

Profile and perception of graduated professionals from a dentistry course

Perfil e percepção dos profissionais egressos de um curso de Odontologia

Perfil y percepción de profesionales graduados de un curso de Odontologia

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Avaliar o perfil e a percepção dos Cirurgiões-Dentistas formados na UEFS no período de 2013.1 a 2018.1 **Método:** Estudo de corte transversal de caráter descritivo, realizado por meio de um questionário com informações sobre dados pessoais, perfil socioeconômico e demográfico, campo de atuação e formação acadêmica. **Resultados:** Observou-se que a maioria dos egressos é do sexo feminino, na faixa etária de 22 a 26 anos e trabalha no setor privado. A maior parte cursou ou está cursando a pós-graduação devido à necessidade de aprimorar conhecimento, exigência do mercado de trabalho, seguir carreira acadêmica ou metas financeiras. Notou-se que serviço privado foi o principal local de atuação, seguido de serviço público ou mais de um local. **Conclusão:** Os profissionais entrevistados se mostraram satisfeitos ou muito satisfeitos sobre a maioria das variáveis relacionadas às atividades ambulatoriais, processo ensino-aprendizagem, atividades de estágio e corpo docente.

Descritores: Educação em Odontologia; Currículo; Avaliação Educacional.

ABSTRACT

Objective: To evaluate the profile and perception of Dental Surgeons trained at UEFS in the period 2013.1 to 2018.1 **Method:** Descriptive cross-sectional study, through a questionnaire containing information about personal data, socioeconomic and demographic profile, field of activity and academic background. **Results:** It was observed that the majority of graduates are female, aged between 22 and 26 years old and work in the private sector. Most have attended or are attending postgraduate courses due to the need to improve knowledge, demand in the labor market, pursue an academic career or financial goals. It was noted that private service was the main place of operation, followed by public service or more than one place. **Conclusions:** The professionals interviewed were satisfied / very satisfied about most variables related to outpatient activities, teaching-learning process, internship activity and teachers.

Descriptors: Dental School; Curriculum; Educational Assessment.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Evaluar el perfil y percepción de los Dentistas formados en UEFS en el periodo 2013.1 a 2018.1. **Método:** Estudio epidemiológico de corte transversal descriptivo, logrado a través de un cuestionario con informaciones sobre datos personales, perfil socioeconómico y demográfico, campo de actividad profesional y formación académica. **Resultados:** Se observó que la mayoría de los egresados son mujeres, tienen entre 22 y 26 años y trabajan en el sector privado. La mayoría ha cursado o está cursando estudios de posgrado por la necesidad de mejorar el conocimiento, la demanda en el mercado laboral, perseguir una carrera académica u objetivos económicos. Se señaló que el servicio privado era el principal lugar de operación, seguido del servicio público o más de un lugar. **Conclusión:** Los profesionales entrevistados se mostraron satisfechos o muy satisfechos con la mayoría de variables relacionadas con las actividades ambulatorias, el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, las pasantía y el cuerpo docente.

Descriptores: Educación en Odontología; Currículo; Evaluación Educacional.

Introduction

The teaching of Dentistry was made official in 1884, becoming autonomous in 1933, and only after the year 1970 did Brazilian Dentistry make great progress. The profession is governed by Law 5.081/66, which regulates the exercise of the profession in the country and Law 4.324/64, which established the Federal and Regional Councils of Dentists. The student completing the course in Brazil receives the degree of bachelor's degree in dentistry and every professional must enroll in the Regional Council of Dentistry of his State (CRO) so that the profession of Dentist (CD) can be exercised. The possibilities of cd insertion involve the performance in various spheres, which may be in the deprivation in private clinics and offices, in supplementary health by dental health plans, in teaching and research related to educational institutions, and in the public sector, directed to the Unified Health System.¹

The Dentistry course at the State University of Feira de Santana (UEFS) was created in 1985 and implemented in 1986. It was, at the time, an innovative course with its pillars anchored in Integrated Dentistry turning to preventive and social actions, in the search for the formation of the generalist CD, working in curricular macro-components that interrelated. Over the years, teachers and students have observed a distancing from the profile of the professional being formed, from the proposed conceptual framework. As a consequence and in a procedural and collegiate manner, a new curricular matrix was proposed for this course, following the precepts of the National Curriculum Guidelines (NcD) and within the historical context of education in Brazil.²

The ordering of human resources in health, even being constitutionally guaranteed in the Unified Health System (SUS), still finds obstacles to transform it into an institutional practice. Higher education institutions find it difficult to train professionals with a humanistic, critical and reflexive view, and with preparation to deal with the community, although the public sector constitutes a wide area of activity for the Dentist.³ Seeking a paradigm shift in academic training, the NcDs for the Dentistry Course were published in 2002³ and brought in their writing guidelines that should, from then on, lead the elaboration of curricula in order to enable the graduate to have a "generalist, humanist, critical and reflective" formation, based on "ethical and legal principles, and on the understanding of social reality, and on the understanding of social reality, and on the understanding of social reality, and on the understanding of social reality, and on the understanding of social reality, and on the understanding of social reality, and on the understanding of social reality, and on the understanding of social reality, and on the understanding of social reality, cultural and economic of its environment, directing its work to the transformation of reality for the benefit of society".⁴⁻⁵

Several feelings are experienced at the time of insertion in the labor market, Luz and Levandowski (2006)⁶ demonstrated in their study that, although the graduates show relief because they are completing another stage of their life, feelings such as hesitation, doubts, fears and disbelief about their own professional capacity are present at this time. It is essential that universities have strategies for evaluating graduates, as it is necessary to verify the effectiveness of academic activities performed throughout university education, since self-assessment may lead to the improvement of the pedagogical model of the course in agreement with the CND. In this way, the educational institution can provide the necessary changes to improve the quality of education, and train a trained

professional, with a critical-reflective profile and with adequate inclusion in the labor market.⁷

Efforts in this direction have been sent by the National Program for the Reorientation of Professional Training in Health (Pró-Saúde) and the Work Education Program (PET-Saúde) aimed at the reorientation of health training through integrated teaching to the public service, seeking to respond to the needs of the Brazilian population, when training human resources. In view of this, considering the period of new social demands, the role of education is fundamental to contribute to the transformation of reality, without leaving aside the questioning of the pedagogical practices employed in universities and the applicability of the content taught. From this point of view, the knowledge and perception of trained professionals about their difficulties and deficiencies in professional practice, whether related to their academic education or related to the demands of the labor market, are of great value for important reflections about the curricular reorientation of dentistry courses. This study aims to analyze the profile and perception about the academic background of professionals graduated from the undergraduate course in Dentistry of the State University of Feira de Santana, Bahia.

Method

It is a descriptive cross-sectional study. This type of study, despite presenting some limitations, provides valuable contributions to the elaboration of programs and actions that will help in the knowledge and possible improvement of the current reality.

The State University of Feira de Santana (UEFS) is a Brazilian public institution of higher education based in the city of Feira de Santana. It is the second oldest public university in Bahia and the oldest among the state, considering the date of recognition as a university by the government, being the third largest public university in Bahia in total number of students and the only one located in Feira de Santana. The study group was composed of graduate professionals totaling an average of 206 graduates, which corresponds to the total number of professionals trained in the selected period.

Inclusion criteria were for the research subjects: to be formed in the period 2013 - 2018. Graduates who graduated outside the period established for the study were excluded. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire, containing the following variables: gender, age, marital status, time of training, area of activity, post-graduation, income, difficulties in insertion in the labor market, evaluation of the teaching-learning process, evaluation of academic activities and teaching practice, in addition to the contribution of the course to professional practice.

Data collection occurred electronically, through a tool called google-docs which is a product of the Type SaaS (Software as a Service), which offers the user means not only to create and edit text documents, spreadsheets and presentations without the need to install any program (since the programs are installed on Google servers and the user's communication with them, or interface, is done through the browser program), as well as storing the files thus created on these same servers.

The research subjects were contacted by e-mail and telephone provided by the board of dentistry. Respecting the ethical aspects, this project was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the State School of Feira de Santana, CAAE 6639941740000053, opinion 2118633.

Once it is a study involving people, obtaining the free and informed consent of the study participants was the first step to conduct the research. Anonymity and confidentiality in the use of the information obtained in the data collection were ensured, excluding the names of the participants of the databases as well as the formator agents eventually mentioned in the data collection, as well as any subsequent publication of the results.

After data gathering, the data were entered in the Statistical Data Package SPSS version 20.0⁸ and descriptive statistical analysis was made by calculating the absolute and relative frequencies of the percentages of the variables, and the results were expressed in the form of tables and graphs.

Results

From the total of 206 graduates, 103 answered the questionnaire, 64.4% of which were female, and 54.8% were between 22 - 26 years old. Most graduates (78.9%) declared to be single, (82.4%) declared that they had no financial dependents and 78.4% (81 graduates) reported receiving up to five minimum wages.

Regarding the year of completion, 49.2% were graduates from 2013.1 to 2015.2 (old curriculum) and 50.8%, graduated from 2016.1 to 2018.1 (new curriculum). More than 90% of the participants have a degree only in Dentistry and a minimum portion reported having attended another degree. Less than half (47.1%) has completed graduate course and 53.8% reported attending graduate school. Among the most cited postgraduate courses are: endodontics, surgery, orthodontics, prosthesis, collective health, implantodontia and pediatric dentistry. On the reasons for attending graduate school, the professionals mentioned the need to improve knowledge, demand from the labor market, pursue an academic career and immediate financial option. Regarding the workplace, the majority (57.8%) reported acting in private practice.

Table 1 shows the variables associated with safety and satisfaction in the professional performance of graduates, observing the answers between professionals who integrated the old curriculum and professionals who integrated the new curriculum. In both, it was possible to observe similar percentages in all variables questioned.

Table 1 - Numerical and percentage distribution of variables related to safety and satisfaction in professional performance, the population of graduates, dentistry course, UEFS. Bahia, 2018-2019.

Variable	Old Course		New Course	
	N	%	N	%
Safety of performance				
Safe to act alone	34	66,7	26	50,0
Supervised act insurance	09	17,6	16	30,8
unsure	08	15,7	10	19,2

Degree of satisfaction				
Very Satisfied / Satisfied	32	62,7	26	50,0
Average satisfaction / Dissatisfied	19	37,3	26	50,0
Difficulty in the Labour Market				
Yes	06	11,8	18	34,6
No	45	88,2	34	65,4
Difficulty new techniques				
Yes	10	19,6	12	23,1
No	41	80,4	40	76,9
Training expectations				
Good/Great	46	90,2	38	73,0
Regular/bad	05	9,8	14	27,0

Table 2 shows the variables related to the perception of graduates regarding the teaching-learning process. The graduates reported being satisfied/very satisfied about the organization of the curriculum (>78%), number of students per class in theoretical subjects (>86.0%), relationship between theoretical and practical classes (>69.0%), proportion of teacher/student (>63.0%), number of administrative professionals available to assist students (>61.0%), indicated bibliography (>82.0%) and research and extension activities (>82.0%). About the elective subjects and conditions of the materials of the practical classes, most reported being dissatisfied/not satisfied (>66.0%). On the other hand, on the bibliographic collection available at the university, the graduates of the old curriculum reported satisfaction (72.5%) and the graduates of the new curriculum were dissatisfied (51.9%). There was divergence in relation to the evaluation method, and the graduates of the old curriculum reported being satisfied/very satisfied (62.7%) and the graduates of the new curriculum, dissatisfied/unsatisfied (51.9%).

Table 2 - Distribution of variables related to the perception of the teaching-learning process, of the population of graduates, dentistry course, UEFS. Bahia, 2018-2019.

Variable	Dissatisfied/ Little Satisfied		Satisfied/ Very Satisfied	
	N	%	N	%
Curriculum organization				
Old Course	09	17,6	42	82,4
New Course	11	21,2	41	78,8
Optional discipline				
Old Course	42	82,3	09	17,7
New Course	39	75,0	13	25,0
Number of students per class				
Old Course	03	5,9	48	94,1
New Course	07	13,5	45	86,5
Practical theory				
Old Course	08	15,7	43	84,3
New Course	16	30,7	36	69,3
Teacher/student relationship				
Old Course	13	25,5	38	74,5
New Course	19	36,5	33	63,5

Student/administration relationship				
	09	17,7	42	82,3
Old Course	20	38,4	32	61,6
New Course				
Bibliography indicated				
Old Course	05	9,8	46	90,2
New Course	09	17,3	43	82,7
Bibliographic Collection Available	14	27,5	37	72,5
Old Course	27	51,9	25	48,1
New Course				
Evaluation Method				
Old Course	19	37,3	32	62,7
New Course	27	51,9	25	48,1
Conditions of the practices materials	34	66,7	17	33,3
Old Course	45	86,6	07	13,4
New Course				
Research Activity				
Old Course	07	13,7	44	86,3
New Course	09	17,3	43	82,7
Extension Activity				
Old Course	04	7,9	47	92,1
New Course	09	17,3	43	82,7

Regarding outpatient activities, graduates of both curricula expressed mostly satisfaction about the proportion of teachers in practical classes (>67%), supervision strategy (>57%), proportionate learning (>80%), time and duration of activities (>73%) and evaluation method (> 51%). There was greater dissatisfaction regarding outpatient conditions for graduates of the new curriculum (78.9%), as presented in Table 3.

Table 3 - Numerical distribution and percentage of variables related to the perception of outpatient activities, the population of graduates, dentistry course, UEFS. Bahia, 2018-2019.

Variable	Dissatisfied/ Little Satisfied		Satisfied/ Very Satisfied	
	N	%	N	%
Teacher/student relationship				
Old Course	13	25,5	38	74,5
New Course	17	32,7	35	67,3
Ambulatory conditions				
Old Course	23	45,1	28	54,9
New Course	41	78,9	11	21,1
Supervisory strategy				
Old Course	17	33,4	34	66,6
New Course	22	42,3	30	57,7
Proportionate learning				
Old Course	07	13,7	44	86,3
New Course	10	19,3	42	80,7
Time and duration				
Old Course	10	19,6	41	80,4

New Course	14	26,9	38	73,1
Evaluation method				
Old Course	17	33,3	34	66,7
New Course	25	48,1	27	51,9

Regarding internship activities, regarding outpatient conditions, there was a difference between the answers, the graduates of the old curriculum (54.9%) demonstrated satisfaction and graduates of the curriculum new dissatisfaction (65.4%). Regarding the other variables, the graduates expressed satisfaction (Table 4).

Table 4 - Numerical distribution and percentage of variables related to the perception of internship activities, the population of graduates, dentistry course, UEFS. Bahia, 2018-2019.

Variable	Dissatisfied/ Little Satisfied		Satisfied/ Very Satisfied	
	N	%	N	%
Teacher/student relationship				
Old Course	09	17,7	42	82,3
New Course	15	28,9	37	71,1
Ambulatory conditions				
Old Course	23	45,1	28	54,9
New Course	34	65,4	18	34,6
Supervisory strategy				
Old Course	13	25,5	38	74,5
New Course	18	34,6	34	65,4
Proportionate learning				
Old Course	07	13,7	44	86,3
New Course	13	25,0	39	75,0
Time and duration				
Old Course	14	27,4	37	72,6
New Course	08	15,3	44	84,7
Evaluation method				
Old Course	12	23,5	39	76,5
New Course	19	36,5	33	63,5

For the questions related to the perception of the teaching staff, in relation to the domain of the contents of the disciplines, there was a level of satisfaction above 88% and the pedagogical didactic resource satisfaction greater than 67%. Regarding the attendance of the teaching staff, the graduates reported being satisfied/very satisfied (>76%) and greater than 59% related to punctuality. On the extraclass care and the stimulus to learning, the graduates were satisfied/very satisfied (>60%), and the adaptation of the work methods to the characteristics of the class was satisfaction greater than 50% (Table 5).

Table 5 - Numerical distribution and percentage of variables related to the perception of the faculty, the population of graduates, dentistry course, UEFS. Bahia, 2018-2019.

Variable	Dissatisfied/ Little Satisfied		Satisfied/ Very Satisfied	
	N	%	N	%
Content domain				
Old Course	01	1,9	50	98,1
New Course	06	11,5	46	88,5
Didactic resource				
Old Course	09	17,6	42	82,4
New Course	17	32,7	35	67,3
Attendance				
New Course	07	13,7	44	86,3
Old Course	12	23,1	40	76,9
Punctuality				
Old Course	09	17,6	42	82,4
New Course	21	40,3	31	59,7
Extra-class servisse				
Old Course	20	39,2	31	60,8
New Course	20	38,5	32	61,5
Stimulating learning				
New Course	15	29,4	36	70,6
Old Course	15	28,9	37	71,1
Adaptation of methods				
Old Course	21	41,2	30	58,9
New Course	22	42,3	30	57,7

Discussion

In the present study, the predominance of female professionals was observed. Until the mid-1990s, it was possible to verify a male dominance in dentistry, pointed out in older studies⁹, but recent studies prove the prevalence of women in relation to males.^{7,9,10,18}

In the area of health, it is necessary that professionals continue to improve their knowledge. Dentistry is a profession that is always in the process of updating with the emergence of new techniques and evolution of some materials used in the course of procedures. Therefore, in this study it was possible to observe that 47.1% have completed graduate school and 53.8% reported being attending graduate school. When asked about the reasons for attending graduate school, the professionals mentioned the need to improve knowledge and the requirement of the labor market.

For a long time, dentistry adopted a technical, individualistic and specialized profile. Brazilians' access to oral health was difficult and limited, people only sought dental care when painful symptomatology arose, and thus, they made the main dental treatment offered by public health only tooth extraction. After the 2000s, the new public health policies led significant changes to the oral health scenario, and as one of the milestones we have the National Oral Health Policy (Smiling Brazil Program, launched in 2003 by the Ministry of Health) which expanded dental access through the Unified Health System (SUS)

with the implementation of oral health teams in the Family Health Strategy.^{11-12,19} Consequently, there was greater participation of professionals working in the public health service. In this study, there was a predominance of professionals working in private practice (57.8%), diverging from the recent established conjuncture. Some authors point out that professionals choose to work in both sectors due to the stability and labor benefits offered by the public service and seek private service as a way to supplement income.^{5,8,10} There were few adherents to the teaching area (only 2%), this fact may also be linked to the young age of professionals, who have not yet moved on to the teaching career or to the fact that there are few public competitions that discourage professionals from going to the area.

It is natural that recent graduates feel insecure to practice the profession, because they have become accustomed to the routine of academic clinic and assistance of teachers, and when they leave university they come across a different routine. The results showed that a minimal portion felt unsafe in acting alone or supervised acting, which can relate this security to the practice acquired with the outpatient activities of the integrated disciplines, to learning with internships and extension activities. Several studies show that the extension and internship activities provide an experience of real practice in the labor market, develops professional skills and skills, humanistic and reflective thinking about the social sphere.^{7,13}

When analyzing the difficulty of insertion in the market, graduates of the old curriculum reported less difficulty, however, the degree of professional dissatisfaction was higher for graduates of the new curriculum, because they have less time to practice the profession and did not achieve the financial stability desired by many recent graduates. Although the graduates reported discontent regarding the labor market, when asked if the course met the expectations of training, they were satisfied/very satisfied, assuming that the professional field is still favorable.

When observing the perception of graduates about the variables related to the teaching-learning process, it was observed that more than 77% of the professionals from both curricula are dissatisfied/very satisfied with the elective disciplines offered. In the curriculum of the Dentistry course of UEFS are required 120 hours that students must meet through the elective disciplines, and in addition to being offered few vacancies, the available schedules of these disciplines end up clashing with the mandatory schedule. Often students need to go to the collegiates of the other courses in search of other options for the fulfillment of the workload. The dissatisfaction rate may be related to these facts. There was also great dissatisfaction regarding the conditions of the materials of the practical classes. The student residence policy has experienced some relapses in recent years, students went on strike at the end of 2014 to defend the measure and require an agreement with the rectory to have the proper transfer of materials and maintenance of the equipment of the clinics, which due to the time of use often require maintenance, and may have contributed to the higher rate of dissatisfaction of graduates of the new curriculum.

The graduates of the new curriculum were also dissatisfied/dissatisfied (54%) on the bibliographic collection available at the University, those of the old curriculum were satisfied/very satisfied (71%), and it can be justified by the collection not being updated with new editions constantly. A portion of the

graduates of the new curriculum were dissatisfied/not satisfied about the evaluation method. Young people born from the 1990s grew up amid rapid technological advances and are well connected to internet, applications and information technologies, are exposed to a range of information and are looking forward to getting quick answers about their questions. Schools have been using differentiated learning and evaluation processes, students are more demanding about the evaluation methodology and bring with them this more critical and demanding view.

On the other hand, there was great satisfaction of both curricula about the other teaching-learning variables involved, especially when asked about research and extension activities, reaching rates above 83% in both groups. The institution has several research and extension activities distributed among many courses, and dentistry has several, favoring experience to the student and providing services to the community, from educational activities, to clinical care, support to cancer patients in the head and neck region, in addition to the treatment of patients with temporomandibular dysfunctions.

When analyzing the perception regarding outpatient activities, it was observed that those formed by the new curriculum expressed dissatisfaction with the outpatient conditions. It is known that Brazilian public universities face problems related to the budget of costing and investment, and infrastructure, which is most often in precarious conditions. Some laboratories and outpatient clinics for the Dentistry course of UEFS are old, presenting problems in the equipment and hindering its use, and the most current users are the most affected, justifying the discontent. However, despite the adversities, the level of satisfaction was positive in relation to the learning provided for the students of both curricula. This data reflects the commitment and dedication of both undergraduates and professors in performing the activities and assisting the community that is a user of the dental services offered by the University.

Regarding the activities of internships, it was also noticed dissatisfaction of the graduates of the new curriculum regarding outpatient conditions since the activities are performed in the Basic Health Units and many have problems related to the structure, broken equipment or that do not work properly, which interferes in the execution of the activities. However, as for the other variables (proportional learning, time and duration, teacher/student relationship) there was satisfaction above 70% for both groups, a significant result due to the importance of internship activities for professional training, because they enable the student to experience the reality of public health, enables integration with professionals from other areas, develops the critical and conscious sense about the importance of health promotion, integrality and humanization.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

When observing the percentage distribution of variables related to the perception of the faculty, the high satisfaction index related to all the variables questioned was remarkable. UEFS stood out in the Folha University Ranking (RUF), published in 2017 by *Jornal Folha de São Paulo*. In the specific evaluations, which are part of the general concept of the RUF, the dentistry course was indicated by the ranking as the 9th best in the country, in the item "Teacher Evaluation" and the 14th in the general evaluation.¹⁷ We noted that the evident commitment of teachers reflects not only in the professional curriculum, but also in the interaction in an educational environment.

Conclusion

The dentistry course at UEFS has trained professionals with a predominant female profile, aged 22 to 26 years, single and without dependents. Most of them have attended or are attending graduate school due to the need to improve knowledge, job market requirements, pursue an academic career and immediate financial option. It was noticed that private service was the main place of operation, followed by public service or more than one place concomitantly. The perception of the graduates in relation to the variables of teaching-learning, outpatient activities, internship activities and teaching staff were largely satisfactory or very satisfactory.

As a benefit for the course, this research aims to improve the curriculum of the Dentistry course of UEFS, the application of the National Curriculum Guidelines and the integration of training for the Unified Health Service, promoting the discussion of the training of the graduate in the dentistry course.

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