

Original Research Article

Factors Affecting Career Satisfaction among Undergraduate Dental Students: A Comparison between Male and Female Students of Riyadh Colleges of Dentistry and Pharmacy, Saudi Arabia.

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The motivation of dental students is an important factor that may affect their decision to either excel or quit the profession of dentistry. Previously, studies have reported that the major contributing factors that may affect the career satisfaction among students included job stability as well as high income. A total of 396 male and female students from level 9 and above were used in this research. Informed consent was signed by the students before responding to the survey. Majority of the students were found to be satisfied with dentistry as their chosen profession. Female students were reported to be more professionally satisfied as compared to males. 'Personal favorite' was found out to be the major factor behind choosing dentistry as a career.

Keywords: Career satisfaction, Riyadh colleges of dentistry, Pharmacy.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation of dental students is an important factor that may affect their decision to either excel or quit the profession of dentistry. Previously, studies have reported that the major contributing factors that may affect the career satisfaction among students included job stability as well as high income. Whereas, another very important factor mentioned was the family pressure, which affected the decision making while pursuing career in dentistry (Agarwal et al, 2012).

Another study revealed that majority of the dental students was satisfied with their career choice of dentistry. However, their levels of motivation went up and down during the course of their undergraduate studies. An important aspect related to the career satisfaction among students was noted, which was 'meeting the expectations' when it comes to putting their ideas and theories that were developed before starting dentistry and actual application of their methods that affected their level of motivation, therefore the decision to stick to dentistry (Vigild & Shwarz, 2001)

Another study aimed to investigate whether dentists would choose dentistry again as a professional career and whether their professional expectations would change after years of practice. The results showed that half of dentists had dentistry as their first choice; due to the dentist's grades in the general secondary education. Half stated that they would not choose it for the second time, the main reason being the health problems acquired through the profession and the low income. Helping others and the social standard dentistry provides were the main reasons given for dentists to choose dentistry again (Oweis et al, 2012).

Dentistry has evolved as a profession more attracted by females (McKay & Quinonez, 2012). A research focused on the difference between male and female motivation factors was done, which revealed that there was a distinct difference in the way male dental students evaluated their career satisfaction as compared to females. Male students were more inclined towards the financial factors, on the other hand, female

students perceived dentistry career as a service towards the society (Scarbecz & Ross, 2002).

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

- To assess the career satisfaction levels of male and female students during their various academic years of dentistry.
- To compare the satisfaction level of males and females.
- To determine the factors that may affect students' motivation at different levels of academic life.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A closed-ended questionnaire was used to determine the career satisfaction among dental students. A total of 396 male and female students from level 9 and above were used in this research. Informed consent was signed by the students before responding to the survey. Data was analyzed using SPSS and will be presented during the annual research day. Total time duration of research was 3 months.

RESULTS

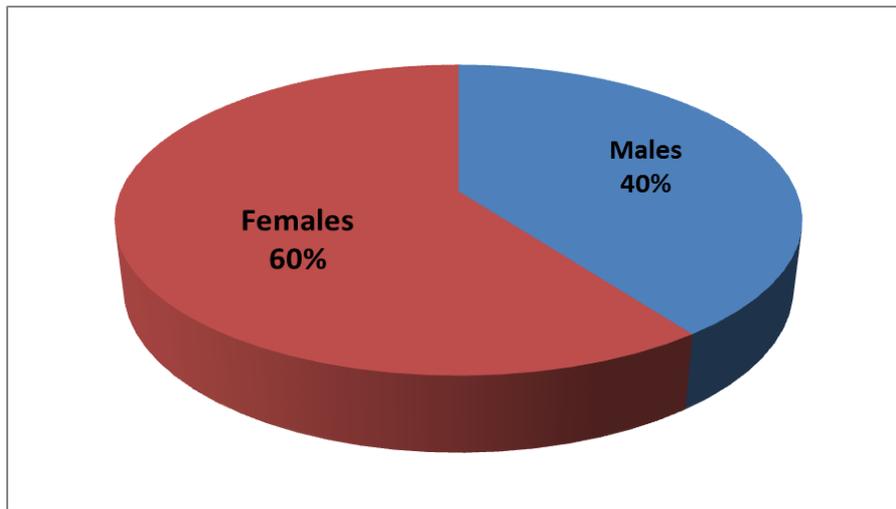


Figure 1: Ratio between male and female study participants

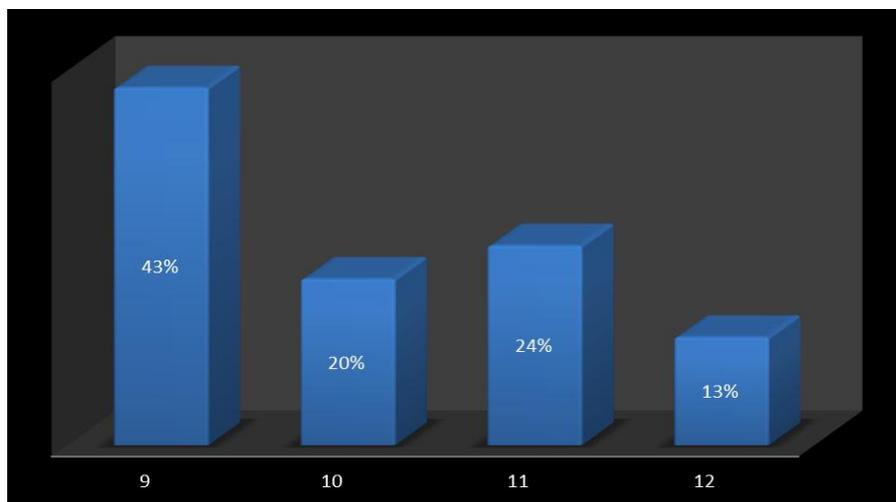
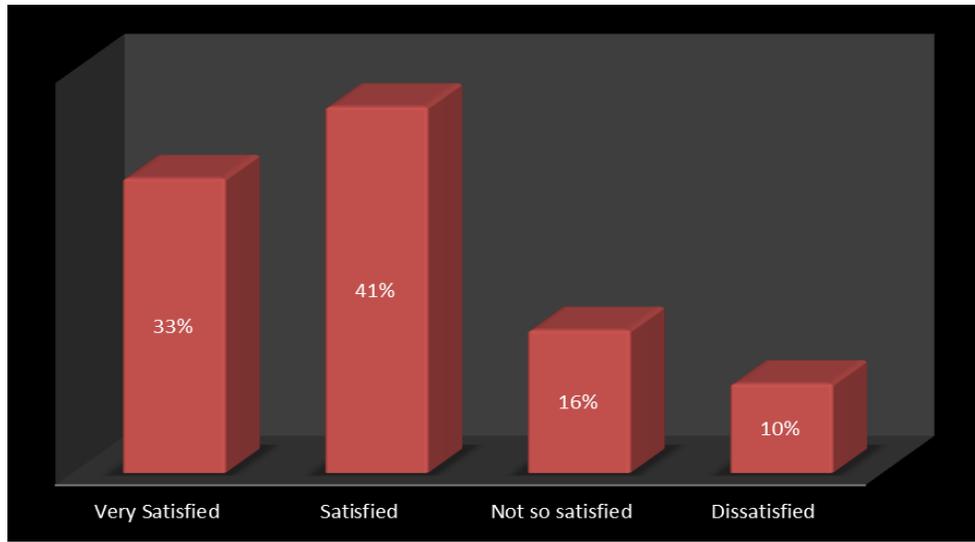


Figure 2: Ratio of different levels of students taking part in this study

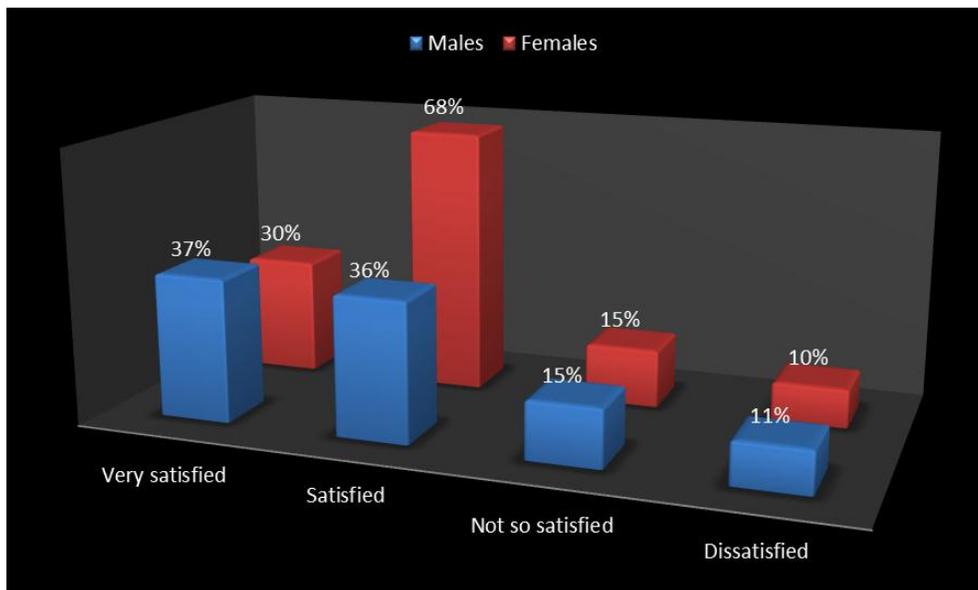
Table 1: Reasons behind choosing dentistry as a career

| Reasons | Response % |
|--------------------|------------|
| Personal Favorite | 62% |
| Family Pressure | 14% |
| High Income | 12% |
| Respect in Society | 12% |



P Value: 0.679

Figure 3: Current level of satisfaction among level 9 students and above



P Value: 0.226

Figure 4: Current level of satisfaction among students; male vs. female

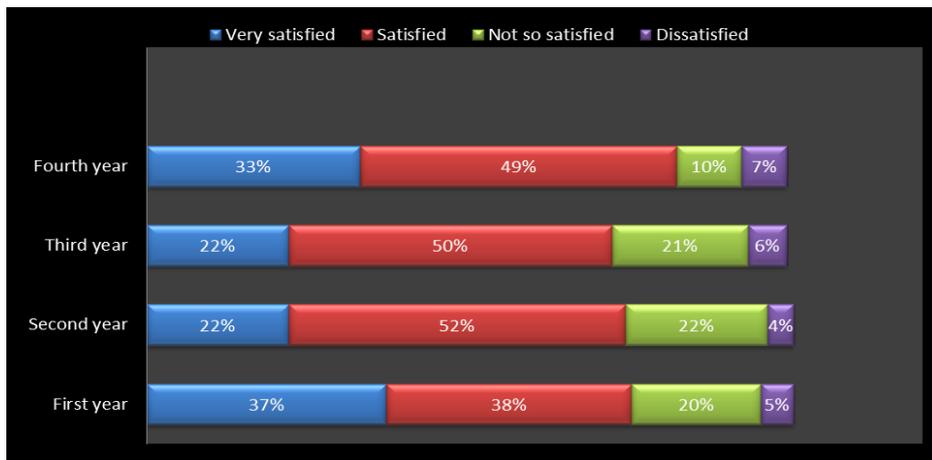


Figure 5: Level 10 satisfaction variations throughout their initial four academic years

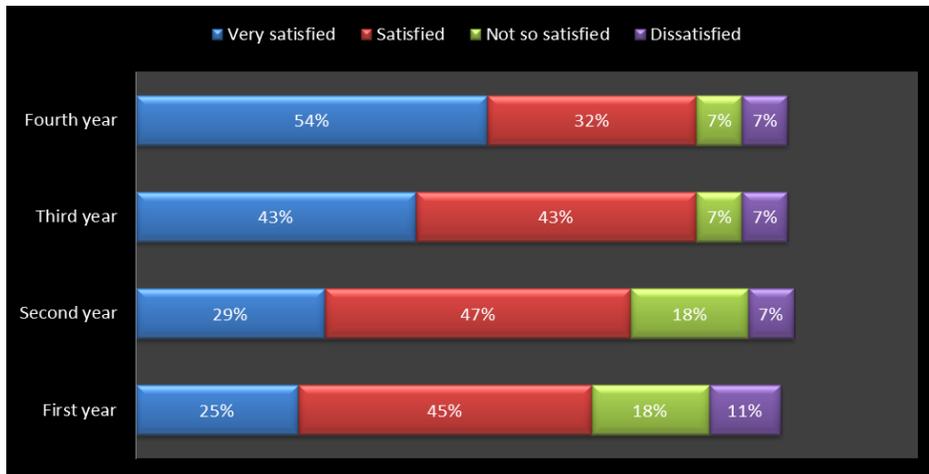


Figure 6: Level 12 satisfaction variations throughout their initial four academic years

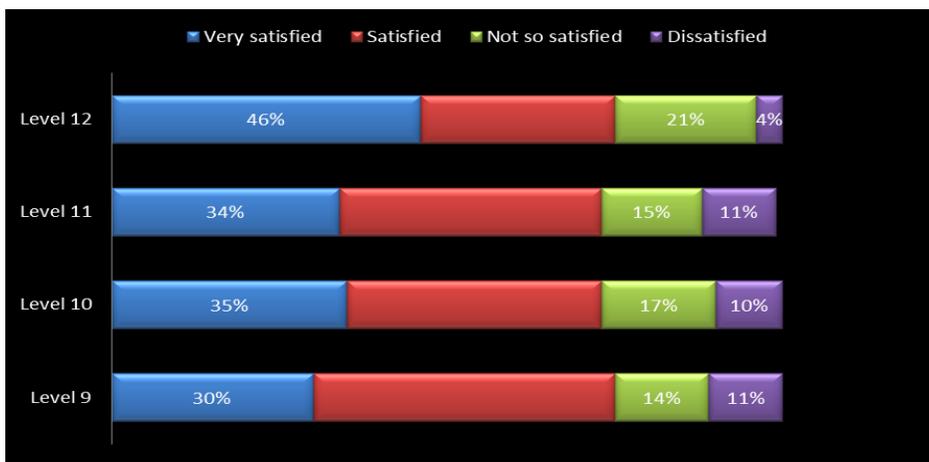
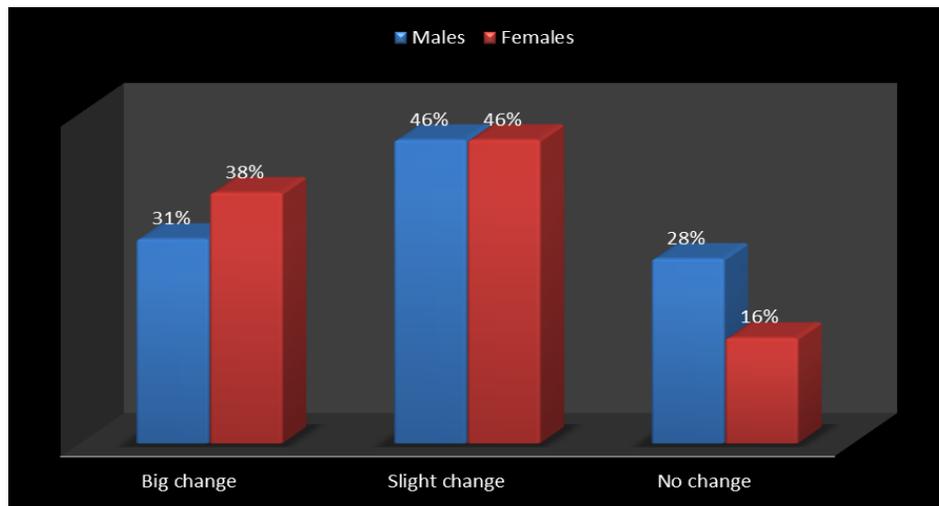
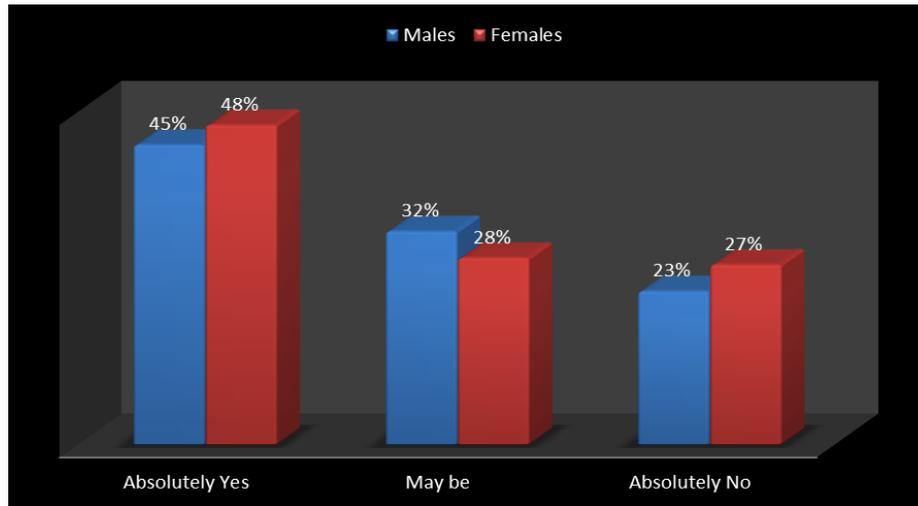


Figure 7: Current level of satisfaction of level 9, 10, 11 & 12 students



P Value: 0.66

Figure 8: Health changes experienced by the students; male vs. female



P Value: 0.516

Figure 9: Male vs. Female response to choosing dentistry again as a profession

DISCUSSION

Choosing a career requires motivation and prominent factors that influence decision making. Dental students face varying phases during their academic life (Sofola, Uti & Akpene, 2008). This study was aimed to inquire about the possible changes in motivation during the initial and latest phases of academic life of dental students of RCsDP. Students have shown different motivation levels throughout their academic life. In some cases, the motivation level increased from initial to latest years, whereas; in some student, it was the other way around. There was a small percentage of students whose motivation level did not change much during their academic life.

A large majority of students were reported to have chosen dentistry because of their personal interest as compared to a small percentage who chose this profession as a result of family preference, better job options etc. In previous studies,

negative health changes have been reported by medical as well as dental students. This encouraged us to inquire the same from our students, who in response, disclosed that a large majority of them experienced a slight to moderate change in health especially among females.

CONCLUSION

- Majority of the students were found to be satisfied with dentistry as their chosen profession.
- Female students were reported to be more professionally satisfied as compared to males.
- ‘Personal favorite’ was found out to be the major factor behind choosing dentistry as a career.

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