

# Does Health Professional Students' Personality Traits Influence Their Attitudes, Perceptions and Practices towards research at Northern Border University (NBU) Arar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Research has an essential role in all academic protocols. A declining trend in the number of Health Sciences Professionals undertaking research has been reported. The possible reasons for this decline may include less financial benefits, academic pressures, and less research exposure in the beginning particularly before the career paths. It is vital to analyze the interest and awareness of research benefits during undergraduate years.

**Aim:** To evaluate the health professional students' experience and attitude about the research and to analyze their perceptions, attitude and hurdles to research during their undergraduate study.

**Methods:** During the study period, the research questionnaire has been distributed among the one hundred willing participants from the health professional students of NBU. The research questionnaire included the research attitude scale and personality inventory scale.

**Results:** The analysis of the collected data by using Research Attitude Scale reflected that majority of students (72%) agreed the reason for doing research work was that they were interested in the topic and 70% of the students agreed that it helped them to develop independent thinking. A significant number (68 %) of the students think that research activities provided them a better chance for more learning. 26% of the students felt that doing research does not make much difference. The data collected by using Personality Trait Scale showed that 73% of students agreed that they have good relationship with their neighbor and 71% students mentioned that they boldly accept the challenges of bad days. 64% of students agreed that seeing a new object, they became curious to know about it and 60% of the students stated that they like those people who deliver their judgment immediately. 84% of students stated that even small failure produces strong discouragement in them.

**Conclusions:** The students' personality traits significantly affect their attitude and practices towards the research. It is very important for them to be involved in research during their undergraduate study and they should have appropriate concepts of quality research.

**Keywords:** Personality traits, Research barriers, Research perceptions

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## INTRODUCTION

Research is an essential measure of all academic disciplines. In mandate to yield exemplar health professionals equipped with scientific facts for improved health care, universities need to make sure that students cultivate the expertise in research related to health professionals. Currently there has been a significant awareness to encourage Health Professional students with early research experience hence research component has been included within the University curriculum. There is also a necessity to evaluate students' perceptions and attitude towards research, facilitating to create awareness and to make recommendations and postulate keys to any issues obvious within the research setting. There has been a recognizable falloff in the number of students in health professional field who are interested in undertaking research. Assumed reasons for the drop in interest in doing research among students comprise less financial incentive, family, and insufficient knowledge regarding research before career directions are defined. There are also certain barriers in the smooth conduction of research such as problems in design and development, project approval along with administrative and managerial problems<sup>1</sup>.

Studies revealed that the student are not aware even about the research which is being carried out in their

institution and there is perception among the students regarding research is that the research involvement may limit their interaction with patients<sup>2</sup>. The other important barriers in the involvement of students in the research are time constraints and lack of academic and financial advantages<sup>3</sup>.

While framing an undergraduate curriculum for health professional training, it is vital to include topics to create an interest and awareness of research benefits during undergraduate years of health professional students. There is an essential need to inquire about the attitude towards research during undergraduate years. The main aim and objectives of the present study is to evaluate the personality traits of health professional students of NBU and their correlation with the students' perceptions and attitude about the research and identification of any obstacles for the students in their involvement in the research.

## MATERIAL & METHODS

Among the NBU health professional students, one hundred willing participants have been enrolled in this study and their confidentiality have been ensured. Research Attitude Scale authored by Dr Y.Bhutia & Ms Preslee D. Kharsati and Personality Trait Scale (Differential Personality Inventory) authored by Prof Arun K Singh have been used

to gather the data regarding our research questions. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the collected data. This is a cross-sectional descriptive survey and convenience sampling technique has been chosen to select the participants. Undergraduate Health Professional students of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> year and 5<sup>th</sup> year students who were repeating the courses and those who did not give consent have been excluded from the study. A pilot study was done for validation of questionnaire for achieving the stated objectives. Descriptive analysis of the data was done by SPSS.

## RESULTS

Data collected using Research Attitude Scale authored by Dr Y.Bhutia & Ms Preslee D.Kharsati reflected that majority of students (72%) agreed the reason for doing research work was that they were interested in the topic and 70% of the students agreed that it helped them to develop independent thinking. A significant number (68 %) of the students think that research activities provided them a better chance for more learning. 62% of the students

strongly agreed that research is the key factor in contribution to further knowledge. 43% of the students agreed that they enjoy doing research. 37% students felt that the research is time consuming which is frustrating. The results are shown in table 1.

Data collected by using Personality Trait Scale (Differential Personality Inventory) authored by Prof Arun km Singh showed that 73% of students agreed that they have good relationship with their neighbor and 71% students mentioned that they boldly accept the challenges of bad days. 64% of students agreed that seeing a new object, they became curious to know about it and 60% of the students stated that they like those people who deliver their judgment immediately. 54 % students agreed that they feel difficulty about taking a decision regarding establishing a friendship. 44% of students mentioned that they can easily decide regarding the priority when several works are to be done at the same time. 43% of students stated that despite loud noise, they are able to read with concentration. The results are depicted in table 2.

Table 1: The results of Research Attitude Scale authored by Dr Y.Bhutia & Ms Preslee D.Kharsati

S.No	Questionnaire statements: Research Attitude Scale	%age of students
1.	Research provided a better chance for more learning	68 %
2.	Getting involved in research help them to develop independent thinking	70%.
3.	Research work excited them	65%
4.	They were performing research work due to their interest in the research topic	72%
5.	Felt that career in research is not rewarded financially and the researcher does not enjoy a good status in the society.	34%
6.	Recommendations made in any research are not realistic.	24%
7.	Research is irrelevant to their life.	36%
8.	in all disciplines, the research plays a very important in improvement and advancement of knowledge	62%
9.	They will enjoy a job which has some component of research in it.	43%
10.	Their research work will provide the base for another research work.	37 %
11.	Research work is repetitive in nature.	47%
12.	Research work in University is taken for the sake of a degree.	52%
13.	Students agreed that the research work is frustrating.	29%
14.	Research work will not make much difference.	26%
15.	They feel insecure concerning the analysis of research data.	25%
16.	Studying for research papers is lengthy and boring.	34%
17.	Research work is confusing for them	40%
18.	Research concept is easy to understand.	34 %
19.	They are confident in using statistics for analysis in their research work.	38%
20.	Students agreed that they are passionate about their research work	57%
21.	Students agreed that their research work develops with time	62 %
22.	They cannot work without a proper time framework.	73%
23.	The research data promotes false assumptions.	82%
24.	Students develop critical and negative attitude in individual.	47%
25.	Research contributes a lot to the awakening of public towards reality.	24 %
26.	Research makes them more aware about the surrounding things	36%
27.	Research consumes more time which is frustrating	37%
28.	Long years of research are stressful	45%

Table 2: The results of using Personality Trait Scale (Differential Personality Inventory) authored by Prof Arun km Singh

S.No	Questionnaire statements ( Personality Trait Scale)	Percentage of
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		students
1.	Rejecting the viewpoint of others in debate	67%
2.	They behave with patience despite seriousness of illness.	36%
3.	They feel difficulty in taking a decision about going to homes of seniors without being called.	43%
4.	Their aspirations are sometimes unreal.	39%
5.	They don't hesitate in speaking against a person in a class when you consider wrong.	20%
6.	They prefer to meet someone on one's residence rather than in office.	41%
7.	They prefer to remain silent rather than to quarrel if someone abuses them.	26%
8.	Students mentioned that they do not tell such thing about others.	34%
9.	They are able to soon decide about clothes shown by the shopkeeper for purchasing.	38%
10.	They are able to solve the difficult problems.	46%
11.	They tolerate the opposition of a decision taken after careful thought.	22%
12.	They have curiosity to see famous places and buildings of even new places.	80%
13.	They boldly accept the challenges of bad days.	71%
14.	They have good relationship with their neighbor.	73%
15.	They enjoy meeting a challenge.	18%
16.	Students mentioned that they answer questions asked in viva calmly.	68%
17.	They can easily decide regarding the priority .	44%
18.	Their general knowledge capacity is enough.	44%
19.	They like those persons who do their work when requested by others.	64%
20.	They are able to take even important persons in confidence easily.	40%
21.	They travel even the small distance by car.	19%
22.	They get angry very soon and then become calm automatically.	72%
23.	They feel difficulty about taking a decision regarding establishing a friendship.	54%
24.	They feel that their behavior is immature.	54%
25.	If a person does not do his work properly, he don't hesitate in telling him about it.	22%
26.	Seeing a new object, they became curious to know about it.	64%
27.	Despite loud noise, they are able to read with concentration.	43%
28.	They establish a good contact with unfamiliar very soon.	43%
29.	They are so happy that they start behaving in an erratic way.	24%
30.	Students mentioned that they almost all work in a fixed time.	32%
31.	They like those people who deliver their judgment, immediately.	60%
32.	They often face a difficulty in the path of progress.	60%
33.	They are able to talk with their friends with full confidence.	58%
34.	They joyfully, meet with a person who has turned up to your home without pre information.	15%
35.	Are able to solve any mental conflict easily.	76%
36.	They feel happy in congratulating their opponents for their winning.	54%
37.	They arrive at an earlier time at a scheduled place for listening the lecture of famous leader.	48%
38.	They expect that one day they will leave far behind all their opponents.	22%
39.	If, somebody comes to them without prior appointment, they ask them to come next day.	18%
40.	If, many people fell ill at a time in the home, they fail to decide what to do or what not to do.	12%
41.	Failure in any work produces a new idea rather than frustration in them.	16%
42.	They often inspect themselves the complex and difficult task.	27%
43.	They often fail to reply to email in time.	25%
44.	They don't express their views as soon on any important issue.	17%
45.	Some people feel frustrated and helpless due to their success.	28%
46.	In a lecture theatre if somebody by mistake, occupies their seat, you will tell him politely that this is not his seat.	43%
47.	Even small failure produces strong discouragement in them.	84%
48.	They like to inspect ordinary and simple works.	34%
49.	If you have decided to go somewhere, they will certainly go irrespective of obstacles in the way.	6%
50.	Rejecting the viewpoint of others in debate	67%
51.	They are late, they prefer not to attend than to attend a meeting.	23%
52.	Often their expectations are based on their success.	56%
53.	They help their friend lying in state of helplessness.	61%
54.	Have never experienced failure in my life.	18%

## DISCUSSIONS

Research is an important skill for the lifelong learners and it is recognized as a high-impact educational practice. Many universities consider the cultivation of an appropriate personality and the ability to generate interest in students to do research from the early years of education as one of the most important educational outcomes. There is a need to study the factors that determine students' perceptions

and practices and preferential choices effective for their participation in research. The results of our study highlighted that the interest in research among our students was for quest of academic career and improvement and enrichment of knowledge.

In our study, it was analyzed that student's interest in research and their attitudes were mainly related to research environment in the university, research approaches and the extent to which students were influenced by rewards in

research. Some researchers have earlier examined the attitudes toward research among the students and it has been found that the usefulness of research has been associated with the positive attitude<sup>4</sup>. The study has revealed that there is less research anxiety in the students if they take more number of research courses. The self – efficacy in the students is associated with their attitude towards research<sup>5</sup>.

In our study, reward expectation was a big motivational factor among students. Research findings in our study revealed that the inappropriate selection of time and uninteresting topic of research had a substantial impact on the students' preferences to participate in scientific research.

In the present study, it was observed that students of undergraduate programs have a negative perception about the research methods courses. An understanding of student's attitudes is important as it would help the authorities to facilitate and to generate healthy attitude toward research activities. One of the important factors which influence the students' interest and their opinion is the role model<sup>6</sup>. The teachers as role model in research may have positive impact on the attitude of students towards research. The engagement of students in the research with practical training could strongly influence the approach of students towards the research<sup>7</sup>.

Research is necessary to assist students in acquiring the understanding of knowledge unique to their courses. Research activity as an educational practice has been progressively engaged in a diversity of disciplines as well as in varied cultural contexts. Cultures have influence on learning process and activity<sup>8</sup>. The research experiences are granted high rating by the majority of the undergraduate students<sup>9</sup>. The motivation of undergraduate students for their engagement in research activities is related to curriculum enrichment<sup>10</sup>. The maintenance of balance in each step of the research process is an important factor in promoting the active participation of the students in the research.

Introduction of research-based education into the early undergraduate curriculum cultivates research-specific skills which are fundamentally essential for continuing professional development<sup>11</sup>. Our study also confirmed the findings reflected in other studies including the reasons for a significant discrepancy between the participation in research by students and their attitudes toward research, and reflected about significant barriers impeding these activities<sup>12-13</sup>.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our study concluded that the students' personality traits significantly affect their attitude and practices towards research. Also it is very important for them to be involved in research and they should have appropriate concepts towards quality research. Authorities' purpose is to cultivate

among the students the ability to grasp standardized practices involved in the research. There is a need for the development of course related to research as a part of curriculum, so that it is recognized by students to be pertinent to the routine practice. There is also a need to encourage the students to attend workshops and conferences from their early educational years.

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