

Attitude of the Students of North Khorasan University of Medical Sciences Towards their Job Prospects in 2013

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Knowledge of students' attitude towards their job prospect may be useful for predicting social behaviours and after the event interpreting to provide the necessary information to the officials to create a job motivation through reviewing the employment and training programs. This study is aimed to determine the attitudes of the students of North Khorasan University of Medical Sciences towards their job prospects and effective factors in 2012–2013. **Methods:** In this cross-sectional descriptive study, 90 students of public health, environmental health and occupational health were studied. The data related to the students' demographic information and their attitude were collected through a valid and reliable attitude questionnaire. The data were analysed through *t*-test, ANOVA and correlation analysis using SPSS 19 software at the significance level of 0.05. **Results:** The students' mean age was 21.4 ± 2.79 and the average scores of students' attitude was 65.8 ± 10.5 . The results of the analysis indicated that there is no significant relationship between the students' attitude with variables of age, the number of terms passed, marital status, employment status and financial situation; further, there is a significant relationship between attitude and the variables of average, gender, orientation and social status ($P < 0.05$). **Discussion and Conclusion:** Despite the prevailing perception in the community, the results of this study demonstrate the positive attitude of health students towards their job prospects. At the same time, low positive attitude towards job prospects among students in some fields of health reveals the necessity of an appropriate policy making by the authorities in future planning to establish a clearer horizon of job prospects for the students.

Key words: Attitude, job prospects, student

INTRODUCTION

Success and achievement in any work requires a positive attitude to it and its future. Integrating cognitions, feelings and readiness to act towards the problem called the individuals' attitude towards that problem.^[1] Nowadays, the study of attitude as the most privileged concept of social psychology has a special place in studies.^[2] Awareness of the attitude can be useful to predict social behaviours and to interpret after its occurrence.^[3]

Acquiring knowledge and getting qualifications in higher education is, now, an integral part of young people aspirations in Iran; although, lack of accurate knowledge of some of the academic fields leads to difficulties in the scientific future and education of some students causing dissatisfaction, worry and uncertainty towards job prospect of their field.^[4] Knowledge of the fields and interest in the field of study will have a high sense of responsibility leading to higher efficiency of individuals in

providing health care system services.^[5] Providing effective strategies to increase students' interest in the field of study, leads to improving the educational system, efficiency of human resources in hospitals, medical centres, health centres and offering optimised health services to society.^[6] Among the health studies, knowing the attitude of students of these fields of study towards their job prospect is of great importance. Causing frustration and lack of job security in graduates of various fields of health, where the application of experts is of great importance can lead to the loss of material and spiritual capital of the country.^[7] Considering the health care providers

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in different fields of study are the frontline providers of health in the community, it is essential to identify these attitudes and the related factors in designing and developing strategic plans of health system and making policies in the field of health applying them to improve the health status of high value health jobs.^[8] Career motivation is considered necessary for useful employment.^[9] If the individual were not interested in his job, continuing employment would be tedious and even impossible. Therefore, an interaction can be considered between job motivation and job success in the future. A positive attitude towards job prospect will bring job motivation, which will lead to job success.^[10] However, concerns about the job prospect are not only attributed to our country. In a study at the University of Minnesota in The USA, the majority of medical students were concerned about the loss of status and income.^[1]

Obviously, conducting national and regional research can be useful for the awareness of health students' attitude towards job prospect to predict social behaviours and interpret, after the fact, so that provide the necessary information to the officials to create a job motivation for students through reviewing an employment and training programs.^[1,10]

Since the university was the origin of developments in various areas of society; and the student, as the key elements of the university in the future, forms the main body of various organisations of the society; therefore, students' attitude to their job prospects and the related factors including gender, age, field of study, etc., as important factor in creating motivation should be examined.^[11,12] Regarding the importance of students' attitude towards job prospect, this study aimed to determine the attitudes of students of North Khorasan University of Medical Sciences towards their job prospects and the effective factors in 2012–2013.

METHODS

This descriptive-analytic cross-sectional study conducted at the Faculty of Health at the Medical University of North Khorasan in the first semester of the academic year of 2013–2014. The study population comprised of the undergraduate students studying in the fields of public health, environmental health and occupational health.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the largest sample size at confidence level of 95% ($\alpha = 0.05$, $Z_{1-\alpha/2} = 1.96$) was estimated to be 90 focusing to achieve the maximum precision $P = 0.5$. The samples selected according to the different academic fields through stratified sampling method with a proportional allocation. The data collection tool in this study was a questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part related to the demographic data such as age and family status and the second part was related to the attitudes towards the job prospect. The questions about the attitude towards job prospect included 33 questions including awareness of job prospect, the amount of interest in their future job, existence of a proper job market, social status, and so on. The answers to these questions classified based on 5-point Likert scale

from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree'. A score of 0–50 indicates a negative attitude of the student and a score of 50–100 indicates the students' positive attitude towards job prospect.

Questionnaire reliability investigated in previous studies by Sadrearhami *et al.*, where Cronbach's alpha was estimated to be 0.8. The panel of experts verified the content validity.^[12] The collected data of the questionnaires were stored in a file in SPSS 19, Inc., Chicago, IL, USA software and statistically analysed. To describe the data, descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation (SD) and percentages were used and research hypothesis tested through Kolmogorov–Smirnov, Kruskal–Wallis, *t*-test, ANOVA and correlation analysis (according to the following normal distribution).

RESULTS

The present study conducted on a sample of 90 people with an average age of 21.4 ± 2.79 . Regarding the frequency of people based on their field of study, 37.8% of individuals are studying public health, 24.4% are studying occupational health, and 37.8% are studying environmental health.

The overall educational average of the students' diploma was 17.54 ± 1.5 . Of all the participants, 64.4% were male, and the rest of the students were female, among which 78.9% were single, and 21.1% were married. In addition, only 5.6% of the students were employed.

Of the students, 28.9% were living in their own house with their parents and 71.1% of the students living in a dormitory.

Regarding the social status, 3.4% had a low social status, 67% had an average status, and 29.5% had a high social status.

The mean attitude scores in students were 65.8 with the SD of 10.5; and considering the range of 50 to 100, the students' attitudes are positive towards their job prospect. The attitude of 15.1% of the students was negative, and 84.9% of the students had a positive attitude towards their job prospects. Used in this study, the details of questionnaire have been shown in Table 1.

The results of the analysis indicated that there is no significant relationship between the students' attitudes towards their job prospects with age (correlation coefficient of -0.052 and $P = 0.647$) and the number of terms passed (correlation coefficient of -0.048 and $P = 0.675$).

In addition, students' attitudes towards their job prospect were not statistically related to their marital status, employment status, financial status and participation in cultural. However, a significant relationship observed between students' attitude towards their job prospect and the average score of the passed terms, gender and social status ($P < 0.05$). More accurate results of this study have been shown in Table 2.

DISCUSSION

Hope and having a positive attitude towards job prospects of the chosen field of study can lead to the academic improvement

Table 1: Distribution of students' attitudes towards their job prospects

Questions	Completely agree (%)	Agree (%)	No comments (%)	Disagree (%)	Completely disagree (%)
I am absolutely aware of my job prospects	17 (21.3)	27 (33.8)	13 (16.3)	19 (23.8)	4 (5)
I am hopeful towards my job prospects, and I struggle that	15 (19)	39 (49.4)	11 (13.9)	9 (11.4)	5 (6.3)
My job is interesting, meaningful and enjoyable in the future	18 (22.5)	32 (40)	20 (25)	6 (7.5)	4 (5)
I know my job requirements, and I know what is expected of me	13 (16.3)	36 (45)	20 (25)	8 (10)	3 (3.8)
The necessary trainings for the successful career in the future are provided	10 (12.5)	25 (31.3)	14 (17.5)	23 (28.8)	8 (10)
There are a great number of trained experts in my field in the society	13 (16.3)	27 (33.8)	17 (21.3)	15 (18.8)	8 (10)
There is a mismatch between the earning of my job and the cost of living	14 (17.5)	18 (22.5)	33 (41.3)	11 (13.8)	4 (5)
There is a proper workplace for my job	7 (8.8)	32 (40)	22 (27.5)	14 (17.5)	5 (6.3)
The society's attitude towards my job is clear and positive	9 (11.4)	22 (27.8)	19 (24.1)	18 (22.8)	11 (13.9)
My job has a good social status	11 (13.8)	34 (42.5)	13 (16.3)	14 (17.5)	8 (10)
I can simply comment on my job prospect	17 (21.3)	26 (32.5)	17 (21.3)	16 (20)	4 (5)
My efforts are effective in my job prospect	40 (50)	34 (42.5)	3 (3.8)	2 (2.5)	1 (1.3)
A reduction in the number of employees over time is one of the reasons to my concern	36 (45)	29 (36.3)	9 (11.3)	6 (7.5)	0 (0)
My job has a good effect on the health of society	33 (41.8)	38 (48.1)	5 (6.3)	2 (2.5)	1 (1.3)
My concerns about job prospect cause my mental concern	19 (24.1)	21 (26.6)	16 (20.3)	16 (20.3)	7 (8.9)
Decision-makers and planners must try to solve the problems of my career	42 (53.2)	28 (35.4)	7 (8.9)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)
If I have the chance of continuing my study in this field, I will have good job prospects	37 (46.8)	29 (36.7)	11 (13.9)	0 (0)	2 (2.5)
I am familiar with the careers I can choose based on my field of study	19 (23.8)	30 (37.5)	17 (21.3)	9 (11.3)	5 (6.3)

Table 2: Distribution of students of the health faculty attitudes towards job prospects according to field of study

Major	Mean and SD of attitude score	Level of significance (P)
Occupational health	67.96±10.64	<0.05
Public health	10.10±10.64	
Environmental health	9.21±58.89	
Gender		
Female	68.76±10.20	<0.05
Male	59.46±8.2	
Social status		
Down	55.95±9.11	<0.05
Average	63.66±8.4	
Top	72.09±12.67	

SD: Standard deviation

of the students or vice versa lead to disenchantment, disappointment and exhaustion of continuing the study. As seen, 15.1% of students have negative attitudes about their job prospects and 84.9% of students have a positive attitude. The results of Rejali *et al.*, studied attitudes of 318 students of School of Health, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences about their job prospects, and 87.4% of students had positive attitude and 12.6% had negative attitude, which is consistent with the results of this study.^[11] However, it is not consistent with the results of the study conducted by Satari *et al.* at Hamadan University of Medical Sciences. The results of the study conducted by Satari *et al.* indicated that nearly 50% of the students were worried about their job prospects, and 40% of medical students had negative attitudes about their job prospects.^[13] The results of a study in 1998 in Urmia showed that about 55% of the students had negative attitude towards their job prospects, and the most important influencing factors

of this negative attitude include job status, society's attitude towards the job, job and interest in job. Another result of this research was 86% of the students were worried about their job prospects. This inconsistency in results attributed to measures taken by the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education in the interval between the executions of Satari *et al.* and the present study; measures such as creating more opportunities to continue higher education and increasing employment capacity in health fields, which can affect the attitude of the students towards their job prospects.

As having enough motivation to serve community depends on creating the right attitude at the time of study, besides having a good and positive attitude towards the field of study leads to better job prospects, this truth observed in the studies of Sharifi and Taheri^[2] and Rejali *et al.*^[11] In addition, in the two mentioned studies, there was a significant relationship between students' attitudes towards their field of study and their attitude towards their job prospect.^[2,11] Therefore, professors and experts in this field recommended to plan, in order to increase students' job motivation and try to make a positive attitude in students of health field towards their field of study and provide advice on planning students' career.

In the present study, there was a significant relationship between variables of gender, field of study, social status, and average score of the passed terms with an attitude towards job prospect so that female students had higher scores of attitude than male confirming the fact that men are more concerned than women about job prospect. Since in our country, men still have higher responsibilities than women to the family, these findings seem logical.

Moreover, the students' mean scores of attitudes were significantly higher in the fields of public, occupational and

environmental health, respectively. Research results showed no significant difference between variables of age, number of passed terms, marital status and employment status of students and cultural activities of the students with their attitude towards their job prospect.

In the study of Rejali *et al.*, there was a significant relationship between the attitudes towards the job prospect and membership in cultural centres.^[11] Inconsistency of the present study, results and Rejali *et al.* may be due to differences between the studied universities respecting to resources allocated to the students and wider field for activity and participation of the students in university activities.

This study investigated the most important factors in health students' positive and negative attitude towards their job prospect.

Among the main factors of positive attitude, good impact on public health and field's being interesting, meaningful and enjoyable can be referred which is consistent with studies of Rejali *et al.*^[1,11]

CONCLUSION

According to the studies conducted on students' attitudes towards job prospect, in recent years, students' attitudes to job prospects were more positive than in previous studies demonstrating that the current planning of the authorities and ministry officials to attract more manpower in the field of health influenced students' attitudes. Despite the increase in the students' attitude scores of their profession future, some students yet concerned for this issue. The issue reduced by reforming educational system, providing a situation for continuing education for health professionals, paying more attention to create favourable conditions for employment of graduates in this field and recruiting young people, performing standard evaluations and planning for students' future prospect. Given that in the present study, only undergraduate students of three health fields were investigated, it suggested that in future studies, discontinuous undergraduate and graduate students of health field be also investigated.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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