

Demographic Characteristics of Clinical Psychology Internees

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ABSTRACT

The influence of Clinical Internees' demographic characteristics on their training performance is an important factor, yet relatively overlooked. The present study aimed to examine the Clinical Internee's demographic profile to assess its role on outcome performance variables (academics, clinical and research performance) during Clinical Psychology Training at Postgraduate Level. A cohort study comprised of archival data of Clinical Internees who were selected in Master of Science (MS) and Advanced Diploma in Clinical Psychology (ADCP) Program during year 2008-2012 (N = 200) were analyzed retrospectively on their performance. Postgraduate Clinical Training attracts a large number of entrants each year. Although clinical internees appeared to be more diverse in certain aspects but female form a majority of applicants, within the age range of 21-36 years (M = 23.56, SD = 1.87). A substantial number of Postgraduate trainees reside in hostels and had exceptional previous academic performance. Living status of the Master in Science (MS) Clinical Internees were found to be significantly negatively correlated with clinical performance. However, a significant negative correlation was found between previous academic score and outcome performance variables of Advanced Diploma in Clinical Psychology trainees. The present study illustrates the impact of Clinical Internees' demographic characteristics on their outcome performance during Clinical Psychology Training. It is pertinent to review the profile of Clinical Internees to provide an opportunity to selectors to improve the quality of Clinical Training at Postgraduate level.

Keywords: *Demographics Characteristics, Clinical Psychology Internees, Postgraduate Training*

Clinical Psychology is the field that poses importance of education, training, practice and assessment of those who are going to serve in the practical field. In recent years, the annual intake of students in Clinical Psychology is increasing which highlighted the interest for the field. Hence, this has stimulated the development of pertinent screening procedures by the selectors at the initial level to recruit those who will enter in field with certain baseline skills, set for the career in Clinical Psychology. However, the high resource cost and the effort

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Received: July 1, 2019; Revision Received: July 25, 2019; Accepted: July 27, 2019

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involved in the training, makes the assessment phase a bench marker for recruitment of competent clinical psychologists.

Selection and training of preeminent candidates to deliver best professional competency and skills to the general population is the aim of the guidelines and criteria set for training by the psychological associations. Clinical Psychology Training in Pakistan starts after a Master's degree (MSc/MA in Psychology or BS (Hons.)). The licensing and extensive training is given at Postgraduate Level with two years training program (Master in Science degree) and one-year Diploma in clinical practice (Pakistan Association of Clinical Psychologist [PACP], 2012). The training involves three areas for a period of two years: academic course, clinical training, and research. Successful fulfillment of all three aspects award the trainee with Postgraduate degree in Clinical Psychology (MS).

A number of studies have highlighted the important screening procedures in the recruitment of trainees for Clinical Psychology Training (Scior, Bradley, Potts, Woolf, & Williams, 2014; Phillips, Hatton, & Gray, 2004; Helmes, & Pachana, 2008). Among evidence based selection procedures, application form data also served as an important factor for screening candidates (Scior et al., 2014; Camp, 2012; Nicklin & Roch, 2009). To best serve the population, the diversity in terms of demographics, of those in training is significant to cater multicultural/multiracial population needs. In many studies, Clinician Internees' gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation and socio-economic status significance for recruitment were highlighted; taken from application forms (Waxenberg, 2015; Meredith & Baker, 2007; Simpson, Hemmings, Daiches, & Amor, 2010). Previous researches reported that academic scores, entry test marks and interview process predict better outcomes in Clinical Psychology Training (Phillips et al., 2004; Helmes & Pachana, 2008) but the role of demographic characteristics on their performance during training has been relatively overlooked. Literature suggests clinicians' practice patterns are undoubtedly influenced by their demographic factors (Jeffrey, 2008; VanRyn, 2002, Hemming & Simpson, 2008). Considering the importance of demographics of the interneers, the issue of recruiting more eligible and better clinical psychologists for future is a major task for selectors (Scior et al., 2014). Selectors will need to understand the impact of difference and diversity in trainees' demographics (including sexuality, ethnicity, culture, faith, cohort differences of age, socio-economic status) and their implications for working practices (Turpin & Coleman, 2010).

Rationale

Each year the annual intake of students in Clinical Psychology is increasing which highlighted the interest for the field. The diversity of the clinical workforce makes the selectors aware of the need that the clients should be able to access services that reflect their own particular culture and personal identities. The demographic diversity will increase the possibility of choice across therapists. Unfortunately, the make-up of Clinical Psychology trainees frequently does not reflect the population demographics of the communities within which training courses are located or serve.

It is therefore pertinent to review the profile of Clinical Internees and to provide an opportunity to improve the quality of Clinical Psychology Training.

Objectives

1. To examine demographic profile of Clinical Internees at Postgraduate Level

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

A cohort study using archival data of Clinical Internees who were selected in Master of Science (MS) and Advanced Diploma in Clinical Psychology (ADCP) Program (N = 200) during year 2008-2012 were analyzed retrospectively.

Sampling Strategy

The sample was collected through purposive sampling strategy from Centre for Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore within the duration of three months.

Inclusion Criteria. Overall, 200 trainee clinical psychologists (the entire 2008-2012 entry cohorts from Center for Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan) who had completed all aspects of their training by the time of the study were included in the study.

Exclusion Criteria. Doctorate in Philosophy (PhD) and MS (Top up) students in Clinical Psychology were not included.

Assessment Measures

- 1. Application Form Data.*** Demographic information and admission related information was gathered from the admission form of the Clinical Internees to understand the sample properties. Information included age, gender, marital status, living status, Matriculation marks, Intermediate Marks, Bachelors (BA/BSc) Marks, Masters (MSc) Marks, BS (Hons) Marks, Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of the last degree attended, the type of College/University attended for last degree (Higher Education Commission (HEC) recognized University).
- 2. Selection Criteria.*** The applicant selection criteria in Center for Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore based on 100 marks. The division of marks for MS is as follows: 40 marks of academic qualification (Academic Score = 10 marks each of Matriculation, Intermediate, BA/BSc and MSc., 20 marks of BS (Hons)), 40 marks of entry test, 5 marks of clinical experience and publications each and 10 marks for interview. For ADCP; 50 marks of last degree, 40 for entry test and 10 for interview.
- 3. Outcome Performance Factors.*** The outcome data comprised of ratings gathered from academic, clinical and research performance of the Clinical Internees.
 - a. Academic Performance.*** Accumulative of clinical courses Grade Point Average (GPAs) studied in first two semesters.
 - b. Clinical Performance.*** Clinical Performance is measured in terms of clinical placement Grade Point Average (GPA). Clinical GPA is made of clinical reports marks, clinical viva marks and clinical supervisor evaluation form rating. Clinical supervisor evaluation forms were rated by each clinical supervisor for each Internee on 1-5 Likert scale (5 = Skills are Outstanding, 4 = Skills are strong, 3 = Skills are adequate, 2 = Minor Skill Deficit, 1 = Significant Skill Deficit) based on 5 domains professional characteristics, response to supervision, assessment skills, clinical skills and cultural sensitivity.
 - c. Research Performance.*** Research Performance is the accumulative score of research viva marks, research report marks and research course marks.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission for taking the admission forms of the students from year 2008-2012 was sought from the Director of Center for Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

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Archival data from year 2008-2012 were approached from the office records. Information related to Clinical Internees demographics, academic, clinical and research performance was gathered from the database. Piloting of few selection forms was done initially to improve the quality of datasheet, by either adding details or remove irrelevant/insignificant details.

RESULTS

To analyze the demographic characteristics of Clinical Internees in Clinical Psychology Training, descriptive analyses were run.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Clinical Psychology Internees (N = 200)

| Variables | <i>f</i> | % | <i>M (SD)</i> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------------------|
| Gender | | | |
| Female | 197 | 98.5 | |
| Male | 3 | 1.5 | |
| Age | | | 23.56(1.87) |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Unmarried | 189 | 94.5 | |
| Married | 10 | 5.0 | |
| Widow | 1 | .5 | |
| Living Status of Clinical Internees | | | |
| Hostelite | 112 | 56 | |
| Day Scholar | 88 | 44 | |
| Matric Grades | | | 641.07 (93.75) |
| Intermediate (FSc/FA) Grades | | | 730.88 (106.26) |
| BS (Hons) Grades | | | 307.39 (212.28) |
| 2.00 – 2.50 | 0 | 0 | |
| 2.51 – 3.00 | 8 | 4 | |
| 3.01 – 3.50 | 41 | 20.5 | |
| 3.51 – 4.00 | 49 | 24.5 | |
| Missing value | 102 | 51 | |
| MSc/MA Grades | | | 50.07 (48.08) |
| 2-2.5 | 16 | 8 | |
| 2.51-3.00 | 33 | 16.5 | |
| 3.01-3.5 | 28 | 13.5 | |
| Variables | <i>f</i> | % | <i>M (SD)</i> |
| 3.51-4.00 | 25 | 12 | |
| Missing value | 98 | 50 | |
| Candidates Course Continuity Ratio | | | |
| Candidates Left the Course | 45 | 22.5 | |
| Candidates Continued Course | 155 | 77.5 | |

Note. *N* = Sample size, *FSc.* = Faculty of Science; *FA* = Faculty of Arts; *BS* = Bachelors of Science; *MSc* = Masters of Science; *MA* = Masters of Arts

It is hypothesized that there is likely to be a relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Academic, Clinical and Research Performance of the candidates during Clinical Psychology Training at Postgraduate Level. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed between the criterion variables (applicant characteristics) and the predictor variables (academic, clinical and research performance) of Masters in Science and Advanced Diploma Clinical Trainees to see relationship among variables.

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Table 2: Inter-Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Demographic Characteristics of Masters in Science Clinical Internees and Outcome Performance (Academic, Clinical and Research Performance) during Clinical Psychology Training at Postgraduate Level

| Measures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|--------------------------|-------|------|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. Age | - | -.09 | .00 | -.15 | -.12 | .23* | -.26* | .26* | -.12 | -.10 | .10 | .04 |
| 2. Living Status | | - | .00 | .25* | .22* | -.44* | .44** | -.44** | .09 | -.16 | -.25* | -.20 |
| 3. Marital Status | | | - | .16 | -.01 | -.09 | .09 | -.09 | .13 | .20 | .04 | .02 |
| 4. Matric Grades | | | | - | .69** | -.17 | .18 | -.18 | .24* | -.01 | -.14 | -.15 |
| 5. FSc/FA Grades | | | | | - | -.18 | .20 | -.20 | .30** | -.06 | -.10 | -.08 |
| 6. BA/BSc Grades | | | | | | - | -.98** | .98** | -.30** | .06 | .05 | .07 |
| 7. MSc/MA Grades | | | | | | | - | .99** | -.32** | -.04 | -.02 | -.03 |
| 8. BS (Hons) Grades | | | | | | | | - | -.32** | .04 | .02 | .03 |
| 9. Academic Score | | | | | | | | | - | -.00 | .11 | .11 |
| 10. Academic Performance | | | | | | | | | | - | .40** | .29** |
| 11. Clinical Performance | | | | | | | | | | | - | .85** |
| 12. Research Performance | | | | | | | | | | | | - |
| M | 22.98 | | | 675.48 | 783.93 | 178.30 | 82.17 | 20.31 | 33.52 | | | |
| SD | 1.48 | | | 97.76 | 105.85 | 174.63 | 36.62 | 36.54 | 3.57 | | | |

Note. FSc. = Faculty of Science; FA = Faculty of Arts; BA = Bachelors in Arts; BSc = Bachelors in Science; MSc = Masters in Science; MA = Masters in Arts; M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 3: Inter-Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Demographic Characteristics of Advanced Diploma in Clinical Psychology Clinical Internees and Outcome Performance (Academic and Clinical Performance) during Clinical Psychology Training at Postgraduate Level

| Measures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|--------------------------|-------|-----|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| 1. Age | - | .10 | .56** | -.14 | -.25** | .09 | -.21* | .21* | -.32** | .07 | .11 |
| 2. Living Status | | - | .04 | -.04 | -.03 | -.22* | .26** | -.26** | -.13 | -.09 | -.15 |
| 3. Marital Status | | | - | -.10 | -.07 | .07 | -.13 | .12 | -.11 | -.05 | -.06 |
| 4. Matric Grades | | | | - | .46** | -.27** | .37** | -.37** | .37** | -.02 | .07 |
| 5. FSc/FA Grades | | | | | - | -.34** | .42** | -.41** | .40** | -.19* | -.22* |
| 6. BA/BSc Grades | | | | | | - | -.80** | .80** | -.14 | .00 | .01 |
| 7. MSc/MA Grades | | | | | | | - | 1.00** | .18 | -.08 | -.07 |
| 8. BS (Hons) Grades | | | | | | | | - | -.17 | .07 | .07 |
| 9. Academic Score | | | | | | | | | - | -.23* | -.23* |
| 10. Academic Performance | | | | | | | | | | - | .86** |
| 11. Clinical Performance | | | | | | | | | | | - |
| M | 24.05 | | | 612.33 | 686.60 | 415.17 | 23.27 | 78.78 | 37.61 | | |
| SD | 2.10 | | | 80.00 | 84.38 | 178.48 | 39.34 | 39.26 | 5.67 | | |

Note. FSc. = Faculty of Science; FA = Faculty of Arts; BA = Bachelors in Arts; BSc = Bachelors in Science; MSc = Masters in Science; MA = Masters in Arts; M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

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No variables found to be statistically significantly correlated with the outcome variables except living status (day scholar/hostelite) of the Masters in Science (MS) candidates, which was negatively correlated with clinical performance ($r = -.25, p < .05$).

The results revealed that academic score (Matric, FSc, BSc and MSc) of the Advanced Diploma in Clinical Psychology (ADCP) trainees had a significant negative correlation with the clinical performance ($r = -.23, p < .05$).

DISCUSSION

Recent decades have seen an appreciable growth in the quantity of researches focused on Clinical Training predictors. Moreover, the researches on the demographics of the Clinical Internees and their significance in the performance of the candidates later on are scarce. Just like all over the world, the induction and training of clinical psychologist is a major concern in Pakistan due to expenses and time involved in the training. So the main emphasis and focus usually involves bringing those who are competent and would serve the humanity at their best.

Demographic profile indicated that 98.5% of the Clinical Internees were unmarried females. The high proportion of women in the training of the Clinical Psychologist was supported by a number of different studies (Camp, 2012; Phillips et al., 2004; Scior et al., 2014, Turpin & Coleman, 2010). McNiel, Areean, Lieberman, Sorensen, and Sosa (2015) reported that during last ten years almost 78% trainees in Clinical Psychology course in University of California, San Francisco were females. Similar results were given by United Kingdom largest Clinical Training course in which 85% candidates were women and 15% were men (Scior et al., 2014). The high proportion of women in the field may be due to innate attraction of women to the field and their helping nature. Women are felicitous in order to deal with the emotional problems since unassumingly they have emotional warmth and tenderness. However, the minority of men in the field throughout the world is a concern. There is an utmost desire of the profession for recruiting men in the training procedure of Clinical Psychology as it is the need of the time and some male issues are better catered by men than women. Also some clients are more comfortable with sharing their problems with clinicians of same gender. A study by Jeffrey (2008) reported that physician gender also influences clinical practice. Similarly, it was believed that men are more focused on individualistic issues however women are more of a collectivist family oriented personalities (Anderson 2011, as cited in Willyard, 2011).

Apart from the differences in both genders, the equal representation of both is important to best ensure a diverse work force, similarly a reasonable balance of both gender, in the field is the basic requirement for its growth. As the feminization is increasing in the field, the majority of unmarried Clinical Internees are eminent. It may be because the rigorous Clinical Training demand extra responsibilities which can be performed by unmarried Internees in a better manner.

Age range of Internees at entry to the course was 21-36 years ($M = 23.56, SD = 1.87$). Literature suggested that a number of unmarried female Clinical Internees are more interested in seeking admission in Clinical Psychology Training courses with mean age was around 27-28 years (Meredith & Baker, 2007; Scior et al., 2014; Hemming & Simpson, 2008). However, there is diversity in the age of the entrants in Clinical Psychology in terms of their age (Hecker & Thorpe, 2005; Walker, 1991). One reason may be that there is no age limit for entry into the clinical course at Postgraduate Training Level.

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Most of the Clinical Internees were residing in hostels/boarding homes, one reason may be that good Clinical Training is available in Government sectors at universities level in big cities. Of all the universities offering Clinical Training majority are in Lahore so this may serve as a reason of high proportion of hostelites Internees. These results highlighted that the recruitment from various areas bring versatility in the field (Scior, Fearon, & Soon, 2007; Turpin & Fensom, 2004; Williams, Turpin, & Hardy, 2006). As stated by Parham (2001), with demographic changes, there is an increased need for “Intercultural communication between the multiracial/multiethnic/multicultural groups and corporate, education, governmental, and political institutions”. The versatility helps to deal with clients from different ethnic groups and cultural norms. Subsequently, the results revealed negative relationship between the living status of MS Internees (day scholar/hostelite) and clinical performance. It may be due to the reason that hostelites experience strenuous and tough time during their stay in the hostels. Therefore, dealing with the stressful events and trying to cope up with them heavily affect their academics (Kate, Kulkarni, Shetty, & Deshmukh, 2010). Most of the Clinical Internees in the training process were hostelites and were facing great deal of stress due to tough schedules and bearing the responsibilities of the rigorous Clinical Training process. This may be one of the reasons that is leading toward the negative relationship of students living in hostels and their performance on the clinical domains.

Clinical Internees had shown subsequently outstanding performance in their undergraduate degree, mostly have Grade Point Average (GPA) above 2.5. Consequently, those who completed MSc. as their last degree had variations in their Grade Point Averages (GPA's), a considerable number of Clinical Internees had GPA above 2.5. However, those having BS (Hons) as their last degree had shown substantial performance where most of the internees had GPA above 3.0. The same results were replicated by Scior, Bradley, Potts, Woolf, and Williams (2014) study in which Clinical Internees had 2.2 GPA in their last university degree i.e. Undergraduate Degree. Multiple studies highlighted that successful selection in Clinical Psychology course is associated with better degree class (first division or 2.1 GPA) of last degree (Phillips et al., 2004; O'Shea & Byrne, 2011, Turpin & Coleman, 2010). Furthermore, questing for the ideal and epitome university is also the major area of concern as the entire future in the professional field being a clinical psychologist depends on it. Choosing the impeccable university and substantial academic scores served as an important predictor in reaching to the conclusion about who is likely to perform better in the Clinical Psychology course (Scior et al., 2014; O'Shea & Byrne, 2011).

Academic Scores (merit based on previous academic score) were significantly and negatively correlated with academic and clinical performance of Clinical Internees of Advanced Diploma in Clinical Psychology. Literature also suggests that previous academic performance, an important factor for selection, have negative relationship with performance variables at Postgraduate level (Ferguson, James, O'Heir, & Sanders, 2003; Jones, 1991). Hackman, Wiggis, and Bass (1970) reported that undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) whether in physical science course, biology course and number of hours of foreign language courses were negatively related to professional performance. One reason may be that postgraduate studies focused more on analytical and practical based knowledge irrespective of the previous academic grades. This may be the reason of negative relationship between intermediate marks and clinical internees' performance on academic and clinical performance later on.

Although the annual intake is increasing the drop out in the field of Clinical Psychology is a concern. Candidates either left the course or were dropped out of the course for various

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reasons. In the present study, out of the 200 Postgraduate trainees 22.5% had left the course during the training procedure (n = 45). Due to the inappropriate record keeping/ insufficient information of the dropped out candidates, it was not feasible to examine what factors may influence dropout in the present study. Contrary to the present study the dropout rate in Clinical Psychology training course is very low, Clearing House (United Kingdom, 2012) reported attrition rate of 0.62% in year 2012/2013 for Postgraduate Courses, including both those who failed or dropped out. Subsequently in 2012, the United Kingdom Clinical Training course reported 0.76% failure/dropped out rate reflecting high standards and criteria of the trainees. However, the dropout rate was high in the first year (Scior et al., 2014) these results were replicated in the present study in which majority of students dropped out/failed in the first year of their training course. Lower school grades also predict dropout (O'Neill, Wallstedt, Eika, & Hartvigsen, 2011). However, the majority of applicants have top grades and an entry test was held, still the high dropout rate raises a debate about the usefulness of these parameters.

CONCLUSION

The present study indicated the significance of Clinical Internee's demographics in contributing to the outcome performance. The demographics highlighted the versatility among the Clinical Internees. Most of the Clinical Trainees were unmarried females, with diversity in their age range (21-36 years). Most of them resided in hostels during their training tenure. Considering their pre-training academic performance, most of them showed substantial performance. The study aims to highlight the significance of diversity within clinical psychology where the versatility of the professionals will help the clients from various cultures and ethnic groups. The dropout rate as depicted in the study is high, as 45 trainees were dropped out of 200. The high dropout rate raises a debate about the usefulness of academic scores and selection tests for recruitment, moreover, it's a concern for the selectors to recruit those who are competent enough to complete the training tenure. The study implied the need of further collaborative researches on diverse demographics of postgraduate Clinical Internees.

Limitations

The study has certain limitations as it took data from only one university Clinical Psychology department so the results of the study may not be representative of all the universities offering Clinical Psychology course as a whole. Moreover, certain aspects of demographic characteristic of Clinical Internees (application form data) were assessed; however, there is a need for several other important areas to be highlighted and to further investigate, particularly concerning the application form domains.

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Acknowledgements

We acknowledge substantial support of Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Kausar, Ex-Head of Department of Center for Clinical Psychology, University of the Punjab, Lahore for granting permission and facilitating in conducting research on institutional data.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

How to cite this article: Khan, N., & Farooq, A (2019). Demographic Characteristics of Clinical Psychology Internees. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(3), 68-77. DIP:18.01.009/20190703, DOI:10.25215/0703.009