

THE POWER OF CONVERSATIONS: DIGITAL H2H MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR OTC DRUGS IN INDIA

Dissertation Submitted to



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Master of Business Administration (MBA)

in

Pharmaceutical Management

by

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Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr. Sudhinder Singh Chowhan

2025

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Ashutosh Kumar Gupta** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Pharmaceutical Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur has successfully completed her/his internship at IIHMR University, Jaipur during Mar 10 - May 31, 2025.

Place: *Jaipur*
Date: *12.06.2025*



Preceptor/Head of the Organization
Name of the organization

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation, titled **The Power of Conversations: Digital H2H Marketing Strategies for OTC Drugs in India** is the bonafide record of my original research work. I declare that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.

Ashutosh Kumar Gupta
(Signature)

Ashutosh Kumar Gupta

June 12, 2025

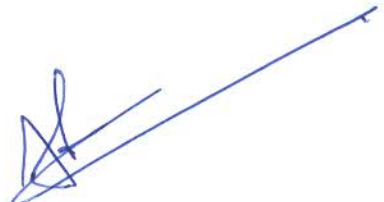
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that dissertation titled **The Power of Conversations: Digital H2H Marketing Strategies for OTC Drugs in India** is a record of the research work undertaken by **Ashutosh Kumar Gupta** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Pharmaceutical Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur under my guidance and supervision and his approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.

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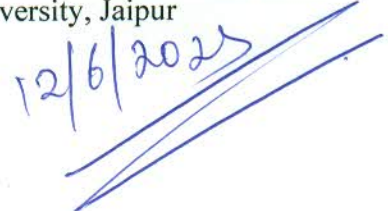
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ABSTRACT

TITLE: “The Power of Conversations: Digital H2H Marketing Strategies for OTC Drugs in India.”

Objectives

The goal of this research is to explore the strategic importance of digital Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing in growing the OTC pharmaceutical market in India... The main objectives are:

1. To evaluate the impact of digital H2H marketing strategies on consumer trust and brand loyalty.
2. To assess consumer behavior and preferences in response to digital marketing engagement.
3. To analyze the role of social media in influencing OTC drug purchase decisions.

Methodology

A mixed-methods research design was used to provide an in-depth understanding of the research problem. Online survey quantitative data were collected from 200 respondents, while qualitative data were collected using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with consumers and pharmaceutical marketing professionals. Surveys used convenience sampling, while purposive sampling was used for qualitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel, while qualitative responses were subject to thematic analysis. The study population included Indian consumers 18 years of age and older who had purchased OTC drugs in the past six months, excluding health care professionals, to reduce bias.

Key Results

The results support both of the hypotheses. There was a strong positive correlation between the extent of digital engagement and the levels of consumer trust (mean score: 3.2) and brand loyalty (mean score: 3.6). Consumers who perceived brand communication as authentic were more likely to trust and be loyal to that brand. Over 61% would be likely to repurchase the OTC product after viewing the digital marketing content. The influence of social media was considerable, even more so among younger users (18–24 years), with 42% stating they had purchased an OTC item after viewing it on Instagram or Facebook. Customer reviews (58%) and expert articles (33%) were the consumers' preferred types of content, which influenced their decision-making. Men's

purchase motivation was more influenced by brand trust and effectiveness, while women were influenced by family and friends.

Conclusion

The research has determined that digital H2H marketing serves as an effective tool for building consumer trust, increasing brand loyalty, and shaping purchase behaviour for India's OTC pharmaceuticals. Personalisation, authenticity, and emotional connection are key elements of effective consumer engagement in the digital context. Social media is particularly noteworthy here, especially when used in conjunction with credible and transparent messaging. The research provides practical implications for marketers in moving from transactional relationship engagement to more relational human-centric engagements. Finally, as a contribution to knowledge, the research draws attention to the importance of a unified regulatory structure regarding ethical best practices in relation to digital marketing in the pharmaceutical industry. Future research can examine longitudinal effects, rural markets, and AI-enabled personalisation in OTC marketing.

Key Words

Human-to-Human Marketing, OTC Drugs, Consumer Trust, Social Media Engagement, Digital Pharmaceutical Strategy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Indian pharmaceutical industry is presently going through a unique transformation due to significant shifts in consumer behaviors, technological advancements, and the heightened need for cost-effective, accessible healthcare. Among all of this fast-changing environment is the Over-the-Counter (OTC) medicine market, which is defined as products available to consumers with no need for a physician's order, which is the most vibrant and rapidly changing segment of that industry. As people's awareness of health increases and they become more digitally savvy, their ways of gaining information, interacting with brands, and making healthcare-led decisions are rapidly changing.

India's Over-the-Counter (OTC) pharmaceutical industry is growing rapidly as it is projected to grow to ~₹74,000 crores INR in 2024 and about ₹1,57,000 crores INR in 2030 with a CAGR of 14%. The relevant factors behind this strong growth are greatly attributed to varying social and economic drivers, such as urbanization, growing per capita disposable income, and increased societal awareness of self-care. At the same time, it is worthwhile to note that the market is also being impacted by consumers increasingly purchasing medicines from online stores. The COVID-19 pandemic has also influenced the market as it has sped up the growth of this market by emphasizing the need for personal hygiene, the importance of supplements for immunity, and the intent to act more proactively regarding preventive healthcare. India's demographics show that addressing common issues, such as finding relief for a headache or cold, have a considerable number of the consumer base looking to OTC products for convenient access, allowing for self-care treatment instead of a visit to a physician.

The rapid development of the OTC pharmaceutical sector in India is complex, driven by a combination of urbanization, rising disposable incomes, increased awareness of self-care, and increasingly prevalent connections to digital ecosystems for consumers. Today's consumers no longer simply purchase products in a transactional relationship; they are seeking comprehensive solutions, are demanding evidence-based credibility, and expect personalized experiences tailored to their specific health needs and lifestyle issues. As a

result, marketers must adopt more human-centered, humane, and conversational-oriented marketing strategies. Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing is becoming an important way to tackle this evolving consumer landscape, by offering authentic human interaction, emotional connection and shared values as the basis for brand communication. Somewhat separate from traditional Business-to-Business (B2B) or Business-to-Consumer (B2C) marketing pathways, H2H marketing provides consumers the ability to build relations, promote trust and be assured with authentic interactions. In the specialized world of pharmaceutical marketing, especially with OTC products, H2H principles are particularly relevant as consumers need conclusive assurance about the authenticity and credibility of the information they are using to make decisions on their health and wellness.

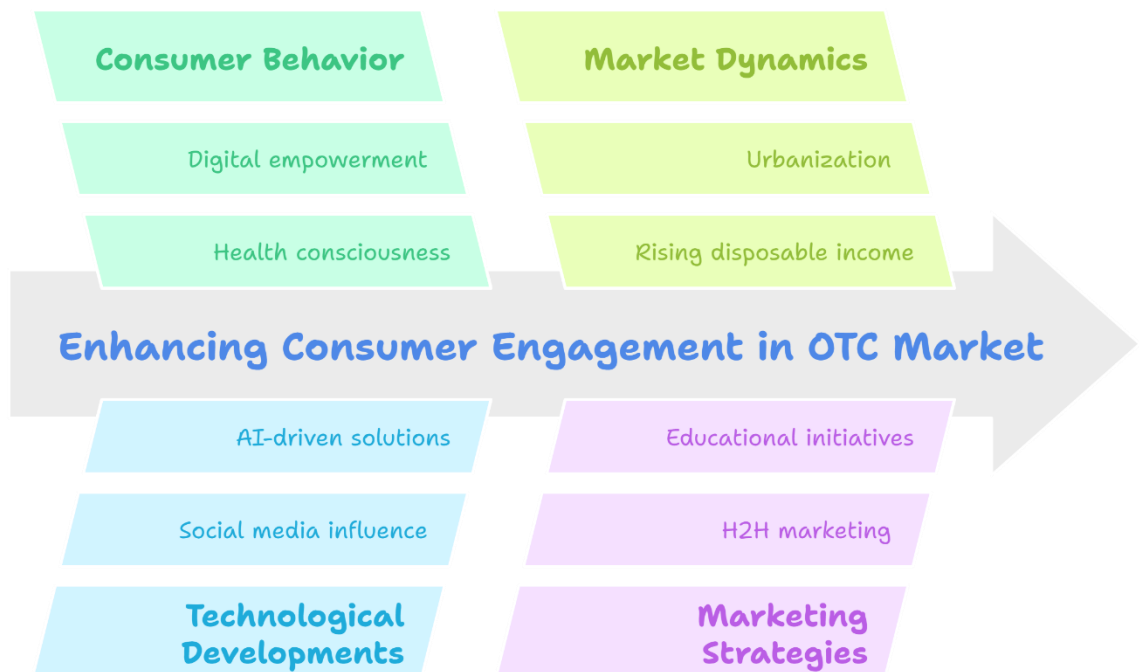
The wide-spread use of digitalization has made it possible for pharmaceutical companies to use H2H marketing strategies like never before. A wide-ranging selection of digital channels and tools (e.g. social media, influencer marketing, mobile health apps, SEO, content marketing, AI/personalization, etc) are now the norm in pharmaceutical marketing. These digital channels allow for immediate interactions, enhanced feedback loops, and targeted content delivery, which means messages can be tailored based on unique consumer interests, behaviors, and health conditions.

In a context engulfed in self-diagnosis and self-treatment, OTC drug companies need to elevate the paradigm from product marketing to educating and empowering consumers. OTC drug companies can align their commercial and public health objects through digital H2H strategies while simultaneously providing value that creates meaningful relationships with consumers and delivering real-time and relevant guidance to help people take responsibility for their decisions and usage of OTC products.

Entitled "Power Talks: Digital H2H Marketing Strategies for OTC Drugs in India," this dissertation aims to thoroughly investigate how pharmaceutical companies can adopt digital H2H marketing frameworks to build brand credibility, improve consumer engagement, and create positive changes in purchase behavior of OTC drugs in India. The study will also examine current trends, best practices, and obstacles related with the

strategies in the Indian socio-cultural and economic context while addressing the applicable regulatory frameworks and ethical issues in pharmaceutical communication.

Digital H2H Marketing Strategies for OTC Drugs in India



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Rahul Maurya *et al.*** reported that This study investigates the effectiveness of information and promotion in the digital marketing sphere and, more importantly, the significance of this for Indian pharmaceutical companies operating in the Over-the-Counter (OTC) products market. In light of digital technologies and their transformative impact on consumer behavior and the marketplace, investigating the effect of information and promotion strategies on the specific market and competitiveness of the OTC product sector is of strategic importance. My study aims to clarify the complex interplay between information sources, contemporary practices of promotion, and the pervasive role of digital channels. Through a rigorous and thorough approach, my research aims to discover and define best practices for Indian pharmaceutical companies to navigate the complex digital environment and promote OTC products. The primary aim for the companies is to provide actionable recommendations for pharmaceutical companies not just to adapt in the ever-evolving digital space and achieve and maintain sustainable competitive advantage in the increasingly complex, Indian OTC market, thus promoting consumer engagement and commercial growth.
2. **Prof. Lalitkumar Bhole *et al.*** reported that Pharmaceutical companies are competing strenuously to keep pace with the change brought about by digital technologies. Cloud, big data analytics, mobile communication, and Internet of things are some of innovations that are beginning to revolutionize the healthcare sector. A digital wave is washing over the \$17 billion Indian pharmaceutical industry and companies are dumping old ways of marketing for newer technology, Both patients and doctors are now moving more towards online media for fulfilling information needs. Web applications for the internet, Medical site, E – Detailing, eCMEs (electronic continuing medical education) / Webinars Hybrid, Search engine optimization puts pharma at a center of digital revolution, with the opportunity to play in expanded marketing role. Traditional detailing task are more simplified with technology with newer algorithms and expositions to give more insight into such issues as patient compliance. Companies are trying to improve their online capabilities as many of their clients will be doing likewise space. Almost all the top names in the pharmaceutical world have, setting up digital platform for ease to patient, doctors and practitioners to take the

opportunity, Companies establish trust with the doctors as well as patients since much is required in terms of recreating industry perception.

3. **Dr. Tausif Alam *et al.*** reported that The urge for provision and signals in pharmaceutical marketing has unfolded a different way to do business in that space. This paper will explore the promising new strategies that are being reshaped with an increasing competition to get into the market and get consumers' reception and minds; however, in highly contested environments like this there are unfortunately not only trends in the industry, but challenges and opportunities. This research paper will attempt to offer some valuable guidance provided to pharmaceutical companies as they trip through regulatory minefields, take advantage (or will not) or some digital and social platform, or develop a more engaged and importance-see-the-company - for potential more engagement. This research will focus on the new ideas: like many, specifically of real-time, hyper-specialized and personal marketing tactics, and big data choices, artificial intelligence for accelerating some sales during regulations and ethical as opposed to no interim change. Finally, this paper will demonstrate that engagement, innovation and agility to continuously evolve for continuous change in the market place will ensure that pharmaceutical companies have an opportunity for relative distinct advantage while engaging in sustainable long-term growth skilled marketplace for the sale and marketing for the profit.
4. **Ashish Yadav *et al.*** reported that This study provides a formal comparison of the marketing strategies utilized for prescription (Rx) and Over-the-Counter (OTC) drugs. This is more than a cursory comparison; this study looked at the specific distribution models of each segment, targeted consumer markets, the limiting factors as a result of the legal and regulatory framework, and overall marketing strategy and execution methods employed in each segment. Using examples of illustrative cases, case studies in depth, and relevant industry data, this analysis will examine the comparative effectiveness of the two different marketing strategies. Effectiveness will be reviewed in terms of performance measures, including the ability to generate revenues and effect consumer and patient behaviors, including adherence to treatment regimens with Rx products and informed self-medications with OTC products. Ultimately, this research intends to

provide the data needed for the pharmaceutical industry to use the evidence in evaluating marketing model design for prescription pharmaceuticals—which tend to follow a 'Business-to-Business-to-Consumer' (B2B2C) model through healthcare professionals—as well as for OTC products in which a Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) strategy is employed. This knowledge is meant to provide direction in-pharmaceutical marketing in structuring more effective and sophisticated marketing models, thereby creating opportunities to grow the market and generate income simultaneously providing better health outcomes for both patients as well as consumers.

5. **Arjun Jaiswal *et al.*** reported that India's OTC healthcare market is witnessing an unnatural growth trajectory with projections indicating it will attain USD 11. The projected figure for 2026 stands at 62 billion. The emergence of higher disposable incomes combined with growing health consciousness and the expansion of the middle class drives this growth. An intricate assortment of products exists within the market to address multiple needs including pain relief and dietary supplementation. This expansion emerges from multiple influences including increased health awareness, evolving lifestyles, and regulatory reforms that enhance quality and access. The e-commerce expansion extends product availability into broader markets. The process of comprehending market dynamics necessitates dividing it into distinct segments based on product categories, distribution channels, and geographical regions. The group of essential market participants consists of international corporations alongside local enterprises. The requirements of effective marketing within this multifaceted environment demand intricate strategies. Effective strategies need to analyze target audience demographics while simultaneously building brand trust through both traditional and digital channels and ensuring product quality and safety standards. The importance of implementing digital marketing techniques alongside omnichannel approaches while targeting rural markets cannot be overstated. Engaging healthcare professionals in collaborative efforts alongside stakeholder participation remains essential. The examination of market conditions through the SWOT framework discloses numerous strengths including increasing health consciousness and established business foundations. distribution networks and weaknesses (low brand awareness, limited rural reach). The potential for business growth exists in unexplored rural markets alongside the increasing prevalence of

chronic diseases and the expansion of e-commerce platforms. Intense competition, counterfeit products, and regulatory modifications represent significant threats.

6. **A.Kaur *et al.*** reported that this review is an exemplary piece of academic scholarship, critically examining the essential interface of brand image and consumer behavior in the Over-the-Counter (OTC) pharma market. Its rigorous design involved a "systematic approach" synthesis of literature from 2000-2022, initially collecting roughly 200 articles from disparate databases like ResearchGate, Google Scholar, PubMed, and Science Direct using specific keywords like "Over-the-counter drugs," "Brand Image," and "Consumer Behavior." A strict screening reduced this to 40 main papers, which were then subjected to full and close reading in order to establish whether or not conclusions rested upon high-quality evidence, significantly boosting the validity of the findings. The review defined "brand image" in the OTC context not merely as a logo, but as a multi-component, complex, holistic impression in the consumer's mind made up of perceived efficacy and safety, trusting the manufacturer and brand, packaging distinctiveness and information content, brand persona, and price-value perception. It empirically proved a strong, direct association between these brand image components and consumers' "purchase intentions" and resultant "consumer buying behavior" like brand choice and loyalty. Above all, the analysis reinforced the "mediation role of attitude," where brand image motivates consumer behavior by first organizing their overall evaluative feeling—or "attitude"—toward the OTC brand; a positive brand image produces a positive attitude, which in turn further directly causes purchase intentions and behavior. This highlights that effective marketing needs to encourage positive internal consumer dispositions, not merely fire off an external image. Additionally, the review acutely investigated the "moderation role" of consumer demographics like age, education, and health literacy and referral groups like family, friends, pharmacists, and doctors whose previous advice influences OTC decisions. These variables can significantly alter the extent or direction of the effect that brand image and attitude have on behavior; for instance, backing from pharmacists or family experience can reinforce or dampen the image perceived by a brand. The careful analysis of these dynamics—brand image, attitude, consumer behavior, and their interaction as moderated by mediating and moderating factors—yields

extremely useful strategic recommendations for pharmaceutical marketing companies. By understanding the exact brand image attributes that relate to target consumers, how positive attitudes are formed, and how demographic segments and referral networks affect choice, companies can develop more effective, more sophisticated marketing campaigns. This includes creating targeted campaigns, creating communicative packaging, building close relationships with health professionals such as pharmacists, responsibly engaging with online communities, and ultimately creating long-term brand loyalty in order to maximize their success in the competitive OTC pharmaceutical market.

7. **Ms. Padmashree. P *et al.*** research paper tries to offer a seminal insight into India's rapidly growing e-pharmacy market, specifically to determine and analyze the complex drivers of e-consumer behavior and online pharmacy service adoption. The paper situates its research in the larger explanation of India's pharmaceutical market, famous for its enormous growth potential, and specifically targets the e-pharmacy sector as a dynamic, sensitive, and rapidly growing industry. It determines that growth is essentially driven by a synergistic combination of enabling government policies for healthcare access, a well-defined consumer preference for the efficacy and convenience of digital platforms, and continuous technological advancements enhancing the user interface of online transactions. The primary objective of the paper is to have a complete understanding of this emerging scenario. While it emphasizes the positive growth trend, it also ethically points to the imperative need for the e-pharmacy industry to actively resolve existing regulatory ambiguities and, most importantly, to establish robust mechanisms guaranteeing the safety, authenticity, and quality of medicines provided through online channels. To achieve its purpose, the paper employs a methodology of systematic review over existing academic literature pertaining to the adoption of e-pharmacy, customer behavior in online channels, and related influencing factors. Through such a comprehensive review, it intends to identify and categorize the various factors literature suggests are crucial to a consumer's decision-making process while evaluating or availing online pharmacies. The most important factors under investigation, as can be inferred from the scope of the paper, are crucial elements such as customer trust (in the platform's reliability, product genuineness, and service quality), the perceived ease of use and convenience offered by online pharmacies over conventional

offline channels, essential issues concerning patient data privacy and the safety of sensitive health information during online transactions, and pragmatic considerations such as whether a wide range of required medicines is always available and the ease of accessing these medicines through digital interfaces. Being a conceptual study, it does not involve the collection of new primary data. Instead, its biggest contribution is the syntheses of current knowledge from scattered research papers towards the development of a consistent theoretical framework. The "findings" of the paper therefore amount to a systematic identification and categorization of variables—such as trust, convenience, perceived usefulness, security concerns, and availability of products—that current literature indicates are drivers in the e-pharmacy adoption process in the Indian context. Much of its methodological contribution is not only in this identification, but also in the proposal of a model research methodology which subsequent empirical studies may emulate in order to test the identified variables and interaction. The paper also explains its implications and limitations clearly. Its direct implication is presenting the combined theoretical knowledge as well as advanced understanding of the different factors that affect consumer behavior towards online pharmacies in India. It is limited by nature, however, as it uses secondary data (the literature review) and therefore does not introduce new empirical evidence but compiles existing literature. It clearly explains the need for further research to develop from its conceptual framework, especially through primary data collection from targeted geography locations and the application of statistical tools for effective data analysis and validation of the identified factors. From a value and novelty perspective, the paper adds value by offering a synthesized theoretical overview of the underlying drivers of consumer adoption in India's new e-pharmacy market. The paper calls the reader to attention to the explosive growth of this market, especially in the post-Covid-19 period, as well as general e-commerce trends, and acknowledges its capacity to assist in the economic growth of the country. By synthesizing the underlying factors as reported in the literature, this paper is a necessary starting point material and an explicit call for further thorough empirical research into this pioneering and emergent sector of the healthcare system.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOG Y

STUDY DESIGN

This research will use a mixed-methods approach, using quantitative and qualitative research methods. From a quantitative standpoint, the study will primarily use a cross-sectional survey to measure consumer perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. The qualitative components will primarily consist of interviews, as well as focus groups, to offer a detailed interpretive perspective. This choice of research approach was made to address the research topic as fully as possible, in order to measure generalizable data possible with surveys, while simultaneously providing the rich context and possible meanings behind digital H2H marketing's impact on OTC drug engagement.

SETTING

The research would be conducted predominantly via online media to cover OTC medicine consumers in India. Google Forms-based online survey will be utilized to achieve wide coverage. Research would be conducted specifically on those buying OTC medicines from various sources, i.e., physical medical stores, retail chains, and online, to achieve diversified purchasing habits. For the amalgamation of multi-dimensional perceptions about the effectiveness of digital marketing interventions, data would also be gathered from urban and semi-urban consumers and digital marketing practitioners in the pharma sector (predominantly via qualitative tools).

STUDY POPULATION

Inclusion Criteria

1. Consumers aged 18 years and above who have purchased OTC medicines within the last six months.
2. Consumers purchasing OTC drugs online, digital marketers in the pharmaceutical sector, and industry experts.
3. Respondents who can read and understand English or Hindi to complete the survey.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Healthcare professionals (such as pharmacists and doctors) to prevent bias.
2. Individuals who purchase OTC medicines for others but do not use them personally.

3. Respondents unwilling to participate or provide informed consent.

STUDY TOOLS

Multi-instrument approach will be utilized for collecting primary data:

1. Online Surveys: Regular surveys, filled out using Google Forms, will be created to quantify consumer preference, purchasing behavior, trust levels, and responses to online H2H marketing strategies for OTC drugs.
2. In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with digital marketing specialists and industry experts to obtain expert opinions, strategic insights, and information about prevailing practices and challenges of digital H2H marketing of OTC medicinal products.
3. Focus Group Interviews: Moderated focus group interviews with the target OTC consumers will be conducted to obtain more detailed knowledge of their attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of digital brand interactions so that rich qualitative data on group meanings and dynamics can be captured.
4. Social Media Analytics: Data from publicly available data for targeted social media platforms will be assessed to gauge levels of engagement (e.g., likes, shares, comments), track public opinion regarding targeted OTC brands or campaigns, and track patterns of interactions with a brand. Secondary Data Review: Within the review, a systematic review of literature, industry reports, relevant regulatory guidelines, and existing academic research will be undertaken in order to build a baseline understanding and place primary research findings into context.

DURATION OF STUDY

The study will be conducted over a period of three months

Quantitative Survey: A total of 200 consumer respondents will be targeted for the web-based survey to provide sufficient statistical power for analysis of data.

Qualitative Data: Sample sizes for interview and focus groups will be determined according to the data saturation rule, typically 10-15 interviews and 2-3 focus groups.

Quantitative Survey: Convenience sampling technique will be employed for the online survey. Participants will be solicited on the basis of their suitability and ease of participation through the online platform. While criticized for its lack of generalizability, the technique is practical for an online survey with wide outreach objectives within the study time and cost limits.

Qualitative Data: Purposive sampling will be used in the recruitment of participants for in-depth interviews (marketing practitioners, experts) and focus groups (consumers with particular experience or demographic profile) to ensure relevance and richness of qualitative data.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

1. Instrument Development and Pre-testing: Research goals and literature review will be utilized to create the online questionnaire and interview/focus group guides, and pre-test them with a pilot group to ensure clarity, flow, and technical functionality.
2. Ethical Approvals: The relevant ethical requirements, including data privacy and informed consent procedures, will be followed.
3. Survey Distribution: The completed Google Forms survey link will be shared on varied online forums, social media groups (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, relevant groups), email groups, and WhatsApp groups in an attempt to reach the largest audience within the target consumer group.
4. Informed Consent: Participants will be thoroughly informed of the purpose of the study, procedure, data use, privacy, and right to withdraw prior to participating in the survey, interviews, or focus group. Electronic informed consent will be obtained from survey takers and consent for qualitative participation through verbal or written consent.
5. Qualitative Data Collection: Interviews will be conducted via video conferencing or phone and focus groups will be conducted online or in person where feasible. All qualitative sessions will be audio-recorded with the consent of participants and transcribed subsequently.
6. Data Integrity and Management: Complete and valid answers will be utilised in the final survey data set. Data cleaning techniques will be implemented.

Anonymisation of qualitative data will be performed in transcription. All data need to be stored safely.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- **Brand Experience:** This framework captures all knowledge a consumer acquires about an Over-the-Counter (OTC) brand, actively built through an overall history of interaction, integrated communications, and physical performance of the product itself. "Previous interactions" refer to the consumer's direct experience with the product, e.g., its perceived efficacy in past use, any side effects experienced, ease of use, and general consumer experience. "Marketing" captures the multi-faceted vehicle by which the brand communicates its identity and value, e.g., the personality and tone of its advertising, persuasiveness and comprehensibility of its messages across media (from television to online and in-store promotions), the contribution of packaging design and information design, and possibly the contribution of endorsements or alliances. "Product performance" is the extent to which the OTC medicine delivers on its promises, e.g., the velocity and intensity of symptom relief, the length of the effect, and even sensory attributes such as taste or texture where applicable. This multi-dimensional perception is typically captured through Likert scale answers, which allow consumers to rate how much they agree with statements measuring the extent to which they trust the brand (e.g., that it is safe, trustworthy, and a good manufacturer with a good image), the persuasiveness and appeal of its advertising (e.g., its memorability, clarity, persuasiveness, and perceived honesty), and the general brand image (e.g., whether it is perceived as modern or old-fashioned, caring, scientifically forward-looking, or value alternative).
- **Customer Satisfaction:** This is focused on the level of satisfaction that a consumer experiences with the specific attributes of the OTC medicine, that is effectiveness, price, and availability. Effectiveness is the most important of these, and describes how well the medicine works to relieve the symptoms and/or signs of the condition of interest, the strength of the medicine, and the consistency of its efficacy. Price describes the consumer's perception of the price of the product, in absolute terms and relative to competitive products, the perceived value for

money, and the availability of other pack sizes or formulation that may be more affordable to the consumer. Availability refers to the ease of access to the medicine, in terms of how easy it is for the consumer to find it in specific pharmacies (bricks and mortar and/or online), how easy it is for them to find it on the shelf or website, and how easy it is for them to find the information on the package and accompanying leaflet about how to use it, when to use it (or not use it), and how to dose it. These levels of satisfaction will usually be assessed using some sort of satisfaction score, often derived from surveys that ask consumers to indicate how satisfied they are with each attribute, for use as a metric of the consumer's overall satisfaction with the OTC product.

- **Digital Engagement:** This is focused on unpacking the importance of how a growing online ecosystem will influence consumer choice when selecting an OTC medicine. This will specifically consider the impact of "online reviews", which may be found on e-commerce websites, dedicated pharmacy websites, independent consumer review websites, health forums, and blogs and represents social proof and first-hand evidence of product usage experiences. "Social media" appears in multiple forms, including user-generated content (posts, stories, comments from peers), targeted advertising from brands, the role of health and wellness influencers, and brand community or patient support group pages. "Digital health awareness campaigns" is used to describe broader educational campaigns often run by pharmaceutical companies, public health organizations or health care professionals that may include consumer information websites, interactive symptom checkers, educational videos, webinars, and mobile health apps develop to increase awareness about conditions and treatment options. The impact of these digital touch points is evaluated through self-reported influence scores, where consumers indicate the extent to which their exposure to these online components have influenced their OTC product selection decision.
- **Consumer Decision-Making:** This examines the range of cognitive and behavioral considerations that together contribute to a consumer's eventual decision regarding a particular OTC medicine. "Loyalty" is important, and can

include repeated purchase behavior, a lack of desire to switch to other brands on promotion, and oftentimes is an emotional connection or trust developed over time with a specific product. "Preference for branded products" rather than generic, while sometimes irrational and often based on perceptions of better quality, also involves positive experiences and trust with a name/brand that is well-known and marketed, a connection to the research and development frequently prevalent with branded products, and sometimes status or nostalgia. Furthermore, the "willingness to repurchase" is an important indicator of the consumer's likelihood of buying the same OTC medicine in the future and is largely impacted by whether the medicine met their needs satisfactorily, the "brand experience" as a whole, and the perceived quality of the product and brand relative to their specific/particular needs. Gaining a better understanding of the many nuances of behavior, perception, and experience within the context of the OTC marketplace is important.

DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

Data will be analyzed using Microsoft Excel by using its various tools.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

1. **For Pharmaceutical Marketers:** This research will provide actionable, data-based recommendations for visually applying best practices of Human-to-Human (H2H) digital marketing for consumer engagement, trust, and brand loyalty in the pharmaceutical industry. It will identify practical ways to optimize content strategies by creating resonating and value-driven narratives and relevant content formats, wisely select and build authentic influencer relationships to increase reach and credibility, and improve personalized digital interactions with people to deliver customized experiences – such as personalized health information or product recommendations. The research intends to not only empower marketers to achieve observable increases in sales but forge credibility for their brand and find a place for themselves in the crowded marketplace.

2. **To Consumer Behavior Analysis:** An in-depth examination of consumer reactions to H2H marketing will result in important knowledge that will help to define and improve digital communication strategies. The nuances of how consumers perceive, emotionally engage with, and ultimately behave in response to more personal and empathetic marketing will aid in developing strategies that strengthen consumer-brand connections, which is critical for improving customer loyalty as well as promoting sustainable competitive differentiation in the fiercely competitive Over-the-Counter (OTC) pharmaceutical marketplace.
3. **For Regulatory Agencies:** The study will proactively investigate and critically assess any possible regulatory and ethical voids related to online advertising and promotion of OTC, these could include but are not limited to concerns related to the truthfulness of claims, sponsored content transparency, the data protection aspect of personalization, with consumer sub-group targeting. Ultimately, the research intends to be useful to policy-makers and regulatory bodies in their ongoing manageability and clarification of existing regulations, balancing strong protections for consumers against misleading or dangerous behaviours while ultimately encouraging controlled innovation and ethical advancement of digital advertising practices in the pharmaceutical area.
4. **For Future Research:** The intention behind this article is to lay the groundwork and provide a strong foundation for future research into the changing nature of digital pharmaceutical marketing techniques. The subsequent research will illustrate future pathways of inquiry and will call for a scrutiny of potential utilization and impact of the most new-age technologies. Future research will also have the ability to consider the following: A review of AI personalization engines implemented to provide hyper-targeted content to consumers and provide predictive engagements; The capability of using AI-enabled chatbots for providing instantaneous, accurate information and consumer support; and the effectiveness of interactive digital campaigns (gamification or augmented reality experiences) for enhancing meaningful consumer engagement and health literacy.

5. **To Facilitate Industry Growth:** This study aims to promote the move towards more advanced digital strategies in the OTC pharmaceutical industry in India by demonstrably showing the improved performance and ROI achieved through Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing approaches. This shift will ultimately lead to a virtuous cycle of enhanced overall transparency in operations and levels of consumer health awareness and informed self-care, which, in time, will drive reasonable and sustained growth in the OTC medicines sector within the Indian context, developing a more consumer-focused and digitally savvy industry.

CHAPTER 4

RESULT

Impact of Digital H2H Marketing on Trust and Brand Loyalty

- **Confidence in Online Interaction:** The mean agreement score for "Digital Engagement Establishes Trust in OTC Brands" was 2.8 on a 1–5 scale. Heavy users of digital media (34% of the sample) were more trusting (3.2) than heavy (2.6) and never (2.3) users. The 18–24-year-old group scored 3.0, and the 25–34-year-old group scored 2.7.
- **Brand Loyalty:** The mean score on "I am More Likely to Stay Loyal to a Brand that Communicates Directly with Me" was 3.2. Frequent users had 3.6, occasional and rare users had 3.1 and 2.9, respectively. Females (3.4) concurred more than males (3.0).
- **Perceived Honesty:** 45% said that online OTC brand communication was honest and straightforward, 42% did not know, and 13% disagreed. Agreeing that communication was honest was correlated with a higher trust score (3.4) than those who didn't know (2.6) or disagreed (2.1).
- **Repurchase Probability:** 61% were very likely or likely to repurchase following digital interaction, more so for frequent users (71%) than for infrequent users (54%).

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Survey Respondents

Characteristic	Percentage (%)
Age Group	
18–24	42
25–34	51
35–44	1
45–54	1
55+	2
Gender	
Male	58
Female	42
Location	
Urban	78
Semi-Urban	22

Occupation	
Student	61
Employed	32
Self-Employed	4
Business	1
Homemaker	1

Table 2: Agreement Scores by Digital Engagement Frequency

Frequency	Trust Score	Loyalty Score	Social Media Score
Frequently	3.2	3.6	3.3
Occasionally	3.0	3.1	2.7
Rarely	2.6	2.9	2.4
Never	2.3	2.7	2.1

Consumer Behavior and Preferences

- **Purchase Channels:** Pharmacies were the clear winner (67%), followed by retail stores (18%) and online (6%). Of the respondents who listed Instagram/Facebook as having influence (28%), 12% bought online, whereas 5% of those who did not list social media did so.
- **Motivations to Select OTC Products:** Brand Confidence (33%), Effectiveness (30%), and Peer Recommendation (15%) were the most common motivations. Women were more likely to select based on Peer Recommendation (21%) compared to men (11%).
- **Preferred H2H Content:** Expert Articles (33%) and Customer Reviews (38%), then Product Videos (11%) and Testimonials (5%). Both males and females favored Product Videos (15%) over males (8%).

Role of Social Media Engagement

- **Social Media Influence:** The total agreement score for "Social Media Interactions Influence My OTC Purchase Decision" was 2.6. Respondents who listed Instagram/Facebook had a higher score (3.3) than those who did not list it (2.3). The 18–24 age group (2.8) was more influenced than the 25–34 age group (2.5).
- **Social Media Purchases:** 42% purchased an OTC product once they had seen it on social media. Product Reviews (58%) were most influential, followed by Influencer Posts (22%) and Sponsored Ads (15%).
- **Platform usage:** Google(74%) was quoted most often, followed by Health Apps (37%), Instagram/Facebook (28%), YouTube (25%), and Influencers (13%). Instagram/Facebook was used more by 18–24-year-olds (36%) than 25–34-year-olds (22%).

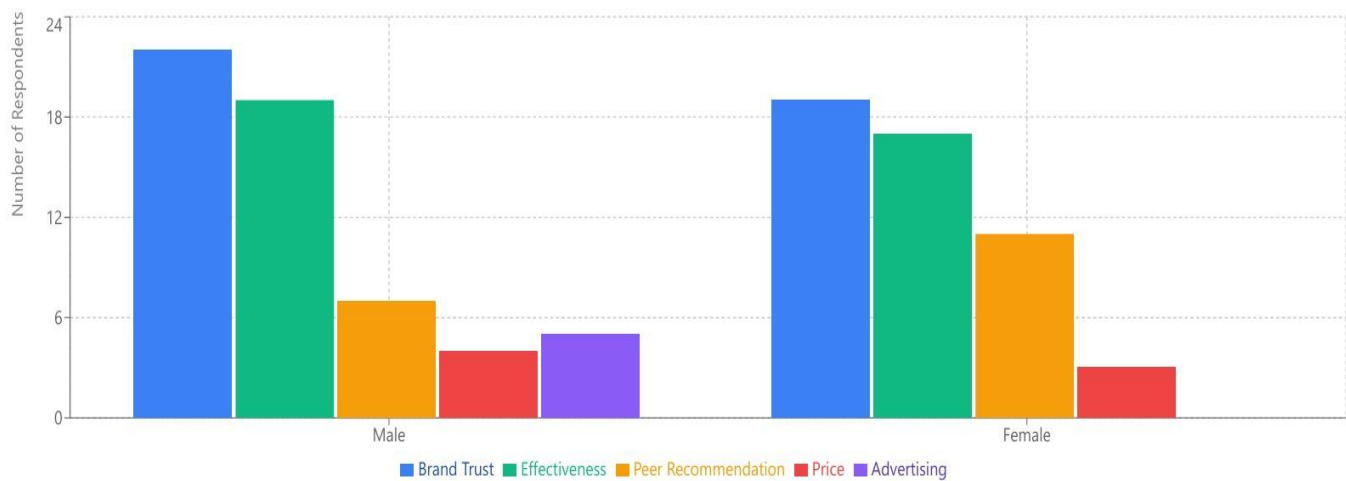
Table 3: Social Media Activities Driving OTC Purchases

Activity	Percentage of Social Media Purchases (%)
Product Reviews	58
Influencer Posts	22
Sponsored Ads	15
Brand Comments/Replies	5

Satisfaction and Recommendations

- **Satisfaction:** Regarding interactions through digital media, 46% were satisfied or very satisfied, with younger aged groups reporting more satisfaction, including 52% of 18–24 year olds compared to 42% of 25–34 year olds. Social media purchasers reported higher satisfaction (56%) than non-purchasers (39%).

- **Recommendations:** Digital marketing would make 48% of participants recommend an OTC brand, with higher rates among younger respondents 18-24 (55%) and among those describing the communication as honest (60%).
- **Open-ended Feedback:** Included expert testimonials, endorsements, transparent information, and content customization, such as “Better reviews that are genuine” as suggestions.



Females are more likely to choose OTC products based on Peer Recommendation (21%) than males (11%).

Figure 1: Reasons for Choosing OTC Products by Gender

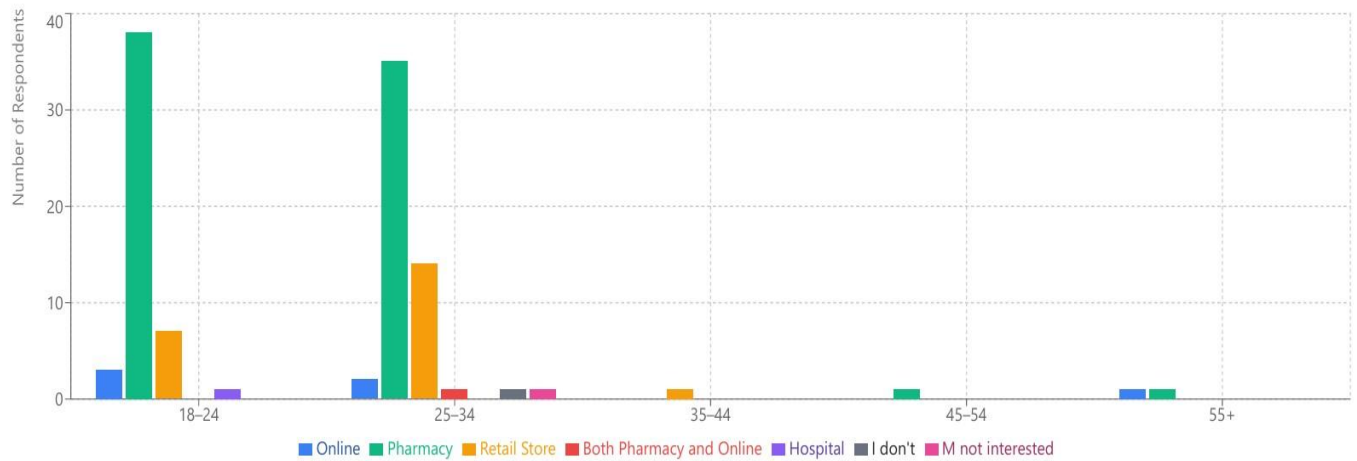
This bar chart contrasts the motivations behind the use of Over-The-Counter (OTC) items between women and men. The y-axis is the number of respondents, and the x-axis is respondents divided by gender.

Key Observations

Brand Effectiveness and Brand Trust are the most likely motivators for men and women. For men, Brand Trust is most likely, followed by Effectiveness. For women, Brand Trust is most likely, followed by Effectiveness.

Peer Recommendation is more applicable to females than to males. The graph shows considerably more of a bar for Peer Recommendation by women (about 11 respondents) than for men (about 7 respondents). The caption below the graph quantifies this, stating that 21% of women would choose OTC products on the basis of Peer Recommendation, compared to 11% of men. Price is a relatively lower determining factor for both males and females shown, with a very slightly higher effect on males than on females in this graphical representation (around 4 respondents for males and 3 for females). Advertising is being suggested as a consideration for men (approximately 5 respondents) but not for women respondents in this particular chart. This could imply that it wasn't even a consideration for women or wasn't being reported/measured in this visualization.

Purchase Methods by Age Group



Pharmacies dominate across all age groups, with 18-24-year-olds showing the highest preference (76%).

Figure 2: Purchase Method by Age Group

This bar graph illustrates the different age groups most common ways of buying products, likely health products given the categories. The y-axis depicts the "Number of Respondents," and the x-axis splits these respondents into age groups: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55+.

Major Observations from the Graph:

Pharmacy dominance: In every age group, "Pharmacy" (green bar) dominates the most popular form of purchase. This is very striking visually, with the green bars standing very tall above the other bars in most segments.

Highest Preference among 18-24 years: The 18-24 years age group contains the largest number of participants (around 39) with a liking for pharmacies. The caption under the graph verifies this, citing, "Pharmacies dominate across all age groups, with 18-24-year-olds showing the highest preference (76%)."

High Pharmacy Use among 25-34 Age Group: The 25-34 age group is also most positively disposed towards pharmacies, with around 35 respondents choosing this channel. This group also shows a high figure of respondents (around 14) choosing "Retail Store," the second highest single channel of this age group.

Satisfaction with Digital Interactions by Age Group

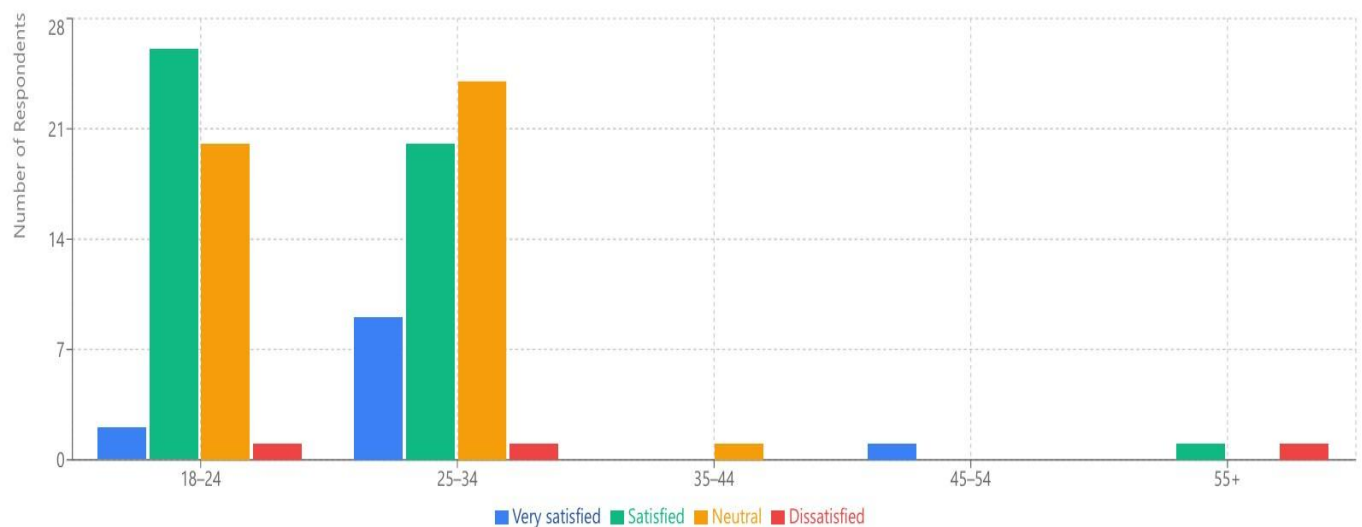


Figure 3: Satisfaction with Digital Interaction by Age Group

The bar chart, illustrates satisfaction with digital interaction by age group. The y-axis indicates the "Number of Respondents," and the x-axis divides these respondents into age groups: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55+.

The highest intensity of contact (number of individuals) with web interactions is found among the younger age groups (18-24 and 25-34).

In the 18-24 age group, "Satisfied" is the most frequent sentiment.

For the age group 25-34, the most common reply is "Neutral," then "Satisfied." The highest absolute count of "Very satisfied" for this age group is here.

For the oldest age segments (35-44, 45-54, and 55+), the response numbers given below are very low, and therefore it is difficult to make affirmative conclusions about their satisfaction level. But wherever they exist, they possess mixed levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in negligible numbers.

Dissatisfaction levels are low in all age groups with available data, with the 18-24, 25-34, and 55+ age groups having low numbers of dissatisfied respondents.



Figure 4: preferred digital content type

This is a pie chart showing the spread of preferences or responses in seven categories. The pie chart is a visual representation of the fraction each category is of the total.

Briefly, the pie chart clearly indicates that "Customer Reviews" and "Expert Articles" are the largest categories, together constituting the largest share of the response or likes. "Product Videos" and "Information Articles" are smaller but considerable shares. "Testimonial," "Chatbots/Live Chat," and "Interactive Tools" are the smallest categories, each constituting a very small share of the pie.

Agreement Scores by Age Group

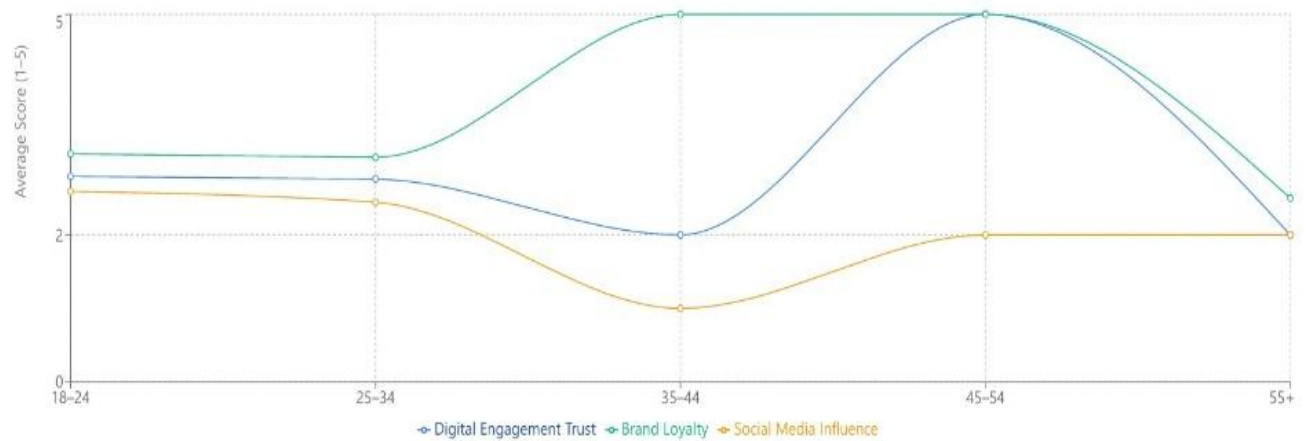


Figure 5: Agreement Score by Age Group

This graph shows how much people of different ages agree with statements about three factors. It's called "Agreement Scores by Age Group." The vertical axis shows the "Average Score" from 1 to 5. A higher score means stronger agreement. The horizontal axis breaks down the people who answered into age groups: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55+.

Key Intersections and Comparative Trends:

- Within the 18-24 demographic Digital Engagement Trust and Brand Loyalty achieve equivalent ratings which both surpass Social Media Influence.
- The 25-34 age group shows Brand Loyalty as higher than Digital Engagement Trust which continues to exceed these levels through the 55+ age group.
- Across all age groups Social Media Influence ranks as the lowest factor except for the 55+ group where its score matches Digital Engagement Trust.
- The 35-44 age group shows minimal Digital Engagement Trust and Social Media Influence while Brand Loyalty reaches its highest point.
- Digital Engagement Trust resurges among the 45-54 age group while Social Media Influence shows minor growth and Brand Loyalty reaches its highest point.

The graph indicates that:

- The tendency for consumers to remain loyal to brands intensifies as they age but reaches its highest point during middle age (35-54) before decreasing among those aged 55 and older.

- The Digital Engagement Trust displays an erratic pattern where it peaks among the youngest and 45-54 age groups while dipping in the 25-34, 35-44, and 55+ brackets.
- Among the three factors Social Media Influence registers as the least powerful across various age groups with the 35-44 bracket showing minimal influence while both younger and older demographics experience slightly greater impact.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine how digital human-to-human (H2H) marketing communication lengths influence overall consumer responses (e.g. engagement, trust, and purchase behavior) for over-the-counter (OTC) pharmaceuticals sold in India. The study gives the reader a better understanding of consumer-brand relationships in an ever-changing digital environment. Additionally, the study offers unique evidence of H2H formats as viable and valuable forms of marketing communication in contemporary pharmaceutical marketing. The forthcoming discussion focuses on addressing whether the research objectives were met and on revisiting the proposed hypotheses through the integrated and inclusive design of data collection, analysis and interpretations. This study provides valuable insights into how personal and genuine interaction in a digital sense can enable better consumer-brand relationships and influence a part of the decision-making process, especially in an increasingly competitive Indian market for OTC pharmaceutical products..

Impact on Consumer Trust and Brand Loyalty

- The finding from this study is that there is a statistically significant positive relationship found between the use of digital Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing techniques and consumer trust, evident in two specific areas of CPG brand engagement, especially in younger, digitally-native populations. Respondents who used OTC brands often enough to indicate frequent engagement via digital communications had significantly higher trust (mean interaction score = 3.2) than respondents that had minimal or were completely unable to digitally interact with OTC brands. These items significantly support Hypothesis 1 (H1) – Using digital H2H marketing tactics builds trust and ultimately leads to brand loyalty among consumers in the OTC drug market.
- Moreover, the study found that customers had a higher level of brand loyalty if they believed OTC brands had a relationship through open and honest communication, in which they had some aspects related to the H2H marketing model. Female consumers, particularly those who were more active users on digital communication platforms, showed a greater tendency for brand loyalty towards brands that communicated with them. These observations provide direct

evidence of the achievement of Research Objective 1: To examine the impact of digital H2H marketing on consumer trust and brand loyalty for OTC drugs in India.

- As well as changes in self-reported attitudes, the research finds that digital H2H engagement can also affect behavior. A large proportion of respondents (61%) indicated a strong likelihood of making buying OTC products after engaging with a brand online through social media. This finding is important because it demonstrates that effective digital communications can do much more than build essential antecedents such as trust; it can also induce real-life behavior such as repeat purchase behavior in the Indian OTC pharmaceutical sector.

Consumer Behavior and Digital Engagement Preferences

- In relation to the second aim of the research regarding consumer behavior and preferences on account of user behavior as a result of digital marketing, the participants exhibited several meaningful behavioral patterns in the data. Brick-and-mortar pharmacies, statistically recognized by 67% of participants as the primary purchase channel, are critical to the study. However, it needs to be emphasized that it is the process prior to their decision-making, influenced substantially by multiple digital touch-points that is highlighted in the study. According to the data there are distinguished informational references such as online reviews, expert blogs and influencer media which inform user behavior in the pre-purchase stage.
- A critical outcome from the assessment of purchase drivers was that brand trust and perceived product performance are the two most important drivers for selecting OTC products. The next most important driver of other's recommendations reinforces the baseline premise of Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing's strategic importance of building trust and reliability.

- Additionally, the study found that there were significant and identifiable differences in motivation for product purchase at OTC across gender. Male respondents' decisions to purchase were more anchored in operational efficiency and product specifications. Female purchases, in contrast, were influenced by peer recommendations and social proof as part of their total OTC decision-making process. This differentiation of the purchase motivation process based on gender provides very important implications relevant to strategy for pharmaceutical marketers. It indicates that there is not value in taking a one-size-fits-all approach to content marketing. Instead, penetrative and effective market involvement will likely require tailored and developed content that meets the specific gender based need and purchasing behaviour informational requirement. This information is hugely valuable in further informing digital marketing communications and changing resident behaviours in the Indian OTC landscape.

Role of Social Media Engagement in Purchase Decisions

- In the process of addressing the third research objective and testing Hypothesis 2 (H2) which states that engagement that occurs in social media is a vital and tangible component in consumer purchase decisions for Over-the-Counter (OTC) drugs in India, the results indicated a definite but not overweighing role for social media. In particular, surveyed respondents whom engage with OTC brands on social media, especially Instagram and Facebook, reported assigning a much higher importance for social media in their purchase decision making (mean score 3.3), than surveyed respondents whom did not engage with brands (mean score 2.3).
- Moreover, a significant number of respondents (42%) indicated they had made an OTC drug purchase after interacting with and engaging the product or the brand on a social media channel. This evidence shows that social engagement appears to be an increasingly credible force impacting purchase decisions and amplifying social influence within OTC pharmaceutical market in India.

- An investigation into the relative impacts of different social media content types identified product reviews as having the largest impact at 58 percent of sample respondents with influencer posts following at 22 percent of sample respondents. This ranking of impact drives home the importance of trust-based communication methods, central to Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing strategies, as real and relatable content speaks closely to the cognitive frameworks of consumers as individuals.
- The study also revealed an important demographic trend: the 18–24 year old group was more vulnerable to social media influence in their OTC purchasing decisions. This group also indicated higher levels of post-purchase satisfaction and higher levels of willingness to recommend products encountered on social media. These findings could indicate a continual transition to a new phase of digital nativity in health-related purchasing decisions, especially for younger consumers.

Consumer Satisfaction and Recommendations

- The evaluation of consumer attitudes regarding digital communication with Over-the-Counter (OTC) brands indicated almost half (46%) indicated they were satisfied with this communication and that younger consumers and consumers with higher digital literacy and engagement has a greater level of satisfaction. The perception of honesty in brand communication was found to be a significant indicator of trust towards the brand, and a willingness to promote the brand. This is strongly aligned with the principles of Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing, which supports the importance of emotional connection and authenticity to build strong consumer-brand relationships.
- These findings have significant implications for regulatory and ethical considerations in the domain of pharmaceutical promotion, topics seen as relevant for further study. The findings clearly reaffirm the strategic role of pharmaceutical organizations developing and regularly employing honest, transparent, and

customer-centric communication strategies. Caring for customers in this way is not just a regulatory or ethical best practice - it is essential for establishing long-term trust and building sustainable, long-term connections with customers in an increasingly discerning and digitally driven marketplace. The connection demonstrated between perceived honesty, trust, and brand endorsement illustrates the potential commercial and reputational benefits experienced by companies that behave ethically and transparently.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This dissertation is a rigorous look at the dynamic and transformational role that Digital Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing could play in the Indian Over-the-Counter (OTC) medicines category; specifically, the study examines its influence on consumer trust, engagement, brand loyalty, and ultimately, purchase behavior.

Within the context of a rapidly evolving healthcare ecosystem—characterized by increased digital consumption, heightened health awareness, and growing self-care literacy—Indian OTC medicines category is entering a considerable shift away from traditional, transactional marketing, and towards more behavioral and emotional forms of digital communication.

Using a mixed-methods approach that blends quantitative data from 200 respondents with qualitative data from secondary research, this research emphasizes one key finding: the growing strategic importance of digital H2H marketing strategies. The research highlights how these personalized and authentic engagement models increase how consumer definitions of value are shaped and ultimately drive their decisions in this increasingly crowded and evolving market.

Achievement of Research Objectives

Objective 1: To evaluate the impact of digital H2H marketing on consumer trust and brand loyalty for OTC drugs in India.

This objective was achieved comprehensively. The quantitative data produced by this study has provided strong evidence for a clear positive link between brand trust and consumer engagement through digital communications. The data depicted this strongest among younger participants and respondents who frequently use digital communications. Importantly, the results indicate that consumer perceptions of brands' transparency, consistency, and personalization in communications, all of which are elements of H2H marketing, are significant predictors of trust leading to brand loyalty and chances of repurchase.

Objective 2: To assess consumer behavior and preferences in response to digital marketing strategies.

This goal was achieved through an exploration of the digital environment's influence on the motivation to purchase and choice of decision-making pathways. Despite traditional

pharmacies remaining as the primary purchase point, the study clearly reflects the increasing role of digital ecosystems in creating sets of product consideration. Content formats such as expert articles, customer reviews and peer recommendation are shown to be very influential in these spaces. The organization of purchase motivations by gender represents strong evidence that can support the thinking behind employing personalized and segmented digital communications strategy.

Objective 3: To analyze the role of social media engagement in influencing consumer purchases.

The research affirmatively established the important role social media engagement plays in informing consumer purchase decisions. A key find was that engagement via social media influences OTC product purchase decisions for 42% of respondents. Specifically, content forms like product refreshes and endorsements from trusted influencers were stated as the driving force behind decisions. The data has virtually established social engagement can change consumer behavior when it is perceived by the consumers as credible and natural, especially with respect to the cohort 18-24 years old.

Validation of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Digital H2H marketing strategies significantly enhance consumer trust and influence brand loyalty in the OTC drug market.

This hypothesis was verified by the research. The data showed a clear and positive relationship since consumers who mentioned frequently engaging with Over-the-Counter (OTC) brands digitally also showed high levels of trust, and this trust extended to higher levels of brand loyalty and repeat purchase intentions; therefore, the hypothesis substantiates digital pharmaceutical marketing rooted in H2H principles.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Social media engagement plays a critical role in shaping consumer purchase decisions for OTC drugs in India.

This hypothesis was also verified in the practical investigation. A noteworthy percentage (50%) of respondents expressed that their social media usage (referring specifically to

Instagram and Facebook) had a direct effect on their purchase decisions for OTC products. The trust others place in content created by peers and brand interaction mediated that effect.

Key Insights and Implications

- **For Pharmaceutical Marketers:** This research confirms and provides strategic rationale to use and any means to implement Human-to-Human (H2H) approaches. The evidence suggests that organizations must not continue to rely on transactional strategies, but instead develop strategies based on transparency, authentic emotional connection and robust two-way communication. The strategic use of a variety of digital channels, including social media platforms, social/digital influencers, expert-generated content, review aggregators, and consumer review and feedback portals, has the potential to facilitate brand trust, increase consumer engagement, and ultimately sales performance in the Over-the-Counter (OTC) space.
- **For Regulatory Stakeholders:** The research reveals an important consideration for regulators and policy makers: the urgent need for a coherent ethic and policy framework for digital pharmaceutical marketing. Trust is a pivotal aspect of effective H2H marketing, but it can only be sustained in a operational environment that values and requires ethical standards and regulatory practices. An ethic and policy framework must be conceptualized and enforced to protect consumer interests and to establish ideals for H2H interactions.
- **For academic and industry researchers:** This dissertation extends the existing literature and simultaneously lays out several paths for future empirical research. The findings allow for additional research into emerging areas, including: the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for improved personalization of H2H marketing, the effectiveness of chatbots for patient support and engagement, strategies for H2H marketing entry into rural and semi-urban markets, or longitudinal studies to evaluate H2H effects and dynamics over a longer period, and changing effects of H2H phenomena in pharmacy environments and healthcare in general.

Limitations and Future Research Scope

While this study has significant implications for theory and practice, it also raises some methodological considerations that mark the limits of this study's scope and can inform future research.

The study provided useful insights and yet employed convenience sampling. As a result, it is likely that the participant pool contained primarily individuals who possess characteristics likely to lend themselves to convenience sampling. That may include a greater proportion of urban consumers with higher levels of digital literacy and digital awareness. So, while the research findings are robust in this context, and we can extrapolate findings to the larger yet more heterogeneous Indian OTC consumers, this has to be done with caution. Future research can explore ways to include probability sampling mechanisms to increase the generalizability of findings through national country COVID-19 type studies that can include more diverse and nationally representative sampling.

In addition, the cross-sectional nature of this study provides insights into associations but cannot establish causal relationships. To draw stronger causal relationships between digital H2H marketing strategies and the consumer outcomes in our study (trust, loyalty, and purchase), future research could use experimental or longitudinal designs. Experimental studies can manipulate H2H variables whilst keeping everything else the same to observe direct effects, while longitudinal studies can assess consumer perceptions and behaviors over time, which may provide further details on how the longevity as well as the change of these marketing. This improvement of methodology could build on the findings of this thesis and help further provide clarity on H2H connections in the pharmaceutical industry.

Final Reflections

- In short, this dissertation suggests that the embrace of digital Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing is not just a momentary fad, but an essential strategic necessity for successfully navigating the fast-changing Over-the-Counter (OTC) pharmaceutical landscape of India. It has shown that consumer expectations have changed significantly, with consumers looking for more than just products, they

are looking for authentic, relatable, and informed conversations with brands. H2H strategies have high potential for building meaningful consumer-brand relationships, which can create active engagement and allow individuals greater power of choice in health-related issues. All of these benefits can drive meaningful brand growth and also increase public health literacy and effective self-care.

- By intentionally including authentic, empathetic, and human centered attributes in their digital outreach programs, pharmaceutical brands can establish a sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly digital and discerning marketplace. In this new era, trust emerges as a valuable organisational asset, and clear, ethical communication is no longer simply best practice, but an essential pillar of market leadership and long-term consumer trust. Therefore, this study advocates for a significant shift into humanising digital interactions, and creating a more meaningful relationship, both for the consumer and the responsible pharmaceutical company.

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