Self-Care Strategies and Psychological Ownership in Athletic Trainers

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TITLE: Psychological Ownership in Athletic Training

ABSTRACT

Context: Psychological ownership (PO) is a state where an individual feels possession over an object (e.g. PO over the organization where one works, PO over the profession one serves). Understanding PO could provide insight to “vitality of the profession” as defined in the Prioritized Research Agenda for the Athletic Training Profession.

Objective: The purpose of this study was to explore athletic trainers’ (AT) PO over their employing organization and the athletic training profession.

Design: Cross-Sectional Study

Setting: Web-based survey

Patients or Other Participants: Clinically practicing ATs that were active members of NATA.

Main Outcome Measure(s): Demographic variables, Psychological Ownership Questionnaire (POQ), and Psychological Ownership of Athletic Training (POQ-AT) were the primary outcomes measured. Descriptive statistics were calculated for demographic variables, POQ and POQ-AT overall scores, form scores, and dimension scores. Non-parametric tests were used to investigate differences between the POQ and POQ-AT among demographic characteristics.

Results: ATs indicated greater PO over the athletic training profession (Z=-3.45, p=0.001) than over their employing organization. They indicated greater belongingness (Z=-9.51, p<0.001) and self-identity (Z=-8.71, p<0.001) and less territoriality (Z=-5.52, p<0.001) and accountability (Z=-5.33, p<0.001) over their profession than within their organization. ATs that supervised others indicated greater overall POQ (U=34372, p<0.001) and overall POQ-AT score (U=36624,
p=0.014) than ATs that did not supervise others. There was a difference in overall POQ (H(4)=20.47, p<0.001) and overall POQ-AT scores (H(4)=21.34, p<0.001) between groupings of years of experience.

**Conclusions:** ATs indicate greater PO over their profession than their employing organizations. They indicate greater self-identity and belongingness and less territoriality and accountability over the athletic training profession than over their employing organization suggesting ATs are connecting aspirations and accomplishments with the profession but connecting duty and responsibility to their organizations. Years of experience and supervisor status may play a role in the level of organizational PO.

**Key Words:** belongingness, identity, territoriality, organization, profession

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**Key Points:**

1. Athletic trainers’ responses indicated greater feelings of psychological ownership over the athletic training profession than over their employing organization.

2. Athletic trainers report greater self-identity and belongingness and less territoriality and accountability over the athletic training profession than over their employing organization, suggesting athletic trainers are connecting aspirations and accomplishments with the profession but connecting duty and responsibility to their organizations.

3. Those in decision-making positions, or supervisors indicate higher psychological ownership over their organizations and the profession than their non-supervisor counterparts.
The Prioritized Research Agenda for the Athletic Training Profession established vitality of the profession as an area of needed exploration. Investigating the vitality of the profession includes the exploration and identification of solutions to improve work-life balance, retention of athletic trainers (AT) in jobs and the profession and advancing the reputation of the profession and the value of an AT. Thus far, much of the research in this prioritized research agenda has identified areas that lead to professional attrition rather than investigating solutions for improving the vitality of the profession. Kahanov and Eberman noted a general decline in the athletic training labor force across an occupational lifespan, with men and women differing across settings and age-groups and a noticeable decline in the number of ATs in the workforce after 30 years of age. Differences in the experience of work-life conflict and role strain have been demonstrated between females and males as well as between different work settings. These discrepancies both factor into burnout and may play a role in leaving the profession. Gender, setting, and age may play a role in work-life balance and the retention of ATs in jobs and profession. The challenges related the vitality of the profession are so ubiquitous to athletic training that it has entered the collective consciousness of the profession of athletic training through media and social media.

Psychological ownership (PO) is a theory that measures aspects of self-perception in direct relation to another object, and if applied appropriately to athletic training, PO may provide insight into topics related to professional vitality such as professional retention, organizational commitment, work-life balance, and burnout. PO is a state in which an individual, or individuals, feel that a target of ownership, or piece of a target is “theirs.” A feeling of PO can occur whenever there is a target to own. A target can be physical or non-physical, material or immaterial. When one develops PO over a target they feel possession over it, identify with it and become tied to it – the object becomes an extension of their self. To date, the theory of PO
has focused on an individual’s ownership over a job or an employing organization but it could also be applied to any object that one identifies with or feels possession over, such as the athletic training profession. Ideas or skills such as evidence-based practice, documentation, or use of outcome measures could also become targets and as such enhance PO of ATs.

There are internal and external factors that lead to the development of PO. Internal factors that influence the development of PO include self-efficacy, self-identity, and belongingness or a feeling of having a place in relation to a target. External factors that influence the development of PO include controlling a target, having intimate knowledge of a target, and investment of one’s self into a target. PO has been measured across various industries including business, technology, and medicine. Aspects of PO that have been investigated include: external factors to PO development; and work-related behavioral outcomes. The external factors related to PO development that have been investigated include job scope, work climate, decision making opportunities, monetary compensation and the type of leadership provided to employees. In regard to work-related behavioral outcomes, individuals with higher organizational PO have been shown to have increased job satisfaction, improved knowledge-sharing, organizational commitment, perseverance through adversity, decreased knowledge holding and turnover intent when compared to peers with lower organizational PO. To date, there has been no published investigations of PO in ATs or in the profession of athletic training. While PO development routes and behavioral outcomes of organizational PO have been established, the translation to the profession of athletic training, the organizations ATs work within, and the specifics of ATs’ jobs, have not been made. Evaluating PO in athletic training may better contextualize work-life integration recommendations and provide a framework for the development of solutions related to the improvement of organizational and professional retention, practice advancement, and improving the reputation of the profession.
The project had two purposes. The first purpose of the project is to explore PO in athletic training related to the feelings of PO ATs have over their employing organization and over the Athletic Training Profession. The second purpose of the project is to identify what demographic variables may be associated with higher or lower PO over an organization or over the profession, as areas of professional vitality have been previously affected by demographic variables.\textsuperscript{2–3} We hypothesized that (1) there would be a difference between the feelings of PO an AT demonstrates over the athletic training profession than over their employing organization, (2) demographic variables would have an impact on an ATs feeling of PO over the athletic training profession and (3) demographic variables would have an impact on an ATs feeling of PO over their employing organization.

METHODS

Study Design

We used a cross-sectional survey design to explore organizational and professional PO in clinically practicing ATs. This project was deemed exempt research by the XXX Institutional Review Board.

Participants

This study included ATs that were currently practicing daily patient care. To be included in the study, ATs had to be active members of the National Athletic Training Association (NATA) and were credentialed by the Board of Certification. A random sample of 8,000 ATs was generated from the NATA member database and emails inviting participation were sent via email. A total of 11.5% (n = 887) of individuals accessed the survey and of those that accessed the survey, 623 individuals met the inclusion criteria, consented to participation, completed the survey entirely (70.2%, n=623/887), and were included in the analysis. Participants were majority female, full-time employees, working in the college/university setting, holding a
professional master's degree, with 6-10 years of experience, not in supervision of others, with
an average age of 33±9 years. Participant demographic information can be found in Table 1.

Instrumentation

The web-based survey (Qualtrics®, Provo, UT) consisted of four sections: the informed
consent, a demographic section (7 items), the Psychological Ownership Questionnaire (POQ)
(16 items ©Copyright 2007, Mind Garden, Inc.), 5 and the adapted Psychological Ownership
Questionnaire for the Athletic Training Profession (POQ-AT) (16 items). The demographic
section of the instrument allowed us to gather information on gender, age, ethnicity, education,
years-of-experience, practice setting, employment status, and supervisory roles.

The POQ was designed to evaluate preventative and promotive forms of PO over an
organization. 5 The 16-items are categorized into 2 forms and 5 dimensions. The forms are
preventative PO and promotive PO. The dimensions include territoriality, self-efficacy,
accountability, sense of belongingness, and sense of self-Identity. 5 Territoriality is the lone
dimension composing the preventative psychological ownership form. 5 The dimensions of self-
efficacy, accountability, sense of belongingness, and sense of self-Identity compose the
promotive psychological ownership form. 5 Participants rated items on a 6-point Likert Scale. In
the Likert Scale, 1 represents Strongly Disagree and 6 represents Strongly Agree. Mean scores
are calculated for overall psychological ownership, for each form and for each dimension. 5 A
maximum score for overall psychological ownership, each form and each dimension are 6 and a
minimum score is 1. 5 The 5 dimensions of the POQ previously demonstrated acceptable
reliability during questionnaire development (α = .72 - .92) and in a follow up study used to
replicate and validate the questionnaires psychometric properties (α = .80 - .92). 5 When the
POQ was measured against similar constructs, such as transformational leadership,
organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, workplace deviance, intentions
to stay, and job satisfaction, the POQ demonstrated acceptable reliability (α = .77-.96). 5
questionnaire was positively related to transformational leadership ($r = .23, p < .01$), individual oriented organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) ($r = .15, p < .01$), organization targeted OCB ($r = .57, p < .01$), job satisfaction ($r = .49, p < .01$), intentions to stay with an organization ($r = .50, p < .01$) and negatively related to workplace deviance ($r = -.36, p < .01$).\(^5\) In summary, the POQ has been used with various constructs and has maintained its internal consistency. As such, it was reasonable to consider modifying the tool to address both organizational and professional PO in athletic training.

The POQ-AT was adapted from the POQ, where the POQ-AT uses the same 16-items, 2 forms, 5 dimensions, and scoring as the POQ. Vernacular changes were made so that the POQ-AT reflected the intent to measure PO over the athletic training profession. The word “organization” in the original POQ was changed to “profession” in the POQ-AT. A definition of “organization” and “profession” was given to participants prior to beginning the respective questionnaire sections. “Organization” was defined as, “The group through which you are employed. The group whose mission, vision, and standards you are obligated to. The group through which you practice clinically, regularly rendering services or treatments to patients.” “Profession” was defined as, “The athletic training profession. A group of healthcare providers, recognized by the American Medical Association, who render service or treatment, under the direction of or in collaboration with a physician, in accordance with their education, training, ethical standards, and the states’ statutes, rules and regulations. As a part of the healthcare team, services provided include injury and illness prevention, wellness promotion and education, emergent care, examination and clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention, and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions.” The vernacular changes in the POQ-AT and the accompanying definitions were reviewed by survey design experts and deemed appropriate for use. The tools demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (POQ Cronbach’s $\alpha=.81$; POQ-AT Cronbach’s $\alpha=.76$) in the sample population.
Procedure

The survey was emailed to potential participants that had been randomly selected by the NATA. The initial email included information on the study and a link to the web-based survey. Participants were sent an initial email, then weekly reminders for 3 weeks, and one final reminder at week 5. Data collection closed after 7 weeks. Data were collected and stored by the Research Survey Service until the project was completed. Data were deidentified and shared back with the research team for analysis.

Data Analysis

We omitted participants that did not complete both the POQ and POQ-AT from analysis. We calculated descriptive statistics for central tendency for demographic variables. Descriptive statistics for POQ and POQ-AT were calculated using mean score for overall PO, form score, and dimension score. We used non-parametric tests to investigate differences between the POQ and POQ-AT overall scores, form scores and dimension scores as well demographic variables in relation to POQ and POQ-AT overall scores. We conducted a Wilcoxon signed-rank test to investigate differences in overall POQ and POQ-AT scores. A Mann-Whitney U was used to investigate differences in overall POQ and POQ-AT scores between participants that supervised personnel and those that didn’t. We used a Kruskal-Wallis test to identify differences in POQ and POQ-AT scores among those with various years of experience, and subsequent Mann-Whitney U tests were used to conduct pairwise analyses when appropriate. All statistical analyses were completed at a significance level of p < .05 and conducted using IBM SPSS (Armonk, NY) Version 27.

RESULTS

Participants demonstrated comparable total PO (mean = 4.1 ± 0.6)\(^{13}\), promotive (mean = 4.6 ± 0.8) and preventative (mean = 2.4 ± 1.0) forms of organizational PO to other adult working
The promotion-focused dimensions were also comparable (self-efficacy = 5.0 ± 0.8, self-identity = 4.3 ± 1.1, accountability = 4.5 ± 0.9, belongingness = 4.6 ± 1.1) to other adult working groups. A comparison between POQ and POQ-AT overall PO scores and dimensions is displayed in Figure 1. Participants indicated greater PO over the athletic training profession (Z=-3.45, p=0.001) than over their employing organization. They indicated greater belongingness (Z=-9.51, p<0.001) and self-identity (Z=-8.71, p<0.001) over the profession than over their employing organization. They indicated less territoriality (Z=-5.52, p<0.001) and accountability (Z=-5.33, p<0.001) over their profession than within their organization. There were no significant differences between self-efficacy over the profession (Z=-1.41, p=0.16) and self-efficacy over an organization.

A comparison of overall POQ and POQ-AT mean scores in relation to supervision of personnel is presented in Figure 2. ATs that supervise others indicated greater overall POQ (U=34372, p<0.001) and overall POQ-AT score (U=36624, p=0.014) than ATs that did not supervise others, meaning they indicated greater PO over their organizations and over their profession than ATs that did not serve in a supervisory role.

A comparison of POQ and POQ-AT overall mean scores related to years of experience can be seen in Figure 3. There was a difference in overall POQ (H(4)=20.47, p<0.001) and overall POQ-AT scores (H(4)=21.34, p<0.001) between groupings of years of experience. Individuals with 21+ years of experience indicated greater organizational PO than individuals with 1-5 years of experience (U=3480, p<0.001), 6-10 years of experience (U=3609, p<0.001), 11-15 years of experience (U=1944, p=0.003) and 16-20 years of experience (U=837, p=0.043). Individuals with 21+ years of experience indicated greater professional PO than individuals with 1-5 years of experience (U= 4104, p=0.01), 6-10 years of experience (U=3681, p<0.001), and 16-20 years of experience (U=772, p=0.012). Individuals with 6-10 years of experience also...
indicated significantly lower PO over the profession than individuals with 1-5 years of experience (U=17938, p=0.020) and 11-15 years of experience (U=8298, p=0.002). There were no statistically significant differences between genders for POQ (U=38653, p=0.071) or POQ-AT (U=40702, p=0.409) overall scores.

**DISCUSSION**

PO develops through self-efficacy, self-identity, and belongingness in relation to a target of ownership or through feeling control over, having intimate knowledge of, or investment of self into a target. As PO develops, individuals feel more connected to a target, and it becomes part of their identity. PO has been associated with positive work-related behaviors such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. As PO has been shown to positively influence outcomes related to professional vitality, we believed investigating the organizational and professional PO of ATs would provide insight and frame the recommendations given to address challenges.

*Psychological Ownership*

ATs in this study indicated greater overall and promotive professional PO than overall and promotive organizational PO. Participants also indicated greater professional belongingness and self-identity than over their organization and lower professional territoriality and accountability when compared to their organization. Belongingness is defined as a need for a “home” that satisfies social and socio-emotional needs. Self-identity is a possession or object that becomes an extension and expression of an individual’s values and beliefs. Belongingness and self-identity with a target are related to feelings of accomplishment and aspiration, where an individual’s goals often reflect those feelings of accomplishment and aspiration. Self-identity with a target of PO may promote positive behaviors that are not prescribed by roles or responsibilities. Results from this study indicate that ATs may feel more “at home” within the
profession of athletic training than they do within their employing organizations. They may feel that the values and beliefs of their profession are more reflective of their own when compared to the values and beliefs of organizations they work within. Greater professional self-identity may promote positive un-prescribed behaviors on the professional level that are not seen at an organizational level. For instance, in athletic training, when ATs in the collegiate setting identify with a team as opposed to a patient population, they may participate in negative behaviors such as moral disengagement from return-to-play decisions. These ATs may relate team success to individual goals, accomplishments, and aspirations, suggesting that identity, and PO, must be directed at the correct target to promote positive behaviors.

Territoriality is described as a preventative form of PO. It is defined by the fear that external entities may influence a target of PO, which leads to the need to defend or protect that target from others. Accountability is the expectation that an individual will be called upon to justify their beliefs or actions to others. Territoriality is related to an individual's obligations and duties and the goals associated with territoriality are focused on reducing punishment. The results from this study indicate that individuals may feel the need to justify their actions, defend themselves and reduce the likelihood of punishment within their employing organizations more so than within the athletic training profession. As an example, in the social media culture of athletic training, this may be revealed by the connection with others in #ATTwitter while simultaneously reporting a lack of feeling valued by employers, thus the defending of themselves in their work and an empowerment among others within the profession.

Control over a target, intimate knowledge of a target, and investment of self into a target have all been theorized to explain why an individual may feel ownership over their job or organization. Several studies have identified that job control, decision-making power or participative decision-making, and being a part of a self-managing team promotes or has a positive relationship with PO. In our study, it was seen that ATs working in a supervisory role...
indicated significantly greater PO than individuals that did not. Also, individuals with 21+ years’
experience as an AT indicated significantly greater organizational and professional PO than ATs
with less years of experience. Job control and decision-making power may explain why ATs that
supervise others and ATs with more years of experience indicate greater levels of PO.
However, this explanation does not justify why ATs with 6-10 years of experience indicated the
lowest organizational and professional PO of all years of experience groupings. ATs with 6-10
years of experience indicated the lowest organizational and professional PO of all age groups.
They were the only group that demonstrated lower professional PO than organizational PO.
These findings, related to PO, could explain why there is a general decline in the labor force at
30 years of age.²

Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to stay with an organization are
relevant when discussing the vitality of the profession, through the lens of work-life intention and
job retention. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to stay with an
organization have been studied in relation to PO, and it has been established that they
positively relate to organizational PO throughout varying contexts.⁶-⁸,¹²,¹³ In our study, ATs
indicated significantly greater overall PO for the profession than for their employing
organization. Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to stay were not measured
in this study but based on the results, it could be theorized that ATs may be more satisfied with
and committed to the athletic training profession than they are their employing organizations.
Meaning, these ATs may be more likely to leave their organization before they leave the
profession.

Based on our findings, we theorize that organizational and professional PO occur on a
continuum, across an occupational lifespan for ATs. Throughout this continuum, the targets of
an ATs PO may shift and change as they gain experiences. ATs with 0-5 years of practice
experience may feel PO over the profession based on recent control over, and investment into,
their education and early career opportunities. They may not have experienced work-life conflict or job role strain at a level that negatively affects their feelings of belongingness or identification with their organization or profession. During the 6-10 years of experience range, an ATs personal and professional needs and priorities may change. The target of their PO may change based on evolving priorities. ATs may desire more job control, decision-making power, or supervisory responsibilities to meet their changing personal and professional needs. If they are not given these opportunities organizationally, the PO of ATs at this stage in their career declines and they may be willing to leave their organization and the profession, if needed, to find a sense of belongingness and identity elsewhere. ATs that stay in the profession past this point may then continue to invest themselves into their organization and the athletic training profession. Their knowledge of these targets increases with time and experience, and they are given more organizational or professional control, which maintains or increases their PO over their organization or the profession.

Recommendations for Promoting Psychological Ownership

Organizational and professional AT leaders should create formal and informal workplace opportunities for the employees to promote PO. To promote organizational PO, employers should provide AT employees with decision-making power and supervisory responsibilities when able, as these have been shown to promote PO in other industries. If there are no opportunities for such strategies, organizations should actively establish an environment that promotes employee control over the organization, intimate knowledge of the organization, and an investment of employee’s self into the organization. This could be established through a continued onboarding, mentoring, and socialization process at various time points in an AT career, whether the AT is a new professional or simply a new employee. From multiple sources, a large majority (76-77%) of ATs go through a formal orientation when transitioning to practice or transitioning to a new place of work, which demonstrates the opportunity for
organizational PO development. ATs transitioning to practice deemed that emergency action
plan practice, meeting with athletic training staff members, meeting with other staff members,
touring the facilities, and meeting with supervisors were the most useful orientation tactics. Additionally, ATs practicing in the collegiate setting that were formally or informally oriented to
work-life balance policies felt more confident and knowledgeable of those policies. These
orientation tactics may be useful because they provide ATs with an intimate knowledge of their
new work environment and provide them with a level of control over it, which promotes
belongingness, identity, and PO over the organization. ATs transitioning to practice have used
the support of professional mentors during that process with availability, honest feedback,
reassurance, and promotion of learning being the primary benefits for the mentee. These
tactics could be continued after the initial orientation process across an occupational lifespan for
the continued maintenance and development of organizational PO. Employers should
encourage and facilitate formal and informal mentorship relationships for all staff members.
They can use their AT staff in the orientation of new employees, hold regular meetings with
individual employees and between staff, and regularly orient staff to policies as they adapt,
change, or require reinforcement. Lastly, employers should consider using their staff members
with 6-10 years of experience in these processes. Specifically using this experienced group may
positively affect their comparatively lower PO by giving them control and allowing them to invest
into targets related to the organization.

Another opportunity for PO development may be in the utilization of employee self-care
strategies within an organizational setting. A recent study into self-care strategies found that
ATs regularly engage in physical and interpersonal self-care strategies. In the study, AT
participants engaged in moderate exercise, healthy diet and nutrition, and hydration to care for
themselves most often. Athletic trainers in the college/university setting (NCAA Division I) have
previously reported using exercise as a mechanism to separate or disengage from their role as
an athletic trainer.\textsuperscript{24} Fitness is thought to support healthful regeneration and increase engagement.\textsuperscript{25} Specifically, exercise is critical to building physical, psychological, and social resiliency, and is particularly helpful for leaders managing work-related stress, whereby the leaders develop increased stamina and mental focus.\textsuperscript{26} In fact, intense exercise has been found to improve performance of leaders who are experiencing emotional exhaustion and burnout.\textsuperscript{26} In addition, outdoor exercise is thought to be even more effective and might be considered as an enhanced self-care strategy.\textsuperscript{27} Moreover, organizations that have implemented exercise programs have seen improvements in worker perceptions of well-being and personal accomplishment, while also seeing decreases in psychological stress and emotional exhaustion.\textsuperscript{28}

Interpersonal self-care strategies used by participants, included social relationships, laughter, and setting personal and professional boundaries.\textsuperscript{23} Most participants in the study reported engagement in positive personal relationships and laughter on a weekly basis.\textsuperscript{23} Previous research in athletic training indicated support networks have been particularly helpful to rejuvenate commitment to athletic training.\textsuperscript{29} Social support and relationships also enhance one’s understanding of their role, thus minimizing role strain.\textsuperscript{29} A supportive work community contributes to job engagement, feelings of energy, involvement, and efficacy in the workplace.\textsuperscript{30} Laughter is a way one can express self-acceptance, kindness, and compassion for themselves and others, especially in times of perceived weakness.\textsuperscript{31} Laughter is thought to be an effective self-care strategy in the workplace because it has both physical and psychological benefits.\textsuperscript{31} Joyous laughter enhances mood, decreases stress hormones, enhances immune activity, lowers bad cholesterol and systolic blood pressure, and raises good cholesterol.\textsuperscript{32}

In theory, organizations could leverage self-strategies to develop organizational PO by promoting an employee’s self-efficacy, self-identity, and sense of belongingness within an organization while also enabling an employee to invest their self into the organization.
Supervisors should consider promoting self-care strategies of various forms to improve connection and a sense of ownership with the organization. Organizations that offer and combine physical and interpersonal strategies to help athletic trainers disengage from their professional role might lead to a stronger connection to the organization, especially when previous research has found success in work-based wellness programs.\textsuperscript{33-34}

**Limitations and Future Considerations**

The concept of PO is complex, and measurements are still somewhat argued in the organizational leadership literature.\textsuperscript{35} The instrument we used in this study accounts for both the promotive and preventative forms of PO, where others often ignore aspects of territoriality. This is the first study to measure the PO of ATs in relation to their organizations and in relation to the profession and there are limitations due to that. The other research in this area focused specifically on PO over their “organization,” and in the second purpose of the study, we also evaluated PO over the profession, as this helped us better explore the vitality of the profession. This study was the first to do so and as such, we were unable to draw external comparisons for this purpose.

The data for this project was collected within the first 6 months of the SARS-CoV-2 global pandemic. While it is unknown if the pandemic had a direct influence on our results, it is worth noting, particularly if this work will be used for future comparisons.

Future studies should seek to qualify the findings from this study. Further investigation is needed to determine potential causes for the PO differences between ATs and professionals in other fields, investigate why professional and organizational PO differences exist, and explore how feelings of belongingness, self-identity, territoriality, and accountability may positively and negatively affect specific behaviors and actions of ATs. Additionally, more information is needed to determine why individuals with 6-10 years of experience indicate the lowest levels of PO.
Factors that may contribute to organizational PO, including work-family responsibilities, formal and informal workplace policies, work-family conflict, work locus of control, workplace dynamics (including supervisor/supervisee interpersonal relationships), race and ethnicity, gender, and even setting should be explored. Future studies should also explore PO outcomes related to job and professional satisfaction, intent to stay with an organization or in the profession, work-life conflict, and burnout to improve job retention and work-life balance. PO targets in relation to practice advancement, such as the use of evidence-based practice, patient rated outcome measures, and documentation best practices should be measured so recommendations can be made to overcome barriers and improve the reputation of the profession.

**CONCLUSION**

ATs demonstrate greater PO over their profession than their employing organizations. They indicate greater self-identity and belongingness with the AT profession and more territoriality and accountability with their employing organization. This suggests ATs are connecting aspirations and accomplishments with the profession but connecting defensiveness, duty and responsibility to their organizations. Years of experience and supervisor responsibility may play a role in the level PO felt. While not the specific focus of this study, it is important to note that there may be a pattern or progression of PO across the occupational lifespan of an AT. Targets of PO may naturally shift and change based on personal and professional experiences and priorities. ATs may share similar personal and professional experiences at similar time points causing their organizational and professional PO to increase or decline at similar ages or years of experience groupings.

Organizational PO maintenance and development for employees should focus on one or more of the following factors: control of the organization, knowledge of the organization, investment of self into the organization, their sense of belongingness within the organization, their self-identity with the organization, or their self-efficacy within the organization.
Organizational efforts that include assimilation to the workplace, formal and informal workplace policies that integrate work and life, and organizationally directed employee self-care as seen in employee wellness initiatives may be the necessary blend of employer efforts to maintain and promote organizational PO. When able, organizations should empower employee decision-making and enable supervisory. Additionally, employers should consider providing employee self-care opportunities to develop and direct feelings of PO towards their organization.
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Table 1. Demographic Variables

Figure 1. A comparison of mean POQ-AT and POQ overall and dimension scores.

Figure 2. A comparison of POQ and POQ-AT overall means scores between individuals that have supervisory responsibilities and those that do not.

Figure 3. A comparison of mean overall POQ-AT and POQ scores across 5 groupings for years of experience.
Figure 1. A comparison of mean POQ-AT and POQ overall and dimension scores.

*significant at p<0.05
Figure 2. A comparison of POQ and POQ-AT overall means scores between individuals that have supervisory responsibilities and those that do not.

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Figure 3. A comparison of mean overall POQ-AT and POQ scores across 5 groupings for years of experience.
Table 1. Demographic Variables

| Demographic Variable                              | n    | %    |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|------|
| **Gender**                                       |      |      |
| Female                                           | 416  | 66.8 |
| Male                                             | 204  | 32.7 |
| Transgender or Non-binary                        | 1    | 0.2  |
| Prefer not to say                                | 2    | 0.3  |
| **Race/Ethnicity**                               |      |      |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native                   | 5    | 0.8  |
| Asian/Asian American                             | 18   | 2.9  |
| Black or African American                        | 18   | 2.9  |
| Hispanic or Latinx                               | 26   | 4.2  |
| Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander        | 1    | 0.2  |
| White or Caucasian (not Hispanic or Latinx)      | 543  | 87.7 |
| Not Listed                                       | 8    | 1.3  |
| **Employment Status**                            |      |      |
| Full-time                                        | 585  | 93.9 |
| Part-time                                        | 38   | 38   |
| **Practice Setting**                             |      |      |
| Clinic                                           | 50   | 8    |
| College/University                               | 297  | 47.7 |
| Professional Sports                              | 21   | 3.4  |
| Secondary School                                 | 183  | 29.4 |
| Hospital                                         | 13   | 2.1  |
| Emerging Setting                                 | 20   | 3.2  |
| Other                                            | 39   | 6.3  |
| **Highest Degree Earned**                        |      |      |
| Bachelors Degree                                 | 95   | 15.3 |
| Professional Masters Degree                      | 304  | 48.9 |
| Post-Professional Master’s Degree                | 192  | 30.9 |
| Advanced Practice Clinical Doctorate             | 22   | 3.5  |
| Research Doctorate                               | 9    | 1.4  |
| **Years of Experience**                          |      |      |
| 1-5                                              | 197  | 32.7 |
| 6-10                                             | 210  | 34.8 |
| 11-15                                            | 101  | 16.7 |
| 16-20                                            | 41   | 6.8  |
| 21+                                              | 54   | 8.9  |
| **Supervisor Responsibilities**                  |      |      |
| Supervisor                                       | 195  | 31.3 |
| Not a Supervisor                                 | 428  | 68.7 |