

Study on Consumers Perception Towards Online Pharmacy

By

Suresh

*Dissertation submitted for the partial fulfillment of the
MBA Pharmaceutical Management*

Academic year, 2016-2018



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Suresh** student of MBA Pharmaceutical Management from The IIHMR University, Jaipur has undergone Dissertation training at **IIHMR University**, Jaipur from 7th February to 7th May 2018.

The Candidate has successfully carried out the study designated to him during internship training and his approach to the study has been sincere, scientific and analytical.

The Internship is in fulfilment of the course requirements.

I wish him all success in all his future endeavors.



Dr.(Col) Ashok Kaushik

Dean, Academics and Student Affairs

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CERTIFICATE BY SCHOLAR

This is to certify that the dissertation titled **A Study On consumers perception towards online pharmacy** and submitted by (Name) **Mr. Suresh**, Enrollment No.-**0084**, under the supervision of **Dr. Sandeep Narula** for award of MBA in Pharmaceutical Management of the University carried out during the period from **Febriary07,2018** to **May07, 2018**embodies my original work and has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma associate ship, fellowship, titles in this or any other institute or other similar institution of higher learning.



Signature

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Immensely, I would like to thank my guide **Dr. Sandeep Narula**, I have been astonishing blessed to have a guide who has was supportive and had given me the liberty to discover on my own and at the same time the supervision to recover my steps which get hesitated. His fortitude and his support helped me to overwhelmed from many downfalls besides helped me to accomplish my dissertation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1Online Pharmacy

Online pharmacies, Internet pharmacies or Mail Order pharmacies are the pharmacies that operate over the internet and send the orders to customers. Online or internet pharmacies might include -

- Pharmacy benefit manager- A large administrator of corporate prescription drug plans.
- Legitimate internet pharmacy in the same country as the person ordering.
- Legitimate internet pharmacy in different country than the person ordering. This pharmacy usually is licensed by its home its home country and follows those regulations, not those of the international orders.
- Illegal or unethical internet pharmacy.

Conventional stationary pharmacies usually have controlled distribution system from the manufacturer. Validation and good distribution practices are followed. Home delivery of pharmaceuticals can be desirable convenience but sometimes there can be problems.

The shipment of the drugs through the mail and parcel is sometimes a concern for temperature sensitive pharmaceuticals. Uncontrolled shipping condition can include high and low temperature outside of the listed storage conditions for the drugs. For example, the USFDA found the temperature in the mail box in the sun can reach 136° F while the ambient air temperature was 101° F.

Shipment by the express mails and couriers reduces transit time and often involve delivery to the door, rather than a mail box. The use of insulated shipping containers also helps to control the drug temperatures, reducing risks to the drug safety and efficacy. There are several risks and concerns associated with the online pharmacies like-

- Illegal or unethical pharmacies sometimes send outdated, substituted or counterfeit medications.
- Sometimes an online pharmacy may not be in country that is claimed. For example, one study of the drug shipment claiming to be from Canada revealed many originated in several different countries and was often bogus medications.
- Minors or children can order controlled substances without adult supervision.
- Other concerns include potential lack of confidentiality, improper packaging, inability to check for drug interactions, and several other issues.

Legitimate mail order pharmacies are somewhat like community pharmacies; one primary difference is the method by which the medications are requested and received. Some customers consider this to be more convenient than travelling to the community drug store, in the same way as ordering goods online rather than going to a shop.

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 prescription is not required. Some customers order drugs from such pharmacies to avoid the cost and inconvenience of visiting a doctor or to obtain medications their doctors were unwilling to prescribe. People living in United States and other countries where prescription medications

are very expensive may turn to online pharmacies to save money. Many of the reputable websites employ their own in-house physician to review the medications request and write a prescription accordingly. Some websites offer medications without a prescription or a doctor review. This practice has been criticized as potentially dangerous, especially by those who feel that only doctors can reliably assess contraindications, risks/benefits ratios, and the suitability of a medications for a specific individual. Pharmacies offering medications without requiring a prescription and doctor review or supervision are sometimes fraudulent and may supply counterfeit and ineffective and possibly dangerous medicines.

Online pharmacies generally are the part of the retail industry. Online pharmacy mode of business is termed as e-commerce. Online pharmacy is like an online shop whereby consumers directly buy goods or services from a seller over the internet without an intermediary service. An online shop, e-shop, e-store, Internet shop, webstore, online store, or virtual store evokes the physical analogy of buying products or services at a bricks and mortar retailer or shopping centre. The process is called business to consumers online shopping. When a business buys from another business it is called business to business online shopping. Customers who generally purchases online must have access to computer and method of payment. In general, higher levels of educations, income and occupation of the head of household correspond to more favourable perceptions of shopping online. Also, increased exposure to technology increases the probability of developing favourable attitudes towards new shopping channels. In December 2011 study equation research found that 87% of the tablets users made an online transaction with their tablets device the early holiday shopping season.

Different firms adopt different strategies for marketing of their products. With the advancements of technology, the e-business is sprouting up. Many firms have extended their service area through use of internet to millions of consumers. Also, to be noted that in recent year's many firms had started doing business through online medium only. These are generally online firms.

1.2 Indian Online Retail Industry Today

In India retailing is one of the important pillars of economy and accounts for 13% of GDP. The retail industry is divided into organized and unorganized sectors. Organized retailing refers to trading activities undertaken by licensed retailers, that is, those who are registered for sales tax, income tax, etc. These include the corporate-backed hypermarkets and retail chains, and the privately owned large retail businesses. Unorganized retailing, on the other hand, refers to the traditional formats of low-cost retailing, for example, the local kirana shops, owner manned general stores, paan/beedi shops, convenience stores, hand cart and pavement vendors.

The retail business in India is currently at the point of inflection. Rapid change with investments to the tune of US\$ 25 billion is being planned by several Indian and multinational companies in the next 5 years. It is huge industries in terms of size and according to India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), it is valued at about US\$ 395.96 billion. Organised retail is expected to garner about 16-18 percent of the total retail market (US\$ 65-75 billion) in next 5 years.

In Indian now the e-commerce activities have spread across the country not only to the Metros but also to the prominent tier-II cities and towns which are witnessing a pickup in online retailing activities and increased transaction values. The global research and advisory firm Forrester's latest research report titled 'Asia Pacific Online Retail Forecast, 2011 to 2016, has noted that e-commerce in a rapidly growing market like India will grow at compound annual growth rate of 57% annually for the next four years. By 2016, Ecommerce sales will surpass \$ 8.8 billion. In 2012 itself, the e-commerce sales in India will surpass \$ 1 billion. The report has cited that rising consumers demand and increasing penetration of technology in India is the growth driver for e-commerce, which is here to stay.

In comparison local pharmacy shops which comes under Indian retail market is one of the major contributors in growth of the retail industry in India. The current pharmacy retail market size is estimated to be of US \$ 4.5 billion and it is expected to grow to US \$ 8.7 billion by 2010. Pharmacy retail is growing at the rate of 20-25% annually. The organised pharmacy retail chain is dominated by 12-15 big players. There are more than 3500 organised retail pharmacy outlets in India and it is expects to grow to 10,000 by the end of 2010. The organised pharmacy retail market is dominated by big industrial houses like Ranbaxy's (Fortis), Pantaloon(Tulsi), Reliance Retail's (Reliance Health and pharma) and Subhiksha as well as health care players like Apollo Hospitals Group's (Apollo Pharmacy), Medicine Shoppe, Zydus Cadila's (Dial for health), Sagar Drugs and pharmaceuticals (Planet Health), Morepan's (Life Springs), Lifetime Healthcare (Life ken), Global Healthcare (98.4), Guardian Lifecare's (Guardian pharmacy), MedPlus to name a few.

Current scenario of online retail pharmacies in India is that they are still very few in foreign nations the concept of online pharmacy is very popular. People generally purchase their prescription medicines through online retail pharmacies. Since about the year 2005, a growing number of internet pharmacies have been established worldwide. Many of these pharmacies are like community pharmacies, and in fact, many of them are operated by brick-and-mortar community pharmacies that serve consumers online and those that walk in their

door. The primary difference is the method by which the medications are requested and received. Some customers consider this to be more convenient and private method rather than travelling to the drug store where other customers might overhear about the drugs that they take. Internet pharmacies are also recommended to some patient by their physicians if they are homebound.

Challenges to online pharmacies in India:

- To operate legally online, pharmacies must be licensed in every state in which sales occur. Although online pharmacies provide benefits to consumers, when compared with traditional pharmacies patient's safety may be compromised.
- Purchasing prescription drugs online may pose a risk to consumers because they cannot tell whether the site is offering drugs of the same quality offered by a retail pharmacy.
- There is also a possibility that prescription drugs purchased online may be counterfeit, illegal or unapproved.
- Due to widespread anonymous and ever-changing nature of internet it is difficult to regulate the content on Internet. In India also, the regulation on Internet is not such which may curb the opening of illegal online pharmacies or stores.
- In community pharmacies or local pharmacy shops physical interaction with pharmacist is common with verification and clarification taking place, this is not the case with online pharmacies.

Different customers have different buying behaviour. Perception varies from consumers to consumer. In India the concept pharmacy is new. People now have different set of lifestyles. The growing internet business market has opened the opportunity gates for the establishments of online pharmacies. But what people will perceive and how they respond to the concept is measurable phenomenon. For any business to grow building relation is very important. By measuring perception of customers, to know whether the online pharmacy is a worthy idea or not is very important.

2. Literature Review

The study by Richard Francis Lowe and Dominic Montagu (Legislation, regulation and consolidation in the retail pharmacy sector in low-income countries; Southern Med Review Vol 2 Issue 2 sep 2009) in India two main pieces of legislation pertain to retail pharmacy, Drugs and cosmetics Act 1940 and Pharmacy Act 1948. In India the independent pharmacy chains, came into existence in 1997 and have grown after 2000. The study shows that in India there are around 1500-2000 pharmacies. Despite the tremendous interest in the area the expansion has slowed down due to increasing cost of retail real estate, overall shortage of qualified pharmacist and rising salaries. The retail chains growth in recent times has created friction with the individually owned pharmacies, prompting the latter to organise against the perceived threat from the large retailers.

According to a review from the article- Facts about Online Retail Pharmacy, Online Pharmacies are the easy ways to get drugs: In the present days, this is the new methods by which many people are purchasing medications. Online Pharmacies are very easy and convenient way of purchasing medications. Customers can enjoy many benefits when they order medicines from these online pharmacists. Many of these online retail stores offer medications at very low prices which is affordable by everyone.

In the article: Pharmaceutical distribution in India; Biopharm International www.biopharminternational.com September 2008, it is reported that organized retail pharmacies are in nascent stage in India. The organized retail pharmacies however retail system will help pharmaceutical companies to offer medicines at higher margins. According to report it is speculated that retailers may even be able to pass on the cost benefits to end users.

According to the report by McKinsey & Company, India pharma 2015: Unlocking the potential of Indian Pharmaceutical Market, in recent times the pharmaceuticals industry has shown high interest in India due to its sustained economic growth, healthcare reforms and patent related legislation. Real average household income in India has roughly doubled over the past two decades. In the meantime, the disease patterns in India have undergone a shift. The incidence of chronic disease has increased due to increased stressful lifestyle patterns. Due to change in income status and shifting disease patterns the total consumers spending on healthcare products and services grew at a CAGR of 14 % from 2000 to 2005. During this period the pharmaceutical industry grew at a CAGR of 9 %. From the study McKinsey has reported that if the growth of Indian economy continues, the pharmaceutical market will triple to USD 22 billion by 2019.

In the report: Improving online pharmacy experience by Kunal Puri and Parag Damle, Infosys, it is shown that online prescription drug sales clock over \$ 5.6 billion per year and are consistently growing at faster rate than in store sales. But still online drug sales constitute only a small percentage of overall prescription. Sales. The key factor for high volume of in stores sales is patient immediate need for medications, which can only be met in store. One of the important reason for the relatively lower online drug sales the inconvenience associated with most pharmacy retailer websites. According to this white paper online pharmacy customers are generally technology optimist who purchase other products and services online such as electronics, appeals. Most online pharmacies offer these functionalities like viewing of drugs information's and drugs interactions, ordering refills, scheduling of auto refills,

transferring prescription from other pharmacy chains, Offering Medicare plans. These websites are cumbersome to use, often overloaded with item and information. For improving online pharmacy retailing experience, retailers can provide value added services to the customers like customized offer for every customers according to his/her medical requirements, an online chat with the pharmacist's options, appointments scheduling with the pharmacists, manufacturing discount coupons, price match/lowest price guarantees. An improved online experience can enable customers to tap into desirable demographic of online customers.

The research article on: Study on the customer perception of planet health retail pharmacy chain store at Ahmedabad City by Sunil Patel, Himanshu Barot, Keyur Darji, Report that customers perceptions for the retail store includes many attributes. In case of retail store, store décor, and ambience The conclusion of the study shows that as far as CRM and store ambience is concern, they are managed properly, while the product range should extend vertically and horizontally. While testing the hypothesis, it was found that the customer perception towards planet health was on the positive side. Thus, the management is making the right moves towards better customer satisfaction.

According to the article Influencing Costumers perception of value and quality, marketing is one the most powerful forces today. It influences consumers purchase behaviour by solidifying the idea that such products are essentials to their daily lives. In additions to the encouraging brand loyalty marketing can also be in the important tool in influencing consumer perception of value and quality. Packaging is one of the such tool used by marketers to influence the customers perceptions. The emotional connections consumers have with the products attributes associated with the products which impact the customer perceptions towards a particular products and services.

According to the study conducted by the Rajesh Rajguru and Margaret: Consumers perception of the store and products attributes and its effects on consumers loyalty within the retails sectors, Store and products attributes determine consumers loyalty and product price negatively impact the costumer loyalty. Indian consumers are more concerned about the service quality, store convenience, products quality and availability of new products. According to study, retail managers must assure quality availability of new products to enhance customers loyalty.

3. OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the projects-

3.1 Primary objective:

- A study on consumer's perceptions towards online retail pharmacy.

3.2 Secondary objective:

- To assess the difference in the perception of male and female towards online retail pharmacy in India
- To assess the acceptability of concept of online pharmacy in India.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

Study Type: Cross Sectional study

Study Duration: Three Months.

Analysis Used Tool: MS-Excel

Data Collection Tool: Fully structured Questionnaire

Sampling Technique: Purposive Sampling

Sample Size: 200 respondents

5. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

6.1 Profile of Respondent- Education

Education has direct or indirect bearing on the lifestyle preferences and choices of an individual. Therefore, it is important to know details of highest level of education completed. The findings from the study reflects that-

Education	gender		total
highest level attained	Male	female	
high school	8	2	10
	6.15%	2.85%	5%
graduate	63	33	96
	48.4%	47.14%	48%
post graduate	59	35	94
	45.3%	50%	47%
total	130	70	200

6.3 Profile of Respondents-Occupation status

Occupational status determines the monetary decisions that an individual takes. The products and the mode of purchase depend on the financial capacity of individual.

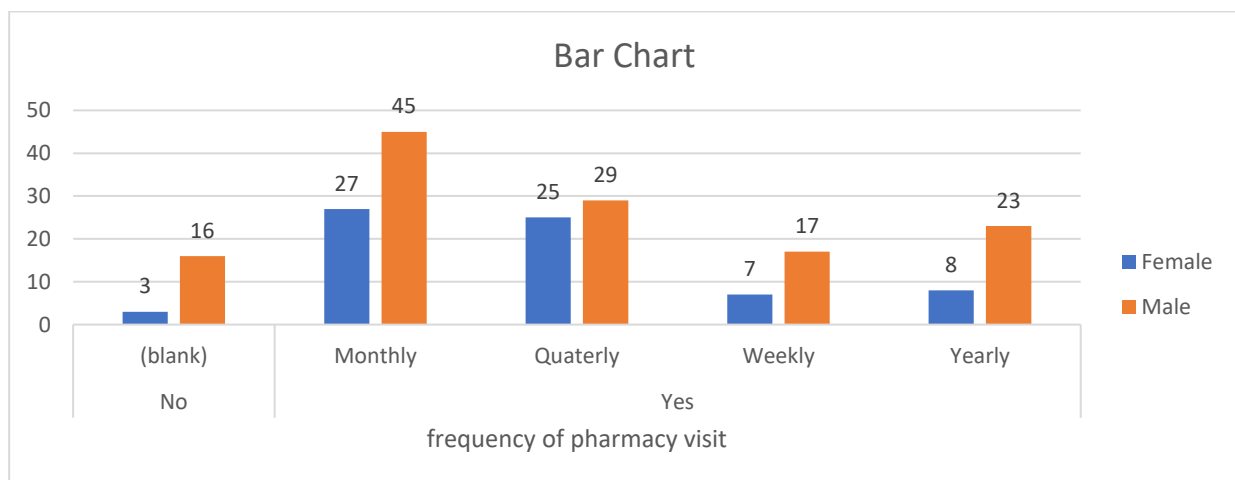
Researcher in his study tried to find different occupation in which the male and female respondents were engaged, and following results were found after analysis-

occupation	gender		total
	Male	female	
student	66	47	113
	50.7%	67.1%	56.5%
employed	62	23	85
	47.6%	32.8%	42.5%
business	2	0	2
	1.5%	0	1%
total	130	70	200

6.4 Have respondents ever purchased medicines - if yes, frequency of pharmacy visit

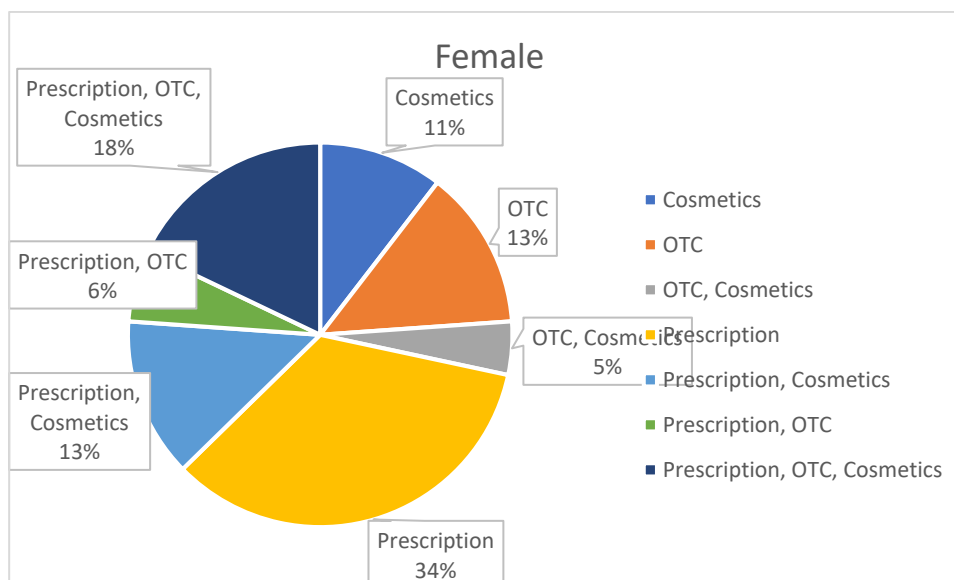
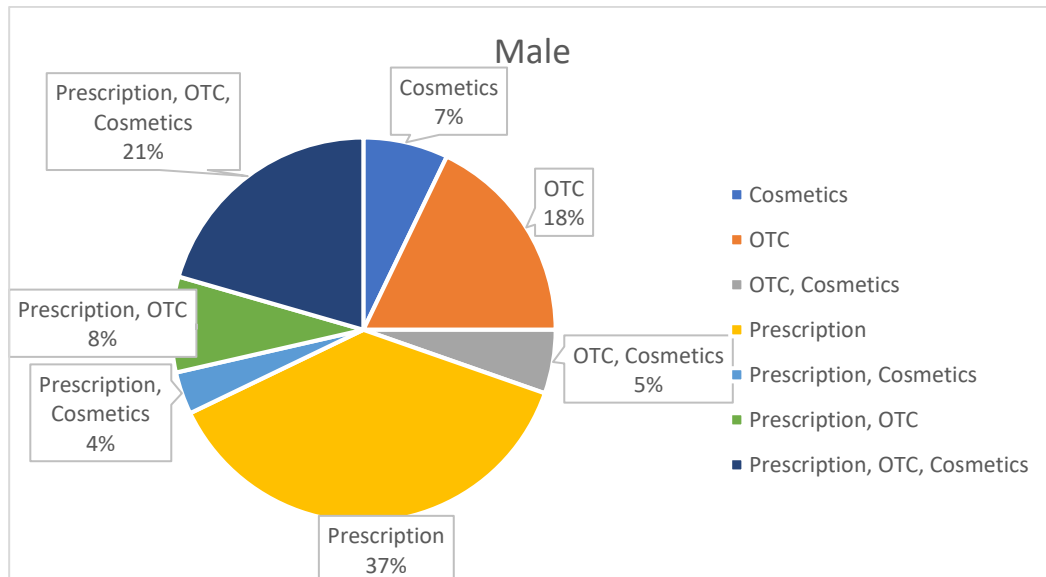
Pharmacies are the popular access point for drugs and health products in India. The no. of visits to a pharmacy store depends on the needs of individual, some buy in bulk for months while some buy in loose quantity. Researcher try to find out the pharmacy visit and purchased behaviour and the frequency of the same. The study reflects following results-

Frequency of pharmacy visit	gender		total
Yes	Male	female	
yearly	23	8	31
	17.6%	11.4%	15.5%
quarterly	29	25	54
	22.3%	35.7%	27%
monthly	45	27	72
	34.6%	38.5%	36%
weekly	17	7	24
	13%	10%	12%
No	16	3	19
total	130	70	200



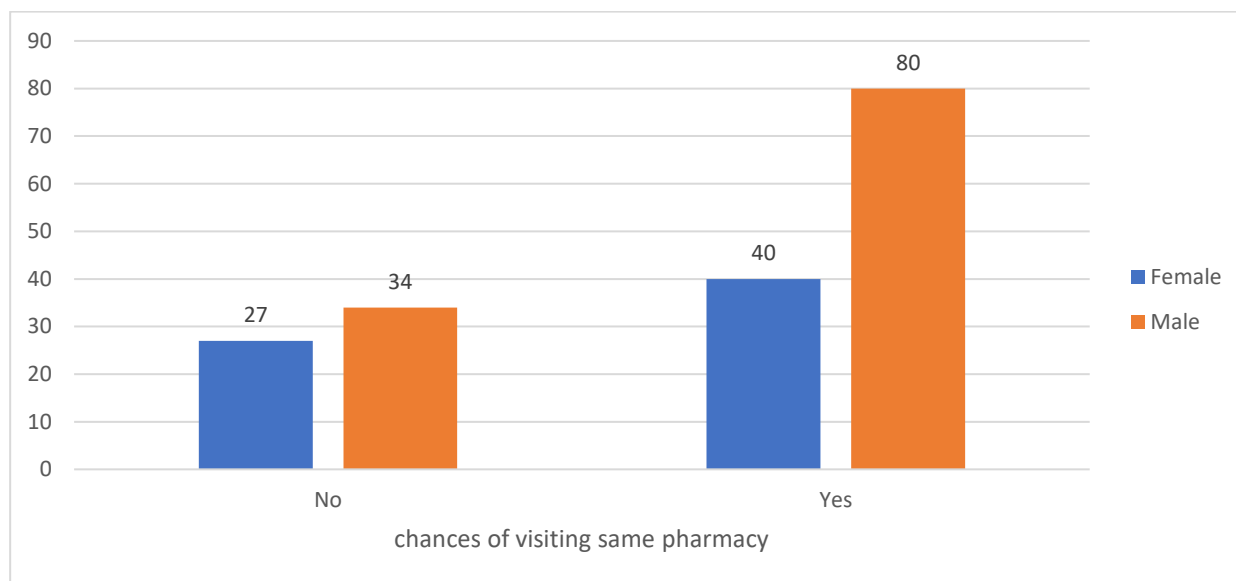
6.5 Category of medicines/ items purchased from pharmacy shops

Individual have different demand depending on their health needs. Researcher in his study tried to find out the category of drugs and items purchased by respondents from pharmacy shops. The study reflects that-



6.6 Frequency of visiting same pharmacy for every purchase

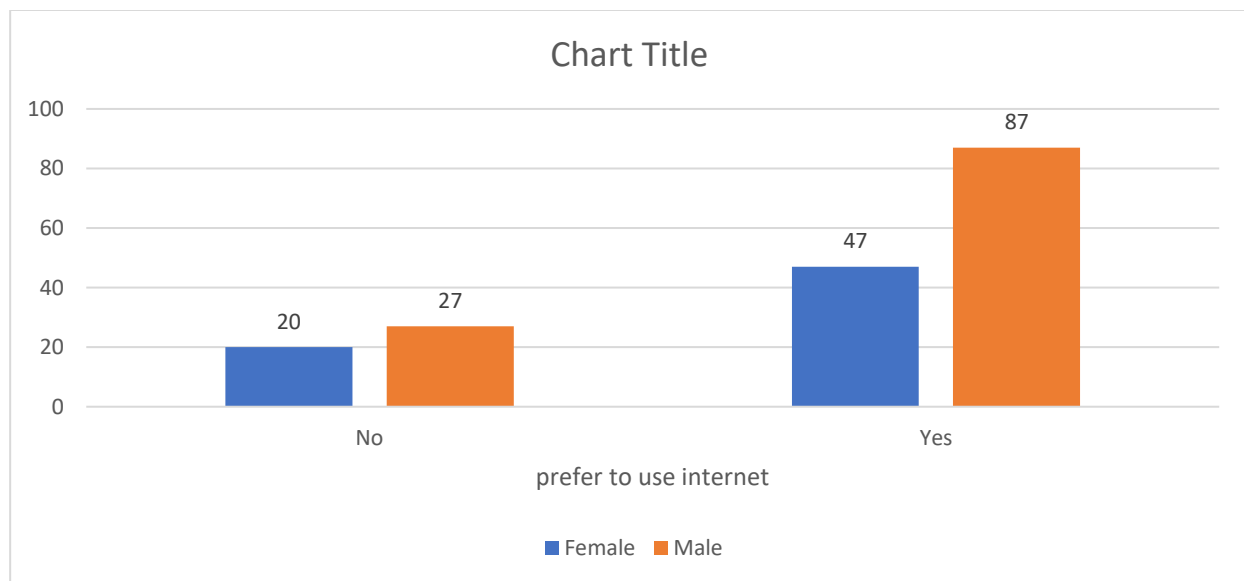
Individual generally go to the nearby pharmacy shop for the purchase. In some areas generally, single pharmacy shops are there, while in cities like Jaipur various pharmacy shops are available. The question was asked with the purpose to access the customer loyalty and flexibility of change. Researcher tries to find whether male and female differ in their perception towards selection of shops. The finding reflects that-



6.7 Prefer to use internet

With the advancement of technology, the penetration of internet has grown deeper. People use internet for different purposes. Researcher in this study tried to find extent of internet use by respondents. The study reflects that-

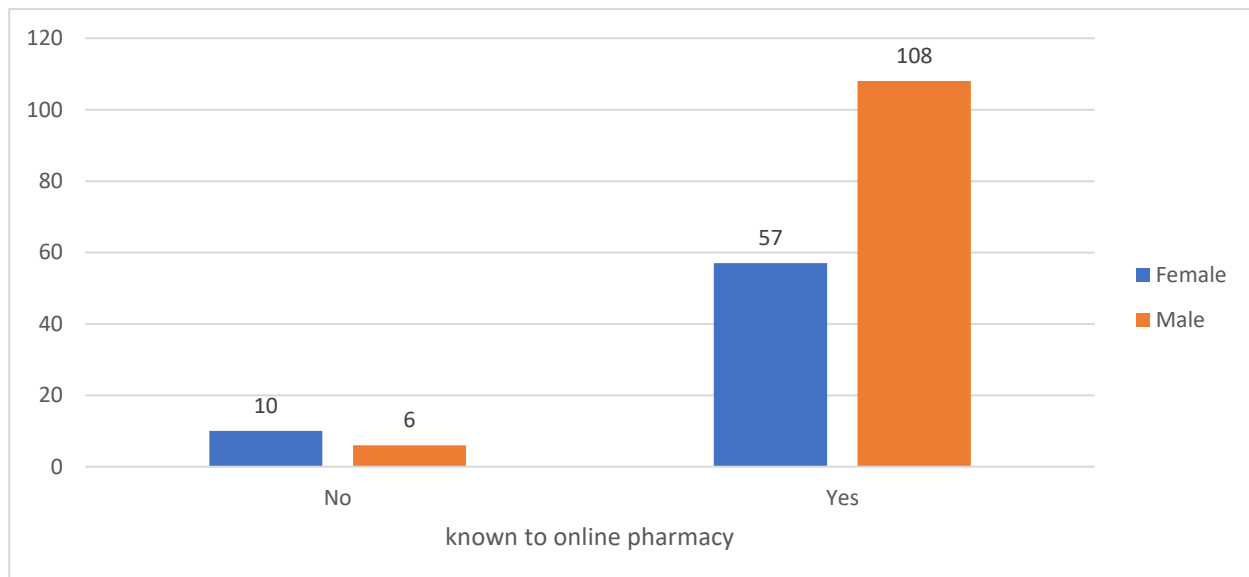
internet use	gender		Total
	Male	female	
YES	87	47	134
	76.3%	70.1%	74.03%
NO	27	20	47
	23.6%	29.8%	26%
Total	114	67	181



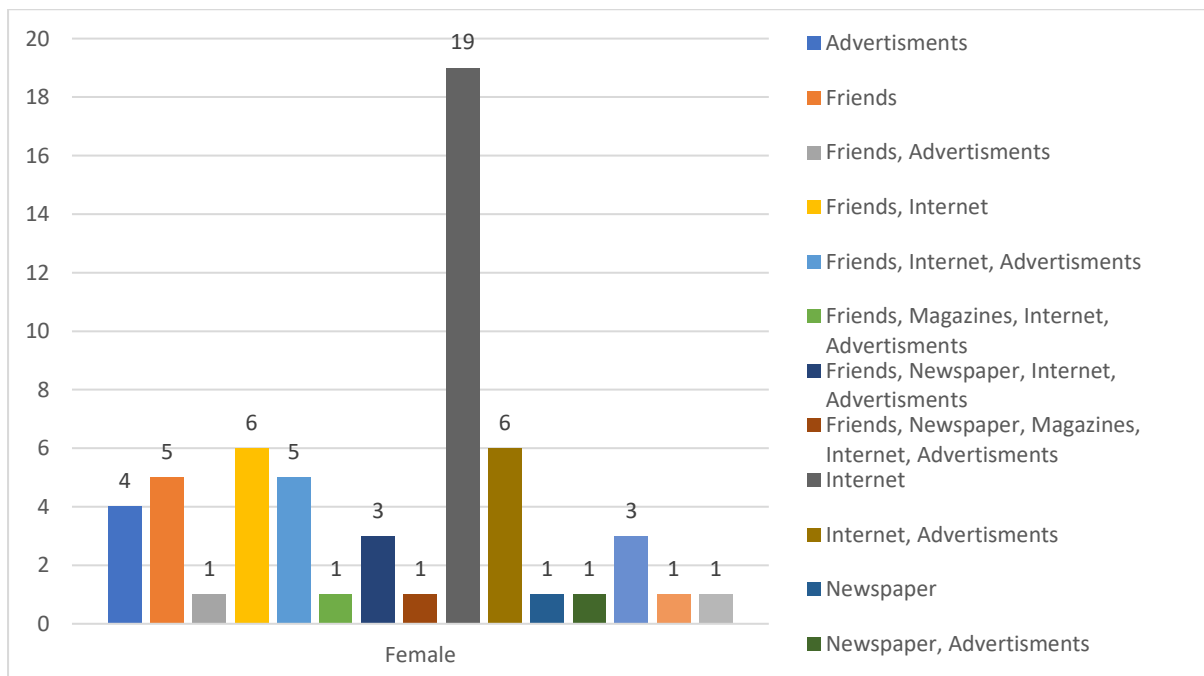
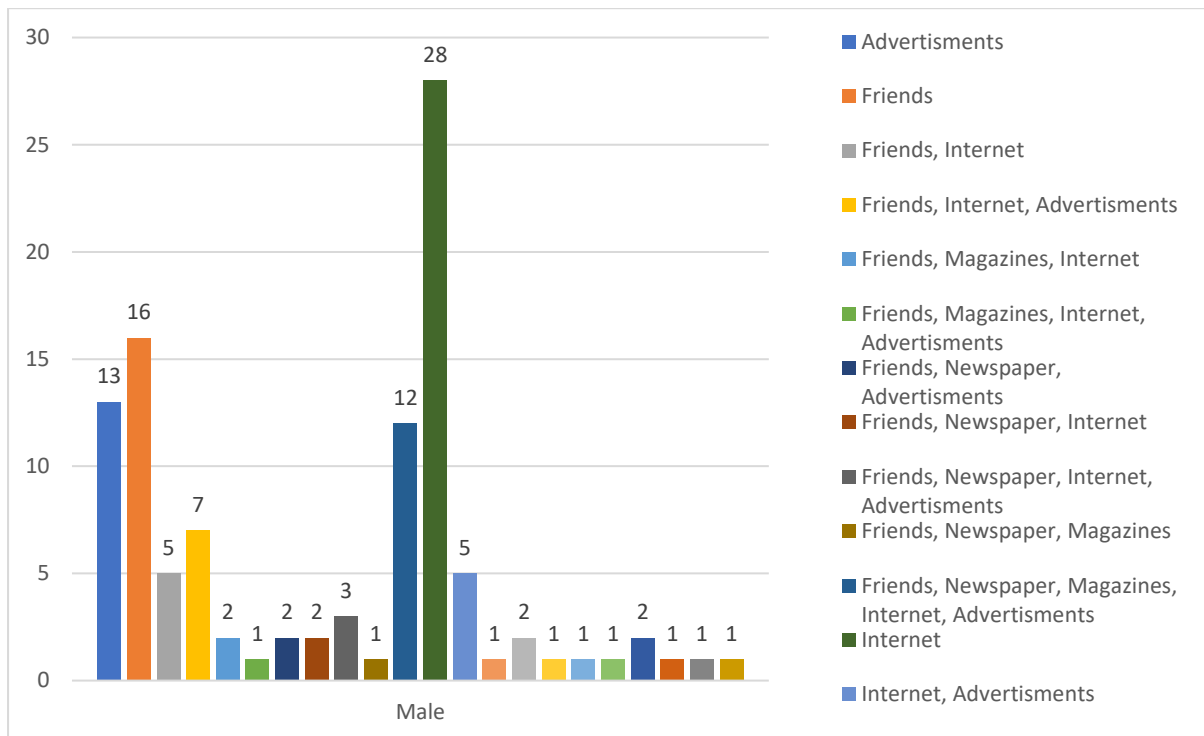
6.8 Is online pharmacies are known to respondents?

Online pharmacies are the online stores from where the customer can purchase drugs or other item using internet. Researcher in this study try to find that whether the respondents are aware of the online pharmacy store or not. The study reflects that-

Known to online pharmacy	gender		total
	Male	female	
YES	108	57	165
	94.7%	85%	91.1%
NO	6	10	16
	5.2%	14.9%	8.83%
Total	114	67	181



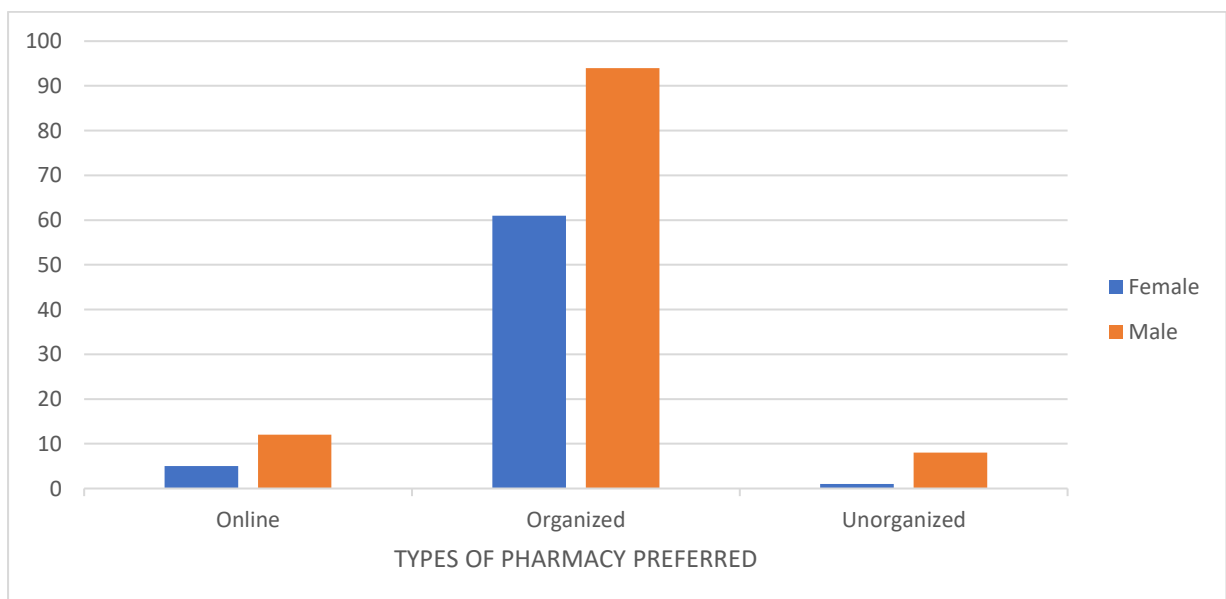
6.9 What medium you get to know about online pharmacy-



6.10 PHARMACY PREFERENCE

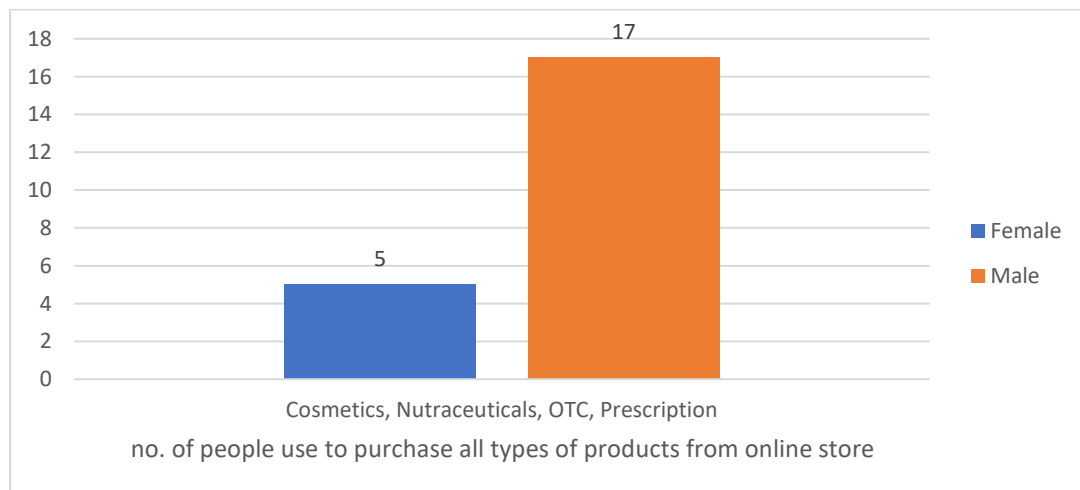
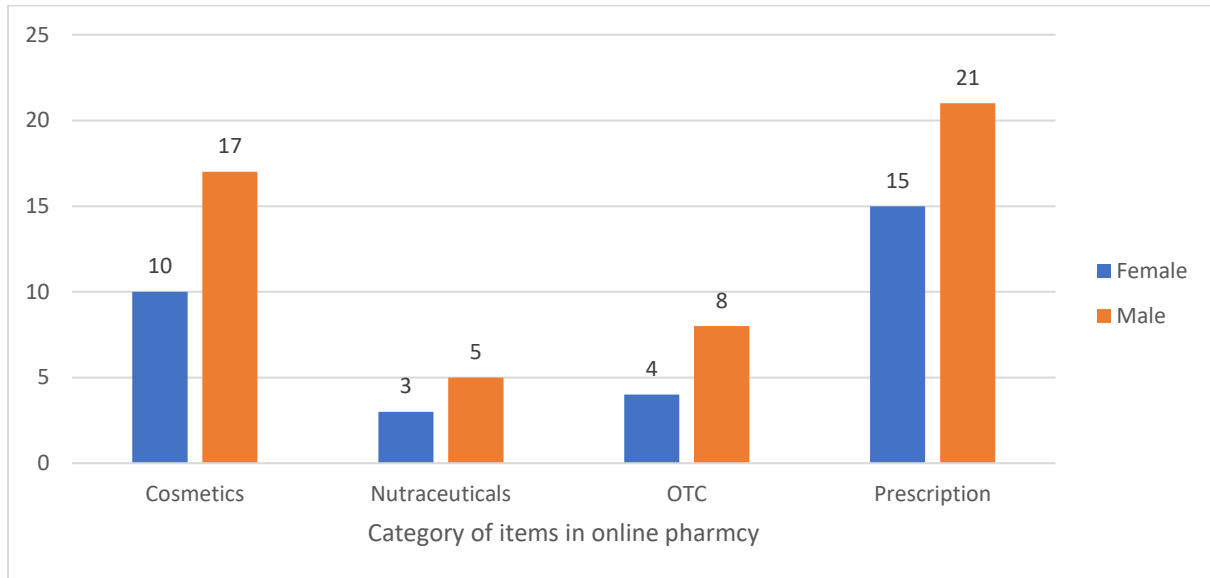
Individual may differ in their perception towards different pharmacy stores. Researcher in this study tried to find that there is any difference in male and female towards their preference of pharmacy. The study shows that -

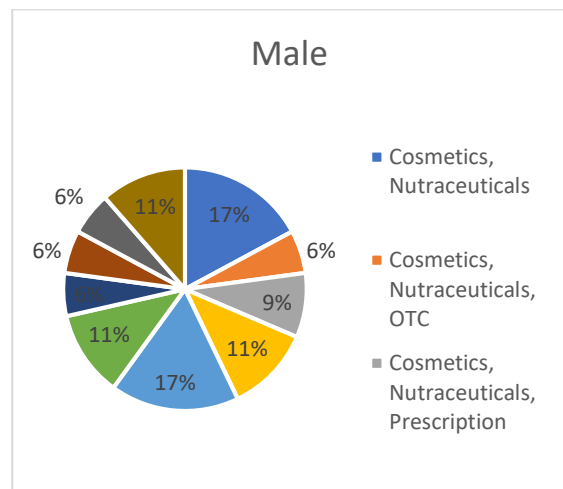
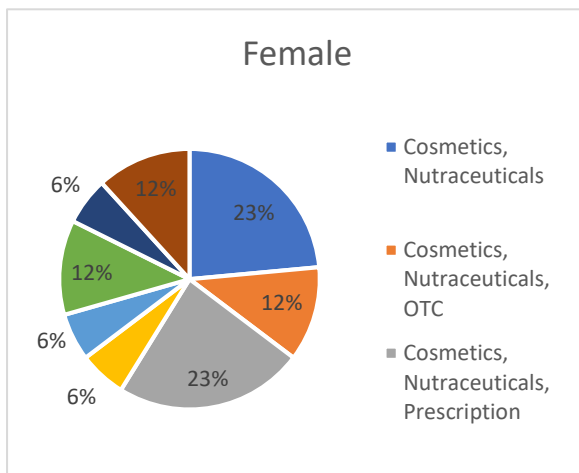
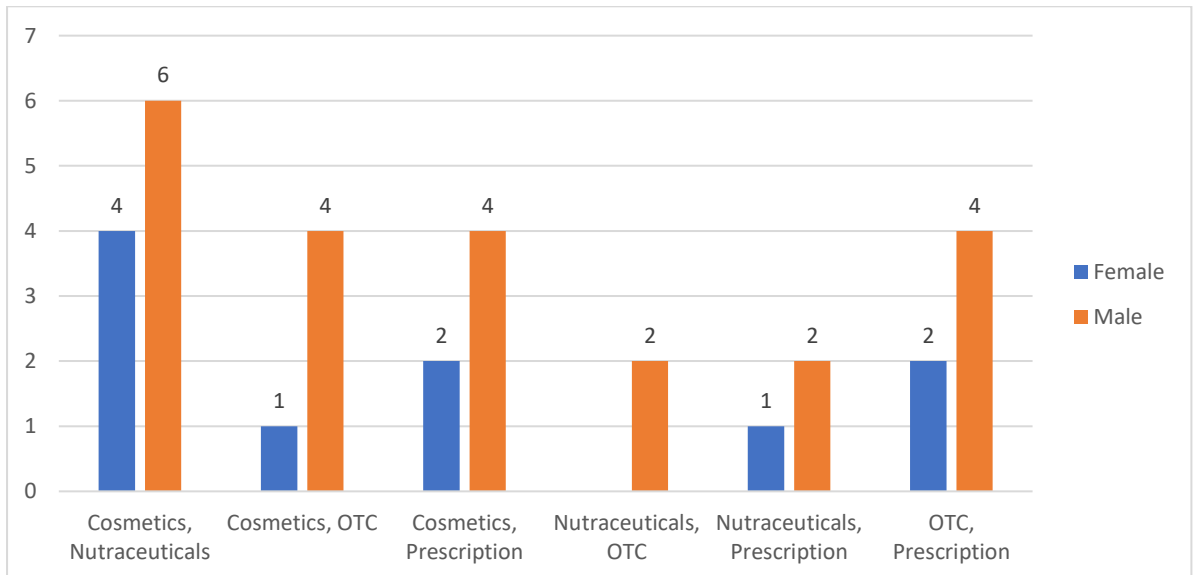
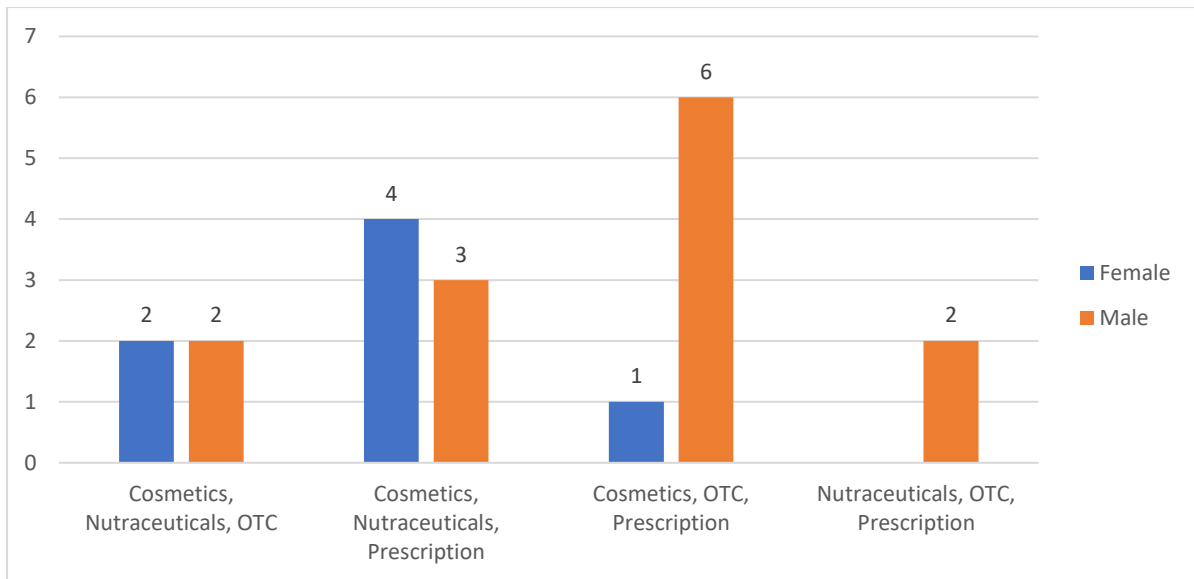
type of pharmacy	gender		Total
	male	female	
organised	94	61	155
	82.4%	91%	85.6%
unorganised	8	1	9
	7.01%	1.4%	4.9%
online	12	5	17
	10.5%	7.4%	9.3%
total	114	67	181



6.11 Products purchased from online pharmacy

A pharmacy stores have different drugs and product in the inventory. Online retail pharmacy must be having variety of products in inventory to fulfil the needs of different individual in India. Researcher in this study tried to find out different category of products male wants, and different products female wants in online pharmacy store inventory. The study reflects that-

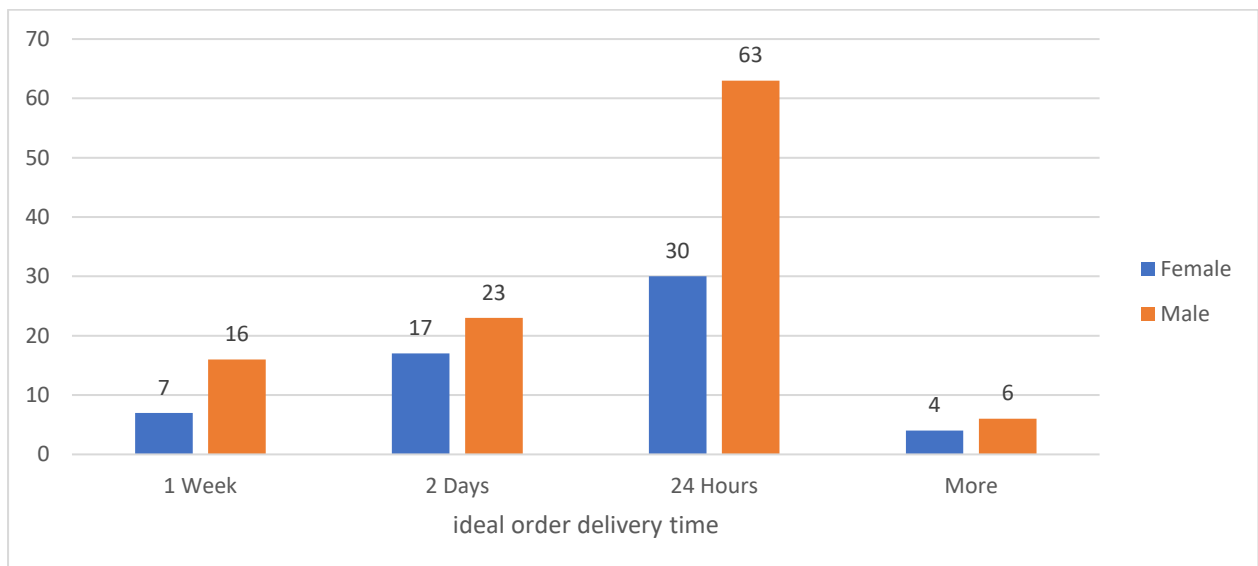




6.12 Ideal order delivery time of an online pharmacy

Individual want the product ordered through online portal within their desired delivery time. Delivery time depends on number of factors. Researcher in this study try to map the perception of male and female respondents with respect to delivery time from an online pharmacy store of the product order.

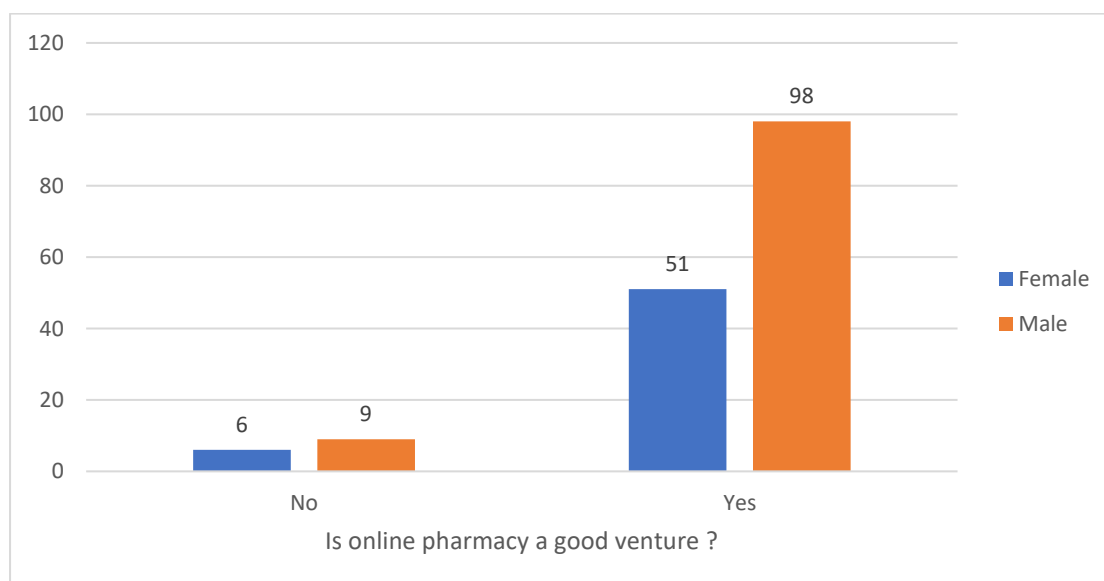
Ideal delivery time of the product	gender		Total
	male	female	
1 week	16	7	
	14.8%	12%	
2 days	23	17	
	21.2%	29.3%	
24 hours	63	30	
	58.3%	51.7%	
More	6	4	
	5.5%	6.8%	
total	108	58	166



6.13 Is online pharmacy a good venture

To start the successful venture, it is important to know what consumer want and what is the perception of consumer towards it. Researcher tried to find out that whether a online pharmacy is good in India. The study reflects that-

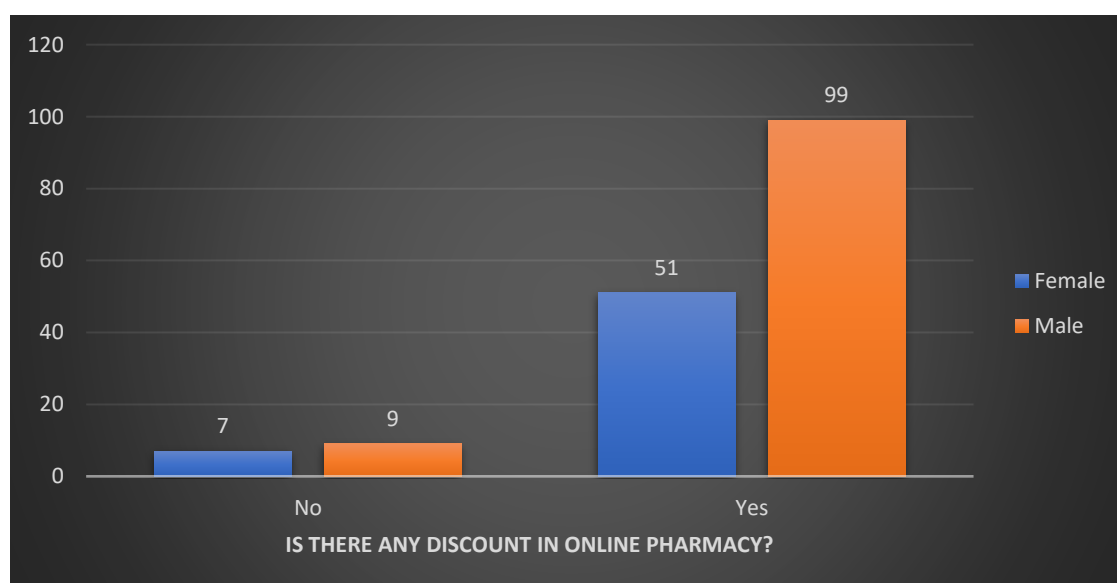
Is online pharmacy a good venture	Gender		total
	male	Female	
YES	91	50	141
	84.2%	86.2%	85%
NO	17	8	25
	15.7%	13.7%	15%
total	108	58	166



6.14 Is there any Discount on online pharmacy?

In many countries online pharmacy stores provide the medicines on discount to attract the customers. Online pharmacy being a new start in India researcher tries to found through his study that whether the concept of discount on online pharmacy is viable in India or not? The study reflects that-

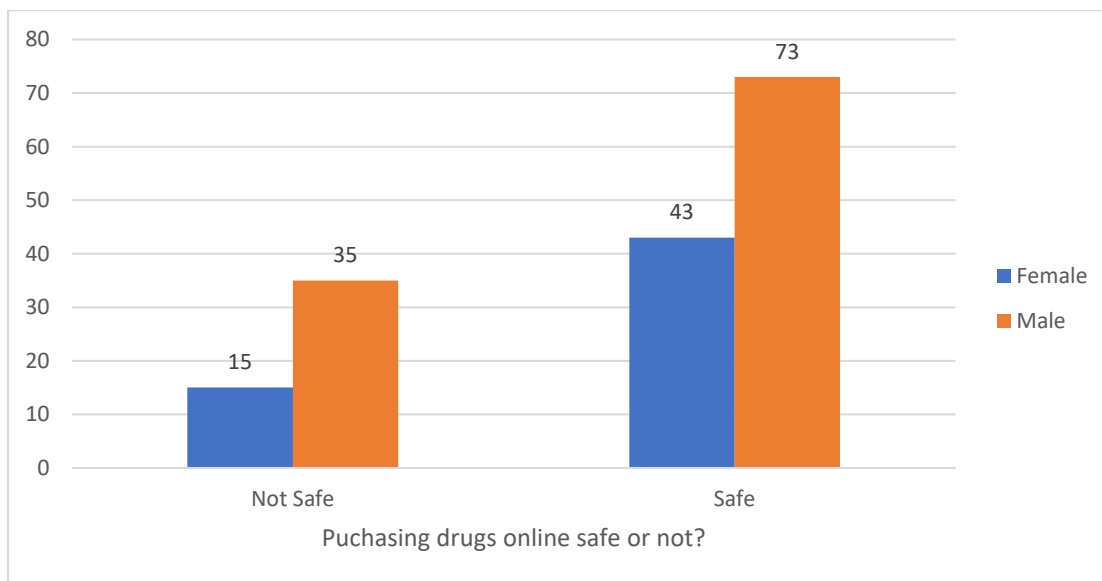
Discount in online pharmacy	gender		total
	male	female	
YES	99	51	150
	91.6%	87.9%	90.3%
NO	9	7	16
	8.3%	12%	9.6%
Total	108	58	166



6.15 Purchasing drugs online safe or not

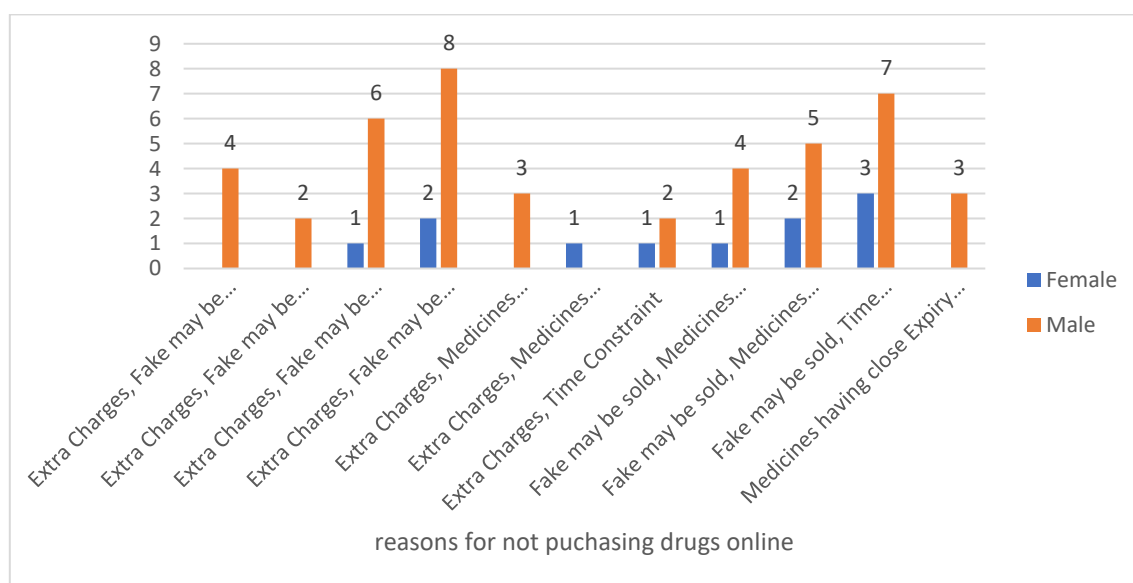
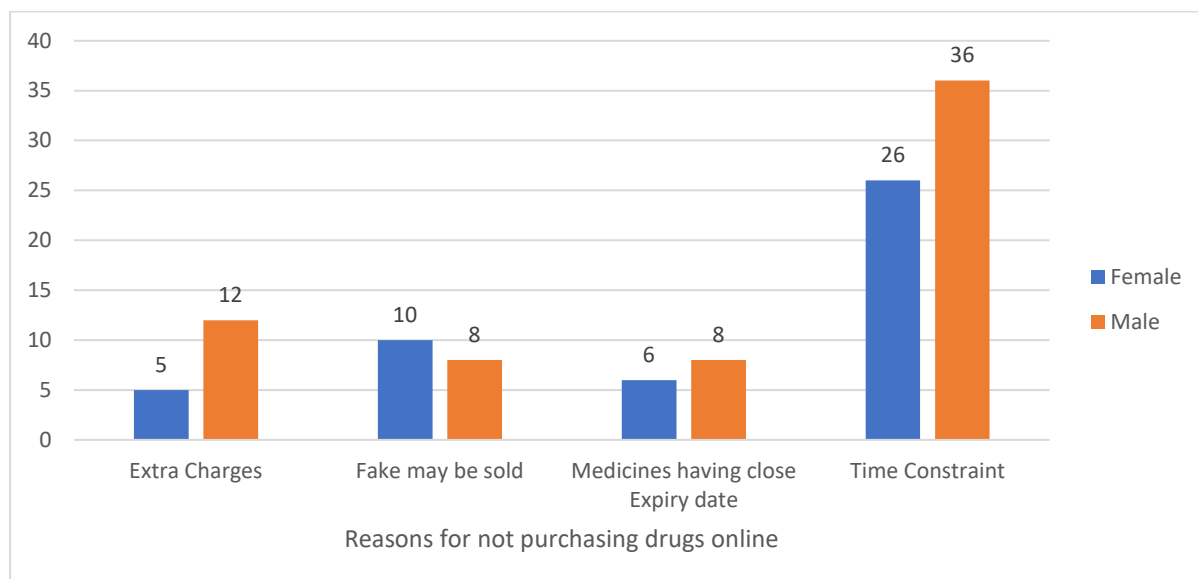
Online pharmacy generally does transactions through online portal only. Online transactions involve transfer of consumer financial and due to the same reason, many people are apprehensive about online transactions. Some fake online pharmacies also sell spurious and adulterated drugs. Researcher in this study tried to find out from the consumers that is according to them purchasing drugs online are safe or not safe. The study reflects that-

Purchasing drugs online	Gender		total
	Male	Female	
Safe	73	43	116
	67.5%	74.1%	69.8%
not safe	35	15	50
	32.4%	25.8%	30.1%
total	108	58	166



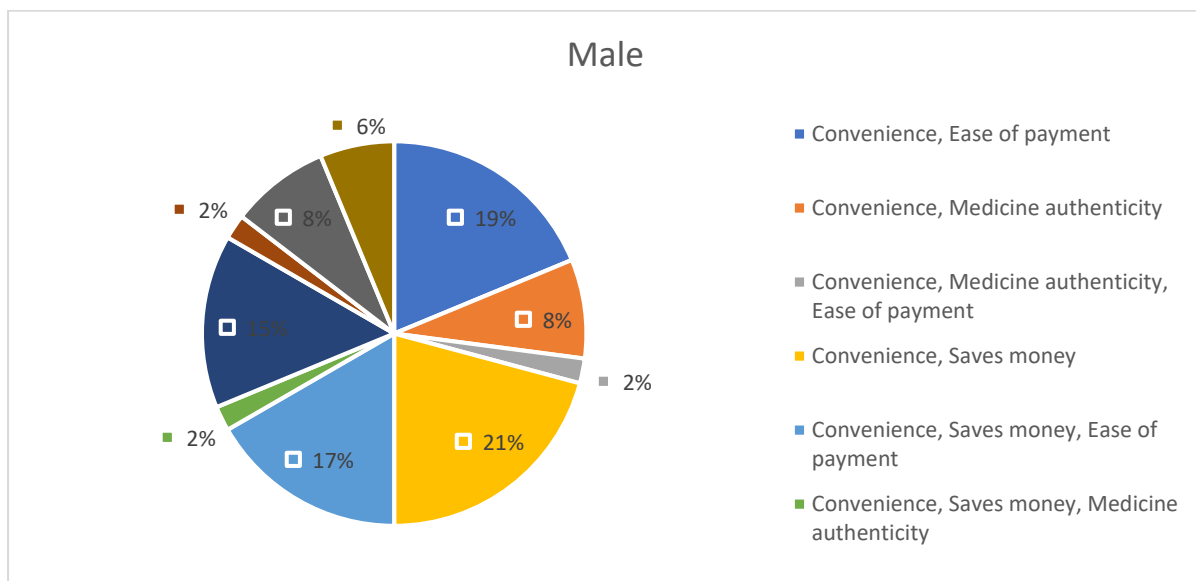
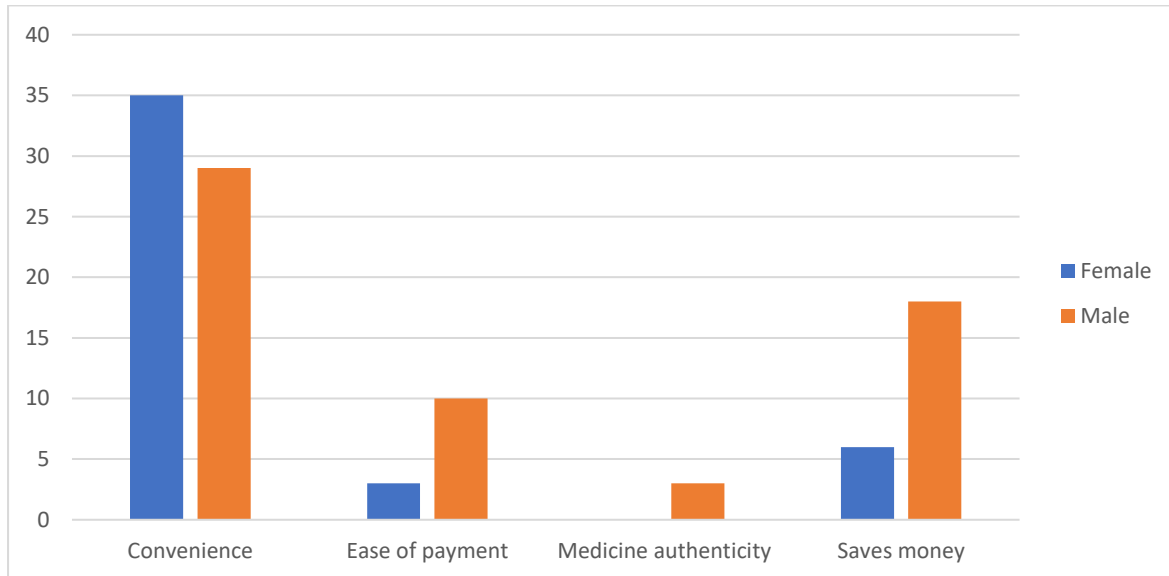
6.16 Reasons for not purchasing drugs online

Individual have different opinion for same thing. Purchasing drugs online is considered safe by some and some consider it not safe. Researcher in this study tried to know the reasons why people are not interested in online pharmacy.

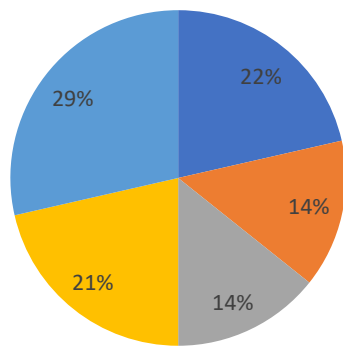


6.17 Benefits from online retail pharmacy

Consumer always seek benefit from the point of purchase in terms of discount, offers and others. Researcher in this study try to assess the benefits consumers get from online retail pharmacy. The study shows that-



Female



- Convenience, Ease of payment
- Convenience, Medicine authenticity
- Convenience, Saves money
- Convenience, Saves money, Ease of payment
- Convenience, Saves money, Medicine authenticity, Ease of payment

6. CONCLUSION

- Both male & female respondents visit pharmacy shops and frequency of visiting pharmacy shop by most of the sample population was found to be once a month.
- Male usually go to local pharmacy shops for purchase of prescription & OTC drugs while female usually visit to pharmacy shops for purchase of cosmetics also along with medical items.
- Internet is used by almost all the respondents.
- Male & female respondents who know about online retail pharmacy were less as it being a new concept.
- Both male & female respondents preferred visiting local pharmacy rather than visiting online pharmacy but out of those who preferred online pharmacy female were more as compared to males.
- Along with prescription & OTC drugs female respondents want cosmetics in the inventory of online retail pharmacy whereas male respondents want health products along with prescription & OTC drugs.
- Almost all respondents think that online pharmacy will be a good venture which shows the acceptability of online pharmacy.
- Female respondents showed more interest in purchasing drugs online considering it safe in comparison to male respondents.
- Fake drugs, extra charges, quality issues, credibility & reliability were the factors for considering online purchase of drug being not safe.
- 24*7 delivery, emergency services, offers, discount, cheaper drugs, expert advice are some of the important benefits male & female respondents think an online pharmacy should provide & increase the acceptability of online pharmacy.

7. SUGGESTIONS

- Awareness about online pharmacy & its user-friendly interface should be given to people so that acceptability increases among end user.
- Govt. should establish a regulatory body to regulate & monitor the all the aspects related to online pharmacies in India.
- In case of wrong delivery & other cases which include refund to consumer, proper refund policies should be drafted by site for the consumer interest in their SOP's.
- Option of interaction with expert & company personal should be there on monthly or weekly basis.
- Feedback mechanism should be there on the site so consumer perception about the services offered can be mapped & improvements can be made accordingly.
- Satisfaction level of consumer should be measured time to time, so the changing in strategy can improve accordingly.
- 24*7 services, low cost drugs, at Right time, Right Quantity, Right Place delivery to consumer, COD, expert advice at all-time are some services should be there & it can increase the survival chances.

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