

A Study to Assess the Employment Ambitions of Graduating Students from College of Applied Medical Sciences, King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract—Introduction: Students make plans for their career and are keen in exploring options of employment in those carriers. They make their employment choice based on their desires and preferences. This study aims to identify if students of King Saud Bin Abdulaziz for Health Sciences, College of Applied Medical Sciences after obtaining appropriate education prefer to work as clinicians, university faculty, or full-time researchers. There are limited studies in Saudi Arabia exploring the university student's employment choices and preferences. This study would help employers to build the required job positions and prevent misleading employers from opening undesired positions in the job market. Methodology: The study included 394 students from third and fourth years both male and female among the eighth programs of college of applied medical sciences, King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences (KSAU-HS), Riyadh campus. A prospective quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted; data were collected by distributing a seven item questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS. Results: Among the participants, 358 (90.9%) of them chose one of the three listed career choices, 263 (66.8%) decided to work as hospital staff after their education, 75 students (19.0%) chose to work as a faculty member in a university after obtaining appropriate degree, 20 students (5.1%) preferred to work as full-time researcher after obtaining appropriate degree, the remaining 36 students (9.1%) had different career goals, such as obtaining a master degree after graduating, to obtain a bachelor of medicine and bachelor in surgery degree, and working in the private sector. The most recurrent reason behind the participants' choice was "career goal", where 276 (70.1%) chose it as a reason. Conclusion: The findings of the study showed that most student's preferred to work in hospitals as clinicians, followed by choice of working as a faculty in a university, the least choice was to be working as full-time researchers.

Keywords—College of Applied Medical Sciences, employment ambitions, graduating students, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences.

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I. INTRODUCTION

PEOPLE think about their future and make plans for their forthcoming career. They build their career preferences on their desires and life experiences. Factors that affect their choices may include personal, social, and financial. College education helps students identify their preferences which lead to their career choices. After applied medical education, students can choose their carrier either to work as a faculty in the university, as a clinician in the hospital or as a full-time researcher affiliated to a research institute.

In a survey conducted amongst medical students in Malaysia to identify students' career choices, students from both the genders had the first choice of work as a clinical consultant in the hospital, close to their hometowns [1]. In another study, entry level medical students were asked to identify career preferences and the factors related to family medicine as a first-choice career option. This research could provide evidence of a model that is reliable and valid, that predicts choice of a carrier [2]. A nationwide survey in Germany brought to light that the coming generations of physicians anticipate working in clinical settings in the future, and they are less likely to work in areas of primary care and in rural locations [3].

Large populations of medical students in their sixth year of training were utilized to detect the elements of specialty choice. The researchers concluded that interplay among several factors contributes to decision making [4]. In one of the researches carried out in Germany, investigators were able to identify the need for medical schools to put more emphasis on career advice for undergraduates, beginning at an early stage in medical training. This study also brought forth facts that, future doctors choose specialties with respect to awareness about the cases, personal aspects such as individual preferences, and a specialization that enables coping with the professional and personal life [5]. When specialty choices of graduating medical students were examined, perceptions of controllable lifestyle accounts were the determinant of most of the variability in recent changing patterns of career choice [6].

Student doctors indicated that elements that influence their choice would include pay, quality of the institution, and administrative support comparative to other features towards career choice [7]. A survey conducted among medical students in Nepal showed that most of the students were in favor of

working in rural areas after graduation, which displayed that the place that student lived can be associated to the choice of job [8]. A qualitative research carried out among nursing students acknowledged that educators must change their mindset of students not to concentrate only on becoming a civil servant; instead the government should provide support for further education [9].

Another study tried to enquire about the final year medical student's career intentions and the impact of origin and gender on the location of their proposed future practice. The outcomes showed that women were less likely than men to practice in rural areas [10]. It was found that students and interns of King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah detected personal interest as the most important factor in choosing a specialty followed by positive experience during undergraduate elective rotation [11].

Scarcity of such studies, relevance of the subject and its profound implications on the job market, prompted us to undertake this research in identifying the career choices of graduating students.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at KSAU-HS College of Applied Medical Sciences, Riyadh campus. A sample size of 394 students participated in the survey, which included both males and females from the 3rd year and 4th year of their professional education. Students from other Colleges of the University and other branches (Alhasa & Jeddah) of KSAU-HS were excluded. King Abdullah International Medical Research Center (KAIMRC), institutional review board provided the ethical clearance and approval for the study.

A prospective, quantitative, cross-sectional design was implemented. Convenient sampling was used for selecting the subjects. After obtaining consent, hard copies of the questionnaire were circulated among the 3rd year and 4th year students.

The questionnaire had seven items, and was validated by 3 experts who were of the academic rank of Professor or Associate Professor. The data collected were entered in Microsoft Excel and exported into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for statistical analysis. Data were explained using descriptive and analytical statistics using percentage and frequency.

III. RESULTS

A total of 394 respondents participated in the survey. The 3rd year and 4th year male students accounted for 213 (54.1%). The 3rd year and 4th year female students were 181 subjects (45.9%) which shows that a greater number of male subjects participated in the study than the female as displayed in (Fig. 1).

According to the academic level of participants the number of students from the 3rd year were 199 (51%) and from the 4th year 195 (49%) students as depicted in (Fig. 2).

Fig. 3 depicts the distribution of students from all the seven academic programs in the college of applied medical sciences

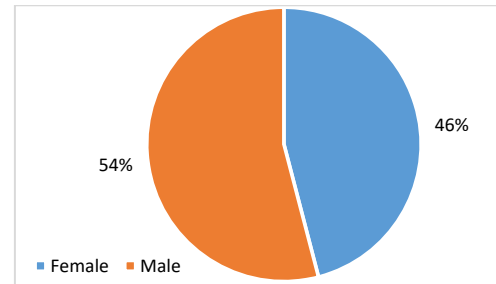


Fig. 1 Gender distribution of subjects

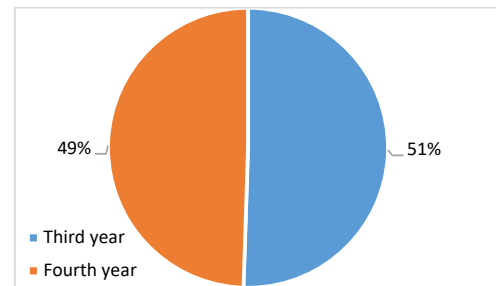


Fig. 2 Academic level of subjects

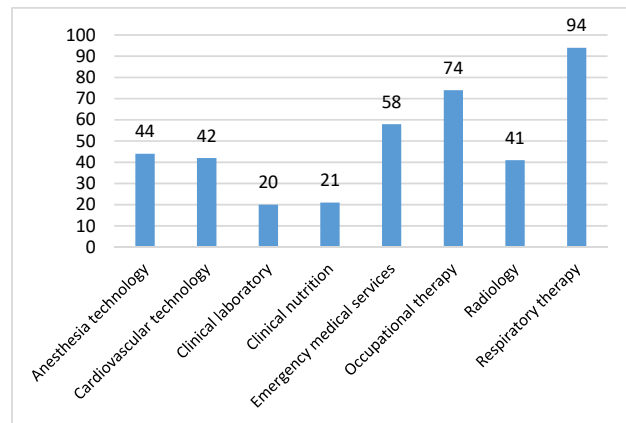


Fig. 3 Number of subjects per academic program

- Question 1. Have you made your decision about your career choice? 306 students answered that they have decided their career choice, while 73 students had not decided on their carriers and 15 students have not even thought about it (Fig. 4).
- Question 2. How would you rank your level of motivation to achieve your ambition? (Fig. 5). Majority of the students ranked their level of motivation for achieving their ambition as moderately motivated, while 160 were highly motivated, and 25 were not motivated.

The question regarding the primary objective of this research showed that 263 (66.8%) students both male and female chose to work as hospital staff after graduation, 75 (19%) wanted to work as a faculty member (after obtaining appropriate degree) and 20 (5.1%) want to work as a full time researcher (after obtaining appropriate degree) (Fig. 6). The

remaining 36 (9.1%) students had different career goals, such as obtaining a master's degree after graduating, to obtain a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor's in surgery degree and working in the private sector. The most recurrent reason behind the participants' choice was "career goal", where 276 (70.1%) chose it as a reason.

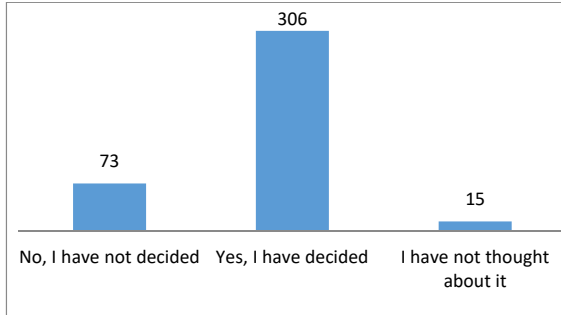


Fig. 4 Q1. Have you made your decision about your career choice?

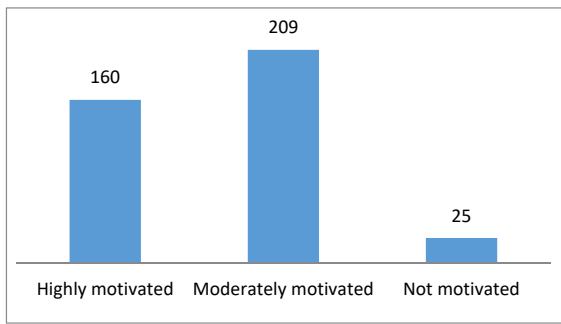


Fig. 5 Q2. How would you rank your level of motivation to achieve your ambition?

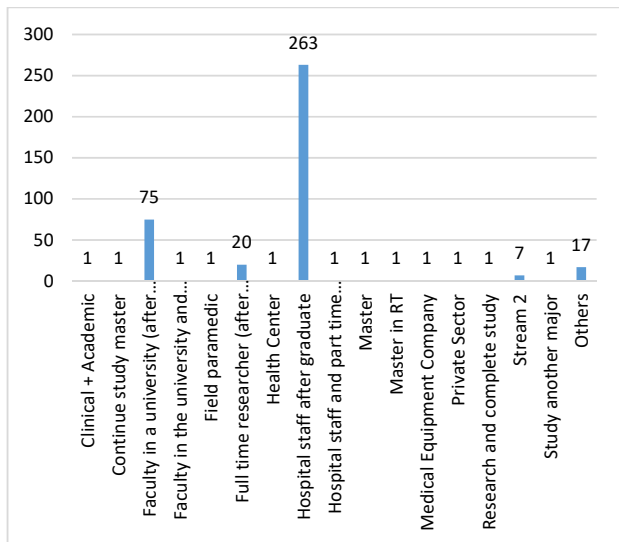


Fig. 6 Employment ambitions of Students in the 3 major categories

IV. DISCUSSION

Our study intended to evaluate the employment choices of

students of KSAU-HS, College of Applied Medical Sciences. The study included 394 students. 358 (90.9%) of them chose one of the three listed career choices. Among those 263 students, 66.8% decided to work as hospital staff after graduation. Other 75 students (19.0%) expressed their wish to work as a faculty member in a university after obtaining appropriate degree. Another 20 students (5.1%) wanted to work as a full-time researcher after obtaining appropriate degree. The remaining 36 students (9.1%) students had different career goals, such as obtaining a master's degree after graduating, joining stream 2, or working in the private sector. The most recurrent reason behind the participants' choice was "career goal", where 276 (70.1%) chose it as a reason.

Similar results were observed in another study conducted in Saudi Arabia's pharmacy sector. Hospital pharmacies were the preferred area of practice (n=212: 51.6%), followed by academia and research centers (n=102: 24.8%), while the pharmaceutical industry and community pharmacies were the least preferred, at 7% and 2%, respectively [12]. Another study on the impact of graduates' job preferences on the current job market identified that, the majority of applicants applied to both academic and nonacademic positions (60.9%), with top job type choice being equally split [13].

Strengths of this study include that this is one of the few studies of its kind carried out in Riyadh. The study included a wide range of professions from College of Applied Medical Sciences and it included both the genders. Also a large sample size was utilized. The limitation of our study was that we were unable to involve the internship students. These findings illustrate the employment ambitions of graduating students of college of applied medical sciences students at KSAU-HS. We also aim to draw the attention of the government, ministry of health, the private sector hospitals, and universities to the graduate students' choices to ensure a balance between supply and demand and effective clinical workforce planning, which is obligatory. Future research could focus on graduate's choice of employment in urban or rural areas also taking into account the participation of internship students. This study can be undertaken in the Alhasa & Jeddah campus of KSAU-HS in order to find out if there are similar choices expressed.

V. CONCLUSION

This study exemplifies that a majority of graduating students of College of Applied Medical Sciences of KSAU-HS, Riyadh Campus prefer to work as hospital staff, a moderate number of students would join as faculty after attaining an appropriate degree and a few students would choose to work as full time researchers after attaining a suitable education.

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