

An Analysis of Potential Factors Influencing College Sport Communicators' Feelings of Being Overworked and Underappreciated

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Abstract

In collegiate athletic communication, CSCs play pivotal roles, balancing the preservation of student-athlete narratives with the real-time demands of media-driven communication. However, a persistent challenge has emerged: many CSCs experience a pronounced sense of being overworked and undervalued (Elliott et al., 2023; Hardin & McClung, 2002; Stoldt, 2013; Whiteside, 2014). This issue is further exacerbated by athletic department expansions that often neglect meaningful consultation with CSCs, reflecting a broader trend of institutions expanding sports programs to boost enrollment and revenue. These rapid expansions burden CSCs with additional responsibilities, leaving them struggling to fulfill their already-demanding roles, including maintaining statistics, preserving program history, and crafting compelling athlete narratives. Furthermore, the lack of consultation can hamper the authentic storytelling of student-athletes, risking a decline in the substance of collegiate sports communication. This study aims to explore predictors contributing to CSCs' feelings of being overworked and underappreciated, investigating factors like years of experience, career motivations, reasons for institutional selection, and tenure plans to understand their impact on CSCs' perceptions before employment. Ultimately, the study seeks to offer insights that inform strategies to improve the working conditions of CSCs in a changing collegiate sports landscape.

Method and Analysis The researchers sent a survey instrument that included Likert scale, closed-ended items related to feelings over being overworked and underappreciated to CSCs. The survey solicited information related to each participant's tenure plan for their current position, years of experience, the reason why they got into the CSC profession, and why the CSC is working at the specific institution they are currently employed. The survey items were informed by a previous study from Elliott et al., 2023 identifying specific responses from participants indicating why CSCs may feel overworked and underappreciated in their position. The primary analysis involved an independent samples t-test, which was selected due to its suitability for comparing two independent groups. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Additionally, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess years of experience reported by participants and related responses to being overworked and under-appreciated.

Discussion and Implications In terms of the impact of tenure plan on CSC feelings of being overworked and underappreciated, the relationship with coaches and athletes appeared paramount across tenure intention groups. Further, CSCs tended to value coaches and athletes understanding their job as well. However, in terms of reason for entering the industry or taking a specific role, there appeared to be limited patterns within the data. This finding may suggest that there are minute effects around career choice and feelings of being overworked. Overall, there is a need to better support CSCs in the field and many governing bodies exist to provide resources – the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA), College Sport Communicators Association (CSC), and NCAA conference offices. With

the impactful work done by CSCs, the governing bodies associated with the CSC position should be willing to step up and provide support for the employees stretched thin in the positions.