



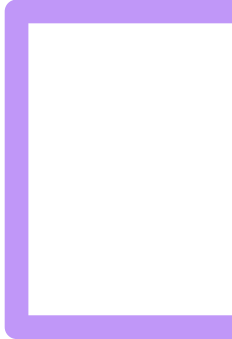
THE POWER OF CONVERSATIONS: DIGITAL H2H MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR OTC DRUGS IN INDIA

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India's Rapidly Transforming OTC Pharmaceutical Landscape

- Significant shifts in consumer behavior, technological advancements, and a growing need for cost-effective healthcare are transforming the Indian pharmaceutical industry.
 - The Over-the-Counter (OTC) medicine market is a vibrant and rapidly changing segment, projected to grow to ~₹74,000 crores INR in 2024 and about ₹1,57,000 crores INR in 2030 with a CAGR of 14%.
 - Key drivers include urbanization, rising disposable income, increased self-care awareness, and the growing trend of online medicine purchases.
 - The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated market growth by emphasizing personal hygiene and preventive healthcare.
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The Rise of Human-to-Human (H2H) Marketing

Beyond B2B and B2C: The H2H Imperative

- Today's consumers seek comprehensive solutions, evidence-based credibility, and personalized experiences tailored to their health needs.
- Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing offers authentic human interaction, emotional connection, and shared values as the basis for brand communication, building trust and assurance.
- In OTC pharmaceutical marketing, H2H principles are particularly relevant as consumers need conclusive assurance about information credibility for health decisions.
- Digitalization enables pharmaceutical companies to leverage H2H strategies through various channels like social media, influencer marketing, and content marketing.



Research Objectives

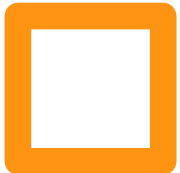
1. To evaluate the impact of digital H2H marketing strategies on consumer trust and brand loyalty.
2. To assess consumer behavior and preferences in response to digital marketing engagement.
3. To analyze the role of social media in influencing OTC drug purchase decisions.

Hypothesis

1. Digital H2H marketing strategies significantly enhance consumer trust and influence brand loyalty in the OTC drug market.
 2. Social media engagement plays a critical role in shaping consumer purchase decisions for OTC drugs in India.
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Research Methodology - Approach & Participants

- Research Design: A mixed-methods research design was used, combining quantitative and qualitative data.
- Quantitative: Online surveys collected data from 200 respondents. Convenience sampling was used.
- Qualitative: In-depth interviews and focus group discussions with consumers and pharmaceutical marketing professionals. Purposive sampling was used.
- Study Population: Indian consumers aged 18 and older who purchased OTC drugs in the past six months, excluding healthcare professionals, to reduce bias.
- Study Tools: Online surveys (Google Forms), semi-structured in-depth interviews, moderated focus group interviews, social media analytics, and secondary data review.



Key Results

Digital H2H: Building Trust and Fostering Loyalty

- A strong positive correlation exists between digital engagement and 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.
- Frequent digital media users showed higher trust (3.2) compared to occasional (2.6) and never (2.3) users.
- Females (3.4) showed more brand loyalty than males (3.0) when brands communicated directly.
- 61% of respondents were likely to repurchase an OTC product after viewing digital marketing content.

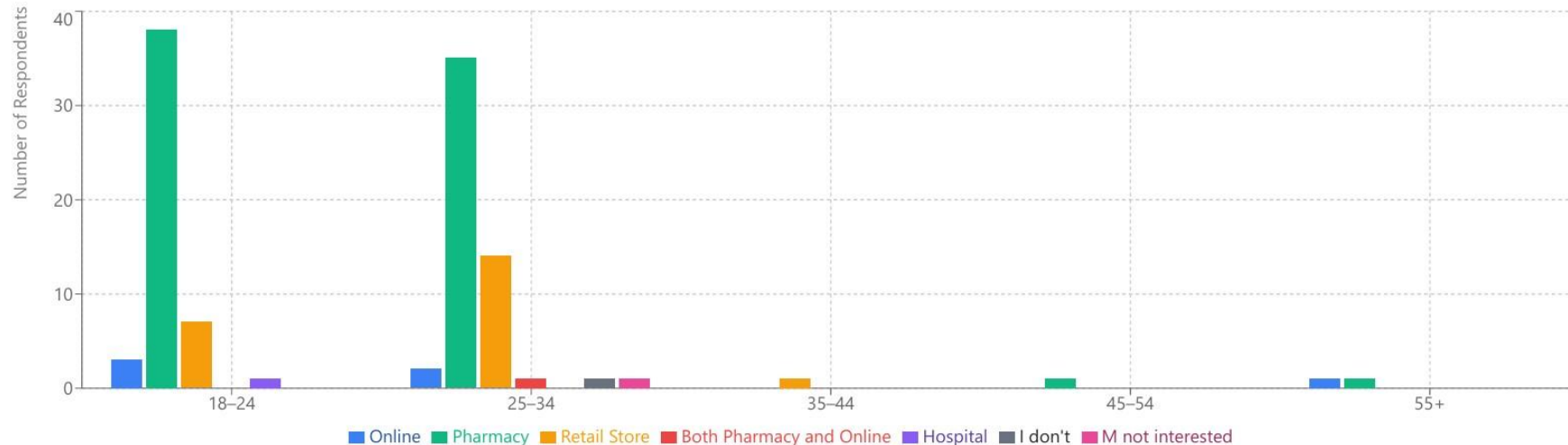
Frequency	Trust Score	Loyalty Score	Social Media Score
Frequently	3.2	3.6	3.3
Occasionally	3.0	3.1	2.7
Rarely	2.6	2.9	2.4
Never	2.3	2.7	2.1

Table: Agreement Scores by Digital Engagement Frequency

Understanding the Digital Consumer Journey

- Pharmacies remain the primary purchase channel (67%), followed by retail stores (18%) and online (6%).
- Brand Confidence (33%) and Effectiveness (30%) were the top motivations for selecting OTC products, followed by Peer Recommendation (15%).
- Women were more influenced by Peer Recommendation (21%) than men (11%).
- Preferred H2H content types were Customer Reviews (38%) and Expert Articles (33%).

Purchase Methods by Age Group

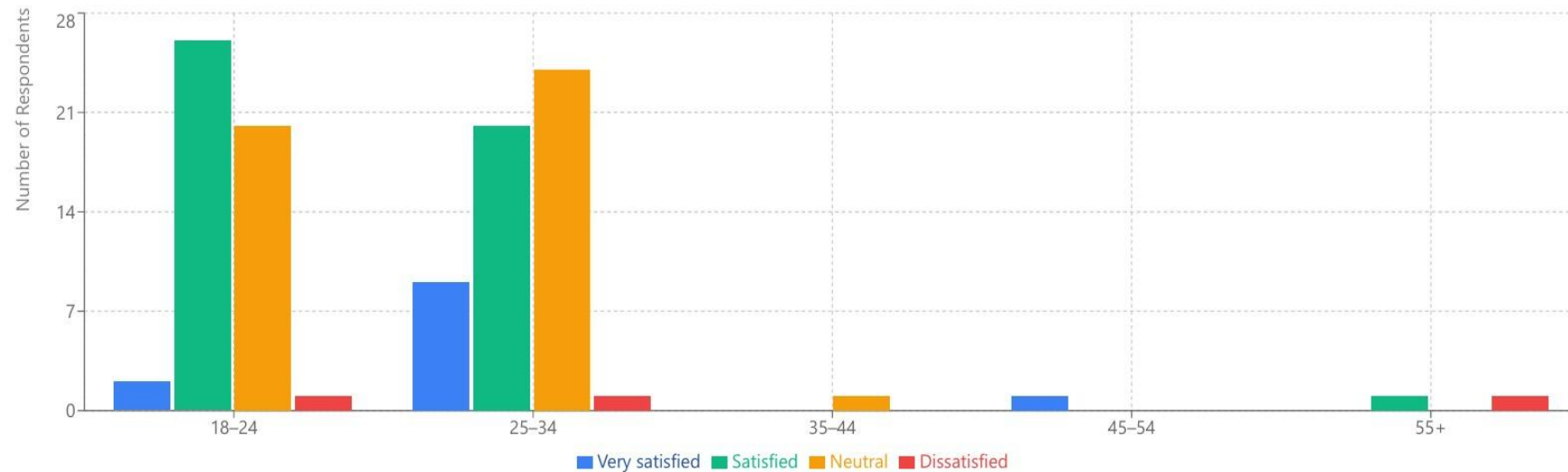


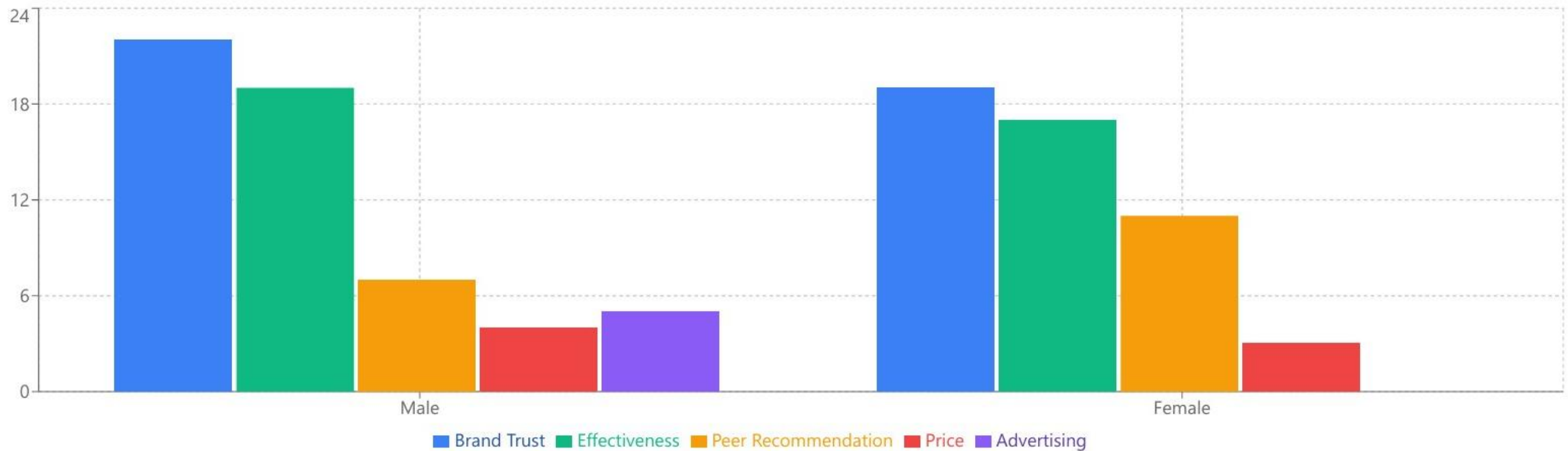
Pharmacies dominate across all age groups, with 18-24-year-olds showing the highest preference (76%).

Social Media: A Growing Influence on OTC Purchases

- Social media significantly influences OTC purchase decisions (agreement score: 2.6).
- Respondents who listed Instagram/Facebook as influential had a higher score (3.3) compared to those who did not (2.3).
- 42% of respondents purchased an OTC product after seeing it on social media.
- Product Reviews (58%) were the most influential content type on social media, followed by Influencer Posts (22%).
- Younger users (18-24 years) were more influenced by social media (2.8) than older age groups.
- Google (74%) was the most used platform for health information, followed by Health Apps (37%), Instagram/Facebook (28%), and YouTube (25%).

Satisfaction with Digital Interactions by Age Group

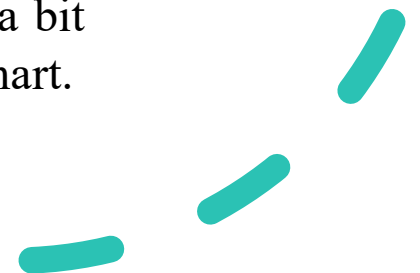
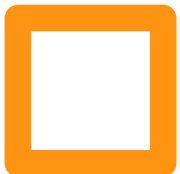




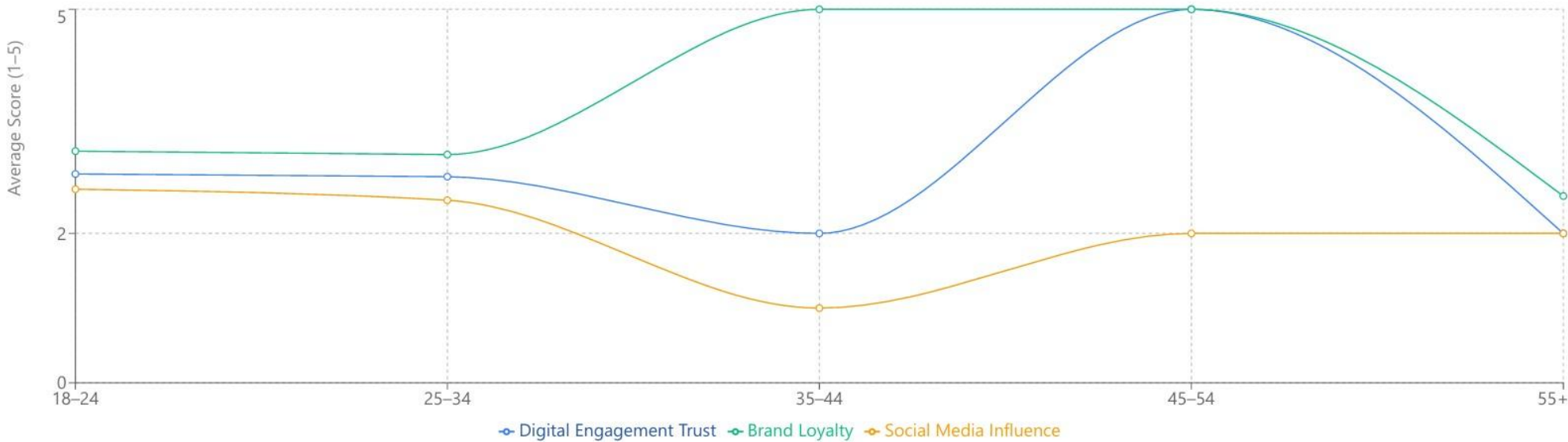
Women are more likely to choose OTC products based on Peer Recommendation (21%) than males (11%).

Men and women both choose OTC products mainly because they trust the brand and find it effective.

However, women are more influenced by peer recommendations (21%) than men (11%). Price matters less to both, but slightly more for men. Advertising affects men's choices a bit (about 5 people), but it didn't seem to influence women, based on the data shown in the chart.

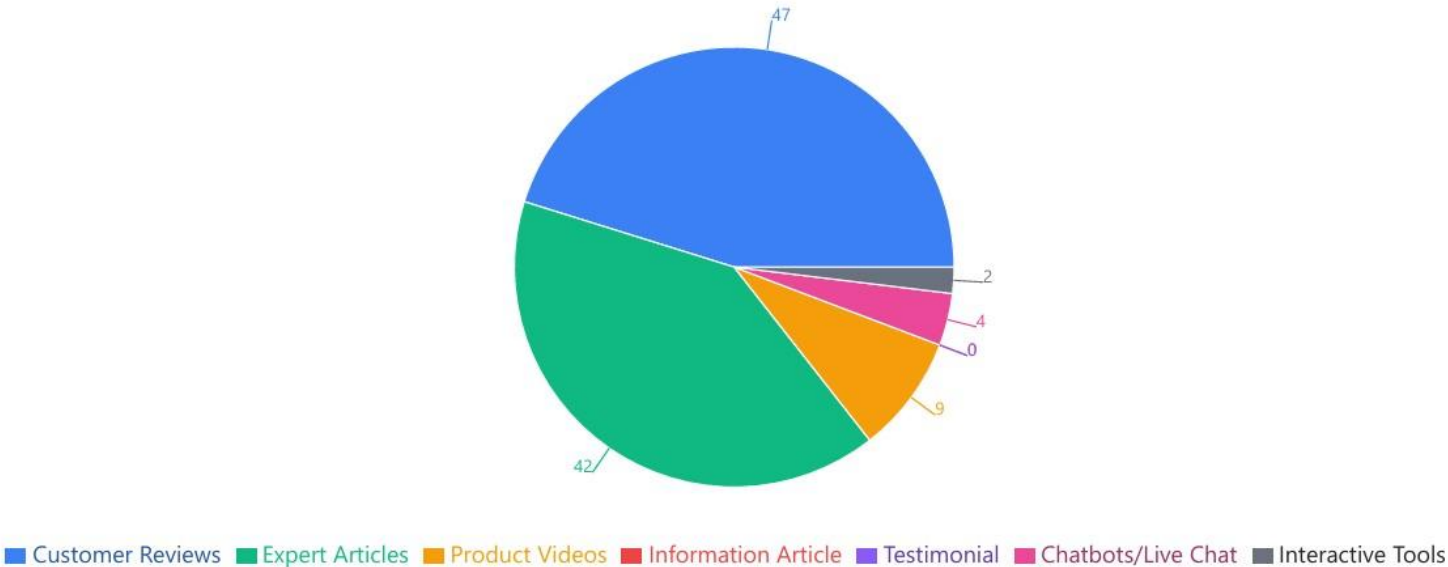


Agreement Scores by Age Group



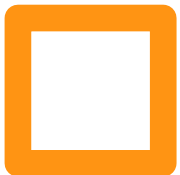
Younger respondents (18-24) show slightly higher trust in digital engagement (3.0) than older groups.

Preferred Digital Content Types



Discussion & Validation of Hypotheses

- Achievement of Objectives: The study comprehensively achieved all three research objectives by providing insights into the impact of digital H2H marketing on trust, loyalty, consumer behavior, and social media's role in purchase decisions.
- Hypothesis 1 Validation: Digital H2H marketing strategies significantly enhance consumer trust and influence brand loyalty in the OTC drug market. This was verified by data showing a clear positive relationship between frequent digital engagement and high levels of trust, brand loyalty, and repurchase intentions.
- Hypothesis 2 Validation: Social media engagement plays a critical role in shaping consumer purchase decisions for OTC drugs in India. Verified by 42% of respondents making OTC purchases after social media interaction, with peer content and influencer endorsements being key drivers.





Implications for Marketers & Regulators

Actionable Insights for the OTC Pharmaceutical Industry

For Pharmaceutical Marketers:

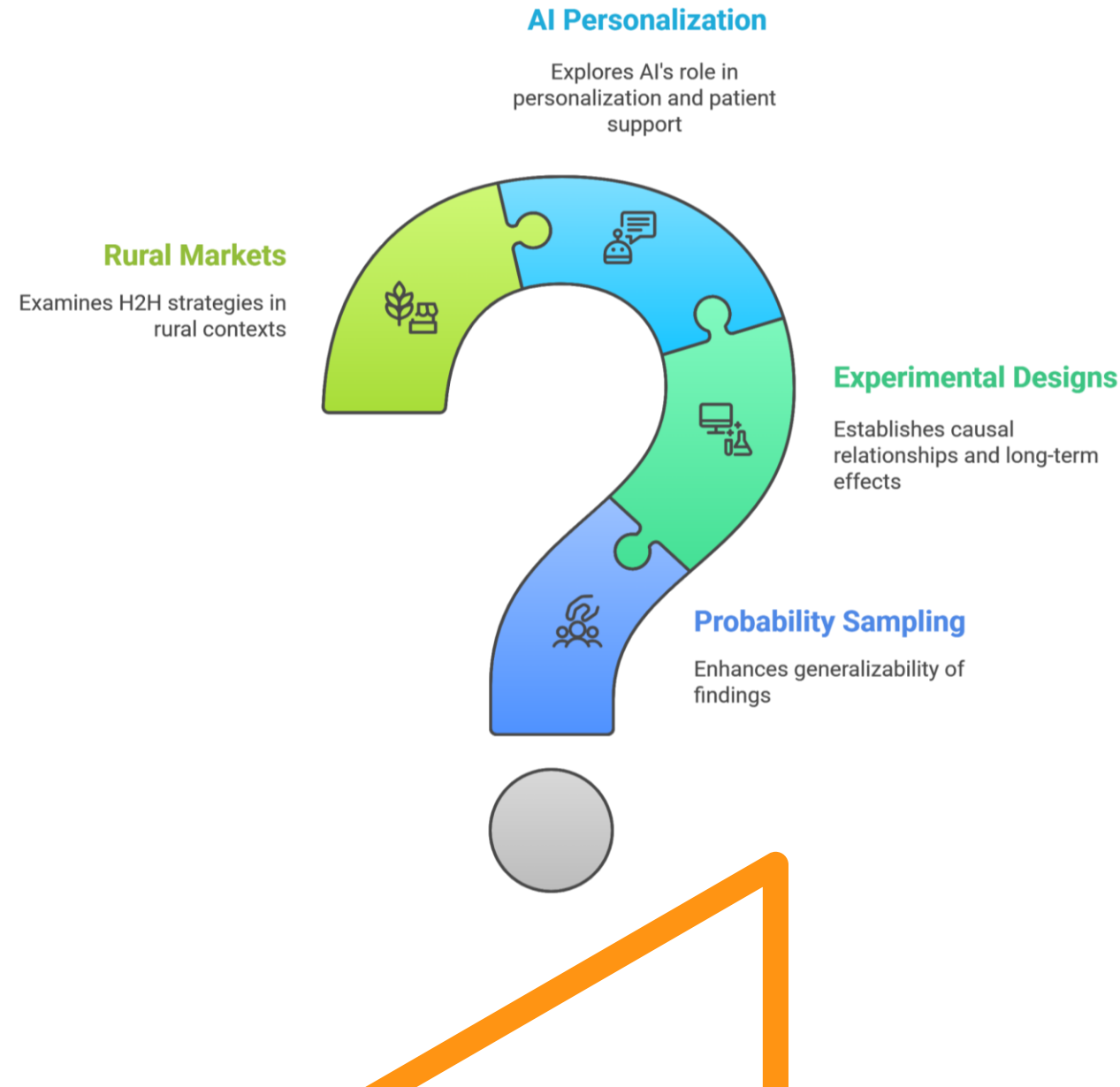
- Shift from transactional to transparency-based, authentic, and two-way communication strategies.
- Leverage digital channels like social media, influencers, expert content, and review platforms to build trust, engagement, and sales.
- Tailor content to specific gender-based needs and purchasing behaviors.

For Regulatory Stakeholders:

- Urgent need for a coherent ethical and policy framework for digital pharmaceutical marketing.
 - Focus on truthfulness of claims, transparency of sponsored content, data protection, and ethical targeting of consumer subgroups.
 - Balance consumer protection with encouraging innovation and ethical advancements in digital advertising.
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Future Research Scope

- Incorporate probability sampling for greater generalizability.
- Utilize experimental or longitudinal designs to establish stronger causal relationships and assess long-term effects of H2H marketing.
- Explore AI-enabled personalization, chatbots for patient support, and effectiveness of interactive digital campaigns (gamification, AR) in H2H marketing.
- Examine H2H marketing strategies in rural markets.





Conclusion

- The Future of OTC Marketing: Humanizing Digital Interactions
 - Digital H2H marketing is a strategic necessity for the Indian OTC pharmaceutical landscape.
 - Consumers seek authentic, relatable, and informed conversations, moving beyond transactional relationships.
 - H2H strategies build meaningful consumer-brand relationships, driving engagement, informed self-care, and brand growth.
 - Trust is a valuable asset, and ethical, transparent communication is crucial for market leadership and long-term consumer trust.
 - The study advocates for a significant shift towards humanizing digital interactions, benefiting both consumers and responsible pharmaceutical companies.
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**THANK
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