



# "I MADE IT" THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE SUCCESSFUL PHYSICAL THERAPY GRADUATES OF MEDICAL COLLEGES OF NORTHERN PHILIPPINES

Jemaica B. Calderon,  
Deborah Grace L. Perocho,  
Gabrielle Mariz D. Wakat  
Daisy Liza B. Taccad,

## ABSTRACT

Given the small number of people who study physical therapy (PT), it is crucial to choose candidates who will succeed. The goal of the study is to learn from their strategies and experiences regarding the qualities and/or characteristics that are likely to lead to a successful Physical Therapy experience. For entry-level clinical practice, physical therapy students must be taught about their roles and responsibilities for working collaboratively. The purpose of the study was to identify pedagogy that might help the next generation of Physical Therapy (PT) students, as well as to identify the characteristics that make up an effective physical therapist (PT). Phenomenological case study that is qualitative was used as the research design. Researchers selected 10 accomplished individuals who attended Medical Colleges in Northern Philippines using purposive sampling. During the interview, participant perceptions and experiences were probed during their time in college; educational strategies for addressing knowledge and skill gaps in students; barriers, and gaps in educational preparation for intra-professional success; their experiences as licensed physical therapists at this time; life success strategies, and the role of MCNP in guiding them towards their career success. Ten respondents participated in four questions. Nine cluster themes emerged from the data: a solid foundation, seizing the chance to realize dreams, career-mindedness, acculturation, perseverance, passion, shaping one into a significant professional, modesty, hard work, and perseverance. The themes covered the experiences and methods used by the 10 respondents to become successful physical therapists. According to respondents, the future physical therapist should demonstrate and possess the experiences and strategies from this study as they develop both cognitive and affective clinical skills. The development of pedagogy and environments that are favorable for becoming a successful Physical Therapist is greatly influenced by academic and clinical practice settings. Clarifying roles may improve patient satisfaction, health care efficiency, and costs while minimizing miscommunication-related issues. These people may try to change their histories and experiences and their standards and methods for success to become successful Physical Therapists. This data may be used by entry-level PT programs to direct what abilities/characteristics are required to set graduates up for success.

**Key words:** *Phenomenological; success stories, Physical Therapist.*



## INTRODUCTION

The field of physical therapy is experiencing rapid growth and expansion within the healthcare industry, making it one of the fastest-growing professions. Projections indicate that the demand for physical therapists is set to increase by a significant 36 percent by the year 2022 (Therapist Resources, 2014).

In this regard, this study aims to investigate and comprehend the lived experiences, views, and methods of successful physical therapy graduates from Northern Philippine Medical Colleges. This study intends to elucidate the underlying elements and characteristics that have contributed to their success in order to provide significant insights for physical therapy education, practice, and professional development.

A phenomenological study in the context of physical therapy education can discover the distinctive perspectives and insights of successful graduates, shedding light on the elements that have played a key part in their achievements. This study seeks to provide significant insights and implications to various stakeholders by focusing primarily on successful physical therapy graduates from the Medical Colleges of Northern Philippines.

By understanding the lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies of successful graduates, educators can gain valuable insights into the factors that contribute to their success. This knowledge can then be applied to curriculum creation, teaching techniques, and clinical training practices, which will improve the educational experience and better prepare future physical therapy graduates for their professional jobs.

### Research Design

The research design method used is qualitative inquiry which involves exploring and describing the contribution of MCNP to the Alumni Physical Therapist, the study is concerned with the successful life stories of Physical Therapy graduates of MCNP.

#### *Respondents of the Study*

The study's participants are chosen individuals who offered their experiences on how to be successful in the field of Physical Therapy. They are composed of 10 individuals, and are Physical Therapy Alumni of the Medical Colleges of Northern working abroad and have at least 5 years of work experience or more.

Purposive sampling was utilized in this qualitative investigation to ensure that the data acquired would be valuable to the study.

### Data Gathering Tool

The data used in this study includes the Personal Demographic Sheet and Research Questionnaires developed by the researchers. The questionnaires were formulated through brainstorming, it was based on the research questions, and were revised and approved.



## Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers prepared a letter for permission to conduct the study from the Research Development Center and the Administration. This step was done to assure them that the research was purely for academic purposes only. Once the letter was approved, the researchers sent the consent letter to the respondents and questionnaires through their email.

After all the reply of the respondents were gathered, the researchers double-checked the accuracy of the results and manually checked the participants' answers. Then, the researchers proceeded to code the data. After coding the data, it was then forwarded to the RDC office for checking. Once the result is out, the researchers then proceeded to interpret the result of the coded data.

## Data Analysis

The collected answers from the participants were analyzed using Colaizzi's approach. This method entails: (1) collecting respondents' descriptions of the phenomenon, (2) reading the transcribed manuscript several times to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings conveyed, (3) identifying notable statements and phrases and converting them into general terms, (4) formulating meanings of Physical Therapist work abroad, (5) organizing the derived meanings into clusters of themes, and (6) producing an extensive description of the concerns addressed, and (7) thoroughly analyzing the meaning of this study's participants before writing a comprehensive description of themes to validate the result and merging any new ideas or adjustments into the final exhaustive description.

## RESULT

The results and discussion chapter includes the presentation, analysis and interpretation of all the data gathered in this research study. The various results are presented in the succeeding tables. Analysis and interpretations of data are done every tabular presentation.



**Table 1 DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES DURING COLLEGE**

CODES	CLUSTER THEME	EMERGENT
Limited resources Great experience Challenging journey Tough journey Provocative Earnest	Motivated Challenging Journey	
Amazed Financial incapability Pressured and motivated Time constraints Health problems Limited resources Time management	Distressing	Meaningful Academic Journey
Resourceful Strategic person Self-disciplined and time management Dedication and courage Have good study habits Assist/support from others Self-reliance	Resourceful	

The emergent themes were formulated from the responses of our respondents. It is a meaningful academic journey because of their worthwhile challenges along the 5 year course journey as a PT student but ironically speaking, they were motivated in pursuing their dreams to become a registered Physiotherapists. With the different stress and circumstances, and limited resources in the institution they managed to make a way to complete their course despite the difficulties of academic activities, they just enjoyed and loved their soon to be profession and gave all their best and dedication on pursuing their career that makes them who they are right now and with the different struggles they experienced; it drives them to be strong and finish what they started.

The first cluster theme from the respondents is A motivated challenging journey and has been defined in this study that pertains to the experiences of the respondents despite the limited resources of the institution. A great opportunity for them in experiencing the teaching-learning process of the institution resulted. The tough journey towards achieving their goals is also highlighted. Entering into PT school is a tough and long process that challenges their ability to pursue their dreams in life and through their challenging journey for 5 years as a PT student, all are paid off due to their labor that makes them strong enough to face the real world after the long process of fighting their dreams.

The next cluster theme is distressing because there are a lot of challenges in pursuing the Physical Therapy course at MCNP. According to the respondents, they were overwhelmed and amazed by the different activities, subjects, and rehabilitation equipment in the Physical Therapy course. Time



management is one of the biggest challenges because they were bombarded with a lot of reporting, quizzes, readings, practicals, and exams. They were pressured by the academic workloads but still, they were motivated. With this, they don't have enough time to sleep which puts their health at risk but despite all these struggles they faced they still remain strong to finish the line.

According to the research study of Liébana-Presa et al, (2014) The willingness to put out effort, time, and perseverance into the study appears to have a positive impact on psychological distress. Academic engagement, in particular vigor, is linked to students' psychological agony and, consequently, to energy and mental resilience during the studying process. Another challenge is financial incapability, even though they were academic scholars they don't know how to manage their allowances because it is not enough for their food, study materials, etc.

The last cluster theme is resourceful in a way that instead of buying books, they go to the library to borrow a book because they can't afford to buy it because it is expensive. They manage their time well to read their books, take down their notes and take only the important ones and having a group study with their classmates to share their thoughts and insights with the lessons they are learning. With this, they are determined and courageous to finish Physical Therapy by helping one another.

According to Dison (2009), the concept of resourcefulness is a concept we use to foreground "the complex combination of emotional, motivational, and endurance qualities believed to indicate a commitment to learning". The idea of resourcefulness is in line with Beard, Clegg, and Smith's (2007) findings that students succeed in their learning "by drawing on their own individual and social resources" highlighting "the importance of the affective, the bodily and sociality in relation to their engagement with learning".



Table 2 STRATEGIES FOR MAKING LIFE SUCCESSFUL

CODES	CLUSTER THEME	EMERGENT
a. Strong Foundation Persistent in achieving dreams Hope and faith in self and GOD Strong conviction Supportive family Courageous and positivity Determination Morale booster Good support system	Strong foundation	
b. Take the opportunity in achieving dreams Sacrifices Sacrifices Self-sacrifice Working way from love ones Self-sacrifice Sacrifices Missing love ones Giving up my 1 <sup>st</sup> job	Take the opportunity in achieving dreams	Action-driven
c. Build a strong foundation in life Have faith in GOD Daydreaming habits Harmonious Diligent and courageous Tenderhearted and caring Erudite with humbleness Resolute and have a vision in life	Career-minded	

The first cluster theme is a strong foundation that they have as they face all the challenges of life and whatever life throws at them, they still have the guts to smile and fight it with determination, positivism, and the faith they have as their resistance to continue. Because of their dreams in life, it drives them to show that hardships are never an excuse for them to continue their goals in life as long as they have support from their families and GOD who is always at their back.

Family relationships are significant sources of social influence and connection for people throughout their lives because of the significant connections they make at each stage of life. Through psychosocial, behavioral, and physiological mechanisms, the nature of family ties, including social support (such as giving love, counsel, and care), as well as strain (such as fights, being critical, and making too many expectations), can affect well-being. A greater sense of self-worth may be



experienced by those who receive support from their family members, and this increased self-esteem may serve as a psychological resource, promoting optimism, positive effects, and better mental health. However, as a coping strategy for stress, unhealthy habits may also come from relationship stress. Other methods that family members might influence one another's behavior include social control, information sharing, encouragement, and better health care utilization. (Thomas and Umberson, 2017)

The second cluster theme is taking the opportunity in achieving dreams; due to the eagerness in finding their fate after they're staying on a 5-degree journey of their lives, they are willing to do all things, if they need to sacrifice everything they will do just to seek another opportunity to achieve the things they want and in order to give all back the sacrifices of their parents to them. Our respondents are family oriented, that's why they are willing to do all just to make their loved ones happy and proud. They are working abroad away from their families and giving up other things to take another opportunity. Taking the opportunity to other places and working abroad is a dream come true to them to pursue their hardships from achieving their degree from many years at school and applying it in facing the real world.

When the iron is hot, strike. This aphorism sums up how to embrace opportunities in life well. That entails seizing them while they are still available. One thing that not everyone does, though, is seize opportunities. Some people are reluctant to take chances or leave their comfort zone in order to capture possibilities. Some of us can't help but think this way, probably as a result of regrettable previous events or the anxiety we feel when trying anything new or untested. Nevertheless, it is advisable to seize as many possibilities as you can because you never know what can transpire. Because we can never be certain of the future, possibility is appealing. One or more of these chances may help us achieve success and discover something worthwhile or anything else that might provide us happiness and fulfillment. On the other side, passing up possibilities could make us regret it later when we discover the advantages we could have had.

The last cluster theme for table 2 is about career-minded, our respondents are very career minded in a way that they set their goals and have the vision of pursuing their profession. They are diligent and courageous to take a step in making their dreams come true. They have this faith in themselves and the creator that whatever things they do, they will achieve because of having a good heart, tenderness, and humbleness they have as their traits to become successful PT. They set their mind, their body, and their soul to make the impossible possible. Because of the wisdom and knowledge, they have and learn from their Alma Mater, they use this as their combat to have what they want in life. Also, they are loving what they are doing, that's why they are blessed with what they have right now.



Table 3 DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES AS A REGISTERED PHYSICAL THERAPIST

CODES	CLUSTER THEME	EMERGENT
a. Acculturation Emotional distress Discrimination Time and schedule Conveying Managing/handling clients	Acculturation	
b. Perseverance Positivity thought Confidence Flexible person Strong and courageous Focus on goals Be sociable Acquaintance Humble/respectful	Perseverance	Determined
c. Determination Indomitable Happiness Strong and courageous Righteous Salary and the patients The salary Purpose Passion/devotion	Passion/devotion	

The first cluster theme is acculturation that the respondents experienced all throughout their journey as a physical therapist working abroad. Being away from their loved ones is a struggle and challenging part they experienced and as they go to another place to work and the discrimination, they feel from their work also made them pursue their career and through the determination they have despite the acculturation they have encountered in their workplace.

The next cluster theme is perseverance because our respondents struggled to have positive thoughts, confidence, strength, courage, unrefined focus, and unsociable despite the hardships they've been through. At its simplest, perseverance acted working toward their goals despite challenges and setbacks. It's the persistence they have displayed, even if there is a delay in achieving their goals or success before. Our respondents who have long-term goals often lost their focus and direction. It's difficult not to lose motivation and enthusiasm after a certain point; however, perseverance taught them how to continue working hard until they have been succeeding. Perseverance boils down to their drive and resilience they display while completing an objective. Irrespective of the challenges that emerge or the time it takes them to complete the task, they persist tirelessly and pursue their set goals. It's an



important quality in life as it allows them to stay in the game even though everything else says it's time to call it quits. Perseverance helped them achieve their life's dreams, goals, and vision.

The last cluster theme is passion and devotion. Our respondents have dedicated their lives since day one as they have chosen Physical Therapy as their chosen career. They have experienced happiness, strength and courage, high salary and found their purpose doing what they have chosen. Their devotion showed us through their work that many of us inspired through their stories. And the passion that they have as a great, strong, powerful emotion, poured into their work is something that we can adapt to when we practice our chosen career.

Passion workers are strongly committed to the field they work in and the task they conduct. They are more enthusiastic about their work than someone who hasn't got the experience due to a simple experience. According to Deloitte, encouraging employees to embrace the domain and giving them the chance to speak with clients directly helps boost their commitment. The most important thing for you to comprehend is that everyone has the capacity to be passionate about their career. Humans have an innate desire to learn, develop, and be enthusiastic about their profession. One common misconception they discovered is that only younger employees may get passionate about their profession. Younger employees were enthusiastic, but enthusiasm sometimes grows with experience.



**Table 4 THE ROLE OF MCNP IN MOLDING SUCCESSFUL PHYSICAL THERAPIST**

CODES	CLUSTER THEME	EMERGENT
<p>a. Vision and mission of the school Motivated and determined To be efficient professional Motivational stories Solid foundation Develop and devoted on my profession Build me to be a great healthcare professional Provision Mold me to be a significant professional.</p>	Mold me to be a significant professional	
<p>b. Kind and humble Be prayerful and have faith Motivated despite the struggles of the chosen career Dreamer Committed Perseverance Tenacity Principled/ethical professional</p>	Kind and humble	Enthusiasm
<p>c. Motivating other people through my story Have a positive foundation Faith and humbleness Commitment Hard work and perseverance Dedicated on achieving dreams Determination Flexible Embody all these experiences</p>	Hard work and perseverance	

The cluster theme is mold to be a significant professional because of the solid foundation that the institution shared and gave to them despite the long academic journey and their hardships they continue to move on and accept the situation they have and due to their eagerness to finish their degree and the school equipped them to be competent and prepared them to be the best physical therapist they can be. They also prepared them to be a global healthcare superstar which helps them to love their journey and the profession they want.

According to "How Education has shaped by Molly" of Mt. Blanchard into being smart and motivated. Not only that, but he also thinks that education has shaped him into a better person.



Education taught him things about the world, and it helped him to motivate himself so they can help be the change. During her freshman year in high school, she had a world history class and one of the chapters that they studied Mahatma Gandhi says that "Be the change you wish to see in the world." And she wants to see the world be changed into something better. For that to happen, Mr. Molly believes that he must be the change he wishes to see and without education, he wouldn't be able to do that, and he wouldn't be the motivated person he is today, and education is something that he will never regret.

The next cluster theme is kind and humble which the institution teaches to them not only all about PT but also the core values of the school that help them to reach their dreams in life. Through the four words that the founder of the institution shared with them, which is the study, study, study, and prayer where it works to them as they embodied the power of positivity. Through their hard work, perseverance, and their devotion to keep on studying to be successful in life. Being a dreamer with a good heart is the best they shared to us they've learned from the long journey they experience.

According to Davis et al. humility fosters strong social relationships during interpersonal encounters and has a positive correlation with acceptance of status in big groups. Which is also consistent with the view expressed by Wright et al. that humility is a virtue associated with prosocial, moral, and social advantages. The moral basis also includes other qualities associated with humility, such as honesty, universal ideals, generosity, and kindness. A more contented (full) life can also be facilitated by humility as a virtue. According to Wright et al. (2016), various good characteristics and character qualities are correlated with humility. One of the strongest prosocial virtues having positive psychological, moral, and social effects is humility. Humility is a key quality for developing other positive traits. The outcomes of the humility test have an impact on psychological health, including optimism, hope, achievement value, positive life appreciation, positive growth, interpersonal connections, assertiveness, comfort with uncertainty, and openness to new experiences. There is also a

The last cluster theme is hard work and perseverance as they are dedicated and motivated to continue their journey and be able to embody all the experiences they learned from their previous years up to now. Also being compassionate and having an open mind to accept all the possibilities that may happen but through the determination they have they are able to overcome all. And through this struggle they are happy to share and motivate others to do the same even though we have different paths, but they want us to have faith in everything we should do.

Grit is a term that encompasses ideas like desire and perseverance, and it is playing a bigger role in preparing students for both academic and personal success. Grit has been associated with successful outcomes; therefore teachers encourage their pupils to put in extra effort and persevere in achieving their objectives. (Huescar et al 2020)



Nobody pursues their academic career by themselves. A collection of eminent scholars or scientists who seek to advance and uphold the standards in their field is known as an academy. An academy is also a facility where people can receive education or training in a particular field. As we progress through our academic careers, we explore and develop enduring bonds with our teachers, students, and friends. Even with this limitless capacity for learning, nobody can ever predict the direction of their academic career. There will be ups and downs in every student's academic career. The journey, on the other hand, will be great and thrilling if the suitcase is filled with a thirst for knowledge, a desire for learning, kindness, respect, enthusiasm, and thankfulness.

"From earning a degree to succeeding in a career, remaining determined is important." A quote that manifests in the illustration of a physical therapist who is now successful due to the determination



that keeps them moving forward in a way that they need to focus on their goal that can create paths for them to move closer to the success they want. That's where determination takes them to where they are right now, from a fragile student to a successful physical therapist as they keep in their mind and heart the vision and mission of the school that inspires them to continue despite the struggles they experienced when they were studying. From their Unending efforts, optimism, and perseverance they reach their goal and dreams of what they like to become and to like who they are right now. The respondents share their stories with us so we need to remind ourselves of the power of determination and passion that can lead us to be better people and to reach our dreams just like them. That's why being a good fighter with determination, passion, humbleness and strong faith is important on the road to success for us to be able to reach the set goals we want in life and that's what the respondents shared and prove to us that no matter what happens if we have a dream in life.

As much as the Philippines is considered a "third world country," Filipinos are more likely to work overseas rather than remain in their land and this great Physical therapist was one of its temples. The "plane jeepney" represents their journey as they soar high with eagerness to fulfill their duties. With a reaching hand, they brought progress and development nearer to the borders of the world. The structure and research illustrations portray the growth of physical therapy advancement wherein it has a vision of making the world a better place to live on. To sum it up, the summation of this drawing mirrors an enthusiastic era in the world of physical therapy which embodies action-driven and responsible pioneers of (school).

## CONCLUSION

Research was developed from the themes that included learnings from the respondent's stories, experiences and strategies in becoming successful. Respondents indicated that experiences and strategies of this study must manifest and possess the future physical therapist that develops both cognitive and affective clinical skills pertaining to their experiences and strategies. Academic and clinical practice settings play an integral role in creating pedagogy and environments conducive to becoming a successful physical therapy. The purposes of this research were to explore the qualitative characteristics that comprise a successful physical therapist. Analysis of 10 successful respondents' interviews elucidated 4 essential elements that constitute effective stories, experiences, and strategies as guides to become successful physical therapists. The data from the 10 respondents'—were helpful and powerful to convince you to strive.

This study expressed the successful life stories of the 10 professionals who graduated from medical colleges of northern Philippines and entails their experiences as students and a registered physical therapist with a humble appreciation of the participant's motivation to share their meaningful journey that this research has been completed. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The researchers conclude that the respondents have an incredible 5 year journey as a PT student of an amazing institution that mold them to become successful professionals.
2. The researchers conclude that the respondents have successful careers due to their determination, passion, and vision of being once a part of their alma mater which them to be respected professionals.



The researchers conclude that the respondents have the ability to pursue their dreams despite the struggles of their life, especially academics they encountered and dealt with for 5 years and through their motivation from their Alma Mater that built them to be efficient physical therapists.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions presented, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The researchers must abide by all the experiences of the respondents in order to apply them to themselves in the future and be ready to face their new journey by facing the reality through the shared experiences of the respondents that it can guide them to become a successful professional.
2. The researchers can use this study to be able to share to other PT students and future PT students about the incredible journey of the respondents and serve as an inspiration through their tough journey as a Physical Therapy.

The researchers can use this study as their guidance to deal with different struggles they face and through the different stories of each respondent; from the humble beginnings to the time where they are successful right now as amazing physical therapists it helps others to build themselves just like the respondents' stories.

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