A STUDY OF FACTORS INFLUENCING BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINE AMONG THE USERS OF PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

OTC medicines are also termed as non-prescription drugs. These are the medicines or health supplements which can be bought without a prescription. These are deemed safe and effective if followed the instructions on the label. In India, OTC has no legal recognition as such. Till now, it is legally identified as all those drugs which do not come under “prescription-only” category. So they are available “over the counter” on a medicine shop or a retail store. Certain medicines which were earlier sold as “prescription only” has proven safe for self-medication gradually and thus switched from prescription to OTC medicine. One such example is Diphenhydramine (Benadryl).

Keywords: OTC, Buying behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Indian pharmaceutical is contributing almost 10% by volume in the global pharmaceutical industry. Indian OTC drug market is forecasted to grow to $6.6 billion by volume by 2016-17. According to a study conducted by FICCI Indian Pharma Summit 2014-15, OTC medicines account for 21% of share with generic drugs as 70% and patented drugs as 9%. Few famous brands are Vicks (P&G), Iodex, Crocin, Calpol (GSK), Glucon D (Heinz-Kraft), Digene (Abbott), Dettol (RB), Benadryl (Pfizer), Combiflam (Aventis Pharma), Gelusil (Parke-Davis) etc. The pharmaceutical industry in India is expected to grow at a CAGR of almost 12 to 13% over year 2015–20 to reach $55 billion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As per WHO, self-health care refers to unorganized health activities and health-related decision making by individuals, families, friends, colleagues at work. In 1986, Engel et al, studied buying behaviour as act of obtaining, using and disposing of economic goods and services. Rossiter and Prey, 1987, added that brand awareness is most important factor in consumer buying process. Bond and Bradley, 1996, studied about OTC and argued that individuals are actively participating in own health and treatment of illness. In 1998, Morrison and Roberts added that consumer’s understanding of the channel is important factor in determining the future use of that channel for buying purpose. Neafsey & Shellman, 2001, researched that adults used OTC medicines due to cost affordability. They also found the consumer behaviour of buying process and found that few OTCs are more prevalent in usage such as calcium, antacid, aspirin, oral decongestants, vitamin supplements etc. Nabors et al, 2004, in his study reported that 80% of the youth is spending on OTC medication on a weekly basis Hughes et al, in 2002, added that people perception towards OTC medicines is adjudged as safer medicine. Contrary to this, Lessenger and Feinberg, 2008, studied about it and concluded that these medicines have potential to harm as well. Kotler and Keller, 2005, researched about consumer buying and added that analysing the alternatives available for the product or service is important step in buying process.
Abay and Amelo, 2010, found in his study that past experience and minor illness was the major reason for OTC medicines among pharmacist and other health care personnel. Almasdy and Sharrif, 2011, added that lack of time and cost of treatment are another factor for OTC medicines sale. In 2012, Banerjee and Bhadury, through their study concluded that usages of OTC drugs are common throughout the world but this practice should be based on proper medical information.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

We want to study about the OTC medicines availability and its buying pattern. Our objective is framed as follows

1. To study about factors affecting buying behaviour of OTC medicines among users of Punjab
2. To develop a consumer buying model based on factors obtained by the study

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

We have administered structured questionnaire to the sample population for the primary data collection. The scale has been developed by M Babu. For the study of Factors contributing to the purchase of Over The Counter (OTC) drugs in Bangladesh: An Empirical study, The Internet Journal of Third World Medicine. 2007, Volume 6 Number 2. The variables are recorded as a response in 5-point Likert scale. (The variables are attached in the annexure). Overall variables are converted to factors using Principal component analysis in IBM SPSS data analysis software. A buying Model is developed using structural equation modelling

**SAMPLE SIZE**

We have chosen convenience sampling first and based on the demographics question answered by the respondents we have adopted the judgmental sampling, i.e, we have rejected those filled questionnaires who are unaware or don’t buy OTC medicines. Initially the questionnaire was floated among 317 respondents using online and offline mode. Later on we have discarded 113 responses due to half-filled information or non-compliance to the survey conducted.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

We are conducting the survey among the users of Punjab. Further studies can be continued with different geographical regions or the nations. We are asking respondents for OTC medicines as general, but further studies can be done for individual segments viz- vitamin supplement, digestive disorders, headache, minor body pain and OTC available for these treatment.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

Principal component analysis fetched the below data as output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KMO and Bartlett's Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. Chi-Square df Sig.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KMO values and Bartlett’s test of sphericity validates the sampling adequacy
The factor analysis results show that the people of Punjab are selecting OTC drugs for below 5 factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors Contributing to the OTC medicine purchase</th>
<th>Variance (%)</th>
<th>Cumulative Variance (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand Image</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived as safe to use</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness about diagnosis</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time saving</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factors obtained**

**Factor 1. Brand Image**

Variables:
- I choose OTC medicine of those companies which has good image
- In case of buying OTC I select only the known brands
- The appeal of company’s promotional activity instigates me the adoption of OTC drugs of that company
- I prefer the brand names over generic names of the OTC medicines
- I have trust over the pharma companies

**Factor 2. Perceived Safe to Use**

Variables:
- I believe OTC medicines are safe
- While buying an OTC medicine, I consider the side effect of the medicine
- I buy those OTC medicines which I have the past experience
- The tablets and package provides enough information about OTC medicine

**Factor 3. Self-Awareness about diagnosis**

Variables:
- I select OTC medicines on my own because I know doctor is going to prescribe the same medicine
- I prefer OTC when I have adequate knowledge of disease
- My choice over OTC medicine depends on choice of medicinal system (Ayurved, Unani, homeopathic etc)
- I have adequate awareness of medicine
Factor 4. Time saving

Variables:

I buy it because an OTC drug is easy to administer or apply

Easy availability of the OTC medicines also influences my choice of buying

I don’t have enough money for consulting a doctor so I buy OTC

I don’t have enough doctors in the locality so I have to buy medicine on OTC

Factor 5. Peer Pressure

Variables:

Shop owner’s opinion is important to me while buying an OTC medicine

I purchase those OTC medicines about which I have gathered information from the users

I buy OTC because it is a common practice in my family

I buy OTC medicines because all of my friends do the same

Model Fit:

We have asked one question from respondent as How much you are willing to buy an OTC medicine. (On a scale of 1 to 5). We have taken “Willingness to buy” as dependant variable and tried to make a model based on independent variables viz. “Brand Image”, “Perceived safe to use”, “Self Awareness about diagnosis,” “Time Saving” and “Peer Pressure”. We want ascertain that how the perception of OTC-as-a-safe-drug-to-buy is framed based on our previously extracted factor.

SUMMARY

OUTPUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

We observed that all the factors are contributing positively to the buying willingness. Factors like “Brand Image” and “Perceived safe to use” has major effect compared to rest three viz. “Self Awareness about diagnosis,” “Time Saving” and “Peer Pressure”

Proposed Model equation for buying behaviour

\[
\text{Willingness to buy} = 2.913 + 0.336 \times \text{Brand Image} + 0.308 \times \text{Perceived safe to use} + 0.208 \times \text{Self Awareness about diagnosis} + 0.201 \times \text{Time Saving} + 0.103 \times \text{Peer Pressure}
\]
REFERENCES


