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INTRODUCTION

Professional identity (PI) is defined as “the attitudes, values, knowledge, belief and skills shared with others within a professional group.”¹ Professional identity formation is an adaptive and continuous process that involves “thinking, feeling, and acting” like others in the profession.^{1,2} It is also described as an “internal feeling of belonging to a community.”³ Professional identity formation of student pharmacists begins during the formative years of pharmacy education and continues to evolve during pharmacy practice experiences.³

The evolution of professional identity has its challenges as student pharmacists adjust from being an undergraduate learner to a professional learner, from being in the classroom as a learner to being a member of a healthcare team.²

Year-specific curricular and co-curricular assignments and activities are key to student pharmacists’ description of professional identity formation and evolution.⁴

OBJECTIVE

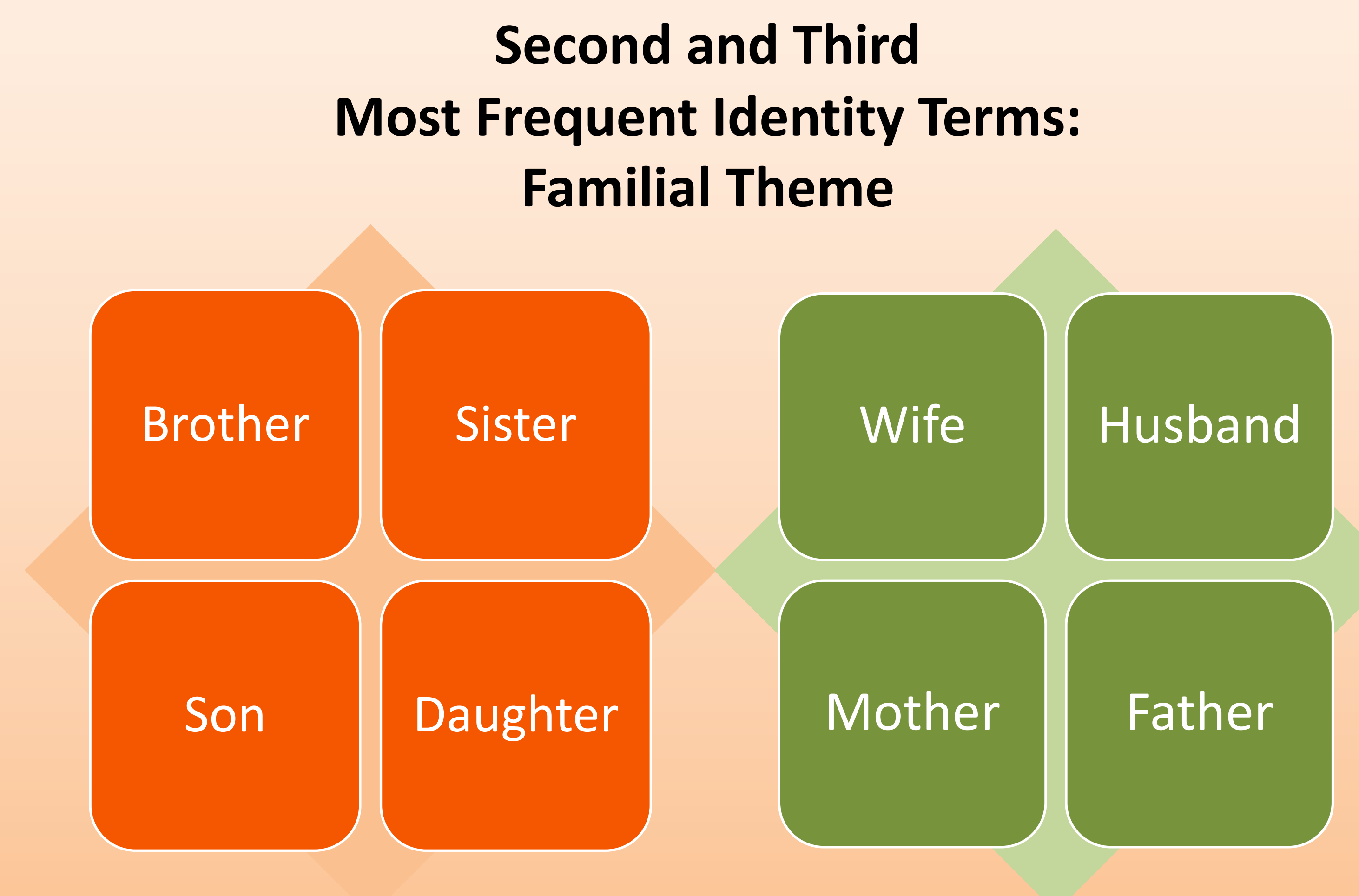
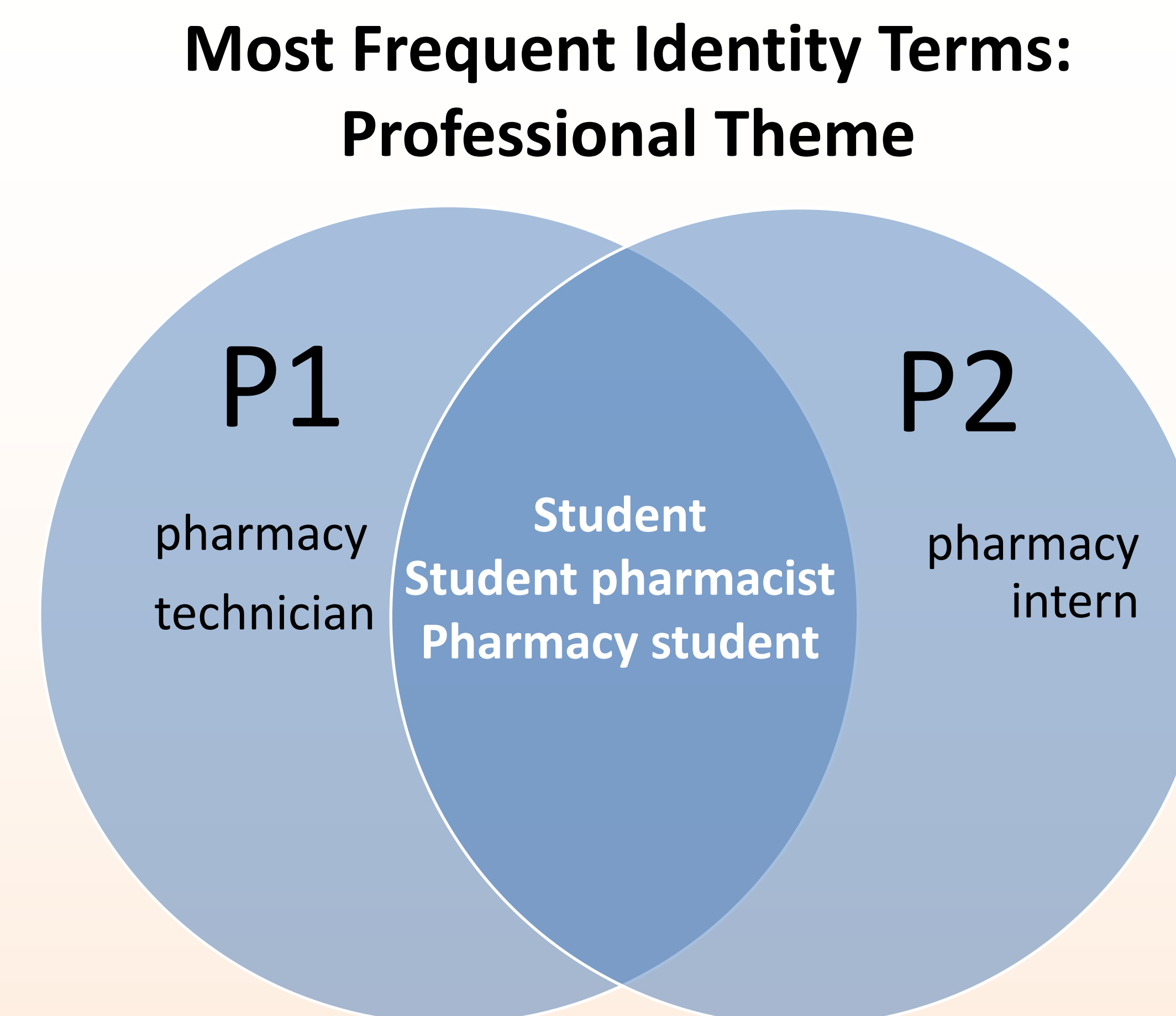
To compare terms most frequently used by first- and second professional-year student pharmacists to describe their professional identity.

METHODS

- First (P1) and second (P2) professional-year students listed in rank order, five terms used to describe their identity.
- P1s completed the PI activity during New Student Orientation uninfluenced by professional activities; P2s completed the PI activity during spring semester of second-year after completion of curricular and co-curricular professional development opportunities.
- Responses were collected and frequencies of each term were compared between both professional years.

RESULTS

The most frequency terms used by by P1 and P2 student pharmacists to described their identities could be categorized into two themes: professional and familial. The frequency at which student pharmacists identify as a technician versus an intern changed over time. Presumably this change occurs due to curricular and co-curricular exposure to pharmacist expectations and experiences.



Most Common Identity Terms of P1 and P2 Student Pharmacists

Term	P1	P2	Total
Student Pharmacist / pharmacy student	1	87	86
Student	45	10	55
Pharmacy intern	2	38	40
Pharmacy technician	24	0	24
Wife/husband	8	15	23
Father/mother	4	14	18
Brother/sister	10	31	41
Son/daughter	30	47	77
Cat/dog mom	18	19	37
Foodie/food lover	16	9	25
Friend	12	27	39

CONCLUSION

Student pharmacists’ form their professional identity over time and throughout their pharmacy education. Personal experience and participation in curricular and co-curricular activities influences identity formation. Upon entry into the PharmD curriculum, student pharmacists tend to identify as “students” or “pharmacy technicians”, but over time, their identities morph into “student pharmacist” or “pharmacy intern”. Additional research is needed to identify specific activities that have the most influence on the ever-evolving professional identity.

REFERENCES

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