

# The Role of Personality in Job Satisfaction Among Collegiate Athletic Trainers

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**Context:** The degree to which an individual likes his or her job is known as job satisfaction. A person with higher job satisfaction is less likely to depart from a profession than a person with lower job satisfaction. Researchers studying job satisfaction among other allied health professionals suggest a personality component could explain why the reasons for departure can be so individual.

**Setting:** Collegiate institutions.

**Objective:** To determine the relationship between job satisfaction and personality among collegiate athletic trainers (ATs).

**Patients or Other Participants:** A total of 202 ATs (68 [33.7%] men and 134 [66.3%] women), were recruited using the National Athletic Trainers' Association e-mail database. We excluded any AT from this study who worked outside of the collegiate setting. The response rate was 20.2%.

**Intervention(s):** Data were collected using a Web-based survey instrument consisting of 3 sections: (1) demographics, (2) job satisfaction survey, and (3) Big Five Personality Inventory.

**Main Outcome Measure(s):** Independent *t* tests were run to determine sex differences, and correlations were run to evaluate relationships between demographics and job satisfaction and between job satisfaction and personality.

**Results:** Women reported higher levels of neuroticism than men. Extroversion and conscientiousness showed a weak positive relationship with job satisfaction. A moderate positive relationship was found between agreeableness and job satisfaction. A moderate negative relationship was noted between neuroticism and job satisfaction.

**Conclusions:** Based on our findings, head ATs or other organizational leaders may consider using personality assessments during interview processes, or athletic training program directors may be able to better guide students interested in athletic training based on knowledge of their personalities.

**Key Words:** workplace influences, retention, sex differences

## Key Points

- Personality appears to play a role in job satisfaction among collegiate athletic trainers.
- Female athletic trainers employed in the collegiate setting exhibited higher levels of neuroticism than their male counterparts.
- Personality is an important individual-level factor that should be considered when evaluating workplace outcomes.

For many years, athletic trainers (ATs) have been characterized as hardworking professionals who often labor under difficult conditions that include low pay, long hours, inadequate staff, little time off, and high levels of stress. These professional concerns have been studied in several settings to help us better understand the working conditions for ATs and to potentially address burnout and attrition.<sup>1–3</sup> The collegiate setting often receives the most attention because of its long hours and stress related to expectations of a team's success. Additionally, it represents the largest clinical employment setting for ATs<sup>4</sup> and, therefore, a setting of great interest for ATs. Investigators have suggested that ATs enter the profession because of their attraction to sports and their desire to help people,<sup>5</sup> and some select the setting because of the competitive atmosphere and collegiality of coworkers.<sup>6</sup> However, what makes these dedicated ATs remain in the profession and accept the low pay, long hours, and work-family conflict that lead many

others to leave or change job settings? Job satisfaction is a major facilitator for persistence, despite some of the challenges present within the athletic training collegiate setting. Research in athletic training<sup>6</sup> suggests that finding satisfaction in the workplace through the fulfillment of many factors can lead to improved commitment and persistence. Despite this information, some ATs are unable to overcome certain job-related factors and remain in the profession. Kahanov and Eberman<sup>7</sup> found that male ATs showed a trend toward changing the clinical setting (eg, leaving the collegiate setting for secondary schools), whereas female ATs were leaving the profession entirely around the age of 28. Attrition within athletic training has become an area of focus in the literature, specifically examining how job satisfaction may affect the intention to leave.<sup>8</sup>

Authors<sup>9,10</sup> studying job satisfaction among other allied health professionals suggest that a personality component could explain why departure can be so individual. The link

to personality emanates from the definition of *job satisfaction*, which reflects the emotion and happiness one gains from his or her job. Assessment of one's job may be based on a person's level of affectivity (ie, expressing emotion or feeling); simply stated, those who are high in affectivity are likely to feel more satisfied.<sup>11</sup> In other words, maybe ATs have a certain personality that leads them to be satisfied with a challenging work environment despite work-life concerns that would cause others to leave, specifically from the collegiate setting. The concept of job satisfaction within the athletic training profession is timely. Studies examining job satisfaction in athletic training date back to the 1980s<sup>12</sup> and have focused on many facets, including factors affecting satisfaction as well as its relationship to intent to leave.<sup>8,13–15</sup> Yet no researchers, to our knowledge, have examined the effects of personality on job satisfaction and an AT's assessment of it. Identifying common personality traits among ATs with career longevity is important. Understanding how personality may affect retention could aid high school counselors in properly advising students who are considering athletic training careers, facilitate continued advising throughout athletic training education programs, and assist head ATs during their recruitment of new staff. By helping us to understand the correlation between personality and job satisfaction, our findings could influence policy on retaining ATs and providing resources to maintain or improve the wellness of ATs.

## Job Satisfaction

*Job satisfaction* has been defined as the degree to which an individual likes his or her job.<sup>16</sup> The concept consists of an affective component, encompassing an individual's feeling satisfied by the job, and a perceptual component, which assesses whether or not the job is meeting the personal needs of the individual. Job satisfaction is the primary predictor of intent to leave a profession or organization.<sup>17,18</sup> An individual with higher job satisfaction is less likely to depart from a profession than an individual with lower job satisfaction.<sup>18</sup> Factors affecting job satisfaction exist in every profession and have been studied extensively in other health professions, including medicine,<sup>19</sup> occupational therapy,<sup>20,21</sup> and physical therapy.<sup>22,23</sup>

In 1985, Spector<sup>24</sup> developed the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) to measure 9 subscales of satisfaction: supervision, pay, contingent rewards (appreciation and recognition), fringe benefits, promotional opportunities, coworkers, nature of work, work conditions, and communication. Terranova and Henning<sup>25</sup> reduced the number of subscales to 8 by combining the subscales of pay and contingent rewards into pay and rewards. Although many factors can influence an individual's longevity in a career, job satisfaction is seen by many as the main predictor of intention to leave a profession or organization.<sup>17</sup> The most concerning potential negative consequences of a low level of job satisfaction are intention to leave and ultimate departure from a profession. Terranova and Henning<sup>25</sup> found that all 8 subscales were negatively correlated with intent to leave, with pay and rewards and nature of work having the highest correlation for the AT. For many health care professionals, including ATs, physical therapists,<sup>26</sup> and

nurses, being challenged and rewarded within their positions is an important facilitator of overall satisfaction, whereas role overload can often negatively affect satisfaction.<sup>25</sup>

In 1986, Staw et al<sup>27</sup> reported a link between childhood personality and job satisfaction later in life. Since then, considerable attention has focused on the relationship between individual personalities and job satisfaction because it is assumed that identifying individual specific personality types<sup>19</sup> can predict workplace behavior. Disagreement is considerable, but an accumulating body of literature<sup>28,29</sup> suggests that variance in job satisfaction across individuals can be attributed to measures of personality. One factor that has encumbered theoretical explanations of the personality component of job satisfaction is the lack of a framework for the structure and nature of personality itself. In the history of personality research, thousands of traits have been invented, and numerous traits have been studied in relation to job satisfaction, which has led to confusion over which personality variables should be examined.<sup>30</sup>

## Personality

A 5-factor model of personality has emerged that can be used to describe the most salient aspects of personality. This model is often referred to as the Big Five<sup>31</sup> and has been generalized across measures, cultures, and sources of rating.<sup>32</sup> The Big Five are (1) openness, (2) conscientiousness, (3) extroversion, (4) agreeableness, and (5) neuroticism. These 5 overarching domains have been found to contain all known personality traits and to provide the basic structure behind all personality traits. *Openness* reflects the extent to which an individual desires uniqueness, variety, and change.<sup>33</sup> The openness trait distinguishes imaginative people from down-to-earth, conventional people. *Conscientiousness* is related to impulse control and is a key ingredient in success.<sup>32</sup> A person with an extremely high conscientiousness score may border on perfectionism by setting his or her sights too high. *Extroversion* is often characterized by positive emotions, urgency, and the tendency to seek stimulation and the company of others.<sup>32</sup> This trait is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world: extroverts enjoy being with people. *Agreeableness* is a tendency to be compassionate and cooperative.<sup>32</sup> Agreeable individuals value getting along with others; they are generally considerate, friendly, generous, helpful, and willing to compromise with others. *Neuroticism* is the tendency to experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or depression.<sup>32</sup> It is sometimes called *emotional instability*. Those who score high in neuroticism are emotionally reactive and vulnerable to stress.

Each of the Big Five has its own link to job satisfaction, except for openness. Openness predisposes individuals to both positive and negative effects, rendering its directional effect on job satisfaction uncertain.<sup>34</sup> Conscientiousness has been linked to job satisfaction because it represents a general tendency toward work involvement that leads to a greater likelihood of receiving both formal and informal satisfying work rewards,<sup>35</sup> and the wellbeing literature suggests a positive relationship between job satisfaction and conscientiousness.<sup>34</sup> Extroverts are predisposed to

**Table 1. Demographic Variables**

Characteristic	n	Mean $\pm$ SD	Range
Years certified	200	4.99 $\pm$ 2.67	0, 11
Years at current institution	200	2.91 $\pm$ 2.25	0, 12
Years in current position	200	2.51 $\pm$ 1.84	0, 10
Teams, no.	196 <sup>a</sup>	4.91 $\pm$ 5.40	0, 41
Athletes, no.	191 <sup>a</sup>	119.34 $\pm$ 104.84	0, 500
Staff athletic trainers, no.	196 <sup>a</sup>	4.16 $\pm$ 3.25	0, 21
In season, h	193 <sup>a</sup>	57.14 $\pm$ 15.57	0, 90
Out of season, h	189 <sup>a</sup>	42.21 $\pm$ 15.04	0, 85
Travel in season, d/mo	188 <sup>a</sup>	6.89 $\pm$ 5.98	0, 35
Travel out of season, d/mo	184 <sup>a</sup>	1.18 $\pm$ 2.59	0, 20

<sup>a</sup> Not all participants answered all questions.

experience positive life emotions, and positive emotionality likely generalizes to job satisfaction.<sup>36</sup> Agreeable individuals have greater motivation to achieve interpersonal intimacy, leading to greater levels of wellbeing,<sup>35</sup> which may translate into job satisfaction. Neurotic individuals, who have an essentially negative nature, experience more negative life events than other individuals, which can then negatively affect levels of job satisfaction.<sup>36</sup> Judge et al<sup>11</sup> found in their meta-analysis that a 5-factor model was effective for examining the dispositional source of job satisfaction. Specifically, neuroticism, extroversion, and conscientiousness were moderately correlated with job satisfaction.<sup>11</sup>

Ample research has focused on whether personality can influence career choice and whether individuals with certain personality traits are drawn to specific careers. These same traits may influence the career longevity of an AT and could help explain why ATs persist in the collegiate setting. Stated simply, we know that ATs who experience greater levels of stress, which could be due to personality type, are more likely to have lower levels of job satisfaction, a precursor to departure from the profession.<sup>15</sup> Despite this anecdotal impression, no investigators have attempted to correlate personality with job satisfaction in the athletic training profession.

To gain the most comprehensive understanding of factors related to ATs' job satisfaction, the purpose of our study was to examine relationships among specific demographic factors, personality domains, and job satisfaction. In particular, we hypothesized that agreeableness and conscientiousness would be positive predictors of job satisfaction and that neuroticism would be a negative predictor of job satisfaction.

## METHODS

### Participants

We recruited ATs by soliciting the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) for the e-mail addresses of 1000 certified ATs employed in the collegiate setting. We excluded any AT who worked outside of the collegiate setting. A total of 202 responses to demographics questions were useable, for a response rate of 20.2%. This participant

**Table 2. Big Five Inventory Classifying Statements**

Domain (Items, No.)	Statement
Extroversion (8)	Is talkative
	Is reserved
	Is full of energy
	Generates a lot of enthusiasm
	Tends to be quiet
	Has an assertive personality
	Is sometimes shy
	Is outgoing, sociable
Agreeableness (9)	Tends to find fault with others
	Is helpful and unselfish
	Starts quarrels with others
	Has a forgiving nature
	Is generally trusting
	Can be cold and aloof
	Is considerate and kind to almost everyone
	Is sometimes rude to others
Conscientiousness (9)	Likes to cooperate with others
	Does a thorough job
	Can be somewhat careless
	Is a reliable worker
	Tends to be disorganized
	Tends to be lazy
	Perseveres until the task is finished
	Does things efficiently
Neuroticism (8)	Makes plans and follows through
	Is easily distracted
	Is depressed, blue
	Is relaxed, handles stress well
	Can be tense
	Worries a lot
	Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
	Can be moody
Openness (10)	Remains calm in tense situations
	Gets nervous easily
	Is original, comes up with new ideas
	Is curious about many different things
	Is ingenious, a deep thinker
	Has an active imagination
	Is inventive
	Values artistic, aesthetic experiences
	Prefers work that is routine
	Likes to reflect, play with ideas
	Has few artistic interests
	Is sophisticated in art and literature

sample comprised 68 men (33.7%) and 134 women (66.3%). Table 1 highlights participant demographics.

### Instrumentation

We collected our data using a Web-based survey instrument housed on SurveyMonkey (Palo Alto, CA). The survey consisted of 3 sections. The first 2 sections were designed to measure personality traits of ATs and job satisfaction; the third section collected general demographic information, including age, current position, and years of experience for ATs working in the collegiate setting.

**Personality.** The Big Five Inventory (BFI) was used to measure the personality traits of ATs. The BFI framework has gained considerable support and is the most widely used model of personality.<sup>32</sup> The BFI measures the 5 domains of personality using 44 characteristics formulated as statements about oneself and rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*disagree*

**Table 3. Comparison of Coefficients**

Big Five Inventory Comparison		
Subscale	Current Study (n = 225)	John et al <sup>37</sup> (n = 191)
Extroversion	0.89	0.86
Agreeableness	0.78	0.79
Conscientiousness	0.79	0.82
Neuroticism	0.83	0.87
Openness	0.76	0.83
Job Satisfaction Survey		
Subscale	Current Study (n = 225)	Terranova and Henning <sup>25</sup> (n = 191)
Supervision	0.86	0.89
Pay and rewards	0.87	0.87
Benefits	0.84	0.83
Promotion	0.79	0.75
Coworkers	0.82	0.78
Nature of work	0.81	0.76
Operating conditions	0.51	0.69
Communication	0.79	0.75

*strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). Classifying statements for each domain are listed in Table 2. Table 3 compares the reliability coefficients for the BFI subscales as reported by John et al<sup>37</sup> and us.

**Job Satisfaction.** The Spector JSS was used to assess the ATs' level of satisfaction with their current jobs.<sup>24</sup> In the original JSS, 36 items are divided into 10 subscales (9 subscales and 1 total score). Terranova and Henning<sup>25</sup> modified the JSS for studying job satisfaction in ATs. Their survey was reduced to 8 subscales by combining the subscales of pay and contingent rewards from the Spector survey into 1 subscale. The 8 subscales were supervision, pay and rewards, fringe benefits, promotional opportunities, coworkers, nature of work, operating conditions, and communication. The scales addressed satisfaction related to those facets assessed as important to evaluating one's job. The JSS was measured on a 6-point Likert scale with anchors of 1 (*disagree very much*) and 6 (*agree very much*). The Cronbach coefficient  $\alpha$  for the scales ranged from 0.69 to 0.89, ensuring an acceptable level of internal consistency. Similar to the findings of Terranova and Henning<sup>25</sup> with ATs, the internal consistency for this study ranged from 0.69 to 0.89.

**Demographics.** The third section of the survey was designed to collect demographic data inclusive of age, highest level of education, athletic training experience, athletic training work context, work-related time commitment, and income.

**Data-Collection Procedure.** After receiving institutional review board approval, we contacted NATA Member Services to request a membership list with the criterion of certified members working in all collegiate settings. The e-mail to potential recruits included the purpose of the study, a brief description of the survey, and an account of how consent was to be obtained. Participants were directed to a Web site URL, where they were invited to complete an online survey (SurveyMonkey). Consent was implied once they initiated the survey.

Data collection began in early January 2013. Two weeks after the initial solicitation, the NATA sent a second e-mail to all potential participants. A third e-mail was sent 4 weeks after the initial solicitation to help increase our overall

response rate. Data collection ceased after the third e-mail in late February 2013.

## Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software (version 21; IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY). Preliminary analysis of the background variables began with an independent *t* test that was performed as a general analysis of our demographic data. We were looking specifically at sex differences in the BFI domains and JSS subscales. Analyses of variance were used to determine variations in BFI domains and JSS subscales by age, education level, income, position, years certified by the Board of Certification, years at current institution, and years in current position. Pearson product moment correlations were conducted to evaluate the relationships between job satisfaction and personality, demographics data and job satisfaction, and demographics data and personality. Quasihierarchical stepwise multiple regression analyses were calculated to examine which Big Five personality domains predicted each of the 8 job-satisfaction scales and total job satisfaction, after controlling for significant background variables.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Variables

To determine sex differences in the BFI and job satisfaction, we performed an independent *t* test. No differences were found in any subscales except neuroticism, which demonstrated higher scores in women than in men (mean =  $2.53 \pm 0.635$  versus  $2.32 \pm 0.636$ , respectively;  $t_{200} = -2.26$ ,  $P < .05$ ). Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to evaluate relationships between demographic information and the subscales of job satisfaction (Table 4). Because the correlation between years in current position and years at institution was multicollinear ( $r > 0.8$ ), years in current position was used in regression analyses. No significant relationship was evident between age and any of the JSS scales, so age was also excluded from subsequent analyses. Relationships between Big Five personality domains revealed a weak negative relationship between extroversion and years certified ( $r = -0.143$ ,  $P = .044$ ) and years at current institution ( $r = -0.180$ ,  $P = .011$ ). A weak negative relationship was also discovered between agreeableness and years certified ( $r = -0.184$ ,  $P = .009$ ). Table 4 highlights the correlations between background demographics and job-satisfaction subscales. Correlation analyses among the Big Five personality domains and job-satisfaction scales indicated weak positive relationships between the extroversion and conscientiousness scales and total job satisfaction. A moderate positive relationship was revealed between agreeableness and total job satisfaction, and a moderate negative relationship was discovered between neuroticism and total job satisfaction (Table 5).

### Predictors of Job Satisfaction

We used quasihierarchical stepwise regression to examine the amount of variability in the subscales of job satisfaction explained by demographic and personality

**Table 4. Correlations Between Job-Satisfaction Subscales and Background Demographic Characteristics**

Demographic Characteristic	<i>r</i>								
	Supervision	Pay and Rewards	Benefits	Promotion	Coworkers	Nature of Work	Operating Conditions	Communication	Total Job Satisfaction
Highest level of education	-0.014	0.037	0.218 <sup>a</sup>	0.028	-0.086	-0.066	-0.039	-0.010	0.03
Years as Board of Certification-certified athletic trainer	-0.209 <sup>a</sup>	-0.146 <sup>b</sup>	0.062	-0.157 <sup>b</sup>	-0.200 <sup>a</sup>	-0.189 <sup>a</sup>	-0.166 <sup>b</sup>	-0.125	-0.19 <sup>a</sup>
Years at current institution	-0.235 <sup>a</sup>	-0.195 <sup>a</sup>	-0.014	-0.210 <sup>a</sup>	-0.212 <sup>a</sup>	-0.119	-0.196 <sup>a</sup>	-0.121	-0.22 <sup>a</sup>
Years at current position	-0.235 <sup>a</sup>	-0.237 <sup>a</sup>	-0.010	-0.274 <sup>a</sup>	-0.186 <sup>a</sup>	-0.181 <sup>b</sup>	-0.137	-0.120	-0.22 <sup>a</sup>
I am responsible for (no.) teams	-0.144 <sup>b</sup>	0.060	0.059	-0.004	-0.037	0.071	0.006	-0.038	0.043
In season, h	-0.100	-0.226 <sup>a</sup>	0.074	-0.214 <sup>a</sup>	-0.074	-0.134	-0.189 <sup>a</sup>	-0.064	-0.01
Out of season, h	-0.078	-0.166 <sup>b</sup>	0.077	-0.113	0.024	-0.115	-0.173 <sup>b</sup>	-0.003	-0.14
In-season travel, d/mo	-0.015	-0.120	0.058	-0.147 <sup>b</sup>	-0.071	0.035	-0.037	-0.057	-0.07
Current salary	-0.174 <sup>b</sup>	0.059	0.380 <sup>a</sup>	0.003	-0.207 <sup>a</sup>	-0.052	-0.128	-0.025	-0.02

<sup>a</sup> Significant correlation at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

<sup>b</sup> Significant correlation at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).

variables. After controlling for significant background variables identified in the correlation analyses (see Table 4), the contributions of the Big Five domains were examined separately, entered in stepwise fashion. Results of the regression analysis are displayed in Table 6.

Nine separate regression analyses, 1 for each job-satisfaction subscale and 1 for total job satisfaction, were conducted. For supervision, controlling for number of teams, years certified, current salary, and position explained 8%, and extroversion, 3%, of the total (11%) variance. Controlling for years certified, years in current position, and in-season and out-of-season hours explained 12%, and neuroticism, 6%, of the 18% total variance in pay and rewards. After controlling for salary and education, which explained 16% of the total variance, agreeableness explained an additional 4% of the 22% total variance in benefits; openness was not significant ( $P > .005$ ). For satisfaction with promotion, controlling for years certified, years at current position, in-season hours, and in-season travel explained 13%, and extroversion, 3%, of the total variance (16%). Years certified, years in current position, and salary background variables controlled in the analyses for satisfaction with coworkers were not significant, but extroversion (10%) and agreeableness (4%) explained most of the total variance (20%). Similarly, for satisfaction with nature of the work, neither of the background variables was significant (years certified or years at current position), but neuroticism (12%), extroversion (6%), and agreeableness (4%) explained most of the 24% total variance. None of the

background variables (years certified, years at current position, hours in and out of season) were significant predictors of operating conditions, with agreeableness explaining 6% of the 14% total variance. No background variables were controlled in the model for satisfaction with communication because correlations were not significant. Extroversion (11%) and neuroticism (5%) explained the 16% total variance. For the total JSS, years certified and years at current position were significant background variables, explaining 6%, while agreeableness (10%) and extroversion (4%) explained most of the 22% total variance.

## DISCUSSION

Finding a career and work setting that are enjoyable and rewarding and fit personal needs is important to bolster satisfaction as well as retention in the workplace.<sup>38,39</sup> Until now, the idea that personality plays a major role in finding satisfaction in one's job in athletic training, as well as retaining the person in the profession, has been hypothetical. We predicted that an AT with high scores in job satisfaction would have a positive relationship with the personality traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness and a negative relationship with the personality trait of neuroticism. Our result revealed that the personality domain of agreeableness had a moderate positive relationship and extroversion and conscientiousness had a weak positive relationship with job satisfaction, whereas neuroticism had a moderate negative relationship with job

**Table 5. Correlations Between Big Five Inventory Domains and Job Satisfaction**

Job-Satisfaction Subscale	Big 5 Inventory Domains, <i>r</i>				
	Extroversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Supervision	0.211 <sup>a</sup>	0.157 <sup>c</sup>	0.039	0.175 <sup>a</sup>	0.020
Pay and rewards	0.178 <sup>a</sup>	0.095	0.036	-0.229 <sup>a</sup>	-0.018
Benefits	-.023	0.108	0.094	-0.061	-0.096
Promotion	.191 <sup>a</sup>	0.043	-0.002	-0.142 <sup>c</sup>	0.043
Coworkers	0.260 <sup>b</sup>	0.315 <sup>b</sup>	0.081	-0.285 <sup>b</sup>	0.042
Nature of work	0.354 <sup>b</sup>	0.365 <sup>b</sup>	0.296 <sup>b</sup>	-0.373 <sup>b</sup>	0.128
Operating conditions	0.121	0.256 <sup>a</sup>	0.203 <sup>a</sup>	-0.235 <sup>b</sup>	0.073
Communication	0.324 <sup>b</sup>	0.262 <sup>a</sup>	0.155 <sup>c</sup>	-0.295 <sup>b</sup>	0.048
Total job satisfaction	0.284 <sup>b</sup>	0.308 <sup>b</sup>	0.175 <sup>a</sup>	-0.328 <sup>b</sup>	0.032

<sup>a</sup> Significant correlation at the .01 level (2 tailed).

<sup>b</sup> Significant correlation at the .001 level (2 tailed).

<sup>c</sup> Significant correlation at the .05 level (2 tailed).

**Table 6. Results of 9 Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Job-Satisfaction Models<sup>a</sup>**

Variable	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> <sub>adj</sub>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> Change	$\beta$	<i>P</i> Value
1. Supervision model					
Certified (y), current position (y), salary	0.28	0.06	0.08		.004 <sup>b</sup>
Extroversion	0.31	0.09	.03	.18	>.005
2. Pay and rewards model					
Certified (y), current position (y), in season (h), out of season (h)	0.34	0.09	0.12		<.001 <sup>c</sup>
Neuroticism	0.42	0.15	0.06	-.24	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
3. Benefits model					
Salary, education	0.40	0.15	0.16		<.001 <sup>c</sup>
Agreeableness	0.44	0.18	0.04	.21	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
Openness	0.46	0.19	0.02	-.14	>.005
4. Promotion model					
Certified (y), current position (y), in season (h), in-season travel (d/mo)	0.36	0.11	0.13		<.001 <sup>c</sup>
Extroversion	0.41	0.14	0.03	.19	<.005 <sup>c</sup>
5. Coworkers model					
Certified (y), current position (y), salary	0.24	0.04	0.06		>.005
Extroversion	0.40	0.14	0.10	.30	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
Agreeableness	0.44	0.17	0.04	.20	<.005 <sup>c</sup>
6. Nature of work model					
Certified (y), current position (y)	0.21	0.03	0.04		>.005
Neuroticism	0.40	0.15	0.12	-.18	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
Extroversion	0.46	0.20	0.06	.25	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
Agreeableness	0.51	0.24	0.04	.24	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
7. Operating conditions model					
Certified (y), current position (y), in and out of season (h)	0.27	0.05	0.08		>.005
Agreeableness	0.37	0.11	0.06	.25	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
8. Communication model					
Extroversion	0.32	0.11	0.11	.26	
Neuroticism	0.39	0.14	0.05	-.22	
9. Total job satisfaction model					
Certified (y), current position (y)	0.23	0.06	0.06		<.005 <sup>b</sup>
Agreeableness	0.39	0.14	0.10	.22	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
Extroversion	0.44	0.18	0.04	.17	<.001 <sup>c</sup>
Neuroticism	0.46	0.19	0.02	-.16	>.005

<sup>a</sup> Background demographics were controlled at step 1 in each of the models with Big Five Inventory personality scales entered at step 2 in stepwise fashion.

<sup>b</sup> Significant at the  $P < .05$  level.

<sup>c</sup> Significant at the  $P < .001$  level.

satisfaction, supporting our original hypothesis. Our results expand our understanding of how personality may affect job satisfaction and potentially influence retention in the athletic training profession, building on the job-satisfaction work of Terranova and Henning.<sup>25</sup>

Agreeableness was the personality domain that had the strongest predictive value among this sample of collegiate athletic trainers. Furthermore, analyses of variance revealed a difference in agreeableness scores, with ATs in the 31- to 35-year age group scoring lower than those in the 20- to 25- and 26- to 30-year age groups. This is consistent with BFI and demographic correlations that indicated a negative relationship between agreeableness and years certified and could help to explain the low response rate of older ATs.

Our results indicate less satisfaction with the collegiate setting as years certified and years at current institution increase. This could help explain the lower numbers among older, more experienced ATs; they could be leaving the collegiate setting for a more suitable setting or moving out of the profession altogether. We identified a sharp decline in the number of collegiate ATs over the age of 30 years, with only 7 ATs over the age of 35, 2 of whom were over 50. This finding is not surprising for 2 main

reasons: our sample population was mainly female and Kahanov and Eberman<sup>7</sup> similarly showed that female ATs departed the profession before the age of 30. Other authors<sup>40</sup> have also shown that most collegiate ATs were age 35 or younger. Our findings help expand the explanation for this result, indicating that an AT's personality influences his or her assessment of job satisfaction, which in turn influences the decision to remain in the profession. This could also simply indicate a low priority placed on completing our survey rather than lower actual job satisfaction.

Women in our sample reported higher levels of neuroticism than their male counterparts. Previous studies with the BFI have also shown that women displayed higher levels of neuroticism than men.<sup>41</sup> In fact, Schmitt et al,<sup>41</sup> who examined personality differences among men and women in 55 nations, found that sex differences were most pronounced in the neuroticism dimension and that men in no culture reported significantly more neuroticism than women. Schmitt et al<sup>41</sup> also noted that women reported higher levels of extroversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness than men and concluded that, with greater human development and with more opportunities for gender equality, the Big Five personalities of men and women

did not become more similar. We did observe sex differences in personality, with the exception of neuroticism. It is possible that, because all of our participants were employed in the same profession, certain personalities are drawn to athletic training. Furthermore, sex differences are rarely reported in athletic training for professional concerns of work-life balance and parenting; thus, we did not expect to find any differences in regard to personality and job satisfaction.

Research in the area of job satisfaction and gender indicates that women are paid less (ie, earnings gap), but they appear more satisfied with their jobs than men in the United States and Great Britain.<sup>42–44</sup> The literature offers 2 possible explanations for this paradox. The first is that satisfaction is a function of expectations. If women have generally lower expectations about their job outcomes, their expectations are more easily fulfilled.<sup>42</sup> It is possible that women's job expectations are more than being met in the general population. Second, the problem could be in selection. A large portion of women are not employed by their own choice. It is possible that employed women are not a random sample of the entire female population and that employed women may be generally happier than nonemployed women. Many women choose not to work, but others make the difficult decision to depart their professions to care for and raise their families. Although this is a decision made by many women of their own choosing, it is not necessarily an easy one or one that prevents them from second guessing themselves. Women are typically still primarily responsible for childcare and housework and men for the financial aspects of a household. Therefore, women who are dissatisfied with their jobs may be more likely to leave the labor force. As Clark<sup>42</sup> stated, less social pressure is placed on women than on men to be successful at work.

Previous research<sup>45–47</sup> on professional commitment of ATs has shown that individuals in this profession are highly intrinsically motivated. Perhaps this motivation is a manifestation of certain personality traits common to ATs. Authors of a 2008 study<sup>48</sup> conducted in a university setting found support for the potential mediating role of intrinsic motivation between creativity and openness. Further investigation of individual personality traits of ATs is warranted to identify similarities.

## LIMITATIONS

Our study was designed as an open exploration of the effect of personality domains on job satisfaction among ATs employed in the collegiate clinical setting. We did not examine organizational structure, organizational climate, or the cultures of the individual participants' places of employment. Each of these factors can affect one's role within an organization, and therefore, we cannot say how these factors may have influenced our participants' job satisfaction. We do know, however, that certain personality domains likely make a person more or less susceptible to individual organizational cultures and climates. This limitation, however, provides the backdrop for future investigations in which those organizational facets are examined and evaluated for links with career placement and success.

Similar to Terranova and Henning,<sup>25</sup> we recognize that response bias was another primary limitation. The design of our survey did not allow us to track nonrespondents, and thus, we cannot determine if the demographics and personality domain and job-satisfaction scores were similar in nonrespondents. It is also important to note that we used a strictly quantitative approach to assessing personality and job satisfaction; future authors may pursue a mixed-methods approach to further understand ATs' personality assessments and their love of their jobs.

Additionally, our work was a measurement of personality at 1 time point and did not examine any longitudinal effects. Future researchers should examine the influence of personality over time; as indicated by other studies, time of year can play a role in the personal assessment of satisfaction, workload, and balance. Our results provide a baseline for future assessments to continue to evaluate ATs' personalities and their relationship to other factors, including burnout and work-life conflict.

We examined personality using only the Big Five construct. Other facets of personality, such as hardiness, could provide insights into the job satisfaction of ATs. Hardiness is often described as a personality attribute that relates to stability, coping, and resiliency, all fundamental characteristics that are likely to promote persistence among this population. Thus, we believe that future investigators should examine the relationships among personality, hardiness, resiliency, and job satisfaction. Additionally, future authors should explore how our knowledge of the relationship of personality to job satisfaction could enhance or potentially change the athletic training working environment.

## CONCLUSIONS

The ATs in this study demonstrated a positive relationship for extroversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness with job satisfaction. Simply stated, these ATs appeared to be outgoing and to find time spent at work rewarding. Moreover, they must feel appreciated and well received and get along with others, all factors that facilitate a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Additionally, neuroticism had a negative relationship with job satisfaction. Our findings speak to the existing knowledge regarding the relationship between the Big Five model of personality and job satisfaction, which indicates that those who are neurotic will be less satisfied, as they experience more negative life events than others.

We are the first, to our knowledge, to examine the association of personality with job satisfaction. Our findings made the link between personality and job satisfaction clear. We believe that our results will help to specifically change the athletic training work environment. Concerns related to job satisfaction exist on multiple levels, and these data highlight the importance of individual-level factors.

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