Perceptions of pharmacy professionals on the value of leadership training programmes

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study is intended towards the assessment of perceptions of pharmacy professionals on the value of leadership training programs. It has been made apparent by the previous studies that leadership training programs can significantly influence the pharmacists' professional career. However, to test this statement, the study was based on mixed design, in which both qualitative and quantitative data to understand the perception of the pharmacy professionals regarding the leadership training programs. Moreover, a total of 76 completely filled questionnaires were incorporated in this study where 10 managers were approached for the interviews. It was found that there is a significant relationship between perceptions of pharmacy professionals and the value of leadership training programs. Therefore, it was recommended that a viable evaluation and monitoring system should be allocated for the pharmacists in order to prepare for professional challenges.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Access to quality medicines and competent and capable health professionals are fundamental aspects for any health system. Human pharmaceutical resources must ensure the uninterrupted delivery of quality medicines to the population, their management and responsible use, as vital components for improving the health of nations (Elvey et al., 2013). Multi-stakeholder collaboration Stakeholders incorporating the best available evidence is needed to inform planning based on the needs of human resources. When relevant and well-informed stakeholders come together to address labour force problems, there is greater potential for coordinated planning and implementation of the workforce (Fuller, 2012).

The per capita pharmaceutical labour force varies considerably across countries and regions, and is generally correlated with the level of economic development indicators in the country. Countries and territories with lower economic indicators, such as those in Africa, tend to have relatively fewer pharmacists and pharmacy support workers. This has implications for the inequalities observed in access to and experience of drug use (Kheir and Fahey, 2011). In addition, some countries and territories often have more pharmacies than pharmacists, which may imply a renewed need for drug monitoring and use. Strategic and policy frameworks related to the pharmaceutical workforce have been successfully developed and implemented at the national level through multi-stakeholder processes involving ministries of health, health professional associations, regulators and educators to lead and obtain competition and professional excellence for quality of care (Group, 2011).

Improving workforce performance and productivity, competence and the ability to adapt to new roles is a constant challenge in the increasingly dynamic environment of high health care costs, growing demand for health services, and the growing burden of chronic diseases (Rubino, Esparza and Chassiakos, 2013). Driven in part by a greater focus on patient care and interprofessional collaboration, these elements provide pharmacists with an opportunity to use their professional skills to provide safe, high-quality and cost-effective pharmaceutical services for the benefit of populations. Leadership is a key aspect to empower pharmacy professionals to maximize these opportunities and innovate and shape their practice (Janke, Traynor and Boyle, 2013).

Investment for the transformation and expansion of vocational training is essential, since education is the basis for building a skilled health workforce. The ability to provide pharmaceutical services in each country depends on having a competent workforce and an

integrated academic strength to train a sufficient number of new pharmacists and other support staff at both basic and advanced levels. Continued effort is required to ensure the development of drug expertise that responds to the populations' pharmaceutical health needs (Shannon, Bradley-Baker, and Truong, 2012). A needs-based education strategy enables local systems to better assess the needs of their community and thus develop (or adapt) the educational support system to produce a workforce relevant to these needs. National demands for health care are diverse and complex, often vary widely within and between regions. While broad and broad frameworks can be beneficial at the macro level, the "one size fits all" system does not provide the authenticity required for full participation and sustainability at the local level (Chisholm-Burns, 2012).

Human Pharmaceutical resources continue to be a priority theme all over the world to participate in collaboration with all stakeholders. It is important to work together to achieve the development of a profession that can meet the present and future pharmaceutical health needs of society and the world. Facing these challenges, faculties and pharmacy schools must create learning opportunities that provide all students with a basic understanding of leadership, organizational change, and the role of the leader in change (Grindrod, et al., 2014). In addition, faculties and pharmacy schools must demonstrate to students that leadership not only comes from professional leaders with a hierarchy of authority. Students should hear success stories from recent graduates who made changes even without having a position as such. More specifically, new graduates require a particular knowledge and a group of skills (Traynor, Boyle, and Janke, 2013).

First, in the minds of students, leadership needs become tangible and concrete. Studying the 5 practices of a leader makes leadership less ethereal. As a foundation, students must learn that they need to model style, have a broad vision, face the process, be willing to act and motivate the heart. The 5 practices are decipherable, learnable and measurable. Inventions such as Student Leadership Practices Inventory can be used to support students in leadership development (Grindrod, et al., 2014).

Second, the ability to recognize and identify the process of change is vital. It can be difficult to thrive during the agitation and anxiety that often accompanies a change in organizations. Objectivity and perspective is necessary to calm the storm. Kotter provides a coherent model of organizational change processes, which includes the concepts of creating emergencies, envisioning, guiding coalitions, and communicating. Once studied, this model provides students with a road map to avoid obstacles and to turn to best practices, such as a change during navigation (Shannon, Bradley-Baker, and Truong, 2012).

Third, new graduates need to understand the leader's role in the change process. Successful leaders employ strategies that can be identified and learned to guide an organization through change. The leader must "stay on the balcony" thinking politically and controlling the pressure. There must be enough pressure to motivate the organization to go forward but not so much that it creates chaos (Traynor, Boyle and Janke, 2013). Rubino, Esparza and Chassiakos (2013) highlight the strategies and tactics that are essential for change leaders. Pharmacy students should be convinced that change is not only for those in positions of authority. Pharmacists cannot wait until an appropriate practice for them is created by someone with power. Creating best practice is not just an administrative issue, the basis of leadership is necessary. Although the academic portion has made good progress in preparing new graduates to provide patient care, opportunities for students to develop skills to lead change must also be incorporated into the curriculum.

The Pharmacy in the hospital should have a strong leadership, a clear strategic vision and ensures the management and control of the processes necessary to give the patient the best possible therapeutics (Chisholm-Burns, 2012). Overall pharmacy professionals need to develop leadership skills with respect to three broader aspects:

1.1.1 Strategic Leadership

The leading hospital pharmacist ensures that the Pharmacy Service as an organization maintains a clear vision about pharmaceutical benefits and the use of medicines and medical products throughout the healthcare facility and related systems (Janke, Traynor, and Boyle, 2013). The hospital pharmacist must have technical and administrative knowledge for the definition and implementation of strategic plans according to policies established for the Pharmacy Service and aligned with those of the organization that contains it. The hospital pharmacist must develop skills and attitude to lead, teamwork, make decisions, delegate, communicate, motivate, learn and teach, focused on improving and innovating pharmaceutical benefits that involve the best possible therapy for the patient (Kheir and Fahey, 2011).

1.1.2 Operational Leadership

The leading hospital pharmacist ensures that the Pharmacy Service performs its patient benefits in line with operational plans and resources available at the health facility and related systems. The hospital pharmacist must have knowledge that applies to process management within the framework of integrated systems. The hospital pharmacist must develop skills and have an attitude to operate patient-focused professional action plans according to available guidelines and resources (Elvey, et al., 2013).

1.1.3 Clinical Leadership

The leading hospital pharmacist ensures that the Pharmacy Service performs its services to the patient by intervening in the phases of the chain of use of medicines and medical products that apply to their professional responsibility. The hospital pharmacist must have up-to-date and transformative knowledge of the processes intended to ensure the effective and safe use of medicines and medical products in patients assisted in the care setting and related systems. The hospital pharmacist must develop skills and attitude to lead, advise, support and educate health team members and patients on the safe and effective use of medicines and medical products (Group, 2011).

1.2 Research Aim and Objectives

To investigate how pharmacy professionals perceive the value of leadership training programmes and their impact.

1.2.1 Research Objectives:

The research will be conducted through compiling quantitative and qualitative feedback from trainees who attend the leadership training programme.

- A literature review will first be conducted to gather evidence from current research in this field and provide a scope on what leadership training provision is currently available for pharmacy professionals and whether this has been evaluated and it's perceived values.

- The literature review will be used to establish the most appropriate method to use for this research proposal through building on what has worked in the past. The method will include both quantitative and qualitative results in the form of surveys and interviews

- The results will be presented in table format and key points from trainees will be highlighted in an easy to follow format.

- A discussion will follow that analyses the results to draw the important learning points gathered from the research and to identify whether the training has had an impact on trainees perceptions

- Finally a summary and recommendations will be made based on the findings and how we hope to move this work forward in the future, if any limitations occurred during the research these will be highlighted.

1.3 Research Approach

Since the underlying epistemological assumption for this study is constructionist, because of the fact that pharmacy professionals are likely to provide various perspectives about the impact of leadership on their professional career. Thus the approach of this study is decided to be mixed approach in which both quantitative and qualitative data is collected for research data collection purposes. The main hypothesis of this study is based on the belief that leadership training programmes can add significant value to the overall career of the pharmacy professionals. Thus it is important that this study answer this research hypothesis by evaluating the perceptions of pharmacists regarding the importance and value of a leadership programme in their professional life.

There are a number of studies that have adopted a variety of research approaches to evaluate the impact of leadership on pharmacy career. For instance the study of Eich (2008) is based on grounded theory, which is a commonly used research design in construction of theoretical models. The aim of this study is to assess the impact of leadership programmes towards learning and development of students. Thus current study also uses elements of Eich (2008)'s methodology to integrate qualitative evidence while constructing research questions and gathering data using interviews as qualitative data collection. Recently, Chesnut and Tran-Johnson (2013) also conducted a quantitative study design to analyse the impact of students leadership development and used a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire to understand the usefulness of leadership programme as a curricular components for students.

Therefore the research approach of this study is based on mixed design, as other researchers have used both qualitative and quantitative designs. Another advantage of mixed design is that it requires the researcher to triangulate qualitative and quantitative evidence which increases the reliability and validity of results and conclusions drawn in the study.

1.4 Rationale for the study and the contribution to the field

In the document The General Pharmaceutical Council: Future pharmacists Standards, the need for students to develop skills and abilities to anticipate and lead change is highlighted, particularly as a component of initial education and training of pharmacists (GPhc May 2011). Currently, in pharmacy schools of the UK pharmacy schools, developing leadership skills does not get adequate attention. Some institutions have introducd leadership training programmes but only as elective modules during initial training and education, while other institutions only deliver special lectures that try to address broad clinical perspective. Generally students are left to develop leadership skills on their own after completing the

education, typically through continuing professional development. There are also some organisations for example big pharmacy chains that provide training as a component of career development programmes.

However, all these efforts are not sufficient and do not provide a clear pathway for pharmacy students to develop leadership skills. A pharmacy training organisation called ProPharmace Ltd designs and provides special and innovative training programmes for pharmacy professionals and one of the programmes include leadership training, specially for newly qualified pharmacy professionals. The underlying purpose is the belief that these programmes have significant impact on the professional career of pharmacy graduates. The programmes introduces leadership theories and fulfils the educational and developmental need of undergraduate pharmacy students.

There is a need to provide leadership education to pharmacy student at earlier stage in the pharmacy education period with a structured approach to develop a sound foundation in students that they can use in developing leadership skills in their future professional careers. There is a number of academic that have made similar suggestions, particularly in the fields of pharmacy education and profession, for example (Janke et al. 2016; Maddalena 2016; Mort JR 2014; Chesnut and Tran-Johnson 2013; GPhc May 2011; Sorensen, Traynor and Janke 2009; Kerr et al. 2009;).

1.4.1 Research Questions

1. Do pharmacy trainees show interest in leadership training and understand the importance of developing leadership skills?
2. Do pharmacy trainees, as a result of completing the training programme feel equipped and ready to manage and lead pharmacy teams?
3. Do pharmacy trainees as a result of attending the leadership programme feel more able to adapt to the changing face of pharmacy and the current turbulent climate changes to pharmacists roles?
4. Does the feedback from delegates who join the training programmes show that training has made a different to their practice as pharmacy professionals and an enhanced skillset?

1.5 Dissertation Outline

First chapter in this study introduces main topic and then continues to narrow it down to research problems. This chapter also presents research aim, questions, and objectives. The chapter also emphasises on rationale of the study and how it contributes in the field of

nursing. The second chapter presents review of existing literature and summarises the work contributed by other researchers in the same topic. The study then continues to chapter three that presents detailed discussion of all methodological decisions undertaken during the study which includes research philosophy, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, sampling, and ethical considerations among others. Chapter four of the study presents the results of primary research and data collected during the study. This chapter also presents a discussion of results within broader literature and how secondary and primary research results have achieved the aims and objectives of the study. Finally chapter five presents major conclusions drawn in the study and highlights limitations and future research implications.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is specifically prepared for an academic research. For the purpose of this research, the researcher has to investigate how pharmacy professionals perceive the value of leadership training programmes. Kindly give your responses by (✓) an appropriate option for each of following question:

Name _____

Contact   Number   _____   Email   id:

_____

Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐

Age: 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐   41-50 ☐   51 and above ☐

Organization: _____

Level of Education
- ☐ Bachelor Student
- ☐ Master Student
- ☐ Doctoral Student
- ☐ Post-Doctoral Training

Your occupational experience:
- ☐ Below 1 year
- ☐ 1 year – 3 years
- ☐ 3 – 8 years
- ☐ 9-12 years
- ☐ 12 years and above

Please rate your responses by ✓ the value that you think is more appropriate:

Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Neutral*	*Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*
0	1	2	3	4

Perceptions of pharmacy professionals	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Student Leadership Development					
Student leadership development is the main dimension of leadership training program in pharmacy.					
It is responsibility of pharmacy institutes to provide valuable experiences to its students in order to successfully integrate leadership development program.					
Continuous Professional Development					
Pharmacists are aware of the benefits of continuous professional development					
CPD helps pharmacist in developing new competencies which are related to leadership.					
Higher management support and access to the resources that facilitate the learning needs builds confidence and empower the pharmacy professionals, in the process of CPD					

Facilitating Self-awareness					
Pharmacy leaders are willing to apply all their existing and new knowledge, abilities, talents and skills for addressing latent health care needs of patients.					
The experience based learning tactics enable the young pharmacists to become self-aware of their potential strengths and weaknesses					
Intentional and Visible Institutional Commitment					
Pharmacy institutions should have commitment to practice leadership skills for the students					
Faculty members and administrators can equally contribute and flourish the environment in pharmacy schools to foster leadership					
Raising Profile of Pharmacists					
The pharmacy leaders have been expressing their commitment towards the best pharmaceutical practices					
Future pharmacists with the vision of leadership and persistent commitment can lead change in the pharmaceutical industry					
Value of leadership training programs					
Leadership training programs are important for establishing leadership skills in pharmacist.					
It helps in providing personal reflection to the pharmacists.					
Pharmacy residents provide the incorporation of the leadership training program for helping the students and young professionals for meeting the needs to leadership in the profession.					
Leadership training programs provide value to the development of leadership mechanisms in the pharmacy students.					

Thank You ☺

Interview Questions

Q1. In your opinion, what is the significance of leadership programs for the pharmacists?

Q2. To what extent, pharmacy trainees show interest in leadership training and understand the importance of developing leadership skills?

Q3. Which leadership positions in a pharmacy organization you find effective for the student's learning?

Q4. Do you think that the leading pharmacists are considered to be the influencers stewarding medication to the patients?

Q5. What are your perception regarding Leadership Training Programmes in terms of continuous professional development and enhancing the pharmacist profiles?

Q6. Please suggest some recommendations regarding leadership for the pharmacists.