

Evaluation of graduates of the Tutorial Education Program (PET) of the Dentistry Course at the Federal University of Pelotas

Laura Lourenço Morel*; Nadine Barbosa Ferreira*; Juliana Garcia Altman*; Heloisa Grehs e Silva**; Eduardo Trota Chaves***; Josué Martos****

- * Undergraduate dental student, Scholarship student of PET, School of Dentistry, Federal University of Pelotas
- ** MSc student in Dental Clinics (Endodontics), Postgraduation Program in Dentistry, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul
- *** MSc student in Dental Sciences (Restorative Dentistry), Postgraduation Program in Dental Sciences, Federal University of Santa Maria
- **** Full Professor, Tutor of PET, School of Dentistry, Federal University of Pelotas

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the professional profile of graduates of the School of Dentistry at the Federal University of Pelotas, participants of the Tutorial Education Program (PET). A descriptive research was conducted, of qualitative and quantitative nature, using a structured and self-administered electronic questionnaire as collection instrument, sent by email to all graduates who effectively participated in the PET group and agreed to participate in this study. The study assessed the professional activity, training levels and objectives proposed by the program. The total number of graduates was 89, since the group was created in 1992 until 2019. The answers obtained (n=59) revealed that most graduates who joined the survey completed the course between the years 2004 to 2018 (59.3%), and only 24 (40.6%) in the period before 2004. It was found that 25% work in public services, 44% in the private sector and 22% work in both. Concerning the degree, only 4 (6.8%) did not attend postgraduation education, and 53 (89.8%) work in the Southern region of the country, 36 (61%) are females and 23 (39%) are males. At completion of the questionnaire, the participants were asked about the influence of participation in the Program on their professional career, with a scale of progressive intensity from 1 to 5, retrieving 19 responses with score 4 and 39 responses with score 5. The results evidenced a positive influence from participation in the Program in the professional lives of former participants, both in the job market and in the postgraduation experience.

Descriptors: Dentistry. Higher Education. Educational Evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

The universities present, among many assignments and duties, the primary function of professional training, preparing professionals for careers with intellectual, scientific and technical basis; the search and development of human knowledge; and transmission of the product of their knowledge to society¹. However, the social function of the university extends beyond preparing for the job market, assessing the collective problems and articulating so that university and society are connected and working in harmony². Thus, the Brazilian university is supported by three pillars (teaching, research and extension), which are essential and fundamental for the construction of knowledge with quality and productivity.

In this aspect, the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences depend on a teaching-learning process that establishes the connection between theory and practice, linking science and work³. However, sometimes a distance is observed in the university, associated with teaching out of context, with researches that are not connected with the social reality of the course².

In this context, the Tutorial Education Program (PET) is developed by groups of students tutored by professors and organized from undergraduate training in higher education institutions (IES) in the country, guided by the principle of full inseparability between teaching, research and extension. The PET was created by CAPES in 1979, based on the successful experience of Professor Yvon Leite de Magalhães Pinto from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, named Special Training Program, which offered to scholarship students academic training in the highest degree of excellence, to prepare and encourage them to enroll in graduate programs and later

in university teaching⁴. Currently, the PET established in universities in the country acts by the development of collective and interdisciplinary actions, aiming at the formation of citizens with a broad vision of the world and social responsibility⁵. The reflexes of these actions would be the qualification of academic performance, of undergraduate courses in which the groups are inserted, in postgraduation courses and not least of professionals themselves inserted in the job market^{4,6}.

The institutionalization of PET allowed the consolidation of a tutorial work of learning favoring the diversity and always guided by the basic inseparable principles of teaching, research and extension. Currently, PET has 842 groups distributed in 121 higher education institutions in the country⁷.

By PET, it is expected to boost the training of higher education professionals with high scientific, technical and ethical standards with social responsibility, in the various fields of knowledge, who should be able of acting in the sense of transforming the national reality⁷. In this sense, analysis of the profile of graduates has been an important tool to evaluate the academic courses and programs established in IES, aiming to identify if the training offered is impacting the legitimate population needs. Besides, the research on graduates reveals if these participants have effectively absorbed the information, skills and tools supposedly offered by the proposed educational program⁸⁻¹³.

Thus, this study evaluated the professional profile of graduates from the Dentistry School of the Federal University of Pelotas (FO-UFPel), participants in the Special Training Program/Tutorial Education Program from its creation in 1992 until 2018.

2 METHODOLOGY

This descriptive study had a cross-sectional design. The target population was identified from physical data stored in the program, with 89 participants registered in the records of PET Odontologia FO-UFPel, in the period since the program was established in the institution (1992) until the academic year of 2018. After identification, the target population was contacted by social networks and email.

This study was submitted and approved by the Institutional Review Board (CAAE: 81315317.0.0000.5318) and followed all criteria foreseen in Resolution 196/96 of the National Health Council (CNS), which regulates the ethical principles for biomedical research on human beings.

All former participants were invited to voluntarily participate in the study and, after information on the study, they provided written agreement by email after reading the Informed Consent Form (TCLE).

A structured and self-administered electronic questionnaire was used as collection instrument, composed of 36 questions, being 27 multiple choice and 9 open questions, divided into 5 axes.

A coding tree was used for data analysis, consisting of five categories or axes of analysis¹² (Chart 1). The first three axes addressed questions related to personal information, including academic training, professional work and job satisfaction, respectively. The notes detailed in the following two axes referred to aspects related to objectives proposed by the program, such as experience and opinion about PET.

Qualitative data were evaluated by analysis of their contents, and quantitative data were evaluated by descriptive analysis by absolute and percentage distribution, using the Microsoft Excel 16.0 software (Microsoft

Corporation, Redmond, WA, USA).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 89 graduates were identified in the program database, from which 59 effective responses were obtained, with a response rate of 66%. Despite the high rate of respondents, there was an important proportion of missing individuals due to difficulties in communication and location by social networks, outdated email addresses or even deaths.

Among the graduates of the PET program of the Dentistry course of UFPel who participated in the study, most (61%) are females, agreeing with previous studies that reinforce this profile^{9,10,13-15}. According to data from the Federal Dental Council (CFO), in 2020 the women already accounted for 56% of the total of Brazilian dental professionals, establishing women as the largest population of Dentistry in the country.

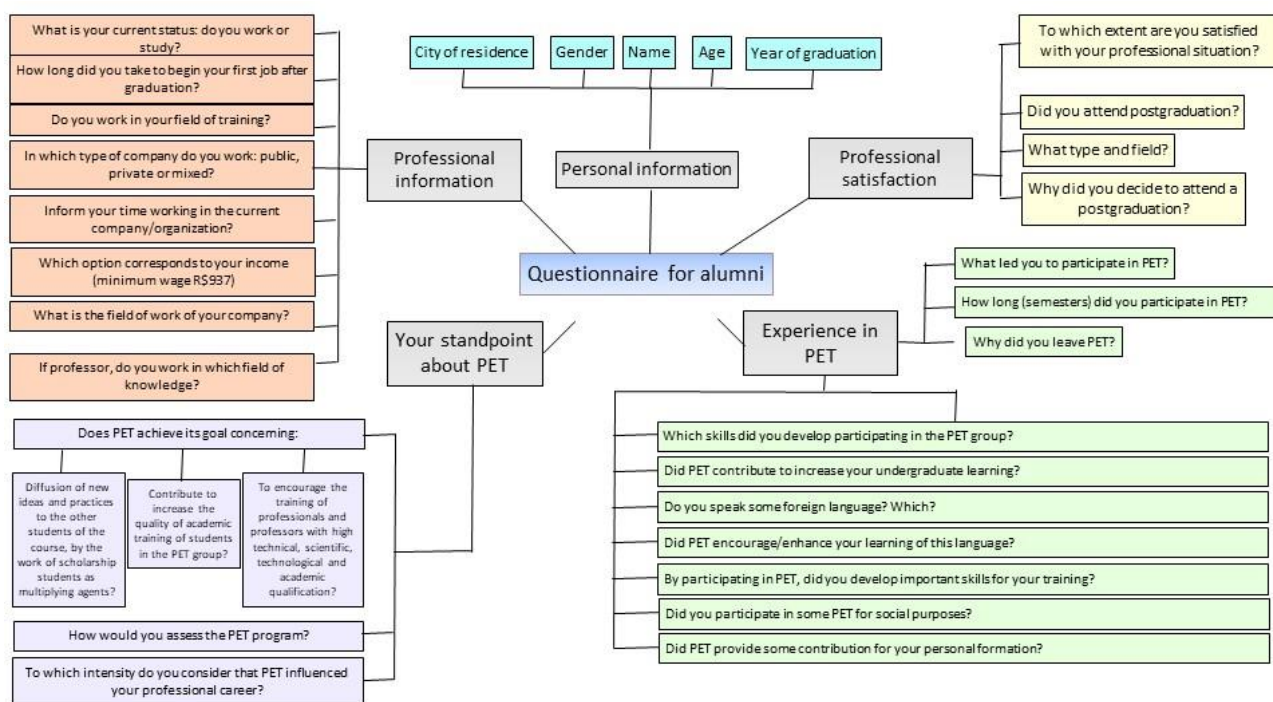
Concerning the year of graduation, representatives were obtained from 1992 (1.6%) until 2018 (3.3%), noting that most graduates who joined the study completed the course between 2004 and 2018 (59.3%), with only 24 (40.6%) in the period before 2004. After completing the Dentistry course, there was a slight territorial migration of graduates. Most participants still live in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (78%), some in places as Santa Catarina (8.5%), Paraná (3.3%), and a smaller number in other 6 states.

Regarding the professional activity performed, most participants reported studying and working (50.8%), but an important portion of participants had exclusive dedication to work (42.3%) and a few others had study as work activity (6.7%) (Table 1). Also, according to the field of professional practice, the graduates reported they work in the field of training in

Dentistry (98%) and most mentioned the provision of dental services (59.3%), yet some work in education (22%) and commercial fields in general (11.8%). Concerning the professional

market, Dentistry allows work in several modalities, such as self-employment, public and private services, besides professional insertion in health insurance plans¹⁶.

Chart 1. Coding tree with strategies for evaluation of axes analyzed (adapted from Silva¹²).



It should also be noted that 22% of graduates work as professors, corroborating the results of other studies that reported academic insertion with percentages ranging from 33.9% to 34.3%^{12,13}.

When asked about the time elapsed between graduation and entering the first job, it was observed that 46 people (77.9%) obtained their first job in six months or earlier. When asked about the nature of this job, most graduates reported that they work in the private sector (44%), while 25.4% work in the public sector.

With regard to the time of work in the different sectors of action, most are working for more than 10 years (40.6%). However, some reported a shorter period, from 1 to 3

years (27.1%). Regarding the financial aspect, the monthly income of 57.5% of graduates is above average, ranging around 7-10/11-14 minimum wages or more. However, extremes were also observed, such as graduates without income (3.3%) or receiving more than 23 minimum wages (6.8%) (Table 1). When associating these data to other studies, it is observed that the average monthly income, observed in a high percentage of graduates, is slightly different from reports in the literature^{10,21,22}. Dentistry is a profession that allows working in several fields, but a real obstacle is the saturation of the job market¹⁶ combined to the difficulty to find a job with good pay.

Table 1. Absolute and percentage distribution of the professional profile of graduates interviewed

Professional profile	Category	Distribution – N (%)
Current professional status	Only studying	4 (6.8)
	Only working	25 (42.4)
	Working and studying	30 (50.8)
Work in the field of training	Yes	58 (98.3)
	No	1 (1.7)
Professional work	Private sector	26 (44.1)
	Public sector	15 (25.4)
	Public and private sectors	13 (22.0)
	Mixed company	4 (6.8)
	Others	1 (1.7)
Field of work	Service providing	35 (59.3)
	Educational	13 (22.0)
	Commercial	7 (11.9)
	Industrial	1 (1.7)
	Others	3 (5.1)
Work as professor	Yes	13 (22.0)
	No	46 (78.0)
Monthly income [§]	No income	2 (3.4)
	≤ 2 minimum wages	5 (8.5)
	3-6 minimum wages	9 (15.3)
	7-10 minimum wages	21 (35.6)
	11-14 minimum wages	13 (22.0)
	15-18 minimum wages	3 (5.1)
	19-22 minimum wages	2 (3.4)
	≥ 23 minimum wages	4 (6.8)

[§]Base minimum wage: R\$ 937.00

With regard to the time of work in the different sectors of action, most are working for more than 10 years (40.6%). However, some reported a shorter period, from 1 to 3 years (27.1%). Regarding the financial aspect, the monthly income of 57.5% of graduates is above average, ranging around 7-10/11-14 minimum wages or more. However, extremes were also observed, such as graduates without income (3.3%) or receiving more than 23 minimum wages (6.8%) (Table 1). When associating these data to other studies, it is observed that the average monthly income,

observed in a high percentage of graduates, is slightly different from reports in the literature^{10,21,22}. Dentistry is a profession that allows working in several fields, but a real obstacle is the saturation of the job market¹⁶ combined to the difficulty to find a job with good pay.

Data about the academic profile of graduates of PET Dentistry group evidenced a great predilection for academic updating, since 93.2% reported they had attended or are attending a postgraduation program, as shown in Table 2. Among these, most reported *lato*

sensu courses, completed (35.6%) or ongoing (10.2%). Some graduates reported *stricto sensu* postgraduation courses, such as Master (16.9%) and/or PhD programs (27.1%).

These data, alike other studies, confirm that continuing education and qualifications resulting from postgraduation studies are essential for the job market^{13,17}. It is important to highlight the high percentage of *lato sensu* and *stricto sensu* courses, completed or ongoing (93.2%), emphasizing that there may

not always be equivalence in the offer of places in the labor market⁹.

According to the results, there is great interest from graduates in the field of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (15.2%), followed by Public Health (13.5%). However, the vast majority reported that they did not concentrate their graduate studies in a single field, working in more than one specialty (Table 2). The predilection for the surgical field corroborates other studies evaluating dental students^{15,18-20}.

Table 2. Absolute and percentage distribution of the academic profile of participants

Academic profile	Category	Distribution N (%)
Attended postgraduation course	Yes	55 (93.2)
	No	4 (6.8)
Types of postgraduation course [§]	Specialization	27 (45.8)
	Master program	10 (16.9)
	PhD program	16 (27.1)
	Postdoctoral training	2 (3.4)
	No postgraduation	4 (6.8)
Fields of postgraduation	Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	9 (15.3)
	Restorative Dentistry	2 (3.4)
	Endodontics	5 (8.5)
	Periodontology	1 (1.7)
	Public Health	8 (13.6)
	Stomatology and Pathology	1 (1.7)
	Implantology	1 (1.7)
	Pediatric Dentistry	2 (3.4)
	Orthodontics	7 (11.9)
	Prosthodontics	2 (3.4)
	More than one field	17 (28.8)
	No postgraduation	4 (6.8)
	Reason for postgraduation [†]	Enhance the knowledge
Academic career		26 (21.7)
Market demands		24 (20.00)
Financial option		11 (9.2)
Others		13 (10.8)

[§] Postgraduation completed or ongoing. [†] Accepted more than one response.

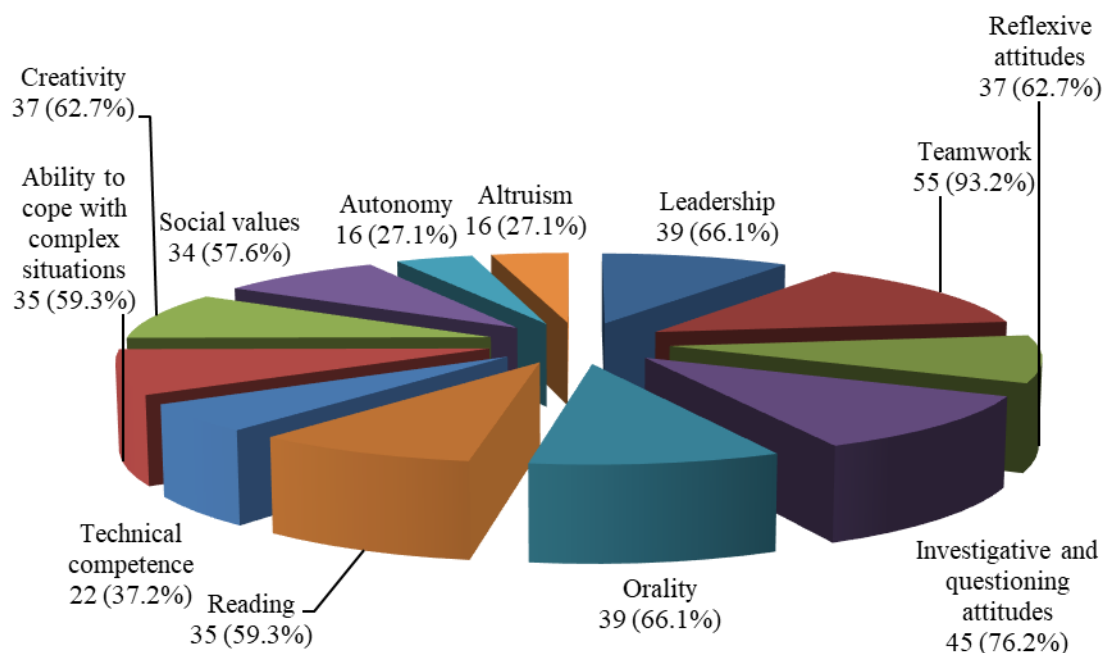
The main reasons that led participants to enter the program were to develop teaching, research and extension activities (26%), and they participated in PET between 7 and 8 academic

semesters (59%). The reasons that led them to leave PET were course completion (93.2%) and desire to participate in other programs (3.3%). Also, 55 participants (93.2%) reported that

participation contributed to their performance in undergraduate activities. A total of 59 participants (100%) stated that they had developed important skills for their training, such as ability of teamwork, spirit of leadership and ability to develop reflective, investigative and questioning attitudes (Graph 1).

Concerning the participation in social activities developed by PET Dentistry group at UFPel, most participants (83%) stated they participated in these activities, contributing to the

personal training of all graduates (100%). In the onset, as a Special Training Program, the relevance of training based on social commitment was not understood, and this aspect was included within the objectives of the Tutorial Education Program after edition of the Basic Guidelines Handout in 2002¹². Thus, by participating in PET, the graduates were able to develop several skills for their personal and professional training, besides cognitive, social and affective aspects.



Graph 1. Skills developed by participation in the PET group^s (n=59) (multiple choice).

Concerning the knowledge/competence in other languages, most graduates responded positively (93.2%). For this portion, it was questioned which languages were dominant, with English (54%) followed by Spanish (32%) as the most cited. However, languages as French, Arabic, German and Italian, though in minority, were also reported.

Regarding the evaluation of graduates

on the objectives proposed by PET to diffuse new ideas and practices, most (89.8%) believe that this objective is achieved. Also, it is noted that the program contributed with great intensity (62.7%) to enhance the quality of training of scholarship students and also has the ability to stimulate the training of professionals and professors for Dentistry courses (71.2%) (Table 3).

When the graduates were asked to assign a numerical value to the PET program, proposing this evaluation on a scale of progressive intensity from 1 to 5, the majority (66.1%) assigned score 5 to the program, considering it great. Also, when asked about the influence of PET on their professional careers, 19 (32.2%) highlighted a score 4 intensity, and 32 (54.2%) a score 5 intensity,

corroborating the influencing effect of PET on their professional careers (Table 3).

Last but not least, the professional satisfaction of graduates with their career revealed that only 1.7% are dissatisfied, while most reported being very satisfied with their profession (47.5%), followed by moderate satisfaction (30.5%) and total satisfaction (20.3%), as shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Contributory perception and evaluation of PET

Variable	Category	Distribution N (%)
Did PET achieve its goal in the dissemination of new ideas and practices to other students of the course, by the action of scholarship students as multiplying agents?	Yes	53 (89.8)
	No	6 (10.2)
Did PET achieve its goal in the contribution to increase the quality of academic training of students participating in PET, and to which intensity?	None	-
	Little	-
	Moderate	3 (5.1)
	Very much	37 (62.7)
	Totally	19 (32.2)
Did PET achieve its goal to stimulate the training of professionals and professors with high technical, scientific, technological and academic qualification?	None	-
	Little	-
	Moderate	3 (5.1)
	Very much	42 (71.2)
	Totally	14 (23.7)
How do you evaluate the PET program ?	1 Bad	-
	2 Regular	-
	3 Good	1 (1.7)
	4 Very good	19 (32.2)
	5 Excellent	39 (66.1)
Do you consider that PET influenced your professional career , and to which intensity?	1 Bad	1 (1.7)
	2 Regular	2 (3.4)
	3 Good	5 (8.5)
	4 Very good	19 (32.2)
	5 Excellent	32 (54.2)

Table 4. Professional satisfaction of graduates with their career, according to gender

Degree of satisfaction	Gender		Total	
	Male	Female	N	%
Poorly satisfied	-	1	1	1.7
Moderately satisfied	6	12	18	30.5
Very satisfied	10	17	28	47.5
Totally satisfied	7	6	12	20.3
Total	23	36	59	100

It is legitimate to assume that graduates are a privileged source of information that allows to understand the scope, effects and consequences of an educational action. This study may be the most powerful and informative means to understand the efficacy of a program and how the practices and values of individuals were really influenced⁸.

We believe that the approach of graduates should also include an assessment of competences foreseen in the objectives established by the Basic Guidelines Handout of PET¹², to effectively promote the training desired by the program and its effective professional performance. If, on one hand, it is important to analyze the results of programs as PET, on the other hand there are challenges in creating instruments and indicators for such evaluation measures.

Regarding the graduates of this PET program with a profile related to the health area, there were no significant differences from other studies that also evidenced the improvement and continuing education of their graduates^{10,12,13}. Postgraduation is a reality of almost all participating graduates, as shown in Table 2. Unfortunately, there is no institutional policy for the management of graduates, and besides the scarcity of published studies, its follow-up is incipient in most Brazilian institutions¹¹.

PET, using its premise of inseparability

between the basic pillars of university knowledge (teaching, research and extension), favors the breakdown of technical academic inertia and the lack of critical sense, training qualified professionals with social commitment⁵. Currently, the philosophy of the PET program aims to encourage a more comprehensive training, based on the National Curriculum Guidelines (DCN), inseparable in its fundamental pillars and with total reversion from the elitist thinking of the period when it was established, even as a Special Training Program, when it only aimed at strengthening the national postgraduation courses¹².

It is fundamental to better understand the scope of actions developed by the Program over time, especially by prospective evaluative studies that provide valid evidence of the efficacy and usefulness of the PET program in the context of professionals with better training in their respective professional fields²³.

Finally, it is important to realize that this study corroborates others that evaluated graduates of tutorial education programs, regarding objective evaluations of their former students. The methodological experiences provided by the program in teaching, research and extension, combined with the perspective of liberating pedagogy, determined that participation in the program has been a positive and strong differential in the training of

graduates^{12,13}.

Knowledge on the graduates' profile is fundamental to understand what is expected from their careers in the higher education institution, achieving the necessary skills for the full exercise of the profession.

4 CONCLUSION

Most PET graduates evaluated in the study are inserted in the labor market in their field of training, acting as professionals or professors, presenting professional qualifications from postgraduation courses. The Tutorial Education Program of FO-UFPel has been playing an important role in the professional career of graduates, revealing as a preponderant point with great influence in the life of former participants.

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RESUMO

Avaliação dos egressos do Programa de Educação Tutorial (PET) do curso de Odontologia da Universidade Federal de Pelotas

O objetivo desse trabalho foi avaliar o perfil profissional dos egressos da Faculdade de Odontologia da Universidade Federal de Pelotas, participantes do Programa de Educação Tutorial (PET). Foi realizada uma pesquisa descritiva, de natureza qualitativa e quantitativa, utilizando um questionário eletrônico estruturado e autoaplicável como instrumento de coleta e enviado, via correspondência eletrônica, à todos os egressos que participaram efetivamente do grupo PET e aceitaram participar desta pesquisa. Atividade profissional, níveis de formação e objetivos propostos pelo programa foram avaliados. O total de egressos foi de 89, desde a criação do grupo, em 1992, até o ano de 2019. Com as respostas obtidas (n=59), verificou-se que maior parte dos egressos que aderiram a

pesquisa concluíram o curso entre os anos de 2004 até 2018 (59.3%), e apenas 24 (40.6%) em período anterior a 2004. Verificou-se que 25% atuam no serviço público, 44% no setor privado e 22% atuam em ambos. Em relação à titulação, apenas 4 (6,8%) não possuem nenhuma pós-graduação, e 53 (89.8%) atuam na região Sul do país, 36 (61%) são do sexo feminino e 23 (39%) do masculino. Ao final do questionário, foi perguntado a respeito da influência da participação no Programa sobre a trajetória profissional, com uma escala de intensidade progressiva de 1 a 5, gerando 19 respostas com nível 4 e 39 respostas com nível 5. Os resultados evidenciaram uma influência muito positiva da participação no Programa na vida profissional de seus ex-participantes, tanto no mercado de trabalho, quanto na vivência de pós-graduação.

Descritores: Odontologia. Educação Superior. Avaliação Educacional.

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Correspondence to:

Josué Martos

e-mail: josue.sul@terra.com.br

Faculdade de Odontologia
Universidade Federal de Pelotas
Rua Gonçalves Chaves 457.
96015-560 Pelotas/RS Brazil