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Theoretical and Methodological Approaches for Studying the Loyalty of Pharmacy Specialists towards Chemist's Shops, As a Part of Corporate Culture

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Abstract

The authors investigated the theoretical and methodological approaches to the systematic analysis of loyalty of the experts who works at the domestic chemist's shops, as one of the important elements of effective management of corporate culture within adaptive personnel management. The terminological definition of "loyalty of pharmacy specialist" is improved, the main features of loyalty of pharmacy specialists and the attributes of their behaviour and loyalty components are outlined, followed by the implementation of the work in practice. PS loyalty elements are presented as pragmatic, normative and emotional components. The methodological basis for the study of pharmacy specialist's loyalty was the special scientific literature, the fundamental publication of labour organization, the scientific reviews and the monographic publications of domestic and foreign HR scientists, Internet resources, the results of research and personal observations. Research results improve theoretical and practical knowledge of the domestic system of management of corporate culture in the context of adaptive management of chemist's shops' personnel.

Keywords: personnel loyalty, pharmacy specialist, chemist's shops, adaptive management, corporate culture

1. Introduction

According to current views on the paradigm of Personnel Management, a powerful source of competitive advantage, a key resource for improving the stability of chemist's shop (CS) is not only the professional competence of each pharmacy specialist (PS) and the leadership of their directors, but also the ability of all staff to work as a team. Today, the corporate culture, as a tool for adaptive personnel management, allows storing and transferring the knowledge and experience to the CS personnel, generating the collective values and defining its norms of interaction with the environment and affecting its commitment to CS. As a result of an active development in the long term, as well as the today's changing environment and the transition period of the national legislation harmonizing with European norms and standards, CSs should not only monitor, but also take care of increasing the loyalty of their staff as one of the reasons for forming their professional motivation, which is reflected in all aspects of their activities, expectations, features of their professional (organizational) behaviour. Considering that those PS committed to CS are capable of finding creative solutions to problems that arise, they adapt quickly to conditions caused by any temporary difficulties, which are necessary to the organizational changes and more. They value their workplace in this CS. Therefore, in order to maximize the results of their work, not only they tend to fulfil their responsibilities at the best, but often put their efforts to urge their colleagues to do the same. Only loyal PS are willing to take responsibility by using personal resources and reserves on their own initiative in order to engage in self-education, seek the advice of experts. In addition, loyalty is an essential condition for the corporate security of CS, which affects the reliability of staff greatly, including the preservation of trade secrets^[16].

That is why the purpose of the research was the systematic study of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of PS loyalty towards CS as one of the important elements of effective management of corporate culture, with the further development of the theory, methodology and application of scientific and methodological principles of adaptive personnel management of CS and implementation of the results of this work in practice.

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2. Materials and methods of research

The methodical basis for the study of approaches of PS loyalty towards CS, as part of the corporate culture within the adaptive personnel management, has consisted of the special scientific literature, the fundamental publication of labour organization, the scientific reviews and the monographic publications of domestic and foreign HR scientists, Internet resources, the results of research and personal observations.

To achieve this goal the research used a range of modern methods: desk (traditional) analysis and content analysis, questionnaires and interviews, brainstorming sessions in the group of experts. Analysis and processing of data, determining the number of objects of research, analysis and representativeness of the data and the significance of research results carried out through mathematical-statistical methods using computer software (STATISTICA, V.6; Microsoft Office Excel 2003).

3. Results and its discussion

The study was carried out in two phases: theoretical - methodological and practical, the results of which are designed to confirm the hypothesis.

At the first phase of theoretical-methodological research through the methods of the desk (traditional) analysis and content analysis based on information sources for unambiguous interpretation and avoiding the semantic errors during the opinion polls, the content of the concept of "loyalty" is stated. Thus, for the determination of such personnel behaviour, different authors use a wide range of terms: loyalty, dedication, commitment, patriotism [1, 4, 14]. Today there is still no common approach to the definition. Therefore, on the basis of dictionary definitions we identified the following aspects of the meaning of the term:

- a correct friendly attitude to someone, something [7];
- allegiance to the applicable laws, government regulations (sometimes only formal) [7];
- honesty, integrity [17];
- Allegiance, loyalty, commitment [18].

Also the word combination "customer loyalty" is found. "The high level of client commitment to a particular pharmaceutical company, product or service that is formed by synthesis of feelings, emotions, thoughts associated with consumer's low sensitivity towards competing products, based on trust,

mutually beneficial cooperation and building long-term client relationship with the shop [21]."

Preferably the personnel loyalty may mean the staff's loyalty to their shop, which, from our perspective, involves not only the PS principle "do no harm", but also actions for the good of CS. In English literature two terms are used: «organizational commitme» and «employee loyalty». There are no significant differences in the application of these concepts, and often they are used as synonyms or as such. In the scientific literature there is a more common term - the organizational commitment; and in the popular literature - the loyalty of employees [1, 4].

However, in our opinion, the following concepts, matched with the reality, were defined by the authors: commitment (G. Dessler), loyalty, trustworthiness (T. Solomanidina) and others [9]. One of the experts who is engaged in the study of organizational behaviour, S.P. Robbinz to indicate the highest degree of loyal conduct of the staff uses another concept - organizational citizenship. That is - the behaviour that is caused mainly by "employee's good will" and not linked to the formal requirements that are fixed in the regulations (statutes, job descriptions, etc.), but at the same time, and most importantly, it promotes "the effective functioning of the organization". Thus, for the further studies only such interpretations of "PS loyalty" were selected, implying that loyalty, dedication, commitment, transliteration «commitment» (obligation) of which it is a synonymous of other English terms "commitment" and "loyalty" [21].

At the second phase of the research the hypothesis made at the theoretical and methodological research of PS loyalty was confirmed. The above-mentioned method has been tested in the professional poll by 1,940 PS from different regions of Ukraine, which became the object of study. In particular, the research has been conducted in Kharkiv - 39.17%, Poltava - 23.20%, Vinnytsia - 6.21%, Chernihiv - 5.27%, Luhansk - 3.79%, Kiev - 2.49%, Sumy - 2, 49%, Odessa - 2.19%, Donetsk - 2.19%, Kirovohrad - 2.01%, Volyn - 1.78%, Chernovtsy - 1.72%, Rivne - 1.60%, Zhytomyr - 1 42%, Dnipropetrovsk - 0.95%, Crimea - 0.89%, Cherkasy - 0.77%, Transcarpathian - 0.48%, Mykolaiv - 0.47%, Ternopil - 0.36%, Lviv - 0 36%, Zaporozhye - 0.36%, Ivano-Frankivsk - 0.18% areas.

Thus sociological survey covered almost all of Ukraine. However, for ease of operating the informational data, we have grouped the geographical location data of CS into regions (Figure 1).

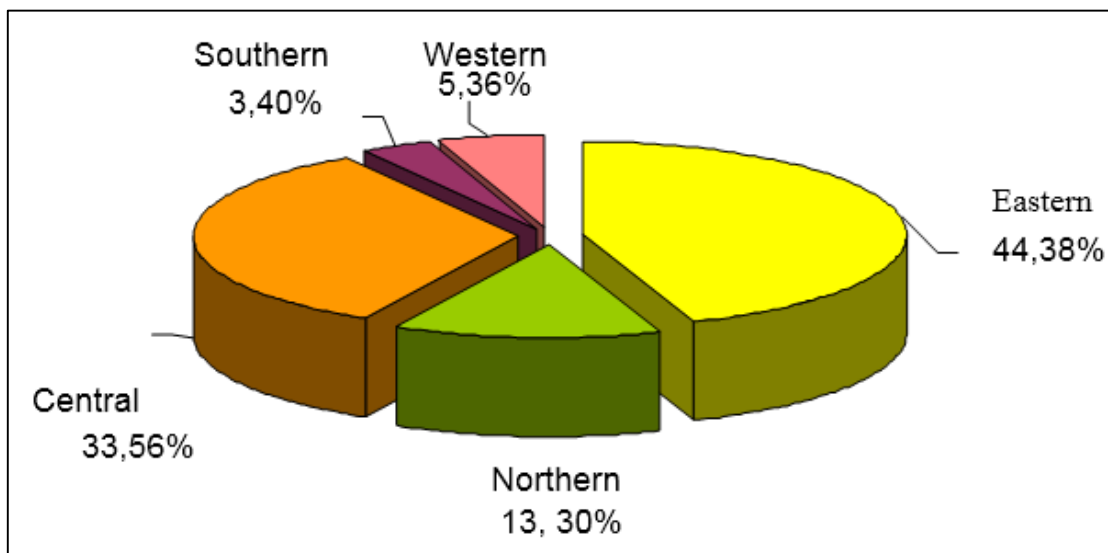


Fig 1: Distribution of respondents by geographic region

Fig. 1 shows that the largest number of PS, whose work was investigated, is from the eastern region (44.38%) and the lowest number represents the southern region (3.40%).

Different forms of CS ownership were subjected to the analysis, located in the regional centre - 70.41%, cities - 22.47%, towns and villages - 7.11% (Fig. 2).

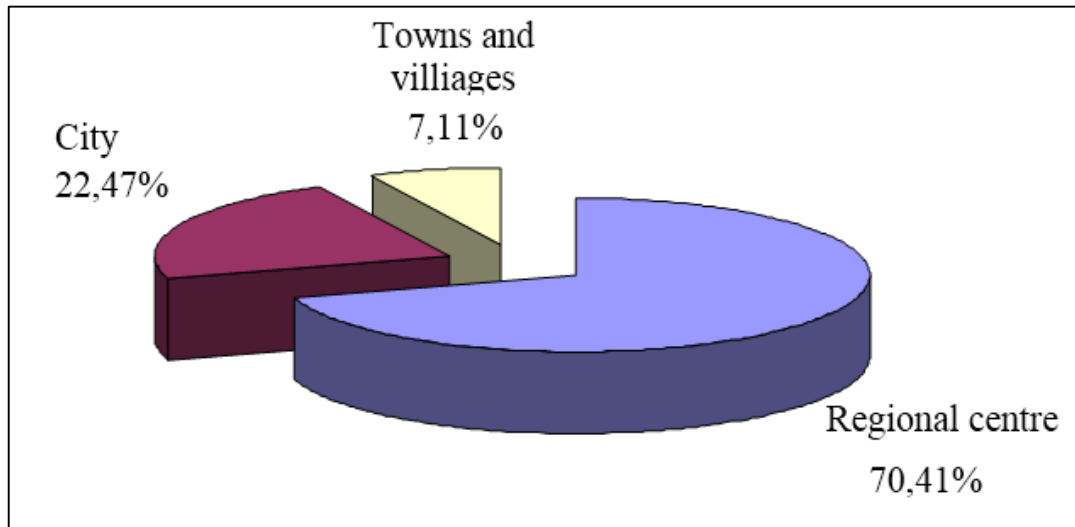


Fig 2: Distribution of respondents by CS location

The study involved PS holding the following positions: chief specialist of pharmacy network - 0.26%, director of CS - 0.36%, head of depot - 0.67%, head of CS - 15.31%, head of pharmacy branch - 2.22%, head of CS department - 1.65%, deputy director

of CS - 0.15%, deputy head of depot - 0.26%, deputy head of CS - 2.63%, deputy head of the pharmacy branch - 0.10%, deputy head of CS department - 0.31%, pharmaceutical sales representative - 67.88%, pharmacist - 8.2% (Table. 1).

Table 1: Description of Respondents by Management Level

Position	Specific weight,%	Group	Specific weight,%
Chief specialist	0,26	Leaders	20,46
Director of CS	0,36		
Head of depot	0,67		
Head of CS	15,31		
Head of pharmacy branch	2,22		
Head of CS department	1,65		
Deputy director of CS	0,15	Deputies	3,45
Deputy head of depot	0,26		
Deputy head of CS	2,63		
Deputy head of the pharmacy branch	0,10		
Deputy head of CS department	0,31	Pharmaceutical sales representative and pharmacist	76,08
Pharmaceutical sales representative	67,88		
Pharmacist	8,2		

At this stage of the research in order to determine the relationship between the position and the level of loyalty of all of the respondents, all the positions were divided into three groups (Table. 1).

- leaders, which include: chief specialist, director of CS, head of depot, head of CS, head of pharmacy branch, head of CS department;
- their deputies, which include deputy director of CS, deputy head of depot, deputy head of CS, deputy head of the pharmacy branch, deputy head of CS department,
- Pharmaceutical sales representative and pharmacist.

Thus, we obtained results according to the processed

information about PS, which showed that leaders take up 20.46% and deputies take up - 3.46% from the all respondents. But pharmaceutical sales representative and pharmacist made the largest group with 76.08%.

The research was conducted among the respondents who have a different experience in the specialty (Fig. 3). Thus, the majority of respondents was made up by young PSs who has worked less than 5 years - 62.22%. The next group consisted of PSs with experience less than 10 years and more than 25 years, 11.96% and 13.97% respectively. The lowest number of PS respondents was that made up by employees with experience in the range of 10 to 20 years - 11.86%.

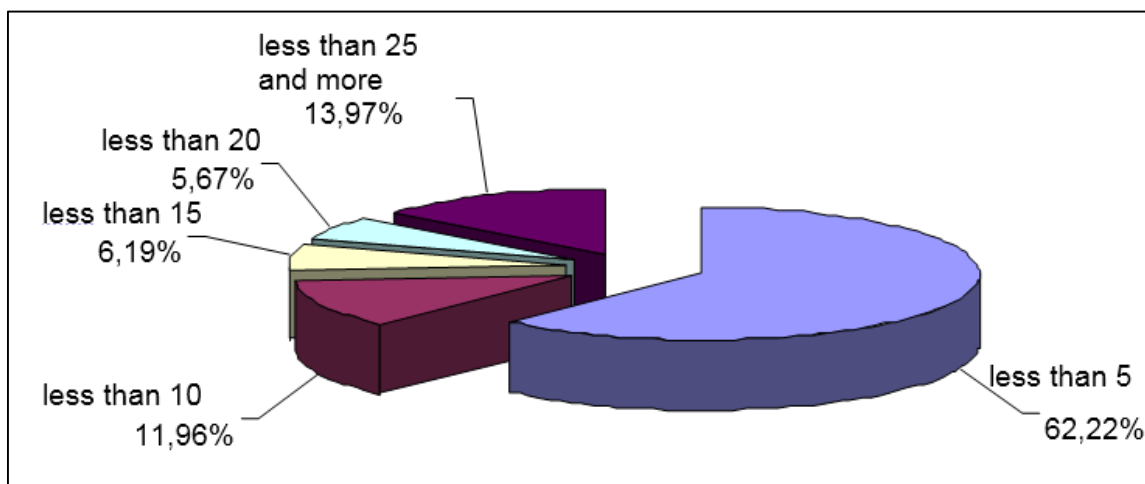


Fig. 3: Characteristics of pharmacy specialists according to their work experience

To confirm our theoretical and methodological hypothesis terminology regarding the definition of "PS loyalty" on the next stage by the methods of sociological research we obtained the representative data, which are confirmed by statistical methods of data processing. In order to obtain such results, the attributes of PS behaviours were identified and processed during the desk review, according to the results of brainstorming sessions in the group of experts. Examination and selection of ideas proposed by PS were conducted carefully, through evaluation of the various options. In order to intensify the process of generating ideas in the "brainstorming" the modern techniques were used:

inversion (finding the antonymous), analogy (finding of a similar meaning), empathy (the idea of being a part of the task, expressing of one's feelings), fantasy (finding of the incredible solution). The hypotheses were assessed according to the scale for each of the attributes from 1 to 10, followed by defining the selective arithmetic mean of the score according to all the experts and the median number of variations. Further by using the typological method of grouping those responses, similar in value and content, were combined and grouped in the following categories of loyal attributes towards CS of PS behavior (Table. 2).

Table 2: Categories of loyal attributes towards CS of PS behaviour

Loyal attributes of PS behavior	The significance, the average score	The median number of variations, points
Striving for the best work performance to achieve the main objective of the CS, avoiding destructive conflicts at the workplace	9,54	10
Adoption and division by the staff of the core CS values, the voluntary adherence to ethical standards of CS's corporate culture	8,75	9
Willingness of PS to prevent crisis and danger, the constant flow of proposals related to the improvement of the department or organization as a whole	7,55	8
Commitment to the organization, a sense of pride in CS, pride in belonging to it, its staff	8,38	8
Integrity towards CS	7,41	7
PS's care and putting their efforts to CS success	6,64	7
Willingness to self-sacrifice, commitment in favor of CS and hard work under any conditions	7,12	7
Loyalty to the store	6,28	6
The open demonstration of belonging to CS or department, a structural unit	4,78	5

Thus, as it can be seen from the table of loyal attributes towards CS of PS behavior, the highest score – 10 points were given by the experts to the “Striving for the best work performance to achieve the main objective of the CS, avoiding destructive conflicts at the workplace” and the lowest score was given to the “The open demonstration of belonging to CS or department,

a structural unit”. At the same time the attributes of the personnel behavior were defined, the presence of which may indicate a lack of PS loyalty. In the case of not taking them into account and timely correcting them, may have negative consequences for CS. The following groups were formed (Table. 3).

Table 3: Categories of unloyal attributes towards CS of PS behaviour

Loyal attributes of PS behavior	The Significance, The Average Score	The Median Number Of Variations, Points
False Relation To CS	9,81	10
Ridicule, abuse of values and beliefs that are important for CS	9,12	9
The benefit of personal interests before the interests of CS	8,48	8
The lack of care and courtesy	7,14	7
Violation of the agreements, and so on	6,21	6

Thus, the most unloyal behavior towards CS was considered by the experts “False relation to CS” (10 points), and the least – “violation of the agreements” (5 points).

Thus, analyzing the literature data and personal observations, there are two main characteristics of personnel loyalty towards CS:

1. The presence of certain obligations of PS before CS that meet the goals and interests of the institution, but are never officially recorded
2. Voluntary compliance with these PS obligations without any external pressure from CS ^[8, 15].

For example, the objective indicators of loyalty are: the compliance with established internal code of CS, discipline, lack of absenteeism, timely and qualitative performance of duties, production solutions, compliance with the working order of the workplace, in particular controlling of the tracking devices, tools and equipment, compliance with technological requirements, etc.

Furthermore, based on analysis of the received responses of PS the following components of their loyalty to CS are clarified: pragmatic component, normative component and emotional component.

1. The pragmatic component based on the ratio of benefits received by PS for his work performance in CS and the possible expected losses incurred by PS in case of employment termination from CS or loss of employment. The excess loss over the profit forces PS to be loyal from the practical point of view.
2. Normative component is associated with certain duties officially enshrined in CS documents and awareness of personal responsibility for commitments to himself (sense of duty).
3. The emotional component is based on relationships with many of the staff, it is associated with many important and pleasant events that have occurred over the years in, honoring and encouraging. The foundation of such loyalty is a sense of identity between PS and CS, PS’s involvement in the affairs of the institution, experiencing its success and failures. Thus, the basis is to meet the motivational needs of belonging to a group, communication, security, participation and involvement in public affairs ^[10].

4. Conclusion

1. For unambiguous interpretation and avoiding of the semantic errors during the opinion polls, the terminological definition of "loyalty of pharmacy specialist" is improved.
2. The research was carried out in two phases: theoretical - methodological and practical, the results of which confirmed the hypothesis.
3. The above-mentioned method has been tested in the poll, the results of which installed the main characteristics of personnel loyalty and behavior attributes that are specific to a loyal PS and those employees, whose behavior attributes may indicate a lack of loyalty to CS. The responses identical to the value and content are combined and grouped into categories of PS attributes of loyalty towards CS.
4. The studied components of PS loyalty that are presented by pragmatic, normative and emotional components.
5. The research results of the characteristics, specificity and loyalty of a PS contributes to the theoretical and practical knowledge of the domestic system of management of corporate culture in the context of adaptive personnel

management of CS. Therefore, these studies require further analysis.

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