



Student Motivation in Dental Academics

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Who doesn't like flowery, optimistic and positive words like appreciation, accolades, appraisals, encouragement, prizing, recognitions, acknowledgment, glory, notability, fame, renown, merit, credit, success, incentives, honours, ranks, distinction, medals, awards, support and sponsors in career front?

Dentistry is an art, a healing science and a noble profession which provides a wide range of career and business openings as a general practitioner or as a specialist by providing essential health care to people and a great opportunity to meet new people on a regular basis. An artist survives on sharpening skills, motivation, appreciations and all forms of self-mood escalation as mentioned above to excel in career. This gives rise to the pivotal question, are the students receiving enough motivation throughout their dental curriculum period to craft their own niche? It is important that those joining the profession have adequate information and are genuinely passionate about provision of oral health services, which can be ignited during the course period.

I always believe a Dental academician role is so holistic that, we need to have enormous patience, interest and management responsibilities as we deal with multiple tasks per day in terms of fulfilling our personal ambition for our own growth along with focussing on students' potentials to guide them to raise their confidence and knowledge, align our clinical; allied and family routine with our working institutional guidelines, day-day management of conflicts, allocating personal time and also sustaining our efforts and mind set in achieving it daily.

Dental college curriculum differs from other academic choices with hectic pre-clinical and clinical exposures which demands knowledge and cognitive abilities in terms of psychomotor, intra and inter personal communication skills and a lot of inbuilt responsibility. Several researchers from multiple disciplines have proved that motivation when used as a non-cognitive aspect,

serves as a mastering key which can improve learning outcomes where students become more independent in handling and they are more capable in their learning process which can drastically improve their academic performances thereby increasing institutional credibility. Motivation triggers all human activities. The motivations of aspiring dentists have been a subject of study for more than twenty years, across seventeen countries. Many proven theories rely on motivation as a self-regulated learning which can improve self-efficacy and capabilities of monitoring own set goals. In this regard, many well established theories, such as Vroom's Expectancy theory, Locke's Goal-Setting Theory and Eccles's Expectancy-Value Theory, as well as an extensive body of literature have emphasized the importance of non-cognitive factors in enhancing academic performance. But most of these theories are yet to be explored in dental education, thus the grey area opens up for wider research among academicians. Interestingly, few research states that day scholars (students living with families) and male students have higher academic performances which was attributed to the positive feedback exposure from their parents, and also that the socio-economic class had a huge role to play in academic consistency. Being so passionate on the concept of woman empowerment, on further kindling over the role of gender in academic performances, my cerebral cortex reservoir pondered to write my perspective on empowered woman dentistry, which can be expected in a couple of months. It is also noted that test anxiety can negatively affect academic performances among dental students' curriculum.

Many countries have conducted research to determine the factors that led people to choose a specific specialty over others. Few interesting responses which were noted for dentistry includes, students own will, preference followed by family influence, advice from friends, admiration of a certain mentor, genuine interest in the specialty, expecting incentives in academics, lifestyle choices, possibility of private practice, good social position, interests in specific diseases, interest in research and teaching, and to gain a higher

income. Many studies also report that dental students tend to shift careers following graduation due to dissatisfaction, psychological stress and excessive competitiveness. So why wait to shower motivation to young minds who are capable of achieving and contributing tremendously to the field of Dentistry when they are indecisive about their future in dentistry? Student motivation by educators can definitely address their academic disinterest, educational burnout and academic inefficacy due to heavy educational curriculum.

Also, that there is a huge scope for research on dental undergraduates and alumni to study on various levels of required motivation to effectively shape their future dental workforce in order to ensure the ever-evolving needs of the population. Few students' motivational activities which I feel can often be implemented by academicians in institutions to highly motivate students to step up their career ladder in dentistry includes, formal career counselling and guidance, a minimal incentive during internship, a frequent friendly pat, interactive learning sessions, group activities, compassionately caring during down falls, greeting them on their small wins, addressing with dignity and treating students with mutual respect. The world health organization emphasis on developing global policies on oral health care, requiring large pool of empowered dental applicants to fulfil their mission and contribute to their profession over the course of their careers. So, lets be a tiny useful drop to the huge student crowd who forms the futuristic dentistry.

Advancements in this topic of student motivation in dental academics can help to teach staffs and policymakers in the dental field to determine and focus on the factors that influence students' academic learning and performance. This can also help in facilitating early identification of at-risk students and in improving admission procedures to help select the best candidate who can fit the requirement of the dental programs [1-3].

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