

A Study on Customers Perception of Over-The-Counter Medicines in Vijayapura city

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Abstract—Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines play a significant role in self-medication by enabling consumers to treat minor illnesses without a doctor's prescription. The increasing demand for quick, affordable, and easily accessible healthcare solutions has led to higher OTC medicine usage in urban areas like Vijayapura city.

This study aims to analyse customer perception, awareness, purchasing behaviour, safety concerns, and influencing factors related to OTC medicines in Vijayapura city. The research adopted a descriptive research design. Primary data were collected from 200 respondents through structured questionnaires (150 online and 50 offline). Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, chi-square test, correlation, and regression analysis were used.

The findings reveal that most consumers use OTC medicines occasionally for minor ailments like fever, cold, headache, and acidity. Local pharmacies are the most preferred place of purchase. Professional advice from pharmacists and doctors has a stronger influence than advertisements. Although general awareness is moderate, knowledge about side effects remains limited. The study concludes that while consumers have a positive perception of OTC medicines, there is a need for improved awareness programs to promote safe and responsible self-medication practices.

Index Terms—Over-the-Counter Medicines, Customer Perception, Self-Medication, Consumer Awareness, Pharmacist Influence, Vijayapura City

I. INTRODUCTION

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are drugs that can be purchased without a prescription and are used for minor health problems such as fever, cold, headache, acidity, and body pain. In India, self-medication practices have increased due to busy lifestyles, affordability, and easy access to pharmacies.

Customer perception refers to how consumers think and feel about OTC medicines based on their experience, knowledge, and beliefs. Understanding consumer perception helps in identifying awareness levels, purchasing behavior, safety concerns, and decision-making patterns.

In cities like Vijayapura, OTC medicines are widely used. However, improper use may lead to risks such as incorrect dosage, drug interactions, and side effects. Therefore, studying consumer perception is important to promote safe usage.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Cited work of Meseret Wabe, Gameshow & Gebremedhin (2020): "Factors Influencing Consumers' OTC Purchase Decisions in Ethiopian Community Pharmacies."

This study examined the determinants influencing consumers' decisions to purchase over-the-counter (OTC) medicines in Ethiopian community pharmacies using survey data and SPSS analysis. The findings revealed that price, pharmacist advice, product availability, and prior experience significantly influenced purchase decisions. The study emphasized the need for consumer-awareness programs and highlighted the limited availability of consumer behaviour-based OTC studies in developing countries.

2. Cited work of Vincent Charn & Hung Tran (2016): "Customer Values, Trust and Decision-Making in OTC Medicine Purchases."

This research investigated customer expectations, perceived value, trust, and decision-making processes while purchasing OTC medicines in Australian pharmacies. The findings indicated that trust in pharmacists and perceived product safety were major

determinants of purchase intention. The study suggested that emotional and psychological factors require further empirical exploration in OTC pharmacy settings.

3. Cited work of Kathryn Ai Kinetic (2016): “Impact of Promotional Offers on Consumer Understanding of OTC Drug Benefits and Risks.”

The objective of this study was to analyse how promotional strategies affect consumers’ understanding of benefits and risks associated with OTC medicines. The results showed that promotional messages often increased purchase intention but sometimes reduced risk comprehension. The study recommended balanced advertising strategies and noted insufficient research on promotional influence on risk perception.

4. Cited work of Merve Minisolo (2017): “Marketing Communication Strategies for OTC Products in Turkey.”

This study explored pharmacists’ perspectives on marketing communication strategies for OTC and non-pharmaceutical products. It found that pharmacists play a crucial role in influencing consumer decisions through direct communication and product recommendations. However, limited qualitative research exists on professionals’ roles in OTC marketing communication.

5. Cited work of Abinaya Ravichandran & Asha Basava Reddy (2016): “Pharmacists’ Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Towards OTC Dispensing.”

The study assessed pharmacists’ knowledge, attitudes, and dispensing practices regarding OTC medicines using a questionnaire survey. Findings revealed moderate knowledge levels but gaps in patient counselling and monitoring practices. The research highlighted the lack of real-world data on pharmacists’ dispensing behaviour.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Determining the demographic characteristics that affect the perception and use of over-the-counter medications.
- To assess consumer knowledge of over-the-counter product side effects, label reading practices, and information sources.
- To examine opinions about OTC availability, cost, safety, and efficacy for mild illnesses.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₀)

- There is no significant preference in the place of purchase of OTC medicines.
 - There is no significant pattern in how often customers read labels and dosage.
 - There is no significant relationship between awareness of side effects and source of information.
- #### Alternative Hypothesis (H₁)
- There is a significant preference in the place of purchase of OTC medicines.
 - There is a significant pattern in how often customers read labels and dosage.
 - There is a significant relationship between awareness of side effects and source of information.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Particulars	Details
Research Title	A study on customer perception of over-the-counter medicines in Vijayapura city,
Research Design	Descriptive Research
Research Method	Survey Method
Area of Study	Vijayapura city
Data Type	Primary and Secondary Data
Primary Data Collection	Structured Questionnaire
Secondary Data Collection	Books, Journals, Research Articles, Websites, Healthcare, Reports.
Data Collection Method	Online (Google Forms) and Offline Survey
Sample Size	200 Responses
Sampling Method	Convenience Sampling
Statistical Tools Used	Percentage Analysis, Chi-square Test, correlation, Regression Analysis
Study Focus	Consumer Awareness, Perception, Buying Behavior, Safety and Satisfaction of OTC Medicines

IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1. The study focuses on customer perception, awareness, and purchasing behavior of OTC medicines in Vijayapura city.
2. It examines factors such as price, brand preference, safety concerns, and pharmacist influence for minor health problems only.
3. There search is limited to 200 respondents selected through convenience sampling within Vijayapura.
4. The findings are based on respondents’ personal opinions and exclude prescription medicines.

Discussion and Results of the Hypothesis

Analysis of Hypothesis-1

Null Hypothesis(H₀): There is no significant preference in the place of purchase of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines among customers.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant preference in the place of purchase of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines among customers.

Chi-Square Test

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Local pharmacy store	69	40.2	28.8
Hospital medical shop	59	40.2	18.8
Online pharmacy platform	40	40.2	-.2
Supermarket or general store	23	40.2	-17.2
5	10	40.2	-30.2
Total	201		

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Always	72	40.2	31.8
Often	41	40.2	.8
Sometimes	54	40.2	13.8
Rarely	16	40.2	-24.2
Never	18	40.2	-22.2
Total	201		

Interpretation

A chi-square test was conducted to examine consumers’ preference for purchasing OTC medicines from different locations. The results show a significant

difference between observed and expected frequencies, indicating that consumers have a clear preference regarding buying locations. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected at the 5% significance level.

Decision Rule

If p-value<0.05, reject H₀ and accept H₁ If p-value > 0.05, accept H₀.

Analysis of Hypothesis-2

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant pattern in how often customers read labels and dosage.

Alternative Hypothesis(H₁): There is a significant pattern in how often customers read labels and dosage.

Test Statistics		
	Where do you usually purchase OTC medicines	How often do you read the label and dosage
Chi-Square	59.473 ^a	56.736 ^a
Df	4	4
AsympSig.	0	0

Interpretation

A chi-square test was conducted to examine consumers’ purchasing location preferences and their frequency of reading OTC medicine labels. The results ($\chi^2 = 59.473$ and 56.736 ; $p < 0.05$) indicate significant differences in consumer behavior. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that purchasing and label-reading behaviors are not uniformly distributed.

Decision Rule

At a 5% level of significance, reject H₀ if p-value<0.05; otherwise, accept H₀. Since p = 0.000 (< 0.05), H₀ is rejected.

Analysis of Hypothesis-3

Null Hypothesis(H₀): There is no significant relationship between awareness of side Effects and sources of information.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between awareness of side effects and sources on information.

Correlations			
		How aware are you of the Possible side effects	From where do you usually get information
How aware are you of the Possible side effects	Pearson Correlation	1	.125
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.077
	N	201	201
From where do you usually Get information	Pearson Correlation	.125	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.077	
	N	201	201

Regression

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	From where do you usually get information	.	Enter

Interpretation

A weak positive correlation ($r=0.125$) was found between information sources and awareness of adverse effects. However, there relationship is not statistically significant ($p=0.077>0.05$). Regression results ($R^2 = 0.016$) show minimal explanatory power.

Decision rule

Since $p>0.05$, the null hypothesis is accepted.

V. KEY FINDINGS

- Majority of respondents are aware of OTC medicines and use them for minor health problems.
- Most believe OTC medicines are effective and safe when used properly.

- Pharmacists are the main source of information, and many customers trust their guidance.
- A good number read labels, but risk awareness and brand switching behavior still exist.
- Overall perception toward OTC medicines is positive.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

- Increase consumer awareness about safe and correct usage of OTC medicines.
- Strengthen pharmacist guidance and promote responsible self-medication.
- Improve label clarity and provide clear safety information.
- Maintain affordable pricing and ensure availability of medicines.
- Encourage doctor consultation for serious or persistent health issues.

VII. CONCLUSION

- High Reliance: Consumers heavily use OTC drugs for minor illnesses due to their affordability and convenience.
- Trust Factors: Purchase decisions are driven by pharmacist advice and brand reputation rather than aggressive advertising.
- Knowledge Gap: Users often have only partial awareness of side effects and dosages, despite generally positive perceptions.
- Key Need: Better consumer education and stronger pharmacist-buyer interaction are essential for safer medication practices.

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