

LEGAL BASIS AND MOTIVATION FOR SELECTION OF SPECIALITY - STUDY AMONG FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS IN THE MEDICAL COLLEGE - CITY OF VARNA

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Abstract

One of the major factors in the selection of speciality is the opportunity for professional development in the country and abroad. The legal basis of the relevant profession should specify whether it is regulated or not, the educational and qualification degree required for its pursuit, etc. The options to start work immediately upon completion of the education, as well as the options for comparative autonomy in the pursuit of any profession and for professional development in the private sector are beneficial for the motivation for selection of speciality. The specialists of the Medical College - city of Varna are offered various options in these directions. The purpose of the study is to compare the motivation for selection of speciality in the first-year students trained in three professional areas which are regulated in a different way and legally separated - Rehabilitation Therapist, Public Health Inspector and Medical Beautician. The study involved direct individual survey.

88.9 % of the medical beauticians and 86.1 % of the rehabilitation therapists chose their speciality on their own. This applied only to 18.8 % of the public health inspectors. 87.5 % of them chose this speciality since they were not approved for the desired one. Over 90 % of the students of the first two specialities had a clear idea of the nature of their future profession and were familiar with the legal basis. 81% of the future public health inspectors were not supplied with information in advance. Therefore these results may be correlated with the dynamics of the motivation to study the specialities in the course of the entire education.

There are significant differences in the reasons for selection of the three specialities. These differences do not have any direct connection with the relevant legal basis. This means that the selection of speciality is motivated by the real practical opportunities for professional development rather than the legally regulated ones.

Keywords: Motivation, Selection of speciality, Regulated profession, Educational and qualification degree

INTRODUCTION

The cognitive processes are always carried out with the interaction of three major factors: the behaviour of the person, its personal qualities and the impact of the surrounding environment (Bandura, 1984, page 55-60). The peoples' motivation is a dynamic variable which is influenced by multiple social and cultural factors. In particular, the academic motivation is determined by several major factors, such as the own choice, the expectations for professional development in the area of the selected speciality, the image and payment, etc. (Yankulova - Tzvetkova, 2001). In this sense, the motivation balance and ambivalence of the person cannot be understood outside the social context of the community (Miller, 2010).

One of the major motivating factors in the choice of speciality is the opportunity for professional development in the country or abroad. The requirements for the pursuit of each profession in the Republic of Bulgaria are described in the relevant regulations. The legal basis of the relevant profession should specify whether it is regulated or not, the educational and qualification degree required for its pursuit, etc. The options to start work immediately upon completion of the education, as well as the options for certain autonomy in the pursuit of the

profession and for professional development in the private sector are beneficial for the motivation for selection of speciality. The specialities studied in the Medical College - city of Varna offer various options in these directions.

The purpose of the study is to compare the motivation for selection of speciality in the first-year students from three professional areas which are regulated in a different way, legally separated and studied in the Medical College - city of Varna - Rehabilitation Therapist, Public Health Inspector and Medical Beautician.

LEGAL BASIS

The term "regulated profession" has been introduced to the Bulgarian legislation with the recent amendments to the [Higher Education Act](#) (published in State Gazette (SG), issue 66 of 8 August 2014) and the [Vocational Education and Training Act](#) (published in SG, issue 61 of 25 July 2014). The "regulated profession" is an activity or a set of activities which is included in the list of the regulated professions in the Republic of Bulgaria. It is of major importance for the society and/or is essential for the life and health of the people. The pursuit of the regulated profession is determined by laws, regulations or administrative provisions governing the possession of specific professional qualification, competence or a membership in professional organisation recognized by the state.

The rehabilitation therapist is a health care professional who has completed medical college and has been awarded a diploma of completed higher education of educational and qualification degree Professional Bachelor and professional qualification Rehabilitation Therapist. Upon completion of his / her education he / she becomes an important member of the multidisciplinary rehabilitation team and starts to carry out his / her activity under the control and management of a physician who is a specialist in physical and rehabilitation medicine. The medical rehabilitation therapist conducts a comprehensive rehabilitation programme for the functional recovery of the patients which is aimed at achieving the maximum possible independence in carrying out activities of the everyday life and at improving the patients' quality of life (Ordinance No. 1 of 8 February 2011). The graduates who have completed this speciality find a job in clinical and preclinical establishments, sanatoria, medical and spa centres, fitness centres, etc. They acquire fourth level of qualification according to Art.11, cl. (d) of Directive 2005/36/EC.

The graduates who have completed the speciality Rehabilitation Therapist may continue their training in order to acquire educational and qualification degree Bachelor or Master in the specialities Kinesitherapy, Medical Rehabilitation and Occupational Therapy and Healthcare Management. This year master course in the speciality Rehabilitation, Thalassotherapy, Wellness and Spa has been introduced as well.

The training in the speciality Public Health Inspector is aimed at creating specialists who exercise public health control in order to protect and strengthen the public health in the Republic of Bulgaria. This is a health activity carried out by the state which is connected with the control and implementation of the statutory health requirements for control of the premises with public purpose, control of products, goods and activities which are essential for the human health, control of the environmental conditions and surveillance of the communicable diseases. The graduates may work in the Regional Health Inspectorate Directorates, Regional Food Safety Directorates and similar structures under the Ministry of Interior, Occupational Health Services, specialised services involved in disinfection, disinsection and deratisation, etc. These specialists have also fourth level of qualification. The graduates who have completed the speciality Public Health Inspector may continue their training in order to acquire educational and qualification degree Bachelor or Master in the speciality Healthcare Management.

The profession medical beautician is not regulated. Ordinance No. 8 of 5 February 2010 of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (hereinafter referred to as Ordinance No. 8 of 5 February 2010) determines the educational requirement for the acquisition of qualification in the profession beautician. The pursuit of this profession does not require a document evidencing completed higher education.

Currently the profession beautician is not included in the list of the Chamber of Crafts. However, according to the European directives the pursuit of this profession should require completed medical education. For this reason some colleges started to offer the speciality Medical Beautician three years ago. Legal changes which will govern the labour rights of the graduates are expected to be made.

The medical beautician is a health care professional who has completed medical college and has obtained the required qualification that is certified by diploma of completed higher education. The training in this speciality is a full-time one and continues 3 years. The graduates acquire educational and qualification degree Professional Bachelor in the speciality Medical Beautician. They may work in cosmetic studio, either alone or in a team, beauty salon or beauty centre, dermatological, dermato-cosmetic and physical therapy centres, plastic

(aesthetic and cosmetics) surgery clinics, pharmacies, drugstores and perfumery stores, spa-, wellness- and thalassotherapy centres, etc.

The analysis of the Higher Education Strategy shows drastic gap between the profile of the specialists trained in the higher education institutions and the actual demand in the labour market. It is significant that a large number of the graduating students do not realise themselves in the relevant speciality. Attention to the difficulties in the quality and compatibility of the higher education with the European higher education systems is also paid. There is considerable gap between the structure and profile of the graduating students who have acquired educational and qualification degree Professional Bachelor and the dynamics of the labour market in Bulgaria and European Union. In practice, this degree does not exist anywhere in the countries of the European Community.

PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY RESULTS

Survey among first-year students trained in the specialities Rehabilitation Therapist, Public Health Inspector and Medical Beautician of the Medical College - city of Varna was conducted. 79 students of a total of 90 students of the three training courses were included in the study.

The results were processed by using mathematical and statistical methods and graphical analysis.

Figure 1 shows the answers to the question "Why did you choose to study in the Medical College - city of Varna?" (with an option for more than one answers).

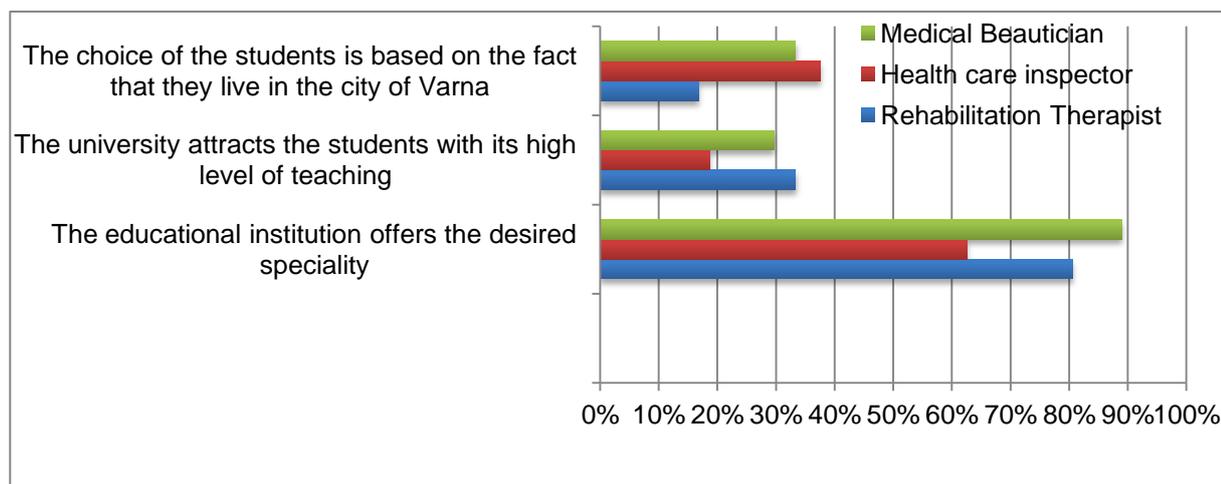


Fig. 1 Answers to the question: "Why did you choose to study in the Medical College - city of Varna?" (with an option for more than one answers)

80.6 % of the respondents trained in the speciality Rehabilitation Therapist answered that the reason to make such a decision is that the educational institution offers the desired speciality (Rehabilitation Therapists). 33.3 % of them indicated that the university attracts them with its high level of teaching and 16.7 % of the respondents answered that they chose to study in the Medical University due to the fact that they live in the city of Varna.

The percentage distribution of the answers given by the students trained in the speciality Public Health Inspector is different. 62.5 % of the respondents answered that the reason to choose the Medical College is the availability of the desired speciality (without specifying whether it is Public Health Inspector or not). 37.5 % of them were motivated by the fact that they reside in the city of Varna. 18.7 % of the respondents indicated the answer high level of teaching in the Medical University.

The percentage distribution of the answers given by the students trained in the speciality Medical Beautician is the following: 88.9 % of the respondents chose the university due to the availability of the desired speciality (Medical Beautician). 29.6 % of them indicated that the educational institution is attractive due to its level of teaching and 33.3 % of the respondents made their choice by taking into account their place of residence in the city of Varna.

Significant differences were found in the answer to the question "Why did you choose this speciality?" (Fig.2)

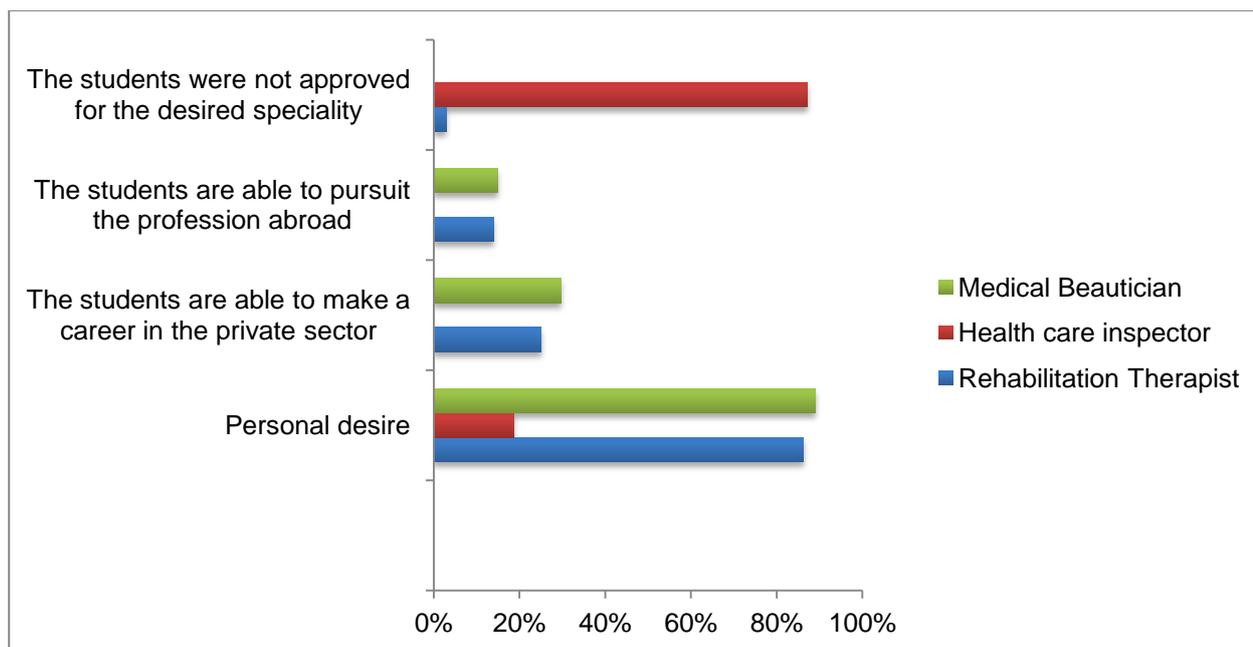


Fig. 2 Answers to the question: "Why did you choose this speciality?" (with an option for more than one answers).

86.1 % of the rehabilitation therapists answered that they chose this speciality at their desire. 25 % of the respondents hope that they will make a carrier in the private sector and 13.9 % of them hope to practice the speciality abroad. Only 2.8 % of the respondents started their training in the speciality Rehabilitation Therapist since they were not approved for the desired speciality.

Only 18.7 % of the students of the speciality Public Health Inspector intentionally applied for this speciality. 87.2 % of the respondents answered that this was not the speciality that they first chose. They started their training since they were not approved for the desired speciality. Therefore, the initial level of motivation is not expected to be high. None of the students involved in this group expects to make a career in the private sector or abroad.

88.9 % of the students trained in the speciality Medical Beautician answered that they applied for this speciality on their own. 29.6 % of the respondents expect to make a career in the private sector and 14.8 % of them expect to make a career abroad.

The percentage distribution of the answers to the question "Did you have any idea of the nature of the profession" (Fig.3) given by the students trained in the speciality Rehabilitation Therapist is the following: 30.6 % of them answered that they had a very clear idea and 69.4 % of them answered that they had some idea of the nature of the profession. All students were informed of the nature of their future profession.

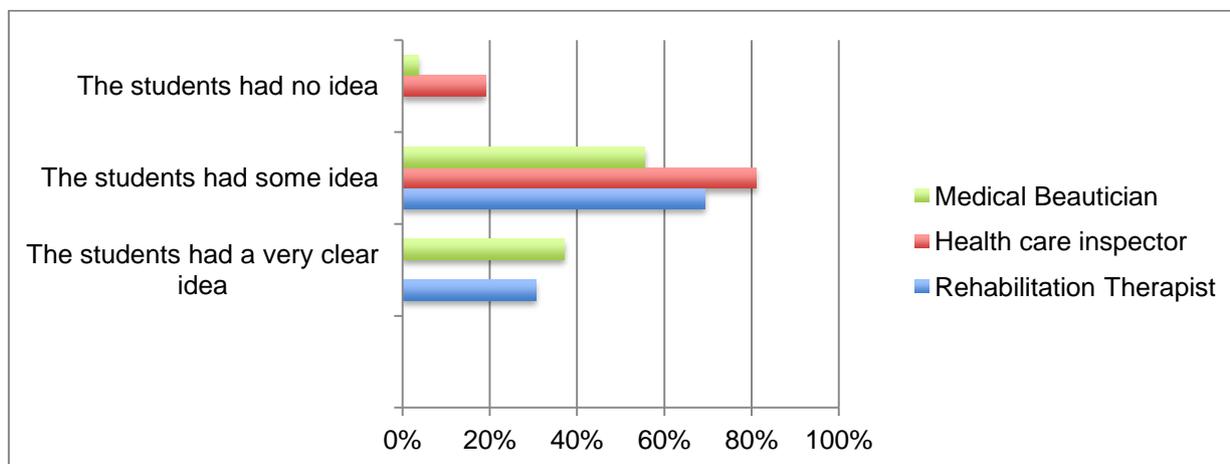


Fig. 3 Answers to the question: "Did you have any idea of the nature of the profession"

The fact that 81% of future public health inspectors have only some idea of the nature of the selected profession and 19 % of them have no idea therefor is really disturbing.

37 % of the students trained in the speciality Medical Beautician answered that they had a very clear idea of their future profession, 55.5 % of them answered that they had some idea therefor and 3.7 % of the respondents answered that they had no idea of the nature of the profession which they would practice in the future.

CONCLUSION

The results show that, paradoxically, the most motivated students in the selection of speciality are the students trained in the speciality Medical Beautician although this is the only one unregulated profession and despite the fact that this speciality does not allow for further development of the educational and qualification degree. Perhaps the choice is motivated by the expected regulatory changes, on the one hand, and, by the high level of the future autonomy, on the other hand. This is a profession which may be pursued independently, in its market niche in the private sector, and which allows for career development abroad.

The second place in the motivation for selection of speciality is taken by the students trained in the speciality Rehabilitation Therapist. They will pursue a regulated profession with low level of autonomy - i.e. they will work in a team with a physician - rehabilitation therapist - and other specialists. In order to make a career abroad equivalence of the educational and qualification degrees will be required; however the graduates may meet this requirement only by acquiring master degree in the speciality Rehabilitation Therapist.

The students trained in the speciality Public Health Inspector have the lowest motivation for selection of speciality. It appears that despite the regulation of this profession and the relatively high level of autonomy the opportunities for its pursuit in practice are quite few. This profession can hardly be pursued in the private sector or abroad. Even in Bulgaria it is not quite competitive due to the educational and qualification degree Professional Bachelor. Despite the acquisition of specialised education the young specialists may only be appointed to a certain position after a competition. However, often at the announcement of the competition one of the requirements is the acquisition of bachelor degree. This means that only the specialists who have such a degree are appointed despite the fact that they are qualified in another speciality.

In conclusion, it should be noted that in order to overcome these discrepancies a reform in the higher education aimed at unification of the national and European requirements should be made. Another important condition to increase the motivation for selection of speciality and to retain the young specialists in the country is to align the conditions for occupation of certain positions and the specialised education with the educational and qualification degree.

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