

A survey study of employment intention and related factors in medical college students.

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Abstract

This study investigated the differences in employment intentions between poor and nonpoor students in medical colleges as the basis for dynamic occupational guidance. Questionnaires were administered to 400 students from two medical universities. A higher proportion of poor college students had direct employment intentions than nonpoor college students. Poor students preferred to work in cities of all sizes. A higher proportion of nonpoor students wanted to work in their hometowns, communities, and western regions. A higher proportion of poor students hoped for well-paid jobs and prestigious occupations. In the employment process, both groups consistently considered crucial helpful factors including comprehensive ability, social relationships, and actual operating ability. Medical students should improve their skills and engage in community work. Ideological guidance should be strengthened in poor college students to help them choose occupations well.

Key words: Medical college, Undergraduate, Employment intention, Factors

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Introduction

According to Peterovski's "motivation system theory," activated motive is a process of varied strength with a certain amount of fuzziness and instability [1]. College students are typically hesitant to consider occupations and practice job-hunting because they have not experienced improvement through professional practice. Their view of professional development is unstable and incomplete and subjective intention characteristics are quite evident [2-4]. Medical institutions lack complete occupational planning and medical college students can feel lost in the employment process. Poverty and gender differences can significantly influence employment selection and expected salary [5, 6]. Employment motives and value orientations in foreign students are also different [7].

Medical college students' employment difficulties are associated with some objective factors (such as the college expansion plan). However, it should also be noted that college students lack employment knowledge and skills. Factors including lack of career planning, ambiguous employment situations, and partial utilization of employment information contribute to difficulty finding employment opportunities in practice. Thus, medical college students may bear tremendous psychological pressure,

especially poor students [8, 9]. Therefore, it is quite important that scientific, systematic, and effective occupational guidance be provided in medical colleges. A series of preferential policies to encourage community work were introduced in "Opinions of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council on Deepening the Health Care System Reform" in March 2009 [10]. These policies aimed to improve qualified regional health services, rationally allocate health human resources, and effectively alleviate employment pressure on medical students. Employment intentions of medical students may influence the distribution of health human resources and employment quality. We examined the differences in employment ideas and intentions between poor and nonpoor students through student survey at two medical colleges to address the problem of employment selection. This supports dynamic study of employment intentions and guidance in medical students by surveying employment intention and relevant factors in students of five grades from two medical colleges.

Methods

Subjects

Stratified random cluster sampling methods obtained students of five grades from Xinxiang Medical University and Sanquan Medical College at Xinxiang Medical Uni-

versity in May 2013. A total of 400 questionnaires were issued and 386 of them were returned (recovery rate: 96.50%). Nine invalid questionnaires were excluded and 377 questionnaires were finally obtained (effective recovery rate: 94.25%). Of these, 182 male and 195 female students participated in the study (Table 1). None of these students had major physical illness or severe cognitive impairment. This study was conducted in accordance with the declaration of Helsinki. This study was conducted with approval from the Ethics Committee of Xinxiang medical University. Written informed consents were obtained from all participants.

Measured methods

Group test methods were used in the study. Researchers strictly administered the instructions to the students. Students responded to questionnaires voluntarily. After completion, questionnaires were immediately returned. Questionnaires with incomplete answers or evident sketch as will were removed from the study.

Results

Graduate destination

Results showed that most students (more than 70%) intended direct employment or advanced study after graduating. Compared to nonpoor students, more poor students intended direct employment while nonpoor students intended advanced study. Similar proportions were obtained in selection of "civil servant," "entrepreneurship," and "further study abroad" between the two groups (Table 2).

Regional employment intention

Compared to nonpoor students, a higher proportion of poor students intended to work in cities of all sizes. More nonpoor students intended to work in their hometowns, communities, and western regions (Table 3).

Related factors affecting career choices

Career choice is one of the most important decisions in future career development. Many factors influence career choice. The survey indicated that nonpoor students considered whether a career could provide development opportunity, satisfy personal interest, and provide stable and professional colleagues more typically than poor students (Table 4). A higher proportion of poor students hoped for well-paid and prestigious jobs.

Helpful factors in employment

In the employment process, consistent selection of the most crucial helpful factors was found between poor and nonpoor students (Table 5). The most important factors were comprehensive ability, social relationships, and actual beginning ability. Moreover, a higher proportion of nonpoor students described work experience as a factor while poor students described knowledge base as a factor.

Discussion

Employment agencies at domestic and international universities issue employment guidance strategies based on the actual employment situations of their graduates [11-14]. Students from different families, especially different economic conditions, tend to experience employment anxiety and psychological problems due to their family backgrounds [15-19]. It is necessary to target occupational guidance through recognizing and understanding employment intentions, area selections, and salary expectations, and then grasping students' dynamic employment intentions. We recommend that: this guidance include psychological counseling, not just lecture format; a good public opinion atmosphere be established; specific culture groups for poor students be created with independent residences; and employment guidance and guides be optimized consistent with career choice psychology [8, 14, 17, 20, 21]. Based on questionnaires with students from medical colleges, we found differences in employment intentions.

Evident differences in employment intentions were detected in students from medical colleges. Specifically, a higher proportion of nonpoor students choose to deepen their professional knowledge, get a government job, establish a business, or go abroad for further study; most poor students select direct employment. The proportion of poor students' direct employment intentions is far higher than nonpoor students. One reason may be that nonpoor students pay more attention to self-development due to less life pressure; they hope to realize their own values and abilities through higher levels of advanced study. Therefore, a higher proportion of nonpoor students choose to deepen their professional knowledge. Poor students intend to earn money to improve their economic condition by selecting direct employment; they receive economic pressure from their families and hope to share that responsibility. Parents of nonpoor families value stable jobs, which influences their children's selections. In addition, such parents may have social relationships with civil servants to provide help and guidance in preparing for the civil service exam. Poor families have fewer advantages, especially considering the modest salary of civil servants; they want to earn more money to improve their economic condition. Thus, "civil servant" is not the most attractive selection, and fewer poor students choose to get a government job than nonpoor students. The differences in establishing a business and going abroad for further study are mainly derived from the difference in economic conditions because these two selections require money. Nonpoor families have an inherited financial basis while poor families have no such opportunities. This survey indicates that fewer poor and nonpoor students intend to establish businesses, which is very different from vocational technical colleges [22]. This was due to selecting

only students from medical colleges. The stricter entry requirements for the medical industry compared to other vocations are well known. Before students in a clinical medical specialty pass an entrance examination, they must work one year in a health agency with physician supervision after graduating from medical college. They may practice medicine and apply for prescription rights after receiving medical licenses. Therefore, medical students may be qualified to practice medicine after one and a half years; this is the major reason that fewer medical students choose to establish a business.

In regional selection, more poor students want to work in cities of all sizes. More nonpoor students choose to work in their hometowns, communities, and western regions. Poor students have higher expectations; they believe that they can change their future and rise from poverty through college attendance. Then they focus on coastal regions or economically developed cities. Fewer poor students intend to work in western rural areas or regions because of their humble origins. Wealthier students select jobs in their hometown, which may be associated with family resources. Parents, relatives, friends, social relations, and widespread social resources in hometowns are factors that encourage work in a familiar environment. However, poor students' families lack social resources and fewer poor students choose to work in their hometown. Moreover, significant differences in expected selections can be found between poor and nonpoor students [23].

Nonpoor students believe that the most important career selection factors are to provide development opportunity, satisfy personal interest, and have stable and professional colleagues. Poor students focus on well-paid jobs and professional reputation. Nonpoor students do not worry about livelihood but consider opportunities for career development, satisfying personal interest, or professional colleagues. However, poor students want well-paid jobs to change their standard of living even if the jobs do not suit their majors. Furthermore, stable jobs do not always provide higher salary but can accord with the value demands of nonpoor students who hope to have wealthy lives. Well-paid jobs are more attractive to poor students and more nonpoor students select stable jobs. Poor families have higher expectations for their children [24]. Children entering colleges may carry heavy intangible burdens because their families believe they glorify and illuminate their ancestors. Local government even sends them to college with the accompaniment of gongs and drums. Poor students hope to get creditable jobs; otherwise, they will fail to meet everyone's expectations. These factors contribute to the increased selection of creditable jobs by poor students compared to nonpoor students [4].

Both poor and nonpoor students believe the most important consistent helpful factors are comprehensive ability,

social relationships, and the actual beginning ability. Moreover, more nonpoor students accept work experience as a helpful factor while more poor students consider knowledge base as a helpful factor. There are several reasons. There are increased requirements for people in occupations in the current knowledge economy society [25]. In addition to education background, comprehensive ability and actual beginning ability are quite important. Surveyed students recognize this consistently through media publicity, newspapers, and periodicals. Both poor and nonpoor students believe social relationships are important after comprehensive ability. A higher proportion of poor students select the factor than nonpoor students. This selection may be associated with the imperfect Chinese market economic system, which may influence poor students' psychological balance. Poor students, especially students from rural areas, may believe that social relationships are a crucial factor in the employment process because they have simple social relationships and lower economic levels. They are more easily influenced by unhealthy social climate, unfair competition, and corruption. Due to differences in economic conditions and living environments, nonpoor students have more opportunities to contact and more extensive knowledge of the outside world that can contribute to work experience. Moreover, most poor students join school work-study programs in colleges [26] but fewer of them attend part-time internships because of limited money, time, and consciousness. Thus, poor students have poorer recognition of the value of work experience in the employment process.

The rapid development of current society raises the demands on people. Traditional ideas and thoughts are no longer adapted to the requirements of modern society. Most medical students are unwilling to work in remote or rural regions. To address this, social consensus propaganda is necessary. The western regions lack physicians and medicines and medical students should be eligible to work in remote or rural regions after systematic study. Simultaneously, medical colleges should be responsible to train students, strengthen educational propaganda, change conservative employment ideas, cultivate correct occupational values, guide students in career planning, and cultivate different requirements for students with different majors in the employment market. Moreover, the current employment market of medical students is gradually saturating. Medical treatment and public health require higher medical education. Therefore, the phenomenon that doctors are greeted, masters are limited, and undergraduates are blocked is found [26]. Regardless of the perspective of employment or medical students' own development, we should strongly encourage medical undergraduates to obtain higher levels of professional knowledge and integrated skills, strengthen clinical practice [27], and improve professional skills through more practice opportunities. Thus, they can serve society with their life-saving duty.

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