



# CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS PHARMACEUTICAL OTC PRODUCTS

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the research is to determine the factors which influence the attitude of consumer in decision making process when purchasing pharmaceutical OTC products and to understand the impact of cost, advertising and availability factors on the consumer decision-making process when buying OTC products. The market for over-the-counter (OTC) drugs in India has seen significant growth in recent years. Based on the survey, it can be clearly seen that customers take OTC Products for Acute (short term) disease. Under the study it is seen that majority of the customers are neutral towards advertising of OTC Products and disagree that advertising affects the buying behaviour of the customers. Most of the customers think that OTC Products have lower cost than prescription drugs. During the study, it can be seen that there is an increase in the purchase of the OTC Products as compared to the last year and customers think that OTC products are easily available than prescription products.*

**KEYWORDS:** *OTC Products, Consumer Behaviour, Pharmaceutical Advertisement, Availability, Cost, Acute.*

## 1-INTRODUCTION

Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are drugs that are sold directly to consumers without a prescription from a healthcare professional. The market for over-the-counter (OTC) drugs in India has seen significant growth in recent years.

In 2005, it is estimated to have reached INR. 4500 crores and was predicted to rise to C by 2007.A.G.R. (Compound annual growth rate) about 4.5%. However, this segment still has a long way to go as O.T.C. is not clearly defined. Indian regulatory authorities do not allow over-the-counter sales of some medicines like ranitidine and some OTC brands do not have consistent branding within a certain period of time due to high branding costs.

Growing elderly population suffering from various diseases, prevalence of diseases among young people due to daily lifestyle, access to these generic drugs, affordability and increasing patient awareness are driving the market. Additionally, generic drug manufacturers are increasingly aware of the need for affordable health solutions for people suffering from unhealthy eating habits. The digital availability of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs along with the prevalence of online pharmacies is driving the market growth. Self-medication is the practice of taking medications to treat self-diagnosed symptoms without a doctor's prescription.

This trend toward self-medication is expected to strengthen the domestic OTC cough and cold, gastroenterology, painkillers, multivitamins, and dermatology segments. The increasing incidence of the elderly increases the demand in the market. OTC medications are most commonly used for fever, headache, toothache, acne, constipation, musculoskeletal pain, and colds, coughs, and flu.

The launch of new and updated customer-focused products is accelerating the growth of the over-the-counter (OTC) market, such as alcohol, dye-free, cough or cold containing honey, non-sedating cold and cough preparations, oral raft-forming suspensions, oral and topical analgesics, naturally extracted creams and acne treatment lotions. However, many patients do not have access to the drugs they need due to factors such as lack of a health facility, workforce disparities or shortages of trained medical professionals, and time or economic constraints. As a result, patients often live with their symptoms, which affects their quality.



## 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

**George N. Lodorfos, Kate L. Mulvana, John Temperley(2006)** did study on Consumer Behaviour Experience, Price, Trust and Subjective Norms in The OTC Pharmaceutical Market. This study investigated the theory of planned behaviour to investigate the factors contributing to an individual's brand choice decision within the over-the-counter (OTC) pharmaceutical market. It found that direct experience with the brand, price tolerance, brand trust and the opinions of others are important determinants of repeat purchase behaviour of OTC products.

**Katarina Bostrom(2011)** studied Consumer behaviour of pharmacy customers that The three main reasons why a consumer chooses a pharmacy are location, assortment and staff. He concluded that almost all consumers usually buy the same product again and most sometimes buy products they know through advertising. Most bought an over-the-counter drug or vitamin/supplement at the pharmacy, even if it wasn't planned.

**Mr. Rohit Ravindra Landge, Dr. Purushottam Petare(2021)** did study on consumer behaviour in covid pandemic with respect to otc medicine(2021).during this study, they concluded that Self-treatment plan coordinated with guaranteed health problems regardless of their occupation in all age groups. Information is collected from 120 respondents of Ichalkaranji. Clear and inferential measurements reveal that individuals prefer OTC allopathic medicines to remedy normal ailments.

**Lisa Aufegger, Celine Yanar, Ara Darzi and Colin Bicknell(2021)** did his research on The risk-value trade-of: price and brand information impact consumers' intentions to purchase OTC drugs(2021), under this they concluded that Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) advertising is an important tool to improve consumers' awareness of the availability of different OTC drugs. Consumers' purchase intentions are influenced by unawareness and misconceptions, past experiences, and advertising as a decision-making tool.

**Listya, Yeshika Alversia(2021)** conducted research on the Influence of Exposures, Benefits, and Barriers Toward OTC Medicine Behavior. during this research, they examine the factors influencing consumer behavior in the use of over-the-counter medicines. The study shows that both perceived benefits and perceived barriers significantly influence behavior for both over-the-counter and herbal medicines. Perceived trust and exposure factors do not have a significant impact on use.

**Aniruddha Bhowmick, Dr. Mridanish Jhadid(2017)** his research on the study of consumer behavior towards over the counter allopathic medicines using integrated behavioral model. The study has implications in developing a new way of thinking for pharmaceutical houses to develop marketing strategies to penetrate the Indian over-the-counter allopathic medicine market. Factors influencing consumer buying behavior over. antidotes were categorized by personal approach, subjective norms, and perception.

**Aniruddha Bhowmick(2020)** conducted research on the Factors Influencing Consumer Preferences for Over-The-Counter (OTC) Allopathic Medicine. During this research, he examines consumer purchasing behavior with respect to over-the-counter allopathic analgesic topical medications. It concludes that perceived behavioral control plays a critical role in determining consumers' intention to purchase an over-the-counter drug. Demographics have minimal or nominal influence on the consumer decision-making process, while income has the highest degree of impact.

**Shafinaz Binti Ali Jinnah, Ahasanul Haque, Mohammad Aizat Jamaludin(2020)** conducted research on Consumer Behavior Towards Over-The-Counter Medicine Purchase. During this, they concluded that Global drug scheduling is changing due to the frequent introduction of new and generic drugs to the market. This study incorporates extended TPB theory to effectively measure research constructs. The results showed that customers' attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control towards OTC medicine have a very supportive significance, while perceived risk is not significant.

**Jaap Bogerd Wendel, S Lim(2018)** conducted study on distribution channel preferences in the Dutch OTC drugs market. during this study, they concluded that consumer preferences for distribution channels of over-the-counter drugs classified as AV. The findings could serve as a basis for developing channel-specific marketing strategies. "Age", "Gender", "Perceived cost of painkillers", "Number of brands" and "Distribution distance" were statistically significant.

**Anita Kotwani, Jyoti Joshi, Anjana S Lamkang, Ayushi Sharma, Deeksh Kaloni (2021)** conducted study on Knowledge and behavior of consumers towards the non-prescription purchase of antibiotics. during this research, they concluded that consumers often purchase over-the-counter (OTC) antibiotics from retail pharmacies. This practice leads to the inappropriate use of antibiotics, which is an important driver of the development of antimicrobial resistance. A better understanding of consumer views on this serious public health problem is essential for the development of evidence-based intervention programs.

**Srdan Sapic, Milan Kocic, Katarina Radakovic(2019)** conducted research on Creating Consumer Loyalty in the Field of Using Over-the-Counter Products. During this study, they concluded that Pharmaceutical marketing places special emphasis on researching over-the-counter products. They are trying to find out which variable has the biggest effect on loyalty to these products. Perceived risk and pharmacist expertise have a statistically significant impact on consumer loyalty. There is a significant relationship between consumer loyalty and willingness to buy.

**Chowdhury, Saifur Rahman(2019)** conducted research on Attitude towards OTC drugs consumption in which they concluded that a total of 72 random sample size samples were taken to conduct this study. The maximum consumers of over-the-counter drugs are those aged 18 to 26, and the second highest percentage of consumers are those aged 27 to 35. 58.3% of people do not prefer over-the-counter drugs, but 61.1% of people shop between them. Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs do not work properly in the human body.



**Damilola Grace Rasheed, George Oludare Diyaolu, Ali Tobi Raji (2018)** conducted research on the Impact of Physicians Word of Mouth Advertisements on Consumer Behaviour towards Over-The-Counter Medicine. During this, they included that Over the past 30 years, direct marketing for pharmaceutical products (DTCA), including the promotion of over-the-counter drugs, has increased. This study investigates and determines the effect of physician prescribing on patient behavior towards over-the-counter (OTC) drugs in Nigeria.

**Erol Kohli, Allison Buller(2013)** conducted research on Factors influencing consumer purchasing patterns of generic versus brand name over-the-counter drugs which they concluded that American consumers spend more than \$20 billion a year on over-the-counter drugs. Generic and brand-name OTC drugs share the same active ingredients and are subject to the same rigorous FDA approval process. However, branded formulations continue to lead the OTC market with a higher market share.

**Abinaya Ravichandran and Asha Basavareddy(2016)** conducted research on Perception of pharmacists regarding over-the-counter medication. Under this research, they did questionnaire-based study was conducted to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practice among pharmacists regarding OTC medications. Analgesics were most commonly used OTC. OTCs were safe to dispense, according to 90% of the pharmacists; 50% expressed that the consumers should first consult doctor.

**Abhishek Dadhich, Dr. Kavaldeep Dixit(2017)** conducted research on Consumer Selection and Buying Behaviour Towards Over the Counter (OTC) Medicine in Jaipur City. In this study, the researcher investigate the perception and behavior of consumers in choosing over-the-counter drugs and the impact of different marketing strategies adopted by major pharmaceutical companies. This document also sets out how promotional tools, marketing mix and overall company strategy are integrated for pharmaceutical OTC marketing.

**Mayyada Wazaifya, Eileen Shields, Carmel M Hughes and James C McElnay(2005)** conducted research on Societal perspectives on over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. During this study, they investigate that Over-the-counter (OTC) medications are increasingly used for self-medication, but the products can be misused/abused. This study investigated the opinion and perception of over-the-counter medicines by the general public, including the misuse/abuse of such preparations. It found that most people in Northern Ireland were very aware of the abuse potential of some over-the-counter drugs.

**Dr. Rajesh Kanthe, Ms. Vaishali P. Pawar, Rajendra Mohite(2012)** conducted research on sale of over the counter (otc) drugs via post offices-a consumer perception. During this study, they investigate that Medico-marketing is a business in the field of advertising or other support for the sale of over-the-counter drugs or medicines. This article is an attempt to create a new marketing process for post offices in selling OTC products to the area where postmen come.

### 3- PROBLEM STATEMENT/RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The reason for conducting this study is to identify how different consumer have different perception on OTC Products with different aspects. For what type of disease customers prefer OTC products.

### 4- OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1-To examine the influence of attitude on consumer in decision making process when purchasing pharmaceutical OTC products
- 2-To understand the impact of cost and availability factors on the consumer decision-making process when purchasing OTC products.

### 5- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1-Research Design-

This research is based on **Descriptive Research** method.

#### 5.2- Sources of Data-

For this research, Primary data is used.

#### 5.3- Data collection Method

In this research, we use **Survey and Questionnaire methods** for data collection.

#### 5.4-Sampling Method:

Simple Random Sampling method is used.

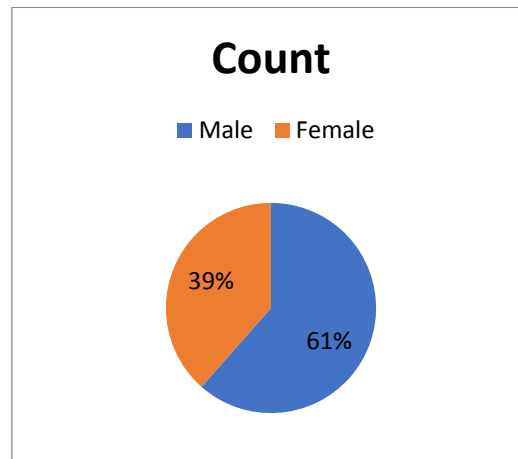
#### 5.5-Sampling Frame:

The sample size for the research includes 200 respondents.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

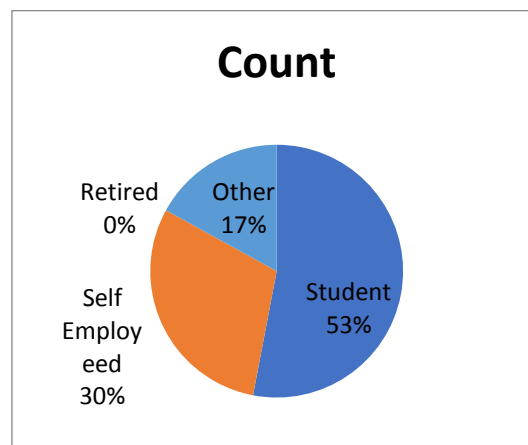
### Gender

Option	Male	Female
Count	123	77



### Occupation

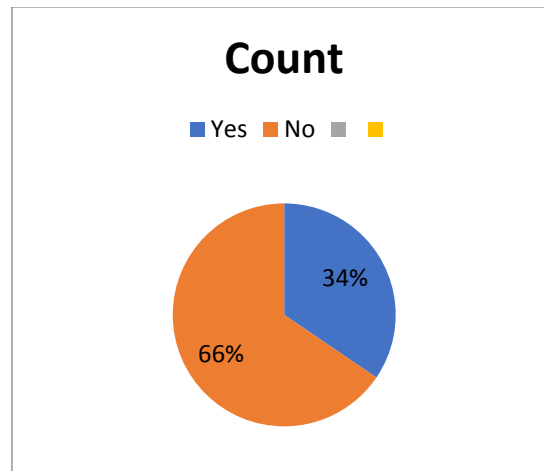
Option	Student	Self Employed	Retired	Other
Count	106	60	0	34



This survey includes students(53%), self employees(30%), others(17%) who gives there reviews on the survey.

### When the customers take Pharmaceutical OTC Products?

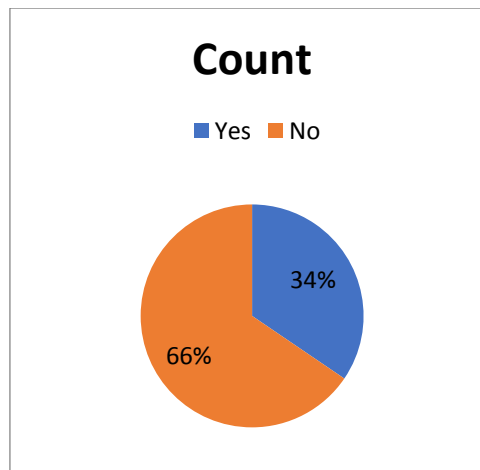
Option	Occassionaly	Daily	Other
Count	185	7	8



Under this survey, out of 200 respondents, 92% customers take OTC Products Occasionally. Only 4% of customers take OTC Products daily and there are 4% of customers who do not take either occasionally or daily.

#### Does the customer know about side effect of OTC Products?

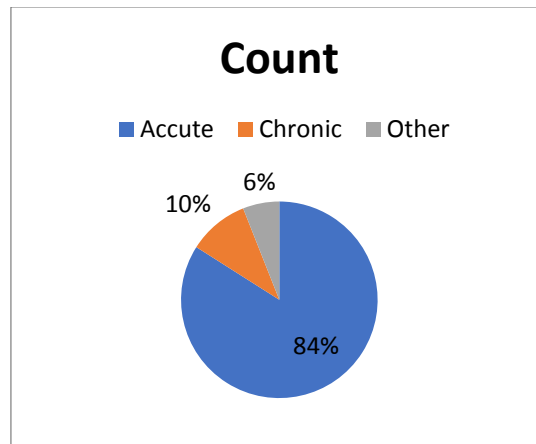
Option	Yes	No
Count	69	131



Under this survey, from 200 respondents, there are 66% customers who are not aware of the side effects of OTC Products. There are only 34% customers who know about the side effect of OTC Products.

#### For what type of disease, customers prefer OTC Products?

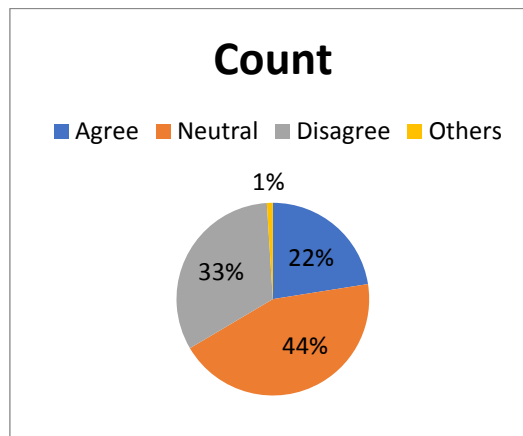
Option	Acute	Chronic	Other
Count	168	20	12



There are 84% of customers out of 200 respondents, who takes OTC Products for acute disease. And there are only 10% customers takes OTC Products for chronic disease.

**Does advertising of OTC products affects the buying behaviour of customers?**

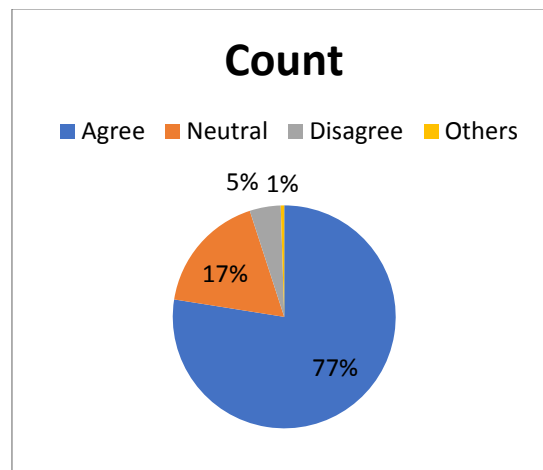
Option	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Others
Count	45	88	65	2



Under this survey, there are 22% of customers are agree on the fact that advertising of OTC products affects the buying behaviour of customers and 33% customers disagree from this and there are 44% of customers who are neutral that sometimes they buy products on seeing advertising and sometimes not trusting on advertisement.

**Cost of OTC Product is lower than Prescription Products.**

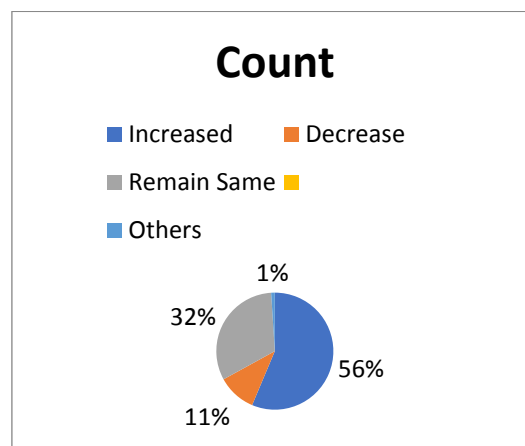
Option	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Others
Count	155	35	9	1



Under this survey, out of 200 respondents, there are 77% customers believe that OTC products have lower cost than prescription drugs. There are only 5% customers believe that Prescription drugs have lower cost than OTC Products

**Comparison of purchasing OTC products by customers in present and last year.**

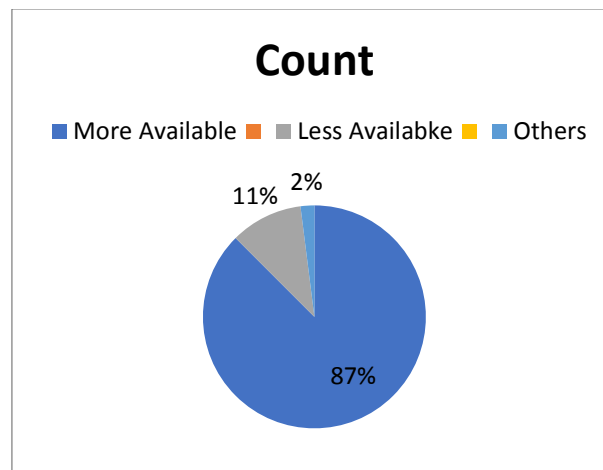
Option	Increased	Decrease	Remain Same	Others
Count	111	21	63	2



Out of 200 respondents, 56% customers say that their consumption of OTC products has increased as compared to last year and 11% customers think that their consumption of OTC products has decreased and 32% customers think that their consumption of OTC Products remain same as compared to last year.

**Availability of OTC vs Prescription drugs-**

Option	More Available	Less Available	Others
Count	175	21	4



There are 87% customers believes that OTC products are more available than Prescription products and only 11% customers believes that OTC Products are less available than Prescription products.

## CONCLUSION

From our results and discussion, it can be noted that the majority of our respondents were male users, and most of them were students. During this research, we find that most of the customers prefer OTC Products occasionally and a few of them take OTC products on daily basis. Majority of the customers do not know about the side effect of the OTC Products and a very few are aware of the side effects. Based on the survey, it can be clearly seen that customers takes OTC Products for Accute(short term) disease and very few customers uses OTC Products for Chronic(long term) disease. Under the study it is seen that majority of the customers are neutral towards advertising of OTC Products and disagree that advertising affect the buying behaviour of the customers. Only very few customers thinks that advertising can influence the customers. Majority of the customers thinks that OTC Products have lower cost than prescription drugs. During the study, it can be seen that there is an increase in the purchase of the OTC Products as compared to the last year and customers thinks that OTC products are easily available than prescription products.

## LIMITATIONS

The study relied on participants' integrity to respond honestly to questionnaires, which would have exceeded the purpose of the experiment.

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