

Factors Affecting Career Satisfaction among Dentists of Pakistan

AHMAD LIAQUAT¹, EHSANUL HAQ², AIMAN GULL³, AYESHA SADIQA⁴, MUHAMMAD ABBAS⁵, MUHAMMAD RASHID⁶

^{1,5,6}Assistant Professor, University College of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Lahore

²Assistant Professor, King Edward Medical University, Lahore

^{3,4}University College of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Lahore

Correspondence to Dr. Ahmad Liaquat, Email: ahmadliaquat@gmail.com, Cell: 0345-4155798

ABSTRACT

Background: career satisfaction is considered as the amount or degree of gratification and contentment that a dentist fosters towards his/her overall job, factoring into that equation his/her satisfaction with the job itself, the peers at the job, the supervisors, and the policies at work.

Aim: To identify the factors that hinder dentists' jobs and their satisfaction levels.

Methods: The study was conducted over the period of two and half months at Lahore University College of Medicine and Dentistry. Sample size 194 was calculated and data were analyzed with simple descriptive statistics. This study was approved ethically by the ethical review committee of the University College of Dentistry, University of Lahore.

Results: Results showed there were some areas of dentistry that requires new policies for improvement.

Conclusion: Time to incorporate new technologies, learning new skills, and career aspirations show a high level of satisfaction while leisure time, income and opportunities for quality care are the least satisfying areas.

Keywords: career, satisfaction, dentistry,

INTRODUCTION

Satisfaction is a Latin word that means "to do/make enough". According to psychology, "Satisfaction with one's life implies a contentment with or acceptance of one. Life circumstances or the fulfillment of one's wants and needs for one's life as a whole"¹. It is a subjective assessment of a person about the judgment of life and success. Career satisfaction ultimately impacts the dentist's performance and the motivation that he/she needs for the service of the community and helping the patients. Motivation has a direct relation with dentistry.

In the past career satisfaction in dentistry was assessed in various countries including china, turkey, India, etc. Several studies were also conducted in Europe, UK and USA. Studies showed that dentists belonging to the orthodontic community of Canada, practitioners as they get more experience, become more satisfied with dentistry. Studies also showed attaining higher education, employment of good dental auxiliaries, and a higher amount of income are the factors of satisfaction in dentists. While the contrary, people with the threat of malpractice, personal time, the threat of malpractice and demands of managing the practice are more dissatisfied^{2,3}.

Although the health care system is different in these countries. And these countries will also have different factors for satisfaction as compared to Pakistan. There is a need to know about satisfaction factors in Pakistan.

This article aimed to explore career satisfaction in dentists. The satisfaction is not merely based upon money; it also includes, delivering care to patients, respect, mental health, motivation, dentist-patient relationship, workplace environment coordination, opportunities to excel in the future and skills of auxiliary staff, and leisure time. These all together make a career satisfactory.

Career satisfaction comes after the complex interaction of income, the work performance of auxiliary staff, dentist-patient relationship, skills that require to cope with medical emergencies, leisure time, time for professional contacts, ability and time for the learning and updating yourself with the new and innovative technologies in the practice and most importantly either it is fulfilling career aspiration or not.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was conducted at the University College of Medicine and Dentistry, the University of Lahore, after taking approval from the ethical board. The duration of the study was two months. The

Received on 03-04-2022

Accepted on 23-08-2022

sample size of 194 was calculated with a confidence interval of 95%. The targeted audience includes academics dentists, clinicians and postgraduate trainees. While the dentists who refused to fill out the questionnaire and undergraduate students were excluded. A pre-validated questionnaire was distributed by hand and through google forms. The questionnaire was based on DSS (dentist satisfaction survey) which is a standardized instrument to collect the findings. The questionnaire included close-ended questions for the quantitative research. The questionnaire contains 31 survey-based questions.

This survey was measured on a 5-points Likert scale of 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree & 5= strongly agree. The questionnaire also included the demographic data which include gender, years of practicing, special training, area of practice, and per week working hours. The agreed response was simply obtained after the addition of the percentages of agreed and strongly agreed. Strongly disagreed and disagreed responses were also added to conclude the disagreement percentages. Agreed responses are also taken as the satisfaction rate while disagreed responses are taken as dissatisfaction. Negative phrases items were taken contrary.

RESULTS

Results were obtained after the distribution and after filling out the questionnaire. In the study, from the total participating population 55.2% were females and 44.8% were males and 39.2% were specially trained in different areas of dentistry while others were general practitioners and 73.2% had the experience of <5years, and the rest have experience >5 years. Of the participants 40.2% showed a neutral response regarding the auxiliary qualities, 38.1% agreed regarding the lacking of the quality of auxiliary staff 21.2%, and neutral responses were shown by 49.6% of practicing dentists. Regarding work performance, participants showed a neutral response and were satisfied with coordination as shown in Fig.1. For the question related to the income, participants said they are earning much lower income as compared to other dentists, and are dissatisfied with the item that the income is satisfactory for their needs and the income which allows well to provide for their families and their income as not high as compared to other dentists who live in other parts of the world.

The next items included the time learning new skills and technologies. A dentist should keep his/her self updated with the new knowledge and technologies. Item evaluating the time to keep abreast in dentistry showed a neutral response rate with 37.6% and 36.6% & 25.7% satisfied and dissatisfied responses respectively. While the participating dentists in this survey with the population percentages of 49.5%, 27.3% & 23.2% said they have

time to improve technologies satisfied, neutral and dissatisfied respectively. 41.2% are satisfied as they have time for incorporation of new technologies and 41.8% have a good time to discuss the difficult cases with colleagues. Overall, participants showed a satisfaction level to learn and incorporate technologies and skills.

Fig. 1: Satisfaction related to dental auxiliaries

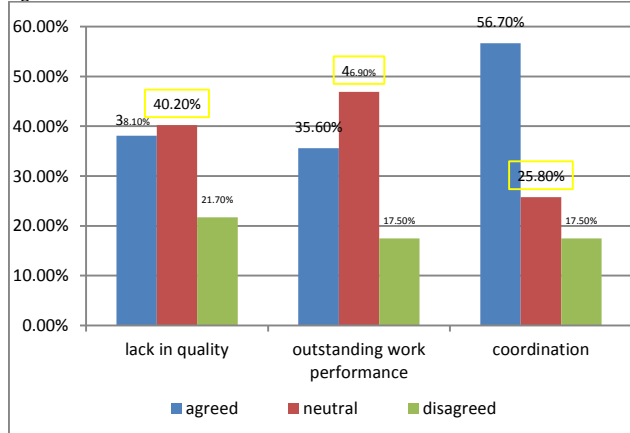


Fig. 2: Satisfaction related to income.

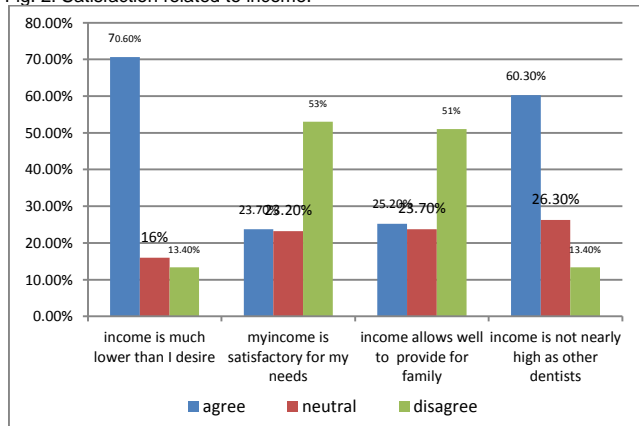
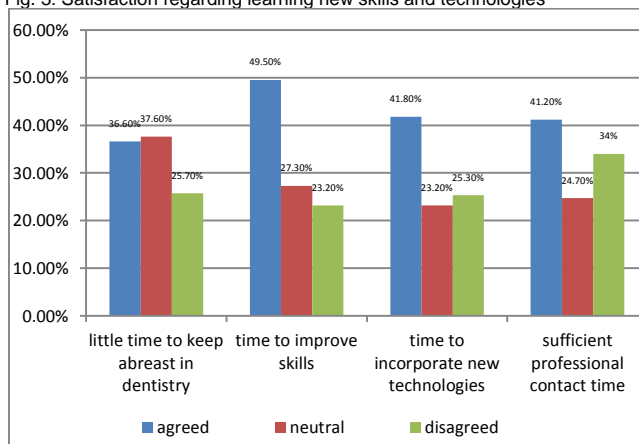
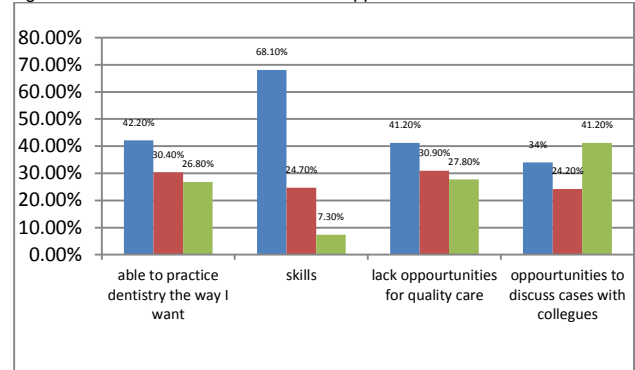


Fig. 3: Satisfaction regarding learning new skills and technologies



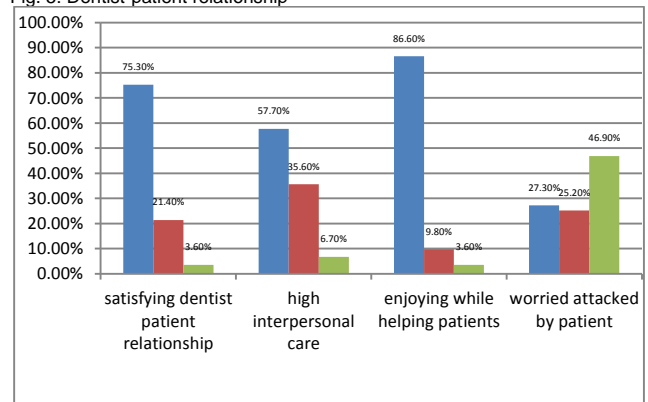
Dentists of Lahore have much work freedom and they are satisfied it the opportunities for the care and treatment of cases of patients they are lacking and are unsatisfied in this area.

Fig. 4: Satisfaction in work freedom and opportunities



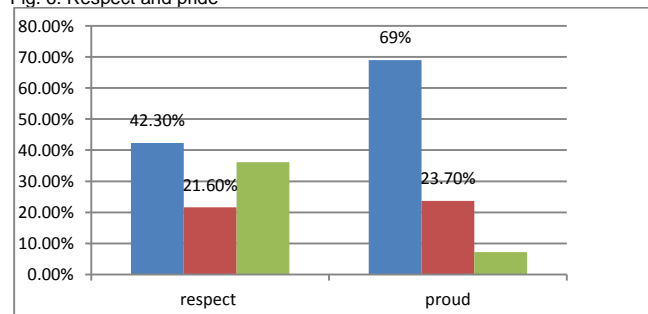
A good dentist-patient relationship increases the patient's trust in the dentist and increases the patient's adherence to the treatment plan and the dentist's confidence and capabilities. Dentists have high personal care and they are satisfied as they are less worried about attacking patients.

Fig. 5: Dentist-patient relationship



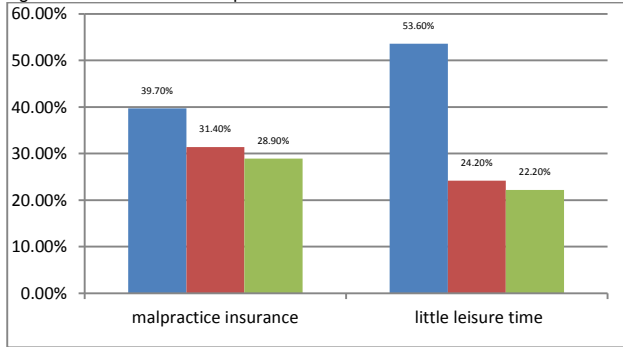
Dentistry is a much more respectful profession in Pakistan and the majority is satisfied with it and dentists also feel proud as a dentist when they serve the community.

Fig. 6: Respect and pride



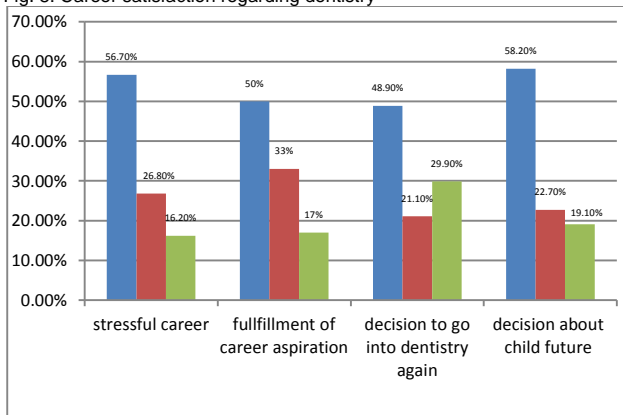
No insurance company is offering malpractice insurance at this moment in Pakistan so when asked from the practicing dentist will they buy malpractice insurance in the future if any company will offer it in the future. People responded as agreed was 39.7%, that they will buy malpractice insurance while 28.9% disagreed they will not buy malpractice insurance. Dentists of Lahore said they have very little leisure time and are not satisfied with it. As already known, Dentistry is a stressful career. This survey also verified it because 56.7% agreed it is a stressful career for them. But dentistry is fulfilling the aspirations of a career.

Fig. 7: Leisure time and malpractice insurance



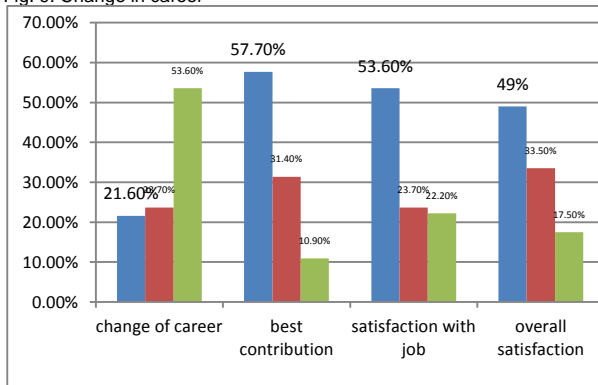
Two items were asked to judge the dentists' thinking about how they perceive the dentistry for their children and for themselves if they want to opt the dentistry as a career either they will encourage their children or not? Majority of the participant agreed that will support/encourage their children. And in the second item, a situation was given by assuming that participants have the opportunity to go into the past and either they will choose the dentistry again or not while knowing all the facts that they know now, the majority agreed that they will choose the dentistry again and again in future if they get an opportunity in future.

Fig. 8: Career satisfaction regarding dentistry



Dentists of Lahore are satisfied with their profession as from the participating population 53.6% disagreed they will not change their career in the future as they are satisfied and dentists said this is the field where they are serving the community with their best contributions and 53.6% and 49% participants are satisfied with their job and overall satisfied respectively.

Fig. 9: Change in career



DISCUSSION

Recently for a few years, it has been focused on the factors of career satisfaction of dentists. The primary goal was to determine the level of satisfaction among dentists.

UK and USA studies showed that dentists become satisfied when they get experienced. Studies also showed attaining higher education, employment of good dental auxiliaries, and a higher amount of income are the factors of satisfaction in dentists. While the contrary, people with the threat of malpractice, personal time, and the threat of malpractice and demands of managing the practice are more dissatisfied²⁻⁶.

Respondents were more satisfied with professional relations, staff, respect, professional time, and professional environment. Two studies in Australia and one study in India indicated that female dentists had higher job satisfaction than male dentists. 7 Some other studies conducted in the UK and Turkey reported that male dentists had higher mean career satisfaction scores than female dentists^{8,9}. Similar to our findings, several previous studies indicated that older dentists were more satisfied or less depressed with dentistry⁷⁻¹¹.

Most of the dentists in our study worked ≥ 40 hours per week (52.9%), which was more than the studies conducted in UK and USA but was shorter than one South Korean study. 8 Our study showed, that overall professional satisfaction is related to income, respect, personal time, delivery of care, and dentist-patient relationship. Factors like income, patient-related factors, and time for personal and leisure activities are importantly associated with career satisfaction. These findings are similar to the study done on factors related to job satisfaction among South Korean dentists¹².

Dentists of South Africa were dissatisfied due to limited opportunities in their specialties, and difficulties to excel in their careers and they are also frustrated due to the lack of development in dentistry¹³.

To promote and boost dentistry as a profession some factors like work freedom, new resources and opportunities, and relationships with colleagues including staff and patients should be improved. Evidence showed that one of the major factors is also included what influence one to choose dentistry as a career. An effective and stable dental team also plays an important major role in the satisfaction of a career. Dissatisfaction areas should be addressed like administrative chores, personal time and the hiring campaigns for the new graduates and dentists especially encouragements to keep stick with dentistry for those who are already working in dentistry. This study showed quite similar results as to the study conducted in china regarding auxiliary staff, leisure time, income, time for personal activities etc¹⁴.

Workplaces that offer job autonomy, competitive remuneration, flexible working hours and minimum administrative burden may improve dentist job satisfaction. Educational programs should be directed to help professionals to cope with their professional duties without hazardous effects on their physical and mental health¹⁵.

Strengths: We used a comprehensive dentist satisfaction survey, a standardized instrument, to create a homogenous finding. In our study we evaluated stress, the majority of other studies did not evaluate stress

Limitations: As there were closed-ended questions, there may be a chance of exaggeration or suppression of responses. It was a cross-sectional study and carried on a small population, so it may interfere while generalizing the results. But it was giving an estimate regarding the dental health system in Pakistan.

Recommendations: There is always lacking dental equipment and hiring policies in public sectors that should be addressed so that practitioners can pursue their carrier without any limitations and hesitation. New policies for the increase in dentist income and improved dental care should be made. New strategies that can reduce stress and improve a respectful working environment should also be made.

CONCLUSION

Professional relations, helpful staff, career aspirations, respect and overall job satisfaction have a medium level of satisfaction whereas leisure time, low income, opportunities for quality care and heavy stress cause dissatisfaction in this profession. Some issues can be even managed at a personal level between dentists by increasing cooperation and kindness towards each other.

REFERENCES

1. Worell J, editor. Encyclopedia of women and gender, two-volume set: Sex similarities and differences and the impact of society on gender. Academic Press; 2001 Sep 27.
2. Roth SF, Heo G, Varnhagen C, Major PW. The relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction in orthodontics. *American journal of orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics*. 2004 Jul 1;126(1):106-9.
3. Roth SF, Heo G, Varnhagen C, Glover KE, Major PW. Job satisfaction among Canadian orthodontists. *American journal of orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics*. 2003 Jun 1;123(6):695-700.
4. Luzzi L, Spencer AJ. Job satisfaction of the oral health labour force in Australia. *Australian dental journal*. 2011 Mar;56(1):23-32.
5. Ayers KM, Thomson WM, Rich AM, Newton JT. Gender differences in dentists' working practices and job satisfaction. *Journal of dentistry*. 2008 May 1; 36(5):343-50.
6. Puriene A, Aleksejuniene J, Petrauskiene J, Balciuniene I, Janulyte V. Self-perceived mental health and job satisfaction among Lithuanian dentists. *Industrial health*. 2008;46(3):247-52.
7. Luzzi L, Spencer AJ, Jones K, Teusner D. Job satisfaction of registered dental practitioners. *Australian dental journal*. 2005 Sep;50(3):179-85.
8. Kaipa S, Pydi SK, Kumar RV, Srinivasulu G, Darsi VR, Sode M. Career satisfaction among dental practitioners in Srikakulam, India. *Journal of International Society of Preventive & Community Dentistry*. 2015 Jan;5(1):40.
9. Gilmour J, Stewardson DA, Shugars DA, Burke FJ. An assessment of career satisfaction among a group of general dental practitioners in Staffordshire. *British dental journal*. 2005 Jun;198(11):701-4.
10. Shugars DA, Hays RD, DiMatteo MR, Cretin S. Development of an instrument to measure job satisfaction among dentists. *Medical care*. 1991 Aug 1;728-44.
11. Jeong SH, Chung JK, Choi YH, Sohn W, Song KB. Factors related to job satisfaction among South Korean dentists. *Community dentistry and oral epidemiology*. 2006 Dec;34(6):460-6.
12. Matjila SA, Madiba TK, Annandale-Dippenaar L, Olutola BG. Assessment of job satisfaction among dentists working in different settings in the Tshwane metro. *South African Dental Journal*. 2019 Jun;74(5):230-5.
13. Cui X, Dunning DG, An N. Satisfaction among early and mid-career dentists in a metropolitan dental hospital in China. *Journal of Healthcare Leadership*. 2017;9:35.
14. Fahim AE. Predictors of job satisfaction among practicing dentists at hospitals in Suez Canal Area, Egypt. *International journal of occupational medicine and environmental health*. 2013 Mar;26(1):49-57.
15. Dang MH, Kim JG, Yang YM, Lee DW. Dentist Job Satisfaction: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *International Dental Journal*. 2021 Oct 1;71(5):369-77.