

Demographic Profile of Students in the Dentistry Course of a Private Higher Education Institution in Salvador

Perfil Demográfico de Discentes do Curso de Odontologia de uma Instituição de Ensino Superior Particular em Salvador

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Abstract

Socio-economic-cultural issues are related to the learning process, which makes knowledge of the students' profile at higher education institutions (HEIs) essential to understand the future direction of the profession. The purpose of this research is describe demographic profile of undergraduate dentistry students from a HEIs, in the city of Salvador. After approval by the research ethics committee, a form containing 16 questions related to socio-economic-demographic factors and academic performance were applied to students who attended between the 2nd and 10th semester of the course. Data analysis obtained was described through measures of central tendency, percentage, and dispersion. A total of 154 students were included. Students were mostly young, single, female, childless, born in cities other than the capital of Bahia. They entered the institution through the entrance exam, and they kept their enrollment through the support of the Student Financing Fund. Regarding academic performance, it was observed that most participants had already needed to take a final exam and had already failed in at least one subject. It is noted that there is greater similarity than divergence in the profile of the Dentistry student at this private institution in Salvador, compared to other national works consulted in this research. However, in contrast to the literature, it was observed that in this particular HEI, there was a higher percentage of students coming from public schools. It is noteworthy that more demographic studies throughout national territory are important to better understand the perspectives of the Brazilian educational system.

Keywords: Higher Education. Students. Dentists.

Resumo

Aspectos sócio-econômico-culturais estão diretamente relacionadas ao processo de aprendizagem, o que torna o conhecimento do perfil dos discentes de instituições de ensino superior (IES), fundamental para se compreender eventuais rumos da profissão. O objetivo da presente pesquisa foi descrever o perfil demográfico dos graduandos do curso de Odontologia de uma IES particular, município de Salvador. Após aprovação do comitê de ética em pesquisa, um formulário contendo 16 questões relacionadas a fatores sócio-econômico-demográficos e sobre rendimento acadêmico foi aplicado aos alunos que cursavam entre o 2º e 10º semestre. A análise dos dados obtidos foi descrita através de medidas de tendência central, porcentagem e dispersão. Um total de 154 alunos foram incluídos. Os discentes se apresentaram majoritariamente como uma população jovem, solteiros, sexo feminino, sem filhos, nascidos em outros municípios que não a capital baiana. O ingresso na instituição se deu através do vestibular e os mesmos mantiveram a matrícula através do auxílio do Fundo de Financiamento Estudantil. No que tange ao rendimento acadêmico, observou-se que a maioria dos participantes realizaram prova final e já foram reprovados em ao menos uma disciplina. Nota-se que há maior similaridade do que divergência no perfil do estudante de Odontologia dessa instituição particular de Salvador, em comparação com os demais trabalhos nacionais. Entretanto, em contraste com a literatura, observou-se que nesta IES particular, houve maior percentual de alunos egressos de escola pública. Ressalta-se que mais estudos demográficos ao longo do território nacional são importantes para se compreender melhor as perspectivas do sistema educacional brasileiro.

Palavras-chave: Educação Superior. Estudantes. Odontólogos.

1 Introduction

A higher education institution (IES) allows students to focus their attention on qualification and preparation for the labor market¹. For many young adults, the end of a university course means the promise of a new phase of life, marked by the beginning of the performance of the chosen profession. However, one of the main problems faced by graduates is the difficulty entering the labor market for their respective professions. It is known that the conquest of space

in the market depends not only on a diploma, but also on personal characteristics, specific competencies, networks of relationships and ability to adjust to different work demands².

However, it is noticeable, with a certain frequency, that many graduates, after graduating in higher education, do not develop activities related to their area of training. This is often due to the poor use of students³.

Although multiple factors are involved in difficulties during the learning process, it is known that socio-economic-cultural issues are directly related⁴. Therefore, knowledge of

the profile of the professional future is essential to understand the possible direction of the profession and even of health care⁵.

This study aims to identify the general demographic profile of the Dentistry course students of a private IHE, located in the city of Salvador, registered in the second academic semester of 2019.

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This study aims to identify the general demographic profile of the Dentistry course students of a private institute of higher education, located in the city of Salvador, enrolled in the second academic semester of 2019.

2 Material and Methods

This descriptive cross-sectional study was attended by students enrolled between the 2nd and 10th term of the Dentistry Course in Salvador at Centro Universitário Regional do Brasil (UNIRB). The participants signed a free and informed consent form (TCLE) and answered a questionnaire of 16 objective questions on socio-economic-demographic issues and questions related to their academic achievement at the higher education institution. This data collection instrument and the TCLE were previously approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP), referring to Legal Opinion number 3.602.573.

Data collection through the questionnaire, elaborated by the researchers, was obtained during the course of the classes. The individual failure rate of the students was provided by themselves. The inclusion criteria were: over 18 years; acceptance to participate in the research and to be enrolled regularly between the 2nd and the 10th term in the current

academic period of data collection. We did not include individuals under the age group who had not completed yet a full six-month term in the IHE, and those who were not found for the face-to-face application of the proposed questionnaire. The exclusion criteria of this research were the student's refusal to participate in it and cases where there was conflict of interest.

After the questionnaires were applied, the data were computed in a database of the Windows Excel 2016 program to make the respective tables and percentage calculations. Information on socio-economic-demographic-cultural profiles was collected and analyzed in a descriptive manner through measures of central tendency and dispersion.

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3 Results and Discussion

Of the total of 167 students enrolled in the dentistry course in this IES, 154 students were reached through the forms of the present research. Thus, 13 students were not included due to the inability to apply the questionnaire in person.

The results obtained on demographic data and academic yield are tabulated in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 - Demographic data collected from students of the dentistry course, enrolled from the 2nd to the 10th term in the second academic period of 2019 (Salvador, Bahia)

Variable	2nd term		3rd term		4th term		5th term		6th term		7th term		8th term		9th term		10th term		
	N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Sex																			
Gender	4	67	1	25	0	0	1	33	6	43	5	33	3	33	10	37	22	31	
Female	2	33	3	75	2	100	2	67	8	57	10	67	10	77	17	63	48	69	
Age range																			
From 18 to 20 years old	4	67	1	25	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
From 21 to 25 years old	2	33	2	50	2	100	2	67	9	64	11	73	10	77	15	56	40	57	
From 26 to 30 years old	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	33	2	14	4	27	0	0	9	33	17	25	
From 31 to 35 years old	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	15	1	4	3	4	
Over 36 years old	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	14	0	0	1	8	2	7	9	13	

Continua...

Variable	2nd term		3rd term		4th term		5th term		6th term		7th term		8th term		9th term		10th term	
	N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Not informed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Family income																		
Up to 1 minimum wage	1	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	29	2	13	2	15	5	19	6	9
More than 1 minimum wage	5	83	4	100	2	100	3	100	10	71	13	87	11	85	22	81	64	91
Marital status																		
Single	6	100	4	100	1	50	3	100	12	86	15	100	11	85	24	89	57	81
Married	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0	2	14	0	0	2	15	2	7	11	16
Divorced	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Widowed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Not informed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0
Labor market																		
Employed	2	33	1	25	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	2	15	1	4	6	9
Unemployed	4	67	3	75	2	100	2	67	11	79	13	87	9	69	22	81	47	67
Self-employed	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33	2	14	2	13	2	15	4	15	17	24
Type of housing																		
Own	4	67	2	50	2	100	2	67	6	43	4	27	9	69	15	56	46	66
Rented	2	37	2	50	0	0	1	33	8	57	11	73	4	31	22	44	24	34
Number of people in the housing																		
Alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	2	7	2	3
More than one person	2	33	1	25	0	0	1	33	4	29	8	53	6	46	7	26	30	43
More than 2 persons	0	0	2	50	1	50	1	33	6	43	1	7	2	15	6	22	13	19
More than 3 persons	4	67	1	25	1	50	1	33	4	29	6	40	4	31	10	37	25	36
Children																		
None	6	100	3	75	0	0	0	0	11	79	15	100	12	92	24	89	54	77
Up to 1 child	0	0	1	25	2	100	2	67	3	21	0	0	1	8	1	4	10	14
More than 1 child	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	6	9
City was born																		
Salvador	4	67	2	50	1	50	2	67	5	36	4	27	6	46	8	30	23	33
Others	2	33	2	50	1	50	1	33	9	64	11	73	7	54	19	70	47	67
City where attended high school																		
Salvador	4	67	3	75	1	50	3	100	5	36	4	27	5	38	10	37	22	31
Others	2	33	1	25	1	50	0	0	9	64	11	73	8	62	17	63	48	69
School that studied High School																		
Public	5	83	3	75	1	50	1	33	10	71	13	87	7	46	13	52	22	31
Private	1	17	1	25	1	50	2	67	4	29	2	13	6	54	14	48	48	69
Form of admission to college																		
Vestibular	6	100	4	100	2	100	1	33	11	79	12	80	7	54	22	81	57	81
Internal transfer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	1	7	0	0	0	0	1	1
External transfer	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	67	1	7	2	13	3	23	5	19	12	17
ENEM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	3	23	0	0	0	0
Form of stay in college																		
Own cost	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0	2	14	0	0	0	0	8	30	12	17
Scholarship	2	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	29	1	7	1	8	3	11	0	0
Student financing	0	0	1	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	1	4	5	7
FIES	4	67	3	75	1	50	3	100	8	57	13	87	12	92	15	56	53	76
Educa mais Brasil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Resource data.

Table 2 - Demographic data collected from dentistry course students, enrolled from the 2nd to the 10th term in the second academic period of 2019 (Salvador, Bahia)

Variable	2nd term		3rd term		4th term		5th Term		6th term		7th term		8th Term		9th term		10th term		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Subjects failed																			
None	2	33	3	75	0	0	1	33	5	36	5	33	5	38	4	15	10	14	
Only 1	4	67	0	0	0	0	1	33	3	21	2	13	3	23	4	15	11	16	
From 2 to 3 disciplines	0	0	1	25	1	50	1	33	5	36	4	27	1	8	8	30	20	29	
Over 4 disciplines	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0	1	7	4	27	4	31	11	41	29	41	
Final test																			
Yes	6	100	4	100	2	100	3	100	11	79	15	100	12	92	26	96	70	100	
No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	21	0	0	1	8	1	4	0	0	

Source: Resource data.

Through the data collected, there was a great disparity in the volume of students during the terms, where there is a larger number of students enrolled in the last terms. It was observed that the population of students of this course is predominantly young, aged between 21 and 25 years, female, single marital status, and childless

Although they reside in Salvador, a municipality where the university campus is located, a large part of the students (63%) reported having completed high school in other cities, in contrast to 37% who concluded the same in the Bahia state capital. Among the cities described by the students are: Cruz das Almas, Conceição de Coité, Tucano, Mundo Novo, Petrolina, Carnaíba, Jussara, Iacu, Rodelas, Retirolândia, Serrinha, Alagoinhas, Morro do Chapéu, Amargosa, Pojuca, Igrapiuna, Inhambupe, Camaçari, Dom Bosco, Feira de Santana, Presidente Dutra, Irece, Cafarnaum, Lapão, Ubatã, Guaibim, Central, João Dourado, Tupinambá and Iraquara.

Regarding the city of birth, it is noticed the proximity of the results regarding the place of completion of the high school. Students are mostly from other cities (64%) compared to those born in Salvador (36%). However, despite the proximity of these data, it cannot be said that all the individuals who were born in the capital remained there during high school education, as well as the same for the other cities, since it was observed that in some cases, students born in other cities used capital during the period of high school, as well as the opposite.

Of the students investigated, most (73%) were unemployed, and with family income higher than a minimum wage (87%). In spite of this family income, when investigating the type of school where the student attended high school, it was observed that most of the students who participated in the research responded to have completed high school in public school (66%), in contrast to the minority who said they had completed in private networks being represented by only 34% of the population. In relation to housing, most (59%) inform living in their own home, with one more person (33%).

It is noted that the most prevalent form of admission is through the vestibular (79%) and that the forms of stay of students in the IES are varied, such as the own costing, students, and the Student financing Fund (FIES).

Regarding the academic performance of the students

enrolled in the Dentistry course in the 2019.2 school period (Table 2), most (32%) reported having a fail index covering 4 or more disciplines. Regarding the need of the student to carry out a final test for approval in some discipline, the majority of 77% of the students answered that they had already had the need to perform final test beforehand.

When they enter the university, Dentistry students draw thoughts that guide their course choices, among these are items such as: status, remuneration, family influence and vocation. In addition to the reasons for choosing the course, these students are expected to create in relation to their ingress and inclusion in the labor market, which is also characterized as a vector in the construction of their profile⁶.

The prevalence of the female sex in 66% of the students points to the term feminization when it refers to the increase of the female population in areas that once did not have such predominance, as in Medicine and Dentistry. This process, in addition to numerical gain, has also contributed to the enhancement of the female sex in the space in which she is inserted as a result of the democratization of higher education in recent decades for both sexes, especially for women, since they have been highlighted in school education, at the elementary, high school and higher level⁷.

Together with the large number of women who have entered universities, the research data showed that most students have an age range between 21 and 25 years old, in line with the results found in the study by Marques (2015)⁸, which investigated students from the 1st, 5th and 10th semester of the Dentistry Course of the Federal University of Pernambuco. These authors reported that the predominant age group found was young people aged 21 years and still found mostly female, single and family income students above 5,000.00 reais.

The predominant age group found in the students' profile in the present study was slightly above the findings by Toassi⁵ and Costa⁹, which was between 17 and 22 years and 17 and 20 years, respectively. Although such disparity is explained by the difference of semesters included in the study by Costa et al.⁹, which was undergraduate students from the first to the 5th academic semester, in the Toassi study⁵ students from the 1st to the 10th semester were included.

The Toassi study⁵, aimed to know the sociodemographic

profile and perspectives regarding the profession of Dentistry student at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (FOUFRGS), here in Brazil. According to the authors, the students' sociodemographic profile included mostly women, young people, single, childless, without employment during the time of the research, with family income between 6 and 10 minimum wages, who completed high school in private schools. Although it is a federal university, FOUFRGS's Dentistry student's profile approached in several respects those of students in the present study, except in the type of high school education.

In a study carried out by Costa⁹, the objective was to outline the profile and identify the reasons for the entrance and dropout of the Dentistry students of the Federal University of Campina Grande. In her findings about the sociodemographic profile, an approximation of the profile was observed to that of the students of the present investigation. The authors found mostly Dentistry students, female sex, single, from the state capital and did not reside alone, however, as well as Toassi⁵, most of the students completed high school in private schools.

Although the majority of the students' Dentistry profile completed high school in private school, in both of these studies, an expressive number of 66% of the students enrolled in the second half of UNIRB graduated in public schools. Comparing these studies to the present research, it was noted that there is a reversal in the type of education (public and private networks) from high school to higher education, since in studies by Toassi⁵ and Costa⁹ it was referred to public universities in contrast to the UNIRB network which is a private HEI.

Still in 1997, Nakamae et al.¹⁰ stated that it is appropriate to look at the provision of vacancies in public schools that have been shown to be smaller than in private schools. This is added to greater rigor in the form of vestibular exams, which makes it very difficult for candidates who come from a social class with educational possibilities that give them disadvantages and move them to private education.

According to Moura¹¹, among the fundamental rights, which the State has the duty to guarantee, the right to education was highlighted, and this is at all levels, including higher education, which allows for a higher qualification and consequently a insertion in the labor market. Thus, FIES was created in 1999, with the aim of enabling students without conditions to bear the costs of their undergraduate degree in a private institution, to achieve the much-desired higher education diploma through the granting of funding. Regarding the maintenance of the students investigated in the present study, in the private upper course, it is worth pointing out that the majority of 72% of the students referred to using FIES as a sponsoring resource for the same.

Whereas Prouni, which was institutionalized in 2005, is a program of the Ministry of Education, created by the Federal Government, which offers scholarships in private higher education institutions, in undergraduate and sequential

courses of specific training, to Brazilian students without a higher level diploma. The scholarships may be full or partial, the full ones are offered to students who have family income, per person, up to a minimum and a half wage, and the partial income of 50% for students who have family income, per person, up to three minimum wages¹¹.

For Moura¹¹, the public educational policies, FIES and Prouni are shown as instruments of democratization of higher education as they make it possible for a share of the population, long excluded, access to education that enables them to be integrated into the social and economic world. It should be noted that although only 13% of the students report having family income below 1 minimum wage, a minority of 15% reported bearing the costs of the course themselves.

According to Vargas and Paula¹², sometimes the work makes it difficult to schooling, as well as the absence of it can prevent schooling. This situation reflects the evidence of incompatibilities between study and work, that is, the possibility or not of long schooling, according to the student's relationship with work. However, corroborating the findings in the literature of Cavalcanti et al.¹³, most students in the present study did not exercise paid activity (73% unemployed). Thus, it is understood that most of them are excluding students. For Vargas and Paula¹², the "non-worker" student features the "full-time student", released from the obligation to support himself or herself. The full-time student can not only choose careers that require greater investment of time, but can, at the appropriate time, go on the ritual of the stage that precedes good professional placement.

Thus, it is understood that a share of 23% of students who managed to reach the goal of completing the semester with full approval in the courses, although with the help of the final test resource, is little for the profile of the "full-time student". However, broader aspects are related to academic income difficulties. According to Santos and Graminha¹⁴, behavioral and emotional difficulties influence academic problems, stressful events resulting from situations such as hospitalizations or institutionalization may also represent a source of risk for emotional/behavioral disorders, as well as for learning problems. In 1997, Braga et al.¹⁵ attributed low academic performance to a lack in the high school education.

The authors Braga et al.¹⁵ sought to identify the dropout causes in the chemistry course of the Federal University of Minas Gerais. The authors observed that the student's academic performance, that is, the means of the evaluation grades, especially in the first period, were one of the main aspects for his or her decision to stay in the course chosen until its completion. According to the authors, conflicts from the transition from high school to university influence the academic performance. Therefore, the lack of good training, especially in high school education, resulted in four fails followed in the first period of higher education and consequently in the withdrawal of the course.

However, for Gomes and Soares¹⁶, academic expectations and social skills may influence the student's academic performance and fluid intelligence has not been a determinant in academic evaluation results. Regarding social skills, such as coping, self-assertion, and self-control of aggressiveness, may interfere positively in the student's performance. It was also noted that the student with more expectations about institutional involvement and resource utilization has lower performance. However, the student who has more expectations regarding curricular and vocational involvement has his or her performance increased. Therefore, students with higher scores of social skills have more expectations about vocational involvement, curricular involvement and social involvement.

In order for students to achieve better academic performance by using their personal skills and to be motivated to continue the chosen course, educational institutions should know better and evaluate the students' expectations with the aim of making the university environment more compatible with the expected realities. Thus, they would open up the possibility of creating more welcoming university environments from the students' initial needs, reducing the impact of their initial difficulties and consequently in their decision to continue the course chosen. Thus, both the Higher Education Institution and the students could assume their real responsibilities in relation to the rates of school dropout and consequently to the financial and social costs caused by it¹⁶.

4 Conclusion

Among the students who were included in the present research, it was noticed that there is greater similarity than divergence in the profile of the Dentistry student of this private IHE, in comparison with the other findings in the literature, the exception of the public schools egress, where a large part of the students attended high school. The results also indicate that there is a high rate of disapproval of the curricular components and difficulty of approval by means of the disciplines.

Thus, it is emphasized that other demographic studies throughout the national territory should be encouraged in order to obtain greater representativeness of the profile of the Brazilian university student, so as to better understand the perspectives of the national educational system and future professionals.

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