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VIBRA-DENT: A Dual-Function Dental Vibration Device

Virendra Yadav[1], Almita Gupta[2], Garima Pandey[3], Shrawani Kolhe[4], Tanushree Khadatkar[5], Avanti Thakur[6]
[1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]*Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Priyadarshini College of Engineering, Nagpur*

Abstract: ***Pain and anxiety during dental procedures, particularly during the administration of local anaesthesia, remain major concerns in clinical dentistry. Additionally, achieving a uniform and defect-free mixture of dental restorative materials such as glass ionomer cement (GIC) is another challenge faced by practitioners. To address these issues, this paper presents Vibra-Dent, a compact, handheld prototype dental device designed to reduce pain perception and improve material mixing efficiency.***
The system is based on the Gate Control Theory of Pain, which states that non-painful stimuli like vibration can inhibit the transmission of pain signals to the brain. Vibra-Dent generates controlled vibrations (~80 Hz) at the site of dental procedures, stimulating A-beta nerve fibers that transmit signals faster than pain signals carried by A-delta and C fibers. This mechanism helps in reducing the perception of pain during dental treatments.
In addition to pain reduction, the device provides a secondary function of assisting in the mixing of dental materials. The vibration-assisted mixing process helps reduce air bubbles and improves the uniformity of the mixture, which may enhance the strength and durability of dental restorations compared to conventional manual mixing.
The hardware design of Vibra-Dent is centred around an Arduino Nano, which controls a DC vibration motor using pulse-width modulation (PWM). The system includes a potentiometer for adjustable vibration control, an OLED display for real-time monitoring of frequency and device status, and a rechargeable 5V battery for portable operation. Additional features such as a mode-switching mechanism allow the device to operate in both Pain Relief and Material Mixing modes.
The device is designed as a lightweight, ergonomic handheld tool with a 3D-printed biocompatible casing, ensuring ease of use and safety in dental applications. Vibra-Dent is currently developed at the prototype level, and its performance is based on established scientific principles and engineering design. Clinical validation is considered as future work.
In conclusion, Vibra-Dent offers a cost-effective, non-invasive, and dual-purpose solution that has the potential to improve patient comfort and enhance the quality of dental treatments. The project demonstrates the effective integration of embedded systems and biomedical concepts, contributing to the development of advanced dental care technologies.

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's dental treatments, one of the biggest problems patients face is **fear and pain during injections**. Many people, especially children and first-time patients, feel very anxious even before the procedure starts. The main reason behind this fear is the pain caused by the injection needle. Because of this, some patients avoid dental treatment completely, which can make their dental problems worse over time.

Usually, dentists use medicines like gels or anaesthesia to reduce pain. While these methods work, they also have some drawbacks. For example, they may take time to show effect, may not fully remove the pain of needle insertion, and in some cases can cause side effects. Also, these methods do not reduce the **instant pain feeling** when the needle actually touches the gum. So, there is a need for a method that can reduce pain **immediately**, without depending too much on medicines.

To solve this problem, our project *Vibra-Dent* uses a concept called the Gate Control Theory of Pain. This theory explains how our body feels pain. According to it, pain signals travel to the brain through slower nerves, while signals like touch or vibration travel faster. If we send vibration signals to the brain at the same time as pain signals, the faster vibration signals can block or reduce the pain signals.

In simple words, when vibration is applied near the injection area, the brain focuses more on the vibration instead of the pain. This helps in reducing how much pain the patient actually feels. This idea is the main working principle of Vibra-Dent.

Based on this concept, Vibra-Dent is designed as a **small handheld device** that produces controlled vibrations near the gums during dental procedures. The device generates vibrations around 80 Hz, which is effective for reducing pain without causing discomfort. We have also added a potentiometer so that the dentist can adjust the vibration level according to the patient's comfort.

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The main control of the device is done using an Arduino Nano. It helps in controlling the vibration motor using PWM (Pulse Width Modulation), so that the vibrations are smooth and stable. The device also includes an OLED display that shows useful information like frequency, mode, and whether the device is ON or OFF. This makes it easy for the dentist to use and monitor the device during treatment.

Apart from reducing pain, Vibra-Dent also has another important use. It can help in **mixing dental filling materials** like glass ionomer cement (GIC).

Normally, when dentists mix these materials by hand, small air bubbles can form inside the mixture. These air bubbles can make the filling weak and reduce its life.

To solve this, Vibra-Dent has a Mix Mode, where vibrations are used to mix the material properly. The vibrations help in removing air bubbles and make the mixture more uniform. This can improve the strength and durability of the dental filling. Because of this feature, Vibra-Dent is not just a pain-reducing device but also helps in improving treatment quality.

The device is designed in a pen-like shape, so it is easy for dentists to hold and use. It is lightweight and made using 3D-printed biocompatible material, which is safe for use inside the mouth. It also has a rechargeable 5V battery, so it can be used without wires, making it more convenient in a clinic.

Right now, Vibra-Dent is developed as a prototype. Its working is based on scientific theory and engineering design. We have not yet tested it on patients, but based on its design and concept, it is expected to reduce pain and improve the quality of dental fillings. In the future, proper clinical testing can be done to check its performance in real dental conditions.

In conclusion, Vibra-Dent is a simple, cost-effective, and innovative device that aims to make dental treatments more comfortable for patients.

It combines electronics and medical concepts to solve real problems in dentistry. With further improvements and testing, it can become a useful tool for dentists and help create a better, pain-free dental experience.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Pain and Anxiety in Dental Patients

Dental pain occurs when nociceptors in the gums are activated during procedures like injections. These receptors send signals through A-delta fibres (sharp pain) and C-fibres (dull pain). Along with this, anxiety plays a major role. Fear of injections triggers a stress response in the body, increasing heart rate and reducing pain tolerance. As a result, even small procedures may feel more painful, especially for children and anxious patients.

B. Limitations of Traditional Methods

Common methods like topical aesthetic gels and injections have certain limitations. Topical gels only numb the surface and do not affect deeper tissues where the needle penetrates. Injections themselves are a major source of discomfort. These limitations create the need for a faster and non-invasive method to reduce pain during dental procedures.

C. Gate Control Theory and Vibration Concept

The Vibra-Dent system is based on the Gate Control Theory of Pain. According to this theory, vibration signals travel faster than pain signals. When both are applied together, vibration can block or reduce the pain signals reaching the brain. This helps in decreasing the pain felt by the patient. The effective vibration range for this purpose is around 80Hz.

D. Dental Material Mixing Problem

Another important issue in dentistry is the mixing of materials like glass ionomer cement (GIC). Manual mixing can trap air bubbles inside the material, creating weak points. These can lead to cracks, leakage, and failure of the dental filling over time.

E. Vibration-Based Mixing Solution

Applying vibration during mixing helps remove trapped air and improves the uniformity of the material. This results in stronger and more durable fillings. This concept is used in Vibra-Dent's Mix Mode, making it useful not only for pain reduction but also for improving treatment quality.

F. Findings from Previous Research

Several studies show that vibration helps reduce pain during dental procedures. The table below summarizes key findings:

Study	Key Findings	Age Group
Chauhan et al.	Both vibration and VR distraction significantly reduced pain and anxiety during injections.	Children (6–12 years)
AlHareky et al.	A device combining vibration and cooling reduced pain perception, though larger sample studies were recommended.	Mixed age
Joshi et al.	Patients reported lower pain levels when vibration was applied during local anaesthesia injections.	Adults
Pinjari et al.	A simple vibrating toothbrush reduced pain for children receiving injections.	Children
Gholam Hossain Ramezani et al. (2017)	Vibration significantly reduced injection pain. Mean pain on vibration side was lower (1.95 ± 1.57) than control (0.65 ± 0.81), p< 0.001. Effective regardless of age, sex, injection type.	Children (Pediatric patients; split-mouth trial)
Gaurav Gupta et al. (2024)	DentalVibe and Nitrous Oxide Sedation produced the lowest pain scores (1.68 and 2.12). Conventional syringe had highest pain levels (9.2). Vibration technique is effective, safe, and child friendly.	Children
Mitchell G. Eichhorn et al. (2016)	Vibration reduced mean pain from 3.46 → 1.93 (p < 0.001). 86% reported pain reduction; 82% would prefer vibration again. Effective across multiple minor procedures.	Mixed age (Adults + some younger patients in clinic setting)

Table 2.1: Previous Research on Vibration Based Pain Reduction

These studies prove that vibration is an effective and safe method for reducing dental pain.

G. Engineering Background

Modern systems use microcontrollers like the Arduino Nano with PWM to control vibration. This allows smooth and adjustable operation compared to older devices, which had fixed speed and poor control.

H. Limitations of Earlier Devices

Earlier devices had several drawbacks:

- Weak battery performance
- Bulky and difficult to handle
- No display for monitoring
- Only single function
- Sudden vibration start
- Expensive and less user-friendly

I. Improvements in Vibra-Dent

Vibra-Dent improves upon these limitations by providing:

- Adjustable vibration using potentiometer
- OLED display for real-time feedback
- Smooth control using PWM
- Dual functionality (pain relief + mixing)
- Compact and portable design

J. Summary

The background of this project combines biology, material science, and electronics to create a device that reduces pain and improves dental treatment quality.

III. SYSTEM OVERVIEW

A. Introduction to the System

Vibra-Dent is a compact and portable dental device designed to reduce pain during dental procedures using controlled vibration. The system works by applying vibration near the injection site, which helps in reducing the perception of pain. This is achieved by stimulating mechanoreceptors in the gums, which transmit signals faster than pain signals. The device is designed to be user-friendly and does not require any external power source, making it suitable for clinical environments. It operates on a rechargeable battery, ensuring portability and ease of use.

Vibra-Dent is developed as an embedded system where both hardware and software components work together to produce smooth and controlled vibrations. The system also provides real-time feedback to the user through a display interface.

B. System Architecture Overview

The Vibra-Dent system consists of multiple interconnected components that work together to achieve controlled vibration output. The core of the system is the Arduino Nano, which processes user inputs and controls the overall operation. Inputs such as the potentiometer and buttons are given to the microcontroller, which processes them and generates appropriate output signals. These signals are used to control the vibration motor and update the OLED display.

The system architecture ensures smooth communication between all components, resulting in stable and efficient performance. The overall architecture of the Vibra-Dent system is shown in Figure 3.1.

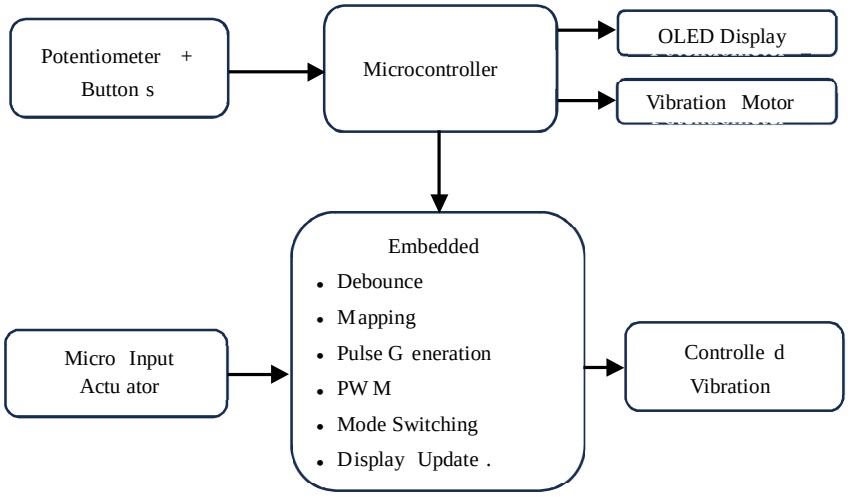


Figure 3.1: Block Diagram of Vibra-Dent System

C. Main Hardware Components

The Vibra-Dent system includes the following main components:

Component	Function
Arduino Nano	Controls the entire system
Vibration Motor	Generates vibration
Potentiometer	Adjusts vibration intensity
Tactile Buttons	Used for mode selection
OLED Display	Shows system status
Battery	Provides power supply
Transistor	Drives the motor

Table 3.1: Hardware Components of Vibra-Dent

D. Working Principle

The working of Vibra-Dent is based on vibration assisted pain reduction. When the device is activated, the vibration motor generates controlled vibrations near the injection site. These vibrations stimulate sensory receptors and help reduce pain perception.

The process starts with powering the device, followed by adjusting the vibration intensity using the potentiometer. The user can select different modes using buttons. The microcontroller processes these inputs and generates appropriate signals to control the motor. The working process of Vibra-Dent is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

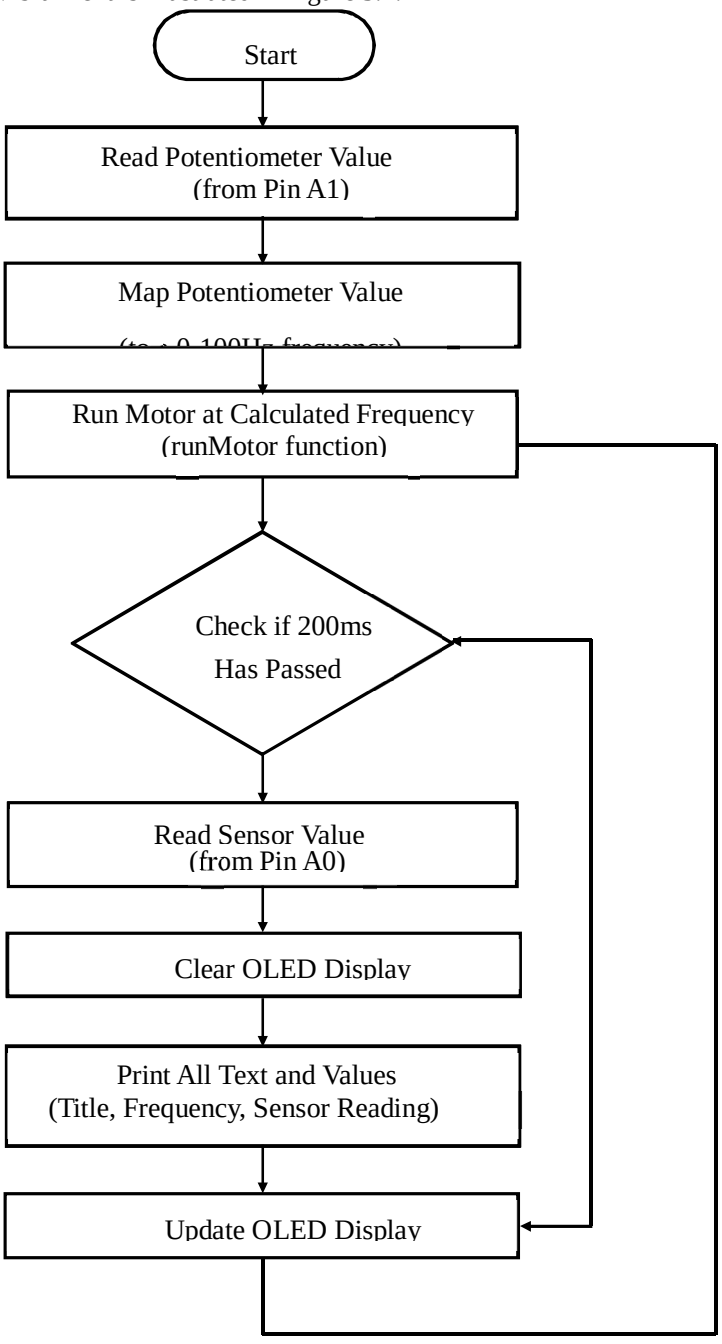


Figure 3.2: Flowchart of Vibra-Dent Operation

E. Algorithm Functions

The system uses several algorithms to ensure smooth and efficient operation:

- Debounce Algorithm – Prevents false button inputs
- Mapping Algorithm – Converts potentiometer input into vibration level
- PWM Algorithm – Controls motor speed smoothly
- Pulse Algorithm – Generates vibration patterns
- Display Algorithm – Updates OLED screen

These algorithms improve system stability and user experience.

F. Step-by-Step Operation

The working process of Vibra-Dent can be summarized as follows:

- The device is powered ON
- The user adjusts vibration intensity using the potentiometer
- The required mode is selected using buttons
- The microcontroller processes inputs
- The vibration motor generates controlled vibration
- The OLED display shows system status
- The device is applied near the injection site

G. Implementation

3.7.1 Component Selection

The system was developed using carefully selected components such as the Arduino Nano, vibration motor, OLED display, and battery.

3.7.2 Component Testing

Each component was tested individually to ensure proper functionality before integration.

3.7.3 Circuit Design and Assembly

All components were connected to form a complete circuit. A transistor was used to drive the motor, and a stable power supply system was implemented. The complete circuit diagram of the Vibra-Dent system is shown in Figure 3.3.

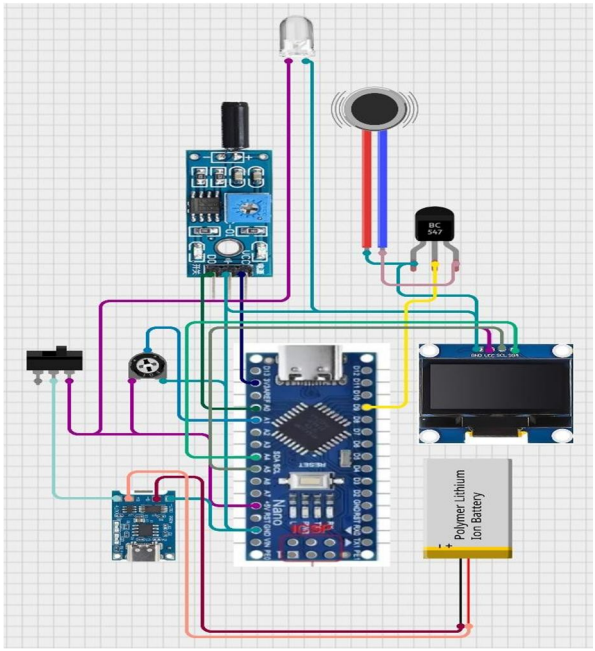


Figure 3.3: Circuit Diagram of Vibra-Dent

3.7.4 Software Development

The system was programmed using PWM and other algorithms to control vibration and display output.

3.7.5 System Integration

All components were integrated into a single system and tested for proper operation.

3.7.6 Final Prototype Assembly

The system was assembled into a compact and portable device.

3.7.7 System Performance

The device operates smoothly with adjustable vibration and clear display output.

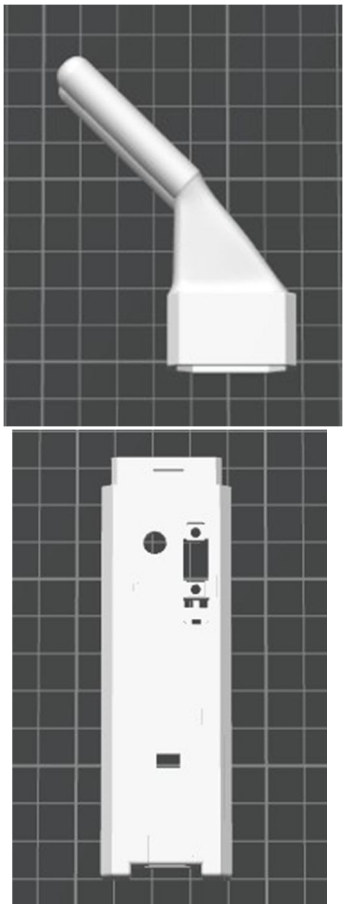
3.7.8 Implementation Outcome

The Vibra-Dent system has been successfully implemented as a working prototype. The final developed Vibra-Dent prototype is shown in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4: Final Vibra-Dent Prototype

H. Physical Design

The physical design of Vibra-Dent focuses on compactness and ease of use. The device is designed to be handheld, allowing dentists to operate it comfortably during procedures. The 3D design of the Vibra-Dent outer casing is shown in Figure 3.5.



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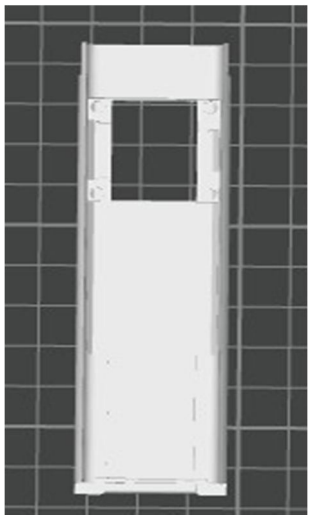

Figure 3.5: 3D Design of Vibra-Dent Casing

IV. ALGORITHM DESCRIPTION

A. Debounce Algorithm

Mechanical buttons often generate multiple unwanted signals due to contact bounce when pressed. This can cause the system to detect a single press as multiple inputs. To avoid this, a debounce algorithm is used. It introduces a short delay (around 50 ms) and checks the time between consecutive presses using the millis() function. Only stable and intentional inputs are accepted.
This ensures smooth operation and prevents accidental mode switching during dental procedures.

B. Mapping Algorithm

The potentiometer provides an analog input value between 0 and 1023. This raw input is converted into a usable vibration range using a mapping algorithm. In Vibra-Dent, the input is scaled to a frequency range of 80 Hz to 120 Hz, which is suitable for pain reduction. This allows smooth and precise control of vibration intensity, improving usability and comfort.

C. Pulse Generation Algorithm

For mixing applications, a pulsed vibration pattern is required instead of continuous vibration. The pulse generation algorithm turns the motor ON and OFF at fixed intervals using a timer-based approach.
This rhythmic vibration helps remove air bubbles from dental materials like GIC, improving their uniformity and strength.

D. PWM Control Algorithm

Pulse Width Modulation (PWM) is used to control the speed and intensity of the vibration motor. It works by adjusting the duty cycle of a signal to regulate power delivered to the motor.
A soft-start feature is also implemented, where vibration gradually increases to the desired level. This avoids sudden jerks and ensures smooth operation, making the device comfortable for patients.

E. Mode Switching Algorithm

The system operates in different modes such as standby, pain relief, and mixing. A mode switching algorithm manages transitions between these states. Each button press (after debounce) changes the current mode. The microcontroller tracks the active mode and executes the corresponding function. This makes the system easy to use and flexible.

F. OLED Display Algorithm

The OLED display provides real-time information such as vibration level, mode, and system status.
A conditional update method is used, where the display refreshes only when values change. This reduces flickering and improves system efficiency. It also helps the user monitor and control the device easily.

G. Comparative Analysis

Feature	Conventional Devices	Vibra-Dent
Vibration Speed	Fixed	Adjustable
Modes	Limited	Multiple
Display	Not available	OLED display
Control	Basic	PWM-based
Portability	Bulky	Compact
Pain Reduction	Moderate	Improved

Table 4.1: Comparison between Conventional Devices and Vibra-Dent

V. LITERATURE SURVEY

S.No.	Author(s) & Year	Title of Study	Objectives / Research Question	Methodology	Key Findings	Limitations / Gaps
1.	Pinjari et al, 2024	Evalution of pain perception using a vibrating toothbrush.	To access the effectiveness of a vibrating toothbrush in reducing pain during IANB in children.	RCT with 52 children (6-11yrs). Two groups: one used topical spray the other used vibrating toothbrush.	Toothbrush group had significantly lower FPS-R pain scores. SEM scores were lower but not significant.	Small sample, single location, no blinding possible due to vibration sensation.
2.	AlHareky., 2021	Assessing the Role of a Vibratory System in Minimizing Pain During Pediatric Dental Anesthesia	To evaluate if vibration + cold application reduces pain during injection in children	RCT with 51 children (5–12 yrs). Used VAS, FLACC, and SEM scales. Compared topical gel vs vibration + cold	Vibration + cold group had significantly less pain per VAS and FLACC, not significant on SEM scale	Did not isolate effect of vibration alone; used commercial device without technical specs
3.	Tirupathi et al., 2022	Effect of Vibratory Stimulus and Cooling on Pain	To evaluate how extraoral vibration and cooling together help reduce discomfort during dental anesthesia in children.	Systematic review and meta-analysis of 7 studies, total 391 children aged 4–12	The combined application of vibration and cooling resulted in a significant reduction in both subjective and objective measures of pain.	Low-quality evidence overall; could not isolate effects of vibration vs cooling individually
4.	Sagar Joshi	Effect of vibration device on pain during anesthesia (assumed from content)	To compare topical anesthetic vs vibrating device for pain control	Likely RCT or comparative study, pediatric sample (age group unclear), subjective pain evaluation	Suggests vibration reduces pain perception during LA in children	Insufficient reporting of sample size, statistics, and device details
5.	Prem S Chauhan	Use of vibrating device during IANB in pediatric patients	To compare pain levels between traditional LA and vibrationassisted LA	Pediatric patients, clinical observation of pain response using standard pain scales	No significant pain reduction reported with vibration device in some children	Children reluctant due to sound/vibration sensation; not always well accepted
6.	Francisco Javier (2016)	Revisiting the Gate Control Theory of Pain: A Simplified Neurocomputational Approach to Modeling Various Pain Conditions	To revisit and computationally model the Gate Control Theory of Pain and explain how tactile/vibratory stimuli can modulate or block pain signals.	Neurocomputational modeling using Excitatory nociceptive and mechanoreceptor inputs; simulation of pain modulation via NMDA synaptic and intrinsic plasticity.	Demonstrated that pain can be inhibited ("gate closed") when tactile and nociceptive stimuli interact appropriately. Model explains normal pain inhibition and pathological pain (e.g., phantom limb, allodynia, wind-up pain).	Theoretical model — no human subjects; doesn't quantify optimal vibration parameters (frequency, intensity, timing). Future work should integrate biological/clinical validation.
7.	Gholam Hossain Ramezani (2017)	The Effect of Vibration on Pain Perception during Local Anesthesia	To evaluate the effectiveness of vibration in reducing pain	Split-mouth randomized clinical trial on 20 pediatric patients (40 sites).	Mean pain significantly lower on vibration side (1.95 ± 1.57) vs control (0.65 ± 0.81), $p < 0.001$.	Small sample; subjective measurement; device

		Administration: A Split- Mouth Randomized Clinical Trial	perception during the administration of local anesthesia in children.	DentalVibe used "on" for test side, "off" for control. Pain scored using Wong-Baker scale.	Age, sex, and injection type had no significant effect. Vibration effectively reduces injection pain.	not blinded (possible placebo effect). No physiological or longterm data.
8.	Gaurav Gupta (2024)	Evaluating the Efficacy of the Vibrotactile Device *DentalVibe* in Reducing Pain during Local Anesthesia among Pediatric Dental Patients: A Comparison with Conventional Techniques.	To evaluate how the *DentalVibe* vibration device performs in comparison with other local anesthesia delivery methods (NIOS, CCLAD, Vibraject, topical jelly, and conventional needle) in children.	A randomized controlled comparative study was conducted involving 150 children, divided into six groups (n = 25 each). Pain perception was evaluated using the Visual Analog Scale (VAS) and a 10point comfort scale.	DentalVibe and Nitrous Oxide Sedation (NIOS) produced the lowest mean pain scores (1.68, 2.12). Conventional syringe produced highest (9.2). Vibration technique is effective, safe, and child-friendly.	No blinding; variability in operator technique; limited control over vibration parameters; single-center study limits generalizability.
9.	Cem Ungor (2014)	The Effects of Vibration on pain and anxiety during local anesthesia administration.	To evaluate whether vibration reduces pain and anxiety during dental local anesthesia injections.	Split-mouth study on 49 adult patients receiving bilateral local anesthesia (vibration vs control). Pain measured by VAS; anxiety by Spielberger STAI.	Both pain and anxiety scores were significantly lower in the vibration group ($p < 0.001$). Supports gate control theory that vibration blocks nociceptive transmission via A-beta fibers.	Moderate sample size; subjective scales; no blinding; device frequency not standardized; limited demographic diversity.
10	Mitchell G. Eichhorn et al. (2016)	Vibration for Pain Reduction in a Plastic Surgery Clinic	To determine whether vibration can reduce pain during minor outpatient plastic surgery procedures (e.g., injections, suture removal).	Randomized, matchedpair study on 28 patients undergoing paired procedures (one with vibration, one without) using DentalVibe. Pain measured by Numeric Rating Scale (NRS) and questionnaire.	Mean pain reduced from 3.46 → 1.93 with vibration ($p < 0.001$). 86% of patients reported pain reduction; 82 % would request vibration again. Works across ages and procedure types.	Small sample; singlecenter; subjective reporting; no physiological data; requires larger trials for external validation.

Table 5.1 : Literature Survey on Vibra-Dent

VI. ADVANTAGES OF VIBRADENT

1) Compact and ergonomic design for easy handling
2) Reduces pain and improves patient comfort
3) Adjustable vibration intensity and modes
4) OLED display provides real-time feedback
5) Smooth motor control using PWM
6) Portable and battery-operated
7) Non-invasive and reduces need for medication
8) Suitable for all age groups
9) Dual functionality (pain reduction + material mixing)

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

A. Limitations

1) Prototype-based system
2) Limited clinical testing
3) Performance under real conditions not fully evaluated

B. Future Scope

1) Large-scale clinical validation
2) Algorithm improvement based on feedback
3) Exploration of advanced vibration patterns
4) Integration of monitoring features

VIII. CONCLUSION

The Vibra-Dent system presents an innovative and practical approach to pain management in dentistry by integrating embedded system technology with biomedical principles. Based on the Gate Control Theory of Pain, the device utilizes controlled vibration to effectively reduce pain perception during dental procedures, particularly during local anaesthesia administration.

The system offers a non-invasive and nonpharmacological solution, which helps in minimizing patient discomfort and anxiety without relying heavily on medications. Its compact design, adjustable vibration settings, and real-time feedback through the OLED display make it user-friendly and suitable for routine clinical use. The use of PWM based control ensures smooth and stable operation, enhancing both patient comfort and device reliability.

In addition to pain reduction, Vibra-Dent also demonstrates potential in improving the quality of dental material mixing, making it a dual-purpose device. This added functionality increases its practical value in dental clinics.

Overall, Vibra-Dent is a cost-effective, portable, and efficient solution that addresses key challenges in dental care. The successful development of this prototype highlights the potential of combining electronics and healthcare to create innovative tools that improves both patient experience and treatment outcomes.

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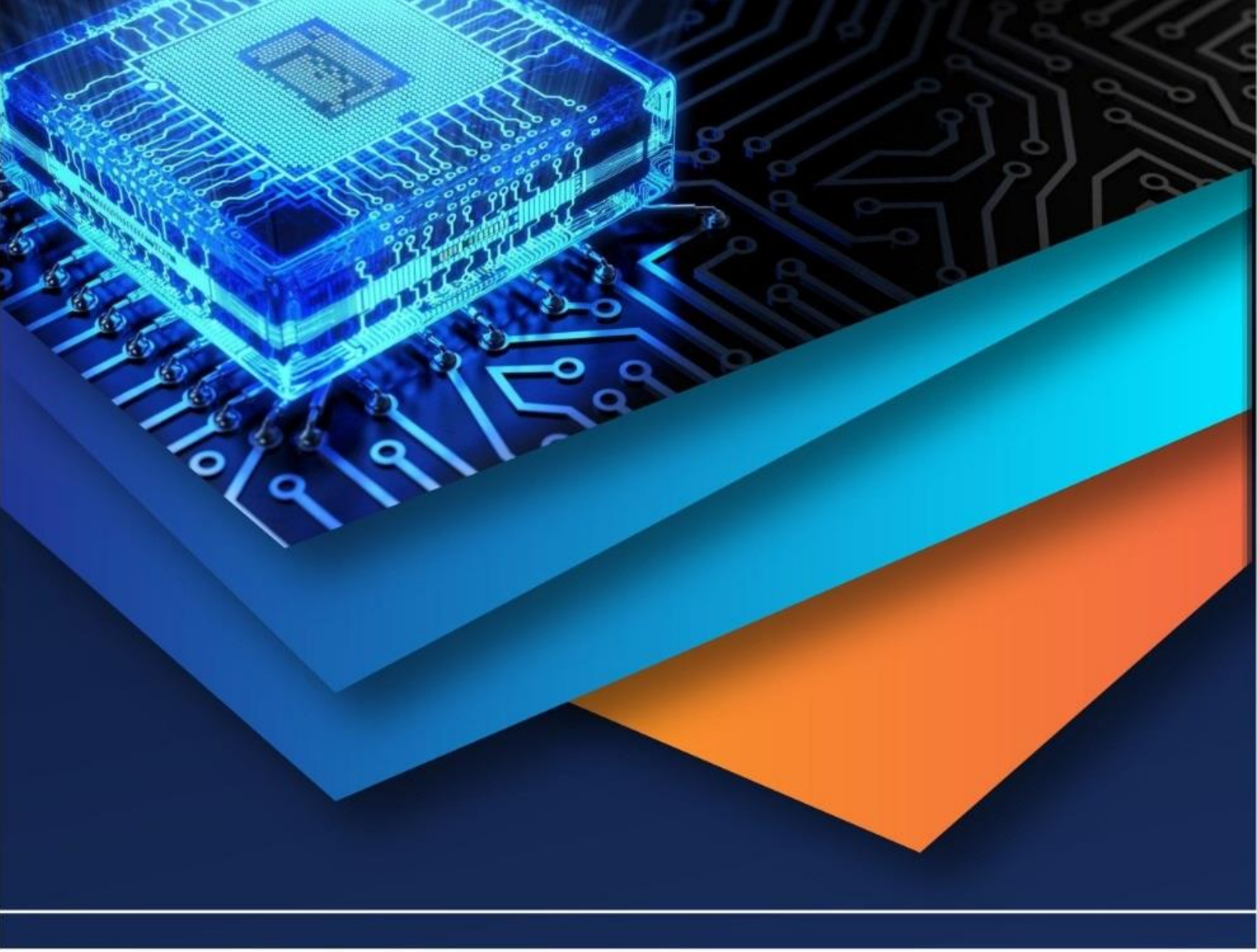

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