

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION AMONG PHYSICAL THERAPY GRADUATES DURING HOUSEJOB AT TERTIARY CARE HOSPITALS IN PESHAWAR

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: House job is an important part of health education, as at this point graduates learn to transfer their theoretical knowledge into practical skills. Physical therapy is an emerging field, and the demands are often stressful for the therapist. House job satisfaction is important to be determined as it would help the policy makers to make the necessary changes for the increased satisfaction and confidence of the physical therapy graduates. Objective: To determine the level of house job satisfaction among physical therapy graduates working at tertiary care hospitals of Peshawar. Results: The study had 150 participants, 38% being male and 62% being female. Males reported higher satisfaction scores compared to females; however, these differences were not statistically significant. Across hospitals, intrinsic satisfaction showed a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.001$), whereas extrinsic and general satisfaction did not demonstrate significant differences. Conclusion: Overall, the physical therapy graduates during house job in tertiary care hospitals of Peshawar demonstrated satisfactory levels of intrinsic, extrinsic, and general job satisfaction. Although satisfaction levels varied slightly according to gender and hospital setting, significant differences were observed only for intrinsic satisfaction across hospitals.

Keywords: *Physical therapy, job satisfaction, house job, intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, general satisfaction, tertiary care hospitals*

INTRODUCTION:

House job is a distinct part of health education in which graduates learn to consolidate theory into practice with the aim of gaining clinical competence and enhancing professional knowledge. Clinical knowledge and skills can be achieved through a conducive clinical learning environment with the effective supervision.(1) Physical therapy is an emerging profession. On the one hand, practicing physical therapy is highly satisfying and fulfilling while on the other hand, this field is very demanding and stressful.

There are about two dimensions of job satisfaction, intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction. Intrinsic satisfaction arises from within, does not require any external reward and enables higher satisfaction and performance. Extrinsic satisfaction dials up to external factors, like job security, salary, bonuses and working conditions etc. that maintain performance even when work is no longer pleasurable. The absence of extrinsic factors is reported to be a major cause of dissatisfaction.(2)

The delivery of healthcare facilities has changed considerably over the last two decades and professional burnout is common among trainees and practicing physical therapists. Satisfied physical therapist are known to provide better quality of care, are more conscientious with their attitude towards prescribing treatments and have less chances of making errors. Consequently, job satisfaction in physical therapists can lead to better patient outcomes and satisfied patients, also resulting in fewer litigations. Lack of job satisfaction is related to higher attrition rates, work-related stress, burnout and work family conflict.(3)

Level of satisfaction depends upon the environmental/organizational factors as well as personal characteristics. Improving physical therapist welfare depends largely on the identification of employee's satisfaction with job. There are many personal characteristics that can affect the therapist's job satisfaction. For example, employees who have worked for longer years may have more opportunities for promotion, have higher income, and are therefore, more satisfied with their work. Age, personality, marital status and educational milestones are some of other factors that may affect satisfaction.(4)

The physical therapist job market has recently noted higher rates of turnover and job vacancies. An understudied factor contributing to these trends in profession is job satisfaction. The profession continues to experience relatively low wages compared with other health professions and graduates of Doctor of Physical Therapy programs face increasingly high student debt.

There is lack of research on house job satisfaction levels of physical therapists. This area remains of higher interest as over the past two years Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has witnessed an increased number of diseases, road traffic accidents and increasing age, increasing the demand for physical therapy services.

As most of the physical therapy services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are provided by public health sectors, an awareness of the factors that influence job satisfaction in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is important to enhance recruitment and retention of physical therapy staff, thus maximizing the ability to provide high-quality health care to the population. (5)

Though there is general perception that currently physical therapists are content with their jobs, there is scarce literature available globally on the subject. In the past two decades, research has been conducted to evaluate job satisfaction in medical staff, job satisfaction among physical therapist remains under-reported.(6)

Researching the level of job satisfaction among physical therapy graduates during house job at tertiary care hospitals in Peshawar provides us with valuable insights regarding intrinsic factors related to job content such as psychological needs, recognitions, responsibility, achievements and extrinsic factors related to job environment such as supervision and working conditions.

METHODS:

Duration Of Study: 6 Months (June-November 2024)

Sample Size: 150, calculated using the Rao soft online sample size calculator, with a margin of error of 5% and confidence level of 95%.

Sampling Technique: Non-probability convenience sampling

Sample Selection:

Inclusion criteria

- Physical therapy graduates during house job
- Physical therapy graduates after house job

Exclusion criteria

- Physical therapy undergraduates
- Physical therapy graduates before house job

Data Collection Procedure

Upon approval from the Advanced Studies and Research Board (ASRB) and ethical review board of Khyber medical university Peshawar, data was collected from graduates during house job.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data was analysed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics i.e. frequency and percentages were used to report demographic data and the scoring for satisfaction.

Table 1: Demographics of the participants

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	57	38.0
	Female	93	62.0
Hospital	LRH	81	54.0
	HMC	47	31.3
	NWGH	22	14.7
Hospital Type	Public	128	85.3
	Private	22	14.7

Comparison of Satisfaction Scores:

An independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were applied to compare satisfaction scores according to gender and hospital. Male participants demonstrated slightly higher mean scores for extrinsic, intrinsic, and general satisfaction compared to female participants; however, these differences were not statistically significant.

Mean and standard deviation were reported for the level of satisfaction.

Chi-square test was applied to find out the association between satisfaction, gender and hospital setting.

Analysed data was presented on charts and tables, $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS:

Participant Characteristics:

A total of 150 physical therapy graduates participated in the study, with 38% being male and 62% being females. The characteristics of the sample are described in table 1.

Table 2: Comparison of satisfaction scores according to gender and hospital

Variable	Category	Extrinsic Mean \pm SD	Intrinsic Mean \pm SD	General Mean \pm SD	p-value
Gender	Male	70.54 \pm 15.78	68.75 \pm 13.14	70.39 \pm 20.40	0.087*
	Female	68.54 \pm 24.50	66.55 \pm 14.10	60.48 \pm 20.79	0.695*
Hospital	LRH	69.34 \pm 15.14	67.82 \pm 12.31	65.43 \pm 21.03	0.218**
	HMC	69.84 \pm 30.23	68.08 \pm 12.71	59.30 \pm 22.18	0.001**
	NWGH	67.99 \pm 20.54	64.29 \pm 19.91	70.45 \pm 17.48	0.770**

\n*Independent sample t-test

**One-way ANOVA

Association Between Satisfaction Levels and Study Variables:

Chi-square test was applied to determine the association between satisfaction categories and gender as well as hospitals. Majority of the participants demonstrated average to high satisfaction levels across all domains.

Across hospitals, participants from HMC showed the highest mean extrinsic and intrinsic satisfaction scores, whereas participants from NWGH demonstrated the highest general satisfaction score. A statistically significant difference was observed only for intrinsic satisfaction across hospitals ($p = 0.001$).

For extrinsic satisfaction, most female participants reported high satisfaction, while most male participants demonstrated average satisfaction. Similarly, average satisfaction was the predominant category for intrinsic and general satisfaction among both genders and across hospitals.

Table 3: Association between satisfaction categories and variables

Variable	Category	Low n (%)	Average n (%)	High n (%)
Extrinsic Satisfaction	Male	1	36	21
	Female	2	63	92
General Satisfaction	Male	3	35	19
	Female	7	73	13
Intrinsic Satisfaction	Male	0	44	13
	Female	1	68	24
Extrinsic Satisfaction by Hospital	LRH	1	52	28
	HMC	0	34	12
	NWGH	1	13	8
Intrinsic Satisfaction by Hospital	LRH	0	63	18
	HMC	0	36	11
	NWGH	1	13	8
General Satisfaction by Hospital	LRH	7	57	17
	HMC	3	37	7
	NWGH	0	14	8

DISCUSSION:

The present study assessed the level of satisfaction among Physical Therapy graduates while doing house job training program in the tertiary care hospitals at Peshawar. The results showed that most subjects expressed average to high satisfaction in all three sub-domains of satisfaction (intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction and general satisfaction). Although the mean satisfaction scores were higher for the males than for the females, the differences found were not statistically significant. Both comparisons within and across hospital settings suggest no significant differences in the majority of comparisons, except for intrinsic satisfaction, which showed significant differences across hospitals.

Mood scores of the present study were consistent with previous research reporting moderate to high scores of physical therapists and other healthcare professionals, as well as job satisfaction. In a similar study, Carillo-García et al found that of all the health care professionals included, 77% were satisfied with their jobs with females being predominant group in the workforce. (7)

Rosta et al discovered that generally the job satisfaction of health care professionals is high and stable over time, particularly that of the senior staff. (8) The present research also revealed that the satisfaction among physical therapy house officers for their training environment and professional experience was mostly average to high level.

The present study demonstrates that males had slightly higher scores on both the extrinsic and intrinsic and general satisfaction than females, but this difference did not prove to be significant. The results of the present study may imply that the job satisfaction level of male as compared to female Physical Therapy graduates may not have significantly differed during the house job due to relatively similar level of training and experience. Majority of the participants reported average satisfaction for each of the domains. Several work-related risk factors, such as workload, supervision, professional recognition, career uncertainty, and low salary incentives, could be responsible for this. Previous research work has ranked working conditions, organizational support, salary structure, and professional development opportunities as key elements which impact physical therapists' satisfaction with their jobs.(9,10,11) Mulligan et al. also documented that factors such as work environment and finances are significant in determining job satisfaction among physical therapists.

For any hospital, a significant difference for intrinsic satisfaction was only found ($p = 0.001$). The intrinsic satisfaction level was slightly higher for the HMC participants than for the LRH and the NWGH participants. Personal achievement, recognition, learning opportunities, and opportunities for professional growth are all common sources of intrinsic satisfaction. Such differences from one hospital to another may indicate differences in mentorship, patient

exposure, clinical learning environment and administration. Based on previous studies, positive workplace culture and supportive supervision could play a significant role in the intrinsic job satisfaction of healthcare workers. (1,10)

The results of the present study are also consistent with studies in the field of developing healthcare systems which report average level of satisfaction instead of very high levels among the individuals who provide healthcare services. The current study did not specifically assess factors contributing to dissatisfaction in healthcare workers however the majority of workplace satisfaction was average raises the possibility of similar workplace challenges in the local health care arena.

Physical therapy is still a new profession in Pakistan, specifically in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province where they even developed house job programs for students who have made a decision to go into physical therapy. The results of this study are therefore useful baseline data on the experiences of physical therapists who have already graduated. The assessment of house officer satisfaction is important because it has a direct impact on motivation, quality patient care, commitment to profession and retention of workforce:(3,9)

This study is important for providing initial data on the satisfaction of physical therapy graduates in house job training in Pakistan. The results have the potential to provide valuable information for policy makers, hospital administrators, and academic institutions when aiming to improve clinical learning environments, levels of supervision, and relevant professional supports to improve satisfaction and retention among Health Care Professionals as future physical therapists.

Strengths of the Study:

- The present study is one of the few studies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that mainly highlighted the satisfaction of physical therapy graduates during house job training.
- House job programs in physical therapy are relatively new in the region and the study offers useful data as baseline information regarding experiences and satisfaction of house officers in physical therapy in tertiary care hospitals.

- Participants from several tertiary care hospitals including government and private sector hospitals were chosen. This enabled satisfaction to be compared in different clinical contexts, and increased sample diversity.

- The intrinsic, extrinsic, and the general satisfaction domains were evaluated, giving a better outlook on the job satisfaction among physical therapy graduates in general.

- Standardized statistical methods such as chi-square, one-way ANOVA and independent sample t-test also increased the reliability of the results.

- The sample size was sufficient to satisfy the research goals for this study and to conduct comparisons between the research variables.

Limitations of the Study:

- The study adopted a non-probability convenient sampling technique which may have biased the sampling and limited the generalizability of the findings.

- The recruited participants were only those working in tertiary care in Peshawar; therefore, the findings might not be representative of physical therapists practicing in other cities or health care environments throughout Pakistan.

- This was a cross-sectional study that only captured satisfaction at one point in time and made no causal links between the workplace characteristics and satisfaction of the employees.

- The overall level of satisfaction was investigated mainly and important determinants like workload, salary structure, burnout, quality of supervision, working hours and organizational support were not closely examined.

- The study depended on self-reported questionnaires increasing the risk of response bias.

- The study may have a social desirability bias, as certain participants might have misjudged their degree of satisfaction, according to their own views or issues in the workplace.

Future Recommendations:

- Additional research is needed that uses larger samples and a probability sampling design for more generalizability of results.

- We recommend that multicentre study from various provinces and health care institutions be conducted to get a more in-depth picture on the satisfaction of physical therapy house officers in Pakistan.

- Specific areas that impact satisfaction levels should be studied, such as workload, salary, mentorship, quality of supervision, opportunities for growth, burnout and workplace stress.
- Qualitative investigations also may provide a means to gain insight into the personal experiences and issues in house job training for physical therapy graduates.
- Healthcare setting and government officials should promote house officers' professional supports, enhance their supervisors, and improve clinical learning environment.
- Career development opportunities, mentorship teams, and career counselling and a distribution of workload could enhance satisfaction and retention among physical therapists.
- Longitudinal studies are also recommended to assess satisfaction over time and to identify the effect of early experiences on job attainment, professional burn-out and the level of retention in the profession.

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