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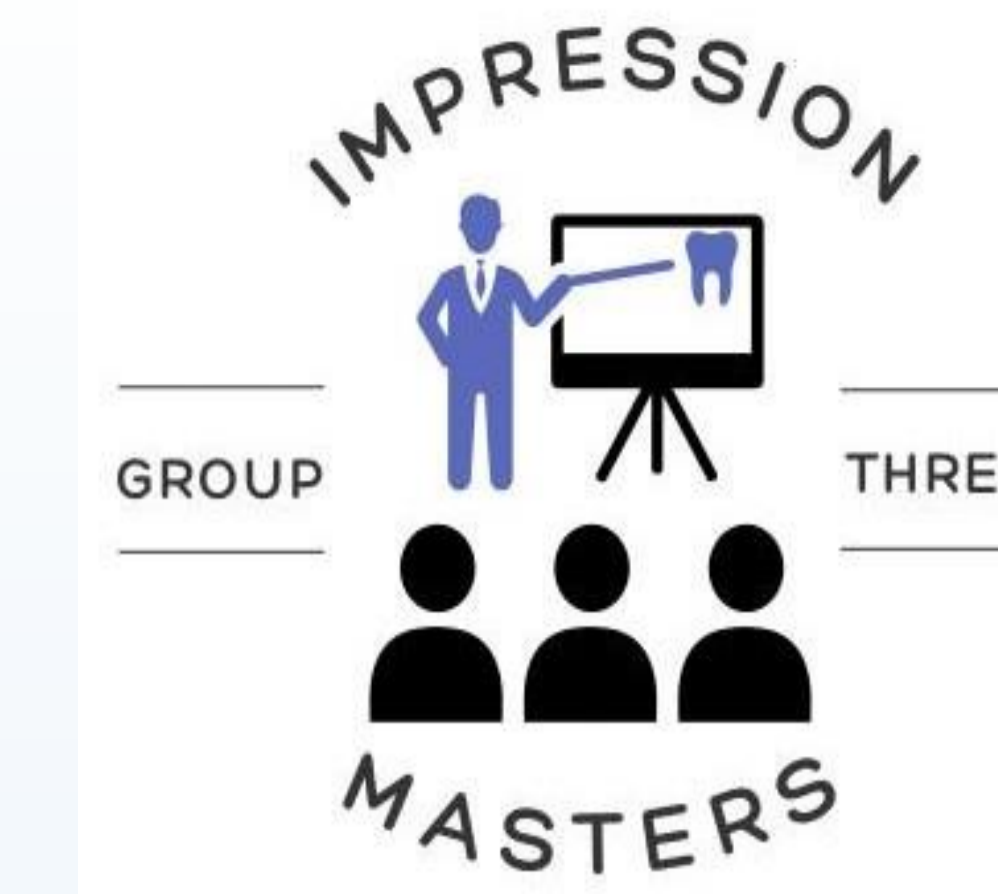
FACULTY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

Dental Students' Perception of Clinical Tutors as Role Models at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine

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Introduction

Role modelling and role models in clinical setting

- Process in which faculty members exhibit clinical skills, model and articulate thought processes and demonstrate positive professional characteristics.
- Learn professional skills and attitude and shape their personality. Behaviours of role models affect learning more than formal teaching and influences the motivation towards learning.
- Positive and negative role models - Clinical tutors must understand that their interactions and behaviours can impact students both positively and negatively.
- This study, first in the Caribbean, was proposed to explore the clinical dental students' perception of clinical tutors as role models at UWI, St Augustine and to determine the attributes associated with positive and negative role models.

Public health relevance

Clinical students spend a substantial course time with their clinical tutors that results in active and passive learning of professional skills and humanistic behaviours. Encouraging development of positive role models will result in development of well-rounded, competent health professionals with positive humanistic attributes for our community.

Objectives

- To gauge the importance of role modelling amongst the clinical dental students.
- To explore dental student's perceptions of clinical tutors at the School of Dentistry.
- To determine qualities of positive and negative role models.

Methodology

Ethical Approval - Campus Research Ethics Committee (CREC), The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, January 23rd, 2023, CREC-SA.1961/01/2023.

Study Population and Study Sample - All clinical registered dental students and dental interns at the School of Dentistry, UWI STA (129 participants). 71 students participated. 97 was the recommended sample size as per online Raosoft.

Study design- Cross-sectional, descriptive approach; no intervention was made, School of Dentistry, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine from January 2023 to June 2023.

Data Collection - Self-administered online questionnaire, consisted of questions pertaining to demographics, students' perception of role models and positive and negative traits.

Data Analysis - IBM SPSS Statistical software version 29.0 for the non-parametric chi square statistical test.

Data Protection - No identity information was requested of any participant throughout the study and completed questionnaires were digitally stored in a password-protected folder.

Results

Table 1: Demographic information of participants

Participants Characteristics			Numbers	%	Participants Characteristics			Numbers	%
Age	21-24	35	49	Year of Study	Year 3	17	24		
	25-28	26	37		Year 4	11	15		
	29-32	8	11		Year 5	31	44		
	33-36	2	3		Intern	12	17		
Sex	Male	10	14	Time spent with clinical tutors	Everyday	51	72		
	Female	61	86		4 days a week	11	15		
Ethnicity	East Indian	43	60		3 days a week	7	11		
	African	18	26		2 days a week	1	1		
	Asian	-	-		1 day a week	1	1		
	Caucasian	-	-	According to you, the impact of a role model is restricted to:	Professional attributes only	5	7		
Mixed	10	14	Personality attributes only		2	3			
Other	-	-	Both professional & personality	15	21				
				Professional, personality, values & general well-being	49	69			

Table 2: Student's perception towards role modelling

	Yes	No	Don't Know
	Number of Participants (%)		
Do you believe that role modelling is important?	100	-	-
Did your Role Models change during different phases of your life?	72	27	1
Does the influence of a clinical tutor impact the confidence in your career choice?	82	9	9
Are there clinical tutors who have characteristics of a positive role model in the DDS Programme?	90	6	4
Are there clinical tutors who have characteristics of a negative role model in the DDS Programme	91	3	6

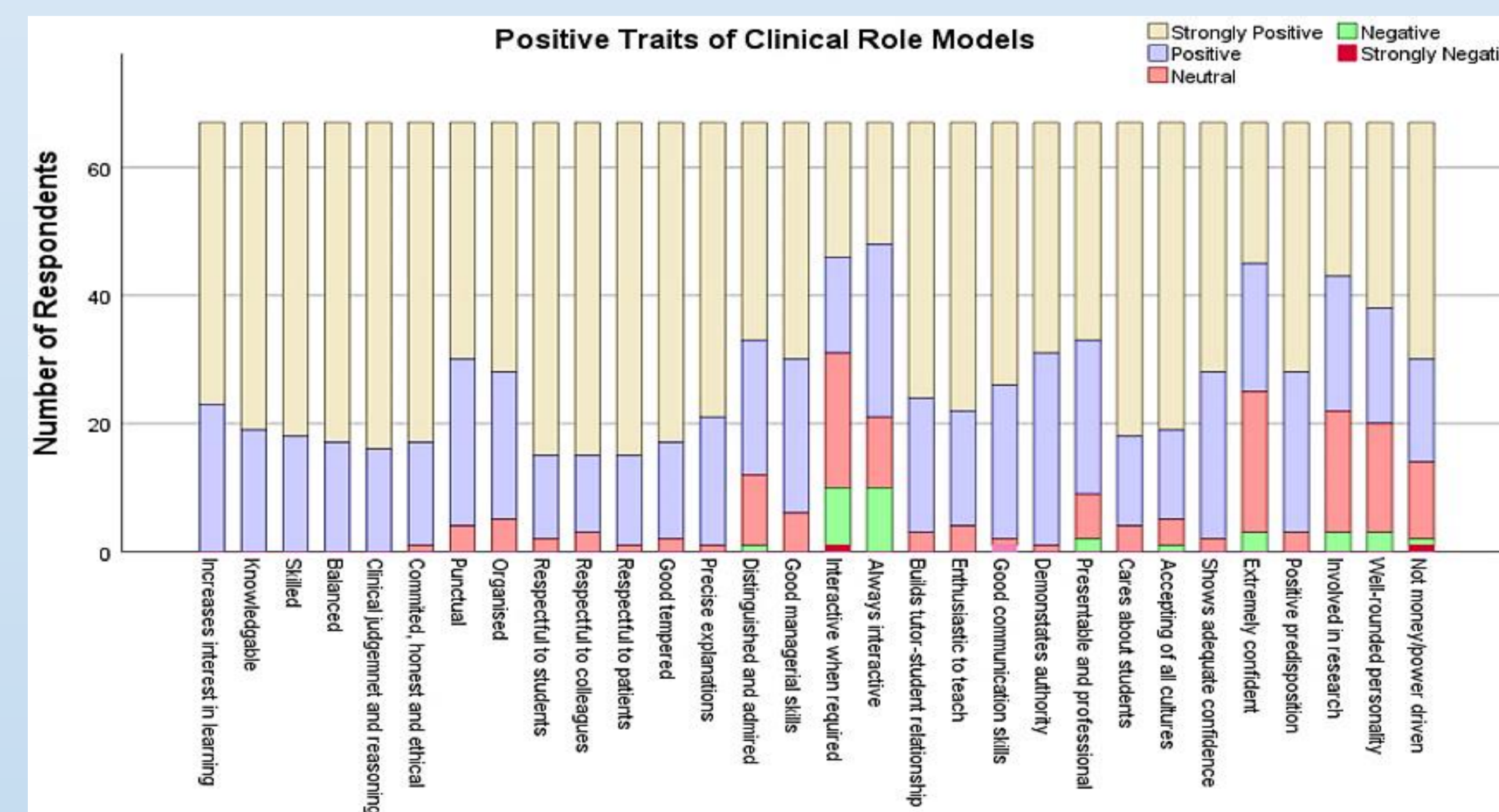


Figure 1: Bar Graph showing positive traits of Clinical Role Models

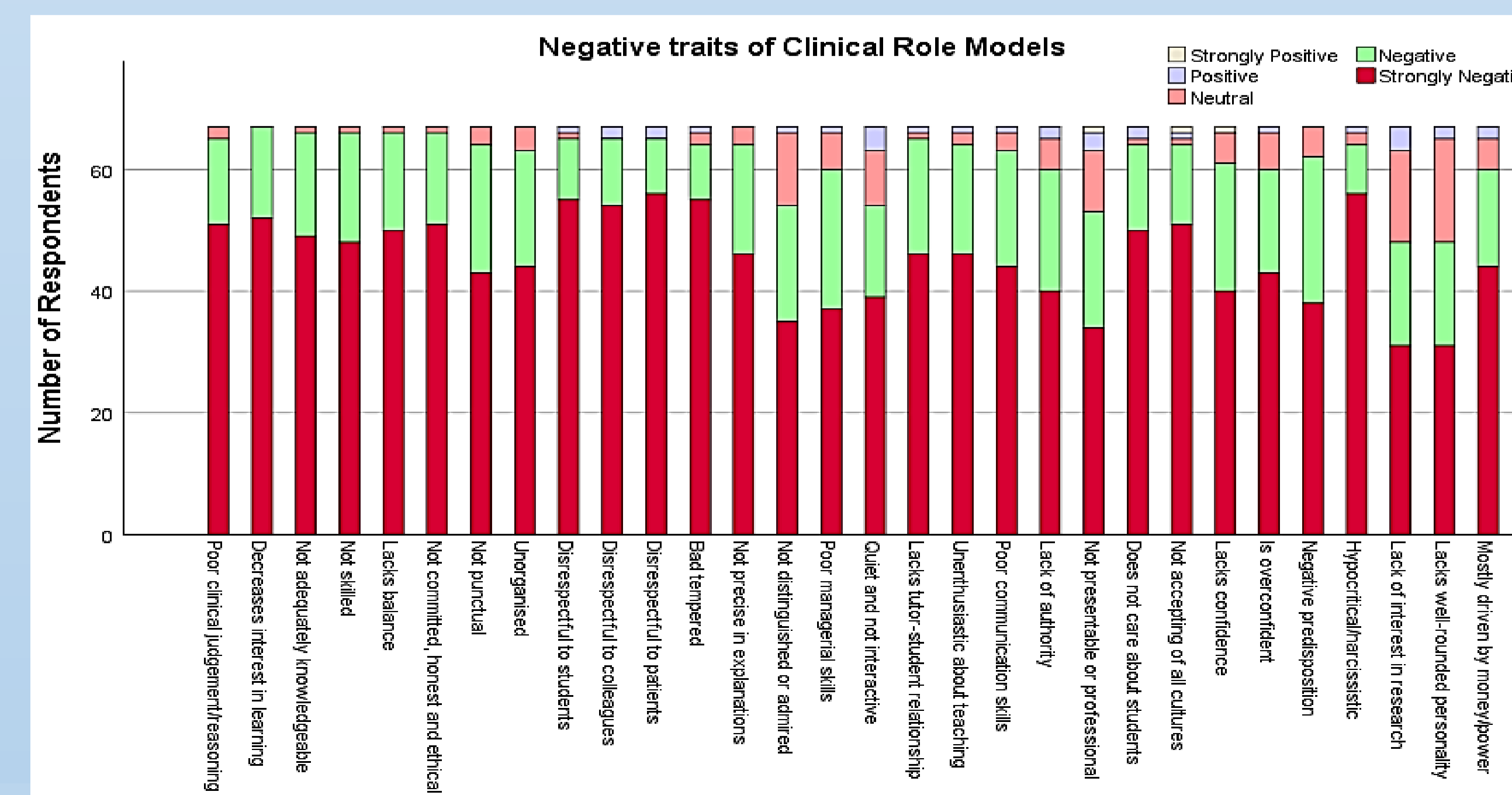


Figure 2: Bar Graph showing negative traits of Clinical Role Models

Discussion

- 100% of respondents agreed that role models are important and that their motivation in dental school was impacted by role models (their clinical tutors) through observation and emulation.
- The majority of respondents indicated that clinical tutors impacted their confidence in their career choices, their professional life, personality, values and general well-being.
- Students identified positive qualities of a role model as having good knowledge of the subject; demonstrating clinical skills; development of student-teacher interactions; empathy and respect for patients; giving immediate and meaningful feedback.
- Students identified negative qualities of a role model as lack of ability to impart knowledge; lack of respect towards patients; lack of empathy for patients; humiliating students; lack of meaningful feedback.

Conclusions

- At the School of Dentistry, clinical tutors were identified as being both positive and negative role models by students based on their clinical and teaching skills, professionalism, ethics, and personality.
- Therefore, the clinical tutors must be aware of the influence of role models on the students and the various qualities associated with positive and negative role models to optimize learning in dental education, ultimately resulting in competent dental professionals.
- At institution level, training programmes and seminars for clinical tutors are recommended to facilitate development of positive role models.

References

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