

Perception Of Health Extension Students Towards National Competency Assessment And Factor Associated Among Harar Health Science College Students, Harari Region, Ethiopia

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Abstract – Background: - The national Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) strategy was developed and replaces an older version adopted in 2002. The strategy, with the objective of creating a competent, motivated, adaptable and innovative workforce in Ethiopia

Method: A cross-sectional study was conducted to assess perception and factors associated with national competency assessment at Harar Health Science College in 2020; The study population was all level IV Health Extension Students who attended Harar Health Science College. Data was collected using structured interview questionnaires Appropriateness of the questionnaires was checked by conducting pretest on 5% of the sample. Data collection was facilitated by trained data collectors. The collected data was entered, cleaned by EPI-info and analyzed using SPSS version 20. Logistic regression was used to assess the association between the dependent and independent variables. $P < 0.05$ considered statistically significant.

Result: This study showed that there was association between students' ability of understanding English language and the students' Perception of National Competency Assessment with $p < 0.05$.

The likelihood of having positive perception among students who could understand lessons with the English language were 11.5 fold more reported as compared to those who could not understand (AOR = 11.54, 95% CI: 2.99, 19.16)

Conclusion and Recommendation:- This study concludes that there is association between students' ability of understanding English language and the students' Perception of National Competency Assessment. Therefore, the colleges give due attention to English language

Keywords – Perception , health extension, National Competency, Harar, Ethiopia

I. INTRODUCTION

The national Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) strategy was developed and replaces an older version adopted in 2002. The strategy, with the objective of creating a competent, motivated, adaptable and innovative workforce in Ethiopia, [Krishnan P, Shaorshadze I. (2013), Ministry of Education of Ethiopia . National Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy(2008).]The Health Extension Program (HEP) was launched by the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) in 2003. it incorporates a package of basic and essential promotive, preventive, and curative health services according to the principles of primary health care . Its goal is to improve health outcomes in Ethiopia by targeting households and communities.[Assefa, Y. et al (2019) , Workie, N.W., & Ramana, G. (2013) , Alebachew A, Waddington C.(2015)]

A competency is defined as “A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.” [Shippman, J.S., et al (2000). It tends to be either general or technical. General competencies reflect the cognitive and social capabilities (e.g., problem solving, interpersonal skills) required for job performance in a variety of occupations. [US Office of Personnel Management, Assessment Decision Guide. (1995)]. It is a combination of several factors like motives, traits, self-concepts, attitudes or values, skills, and abilities. All of them can differentiate superior performers from average performers. Since competencies take a composite view of an employee’s ability to perform, they go beyond mere job knowledge. This becomes particularly useful when the definition of jobs itself changes under external competitive pressures.[Anitha N, Thenmozhi(2011).]

At the end of the undergraduate period, health students are expected to achieve the maximum level of clinical competence after receiving necessary and adequate theoretical and practical instructions. [Belanger A. C. (1999), Amhara RegionCenter of Competency COC: BahirDar; (2006)]

The students’ academic performance plays a vital role in creating qualified manpower for the country that is responsible for the country’s economic and social development. Student’s academic performance is affected by the assessment tool, psychological, socioeconomic, personal and environmental factors.[Singh, S., Malik, S., & Singh, P. (2016) , Farooq, M.S., Chaudhry, A., Shafiq, M., & Berhanu, G. (2012).]

However, studies done on health extension students are very limited. Therefore, this study was aimed to assess Perception of National Competency Assessment and factor associated among health extension students in Harar Health Science College, Harari region, Ethiopia

II. METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted to assess perception and factors associated with national competency assessment at Harar Health Science College in 2020.

Harar health science college Harar health Science College was established as Harar School of health assistant in 1960E.C with the ultimate goal of training health assistant for the country and since then plays, a pivotal role in producing qualified health workers in the history of Ethiopian health care delivery system. In 1988E.C the school transformed to Harar Health Science College.

Currently the college provides education and training in nine fields from level I to level V TVET programs and in 5 BSc programs to solve health and health related problems of the country. The study population was all level IV HESs who attended Harar Health Science College. Data was collected using structured interview questionnaires prepared in English language and then translated to the national language (Amharic & Afan Oromo).Appropriateness of the questionnaires was checked by conducting pretest on 5% of the sample. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Harar Health Sciences College Research Review Ethical Committee (Ref.no.HHSC-171/2020). The aim of the study was briefly explained for the study participants. Data collection was facilitated by trained data collectors. Permission to conduct this study was obtainedfrom Harar Health Sciences College Research Committee. Data were collected after securing informed consent. The collected data were entered, cleaned by EPI-info and analyzed using SPSS version 20. Logistic regression was used to assess the association between the dependent and independent variables. All factors with $P < 0.05$ in bi-variate logistic regression analysis were further entered into multi-variate model to control confounding effects. Adjusted odds ratio (OR) with 95% confidence interval (CI) and P values was calculated. $P < 0.05$ considered statistically significant.

III. RESULT

In all, 227 health extension students participated in the study with a response rate of 100 %, the majority of the study participants 98(43.1%) were between 18-24 years of age with a mean age of 19.3 ± 3.2 years).More than half 116 (51.10%) of the students were not married. Among a total of 111 participants who said they are married 97 of them had children and only 3 of them had greater than 5 children in number. Regarding their English language understanding ability majority 135 (59.47%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio demographic characteristics of the study participants

Variables		Frequency	Percent
Age	18-24	98	43.17%
	25-34	83	36.56%
	>35	46	20.26%
Marital status	Married	111	48.90%
	Not Married	116	51.10%
Do you have children	Yes	97	87.39%
	No	14	12.61%
How many children do you have	1-2	62	63.92%
	3-4	32	32.99%
	≥5	3	3.09%
English language understanding ability	V. Good	14	6.17%
	Good	78	34.36%
	Poor	135	59.47%

Professional Satisfaction

Among a total of 227 participants; more than half (59.47%) of the participants complained that they are not interested in their profession. Among a total of 135 participants who are not interested in the profession 71(52.59%) complained that due to low salary and only 6(4.44%) due to less chance of future career .majority of participants 135 (59.47%) do not believe that National Competency Assessment Is important for Health extension students and among ninety-two respondents who said National Competency Assessment Is important only quarter of them rate it as it is very important.Among 227 candidates who were interviewed, the reasonsdescribed by the candidates for failure in National Competency Assessment, were fear during assessment, Skill gap to demonstrate and Language barrier with a percentage of 87.67%, 77.53% and 59.47% respectively.Among 227 candidates who were interviewed, the Conditions needed to pass for the National Competency Assessment described by the candidates were studying hard, re- demonstrating and having confidence with a percentage of 100%, 100% and 87.67% respectively.(Table 2)

Table 2. Perception of the participants towards competency,

Variables		frequency	Percent
Interest in Health Extension profession	Yes	92	40.53%
	No	135	59.47%
Reasons for being uninterested	Low salary	71	52.59%
	Community not respect the profession	31	22.96%
	Less chance of upgrading	6	4.44%

	The profession is boring	27	20.00%
Study hour per day	<2 hrs	135	59.47
	>2 hrs	92	40.53
Re-demonstration hour per day	<2 hrs	227	100
	>2 hrs	-	-
Attended tutorial class	Yes	-	-
	No	227	100
Do you believe that National Competency Assessment Is important for Health extension students	Yes	92	40.53%
	No	135	59.47%
How do you rate importance of National Competency Assessment	Very important	21	9.25%
	important	71	31.28%
	Not important	-	#VALUE!
	Not important at all	135	59.47%
Do you know your unit of Competency	Yes	175	77.09%
	No	52	22.91%
In your opinion what is the reasons for failure in National Competency Assessment	Fear of National Competency Assessment	199	87.67%
	Knowledge gap	107	47.14%
	Skill gap to demonstrate	176	77.53%
	Assessor's related	77	33.92%
	Language barrier	135	59.47%
In your opinion what conditions needed to pass the National Competency Assessment	Paying attention for class	109	48.02%
	Hard reading	227	100.00%
	Getting tutors		0.00%
	Re-demonstration	227	100.00%
	Confidence	199	87.67%
	Support presence of National	135	59.47%

	Competency Assessment		
How do you perceive yourself	Competent	92	40.53%
	Not competent	117	51.54%
	I do not know	18	7.93%

Factors associated with students' perception towards National Competency Assessment

In bivariate logistic regression analysis, age, having children, students' ability of understanding English language, students who know unit of competency and students who perceive themselves as competent were statistically significant associated with students' Perception towards National Competency Assessment.

Variables that showed statistically significant associations with students' Perception of National Competency Assessment in the bivariate analysis were entered into a multivariate logistic regression model to see the independent effect of each potential determinant while controlling for possible confounders.

After controlling the effect of other predictor variables, the multivariate logistic regression analysis showed statistically significant association between students' ability of understanding English language and the students' Perception of National Competency Assessment with $p < 0.05$.

The likelihood of having positive perception among students who could understand lessons with the English language were 11.5 fold more reported as compared to those who could not understand (AOR = 11.54, 95% CI: 2.99, 19.16).

IV. DISCUSSION

In this study about 40.53% of the study participants perceived themselves as competent and this finding is higher as compared with the finding of 25.5% by a cross-sectional study done among undergraduate health science students in Hawassa University [Fikre, Rekiku. (2016)] and a study done on midwifery students at the point of graduation in Ethiopia with the prevalence of 31.6%. [Endekie, et al (2015)] In contrast, it is lower as compared with the perceived prevalence of 48.7% in a cross-sectional study done at the University of Gondar. [Biftu, B.B., et al. (2016)] The difference might be due to dissimilarities between study subjects across departments. That means this study considered only health extension students (who are all females), so this comparison takes place due to lack of similar study subjects to compare.

Students who had an ability to understand the English language had Positive perception as compared to those who had less language ability. This result is in line with the studies done in the United States [Martirosyan, N.M., Hwang, E., & Wanjohi, R. (2015)] and Saudi Arabia [Kaliyadan, F., et al (2015)], in which students who had reported high levels of self-perceived English language proficiency had high levels of performance. Similarly a studies done in Nigeria [Ozowuba, G.U. (2018), Rafiu, J., & Nwalo, K.I. (2016)] and study done at the Be nadir University, Malaysia which found that communication skill was promote academic performance. [Dhaqane, M.K., & Afrah, N.A. (2016)]. It is clear that students those who had good English language understanding can understand points being discussed by the teacher in class and read and understand what is written in different lecture notes and references. Also communication skills matter to understand and answer questions asked during the period of the assessment. So students who understand the courses will have a positive perception towards competency examination.

V. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted using self-reported and it was dependent on the honest answer of the participants, there are no many researches done in the topic. It was very difficult to discuss with similar researches done on the same topic. Despite these limitations, the findings provide valuable information about Perception of health extension students towards National Competency.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study concludes that there is association between students' ability of understanding English language and the students' Perception of National Competency Assessment. Therefore, the colleges give due attention to English language because it will use

for communication and matter to understand, asking question and answering questions asked. So it will create positive perception towards competency examination. The government and other stakeholders should give priority to create awareness towards the benefit of Health Extension Program at lower levels. Furthermore to probe the deep feeling of the students' caring out of qualitative research is essential

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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