

HCRC RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF KNOWLEDGE INERTIA: OVERCOMING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS' RESISTANCE IN INNOVATION ADOPTION

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SUMMARY

Over the past few decades, global investment in healthcare innovations has surged, with digital transformation in healthcare gaining significant attention. Technologies like cloud computing, telemedicine, mobile healthcare platforms, blockchain, and artificial intelligence are paving the way for new technical infrastructure, processes, and business models in healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of these digital technologies, helping healthcare providers become more resilient and addressing inequalities in healthcare resources.

However, healthcare professionals have faced challenges in fully benefiting from these innovations. Particularly, healthcare professionals often resist new innovations due to a mental block known as knowledge inertia, rather than their actions. Even well-meaning organizational policies might not effectively harness this inertia to benefit healthcare workers.

We surveyed 337 doctors from various hospitals and found that their willingness to adopt new innovations is influenced by two types of inertia: learning inertia and experience inertia. Learning inertia, which is the reluctance to learn new things, has a negative impact, while experience inertia, which is the reliance on past experiences, has a positive impact. Put a simple way, healthcare professionals' resistance to innovations comes from the cognitive aspect of knowledge inertia rather than the behavioral aspect.

Our findings also suggest that organizations could make better use of different types of healthcare professionals. Lower-ranking physicians might excel in acquiring new knowledge, while higher-ranking physicians could be more effective in sharing it. This approach could help in better managing and utilizing the diverse skills within the healthcare sector.

Finally, not all support policies in organizations are effective. In our survey, we found that perceived support from the organization sometimes hindered the positive impact of experience on adopting new innovations. It also didn't help much with the challenges caused by learning new things. Therefore, organizations should understand the complexities of professional users' resistance to change when creating support policies. Specifically, they should consider that professional users' resistance can influence their expectations and responses, and tailor their interventions accordingly.

Citation:

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