SYNOPSIS

DISSERTATION TOPIC:

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

Guided By:

Dr.Sudhinder Singh Chowhan

Associate Professor
School of Pharmaceutical Management

IIHMR UNIVERSITY, JAIPUR

Submitted by:

Name: Ashutosh Kumar Gupta
Roll.no: 0487

IIHMR UNIVERSITY

TITLE

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

INTRODUCTION

Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, or nonprescription drugs, spearhead the worldwide self-medication trend. These drugs—such as painkillers, cold and flu, antacids, and herbal supplements—offer efficient and convenient treatments to minor ailments when used appropriately. From 2008 to the present, the OTC market has surpassed growth in prescription medicine year after year with the driving force of rising consumer demand for affordable and convenient healthcare solutions, conversion of some prescription drugs to OTC status, and the growth of digital channels that boost health awareness. Through March 14, 2025, the OTC market continues to expand, empowering individuals to become more self-sufficient in controlling their health and wellbeing.

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are an important segment of the Indian pharmaceutical industry, providing consumers with direct access to medicines without a prescription. With the onset of digitalization, Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing mechanisms have emerged as a powerful force in connecting with consumers, establishing trust and brand loyalty. H2H marketing differs from conventional Business-to-Consumer (B2C) marketing in that it is focused on one-to-one, interactive, and objective-oriented communication with consumers. The objective of this study is to investigate the role of digital H2H marketing mechanisms in OTC drug sales, consumer attitudes, and regulation in India.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do digital Human-to-Human (H2H) marketing strategies influence consumer engagement, trust, and sales of OTC drugs in India.

OBJECTIVES

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

HYPOTHESIS

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

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

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: Cross-sectional study combining qualitative and quantitative research approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of digital H2H marketing on OTC drugs.

Setting : The research will be conducted among OTC medicine consumers across India through an online survey distributed via Google Forms. The study will target individuals who purchase OTC medicines through pharmacies, retail stores, and e-commerce platforms. The study will be conducted among urban and semi-urban consumers, digital marketing professionals, to gain diverse insights into digital marketing effectiveness.

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

1. **Surveys:** Online questionnaires for consumer preferences and behavior.
2. **Interviews:** Structured interviews with digital marketing professionals.
3. **Focus Groups:** Consumer discussions on perceptions and experiences.
4. **Social Media Analytics:** Engagement levels, sentiment analysis, brand interactions.
5. **Secondary Data:** Industry reports, regulations, prior studies.

Duration of Study : The study will be conducted over a period of three months

Sample Size : A total of 200 respondents will be included in the study.

Sampling Technique : The study will use a convenience sampling technique, selecting participants based on their willingness to complete the online survey.

Data Collection Procedure

1. The questionnaire will be created and distributed using Google Forms.
2. The survey link will be shared through social media platforms, email, and WhatsApp groups to reach a broad audience.
3. Respondents will be required to provide informed consent before participating.
4. Only completed responses will be included in the final dataset.

Operational Definitions

- Brand Experience: The consumer's perception of an OTC brand based on previous interactions, marketing, and product performance. Measured through Likert scale responses on trust, advertising, and brand image.
- Customer Satisfaction: The level of consumer contentment regarding an OTC medicine's effectiveness, affordability, and accessibility, assessed using satisfaction scores.
- Digital Engagement: The impact of online reviews, social media, and digital health awareness campaigns on consumer choices, measured through self-reported influence scores.
- Consumer Decision-Making: Factors influencing the choice of OTC medicine, including loyalty, preference for branded products, and willingness to repurchase.

DATA ANALYSIS PLAN

Data will be analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

1. **For Pharmaceutical Marketers:** The research will give practical insights into how digital H2H marketing best practices can be used to maximize consumer engagement, trust, and loyalty. It will optimize content strategies, influencer partnerships, and personalized digital interactions to drive sales and brand credibility.

2. **To Consumer Behavior Analysis:** Consumer reaction to H2H marketing will guide the development of digital communication strategies that build stronger relationships and customer loyalty in the competitive OTC drug market.
3. **For Regulatory Agencies:** The research will identify possible regulatory and ethical issues in online advertising of OTC medications, which will assist policymakers in simplifying rules to provide consumer protection and stimulate innovation in advertising practices.
4. **For Future Research:** The research shall act as a stepping stone for future research on pharmaceutical digital marketing strategy, examining newer technologies such as AI-based personalization, chatbots, and interactive campaigns to drive consumer engagement.
5. **To Facilitate Industry Growth:** By demonstrating the effectiveness of H2H marketing, the study will encourage wider adoption of digital strategies, resulting in increased transparency, consumer awareness, and industry growth in OTC medicines in India.

REFERENCES

1. Digital Marketing: A Road Ahead To Pharmaceutical Selling Prof. Lalitkumar Bhole (B.Pharm, MMS), Dr. Sushma Verma,IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM) e-ISSN: 2278-487X, p-ISSN: 2319-7668 PP 61-65 www.iosrjournals.org .
2. Role of Information and Promotion Strategies for Indian Pharmaceuticals Firms in the Age of Digital Marketing of OTC Product Rahul Maurya, Dr. Shashikant Maury, Mr. Shivendra Dubey, Prof. (Dr.) Mohd. Wasiullah, Prof. (Dr.) Piyush Yadav,International Journal of Pharmaceutical Science Invention ISSN (Online): 2319-6718, ISSN (Print): 2319- 670X www.ijpsi.org Volume 13 Issue 3 ǁ May. –June, 2024 ǁ PP. 38-41.
3. Navigating India's Expanding OTC Healthcare Market: Trends, Challenges, And Strategies Arjun Jaiswal, Sushil Chaurasiya, Shiva, Ajeet Sharma, Ramayan Yadav, Neha Chaudhary, Ashutosh Chand Kaushal,INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES [ISSN: 0975-4725; CODEN(USA):IJPS00] Journal Homepage: https://www.ijpsjournal.com .
4. Innovations in pharmaceutical marketing: Strategies for sustainable sales growth,Dr. Tausif Alam and Mohd Faisal ,The Pharma Innovation Journal 2019; 8(4): 1285-1289.