

Professional profile of the dentistry school graduates from a university in the interior of the state of Bahia


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Professional profile of the dentistry school graduates from a university in the interior of the state of Bahia

Abstract The objective of this study was to review the profile of the Dentistry School graduates from a State University in Southwest Bahia and the degree of satisfaction in relation to their work. A qualitative-quantitative and cross-sectional study was carried out using an online self-administered questionnaire forwarded through the social networks WhatsApp and Instagram to dental surgeons who graduated between 2009 and 2020. The data obtained were tabulated in an Excel spreadsheet and subjected to descriptive analysis and Pearson's Chi-square test with a significance level of 5%. For the open-ended question, the content analysis technique proposed by Bardin was used. Out of the 383 graduates, 124 (32%) participated in the survey. The majority (84.6%) entered the job market within one month after graduation and had been working as independent professionals (30.2%). There was a significant difference with regard to job satisfaction and financial appreciation. The insecurity in the professional endeavor was associated with the fact that a teacher's guidance was no more available. Furthermore, little exploration of management and entrepreneurship matters had been addressed during the graduation course. It is concluded that graduates were able to quickly enter the job market after graduating and that extracurricular activities are crucial in guiding their future profession and in contributing to professional qualification.

Descriptors: Personal Satisfaction. Dentistry. Job Market.

Perfil profesional de los egresados de la carrera de Odontología en una universidad del interior de Bahía

Resumen El objetivo de este estudio fue comprender el perfil profesional de los egresados de la Carrera de Odontología de la Universidad Estadual del Suroeste de Bahía y el grado de satisfacción en relación al ámbito de trabajo. Se realizó un estudio cuali-cuantitativo y transversal mediante un cuestionario en línea autoadministrado enviado a través de redes sociales a cirujanos dentistas egresados entre 2009 y 2020. Los datos obtenidos fueron tabulados en una hoja de cálculo Excel y sometidos a análisis descriptivo y prueba de Pearson. chi-cuadrado con un nivel de significancia del 5%. Cuando la frecuencia esperada fue menor de cinco ($n < 5$), se utilizó la prueba exacta de Fisher. Para la pregunta discursiva se utilizó la técnica de análisis de contenido propuesta por Bardin. De los 383 graduados, 124 (32%) participaron de la investigación. Se observó que el 74,2% son mujeres y el 44,6% completó la especialización. La mayoría (84,6%) ingresó al mercado laboral dentro del mes posterior a su graduación y trabajó como profesionales independientes (30,2%). Hubo diferencia significativa cuando se asociaron las variables satisfacción con la profesión y apreciación financiera. La inseguridad en el trabajo en la profesión estaba relacionada con la falta de supervisión docente. Además, se destacó poca exploración de contenidos de gestión y emprendimiento durante la graduación. Se concluye que los egresados lograron insertarse rápidamente al mercado laboral luego de graduarse y que un alto porcentaje de los cirujanos dentistas se sienten satisfechos con su profesión.

Descriptorios: Satisfacción Personal. Odontología. Mercado de Trabajo.

Perfil profissional dos egressos do curso de Odontologia de uma universidade do interior da Bahia

Resumo O objetivo desse estudo foi conhecer o perfil profissional dos egressos do Curso de Odontologia da Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia e o grau de

satisfação em relação ao âmbito de trabalho. Foi realizado um estudo quali-quantitativo e transversal por meio de questionário *online* autoaplicável enviado por meio das redes sociais para os cirurgiões-dentistas que colaram grau entre 2009 e 2020. Os dados obtidos foram tabulados em planilha Excel e submetidos à análise descritiva e ao teste Qui-quadrado de Pearson com nível de significância de 5%. Quando a frequência esperada foi menor que cinco ($n < 5$), utilizou-se o teste exato de Fisher. Para a questão discursiva foi utilizada a técnica de análise de conteúdo proposta por Bardin. Dos 383 egressos, 124 (32%) participaram da pesquisa. Observou-se que 74,2% são do sexo feminino e 44,6% realizaram especialização. A maioria (84,6%) se inseriu no mercado de trabalho em até um mês após a formatura e atuavam como profissional liberal (30,2%). Houve diferença significativa quando associadas as variáveis satisfação com a profissão e valorização financeira. A insegurança em atuar na profissão foi relacionada a não ter mais a supervisão do docente. Ademais, foram apontadas pouca exploração nos conteúdos de gestão e empreendedorismo durante a graduação. Conclui-se que os egressos conseguiram uma rápida inserção no mercado de trabalho após a colação de grau e que um elevado percentual dos cirurgiões-dentistas se sente satisfeito com a profissão.

Descritores: Satisfação Pessoal. Odontologia. Mercado de Trabalho.

INTRODUCTION

The number of students who completed undergraduate courses increased by 49% in private institutions and 32.3% in public institutions¹ between 2008 and 2018. In order that new professionals meet the demand of the job market, they ought to go through a thorough education process at the university covering technical, biological, scientific, social and humanistic aspects^{2,3}.

The growth of the number of Dentistry professionals is directly related to the establishment and offering of such Course in different institutions⁴. Furthermore, some factors have contributed to the public changing attitude towards dental work including the demand for health prevention and promotion services, commercialism, advances in oral health and epidemiological, social and cultural factors^{5, 6}.

The *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais* (DCN, National Curricular Guidelines) in Dentistry require that a newly graduated professional be trained as a generalist first and then expand his/her work abilities⁷. Furthermore, dental education in this country is regulated by Resolution CNE/CES 3, dated February 19, 2002, the same Resolution that established the DCN; this explains the need for periodic evaluations of the different institutions' curricular matrices in order to ensure and incorporate adjustments in the education programs, considering the demands of the sectors in which the dentists will work⁸.

According to the DCN, dental surgeons' training must provide graduates with skills and abilities in connection with health care, decision-making, communication, leadership, administration, management and continuing education⁹. For professionals to be able to perform accordingly, it is essential that the university, like any other formal education establishment, take on a double challenge: educating and training professionals to enable them to meet the market demands².

Despite the incentives for the development of individuals with a profile that combines academic knowledge with the field of the specific work activities, the majority of dentistry graduates still have the feeling that college education is insufficient to meet all the practice requirements¹⁰. Furthermore, studies have shown that, when it comes to the practice, graduates feel insecure and unprepared to manage services, take on positions and lead teams¹¹.

In this connection, it is important to understand whether there is a relationship between academic activities and professional practice through the rapprochement between graduates and the university to improve the training of future dental surgeons and guide the course's pedagogical projects. Based on this assumption, the objective of this study was to understand the profile of the Dentistry Course graduates from the *Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia* (UESB, State University of Southwest Bahia) and the degree of satisfaction in relation to their work.

METHOD

This qualitative-quantitative and cross-sectional study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the *Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia* (UESB) (CAAE) under number 44207421.2.0000.0055. The study population included graduates of the UESB undergraduate Dentistry course who graduated between 2009 and 2020.

An online questionnaire was applied, which was created based on studies carried out by De Melo Júnior *et al.*¹² and Pinheiro and Noro⁶ and was previously tested with eight graduates to verify its reliability and validity; it contains 26 close-ended questions and one open-ended question; the questionnaire is separated into four blocks: first (personal data), second (time since graduation), third (academic training and satisfaction with the University course) and fourth (professional practice). Before viewing the questionnaire on the Google Forms platform (Google forms), the graduate viewed the Free and Informed Consent Form, read it and agreed to participate in the survey.

The questionnaires were forwarded via the social networks WhatsApp and Instagram during the period from March to August 2021. Contacts were facilitated through a profile on the social network that brings together graduates, students and teachers of the course. Thus, graduates were identified and received the link to access the questionnaire. The questionnaire was also sent to the individual's email registered on each graduate's Instagram.

The data were organized in an Excel spreadsheet and submitted to the Minitab version 17 program, where descriptive statistical analysis of the variables and Pearson's Chi-square test (χ^2) were performed, considering a significance level of 5%. Furthermore, for the open-ended question, the content analysis technique was used according to the phases proposed by Bardin¹³: Pre-analysis which is characterized by reading with fluctuating attention and Exploration of the material which is carried out through several readings this with the information already categorized to discover guidelines for the Analysis itself.

RESULTS

Out of the 383 dental surgeons who graduated from UESB between 2009 and 2021, 124 participated in the survey. A total 74.2% were female; 84.6% had entered the job market within one month after graduation. In relation to the type of professional practice, 30.2% were independent professionals and 44.6% had completed a specialization course (Tables 1 and 2).

According to the data deployed in Table 3, 77.4% of the participants felt secure to practice the profession after graduating, associating the college/faculty as the main reason (30.9%).

Table 1. Performance in the job market.

Variable	n	%
<i>Lag time from graduation to entering the job market</i>		
Up to 1 month	104	84.6
More than 1 month	19	15.4
<i>Time in the professional practice</i>		
Less than 1 year	8	6.5
From 1 to 5 years	75	61.0
More than 5 years	40	32.5
<i>Current type of professional practice</i>		
Independent professional	60	30.2
Private company	53	26.6
Public office	46	23.1

Table 2. Highest Postgraduate degree.

Variable	n	%
<i>Do or have already taken a postgraduate course</i>		
Specialization	88	44.6
Refresher course	71	37.6
Master's degree	20	10.6
Ph.D. degree	2	1.1
None	8	4.2
<i>Area of the course he/she took/takes</i>		
Surgery	41	17.5
Endodontics	39	16.7
Public Health	35	15.0
Orthodontics	29	12.4
Dentistry	22	9.4
Prosthesis	19	8.1
Pediatric Dentistry	12	5.1
Periodontics	8	3.4
Forensic Dentistry	2	0.9
Other	27	11.5

Table 3. Graduates' perception of feeling secure in exercising the profession.

Variável	n	%
<i>Felt secure to practice the profession</i>		
Yes	96	77.4
No	28	22.6
<i>Reason for security</i>		
School/faculty	86	30.9
Personal interest	59	21.2
Monitoring	44	15.8
Internship	43	15.5
Extension activities	25	9.0
Improvement course during graduation	21	7.6
<i>Contribution of academic activities to the autonomy of the profession</i>		
Quite	44	36.1
A little	37	30.3
Very	28	23.0
No	13	10.7

As for insecurity, the factors most reported in the open-ended question are transcribed in full in Figure 1.

Categories	Excerpts from the comments
Academic education	<i>"Inexperience and lack of in-depth knowledge in some areas"</i>
Understanding of administration/management/marketing	<i>"Lack of preparation for marketing and patient acquisition"</i>
Support from the professors at the University	<i>"During the graduation course we had support (from professors) whenever we needed it. After graduation it's just you and God"</i>

Figure 1. Reports from graduates of a public university regarding the reasons for insecurity in practicing the profession.

A total of 16.6% of the study participants classified Dentistry as the area of greatest affinity, 65.5% considered the knowledge acquired during graduation to be sufficient and 91% would take the course again. The other characteristics of affinity with the areas are described in Table 5.

Table 6 shows the conditions regarding satisfaction with the course. The association with the independent variables showed significant relevance ($p=0.014$) when evaluated by age group and ($p=0.001$) with the extracurricular activities carried out if related to the areas of affinity.

Table 4. Assessment of satisfaction with the profession according to gender, financial appreciation, time spent working and extracurricular activities of Dentistry graduates.

Variable	Satisfied with the profession		p-value
	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	
<i>Gender</i>			0.802
Male	71 (77.1)	21 (22.8)	
Female	24 (75.0)	8 (25.0)	
<i>Financially valued</i>	58 (69.0)	26 (30.6)	0.002*
Yes	30 (93.7)	2 (6.2)	
No	58 (69.0)	26 (30.9)	
<i>Professional practice time</i>			0.31
Less than 1 year	7 (87.5)	1 (12.5)	
From 1 to 5 years	56 (74.7)	19 (25.3)	
More than 5 years	32 (80.0)	8 (20.0)	
<i>Relationship of extracurricular activities with the autonomy of the profession</i>			0.002*
Quite	36 (81.3)	8 (18.2)	
Very	26 (92.8)	2 (7.1)	
No	9 (69.2)	4 (30.7)	
A little	23 (62.2)	14 (37.8)	

*p<0.05; Fisher's exact test.

Table 5. Area(s) and reason(s) for identification of graduates during graduation.

Variable	n	%
<i>Areas identified during the graduation course</i>		
Dentistry	76	16.6
Public Health	71	15.5
Surgery	68	14.7
Endodontics	54	11.8
Forensic Dentistry	44	9.6
Orthodontics	43	9.4
Pediatric Dentistry	41	9.0
Prosthesis	33	7.2
Periodontics	28	6.1
<i>Reason for the affinity with the area</i>		
Experience and practice at the school clinic	96	24.4
Personal interest	95	24.2
Teachers' didactics	86	21.9
Good relationship with teachers	67	17.0
Greater clinical and theoretical time in the discipline	43	10.9
Other reasons	6	1.5
<i>Areas with least affinity during graduation course</i>		
Prosthesis	67	26.1
Endodontics	41	16.0
Orthodontics	34	13.2
Periodontics	32	12.5
Surgery	22	8.6
Pediatric Dentistry	22	8.6
Forensic Dentistry	13	5.1
Public Health	22	8.6
Dentistry	4	1.6
<i>Reason for lack of affinity with the area</i>		
Experience and practice at the school clinic	72	36.0
Other reasons	46	23.0
Misunderstanding of teachers' teaching	35	17.5
Difficulty maintaining a good relationship with teachers	35	17.5
Greater clinical/theoretical time in the discipline	12	6.0

Table 6. Assessment of satisfaction with the course.

Variable	Satisfied with the course		p-value
	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	
<i>Gender</i>			0.812
Female	82 (89.1)	10 (10.9)	
Male	29 (90.6)	3 (9.4)	
<i>Age group</i>			0.014*
21 to 25	26 (30.6)	58 (69)	
26 to 30	21 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	
31 or more	55 (82.1)	12 (17.9)	
<i>Acquired knowledge</i>			0.16
Insufficient	34 (97.1)	1 (2.9)	
Reasonable	3 (100)	0 (0.0)	
Enough	33 (84.6)	6 (15.4)	
Rather not answer	74 (92.5)	6 (7.5)	
<i>Relationship of extracurricular activities carried out with the affinity areas</i>			0.001*
No	1 (50)	9 (50)	
Yes	14 (93.3)	1 (6.7)	
I didn't participate	97 (89.8)	11 (10.2)	
	-	1 (100)	

*p<0,05; Fisher's exact test.

DISCUSSION

Female dental surgeons were the majority of participants in this survey. In the Northeast region, they represent more than 60%¹⁴, in line with the present study which included 74.2% female dentists.

San Martin *et al.*¹⁵ concluded in their work that there is a saturation of dental surgeons in the job market in Brazil due to the large number of Dentistry courses spread throughout the country. Nevertheless, the majority of graduates joined the job market within one month after graduating, corroborating other findings^{6,8}. Entry into the job market may be due to various specialties in the dental field¹⁶ or because there is a shortage of professionals¹⁴, mainly in the interior of the states in the Northeast region.

In relation to professional practice, the highest percentage (30.2%) included working as independent professional, corroborating the findings of another study¹². Exclusive professional work in private practices is no longer a reality for dental surgeons¹⁷ a fact that expands the possibilities for public and teaching positions. This is because undergraduate courses in Dentistry are focused on stimulating technical and generalist skills and also activities to encourage teaching¹². Furthermore, the National Oral Health Policy, through the *Brasil Sorridente* program, incorporated Oral Health Teams into the Family Health Strategy, expanding dental access and the field of work in the government Unified Health System^{18,19}.

The job market demands the attitude of an increasingly qualified and updated professional to meet the needs of the population. In this connection, the data from this study showed the participants' interest in continuing education, as 93.9% are taking or have already taken a postgraduate course, a higher percentage than what was found in other jobs^{12,20,21}. Surgery represented the specialty in which the course was most attended, differing from the numbers found in the databases of the Federal Council of Dentistry and other studies that show Orthodontics as the specialty with the highest number of records^{22,6}.

When asked about the security to practice the profession after graduation, the majority responded positively, similar to the results found by De Melo Júnior *et al.*¹² and De Araújo¹⁷. The main reasons for the feeling of trust were the support of the Institution/faculty plus the contributions of academic activities and personal interest.

On the other hand, the feeling of insecurity is common among recent graduates due to the change in the usual clinic routine and the lack of help from professors when finishing college.²³ Another factor to be taken into consideration for

the lack of self-confidence is the lack of exploration of marketing and management matters during the graduation course. Therefore, the dental surgeon's work scenario implies, in addition to carrying out the clinical procedures, an understanding of workplace management, entrepreneurship and patient recruitment¹².

The curricular components of the Dentistry course are based, in particular, on patient care. This contributes positively to preparing good professionals to work in the market, but without the prospect of combining professional and financial success²⁴. We ought to observe that the entrepreneurship discipline has been incorporated into the dentistry course program's options at the Federal University of Pernambuco. The objective is the elucidation of entrepreneurship, teamwork and leadership models in order to meet the requirements of academic training. However, it was observed that this course subject ought to be considered a mandatory subject or increase the workload to achieve the proposed objectives¹².

The concern with financial return and professional development are aspects taken into consideration as of the date of the student's Dentistry school admission and such concern is enhanced after graduation²⁵. Ferraz MÂAL *et al*⁸ indicate that the dental category is one of the highest paid jobs in Health; however, the data showed that not being paid adequately is positively associated with greater dissatisfaction in working in the profession. This feeling is only described by recent graduates, as their earnings are considered insufficient to meet all their needs.

The University stands on the tripod of teaching, research and extension and students go through experiences that come close to the reality of their future profession. Monitoring programs, academic leagues and scientific initiation give students the opportunity to experience teaching, but extension activities are of a clinical or management nature. Therefore, extracurricular activities, in addition to guiding the students' future career, are important means of professional qualification^{2,6}. Hence, the present survey agrees with this definition, as it demonstrated that satisfaction in working in the profession had a significant difference when associated with the relationship of extracurricular activities for the autonomy of the profession.

Graduates considered the knowledge acquired during the graduation course to be sufficient and the majority would take the course again, an outcome similar to that obtained in other studies^{2,12,17}. The choice and admiration for Dentistry goes beyond the job market situation, since vocation factors, family influence, positive patient feedback and admiration for the profession can influence professional satisfaction²⁶.

The practice concerning the subjects offered in the course curriculum, despite being similar for each new class, is individualized as far as the students' experience is concerned. Thus, the Prosthetics discipline was chosen as the one with the least affinity and Dentistry as the one with the highest affinity; they were selected though, for the same reason. Therefore, it is inferred that some factors may have led to this relationship, such as the theoretical knowledge applied in the clinic, the student's expectations and anxieties and the procedures performed.

The level of satisfaction with the course was positively associated with the age group and the relationship of extracurricular activities carried out with the areas of affinity. This demonstrates that graduates choose to be involved in activities related to the area of greatest affinity, which could have facilitated the development of the teaching-learning process, smoothing the academic trajectory and contributing to the approval of *stricto sensu* course programs or competitions. And when associated with acquired knowledge, there is no statistically significant difference, in line with another study¹².

Furthermore, limitations of the present study were considered to be the participation of only 32% of the population investigated a fact that may be attributed to the difficulty in reaching all graduates electronically due to the lack of use of social networks with a certain frequency or changes in e-mail. It is suggested that the investigation should continue to reach a larger sample of graduates so that inferences are not made about the population researched for certain periods. However, our work presents positive points: the validation of the applied instrument and the possibility of contributing to the evolution of the course based on the aspects identified with the aim of preparing graduates for their future profession, configuring good health professionals.

CONCLUSION

The profile of dental surgeons graduated from UESB between 2009 and 2021 is characterized by a predominantly female professional, aged 26 to 30 who has taken a specialization course. The study highlighted a rapid insertion into the job market by graduates and the importance of the students' participation in extracurricular activities as a strategy for the perspectives of the future profession. The need to develop skills and abilities regarding management and entrepreneurship during the graduation course was also emphasized.

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