



Original Research

Organizational factors influencing pharmacy practice change

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Abstract

Background: Some pharmacists have changed the focus of their practice from solely dispensing. Emerging services they have added include medication therapy management and other pharmacy services.

Objective: To assess the effect of entrepreneurial orientation, resource adequacy, and pharmacy staffing on pharmacy practice change.

Methods: A total of 1847 licensed U.S. pharmacists received 2 mail surveys as part of a larger national pharmacist survey. The core survey collected information about practice setting, prescription volume, and staffing. The supplemental survey assessed how the pharmacy had changed over the past 2 years to enable the delivery of pharmacy services. The amount of change was assessed by 12 items, which were summed to provide an aggregate change index. Five variables from organizational change literature were assessed as influences on practice change: proactiveness, risk taking, autonomy, work ethic, and adequacy of resources. In addition, the associations of pharmacist and technician staffing with practice change were assessed. A multiple linear regression analysis was performed with the aggregate change index as the dependent variable and the 7 potential influences on change as the independent variables.

Results: Four hundred usable surveys were analyzed. At least some level of practice change was reported in 60% of pharmacies surveyed. The linear regression analysis of the model was significant ($P < .001$) with an R -square value of 0.276. Significant influences on change were 2 dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation—proactiveness and autonomy—as well as adequacy of resources and pharmacy technician staffing.

Conclusions: Many pharmacies reported that some aspects of their practice have changed, such as collecting patient information and documenting care. Few reported changes in asking patients to pay for pharmacy services. These findings support previous results, which show that the capacity for organizational change can be

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augmented by increasing proactiveness, autonomy among employees, and the availability of adequate and appropriate resources.

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Introduction

In recent history, pharmacy practice has focused on dispensing prescription medications, although it is evolving to encompass new pharmacy services.¹⁻⁴ Two forces affecting the evolution of pharmacy practice have been the profession's support for medication management activities and the shrinking profitability of dispensing. To varying degrees, both of these factors have supported pharmacy practice change to incorporate new pharmacy services into practice.

There is a growing recognition that pharmacists are society's experts on medications. For example, section 30.4 of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Prescription Drug Benefit Manual about medication therapy management (MTM) programs states that "MTMPs should be developed in cooperation with licensed and practicing pharmacists and physicians."⁵ Even so, the adoption of MTM into practice is still in its early stages.² Recently, however, the decreasing reimbursement rate from third-party payers for dispensing fees and the relative increase in the cost of operation have encouraged some pharmacies to seek new sources of revenue. Increasing societal demand for health care also has influenced some pharmacies to expand their practice.⁶⁻¹³

The transition of a pharmacy practice from a focus on dispensing to one that embraces pharmacy service delivery requires the rearrangement of resources. These resources include tangible items such as the financial resources, the physical layout, equipment, and staffing of the pharmacy as well as intangible resources such as the knowledge and skills of the pharmacists to develop, implement, and effectively market services.^{14,15} Many pharmacies will have to shift their layout and workflow to accommodate patient care, such as MTM services, into their practice site.

Although the ability of a pharmacy to change to allow the delivery of pharmacy services has been described conceptually, it has received limited empirical study.^{7,16-21} However, the process of organizational change has been well documented in business literature, and several facilitators of

change have been identified that could apply to pharmacy practice. These factors include aspects of entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and resource adequacy. Aspects of EO that affect the ability to change include proactiveness, risk taking, autonomy, and work ethic.^{6,22-29} The availability of adequate and appropriate resources also is a vital antecedent to change.^{6,30} The purpose of this study was to assess the association between a set of organizational factors and pharmacy practice change. The objective of this study was to assess how EO dimensions, resource adequacy, and pharmacy staffing influence pharmacy practice change.

Factors influencing practice change

To be successful over the long term, organizations should continually adapt to their changing markets. This translates into the need for various types of change to meet evolving needs. The business literature suggests that for short-term and long-term success, companies need to pursue incremental innovations, architectural innovations, and discontinuous innovations.³¹⁻³³

Incremental innovations or changes are defined as small improvements on existing products or operations that increase efficiency. For example, a community pharmacy may frequently alter staffing or inventory in response to current demands. Architectural innovations refer to applying technological or process advantages to fundamentally alter a business practice. This would include increasing dispensing efficiency through the purchase and integration of some form of automation into a community pharmacy. Finally, to support performance over time, businesses should pursue discontinuous innovations, which are defined as radical advances that profoundly alter the basis of competition in an industry. Adding a mix of cognitive services to complement dispensing services in a pharmacy practice is an example of a discontinuous change.

Discontinuous innovations or changes serve as the origin of industrial transformation. Although exploratory activities can help organizations broaden their markets and render old business practice

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