To Adopt or Not Adopt, That is the Question: Decision-Making Factors Associated with the Adoption of Practices by North American Quitlines

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Background

Decision makers within quitlines decide which cessation practices to adopt and to implement. Although information from within and outside the network of North American quitlines has some bearing on adoption decisions, other factors impose constraints on what quitlines can and cannot offer clients. We proposed two types of constraints, internal and external, and then developed a survey instrument to measure them. Data were collected over three years; this study examines decision making in the first year. Results indicate that quitlines are more likely to use consensus styles of decision making when both external and external constraints are high. Consensus-style decision making is more likely to lead to adoption in general.

Objectives

- Define and operationalize internal and external constraints.
- Evaluate data from Year 1 of the KIQNIC survey.
- Assess the relationship between constraints and reported decision-making practices at the quitline level of analysis.

Methods

- Developed survey questions based on theory of reasoned action.
- Twelve items measured internal and external constraints (e.g., “Strong evidence of effectiveness was an important consideration”).
- Factor analysis revealed that 10 of the 12 items loaded onto two factors (n = 171).
- The outcome measure was likelihood to adopt practices, which suggest other types of decision making styles.
- There is a direct association between internal constraints and likelihood to adopt practices in general. It does not measure which specific practices a quitline might adopt (e.g., fax referral) or even a range of practices (e.g., reach vs. effectiveness).
- There is a direct association between internal constraints and likelihood to adopt practices, which suggest other types of decision making styles at play.

Results

- Consensus-style decision making is more likely when both internal and external constraints are high.
- Unilateral decision-making is not associated with either type of constraint.
- Decision making (i.e., likelihood to adopt practices in general) is a consensus-based process.
- Decision making is much less likely when one person decides.
- There is a direct association between internal constraints and likelihood to adopt practices, which suggest other types of decision making styles at play.

Discussion

- We observed individual variability within quitlines on decision-making practices— not everyone within a quitline perceives similar decision styles.
- It is unclear if decision-making reflects funder or provider influence.
- Dependent variable measures only intention to adopt practices in general. It does not measure which specific practices a quitline might adopt (e.g., fax referral) or even a range of practices (e.g., reach vs. effectiveness).
- Our analysis over time might reveal trends in both the influence of constraints as well as stability in perceptions of decision-making practices.

Conclusions

- Perceived consensus-style decision-making may have some social-psychological advantage in decision-making in general.
- Quitlines not in a position to adopt (for whatever reason) might be better suited to unilateral styles of decision making.
- Collaboration offers benefits when adoption and implementation are goals of the quitline.
- Assessing stability and change in decision-making over time is worthy of future investigation.

Acknowledgements

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Table 1. Factor Loadings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Internal Constraints</th>
<th>External Constraints</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strong Evidence Effectiveness</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Importance Overall Cost</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Practice Consistent with Mission</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Opinions Influenced Decisions</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bureaucratic Procedures</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Decision Based on Expertise to Implement</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Not Pay Attention to Costs</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Influenced by Well-Respected QLs</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Influence of Outside Mandates</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Importance of Being First</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Opinion of Funder/Service Provider</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Importance of Other QLs Adopting</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
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