreed or strongly agreed that one can become disconnected from work over a period

of time. Only 30 respondents (13.21%) who have 20 years or less of service disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. Those respondents who have been in the business over 20 years, however, disagreed or strongly disagreed at a rate of 33% ($n = 16$). These data are displayed in Table 14.

Table 14

Disconnected from Work by Years in the Industry

Years	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1-5	33	37	7	1
6-10	40	32	12	1
11-15	14	15	5	1
16-20	14	12	3	0
>21	6	26	11	5
Total	107	122	38	8

Participants were asked one open-ended question (SQ26), which focused on the adjustments that could be made to promote a better work-life balance. There were 186 responses to this question and the overwhelming theme to emerge concerned hiring adequate staff in these departments. Responses included “more staff to cover all events and obligations,” “hiring more people to help with the workload,” and “enhanced staff would be a game changer.” One individual explained the lack of staffing in this way:

For one, there is a lack of staffing. There needs to be staffing requirements for Athletic Departments within sub-department such as communications or marketing. Depending on how many sports a university has, there needs to be a required certain amount of people working in that department to lessen the load

especially when most of the department are graduate assistants. I find myself working as the SID for over 10 sports while I see other universities having employees only focused on 3 or 4 sports at a time.

Findings Related to Research Question 2: *To what extent is compensation a factor in marketing and communications employee turnover intention in intercollegiate athletics?*

Compensation was the subject of SQ17 and SQ18. SQ17 inquired whether individuals were compensated (either financially and/or with comp time) for any overtime worked with four options. Table 15 shows that 241 respondents (86.69%) reported they were not compensated in either capacity.

Table 15

Compensation for Overtime

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Not compensated	241	86.69%
Earned overtime pay	9	3.24%
Provided comp time	27	9.71%
Both pay and time	1	0.36%
Total	278	100%

SQ18 asked individuals if they felt as if they were compensated according to market value for their skill set with three options provided. Table 16 shows that 160 individuals – more than half the respondents (57.76%) - do not feel their compensation matches the current market value, with 22.7% responding that they were unsure.

Table 16*Compensated at Market Value*

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Yes	54	19.49%
No	160	57.76%
Not sure	63	22.74%
Total	278	100%

A theme to emerge from open-ended responses to SQ26 (adjustments to job to promote work-life balance) was participants' displeasure with their current compensation, which is also a prevalent theme from Chapter 2 when other segments of the industry were surveyed. One individual noted that since "nights and weekends are necessary, it would be very nice to have structured comp time where it would be expected that I take a day during the traditional work week, not just permitted." Another respondent focused not only on the time off during the work week but also on how the athletics calendar has lengthened:

After working full weekends, it being considered normal to take a weekday off.

This industry thinks we can work full work weeks with normal office hours and weekends in perpetuity. Even the summer break is shorter than it was 15 years ago with demands of social media, earlier reporting dates, etc.

Findings Related to Research Question 3: *To what extent are the expectations of administrators a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?*

The third question that guided the study investigated the expectations of the job and the role this plays in burnout. SQ19 and SQ20 asked if individuals felt their time away from work was respected. Both of these SQs utilized a Likert-type scale, and participants were able to indicate responses ranging from 1) strongly agree to 4) strongly disagree. Table 17 shows that 217 respondents (78.33%) felt that their time away from work was respected by their direct supervisor.

Table 17

Direct Supervisor Respects Time Away from Work

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	103	37.18%
Agree	114	41.16%
Disagree	43	15.52%
Strongly disagree	17	6.14%
Total	277	100%

Table 18 displays the number of individuals who believe coaches and/or administrators respect their time away from work, however, falls to 123 (44.56%).

Table 18

Administrators/Coaches Respect Time Away from Work

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	18	6.52%
Agree	105	38.04%
Disagree	105	38.04%
Strongly disagree	48	17.39%
Total	276	100%

A correlation was revealed between administrators and coaches respecting time away from work and sex. This is displayed in Table 19.

Table 19

Bivariate Correlation: Admin/Coaches Respect Time Away and Sex

	Respect Time Away	Sex
Admin/Coaches respect	--	.122*
Sex	.122*	--

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A closer look at these data, displayed in Table 20, shows that there was a difference between how males and females viewed the amount of respect shown to their time away from work. Forty-eight percent ($n = 93$) of males selected either strongly agreed or agreed that this time is respected, while only 36% ($n = 29$) of females felt the same.

Table 20

Administrators/Coaches Respect Time Away from Work by Sex

Response	Male	Female
Strongly agree	17	1
Agree	76	28
Disagree	67	37
Strongly disagree	33	14
Total	193	80

Responses to SQ26 (adjustments to job to promote work-life balance) provided some insight into how respondents view the overreach of coaches and administrators. Responses like “having administrators on our side and tempering expectations of

coaches,” “more honest conversations with non-revenue Olympic sport coaches,” and “greater understanding from coaches and administrators of the work and tasks that are required by support staff to produce a home event and consider that when scheduling events across multiple sports,” were representative of this theme. One individual touched on the need for additional help as well as how coaches and administrators could assume more responsibility:

More additional support staff needs to be hired in order to meet the rising demands of the coaching staffs and administrators. An option could also be that the coaching staffs take on more responsibilities. Whenever a new creative idea comes to light, the coaching staff automatically thinks it's someone else's job to make it happen, even though it was their idea and goes against the marketing plan that was discussed preseason. Why is it the support staff automatically has to assume new responsibilities for something that wasn't part of their plan to begin with? I also think that coaches and administrators need to understand the difference between an immediate need and an immediate want. Very little needs to be discussed at 9 pm when it's convenient for the coach.

When SQ25 asked individuals the main reason for leaving the industry, however, offering five responses and the option to select “other,” only 25 (9.09%) selected the expectations of administrators as their main reason for leaving. These responses are shown in Table 21.

Table 21*Motivating Factor to Leave Intercollegiate Athletics*

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Compensation or benefits package	83	30.18%
Number of hours worked	109	39.64%
Loss of interest in the field	11	4.00%
Expectations of coaches and/or administrators	25	9.09%
Other	47	17.09%
Total	275	100%

Among the 47 participants who selected other, many cited a sense they are underappreciated, saying that the “lack of appreciation from administrators and seemingly no incentive to work my hardest” or the “lack of respect and recognition for what we do” as the main reason they will leave the industry. One individual explained at length what many in the industry seem to be feeling:

As pressures in the collegiate athletics industry continue to escalate, my team and myself have been faced with unfathomable pressures. Not only have we received LESS resources than before, including smaller staff size and budget, but the level of scrutiny and frankly, callousness from administration is jarring. Folks are jumping ship in insane numbers all around the country and the current leadership in college athletics seems completely unable or unwilling to adapt. We are on the front lines of NIL [Name, Image, and Likeness agreements with student-athletes], every aspect of what retains or attracts transfer portal recruits, and the sales tactics and fan experience initiatives that attract fans that ultimately

drive revenue that is king. My team is comprised of employees from a multitude of school representation over the last 12-18 months, and I think we would honestly rate our collective belief that our administrations supports us at an F-.

Findings Related to Research Question 4: *To what extent are the expectations of coaches a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?*

As shown in Table 18, the majority of respondents disagreed with the idea that time away from work was respected by administrators and/or coaches. SQ22 asked whether respondents felt that their work was appreciated by the same administrators and/or coaches, using a four-point Likert-type scale, to allow participants to indicate responses ranging from 1) strongly agree to 4) strongly disagree. The majority agreed and strongly agreed that the work they do is appreciated. Only 22 respondents (7.94%) strongly agreed, however, with 186 individuals (67.15%) who agreed with the statement. These data are displayed in Table 22.

Table 22

Administrators/Coaches Appreciate Work

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	22	7.94%
Agree	186	67.15%
Disagree	54	19.49%
Strongly disagree	15	5.42%
Total	277	100%

While the responses shown in Table 22 show an improvement from the information in Table 20, some respondents offered additional context as to why they disagreed with SQ22. One theme was respect shown for their work, such as this individual who noted that a helpful solution would be “greater respect of time from coaches, less of a feeling that we are simply providing a service for them.” Several noted that administrators could also help more with oversight, as one respondent noted that “administration providing accountability to coaches who overreach” would be appreciated.

One correlation of note identified a significant, negative relationship between respondents’ opinions on whether their work is appreciated and the division in which their institution competes. These data are displayed in Table 23.

Table 23

Bivariate Correlation: Admin/Coaches Appreciation and Division

	Admin/Coaches Appreciation	Division
Admin/Coaches Appreciation	--	-.200**
Division	-.200**	--

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

When asked if administrators and coaches appreciated their work, the majority of respondents believed this to be the case, as shown in Table 22. There is a much stronger feeling of being unappreciated at the NCAA Division I level, however. In all, 76.8% ($n = 53$) of respondents who do not feel appreciated by administrators and coaches serve at NCAA Division I institutions - including 100% ($n = 15$) of those who strongly disagree that their work is valued. These data are displayed in Table 24.

Table 24*Admin/Coaches' Appreciation by Competition Level*

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
NCAA Division I	10	115	38	15
NCAA Division II	4	24	7	0
NCAA Division III	6	31	8	0
NAIA	2	11	1	0
NJCAA	0	1	0	0
Total	22	182	54	15

Findings Related to Research Question 5: *To what extent does job burnout predict an employee's planned longevity with his or her current institution?*

As previously mentioned, SQ23 asked how much longer participants would choose to stay in the profession. Table 25 reveals that the majority of participants (117) revealed they planned to remain in the industry for seven or more years, while only 37 respondents (13.41%) planned to leave the industry within one year.

Table 25*Years Remaining in the Industry*

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Less than one year	37	13.41%
2-3 years	66	23.91%
4-6 years	56	20.29%
7 years or more	117	42.39%
Total	276	100%

SQ24 then asked for the primary motivating factor in remaining in the intercollegiate athletics profession. Five options were provided, including the option to select other that allowed participants to provide their own context. Forty-seven percent ($n = 128$) indicated that the motivating factor for remaining in the industry was a “love of sports and/or the job.” These data are displayed in Table 26.

Table 26

Motivating Factor in Remaining in Intercollegiate Athletics

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Variety of daily tasks and/or personal interactions	22	8.06%
Hope of upward career mobility	46	16.85%
Love of sports and/or the job	128	46.89%
Dedication to student-athletes	38	13.92%
Other	39	14.29%
Total	273	100%

As mentioned, participants were allowed to select other and provide their own feedback, and an analysis of the answers showed the majority of participants who were contemplating leaving the job were close to retirement or planned to take advantage of the retirement benefits offered by their employer. Others mentioned other benefits that encourage them to stay, such as tuition remission for children.

As shown previously in Table 21, participants were also asked what the main factor would be if they chose to leave the industry. Once again, respondents were given five choices, including the opportunity to select other. Forty percent ($n = 109$) indicated that the number of hours worked was their primary motivating factor, while 30% ($n = 83$)

selected compensation and benefits. Forty-seven (17.09%) responded by selecting “other” and offering an explanation. Nine of those responses mentioned “all of the above” and another seven indicated a combination of the provided answers, all of which included hours worked. As related to the answers from SQ23 (how long to serve in the profession), nine participants offered that retirement would be the main factor.

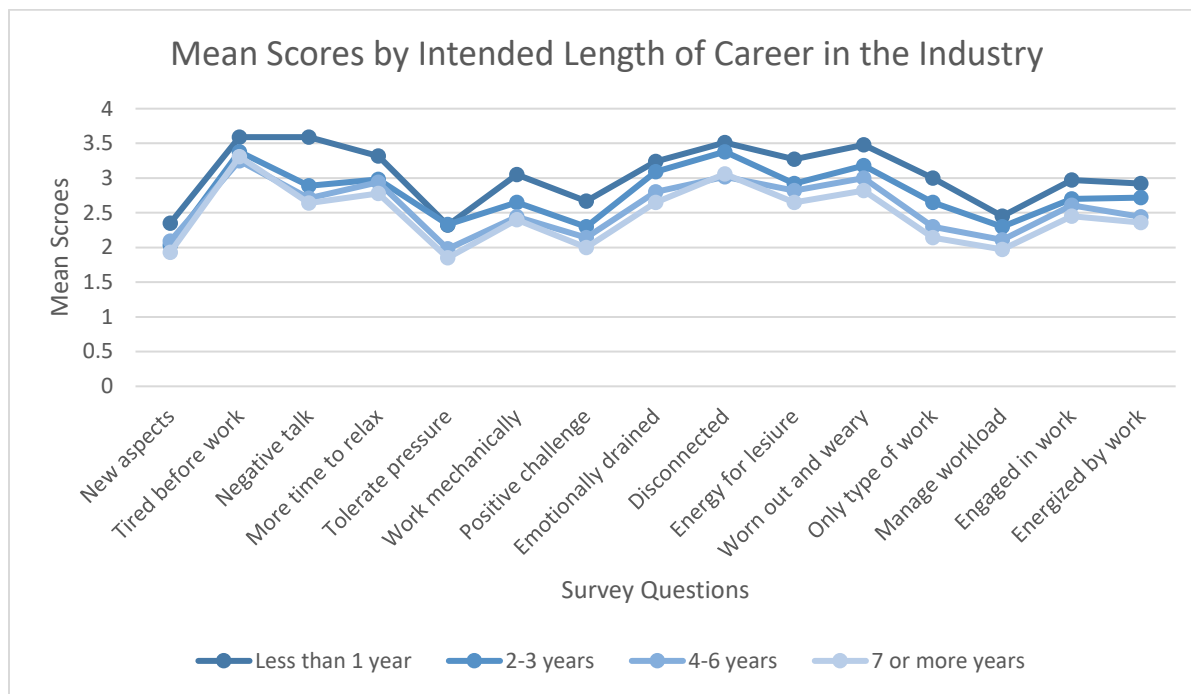
Table 27 compares burnout scores to the number of years participants intend to remain in the industry. The burnout score for those wishing to stay in the field for less than one year is high, but scores decrease as professionals plan or engage in a longer career. While there was a direct correlation between the amount of appreciation professionals feel and their intention to leave the profession, these data show that burnout could play a substantial role in the intended length of a professional’s career in this particular industry.

Table 27

Burnout Score by Intended Length of Career in the Industry

	Score	Percentile	M	SD
Less than one year	42.30	70.50	2.82	0.44
2-3 years	38.25	63.75	2.55	0.41
4-6 years	35.68	59.46	2.37	0.40
7 or more years	34.24	57.06	2.28	0.43

To offer further context to the data in Table 26, the mean scores for each of the OLBI questions asked are broken down in Figure 3. This further demonstrates the larger burnout felt by those professionals poised to leave the industry within the next 12 months.

Figure 3

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine intercollegiate athletics marketing and communications employees and the effects of burnout in the field. The data showed several notable findings regarding the causes of burnout in these employees, their feelings about both their job and the intercollegiate athletics industry as a whole, and their satisfaction with leadership in this enterprise.

Based on both the quantitative and qualitative measures employed in this study, it appears that burnout does play a role in intercollegiate athletics marketing and communications employees leaving the industry. Moreover, the data show that professionals in the industry place the most blame on the hours worked as a contributing factor to job dissatisfaction. These findings will be examined further in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5: Summary, Implications and Recommendations

The intercollegiate athletics enterprise is placing increased demands on marketing and communications employees. The sheer number of dollars required to operate forces marketers to be more creative, while communications professionals are finding their workloads growing as they assist with fundraising and revenue generation, and have now added Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) requests to their plates. Intercollegiate athletics, however, is not a highly researched topic as it relates to staff positions. Some research has focused on senior leaders and coaches, but minimal study has been undertaken on other positions (Benedek et al., 2021; Bielak, 2004; Graham & Smith, 2022; Ott & Beaumont, 2020; Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018).

This study analyzed burnout and disengagement in intercollegiate athletics marketing and communications professionals and assessed the stressors that affect their roles. The research gave the participants the opportunity to offer, from their perspective, what could be done to improve work-life balance and retention rates in the field.

Purpose of the Study

The importance of intercollegiate athletics to institutions continues to be evident. As discussed earlier, the cancellation of the NCAA men's basketball tournament due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to a large loss in revenue for institutions, ultimately causing some sports programs to be cut, students to be displaced, and athletics employees to be furloughed or laid off (Chun et al., 2022). Thriving athletics programs can exert many positive impacts on an institution's philanthropy, admissions, and marketing as well, such as those noticed by Texas Christian University from the success of their football

program or institutions such as Butler University and Gonzaga University who have had recent success in men's basketball (Carlton, 2023).

Giving this under-researched employee group an opportunity to describe the problems or issues within their workplace that cause burnout can help administrators structure these positions to be more beneficial to the employees, extending their length of service and providing a more sustainable work environment. To accomplish this research, five research questions were used:

Research Question 1: To what extent are job requirements a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 2: To what extent is compensation a factor in marketing and communications employee turnover intention in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 3: To what extent are the expectations of administrators a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 4: To what extent are the expectations of coaches a factor in marketing and communications employee burnout in intercollegiate athletics?

Research Question 5: To what extent does job burnout predict an employee's planned longevity with his or her current institution?

Data Collection

At the end of the two-week data collection period, 317 responses were recorded via the Qualtrics survey software. After reviewing the responses, the researcher found 33 (10.41%) of the surveys were not completed fully, although those responses that were submitted were included where appropriate.

The survey began by administering the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI). The OLBI contains 16 statements to measure burnout using a Likert scale ranging from one to four. One question was removed by the researcher. The next 11 questions, designed by the researcher, were specific to working in marketing and communications in intercollegiate athletics. The final five questions were used to collect demographic information. Responses were assessed by using Likert-like scales, multiple-choice items, and open-ended statements to gather data from respondents.

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 28 and Microsoft Excel. Responses were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential methods. Open-ended responses were organized, and families of codes created to identify categories or themes.

Summary of Findings

The first research question was designed to identify the parts of the job that are driving burnout, and further, leading to job turnover. The survey revealed that 85% of participants worked 51 hours or more per week in-season and 84% believed that their departments are not staffed appropriately to fulfill the demands of the job. Additionally, a majority of individuals (40%) selected the number of hours worked as the factor that would most motivate them to leave the profession. These results mirror a study of sports information professionals who averaged 55 hours of work a week over the course of a year (Laubscher, 2016).

The responses suggest that participants are more concerned about the number of tasks on their desks and the amount of time spent at work than any other factor when it comes to job dissatisfaction, and more so than compensation considerations. This is

consistent with the research into what causes burnout. As mentioned in Chapter 2, 60% of workers believe that work-related pressure has increased, and workload management continues to be a leading cause of burnout (Day & Leiter, 2014; Leiter et al., 2014; Maslach et al., 1997; Moss, 2020; Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). As burnout is one of the most important predictors of turnover intention and job satisfaction (Lu & Gursoy, 2016), it is interesting to note that 37% of individuals plan to leave the business within the next three years, but the majority (42%) intend to remain in the industry seven or more years.

Within the industry, the research is consistent when compared to data over the last six years. A review of these data, in fact, shows that it is worsening. In a 2017 study of NCAA employees encompassing all fields, 48% admitted to feeling emotionally drained by their job (Schneider & Hite, 2017). In this study, 65% of marketing and communications employees either agreed or strongly agreed that they feel emotionally drained while working. The number of hours worked and the negative effects of the job were also found in studies of other intercollegiate athletics employees, including athletic trainers and student-athlete support personnel (Barrett et al., 2016; Oglesby et al., 2020; Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018). These data, as well as other research, point to a documented statistical relationship between job requirements and burnout.

There were also somewhat surprising findings in the current study related to the age of respondents and their responses to some OLBI questions. Older respondents reported feeling less tired than their younger counterparts, as well as less disconnected from the job. Other research has indicated that burnout is more common among young people and that older workers have shown an ability to put things into perspective (De

Maeyer & Schoenmakers, 2019; Gursoy et al., 2013; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Moreno et al., 2022). An additional observation is that younger generations attach more importance to the search for new experiences in life and less importance on traditions, which could be additional triggers to burnout (De Maeyer & Schoenmakers, 2019).

This study also explored the effect of compensation on employee turnover intention. This was asked in Research Question 2 and directly addressed in SQ17 (compensation or comp time for overtime worked), SQ18 (compensated according to market value), and SQ25 (main factor in leaving the industry). SQ17 showed that being compensated in any way for overtime work is an anomaly in this field, as just 13% of respondents reported receiving overtime pay or comp time, with just one lone, fortunate individual earning both. With this in mind, it was not surprising that SQ18 revealed that 58% of individuals believe they are not paid market value for their skill set. What was somewhat surprising, however, was that 23% were unsure. SQ25 showed that compensation was the second-most selected reason for leaving the industry behind the number of hours worked, with 30% selecting the option.

Unlike workload, compensation is not a listed cause of burnout (Maslach et al., 1997; Wigert & Agrawal, 2018). While those in the field realize that the industry has not kept up in terms of competitive salaries (Sutton, 2021), none of the existing research into the different segments of intercollegiate athletics found that compensation was a major factor in burnout or job dissatisfaction (Barrett et al., 2016; Oglesby et al., 2020; Hatfield & Johnson, 2012; Rubin & Moreno-Pardo, 2018). In Chapter 2, however, research was discussed that showed younger generations as a whole do expect faster promotions and pay raises, and that Millennial and Generation X workers have reported

that salary is associated with turnover intention (Kellison et al., 2013; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Moreno et al., 2022). In this study, many workers that have been in the field for an extended period of time reported having looked past the compensation and embraced other rewarding parts of the job. While compensation does seem to remain lower in the intercollegiate athletics industry than those working in marketing and communications outside of the sports industry, which should be a concern for industry leaders, it does not appear to be the main factor in turnover intention.

The survey then explored the effect(s) coaches and administrators' expectations had on employee burnout, which was examined by Research Questions 3 and 4. SQ19 and SQ20 specifically asked about the respecting of employees' time away from work by direct supervisors, then administrators and coaches, using Likert-type scales. The results showed a distinct difference between the supervisor classifications. While 78% agreed that their direct supervisors respected their time away from work, that number dropped to 45% for administrators and coaches. With the understanding that in some cases, a participant's direct supervisor could also be considered an administrator, these numbers show that at the very least, many respondents believe that their direct supervisor respects their time away from work.

Another key finding was the difference between males and females in response to the question of their time away from work being respected by administrators and coaches. Survey results showed a 9% difference in males (48%) and females (36%) who felt their time away from work was valued (Table 20), and females also scored 3% higher on the burnout scales, with the highest differences coming on the exhaustion subscale (Table 8). Other research has shown that family stressors weigh more heavily

on women than men, leading to poor work-life balance, and eventually, burnout (De Maeyer & Schoenmakers, 2019). While younger generations observe this as an expression of inequality, older generations acknowledge this as a traditional role pattern (De Maeyer & Schoenmakers, 2019; Lu & Gursoy, 2016). One respondent mentioned her role as a mother and its importance in setting up her work structure:

Being a mom, one of the requirements I made sure was in place prior to taking my position was an increase in marketing staff members to allocate sport assignments across. That has greatly benefited my work life balance to where I am able to have a 'break' not focusing daily on each individual sport, but just on overseeing the team assigned to each task.

While athletics or institutional administration can be indirectly – or directly - responsible for some of the main complaints of respondents, such as the number of hours required and low compensation, the qualitative responses cast more of the culpability on coaches. One of the themes that emerged in relationship to administration was the desire for them to help, by either increasing staffing, or managing the expectations of coaches. As one respondent mentioned, “today’s coaches feel as though they need everything within seconds,” which reflects an unrealistic understanding of staff obligations that could be managed. There is also a desire from respondents to see more collaboration that could help solve issues before they arise, in effect helping manage expectations on staff members and coaches. This could be accomplished, as one respondent explained, by “creating an environment where coaches [and] staff can work on projects and plan ahead, as opposed to items being considered last minute.”

As discussed, coaches also feel that they work under somewhat unrealistic expectations, trying to manage relationships with student-athletes, parents, donors, fans, and administrators. They do this while trying to win games and graduate student-athletes, and the turnover rate has increased dramatically in coaching (Ackeret et al., 2022; Knight et al., 2015; Graham & Smith, 2022; Lee & Cho, 2021; Lundkvist et al., 2014; Short et al., 2015; Won et al., 2021).

Much of the research cited in Chapter 2 on burnout in the industry does not place as big an onus on administrators' expectations as a cause of burnout (Barrett et al. 2016; Benedek & Pederson, 2022; DeFreese & Mihalik, 2016; Graham & Smith, 2022; Hatfield & Johnson, 2012). It is interesting to note, however, that research on burnout within the coaching field points out that the unrealistic expectations of administrators are one of the leading reasons these individuals leave the industry (Knight et al., 2015).

Certainly, the enormity of pressure in this field has an effect on interpersonal relationships within the department. As noted earlier, there is a feeling that coaches should take on more personal responsibility for their ideas, instead of "automatically [thinking] it's someone else's job to make it happen." This could be an example of the pressure on coaches trickling down to staff members. It is interesting to note, however, that those respondents working outside of NCAA Division I felt much more appreciated by coaches and administrators, representing a more proper alignment of expectations across the board at these levels of competition.

A key point arising from the examination of these two research questions involved the amount of staffing provided in intercollegiate athletics marketing and communications. Almost 84% of respondents disagreed with the notion that they were

adequately staffed to meet the expectations of administrators or coaches. Further, the most commonly cited theme seen in the open-ended responses to SQ26 dealt with the need for more help. This is despite the fact that in response to SQ13, over 79% believed they could manage their workload well. This seems to acknowledge that while many in the marketing and communications field are aware that they cannot meet these expectations no matter how hard they work, they are doing their best individually to manage the workload they are assigned despite the insufficient staff numbers. As one individual succinctly explained, “it’s not the tasks listed in the job description, it’s the amount of people we have doing those tasks.”

Despite this, some of the most encouraging data in the study can be found in response to SQ22. The responses showed that 75% of employees believed that administrators and coaches appreciate their work. As the industry onboards younger workers in key entry-level positions, the amount of appreciation shown, and feedback provided are key factors in preventing turnover. As the average job tenure has shrunk, appreciation in the workplace is one of the facets younger employees strive for (Fellay, 2021; Kellison et al., 2013; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Moreno et al., 2022; Ng et al., 2010). Reviewed separately, it appears that the expectations of coaches have more of an impact on burnout and turnover intention than do those of administrators, and that the expectations of the industry are a significant contributor to burnout. While some of the open-ended responses mentioned administrators and ways in which they could play a larger role in curbing burnout, there was more direct criticism of coaches’ expectations noted.

The final research question explored the relationship between burnout and longevity at an individual's current institution. SQ23 inquired as to the length of time professionals intended to remain in the field. Despite all of the negative feelings revealed in the examination of the first four research questions, a plurality (42%) of respondents intend to continue in the field for seven years or more. These data can be coupled with the responses to SQ1, where 82% of participants agreed that they continue to find new and interesting aspects of their job. Additionally, the overwhelming majority cited a love of sports and/or the job as the reason they choose to remain in the business. While the data clearly show burnout is prevalent and that many staff members in the field are overwhelmed and considering a transition, there is still a majority in the field who enjoy the work.

While there is a positive outcome to this question, it also reveals some trends that administrators should note. As Table 27 shows, those who intend to leave the industry within one year scored high on the OLBI, with a steady decline seen in those who have a desire to remain in the business longer. These data show that supervisors should be aware of the possible burnout of their staff and take steps to mitigate these feelings in an effort to keep quality professionals in their current roles, as the scores show there is a definite relationship between an extreme amount of burnout and turnover intention. These data show, however, that many in the field are managing a high amount of work and stress while intending to continue in the business.

Implications for Practice

This study examined the presence of burnout and its implications on marketing and communications employees in intercollegiate athletics. By focusing on the causes

of burnout, athletics administrators can better structure their departments and work environments to adequately support these workers in their current roles and offer opportunities for professional growth.

Understanding that employees in this part of intercollegiate athletics are struggling under the weight of their responsibilities is the first step in corrective action. While adding additional staff could be the quickest answer to reducing hours and workload, other corrective actions are needed as well. Adequate compensation should be the goal, but it has proven to be difficult to achieve in the non-coaching segment of intercollegiate athletics. Administrators should examine additional opportunities to compensate for the number of overtime hours worked, such as making comp time available or offering work-from-home opportunities during the week after weekends which require employee presence in the work environment. As a majority of respondents working over 51 hours during a week, this can add anywhere from 500 to 1000 extra hours of work during a year. Further, new projects and initiatives should be distributed as evenly as possible, taking care to align skills and job requirements and avoiding the use of some departments as “catch-all” areas. While it appears that administrators and coaches are doing an adequate job showing appreciation, the management of these expectations is necessary to prevent burnout and turnover. It is time, perhaps, to reimagine the entire enterprise and reorganize based on the work that has to be done and what the industry’s priorities are at this time.

As younger generations begin to make up the majority of the workforce, care will need to be taken in nurturing these new employees as they adjust to the job. Gone, perhaps, are the days of an individual working at one institution for the bulk of their

career. Twenty-first century employees will leave their roles more frequently and be prepared to move more quickly in the subsequent hiring process, so identifying talented workers and offering opportunities for professional development and growth should be helpful in employee retention. As the traditional intercollegiate athletics playing calendar has now stretched into almost non-stop competition, there is no longer a good time to be short-staffed.

Recommendations for Further Study

The purpose of this study was to examine an under-researched employee group in intercollegiate athletics: marketing and communications employees. Findings from this research will contribute to the overall study of burnout in general and to burnout in intercollegiate athletics employees in particular, providing guidance to administrators in the field as they develop job descriptions and work with these employees on a daily basis. The literature review and data analysis provided multiple areas for future research.

1. There would be a benefit in a longitudinal study measuring responses to the OLBI at various times throughout the academic year. There is a vast difference between in-season, crossover-season, and summer work schedules. Responses could vary based on the time of year.
2. The survey includes only those marketing and communications employees who are currently in the business. Further research on burnout should include capturing the opinions of those who have already left the profession to get a better understanding of reasons for leaving and perhaps what industries they entered upon exiting intercollegiate athletics.

3. The study identified a key difference in the burnout scores of male and female respondents as well as their thoughts on whether administrators and coaches respected their time away from work. Further research should examine potential causes of the statistical differences in burnout and interpersonal working relationships.
4. While this study grouped marketing and communications employees together as one unit because of the continued blurring of lines between these two areas, further research could separate the two entities to determine whether one group is more affected by burnout than the other or whether one group shows more intention to stay in the business. Other subcategories (e.g. content creators) could be created and examined.
5. This study found that younger workers score higher on the OLBI burnout score, as well as several variables on the exhaustion scale. A study exploring this relationship may provide insight into what steps could be taken to reduce burnout as younger workers enter the field and begin to build a career.
6. This study included institutions at every level of competition, from NCAA Division I to NJCAA, with those working at NCAA Division I institutions feeling the most underappreciated. Separate studies could focus on narrower areas to find out whether there are greater differences between those working in different classifications.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



Office of Research Integrity
 Institutional Review Board
 One John Marshall Drive
 Huntington, WV 25755

FWA 00002704

IRB1 #00002205

IRB2 #00003206

January 4, 2023

Bobbi Nicholson, Ph.D.
 Leadership Studies, COEPD

RE: IRBNet ID# 1996284-1

At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Nicholson:

Protocol Title: [1996284-1] Causes of Burnout and Job Dissatisfaction Among Marketing and Communications Intercollegiate Athletics Employees

Site Location: MUGC

Submission Type: New Project APPROVED

Review Type: Exempt Review

In accordance with 45CFR46.104(d)(2), the above study was granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Designee. No further submission (or closure) is required for an Exempt study **unless** there is an amendment to the study. All amendments must be submitted and approved by the IRB Chair/Designee.

This study is for student Ricky Ray.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Lindsey Taylor at (304) 696-6322 or l.taylor@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP
 Director, Office of Research Integrity

Appendix B: Survey Instrument and Consent Form

Participant Consent

You are invited to participate in a research project designed to identify causes of burnout and job dissatisfaction among marketing and communications employees in intercollegiate athletics. The study is being conducted by Ricky Ray, a doctoral student at Marshall University and has been approved by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

This survey is comprised of 30 items and will take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. Your replies will be anonymous, so do not type your name anywhere on the form. There are no known risks involved with this study. Your participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. If you choose not to participate you may leave the survey site at any time. You may also choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank. Your IP address will not be collected and once you complete the survey, you can delete your browsing history for added security. Your responses will remain anonymous. No one will be able to identify you or your responses and no one will know whether you participated in the study. Completing the on-line survey indicates your consent for the answers you supply to be included in the pool of responses.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Dr. Bobbi Nicholson at bnicholson@marshall.edu or Ricky Ray at ray232@marshall.edu. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303. By completing this survey, you are also confirming that you are 21 years of age or older. You may print this page for your records. Thank you in advance for your willingness to share your knowledge and experience.

Sincerely,

Ricky Ray, EdD Candidate – Co-Investigator

Dr. Bobbi Nicholson, Advisor – Principal Investigator

Please read each statement carefully. Consider to what extent these statements describe your thoughts on your current position.

1. I frequently find new and interesting aspects in my work.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

2. There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

3. It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

4. I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better at the end of a work day.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

5. I tolerate the pressure of my work very well.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

6. Recently, I tend to think less at work and do my job almost mechanically.

strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

7. I find my work to be a positive challenge.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

8. I often feel emotionally drained while working.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

9. Over time, one can become disconnected from this type of work.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

10. After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

11. I usually feel worn out and weary at the end of a work day.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

12. This is the only type of work that I can imagine myself doing.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

13. I can usually manage the amount of my work load.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

14. I feel more and more engaged in my work.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

15. I usually feel energized when I work.

strongly agree

agree

disagree

strongly disagree

Consider your current work responsibilities. Please answer the next eleven questions to the best of your knowledge.

16. How many hours do you work in an average week in-season?

35-40

41-50

51-60

61-70

70+

17. Are you compensated or provided comp time for overtime worked?

Not compensated

Earned overtime pay

Provided comp time

Both overtime pay and
comp time

18. Are you compensated according to market value for your skill set?

Yes

No

Not sure

19. My direct supervisor respects my time away from work.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

20. Coaches and administrators respect my time away from work.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

21. My department has adequate staff to meet the expectations of coaches and/or administrators.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

22. Coaches and administrators appreciate my work.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

23. How long do you intend to remain in marketing and/or communications in intercollegiate athletics?

Less than one year

2-3 years

4-6 years

7 years or more

24. If you decide to remain in marketing and/or communications in intercollegiate athletics, what is the main factor motivating that decision?

- Variety of daily tasks and/or personal interactions
- Hope of upward career mobility
- Love of sports and/or the job
- Dedication to student-athletes
- Other (Please enter your response)

25. If you decide to leave marketing and/or communications in intercollegiate athletics, what is the main factor motivating that decision?

- Compensation or benefits package
- Amount of hours worked

- Loss of interest in the field
- Expectations of coaches and/or administrators
- Other (Please enter your response)

26. What adjustments could be made to your job description to promote work-life balance?

Please answer the following demographic questions.

27. What is your age?

- | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 21-25 | 26-30 | 31-35 | 36-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

28. What is your sex?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Male | Female | Non-binary | Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

29. How many years have you worked in this profession?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1-5 | 6-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 21+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

30. At what level does your current institution compete?

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| NCAA Division I | NCAA Division II | NCAA Division III | NAIA | NJCAA | Canadian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Appendix C: Abbreviations

ATC.....	Certified Athletic Trainer
CSC.....	College Sports Communicators
CoSIDA	College Sports Information Directors Association
MBI.....	Maslach Burnout Inventory
N4A .	National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals
NAIA.....	National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics
NATA.....	National Athletic Trainers Association
NACMA	National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NIL.....	Name, Image, and Likeness
NJCAA	National Junior College Athletic Association
OLBI	Oldenburg Burnout Inventory
SID	Sports Information Director
WHO	World Health Organization

Appendix D: Curriculum Vita

Ricky Ray

Ray232 @marshall.edu | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rickyray11>

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education | Marshall University | Huntington, West Virginia

Leadership Studies

Master of Science | University of Central Missouri | Warrensburg, Missouri

Kinesiology

Bachelor of Arts | Campbell University | Buies Creek, North Carolina

Mass Communication

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Associate Athletics Director | William & Mary | Williamsburg, Virginia

2022-PRESENT

Deputy Athletics Director | Campbell University | Buies Creek, North Carolina

2018-2022

Associate Athletics Director

2016-2018

General Manager | Troy University | Troy, Alabama

2015

Director of External Affairs | Carolina Mudcats | Zebulon, North Carolina

2007-2014

Broadcaster | East Carolina University | Greenville, North Carolina

2006-2007

Athletics Marketing Director | Georgia Southern University | Statesboro, Georgia

2003-2006

Assistant Athletics Media Relations Director

2001-2003