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RESEARCH ARTICLE

"EXPLORING ASPIRATIONS AND REALITIES: A COMPREHENSIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE-BASED SURVEY ON THE CAREER OUTLOOK AND EXPECTATIONS OF DENTAL STUDENTS"

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Abstract

This study aims to assess the career expectations of dental students across various dental colleges in India through a comprehensive questionnaire. A structured questionnaire, encompassing factors related to career perceptions and expectations, was distributed among dental students in different regions of India. The study received responses from 403 participants, and subsequent data analysis was conducted to derive meaningful results. Among the 403 respondents, 170 (42.2%) expressed a preference for establishing themselves as self-employed dentists, while 140 (34.7%) indicated that family influences played a significant role in their career decision-making. The findings suggest a prevalent interest among dental students in establishing independent practices or working in established clinics, driven by aspirations for financial stability and a harmonious work-life balance. Family considerations emerged as a crucial factor influencing both short-term and long-term career plans. Respondents highlighted factors such as reduced bureaucracy, increased part-time job opportunities, and improved work-life balance as motivations for eventually establishing their own dental practices. The study reveals a notable inclination among dental students towards entrepreneurship and a desire to strike a balance between professional and personal life. Family dynamics play a pivotal role in shaping the career decisions of these students. Factors such as reduced bureaucratic hurdles and enhanced work-life balance were identified as significant contributors to the preference for establishing independent dental practices.

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Introduction:-

The health workforce is a crucial component in healthcare delivery (World Health Report; 2006), and dentistry is no exception. Therefore, gaining insight into the career expectations of upcoming dental graduates and postgraduates is vital for effectively harnessing human resources in support of oral health. This is a pressing need to delve into students' career expectations, identify influencing factors, and analyze variations based on school characteristics, as well as the stage of study in both graduation and post-graduation (Musa M.F.C, Bernabe E, Gallagher J.E ; 2016). The upcoming generations of dentists will encounter distinct challenges and opportunities, reflecting a shift in times and evolving circumstances (Wolf T, Wagner R, Zeyer O, Ilhan D, Crnic T, Otterbach E, Campus G; 2020). In the past, the primary emphasis was solely on maintaining optimal oral health; however, contemporary dentistry

places equal importance on esthetics. Moreover, the continuous discovery of new restorative materials and advancements in modern technologies are reshaping the landscape of dentistry globally.

The rising awareness of dental education among the Indian population has elevated their expectations from dental practitioners, with a growing preference among patients for consulting specialists rather than general dentists (Jain H, Aggarwal A;2012). Concurrently, there is a noticeable upward trend in post-graduation pursuits among undergraduates (Aggarwal D,Konkeri V, Sumitha S and Reddy CVK ; 2008). However, with limited seats available for post-graduation in dentistry, students face intense competition for higher education. Factors such as social standing and the allure of a high professional status appear to be influential in motivating students to choose their major specialty. Notably, a segment of young graduates actively explores alternative career avenues for professional growth, including opportunities abroad, healthcare management, clinical research, and administrative services. Simultaneously, some choose to transition out of healthcare entirely, seeking opportunities in diverse fields (Jain H, Aggarwal A;2012).

Extensive global research has been undertaken to examine the motivations behind choosing dentistry as a career option, with studies conducted in various regions, including the southern part of India (Aggarwal D,Konkeri V, Sumitha S and Reddy CVK; 2008),(Chattopadhyay A and Chatterjee M.; 1991),(Garla BK.; 2011), Ireland (Curtin S, Ray NJ, McKenna G and Burke FM. ;2012), Iran (Dasterji M.V. et al.;2012), Brazil (Mario do Carmo Matias Frerir et al.;2011), the United Kingdom (UK) (Davies L, Thomas DR, Sandhan SJ, Treasure ET and Chestnutt IG.; 2008), Nigeria (Orenuga OO and Decosta OO.; 2009), Peru (Bernabe E, Icaza JL, and Delgado – Angulo Ek.;2006), among others (Ravi K, Kumar P;2014). Notably, studies focusing on career aspirations and perspectives among undergraduate and postgraduate students in dentistry are limited (Ravi K, Kumar P.;2014). Recognizing this gap, our study is designed to evaluate the reasons, interests, future aspirations, and perspectives among dental students, contributing valuable insights to this relatively understudied aspect of dental education and career planning.

Materials And Methods:-

The primary objective of this cross-sectional survey was to gain insights into the career plans and expectations of dental students.

Study Population:

Seventeen dental schools spanning across India were strategically chosen to comprehensively understand the career expectations and preferences among students pursuing dentistry. A total of 403 students, encompassing both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, actively participated in the survey.

Data Collection:

For data collection, a self-administered questionnaire was utilized. In preparation for the survey, participating colleges provided students with preliminary information. The questionnaire, hosted on Google Forms, was disseminated via email through a web-link. The survey, conducted in English, the primary language of instruction in all Indian dental colleges, aimed to explore various aspects of students' perspectives on dentistry as a professional career. The questionnaire delved into their short and long-term career aspirations, the factors influencing their career choices, and demographic information such as gender and year of study.

The questionnaire covered an array of topics, including:

1. Basic information about the candidate.
2. Initial career plans.
3. Features defining an ideal dental practice.
4. Male/female ratio within their respective year groups

Results:-

A total of 17 dental colleges, offering both undergraduate and postgraduate programs, demonstrated their commitment to this study by actively participating. Among the 403 respondents, 105 (26.1%) were male, while 298 (73.9%) were female, presenting a diverse representation of gender within the surveyed population.

The distribution across academic years revealed interesting insights into the demographic composition of the respondents. The majority belonged to BDS 4th year (116, 28.8%), showcasing a significant presence in the later

stages of the undergraduate program. Subsequently, 1st-year students constituted 96 respondents (23.8%), followed by 3rd-year students with 87 (21.6%). Additionally, 2nd-year students accounted for 57 respondents (14.1%), interns comprised 31 (7.7%), and postgraduate students represented 16 (4.0%) of the total respondents.

(Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the respondent distribution across gender and academic years.)

Within the cohort of 403 respondents, a substantial 42.2% (170 individuals) expressed their intention to pursue careers as self-employed dentists, indicating a noteworthy inclination toward entrepreneurship within the surveyed group. Furthermore, 13.2% of respondents expressed a desire to embark on an academic path by joining as teaching staff in dental colleges. A smaller yet notable 5.0% expressed an interest in contributing to the public sector, expressing a preference for working in the government. Interestingly, 15.4% of respondents, totaling 62 individuals, indicated a willingness to explore alternative professional avenues after completing their dental courses. These diverse career aspirations shed light on the varied trajectories envisioned by dental students upon completing their education (see Table 2 for a detailed breakdown of these career preferences).

A significant portion of the respondents (51.4%) expressed a neutral stance regarding the prospect of being employed as dentists in someone else's clinic. This neutrality suggests a balanced outlook among the respondents when considering employment in private dental practices.

Interestingly, a notable 41.2% of respondents indicated their willingness to work as dentists in various health centers or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This inclination towards contributing to public health initiatives and serving in NGOs reflects a commendable societal commitment within the surveyed group. The diversity in responses highlights the array of considerations and preferences dental students harbor regarding their potential employment settings (refer to Table 3 for a detailed breakdown of these perspectives).

A substantial majority of respondents (40.4%) expressed a preference for establishing themselves as self-employed dentists within 2-5 years following their graduation or post-graduation. This inclination toward entrepreneurship suggests that a significant portion of dental students envisions establishing their independent practices relatively early in their professional journeys.

Contrastingly, a smaller but noteworthy percentage (6.0%) reported that they never aspire to work as self-employed dentists. This variation in responses underscores the diversity of career trajectories envisioned by the surveyed individuals. Understanding these timeframes and preferences provides valuable insights into the career planning and aspirations of dental students (refer to Table 4 for a detailed breakdown of these time-based preferences).

A significant portion of respondents, totaling 140 (34.7%), indicated that family plays a pivotal role in influencing their career decisions. This insight emphasizes the importance of familial dynamics in shaping the professional trajectories of these dental students, underscoring the intersection of personal and career considerations (refer to Table 5 for detailed information).

Furthermore, a substantial majority, comprising 42.2% of respondents (170 individuals), recognized the significance of achieving a work-life balance in their future careers. This acknowledgment highlights a growing awareness among dental students regarding the importance of maintaining a harmonious equilibrium between professional and personal life.

In terms of family planning, a mere 4.2% of respondents (17 individuals) reported that the decision to have children would impact their future career plans, shedding light on a relatively low perceived impact of family planning on their professional aspirations.

Another interesting finding revealed that 43.4% of respondents (175 individuals) agreed that there are better possibilities for part-time work in their chosen field. This acknowledgment suggests a prevailing sentiment among the surveyed individuals about the feasibility and desirability of part-time engagements in dentistry.

Conversely, a small but noteworthy group, comprising only 5.5% of respondents (22 individuals), completely disagreed with the notion that having their own clinic would result in less bureaucratic challenges. This perspective

provides insights into the perceived complexities associated with clinic ownership, revealing a diversity of opinions within the surveyed group (see Table 6 for a detailed breakdown of these findings).

Discussion:-

The study's findings illuminate the career expectations of emerging dentists across diverse regions of India, underscoring a central focus on the pursuit of both professional and personal aspirations. Notably, there is a shared desire among respondents to achieve financial stability and establish a work–life balance, aligning with contemporary career priorities.

In contrast to certain earlier studies and surveys (The World Health Report ;2006),(Ravi K, Kumar P.;2014), a significant shift was observed in the career aspirations of dental students, particularly regarding the pursuit of higher studies or specialization. The present study indicates a notable decline in the number of students expressing interest in advanced studies, potentially influenced by factors such as limited availability of opportunities and less lucrative pay scales in specialized roles.

A noteworthy trend highlighted in the findings is the considerable interest among respondents in establishing their own clinics. This inclination towards entrepreneurship can be attributed to the perceived challenges in securing desirable job positions, coupled with the allure of greater autonomy and control afforded by private practice. The findings underscore the importance of understanding the evolving dynamics of the dental profession, with a growing number of emerging dentists considering entrepreneurship as a viable and attractive career path.

It is crucial to acknowledge the potential implications of these trends on the future landscape of dental practice in India. The declining interest in pursuing higher studies may have broader implications for the availability of specialized dental services in the country. Additionally, the inclination towards entrepreneurship may influence the overall structure and dynamics of the dental healthcare system.

These findings offer valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the dental field, providing a nuanced understanding of the evolving aspirations and preferences of the next generation of dental professionals. As the dental landscape continues to evolve, it becomes imperative to adapt educational and policy frameworks to align with the changing expectations and career trajectories of emerging dentists.

Achieving a harmonious balance between work life and personal life emerges as a pertinent long-term aspiration influencing students' career prospects, aligning with research findings that highlight the enduring importance of this balance (Dhima, M.; Petropoulos, V.C.; Han, R.K.; Kinnunen, T.; Wright, R.F; 2012). Conversely, short-term career expectations and initial career plans are predominantly influenced by the immediate pursuit of financial stability. The prevailing competitiveness in today's society often necessitates that new graduates seize available opportunities to secure their financial standing.

Research indicates that personal satisfaction plays a more immediate role in shaping short-term career expectations (Dhima, M.; Petropoulos, V.C.; Han, R.K.; Kinnunen, T.; Wright, R.F. 2012). Additionally, factors such as continuing professional education, financial stability, and the pursuit of knowledge and skill development are key contributors to students' early career plans (Gallagher, J.E., Clarke, W., Wilson, N.H.2008). These findings underscore the nuanced interplay of short-term and long-term considerations in the dynamic landscape of emerging professionals in dentistry.

As dental graduates navigate the transition from education to practice, understanding and addressing these dual considerations—personal satisfaction in the short term and a balanced work-life dynamic in the long term—become crucial for fostering career satisfaction and sustainability. Moreover, recognizing the multifaceted influences on initial career plans, including the imperative of securing financial stability in a competitive environment, provides valuable insights for career counseling, education, and workforce planning initiatives in the field of dentistry.

An Ideal Practice:

The ongoing transformation within the oral health sector is grappling with numerous challenges (Merkel, S.,Ruokolainen, M. and Holman, D.2019). Adapting the dental profession to current trends becomes imperative, providing essential insights for the design and guidance of oral healthcare initiatives (Campus, G.,Rusca, P., Amrhein, C., Meier, A., Zeyer, O., Wolf, T.G.2020),(Wolf, T.G., Seeberger, G.K., Callaway, A., Briseño-

Marroquín, B., Rusca, P., Frank, M., Otterbach, E.J.2018),(Kettler, N.,FrenzelBaudisch, N. ,Micheelis, W., Klingenberger, D., Jordan, A.R. 2017),(Newton P, Cabot L, Wilson NH et al.2011)

A significant portion of respondents expressed a preference for working in someone else's clinic as their ideal practice. The appeal of this choice lies in the perceived advantages of reduced stress, fewer responsibilities, and a lower financial investment. Furthermore, a noteworthy observation was the recognition that collaborating with 2-3 dentists to establish a shared clinic in a given area could prove economically advantageous and alleviate individual responsibilities. The acknowledgment of the difficulties associated with managing an entire dental clinic single-handedly underscores the practical considerations shaping the preferences of emerging dental professionals.

Another noteworthy finding is the interest expressed by some respondents in pursuing a career in teaching within dental colleges. This choice is perceived as offering better professional connections, enhanced income, and crucially, time and experience, as dental colleges often operate with limited working hours. This suggests a strategic approach among some respondents, combining teaching roles with the long-term goal of establishing their own clinics.

Conversely, a few respondents indicated a preference for working in government hospitals or NGOs. This choice was influenced by the perceived scarcity of jobs and less favorable pay scales in the private sector. This preference aligns with the broader challenges observed in the job market, emphasizing the need for strategic interventions to address the disparities in opportunities and remuneration in different sectors of the dental profession.

Working As A Self-Employed Dentist:

As per the current findings, dental students exhibit a preference for delaying the establishment of their own practices until several years after completing their professional training. While the current study did not delve into the specific reasons behind this inclination, it is plausible that motivations for studying dentistry may undergo transformations in the initial years of gaining professional experience (Gallagher, J.E., Clarke, W., Wilson, N.H.2008). The evolving landscape of the healthcare system and shifts in dental education could be influential factors challenging students' visions and shaping their career trajectories.

Despite these challenges, a prevailing long-term expectation among dental students is the aspiration for a favorable work-life balance. Financial considerations, professional status, flexible work opportunities, and job security continue to be perceived as advantageous aspects within the dental profession (Gallagher, J.E., Clarke, W., Wilson, N.H.2008). These factors underscore the enduring appeal of dentistry as a profession and highlight the significance of addressing evolving needs and expectations within dental education and practice.

A substantial number of respondents expressed the intention to set up their own dental practices after gaining 2-5 years or even 5 years of professional experience post-course completion. The decision to establish a practice often hinges on factors such as gaining exposure, accumulating experience, and achieving a financial standing conducive to such an endeavor. Some respondents expressed a preference for gaining experience by working elsewhere before venturing into the responsibility of handling a clinic independently. However, it's noteworthy that a few respondents reported that they never aspire to set up their own practice, indicating a diversity of career aspirations within the dental profession.

The decision to establish a practice is influenced by multifaceted factors including financial considerations, desire for independence, and individual capabilities. While some dentists excel clinically, they may find challenges in managing the broader responsibilities of setting up and running an entire practice independently. Recognizing and understanding these nuances is crucial for supporting the diverse career paths and aspirations of dental professionals.

Effect Of Family Upon Decisions:

The discernible trend towards the rapid expansion of dental chains prompts consideration of factors influencing the career choices of young dentists. While this study did not extensively examine reasons for dentists choosing employment, aspects such as high loan debts and a reduced administrative burden emerge as potential motivators for young practitioners to opt for employment. This observation raises the need for further research to delve deeper into the dynamics of employment preferences among emerging dental professionals.

Contrasting findings from a Swiss study where over 65% expressed a desire to work full-time in the future (Wolf, T.G., Seeberger, G.K., Callaway, A., Briseño-Marroquín, B., Rusca, P., Frank, M., Otterbach, E.J.2018), the increasing number of female dentists introduces a unique perspective. The rise in female representation in dentistry may lead to diverse impacts on professional practices, potentially contributing to an uptick in part-time employees due to considerations related to family planning (Barac Furtinger, V.; Alyeva, R.N.; Maximovskaya, L.2013). Notably, the main reasons cited by female dentists for considering part-time roles are caregiving responsibilities and child-rearing (World Dental Federation),(Che Musa, M.F.,Bernabé, E., Gallagher, J.E.2016).

Interestingly, the information gleaned from this study suggests that, despite the prevalence of family-related considerations, the vast majority of respondents perceive the influence of family planning as neutral. This nuanced finding underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of how family dynamics intersect with career choices in dentistry.

With the increasing number of female dental professionals, there is a growing recognition that a well-structured working environment and effective time management are becoming increasingly important in personnel planning (Haslach, S.D., Aytepe, Z.,Kokkari, A., Azrak, B., Ehlers, V.,Herz, M.M., Jerg-Bretzke, L., Geibel, M.A. 2018). The changing demographic landscape and evolving family structures necessitate a more nuanced approach to workforce planning within the dental profession.

It's crucial to note that for male dentists as well, familial responsibilities, and the pressure to provide for their families, often drive them to start working early, sometimes even before acquiring the requisite experience or training. This aspect highlights the multifaceted impact of family dynamics on the career trajectories of both male and female dental professionals, emphasizing the need for tailored support systems and policies within the field.

Reasons To Work As A Self-Employed Dentist:

A foundational principle in the dental profession, irrespective of the chosen specialization, is the commitment to liberal dental practice and ethical guidelines. The decision to pursue a specific practice type should stem from a dedication to the principles of free choice in doctor and therapy, rather than being primarily driven by economic interests, state constraints, or a practice management focus centered solely on financial rewards (Kettler, N.,FrenzelBaudisch, N. ,Micheelis, W., Klingenberger, D., Jordan, A.R. 2017).

For many dentists, the desire to establish their own practices is often rooted in the pursuit of a proper work-life balance and the anticipation of encountering less bureaucratic hurdles. This inclination reflects a prioritization of professional autonomy and a preference for a practice structure that facilitates a balanced lifestyle. According to several respondents, setting up one's own practice presents fewer financial risks and offers enhanced possibilities for part-time work, affording dentists more flexibility in managing their schedules as they become their own bosses.

However, amidst these advantages, it's important to acknowledge the associated challenges. Sole ownership entails comprehensive responsibility, with the practitioner assuming control over all decisions concerning the clinic, including the selection and management of staff, as well as meeting the diverse needs of patients. This dual nature of self-employment—offering both autonomy and accountability—underscores the complex considerations that dentists weigh when contemplating the establishment of their own practices. Recognizing these multifaceted aspects is pivotal in offering tailored support and resources to dental professionals as they navigate the landscape of self-employment within the dental field.

Setting In Which One Would Like To Work As An Employed Dentist:

A predominant inclination among the respondents is the preference for practicing with two or more equal associates rather than working under someone. This choice underscores the value placed on professional autonomy and collaborative decision-making. By opting for such a practice structure, dentists can actively contribute their perspectives to decision-making processes while benefiting from the support and camaraderie of fellow colleagues. This choice is indicative of a desire for a collaborative and egalitarian working environment.

Conversely, a minority of respondents expressed interest in working within corporate bodies or dental chains, such as Clove Dental, Apollo White Dental, Max Healthcare, among others. This alternative choice may be influenced by factors such as structured organizational frameworks, established patient bases, and potentially broader professional opportunities.

In addition to these options, there is a noteworthy subset of respondents who expressed a desire to work in various healthcare services or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This inclination reflects a commitment to societal well-being, with respondents seeking to contribute to the community as healthcare professionals. The choice to work in NGOs or healthcare services signifies a broader dedication to the ethical dimensions of the dental profession and a desire to serve beyond the confines of traditional clinical settings.

Understanding the diverse preferences regarding employment settings provides valuable insights into the evolving expectations and aspirations of dental professionals. These insights can inform workforce planning initiatives, organizational structures, and support systems to cater to the varied career trajectories within the dental profession.

While the present study provides valuable insights, it is crucial to acknowledge certain limitations that may impact the interpretation of the results.

Cross-Sectional Nature:

Firstly, the study adopted a cross-sectional design (Dhima, M.; Petropoulos, V.C.; Han, R.K.; Kinnunen, T.; Wright, R.F; 2012), and the participation of some schools and students was not secured. Consequently, the findings may not be entirely generalizable to the entire student population. The cross-sectional approach captures a snapshot of perspectives at a specific point in time, limiting the ability to track changes or developments over an extended period.

Representation of Dental Students:

Secondly, the focus on researching dental students who are on the brink of entering the dental profession, as opposed to new graduates, may be perceived as a constraint. However, existing evidence suggests that the views of new graduates (Gallagher, J.E., Clarke, W., Wilson, N.H.2008) and final-year students are comparable (Merkel, S.,Ruokolainen, M. and Holman, D.2019). Despite this alignment, it is essential to acknowledge that perspectives and career expectations may evolve as students transition from education to professional practice.

Recommendations for Future Research:-

To enhance the robustness and applicability of future research, longitudinal studies that track the career trajectories and perspectives of dental students over an extended period could offer deeper insights. Additionally, efforts to maximize school and student participation would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse factors influencing career expectations within the dental student population.

In conclusion, recognizing these limitations provides a context for interpreting the study's findings and emphasizes the need for a nuanced approach when drawing conclusions about the broader landscape of career perceptions and expectations among dental students.

Conclusion:-

The findings from this survey, reflecting the perspectives of students pursuing dentistry, reveal a substantial interest in establishing their own practices or working in someone else's clinic. This shared aspiration is driven by a dual desire to attain financial stability and achieve a favorable work-life balance. The heightened interest in entrepreneurship suggests a competitive landscape within the dental profession, where aspiring professionals aim for excellence in their field.

The data indicate a prevailing trend among dental students to consider setting up their own practices, typically after gaining 2-5 years of professional experience following graduation or post-graduation. This strategic approach aligns with the increasing competition in the field and underscores the commitment of dental students to achieve a level of mastery before venturing into independent practice.

An interesting observation is the impact of family considerations on the career plans of dental students, both in the short term and long term. This influence is particularly notable among female respondents, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of the intersection between family dynamics and career aspirations. For male students, the imperative to provide for their families often compels an early entry into the workforce, influencing their future career goals.

The allure of self-employment lies in the perceived advantages of less bureaucracy, increased opportunities for part-time employment, and enhanced work-life balance. These factors, cited by respondents, highlight the multifaceted considerations that contribute to the decision to establish an independent dental practice.

In conclusion, the evolving landscape of the dental profession is marked by a dynamic interplay of individual aspirations, professional goals, and external factors such as family dynamics. The insights gained from this survey contribute to a deeper understanding of the career perceptions and expectations of dental students, informing educators, policymakers, and practitioners as they navigate the changing contours of dentistry. Further research and longitudinal studies will be valuable in monitoring the evolving trends and shaping future strategies within the dental profession.

Table 1:-Demographic details –Respondent details in terms of sex and academic years.

Demographic details – Respondent details in terms of sex and academic years		
Category	Frequency	Percent
SEX		
Male	105	26.1
Female	298	73.9
ACADEMIC YEAR		
BDS 1 st Year	96	23.8
BDS 2 nd Year	57	14.1
BDS 3 rd Year	87	21.6
BDS 4 th Year	116	28.8
Interns	31	7.7
MDS Students	16	4.0

Table 2:-Career Preferences – Initial career plans after course completion.

Career Preferences – Initial career plans after course completion		
Plans	Frequency	Percent
Self-employed Dentist	170	42.2
Teaching	53	13.2
Dentist in someone else’s clinic	88	21.8
Change in profession	62	15.4
Higher Studies	10	2.5
Government Sector job	20	5.0

Table 3:- Perspective – An ideal practice would be?

Perspective – An ideal practice would be?					
Employed as a	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree
Someone else’s clinic	47(11.3%)	63(15.6%)	207(51.4%)	78(19.4%)	8(2.0%)
Teaching in college/hospital	38(9.4%)	41(10.2%)	126(31.3%)	152(37.7%)	46(11.4%)
Government Hospital	20(5.0%)	5(1.2%)	54(13.4%)	122(30.3%)	202(50.1%)
Health center/NGO	23(5.7%)	15(3.7%)	110(27.3%)	166(41.2%)	89(22.1%)
Own practice	20(5.0%)	32(7.9%)	137(34.0%)	112(27.8%)	102(25.3%)
Partner in practice	33(8.2%)	43(10.7%)	133(33.0%)	131(32.5%)	63(15.6%)
Partnership					

Table 4:- Time based preferences.

Time based preferences		
Preference	Frequency	Percent
Never	24	6.0
Right after graduation/	44	10.9

post-graduation		
2-5 years after graduation/ post-graduation	163	40.4
> 5 years after graduation/ post-graduation	139	34.5
After gaining certain experience as an employed dentist	33	8.2

Table 5:- Do considerations of family affect the career preferences?

Do considerations of family affect the career preferences?		
Answer	Frequency	Percent
Yes	140	34.7
No	123	30.5
Maybe	140	34.7

Table 6:- Reasons to work as an employed dentist.

Reasons to work as an employed dentist					
Reason	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree
Work-life balance	18 (4.5%)		14 (3.5%)	157 (39.0%)	170(42.2%) 44(10.9%)
Own Children	46(11.4%)		44(10.9%)	219(54.3%)	77(19.1%) 17(4.2%)
Flexible working hours	19(4.7%)		22(5.5%)	125(31.0%)	192(47.6%) 45(11.2%)
Better possibilities of part time work	20(5.0%)		35(8.7%)	138(34.3%)	175(43.4%) 35(8.7%)
No financial risk	21(5.2%)		61(15.1%)	150(37.2%)	127(31.5%) 44(10.9%)
Higher possibility of changing job location	24(6.0%)		52(12.9%)	159(37.5%)	137(34.0%) 31(7.7%)
Less bureaucracy	22(5.5%)		44(10.9%)	202(50.1%)	112(27.8%) 23(5.7%)

Table 7:-Setting in which one would like to work as an employed dentist.

Setting in which one would like to work as an employed dentist					
Employed in	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Totally Agree
practice with two or more equal associates	24 (6.0%)		44 (10.9%)	155 (38.5%)	159 (39.5%) 21(5.2%)
corporate body/ dental chain (Like clove dental, Apollo white dental, max healthcare etc.)	16 (4.0%)		24 (6.0%)	117 (29.0%)	175 (43.4%)71(17.6%)
a healthcare center/ NGO	17 (4.2%)		12 (3.0%)	142 (35.2%)	177 (43.9%)55 (13.6%)

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