

Evaluation of Physical Therapy Students Motives and Viewpoints on their Career Selection in First Year of Professional Degree Program, Lahore

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Abstract

Objective: The objective of this study is to investigate the motivations for choosing the physical therapy field as a career by the students.

Methodology: A cross sectional study design was used. This research included a total of 302 first year doctor of physical therapy students from multiple different public and private institution offering DPT in Lahore. The sampling technique was non-probability convenient sampling. The questionnaire was filled and then statistically analyzed by SPSS 20.1 software. The quantifiable terms were measured in the form of mean and standard deviation.

Results: There were 228 cases, (75.5%) females and 74 (24.5%) were males out of 302. The most important motivation to choose physical Therapy was to provide community service and helping others with an average of 3.73, followed by becoming a clinician with an average 3.58 and having an independent office or self-employment with an average 3.52 were in second and third priorities.

Conclusion: Despite of all the reasons students now a day are inclined towards selecting doctor of physical therapy as a profession, this research concluded that community service and helping others was the top priority factor behind it. In this study it was observed that becoming a clinician, desire for independent office and being self-employed were considered high motivation points whereas parent's pressure was the least priority factor in choosing physiotherapy as field of choice.

Keywords: Career Choice; Physiotherapy; Viewpoints; Motivation

Introduction

While the world is facing shortage and inequitable distribution of healthcare workers, studies shows that there's a need for policy making and further research to solve this problem [1].

Other studies show that commitment and dedication of health workers contributes in the productivity among medical team. It causes decrease in working hours for treating patients in Hospital ED ultimately proving to be cost effective [2]. Thus, as healthcare practitioners carry a huge responsibility to provide and encourage health of general public, there's a need for willingness to serve public.

To remain true to a career, understanding and motives to study it is of great significance and understanding these variables promotes employment planning in the health industry. Previous studies have reported variety of students motives related to factors as gender, race and parents level of education, independent work setup, self-employment etc. All these factors can lead to potential career planning [3].

However, learners with a greater educational incentive can do more teaching activities and achieve more success [4]. Several factors are engaged in selecting the area of study and can be split into two external and internal entities. In most cases, internal factors can be controlled by the person however; external variables are beyond the control of individuals and indirectly impact human decisions. We can mention family, academic environment, age groups, visual media and socio-economic regions for external variables [3].

The main factor of selecting career come in to view includes, personal interest, family pressure, noble occupation and to serve humanity [5]. However, many studies have uncertainty for career in medicine because there is extensive training, extensive working hour, absence of ease and relaxation [6].

Previous studies have shown that providing services to humanity and personal interest in the relative field can prove to be a very important influence for one to choose the field of medicine. However financial gain is not a major component to many of the students as so long working hours and prolonged training sessions often dispirit and discourage students [5].

Aim of the Study

The aim of our study is to explore the factors in student's decision making of physical therapy as profession. Many researches have been conducted to investigate the basic motivation to choose a health profession. Physiotherapy is emerging as one of the most growing field in Pakistan. Number of students to choose physiotherapy goes higher every year. Yet in Pakistan there is very less statistic data about physical therapy as to why students choose this career. The results of this study will help us guide students about the best career for him/her so that they can have bright future. We can also de-stigmatize all the misconceptions about physical therapy and last but not least we can control the yearly admissions and improve the quality of education in our institute.

Materials and Methods

The study design used was cross sectional descriptive study. Total seven institutes were included both private and public sector, the list consists of FMH/NIU, LMDC, PSRD, University of Lahore (UOL), university of Faisalabad (TUF), King Edward University, School of Allied Health Sciences (Children). The duration of research was 6 months. The calculated sample size was $n = 385$. With 95% confidence interval, anticipated population proportion $P = 0.50$ and absolute precision $d = 0.05$.

Sampling technique: Non-probability convenient sampling.

Inclusion criteria: All first year DPT students in annual system, 1st and second semester DPT students, studying in Public and Private sector.

Exclusion criteria: All senior year and senior semester DPT students.

Data collection: A new questionnaire was designed for data collection. A written consent form was given to each participant before data collection. The data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire from 1st year DPT students from above mentioned institutes in Lahore offering DPT. The questionnaire was validated for construct validity (Cronbach alpha 0.706) [7].

In first part of the questionnaire demographic information such as gender, age, Occupation of parents, Marks in intermediate/O levels and name of institute were registered.

The second part of the questionnaire was about student’s motivation in choosing DPT. It consisted of fourteen questions comprising five point Likert scale (1 - 5 points), five as essential priorities and one as not a priority.

Results

Among 302 students, who completed the questionnaire, 228 (75.5%) were females and 74 (24.5%) were males.

Average age of these students was 19.41 ± 1.353 (mean \pm SD) ranging from 16 to 26. Almost 119 (39.4%) students were 19 years old whereas 71 (23.5%) were 20 years old and 56 of them were 18 (18.5%) years old.

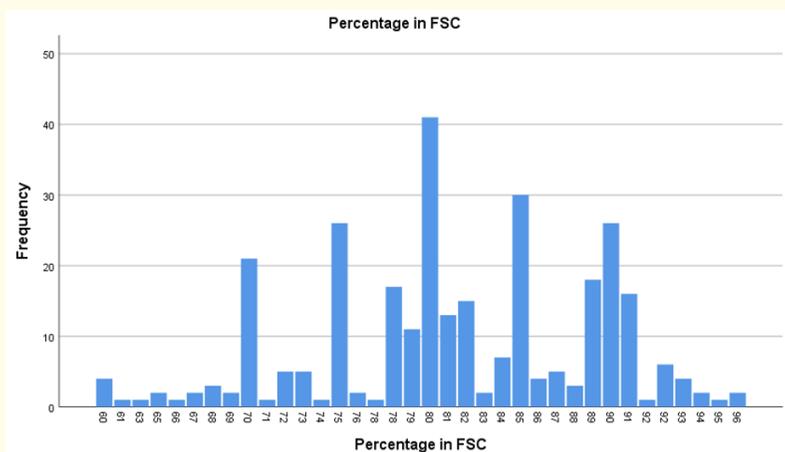
The detail number of students from each institute is shown in table 1.

Sr#	Name of Institute	N	Percent	Valid Percent
1	University of Lahore	111	36.8	36.8
2	Nur International University	54	17.9	17.9
3	Lahore Medical and Dental College	56	18.5	18.5
4	PSRD	18	6.0	6.0
5	School of Allied Health Science (Children Hospital)	19	6.3	6.3
6	The University of Faisalabad	19	6.3	6.3
7	Kind Edward Medical University	25	8.3	8.3
	Total	302	100.0	100.0

Table 1: Shows the frequency of physical therapy students included from seven different Public and private institutes of Lahore.

The demographics showed that there were 75 cases (24.8%) had parents from medical profession and 227 cases (75.2%) from non-medical profession.

Among all these 302 students average percentage in FSC was scored 81.29 ± 7.578 (mean \pm SD) ranging from 60% to 96%. This is illustrated in bar chart.



Bar Chart: The Bar chart shows average percentage in FSC of all 302 DPT students.

To prioritize motivational factors and based on questions that were asked with multiple-choice questions, each factor was measured by the average of related questions. According to the obtained average for each factor which is a number between 1 and 5, the highest point (5) is considered as the essential priority to select this discipline and the lowest point (1) is considered as the least important factor to select this field.

The most important motivation to choose physical therapy was to provide community service and helping others with an average of 3.73, followed by becoming a clinician with an average 3.58 and having an independent office or self-employment with an average 3.52. The next priorities of the studied participants in this study were to move abroad after completion of their degree (3.24), higher social status (3.32), Personal Interest (3.14), Become researcher (3.09), High economic income (3.07), Doctor title (3.02), Influence of Physiotherapy seeking relative (2.97), Admission denial in mainstream medical program (2.91), Pursue in academics (2.29), Friend influence (2.28) and Parents Pressure (1.96). The priority level of all the factors is shown in table 2.

Priority	Motivation of choice of Discipline	Average point from number 5
1	Community service	3.73 ± 1.001
2	Become clinician	3.58 ± 1.090
3	Independent office or self-employment	3.52 ± 1.117
4	Move Abroad	3.24 ± 1.227
5	Higher social status	3.23 ± 1.251
6	Personal Interest	3.14 ± 1.196
7	Become researcher	3.09 ± 1.273
8	High economic income	3.07 ± 1.204
9	Doctor title	3.02 ± 1.363
10	Influence of Physiotherapy seeking relative	2.97 ± 1.303
11	Admission denial in mainstream medical program	2.91 ± 1.438
12	Pursue in academics	2.29 ± 1.083
13	Friend influence	2.28 ± 1.382
14	Parents Pressure	1.96 ± 1.237

Table 2: Shows priorities of motivational Factors to select physiotherapy as career.

This concludes that community service and helping other was the most common high priority factor in choosing physiotherapy as career. Community service, becoming a clinician and having an independent office were the top most priority factors among students.

Discussion

We conducted a study to analyze the motives and viewpoints of students in choosing physiotherapy as a career option through a self-administered questionnaire from 1st year DPT students from seven different institutes in Lahore offering DPT. The study concluded that community service and helping others was the most common high priority factor among the students. The potential to become a clinician and occupy independent office were the other priorities among the participants of this study.

The strengths of the study were the inclusion of multiple physiotherapy institutions including both private and government organizations that gave us a vast insight about students from different backgrounds. The results of this study would pave the way for future

researches that will enable researchers and administrators of institutes to create awareness among individuals seeking physiotherapy as a profession and helping them to pursue a better career choice and destigmatize the misconceptions regarding physiotherapy as a growing field of choice. The outcomes of the study will possibly enable future researchers to build a valid and reliable assessment tool that can be used for funneling the students during the admission process.

The limitations of the studies were the restrictions imposed by some institutes to collect data that resulted in a reduced sample size for our study. Though many similar researches have been conducted but there is still no standardized tool till date to identify and gauge the motivations and viewpoints of the students before selecting a professional career that will fulfill their academic and personal goals in future.

A similar study was conducted in Iran at AJUMS to investigate the motivation behind choosing dentistry as their field of study. The study established that considering high rate of unemployment, students opted for dentistry because of reliable source of income and a prestigious social status. Having an independent office, earning high income and higher social status were top priority motivational factors in choosing dentistry which corresponds with the results of our study where becoming a clinician and having an independent office were high priority factors in choosing physiotherapy [7].

The Physiotherapy profession is considered to be a desirable career choice and is regarded to have a high level of professional prestige ranking fourth after the field of medicine, engineering and law. Research intended to study the perception of physiotherapy as a possible career choice was conducted in Nigeria. The study aimed to compare the perceived occupational prestige of physiotherapy to other occupations. The respondents generally gave high physiotherapy ratings in all dimensions, in particular for their level of salary. In the area of health, it was ranked below medicine but above pharmacy, nursing and other allied or laboratory sciences. One of the main topics identified among the respondents in line with our study was the desire to pursue a career path that related to a strong sense of self and a desire to engage in community service. It was strengthened by the student's response to the need for a high level of education and salary. These factors reinforce the suitability of physiotherapy as a career option for those who aspire to succeed in their lives [8].

In contrast to analysis, research conducted in India has shown that a student's interest in a career in physiotherapy is motivated by his or her own passion and personal interest in the subject or by the influence of a family member in the healthcare profession. It also suggested that the majority of students chose to opt for a medical career as a physician or dentist, however not being able to be admitted to traditional medical programs was not a significant factor in the choice of physiotherapy in our research. Students chose to work in India rather than travel abroad, while our study identified moving abroad was a popular preference among participants after the program had been completed. This study in India was limited to a single institute and therefore the obtained results cannot be generalized [9].

There is a lower ratio of medical practitioners to population in rural compared to urban areas. An analysis to assess and compare the motivation factors to choose a career in health sciences among rural and urban origin students at multiple South African universities demonstrates that in contrast to our findings the influence of parents, friends and other family members was significant to make profession choices. However, likewise in our study personal exposure was also an important contributing factor, although a notable difference in observed results between rural-origin-students and urban-origin-students was shown. These factors could prove essential to form strategies in an effort to amend the disproportion. Healthcare policy makers must support student's families and enhance their personal exposure to the advanced medical facilities in order to encourage them towards a career in health sciences [10].

Physiotherapy is an emerging career choice for Pakistani students. The average number of enrolled students rises each year in the Physiotherapy degree. It calls for a quality control of the increasing quantity. A structured admission selection tool that measures the cognitive and non-cognitive skills required to become a physiotherapist is essential to funnel prospective students during the admission process. The selection of candidates must be those from the total pool of applicants who are most likely to excel not only in academia but also as clinical practitioners in the future. Previous Research conducted that prior Academic achievements, gender and assessment of communication skills in a structured interview demonstrate positive predictive power into undergraduate medical program [11]. A study to review predictive value of selection interview for entry into physiotherapy course in Australia signified the overall association of clinical performance throughout the physiotherapy program with admission interview. The findings suggest an appreciable role for both academic and non-academic selection protocols for entry into physiotherapy program [12].

Conclusion

Of all the factors that compel a student to choose physiotherapy as their career choice, this research concluded that community service and helping others was the top priority factor out of fourteen variables. In this study it was observed that becoming a clinician, independent office and being self-employed were considered high motivation points whereas parent's pressure was the least priority factor in choosing physiotherapy as field of choice.

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