

AN INVESTIGATION OF CAREER SUCCESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS: EXPECTATION VS. PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT: *This study was designed to investigate the expectations and perceptions of medical practitioners regarding career success and professional commitment to find out gap in local setting of Lahore, Pakistan. The research instrument devised was based on qualitative and quantitative methods to probe career success and professional commitment in the local setting of Pakistan as on emerging trend. The initial probing included observations, semi structured interviews and focused group interviews of medical practitioners working in the public sector hospitals. Moreover a questionnaire was developed to collect data from 165 medical practitioners from public hospitals in Lahore, Pakistan. The result indicated the gap between expectations and perceptions of medical practitioners that are reflected by mean scores. Furthermore, study reported that expectations of medical practitioners are higher than perceptions of career success and professional commitment. Research findings can be helpful in policy and strategies planning regarding health care sector.*

Key Words: *Career success, professional commitment, medical practitioners, health care sector*

INTRODUCTION

Career success has positive relation with human capital and organizational performance. Performance of organizations in different sectors of a country plays an important role in the development of economy of that country. Health care sector (HCS) is one of the important sectors which contributes in the growth of economy and create economic opportunities [1], unfortunately HCS of Pakistan has been facing different problems since the day of independence due to the policies of the Government, low funding, shortage of facilities, scarcity of resources, lack of accessibility and utilization. Medical practitioners including Medical officers (MO), Housing Officers (HO) and Post graduates (PG) in public health care sector suffering from insecure service structure resulting in the low morale and low satisfaction related to their work and profession.

Previous studies showed that a significant work has been done on the career success [2, 3, 4, 5, 6] and professional commitment [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13] but little attention has been given to investigate the difference of expectations vs. perceptions among employees regarding career success as well as professional commitment and there has less amount of work on career success and professional commitment in HCS. Due to this reason, previous literature is slightly unable to effectively manage the problems associated with these factors, for example, the medical practitioners working in public health care sector of Pakistan are facing lots of problems such as low salary, slow promotions and contractual jobs which relates to career success of employees and these factors reduce the employee satisfaction and productivity of workers. Therefore, there is need to comprehensively investigate the career success and professional commitment of medical practitioners working in public hospitals of Pakistan for the purpose to devise the effective strategies in this regard. Thus this study was designed to investigate and measure the difference between expectations and perceptions regarding career success and professional commitment among medical practitioners working in public hospitals situated in Lahore, Pakistan.

Career success describe as positive psychological feelings and the gathering of achievements related to work arising

from work experience [2, 14]. Career Success can be objective and it can be subjective [15, 16]. It refers to external and internal element of achievement of an individual through the career duration [15]. Extrinsic outcomes labeled as objective career success refers to visible outcomes such as pay and promotion [15]. Subjective career success known as intrinsic outcomes and intrinsic outcomes of career success depends on individual's satisfaction or appraisal of own success [15]. When people satisfied with their career they are more committed to their profession than those people who have less external and internal satisfaction. There is positive relationship between professional commitment and career success [17].

Professional commitment is individual's belief in and acceptance of the values of the chosen profession [7]. Professional commitment identified by how much an individual has willingness to put an effort in work or profession, maintain a membership and how much he/she has belief in goals in his/her career [18]. Professional commitment describes as the individual's dedication to profession and desire to remain in that occupation when other opportunities provided to him/her to change profession [19]. According to Meyer et al., [7], Professional commitment composed of three components. Affective occupational commitment (APC) is the first component which refers the individual's desire to remain in the profession [8]. Continuance professional commitment (CPC) is second component refers to stay in the profession because of the high costs associated with leaving. The third component, normative professional commitment (NPC) leads individual to remain in the profession with sense of obligation [8, 9, 10]. Affective and continuance commitment negatively related to the intention to leave the occupation [11]. Professional commitment plays antecedent role to job satisfaction and work stress, professional commitment positively related to job satisfaction [20], job performance [21] and has inverse influence on work stress through job satisfaction [20]. The individuals who have more commitment with their profession and organization have higher job and career satisfaction and their intention to quit from job and profession decrease [18, 22, 23].

People who are more committed to their occupation experience more career success (OCS and SCS) than those who have low commitment with their occupation. Career commitment positively related to objective career success (salary level) and subjective career success (career satisfaction) [17]. People who are more committed to their career and occupation they set high goal for career and they put more efforts to achieve those goals and these efforts leads to increase in performance and high performance provided extrinsic rewards as promotions, increase in salaries and people also feel more internal satisfaction with career.

The above literature showed that there is valuable research work has been done regarding career success and professional commitment in different fields but work on difference between expectations and perceptions remains unresolved, there is little attention has been paid to gap analysis study of career success and professional commitment among employees. Furthermore literature depicted that there is less amount of work on health care sector especially regarding the problems faced by medical practitioners. This paper explains the difference of expectations vs. perceptions regarding career success and professional commitment among medical practitioners working in public health care sector.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The target population based on young medical practitioners HO, MO and PGs working in public health care sector of Lahore, Pakistan. Sample size consisted of 165 medical practitioners working in 9 public hospitals that are Mayo hospital, Services hospital, Jinnah Hospital, Sheikh Zaid Hospital, General Hospital, Ganga Ram Hospital, Shahdara Hospital, Nawaz Sharif Hospital and Lady Willingdon Hospital.

For data collection, a field survey was conducted using questionnaire and convenience random sampling has been used. 200 questionnaires were administered in the public sector hospitals of Lahore, Pakistan. Total 170 questionnaires were collected back; most of them required many reminders, also personal visits by the authors. It took almost 2 months for data collection. Out of 170 questionnaires, 165 were used for analysis. 5 questionnaires had large number of missing values that's why those were not used in analysis. Data was entered in SPSS (version 18) for analysis. Mean score and Standard deviation (SD) used to find difference in expectations and perceptions regarding career success and professional commitment.

The main section of the questionnaire contained 66 statements and two sections. First section was about career success contained 40 items, 20 items related to expectations regarding career success and 20 items related to perceptions regarding career success. 2nd section contained 26 statements regarding professional commitment 13 statements for expectations and 13 statements regarding perceptions of professional commitment. A five point Likert scale (ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5) was used. Questionnaire was developed in the context of local setting, interviews conducted to know the real problems faced by medical practitioners in public hospitals and to know the important items relating to career success and professional commitment according to them in the real sense. Career satisfaction scale by Greenhaus et al., 1990 [3] and Professional commitment scale by Meyer & Allen [24, 7] was

also used in the questionnaire. Among demographic variables gender, marital status, age, monthly income, Working experience and designation have been examined.

RESULTS

From 170 sample size of data only 165 utilized which included male respondents 103(62.4%) and 62 (37.6%) female respondents. 111(67.3%) respondents were single and 54 (32.7%) were married. The mean age of respondents 2 ± 0.73 , respondents having age 20-25 years were 38 (23%), 92 (55.8%) respondents had age group 26 -30 years, 30 (18.2%) lied in 31-35 years age group and 5 (3%) had age 36-40 years. The mean income of respondents 2.27 ± 1.368 , maximum respondents 83(50.3%) had net monthly income salary from 40001-60000 and minimum number of respondent 1(0.6%) had income from 80001-100,000. The mean work experience of respondents 1.3 ± 0.544 , maximum number of respondents 122 (73.9%) had less than 5 years work experience. The respondents at HO level were 31(18.8%), at MO level 47 (28.5%) and maximum respondents 80 (48.5%) were at PG designation. Furthermore 80 (48.5%) respondents were the member of young doctors association (YDA) and 85 (51.5 %) were not the member of YDA (Table 1).

Results of both expectations and perceptions of career success and professional commitment are presented in the table 2 and table 3 (see below references). The coefficient alpha values for the expectations of career success and perceptions of career success are 0.915 and 0.903 respectively. The coefficient alpha values for the perception of professional commitment are 0.905 and 0.798 and expectations of professional commitment scores respectively.

Medical practitioners have more expectations regarding the career success and professional commitment than perception of career success and professional commitment. Results of the item analysis for both expectations and perceptions of career success and professional commitment scores are presented in Table 2 and Table 3. Mean score (X) and standard deviation for each item and the gap (P-E) of scores are given in the tables.

Table 2 is representing that for every item expectations of medical practitioners are high while perceptions after the joining the job are low. There is a gap between the scores of expectation and perception of career success as P-E scores containing negative sign. Furthermore Table 3 is depicting the gap scores regarding expectation vs. perception for the each item of professional commitment scale. It shows that values of P-E are expressing negative sign which is the indicator of high expectation regarding the medical profession.

DISCUSSION

In this present study expectations of medical practitioners regarding career success and professional commitment are greater than perceptions. It shows that before joining medical profession medical practitioners were expecting more learning and professional development opportunities, monetary benefits, social benefits and have wished to commit with this profession but after joining this profession now their perceptions are low than their expectations.

There are different reasons behind the low perception of career success and professional commitment like non-

cooperative role of government, anti-health policies of government, promotion and salary structure, lack of facilities. There is service structure uncertainty and doctors are less paid due to which fewer facilities are available to doctors, to fulfill the desired needs they do part-time jobs which resulting loose the concentration and they are not able to giving best practices. Due to lack of facilities and better opportunities doctors are going to the foreign countries for betterment which resulting shortage of expertise. Security issues are there and no liberty of decisions to doctors which create professional un-satisfaction, employee’s personal success can eventually contribute to organizational success [2] and less satisfied employees decrease the performance of an organization which leads to overall decrease in sector performance. HCS is one of the important sectors which contributes in the growth of economy [1], Lack of budget and misuse of funding is the main problem of health care sector in Pakistan, due to shortage of budget there is less number of public hospitals which increase the work load, less separate time for a patient which affects the patient satisfaction, non availability of better equipment and increase in brain drain. Young medical practitioners have formed association in 2007/8 with the name Young Doctors Association (YDA) to protect the basic rights of young doctors. YDA put some demands about revision of the service structure, transfer of doctors and increase in seats in Government Hospitals. From the activities of YDA it revealed that career success (salary package, promotion, regulation of seats, satisfaction) and commitment have important meaning for the doctors working in public hospitals. Medical practitioner working in public hospitals in Lahore, Pakistan are facing problems relating to income, regulation of jobs, service structure and other facilities [25] which leads to low satisfaction with their profession. There is need to resolve the problems faced by medical practitioners in public sector to minimize the gap between expectations and perceptions which will provide the positive results in future.

CONCLUSION

In this study gap scores have emerged between expectations and perception of medical practitioners related to career success and professional commitment. Results indicated that perceived career success and professional commitment falls short of idealized expectations. The results also explore that Government policies are not facilitating the young doctors, as they have low perceived scores regarding income, promotion, compensation, rewards, peace of mind, learning opportunities, security, overall service structure and allied benefits. These are the areas that Government should improve through policy making and implementation in favor of young doctors in order to give strength to their commitment with this gracious profession. So, they can achieve success in their career and can efficiently perform their duties in public hospitals with satisfaction. For future studies this research will be helpful to explore the gap between expectations and perceptions of medical practitioners working in different cities of Pakistan as well as employees which are working in different industrial organizations.

Table: 1 Different Characteristic of Demographics

	Characteristics	N=165 Respondents	
			%age
Gender	Male	103	62.4
	Female	62	37.6
Marital Status	Single	111	67.3
	Married	54	32.7
Age	M= 2, S.D= 0.73		
	20-25 years	38	23
	26-30 years	92	55.8
	31-35 years	30	18.2
Monthly Income (Rs.)	M= 2.27, S.D= 1.368		
	21000-40000	43	26.1
	40001-60000	83	50.3
	60001-80000	21	12.7
	80001-100,000	1	0.6
	100,001 & above	3	1.8
Working Experience	M= 1.3, S.D= 0.544		
	Less than 5 years	122	73.9
	5-10 years	38	23
	11-15 years	4	2.4
Designation	16-20 years	1	0.6
	HO	31	18.8
	MO	47	28.5
YDA Member	PG	80	48.5
	Yes	80	48.5
	No	85	51.5

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Table: 2 Career success expectations and career success perceptions means scores (N= 165)

Items	Expectations (E)		Perceptions (P)		P vs. E
	X	SD	X	SD	P-E
	$\alpha = 0.915$		$\alpha = .903$		
You will be satisfied with the success, you will achieve in your career.	3.94	.915	3.21	1.069	-0.73
You will be satisfied with the progress, you will attain by meeting goals for income	3.47	1.096	2.60	1.081	-0.87
You will be satisfied with the progress, you will attain by meeting goals for promotions	3.57	1.106	2.55	1.062	-1.02
You will be satisfied with the progress, you will attain by meeting goals for skill/professional development.	3.79	.966	3.00	1.053	-0.79
You will be in a position to do mostly the work which you really like.	3.78	1.000	2.97	1.062	-0.81
Your job title will indicate your progress and importance in the organization.	3.71	1.012	2.95	1.120	-0.76
Your job will provide peace of mind.	3.72	1.034	2.93	1.100	-0.79
The medical/health practice will be respectable and honorable profession.	4.09	1.011	3.55	1.112	-0.55
Your job will enable you to enjoy social status being medical/health practitioner.	3.69	1.045	3.01	1.179	-0.68
You will enjoy liberty of decision in career.	3.49	1.022	2.84	1.168	-0.65
Monetary benefits & perks attached with your career will be reasonable & satisfactory	3.33	1.066	2.48	1.022	-0.85
Your profession will provide reasonable service structure & rapid promotion	3.04	1.209	2.26	1.093	-0.78
You will be happy with the incentives and compensation you will receive	3.28	1.152	2.38	1.056	-0.90
Medical/health practice as career will provide you sufficient reward & recognition	3.59	1.093	2.84	.983	-0.76
Your job will provide security and allied benefits	3.23	1.213	2.41	1.104	-0.82
Your career will provide you opportunities for higher qualification.	3.76	1.035	3.02	1.174	-0.74
It will provide better working conditions and friendly environment.	3.53	1.079	2.98	1.076	-0.56
You will enjoy and learn a lot from senior as cooperators and facilitators.	3.75	1.009	3.29	1.104	-0.46
It will provide learning & earning opportunities due to collaboration & linkages	3.65	1.052	3.01	1.036	-0.64
It will enable to polish personal & technical skills due to training & refresher courses	3.82	1.008	3.16	1.089	-0.65

Table: 3 Professional commitment perceptions and expectations means scores (N=165)

	E (X)	E (SD)	P (X)	P (SD)	P-E
	$\alpha = .905$		$\alpha = .798$		
You will be proud to be a Medical/Health Practitioner.	3.82	1.087	3.58	1.071	-0.24
Medical/Health practice will be important to your self-image.	3.77	1.028	3.57	1.094	-0.20
If you want to leave, it will require considerable personal sacrifice.	3.69	.992	3.53	1.113	-0.16
You will remain in Medical/Health practice because you feel a sense of loyalty to it.	3.85	.998	3.58	1.099	-0.27
You will feel yourself more responsible being Medical/Health practitioner	3.86	.917	3.71	.890	-0.15
You believe that the people trained in a particular line of work/profession will have to remain in it.	3.68	1.017	3.42	.995	-0.26
You will be willing to put in more efforts beyond that normally expected to make your profession successful	3.98	.914	3.93	3.050	-0.05
You will accept almost any type of job assignment associated with this profession to keep working	3.40	1.023	2.90	1.124	-0.50
You will find that your values and your profession's values will be very similar.	3.55	1.050	3.17	1.063	-0.38
You will be proud to tell others that you are part of this profession.	3.89	1.018	3.53	1.079	-0.36
This profession will inspire you to perform your job related duties in the best way	3.89	.917	3.48	.973	-0.41
You will be extremely glad at the time you will join this profession	4.01	.981	3.68	1.041	-0.33
You will really care about the fate of this profession	4.04	.971	3.73	1.037	-0.31