



Status of the Textbooks Used by the Dentistry Students of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Iran (2018)

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Abstract

Background: The inappropriate use of pamphlets rather than textbooks is an educational problem faced by most students. Note-taking and reading pamphlets rather than reading textbooks regardless of defects and shortcomings with their own structure cannot cover the required materials for students.

Objectives: The present study aimed to investigate the status of the textbooks used by the dentistry students of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (KUMS), Iran.

Methods: This descriptive study was conducted on the students of the dentistry school of KUMS. In total, 148 students were selected via random sampling. Data were collected using a valid and reliable questionnaire. Data analysis was performed in SPSS version 18.

Results: In total, 67.6% of the students used the content presented by professors in the class, and only 2% used the original English textbooks of dentistry. The analysis of the priorities of the type of resource indicated that the highest frequency belonged to the use of printed pamphlets (55.4%), and the lowest frequency belonged to the use of printed versions and electronic audio files (0.7%). Additionally, evaluation of access to resources showed the maximum frequency of a group pamphlet to be 35.8%, while the lowest frequency belonged to the pamphlet prepared by others (2.7%).

Conclusions: According to the results, the students showed great interest in note-taking and reading pamphlets rather than reading textbooks. The insufficient fluency of students in English, high costs of reference books, and a large amount of resources made the students more likely to use pamphlets.

Keywords: Note-taking, Pamphlets, Textbook, Dentistry Students

1. Background

Study habits and skills play a pivotal role in the success of medical students, which are often characterized by a heavy workload, substantial time commitments, and high-stakes testing. Learning and teaching processes require the active cooperation and interaction of students and educators. Several factors are known to affect academic success, such as an organized and integrated program of study, the proper use of educational references and materials, excessive perseverance, consistent class attendance, and efficient study habits. On the other hand, factors such as motivation, learning style, and the time and place of study largely influence students' learning (1, 2).

Textbooks and class handout materials are frequent and important sources of information for students. How-

ever, the inappropriate use of pamphlets and notes is a common educational problem faced by most students. A key benefit of using textbooks is that student can refer back to the textbook for missing, misunderstood, or forgotten information, while reading note-taking in class, students may easily forget what they have heard in class (3).

Educational resources in the Iranian medical education system have long been neglected. The examination and evaluation of students are important issues that may concern medical students (4), which in turn leads to their tendency to note-taking and reading pamphlets rather than reading textbooks. Students' notes are generally brief and incomplete compared to textbooks references. Therefore, pamphlets with the shortcomings and deficiencies cannot fully meet the needs of these students (5-7). Class notes have been reported to be more effective in this re-

gard compared to reading English/Persian educational references (8).

The tendency of medical students to using pamphlets instead of textbooks has various reasons. Most students assume that reading textbooks is time-consuming as they lack the adequate proficiency in English as well. Moreover, the teaching methods employed by most faculty members often urge students to take notes in the class (5). In a study in this regard, it was reported that the large volume of educational materials, the need for time, lack of motivation to study, lack of training on different levels of education, inadequacy of available resources in the library, and large volumes of reference books are the factors that highly influence the tendency of students to using pamphlets rather than textbooks (6).

Methods of study largely influence the process of learning in students, thereby helping them acquire more practical skills and decide their future career. Tendency for use of note-taking in classes and using pamphlets instead of textbooks would have destructive influence on the learning and educational processes (5). Therefore, attention and planning is needed to improve study methods.

2. Objectives

It is important to evaluate the wrong study habits among medical students and the reasons of. The present study aimed to investigate the status of the textbooks used by the dentistry students of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (KUMS) in 2018.

3. Methods

This descriptive study was conducted on the students of the dentistry school of KUMS. Subjects were selected via random sampling as a total of 146 people.

In order to design and develop a questionnaire, first the questions were extracted from scientific sources according to experts' opinions. To determine the content validity of the questionnaire, content validity ratio (CVR) and content validity index (CVI) were used. The validity of the questionnaire from experts' view and its reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = 0.85$) have been previously confirmed.

Data were collected using demographic questionnaire (age, gender, marital status, place of residence, year of entering university) and a number of items about fluency in English, study hours per day, priority resources, priority

type of resources, access to resources, the reasons for the priorities of each sources used and the reasons for not using reference books.

The subjects were recruited with sufficient personal satisfaction and information about the goals and methods of the research and completed the questionnaire. Data analysis was performed in SPSS, and the data were expressed as the mean and standard error of the mean (SEM).

4. Results

The mean age of the students was 22.43 ± 2.5 years, and 50% of the subjects were female; 93.9% were single. The mean demographic data (Table 1) and the frequency of the students' answers to the main items of the questionnaire (Table 2) are shown.

Table 1. Demographic Information

Variables	No. (%)
Sex	
Male	74 (50)
Female	74 (50)
Marital statuses	
Single	139 (93.9)
Married	9 (6.1)
Address	
Dormitory	58 (39.2)
Father's house	76 (51.4)
Student house	14 (9.5)
Year of university entrance	
1391	11 (4.4)
1393	23 (15.5)
1394	31 (20.9)
1395	26 (17.6)

According to the obtained results, 67.6% of the students used the content presented by professors in the class, and only 2% used original English textbooks. In addition, 10.1% of the students used textbooks, and 20.2% used translated references.

Analysis of the priority type of resource showed that the highest percentage was with printed pamphlets (55.4%), and the lowest percentage was with using printed versions and electronic audio files (0.7%).

In terms of access method to resources, the maximum percentage was with group pamphlets (35.8%), and the low-

Table 2. Frequency of Students' Responses to Main Questionnaire Items

Variable	No. (%)
Fluency in English	
Excellent	5 (2.4)
Good	19 (12.8)
Moderate	101 (68.2)
Weak	23 (15.5)
Hours of studying	
≤ 1	118 (79.8)
2	16 (10.8)
3	6 (4.1)
4	6 (4.1)
≥ 5	2 (1.4)
Priority of references	
Content presented by professors in class	100 (67.6)
Textbook	15 (10.1)
Reference sources in original language	2 (2)
Translated reference sources	20 (20.2)
Priority of type of resources used by the students	
Printed versions	1 (0.7)
Handwritten pamphlets	60 (40.5)
Electronic video file	4 (2.7)
Printed pamphlets	82 (55.4)
Electronic audio file	1 (0.7)
Access to resources	
Buy resources	25 (16.9)
Noting	26 (17.6)
Pamphlet that is prepared by others	4 (2.7)
Pamphlet of previous years	20 (12.5)
Prepare a group pamphlet	52 (25.8)
Library	10 (6.8)
Recording voices of professors	10 (6.8)

est percentage was with pamphlet that is prepared by others (2.7%). The overall results revealed a lack of fluency in English as a reason for not using original textbooks, as well as the high costs of reference books and the large amount of content (Table 3). The mean variables are shown (Table 4).

5. Discussion

The results of the present study indicated that less than 5% of the students used original textbooks, and less than

Table 3. Frequency of Main Reasons for Students' Tendency to Using Pamphlet Instead of Textbooks

Variable	No. (%)
Large amount of resources	
Endorse	140 (94.6)
Ambivalent	7 (4.7)
Reject	1 (0.7)
Extent	
Endorse	12 (8.1)
Ambivalent	113 (74.4)
Reject	23 (15.5)
High costs	
Endorse	141 (95.3)
Ambivalent	2 (1.4)
Reject	5 (3.4)
Fluency in English	
Endorse	142 (95.9)
Ambivalent	1 (0.7)
Reject	5 (3.4)
Insufficient resources	
Endorse	136 (91.8)
Ambivalent	2 (1.3)
Reject	10 (6.6)
Lack of time	
Endorse	128 (86.5)
Ambivalent	4 (2.7)
Reject	16 (10.8)
Insufficient facilities	
Endorse	131 (88.5)
Ambivalent	6 (4.0)
Reject	11 (7.4)
Lack of interest	
Endorse	15 (10.1)
Ambivalent	6 (4.0)
Reject	127 (85.8)
Night before exam	
Endorse	122 (82.4)
Ambivalent	5 (3.4)
Reject	21 (14.2)
Inadequate training	
Endorse	130 (87.8)
Ambivalent	7 (4.7)
Reject	11 (7.4)
Lack of motivation	
Endorse	74 (50)
Ambivalent	10 (6.8)
Reject	64 (43.2)

Table 4. Mean Variables

Variable	No.	Mean \pm SD	Min	Max
Demographic information				
Age (y)	148	2.43 \pm 2.50	18	33
Priorities				
Original English textbook	148	1.70 \pm 2.26	13	25
Translated textbook	148	1.75 \pm 2.08	9	19
Textbook	148	2.87 \pm 2.16	14	26
Literature provided by professors in class	148	1.48 \pm 2.44	12	23
Not using textbook	148	1.07 \pm 1.88	12	23

a quarter preferred translated books. More students preferred using the content presented by professors in the class. Therefore, students of KUMS showed great interest in note-taking and reading pamphlets instead of reading textbooks. Also, the preferred form of study in the KUMS students was printed pamphlets.

In a previous study, Pirhaji et al. reported that more students used pamphlets instead of textbooks (9), which is in line with our observations. Rashidian examined the efficacy of diverse learning styles used by students in basic medical sciences, reporting that class notes were most effective, whereas materials such as English/Persian resources had the smallest share (8). Interestingly, Torshizi et al. carried out a study and reported contradictory results with our findings. They reported that the majority of students used books as the main source of study (10). This discrepancy could be due to the differences in teaching methods and references recommended by professors.

The present study revealed that most students study for one hour or less each day. In a study, Ravari et al. investigated the pattern of time management in the college students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences (Iran), and the results showed that the majority of the participants studied for one hour or less during the day, while some studies have indicated that students at Stanford and Cornell University study for 46 and 49 hours per week, respectively (11). In another study, Azimian reported that most of the participants studied for 22-56 minutes a day, and only 8 % studied more than 100 minutes (12).

Since using notes instead of books is an important problem in learning and teaching, it is essential to investigate the causes of this inefficient method in educational processing. With the progress of science and technology, fluency in English is an important factor affecting the learning process, and this ability is essential to academic

achievement and attain updated medical knowledge (13). Therefore, the insufficient fluency of students in English makes them more likely to use the pamphlets and literature provided by professors. Our findings indicated that the majority of the students had moderate fluency in English, and a few had official certificates of the English language. Therefore, a lack of fluency in English to read original textbooks makes students use note-taking and pamphlets. In this regard, Mardanian and Kazerouni zadeh reported that 84% of students, 76% of interns, and 90% of medical residents study translated books (14). In another study, only 2.7% of students used original references (2). The results of the present study showed that due to the insufficient fluency of the students in English, high costs of reference books were imposed, and substantial resources were significant factors that predisposed students to prefer note-taking and reading pamphlets/notes.

5.1. Conclusions

Overall, the students had positive attitudes toward note-taking in the class as their main source of educational input. Moreover, the insufficient fluency of the students in English, high costs of textbooks, and the substantiality of resources made the students more likely to use the note-taking and pamphlets.

Footnotes

Authors' Contribution: Atefeh Khavid: investigation of original draft; Mostafa Godiny: writing and edition of manuscript; Milad Esmaielei: investigation.

Conflict of Interests: There was no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval: This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of KUMS (ethics code: KUMS.REC.1397.536).

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