EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG STUDENTS OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

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Introduction: One of the indicators of predicting success and promotion in any job or specialty is academic achievement. Moreover, descriptive information about the status quo is essential for making constructive changes. The aim of this study was to evaluate academic achievement among students of Medical Sciences.

Methodology: This was a cross-sectional analytical study examining academic achievement among a total of 200 students randomly during 2015. Data were collected through a demographic questionnaire covering: age, sex, faculty and parental education. Finally, the data were analyzed through SPSS 19, descriptive statistics, independent t-test and ANOVA.

Findings: The average age of participants in this study was 22.74±2.22 and the GPA was 15.82 ±1.5. There was a significant correlation between gender and academic achievement (P=0.002). Moreover, women had achievement attainment higher than average. The relationship between academic achievement was significant with parental education (P<0.001) and maternal education (P<0.001). The relationship between age and faculty was not significant with academic achievement (P>0.05).

Conclusions: The results can somewhat anticipate achieving educational goals. The results of this study showed that medical students’ achievement was not desirable. Hence, it is crucial that authorities take appropriate actions.

Keywords: students, medical sciences, academic achievement.
Introduction

Humans acquire the necessary motivation for the fulfillment of their goals, needs, or instinct. As for university students, academic achievement is of special importance [1]. Improving the quality of education and investment on human resources training are factors considered important in the inclusive development of any nation. In this regard, students’ progress is one of the main objectives of curriculum, because students gain through academic achievement a position to find their talents and abilities to achieve the goals of higher education and create successful social conditions [2]. At the present era, education generally will form an important part of every person’s life. In addition, the quality and quantity of education play an important role in the future of students. Accordingly, psychologists have for nearly a century been making efforts to identify factors predicting academic achievement [3,4]. That is because academic failure have a significant impact on the fate of the individual imposing a heavy cost on the family and society [5]. In Iran, tens of million rials of national budget is squandered yearly due to this very important issue within the education system [6]. According to previous studies, many students are deterred from pursuing their education each year or are desperate to pursue their education [7].

According to the results a study demonstrated that about 12% of medical students experience probation at least one term throughout their education. Such failure causes a great deal of damage to the society, students and families [8]. The results of a study showed that nearly a quarter of the young population are at risk of academic failure [9].

For students, Grade Point Average (GPA) represents their academic abilities to engage into the world of jobs, employment and higher education. Many factors such as cultural familiarity with the education system, language skills, social resources and the economy may affect academic achievement [10]. In a sense, academic achievement is the attainment of predetermined educational goals expected through learning endeavors [11]. Various criteria are considered for academic achievement, the most famous of which is GPA [12].

One of the indicators of predicting success and promotion in any job or specialty is academic achievement [13]. Moreover, descriptive information about the status quo is essential for making constructive changes [7]. Considering the importance of academic achievement and the insignificant information among students of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, it was decided that a study should be carried out to assess academic achievement among students of Medical Sciences during 2015.
Materials and Methods

This was cross-sectional analytical study examining academic achievement among students during 2015. Random sampling was conducted on 200 students. Data were collected through a demographic questionnaire covering: age, sex, faculty and parental education. Inclusion criteria involved student participants who passed at least one semester. That was because the measure for academic achievement of students was GPA. To collect data, the researcher visited students during breaks between classes. Students were first briefed about the objectives. They then expressed their consent verbally, stressing within the questionnaire, “Your participation in this project shall be deemed upon your informed consent. The information in this questionnaire is confidential and shall not pose any danger to you“. After explaining the purpose of the scheme, the questionnaire was handed to students willing to participate in the study. Finally, the data were analyzed through SPSS 19, descriptive statistics, independent t-test, Pearson correlation and ANOVA.

Findings:

The average age of participants in this study was 22.74±2.22, and GPA was 15.82±1.5. Moreover, there were 149 women (74.5%) and 51 men (25.5%). The paternal education of 73 students (35.5%) was below diploma, 45 students (22.5%) was diploma, 23 students (11.5%) was college associate and 59 students (29.5%) was bachelors and postgraduate. The maternal education of 119 students (59.5%) was below diploma, 39 students (19.5%) was diploma, 27 students (13.5%) was college associate and 15 students (7.5%) was bachelors and postgraduate. There was a significant correlation between gender and academic achievement (P=0.002). Moreover, women had achievement attainment higher than average. The relationship between academic achievement was significant with parental education (P<0.001) and maternal education (P<0.001). The relationship between age and faculty was not significant with academic achievement (P>0.05).

Table 1: Relationship between academic achievement and faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>15.7792</td>
<td>1.55346</td>
<td>13.50</td>
<td>18.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.1610</td>
<td>1.25732</td>
<td>14.16</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical sciences</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15.6753</td>
<td>1.41513</td>
<td>12.70</td>
<td>18.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentistry</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.4671</td>
<td>1.58119</td>
<td>13.30</td>
<td>18.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paramedics</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15.5389</td>
<td>1.68617</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>18.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15.7728</td>
<td>1.33337</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>15.8226</td>
<td>1.50278</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion:
The aim of this descriptive study was investigating academic achievement among Students of Medical Sciences. Academic achievement is an attainment of educational goals during all semesters. Hence, assessment of academic achievement can determine the quantitative values of academic achievement, thereby determine to some extent how educational goals have been realized [14].

The results of this study showed that medical students of medical sciences’ achievement was not desirable. Academic performance in any society represents success of higher education in attaining goals and fulfilling individual needs. Learning styles have impact on students’ academic achievement and educational performance [15]. Hence, education system can be efficient when the learners’ academic progress is in good condition[16]. Thus, academic achievement was not desirable according to the results of this study. It is therefore suggested that the authorities and managers assess the situation and find appropriate solutions to improve the current situation. After all, the success and progress in education could bring about fulfillment and happiness among student. On the other hand, a student who has an appropriate level of happiness and mental peace and prosperity will more likely obtain better results in education and academic activities[17].

One contributing factor to academic achievement noted in the previous studies is that individuals with high achievement motivation prefer tasks and opportunities that can affect them and be completed successfully. However, those with low achievement motivation are not sure of themselves leading to failure[18,19].

On the other hand, prospective individuals with confidence and diligence tend to achieve greater progress in various fields, since they have certain goals and strive to achieve them(20). Moreover, self-efficacy affects academic achievement because students with higher grade point average naturally have more self-confidence, which in turn can play a significant role in the educational development[21].

The results of a study in Iran, showed that social networking have affect on educational performance and then academic achievement[22]. In their studies, Chen et al. (2009) examined English language students concluding that students with higher self-efficacy tend to showed better academic achievement[21].

In this study, there was a significant relationship between gender and academic achievement. Moreover, women had higher GPA than men, which was consistent with other studies [23]. Furthermore, there was a significant correlation observed between educational levels of parents and academic achievement. The motivation grows in children when they observe in their families the kind of behavior and interaction, lifestyle, health, working conditions and so on arising from
parental education. In such circumstances, it seems children have a good academic progress and are likely to have more of leisure, education, welfare and health facilities, which can be the reason for their academic achievement. However, the results from this study and other studies based on self-reporting are not completely reliable. It is suggested that other more reliable methods be considered[24]. Academic achievement can enhance the educational performance [25]. The results of a study cleared that learning style may have impact on the academic performance [26].

Assessment of academic achievement involving GPA was one major limitation experienced by all the studies dealing with academic performance and progress. Progress should be regarded so limited since it should be noted that if schools and classrooms are assessed based on how gain skills and knowledge, it may lead to failure of other educational goals[21].

Conclusions:
The results can somewhat anticipate achieving educational goals. The results of this study showed that medical students’ achievement was not desirable. Hence, it is crucial that authorities take appropriate actions.

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