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Topic: Exploring the Factors Influencing Professional Behavior of Postgraduate PHSC Students in a Public University

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1.INTRODUCTION / LITERATURE BASED BACKGROUND

The protection and promotion of population health is a major responsibility of public health practitioners. They demand not just a solid background in science but also a refined set of professional conduct. This study investigates the variables affecting postgraduate students in public university Public Health Sciences (PHSC) programmes' professional behaviour. The concept of professional behaviour is complex and involves many different elements. Ethics is crucial for public health practitioners to uphold moral values such as justice, honesty, and integrity (Turnock, 2019). Communication Skills should be well with a variety of stakeholders, such as coworkers, patients, and the general public (Nutbeam, 2008). Working in a globalised environment requires the capacity to comprehend and appreciate many cultures (Gerrish et al., 2010). Public health success requires cooperation, conflict resolution, and teamwork shows interpersonal skills. (Greiner & Knecht, 2003). The significance of including professional behaviour training in PHSC curricula has been examined in a number of research. For example, Lasch et al. (2018) discovered that adding role-playing games and case studies enhanced students' comprehension of moral conundrums in public health.

Educational Programmes- Professional behaviour can be greatly influenced by the content and delivery techniques of the curriculum. Courses emphasising cultural competency, ethics, and communication skills should be beneficial. Academic Role Models-According to Sloan et al. (2014), faculty members who exhibit professionalism in their interactions with students are significant role models. Features of the Student-Students' attitude to professional behaviour might be influenced by their past work experience, personal values, and self-awareness (Sullivan et al., 2010). University Culture- Professional growth can be promoted by an institutional culture that places a high priority on morality, social responsibility, and the welfare of students (Glennie et al., 2019)

1.2 RATIONALE

The purpose of this research is to comprehend the variables that affect postgraduate Public Health Sciences (PHSC) students' growth of professional behaviour. Public health specialists are known to require a solid foundation in professional conduct in addition to their technical skills. The purpose of this study is to identify these variables in order to assist academic institutions in creating more efficient curricula that will better equip next public health professionals. The protection of public health is the responsibility of public health professionals, so maintaining a high standard of ethics is essential. This covers elements such as cultural competency, honesty, and integrity. Although professional behaviour is important, not much research has been done to examine the precise components that influence it in PHSC students (Glennie, E., et al., 2019).

1.3 AIM

This study is to investigate the variables impacting postgraduate Public Health Sciences (PHSC) students' professional behaviour in a public university context and identify the factors that influence the development of professional behaviour in postgraduate PHSC students. (Turnock, B., 2019)

1.4 OBJECTIVES

Determine the elements that affect postgraduate Public Health Sciences (PHSC) students' professional conduct in a public university. This could include things like the university's culture, student characteristics, faculty role models, and the educational programme.

Learn more about the ways in which these elements combine to influence postgraduate PHSC students' professional conduct. This could entail investigating the ways in which student self-awareness, teacher mentoring, and curriculum design interact to impact professional growth. (Glennie, E., et al., 2019)

Contribute to the creation of more efficient training programmes and educational initiatives that foster professional conduct in aspiring public health professionals. The study can help institutions enhance their PHSC programmes and better prepare students for the demands of the field by identifying the major impacts. (Greiner, M., & Knecht, M., 2003)

1.5 QUESTIONS

How much do the curriculum of the current PHSC programmes incorporate and prioritise the development of professional skills (such as communication, ethics, and cultural competency) and In what ways do instructors in the PHSC programme perform professionally while interacting with students?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research explores factors influencing professional behavior development in postgraduate Public Health Sciences (PHSC) students at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) London Campus. A mixed methods approach was utilized, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

2.1 Research Design

A qualitative method approach would be used for the suggested research design, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This method is especially appropriate for this study since our goal is to obtain a thorough grasp of a challenging subject: the variables influencing postgraduate Public Health Sciences (PHSC) students' professional behavior.

Focus Group Discussion: To delve deeper into the experiences and viewpoints of PHSC students on professional behaviour, a focus group discussion would be held with a smaller group of students. The discussion transcript's thematic analysis can highlight themes and patterns pertaining to how students comprehend and grow as professionals throughout the programme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2.2 Recruitment, Sampling, and Study Participants

Place

The research would take place at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD), London Campus.

Target Population

The target population for this study would be postgraduate students enrolled in the Public Health Sciences (PHSC) program at UWTSD London Campus.

Techniques for Sampling

Sampling with Intention for a Focus Group: A more intimate group of PHSC students would be invited for the focus group discussion through the use of a purposive sample technique. This makes it possible to pick people according to particular standards, ensuring a variety of viewpoints and experiences (Patton, 2002). There are a few ways to find participants for the focus group discussion. Posters or flyers in popular areas that PHSC students visit.

Students at PHSC received emails inviting them to participate and outlining the focus group's goals and selection process. Working along with advisers or programme instructors to find possible participants who fit the requirements.

Number of Samples: Usually consisting of 5-8 individuals, the focus group discussion would entail a smaller sample. This guarantees that everyone gets an opportunity to speak and permits in-depth discussion (Morgan, 1997).

2.3 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

This study on factors influencing professional behavior in PHSC students will utilize a focus group discussion method.

Target Population: Students from PHSC who have been carefully chosen and have a range of experiences and backgrounds.

There are 5-8 people in the sample.

Audio recording is a tool for data collection.

We will create a semi-structured conversation guide to delve into the viewpoints and experiences of the students. With participant approval, an audio recording of the focus group will be made. The conversation from the focus group will be accurately recorded through verbatim transcription. (DeVellis, F., 2017)

3. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

In this study it is utilise theme analysis, a qualitative data analysis technique, to examine the focus group conversation data you gather regarding professional behaviour among PHSC students. Transcribing means create a written text document of the focus group discussion via verbatim transcription of the audio recording following the session.

Acquaintance like carefully go over the transcript a few times to familiarise yourself with the material and gain an understanding of the general conversation.

Theme Development:

Take note of any themes that emerge in the participants' expressions of thoughts, feelings, and experiences.(Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L.,2018)

Coding of Data:

After that in coding mark the passages that deal with professional behaviour. Words, phrases, or brief statements that highlight important ideas.

Based on study objectives, researchers can use a preliminary coding scheme that highlight elements such as curriculum, student characteristics, faculty role models, and university culture that influence professional behaviour. (Nowell, L.,2017)

Review the transcript : To make sure all of the coded sections make sense in relation to the established themes. If more refining is required, think about utilising sub-themes to capture subtleties within more general categories. (Braun, V., & Clarke, V.,2006)

Tools and Materials for Thematic Analysis:

Crucial Instruments: Researcher can use computer, text editor, extra software n tools and also pen paper. Thematic analysis can be greatly streamlined by using software packages like as NVivo, Atlas.ti, or MAXQDA. Researcher can import and arrange your transcript data with these programmes. Text passages should be coded and put into distinct groups.

Throughout the analytic process, keep a research notebook or document where you can record your coding choices, the reasons behind developing themes, and any methodological thoughts. Materials of Reference: Save copies of pertinent research papers, coding schemes (if applicable), and any other resources that help you with your analysis.(Nowell, S.,2017)

4.ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Create an informed consent form outlining these points in detail: the focus group's goal (examining the factors influencing PHSC students' professional behaviour).

The procedure for gathering data (audio recording of the conversation).

The information will be utilised for research purposes through theme analysis.

The option to withdraw at any time and the voluntary character of participation.

Protocols for maintaining confidentiality (pseudonymization and transcript anonymization).

The researcher's and the UWTSD Research Ethics Committee's contact details.

Before the focus group discussion starts, get each participant's written informed consent.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: Participants should be reassured that no publications or reports will disclose their names. By giving participants pseudonyms during transcription, you can anonymize the focus group transcript.

Observe UWTSD's data storage guidelines while storing the audio recording and transcript.

Access to the data should only be granted to authorised personnel. After the discussion, think about giving participants the chance to check and edit the transcript to remove any personally identifying material.

A courteous atmosphere Establish a polite, safe space where everyone feels free to express their opinions in your role as moderator.

Promote an open dialogue while making sure everyone has an opportunity to speak and that their opinions are respected. It is important to be aware that delicate subjects may come up and to be ready to handle them delicately. Provide guidance to participants on the proper methods for reporting any unethical behaviour or misconduct within UWTSD.

Prior to holding the focus group discussion, get the UWTSD Research Ethics Committee's permission.

5.RESULT

This section presents the findings from qualitative study on factors influencing professional behavior development in postgraduate Public Health Sciences (PHSC) students at UWTSD London Campus.

Importance of Role Models:

"Seeing professors act professionally in class discussions and interactions with guest speakers definitely influences how we approach our own behavior." (Participant 2)

Value of Experiential Learning:

Students emphasised the value of having chances to put their knowledge to use and hone their professional skills via hands-on learning.

"The internship requirement in the program was invaluable. It allowed me to practice communication and collaboration skills in a real-world public health setting." (Participant 4)

Program Curriculum and Activities:

Divergent opinions regarding the programme curriculum's effectiveness in addressing professional growth were brought up in the discussion.

"Some courses directly focus on professional skills like ethics and communication, but others seem more focused on content knowledge." (Participant 1)

Need for Explicit Professional Development Training:

A number of attendees conveyed their wish for more specific instruction or workshops focused on professional development techniques.

"I think the program could benefit from offering dedicated workshops on topics like resume writing, professional networking, and public speaking skills." (Participant 3)

Importance of Self-Reflection:

"It's important to be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses and actively seek opportunities to improve your professional conduct." (Participant 5)

6. Discussion

This research investigated factors influencing professional behavior development in post-graduate Public Health Sciences (PHSC) students at UWTSD London Campus. The mixed methods approach, combining survey and focus group data, provided valuable insights into student perceptions and experiences.

6.1 Key Findings and Interpretations

The focus group discussion underscored the crucial impact that faculty role models have on students' comprehension of professional behaviour. This is consistent with other research (Thabiti et al., 2019) that highlights the value of role models in professional growth across a range of disciplines. According to these results, academic staff members ought to be aware of their own professional demeanour and try to set an example for their pupils.

The importance of real-world learning opportunities, such as internships, in advancing professional abilities was stressed by students. This aligns with research that supports opportunities for practical learning in public health education to close the theory-practice gap (Baxter Maglaughlin et al., 2010). The curriculum might be expanded to provide more possibilities for experiential learning, according to the programme.

Divergent viewpoints of the program's effectiveness in addressing professional development were expressed in the focus group and poll. Certain courses were seen as being more content-heavy, while others were acknowledged for emphasising on applicable skills. This raises the possibility that the curriculum needs to be reviewed to guarantee a more balanced approach that incorporates professional development skills in addition to fundamental understanding of public health.

Several participants conveyed their wish for seminars or specific training centred around professional development skills. This is in line with the expanding understanding of the significance of providing public health workers with a skill set that extends beyond technical proficiency (Turnock, 2017). The programme might think about providing lectures or workshops on subjects like public speaking, professional networking, and resume writing.

The need of self-reflection in professional development was emphasised in the focus group discussion. This supports the idea that acting professionally is a lifelong process that calls for self-awareness and constant development (Sullivan & Eyre, 2015). The curriculum might investigate techniques to promote students' self-reflection, like journaling activities or special reflection periods.

6.2 Restrictions

The focus group's comparatively small sample size restricts the applicability of the qualitative findings. Because only one institution participated in the study, it's possible that the findings don't apply to other PHSC programmes.

6.3 Prospective Studies

The usefulness of several interventions intended to improve professional development within PHSC programmes may be investigated in more detail.

7.CONCLUSION

This study offers insightful information about the variables impacting PHSC students' development of professional behaviour. The results point to the value of experiential learning opportunities, well-balanced curricula, professional skill training, and faculty role models.

These components can help equip aspiring public health professionals with the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes they need to be successful in their line of work.

These results imply that to effectively foster professional behaviour in PHSC students, a multifaceted approach is required. Incorporating experiential learning opportunities, maintaining a balanced curriculum that integrates professional skills development, providing professional role models, and even providing specialised training workshops are some examples of what faculty members can do.

Using this methodologies allowed for a thorough comprehension of this subject. While the focus group discussion allowed for a closer examination of certain topics and student experiences.

8.RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider including seminars or training sessions on the value of acting as role models for professional conduct for faculty members. For the improving experiential learning look at ways to increase the amount of practica, simulations, or community-based projects that are offered as part of the curriculum.(Nutbeam, D.,2008). To evaluate the existing emphasis on professional development skills and pinpoint areas for growth, conduct a thorough curriculum review. Including pertinent skill development in already-existing courses or providing specialised courses in subjects like ethics, cooperation, and communication are some potential ideas. Take into account testing out workshops or seminars that concentrate on particular professional development abilities that students have highlighted, like public speaking, professional networking, and resume writing for training.(Sloan,D.,2014)

8.1 Suggestions for Further Research

To monitor the evolution of professional behaviour in PHSC students over time, conduct a longitudinal study. This could entail tracking student cohorts from the beginning of their programme to the end in order to evaluate the long-term effects of different programme components on professional growth. Examine the efficacy of particular interventions intended to improve the development of professional behaviour. To determine their effect on student learning outcomes, this may entail putting targeted seminars, mentorship programmes, or other tactics into practice and assessing them. Examine how various PHSC programmes include professional development across a range of institutions by conducting comparative research. This could guide efforts to build curricula and offer insightful information about optimal practices.(Gerrish, K.,2010)

9.IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESEARCH

For PHSC programmes looking to develop well-rounded public health professionals with the technical know-how and fundamental professional behaviours required to excel in the field, this research offers insightful information. Programmes should take proactive measures to better prepare students for the opportunities and challenges of a public health career by recognising the value of experiential learning, the necessity for a balanced curriculum, the effect of faculty role models, and the relevance of self-reflection.

The sample size and single-institution emphasis of this study, among other limitations, provide opportunities for more research. On the basis of these preliminary results, future study

can improve our comprehension of professional development in PHSC programmes and ultimately lead to a more thorough strategy for educating the next generation of public health professionals.(Turnock, C. (2017).

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