

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Personal Training as a Career

A Thesis Submitted to the University Honors Program

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Baccalaureate Degree

With Upper Division Honors

Department of Kinesiology

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DeKalb, Illinois

Graduation Date: August 14th, 2004

University Honors Program

Capstone Approval Page

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Personal Training as a Career

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Abstract

The purpose of the project was to research the many aspects of personal training and gain knowledge and understanding of these aspects to help benefit perspective personal trainers, faculty, and personal career interest. The research design was interview based with an audio recording of each subject's responses. Ten adults participated in the research study. Results were collected into tabular format and correlations were made. Overall career success was attained to the amount of experience and education that each participant attained. Knowing they have found a career of interest increases the amount of success of the participant. However, this study also shows that the field of personal training tends to be more of a part-time job rather than a full-time career. Personal trainers are more likely to start out in this field and then move on to another career, which may or may not be related to the fitness career.

Introduction

In speaking with my fellow peers and the faculty at Northern Illinois University, I feel there is a need to further provide information on personal training as a possible career for students completing degrees in exercise science. Students need to know more about the settings, education level, and salaries in which a personal trainer works. While traditionally it is thought that personal trainers are employed by local health and fitness centers, they can also be found working in retirement homes, corporate fitness centers, or for privately owned businesses. Furthermore, the level of formal education and/or professional experience may vary among personal trainers. The amount of education and experience a personal trainer has might depend on the amount of income they make per year. I plan to explore the similarities and differences among experiences of personal trainers working in diverse settings and from various educational backgrounds.

Personal training is a rapidly growing profession and opportunities in this area are increasing. For example, there are a number of certifications that exist through American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA), and Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA). Opportunities for personal trainers exist because of the health/fitness boom, the rising interest for corporate fitness, the need for exercise in the aging population, and the obesity epidemic.

One opportunity for personal trainers comes from the health/fitness boom that has increased exponentially since the 1960's. This huge growth in the fitness industry has increased participation in physical activity whether it is in the commercial setting (health clubs) or clinical settings (hospital based fitness center). Home exercise and corporate

fitness participation is also increasing rapidly. Even despite this enlarged business, 80 percent of Americans still do not participate regularly in physical activity. This gives an increased opportunity for the health fitness industry to increase and for personal trainers to sustain a very stable career (Grantham, 1998). A career in personal training also gives rise to a new opportunity in the expanding number of corporate fitness centers nation wide.

There has been a large amount of growth in the number of corporate fitness centers. This business has increased more than 50 percent from 1989 to 1994. The advantage of having corporate fitness centers is to increase employee health, which allows for greater productivity, lower health care costs, and fewer absences of each employee (Grantham, 1998). There is a clear advantage for corporations to integrate fitness memberships into employee benefits. This is just one area of fitness that a personal trainer could be a part of.

The aging population is a significant area for personal trainers to be concerned with. This population is growing rapidly because the baby boom generation is now reaching the age where more health problems occur as well longevity is increasing. Fitness Professionals need to promote active lifestyles for people with disease and disabilities. Older adults need to realize that one of the most effective ways to reduce the onset of frailty and lower functional capacity is to follow an exercise program and lead an active lifestyle (Jones, 2000). Opportunities arise in all populations and areas across America. Along with the aging population another population of obese people needs the help of a personal trainer.

The obesity epidemic is becoming a health crisis for both adults and young children in America. Today there are approximately 127 million U.S. adults that are obese.

This disease is the second leading cause of preventable death and is closely linked to conditions such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, asthma, and sleep disorders. Fitness professionals worldwide are needed to educate the public on the facts of this life-threatening disease of obesity (Griffin, 2003). This life-threatening disease is preventable if we have more personal trainers to educate the public.

Personal trainers have a number of opportunities with a huge population who either help prevent disease or promote health. A personal trainer must have the full range of knowledge required to find their area of interest. Personal trainers can work in a variety of settings whether they are commercial facilities, corporate facilities, medically based facilities, or private facilities. A number of Americans need personal trainers to prevent or manage major health problems such as obesity. Older adults require leadership in preventing frailty and lowered functional capacity. With all of these opportunities in this field it is so important for students and faculty to be informed.

Purpose and Overview

The purpose of the project was to research the many aspects of a personal trainer and gain knowledge and understanding of these aspects to help benefit prospective personal trainers, faculty, and personal career interest.

Interviews were conducted with a number of personal trainers utilizing a standard list of questions pertaining to demographics, education, and perceived career success. In addition, an audiotape was used during these interviews to further validate the research. The results were combined into table format.

The results were analyzed to assess the relationships between demographic data and perceived career success.

Limitations of the Study

The following were possible limitations of the study:

1. Ten individuals who were currently working in the field of personal training participated in the study. Statistical analysis may have benefited from a larger sample size.
2. Participants were mainly from the Midwest. Regional differences in the beliefs and attitudes of personal trainers may have existed. Client goals may have also differed regionally.
3. A limited access to personal trainers may have lacked a comprehensive sample of settings in which they worked.
4. Interview times became a problem when trying to schedule an hour-long appointment with the busy work schedules of the participants.
5. The questionnaire was created for this study because there were no existing questionnaires in this subject. The questionnaire may not have been as valid if it was administered to another group of people.

Methods

My research design was interview based. Personal trainers were recruited through three sources: those working independently, those working at commercial fitness centers, and those working at corporate fitness sites. The names and contact information were obtained through industry directories and the phone book.. In the case of commercial and corporate centers an initial approach was made to the center asking for permission to contact the personal trainers. Personal trainers were approached by phone, in person or through the mail and asked to volunteer to take part in the study. For those working at the commercial and corporate sites it was made clear that while the sites had given permission to approach the subjects, the sites were not involved in the study and would not be privy to the data collected.

Those agreeing to take part were provided a consent form to sign and arrangements were made to complete the interview. Meetings with the subjects took place in a quiet, private environment, typically subject's place of employment. . The interview lasted approximately one hour. Subjects were asked a standard list of questions in a face to face format.. An audiotape was used during the course of the interview to ensure all points were recorded. A phone interview was used when the interviewee was unable to attend a personal meeting. A specific form was filled out as the answers were provided to the interviewer from the interviewee.

Results

A collection of answers were arranged in a tabular format.. The questions that provided either numerical data or simply a one word answer are presented in Table 1 and

Table 2. The rest of the questions were open ended questions and are presented in Table 3 through Table 30. The benefit of arranging each question in a separate table was to ease the comparison of the answers. The table information was then analyzed further into correlations. Figure 1 through Figure 6 represents relationships between the numerical data obtained. Analyses of these findings are given in the discussion.

Subjects

Ten adults participated in the research study. Four of these subjects worked in a community setting, four worked in a private facility, and two participants worked in a medical-based facility. The subjects range in personal training experience from no experience to 9 years of experience. All subjects worked in the United States except for one subject who worked in Canada. For the purpose of this study age and gender was kept confidential. Information for each subject is displayed by letters A through I.

Question # 13: On a scale of 1-5, how satisfied are you with your career?

Response	1	2	3	4	5	Count	Percentage	Average
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0.00
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0.00
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0.00
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0.00
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0.00
AVERAGE	3.05					4.5		34.8

KEY:

Question # 1: How many years have you been a personal trainer?

Question # 4: What country do you work in?

On a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being most satisfied and 1 being least satisfied), how satisfied are you with your career

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Question # 47: On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most satisfied and 1 being least satisfied), how satisfied are you with your client base?

Response	Count	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
1	0	0.0%				
2	0	0.0%				
3	1	100.0%	3.0	0.0	3.0	3.0
4	0	0.0%				
5	0	0.0%				
AVERAGE			3.0			

On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most satisfied and 1 being least satisfied), how satisfied are you with your client base?

What salary range would you say the average personal trainer lies within?

Could you please confirm the amount of income per year you make as a personal trainer?

On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most satisfied and 1 being least satisfied), how satisfied are you with your liability insurance?

Do you carry liability insurance?

On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most important and 1 being least important), how important do you think the business aspect of personal training is to you?

Level of Education attained?

On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most satisfied and 1 being least satisfied), how satisfied are you with the amount of education you have?

Are you certified in Personal Training? Yes No

What organization (s) are you certified with?

On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most important and 1 being least important), how would you rate the importance of your certification?

Question # 47: On a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being most successful and 1 being least successful) how would you rate your career success?

Response	Count	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
1	0	0.0%				
2	0	0.0%				
3	1	100.0%	3.0	0.0	3.0	3.0
4	0	0.0%				
5	0	0.0%				
AVERAGE			3.0			

Table 3 Reasons for dW{lsing personal training as a profession.	
A	Good Field to be in. People are looking for trainers, likes the job
B	Had the opportunity, needs the money
C	Started with track and field and my coach was really into the specific exercises of the sport. I love the human body
D	Health and fitness has been very important.. Enjoys helping others.
E	Wanted to help people
F	Really enjoyed my own exercise program and saw results. I then believed any woman could do a program
G	I like working with people
HI	This job is given to me by my education
H2	I like the feeling of making a difference in someone's life
I	Always have been interested in staying fit and tone. Keeping fit and losing weight is an interest of mine

Table 4 What personal trainers love most about their career.	
A	Interacting with different people, people who need help and direction
B	Work with a variety of people, help people reach their goals
C	Freedom. You set the schedule around your clients and yourself. I am able to spend more time with family
D	I like working part-time. I like seeing people being appreciative of the knowledge I have. I like watching people succeed
E	Helping people, more specifically, special needs people
F	Seeing differences in people, seeing people being happy with their bodies, like to see how the inner body and outer body work together.
G	I love the flexibility of the hours. If I want to be done work early I can work from 5am-12pm or if I want to sleep in I can make my own hours
HI	I like the success that clients have
H2	Seeing people succeed with their goals and sticking with an exercise program
I	People make me happy. Making new friends, and helping people achieve their goals

Table 5 Satisfaction of career choice for personal trainers.	
A	Likes what they do, interaction with people. There is a need for trainers
B	Does not know what a future job will be. Does not have enough control in present job and would like to have more.
C	Have other interests in the next few years. This job does give high satisfaction levels. Enjoys helping people, not just by getting stronger or helping with losing weight but helping a client mentally and increasing self-esteem
D	This position is not full-time, but I do enjoy what I do
E	Is working with really excellent people. I like to see results of people achieving their goals
F	Really likes the people they work with. Clients make the profession enjoyable
G	Because of the current status of health care. There is a continued demand for personal trainers because of baby boomers
HI	Demographics aren't where my passion lies. I'd rather work more in the performance side of fitness instead of the health side
H2	Very happy right now. Loves fitness and leading a healthy lifestyle. I like helping others better themselves
I	Has experience in working in an administrative office, but has always wanted to work in fitness. I have achieved my goal

Table 6 A typical workday for a personal trainer.	
A	Works mornings and evenings. Works around the client's schedules.
B	Depends on the day, depends on the schedule of client.. Usually do fitness assessments and programs for clients. Contact the clients by phone or email for questions they might have.
C	7am to 1pm and then 3:30pm, 4:40pm, or 5:30pm and on.
D	Usually 2 nights a week.. 6pm-8: 1Spm or 8:30pm
E	8am-1pm, Tues., Thurs., and Sat.
F	Two mornings a week 6am-9am. One evening a week 3pm-7pm. Usually do sign-ups of new members, health histories, goals, trainings to show clients how to use machines, heart rates, and answering phones
G	I usually work 7am-10am and come back for 5pm-8pm, but it is possible to work all hours of the day
HI	I go to the gym at 6:30am, I have a client at 7am and do some training until 12pm. Very few people work out during midday. I usually train later on from 4pm-9pm. Just come in when your clients are here
H2	I work 7am-3pm instructing Pilates, aqua fit, swimming lessons, and personal training programs.
I	I work 7am-7pm. It takes a lot of hours to begin a business. Administrative work is done in the early morning. The rest of the day just depends on when clients show up.

TaMe 7 General responsibilities of a personal trainer.

A	Develop a program suitable for specific clients to reach their needs and goals
B	Set up individualized programs for clients. Sign legal liability and health history, ensuring safety, guide client through the program.
C	Providing customer service, working on fitness floor, taking blood pressure, knowing what motivates each client, have a progressive program for each client based on their long-term and short-term goals, keeping track of number of sessions for each client
D	Showing up for your appointment, giving clients the right information they need. Listening to the clients and hearing their desires and goals and times they are available
E	Help clients achieve their goals, prevent injury by training people properly
F	Tweaking a program to meet needs, goals and abilities of each client., Teach and really listen to the client and meet them where they are at
G	Safety is most important.. Preventing injury. Making sure we keep cholesterol down and there is an increase in strength.
HI	Being an educator is important.. We need to educate, motivate, and be a "big brother type" for each client.. Safety issues come up as well as knowledge about special populations.
H2	Having up to date knowledge and background to ensure safety. Promoting you as a trainer. Must have a positive attitude and be motivational
I	Encouragement for each client is important.. Progress tracking of each individual, provide variations for each workout, and help people with target areas.

Table 8 The most common informational areas personal trainers help provide their clients with.	
A	Lose weight and gain strength
B	Weight loss for women
C	Losing weight, lowering body fat percentage
D	Strength training, cardio principles, proper use of equipment (form)
E	Flexibility exercises, strength and endurance, and cardio
F	Weight loss, tightening and firming, gaining muscle, increasing flexibility and bone density
G	Mostly for losing weight. The biggest amount of time is spent strength training. Cardio work is done on their own. Nutritional counseling and general knowledge is also provided
H1	Losing weight and trimming up seem to be most people's goals. There are some clients with post surgical/rehabilitation work. There are few clients into bodybuilding, or just want to get ready for a golf outing. A few diet tips are always suggested.
H2	Overall health and fitness is most common. A lot want to lose weight and gain knowledge about nutrition
I	Overall health. Mainly losing weight and nutrition. I promote some nutritional products to my clients

Table 9	Clients either exercise for their own general well-being or they exercise because of a doctor prescription.
A	Both
B	Mostly for their own general well-being
C	Mostly for general well being. Some are Doctor prescribed
D	Combination of both. Mostly for a general well-being, 10-25% are doctor prescribed
E	Both. Mostly for general well being. A couple are Doctor prescribed
F	Most are for personal well being. Some are doctor prescribed for Type II diabetes.
G	Both. Hospital based clients are doctor prescribed.
HI	Both. Some have prescriptions, most are here on their own motivation to workout
H2	Both. I work very closely with a physiotherapist to increase strength and prevent injury for my clients
I	The majority of clients are for a general well-being. Some clients are Doctor prescribed for type II diabetes

Table 10 Whether or not motivation is a problem with clients	
A	Motivation is only a problem with some clients
B	Depends on the client.. It takes a lot of experience to be good at motivating different clients.
C	There have been some clients that have problems with motivation. You are more likely to be not motivated if you have to work out alone
D	Yes motivation is a problem. If you can't find what motivates you, it's hard to stick to an exercise program.
E	Absolutely. This is why most people choose to have a personal trainer
F	I don't think so. People we work with are consistently motivated. The others we don't work with we don't here from
G	Yes, some members know what to do in a program they just get a personal trainer to push and motivate them
HI	Initially clients do have a problem but once you break through walls to where you want them to be it gets a lot easier to maintain their motivation
H2	Clients come to me for motivation. Personal trainers are there to remind clients of their goals and what they want to achieve
I	Motivation is not a problem with a 30min. program

Table 11 The most commonly administered tests and assessments	
A	Body fat, muscular strength, muscular endurance
B	Step test, sit-up test, push-up test, sit and reach, biological impedance, body composition
C	Body fat percent and circumference measurements
D	No tests are taken. Fat analysis is taken but not regularly. A guess of strength for each client is used for equipment
E	Body composition, blood pressure, stress test
F	Weight measurement, body fat, and heart rate
G	Sub maximal treadmill test, body fat, sit and reach, cholesterol, girth measurements, and weight
HI	Body fat analysis, weight, girth measurements, performance goals of strength, and aerobic capacity
H2	Resting heart rate, blood pressure, body composition, aerobic capacity, strength, and trunk forward flexion
I	Body weight, body fat, and girth measurements

Table 12 The type of records that are kept for each client.	
A	Consent form, test records, contact info, everything is documented for own safety
B	Assessment results, consent forms, contact info, waiver of liability, client's goals, fitness history and physician consent
C	Health history, consent form, assessment records, interest form which contain goals and needs of clients, past exercise history, pre-test information
D	Starting Heart rate, starting weight, and girth measurements
E	Assessment results, consent forms, contact information, exercise routines
F	Consent forms, health history, goal sheets, assessments of weight and body fat are taken every month. Score cards, of how much weight has been lost and how well each client is doing, is kept on file
G	Health history, consent form for testing, retest information, and workout logs for progress. All information is on palm pilots and computer based
HI	We keep everything! Health history, doctor's consent, pre/post results, notes on each client (motivation status), and a commitment letter for each client. This letter will be mailed to the client when they have missed a day at the gym
H2	Assessment results, consent forms, contact information, Par Q, liability waiver, self contract, changes of care list, and self confidence list,
I	Membership's agreement, release of reliability health form, record of weights and measurements.

Table 13 Satisfaction with client base.	
A	Always want more clients, have to work around client schedules
B	Clients are not very steady
C	Works more in administration, so it is hard to add in more personal training clients. Very satisfied with number of clients for personal training and feels rewarded
D	When the clients show up I love meeting with them. The clients are excited and grateful
E	Would like to have more clients
F	We'd always love to have more people
G	We have a lot of clients (8000) for about 20 trainers. We would always like more clients
HI	Client base is always seasonal.. There are not many clients during spring and summer. More clients are during the fall and winter months
H2	The majority of my clients are 50 years and older. It is great that more people over 50 years are exercising
I	Every woman comes because they want to. Once they start they enjoy it

Table 14 Satisfaction with their income level,	
A	Motivation to keep working. Loves the job but could make more money if more hours were worked
B	It could be more per hour. It is convenient to work on campus for now
C	Administration rate is lower than personal training. Does not rely on money but more on satisfaction
D	Not certified, the fitness center needs to pay employees more
E	Pretty happy with income level
F	Everybody would always love to make more money. Given the number of hours worked, it's my choice for the amount of income I make
G	If you want to make more money, you need more clients. I have a management position right now, so I don't have time for too many clients. It just depends on you and your motivation
HI	This income pays the bills. I live within my means
H2	I am happy with my income for a small town in regards to population
I	I have had a new business that has been open for 3 months and it is supporting itself and growing quickly

Table 15 The business plan of it personal trainer.	
A	Get certifications, have more clients on the side or extra
B	No business plan in personal training
C	The plan is always to bring in more money for the company. New things have been made like creating different marketing services, involve more different types of programs for members that are set and structured for clients needs. All programs based around wellness is very important now.
D	No plan
E	I have a business card; I offer orientations for all new members and give the business card out to new clients.
F	Not personally, I do not have a business plan
G	I would like every new member to get an orientation and assessments. This will provide leads for trainers and the club to make more money
HI	My business plan is called the 8531 method, which stands for 8 people to be contacted. 5 of which become interested. 3 of these interested people become clients, and 1 client becomes long-term.
H2	I want to be able to get as many people as I can active in the population I have
I	I want to continue to add additional services to my business, add client base, and additional equipment

Table 16 The amount of equipment that is necessary to work with.	
A	Specific machines for each muscle group
B	A set of dumbbells
C	Dumbbells, medicine balls, resistant balls, cables. All plains that mimic every movement
D	12 pieces of equipment for strength training. This gives a full-body work out. Lots of cardio as well.
E	One piece- The Bow Flex and maybe calisthenics
F	8-11 machines
G	Depends on client and their goals. One client might use some equipment and another client might use all the equipment.
HI	Depends on the individual.. A pair of tennis shoes and a Thera-band for one person and another person might need an entire gym full of equipment
H2	A treadmill, stability ball, and free weights
I	8 hydraulic machines, 8 body boards for cardio. I would like to add more to accommodate more members

Table 17	The comparison between a complete fitness center full of equipment and a smaller private studio.
A	Could be better, depends on the client. Depends if you like more one on one vs. a group
BYes	there is a benefit. It is easier to introduce exercises; machines are easier for people who are learning for the first time. Some clients also enjoy the private studio as well
C	Yes to both fitness centers. The larger center has more variety like more machines and having a pool. The smaller studio for people who do not feel comfortable in a huge fitness center with a lot of people
D	Could be benefits to a larger center. Motivation definitely because it's more of a social environment and there is a variety of equipment
EYes,	in the larger center you can work more body parts and you get a better work out. There is more variety, so you can mix up the programs and make it more fun for the clients
F	Some people might think so. I don't think it's necessary to be at a larger gym as long as you teach people to use equipment properly
G	More equipment is needed for member retention. Clients need more variety because they get bored easily. You need to make sure the clients are having fun and the more options there are the better
HI	Yes, the larger gym gives you more freedom to fight boredom. There are more diverse options, more modes of similar options. There is also motivation in a big gym because of more opportunity to socialize. Some people do prefer a smaller private studio because they don't like to socialize.
H2	I prefer a private studio with less equipment. It is less confusing for members and clientele
I	I don't believe there is a benefit. The majority of women do not want to go to gyms. I think the larger gyms are more for men

Table i8	The requirements for beginning a business.
A	You need to purchase equipment, retail prices, have money to start up, and advertising
B	There is initial capital to put out. You have to buy land, building, insurance, employees, advertising, equipment, and maintenance
C	Requires a business plan, business advertiser, initial capital for property and building. A Deposit is necessary. Equipment, staff, utilities, and tax identification is also necessary.
D	Does not know. Assumes there is a capitol investment
E	You need an education, clothing and tennis shoes
F	Having a facility and machines
G	You need to either buy or rent equipment, space for the building, reality, insurance coverage. And you need to think about whether you should pay trainers even if they are not training
HI	You need a certification for your credibility which is not cheap, you need a marketing plan, and enough equipment to get by to suit all of your clients
H2	This does not apply to me. I assume there is a lot of time and effort involved
I	A business plan, capital investment, and finances to support you once you get going

Table 19	Ho'l-" personal trainers market their services.
A	Market through the YMCA, flyers, website, ads in paper
B	Advertises through fitness center and with pamphlets
C	Trainers being out on the fitness floor working with clients. Offer free workshops
D	Word of mouth from people you have trained. Ask other people on the fitness floor if they need help
E	Business card at orientation
F	Word of mouth, ads in newspapers, flyers, television, billboard signs
G	Use different uniforms for a visual.. Word of mouth and person-to-person recognition.
HI	I market through the gym I work at. They market by television, newspapers, and magazines. Word of mouth is important as well
H2	I market through flyers, newspapers, and here-say
I	I'm in my testing stages but right now I use newspapers, radio, flyers, yellow pages, advertise in the pumpkin parade, and an add in coupon books

Table 20 Importance business to the participant.	
A	Not very important if only working at the YMCA, if worked privately it would be more important
B	Business aspect of personal training is not that important. Cares more about peoples lives than making money
C	Business is great.. You enjoy more of what you do
D	Business is not a route of interest
E	It is important to get yourself known, get a good reputation, referrals are very important from clients that I've worked with
F	I don't deal with all business aspects. It is effected by the amount of clients you work with
G	If you do not have a business plan or goals you will not succeed. You need marketing and business skills
HI	If you can't sell yourself and get your name out there, you will not make it. The gym does not hand you clients.
H2	The business aspect is important for me because I run my own business within a resort. You have to be able to bring in more money and clients
I	For personal training the business aspect is important.. For a circuit program that is already made for most clients, the business aspect is not as important because it is already planned and covers a full body work out.

Table 21 Recommendations future personal trainers to take business courses,	
A	Management course are important.. You need to know about contract law, tortes, consent forms, documentation, and liability insurance
B	Yes, if they want to start their own business. No, if you are going to work for someone else
C	Yes. Business gives you a lot of information to learn and apply and to become reputable
D	If they are going to own their own business than knowledge is power
E	No because most personal trainers work for a club. The club will promote the business
F	Always helpful to take a course no matter what field
G	Yes definitely. There is a lot of burn out in personal training. You are always talking, always on stage. This takes a toll on your body. You should have a business background so you can eventually go into administration
HI	Yes, business courses are huge for understanding the role of marketing and management. . Psychology of sales and marketing is important. . How to communicate with people and make a sale is important too.
H2	Yes, you need business knowledge to survive. You need to know how to attract and keep clients
I	Yes, if you are self-employed. It is not as important for non-private personal trainer

Table 22 Satisfaction of education level.	
A	Has the experience that is needed, worked at the rec. It depends on the person and how much education you want
B	Education was top notch but everything can also be improved
C	Would like to advance previous education to a PHD program
D	The education prepared well for the career
E	Had an average amount of education, had a 2 year degree program in 2 weeks as a fitness specialist which goes more into the nutrition aspect
F	Not looking to go back to school.. Education suits all my career choices
G	Our field does need a master's degree. It is not necessary. Only get your master's if you don't know what you want to do. Experience outweighs education
HI	My bachelor's degree was fantastic, but I want more knowledge. I would like to get deeper into the science of my field
H2	My education was very thorough and I maintained my experience through co-ops
I	I am very fortunate to gain business experience. Education is important but experience is better

Table 23 How often personal trainers participate in events that earn continuing education units.	
A	-----
B	Everyday-college courses are counted towards continuing education units
C	Every year you must keep the certification current.. Club industry in Chicago is one place to go
D	-----
E	Annually update certification
F	-----
G	I go to 2 trade shows a year, which are 3-4 days long. Seminars and breakout sessions are incorporated. I attend club industry in Chicago, and IHRSA..
HI	Working on master's covers most of the units per year
H2	Every 2 years
I	-----

Table 24 The requirements for updating a certification.	
A	-----
B	8 units for the first 2 years and 4 units every year after that
C	0.6 credits is necessary through NSCA
D	-----
E	A Four-day classroom seminar. Two written exams, three practical exams.
F	-----
G	2.5 credits per 2 years. It depends on certification and how long you've been certified.
HI	6 continuing education units per year
H2	Written test, and a practical
I	-----

Table 25 How personal trainers stay current in their field.	
A	NSCA journal subscriptions, studies different types of exercise and special population groups
B	Work with professionals in your field; Attend the Midwest Fit test where you learn new aerobic techniques once a year.
C	Researching, reading, getting magazines. The journal of strength and conditioning. Reading online. Physical therapy and sports medicine seminars
D	Read internet sources, reads books from school on multiple sclerosis, and pregnancy, also reads professional training and fitness management journals
E	Read a lot of books on health and fitness. Men's Health gives tips and exercises on fitness. The internet is also used
F	Do trainings every few months on machines and nutrition. My owner goes to conferences and brings back the newest information
G	I listen to guest speakers. I bring in workshops to our club, read newsletters, read publications. I read fitness management and personal fitness journals. I also read websites
HI	I am pursuing a master's degree. I also like to read questionable material like "Men's health" so I know what my clients are reading
H2	Read a lot. I receive newsletters from certifications, go to seminars and workshops
I	A franchise helps out tremendously for new trends and better ideas for doing things

Table 26 How personal trainers rate the importance of their certification.	
A	There are a lot of places you can get certified. YMCA is good and cheaper.
B	You have to be certified for the credibility. It shows your responsibility, and safety for clients. Shows you are a professional in your field
C	The certification is important in terms of going through the testing procedures.
D	You have to keep your knowledge current by having to take continuing education units. It is a seal of approval. People hear about it and it's more important, shows validity towards yourself as a trainer
E	The certification is not important to employer but is important for you.
F	I am not certified but I do believe it is a good thing
G	This is the only credibility you have. A combination of the degree and certification gives you this credibility
HI	This helps you stand out from other people, make you worth your investment. There are big credentials with a certification
H2	This confirms to clients you have the knowledge in your field
I	-----

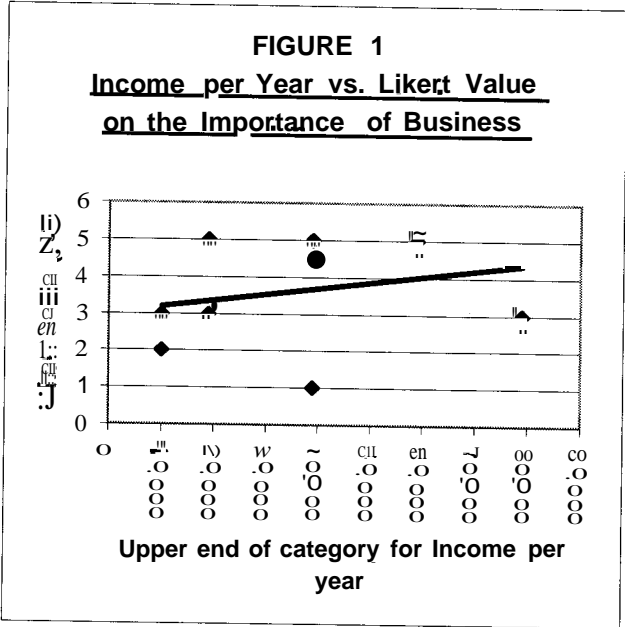
Table 27	The downsides of being a personal trainer,
A	The first downside is the working hours. You need to work around the client's schedules. The second is motivating the clients. Some clients have more motivation than others
B	It is hard to workout yourself if you have been at the gym all day. Knows a lot of theory and it is hard to make your own program because you over analyze stuff too much
C	This career can wear you out. One client after another keeps you constantly on the go. When clients don't show up you have to decide whether to still charge them or not. There is a downside with insurance to make sure you are covered or not. You might have to work a certain number of hours at the fitness center but don't have enough clients. There are also clients that never leave and get attached to you.
D	Depends on how much time is devoted by the client. People drop out from not being motivated. Another downside would be the amount of money you need to be certified.
E	The downside is cancellations of clients
F	A downside is when people don't stick with their program. The client can be successful but all we see is that they are discouraged and want to quit. Another downside is that there are some people you cannot please
G	A downside is that you get a different paycheck every week. Clients go on vacations, have children that make them cancel appointments. If you go to management you get a safe salary every week. You also do not work on holidays
H1	Seasonal work is a downside. You get a pile of money part of the year and nothing the next part of the year. Also working with the public does have its downsides. You always come across a tough person to work with
H2	It is upsetting to see people with potential but don't use this potential. You must not take this seriously.
I	There are no downsides. There is a huge awareness to fitness and overall health

Table 28	Additional advice, information, or wisdom for aspiring personal trainers,
A	Keep your certification current, make them last. Read up on trendy diets, watch the news, and keep up with the changing field. Liability insurance is important.
B	The first meeting with your client is very important. Act professional so you gain their trust. Show your wisdom. Give your clients their own responsibility to reach their goals even when you aren't around
C	It is important to really study, learn more about the body and its systems. Bodies response to exercise and learn more about different populations. You must have at least a bachelor's degree and a certification. If you are motivated enough go for your master's
D	Make sure you pay attention in exercise physiology. Do your best in academics. love working with people, be a good example to people
E	Get as much education as you can. Everyone has different needs. Market yourself with a business card. Be in good shape yourself for times when you have a number of clients in a row.
F	Make sure you would personally enjoy this career
G	Take an internship before you decide what to do. Remember you have to pay your dues the first couple of years so don't expect a high paying job right out of school. Build up a good reputation and then you can accept clients when you want. Don't get down; it takes a lot of work. Also you have to like working with people
HI	Get a real certificate; learn how to sell yourself and how to convince people they need you. Be a friendly expert and show what you know for free. A bachelor's degree in front of your name always helps. Be ready for special populations and don't be afraid. You can do a lot more harm if you don't know what you are doing
H2	There are personal benefits if you love helping people. Believe in your knowledge. Try new trends on yourself before you try them on clients
I	You have to love what you do otherwise it can turn into a drudge

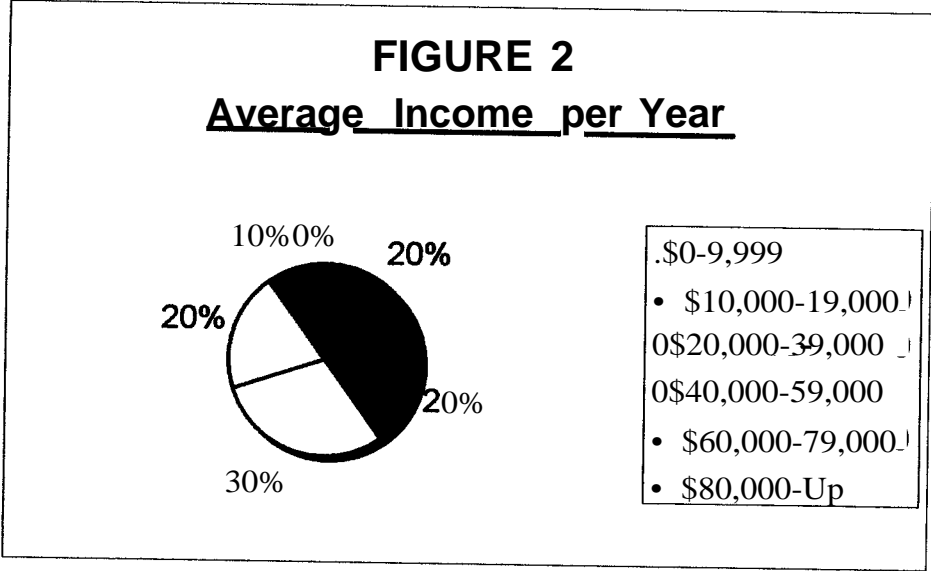
Table 29 Additional professional goals of the participant.	
A	Would like to become a strength and conditioning coach. Own a private health club, and be certified
B	Wants to become an army officer.. Also wants to become a physical fitness instructor in the army. When retirement comes I would like to work in rehab in a hospital setting
C	Wants to eventually teach sports physiology
D	Maybe become certified, go back for the master's degree, be successful at what I'm doing
E	Would like to get the fitness specialist certification
F	Happy where I am at
G	I would like to be the director of the whole fitness center. This position is called the executive director positions which deals with the cafe, the kids area, marketing, and just oversees every aspect of fitness
HI	I would like to get more into the human performance side of this field. Collegiate work as a strength and conditioning coach is where my passion lies. I would eventually like to work with athletes in the Olympics
H2	I would like to open my own fitness center some day. More people are taking health and fitness more seriously these days
I	Possibly open a second club. I also want to get a personal training certification

Table 30 How the subjects would rate their career success.	
A	Is not certified and is still looking for a full-time job
B	Haven't had many clients to work with. Amount of work with clients is restricted, there is no pool to work with and hours are restricted
C	The career was exactly as planned. Got into different areas in fitness and is very satisfied with the present career
D	Fear is paralyzing that I wouldn't be good enough. I wished I took the certifications instead of worrying about if I was going to fail the tests and waste my money
E	Has a good client base, works at an excellent facility. People who give referrals let me know that I must be doing something right.
F	I am happy. I feel I have helped a lot of people. I feel I am good at what I do
G	I have done pretty well. There is always room for improvement. There is always a financial gain to strive for. I feel it is a lot of hard work and just being in the right place at the right time. Also there is high turn over in this position.
H1	There are many milestones I account for my success so far. Getting certified, getting my first client, and seeing the success clients had. I rated it a little low because money is tough to come by. This is a stressful job with special populations. Also working with managers and other employers who have less knowledge about fitness than I do.
H2	My major milestone so far is starting at a private resort and made 200 members with 60-70 regular members.
I	I have gone from 0-100 clients in 3 months, my business is supporting itself, and I have enthusiasm and personality that supports the club and its programs

In addition to the organized tables of responses, scatter plots and pie charts were made to further analyze the data. The relationships made were income per year versus the likert value on the importance of business (Figure 1), amount of education versus career success (Figure 4), amount of income versus satisfaction of income level (Figure 5). The pie charts show the various percentages from the demographic data.

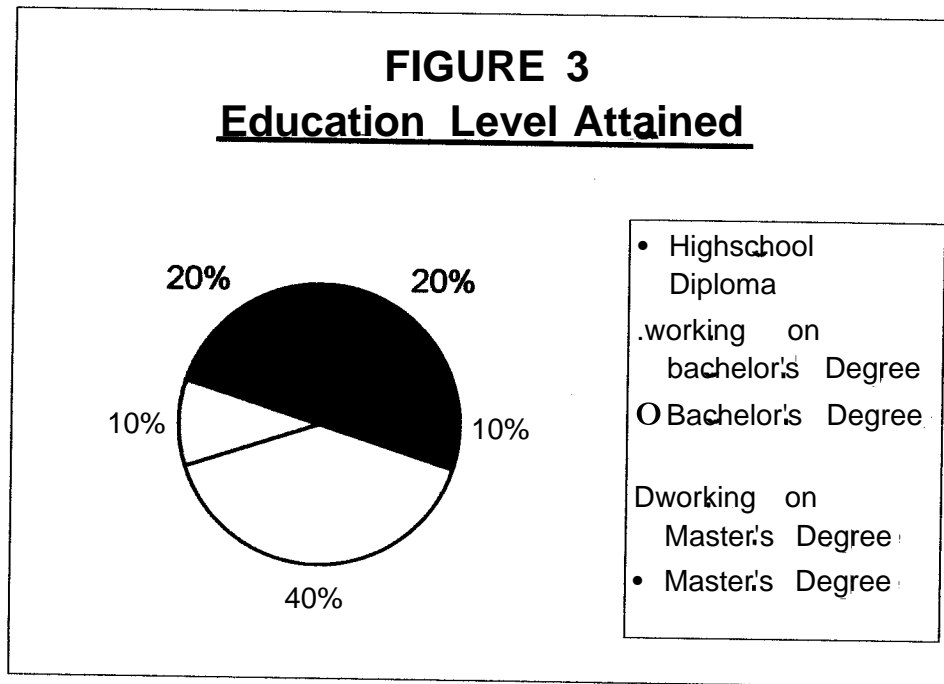


The graph illustrates the relationship between amount of income per year and the likert value on the importance of business. The correlation $r = 0.23$. This means that there is a positive correlation, but it is very weak. This may mean that there is not a strong relationship between the amount of money a personal trainer earns and the importance of business. However, a larger sample size may have helped in making this correlation clearer.

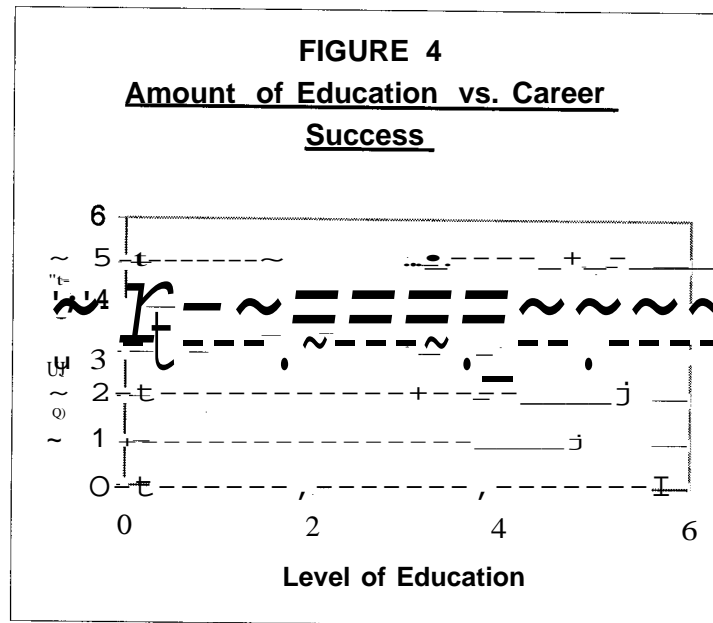


The pie chart shows the percentage of personal trainers at each income level. All income categories were chosen except for the \$80,000-up category and therefore the chart shows how variable the income level can be.

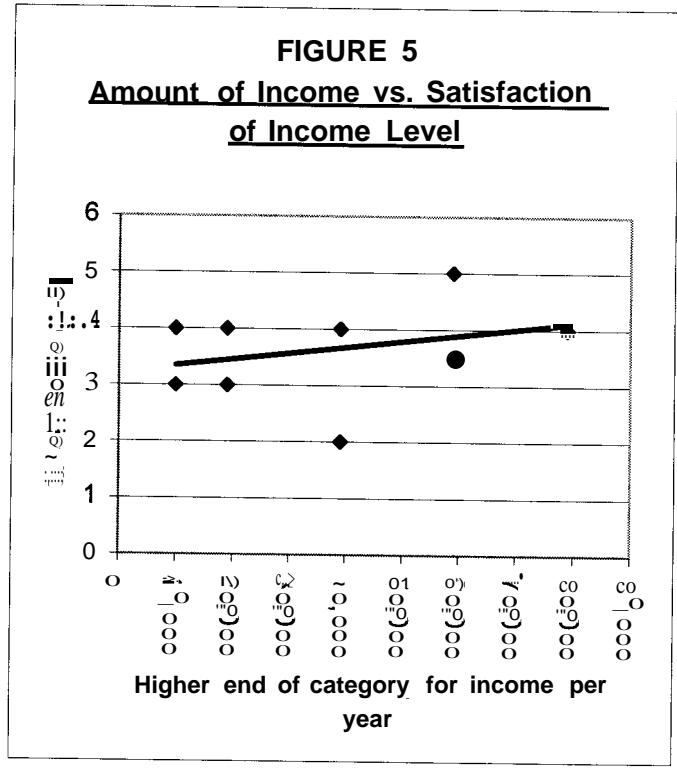
FIGURE 3
Education Level Attained



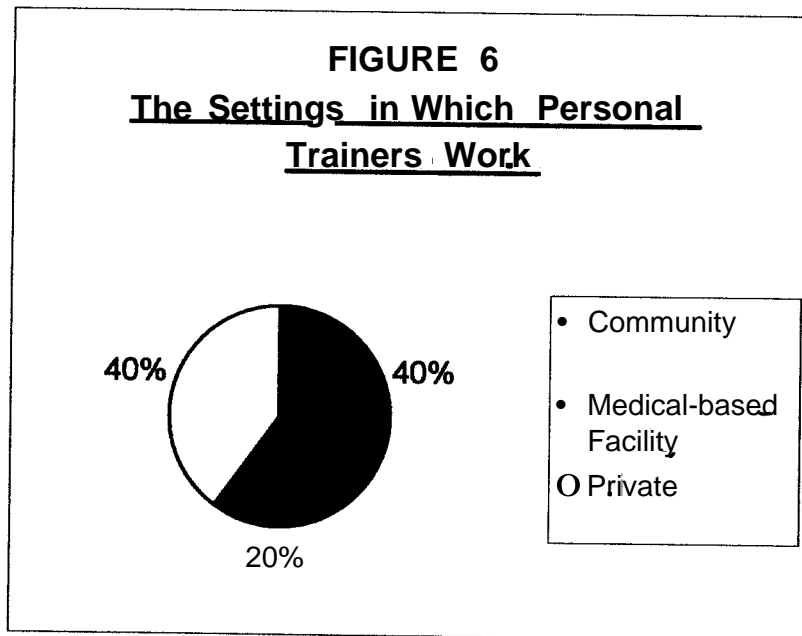
The pie chart shows the percentage of personal trainers who attained each educational level. Various levels of education are attained. Most subjects do have at least a Bachelor's degree.



The graph illustrates the relationship between amount of education and the likert value perceived career success. The correlation $r = 0.15$. This means that there is a positive correlation, but it is very weak. This low correlation may be affected by a low sample size.



The graph illustrates the relationship between amount of income per year and the likert value for satisfaction on income level. The correlation $r = 0.31$. This means that there is a positive correlation, but it is very weak. This correlation may be affected by a small sample size.



The pie chart shows the percentage of personal trainers who work in specific settings. The sample size was very small and the representation would benefit greatly from more participants.

In summary, participation was given for all questions with the exception of subjects who were not certified as a personal trainer. The questions are in table format for the convenience of comparing answers. Correlations were made to identify relationships between the subject's responses.

Discussion

Personal Trainers who participated in the interview questions shared a variety of responses and useful information. The interview was divided into five separate sections beginning with the first section titled, "A Little About Yourself." The section involves questions relating to the subject's career and reason for choosing personal training. The second section is titled, "On the Job." This section asks what personal trainers do on a day-to-day basis and asks to list all responsibilities involved. The third section is called,

"The Business Aspect of Personal Training." This section provides questions regarding information on marketing, liability insurance, equipment necessity and how important business is to personal training. The fourth section titled "Academics" provides questions in relation to their academic accomplishments and how important education is to the personal trainer. The last section is titled, "Personal Reflections." This section asks questions relating to the personal success of individual personal trainers, along with the downsides of personal training. Additional advice and professional goals were then identified.

Personal Profiles of Trainers

The following are answers provided from the first section, "A Little About Yourself." The average amount of years participants have worked in personal training is three years. The most common answer for entering the field of personal training is because they wish to help other people lead healthier lives. Another popular response was based on the fact that they had a strong interest in the area of personal fitness. When answering what they love most about their careers, the majority of the responses focused on helping people. They love interacting with a variety of people, seeing their client's success, and watching them reach their goals. Although many of the respondents gave favorable ratings towards their level of job satisfaction, they raised some concerns for their present job. Those concerns included: an uncertain future, a lack of full time employment, and not having enough control.

A study found that personal trainers have a very high level of overall work satisfaction (89%) for the year 2000. The reason for the high satisfaction levels is contributed to the continuity of trainer-client relationships and the chance to watch the client succeed in their health and fitness goals (Gauvin, 2001). According to Table 5 personal trainers are very satisfied with their careers and believe they have found their

niche. The results of both studies indicate that a large percentage of personal trainers are satisfied with their jobs.

Job Description of Personal Trainers

The results in section two of the interview, "On the Job," provides the amount of hours worked as a personal trainer. The average amount of hours the participants work per week is 34.8. When asked what personal trainers do during a typical work day, the answers given seem to be totally dependent on the needs or characteristics of the client. A typical work day would involve a broad range of activities. Some include administrative duties (i.e. member signups and answering phones, alongside the obvious of personal training). The majority of participants answered that the main responsibility in personal training is designing exercise programs. Another important factor is being aware of their client's goals, which provides encouragement for their client's success. Participants overall felt that safety was an important factor in being responsible. The main responsibility of safety brings up the issue of how important it is to have the experience and educational background to be prepared for a career in personal training. Even though safety is a main responsibility in the career of personal training, other responsibilities are also important to add.

While the subjects in this study did not mention communication as being an important responsibility, other people did. According to Roberts (1996), communication is another important responsibility of a personal trainer. Communication is important because it is how we transfer knowledge between people. Both verbal and physical communication is needed. Knowing how to present correct information in a way that a client will understand is a big responsibility.

Personal trainers use both physical and verbal communication when working with clients. Personal trainers need to be able to explain how to use specific equipment safely,

and be able to explain various muscle functions while exercising, which is verbal communication. Demonstrating the use of machines is physical communication. Physical appearance and positive attitude are also physical communications skills, which show professionalism. Listening is another important responsibility of the personal trainer. The personal trainer must be able to concentrate and focus on a client's concerns, goals, and/or emotions. Understanding each client separately will only increase the success as a personal trainer (Roberts, 1996).

An article from the journal *IDEA* did a study on job responsibilities and performance. They found that personal trainers who work 16 to 24 hours per week or 25 to 34 hours per week are significantly clearer about their job responsibilities than those who work fewer hours per week (Ryan, 2001). The current study did reveal that the average number of hours the subjects worked per week was 34.8. All subjects were very clear on their responsibilities, as stated in Table 7. The responsibilities of a personal trainer are significant pieces of information to be aware of in this career. The setting in which a personal trainer works is considered to be an important decision as well.

The type of facility that most trainers work in differs among the participants. Four participants work in community based facilities and the rest are either private or hospital based facilities. Figure 6 shows the percentages of which setting each participant works. The average population of the town the participants work in is around 40,000. The average number of clients a personal trainer currently works with ranges from 2 to 300 clients. The age range of the clients is 12 to 94 years of age.

The background information of the clients become evident, but the information a personal trainer gives to a client is unclear. Eight out of the ten people responded with "losing weight" as the main informational area a personal trainer provides for their clients. Other answers include general fitness and nutrition. The client's motivation for working

out was mainly for his or her own well being. Very few participants indicated that a doctor's referral was used in order to benefit their health. These are reasons why people need to exercise, and it is important to understand why clients need or want a personal trainer.

Motivation was one main reason for a client to hire a personal trainer. The current study indicates that responses were split on the question that asked if motivation was a problem for their clients. Some subject's answers depended on each individual client, while others believed that clients did come to them for motivation. Most of the subjects agreed that it does take a lot of experience to be excellent at motivating a variety of people. It is important for a trainer to motivate his or her clients. This helps a client to see what is possible for them, help them form some expectations for themselves, and be able to measure their progress (Roberts, 1996). Administering a number of tests and assessments, and keeping a record of their results can increase motivation for clients.

Personal trainers administer a wide variety of tests. A large portion of participants answered that the body fat test was the most common test. The subjects did not specify which types of body fat tests were administered. Therefore this type of information can not be discussed. The participants made it very clear that a number of different records are kept for each client. Important records to keep are exercise health screening, medical history/health questionnaire, the client interview, and fitness testing (Roberts, 1996). The current study lists all these previous documents, as well as further documentation in Table 12. With each record comes the number of clients a personal trainer actually works with.

Participants were asked how satisfied they were with their client base. Some participants work part time, which does not give them a chance to work with many clients, whereas working as a fulltime trainer provides the opportunity of working with more

clients. Most participants stated that the reasons for wanting more clients is either for revenue or simply finding pleasure in helping others.

The participants were asked what the average income of a personal trainer is and the results varied. Six participants answered that the average participant makes \$20,000-\$39,999 per year. The rest of the participants either said \$10,000-\$19,000 or \$40,000-\$59,000. The participants then stated their own income per year and the most common category was between \$20,000-\$39,000. According to the *Idea Health and Fitness Source*, 1% of personal trainers are on salary, which means that personal trainers earn money depending on the number of clients they work with. Seventy-five percent of personal trainers earn money either per hour/per class or per session and 24% earn money through the number of clients. The average hourly pay for a personal trainer is \$28.50 (Ryan, 2002).

Another article from *IDEA* journal indicates that the average annual income from personal training was \$21,000, while the annual household income for these same trainers was \$78,000. This suggests that not all personal trainers work full-time and that they have another part-time job (Gauvin, 2001). The average income per year found in the current study is in the category \$20,000-\$39,000, illustrated in Figure 2. The average income level was established, but how satisfied were the Subjects?

The participants were asked how satisfied they were with their income level. The answer was based on the realization that the more hours worked per week gave the subject more opportunities to gain a greater base of clients. The greater client base increases the amount of income per year. Being motivated to work a lot of hours was a major reason for making more money. Some people would rather work in administration, get paid less, but receive the stable hours from week to week. Amount of income might not be as important to a personal trainer as it may seem. A lot of participants love their job because they work

with people. It seems that caring for people is more important than making money for the subjects. Figure 4 illustrates a positive correlation between amount of income and how satisfied personal trainers are with their income level. The low correlation suggests that the participants feel guilty in making lots of money even though they are doing what they love to do.

Business Portion of Personal Training

The third section "The Business Aspect of Personal Training" asks if the participants had their own business plan. Most of the personal trainers interviewed did not have a business plan of their own. The participants that are in administration believe their main plan is to bring in more money and more clients. No formal business plans are mentioned. Even though no business plans were mentioned, all subjects had some ideas in what is needed in order to begin a business or why business knowledge seems to be so important.

In order to begin a business the participants suggested that a personal trainer needs an education, certification, business plan, capital investment, financial support, a facility, insurance, a business advertiser, employers, equipment and maintenance. A lot of marketing for personal trainers is done through the facility they work for by means of advertisements in the newspaper, flyers, pamphlets, television, radio, websites, and most important is word-of-mouth. Personal trainers market themselves personally by being on the fitness floor and publicly displaying their knowledge to the current members working out. Advertising and marketing is a significant aspect of business.

The subjects believe that another important aspect of business was to carry liability insurance. All of the participants either carry liability insurance personally or through the organization for which they work. Business aspects seemed to be a major piece of information to be knowledgeable in until the following question was answered. The

participants were asked how important the business aspect of personal training is to them. The main answer for this question stated that if you're a personal trainer that is working privately it is very important to gain business knowledge. Most participants believed that no knowledge of business is required if you are a personal trainer working for an employer. Figure 1 shows that the relationship between the importance of business and the income level per year is a positive correlation. However, the correlation was very low. The illustration shows that business knowledge can be important for the amount of income a trainer receives per year. The low correlation illustrates that, depending on if a trainer works for an employer or works privately, a career in this field may not need business experience or knowledge. A larger sample size is needed to fully understand the correlation of business knowledge and the amount of income per year a personal trainer receives.

Personal trainers need to know about business whether they are self-employed or work for a fitness facility. Successful personal trainers are people who have the business knowledge of how to sell their services and run their own business, rather than just having the basic knowledge of personal training. It is a personal trainer's responsibility to gain knowledge in every aspect of business including marketing, sales, and knowing how to set prices and collect fees. This individual must know all the rules, regulations, and tax laws associated with this career choice. Understanding social security, unemployment taxes and bookkeeping are very important (Roberts, 1996).

The next questions involved in business were how much equipment was necessary. The range starts from one set of dumbbells to 12 pieces of equipment for each major muscle group. Some participants believe in using the Bow-Flex and some calisthenics. A few participants believe it really depends on the client and their own personal goals. Participants had a common answer when they were asked if there was a benefit to a large

facility full of equipment compared to a small private studio. Many participants believe that a larger facility has more variety for clients who get bored easily and like changing their program- from time to time. The participants also believe that a smaller studio is perfect for people who are intimidated by a larger facility. The smaller studio is also easier for a beginner to learn about exercise machines and the clients are not so overwhelmed by the possibilities.

Educational Background

The fourth section is "Academics." Five of the participants interviewed have completed or are working on a bachelor's degree. Three participants have completed or are working on their master's degree and the last two participants have a high school diploma. The subjects felt their education prepared them well for the jobs they are currently in. A few still have the motivation and interest to pursue further education and are currently in the process of doing so. Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of personal trainers at each level of education. Most of the participants are very satisfied with their education. Figure 4 compares the amount of education with how successful the subject is. There is a positive correlation but it is weak. This could mean that education does not play a big role in being successful in this career. Education is not the only background knowledge you should have for being a personal trainer. However, this could mean there is small sample size and more information is needed to make better analysis. Being a certified personal trainer can make some differences.

A total of six participants are certified personal trainers. The organizations in which they are certified with vary through these six people. The organizations they are certified in are as follows: International Fitness Professionals Association (IFPA), Aerobic & Fitness Association of America (AFFA), National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA), through the YMCA, American Council on Exercise (ACE),

Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS), and Cam Fit Pro. The participants earn continuing education units either through their current education status or by going to one or two seminars a year. Each seminar earns a trainer a certain amount of units depending on which organization they are certified. The certification allows a person to stay current in their field by earning continuing education units. Certification also makes a trainer seem more valid in a client's eyes. Certifications seem to be a key component of personal training. The question of why this certification was so imperative was asked to each individual.

Certification for a number of positions related to fitness has become a more important factor in personal trainers maintaining a certain amount of credibility. Competence is necessary for personal trainers because they are responsible for providing correct information to people who are trying to maintain health and fitness. Since the public is becoming more knowledgeable in the area of health and fitness, it is easier for them to spot a faulty personal trainer. More and more members complain to their health clubs about incompetent trainers and there becomes a need for better ones (Roberts, 1996). One reason for getting certified by top programs such as ACSM and NSCA is that credibility will be enhanced. Other reasons include learning extra facts while preparing for the exam, being able to obtain personal liability insurance through the organization of which they are a member, and being able to receive referrals through physicians and other health professionals (O'Brien, 1997). Being certified and being educated certainly benefit a personal trainer. It is very important to keep up this knowledge in the field because there is always new information for a trainer to learn.

Other ways personal trainers stay current in their field are by reading journal subscriptions, reading websites, reading various fitness magazines, reading fitness books,

going to seminars, working with professionals in their field, listening to guest speakers, and pursuing higher education.

Career Success

The concluding section of questions is "Personal Reflections." There are a few downsides to becoming a personal trainer. The hours can be difficult at times. A personal trainer has to work around his/her client's schedules. A personal trainer might have to either work really early in the morning or later at night, and the hours do not stay constant depending on the number of clients the trainer has. The amount of income changes during the year because of seasonal work. More clients tend to want to work out more during the fall and winter, therefore in the summer and spring months a personal trainer has fewer clients. The hours worked is just one downside to being a personal trainer. Another downside seems to be motivation of clients.

The participants believed their clients had the potential to achieve their goals, and then all of a sudden their clients end their sessions due to lack of motivation. It is very difficult to watch this happen. Knowing how to motivate each client individually will only help prevent drop out from clients.

The third downside to personal training is cancellations. A personal trainer will be ready for an appointment, and waste their time if their client does not show up. Even though cancellations will always be a part of the business, this number of cancellations can be useful for a company to determine whether a session is not effective or enjoyable enough or it could indicate how lenient your cancellation policy is (Aquilina, 2003). The company can then improve on either the sessions each client is having or the cancellation policy can be improved by making it more stringent. All these reasons can help cut down on the amount of cancellations.

The last downside is the amount of money it costs to stay certified as a personal

trainer. Certifications can cost a lot of money, especially the credible ones. For example, the ACSM Health Fitness Instructor certification costs \$250 for the workshop, \$220 for the certification exam for members, and \$270 for the certification exam for non members (ACSM, 2001). There are additional costs for a retest in either the practical or written tests. Another example is from the NSCA organization. The C-EST exam fee is \$275 for this certification (NSCA). There are only a few downsides in the career of personal training, but they do not outweigh the benefits. The subjects also gave some advice for future personal trainers.

Additional advice for aspiring personal trainers is very helpful. The most common answer is that a trainer needs to stay current in his or her field. New trends, latest equipment and current news are very important to be aware of. Another comment is for a personal trainer to act very professional during each encounter with a client. Making a good first impression develops trust with a client. Some participants answered that acquiring as much education as possible is very important for advancement in the field of personal training. The most important answer was that a personal trainer must enjoy working with people in order to love this career; otherwise it will be hard to succeed and feel confident about the work accomplished. Even though advice was given on personal training, a lot of the subjects had other future career plans.

An additional question asked in this section was if the subjects had any further professional goals. The answers were greatly varied. A few participants would prefer to work in the area of strength and conditioning instead of working with the general public on the health side of fitness. A few want to gain more knowledge in their field by furthering their education. A couple participants would like to move up in their administrative positions and either become a director of their facility or own their own fitness center.

The last questions refer to personal success as a personal trainer. Individuals who lack experience in their field, or who are currently in school, do not rate themselves as being very successful. Individuals who believe they are successful have had a number of years of experience in fitness and they have also discovered their area of interest in the field of health and fitness.

Summary

The results of this study were important in gaining knowledge about the career of personal training. This information gave insight for what personal training is all about. The subjects first revealed their personal profiles and stated why they had decided to be in this field. Knowing the importance of a career that is suitable for the individual plays a significant role.

The second section described the exact job description of a personal trainer. Essential knowledge about important responsibilities, important documentation, and annual income of a personal trainer became evident. The study found that the most important responsibility is safety and that knowledge in this area is essential to ensure this safety of clients. All documentation is needed. One piece of information is not more important than another piece. The main conclusion is that all client information should be kept on file. The amount of income a personal trainer makes varies depending on number of clients and amount of motivation a personal trainer has to work with more clients. The job description becomes very evident and the important responsibilities become quite clear in the career of personal training.

The third section was a controversy between whether business was an important aspect of personal training. The participants believed that business knowledge was essential if the personal trainer worked privately. The business knowledge was not as

important if the personal trainer worked for an employer. All participants knew that business in some aspect was important, yet they did not seem to have their own personal business plan.

The fourth section for the study expressed each individual's educational background as well as who was certified and how important that certification was to them. The education prepared each participant well for the jobs they are currently in, but it does not play a significant role in career success. Certification became an important factor for considering a personal trainer to be credible.

The final section focused on if the subjects felt they were successful in their careers and why. The subjects revealed that there were some downsides to personal training, but also emphasized some advice for future students coming into the field. The participants also exposed future professional goals, which showed a lot of them want to move on with their careers and either move to the performance side of health and fitness, which is a growing area, or move up in their administrative positions.

Overall career success was attained to the amount of experience and education that each participant accomplished. Knowing they have found a career of interest increases the amount of success of the participant. However, this study also shows that the field of personal training tends to be more of a part-time job rather than a full-time career. Personal trainers are more likely to start out in this field and then move on to another career, which may or may not be related to the fitness career.

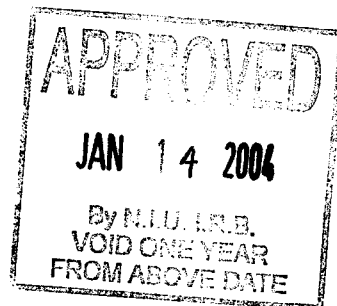
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APPENDIX A
Consent Form



College of Education
 Kinesiology and Physical Education
 Anderson Hall 221, Northern Illinois University,
 DeKalb, IL 60115
 (815) 753-1407



Consent Form

I agree to participate in the research project titled "*Personal Training as a Career*" being conducted by Kristi McIntyre (a student) and advisor Professor Simmons (a faculty member) at Northern Illinois University. I have been informed that the purpose of the study is to determine the many different roles/positions that personal trainers occupy.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I will be asked to do the following: I understand the interview process will be approximately an hour in duration. I will be asked a standard list of questions in a face to face format. The information will be geared toward demographics, education, and perceived career success. The interviewer will be filling out a specific form as the answers are provided. In addition, the interview will be recorded on audiotape. I am aware that my information will be kept confidential. Only the researchers will be able to link my name to the interview audiotape.

I am aware that my participation is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time without penalty or prejudice, and that if I have any additional questions concerning this study, I may contact Kristi McIntyre at 1-815-756-6100 or z095896@student.niu.edu. I may also contact Professor Simmons at 815-753-0617 or ssimmons@niu.edu. I understand that if I wish further information regarding my rights as a research subject, I may contact the Office of Research Compliance at Northern Illinois University at (815) 753-8588.

I understand that my consent to participate in this project does not constitute a waiver of any legal rights or redress I might have as a result of my participation, and I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature of Subject

Date

I give permission for an audiotape to be used during the interview process and for the tape to be placed in the honors library for future student use.

Signature of Subject

Date

APPENDIXB
Interview

Appendix B

Personal Training Interview

The following set of questions will be used for a research study titled, "Personal Training as a Career". I value your time as a participant and wish to ensure that we finish this interview in approximately one hour. Please limit your responses to what is specifically asked.

A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF:

1. How many years have you been a personal trainer? _____

2. Why did you choose personal training as a profession?

3. What do you love most about your career?

4. What country do you work in? (If You have previous job experience in another country, explain and differences and/or similarities with the United States)

5. On a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being most satisfied and 1 being least satisfied), how satisfied are you with your career choice?

1 2 3 4 5

6. Please explain why you have rated the question above at this level.

ON THE JOB:

7. Approximately how many hours do you work a week? _____

8. Describe a typical workday for you. (What specific hours do you work?)

9. Please list and explain some general responsibilities of a personal trainer. Identify the most important responsibility.

10. What type of facility do you work at? (Community/public)? Corporate fitness?

Private? (or self employed?)

11. What size of town/city do you work in? Large medium small

12. Approximately how many clients do you currently work with? _____

13. What is the age range of your clients? _____

14. What are the most common informational areas you help provide your clients with?

Fitness programs (for losing weight? gaining strength? Increasing endurance? Sports

Conditioning?). Diet?

15. Are your clients training because of a need for their own general well being or are their exercise programs doctor prescribed?

16. Is motivation a problem with your clients?

17. Which tests/assessments are most commonly administered to your clients (if several, the most frequent)?

18. What type of records do you keep? (Assessment results? Consent Forms? Contact info?)

19. On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most satisfied and 1 being least satisfied), how satisfied are you with your client base?

1 2 3 4 5

20. Please explain why you have rated the question above at this level.

21. What salary range would you say the average personal trainer lies within?

0-\$9999 \$10,000-19,999 \$20,000-39,999 \$40,000-59,999
\$60,000-79,999 \$80,000 and above

22. Could you please confirm the amount of income per year you make as a personal trainer?

0-\$9999 \$10,000-19,999 \$20,000-39,999 \$40,000-59,999
\$60,000-79,999 \$80,000 and above

23. On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most satisfied and 1 being least satisfied), how satisfied are you with your income level?

1 2 3 4 5

24. Please explain why you feel you have rated the question above at this level.

THE BUSINESS ASPECTS OF PERSONAL TRAINING:

25. Do you have a business plan? If so, what is it?

26. How much equipment is necessary for you to work with?

27. Is there a benefit to a complete fitness center full of equipment compared to a smaller private studio?

28. What is required in order to begin a business? Is there any initial capital investment to put out?

29. How do you market your services?

30. Do you carry liability insurance? _____

31. On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most important and 1 being least important), how important do you think the business aspect of personal training is to you?

1 2 3 4 5

32. Please explain why you have rated the question above at this level.

33. For students choosing to enter this field, would you recommend them to take any business courses? Why or why not?

ACADEMICS:

34. Level of Education attained?

High school diploma Associates degree Bachelor's degree Master's
Doctoral Other?

35. On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most satisfied and 1 being least satisfied), how satisfied are you with the amount of education you have?

1 2 3 4 5

36. Please explain why you have rated the question above at this level.

37. Are you certified in Personal Training? Yes No

38. What organization (s) are you certified with?

39. How often do you participate in events that earn continuing education units?

40. What is required to update your certification?

41. In what other ways do you stay current in your field?

42. On a scale from 1-5 (with 5 being most important and 1 being least important), how would you rate the importance of your certification?

1 2 3 4 5

43. Please explain why you have rated the question above at this level.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS:

44. If any, what do you feel are the downsides of being a personal trainer?

45. Do you have any additional advice, information, or wisdom for aspiring personal trainers?

46. Do you have any additional professional goals?

47. From a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being most successful and 1 being least successful) how would you rate your career success?

1 2 3 4 5

48. Please explain why you have rated the question above at this level. List any career milestones or personal achievements you may feel are responsible for your success.

HONORS THESIS ABSTRACT

THESIS SUBMISSION FORM

AUTHOR: Kristi McIntyre

THESIS TITLE: Personal Training as a Career

ADVISOR: Professor Simmons ADVISOR'S DEPARTMENT: Kinesiology

DISCIPLINE: Kinesiology (Personal Training) YEAR: 2004

PAGE LENGTH: 63 BIBLIOGRAPHY: Included ILLUSTRATED:

PUBLISHED (YES OR NO): NO LIST PUBLICATIONS:

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HONORS THESIS ABSTRACT

The purpose of the project was to research the many aspects of personal training and gain knowledge and understanding of these aspects to help benefit perspective personal trainers, faculty, and personal career interest. The research design was interview based with an audio recording of each subject's responses. Ten adults participated in the research study. Results were collected into tabular format and correlations were made. Overall career success was attained to the amount of experience and education that each participant attained. Knowing they have found a career of interest increases the amount of success of the participant. However, this study also shows that the field of personal training tends to be more of a part-time job rather than a full-time career. Personal trainers are more likely to start out in this field and then move on to another career, which may or may not be related to the fitness career.