

# Sri Lankan Physiotherapy Students' Preferences Regarding Lecture Courses

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**Abstract-** Teaching and learning activities are challenging area for students and teachers as well. Therefore the aim of this study was to explore the preferences of physiotherapy students in Sri Lanka about various aspects of lecture courses. A structured survey consisting of ten closed-ended questions was developed, and thirty six first year physiotherapy students in the department of physiotherapy, Faculty of Allied health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka were approached in this study. Most of the students reported preferring lectures with clinical demonstration. They preferred morning lectures for a maximum of sixty minutes for each lecture, and they preferred to receive information about the lecture topic in advance. The students said that home assignments were beneficial after the lectures, and they agreed with the compulsory attendance for lectures. The results of this study conclude that educators should be aware on students' learning preferences when they developing curriculum.

**Index Terms-** Physiotherapy education, physiotherapy students, Teaching methodologies, Sri Lanka

## I. INTRODUCTION

The learning environment is a key element of effective learning and performance of a student. Thus the effective teaching carrying more weight on this and it is very critical for students, especially in professional field such as physiotherapy. The teaching should be targeted to fulfill the goals and the effectiveness of teaching can be measured by several tools and one is the performance of students.

Many educators face challenging problems on education and the burning problem is the student satisfaction with the learning environment. The learning style is differing from student to student [1] and it is the responsibility of educators to modify their teaching style accordingly. Even some recent studies have targeted to the students' views about academic preparation [2], learning environment [3], use of teaching techniques [4], styles [5] and curriculum change [6, 7] in the field of other health care professionals, not much consideration has been given to their perceptions of the basic aspects of teaching methodologies in the field of physiotherapy education. Thus this study aimed to explore the preferences of dental students in India regarding various aspects of lecture courses.

## II. METHOD

### Instrumentation

A structured survey that consisted of ten close ended questions was developed to find the preferences of physiotherapy

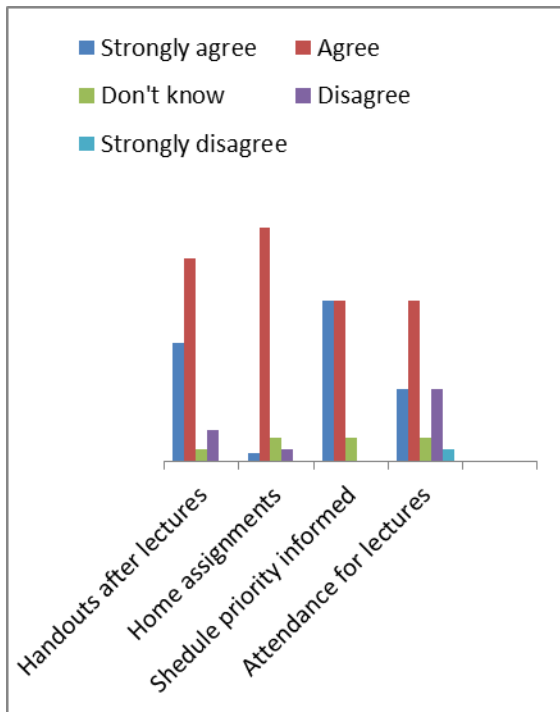
students regarding various aspects of lecture courses using the guidance of study done by Parolia [8]. Last seven questions were answered on a five-point Likert-type scale.

### Participants and procedure

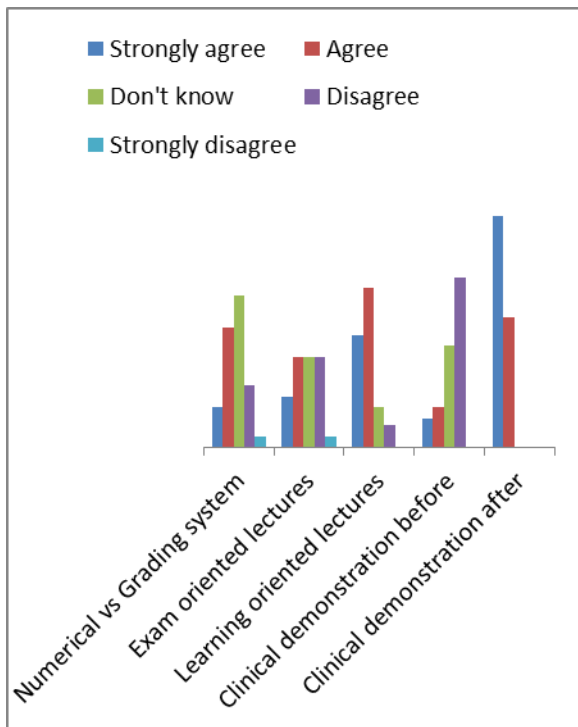
First year physiotherapy students in the Department of Physiotherapy, faculty of allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka were participated in this study. A total of 36 students voluntarily participated in the study (Male and females). All the data were collected in November 2013. The purpose of the study was explained to the students and the hard copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the students who volunteered to take the analysis. The completed questionnaires were collected after 15-20 minutes.

## III. RESULTS

According to the results, 72% of the students preferred lectures with clinical demonstration, while 28% preferred lectures with power point presentation. About 63% agreed with length of lecture should be 1hour, and all the students preferred early morning classes over afternoon classes. Thirty one percent of the students agreed that handouts should be distributed after the lectures, and 61% agreed that there should be homework assignments with the lectures. Forty two percent of students agreed with that the lecture should be announced in advance and that attendance for lectures should be compulsory (Fig 1). Forty two percent disagreed with the change in marking system from numbers to letter grades. The majority of the students preferred lectures to be learning-oriented rather than exam-oriented, while 64 percent strongly agreed that the clinical demonstration should be conducted after the lecture rather than before (Fig 2).



**Fig 1: Physiotherapy students’ preferences regarding handouts, homework assignments, schedule, and attendance required**



**Fig 2: Physiotherapy students’ preferences regarding grading system, learning vs. exam oriented lectures, and timing of clinical demonstration with lecture**

**IV. DISCUSSION**

Satisfaction of students regarding their lecture course curriculum and learning environment is a challenging issue. In

preclinical physiotherapy education, didactic and clinical training is summarized into four years or less. They complete biomedical science courses during their first year and patient clinical experience is gained in rest of the years for their graduation. Disparity between learning and mode of delivery of instruction is a one of the main point of student hindrance.

This study was designed to implore the preferences of a group of physiotherapy undergraduates in Sri Lanka about the various aspects of teaching methodologies. The majority of the students agreed that teaching methodology should include lecture with clinical demonstration as the use models help students to understand the topic better. Furthermore students secondly preferred lectures with power point as it use diagrams and symbolic devices such as graphs, flow charts and hierarchies to make student understand about the topic. The results of this study are not agreement with the previous studies on duration of lecture. [9-12].Majority of the students preferred sixty minutes lecture duration. However the recent studies done by Stuart et al., [13] and Arredonodo et al.,[14] revealed that the lecture time should be less than sixty minutes as student concentration rose sharply to reach a maximum in ten to fifteen minutes and fell steadily thereafter. According to the 2007 Bachelor of Science in physiotherapy (BSc in Physiotherapy) curriculum requires more than 1000 total lecture hours. If using thirty- to forty-minute lectures, the targeted total lecture hours in four years of 240 days/academic year may not be achieved. Our study also found that the students preferred early morning classes, as during this time level of concentration is maximum and they felt lethargic in the evening classes with meal they got for their lunch break.

The Faculty of Allied Health Sciences was established in 2006 as the 8<sup>th</sup> faculty of University of Peradeniya with minimum resources. Hence students had to face many difficulties of finding additional information as their library facilities were not fully established. This was expressed by many students as they have preferred distribution of handouts after the lectures. The recent studies have found that handouts produce a positive effect on students’ academic performance [15-17]. Majority of students agree with homework assignment after the lecture. This may be because assignments encourages student initiative and builds a sense of responsibility and commitment towards schoolwork. Further it may establish a communication link between students, parents and teachers. Further, majority of students preferred clinical demonstration after the theory class. The reason for this could be that students will be able to correlate hands on experience with the theoretical knowledge.

**V. CONCLUSION**

According to the findings of this study, educators in the field of physiotherapy should try to address the preferences of the students when preparing the lectures and developing curriculum.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The author greatly appreciates the participation in this study of the first year physiotherapy students in the Department of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Allied Health sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

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