



JOB AND CAREER SATISFACTION IS RELATED TO PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND RELATIONAL WELL-BEING OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

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Introduction

Research has assessed the effect of work in physical rehabilitation, including occupational therapy on physical health (1,5), emotional well-being (2), and stress (7). Studies examining issues such as these among occupational therapists (OT) are limited to subjects from Canada (2) and Sweden (7), who demonstrated high levels of stress (7), emotional exhaustion, and cynicism (2). These issues have not been studied in the United States (US). The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between a variety of subject variables and the physical, mental, and relational well-being, of OT in the US.

Methods

- 101 OT (Age = 43.87 ± 13.57 years) participated. Surveys were sent via conventional mail to 493 OT in the US whose information was obtained from the AOTA. Subjects included 95 women and 5 men, from 31 states. A qualitative, cross-sectional conventional mail survey was used to characterize AOTA occupational therapist's background and position profile.
- The survey instrument, National Role Delineation of Occupational Therapists, was adopted from a previous published research study of physical therapists (2,3). The survey contained 30 open-ended and fixed-response questions, resulting in 400 pages of data.
- Subjects provided written informed consent prior to participating and the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board.
- Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to determine the relationship between subject variables and measures of job satisfaction.
- Descriptive data were analyzed, using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 24.0).
- Answers to open-ended questions were content-analyzed according to previously published recommendations (6).

Results

- Subject satisfaction in their current position was correlated with their self-reported physical ($r = -0.25$, $p = 0.019$), mental ($r = -0.26$, $p = 0.012$), and relational ($r = -0.25$, $p = 0.018$) well-being.
- Subject satisfaction with their career in general was correlated with their physical ($r = -0.27$, $p = 0.009$) and mental ($r = -0.31$, $p = 0.003$) well-being.
- No correlations were found ($p > 0.05$) between subject's gender, level of education, age, years of work experience, salary, hours worked per week, time of day they started or ended work, and their physical, mental, or relational well-being.
- Figure 1 shows satisfaction in current job. Figure 2 shows overall career satisfaction. Figure 3 indicates prevalence of looking for other jobs. Figure 4 indicates the degree to which physical health is compromised due to the job. Figure 5 indicates the degree to which mental health is compromised due to the job. Figure 6 indicates the degree to which non-work relationships compromised due to the job.

Fig. 1. Current OT Job Satisfaction. Mean = 6.13, N = 91

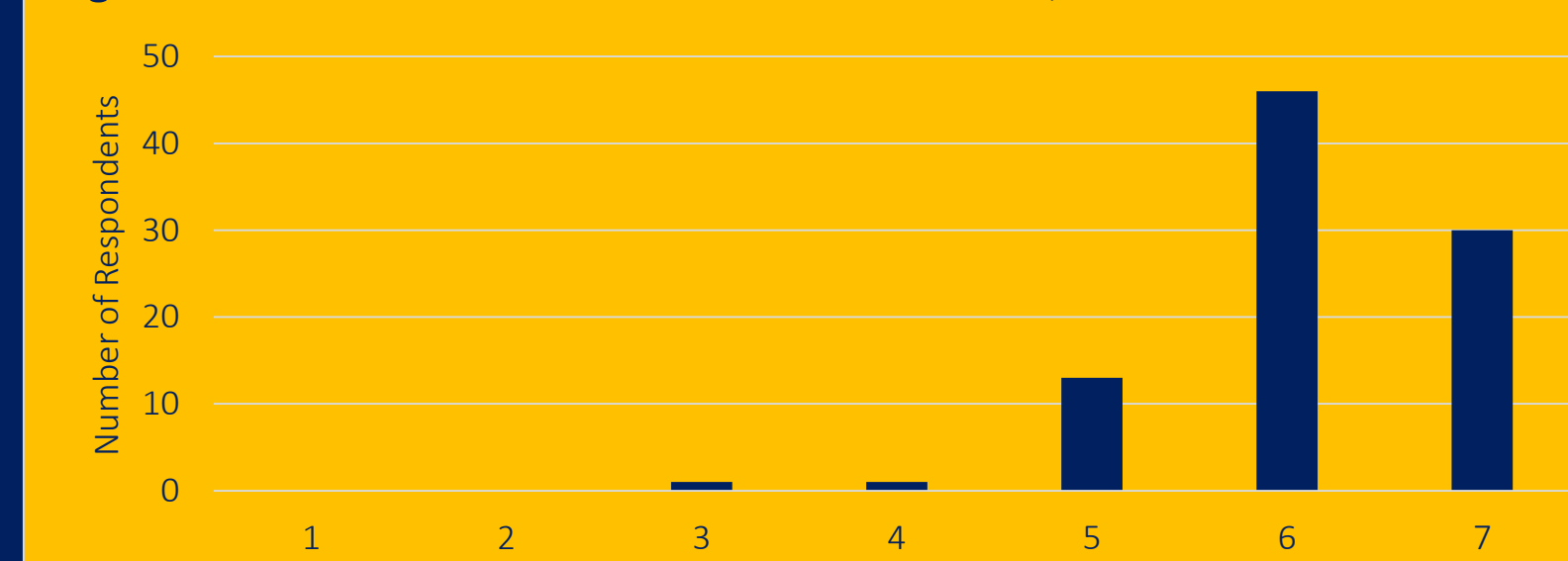


Fig. 2. Overall OT Career Satisfaction Mean = 6.30, N = 92

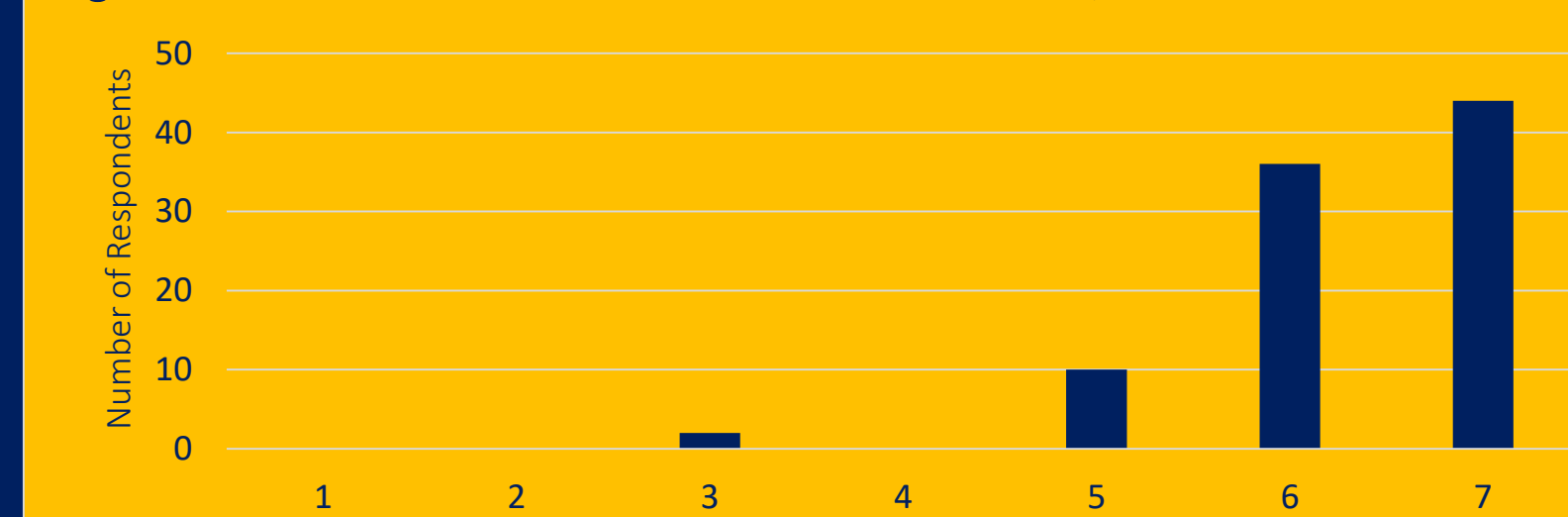


Fig. 3 Looking For Other Jobs Mean = 2.89, N = 92

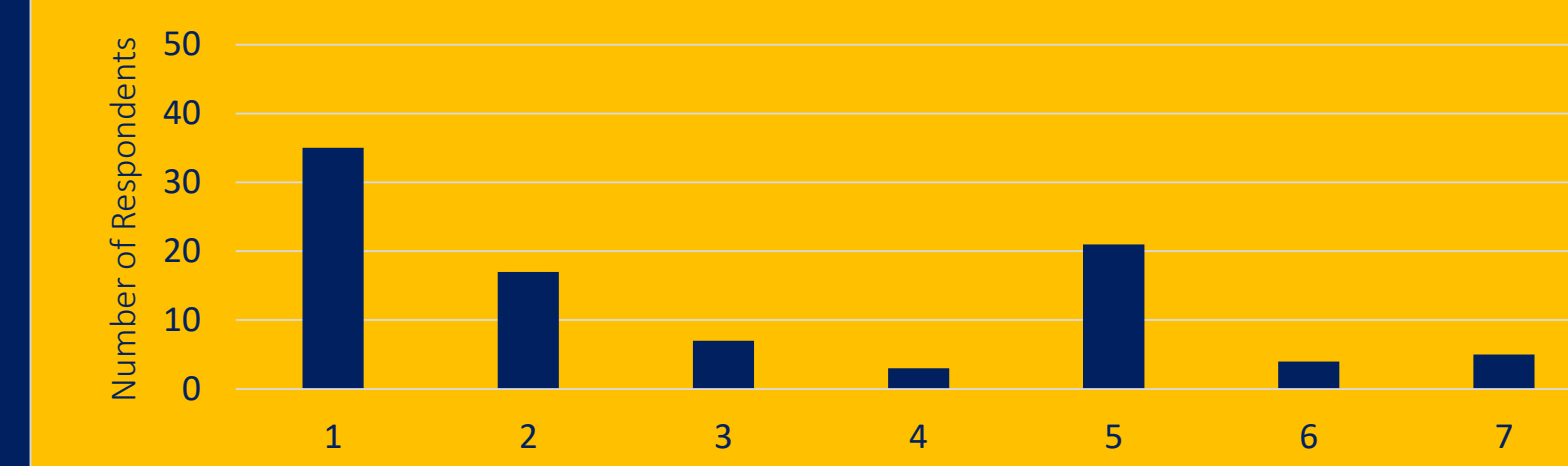


Fig. 4. Career Compromises Physical Health Mean = 3.12, N = 92

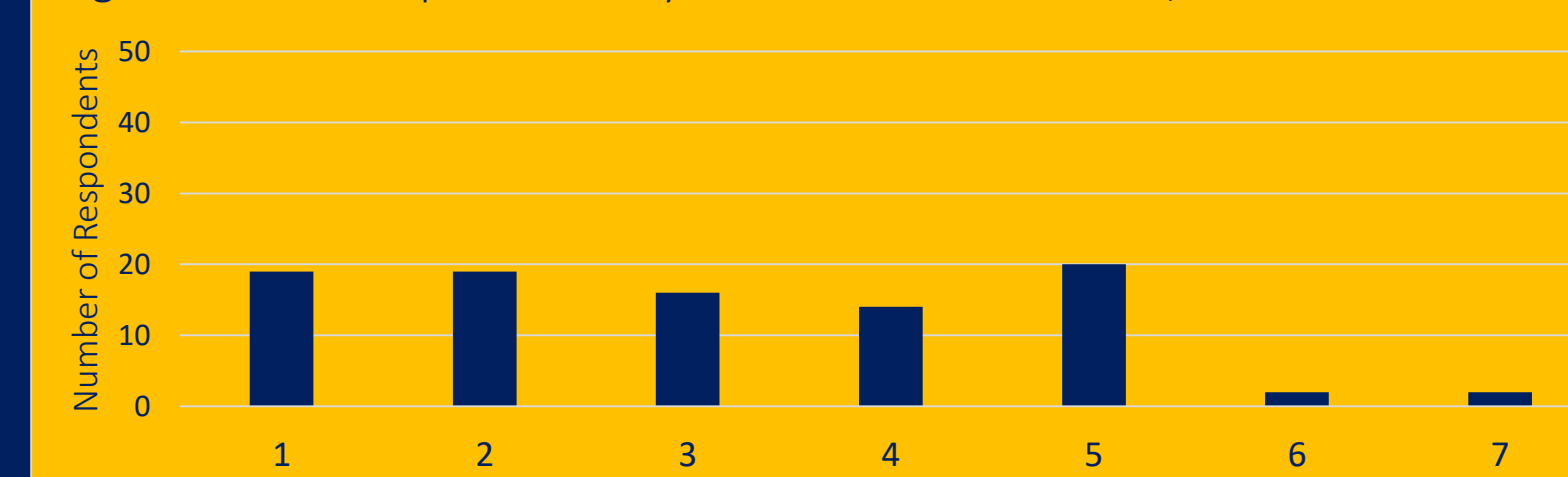


Fig. 5. Career Compromises Mental Health Mean = 2.93, N = 92

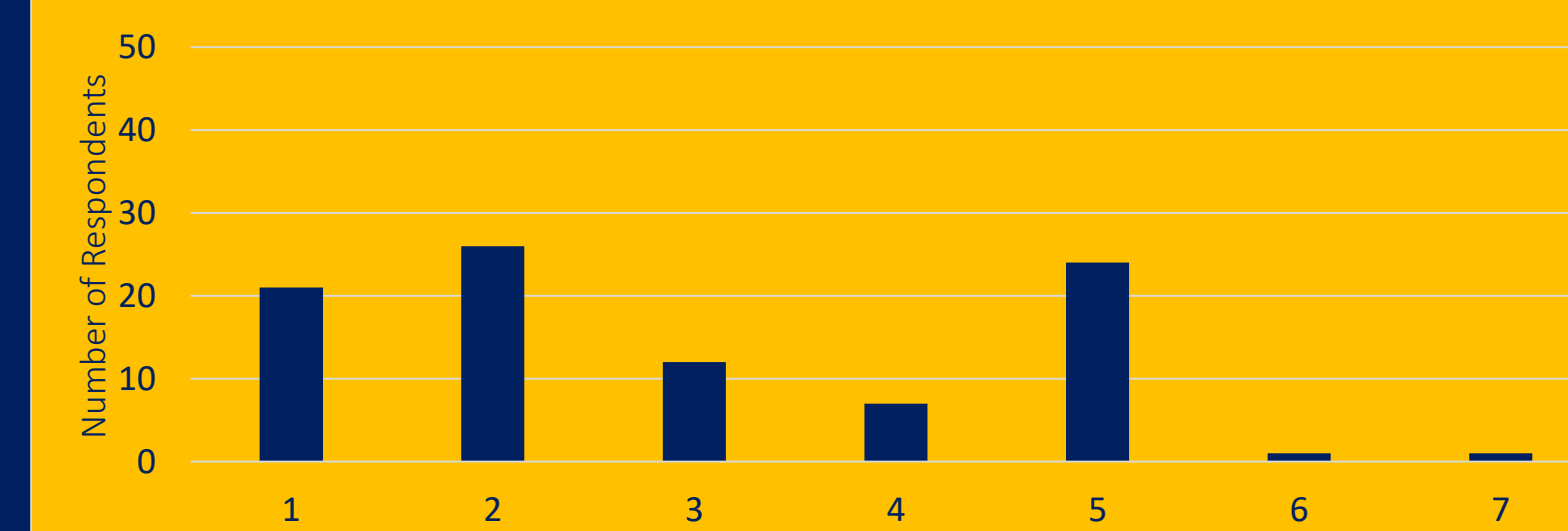
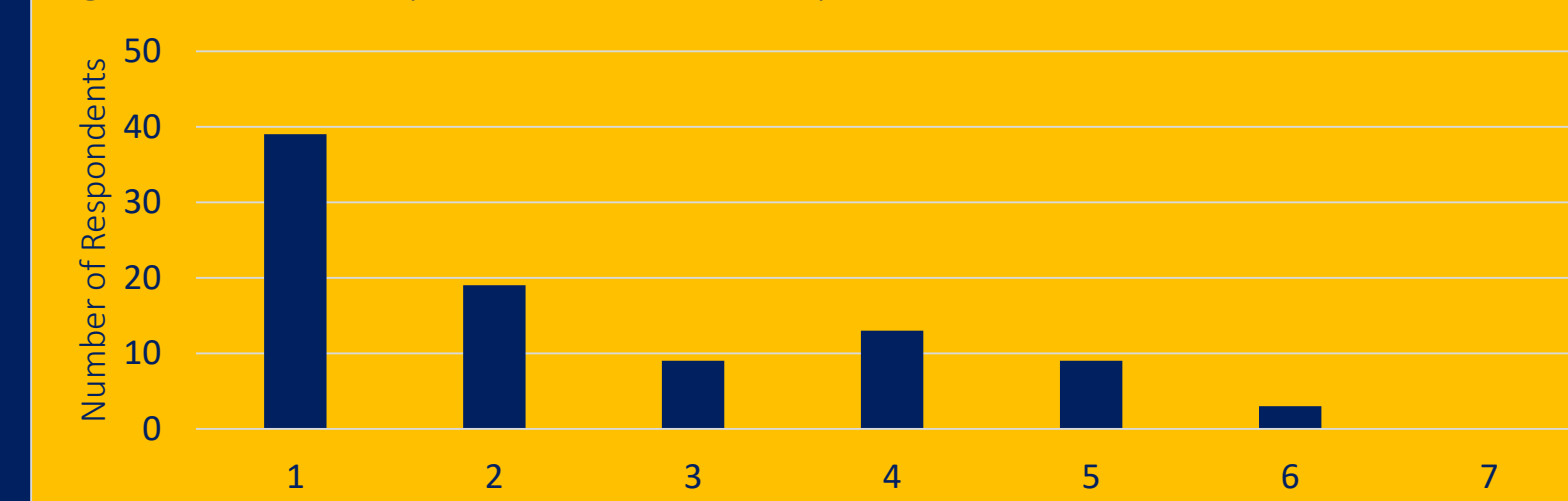


Fig. 6. Career Compromises Relationships Mean = 2.38, N = 92



Discussion

This is the first study to assess the physical, mental and relational well-being of OT in the US. Results show that job and career satisfaction were related to variables such as subject physical, mental and relational well being, as has been shown among chiropractors (2) and physical therapists (3). These wellness variables were not related to other variables including age, experience, gender, and salary. Thus, employers and employees alike should realize that job satisfaction has global effects on OT wellness.

Discussion (Continued)

Subjects in the current study demonstrated high mean job and career satisfaction, consistent with other rehabilitation professionals (2,3). These OT also demonstrated that the effect of the job on their physical, mental and emotional health was similar to the experience of other rehabilitation professionals (2,3), with the exception that the OT in the current study reporting a higher Likert scale score (3.12/7) compared to PT 2.79/7) (3), for the variable "career compromises my physical health." While occupational therapy may be somewhat more physically demanding than physical therapy, few subjects in the current study strongly agreed that their OT career compromised their physical health, whereas 100% previously reported that work-related pain may impact their work longevity (1). Results of the current study appear to be dissimilar to other research which demonstrate that OT working in Sweden quantified mean stress as 6.2 on a 10-point scale (7). Additionally, in Canada, "emotional exhaustion" was reported by almost 35% of OT (2).

Conclusions

Improving career and current job satisfaction are the most obvious things that OT can do, of the variables studied, in order to reduce negative effects of work on physical, mental, and relational well-being. This information, and other study data can be used by current and prospective OT to further understand the profession.

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