

The Attitude and Practice of postgraduate dentists towards research dissertation work

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Abstract

Background: Research in dental field is progressing, and in India research work has witnessed exponential growth. The word research is obtained from French that is ‘recherche’^[1] which means intending to approach seeking. Research dissertation experience not only enhances understanding but also improves the skill and improves the research dissertation work.

Aims: To identify attitude and practice of postgraduate dentists towards research dissertation work.

Methods and Material: A cross-sectional questionnaire survey was conducted among the dental postgraduate students and dentists with postgraduate degree of all the specialties in the month of May-June 2020. The self-administered questionnaire consisting of 4 demographic

questions as well as 10 questions on attitude and 10 questions on practice related to the research dissertation work. Data from 224 completed questionnaires were entered into and analysed using Microsoft excel.

Results: Majority of postgraduate students displayed a positive attitude towards research dissertation work. 50% of respondents claimed that their research dissertation was useful for future career, whereas 55.4% respondents believed that their research dissertation contribute to innovations in dental field. 45.5% respondents believed that they have some basic research methodology training prior to start of research dissertation. 32.6% respondents claimed that their research work increases burden.

Conclusions: Most of the dental postgraduate students have a positive attitude to research dissertation. Present

study also unearths barriers for research in an Indian scenario like documentation, funds, overburden postgraduates. DCI have to make major changes to make research stress free and to make friendly environment.

Keywords: Research, Research dissertation, Postgraduate students, Attitude, Practice.

Introduction

Research in the dental field is progressing at mightier speed worldwide. The field of dental research in India has witnessed exponential growth. A thesis or dissertation is a document submitted in support of candidature for an academic degree or professional qualification presenting the author's research and findings.

The primary purpose of research dissertation is to enhance the knowledge or find new ways of making the existing knowledge available for better purpose. There is a tremendous growth in dentistry due to development of newer technologies, advanced diagnostic materials and drugs used in dentistry.^[2]

At present there are 305 Dental colleges in India and the number of students completing Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) degree in 1 year is 23,690. Every year 4000 Master of Dental Surgery (MDS) student passed.^[3]

The vast number of oral health care professionals can be used for the elevation of Dental research but unfortunately the representation of India toward dental research on the international stage is negligible.

The dental profession is a noble profession and it takes a year of devotion to get the post-graduation degree. Post-graduation helps to build the knowledge obtained at undergraduate degree level. Often the course content is more practical in nature and uplift the students with the skills they will need in workplace. Completing postgraduate studies helps students in their career prospects and deepen their understanding of their area of study. The current situation of dentists in India is not good

due to lack of support from the government. There are very low prospects of job, costly equipment's, lack of awareness about oral health in Indian public etc.

Postgraduates are subjected to different kind of stressors like pressure from academics, research dissertation work etc. Postgraduates need intensive training to write research dissertation. Various research dissertation work has been done in dental colleges. There are some barriers for the growth of dental science and research dissertation work. These factors may be personal like experience, knowledge, time management, institutional cooperation, guidance, regular contact with supervisor and student etc.

Conducting research and thesis writing are quite challenging to postgraduates and supervisors. So a short survey was undertaken with the aim focusing on the Attitude and Practice of postgraduate dentists towards research dissertation work.

Subjects and Methods

A cross-sectional questionnaire survey was conducted among postgraduate dentists. The survey was prepared in the form of an online form and was sent to 300 respondents who included postgraduate students, professor, reader, lecturer and practitioners, in the state of Himachal Pradesh, India. The period of the survey was May 28 to June 14, 2020, and a total of 224 responders completed the survey.

The self-administered questionnaire consisting of 4 demographic questions as well as 10 questions on attitude and 10 questions on practice related to the research dissertation work. Validity of questionnaire was independently checked by two examiners on a sample size of 50 participants and then it was finalized for the survey. The filled questionnaire online form was collected and analyse. As banning public gathering and community-based sampling survey was not possible at that stage due

to pandemic, so we decided to collect the data online by using social media in the form of Google forms.

Consent was obtained by all the participants in this study. The distribution of responses was presented as frequency and percentages. Data were tabulated in excel and descriptive statistics were performed.

Results

A total of 224 dentists participated in this survey. The gender- and branch-wise distribution of dentists are displayed in figures. Out of the total participants, 61.6% were female and 38.4% were male. Among the various subgroups, 54% were student, 16.5% were practitioner, 11.6% were professor, 11.2% were lecturer and 9.4% reader. The demography of participants is explained in Figure 1 and 2 & Figure 3 and 4.

Attitude of dentists regarding Research dissertation

Table 1 shows out of the total participants who took part in this survey, claimed that 50% respondents agreed that their research dissertation was useful for future career.

55.4% respondents believed that research dissertation contribute to innovations in dental field. About 45.5% respondents believed that they have some basic research methodology training prior to start of research dissertation were help postgraduate to perform better. According to 32.6% respondents claimed that their research work increases burden on already overworked postgraduate students.

About 28.6% respondents disagreed that research dissertation should be made optional. About 44.6% respondents agreed that post graduate students were meaningful of plagiarism while writing research dissertation.

According to 43.3% respondents believed that their funding of research dissertation by some agencies would improve the quality of research work. According to 45.5% respondents said that the best method of monitoring of

research work were by lecturer, reader and professor in a sequential manner. About 37.9% respondents believed that dental college should spare the staff involved in research from other responsibilities or employ people for research separately.

About 54.5% respondents wanted that their institute/universities to provide an award like best dissertation, as it improved the quality of research work.

Result regarding practice of Research dissertation among dentists

Table 2 depicts out of total participants, according to 53.1% respondents believed that their topic of research dissertation was selected by the head of department. About 66.5% respondents were satisfied with their topic of research dissertation. 56.3% respondents were agreed with the research methodology training book or undergo research methodology training before start of research dissertation work. Majority (81.7%) respondents claimed that they could not make fake entries for the completion of research dissertation. According to 71.9% respondents, they did not make any alterations in statistical result for better result.

About 58% respondents felt that training was a must for writing an abstract or research dissertation. According to 78.6% postgraduates, believed that they have an ethical committee in their respective institution. About 70.1% respondents agreed that their college libraries had enough references to support the research. According to 49.6% respondents, believed that the quality of research dissertation suffered due to the lack of required patients/materials/equipment in their institute overall 38.8% postgraduates reported that their research work suffered due to inter or intradepartmental politics.

Discussion: In the present scenario, a global approach to scientific studies has developed in dental education which leads to increased number of research dissertation

throughout the world. The present study was led to assess attitude and practice of postgraduate dentists towards research dissertation work. As per the guidelines of DCI, all the postgraduate students have to do mandatory research dissertation as a requirement for completion of degree. Our study revealed the attitude and practice of postgraduate dentists towards research work. The study aimed all the postgraduates irrespective of their branches as basic attitude and practice towards research dissertation work.^[4]

In present study, out of 224 participants, 38.4% were male and 61.6% were female. 20 questions were asked from the participants. Similar demographic distribution was obtained by Sharma et al.^[5] Majority of postgraduates agreed that their research dissertation contribute to innovations in dental field.

There are Barriers for postgraduates in their research dissertation. According to 32.6% agreed that research dissertation work increases burden on already overworked postgraduate students whereas 27.7% disagreed. Similar study by Khamis et al has reported the same, revealed that 69.5% agreed that research work increases load on already overworked postgraduates.

When it came to write a research dissertation, the majority of the respondents had been taught how to write an abstract and almost all the respondents in the present study agreed with the importance of being trained to write research dissertation. Aditi Hedge et al, Srinivasan et al^[6] and Aslan et al^[7] has reported the same.

Workshops and training programs are important to research dissertation. The study of Unnkrishnan et al has yielded same results.^[8]

A major concern about funds and infrastructure for research, is a significant factor which encourage or hamper their research dissertation. In an Indian scenario postgraduates and staff are overburden due to the

education fees and inadequate salaries of the staff make the research work more complicated. Bailit et al has concluded the same.^[9] Most of the postgraduates do not know how many funding agencies are there which provide grant/funds for research dissertation. As we know the dental materials are expensive hence lack of financial support can be attributed to be the most common reason for postgraduates for lack of interest in research dissertation. 43.3% were agreed that funding of research dissertation by some agencies would improve the quality of research work. Similar study was done, in a review by Elangovan et al, lack of infrastructure, inadequacy of funds, & lack of research guides are the reasons for minimum research activity among student in dental schools in India.^[10]

In the present study, 78.6% respondents believed that they have an ethical committee in their institution. But according to Mohammad et al announced that bioethics is insufficient as postgraduates and departmental teachers are not assuming an essential part, and are not favoured the method of learning.^[11]

The literature search revealed very few studies on perception of plagiarism on dental students. In this present study only 44.6% postgraduates were agreed about the meaningful of plagiarism while writing the research dissertation. According to the study conducted by Singh et al on dental postgraduates and faculty members, 51% of postgraduates and 41% faculty members disagreed with the statement that they are working or studying in a plagiarism-free environment.^[12]

The overall findings of our study from Table 1 and Table 2, suggest that postgraduate dentists possess a positive attitude to research dissertation. As the scope of research work is increasing in India. The dental colleges should provide all the facilities to the postgraduates for their

research dissertation by resolving all the barriers which affect the research work.

Limitations

As banning public gathering and community-based sampling survey was not possible due to pandemic (COVID-19), so we choose to collect the data online by using social media in the form of Google forms. So our study involve less respondents which limiting the generalization of results.

Conclusion

Most of the dental postgraduate students have a positive attitude to research dissertation. This study also highlights certain barriers for research which are common India. Our study highlights that there is a need for major changes from the Dental council of India in India to make the research more stress free, and friendly environment rather than non-intensive environment.

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Legend Tables and Figures

Table1: Attitude of dentists regarding Research dissertation

S. No.	Attitudes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	Do you think research dissertation is useful for future career?	2.7%	6.3%	12.1%	50%	29%
2.	Does research dissertation contribute to innovations in dental field?	2.2%	5.8%	9.4%	55.4%	27.2%
3.	Do you think some basic research methodology training prior to start of research dissertation would help postgraduate to perform better?	2.7%	3.6%	2.7%	45.5%	45.5%
4.	Do you think research work increases burden on already overworked post-graduate students?	8.9%	27.7%	22.3%	32.6%	8.5%
5.	Do you think research dissertation should be made optional?	17.4%	28.6%	23.2%	22.8%	8%
6.	Do you think post graduate students are meaningful of plagiarism while writing the research dissertation?	2.2%	19.2%	29.9%	44.6%	4%
7.	Do you think funding of research dissertation by some agencies would improve the quality of research work?	1.8%	5.4%	7.1%	43.3%	42.4%
8.	What do you think is the best method of monitoring		Only guide	Lecturer, reader and professor in	Guide and co guide	

	of research work?		monitor the work	a sequential manner		
			16.5%	45.5%	37.9%	
9.	Do you think dental college should spare the staff involved in research from other responsibilities or employ people for research separately?	4.9%	17.9%	20.1%	37.9%	19.2%
10.	Do you think an award like “best dissertation” at institute or university level would improve the quality of research work?	4.5%	4.5%	10.3%	54.5%	26.3%

Table 2: Result regarding practice of Research dissertation among dentists

S.No.	Practice questions	Yes	No	Can't Say
1.	Who selected the topic of your research dissertation?	Head of department	Any other staff member	Yourself
		53.1%	13.4%	33.5%
2.	Are/were you satisfied with your topic of research dissertation?	66.5%	13.4%	20.1%
3.	Did you read any research methodology book or undergo research methodology training before start of your research dissertation?	56.3%	43.8%	
4.	Did you make any fake entries for completion of your research dissertation?	18.3%	81.7%	
5.	Did you make some alterations in statistical results for better results?	28.1%	71.9%	
6.	Have you been taught how to write an abstract or research dissertation?	58%	42%	
7.	Do you have an ethical committee in your institution?	78.6%	21.4%	
8.	Do you have enough research literature (journals and books) for research dissertation in your college libraries?	70.1%	29.9%	

9.	Did the quality of your research dissertation suffered due to lack of Required patients /equipment/material sin your institution?	49.6%	50.4%	
10.	Did your research work suffered due to inter or intradepartmental politics?	38.8%	61.2%	

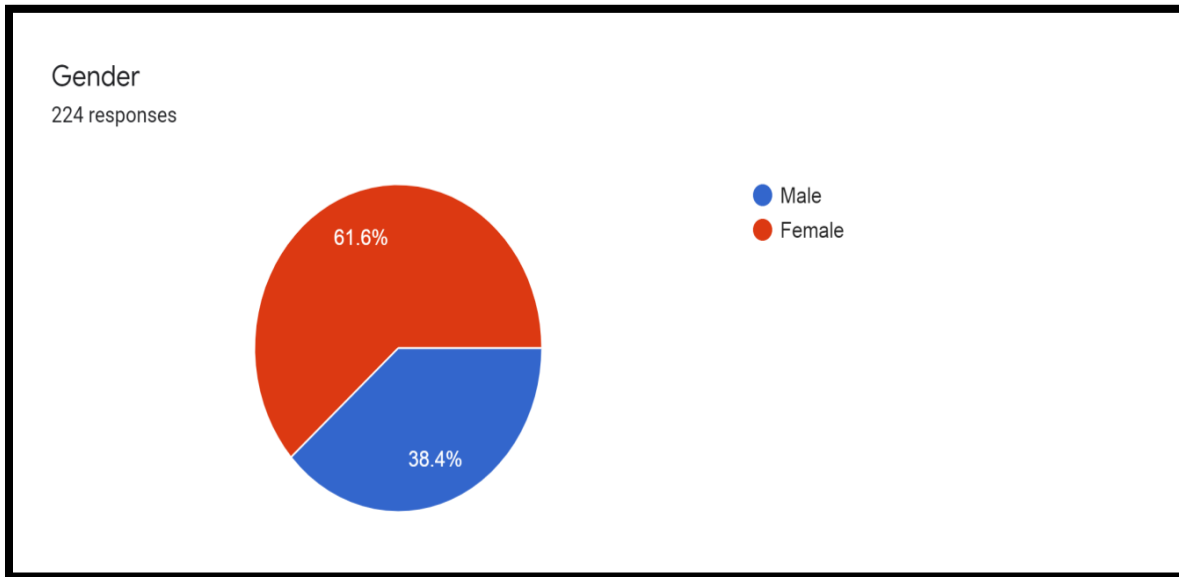


Figure 1

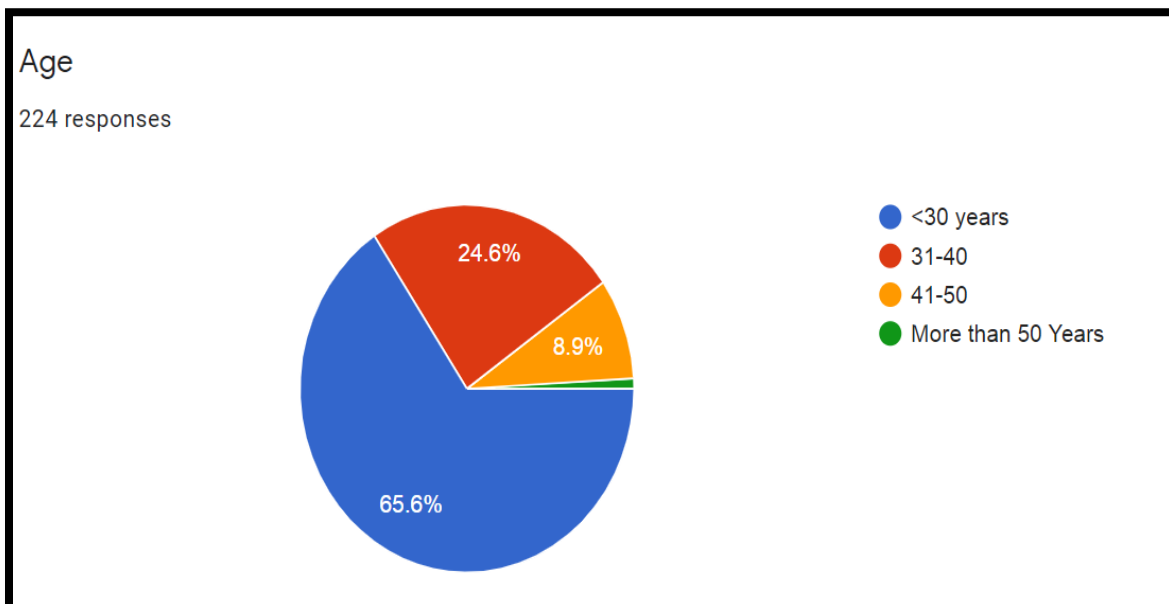


Figure 2

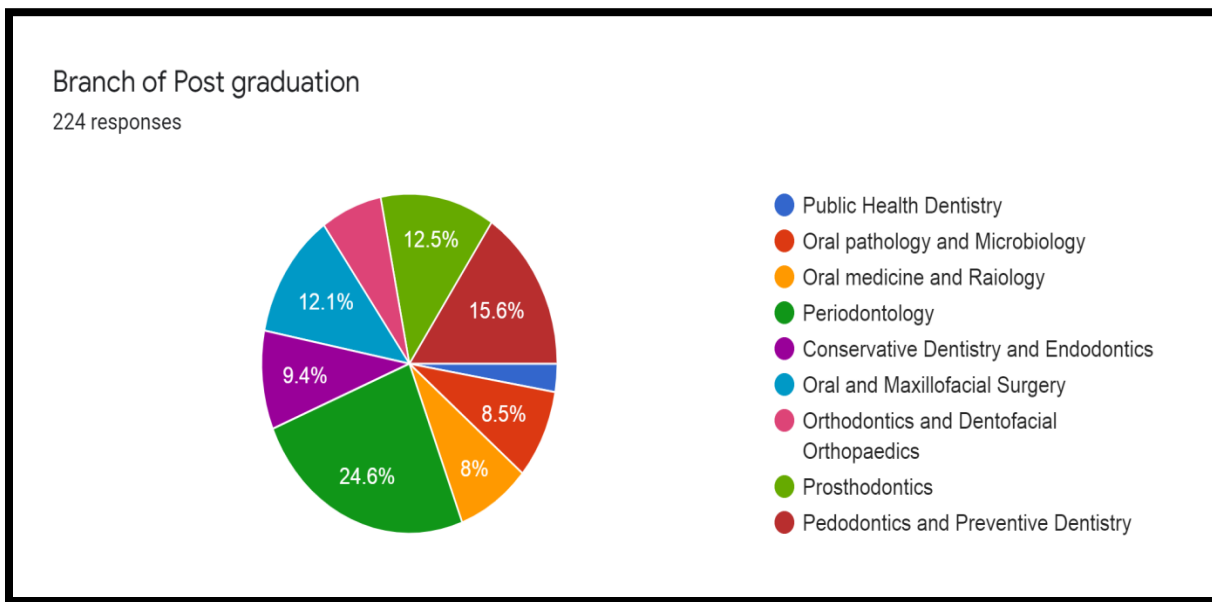


Figure 3

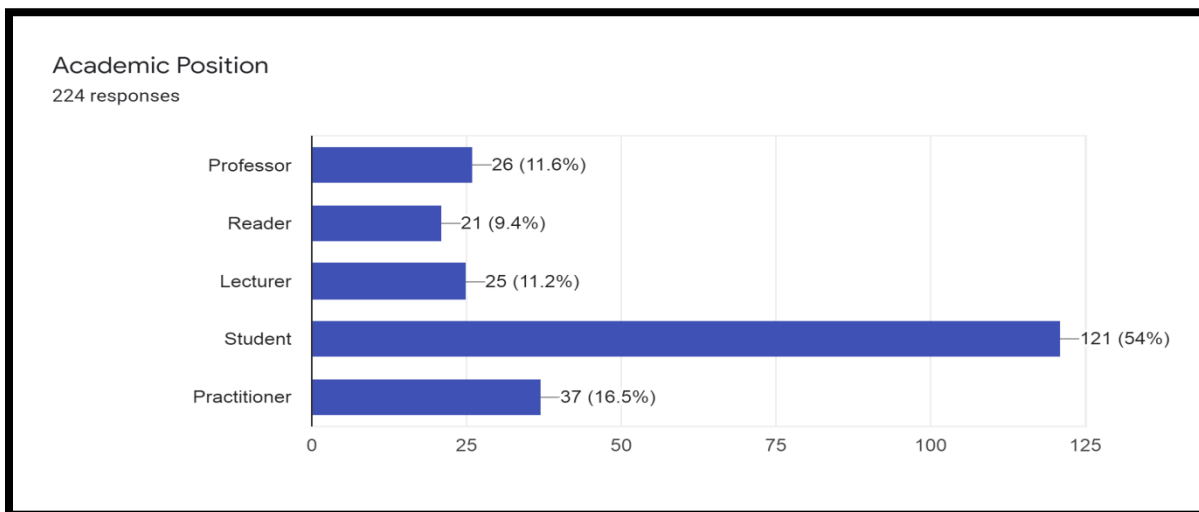


Figure 4