

A CRITICAL STUDY OF ATTITUDES OF MBBS AND BDS STUDENTS TOWARDS THEIR FUTURE PROFESSION

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

The attitudes of the students play a very vital role in choosing a particular career. The amount of study in MBBS and BDS is significantly higher than many other professions. Hence the present study was designed to assess and explore the attitudes of MBBS and BDS students towards their future medical profession.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted by administering online Google Form questionnaire to all MBBS and BDS students (1st year to 4th year) Universal College of Medical Sciences, and College of Dental Surgery, Bhairahawa, Nepal, during the period of 1 October, 2020 to 30 December, 2020, using non-probability purposive sampling. The sample size of the present study is 283 (198 MBBS and 85 BDS). The questionnaire was consisting of 32 statements, both positive as well as negative (Likert scale), on 5 options via strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree, was mailed to all students. The students were asked to read each statement carefully and click on their opinion/response.

RESULTS

The overall mean and standard deviation for MBBS students' attitude towards their medical profession was 3.73 and 0.87 respectively. Similarly, the overall mean and standard deviation for attitude of BDS students' towards their future profession was 1.60 and 0.37 respectively.

CONCLUSION

Both MBBS and BDS students were having a positive and right attitude towards their future medical profession.

KEYWORDS

Attitudes, BDS students, MBBS students, Profession

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INTRODUCTION

The attitudes of the students play a very vital role in choosing a particular career. Medical and dental profession is unique as it is perceived to be very noble, with great responsibilities to serve fellow human beings more. The amount of study in MBBS and BDS is significantly higher than many other professions. Moreover, Doctor must be a life-long learner to update and improve their skills and knowledge continuously. Therefore, a strong positive attitude is required for becoming a competent Doctor in future.¹⁻⁴ This area of study pertaining to the attitudes of MBBS and BDS students towards their future profession has not drawn much attention by researchers in the field of Medical Education, particularly in Nepal. Hence the present study was designed to assess and explore the attitudes of MBBS and BDS students towards their future medical profession.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted by administering online Google Form questionnaire comprising General information proforma and Likert's to all MBBS and BDS students (1st year to 4th year) Universal College of Medical Sciences, and College of Dental Surgery, Bhairaha-wa, Nepal. This data was collected during the period of 1 October, 2020 to 30 December, 2020, using non-probability purposive sampling. Among all MBBS and BDS students (1st year to 4th year) 198 MBBS students and 85 BDS students who filled and sent the questionnaire within 90 days were included in data analysis. Hence the sample size of the present study is 283 (198 MBBS and 85 BDS). The confidentiality of the data has been maintained.

General Information Proforma (GIP) elicits the socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, locality of residence (rural/urban), parent's gender, and nationality (Nepali/foreign) of the respondents. A Google Form questionnaire to assess the attitudes of MBBS and BDS students towards their future profession was constructed on the lines of Likert's summated rating scale. The statements relating to the areas such as social, psychological, academic, administrative, curricular and economic aspects were constructed by collecting from relevant literature and medical students' opinion about medical profession, and screened and validated after thorough scrutiny. Ambiguous statements were modified or rejected. Thus, the content validity of the tool was assumed.⁵

The final tool was consisting of 32 statements, both positive as well as negative. In terms of items of attitude towards their profession was rated on the basis of Likert scales on 5 options via strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. Among 32 items 24 statements are positive towards online assessment and score was given as 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree and vice versa for 8 negative statements. The questionnaire in Google form and was mailed to all students. The students were asked to read each statement carefully and click on their opinion/response. There was no right or wrong answers. Therefore, students were free to express their response freely as they feel.⁶

The collected data were entered into Microsoft excel and exported to SPSS version 22 for analysis. Simple frequency tables, cross tables and mean tables have been used to

analyze data. Characteristics of the sample were categorized using mean and standard deviation. The level of attitude towards their profession was recorded using grand mean of overall perception related item as per previous study.⁷

RESULTS

Table 1. Socio-demographic information of MBBS and BDS students

	MBBS (n=198)		BDS (n=85)		Total (n=283)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age						
≤ 19 years	43	21.72	18	21.18	61	21.55
> 20 years	155	78.28	67	78.82	222	78.45
Gender						
Male	122	61.62	23	61.62	145	51.24
Female	76	38.38	62	38.38	138	48.76
Residence						
Rural	42	21.21	8	21.21	62	21.91
Urban	88	78.79	27	78.79	221	78.09
Parent's Occupation						
White-collared	70	60.61	23	60.61	175	61.84
Agriculture	60	39.39	12	39.39	108	38.16
Nationality						
Nepali	117	75.76	35	75.76	235	83.04
Indian	13	24.24	0	24.24	48	16.96

Table 1 displays the respondents' socio-demographic information. According to their age distribution, more than seventy-five percent (78.45%) of the respondents were older than 20 years. Of the overall sample, 51.24% of the respondents were male. More than seventy-eight percent of respondents (78.09%) reside in urban areas. Nearly three quarters (38.16%) of the respondents parents were engaged in agriculture. Eighty three percent of the students were from Nepal, while the rest students were Indian.

Table 2. MBBS students’ attitudes towards their medical profession

Items	Frequency (n=198) (Percentage)					Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
	SA	A	N	D	SD			
1. One should be proud to be a Doctor	100 (50.51)	64 (32.32)	29 (14.65)	4 (2.02)	1 (0.51)	4.30	1.07	High
2. It is a dream world where there are no values	17 (8.59)	37 (18.69)	42 (21.21)	74 (37.37)	28 (14.14)	2.70	0.26	Low
3. It is good for those who come from the same professional background	16 (8.08)	47 (23.74)	61 (30.81)	50 (25.25)	24 (12.12)	2.90	0.35	Low
4. It provides me peace of mind	36 (18.18)	89 (44.95)	47 (23.74)	19 (9.60)	1 (0.51)	3.62	0.70	Low
5. It is not a noble profession	5 (2.53)	3 (1.52)	6 (3.03)	72 (36.36)	108 (54.55)	4.33	1.21	High
6. It gives me highest status in the society	25 (12.63)	92 (46.46)	52 (26.26)	23 (11.62)	6 (3.03)	3.54	0.71	Low
7. It has no ethics	1 (0.51)	10 (5.05)	8 (4.04)	90 (45.45)	89 (44.95)	4.29	1.08	High
8. Doctors do not have leadership qualities	1 (0.51)	7 (3.54)	21 (10.61)	90 (45.45)	77 (38.89)	4.16	0.97	High
9. It has no discipline	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (2.02)	58 (29.29)	136 (68.69)	4.67	1.48	High
10. It gives me mental satisfaction	42 (21.21)	102 (51.52)	40 (20.20)	11 (5.56)	3 (1.52)	3.85	0.83	High
11. To be a good doctor, it is a God’s gift	35 (17.68)	35 (17.68)	51 (25.76)	4 (2.02)	26 (13.13)	2.54	0.39	Low
12. It serves humanity	130 (65.66)	64 (32.32)	1 (0.51)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	4.59	1.43	High
13. It gives me respect	67 (33.84)	96 (48.48)	34 (17.17)	1 (0.51)	0 (0.00)	4.16	0.93	High
14. It requires huge capital as investment to establish a clinic	50 (25.25)	107 (54.04)	27 (13.64)	14 (7.07)	0 (0.00)	3.97	0.91	High
15. It gives me happiness	62 (31.31)	122 (61.62)	11 (5.56)	3 (1.52)	0 (0.00)	4.23	1.12	High
16. It requires skills only	5 (2.53)	24 (12.12)	30 (15.15)	98 (49.49)	21 (10.61)	2.16	0.36	Low
17. The subjects of medical/dental course are boring	6 (3.03)	20 (10.10)	34 (17.17)	116 (58.59)	24 (12.12)	3.70	0.93	Low
18. Doctor is a second God at the closer distance	36 (18.18)	79 (39.90)	59 (29.80)	18 (9.09)	11 (5.56)	3.64	0.63	Low
19. It is an adventurous profession	37 (18.69)	101 (51.01)	34 (17.17)	18 (9.09)	8 (4.04)	3.71	0.80	Low
20. It requires lot of energy and time	119 (60.10)	77 (38.89)	2 (1.01)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	4.59	1.34	High
21. It provides good comforts of working conditions	23 (11.62)	51 (25.76)	76 (38.38)	38 (19.19)	2 (1.01)	3.16	0.47	Low
22. It does not require intelligence	1 (0.51)	5 (2.53)	19 (9.60)	92 (46.46)	79 (39.90)	4.20	1.00	High
23. Persons of high status alone can be successful in medical profession	0 (0.00)	4 (2.02)	22 (11.11)	105 (53.03)	67 (33.84)	1.81	0.42	Low
24. It gives me dignity	41 (20.71)	128 (64.65)	28 (14.14)	1 (0.51)	0 (0.00)	4.06	1.08	High
25. It leads to corruption	3 (1.52)	25 (12.63)	48 (24.24)	64 (32.32)	44 (22.22)	3.40	0.55	Low
26. It is one’s life saving profession	111 (56.06)	83 (41.92)	4(2.02)	1 (0.51)	0 (0.00)	4.55	1.28	High
27. It is a challenging profession to succeed	81 (40.91)	97 (48.99)	18 (9.09)	1 (0.51)	0 (0.00)	4.29	1.05	High
28. To be a good Doctor one has to have hard work	146 (73.74)	52 (26.26)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	4.74	1.60	High
29. It is a money making business only	0 (0.00)	3 (1.52)	23 (11.62)	101 (51.01)	71 (35.86)	4.21	0.99	High
30. It is a great profession among all professions	41 (20.71)	83 (41.92)	51 (25.76)	19 (9.60)	4 (2.02)	3.70	0.67	Low
31. In medical profession, success means wealth	1 (0.51)	14 (7.07)	32 (16.16)	83 (41.92)	64 (32.32)	1.95	0.30	Low
32. It is based on one’s competence	28 (14.14)	106 (53.54)	51 (25.76)	11 (5.56)	2 (1.01)	3.74	0.85	High

Total Mean Score 739.09, grand mean =3.73 and grand standard deviation= 0.87

Table 2 represents the MBBS Students’ attitude towards their medical profession. The overall mean and standard deviation for attitude towards their medical profession was 3.73 and 0.87 respectively. In terms of items of attitude towards their profession was rated on the basis of Likert scales on 5 options via strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. Among 32 items 24 statements are positive towards online assessment and score was given as 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree and vice versa for 8 negative statements.

The level of attitude towards their profession was recorded using grand mean of overall perception related item as per previous study.⁸ The attitude towards their profession was leveled as high when the individual mean is higher or equal to grand mean (3.73) and low in reverse condition. The mean scores of the responses in relation to 18 items (1, 5, 7-10, 12-15, 20, 22, 24, 26-29, 32) are close to having high perception and 14 items (2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 16-19, 21, 23, 25, 30, 31) are on low level. The results indicate that students were satisfied with more than half of the items regarding their profession.

Table 3. BDS Students' attitudes towards their future profession

Items	Number (n=85) (Percentage)					Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
	SA	A	N	D	SD			
1. One should be proud to be a Doctor	50 (58.82)	28 (32.94)	6 (7.06)	1 (1.18)	0 (0.00)	1.93	0.54	High
2. It is a dream world where there are no values	5 (5.88)	11 (12.94)	20 (23.53)	36 (42.35)	12 (14.12)	1.08	0.12	Low
3. It is good for those who come from the same professional background	15 (17.65)	30 (35.29)	21 (24.71)	18 (21.18)	1 (1.18)	1.49	0.22	Low
4. It provides me peace of mind	9 (10.59)	33 (38.82)	35 (41.18)	8 (9.41)	0 (0.00)	1.51	0.29	Low
5. It is not a noble profession	3 (3.53)	8 (9.41)	17 (20.00)	37 (43.53)	20 (23.53)	1.61	0.30	High
6. It gives me highest status in the society	9 (10.59)	52 (61.18)	18 (21.18)	6 (7.06)	0 (0.00)	1.61	0.42	High
7. It has no ethics	0 (0.00)	4 (4.71)	7 (8.24)	50 (58.82)	24 (28.24)	1.76	0.44	High
8. Doctors do not have leadership qualities	1 (1.18)	3 (3.53)	13 (15.29)	46 (54.12)	22 (25.88)	1.72	0.39	High
9. It has no discipline	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.18)	32 (37.65)	52 (61.18)	1.97	0.58	High
10. It gives me mental satisfaction	10 (11.76)	42 (49.41)	29 (34.12)	4 (4.71)	0 (0.00)	1.58	0.35	Low
11. To be a good doctor, it is a God's gift	8 (9.41)	25 (29.41)	16 (18.82)	27 (31.76)	9 (10.59)	1.27	0.17	Low
12. It serves humanity	47 (55.29)	37 (43.53)	1 (1.18)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1.95	0.55	High
13. It gives me respect	27 (31.76)	53 (62.35)	5 (5.88)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1.83	0.49	High
14. It requires huge capital as investment to establish a clinic	36 (42.35)	40 (47.06)	5 (5.88)	3 (3.53)	1 (1.18)	1.83	0.45	High
15. It gives me happiness	21 (24.71)	55 (64.71)	9 (10.59)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1.78	0.47	High
16. It requires skills only	6 (7.06)	20 (23.53)	15 (17.65)	37 (43.53)	5 (5.88)	1.18	0.16	Low
17. The subjects of medical/dental course are boring	4 (4.71)	11 (12.94)	26 (30.59)	42 (49.41)	2 (2.35)	1.42	0.35	Low
18. Doctor is a second God at the closer distance	19 (22.35)	51 (60.00)	14 (16.47)	1 (1.18)	0 (0.00)	1.73	0.43	High
19. It is an adventurous profession	15 (17.65)	52 (61.18)	15 (17.65)	3 (3.53)	0 (0.00)	1.69	0.43	High
20. It requires lot of energy and time	31 (36.47)	47 (55.29)	7 (8.24)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1.84	0.46	High
21. It provides good comforts of working conditions	6 (7.06)	28 (32.94)	25 (29.41)	22 (25.88)	4 (4.71)	1.34	0.21	Low
22. It does not require intelligence	1 (1.18)	24 (28.24)	10 (11.76)	23 (27.06)	27 (31.76)	1.55	0.27	Low
23. Persons of high status alone can be successful in medical profession	0 (0.00)	5 (5.88)	12 (14.12)	27 (31.76)	34 (40.00)	0.73	0.10	Low
24. It gives me dignity	13 (15.29)	59 (69.41)	11 (12.94)	2 (2.35)	0 (0.00)	1.71	0.49	High
25. It leads to corruption	5 (5.88)	8 (9.41)	16 (18.82)	37 (43.53)	19 (22.35)	1.58	0.30	Low
26. It is one's life saving profession	47 (55.29)	36 (42.35)	2 (2.35)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1.94	0.54	High
27. It is a challenging profession to succeed	33 (38.82)	47 (55.29)	4 (4.71)	1 (1.18)	0 (0.00)	1.85	0.48	High
28. To be a good Doctor one has to have hard work	60 (70.59)	23 (27.06)	2 (2.35)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2.01	0.65	High
29. It is a money making business only	3 (3.53)	15 (17.65)	14 (16.47)	34 (40.00)	19 (22.35)	1.55	0.27	Low
30. It is a great profession among all professions	14 (16.47)	32 (37.65)	27 (31.76)	12 (14.12)	0 (0.00)	1.53	0.25	Low
31. In medical profession, success means wealth	5 (5.88)	4 (4.71)	21 (24.71)	42 (49.41)	13 (15.29)	1.02	0.16	Low
32. It is based on one's competence	11 (12.94)	54 (63.53)	18 (21.18)	2 (2.35)	0 (0.00)	1.66	0.44	High

Total Mean Score 316.94, grand mean =1.60 and grand standard deviation= 0.37

Table 3 represents the BDS students' attitude towards their future profession. The overall mean and standard deviation for attitude towards their medical profession was 1.60 and 0.37 respectively. In terms of items of attitude towards their profession was rated on the basis of Likert scales on 5 options via strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. Among 32 items 24 statements are positive towards their profession and score was given as 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree and vice versa for 8 negative statements

The level of attitude towards their profession was recorded using grand mean of overall perception related item as per previous study.⁵ The attitude towards their profession was leveled as high when the individual mean is higher or equal to grand mean (1.60) and low in reverse condition. The mean scores of the responses in relation to 18 items are close to having high perception and 14 items are on low level. The results indicate that students were satisfied with more than half of the items regarding their profession.

DISCUSSION

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to address the attitudes of MBBS and BDS students towards their future profession i.e., whether they have right/positive attitude for the job. We could not compare and contrast, support or refute our findings, since no literature was available in this area. However, some researchers have studied the attitudes of medical students towards post-graduation in Medicine and Surgery, at Manipal College of Medical

Sciences, Pokhara, Nepal;⁸ towards research in Kerala, India,¹ New Zealand,⁹ and Sudanese University,¹⁰ towards clinical communication skills;¹¹ and rural health care service among Indian and Malaysian medical students.¹²

MBBS students' attitudes towards their medical profession

The MBBS students were having a high attitude with more than half of the items (18 items i.e. 1, 5, 7-10, 12-15, 20, 22, 24, 26-29, 32) regarding their future medical profession; whereas, low level of attitude to 14 items (2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 16-19, 21, 23, 25, 30, 31). Thus MBBS students were satisfied with more than half of the items regarding their future medical profession, and have a right attitude for the job. Similar to our findings, in a study by Nisha,¹ Pallamparthi S,² Htoo Htoo Kyaw Soe et al,¹³ more than half of the MBBS students expressed positive attitude towards research. In another study by Ramya MR et al¹⁴ self-interest or a passion for the medical profession was the most common reason for choosing medicine as the career. Students' had positive attitudes toward medical applications in a study conducted by Koehler N.¹⁵

BDS students' attitudes towards their future dental profession

The attitudes of BDS students towards their future profession was very high to 18 items (1, 5-9, 12-15, 18-20, 24, 26-28, 32) and towards 14 items (2-4, 10, 11, 16, 17, 21-23, 25, 29-31) were on low level. Thus BDS students were satisfied with more than half of the items regarding their future medical profession, and have a right attitude for the job. Similar to our findings, in a study by Baharvand M et al,³

Aggarwal A et al,¹⁶ dental students appeared to have positive attitudes about their future dental profession, and had a great desire to pursue dentistry as their career. Knevel RJM et al¹⁷ concluded in his study, that students' were enthusiastic about their dental profession and expressed the ambition to serve the community. In a study by Banabilh SM,¹⁸ Yemeni students chose dentistry as a profession were primarily economic, then vocational.

CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that both MBBS and BDS students were having a positive and right attitude towards their future medical profession. Research literature of this type will serve as a self-instructional material for MBBS and BDS students to understand their medical profession in a scientific manner and may also be helpful to medical teachers to promote positive attitudes among medical students towards their medical profession.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The study was restricted to only one medical college, and emphasized only a small component of medical education, i.e., attitudinal aspect of medical students towards medical profession.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study can be extended by including all medical colleges of Nepal (large sample), and covering all possible variables pertaining to social, psychological, ethical, economic, administrative, care-delivery, curriculum and other areas of medical profession so that results will be more comprehensive and fruitful.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

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