

Abstract

Internationally and locally, the importance of the dental sector's materials quality has been proved. To fulfill this importance in the Palestinian society, there is a need for research that studies the importance of selecting the right suppliers for dental clinics in Palestine, since choosing an appropriate supplier becomes more advantageous in terms of quality, serviceability and reliability, which creates a competitive advantage among the clinics. In this respect, supplier selection is an important issue.

This research aims to build a systematic methodology and useful tool, to help dentists make the right decision in choosing the best suppliers; based on the factors they consider the most.

To this end, a mixed qualitative and quantitative research methodology is adopted. More specifically, to collect qualitative relevant data, a well-structured questionnaire was conducted and filled by a group of professional Palestinian dentists, to identify the most critical dental supplies they need for their work as well as to identify the main factors dentists consider when selecting such suppliers. Thematic analysis is employed to analyze the qualitative data. Then, the quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire including a set of closed-ended questions to collect responses of Palestinian dentists on the importance of the identified factors in the qualitative data collection process. Then, the well-known analytic hierarchical process (AHP) multi-objective decision process was employed to help quantify the weights of the identified factors as reported in the responses obtained via questionnaires. Accordingly, an assessment tool was developed for assessing each supplier's profile; such a tool will aid dentists in the future in assessing and selecting their suppliers.