Understanding Gender and Cultural Norms in Athletic Training: Validating a Short Scale
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Context: Within athletic training, professional turnover has the potential to negatively impact patient care. There are many hypothesized factors that influence the attrition of athletic trainers, including sociocultural factors. Due to existing societal gender norms, women typically have a more difficult time maintaining both work and life responsibilities. Retention among athletic trainers is well researched topic; however there is no known survey instrument that measures the perceived impact gender and cultural norms play on athletic trainers’ workplace interactions and outcomes. It is important to assess sociocultural factors to have a better understanding of the complexities of career intentions. Objective: Validate a short Gender and Cultural Norm Survey (GCNS) within an athletic training population and determine if gender differences exist. Design: Cross sectional design Setting: Participants were recruited from all NATA practice settings. Patients or Other Participants: Participants were recruited utilizing convenience and snowball sampling procedures. A total of 102 athletic trainers from 8 NATA districts participated; 38 (37.3%) males and 64 (62.7%) females representing a 34% response rate. The majority were white (88.1%), employed at the collegiate setting (53.9%) and held a Master’s Degree (67.6%). Our participants worked on average 51±14 hours a week, had 8±7 years of experience, and were 31±7yrs old. Interventions: Data were collected via Qualtrics, a web based survey instrument and consisted of two sections: 1) Demographics, and 2) 10 item GCNS. The survey was designed to assess athletic trainers’ perceptions of how their gender impacts specific workplace and life dimensions and questions were developed specifically for this instrument. The 10 items were scored in a content adequacy test to determine the degree to which each question matched the defined workplace and life dimensions. The Cronbach’s alpha =0.76. Main Outcome Measures: Likert responses (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) for the GCNS questions were summed to provide a score for each participant. Scores could range from 10-50. A score of 30 represents a neutral response, below 30 indicates a perception of gender negatively impacting workplace and life dynamics, while a score above 30 would indicate a positive perception of gender. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine if there were any gender differences. Results: The mean GCNS score for all participants was 25.8±4.9 ranging from 10–34 (males =24.4±5.6, females =26.7±4.3). Mann-Whitney U testing revealed that males scored significantly lower than females (U=848, p=0.039). Conclusions: Regardless of gender, we found that our participants felt as though their gender negatively impacted their work and life dimensions. Interestingly, males felt that their gender impacted them more negatively than females in our study. Future testing will need to be completed in order to better determine which specific outcomes males and females perceive are impacted by their gender. Word Count: 450