

Gender-Based Motivational Factors For Choosing Dentistry As A Career By First Year Dental Students Of College Of Pakistan

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Abstract

Objective: Dentistry, also known as “Dental Medicine” is opted for various reasons like prestige, socioeconomic status or personal desire. However, some join dentistry just to fulfil the wishes of their parents. Students who choose dentistry by their own choice excel better in this field. Another general impression is that mostly female students prefer it. To have a true picture of these impressions in our society, we planned this study to identify the reasons and motives of undergraduate dental surgeons for joining dentistry.

Methods: A cross-sectional study, was conducted on 278 students at Margalla College of Dentistry, from December 2020 to April 2021 after the approval of the Ethical review committee of the institute. - The probability judgmental sampling technique was used. Students who consented were included in the study. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data which was analyzed using SPSS 21.

Results: In this study, about 48.4% of students selected dentistry as their first choice but out of these only 48.9% did prior career planning. Female students 76 (49.6%) opted for dentistry as compared to male students 12 (30.7%). However, there was an insignificant difference regarding career choice between both genders ($p=0.591$). Prominent motivating factors were flexible work patterns (63.5%), self-employment (63%), financial security (44.8%) and parents wish (25%).

Conclusion: Students chose Dentistry not only due to their interests but also because of flexible work patterns, financial security and self-employment. Both genders have more or less the same inclination towards dentistry.

Keywords: Career; Dental students; Factors; Pakistan; Undergraduate.

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1. Introduction

Career selection is a crucial step in an individual's life. Considering all the decisions a person makes in his or her life: career choice is the most difficult one, as it has a lifelong impact and everything gets tailored around it afterwards. ⁽¹⁾ It seems personal choice but a lot of factors motivate or demotivate it. ⁽²⁾ Motivation is the reason(s) for acting or behaving in a particular way, especially required for becoming a healthcare professional who has to work with empathy. ⁽³⁾ “Dentistry”, also known as “Dental Medicine”, is a prestigious profession that can be opted for numerous reasons other than self-interest and motivation, which could be for making money, family pressure, respect and adjustable working hours. ⁽⁴⁾ In Pakistan, “Bachelor of Dental Surgery” (BDS) is a four-year academic program, with one year of internship and a house job, under the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, which is the regulatory body. ⁽⁵⁾ Dentistry requires a lot of hard work,

studying day and night and tiring working hours but still it has been reported that most students join dentistry just to fulfil the wishes of their parents. ⁽⁶⁾ But a major chunk of those students do not pursue it in future. ⁽⁷⁾ Choosing dentistry without self-interest can lead to cynicism, consternation and melancholy which eventually affect the efficacy of the upcoming dental surgeons. ⁽⁸⁾ Students who choose dentistry by their consent excel better in this field than those who opt for dentistry because of the wishes of their parents or when they have no motivation or desire of their own. ⁽⁹⁾ Motivational factors for students opting for dentistry and selection criteria for institutes even within different institutes of the same country. ⁽¹⁰⁾ These motivating factors should be kept in mind and considered for the selection of students in their respective fields because later on they have to deal with the community. ⁽¹¹⁾ Knowledge of the motivating factors for choosing dentistry is important as these elements should be taken into account when an individual decides on his

career. In addition, the selection of self-motivated individuals can enhance the productivity of the health care system. ⁽¹²⁾ Insight into these perceptions can also help education providers to make a comprehensive overview. ⁽¹³⁾ So, we planned the present study to identify reasons and motives of undergraduate dental surgeons for joining dentistry and based on the observations career counselling of students could be advised, if required. ⁽¹⁴⁾

2. Materials & Methods

A total of 278 undergraduate students participated in the cross-sectional study, conducted at Margalla College of Dentistry, Rawalpindi from December 2020 to April 2021 after the approval from the Ethical Review Committee of Margalla Institute of Health Sciences, Rawalpindi (Reference# FZ/93/21). The sample size was calculated by OpenEpi sample size calculator⁽¹⁵⁾ with a 95% confidence level and margin of error of 0.05 in the population of 1000 first-year students of all dental colleges of Rawalpindi and Islamabad (Table I). - The probability judgmental sampling technique was used. All BDS students, who were willing to participate were included in the study. Those who had some sort of mental illness or had undergone some adverse life event in the past month were excluded from the study. A validated self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data⁽¹⁶⁾. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section included demographic information of the participants including age, gender, institute of training, father's occupation and mother's occupation, duration of analyzing decision for joining dentistry and college chosen as first choice. The second section contained a five-point Likert scale where the students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements outlining various factors like personal, and humanitarian reasons for choosing dentistry, and financial and societal impact that could have influenced their choice of dentistry as a career. Data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 21.0. Descriptive analysis was carried out and represented as frequency and percentages. Categorical data was analyzed using cross-tabulation with the Chi-Square test, where a p-value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

3. Results

Out of 278 students, 192 gave consent, response rate was 69.6%. There was more participation of female students (79%) than male students (21%). Social demographic data showed that 31% of the students had their fathers in the armed forces. About 51% chose dentistry without any prior career planning and took a decision immediately at the time of admission. Only 17% of students did workup before choosing a career. (Table-1) As a whole about 48.4% of students choose dentistry as their first career choice. Among those who didn't opt for dentistry as their first choice, 81.3% of females opted for MBBS whereas 71.4% of male students wanted to join the armed forces. (Figure 1)

Table-1 Demographic Information of Participants

Variables		n(%)
Gender	Males	39 (20.3)
	Females	153 (79.9)
Institute of Training	MIHS	55 (28.9)
	FUCD	43 (22.4)
	IICD	20 (10.4)
	IMDB	37 (19.3)
	AMC	37 (19.3)
Father's occupation	Government job	12 (6.25)
	Armed forces	60 (31.25)
	Business	31 (16.41)
	Doctor	28 (14.58)
	Other	11 (5.73)
Mother's occupation	Doctor/Dentist	7 (3.6)
	Housewife	178 (92.7)
	Others	7 (3.6)
Duration for finalizing the decision to join Dentistry	Immediately	98 (51.0)
	Less than one month	36 (18.81)
	Less than six month	17 (8.9)
	Less than one year	8 (4.2)
	More than one year	33 (17.2)
Dentistry chosen as first choice	Yes	93 (48.4)
	No	99 (51.6)

Table 2 showed that the majority of the participants (64.6%) had some personal interest in dentistry but it was not their first choice. About 84.9% desired to serve humanity after becoming a dentist. Flexible working hours were motivating for 63.5% of participants. About 63% reported that they desired to have self-employment in future. In the financial security domain, 44.8% admitted money as a motivating factor while 21.7% remained neutral. Around 65.6% of participants agreed that they joined because of pride in being called “Doctor”. Participants opted for dentistry under the influence of their parents (35.4%) or friends (34.9%). 27% didn’t have exposure to dentistry. About 94 students (48.9%) gathered information regarding dentistry before opting for this profession. Approximately 57.8% disagreed that they already had a doctor in their families.

Table-2 Factors Affecting Career Choice

Factors affecting Career		Strongly agree n(%)	Agree n(%)	Neutral n(%)	Disagree n(%)	Strongly disagree n(%)
Personal/Humanitarian	Personal interest	72(37.5)	52(27.1)	51(26.6)	11(5.7)	6(3.1)
	Desire to serve/help people	95(68.5)	68(35.4)	23(12.0)	4(2.1)	2(1.0)
	Flexible work pattern	78(40.6)	44(22.9)	33(17.2)	18(9.4)	19(9.9)
	Desire for self-employment	62(32.3)	59(30.7)	38(19.8)	22(11.5)	11(5.7)
Financial/Societal	The desire for financial security	37(19.3)	49(25.5)	52(27.1)	23(12.0)	31(16.1)
	Pride in the title ‘Doctor’	68(35.4)	58(30.2)	36(18.8)	21(10.9)	9(4.7)
	Social status	32(16.7)	63(32.8)	52(27.1)	22(11.5)	23(12.0)
Influence by others	Career Talk/Information	45(23.4)	49(25.5)	37(19.3)	25(13.0)	36(18.8)
	Prior experience of treatment	30(15.6)	39(20.3)	37(19.3)	34(17.7)	52(27.1)
	Prior exposure to Dentistry	33(17.2)	43(22.4)	52(27.1)	25(13.0)	39(20.3)
	Siblings/friends persuasion	29(15.1)	38(19.8)	31(16.1)	22(11.5)	72(37.5)
	Family Doctor	31(16.1)	28(14.6)	22(11.5)	28(14.6)	83(43.2)
	Parents Persuasion	37(19.3)	31(16.1)	46(24.0)	22(11.5)	56(29.2)

5. Discussion

The choice of career is very crucial for a person. It is a decision that has a strong impact on an individual’s life. It won’t be incorrect to state that this decision has marked effects on the whole family including parents and siblings. Although the choice of career should be the decision of that particular person in our society, this decision is not taken by the individual alone. ⁽¹⁷⁾ The current study has pointed out a few factors that influenced this decision. A very encouraging finding of the present study was the most prominent motivating factor for opting for dentistry and that came out to be “personal interest”, about 45.8% of students selected dentistry as their first choice. On the other hand, observations of a study conducted in India reported that dentistry was not the first choice of 79% of dental students. ⁽¹⁸⁾ However, quite a number opted for dentistry under the influence of their family and this remained a continuous mental stress for them. ⁽¹⁹⁾

Among other contributing agents, opting for the profession on humanitarian grounds provided a ray of hope leading to the betterment of the society in our study.

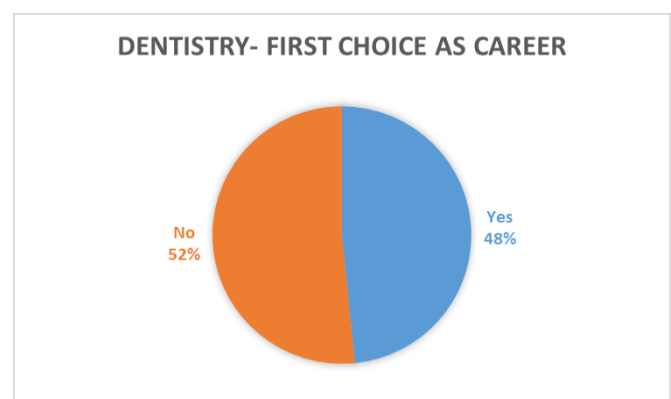


Figure-1 Graph showing Dentistry taken as the first choice as a career

A study conducted also reported the other influencing factors like financial security and societal outcomes but

to a lesser extent. ⁽²⁰⁾ Contrarily, observations of a study conducted in Tehran in four dental colleges in 2017 do not correspond to the present study and showed that high-level income, good social status and work independence were the most common career motivations. ⁽²¹⁾ There was no significant difference between the both genders in taking dentistry as their career. Contrarily, more females opted for dentistry in the study reported by Siddiqui et al. ⁽¹⁸⁾ These observations match with the results of a study conducted in Finland by Terhi Karaharju Suvanto, which showed female dental surgeons perceive themselves as comforters and health promoters. ⁽²²⁾ On the other hand, the astonishing motivating factor having the highest percentage revealed in one of the studies done internationally is that dentists can give sufficient time to their families due to flexible and adjustable work patterns and preference for self-employment. ⁽²³⁾ It was worrisome to find that a large number of participants took their career decision in no time despite no counselling sessions or discussion sessions. Contrary to these findings, studies have shown that sessions are planned and conducted before taking a profession and the pros and cons are discussed with the individual many times. It has also been shown in some studies that students challenge themselves for higher ranks and executive positions and dentistry is one of the milestones. ⁽²⁴⁾ Research and scientific study is another purpose for opting for dentistry that should be aimed at the coming generations. ⁽²⁵⁾ Scrutinizing dental studies may help in the evolution of reasons for students opting for dentistry and producing better dentists in the future. A study of these influences can help us rectify the negative factors and the possibility of their eradication can arise. ⁽²⁶⁾ Selections based on personal liking enable a person to stick to his or her choice through thick and thin. Studies show better performance for students who select their careers themselves. ⁽²⁷⁾

5. Conclusion

The profession of Dentistry is opted for due to personal interest as well as its flexible work pattern, financial security and self-employment. Both genders have more or less the same inclination towards dentistry. Parental wishes or pressure also influence career choice. Timely career counselling can help individuals to decide much

better for themselves, resulting in a more beneficial person contributing to the wellbeing of mankind.

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Contributions:

F.S, A.F - Conception of study

F.S, S.S, S.M - Experimentation/Study Conduction

A.F, A.N, S.S - Analysis/Interpretation/Discussion

F.S, S.T, A.F - Manuscript Writing

S.T, S.M - Critical Review

A.N - Facilitation and Material analysis

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