

A STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE OF ONLINE PHARMACY APPS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

Dr. K. VANAJA

Professor and Head,
Department of Commerce with Professional Accounting,
Dr. N.G.P. Arts and Science College,
Coimbatore.

Ms. SRINISHA S

Student of III B.Com. (PA),
Department of Commerce with Professional Accounting,
Dr. N.G.P. Arts and Science College,
Coimbatore.

ABSTRACT:

Online-pharmacy apps that grease the customers to browse through the existing inventory, order medicine online, refill prescriptions, make payments and get drugs delivered to their doorstep, all from the comfort and convenience of their own homes. E-medicine delivery apps have surfaced as a feasible volition to the traditional brick and mortar pharmacies. The main ideal was to study the consumer preference of online pharmacy apps in Coimbatore city. The study used both primary and secondary data for analysis. The findings of the study were deduced from the data analysis and conclusion was handed based on the data.

KEYWORDS: Online pharmacy apps, E-pharmacy, Consumer Preference, Medicine.

INTRODUCTION:

E-commerce changed the nature of the economy and the healthcare industry as well as it provides the pharmaceutical industry with the best transaction mode for competitive advantage and sustained growth and enables customers to make secure and convenient transactions related to health products and services, allowing the consumer to receive medication at a home or pick up at the nearest community pharmacy. The purchase of online medicines is gaining momentum in today's world. An online pharmacy platform is an effective model that helps to reach more customers, helps in better inventory management, better purchasing margins, competitive and reduced prices for medicines, and options for generic medicines.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

There are numerous online websites and apps available to buy medicine without a person-to-person interaction. But the awareness about the online pharmacy apps is comparatively less in most of the regions,

people are moreover ignorant of the apps or they do not prefer it over the traditional pharmacies. Consumers from different regions may have difference in their opinions so to address these variances the study on consumer preference of online pharmacy apps with a special reference to Coimbatore city is conducted.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of the study is to analyze the consumer preference towards online pharmacy apps. The study substantially focuses on Coimbatore city. It is truly easy to order prescription drugs through E-Pharmacy. Especially for people that live far away from a traditional drugstore, the senior, impaired people, and those who work really intensely, this system is both very easy and actually fast method of acquiring medicine.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To know about the consumer's knowledge and preference towards online pharmacy apps with special reference to Coimbatore city.
- To identify the factors that influence the decisions of consumer preference towards online pharmacy apps.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The descriptive research design is used in the study. Primary and secondary data were collected for the study. Primary data is collected from a well-structured questionnaire by using Google forms and secondary data is collected from various research papers and internet. The convenience sampling technique is used in the study. The samples size is up to 120 respondents who are users of various online pharmacy apps. The various tools used in the study are simple percentage, likert scale analysis and rank analysis.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

J. Priya and S. Subbulakshmi (2022), the objective of the study was to identify the factors that influence customers' buying intention towards e- pharmacies for online medicine purchases in Chennai city. It was based on both descriptive and analytical and the primary data was collected using structured questionnaire during the month of January 2022. The findings showcase the e-pharmacy customers' viewpoint towards the existing services and preference towards e-pharmacy health line. It was concluded that sustaining and retaining customer relationships has to be the crux of marketing for attaining healthy profits and organizational development.

Nandagopan G (2022), the objective of the study was to explore the factor responsible for buying medicine from online E-pharmacy. The study used a quantitative analytic technique to elicit responses to the research

questionnaire. The study found that pharmaceutical market is quite volatile because purchasing clothing and medicine are two entirely different things. The researcher also stated that due to the additional benefits of e-pharmacy, such as a discount, effective customer relationship management, and frictionless doorstep delivery, the e-pharmacy business model is gaining popularity with customers.

Dr.L. Senthilkumar (2021), the objective of the study was to analyse consumer's awareness and preference of e-pharmacy. The researcher collected the data through a questionnaire using google forms and analysed the data with the help of Percentage analysis to derive the results. The majority of the respondents were highly aware and satisfied towards services of e-pharmacies. The study also found that majority respondents were male and suggested to create awareness among female to use e-pharmacies.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Table 1.1

Table showing factors influenced to use online pharmacy by the respondents

S.NO.	PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Newspaper	5	4.2
2	Tv	31	25.8
3	Social media	55	45.8
4	Family	14	11.7
5	Friends	15	12.5
	TOTAL	120	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

The table shows that 4.2% of the respondents are influenced by newspaper, 25.8% of the respondents are influenced by TV, 45.8% of the respondents are influenced by Social-media, 11.7% of the respondents are influenced by family and 12.5% of the respondents are influenced by friends.

Table 1.2

Table showing the reasons considered to buy medicine through online pharmacy apps by the respondents

S.NO.	PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Choice of delivery time and address	22	18.3
2	Reduce visits to pharmacy	39	32.5

3	Attractive discount on prices and offers	32	26.7
4	Freedom to use any brand of drugs of a given generic name	15	12.5
5	Sometimes they sell drugs without prescription	12	10.0
	TOTAL	120	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

The table shows that 18.3% of the respondents chose choice of delivery time and address as the reason to buy medicine through online pharmacy apps, 32.5% of the respondents chose reduce visits to pharmacy as the reason to buy medicine through online pharmacy apps, 26.7% of the respondents chose attractive discount on prices and offers as the reason to buy medicine through online pharmacy apps, 12.5% of the respondents chose freedom to use any brand of drugs of a given generic name as the reason to buy medicine through online pharmacy apps and 10% of the respondents chose sometimes they sell drugs without prescription as the reason to buy medicine through online pharmacy apps.

Table 1.3

Table showing awareness level of the respondents towards online pharmacy apps

S.NO.	FACTORS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	LIKERT SCALE (x)	TOTAL (fx)
1	Highly aware	17	5	85
2	Aware	46	4	184
3	Neutral	42	3	126
4	Not aware	10	2	20
5	Highly not aware	5	1	5
	TOTAL	120		420

(Source: Primary Data)

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Likert scale} &= \sum(fx) / \text{Total no. of respondents} \\
 &= 420 / 120 \\
 &= 3.5
 \end{aligned}$$

Interpretation:

The Likert scale value 3.5 is greater than the mid value (3), so the respondents are aware about online pharmacy apps.

Table 1.4

Table showing the preference of the respondents to buy medicine online

S.NO.	FACTORS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	LIKERT SCALE (x)	TOTAL (fx)
1	Highly preferred	12	5	60
2	Preferred	42	4	168
3	Neutral	41	3	123
4	Not preferred	18	2	36
5	Highly not preferred	7	1	7
	TOTAL	120		394

(Source: Primary Data)

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Likert scale} &= \sum(fx) / \text{Total no. of respondents} \\ &= 394 / 120 \\ &= 3.3 \end{aligned}$$

Interpretation:

The Likert scale value 3.3 is greater than the mid value (3), so the respondents prefer to buy medicine online.

Table 1.5

Table showing ranking for the features that attracts the respondents to buy medicine online

S.NO.	PARTICULARS	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	RANK
1	Price	41(4)	19(3)	29(2)	31(1)	310	1
2	Packaging	17(4)	49(3)	38(2)	16(1)	307	3
3	Availability	24(4)	38(3)	41(2)	17(1)	309	2
4	Quick delivery	38(4)	14(3)	12(2)	56(1)	274	4

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

The table shows that Price is ranked as 1, Availability is ranked as 2, Packaging is ranked as 3 and Quick delivery is ranked as 4.

FINDINGS:

- Majority 45.8% of the respondents are influenced by Social-media.
- Majority 32.5% of the respondents chose reduce visits to pharmacy as the reason to buy medicine through online pharmacy apps.

- The Likert scale value 3.5 which is greater than the mid value (3), so the respondents are aware about online pharmacy apps.
- The Likert scale value 3.3 which is greater than the mid value (3), so the respondents prefer to buy medicine online.
- The result is majority of the respondents ranked 1 for Price as the feature that attracts them to buy medicine online and Quick delivery is ranked 4.

CONCLUSION:

Development of online app-based pharmacies provide good health care system across the nation. The pharma sector is quite volatile and innovations in this industry will help the consumers. Consumers need to be educated about these apps, and it uses also they should be educated about the risks involved in them. With additional services provided by the apps attract consumers to use them. From this study it is evident that consumers are attracted to online pharmacy apps, but they lack in trustworthiness and purchasing frequency. If the pharmacy apps concentrate on these parts it is certain that e-pharmacy can thrive, and it will change the buying behaviour of medicines in India.

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