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## Entrepreneurial Talent among Nursing Students of Golestan Province Universities in Iran in 2019

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### Abstract

**Background:** Entrepreneurship is a process in which a person with a new idea and thought offers a new product and service to market by mobilizing all resources through building businesses by accepting financial, social and economic risks. Given the existing bases in the field of health, the present study was conducted with an aim to determine the entrepreneurial talent in nursing students at universities of Golestan province.

**Methods:** The present cross-sectional study was conducted on 250 postgraduate nursing students at universities of Golestan province during the academic year of 2018-2019, and they were included in the study using the simple random method. The data were gathered using a 95-item Kordenaeej entrepreneurship questionnaire with eight subscale including need for achievement, Internal locus of control, Moderate risk-taking propensity, Ambiguity tolerance, thought flow, daydreaming, operation oriented, and challenge seeking. The final score of entrepreneurial talent was categorized as very weak (95-264), weak (265-283), strong (284-303), and very strong (304-380). Data were analyzed in SPSS16 using descriptive statistics, independent and paired t-tests, and chi-square test. Significance level was considered less than 0.05.

**Results:** The students' mean age was  $20.95 \pm 2.37$ . Samples were strong or very strong only in challenge seeking and thought flow, and were weak or very weak in other features. In the entrepreneurial talent, 47.7% were very weak, 29.4% were weak, 17.4% were strong and only 5.5% were very strong. There were statistical significant relationships between students' gender and entrepreneurial talent ( $P=0.002$ ) as well as students' place of residence and entrepreneurial talent ( $P=0.039$ ).

**Conclusion:** Results of the present study indicated that nursing students at universities of Golestan province were weak in entrepreneurial talent. The students' weakness of entrepreneurial talent indicated that it was necessary to pay attention to the entrepreneurial talent and strengthen the above characteristics in nursing students using the necessary interventions and proper planning.

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### Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a process under which a person offers a new product and service to market with a new idea by mobilizing all resources through building business by accepting its financial, economic, and social risks (1). Entrepreneurial talent refers to activities that have the highest individual efficiency (2), and it is the ability to explore and take advantage of the opportunities that exist in the market (3). Considering the increasing rates of educated young population and unemployment crisis, and graduates looking for work, as well as economic problems in society, entrepreneurship and attention to students' entrepreneurial talents have become significantly important (4). Creating context for entrepreneurial preparedness in students is an important aspect of the entrepreneurship development in society, and it can be fulfilled by identifying and examining psychological factors, and personality characteristics, and entrepreneurial talent in students because these factors play important roles in making the graduates entrepreneurs (5). Individuals with a high entrepreneurial personality profile are more likely to be entrepreneurial; hence, given its positive impact on the entrepreneurial intention, it is important to identify students' entrepreneurial talents in order to teach entrepreneurship to students (6). The health sector with numerous entrepreneurship substrates needs innovative, creative, motivated, energetic and hardworking work forces with strong social relations, entrepreneurial talent and business creation. These work forces work in the field of health by discovering the opportunities, innovation, planning and decision-making, time management and self-regulation (7). In this field, learning to create business skills by students is a prerequisite for creating entrepreneurship. In higher education system, students in different fields of medical sciences enter the labor market with a lot of scientific learning and technical skills of their fields of study, but because of the limited capacity of organizational posts of health care and public health units and lack of skills to build businesses, they spend a lot of time waiting for the right job and face a variety of social, emotional and economic problems (8).

A university, which seeks to promote entrepreneurship, should have a structure that can update creativity and innovation and help strengthen ideation. Due to the students' entrepreneurial talent and establishment of science and technology parks and incubators, universities are seeking to support entrepreneurship and application of new ideas (9). Mardanshahi et al. noted that about 70% of students had low entrepreneurial talent; and the entrepreneurial talent was lower in seniors than the freshmen. This reduction revealed the less effective education programs

and the need to plan for improving this feature (10). Zhimin and Lu also stated that the ultimate goal of universities is to teach creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. They also stated that the development of universities can be achieved through an innovative entrepreneurial talent training system; and thus the universities develop the academic and students' performance by teaching entrepreneurship, creativity and idea generation to students (11). Furthermore, Zhang et al. declare that the entrepreneurial talent and attention to it have caused an economic miracle in China in all public and agricultural sectors, and business activities; and the attention to entrepreneurship, its training, discovering entrepreneurial talent, and directing the talents to different sectors of economy have revolutionized the China's economy since the past 30 years (12).

In 2018, the Statistics Center of Iran announced the unemployment rate of the active population equal to 12%. According to the same statistics, 18.1% of graduates of universities and higher education institutions were unemployed. The same statistic indicated that the unemployment rate of Golestan province was 9.8 percent (13). The unemployment rate of graduates of health in 2015 indicated that 4.1% of all unemployed graduates of different fields of study were graduates or health. According to the unofficial sources and officials, the unemployment rate for healthcare graduates is worrying. Despite the need for services in the field of health, especially nursing, high unemployment rate can be seen in this field.

Determining and recognizing the nurses' entrepreneurial talent allow nurses to pursue their perspectives on health outcomes using innovative approaches. Like other entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial nurses provide nursing services with an educational, executive, research, and consulting nature.

Given that nursing schools of Golestan province are training students both in the University of Medical Sciences and Azad universities of the province, and a large number of nursing graduates enter the society every year, the present study aimed to determine the entrepreneurial talent of students to start businesses and jobs after graduation.

Given the existing platforms at universities to create entrepreneurship, the present study was conducted to determine the entrepreneurial talent in students in order to identify talents and eliminate weaknesses and strengthen the advantages of these talents by determining components of entrepreneurial talent and help students to convert their potential for entrepreneurship to a reality. Therefore, the students can use their talents to start businesses and employment after graduation.

**Methods**

The present cross-sectional study was conducted on all nursing students at University of Medical Sciences and Islamic Azad Universities of Golestan province (Aliabad-e Katul County, Gorgan, Bandar-e Gaz, and Gonbad-e Kavus) during the academic year of 2018-2019. The total number of students in the third to eighth semesters was 713; and 250 students were selected using the Cochran's table with an error value of 0.05.

$$n = \frac{Nz^2pq}{E^2} = \frac{713 \times (1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{684.7652}{2.7429} = 249$$

The questionnaires were distributed of which 235 questionnaires were returned. Inclusion criterion was employment in the third to eighth semesters of master level at a nursing school of Golestan Universities.

Data collection was done using the Kordenaeej entrepreneurship talent questionnaire (14). The questionnaire contained 95 items and 8 subscales; Moderate risk-taking propensity (18 items), Internal locus of control (17 items), Need for achievement (15 items), thought flow (13 items), Operation orientation (8 items), Ambiguity tolerance (11 items), daydreaming (7 items), and challenge seeking (6 items). Scoring of the questions was performed using the 4-point Likert scale from totally agree (score 4) to totally disagree (score 1); and the questions 72-82 were scored reversely. The final score of entrepreneurial talent was categorized as very weak (95-264), weak (265-283), strong (284-303), and very strong (304-380). The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha on need for achievement (0.82), internal locus of control (0.88), moderate risk-taking propensity (0.92), ambiguity tolerance (0.86), thought flow (0.89), daydreaming (0.66), Operation orientation (0.67), and challenge seeking (0.83).

Data were analyzed in version 16 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Ill., USA) using independent and paired t-tests, and Chi-square test at a significance level of 0.05. The independent and paired t-tests were used to compare the mean of each component of entrepreneurship characteristics in students and compare the mean scores of entrepreneurship components with standard theoretical mean.

In order to observe the ethical considerations, the students were assured that their information would remain confidential, and thus the informed consent forms were obtained from all nursing students.

**Results**

Among all samples, 235 ones completed the questionnaires. The mean age of students was 20.95±2.37 years. Standard mean scores of student entrepreneurship based on its subscales (Table 2).

According to Table 1, the findings show that 34.5% were male students and 65.5% were girls. Also, 59.6% of students were urban residents and 40.4% were rural residents. Also, 62.13 percent were studying at Azad University and 37.87% were studying at a public university. Table 3 presents the frequency of nursing students' scores on each entrepreneurial talent subscale.

Based on the results, there was a significant relationship between mean scores of internal locus of control, need for achievement, thought flow, and challenge seeking, but the nursing students' mean scores were higher than the standard mean score of each feature of entrepreneurship.

Results indicated that there was statistical significance relationship between students' age and entrepreneurial talent subscales (moderate risk-taking propensity, internal locus of control, Need for achievement, ambiguity tolerance, daydreaming, and challenge seeking) (P=0.508), and there was a statistical significant relationship between operation orientation (P=0.000), thought flow (P=0.032) and students' age.

There was a significant relationship between gender and entrepreneurial talent in students (P=0.002), so that male students had higher scores than females in most entrepreneurial characteristics. The female students' mean scores were higher than male students in internal locus of control and daydreaming characteristics.

There was a statistical significant relationship between students' place of residence and entrepreneurial talent (P=0.039), so that students living in the village had higher scores than those living in the city in most entrepreneurial characteristics. The students' mean scores in city were higher than those living in the rural areas in terms of moderate risk-taking propensity and daydreaming.

The students' marital status of did not have any statistical significant relationship with students' entrepreneurial characteristics and talent (P=0.157). There was also no statistical significant relationship between father's education level and students' entrepreneurial talent (P=0.002), so that students, whose fathers had high school and academic education, had higher mean scores.

There was no significant statistical relationship between household income and entrepreneurial talent (P=0.525). Students with family income of less than 2 million Rials per month had higher mean scores on average. There was no statistical significant relationship between students' university of study and entrepreneurial talent (P=0.470); however, students, who studied at a public university, scored higher on average than students at Azad universities. (Table 4)

The samples were very weak or weak in most of the entrepreneurial talent subscales. The nursing students were very weak in Internal locus of control (59.1%), need for achievement (41.7%), operation orientation (37.4%), thought flow (35.7%) and moderate risk-taking propensity (30.6%), and only 34.5% were

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of nursing students**

		N(%)
Place of residence	City	140 (59.6)
	Village	95 (40.4)
Gender	Male	81 (34.5)
	Female	154 (65.5)
Marital status	Married	34 (14.5)
	Single	201 (85.5)
Father's education	Academic	179 (76.2)
	High school	37 (15.7)
	Illiterate and primary school	19 (8.1)
Family income (million Rials)	20 <	80 (34)
	20-50	111 (47.2)
	<50	44 (18.7)
University of study	Golestan University of Medical Sciences	89 (37.87)
	Islamic Azad University	146 (62.13)
Work experience	No	217 (92.3)
	Yes	18 (7.7)

very strong in challenge seeking and 32.3% in thought flow. In general, 47.7 percent of nurses were very weak, 29.4 percent were weak, 17.4% were strong, and only 5.5% were very strong in the entrepreneurial talent.

**Table 2. Standard mean scores of entrepreneurship for students based on its subscales**

	Mean ± SD	P-value
Moderate risk-taking propensity	48.99 ± 10.01	.985
Internal locus of control	43.53 ± 13.52	.040
Need for achievement	43.35 ± 12.23	.000
Thought flow	38.65 ± 9.53	.007
Operation orientation	24.64 ± 6.72	.857
Ambiguity tolerance	24.00 ± 4.95	.057
Daydreaming	21.73 ± 4.17	.203
Challenge seeking	18.74 ± 4.72	.001
Entrepreneurial talent	263.63 ± 26.61	.002

**Table 3. Frequency distribution of nursing students' entrepreneurship according to its subscales**

	Very weak	Weak	Strong	Very strong
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Moderate risk-taking propensity	72 (30.6)	69 (29.4)	30 (12.8)	64 (27.2)
Internal locus of control	139 (59.1)	13 (5.5)	54 (23.0)	29 (12.3)
Need for achievement	98 (41.7)	15 (6.4)	63 (26.8)	59 (25.1)
Thought flow	84 (35.7)	29 (12.3)	46 (19.6)	76 (32.3)
Operation orientation	88 (37.4)	57 (24.3)	52 (22.1)	38 (16.2)
Ambiguity tolerance	28 (11.9)	73 (31.1)	73 (31.1)	61 (26.0)
Daydreaming	54 (23.0)	47 (20.0)	61 (26.0)	73 (31.0)
Challenge seeking	71 (30.2)	23 (9.8)	60 (25.5)	81 (34.5)
Entrepreneurial talent	112 (47.7)	69 (29.4)	41 (17.4)	13 (5.5)

Table 4. Frequency of students' entrepreneurial talent according to demographic characteristics

		Frequency of students' entrepreneurial talent				Total N (%)	P-value
		Very Weak N (%)	Weak N (%)	Strong N (%)	Very Strong N (%)		
Sex	Male	30 (37.0)	28 (34.6)	11 (13.6)	12 (14.8)	81 (100)	0.002
	Female	82 (53.2)	41 (26.6)	30 (19.5)	1 (0.6)	154 (100)	
Living place	City	74 (52.9)	36 (25.7)	28 (20.0)	2 (1.4)	140 (100)	0.039
	Village	38 (40.0)	33 (34.7)	13 (13.7)	11 (11.6)	95 (100)	
Marital status	Married	15 (44.1)	7 (20.6)	7 (20.6)	5 (14.7)	34 (100)	0.157
	Single	97 (48.3)	62 (30.8)	34 (16.9)	8 (4.0)	201 (100)	
Income (Million Rls)	20 >	34 (42.5)	27 (33.8)	15 (18.8)	4 (5.0)	80 (100)	0.525
	20-40	53 (47.7)	30 (27.0)	22 (19.8)	6 (5.4)	11 (100)	
	40 <	25 (56.8)	12 (27.3)	4 (9.1)	3 (6.8)	44 (100)	
University	State	42 (47.19)	29 (32.58)	16 (17.98)	2 (2.25)	89 (100)	0.470
	Azad	71 (48.63)	36 (24.66)	22 (15.07)	17 (11.64)	146 (100)	

## Discussion

According to studies, there are few studies on the entrepreneurial talent in nursing students. Findings of the present study indicated that nursing students had the lowest scores in internal locus of control, operation orientation, and moderate risk-taking propensity respectively, and were weak and very weak in the characteristics.

Most students had low scores in the internal locus of control characteristic; and more than half of nursing students were weak and very weak in the characteristic. The results were not consistent with studies by ShojaGhale Dokhtar (15), Sharifzadeh and Abdollahzadeh (16), but were consistent with results of a research by Shareinia. 61% of students were weak and very weak in operation orientation; and it was consistent with results of studies by Shareinia (17), and Sharifzadeh and Abdollahzadeh (16), but inconsistent with Mardanshahi (10) probably because Mardanshahi's study was conducted only in incoming and outgoing students as well as students in other fields (agriculture, technology and engineering). Furthermore, about 60% of nursing students had weak and very weak risk-taking propensity. Results of the present study were consistent with findings of studies by Shareinia (17), Shojaghaleh Dokhtar (15), Ghasemnejad Moghadam (18), Sharifzadeh and Abdollahzadeh (16), and Drucker (19), but they were inconsistent with a study by Jahani et al. (20) who found that the students had higher mean scores in risk-taking propensity because dental students were the target group in Jahani's study, and thus the students had high risk-taking due to the low risk of dental work.

More than half of students were strong and very strong in need for achievement. Results of the present study were consistent with results of studies by Ghasemnejad Moghadam (18), Shojaghaleh Dokhtar (15) and Jahani et al. (20), but inconsistent with results of Shareinia (17), and Sharifzadeh and Abdollahzadeh (16). It was probably due to differences in environmental conditions prevailing the universities and different educational methods of universities. About 52% of students had good score and were strong and very strong in thought flow. It was consistent with results of Shareinia's study (17), but inconsistent with results of studies by Sharifzadeh and Abdollahzadeh (16) and Mardanshahi (10). Most students were strong and very strong in ambiguity tolerance. It was consistent with results of studies by Sharifzadeh and Abdollahzadeh (16) and Jahani et al. (20) indicating that students were strong in the feature, but it was inconsistent with results of a research by Shareinia. The differences and similarities may have many reasons. A reason is probably the difference in education environment and methods of education for students in different studies. More than half of nursing students had strong and very strong daydreaming characteristic. It was consistent with results of studies by Shareinia (17), Sharifzadeh and Abdollahzadeh (16), and Mardanshahi (10). Most students were strong and very strong in challenge seeking characteristic. The students' strength in the characteristic was inconsistent with results of studies by Shareinia (17), Sharifzadeh and Abdollahzadeh (16). A reason for the difference might be related to the target group because Sharifzadeh conducted the study in agricultural students at a public university.

Results of the present study indicated that the total entrepreneurial talent was weak or very weak in the majority of nursing students; and it was consistent with studies by Shareinia et al. (17), Wayne Berger et al. (2004) and Mardanshahi et al. (21), but inconsistent with studies by Azizi et al. (22), Jahani et al. (20), and Phillips et al. (23) who reported high scores of entrepreneurial talent in students. The inconsistency might be due to differences in environmental conditions prevailing the fields of study of students and universities and also different teaching methods for students. Among all variables in the field of entrepreneurial talent characteristics in nursing students, the highest scores belonged to challenge seeking, daydreaming, and ambiguity tolerance for ambiguity, and the other variables were in the next ranks.

In the present study, there was a relationship between father's job and total entrepreneurial talent, so that students, whose fathers were self-employed, had scores in total entrepreneurial talent than students whose fathers were employers. The results were consistent with a study by Badavarnahandi et al. (24). The result indicated the effectiveness of family talent culture in improving the entrepreneurial talent because the fathers are often the work models of children in the Iranian culture. The research results indicated significant differences between male and female students in internal locus of control, need for achievement, challenge seeking, and thought flow. Male students' mean scores in

the above characteristics were higher than female students; and the result were consistent with studies by Ruin et al. (10) and Voda (25). A reason for the issue might be related to men's roles in the Iranian culture as they should provide income for their families.

Nursing students' weakness in entrepreneurial talent indicated the need for providing appropriate plan and interventions to identify and strengthen the entrepreneurship capacity in students in current training programs. In this regard, results of a research conducted by Karimi et al. indicated that the lack of entrepreneurship education is a main reason for preventing the development of entrepreneurial talent in students and development of entrepreneurship in students (26, 27).

Given that the entrepreneurship depends on many factors, including economic, social, cultural and political factors, perhaps some weaknesses of students in entrepreneurial talent are beyond the capabilities of universities, but due to the importance of identifying and developing the students' entrepreneurial talent, the medical universities are expected to develop students' entrepreneurial capabilities by right planning and use of experts in the field of entrepreneurship through removing barriers, so that health graduates can run businesses using their expertise in this field and their entrepreneurial talents.

Results of the present study and the nursing students' weakness in entrepreneurial characteristics indicated the inefficiency and weakness of university educational programs in entrepreneurship training and identification and development of students' entrepreneurial talents. A high percentage of nursing students with weak or very weak entrepreneurial characteristics as graduates of universities of medical sciences and as applicants of entering the business arena and activity in society need further study. Universities of Medical Sciences should consider the creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial talent and potential as fundamental principles. It is essential to review educational, research and extracurricular programs that should be in line with the aim of establishing the universities in fulfilling overall needs of society.

## Discussion

Results of the present study indicated that nursing students of Universities of Golestan were weak in entrepreneurial characteristics; and their entrepreneurial talent was less taken into consideration. Therefore, the universities should strengthen the entrepreneurial talent by teaching entrepreneurship and identifying and developing the entrepreneurial talent in students, and take into account the entrepreneurial creativity, innovation, talent and ability as fundamental principles, so that the students can help start jobs and businesses after graduation.

It is suggested conducting studies on the entrepreneurial training needs of students at Universities of Medical Sciences.

Furthermore, opportunities in the field of health and education should be identifies and taught to students. Moreover, the intention and spirit of entrepreneurship should be examined among medical students. It is also suggested conducting similar studies longitudinally in different grades and fields of medical sciences and the results should be compared with each other. Using entrepreneurial experts, the students' entrepreneurial talents should be identified, professional and entrepreneurial counseling services should be provided for interested students, and each university should have an active entrepreneurship center with the presence of experts in this field.

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