

Leadership Development and Practical Application: A Comparison of Pharmacy Students and Pharmacists

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Introduction

To be effective, pharmacists must possess leadership attributes. Even if they are not in managerial roles, pharmacists are still leaders of the pharmacy. This research aims to reveal the ways current pharmacists developed their leadership skills. This was done by gathering thoughts and opinions from practicing pharmacists. That data was compared with the ideas from pharmacy students to see the similarities and discrepancies between the two age groups with varying levels of experience. This enabled the data to depict the ways pharmacists obtained their leadership skills, and how pharmacy students should act according to the findings.

Another area of interest added to the research was about the likelihood of a leadership position being obtained by pharmacists within one year of graduation. This pertains to how likely new pharmacists are to land a managerial role. Again, opinions were gathered from both practicing pharmacists and pharmacy students to compare the thoughts of each group. This established the magnitude for students to try and obtain leadership skills while still in school.

Methods

Two distinct surveys were created, one for pharmacy students and another for pharmacists, that were approved by The University of Findlay IRB. Surveys were designed in Google Forms and were delivered to potential participants via email or in person with paper copies. Participants with paper copies were given one week to fill out the survey before it was collected in person.

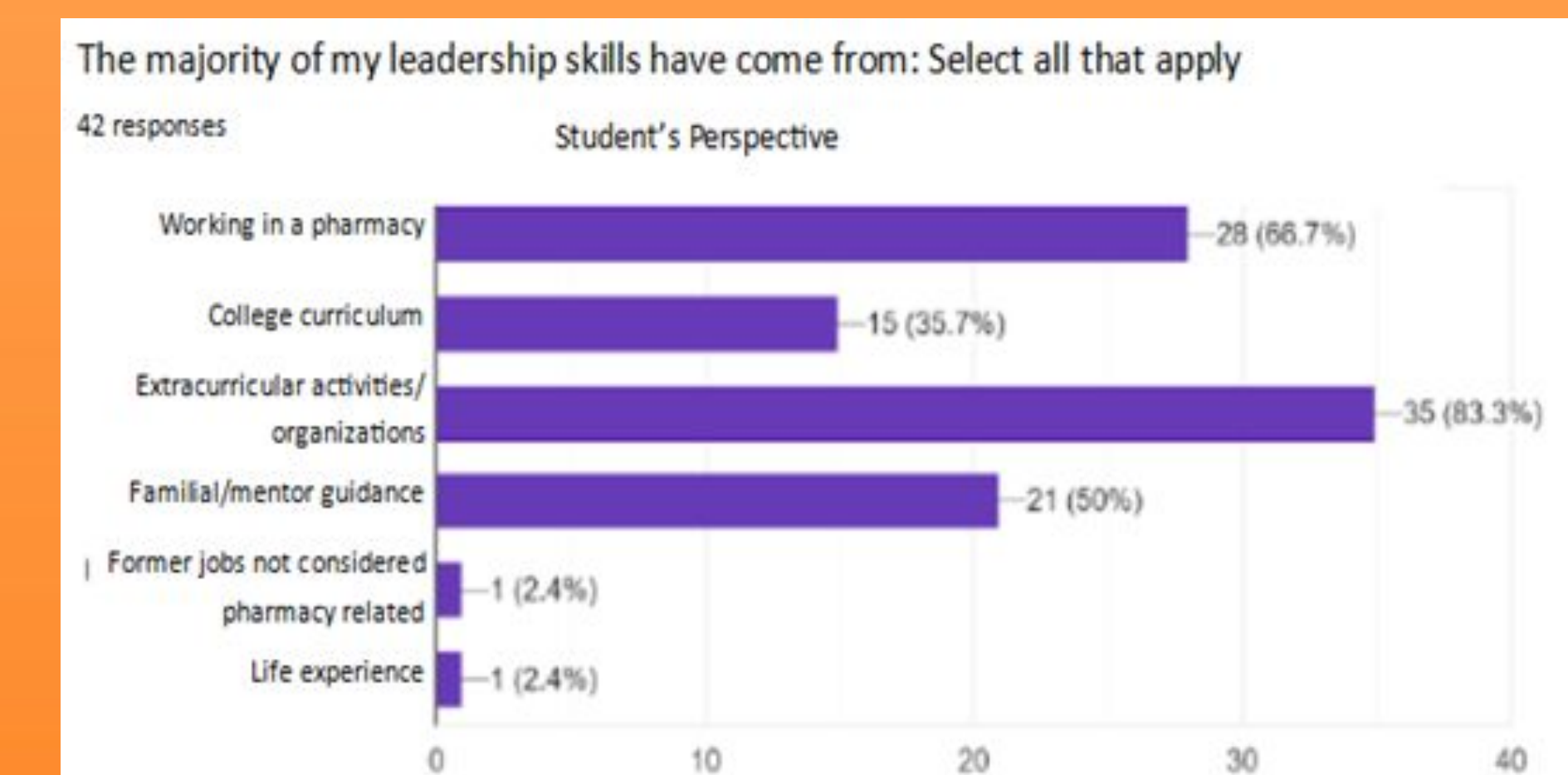
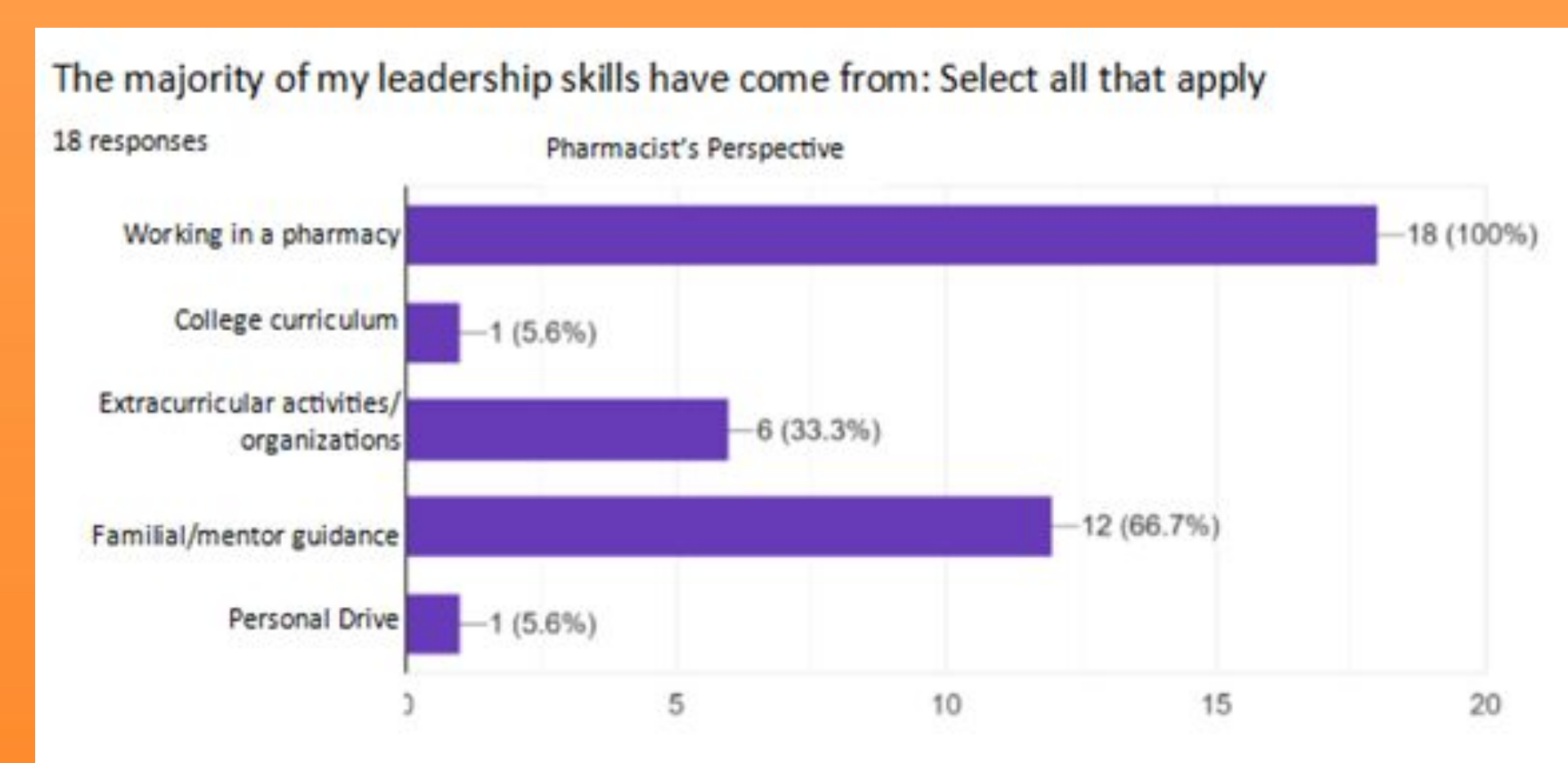
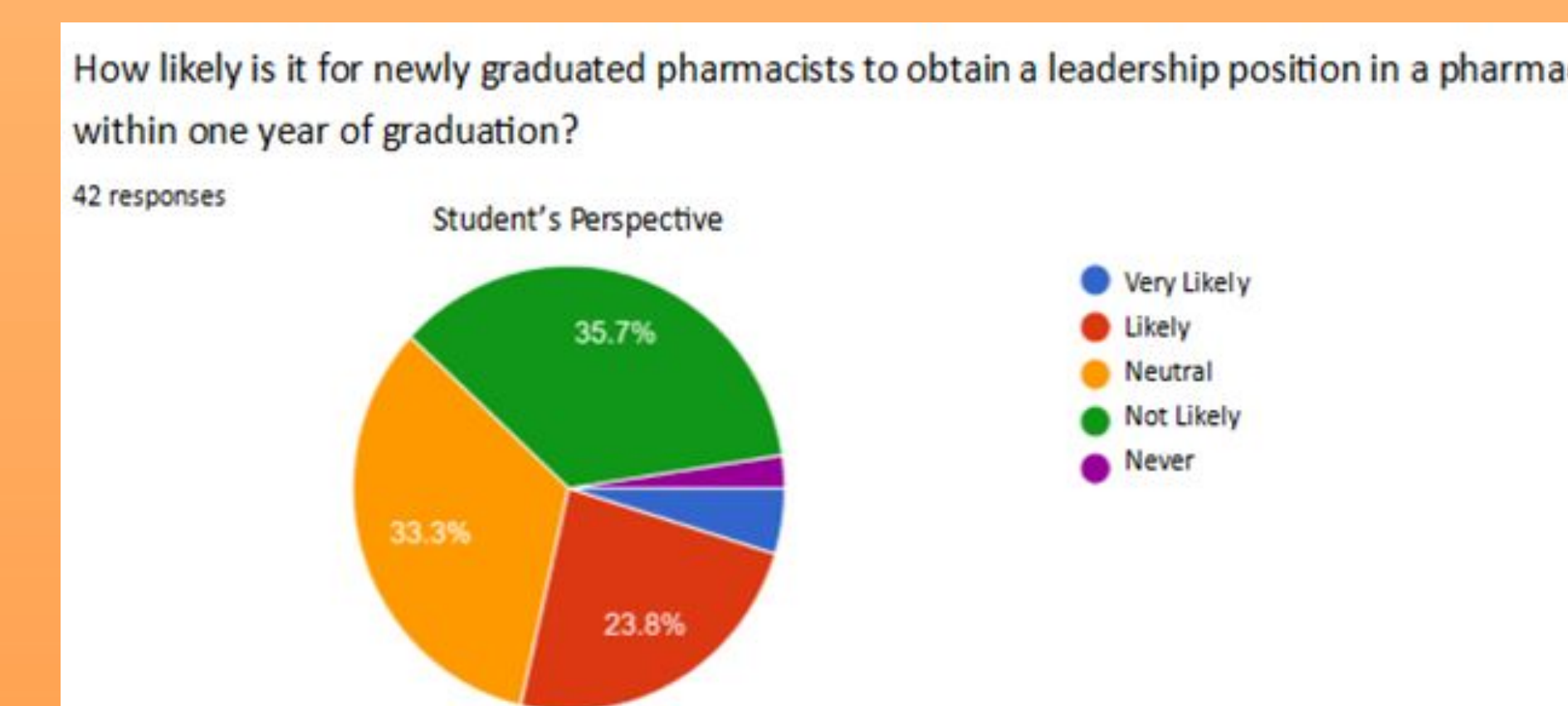
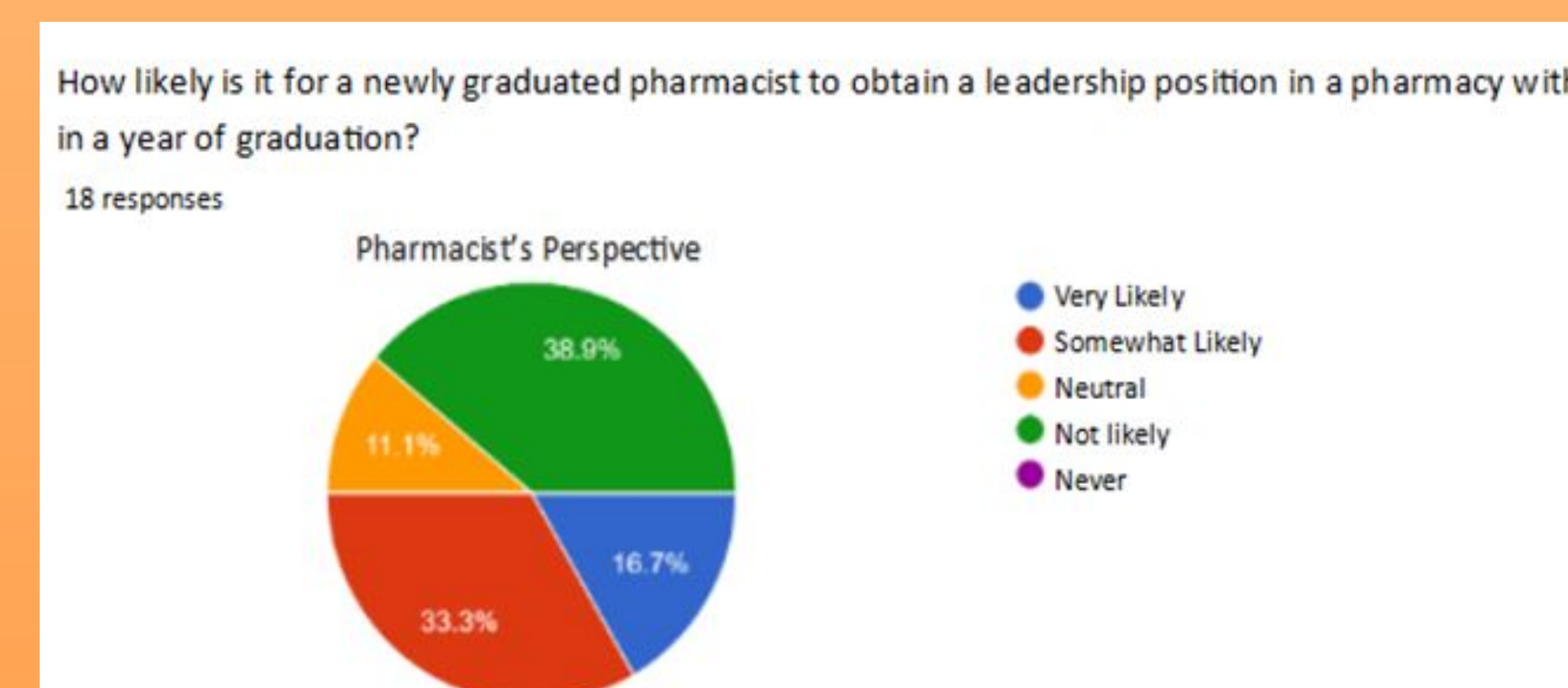
The questions on both surveys were presented as either multiple choice questions or Likert scale questions. For some questions, participants had an option to write in their own answer. This was an option on the questions where more than one answer could be selected.

Participant inclusion criteria consisted of pharmacy students in an accredited college of pharmacy program and pharmacists in any stage of their career. The student population that was surveyed was the current pharmacy students at The University of Findlay, while the pharmacist population consisted of both professors of The University of Findlay and registered pharmacists in the community setting of Findlay, Ohio. There were at least nine community pharmacies used in this research from at least six different companies in Findlay.

Results

When asked how likely it is for a new pharmacy graduate to obtain a leadership position within a community pharmacy setting, 50% of pharmacists and 28.6% of students said it is somewhat likely or very likely. Pharmacists most commonly cited working in a pharmacy (100%) as the source of their leadership development, while only 66.7% of students said that working in a pharmacy gave them their leadership traits.

Survey Responses from Active Pharmacy Student's by Year				
P1: 6 people	P2: 5 people	P3: 6 people	P4: 6 People	P5: 19 people
Survey Responses from Active Pharmacists by Experience				
0-5 years: 2 people	6-10 years: 3 people	11-15 years: 3 people	16-20 years: 4 people	Over 20 years: 6 people



Conclusion

One major difference between pharmacists and pharmacy students is how likely they believe that newly graduated pharmacists are to obtain a leadership position. Pharmacists believe that new pharmacists are likely to obtain leadership positions. Students tend to think that there are not many leadership jobs available for new pharmacists. This difference could be due to the hiring and promotion that companies are doing that pharmacists see, but students do not. It could also be due to the change pharmacists have seen in the education system. Pharmacists can see how a fluid college curriculum can affect students, and maybe the evolving curriculum is producing better leaders right out of college. This could be another reason for the difference between pharmacists and students in this area.

There is also a disconnect between practicing pharmacists and pharmacy students about where leadership traits are developed. While pharmacists mainly got leadership experience from working in a pharmacy, students developed their leadership mainly from experiences in extracurricular activities, but partially from working in a pharmacy and college curriculum. This difference in leadership development could be due to multiple factors, including changing in college curriculum and emphasis on extracurricular involvement, or from students having limited experience working in a pharmacy. With more time spent in a pharmacy and holding leadership positions within their place of employment, pharmacy students would gain leadership skills that current practicing pharmacists already have. These changes could be positive because students would be able to build on the leadership skills they learned in the college curriculum and extracurricular activities by supplementing them with skills and traits they learn from working in a pharmacy as an intern and eventually a pharmacist. College curriculum can never be replaced with only work experience, but when used as a supplemental tool for the curriculum, working in a pharmacy could progress students to be better leaders and more prepared pharmacists.

References

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