

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Professionalism

Professionalism in dental education refers to the attitudes, behaviors, and values required to uphold patient care and ethical practice. It encompasses many skills, such as effective communication, cultural sensitivity, moral behavior, and professionalism toward patients and colleagues.

Professionalism plays a key role in dental education, shaping students to become competent and ethical practitioners. Developing professionalism is a continuous process that begins in dental school and extends throughout a dental professional's career. Professionalism is essential in dental education because it helps dental students learn how to provide compassionate and empathetic care to patients. It also teaches them the importance of ethical practice and the need to comply with professional standards and regulations.

Assessing dental students' professionalism is critical to ensuring they possess the skills and values required to provide exceptional patient care and contribute positively to the dental profession. It helps dental schools identify areas for improvement in their education and training programs and develop targeted interventions to enhance professionalism among their students. Furthermore, assessing professionalism in dental education is critical for maintaining public trust and confidence in the dental profession and ensuring that all patients obtain the highest quality of care.

Assessing professionalism in dental education involves evaluating various skills and attitudes, including clinical competence, communication skills, empathy, cultural sensitivity, professional ethics, and collaboration with colleagues. Various assessment methods, including self-assessment surveys, peer assessment, and faculty evaluation, are employed to assess professionalism in dental education. However, these tools have limitations in terms of validity and reliability, and developing a specific and comprehensive assessment scale is crucial for accurately evaluating professionalism in dental education.

Overall, professionalism is an indispensable component of dental teaching, and assessing it is crucial to ensuring that dental students develop the necessary skills and values to provide excellent patient care and contribute positively to the dental profession. Developing a reliable and valid assessment tool for dental students is critical and has significant implications for dental education and training programs.

Professionalism is a comprehensive and intricate construct that manifests differently depending on cultural backgrounds and periods. It consists of exhibiting ethical behavior, communicating effectively, and delivering high-quality patient services. It is considered a secondary competency, meaning it is necessary to complement primary clinical competencies.

Despite being a recurring theme in dental education, there still needs to be universally accepted professional standards. Educators need help to define and measure professionalism in dentistry. In today's world, dentists are expected to follow professional standards more than ever due to the increasing complexity of dental practice. However, assessing professionalism still needs to be improved in the formal curricula.

To be considered a professional, a dentist must demonstrate a commitment to ethical values such as integrity, honesty, and respect. They must also have excellent communication skills, empathize with patients, and work effectively in a team. Evaluating these characteristics is a challenge, and dental educators need to continue their efforts to develop reliable methods for assessing professionalism.

Professionalism can be broken down into three vital ideologies: patient well-being, autonomy, and social impartiality (Sattar, 2017). Evaluating healthcare professionals can be based on three categories: professionalism as competence, a complete paradigm, and humanism with empathy. (Arnold, 2002). Professionalism combines traits, behaviors, promises, values, and goals that define a particular vocation. Additionally, healthcare professionals have an essential role in society and must deal with sensitive, emotional aspects of their work. On the other hand, ethics deals with carefully and systematically analyzing moral decision-making and behavior. In essence, professionalism involves a set of core values and virtues crucial for building trust among the public when it comes to the work of dentists.

In India, students learn about professionalism from their tutors, who serve as role models. They observe their teachers' behavior, patience, professional integrity, interpersonal relationships, teamwork approach, and direct and indirect actions. Students also develop their attitudes toward professionalism based on their personal experiences with family physicians and dentists

and their interactions with peers and senior students. Students' cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, gender, marital status, and age also influence their professional attitudes. The hidden college curriculum is another significant factor that shapes the students' sense of professionalism. Good communication skills, positive role models, and healthier interactions with seniors can all strengthen the students' understanding of professionalism.

1.1 Definition of professionalism:

Various organizations and authors have given different definitions depending on their contexts and societal needs.

According to the definition by Brosky (2003), professionalism is a form of representation that helps establish a positive association with the patient. This association is built on trust in the healthcare provider's abilities, which makes the patient feel secure.

Camp et al. (2004) Students learn professionalism by observing and emulating the values and behaviors modeled by their teachers, as it is a passive process.

Dart et al. (2019) enumerated 1) personal characteristics; 2) interpersonal interaction; 3) approach to practice; and 4) dedication to continuous lifelong learning as important components.

Erde (2008) It is suggested that professionalism needs to be filtered through ethics to ensure it is good or right.

Hilton and Slotnick (2005) defined professionalism as an attained state, not an innate attribute. They identified two sets of domains of professionalism. The first set includes individual characteristics such as ethical practice, self-awareness, and a promise to lifelong learning. The second set consists of cooperative qualities like respecting patients, effectively engaging in teams, and being socially responsible. In a nutshell, a reflective doctor who acts ethically is considered professional.

According to Myles (2006), professionalism is a construct based on values and ideology.

Martimianakis, Maniate, and Hodges (2009) maintained that professionalism is socially constructed through interaction.

Masella (2007) defined professionalism as displaying highly knowledgeable, organized, and ethical qualities regarding patients and the public.

The Physician Charter 2005 highlights professionalism as the foundation of medicine's agreement with humanity. It is built on fundamental principles such as prioritizing patient well-being, respecting patient autonomy, and promoting social justice. However, professionalism is a complex concept that can vary with time and cultural background, making it challenging to define. Some authors suggest that it is a dynamic construct; its beauty lies in not expressing it strictly.

Rabow et al. (2009) emphasized the importance of patient well-being, autonomy, and social justice.

Selic et al. (2019) suggest that professionalism encompasses clinical excellence and personal aspects, thus requiring a redefinition.

According to Trathen and Gallagher (2009), dental professionalism is the principles, behaviors, and relationships that form the foundation of a patient's trust in their dentist.

Verkerk et al. (2007) proposed the notion of reflective professionalism. They regarded professionalism as a second-order capability, evaluated through other comprehensive competencies.

According to Wilkinson and his colleagues in 2009, there are five major themes to follow for ethical practice. These themes include:

1. Compliance with ethical principles
2. Real communication and interaction with patients and their loved ones
3. Effective communication and interaction with other healthcare professionals
4. Reliability in providing healthcare services
5. Commitment to improving and maintaining competence in oneself, others, and healthcare systems.

1.2 Recommendations by the Dental Council of India about Professionalism and Ethics

There has been a noticeable shift in how dental care is delivered, moving away from the traditional doctor-patient relationship. As science and technology continue to advance and patient needs grow more complex, apprehension for the well-being of the broader public increases. Dental specialists, like other healthcare professionals, face many ethical dilemmas. Therefore, all healthcare providers need to prepare themselves to handle these challenges. To

achieve this, it is recommended that trainees undergo ethical training through lectures and discussions on moral issues and case studies with a significant ethical component. This will help them develop the necessary human values to provide ethical and high-quality care.

1.2.1 Code of Dental Ethics. The declaration must be made in the form provided in the schedule to these regulations. The dentist must acknowledge and follow the rules. It is imperative to evaluate the professionalism of dental students to make sure they possess the attitudes, behaviors, and values needed to deliver outstanding patient care and have a positive impact on the dental profession. Several techniques of assessment are employed to measure professionalism in dentistry education, including self-assessment surveys, peer assessments, and faculty evaluations. However, to evaluate dentistry students' professionalism, it is imperative to create a detailed, standardized assessment instrument. After reading and understanding them.

1.2.2 Health Expert Expectations:

As an independent healthcare professional, it is essential to remember the noble nature of your mission and the level of responsibility you hold. It would be best if dentist always prioritized the care of their patients and the treatment of their ailments by using their skills and responding promptly to their needs. It is crucial to remember that reputation, professional expertise, and trustworthiness are the most valuable assets.

- Treat the welfare of the patients as the top priority and endeavor to preserve it.
- Always be polite, sympathetic, approachable, and supportive of patients.

1.2.3 Good Clinical Practices:

The dentist's primary goal is to serve humanity with the utmost respect for the pride of their occupation and the people they serve. Dental surgeons are responsible for earning their patients' trust by providing top-quality care and devotion. Healthcare professionals must continuously improve their medical knowledge and skills and share their expertise. Dental professionals should adhere to scientifically-based healing methods and avoid any association with those who violate this principle. The dental profession's esteemed ideals suggest that dental professionals' responsibilities extend to individuals and society. Dental surgeons are

responsible for earning their patients' trust by providing top-quality care and devotion. They must consistently seek to enhance their healthcare competencies and skills and share them. Dental professionals should adhere to scientifically-based healing methods and avoid any association with those who violate this principle. The dental profession's esteemed ideals suggest that dental professionals' responsibilities extend to individuals and society.

1.2.4 Quality Maintenance in Patient Care:

As a healthcare provider, it is essential to prioritize the quality of treatment you provide to your patients. It would be best to remain vigilant against any misconduct by other experts that may endanger patients' survival and harm the public. It is your responsibility to be aware of unethical practices and unqualified individuals who may threaten patients' safety. Additionally, it is crucial to note that you must not employ an attendant who is not registered or enlisted under the Dentists Act to provide treatment, attend to patients, or perform operations requiring professional discretion or skill.

1.2.5 Report of Unethical Behaviour: A dental surgeon must expose any incompetent, corrupt, dishonest, or unethical conduct by other professionals, regardless of their position. It is their responsibility to report instances of fraud and any exploitation, including doctor-patient sexual misbehavior, child mishandling, and any other social harms they may become aware of, to the competent authorities.

1.3 Duties of Dentists Toward Patients

1.3.1 Responsibilities towards Patients

- Although dental surgeons are not obligated to serve every person who asks for their services, they are expected to attend to emergencies reported to the clinic. The dental surgeon should always be aware of their high level of responsibility while performing their professional duties. As far as possible, the dentist should try to see patients at their appointed time unless unforeseen circumstances prevent them. The dental surgeon must never overlook that patients' well-being depends on their competencies. The dental surgeon should make an effort to visit at the time the patient specifies to make their

patients more comfortable. In a medical emergency, dentists must provide customary care, including resuscitation. They must be sufficiently skilled in providing adequate life support.

- A dentist has the right to refuse treatment at their discretion. However, it cannot be based on discrimination of any kind, including race, caste, faith, race, or the existence of contagious diseases such as HIV. However, if the patient has been accepted for treatment, the dental surgeon must continue to provide care under the medical care mandate. Treatment can be terminated if the patient requests it or if the issue for which they sought treatment has been resolved. Additionally, treatment may be stopped if the patient requires specialized care beyond the scope of the dental surgeon's expertise. It is necessary to refer the patient to a specialist or an advanced center suitable for their treatment. A dental practitioner with any disability that may harm the patient or affect their performance is prohibited from practicing.

1.3.2 Confidentiality: It's crucial to maintain the privacy of any private or personal information that patients share with their dental surgeon as well as any unfavourable observations made during professional treatment. Such information should be revealed only in cases where state laws require disclosure. However, there may be instances where a healthcare provider must determine if it is their duty to society to use confidential knowledge to protect a healthy person from an infectious disease they may be exposed to. In this situation, the dentist should show empathic behavior.

1.3.3 Prognosis: The dentist must accurately and honestly assess a patient's condition without exaggerating or minimizing its seriousness. The patient, their relatives, or responsible friends must clearly understand their situation to ensure the best possible outcome for the stakeholders.

1.3.4 Emergency addressed: A dentist can select whom they will treat. However, in an emergency, they should respond to any request for assistance. Once the surgeon has accepted a case, they must not neglect or withdraw from it without informing the patient and their family. Surgeons must not do anything that could harm their patients or prevent them from receiving necessary medical or dental treatment.

1.4 latest amendment of the 2007 syllabus, DCI has suggested incorporating behavioral and ethical components of teaching.

The undergraduate students will receive instruction in the principles of behavioral sciences, which encompass psychological and social components, to enable them to apply these principles. This will help in the holistic development of their character and in providing therapy in various circumstances.

The aim is to prepare students with the essential competencies to assess the emotional aspects of each patient, explain stress, learn basic counseling methods, and improve patients' obedience behavior. The education in behavioral disciplines aims to make students apt to provide preventive, promotive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative services to patients in families and communities and to send progressive cases to dedicated psychiatric clinics. The skill should be utilized by all allied departments.

Ethics: In recent times, dentistry has undergone a significant shift from the traditional model of patient-doctor relationships. Advancements in discipline, expertise, and the cumulative needs of patients and communities have brought about this shift. As a result, there is a greater emphasis on the community's overall health and a need for greater accountability among healthcare professionals. Dental specialists, like other healthcare professionals, face many ethical issues. Therefore, all healthcare providers must be prepared to manage these ethical difficulties. To achieve this goal and promote human values, the Council recommends that all learners undertake ethical training through lectures and discussions on moral problems and analyzing ethical dilemmas.

In 2002, the Medical Council of India (MCI) published its code of ethics, a governing article that defines doctors' specialized conduct, etiquette, and ethics. In 2011, the Vision 2015 text recommended the amalgamation of professionalism at numerous stages of medical education. The MCI's 2012 definition of the Indian medical graduate (IMG) includes being a clinician, leader, team player, communicator, learner, and professional with ethical attributes. To implement this, the MCI released the Attitude and Communication (AETCOM) module in 2015 after planning. This module is a well-organized program designed to safeguard nationwide consistency and quality of information. The ATCOM module was implemented with first-year medical students in 2019.

1.5 Goals of Teaching Professionalism

1.5.1 For undergraduate students

As a graduate, developing certain attitudes during training is essential. These attitudes include being eager to use information for the benefit of humanity, maintaining the best professional integrity and behavior, seeking to improve awareness of oral health problems and provide solutions, occasionally participating in programs to update knowledge and professional skills, and helping to implement the national oral health policy.

1.5.2 For postgraduate students

It is important to practice our respective specialties efficiently and effectively using scientific knowledge and skills. We should always maintain high ethical standards and exercise empathy and a caring attitude towards our patients. As professionals, we should continue to show a keen interest in specialized education. We should always be eager to share our knowledge and skills with any apprentice, student, or colleague. Developing the ability to critically analyze and evaluate various concepts and views is crucial to adopting the most balanced approach.

1.6 Components of Professionalism in Dental Education

Post-graduate education is intended to prepare students with advanced competencies in their field of study and equip them for a teaching, investigation, or specialized training career. To succeed in their studies, students must attain a high level of clinical proficiency and gain expertise in research and its methodologies.

1.6.1 Human principles, moral practice, and communication skills:

It is recommended to adhere to ethical principles in every facet of one's practice and cultivate professional honesty and integrity. Patient care provision should transcend the patient's social status, caste, creed, or religion. To ensure informed consent, it is imperative to develop practical communication skills that explain available options and acquire valid consent from the patient. Deliver leadership and create a friendly working atmosphere to get the best out of your team. High moral and ethical standards must be upheld in pursuing knowledge acquisition through research. It is crucial to remain humble, recognize the limitations of one's knowledge and skills, and ask for assistance from colleagues when necessary. Additionally, it is essential to respect the rights and privileges of those being researched, with their right to information, and to try to

find another opinion when necessary. These guidelines safeguard that research is conducted ethically, respectfully, and reliably.

1.6.2 Attitudes:

To follow ethical principles, healthcare professionals must prioritize honesty, credibility, and integrity. They should provide treatment without discrimination based on the patient's social position, status, faith, or belief. Professionals should be ready to share their skills and clinical understanding with their contemporaries for the betterment of society. They must strive for excellence and never compromise on the quality of treatment provided. Professionals should be able to assess and think deeply about their practice to improve independently. They should research to endorse noteworthy, applicable, and valuable data, concepts, or practices for the scientific community. Professionals must validate evidence-based training while managing cases. They should be open to adopting new approaches and practices in their specialties based on systematic research in the public interest. Above all else, healthcare professionals must respect the rights of their patients.

1.6.3 Communicative abilities:

To become a successful dental surgeon, it is essential to develop excellent communication skills. This will enable them to clarify the many treatment choices available to their patients in clear and straightforward language they can understand. Additionally, as a leader, fostering a positive and friendly working environment that brings out the best in your team is crucial. One should also be able to guide and counsel them on the various treatment modalities available. Furthermore, it is crucial to have the aptitude to connect ethically with professional contemporaries through several modes, such as the Internet, emails, video conferences, etc. Finally, as a dentist, one should also demonstrate strong teaching skills and be able to effectively facilitate learning among students. This involves articulating complex concepts clearly and understandably.

1.7 Assessment

Assessing professionalism among dental students is essential to ensure they have the attitudes, behaviors, and values necessary for exceptional patient care and positive contributions to the dental profession. There are various methods used to evaluate professionalism in dental

education, including self-assessment surveys, peer assessment, and faculty evaluation (Hendrickson et al., 2011).

Self-assessment surveys are common for evaluating dental education. These surveys prompt students to reflect on their attitudes, behaviors, and values and identify areas for improvement. They offer insights into students' professionalism and help educators pinpoint where targeted interventions are needed (Lyon et al., 2010).

Another method for assessing professionalism in dental education is peer assessment. In this approach, dental students evaluate their peers' professionalism and provide feedback on their attitudes, behaviors, and values. Peer assessment fosters learning from one another and provides insights into peers' perspectives (Lyon et al., 2010).

Faculty evaluation is a third method used to assess professionalism in dental education. Educators use this method to observe students' attitudes, behaviors, and values. It assists in the objective assessment of students' professionalism and ensures that they meet the necessary standards (Hendrickson et al., 2011).

While these assessment methods are useful, they have limitations in terms of validity and reliability. Therefore, there is a need to develop a specific, comprehensive, valid, and reliable assessment scale (Lyon et al., 2010).

1.8 Key Challenges

The assessment of professionalism in dental education presents several challenges. One of the key issues is the subjective nature of professionalism, which makes it challenging to define and measure objectively. The lack of standardized criteria further complicates this challenge (Byszewski et al., 2011).

Another challenge is the continuous nature of professional development, which necessitates ongoing assessments to ensure improvement over time. Additionally, assessing professionalism requires evaluating not only knowledge and skills, but also attitudes, values, and behaviors, posing a challenge in measurement (Hicks et al., 2015).

Furthermore, assessing professionalism should encompass various settings, including clinical, classroom, and community-based environments. Each of these settings requires different assessment tools and methods, which can be time-consuming and resource-intensive (Hicks et

al., 2015). Lastly, there is a need for faculty development and training to confirm that they are prepared with the necessary competence and knowledge to effectively assess professionalism (Byszewski et al., 2011)

1.9 Implication

Assessment tools are essential for evaluating students' performance in various educational fields, including dentistry. Developing reliable and valid assessment tools is crucial in dentistry, where maintaining professionalism is a key component of the curriculum. One significant implication of creating such assessment tools is the improvement of dental education quality. Standardized assessment tools can help identify areas where students need improvement, guiding the development of educational interventions to enhance students' professionalism. This can ultimately lead to the production of high-quality dental professionals better equipped to meet patients' needs.

Another important implication of standardized assessment tools for professionalism in dental students is the promotion of patient safety. A effective and reliable assessment tool can identify students who may be struggling with professionalism, allowing for early intervention to prevent the development of unprofessional behavior that could compromise patient safety. Therefore, using reliable and valid assessment tools can help ensure that only competent and ethical dental professionals are permitted to practice.

Developing a standardized assessment tool for professionalism among dental students can also lead to increased accountability. If dental education institutions adopt such an assessment tool, they can demonstrate their commitment to producing high-quality professionals capable of providing safe and ethical care to patients. This, in turn, can help build public trust in the dental profession, ultimately contributing to its growth.

1.10 Research Context

The dental curriculum is designed to instill a strong sense of professionalism in both undergraduate and postgraduate students in dentistry. Doctoral students, with their extensive training and advanced knowledge, are particularly well-positioned to exemplify what professionalism entails. In contrast, postgraduate students, typically aged between 24 and 30,

often find themselves navigating a complex web of personal and social responsibilities that can significantly influence their attitudes and behaviors. Many of these individuals may be married or managing family commitments while striving to advance their professional education.

At this stage in their academic journey, postgraduate students have already acquired fundamental competencies from their undergraduate studies and are now faced with the challenge of harmonizing their obligations with their professional aspirations. These individuals have the potential to become a diverse range of professionals, including researchers, educators, private practitioners, or entrepreneurs in the dental field, particularly focusing on the management and utilization of dental materials and equipment.

Recognizing the scant research surrounding the professionalism levels of Indian postgraduate dental students, the researcher embarked on this project to fill that gap. A comprehensive tool or scale has been developed to assess professionalism in this context, by an extensive review of existing literature and valuable insights gained from interviews with various stakeholders, including private practitioners, faculty members, students, and patients. This study aims to uncover the essential constructs and values of professionalism expected from postgraduate dental students within India's unique cultural framework. The findings of this research hold the potential to inspire significant curriculum reforms, ultimately enhancing teaching and learning methodologies and fostering a deeper commitment to professionalism within the dental profession.

1.11 The rationale of the study:

The assessment of professional behavior is a foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching strategies in dental education. As the landscape of healthcare tries to evolve, it becomes increasingly important to employ robust and culturally relevant assessment tools that reflect the nuances of professionalism in a diverse society like India. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of professionalism within dental education, there remains a significant gap in tailored assessment methodologies that cater to the unique cultural and professional context of Indian postgraduate dental students. Current literature highlights that while assessing professionalism is a time-intensive endeavor, it is essential for identifying gaps in educational outcomes and for enhancing the overall quality of dental practice. Furthermore, existing international assessment scales often fall short of applicability in India due to the distinct cultural and contextual differences that exist between Western models and Indian

societal norms. This underscores the urgent need for a locally developed professional assessment scale that not only measures knowledge and skills but also integrates essential soft skills vital for dental practitioners. Recognizing professionalism as a critical attribute for aspiring dental surgeons is merely the initial step; the active promotion and evaluation of it are pivotal for advancing standards within the field. The absence of reliable assessment tools hampers educators from gauging the efficacy of their teaching approaches and limits the potential for informed improvements. As the proverb goes, “assessment drives learning,” highlighting the necessity of comprehensive evaluation frameworks to align educational practices with desired professional outcomes.

In light of these considerations, this study aims to develop and validate a specialized professional assessment scale designed specifically for postgraduate dental students in India. This scale will incorporate input from a diverse array of stakeholders, including patients, dental practitioners, faculty, and students, to ensure comprehensive reliability and validity. By launching this initiative, the researcher aspires to elevate the standards of professionalism in dental education, ultimately nurturing well-rounded practitioners who are not only proficient in clinical skills but also excel in their professional conduct. This study tries to develop a tool to assess professionalism, paving the way for improved educational methodologies and, consequently, better patient care in the dental profession.

1.12 Research Questions

- What basic constructs of professionalism are essential for postgraduate dental students?
- What fundamental values are essential as constructs of the scale of professionalism according to faculties, dental students, dental practitioners, and patients?
- Why is an assessment of professionalism needed for existing postgraduate dental students in India?
- How will the assessment of professionalism help the existing teaching-learning practices of the dental curriculum?

1.13 Conclusion:

Globalization, improved living standards, economic well-being, digitalization, and social changes have generated a high demand for institutions of higher education to keep up with changing curriculums. In this dynamic era of information, technology, and artificial intelligence, all the necessary information is available online. Patients today are well-informed and expect world-class treatment standards. There is a need for a greater focus on the cognitive and psychomotor domains; successful treatment depends more on addressing the affective domain. It is increasingly important to teach professionalism values to dental students, and assessment methods must be carefully considered, taking into account the cultural context.

It is essential to reinforce and develop personal life skills such as empathy, honesty, integrity, and communication in dental education to promote professionalism. To accurately evaluate professionalism within the Indian cultural context, it is imperative to use a valid scale. Currently, only a few tools in India can identify the minimum competencies required in value domains for a dental postgraduate student to be considered a professional. This research has addressed the need by developing a scale that evaluates various subfactors of professionalism under four domains: personal, professional, social, and ethical. By establishing the baseline values of these factors in the Indian context, improvements can be made to the curriculum and teaching methods for professionalism.

Professionalism in dentistry is a multifaceted concept that involves innumerable skills such as ethical behavior, effective communication, and providing high-quality patient care. It is considered essential alongside clinical competencies. Evaluating professionalism in dentistry is difficult and requires the establishment of reliable assessment methods. This emphasizes the need for universally accepted standards that can define and measure professionalism in dentistry. The chapter highlights the crucial role of professionalism in dental education, as it prepares students to be competent and ethical practitioners who offer compassionate care to patients. It also emphasizes that professionalism is a continuous process that begins in dental school and continues throughout a dental professional's career. Professionalism in dental education is vital for maintaining public trust and confidence in the dental profession, ensuring that patients receive the best care. It also helps dental schools identify areas for improvement in their education and training programs and develop focused interventions to enhance professionalism among their students.

In Conclusion, it is essential to standardize an assessment tool for professionalism in dental students to improve the quality of dental education, promote patient safety, and increase accountability. By implementing such an assessment tool, dental institutions can ensure the production of high-quality professionals capable of effectively meeting patients' needs. Additionally, such a tool can help build public trust in the dental profession, thereby contributing to its growth.

Assessing professionalism among dental students is also critical to ensure that they have the essential attitudes, behaviors, and values to provide exceptional patient care and positively contribute to the dental profession. Methods such as self-assessment surveys, peer assessment, and faculty evaluation are currently used globally to evaluate professionalism in dental education. However, it is crucial to develop a specific and comprehensive standardized assessment scale for assessing professionalism in dental students.