Original Article

Core Values of Professionalism among Fresh Medical Graduates in a Malaysian Private University

Abdus Salam[1], Hamida Begum[2], Hasbullani Zakaria[3], Belqees Ahmed Qaid Allaw[4], Thuzar Han[5], Khaleed R Algantri[6], Abdulhameed Gadmor Mofta[7], Mishaal Elbasheer Babiker Elmahi[8], Elamin Mhamed Elamin Mohamed[9], Mohamed Abdelrahman Ahmed Elkhalifa[10], Jamaludin Zainol[11].

Abstract:

Objective: Core-professionalism values: altruism, accountability, excellence, respect, and integrity are unique and universally applicable to all professions. This study was aimed to investigate self-perception of core-professionalism values of medical graduates.

Materials and Methods: All-50 fresh medical graduates from Widad University College session 2019 participated in this cross-sectional questionnaire survey. The questionnaire contained five core-professionalism values with 4-6 attributes under each, comprising a total of 25 attributes. The attributes were measured by a five-point Likert scale where 5=strongly agree and 1=strongly disagree. Graduates were asked to rate their self-perception on these attributes. Data were analyzed and presented as mean and percentage.

Results: Response rate of the study was 92%. Male constituted 30% while females were 70%. The mean score of altruism rated as 18.58/20 (92.9%), accountability 28.01/30 (93.37%); excellence 28.57/30 (95.23%), respectfulness 23.81/25 (95.24%), and integrity 19.10/20 (95.5%). There was no significant difference of core professionalism values observed between male and female graduates.

Conclusions: Fresh medical graduates scored >90% in each of the five core professionalism values which denotes the positive reputation of the organization. Core-professionalism values are unique and universally applicable to all professions and should be focused by the educators of every profession for the public good and to become responsible scientific literate citizens.

Keywords: Altruism, Accountability, Respect, Excellence, Integrity.

Introduction

Professionalism is a multidimensional umbrella concept[1,2], and penetrating to regional similarities, dissimilarities, and socio-economic factors[3]. The words 'profession' and 'professionalism' came from the Latin word 'professio' which means a public declaration with the force of promise[1,4].

The key to professionalism is that members of any profession should place the interests of those they serve above their own[1,5]. Customer service, work ethics and business honesty are the essence of professionalism for the promotion of public good[1]. Professionalism is an aspect of humanism or humanistic dimension, and art rather than science[1].

1. Medical Education and Public Health Unit, Faculty of Medicine,
2. Obstetrics and Gynaecology Unit, Faculty of Medicine,
3. Biochemistry Unit, Faculty of Medicine,
4,6. Anatomy Unit, Faculty of Medicine,
5,9. Microbiology Unit, Faculty of Medicine,
7,8. Pathology Unit, Faculty of Medicine,
10. Public Health Unit, Faculty of Medicine,
11. Surgery Unit and Dean, Faculty of Medicine,
Widad University College, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia.

Correspondence to: Dr. Abdus Salam, Associate Professor and Head of Medical Education Unit, Manager Curriculum and Academic-Scheduling, Faculty of Medicine, Widad University College, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia. Email: _abdussalam.dr@gmail.com_
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0266-9747

The humanistic dimensions are a set of values, behaviors, and relationships that strengthens public trust and expectation[6]. Although professionalism is an umbrella concept, its' core values include: altruism or absence of self-interest, accountability to the profession and society, excellence or commitment to life-long learning, respect for others, and human qualities such as empathy, honesty, integrity, morality, communication, collaboration, etc.[7] which are commonly applicable for all professions. So, these core values are required to exercise in all professions governed by the codes of ethics[1,8]. Awareness of legal and ethical issues is an important aspect of professionalism[1,9] and it represents a promise to remain responsive to diverse beneficiaries and follow ethical principles. Peoples struggle with professionalism, model professions are faded, managers both in public and private sectors try to become professionals[10]. There is a shift from "pure" to "hybrid" or mixed professionalism[10]. Many people think they are professionals and use the word differently for a different reason[1,2]. Traditionally, professionalism was an unspoken outcome rather than spoken and was "caught rather than taught"[1,11]. The present-day professionalism characterizes as "content of control" instead of "controlled content"[10]. The socio-economic and cultural factors may have an impact on graduates who work in an environment that is different from the environment where they trained initially[12]. The professionalism values may vary widely with gender, age, type of professional student, level of education, and social background[13].

Medicine is a profession that requires high standards of behavior in addition to the mastery of a large body of knowledge and clinical skills[14]. A good clinical practice includes decent behavior, the right attitude, accurate and well-timed communication, and empathy which are key ingredients for good clinical practice[15]. Doctor-patient communication is the heart and art of medicine, which helps in the proper identification of patients' desires, insights, and expectations that will lead to fewer mistakes[16]. Medical students learn professional values by modeling the behavior of their senior teachers through the "hidden curriculum"[7,11]. It is evident that fresh medical students usually begin their journey full of idealistic values which gradually erode and become distrustful as they reach final years of training[7,17]. Students frequently get contradictory messages between what they learn in the classroom and what they detect in customer

settings about important values to uphold and appropriate behaviors to establish[1,18]. Carelessness, misbehavior, and immoral practices of medical professionals have led to violence and distrust in the general population, which emphasizes the urgent need for review and development of the medical curriculum[19,20]. If academicians are liable for upgrading core professionalism values and fails to show it before their students by not practicing it in themselves, then certainly professionalism is bound to be missing in the students' education[1,21,22]. Teaching is the profession that creates all the others professions. Among all other professional works, teaching is different; a teacher needs to open the students' minds to ideas, knowledge, and dreams. Teaching is a difficult and multifaceted task and teachers fill many roles. Twelve roles have been identified for medical teachers which are grouped in six areas: (1) the information provider in the lecture, and in the clinical or practical context, (2) the role model on-the-job, and in teaching role model (3) the facilitator as a mentor and learning facilitator, (4) the student assessor and curriculum evaluator, (5) the curriculum planner and course organiser, and (6) the resource material creator, and study guide producer. Some roles require more medical expertise while others require more educational expertise. Some teachers will have only one role such as educational expertise and most of the teachers will have many roles. All roles need to be given due importance in a teaching organization, and justified for the recruitment of staff and for staff training[23].

The teaching of professionalism is now given due importance in many medical schools; it has been merged into the undergraduate curriculum as a separate ethics course or module and administered as the Hippocratic Oath during graduation ceremonies with the aim that doctors would practice with professional values[1,6,7,17]. Ethics is the study of morality for all professionals, and medical ethics concerns mainly about moral and social problems arising out of the practice of medicine[24]. Institutions that accredit organizations have also demanded accountability of physicians in their professional behavior[6]. Teaching professionalism is perhaps the most complex issue[7]. Creation of a non-threatening collaborative learning environment is challenging for the tutors[1,25]. To enhance and promote professionalism in medicine, one should expect it, encourage it, and evaluate it. By evaluating their professional behavior, physicians can provide the kind of transparency

Table-1: Gender profile of fresh medical graduates, n=46.

Gender Profile		
Gender	n	%
Male	14	30
Female	32	70
Total	46	100

with which they can regain the trust of patients and society[6]. Professionalism evaluation can be seen as an individual, interpersonal or societal-institutional spectacle[26]. Public trust in the medical profession will be favorable only if doctors are serious about being re-energized by the new professionalism[6]. Knowledge, attitudes, and skills, are the three domains of education and training. Although they are often considered separately, they do not exist individualistically. The attitudes relate to an affective domain which relates to emotions, feelings, appreciation, and values[27]. Training of students on the affective domain during their medical course would certainly help them to become a moral physician whom people can trust[15]. Higher education institutions should also address the needs of faculty training[28], and must act together conclusively to address the public interest first, and for that a courageous professional leadership is very much essential in every institution[6]. This study is aimed to investigate the self-perception of core professional values of fresh medical graduates at Widad University College (WUC).

Materials and Methods

It was a cross-sectional study conducted among all 50 medical graduates who graduated in September 2019 from WUC. A standardized questionnaire that asked about a set of core professional values including (i) altruism, (ii) accountability, (iii) excellence, (iv) respect, and (v) integrity was used to collect the data. There was a range of attributes under each of these core values which were varied from 4-6, comprising a total of 25 attributes. To measure these attributes of core professional values, a five-point Likert scale was used against each attribute pointing out as 1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree.

The core value of altruism comprised of four attributes which were demonstration of compassion, taking time to explain information, listening sympathetically and showing respect for confidentiality with a maximum total score of 20. Accountability included a maximum of 30 scores

with six attributes comprising of completion of assigned task timely, sharing of appropriate teamwork, reporting accurately, ensuring transfer of responsibility, informing team or supervisor when mistakes occurred, and informing supervisor when faced with conflict of interest. Excellence also comprised of 30 maximum scores with six attributes which were acceptance of constructive feedback, recognition of own limitation, incorporation of feedback to bring changes in behavior, adapting well to changing circumstances, attending learning events, and dressing in an appropriate professional manner. Respectfulness accounted for a maximum of 25 scores with five attributes which were establishing rapport, maintaining appropriate boundaries in work, relating well in a learning environment to colleagues, faculty, and other health professionals. Integrity comprised of 20 maximum scores with four attributes which were the use of professional language, conflict resolution with dignity, honest behavior, and respect for diversities. Internal consistency of the instrument was good with a mean Cronbachs' alpha of 0.810. The questionnaire was administered at the end of an assembly in a lecture hall and the objective of the questionnaire was clearly explained. The data were then collated, compiled, analyzed and compared for significant difference between males and females using SPSS version 26. Data were presented as mean scores ±SD against each of the attributes as well as mean scores for each of the core values along with their percentage.

Results

Among the total 50 participants, 46 responded, giving a response rate of 92%. Table-1 showed the gender distribution of the respondents where 30% were male and 70% were female.

Table-2 revealed the distribution of mean score against each of the attributes of core values of professionalism, along with total score and percentage against each of the core professional values. Among the five core values of professionalism, integrity or truthfulness attained the highest percent (95.5%) while altruism obtained the lowest percent (92.9%) The achievements of the other three core values were respect (95.24%), excellence (95.23%), and accountability (93.37%). Male respondents rated higher than females in every attribute.

Table-3 showed the comparison of mean scores of core professionalism values between male and female respondents which revealed there was no

Table-2: Mean scores ±SD of core professionalism values and their attributes among fresh medical graduates, n=46.

Core values	Attributes of core values of professionalism Mean Score ±SD	Male Mean Score ±SD	Female Mean Score ±SD	Total
Altruism				
	I demonstrate compassion to patients' needs	4.85 ± 0.37	4.47 ± 0.68	4.66 ± 0.53
	I take time and effort to explain information to patients	4.77 ± 0.43	4.43 ± 0.77	4.60 ± 0.60
	I listen sympathetically to patients' concerns	4.77 ± 0.43	4.43 ± 0.77	4.60 ± 0.60
	I show respect for patient confidentiality	4.77 ± 0.43	4.67 ± 0.80	4.72 ± 0.62
	Total score of altruism over 20	19.16 ± 1.66	18 ± 3.02	18.58 ± 2.35
	Percent of altruism	95.8%	90%	92.9%
Accountability /Answerability /Responsibility				
	I complete assigned tasks timely and fully	4.69 ± 0.48	4.43 ± 0.72	4.56 ± 0.60
	I take an appropriate share of team work	4.85 ± 0.37	4.57 ± 0.67	4.71 ± 0.52
	I report accurately and fully on patient care activities	4.85 ± 0.37	4.57 ± 0.67	4.71 ± 0.52
	I ensure transfer of responsibility for patient care	4.85 ± 0.37	4.50 ± 0.86	4.68 ± 0.62
	I inform supervisor / team when mistakes occur	4.85 ± 0.37	4.47 ± 0.86	4.66 ± 0.62
	I inform supervisor when faced with a conflict of interest	4.85 ± 0.37	4.53 ± 0.68	4.69 ± 0.53
	Total score of accountability over 30	28.94 ± 2.33	27.07 ± 4.46	28.01 ± 3.41
	Percent of accountability	96.47%	90.23%	93.37%
Excellence /Fineness /Adaptability and self-improvement				
	I accept constructive feedback	4.92 ± 0.27	4.60 ± 0.67	4.76 ± 0.47
	I recognize own limitations and seek appro help	4.92 ± 0.27	4.67 ± 0.66	4.80 ± 0.47
	I incorporate feedback to make changes in behavior	4.92 ± 0.27	4.60 ± 0.67	4.76 ± 0.47
	I adapt well to changing circumstances	4.85 ± 0.37	4.63 ± 0.80	4.74 ± 0.59
	I attend rounds/seminars and other learning events	4.77 ± 0.43	4.67 ± 0.66	4.72 ± 0.55
	I dress in an appropriate professional manner	4.85 ± 0.37	4.73 ± 0.64	4.79 ± 0.51
	Total score of excellence over 30	29.23 ± 1.98	27.9 ± 4.1	28.57 ± 3.06
	Percent of excellence	97.43%	93%	95.23%
Respectful /Humble /Dutiful to individual and profession				
	I establish rapport with team members	4.92 ± 0.27	4.70 ± 0.79	4.81 ± 0.53
	I maintain appropriate boundaries in work with patients	4.92 ± 0.27	4.63 ± 0.66	4.78 ± 0.47
	I relate well to fellow students in a learning environment	4.85 ± 0.37	4.57 ± 0.81	4.71 ± 0.59
	I relate well to faculty in a learning environment	4.92 ± 0.27	4.57 ± 0.67	4.75 ± 0.47
	I relate well to other health professionals in a learning env.	4.92 ± 0.27	4.57 ± 0.72	4.76 ± 0.50
	Total score of respect over 25	24.53 ± 1.45	23.04 ± 3.65	23.81 ± 2.56
	Percent of respectfulness	98.12%	92.16%	95.24%
Integrity /Honesty /Upholding professionals code of conduct				
	I use professional language with patient and colleagues	4.77 ± 0.43	4.67 ± 0.80	4.72 ± 0.62
	I resolve conflicts concerning the dignity involved	4.92 ± 0.27	4.67 ± 0.27	4.80 ± 0.27
	I behave honestly	4.85 ± 0.37	4.73 ± 0.64	4.79 ± 0.51
	I respect the diversities	4.85 ± 0.37	4.73 ± 0.78	4.79 ± 0.58
	Total score of integrity over 20	19.39 ± 1.44	18.80 ± 2.49	19.10 ± 1.98
	Percent of integrity or truthfulness	96.95%	94%	95.5%

significant differences.

Discussion

Even though medicine is a profession that certainly requires high level of individual skills, the most important thing required is good teamwork, where the bonding of a person within the group and outside the group such as, towards family, patient, and society is of the highest importance[15]. Professionalism may be inherent to the socioeconomic background with personal standards and ethics that is derived from family, friends, or other social contacts[1,13]. As a core professionalism value, the most important questions concerning an organization in society are centered around issues of altruism and selfishness.

Altruism

As a core professionalism value, the most important questions concerning an organization in

Table-3: Comparison of core professionalism values between male and female graduates (n=46).

Core Values of Professionalism with Score	Male Mean Score ±SD	Female Mean Score ±SD	p
Altruism (Score 20)	19.16 ± 1.66	18 ± 3.02	0.20
Accountability (Score 30)	28.94 ± 2.33	27.07 ± 4.46	0.18
Excellence (score 30)	29.23 ± 1.98	27.9 ± 4.1	0.43
Respectful (score 25)	24.53 ± 1.45	23.04 ± 3.65	0.14
Integrity (score 20)	19.39 ± 1.44	18.80 ± 2.49	0.72

*P= <0.05 (Significant level)

society are centered around issues of altruism and selfishness. Altruism or unselfishness is a powerful force to human cooperation. In this study, fresh graduates showed a very good score in altruism. They demonstrate compassion to patients' needs, by taking time and effort to explain information to patients, listen sympathetically to them and show respect for patient confidentiality. Compassion embraces the specific interpersonal and informational skills such as attentiveness, listening, understanding, acknowledging, responding, confronting, and providing prognostic information sensitively, clearly, and actively addressing the sufferings aimed to relieve the sufferings and overall improvement of the patient[29]. It is the patient's right and a professional obligation of the physicians to exhibit compassionate care towards patients. Patients are perceived positively by the clinician and feel an overall good care experience when the clinician listens to them, recognizes them, and actively present during their suffering[29]. Our study participants showed this positive attitude which is a good sign in their carrier. There is much debate about the development of compassion among health care professionals. Some have viewed that compassion is an innate characteristic that is already present in clinicians. However, it can be augmented by training such as undergraduate training and continuous staff development training[30]. Therefore, every medical school should keep ongoing training for undergraduate medical students as well as working physicians. Factors such as lack of time, incoherent teamwork and communication, and the structure of the organization in general, can cause a decrease in compassion[30]. In the medical profession, although every individual needs to be skilful, good teamwork with proper bonding within the group and outside the group such as

towards family, patient, and society is of the highest importance[15]. Therefore, these factors need due importance to achieve the goal of true professionalism.

Environment plays a great role in the development of professionalism[31]. Based on the environmental situation, a smaller fraction or minority of altruists can force a majority of selfish individuals to cooperate, and equally a few self-centered individuals can induce a large number of altruists to a fault[32]. The role of leaders cannot be ignored to ensure a productive environment aimed at sustainable professionalism and organizational development.

Accountability /Answerability /Responsibility

The perception of accountability of fresh medical graduates at WUC is 93.37%. Accountability is the key issue as an aspect of ethics and governance related to problems in the public, private, and individual contexts. Accountability represents answerability, liability, or a commitment or willingness to accept responsibility for his/ her own and/or organizations' actions. Though people seem to understand the importance of accountability, many do not understand where to start it. Accountability starts with leadership. The leader defines the environment and culture; if a leader wants to create a culture of accountability, then he has to set an example by making himself accountable. Leaders need to model the behaviors that they want in their organization. If a leader wants people to take ownership over their actions, then he must be seen taking ownership of his own actions; if the leader makes any commitments, he must fulfil them. Leaders are accountable for any failures, as well as any success that the organization should have. Accountability is not a one-time thing; it is an all-time thing and equally applicable for everyone. If the leaders choose to let one person ignore his accountability, it opens to door for others too. Accountability is something that people must feel to accept willingly without force, as well as take ownership over their actions. There has to be a clear and consistent strategy on how it is going to be implemented and validated. It has to start with leaders and has to be applied at all times and to everyone for sustainable professional and organizational development[33].

In this present study, graduates were found to participate in the teamwork and patient care activities accurately and also inform the supervisor/ team if any mistake occurs or any conflict arises. They were found to have a good perception of

accountability as 93% (Table-2). The medical profession holds accountability to society through the willingness of its members and ability to adjust to the needs of patients and health care systems both nationally and globally[34]. Professional accountability represents answerability to oneself and others for own actions and also willingness to accept professional responsibility when or if deviations from care standards occur[31]. Moreover, the healthcare practices globally are becoming more complex due to continuous improvement in technology and treatment modalities with significant concerns for patient safety. Therefore, all health professionals regardless of their discipline, need to be more responsive to their discipline and need to practice collaboratively as teamwork with different health professional groups to ensure positive health outcomes for individuals and families[32]. It is mentioned that responsibility depends on the quality of "acceptance" towards the assigned duty and is influenced by some personal and external factors such as motivation, religiosity, workload, etc.[35]. To develop the skill of 'acceptance', medical educators need to apply a well-planned and responsibility oriented medical curricula, to demonstrate role models, to organize seminars with students on responsibility issues and also an investigation on the identification of other influential factors[35]. Our graduates' perception of good teamwork and also the patient care responsibilities are a good sign of acceptance towards their work and duties. We hope that these perceptions will be continued and increased further in their real work field.

Excellence /Fineness /Adaptability and self-improvement

Excellence is a condition of being superior or best, in terms of talent or quality which is used as a standard of performance being measured; excellence is the quality of being outstanding or extremely good. People are not born with excellence; they adapt and promote it over time through hard work for fitness and self-improvement, sensible or wise work, and smart work. It develops from continuous upgrading over the past and is a consequence of passion and performance. There is a rising awareness of excellence[36]. Excellence is a habit and not an act. To achieve excellence, one has to be passionate, spot talent and build competencies, upgrade knowledge constantly by reading good books, attending educational conferences, presenting scientific papers, doing work smart and wise, sharing knowledge, asking

for feedback, and managing limitations[36]. In the present study, the fresh medical graduates rated their excellence or adaptability of their self-improvement as 95.23% (Table-2), which is very good. They showed a positive attitude in the acceptance of constructive feedback, recognize their limitations and seek appropriate help, adapt well to changing circumstances as well as increasing knowledge by attending rounds/ seminars and other learning events, and also dress up in an appropriate professional manner.

It is well documented that professional excellence is preferred beyond technical competence because a person with professional excellence can create an atmosphere of trust and goodwill. To achieve professional excellence, three important invisible traits of 'Vision, Values and Character' are essential in addition to the visible traits like knowledge, skills, and technology. 'Vision' directs the individual, 'Values' makes the set of personal and professional standards for decision making and behavior while 'Character' is the personal qualities such as loving, confidence, courage, consistency, and many other qualities that drive one's performance[37]. All these qualities enable the person to achieve excellence.

Respectful /Humble /Dutiful to individual and profession

Respectful /humble /dutiful to individual and profession is one of mankind's most moral views; it is always earned and never given, which is true for self-respect as well as respect for others. Before granting self-respect or respect for others, one has to be sure that the person is well-intentioned[38]. The best way to show respect to someone is to truly listen to his/her point of view, which makes someone feel relevant. One will not always agree with others on every topic and should never adopt a point of view with which one does not agree[38]. Respect starts with self-respect. If somebody does not respect himself, it will be difficult to show respect to anyone else[38]. Some ideals that are crucial for self-respect are: being an honest person, valuing academics and other forms of education, learning to listen, understanding the value of good manner, learning to accept personal responsibility, learning when and how to apologize, learning to understand good and bad influencers, having important goals and plan for reaching them[38]. Respect is a feeling of deep appreciation, humbleness or thankfulness for someone or something produced by his/her abilities, qualities, or achievements. The presence

of respect can create opportunities[39]. Respect allows one to build trust with others, build and rebuild relationships, an entry into the other side, encourage peace, manage conflict, and lead to a positive change[39]. Respect is said to be created when people treat others as they want to be treated[39]. The finding of respectfulness as a core value of professionalism in this study also rated more than 95% which revealed that most of the WUC fresh medical graduates treat others the same way they want to be treated themselves. Graduates agreed that they establish rapport with team members, maintain appropriate boundaries in work with patients, relate well to fellow students in a learning environment, relate well to faculty in a learning environment, relate well to other health professionals in a learning environment.

A respectful behavior is the most needed behavior in the medical profession. Disrespectful behavior breaks down communication and teamwork, lowers individual contributions to care, demoralizes staff, and increases staff resignations and absenteeism. The unhealthy or unfriendly work environment hampers the delivery of services and ultimately causes problems in patients' care. Thus, disrespectful behaviors are associated with adverse outcomes, medical errors, compromises in patient safety, and even patient mortality[40]. This study showed that most of the WUC fresh medical graduates possess the quality of humbleness and dutiful with professional integrity which is very much crucial to ensure safe patient care and maintain a culture of respect towards peers, faculties, and patients.

Integrity /Honesty /Upholding professionals code of conduct

Integrity is an ethical aspect, and it means the practice of being honest and truthful about ones' actions. Integrity means doing the right thing in all circumstances, even if no one is watching; showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral principles and values. Use of professional language with patients and colleagues, resolved conflicts concerning the dignity involved, behave honestly, respect the diversities are important qualities necessary for the graduates to make them able to best or up to a standard level [37]. Graduates' integrity in upholding professional code of conduct in this study was found to be more than 95% which is very good.

The study revealed no significances differences of core professionalism values between male and female. On comparing the male and female graduates, we found that male graduates showed a slightly higher percentage in all the core values compared to female graduates. Different studies give variable results about the significant difference level among male and female participants. In some of the studies, showed male participants exhibited higher scores compared to female[1], while in others showed the opposite result and even no significant difference was also observed between male and female participants[41,42,43]. Another study in Iran showed female participants had a significantly higher mean than males (p=0.05) in terms of knowledge on professionalism[44]. Different study populations, study places, and different teaching environments and cultures could be the reason for this variability.

Currently, medical institutions, medical societies, and accrediting organizations have emphasized the implementation of teaching, assessing, and promoting professionalism[45]. Teaching professionalism is perhaps the most complex issue in the curriculum[7]. To teach professionalism, the curriculum needs to be appropriate with basic elements of professionalism including communication skills, ethics, and attributes of professionalism such as accountability, altruism, excellence, and humanism[45]. Teaching and assessing professionalism with specific teaching and learning strategies and specific learning outcomes, make medical students and physicians in training continue to become more professionals and more aware of its importance in clinical practice[45]. All faculty members should have adequate knowledge on the attributes of core professionalism values and should teach professionalism with appropriate methods such as lectures, small group teaching, case-based discussion, role modeling, reflection, and interactive sessions[45]. It should be assessed longitudinally and the most commonly used instruments for assessment are peer assessments, OSCEs, observation by faculty members using standardized checklists, learner portfolios, critical incident reports, and written evaluation reports from a supervisor are also often used[46]. It is a well-known trend that medical students learn professional values by modeling the behavior of their senior teachers through the "hidden curriculum"[7,11]. Given this positive role model in developing professionalism among the students, accrediting organizations also demanded accountability of physicians in their professional behavior[6]. Positive role modeling also influences the career selection of the student. Thus, the

faculty have an important role to promote the professional development of the medical students through consistent, professional behavior and enhancing the learning environment[47]. Continuous faculty training is vital to achieve the goal of professionalism and to make them familiar with the rules and regulations of the organizations, and to empower them as a perfect role model. The appropriate culture of the organization and learning environment is very crucial to learn professionalism. Unprofessional use of language and disrespectful behavior by the faculty targeting student, colleagues, patients, or even other services were reported[47,48]. Such culture impacts the learning environment of the students and also affects patient care[47]. The teaching environment of 'teaching by intimidation' needs to end if educators expect students to form their own identities, and form students' ethical development[49]. The institutional leadership and support are needed to demonstrate the fundamental significance of professionalism in addition to teaching the definition and values of professionalism[50]. Learning environments with supportive culture keeping alignment with the institution's mission and professionalism principles are crucial for successful implementation of professionalism curriculum[45].

In the present study of the medical profession at WUC, self-perceptions about all the core values of professionalism of the respondents were found above 90%, varied from 92.9% - 95.5% which means that the fresh medical graduates are very much professional which has a positive reputation on the organization WUC. However, previous research points out that, in doing self-assessment, there is a tendency to over-rate and under-rate by the respondents themselves[1,51]. Good students tend to under-rate and weak students tend to over rate[1,52]. The self-perceptions results can be used as a discussion point between the mentor-mentee reaction or as a component of a portfolio.

Self-claimed data and confined within the medical profession from a particular institution only is the limitation of this study, for which further multisource triangulated study is necessary. Lack of focus is a challenge to develop student-professionalism[1] assuming that it is a multidimensional concept. Educators need to focus on core values and humanistic dimensions of professionalism such as respect, accountability, responsibility, caring, leadership, altruism, compassion, etc.[53] which are unique and equally applicable to all professions[1]. Although teaching and assessment are the two sides of the same coin, students often learn what we assess, and not what we teach[54]. So, assessment of core values of professionalism is very important not only for medical education, but also for all professional educational students to ensure the production of morally competent professionals. Professional bodies around the globe has suggested that professionalism should be an integral part of both undergraduate and postgraduate medical and health profession education[48]. It should be assessed longitudinally[55] as an individual, interpersonal and societal-organizational spectacle[26]. Policy makers are required to pay special attention in this regard[56]. Assessment of core values of professionalism should not be confined to medicine and health science only; it should be carried out among all other future professional students also to enhance their personal and professional development towards the public good and to become responsible scientific literate citizens[1].

Conclusion

The self-perceptions of professional behaviors of fresh medical graduates of WUC in terms of humanistic core values such as altruism, accountability, excellence, respectfulness, and integrity were varied from 92.9% - 95.5% with no significant difference between male and female respondents. This finding has a positive reputation on the organization WUC. However, self-claimed data with no verification is the limitation, and hence further multisource triangulated study is recommended for confirmation of the self-claims. Evaluation of professionalism in terms of its core values should not be confined to medical professionals only, but should be carried out among all other future professional students for the public good and to become responsible scientific literate citizens.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

Authors' Contribution

All the authors participated well in the preparation of this manuscript, and approved the final version for submission to the Journal for publication.

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