Development of a Performance Appraisal Instrument

for Pharmacy Technicians

At Wal-Mart Stores

Incorporated

by

Miranda R. Stangl

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Dr. David A. Johnson

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin-Stout

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The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, WI

Author: **Stangl, Miranda R.**

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Abstract

To complete a performance appraisal correctly it imperative that recipient know what is being required. This is important because if a pharmacy technician does not know what tasks need to be completed in order to keep the pharmacies running, it becomes difficult to appraise the behavior when necessary.

Currently, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. has a standardized performance appraisal that is used for all locations. This presents a challenge because not every location performs the same tasks resulting in an inaccurate annual performance appraisal for the pharmacy technicians. A customized performance appraisal will provide the necessary tasks that each pharmacy technician should be performing on a regular basis. With the tasks noted beforehand, the performance appraisal will be easier complete.

This study will evaluate the most important and frequently performed tasks that a pharmacy technician must complete in order to perform the job correctly. Information gathered from literature reviews on types of pharmacies, pharmacy technicians and performance appraisals was used to create a 20 question survey tool. A five point Likert scale was developed by to evaluate which tasks were rated most important and frequently performed.

The study response rating was 58 percent. An analysis of the results included mean and standard deviation of both the importance and frequency of the task statements. The study indicated that 17 out of the 20 task statements from the survey were recommended to be included in the performance appraisal.

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin Stout

Menomonie, WI

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Chapter I: Introduction

An important issue affecting corporations is determining whether an employee's performance appraisals align with the objectives listed on the job description. Within a large corporation there are many different job titles and it can be overwhelming designing and developing performance appraisals for each specific job title. As a result, some performance appraisals may not be as relevant to the exact tasks and duties that are frequently performed by the employee as well as how important they are in the completion of each task.

Along with having an appropriate performance appraisal form, there are also proper ways to administer a performance appraisal. Green (2008) notes that managers commonly make some mistakes while administering appraisals. These mistakes include procrastination which can appear to the employee that the manager doesn't care about their professional development. Managers also are often not direct about problem areas and write in generalities instead of specifics. Performance problems should also not be a surprise to the employee during the evaluation because there should be continuous feedback, but a mistake that managers make is that they feel uncomfortable and in turn are likely to not address. Another mistake includes not paying attention to the overall picture. Managers need to pay attention to the overall message and make sure the sum of the parts add up to the whole picture. This leads to the manager looking at only recent history rather than the entire evaluation period. It is easy to remember recent events and critique them instead of events and behaviors that occurred in the more distant past. Lastly, managers rarely gather feedback from others. Managers should be aware that they only see part of the performance and should consult others for feedback in private (Green, 2008).

Wal-Mart Stores Incorporated is a large corporation with a number of performance appraisals to complete. Wal-Mart was founded in 1962, with the opening of the first store in Rogers, Arkansas. Today Wal-Mart Stores Incorporated serves more than 200 million customers per week at more than 8,100 retail stores within 15 different countries. With fiscal sales in 2009 reaching over 400 billion dollars, Wal-Mart Stores is the top grossing retail store nationwide. Ninety-five percent of Wal-Mart stores have a pharmacy within. Each pharmacy is considered its own division and pays a fee, similar to rent, each month to the store. The number of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians employed within the pharmacy varies per store from one to four pharmacists and two to ten pharmacy technicians.

Statement of the Problem

Pharmacy Technicians have many tasks that are performed on a daily basis. The standard performance appraisals used by the pharmacy managers are too broad and do not specifically align with the required tasks.

Purpose of the Study

This study will evaluate the most important and frequently performed tasks that a pharmacy technician must complete in order to perform the job correctly. A survey tool will be developed and administered to the pharmacy technicians, pharmacists and pharmacy clerk at the Wal-Mart Pharmacy in Menomonie, Wisconsin. The survey results will show the appropriate tasks and duties required to keep the pharmacy operating effectively and efficiently.

Assumptions of the Study

The two assumptions of this study are:

1. All participants will act ethically and provide honest data during the study.
2. The researcher will analyze data provided by the job analysis results.

Definition of Terms

Pharmacist. A person licensed to prepare and dispense drugs and medicines; druggist; apothecary; pharmaceutical chemist (Dictionary, 2001).

Pharmacy Clerk. A person employed in a pharmacy, to keep records, file, type, or perform other general office tasks (Dictionary, 2000).

Pharmacy Technician. A person who works under the direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist and performs many pharmacy-related functions (USPharmD, 2010).

Limitations of the Study

The three limitations of this study are:

1. The sampling process was limited to only one Wal-Mart Pharmacy location.
2. Data collected during the survey process may be influenced by the perceptions of other employees being surveyed.
3. The number of participants was relatively low. There are only twelve individuals participating.

Methodology

The primary purpose of this study is to determine which pharmacy technician tasks are rated to be of the highest importance and frequency. The primary tasks and duties can then be used to create a more effective performance appraisal instrument. The tasks performed by a pharmacy technician will then directly link to the objectives of the performance appraisal process. The subjects of the analysis are the pharmacists and pharmacy technicians employed at the Wal-Mart Pharmacy in Menomonie Wisconsin. The researcher developed a list of daily tasks, duties, and steps that pharmacy technicians perform as a part of their routine and then created a questionnaire for all nine technicians to complete. The questionnaire has both

qualitative and quantitative measures that seek to gather the views from the members of the Wal-Mart Pharmacy. Given the results of the job analysis, the researcher will design and develop a customized performance appraisal instrument.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Wal-Mart Stores, Incorporated owns and operates over 8,000 stores nationwide. There is an operating pharmacy within 90% of these locations. All of the Wal-Mart pharmacies have standardized performance appraisals regardless of their location. All of the stores operate with the same standard operating procedures but each store's pharmacy manager conducts a variety of different assigned tasks. The purpose of this study is to determine the most common tasks and duties that Wal-Mart pharmacy technicians perform in order to design and develop an appropriate pharmacy technician performance appraisal instrument.

The review of literature provides an overview of the different types of pharmacies, the role of a pharmacy technician, and important factors to consider when developing a performance appraisal instrument.

History of Pharmacy

Pharmacies have been around for centuries, but the exact date of when the first drug store was opened is debated by historians. Some claim that the first drugstore was opened in 1823 in New Orleans, Louisiana because the first registered pharmacist in America started it (Soderlund, 2004). It wasn't until the 1860's when the scientific method came into it's own and new drugs were discovered. Prior to the 1860's medical knowledge was nothing more than unsubstantiated anitdotes (Soderlund, 2004).

During the 19th century, pharmacy practices evolved from medicine and developed as a separate profession. This happened when the role of pharmacist as a compounder of medicines was identified and differentiated from physicians whose role was accepted as therapist (Faria, 2009). The pharmacist's practice in those times was restricted to compounding, dispensing medication and manufacturing medicaments in bulk lots not for general sale. Then the

pharmacists commonly produced simple elixirs, spirits, and powders in contrast to the complex pharmaceutical remedies that are required of them in the present era (Faria, 2009). The 19th century witnessed various milestones being set in the field of pharmacy. In 1821, the first school of pharmacy was established in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The first U.S pharmacopoeia was published in 1820, the American pharmacist association was founded in 1852, and the first National formulary was published in 1888 (Faria, 2009).

Types of Pharmacies

Today there are seven specific types of pharmacies including: community (retail), hospital, clinical, compounding, consultant, internet, and nuclear (Pharmacy, 2009).

Community Pharmacies. Community (retail) Pharmacies began in 1901. Walgreens Co. was founded by Charles R. Walgreen Sr. when he purchased his first drug store located on the south side of Chicago. Walgreens is now the nation's largest retail pharmacy chain and is considered a leader in innovative drugstore retailing (Walgreens Co., 2005). There are also popular retail stores that accommodate their customers by having a pharmacy within the store. Examples of them include: Wal-Mart, Target, K-Mart and Shopko. A community (retail) pharmacy does not have to be as large as the companies listed above. A community pharmacy can be primarily a drug store with a few retail products for sale or as large as Customer Value Stores (CVS) Pharmacy which is a large retail pharmacy that sells a number of other retail products.

There are specific procedures that must be followed while working in a retail pharmacy. At least one pharmacist must be on duty at all times while the pharmacy is open and all CII drugs must be locked at all times with the keys being with the pharmacist as well (Pharmacy, 2009).

Other laws may vary by stores and certain states, so it is imperative that retailers remain current on the rules and regulations within their juristiction.

Hospital Pharmacies. The history of hospital pharmacies dates back to the mid 1700's when Jonathon Roberts was certified as the first hospital pharmacist in America. Roberts was an apprentice physician and along with his successor John Morgan, they proposed that practices in medicine and pharmacy be separate (Higby, 1994). By 1811, the New York Hospital had a full-time pharmaceutical practitioner. Hospital pharmacies did not expand quickly in the nineteenth century because most Americans were treated at home; but by the 1930's, American hospital pharmacists had reached the critical mass necessary for group identity on the national level (Higby, 1994).

Today hospital pharmacies are responsible for renal drug monitoring, drug interaction monitoring, patient care rounding, medication teaching, therapeutic drug monitoring, drug order review, drug information support for care providers, along with delivering medications to doctors when needed and dispensing outpatient prescriptions (John Hopkins Medicine, 2009).

Clinical Pharmacies. Clinical pharmacy is a relatively new professional discipline, being only about 15 years old. This new breed of pharmacists is patient rather than drug product oriented. The discipline arose out of dissatisfaction with old practice norms and the pressing need for a health professional with a comprehensive knowledge of the therapeutic use of drugs (Miller, 1981). The clinical pharmacy movement began at the University of Michigan in the early 1960s, but much of the pioneering work was done by David Burkholder, Paul Parker, and Charles Walton at the University of Kentucky in the latter part of the 1960's (Miller, 1981).

Clinicial pharmacy is the area of pharmacy concerned with the science and practice of rational medication use. The pharmacists provide patient care that optimizes medication therapy

and promotes health, wellness, and disease prevention (American College of Clinical Pharmacy, 2009). The practice of clinical pharmacy embraces the philosophy of pharmaceutical care; it blends a caring orientation with specialized therapeutic knowledge, experience, and judgment for the purpose of ensuring optimal patient outcomes. Clinical pharmacy also has an obligation to contribute to the generation of new knowledge that advances health and quality of life (American College of Clinical Pharmacy, 2009).

Compounding Pharmacy. The history of pharmacy is basically the history of compounding. Compounding dates back to Biblical times when ointments, balms, perfumes, and oils were spoken of in the Bible (Soderlund , 2004). One of the most interesting developments in the history of compounding occurred with the use of coal tar for medicinal purposes. When applied topically, coal tar often cures or treats many skin conditions like dandruff. German chemists began to isolate the different constituents of coal tar and developed synthetic dyes from them. One of these synthetic dyes was the first sulfa drug which gave rise to modern antibiotic therapy (Soderlund, 2004).

By the 1800's, compounding became the exclusive domain of the specialized chemist. Compounding was needed because most of the medications required preparation to be usable. It was the practice of compounding that developed laudanum, one of the first pain medications (Soderlund, 2004). During the early 1900's, almost every prescription dispensed was compounded. By the 1960's, compounding consisted of less than five percent of all the prescriptions that were dispensed. A compounding pharmacist became a dispenser of medications rather than a compounder. In the 1950's, pharmacists were still trained extensively in compounding and classes on compounding were an essential part of the pharmacy education.

By the 1980's, compounding classes had become non-existent by most colleges of pharmacy (Soderlund, 2004).

Custom Compounding pharmacies are currently on the rise. Physicians, medical institutions and patients are realizing more than ever the importance of tailoring an individual's medications to specifically meet his/her needs. The majority of the pharmacists that are going back to compounding are doing so for the love of the science and interest in the patients' well being. Being able to be in the role of a problem solver opens the doors to creativity and genius that the medical industry has been eagerly adopting for the last decade (Cowen, 1990).

Consulting Pharmacy. Consultant pharmacists specializing in senior care pharmacy practice are essential participants in the health care system, recognized and valued for the practice of pharmaceutical care for the senior population and people with chronic illness. In their role as medication therapy experts, consultant pharmacists take responsibility for their patients' medication-related needs; ensure that their patients' medications are appropriate, effective, safe, and used correctly; and identify, resolve, and prevent medication-related problems that may interfere with the goals of therapy (American Society of Consultant Pharmacists, 2009).

Internet Pharmacy. There are a number of different internet pharmacies but the most recognized is www.drugstore.com. This pharmacy and website was founded in 1998 and the first store was launched on February 24, 1999. The mission of this store is to serve the health, beauty and wellness consumer with selection, convenience, information, personal service, and a trustworthy and reliable pharmacy (Corporate Overview, 2005). While many internet pharmacies sell prescription drugs only with a prescription, some do not require a pre-written prescription. In some countries, this is because prescriptions are not required. Some customers

order drugs from this type of pharmacy to avoid the inconvenience of visiting a doctor or to obtain medications which their doctors were unwilling to prescribe (Corporate Overview, 2005).

People living in the United States turn to online pharmacies because their medical care and prescription medications are so expensive. To save money, millions of uninsured U.S. customers purchase cheaper drugs from online pharmacies in Canada, India, and the U.K. This is very common with uninsured customers who take prescription drugs for a chronic health condition. Shoppers can easily obtain 50 to 80 percent savings from online pharmacies, in comparison to U.S. prices (Corporate Overview, 2005).

Nuclear Pharmacies. Nuclear pharmacy is the practice of pharmacy where radioactive drugs are dispersed. It was started in the 1950's after World War II but didn't become an official section of pharmacy until 1975. William Briner started the Radio Pharmacy in 1958. He trained many pharmacists that contributed to the development of nuclear pharmacy and established principles and procedures important to the assurance of quality radiopharmaceuticals (Purdue University, 2008). Following the approval of nuclear pharmacy, several committees were established to develop practice sites, responsibilities, and training which lead into the Nuclear Pharmacy Practice Standards that was developed in 1978 (Purdue University, 2008).

The first examination was given to 72 pharmacists in April of 1982, after an examination was designed and developed, scores were set and an administration was set. The Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties (BPS) designated 63 pharmacists as Board Certified Nuclear Pharmacist (BCNP) in August of 1982. By 1998, there were over 430 BNCP's nationwide.

Pharmacy Technicians

Pharmacy technicians work directly under the supervision of a pharmacist and perform many pharmacy related functions.

The daily tasks performed by a pharmacy technician include:

- Receive written prescriptions or refill requests and verify the information is complete and accurate.
- Contact patients doctor/nurse if necessary to clarify directions, strength or allergies.
- Establish and maintain patient profiles, including lists of medications taken by individual patients and medication allerigies
- Maintain proper storage and security conditions for drugs.
- Answer telephones and respond to questions and requests.
- Accurately count correct medication, fill bottles with medications, and affix medication label.
- Label the hard copy prescription and file for pharmacy records.
- Assist customers by answering questions, locating items, and referring them to the pharmacist for medication information.
- Order, label and count medications, and enter inventory data.
- Prepare and process prescription insurance claims, forms and records.
- Accept payment from customer using the cash register.
- Keeping the over-the-counter medications department stocked and priced correctly.
- Removing recalled prescription and OTC medicaitons immediately when notified.
- Abide by the laws of HIPPA (Health Insurance Probability and Accountability Act) at all times.This list is just a portion of what a pharmacy technician does on a daily basis in order to keep the pharmacy working efficiently (O*Net Online, 2009).

Pharmacy technicians work in a variety of different workplace settings. According to a 2002 United States Department of Labor report, about two-thirds worked in retail pharmacies, both independently owned or a part of a drug store, mass retail store, or a grocery store. About 22% were employed at a hosptial, while only a small portion were employed with internet pharmacies, clinics, and the Federal Government (O*Net Online, 2009).

Training for a pharmacy technician varies from on-the-job training to formal training and a certification process, which many employers favor. The most common national certification exams in the United States are given by the Institute of Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ICPT) and the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB). ICPT offers the ExCPT exam on a continuous basis and provides exam results immediately to candidates. The exam is supported by the community pharmacy industry, the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS), and the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) and offers a nationally accredited competitively priced option for pharmacy technicians (O*Net Online, 2009).

Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal relates to the basic human tendency to make judgments about those one is working with, as well as about oneself. This is a process of evaluating how well employees perform their jobs when compared to a set of standards, and then communicating that information to those employees (Jackson & Mathis, 2003). A performance appraisal is widely used for administering wages and salaries, giving performance feedback, and identifying individual employees strengths and weaknesses. Most U.S. employers use performance appraisal systems for office, professional, technical, supervisory, middle management, and nonunion production workers (Jackson & Mathis, 2003). Performance appraisal dates back

from the Second World War. The roots of performance appraisal in the 20th century can be traced to Taylor's pioneering work on Time and Motion studies (TargetWoman, 2009).

Despite the widespread use of performance appraisals, not everyone enthusiastically endorses performance appraisals. Criticisms revolve around the way they are done and the results (Jackson & Mathis, 2003).

Criticisms include:

- With today's emphasis on teamwork, appraisals focus too much on the individual and do too little to develop employees to perform better.
- Most employees who receive reviews and supervisors who give them generally rate the process a resounding failure.
- Most appraisals are inconsistent, short-term oriented, subjective, and valuable only for identifying employees performing extremely well or poorly (Jackson & Mathis, 2003).

Organizations use performance appraisals in two conflicting roles. One role is to measure performance for the purpose of making pay, promotions, dismissal, downsizing or layoffs. This role is considered to be used for administrative uses. This is often the link between rewards employees hope to receive and their productivity (Jackson & Mathis, 2003). Performance-based compensation affirms the idea that pay raises should be given for performance accomplishments rather than for seniority. Typically in this instance the manager has been the evaluator of the employees' performance and also the one who makes the compensation recommendations for the employee (Jackson & Mathis, 2003).

The other role is the use of appraisals for developmental uses. The developmental type of performance appraisal emphasizes identifying potential and planning employees' growth opportunities and direction (Jackson & Mathis, 2003). The manager's role in this situation

parallels that of a coach. The manager rewards good performance with recognition, explains what improvement is necessary, and shows employees how to improve. People do not always know where and how to improve, and managers should not expect improvement if they are unwilling to explain where and how improvement can occur (Jackson & Mathis, 2003).

The purpose of developmental feedback is to change and reinforce individual behavior, rather than to compare individuals such as the administrative uses of performance appraisals. This type of feedback can also identify areas in which the employee might wish to grow (Jackson & Mathis, 2003). For instance, in a performance appraisal interview targeted on development, an employee may only be lacking in one area, and that may be keeping them from a promotion. The supervisor may suggest that they consider taking an evening course at the local college. This will help the employee advance in their career.

There are two different approaches to performance appraisal: traditional and modern.

Traditional Approach. Performance appraisals began as a simple method of income justification. It was used to decide whether an employee's salary or wage was justified or not. The process was firmly linked to the material outcome an employee would receive for good performance. If the employee's performance was less than expected, then a cut in the pay would follow. If the employee's performance was better than expected, a rise in pay would follow (TargetWoman, 2009).

A weakness of this process was that it did not give any consideration to the developmental possibilities of the employee. A pay cut was the only incentive for an employee to either improve or continue to perform well. In many instances, this basic system of performance appraisal failed to achieve the intended results (TargetWoman, 2009).

The traditional approach is also known as overall approach. This is primarily concerned with the overall organization and with the past performance of the employees only. Since the traditional emphasis was only to reward outcomes, it was progressively rejected. It was only in the 1950's that the performance appraisal came to be recognized as a useful tool to motivate and develop the employee potential (TargetWoman, 2009).

Modern Approach. In many organizations, performance appraisal is used either directly or indirectly to help determine reward outcomes. The results of the performance appraisal help in identifying the better performing employee who should be paid more and rewarded with promotions and bonuses (TargetWoman, 2009). Performance appraisal systems are more structured and formal between the employee and the supervisor.

Performance appraisals are normally conducted annually or in some cases, twice a year. The weakness, strengths and opportunities for improvement and skill development of the employee are discussed. During this time, poor performers are counseled to perform better. In extreme cases, demotion, dismissal or decrease of pay is resorted to. The modern approach to performance appraisal is a developmental approach. This recognizes employees as individuals and encompasses the goal setting process (TargetWoman, 2009).

Chapter III: Methodology

Wal-Mart pharmacies have a standardized performance appraisal form that is the same for all stores. The appraisal criteria does not differentiate between store locations, instead each store evaluates the pharmacy technicians on the same tasks and duties whether they are actually performed or not. This chapter will define the research design process, population and instrumentation.

Subject Selection and Description

The population for this study will consist of seven pharmacy technicians who are subject matter experts, (SME). The Menomonie, WI Wal-Mart pharmacy staff consists of eight pharmacy technicians, one pharmacy clerk and three pharmacists. Because the pharmacy staff is so small, all pharmacy technicians, pharmacists and the pharmacy clerk will participate in this study. The pharmacy technicians were chosen because of their excellent understanding of the pharmacy's operations and expectations.

Instrumentation

The data collection survey for this study was based on compiled research about tasks and duties that are required of pharmacy technicians. The survey consisted of 20 tasks and duty statements that the pharmacy technicians, pharmacists and pharmacy clerk were asked to rank on their importance and frequency based on a five-point Likert scale. The feedback from the survey was used to determine the most important and frequently performed pharmacy technician tasks to ensure that information gathered would fit within the context of the annual performance appraisal. This feedback will ensure that the performance appraisal given to each pharmacy technician aligns with the necessary tasks, duties and skills required to adequately perform the job.

The responses used for the survey were different for the two categories, importance and frequency. The responses used for the importance category were: not performed (1), somewhat important (2), important (3), very important (4), and extremely important (5). The responses used for the frequency category were: not performed (1), seldom (2), occasionally (3), frequently (4), and most of the time (5).

An anonymous 20 question instrument was administered to eight pharmacy technicians, three pharmacists and one pharmacy clerk. No names or demographical information was requested. All surveys were completed within a one week time period and the data were analyzed immediately afterward. The responses were viewed only by the researcher and the surveys were disposed of following the data analysis.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Program for Social Sciences, version 17, (SPSS, 2010) was used to analyze the data. Statistical analyses such as mean and standard deviation were performed. When the means and standard deviations were complete, a decision table was used to determine whether the task was valid. If the task statement was proven to be valid it was recommended to be in the new performance appraisal.

Limitations

The three limitations of this study were:

1. The sampling process was limited to only one Wal-Mart Pharmacy location.
2. Data collected during the survey process may be influenced by the perceptions of other employees being surveyed.
3. The number of participants was relatively low. There are only twelve individuals participating.

Chapter IV: Results

This chapter reports the results of the survey that was administered at Wal-Mart Pharmacy in Menomonie, Wisconsin. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the most important and frequently performed tasks that a pharmacy technician must complete in order to perform the job correctly. The study will examine the responses of the participants in order to develop a performance appraisal that accurately identifies the most highly rated tasks and duties as reported on the survey instrument.

The researcher administered the 20 item survey instrument (See Appendix A) to the pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in April 2010. Unfortunately, the pharmacy clerk on staff was unavailable to complete the survey due to time conflicts. The three pharmacists completed the survey within the allotted time, but only four out of the eight pharmacy technicians completed the instrument. The survey provided 20 task and duty statements that were reported to be the most commonly performed based on O*Net. Survey demographics were not provided due to the limited number of participants. The researcher wanted to ensure anonymity throughout the data collection process.

Item Analysis

Each question on the survey tool was analyzed using a decision table which was created by the researcher (see Appendix B). The decision table helped to decide which tasks should be accepted into the performance appraisal, which tasks should be questioned and looked at closer, and lastly, which tasks should be rejected, meaning they are not valid and should not be placed in the newly developed performance appraisal instrument.

The following tables will display each survey question and the participant responses to both importance and frequency of performance.

Table 1 had a strong response rating. The results show that each respondent rated the importance of this task as extremely important. This is shown in the standard deviation as a .00. Also, with a strong response within the frequency aspect, this task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 1

Receive Written Prescriptions and Verify the Information is Complete and Accurate.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
5	5	5	.00	4	5	4.86	.38

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

Table 2 shows a slight variance in the responses, but with both strong means in the importance and frequency sections, and both standard deviations under one, this task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 2

Contact the Patient's Doctor to Clarify Directions, Strengths or Allergies.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
3	5	4.71	.76	4	5	4.71	.49

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

Table 3 shows relatively the same results for both the importance and frequency sections; both have a mean greater than four and a standard deviation lower than one. These solid results place this task in the performance appraisal as well.

Table 3

Establish Patient Profiles, Including Medications Taken and Allergies.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
3	5	4.57	.77	3	5	4.29	.76

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

When analyzing this task using the decision table, it suggested questioning whether or not the responses indicated it was strong enough to make it into the performance appraisal. The respondents did not show consensus on whether this task was important to performing the job correctly or not; although the respondents did show that this task was performed frequently. Ultimately, after considerable analysis, this task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 4

Maintain Proper Storage and Security Conditions for Drugs.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
2	5	4	1	3	5	4.29	.76

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

The results in Table 5 show that all of the respondents agreed that answering the phone and responding to questions and requests was important to performing their job as a pharmacy technician correctly, and that this task was performed very frequently. The standard deviation, being less than one, in both categories, shows that all seven participants answered this question consistently resulting in this task being included in the performance appraisal.

Table 5

Answer Telephones and Respond to Questions and Requests.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
4	5	4.57	.53	4	5	4.71	.49

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

It is evident by the strength of the results in Table 6 that accurately counting medications, filling bottles with the medication, and affixing the label is extremely important and performed very frequently amongst all the respondents. The results show that each participant rated the highest available response in both categories with no variation. These results conclude that this task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 6

Accurately Count Medications, Fill Bottles with Medication and Affix Medication Label.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
5	5	5	.00	5	5	5	.00

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

The results of Table 7 are not as strong as the prior tables, but the mean meets the requirements on the decision table that was used while analyzing the results. Because the means in both categories are higher than 3.5 and the standard deviations are less than one, this task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 7

Label Hard Copy Prescriptions and File for Pharmacy Records.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
2	4	3.57	.78	3	5	3.71	.76

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

Table 8 will make it into the performance appraisal because of the strong agreement amongst the respondents. The average means in both categories is over four with a standard deviation of less than one on each. Assisting customers within a retail establishment is essential to customer service, and that is one of Wal-Mart's top business practices.

Table 8

Assist Customers to Answering Questions, Locate Items and Referring to Pharmacist as Needed.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
3	5	4.23	.79	4	5	4.14	.38

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

The results of Table 9 are strong in both categories. The respondents expressed that it is important to order, label and count medications in order to keep an accurate inventory and that it is also performed frequently. This task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 9

Order, Label, and Count Medications, and Enter Inventory Data.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
4	5	4.29	.49	3	5	4.29	.76

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

The task of preparing and processing prescription insurance claims, forms and records is seen by the respondents as important and performed frequently. The very low standard deviations show that there is agreement among all the participants, because of this; this task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 10

Prepare and Process Prescription Insurance Claims, Forms and Records.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
4	5	4.57	.53	4	5	4.86	.38

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

The respondents did not rank as highly to the task of accepting payment from customer as the previous task statements, but the average mean is above three. The decision table advised to question this statement on its validity it holds within the performance appraisal. This isn't an essential task needed for a pharmacy technician to perform the job correctly, but it is important to the customer service aspect of the job. Wal-Mart Stores Inc. extremely values customer service, so this task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 11

Accept Payment from Customer Using the Cash Register.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
3	5	3.29	.49	3	5	3.57	.79

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

With this task being the lowest ranked in both categories, the analysis using the decision table recommended questioning whether this task was valid enough to make the performance appraisal. The means are less than 2.5 for both the frequency and level of importance, and there are over-the-counter employees that keep it stocked full-time. For those reasons, this task will not be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 12

Keep the Over-the-Counter Department Stocked and Priced Correctly.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
1	3	2.29	.76	1	3	2.29	.76

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

The results for this task in Table 13 were also rated fairly low from the respondents. Along with the means only being 2.57, the standard deviations are too high which indicated the task is not valid. There are too many inconsistencies within the responses indicting that this statement is not recommended to be placed within the performance appraisal.

Table 13

Remove Recalled Prescriptions and OTC Medications Immediately.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
1	4	2.57	.76	1	5	2.57	1.27

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

With HIPAA being a crucial aspect within every medical field, the responses were appropriate to the importance of following HIPAA laws at all time. This task statement will be involved in the performance appraisal.

Table 14

Abide by the laws of HIPAA at all times.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
3	5	4.71	.76	4	5	4.71	.49

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

The respondents showed a bit of inconsistency between the importance and frequency categories. Although, the respondents rated that compounding medications together as important, it is shown as not regularly performed. When analyzing this task statement with the decision table, it was recommended to question whether it is appropriate to place into the performance appraisal or not. Because of the inconsistency, the researcher chose not put this task statement into the performance appraisal.

Table 15

Compound (Mix, Measure, Weigh) Medications Together.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
3	4	3.29	.49	2	5	2.85	1.22

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

The results of Table 16 show that all of the respondents rated the knowledge of medical terminology moderately important but as preformed quite frequently. Therefore, because both of the means are over 3.5 and low standard deviations, this task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 16

Knowledge of Medical Terminology, Abbreviations and Frequently Prescribed Medications.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
3	4	3.57	.53	4	5	4.14	.38

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

Table 17 shows that straightening shelves, vacuuming and dusting the pharmacy will make it into the performance evaluation because it was rated to be consistently important and frequently performed. Straightening shelves and general upkeep of the pharmacy area isn't crucial to performing the job correctly, but without it, the pharmacy wouldn't be able to operate effectively.

Table 17

Straighten Shelves, Vacuum, and Dust Pharmacy

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
2	4	3	.57	2	4	3.43	.79

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

Table 18 shows the results of the task statement of filling prescription bottles and caps when empty. This task will make it into the performance appraisal because of the high means in both categories and the low standard deviations.

Table 18

Fill Prescription Bottles and Caps When Empty.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
2	4	3.43	.79	3	5	3.85	.69

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

Completing the daily McKesson order had average means of over four in both categories making this task statement frequently performed and important to the success of a pharmacy technician. It is also clear, by the low standard deviation on both categories, the respondents agreed on the importance proving this statement to be valid. This task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 19

Complete Daily McKesson Orders, Put Away Drug Order and Verify all Paperwork.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
3	5	4.29	.76	4	5	4.71	.49

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

Table 20 shows how important and frequently pharmacy technicians communicate with prescribers to obtain refill authorizations. The means for both categories were over four with consistently low standard deviations. This task will be included in the performance appraisal.

Table 20

Communicate with Prescribers and their Nurse to Obtain Refill Authorization.

Importance				Frequency			
Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
3	5	4.43	.76	4	5	4.29	.49

Note. SD = standard deviation
n=7

Chapter V: Discussion

Wal-Mart pharmacies have a standardized performance appraisal form for all stores. The appraisal criteria does not differentiate between store locations, instead each store evaluates the pharmacy technicians on the same tasks and duties whether they are actually performed or not. With customized performance appraisals, pharmacy technicians will be evaluated on the specific tasks that are necessary to perform the job effectively and efficiently.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the most important and frequently performed tasks that a pharmacy technician must complete in order to perform the job correctly. This will reduce the stress on the manager when trying to complete a performance analysis, and rank the pharmacy technicians on their work behavior. With the performance analysis created specifically for each location, the manager will have the ability to complete the analysis more accurately.

A review of literature on the types of pharmacies, pharmacy technicians and performance appraisals was completed. Several elements were analyzed in the selection of the pharmacy technician task and duty statements that would make it onto the survey instrument. A review of performance appraisals was also completed in order to learn about the types of appraisals along with tips to complete a performance appraisal correctly.

A five point Likert scale survey was developed based on the research of pharmacy technicians and the tasks that are required to perform the job effectively and efficiently. The questions consisted of tasks and duties provided by O*Net and the participants were asked to rank them based on the importance of the tasks and how frequently they are performed.

A survey tool was intended to be administered to three pharmacists, eight pharmacy technicians and one pharmacy clerk during the week of April 5, 2010. All three of the

pharmacists participated, but due to time conflicts, only four out of the eight pharmacy technicians were able to participate. The pharmacy clerk was also unable to participate due to vacation time.

The consent form was given to each of the participants before completing the survey. Each participant was given a survey and asked to rank all 20 questions based on the importance and frequency. When finished, they were asked to place the survey into a locked box only accessible to the researcher.

Limitations

The limitations of the study were:

1. The sampling process was limited to only one Wal-Mart Pharmacy location.
2. Data collected during the survey process may be influenced by the perceptions of other employees being surveyed.
3. The number of participants was relatively low. There are only twelve individuals participating.

Conclusions

The response rate from this survey was 59 percent which represents a significant sample for this study. The results of the study indicated that 17 out of the 20 tasks will be included in the performance appraisal. The three tasks that were not chosen due to low ratings are normally performed by the over-the-counter pharmacy department with minimal assistance from the pharmacy technicians.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the survey, the following task statements are recommended to be included in the performance appraisal:

1. Receive written prescriptions or refill requests and verify that the information is complete and accurate.
2. Contact the patient's doctor/nurse if necessary to clarify directions, strengths or allergies.
3. Establish and maintain patient profiles, including lists of medications taken by individual patients and medication allergies.
4. Maintain proper storage and security conditions for drugs.
5. Answer telephones and respond to questions and requests.
6. Accurately count correct medication, fill bottles with medications, and affix medication label.
7. Label hard copy prescriptions and file for pharmacy records.
8. Assist customers by answering questions, locating items, and referring them to the pharmacist for medication information.
9. Order, label and count medications, and enter inventory data.
10. Prepare and process prescription insurance claims, forms and records.
11. Accept payment from customer using the cash register.
12. Abide by the laws of HIPAA at all times.
13. Knowledge of medical terminology, abbreviations and frequently prescribed medications.
14. Straighten shelves, vacuum and dust pharmacy.
15. Fill prescription bottles and caps when empty.
16. Complete daily McKesson orders, place delivered orders on shelves and verify all associated paperwork.
17. Communicate with prescribers and/or their nurse to obtain refill authorization.

These 17 task statements were rated as both important and performed frequently by the participants of the survey. The previous tasks were found to be essential to performing the job of a pharmacy technician effectively and efficiently and that is why they are recommended to be listed on the performance appraisal.

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Appendix A

Pharmacy Technician Performance Appraisal Development Survey

Please rank the following statements based on how IMPORTANT they are in completing the necessary tasks required by a Pharmacy Technician using the following Likert Scale.

1- Not performed 2-Somewhat Important 3-Important 4-Very Important 5-Extremely Important

1. Receive written prescriptions or refill requests and verify that the information is complete and accurate. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Contact the patient's doctor/nurse if necessary to clarify directions, strength or allergies. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Establish and maintain patient profiles, including lists of medications taken by individual 1 2 3 4 5
   patients and medication allerigies.
4. Maintain proper storage and security conditions for drugs. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Answer telephones and respond to questions and requests. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Accurately count correct medication, fill bottles with medications, and affix medication label. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Label hard copy prescriptions and file for pharmacy records. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Assist customers by answering questions, locating items, and referring them to the pharmacist 1 2 3 4 5
   for medication information.
9. Order, label and count medications, and enter inventory data. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Prepare and process prescription insurance claims, forms and records. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Accept payment from customer using the cash register. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Keep the over-the-counter department stocked and priced correctly. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Remove recalled prescriptions and OTC medications immediately. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Abide by the laws of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) at all times. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Compound (mix, measure, weigh) medications together. 1 2 3 4 5

16. Knowledge of medical terminology, abbreviations and frequently prescribed medications.
    1 2 3 4 5
17. Straighten shelves, vaccumm and dust pharmacy.
    1 2 3 4 5
18. Fill prescription bottles and caps when empty.
    1 2 3 4 5
19. Complete daily McKesson orders, place delivered orders on shelves, and verify all associated paperwork. 1 2 3 4 5
20. Communicate with prescribers and/or their nurse to obtain refill authorization.
    1 2 3 4 5

Please rank the following statements based on how FREQUENTLY they are in performed a Pharmacy Technician using the following Likert Scale.

1- Not performed 2-Seldom 3-Occasionally 4-Frequently 5-Most of the time

1. 1. Receive written prescriptions or refill requests and verify that the information is complete and accurate. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Contact the patient's doctor/nurse if necessary to clarify directions, strength or allergies.
   1 2 3 4 5
3. Establish and maintain patient profiles, including lists of medications taken by individual
   1 2 3 4 5
   patients and medication allerigies.
4. Maintain proper storage and security conditions for drugs.
   1 2 3 4 5
5. Answer telephones and respond to questions and requests.
   1 2 3 4 5
6. Accurately count correct medication, fill bottles with medications, and affix medication label. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Label hard copy prescriptions and file for pharmacy records.
   1 2 3 4 5
8. Assist customers by answering questions, locating items, and referring them to the pharmacist for medication information. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Order, label and count medications, and enter inventory data.
   1 2 3 4 5
10. Prepare and process prescription insurance claims, forms and records.
    1 2 3 4 5
11. Accept payment from customer using the cash register.
    1 2 3 4 5
12. Keep the over-the-counter department stocked and priced correctly.
    1 2 3 4 5
13. Remove recalled prescriptions and OTC medications immediately.
    1 2 3 4 5
14. Abide by the laws of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) at all times. 1 2 3 4 5

15. Compound (mix, measure, weigh) medications together.
    1 2 3 4 5
16. Knowledge of medical terminology, abbreviations and frequently prescribed medications.
    1 2 3 4 5
17. Straighten shelves, vaccuum and dust pharmacy.
    1 2 3 4 5
18. Fill prescription bottles and caps when empty.
    1 2 3 4 5
19. Complete daily McKesson orders, place delivered orders on shelves, and verify all associated paperwork. 1 2 3 4 5
20. Communicate with prescribers and/or their nurse to obtain refill authorization.
    1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B

Table 21

Decision Table for Pharmacy Technicians Tasks

Importance Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Frequency Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Decision
3.0-5.0	≤ 0.9	2.5-5.0	≤ 0.9	Accept
3.0-5.0	≤ 0.9	1.0-2.49	≤ 0.9	Question
1.5-2.99	≥ 0.9	3.5-5.0	≥ 0.9	Accept
1.5-2.99	≥ 0.9	1.5-3.49	≥ 0.9	Question
1.5-2.99	≥ 0.9	1.0-1.49	≥ 0.9	Reject
1.0-1.49	≥ 0.9	1.5-5.0	≥ 0.9	Question
1.0-1.49	≥ 0.9	1.0-1.49	≥ 0.9	Reject

Appendix C

Consent to Participate In UW-Stout Approved Research

Title: Development of a Performance Appraisal Instrument for Pharmacy Technicians at Wal-Mart Stores Incorporated.

Investigator:
Miranda R. Stangl
UW- Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751
Phone: (715) 928-0491
Email: zignegom@my.uwstout.edu

Research Sponsor:
Dr. David A. Johnson
UW-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751
Phone: (715) 232-2143
Email: johnsondav@uwstout.edu

Description:
The research study is intended to evaluate the most important and frequently performed tasks that a pharmacy technician must complete in order to perform the job correctly. The results of the survey will be used to design and develop a performance appraisal specific to Wal-Mart Pharmacy in Menomonie, Wisconsin.

Risks and Benefits:
There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. Participants of the research study will help the researcher evaluate the most important and frequently performed tasks that are essential to performing the job of a pharmacy technician effectively and efficiently. With the results of the survey, the researcher will develop a performance appraisal instrument ultimately for the supervisor's use during annual evaluations. The participants will have the chance to contribute to the new design of the performance appraisal.

Time Commitment and Payment:
The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality:
Your name will not be included on any documents. We do not believe that you can be identified from any of this information.

Right to Withdraw:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate without any adverse consequences to you. However, should you choose to participate and later wish to withdraw from the study, there is no way to identify your anonymous document after it has been turned into the investigator.

IRB Approval:
This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Wisconsin-Stout's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has determined that this study meets the ethical obligations required by federal law and University policies. If you have questions or concerns regarding this

study please contact the Investigator or Advisor. If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB Administrator.

Investigator:
Miranda R. Stangl
715-928-0491
zignegom@my.uwstout.edu

Advisor:
Dr. David A. Johnson
715-232-2143
johnsondav@uwstout.edu

IRB Administrator:
Sue Foxwell, Director, Research Services
152 Vocational Rehabilitation Bldg.
UW-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54767
715-232-2477
foxwells@uwstout.edu