

# PERCEPTION OF EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AMONG PUBLIC VS PRIVATE PHYSICAL THERAPY INSTITUTES: A MULTI CENTERED STUDY

## SEHAR MUSTAFA KHAN

Physiotherapist, Lahore College of Physiotherapy, Lahore Medical & Dental College, Lahore, Pakistan.

## AYESHA AFZAL

Physiotherapist, Lahore College of Physiotherapy, Lahore Medical & Dental College, Lahore, Pakistan.

## AMBREEN TAUSEEF\*

Professor, Physiology Department, CMH Lahore Medical College & Institute of Dentistry, Lahore, Pakistan.

\*Corresponding Author Email: ambreen\_tauseef@cmhlmc.edu.pk.

## H.M. SAADAN SAQIB

Physiotherapist, Lahore College of Physiotherapy, Lahore Medical & Dental College, Lahore, Pakistan.

## AMAL SHAKEEL

Lecturer, Lahore College of Physiotherapy, Lahore Medical & Dental College, Lahore, Pakistan.

## ALIYA ASLAM

Associate Professor, Pathology Department, Azra Naheed Medical College, Lahore, Pakistan.

### Abstract

The study aimed to evaluate the perception of educational environment among public versus private Physical Therapy institutions in Lahore, Pakistan. It was an analytical cross-sectional study that included final year physical therapy students from various public and private physical therapy institutions in Lahore by using DREEM questionnaire. The total score of DREEM questionnaire that was recorded in complete research concludes that in Public Sector, no student responded positive towards plenty of problems whereas, 83.0 % (n=39) responded more positive than negative. Almost 17.0 % (n=8) of students in public sector responded excellent. In the private sector, only 5 % (n=3) students responded in plenty of problems while 76.7 % (n=46) showed more positive rather negative. Similarly, 18.3 % (n=11) students responded excellent. Students' perception about educational environment of their institutions remained positive showing satisfaction among them. The greater number of students in public sector medical colleges responded more positively compared to private ones.

**Index Terms:** Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measure, Educational environment, undergraduate students, Public and Private, Physical Therapy Institutes.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The educational environment can be described as surroundings of an institution; that may include classrooms, faculty members, peers and other support systems that can encourage the engagement of the learner [1], [2]. It is considered as a significant part in the curricula that is required for acquirement of satisfaction of students, high educational standards, and effective learning outcomes [3], [5].

The educational environment of an institute determines the success and failure of its students [6], [7] A good environment engages students in better learning objectives whilst an undermining one would impede their achievements [8], [9]. The students' perception about their educational environment provides a ground for improvement of its quality and also open doors for students to share their experience [10], [11].

Environment has great impact over the learning capabilities of students. Students' urge for achieving increase, feel more accomplished, and engage themselves better in educational activities; if they are provided with a rather healthy environment [12], [13]. Contrarily, the unhealthy and negative environment obstructs their capabilities and impede their achievements [14]. The significance of educational environment cannot be undermined. In 1988 [15] the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) also believes that educational environment of any institution is a crucial domain that should not be ignored while assessing the educational faculties of any medical institute [16], [17].

The researches have proved the direct relation between the learning outcomes of students and the educational environment of an institution). The perception of students about the healthy environment of an institution enhances their learning capacities [20].

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the positive and negative impacts of educational environment comprehended by the students of undergraduate physical therapy students. This study will help to get deep insight of educational environment and students' perception about the former. Hence, this study will assist the pertaining authorities to follow up and focus in a direction that will develop an institution with more positive environment for students.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A relative cross-sectional study was conducted on private versus public Physical therapy institutes. The sample size was 107. The Physical Therapy students who were taken under research, included 47 from 3 public sector institutions, and 60 students from 3 private sector institutions. This research has been officially approved by Ethical committee of Lahore college of Physical therapy. The study settings were Allama Iqbal Medical College, Allied School of Health Sciences and King Edward Medical University which are public institutions. The private institutions included were Lahore Medical and Dental College, Fatima Memorial Hospital, CMH Lahore Medical College & IOD, Azra Naheed Medical College, Lahore and Rashid Latif Medical and Dental College. An informed consent has been taken from each participant prior collecting data. The sampling procedure was Non probability convenience and simple random sampling technique. The duration of study was from August 2019 to January 2020.

The tool used for this research was DREEM Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measure Questionnaire with reliability coefficient mean was 0.71 with content validity 0.39. The questionnaire used was consisted of 50 statements relevant to educational environment with total score of 200. Moreover, these 50 statements are further subdivided into 5 interrelated subscales that include; students' perception of learning, students'

perception of course organizers, students' academics perception, students' perception of atmosphere and social self-perception. Data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The study variables were presented in the form of descriptive statistics (tables and percentages).

## RESULTS

The results showed that in public 4.3% students reported teaching is viewed not in a positive perception while the count reported by private students is 6.7%. In public 76.6% students have a more positive perception while the count in private is 70%. In public 19.1% students lie in category teaching highly thought of while 23.3% students of private lie in this category.

**Table 1: Students Perception of Learning**

Category * SPOL			SPOL_cat			Total
			Non-positive perception	positive perception	Teaching highly thought of	
Category	Public	Count	2	36	9	47
		% within Category	4.3%	76.6%	19.1%	100.0%
	Private	Count	4	42	14	60
		% within Category	6.7%	70.0%	23.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	6	78	23	107
		% within Category	5.6%	72.9%	21.5%	100.0%

Table 2 shows that 4.3% participants of public lie in category in need of some retraining while the count of private is 1.7%. In public 58.7% participants lie in category of moving in the right direction while the count for private is 65%. In public 37% participants lie in category of model course organizers while the count for private is 33%.

**Table 2: Students' Perception of Course Organizers**

Category * POC			POC_cat			Total
			In need of some retraining	Moving in the right direction	Model course organizers	
Category	Public	Count	2	27	17	46
		% within Category	4.3%	58.7%	37.0%	100.0%
	Private	Count	1	39	20	60
		% within Category	1.7%	65.0%	33.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	3	66	37	106
		% within Category	2.8%	62.3%	34.9%	100.0%

Whereas, Table 3 shows that 2.1% participants of public reported many negative aspects while the results of private is 11.7%. In public 74.5% participants lie in category of feeling more on positive side while in private is 56.7%. In public 23.4% participants lie in category of confident while in private is 31.7%.

**Table 3: Students' academic self-perception**

Category*ASP			asp_cat			Total
			Many negative aspects	Feeling more on positive side	Confident	
Category	Public	Count	1	35	11	47
		% within Category	2.1%	74.5%	23.4%	100.0%
	Private	Count	7	34	19	60
		% within Category	11.7%	56.7%	31.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	8	69	30	107
		% within Category	7.5%	64.5%	28.0%	100.0%

Table 4 shows 4.3 % of public sector students responded that certain things need to be changed while 78.7 % positively responded. In private sector, 10.0 % responded that certain things are needed to be amended whereas 80.0% of students responded positively. In public sector, 17.0 % students responded a good feeling overall and in private sector, 10.0 % students responded towards a good feeling overall.

**Table 4: Students' Perception of Atmospher**

Category * SPOA			SPOA_cat			Total
			There are many issues which need changing	A more positive attitude	A good feeling overall	
Category	Public	Count	2	37	8	47
		% within Category	4.3%	78.7%	17.0%	100.0%
	Private	Count	6	48	6	60
		% within Category	10.0%	80.0%	10.0%	100.0%

## DISCUSSION

The objective of the current study was to evaluate the perception of educational environment among public vs private physical therapy institutes in Lahore, Pakistan. This study will assist to get deep insight of educational environment and students' perception about the former. Hence, this study will assist the pertaining authorities to follow up and focus in a direction that will develop an institution with more positive environment for students. The total score of DREEM questionnaire that was recorded in complete research concluded that in public sector no student responded positive towards plenty of problems while a few students in private responded positive (5 percent). Whereas majority of students (83 percent) in public were more positive than negative whilst the count for private was (76.7percent). Only a small proportion of students responded excellent –public (17 percent) and private (18.3 percent).

It demonstrated that students in public medical colleges are more satisfied with the educational environment of their institutes as compared to private ones. Whereas the private institutions' students face more competition that creates more stress in them. This highly competitive environment lead individuals' perception towards more negative, comparative with the circumstances when individual feels relax [21].

The results of the current study are coherent with the previous ones. Palmgren et al conducted a study in Sweden and reported that majority of the students were more positive than negative [22]. Hongkan et al conducted a study in Thailand and reported that the majority of the students were more positive than negative [23]. Jawaid et al reported in his study that undergraduate students were more positive than negative [24]. Memon et al also concluded that students were overall positive [25]. Despite the similarities this study also has some distinction such as it is focused and targeted study on physical therapy students of different institutions. This study primarily focused on final year students who have spent particular years in their institutions. Further these students have multi-dimensional experiences of each phase of professional life.

The striking feature of the current study is its comparative analysis of public vs private physical therapy institutions in Lahore. This study evaluated the educational environment in both sectors of physical therapy institutions whilst previously Rauf Memon et al conducted a similar study in 2018 in which study setting was single medical university [2]. This research is significant because it analyzed the educational environment of medical colleges in less developed country. Moreover, this research did not include the faculty in data collection so the process remained unbiased and independent.

## CONCLUSION

Students' perception about educational environment of their physical therapy institutions found to be high. The greater number of students in public sector medical colleges responded more positive than negative as compared to private ones.

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