AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL READING HABITS OF CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS

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Many healthcare professions, including athletic training, mandate that credential holders stay abreast of the latest knowledge and skills in their field of study. To accomplish this, credential holders often participate in some type of continuing education. Professional journal reading is a form of continuing education believed to be effective in disseminating new knowledge and skills for professionals. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify professional journal reading habits of certified athletic trainers and determine subjects’ attitudes toward journal reading using an online survey. The online survey contained three sections measuring subject’s professional journal reading habits. Section 1 identified basic demographic information and reading habits. Section 2 measured commonly read journals and journal sections, and factors motivating/inhibiting reading habits. Section 3 measured subjects’ attitudes toward professional journal reading. A Cronbach’s alpha of .76 for the journal reading attitudinal score demonstrated good internal consistency. Two hundred and seventy two subjects (M = 135, F = 137) out of 3,005 useable emails addresses (9%) completed the online survey. Studies indicate that online response rates range between 6-94%. Mean perceived time spent reading professional journals per week was 89.2 minutes (± 84.4) while the mean journal reading attitude score was 71.1 (± 6.70) (95 = positive attitude). Data revealed a significant difference between the degree and journal reading attitudes, $F(2, 270) = 3.5$, $p = 0.031$. Post-hoc analysis revealed subjects holding a doctorate degree ($M = 74.7 \pm 6.2$) had significantly more favorable attitudes toward journal reading than subjects holding a bachelors ($M = 70.9 \pm 6.6$) or masters degree ($M = 70.7 \pm 6.6$). Eighty-six percent of subjects reported not devoting enough time to journal reading. Lack of time (62.5%) was reported as the main reason for not devoting enough time to reading. Commonly read journals included the *Journal of Athletic Training* (40.2%) and *The Physician and Sports Medicine* (9.05%). Subjects’ reported reading the following journal sections all of time; clinical/practical articles (71%) and case reports (50.7%). Advertisement (32%) and letters to the editor (29%) were never read by subjects. Thirty percent of subjects reported receiving continuing education units from professional journal reading. The desire to remain abreast of new information (70%) and new clinical applications (69%) were two factors motivating subjects to read. Reading professional journals is one of many strategies used to disseminate information and is a good means for practitioners to remain current and competent in one’s professional settings.
Key Words: Continuing education, professionalism, attitude, disseminating information