

The Impact of Professional Envy on Core Competencies and Institutional Efficiency Among Undergraduate Medical Faculty

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Abstract

Background: The role of professional envy as a primary emotional distress that increases year after year and negatively affects workplace dynamics, collaboration, and overall organizational performance is increasingly recognized. In environments as competitive as undergraduate medical education, envy may substantially degrade critical faculty competencies that prevent institutional effectiveness and educational outcomes.

Objectives: In order to systematically address the relationship professional envy has with undergraduate medical faculty competency, specifically, teaching effectiveness, academic collaboration, motivation for professional development, mentorship, research engagement, and job satisfaction.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey-based observational study was done between 2023 to March 2024 at Rashid Latif Khan University and its affiliated colleges (Rashid Latif Medical College and Rashid Latif Khan University Medical College), Lahore, Pakistan. An electronic questionnaire surveying all eligible medical faculty members was distributed a structured, validated, closed-ended questionnaire concerning professional envy, and its perceived impact. Statistically, chi-square tests were done using data from 158 respondents with a $p < 0.05$ significance threshold.

Results: Out of 158 participants, professional envy most significantly affected academic collaboration (63.6%, $p < 0.0001$), motivation for faculty development (60.4%, $p = 0.0002$), and interaction with medical students (58.9%, $p = 0.0001$). Workplace performance (57.2%, $p = 0.0004$), overall job satisfaction (55.8%, $p = 0.0004$), mentoring of junior faculty (54.6%, $p = 0.011$), and research engagement (54.5%, $p = 0.019$) were also significantly compromised. Reduction in teaching hours was the least impacted competency (23.5%, $p = 0.467$).

Conclusion: Professional envy significantly undermines critical competencies of undergraduate medical faculty, particularly collaboration and motivation for professional growth, negatively affecting institutional productivity and educational quality. Targeted institutional policies and structured faculty development programs are urgently recommended to mitigate professional envy and promote a supportive, collaborative academic environment.

Keywords: Professional envy, medical faculty, undergraduate medical education, academic collaboration, job satisfaction, faculty development, organizational behavior,



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INTRODUCTION

Envy is a complex emotional state characterized by feelings of inadequacy, resentment, or bitterness triggered by another individual's superior qualities, achievements, or perceived advantages [1]. Although these effects are fundamentally rooted in social comparison processes, they intensify in situations characterized by greater competition, scarcity of resources, and fewer opportunities for advancement [2,3]. Measures within professional environments are frequently characterized by envy when people feel injustice in the same recognition, growth opportunities, and resource allocation that leads to maladaptive behaviors and damage interpersonal relationships [4]. While envy is inherent in human psychology, it usually takes an adverse form at the workplace that leads to the reduction of collaborative behaviour, unethical practices, and overall organizational inefficiency [5].

Professional envy is particularly enhanced in academic medicine. Academic schedules are rigorous and strenuous, clinical expectations are high, and faculty in medical faculties are pressured to rise to the top in teaching, research, and clinical practice. In such high-stakes environments, feelings of envy and resentment are common among faculty members, and in the absence of a strong mentor or positive role model, feelings of envy and resentment may be enhanced when colleagues become more visible, successful, or are recognized as more important institutionally [6, 7]. For that reason, this will lead to dysfunctional workplace behaviors including diminished collaboration, erosion of trust, withholding of crucial knowledge and expertise, and fewer motivations for mentoring and faculty development [8].

There is a strong tradition in the literature that faculty dynamics in medical education have a major impact on institutional outcomes and educational effectiveness [9]. Traditionally, the five fundamental domains that make up faculty competencies are: curriculum development, organizational capability, teaching execution, coaching and mentoring, and student assessment [10]. Effective collaboration, knowledge sharing, and support of a collegial atmosphere are essential for optimum performance in these domains. These critical dimensions are disrupted by professional envy; as faculty are unwilling to collaborate and mentor, interpersonal hostility emerges, occupational stress is compounded, faculty productivity is reduced, job dissatisfaction increases, and attrition rates rise [11]. Furthermore, envy-driven behaviors like scuttling team-based teaching by refusing to actively participate in it, reduced willingness to offer a mentoring role to junior colleagues on purposeful withholding of critical information or resources have detrimental effects on institutional status, teaching quality in general, and the quantity of academic output [12].

Although extensive research has revealed that workplace envy is negative across different professional

settings, empirical investigation of the effects of workplace envy specifically in undergraduate medical education settings is sparse. More specifically, there are few, if any, comprehensive investigations of envy's direct effects on the competencies of medical teaching faculty in particular. Since the direct implications of these faculty competencies on the quality of medical education, which in turn will impact healthcare outcomes, are critical, addressing this knowledge gap is an important area to consider [13].

Thus, this study examines how professional envy affects certain competencies of undergraduate medical teaching faculty at the premier medical education institutions in Lahore, Pakistan, including teaching effectiveness, academic collaboration, motivation for faculty development, research engagement, mentoring behaviors, and overall job satisfaction. Our study quantitatively assessed the precise impact of envy on these fundamental competencies to inform both an increased understanding of this nuanced phenomenon and targeted institutional interventions. More broadly, this work aims to contribute to the creation of structured faculty development programs and evidence-based institutional policies that facilitate the development of collaborative academic culture and mitigate the toxic impact of professional envy on the excellence of medical education [14,15].

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional questionnaire-based observational study was done on Rashid Latif Khan University (RLKU) and its affiliated institutions, Rashid Latif Medical College (RLMC) and Rashid Latif Khan University Medical College (RLKUMC), Lahore, Pakistan. This study conformed to the STROBE guidelines for cross-sectional research, rigorously adhered to them, and is thus methodologically robust and transparent. The duration of the study was from July 2023 to March 2024, covering all phases from ethically approving, distributing the questionnaire, collecting data, and analysing data. The target population included all full-time medical faculty involved in undergraduate medical teaching in the aforementioned institutions. The study was not designed to include specifically non-medical faculty members or visiting faculty.

Around 230 faculty members comprised the total faculty population of these institutions. From this pool, a non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed. Considering an anticipated response rate of approximately 70%, a minimum sample size of 150 participants was targeted to ensure statistical validity and representativeness. Ultimately, 158 faculty members completed the questionnaire, surpassing the required threshold.

For data collection, we developed a structured, validated, closed-ended questionnaire specifically designed to quantitatively evaluate professional envy and its

perceived effects on key academic competencies among medical faculty. The questionnaire was developed following a comprehensive literature review and expert consultations with senior medical educators and specialists in psychology, medical education, and organizational behaviour. Face and content validity were assessed by an expert panel, which included medical educators, senior academic staff, and statisticians, leading to minor modifications for enhanced clarity and relevance. Subsequently, the revised questionnaire underwent pilot-testing with 20 faculty members who were excluded from the final analysis, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal reliability.

The questionnaire captured demographic data (age, gender, academic rank, teaching experience) and systematically evaluated the perceived impact of professional envy across multiple domains of faculty competencies: reduction in teaching hours, motivation for faculty development, overall job satisfaction, workplace performance, interaction with medical students, academic collaboration, mentoring junior faculty, and engagement in research activities. Responses were collected using a three-point Likert scale ("Yes", "No", "Maybe") to facilitate clear and uniform responses.

The questionnaires were disseminated electronically via Google Forms from March to November 2024, allowing participants adequate flexibility and time to respond. Regular electronic reminders were sent to optimize response rates. Ethical approval was formally obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Rashid Latif Khan University Medical College (Approval reference: RLKUMC/IRB/0065/23). Electronic informed consent was explicitly acquired from all participants before their participation, clearly explaining study objectives, ensuring confidentiality of responses, and emphasizing voluntary participation with the freedom to withdraw at any point.

Data confidentiality and anonymity were stringently maintained throughout the study. Collected data were securely stored, password-protected, and only accessible to the principal investigator and authorized team members involved in data analysis. Statistical analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 28.0. Descriptive statistics were computed for demographic characteristics and response distributions. A Chi-square test of independence was applied to assess associations between professional envy and its perceived impact on specific faculty competencies. Statistical significance was determined at a p-value of less than 0.05, with detailed outcomes systematically reported.

RESULTS

A total of 158 faculty members completed and returned the survey, representing a robust response rate of approximately 69% from the targeted population. The respondent group comprised 54.5% female and 45.5%

male participants. In assessing the prevalence and intensity of professional envy experienced by faculty, we found notable variation. Specifically, 38.7% of respondents reported never experiencing professional envy, whereas 15.5% described experiencing strong or intense feelings of professional envy. Additionally, moderate levels of envy were reported by 20.6% of participants, while mild envy was noted by 23.9% (Figure 1).

When evaluating the perceived impact of professional envy on specific faculty competencies, the results exhibited significant variability. Academic collaboration with colleagues emerged as the domain most severely impacted, with 63.6% of respondents affirming that envy substantially hindered collaborative interactions ($p < 0.001$). Motivation for faculty development was the second-most adversely affected area, with 60.4% of participants acknowledging a substantial negative influence ($p = 0.0002$). Interaction with medical students was significantly disrupted for 58.9% of respondents ($p = 0.0001$), while 57.2% reported that workplace performance overall was negatively influenced by envy ($p = 0.0004$).

Overall job satisfaction was significantly compromised among 55.8% of the participants, indicating envy's broad detrimental impact on faculty morale and institutional commitment ($p = 0.0004$). Additionally, more than half of the respondents reported reduced mentoring of junior faculty members (54.6%, $p = 0.011$) and diminished engagement in institutional research activities (54.5%, $p = 0.019$). Notably, the competency least affected by professional envy was the reduction in teaching hours, where only 23.5% of respondents felt a significant negative impact, a finding that did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.467$) (Table 1).

Collectively, these findings illustrate that professional envy substantially disrupts key faculty competencies, particularly collaboration, motivation, and student interactions, thereby highlighting its critical negative implications for medical educational effectiveness and institutional harmony.

The pie chart in fig-2 illustrates the intensity levels of professional envy experienced by the medical faculty. Of the total 155 respondents, 28.4% reported experiencing envy at a very mild intensity, 23.9% at mild intensity, and 20.6% at moderate intensity. Notably, 15.5% experienced strong feelings of professional envy, and 10.3% reported experiencing envy very strongly, highlighting a substantial proportion of faculty members significantly impacted by envy at the workplace.

This pie chart represents responses from 154 faculty members regarding the influence on their motivation for faculty development. A considerable majority (60.4%) reported a definitive negative impact ("Yes"), whereas only 26% of respondents reported no adverse impact ("No"). An additional 13.6% were uncertain ("Maybe"), indicating a widespread detrimental effect of professional envy on

faculty motivation towards professional growth and institutional contribution as shown in fig-3.

Table-1: The impact of professional envy on competencies of medical faculty

No.	Faculty Competencies Affected	Yes (%)	No (%)	Maybe (%)	P-value (Chi-square)
1	Reduction in teaching hours	23.5	54.9	21.6	0.467
2	Motivation for faculty development	60.4	26.0	13.6	0.0002
3	Overall job satisfaction	55.8	28.6	15.6	0.0004
4	Workplace performance	57.2	29.6	13.2	0.0004
5	Interaction with medical students	58.9	29.8	11.3	0.0001
6	Academic collaboration with colleagues	63.6	24.7	11.7	0.0000
7	Mentoring junior faculty members	54.6	38.2	7.2	0.011
8	Engagement in research activities	54.5	35.1	10.4	0.019

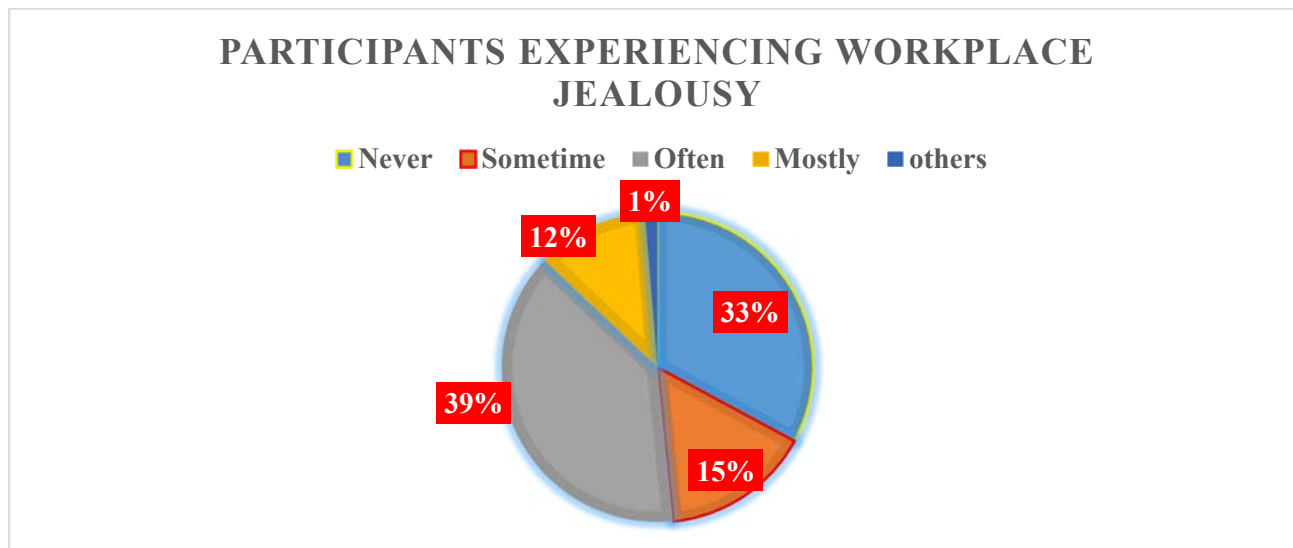


Figure-1: Number of respondents experiencing professional envy at varying intensities (mild, moderate, strong, never experienced).

Q 4: On a scale from (1 to 5) how intense this feeling of Professional Jealousy has impacted your work. 1. Very mild 2. Mild 3. Moderate 4. Strong 5. Very strong

155 responses

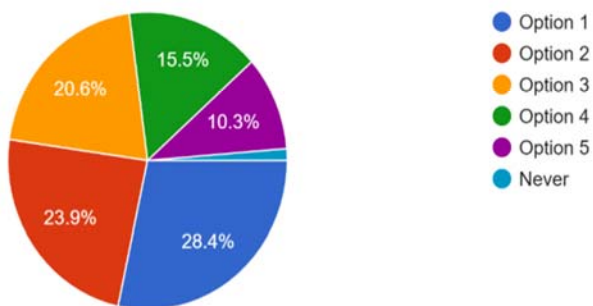


Fig-2: Intensity of Professional Envy Experienced by Medical Faculty

b. Motivation for faculty development

154 responses

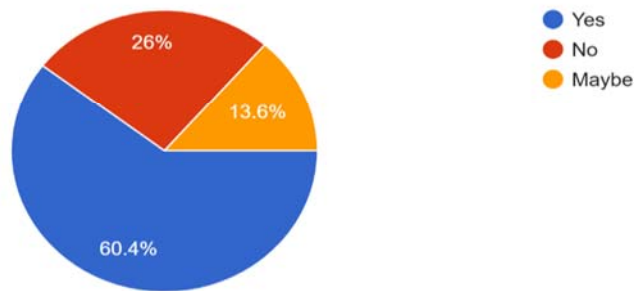


Fig-3: Impact of Professional Envy on Motivation for Faculty Development

c. Overall jobs satisfaction

154 responses

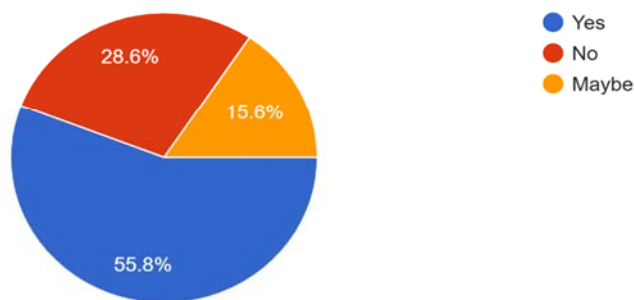


Fig-4: Impact of Professional Envy on Overall Job Satisfaction

Responses of 154 participants highlight professional envy on overall job satisfaction among medical faculty. A significant proportion (55.8%) of respondents confirmed a negative impact ("Yes"), while 28.6% indicated no impact ("No"), and 15.6% were unsure ("Maybe"). These results underscore envy's detrimental role in compromising job satisfaction, potentially leading to higher turnover rates and reduced institutional commitment as shown in fig-4.

Overall, these findings indicate that professional envy significantly compromises critical faculty competencies, notably affecting academic collaboration, faculty development motivation, interaction quality with students, workplace performance, and overall job satisfaction. Conversely, teaching hours appeared least affected, suggesting that despite significant interpersonal and emotional impacts, routine teaching responsibilities were generally maintained. These results highlight professional envy as a substantial, yet often overlooked, factor adversely impacting faculty performance, morale, and institutional efficacy in undergraduate medical education. This underscores the urgent necessity for targeted

institutional strategies and structured faculty development interventions designed explicitly to mitigate envy and enhance collaborative academic cultures.

DISCUSSION

Envy among professional colleagues occurs when one yearns for the other's higher qualities, achievements, or possessions. In medical institutes, the stakes are invariably high; therefore, workplace dynamics and inter-relations among faculty members play a crucial role in shaping a conducive academic environment for both the faculty and the medical students. Accentuated professional envy, which is often overlooked, overshadows the mentorship and collaboration among the faculty and impacts the competencies of medical faculty. The survey highlights that professional envy is generally perceived as threatening career advancement and promotion. This aspect manifests as reduced teaching hours, reduced interaction with students, and overall job dissatisfaction. The results show that the emotional burden exerted by professional envy affects overall performance and encompasses all the

competencies of the medical faculty. A recent study on the impact of envy in the workplace highlighted and described complicated and interrelated changes in the competencies of medical faculty [12]. This fact is accentuated by the scarcity of resources, lack of academic coordination, and impaired motivation, leading to decreased productivity among the medical faculty [13].

It has been documented many years ago that professional envy results in decreased mutual faculty engagement and attendance in the organization [14]. A recent study highlighted that once an employee in an organization perceives envy, there is a resultant reduced mutual helping attitudes or harmful behaviors, which adversely affect organizational performance [15].

Professional envy has been shown to decrease the helping behaviors of envious faculty who are afraid of losing what they have achieved at that stage. There is an associated decrease in courtesy and altruism behaviours as a result of envy in the workplace. These findings are coherent with those obtained from a study conducted in 2022. Altruism refers to voluntary attitudes of the workers in an organization, which aim at supporting other associate members of the organization [16].

Our study has demonstrated that professional envy greatly impacts academic collaboration with colleagues ($p = 0.0000$), followed by an impact on motivation for faculty development ($p = 0.002$). This finding of decreased collaboration with other faculty members probably accounts for the institute's effectiveness, efficacy, and development. Resources within a medical institute, such as recognition for achievement, inevitably lead to competition among the faculty. Furthermore, as the competition increases with time, some faculty gain advantages or disadvantages as a result. Interestingly, the impact of professional envy on reduction in teaching hours was observed to be the least affected ($p = 0.0467$) compared with other competencies of medical faculty. Interaction with medical students also showed a considerably adverse impact ($p = 0.0001$), whereas overall job satisfaction was affected by 55.8% of respondents ($p = 0.004$).

This exhibits that faculty members may prefer to switch their jobs to other organizations or to work online instead. Faculty interacting together within an institute is necessarily affected by each other's emotions, thus, they invariably share various positive and negative feelings (such as envy or jealousy) [17]. More than half of the respondents reported reduced engagement in mentoring junior faculty (54.6%, $p = 0.011$) and substantially reduced participation in research activities. Research activities in a medical institute drive both faculty and students' progress and publications. Professional envy is considered an important aspect of human emotions and overall behaviours [18]. Despite all these negative consequences of professional envy, some faculty members avoid reflecting, exhibit tolerant behaviour, and openly accept less-than-ideal working conditions [19]. The results

obtained are in line with another recent study, which concluded that professional envy has significant and negative effects on altruism and overall job satisfaction, both crucial for developing organizational behaviour and cooperation [20].

CONCLUSION

The results show a significant result, you conclude that professional envy is associated with all the perceived competencies of undergraduate medical faculty. The highest impact was observed in academic collaboration with colleagues, which is most adversely affected. This exacerbates the lack of cooperation among the faculty. Intriguingly, motivation for faculty development was next to be impacted by professional envy, leading to decreased professional performance and impaired organizational behavior. To mitigate the negative impacts of professional envy among medical faculty, it appears to be of utmost importance to promote a culture of mutual respect & collaboration. Success in any specialty must be celebrated collectively rather than attributing undue recognition or advantages to any other faculty member within an organization. In this regard, the medical institutes must organize comprehensive faculty development programs (FDP), which have enormous potential to inculcate team-building and conflict resolution among the medical faculty.

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