

Job Satisfaction Among Dentists in Private Dental Colleges of North India

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of this study was to evaluate the level of job satisfaction among dental faculty member in various private dental colleges in North India and various factors influencing it.

Materials & Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in various private dental colleges in Northern India. A total of 401 dentists were included in the study. A self administered, structured, closed ended questionnaire was developed according to the Dentist Satisfaction Survey. Data analysis was undertaken using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: Findings from the study revealed that the mean score of overall job satisfaction of Indian dentists was 2.25 out of 5. Only 47.7% dentists were satisfied with their job, 29.6% were dissatisfied with their job and 22.6% dentists were neutral about their job satisfaction. Dentists showed the least satisfaction score for perception of income among all factors followed by patient relations and staff. Personal time followed by professional time had the highest satisfaction mean score. Significant predictors of job satisfaction were patient relations, staff, specialty training and working hours per day.

Conclusion: The study concluded that dentists in North India seemed to experience less job satisfaction. Patient relations, perception of income, personal time, staff, and specialty training were important work environment factors for job satisfaction among Indian dentists. Findings of this study showed the issues that need special attention to increase the level of job satisfaction among North Indian dentists and thus improve all dental care system.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Dentist, Private colleges.

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction generally describes how content an individual is with his/her job or the feelings people have about their jobs. The most focal employee attitude is job satisfaction and employees have views about various aspects of their job, their career and for whom they work.¹

Job satisfaction has long been recognised as a key factor determining productivity, as summarised by the statement 'a satisfied worker is a good worker'²⁷ It has been observed that when dental professionals are satisfied with their job as a result of presence of key elements in the workplace that strengthen and support the workforce, rates of

Received: Feb. 13, 2018; Accepted: Apr. 2, 2018

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absenteeism and turnover intent usually decrease, staff morale and productivity increase and work performance as a whole improves.^{3- 6} Dissatisfied dental professionals are likely to leave the organization and as a result staying workers would show poor working performance and might sabotage the work and quit their work.⁷

Studies on job satisfaction among dentists have rarely been reported in literature in India. Hence the present study was undertaken with an aim to determine the level of job satisfaction among dental faculty member in various private dental colleges in North India and various factors influencing it.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Ethical approval

Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from Institutional review board of Swami Devi Dyal Hospital & Dental college, Panchkula.

Informed consent

Informed written consent was obtained from the participants to prevent any inconvenience and to ensure full cooperation.

Study design

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study designed to assess the job satisfaction among dentists working in various private dental colleges of Northern India.

Study area

The study was conducted in various private dental colleges in Northern India.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed according to the Dentist Satisfaction Survey to disclose and measure the areas that are essential for dentist satisfaction. A self administered, structured, closed ended questionnaire written in English was designed. The questionnaire consisted of 29 items: seven items to measure the overall job satisfaction and 22 items related to six work environment factors (see Appendix). The work environment factors included perception of income, personal time, professional time, staff, patient relations, and delivery of care.

The questionnaire also obtained information about the personal and professional characteristics of the subjects including gender, age, job category (general practitioner or specialist), working hours per day and job experience. Participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction on a five point Likert scale with the markers at each end where the value 1 was labelled "Strongly Disagree" and the value 5 labelled "Strongly Agree".

The questionnaire was pilot tested on a sample of 30 participating dentists to evaluate the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Corrective comments on different parts of the questionnaire were summarized and applied wherever necessary. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency was 0.8 which was acceptable.

It was a postal questionnaire survey of all dentists working in various private dental colleges in Northern India. The questionnaires were mailed with an introduction letter and a postage free return envelope. Follow up questionnaires were sent two weeks later to the dentists, who had not replied to the initial mailing. The same was done after another two weeks with three mailing times all in all. The mode of distribution of few questionnaires was even by hand delivery and in order to raise the response rate, several attempts were made to ensure that all the completed questionnaires were collected. The filled questionnaires were collected in at a pre-determined time.

Statistical analysis

The survey data were manually entered using Microsoft Excel 2007. Negatively worded responses were reverse-coded so that higher scores represented higher satisfaction or attainment. The score of items for each factor were averaged to determine the degree of satisfaction for each factor. Then they were classified into three categories based on the mean score in line with previous research (14): dissatisfied (1.0–2.5), neutral (>2.5 but <3.5), and satisfied (3.5–5.0). Statistical analysis was undertaken using the SPSS version 16.0 software package. The univariate analyses were performed to determine associations between personal, professional characteristics, work environmental factors and job satisfaction using chi square test. Stepwise multiple regression

Table 1: Details of demographic and work related data of study subjects.

Variables		Respondents n(%)
Gender	Male	194 (48.4)
	Female	207 (51.6)
Age	>35 years	356 (88.8)
	35-45	45 (11.2)
Qualification	BDS	161 (40.1)
	MDS	240 (59.9)
Speciality	Periodontist	55 (22.9)
	Endodontist	32 (13.3)
	Oral Medicine and Radiologist	29 (12.7)
	Oral Surgeon	27 (11.2)
	Orthodontist	26 (10.8)
	Oral Pathologist	21 (8.8)
	Prosthodontist	20 (8.3)
	Public Health Dentist	20 (8.3)
	Pedodontist	10 (4.2)
Type of Practice	Academics	220 (54.9)
	Academics & Practice	181 (45.1)
Years of Practice	1-5	311 (77.6)
	6-10	42 (10.5)
	>10	48 (12)
Working hours (per day)	4-6	206 (51.4)
	7-9	155 (38.7)
	10-12	40 (10)

Table 2: Satisfaction score and distribution of work environment factors and overall job satisfaction.

Work environmental factors	Satisfaction score ^a	Distribution ^b		
		Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Patient Relations	1.57 ± 0.03	41 (10.2)	145 (36.6)	240 (53.0)
Delivery of care	1.70 ± 0.04	98 (24.6)	84 (21.1)	216 (54.3)
Staff	1.68 ± 0.04	95 (23.9)	81 (20.4)	221 (55.7)
Perception of Income	1.55 ± 0.03	38 (9.6)	143 (36)	216 (54.4)
Professional time	2.05 ± 0.02	80 (20.3)	255 (64.7)	59 (15.0)
Personal time	2.15 ± 0.03	138 (34.4)	187 (46.6)	76 (19.0)
Overall job satisfaction	2.25 ± 0.04	190 (47.7)	90 (22.6)	118 (29.6)

^aMean ± SD of 5-point Likert scales (maximum 5, minimum 1) ^bN (%), respondents (n = 401) were categorized as Satisfied (3.5–5.0), Neutral (>2.5 but <3.5), or Dissatisfied (1.0–2.5)

Table 3: Multiple regression model for factors related to overall job satisfaction.

Variable ^a	Beta	Standard Error	P-value	Standardized beta
Patient relations	-0.51	0.11	<0.05	0.52
Staff	0.38	0.07	<0.05	0.51
Speciality	0.04	0.01	<0.05	0.18
Working hours/day	0.18	0.06	<0.05	-0.18
F = 8.27		P<0.05	R ² = 0.31	

^aGender, age, educational experience, years in practice, personal time, income, professional time and delivery of care did not have a direct significant effect on overall job satisfaction

Table 4: The Questionnaire.

	Item(s)	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Dentistry fulfils my current career aspiration					
2	I wish I could drop my job to do something else					
3	I appear more satisfied with my job than I really I am					
4	Knowing what I know now, I would make the same decision to go into dentistry again					
5.	Dentistry is the place where I can make my best contribution					
6.	Overall, I am extremely satisfied with my career.					
7	I feel trapped in my current position					
	Item(s)	SA	A	N	D	SD
8	My income allows me to provide very well for my family					
9	Compared to other dentists my total earnings are much lower than I desired					
10	The income that i receive from my practice is most satisfactory for my needs	Academics				
		Clinics				
11	My income is not nearly as high as that of other dentists	Academics				
		Clinics				
12	My income compares favourably to that of other dentists	Academics				
		Clinics				
13	I have enough time available for my personal life					
14	I have sufficient time available for leisure activity					
15	I have too little time available for leisure					
16	I have very little time to keep abreast of advances in the field of dentistry					
17	I have enough time to improve my clinical skills					
18	I have sufficient time for professional contacts with colleagues					
19	I have very limited opportunity to discuss difficult cases with colleagues					
20	The quality of my auxiliary personnel is lacking	Academics				
		Clinics				
21	The work performance of my auxiliaries is outstanding	Academics				
		Clinics				
22	The office staff works well together	Academics				
		Clinics				
23	Relating to patients is very frustrating for me	Academics				
		Clinics				

24	I do not enjoy interacting with my patients	Academics					
		Clinics					
25	The quality of interpersonal care I provide is very high	Academics					
		Clinics					
26	I enjoy helping patients	Academics					
		Clinics					
27	I am skilled at dealing with my patients' dental problems	Academics					
		Clinics					
28	I lack opportunities to provide quality care	Academics					
		Clinics					
29	I am extremely pleased with the technical quality of my work	Academics					
		Clinics					

The categories of the responses are Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

analysis was used to verify the association between overall job satisfaction and its related factors including personal and professional characteristics, and work environment factors.

RESULTS

A total of 401 dentists participated in the survey. 51.6% of the respondents were females and 48.4% were males. Around 54.9% participants were pursuing only academics and 45.1% were pursuing both academics and private practice. Majority of the respondents (77.6%) had less than 6 years experience, 10.5% of study subjects had 6-10 years experience and 12% had more than 10 years of experience. 51.4% of dentists reported working 4-6 hours per day, 38.7% dentists worked 7-9 hours per day and 10% dentist worked 10-12 hours per day (Table 1).

Levels of job satisfaction

The mean score of overall job satisfaction of Indian dentists was 2.25 out of 5. Only 47.7% dentists were satisfied with their job, 29.6% were dissatisfied with their job and 22.6% dentists were neutral about their job satisfaction. According to our study, dentists showed the least satisfaction score for perception of income among all factors. It had the lowest mean score of 1.55 out of 5. Of all, even 54.4% of dentists showed dissatisfaction and only 9.6% dentists were satisfied (Table 2).

As for patient relations, it was second of the factors with lowest satisfaction score. Its satisfaction score was 1.57. Of all respondents, 53% dentists were not satisfied while only 10.2% dentists were satisfied.

Dentists were also dissatisfied with staff they have. Its satisfaction score was 1.68 out of 5. Of all 55.7% dentists were not satisfied while 23.9% dentists were satisfied. Dentists were also quite dissatisfied with delivery of care. The level of satisfaction was 1.70 out of 5. Of all respondents, 54.3% of all respondents showed dissatisfaction.

By contrast, for work environment factors, personal time (2.15 ± 0.03) followed by professional time (2.05 ± 0.02) had the highest satisfaction mean score, where 19% dentists were not satisfied with their job and 15% dentists were dissatisfied with their job respectively.

Factors related to job satisfaction

The effect of personal, professional characteristics and work environment factors on overall job satisfaction was evaluated by a stepwise multiple regression analysis (Table 3). Patient relations were the most important predictor of overall job satisfaction after adjusting for other variables in the regression model. Other significant predictors included staff, specialty training and working hours per day. The final regression model accounted for approximately 31% of the total variance in overall job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

Job satisfaction research among dentists is necessary because it has implication on quality of patients care and treatment and also because increased job satisfaction produces improved job performance. Workplace is assumed a second home for workers as the time spent at work accounts for one third of man's life span. Healthy and safe work environment results in more satisfied personnel with consequent improved effectiveness and productivity.. Patient relations, perception of income, personal time, staff, and specialty training are important work environment factors for job satisfaction.

The initial goal of the present study was to investigate the level and distribution of job satisfaction among North Indian dentists. The mean overall job satisfaction score of North Indian dentists was 2.25 out of 5. Overall job satisfaction score among north Indian dentists is very low as compared with data in foreign countries. An earlier survey from California general practitioners found mean score of overall job satisfaction to be 63 out of 100⁸, from South Korean dentists it was 3.2 out of 5.⁹ When respondents were classified into three categories (satisfied, neutral, and dissatisfied) based on the Dentist Satisfaction Survey score, only 47.7% of participating dentists were satisfied with their job. This result is considerably lower than previous reports in other countries. Roth et al.¹⁰ reported that 80% of Canadian orthodontists were satisfied. Logan et al.¹¹ showed that 60% of practicing Iowa dentists were satisfied, and Shugars et al.⁸ found that 50% of California general dentists were satisfied.

Time-related factors may explain the relatively low level of overall job satisfaction among dentists. This survey found that the majority of dentists were discontented with the amount of personal and professional time. This may result from the relatively longer working hours. Majority of Indian dentists worked 7-9 hours per day and the dentists working in colleges are also running their private clinics.

The second goal of this study was to explore the key work environment factors associated with overall job satisfaction among dentists. The personal, professional characteristics and work environment

factors were entered into a regression model in order to explain overall job satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis identified a model including patient relations, perception of income, personal time, staff, and specialty training. The regression model suggested that dentists were more satisfied with their job when they have better relationship with their patients. To a lesser degree, dentists' job satisfaction level was higher when they were more satisfied with their income level, personal time issue and the staff. Dentist who had specialty training showed higher job satisfaction after controlling for other factors in the regression model.

Several limitations must be considered when interpreting the findings of the present study. Firstly, this survey was based on a cross-sectional design that did not allow the determination of causality for any identified association. Thus, prospective and longitudinal studies are strongly recommended to examine the change of work environment factors on job satisfaction. Secondly, the questionnaire was developed by modification of the existing Dentist Satisfaction Survey. Because of the simple process, comparability of the results of present study with that of other studies using Dentist Satisfaction Survey might be imperfect. There is a need to implement well-defined procedures in a future replication studies. Thirdly, the results only reflect the data collected with Dentist Satisfaction Survey questionnaire. Efforts to develop better measures of job satisfaction and more objective measures of work environment factors are needed.

CONCLUSION

Job satisfaction as the barometer of the dental profession has provided insights about issues in the dental profession needing attention in Northern India. Data from this study revealed that Indian dentists seemed to experience less job satisfaction than their colleagues in other countries, although this was not directly tested. Patient relations, perception of income, personal time, staff, and specialty training were important work environment factors for job satisfaction among Indian dentists. Of these factors, the patient relations were the strongest predictor of overall job satisfaction. Findings of this study will be helpful to

policy makers to design plans to increase the level of job satisfaction among Indian dentists. In addition, regarding the application of such data, various studies of job satisfaction would be necessary in order to improve the working environment of dentist's in India.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

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