

PROS AND CONS OF JOINING PHARMACY ACCREDITATION PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

The Pharmacy accreditation project was designed with good intention for both community pharmacies and general consumers. The major aims were to advocate and ensure the quality of pharmacy services and enhance the standard practices of pharmacy as retailers. However, the project has not been very successful. The objectives of this research were to investigate the attitudes of pharmacists toward the accreditation project and to seek for the pros and cons of pharmacy accreditation project. The qualitative and quantitative methodology were utilized with three groups of participants or triangular technique: pharmacists who joined the accreditation projects and pharmacists who did not join the accreditation projects, and the academic in the university who studied these kinds of problems. The findings revealed that there were five pros and five cons of pharmacy accreditation projects.

Keywords: Pros and Cons, Pharmacy, Accreditation Project

INTRODUCTION

Pharmacy accreditation project is an important organization originally promoted with the good intention of the public sector to ensure the high standard of quality and has a positive relation with business units, but the outcome of this project is obscured which indicated by the many different moods of many pharmacy retailers all over the nation. The description of pharmacy accreditation projects as studies in many pharmaceutical literatures indicated both a variety of advantages and disadvantages or pros and cons [1]. The original aims of the pharmacy accreditation project included many collections of practices that help in enhancing the service and quality of employees in the industry, increasing their efforts which thereby results in improving the final service to customers [2]. However, there are no clear ideas in relation to the issue of why the project is not very successful and lack of full participation from general members in the industry despite the fact that it has been assured by the government sector that varied good and long-lasting impacts are created by pharmacy accreditation project. For instance, as per some of the rules of practices, it surely creates enhancement on motivation level of employees in pharmacies to improve their knowledge and skills as well as some basic rules and regulations related to health and science in Thailand. However, from many studies, there is no definite point on which researchers can show how the summary of advantages and disadvantages of pharmacy accreditation and its establishment gain the popularity of the pharmacies in Thailand.

It is acceptable norm that local pharmacy is important and necessary and resonate with the modern Thai society. Even though there are many problems with many local pharmacies such as lack of qualified pharmacists, improper license, out of date medicines, the local pharmacy is still important and necessary for the health of local communities [3]. The problems with local pharmacies in many areas lead to the idea of accreditation pharmacies to enhance both quality and services by the office of committee of food and drugs, Ministry of Public Health of Thailand. The aims of the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand are to reach about 500 drug stores to join the accreditation project. However, the sad fact is that it can reach only 136 drug stores or local pharmacies [1]. The fact remains true that it is a good intention project, but it is not very popular among the local pharmacies in Thailand at all [4]. What are the main reasons for this unsuccessful endeavor? Therefore, it is important for researchers to seek the real reasons of this unsuccessful endeavor and how to provide useful suggestions and recommendations to improve the situation and to promote knowledge and insight information about unbiased pros and cons of joining the pharmacy accreditation [5]. Unbiased information and analysis are the key words, and it is very important to be able to prove [6]. Therefore, it is vital to select the method of triangulation in choosing the sample groups of this research. Three groups of triangulations must include the supporters of pharmacy accreditation and the against of pharmacy accreditation, and the middle group who could provide unbiased opinions which are academia.

OBJECTIVES

1. The first objective of this research was to investigate the attitudes of pharmacists toward the accreditation project.
2. The second objective of this research was to seek the pros and cons of the pharmacy accreditation project.

METHODOLOGY

From many previous and prevalent studies, it is still not clear there are sufficient information and unbiased analysis to provide the for Ministry of Public Health of Thailand and other important committee to make a proper decision and to continue the project or to discontinue the project. The objective of this study clearly is to find pros and cons or advantages and disadvantages to joining pharmacy accreditation from the opinions of both sides and academics. In fact, the results of early research show that it was inconclusive that both sides show their differences in terms of pros and cons of joining the accreditation. For this reason, this study has focused on the opinions on three important groups: first is the group that agree and support the pharmacy accreditation from the beginning of the project, second is the group that opposes and disagrees with the idea of pharmacy accreditation from the beginning of the project, third is the academic who studies this issue and has unbiased position in the middle of the issue from the beginning of the project. Both qualitative and quantitative method were used to determine the finding which may result in positive relation as expected before the conduction of the analysis [7]. Around 300 questionnaires with five points Likert scales were distributed to the three target groups and after two months only 38 percent were received with full and

correct marking. In other words, only 38 percent was the valid response that can be used with limited cautious in generalization with the findings. The qualitative method was used to determine the pros and cons. At the beginning, the researcher made a collection of the list from many previous studies to gain understanding and the bias from each group that supports and against the issue of pharmacy accreditation project [8]. The list then brings the participants of all three groups to be in the deep discussion and debate in the healthy way and try to have a minimum bias from the system of discussion. The focus group was interviewed and discussed. They provided about 10 list of the pros and 10 list of the cons for joining the pharmacy accreditation. However, after the second interview and discussion, the list has been shorted to five reasons for pros and five reasons for cons. Then, the use of quantitative comes to the rescue of format and gain the results of findings. The second method helps to determine the level of importance of each list of pros and cons. By using the simple of means and standard deviations, the author is able to rank the importance for these pros and cons of the list. This method helps to gain the insight that the weight of each element is in the overall list.

RESULTS

The results of the study can be summarized into two tables which are table 1 which focuses on five pros of joining the pharmacy accreditation and table 2 which focuses on the five cons of joining the pharmacy accreditation. Both of the tables are ranked by the use of means and standard deviation to express the level of importance. The Likert five scales were used to collect the information about the opinions from the participants whose opinions must be expressed objectively as much as possible.

Table 1
Five Advantages of Joining Pharmacy Accreditation

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. Gain the high standard of quality service to be able to offer to customers	4.16	.9740	1
2. Focus on the clear roles and responsibility of local pharmacy to the local community	4.07	.8845	2
3. Achieve quality status and become the trusted role model of the local retailers	3.73	.9185	3
4. Belief that the criteria are achievable and have long-term benefits	3.21	.7979	4
5. Gain the confidence from the general public from the heavily support and promoted of government	3.19	.9107	5
All categories	3.67	.8971	

From table 1, There are five advantages of joining the pharmacy accreditation. The first advantage is about “Gain the high standard of quality to be able to offer to customers” which is ranked as number one on the list. This advantage was assessed by the mean of 4.16 and standard deviation of 0.9740. The second advantage is about “Make it clear that roles and

responsibility of local pharmacy to local community” which is ranked as number two on the list. This advantage was assessed by the mean of 4.07 and standard deviation of 0.8845. The third advantage is about “Achieve the quality status and become trusted role model of local retailers” which is ranked as number three on the list. This advantage was assessed by the mean of 3.73 and standard deviation of 0.9185. The fourth advantage is about “Belief that the criteria are achievable and have long-term benefits” which is ranked as number four on the list. This advantage was assessed by the mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.7979. Finally, the fifth advantage is about “Gain the confidence from general public from heavily supported and promoted of government” which is ranked as number five on the list. This advantage was assessed by the mean of 3.67 and standard deviation of 0.8971. However, the overall advantages from table 1 is measured by the mean of 3.67 with the standard deviation of 0.8971.

Table 2
Five Disadvantages of Joining Pharmacy Accreditation

<i>Disadvantages</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. The project is a hype and from past experience, it is not sustainable.	4.46	.9940	1
2. It is a big burden of responsibility and might increase the costs of operations	4.41	.7985	2
3. Achieve the quality criteria is hard and does not worth it.	4.33	.9685	3
4. Belief that joining the project means they will be constantly being monitored	4.20	.7299	4
5. The offers from the government support and promotion are not attractive	4.19	.9417	5
All categories	4.31	.8865	

From table 2, There are five disadvantages of joining the pharmacy accreditation. The first disadvantage is about “The project is a hype and from past experience, it is not sustainable” which is ranked as number one on the list. This disadvantage was assessed by the mean of 4.46 and standard deviation of 0.9940. The second disadvantage is about “It is a big burden of responsibility and might increase the cost of operation” which is ranked as number two on the list. This disadvantage was assessed by the mean of 4.41 and standard deviation of 0.7985. The third disadvantage is about “Achieve the quality criteria is hard and does not worth it” which is ranked as number third on the list. This disadvantage was assessed by the mean of 4.33 and standard deviation of 0.9685. The fourth disadvantage is about “Belief that joining the project means they will be constantly being monitored” which is ranked as number four on the list. This disadvantage was assessed by the mean of 4.20 and standard deviation of 0.7299. Finally, the last disadvantage is about “The offers and support from the government are not attractive” which is ranked as number five on the list. This disadvantage was assessed by the mean of 4.19 and standard deviation of 0.9417. Therefore, the overall disadvantage from table 2 is measured by the mean of 4.31 with the overall standard deviation of 0.8865.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

It is not easy to make a conclusion since indicate that both sides still believe that there is sufficient reasoning to support their own beliefs. However, each pro and con can be argued by the other side. It is hard to settle since it is not just the reason and logic to be evaluated but there are strong emotions and prior belief. For example, criteria, certainly, are important but the detail of criteria is still debatable. Moreover, the criteria is useful for setting up the standard of quality but it still can be used to monitor each pharmacy in the long run. The reason came from the negative and unable to trust the image of bureaucratic government which may have happened a long time ago before this project [9].

Therefore, it is important for the government to reevaluate the communication process to persuade pharmacies to join the project. Empathy, putting yourself into other situations, is the key to success. By trying to understand the other side's point of view and trying to solve their problem until they can see the advantages of the other side. For example, the fee for checking criteria is 3,000 baht which seems to be too much for nothing for the opposition. However, for the government side it seems to be important and necessary. It is the old belief in Thailand that anything from the government should be free, no costs. It is very hard to make both sides agree with simple issues. Therefore, there is a need for the arbitrage to mediate both sides and find the point that both sides can agree [10].

From the panel of discussion, it is clear that only the reasons or using the advantages or disadvantages model to convince the pharmacist to join this important project may not be sufficient to persuade them, but to use more of the psychological and marketing management to offer to sense of appeal and convince them to change their mind and change their behavior. The good example model is necessary to convince them. For example, set up one high quality pharmacy store that gains more customers support as well as profit flow due to the increasing of standard of quality by joining the pharmacy accredited organization.

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