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Research Article

Analysis of pharmacy student motivators and deterrents for professional organization involvement

Erin Petersen^{a,*}, Molly Wascher^{b,1}, Karen Kier^c^a Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice, Ohio Northern University, Raabe College of Pharmacy, Pharmacy Practice Department, 525 S Main St Ada, OH 45810, United States^b Ohio Northern University, Raabe College of Pharmacy, 3020 Shadydale Lane, West Bloomfield, MI 48323, United States^c Ohio Northern University, Raabe College of Pharmacy, Pharmacy Practice Department, 525 S Main St Ada, OH 45810, United States

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The purpose of this study was to determine motivators and deterrents impacting a student pharmacist's decision to join professional organizations. The goal was to create a list of meaningful factors that organizations can use for membership recruitment.

Methods: This descriptive study utilized a blinded electronic survey sent to eight accredited pharmacy schools in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky. The survey assessed motivating and hindering factors, as well as demographic data.

Results: Eight-hundred fifty-six students completed the survey, a 15.05% participation rate. Professional development and networking were the top two endorsed motivational factors, selected as significant by 88.0% and 87.5% respectively. Upon chi-square analysis, networking ($p < 0.001$), involvement opportunities ($p = 0.01$), and scholarships ($p = 0.02$) were motivating factors with which membership was found to be significantly influenced. Networking and involvement opportunities were more significant for members while scholarships were a greater motivator among nonmembers. Time required for involvement and cost were the most commonly selected hindrances with 78% and 76% respectively identifying these as significant barriers. The hindering factor found to be significantly different between active members and nonmembers was bylaws/rules of the organization ($p = 0.032$), with non-members rating this as a greater consideration than current members.

Discussion and conclusions: Multiple factors contribute to a student's decision to join a professional organization. Those active members find greater significance in networking involvement opportunities. Non-member students found scholarships more motivating and recognize bylaws as a consideration for membership more than current members. These results emphasize the multifactorial nature of membership and may direct future membership initiatives.

Introduction

Membership in professional organizations provides essential advocacy, clinical advancement, and personal benefits and has been discussed throughout healthcare professions. The successful recruitment of new professionals is essential to the future of these organizations. Nelson Fabian, the National Environmental Health Association's (NEHA) Executive Director, wrote a letter in

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: e-petersen@onu.edu (E. Petersen), m-wascher@onu.edu (M. Wascher), k-kier@onu.edu (K. Kier).

¹ Current address: PGY2 Administrative Resident, Johns Hopkins University, 600 B Wolfe Street Baltimore, MD 21287, United States.

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September 2013 discussing the trend toward decreased involvement among younger professionals. He wrote, "Unless associations change their benefit menus to offer more benefits that cater to younger professionals, they will die." Throughout the letter he encourages organizations to provide benefits focused on the younger generation such as tangible career benefits, leadership opportunities, and the chance to develop more skills allowing them to become more competitive in the job market.¹ The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) 2016 Standard 4 discusses personal and professional development requiring leadership, innovation, and professionalism by either the college of pharmacy or by professional organizations including "local or state pharmacy associations." Standard 9 states the organizational culture should encourage leadership, professional behavior, and collegial relationships including "support(ing) student, faculty, administrator, preceptor, and staff participation in local, state, and national pharmacy, scientific, and/or other professional organizations."^{2,3}

There are currently more than 18 national pharmacy organizations and additional state and local organizations, providing students with ample opportunities for involvement. These organizations provide member benefits such as professional development, access to mentorship, learning and networking opportunities. Many professional organizations, inside and outside of the pharmacy profession struggle to encourage membership. Yeager⁴ discussed that there has been an increase in member numbers in professional associations, yet membership has decreased in proportion to the percentage of those eligible. Per the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, there has been a continual increase in student enrollment in professional pharmacy programs for the past 13 years. In May 2013, 13,207 first year professional degrees were awarded across the country.⁵ The increase in the number of new practitioners has become an increasing pool of potential new members for pharmacy organizations.

In 1959, Fredrick Herzberg⁶ published his theory on work motivation. In that article, he wrote about his theory on hygiene and motivating factors, referred to as the Herzberg Motivation-Hygiene Theory or Two Factor Theory of Motivation. He proposes the existence of certain intrinsic factors (motivators) that lead to job satisfaction and motivation. There are also extrinsic factors (hygiene factors) that lead to dissatisfaction if they are perceived as unreasonable. The factors are not co-dependent, simply getting rid of dissatisfaction will not lead to job satisfaction. The motivators included: achievement, recognition, meaningfulness of work, responsibility, advancement, and growth. Hygiene factors included company policy and administration, supervision, relationship with supervisor, work conditions, salary, relationship with peers, personal life, relationship with subordinates, status, and security. While this theory is written in regards to employment, there are many similarities with organization membership particularly to students who may consider membership part of their education.

Evaluation of available literature shows a dearth of information on motivators for student involvement specifically in pharmacy organizations. The advancement of the pharmacy profession is largely dependent on the health of the professional organizations. Recruitment and modification of organizations to best tailor to these young professionals is essential as stated by Director Fabian. The goal of this study is to survey current pharmacy students to determine what motivates or deters them from joining a professional organization in hopes that we can create a list of meaningful factors organizations can use to recruit and maintain membership based on the Herzberg Two Factor Theory of Motivation concepts.

Methods

Student population

Students enrolled in ACPE accredited schools in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin in February 2014 were eligible to participate. Each of the 18 accredited pharmacy schools in those states were invited to partake in the study distributed through the school's experiential program staff. Upon approval from the experiential liaison, all students, regardless of year in school were sent a link to the electronic survey from the liaison. Schools invited to participate that had no student respondents were included in the overall students possible as they were given the opportunity to complete the survey.

Survey protocol

Students completed the survey anonymously. The survey consisted of nine questions including questions on motivating and hindering factors, as well as demographic data. Students were asked to rate nine motivational factors derived from the Herzberg Motivation-Hygiene Theory using a Likert-type scale from very significant which was given a value of "1" to very insignificant with a value of "5." For example, the motivating factor "recognition" was divided into scholarships and presentation opportunities as these are recognition tools within the organization. Students were also asked what hindered them from joining a professional organization. Seven possible hindrances were derived from the concepts in the Herzberg Motivation-Hygiene Theory and were assessed the same Likert-type format as the motivating factors from very significant ("1") to very insignificant ("5"). For example, the hygiene factor of "salary" was modified to cost of the organization. Students could select one response per question. Demographic data including year of school, organizations joined, and involvement in a professional organization leadership position were also collected. Fig. 1 includes all questions from the online survey.

A pilot study was completed with 15 student volunteers from Concordia University School of Pharmacy, a college of pharmacy in candidate status at the time of survey distribution, in Mequon, Wisconsin to ensure survey readability and functionality. The study protocol was approved by the Ohio Northern University Institutional Review Board prior to trial initiation.

The survey was active for a two and half week time-period in February 2014. Students were sent a link to the survey via email on two separate occasions one week apart. Participating students were eligible to complete a separate link for entry into a raffle to win one of the four \$25 gift cards. These two surveys were not connected to maintain anonymity in the research.

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