

Occupational Therapy Student's Perception of the Educational Learning Environment During their Paediatric Posting

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Background: Occupational therapy is a health care profession focused on helping individuals achieve independence and enhance their quality of life through meaningful activities or occupations. The students are exposed to paediatric posting from their first year till their final year of study.

Their role seeks to improve child development, to assist the children in activities of daily living and to develop social skills, communication and emotional regulation. Hence a study on their perception of training in paediatrics exposure is of prime importance.

Methodology-Type of Study – Cross Sectional Study

Study Period: June 2023 to April 2024

Study Participants: Bachelor of Occupational therapy(B.O.T) students (first, second and third year students)

Instrument Used for Data Collection: The Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measure (DREEM) questionnaire which is highly reliable and a valid tool used for collection of data as a measure of students' perceptions about the educational environment. It is a 50 - item questionnaire which have 5 subscales - Students perception of learning, Students perception of teachers, Students academic self-perception, Students perception of atmosphere and Students social self-perception. The inventory consists of 50 items with each item scored on a five point Likert scale. Total score is 200 which is distributed among the sub-domains.

Results: A total of 150 students over the first, second and third year studying in Occupational therapy were recruited for the study.

The mean overall DREEM score among our students was 130.02(SD +/- 14.3) out of 200 over all three years. The mean score was highest in the third year(131.89) compared to the first(130.87) and second(128.36) years. When DREEM scores were analysed according to gender, perceptions of both male and female were more positive. The mean scores in the subdomains were Students perception of learning (32.25/48), Students perception of teachers(27.54/44), Students academic self-perception(24.16/32), Students perception of atmosphere(29.25/48) and Students social self-perception(16.82/28). In the analysis of the sub-domains, students academic self perception scored the highest(75%) and students social self-perception the lowest(60%) and needed improvement. In comparison between groups, students academic self perception showed significant difference between 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students(p value 0.0039).

Conclusion: The results of the study have suggested that the students hold more positive than negative perception about their course environment and there is more space for improvement in the educational environment. Students social self perception scored the least and warrants additional care and support. As paediatric occupational therapists play an important role in the rehabilitation of children with developmental delays and disabilities, improving their educational environment during their training period will help the paediatricians in their practice.

Keywords: Occupational therapy, DREEM

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