

ABSTRACT

Objectives: To evaluate the current perceptions and attitudes of students in the dual PharmD/MBA degree program.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional survey of currently registered students in the University at Buffalo (UB) PharmD/MBA program. A 25-item electronic survey was developed through collaboration with the UB School of Management (SOM) and administered in Fall of 2014. The survey questions were qualitative and constructed using a Likert scale, ranking (1 = most important to 7 = least important) and multi-answer formats. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

Results: A total of 23/24 (96% response rate) students who are currently enrolled in the PharmD/MBA curriculum responded to the survey. There was an even distribution of students in the dual degree program. When asked to rank importance in the decision to pursue a dual degree, improvement in employment opportunities (mean = 1.83) and career advancement (mean = 2.04) were the most important. Approximately half of respondents (48%) currently plan on completing post-graduate training after pharmacy school, with marketing being the most popular specialty. Most students (95%) believe the PharmD/MBA will make them more competitive in the current job market and 86% said the dual degree will be a positive return on their investment. Overall, 86% of respondents believe the MBA has been worth the investment and 82% would recommend the dual program to an entering student.

Implications: Students have an increased perception and outlook for employment opportunities post-graduation. Pharmacy students are opting for advanced education to be more competitive in a tight market.

BACKGROUND

- Increased enrollment in professional degree programs has made the job market for pharmacy graduates increasingly competitive in the last decade.
- According to the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP), as of January 2015 there are 130 U.S.-based schools of pharmacy with full or candidate status accreditation.¹
- For pharmacy students, professional degree enrollment totaled 62,743 in fall 2013.
- Schools are now implementing dual degree programs into professional curriculums to make graduates more competitive in a saturated job market.
- At the University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy, students have the opportunities to complete a 4+1 program in order to graduate with a PharmD/MBA
- The dual degree Doctor of Pharmacy/Master of Business Administration (PharmD/MBA), gives students additional skills which allow them more marketability in career opportunities.

OBJECTIVE

- To assess the attitudes and perceptions of the students currently enrolled in the dual PharmD/MBA degree program at UB School of Pharmacy.

METHODS

Study Design:

- Cross-sectional, single center, electronic survey
- Survey was administered using the secure online application, Qualtrics (Qualtrics, LLC, Provo, UT) and administered during a 6 week period (January 2015 to February 2015)

Inclusion:

- Students currently registered in the University at Buffalo (UB) PharmD/MBA program

Data Collection:

- A 25-item electronic survey was developed through collaboration with the UB School of Management and Administration
- The survey questions were constructed using fill in the blank, Likert Scale, ranking (1 = most important to 7= least important), and multi-answer formats.
- Survey was pilot tested before dissemination

Data Analysis:

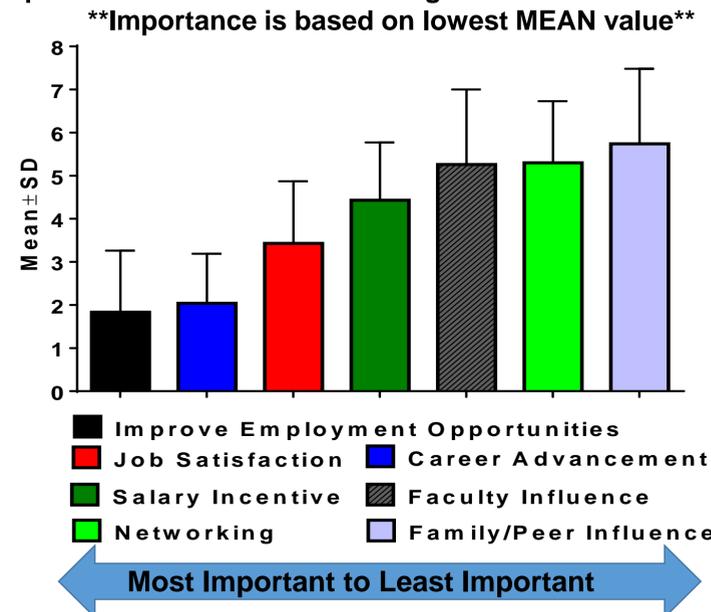
- Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data

Table 1: Baseline Demographics of PharmD/MBA Students

Total Participants	N = 23/24 (96% Response Rate)
Age, mean±SD	24.4±2.1
Male/Female	15/8 (65/36)
Current year in professional program?	
MBA1	7 (30)
P2	7 (30)
P3	3 (13)
P4	6 (26)
Have you completed core classes at SOM?	
Yes	12 (52)
No	11 (48)
Plan to complete post-graduate training following graduation?	
Yes	11 (48)
No	12 (52)
What type of post-graduate training? (n=11)	
PGY-1	4 (36)
PGY-2	1 (0.1)
Fellowship	3 (27)
Undecided	3 (27)

*Data presented as no. (%) unless noted otherwise

Figure 1: What most influenced your decision to pursue a dual PharmD/MBA degree?



RESULTS

Figure 2. How much do you feel each characteristic is an important benefit of earning a PharmD/MBA?

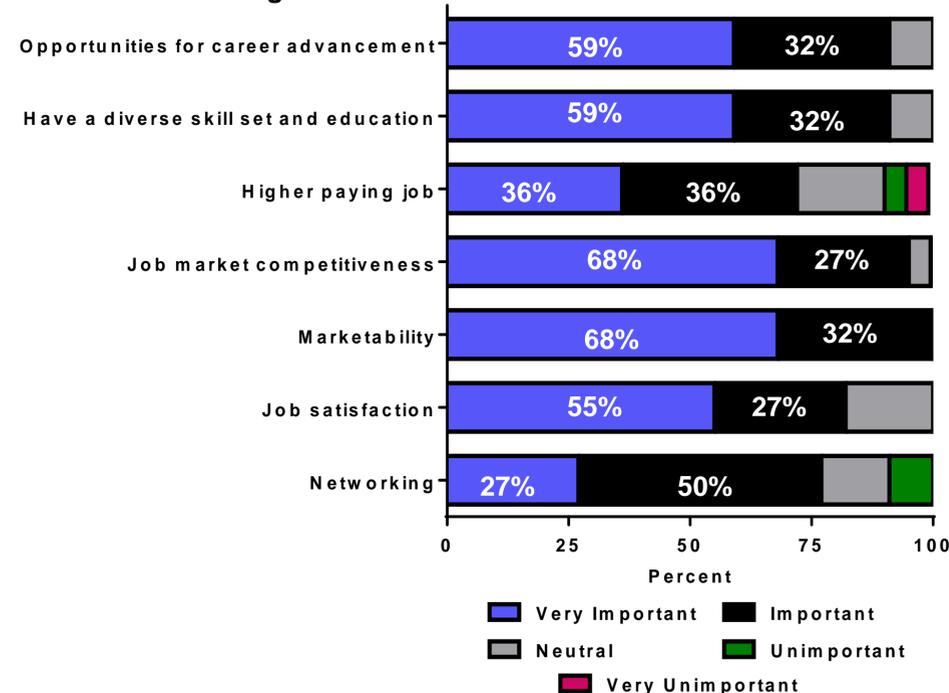


Table 2. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Question	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neither	Disagree / Strongly Disagree
Has the effort to earn an MBA been worth it?	19 (86)	2 (9)	1 (5)
The job marketplace for current pharmacy graduates is becoming increasingly difficult	22 (100)	0	0
I will be more competitive in the job market with a dual PharmD/MBA degree	21 (95)	1 (4.5)	0
I will earn a higher entry level salary with a dual PharmD/MBA degree	12 (55)	6 (27)	4 (18)
I will earn a higher salary at the midpoint in my career with a dual PharmD/MBA degree	21 (96)	1 (4.5)	0
I will have more opportunity for career advancement with a dual degree	21 (95)	1 (4.5)	0
A PharmD/MBA degree will give me employment opportunities which would be unavailable without a MBA	17 (77)	5 (23)	0
I will have an increased job satisfaction	16 (73)	5 (23)	1 (4.5)
I will have a positive return on my investment in earning a dual PharmD/MBA degree	19 (86)	3 (14)	0
I am satisfied that the dual PharmD/MBA program is meeting my needs/goals	15 (69)	5 (23)	2 (9.1)
I will have more opportunity for increased networking opportunities with a dual degree	17 (78)	4 (18)	1 (4.5)
I would recommend the dual PharmD/MBA program to an entering student	18 (82)	3 (14)	1 (4.5)

Figure 3: Following graduation, how much of the PharmD and MBA would you like to utilize? (mean±SD)

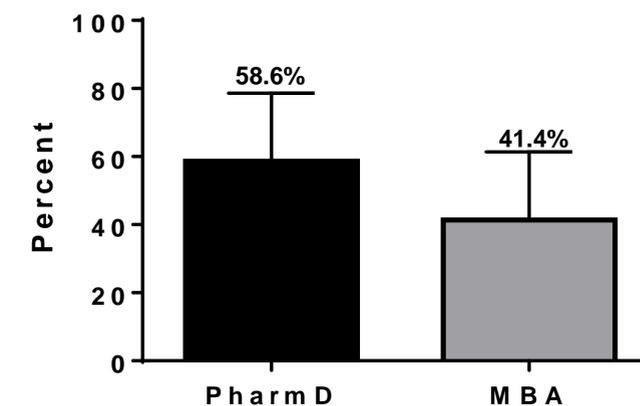
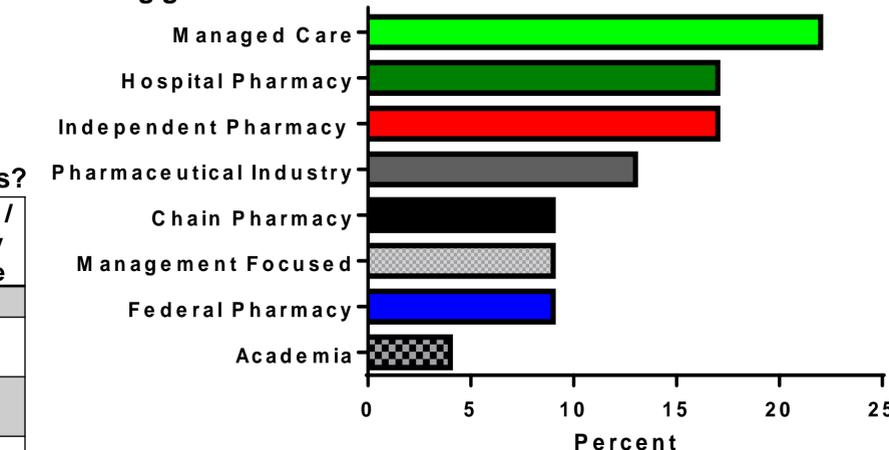


Figure 4. What practice setting do you anticipate working in following graduation?



CONCLUSIONS

- PharmD/MBA candidates value the following when considering to pursue a dual degree: improve employment opportunities, career advancement and job satisfaction.
- The most important characteristics that PharmD/MBA candidates feel in earning a dual degree are: marketability, job market competitiveness, career advancement, and a diverse skill set.
- PharmD/MBA candidates feel earning a dual degree will have a positive return on their investment and the effort to earn a MBA has been worth it.
- Students are aware of the increasing competition for a job following pharmacy school, and are opting for a dual PharmD/MBA degree to enhance their career opportunities

References

2015. American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. April 23. Accessed April 23, 2015. <http://www.aacp.org/about/Pages/Vitalstats.aspx>.