

A Study on Consumer Behaviour Towards E-Pharmacy Services with Special Reference to Coimbatore City

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Abstract:

This study explores consumer behavior in the context of e-pharmacy services, focusing on how demographic, psychological, and environmental factors influence customer preferences and adoption. With the rise of digital platforms, e-pharmacies offer convenience, cost savings, and privacy, yet their acceptance varies across different groups. The research aims to identify key factors driving consumer choices, such as trust, delivery speed, customer support, and promotional strategies, while examining the impact of digital literacy on usage. Data will be collected through structured questionnaires targeting 120 participants, with insights aimed at helping service providers and policymakers optimize e-pharmacy services to meet diverse consumer needs.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour is the study of how people choose which consumption-related activities to engage in with their time, money, and effort. Businesses must have a solid understanding of consumer behaviour in order to develop marketing plans that work, enhance customer satisfaction, and provide services that cater to the demands and preferences of their target market This study examine show consumers behave when using services, paying special attention to the ways in which different environmental, psychological, and demographic aspects affect the choices that consumers make. The emergence of digital technology and e-commerce platforms in recent years has changed how customers obtain and utilize services.

Research on consumer behavior faces particular difficulties because services are intangible and frequently experiential products. Services are consumed at the point of delivery, unlike actual goods, and are frequently impacted by elements like convenience, customer pleasure, trust, and service quality. The pharmaceutical industry, for example, has changed due to the quick expansion of e-pharmacies, which provide customers with the ease of buying prescription drugs and other health-related items online while also bringing in new elements that affect consumer choices, like online reviews, delivery time, and digital trust.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the different elements that influence how customers behave when utilizing services, with an emphasis on the move to digital platforms. In order to find trends in consumer preferences, adoption rates, and attitudes towards using services like e-pharmacies, online banking, digital health services, and more, this study looks at demographic factors like age, gender, income, education, and location. Businesses, legislators, and service providers can all benefit from knowing these trends since it allows them to customise their products to suit the demands of various customer groups. Additionally, this study advances a more comprehensive knowledge of how consumers make decisions in increasingly digital and service-oriented economy by examining psychological factors including perceived value, trust, and convenience.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the key factors influencing Consumer preference for e-pharmacy services over traditional pharmacies.
- To measure the level of awareness and adoption of e-pharmacy services among different demographic factors.
- To evaluate effectiveness of promotional strategies like discounts, loyalty programs and advertisement.
- To determine aspects on delivery speed, customer support and product availability.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study will look at a wide range of internal (technical and psychological) and external (demographic, environmental) elements that affect how consumers behave when using e-pharmacy services. The study intends to

provide useful information for e-pharmacy service providers, legislators, and stakeholders by examining the reasons, obstacles to adoption. The impact of consumers' digital literacy and technological competence on their interactions with e-pharmacy services will be examined in this study. To give a thorough grasp of the elements impacting consumer acceptance and usage patterns, the scope of this study on consumer behavior towards e-pharmacy services will cover a number of important variables. This study will concentrate on a number of technological, psychological, and demographic aspects in addition to particular customer concerns about e-pharmacy services. The study will investigate the ways in which these variables interact and influence customers' choices to buy pharmaceuticals and medical supplies online.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The emergence of e-commerce and digital technology has revolutionized how customers access and buy products and services in a number of sectors, including healthcare. The emergence of e-pharmacy services, which allow customers to buy prescription drugs, medical supplies, and pharmaceuticals online with the added convenience of home delivery and round-the-clock accessibility, is one of the most significant changes. The acceptance and use of e-pharmacies, however, continue to be uneven and range greatly among various demographic groups and geographical areas, despite the obvious benefits they provide, such as ease, cost savings, and improved privacy. In order to assist service providers in creating more successful plans for client interaction, trust-building, and acceptance, this study attempts to offer insightful information about consumer preferences and views promotional strategies regarding e-pharmacy services. E-pharmacies will be able to satisfy the demands and expectations of a wide range of customer groups.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, descriptive research design is made use of which describes the demographic characteristics of respondents and the frequency of two variables.

- Primary data collection
- Secondary data collection

PRIMARY DATA

- The primary data will be collected through a structured questionnaire designed to address their search objectives.

SECONDARY DATA

- The Secondary data for the study has been collected from books, Magazines, Journals, Articles, old reports and required website.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H01: Consumer income is highly influenced to usage of e-pharmacy services

H01: Education and e-pharmacy service usages are also significant

H1: Advertisement and download of e-pharmacy service in gap are not significant

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Only 120 respondents have been taken for the study.
- The study is restricted only to users of e-pharmacy services.
- The accuracy depends upon the respondent's information.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Sumit Agarwal, Garima Bhardwaj (2020)¹ in their study titled "A study of consumer buying behaviour towards E-pharmacies in Delhi NCR". It aims to study the customer preference of buying prescribed/ non-prescribed medicines online vs offline and the study of customer satisfaction level for various benefits related with E-pharmacy. The primary data is collected through structured questionnaire from 200 respondents. The technique used were Convenience sampling. The tools used for the study Likert scale analysis. It was suggested that the satisfaction level was above 3 where customers are satisfied on most of the factors except reliability issues where averages core was 2.83. It is founded that 29.5% of customers prefer to buy

medicines online through e- pharmacies. In case of non- prescribed medicines, customers preferred to buy more through online pharmacies (71.5%) as compared to prescribed medicines (28.5%). It is concluded that the role of company to aware customers about benefits related with purchasing medicines online and also to minimize the issue or limitation related with buying medicines online.

Das Poly, Laskar Sonia, Laskar H.R (2024)²in their study titled ‘Consumer buying behavior towards E-Pharmacy’. It aims to study awareness level of the customer rewarding e-pharmacy to motivate the consumer to buy medicine from e-pharmacy, factors that prevent the consumer from buying medicines from e- pharmacy. Simple random sampling was used for data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to all the residents who were 18 years above. 318 were respondents of this study. The tools used were simple percentage analysis and Pearson Correlation. The finding of the study state that consumers purchase medications from e- pharmacy on an occasional basis. They prefer chronic disease medicine primarily due to their discounts. It is suggested that the medication must be expedited. The e- pharmacy apps must provide a better user experience for easy order placement. Cash on delivery must be seamless, rural locations should be able to receive deliveries. Thus, customer typically prefer both online and offline purchasing methods. This result in limitation such as a small sample size and are stricted geographic scope, which is an incomplete represent action of the purchasing behaviour of customer in SILCHAR.

Uma Sharma, Dr Vishnu Govindan, Dr Muniraj M, Dr G Mahesh (2024)³ in their study titled ‘Exploring online consumer behavior of e- pharmacy products in Bangalore’. Its main aim or objective of study is to analyse that the oport unities towards e-pharmacy business at Bengaluru in B2C and to analyse the online consumer behaviour of customer toward e-pharmacy products at Bengaluru. The study as a sample size of 542 participants at Bangalore city. Sampling technique followed is convenience sampling. The tools used were Correlation analysis, Regression analysis. The result shows that in order of importance based on average results, the to preason behind the consumers’ choice of e-pharmacy is the following, convenient via or dering medicines online, product range and old people, who are all techno savy prefer e-pharmacy. It suggests that majority have brought from online of vitamin supplements even though. When it was not in the plans. In conclusion, the study offers valuable insights into the complex landscape of e-consumer behavior towards e-pharmacy services.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Percentage analysis

Table 4.1.1

Statistics

	Age:	Gender:	Educational qualification:	Occupation:	Location
N Valid	107	107	107	107	107
Missing	0	0	0	0	0

Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	55	51.4	51.4	51.4
female	52	48.6	48.6	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table 4.1.1, study finds most no of respondents are male of using E pharmacy of 51.4% with 55 respondents, 48.6% of respondents are female.

Table 4.1.2

Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid below 20	45	42.1	42.1	42.1
21-35	46	43.0	43.0	85.0
36-45	12	11.2	11.2	96.3
46-50	3	2.8	2.8	99.1
50 and above	1	.9	.9	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table 4.1.2, study finds most no of respondents are 21-35 years of using E Pharmacy of 43.1% with 46 respondents, 42.1% of respondents are below 20 years, 11.2% respondents are 36-45 years, 2.8% of respondents are 46-50 years and balance 0.9% are respondent of more than 50 and above years.

Table 4.1.3

Educational qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid no formal education	1	.9	.9	.9
diplomo	4	3.7	3.7	4.7
under graduation	79	73.8	73.8	78.5
post graduation	12	11.2	11.2	89.7
others	11	10.3	10.3	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Sources: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

From the above table 4.1.3, study finds most no of respondent's Educational qualification of under graduation of using E Pharmacy of 73.8% with 79 respondents, 0.9% of respondents are no formal education, 3.7% respondents are diplamo, 11.2% of respondents are post graduation and 10.3% are respondent are others.

Oneway-ANOVA Analysis

Table 4.2.1

ANOVA

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	f	Sig.
Rank the factors that you source more of E-Pharmacy (data security)	Between groups	2.690	04	0.672	1.142	.341
	within groups	60.039	102	0.589		
	Total	62.729	106			
Rank the factors that you source more of E-Pharmacy (patience safety)	Between groups	.692	04	.173	.791	.534
	within groups	22.299	102	.219		
	Total	22.99	106			

INTERPRETATION

The above table (4.2.1) indicates that the demographic factor that out of 106 respondents have been taken for the study, 2.690 sum of square at between the groups, 0.692 sum of square

at between the groups. The mean square of between the groups are 0.672 and df difference are 4. The mean square of within the groups are .173 and df differences.

FINDINGS FROM PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Gender Distribution

- A slight majority of respondents (51.4%) are male, while females account for 48.6%.
- Both genders show almost equal interest in using e-pharmacy services.

Age Distribution

- The largest age group of respondents is 21-35 years, accounting for 43% of the total, followed closely by individuals below 20 years (42.1%).
- The least represented age groups are those aged 46-50 (2.8%) and 50+ (0.9%).
- Younger demographics dominate the usage of e-pharmacy services.

Educational Qualification

- The majority of respondents (73.8%) have an undergraduate qualification, highlighting a strong preference for e-pharmacies among educated individuals.
- A small fraction (0.9%) of respondents have no formal education, while others (10.3%) fall into varied categories beyond formal education.

FINDINGS FROM ONEWAY-ANOVA

By analysing, the data shows no significant differences in group rankings for data security ($F = 1.142$, $p = 0.341$) and patient safety ($F = 0.791$, $p = 0.534$), with p-values above the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that users largely agree on the importance of both factors when using e-pharmacy services. The uniformity in responses suggests that data security and patient safety are universally valued and regarded as standard expectations for e-pharmacy providers.

SUGGESTIONS

To target young adults and students, develop tailored discounts and partner with universities to promote e-pharmacy services. Increase accessibility for older users by simplifying app interfaces, offering offline consultations, and integrating assisted shopping features. Ensure gender-neutral campaigns highlighting universal benefits like convenience and affordability. Cater to educated users with detailed product descriptions, certifications, and niche medical options, while using simple language and visuals to expand awareness among less educated groups. Build trust by showcasing certifications, secure payment options, and partnerships with reputable healthcare providers. Feature customer testimonials to reassure first-time users and boost credibility. Focus on tailored features to address diverse user needs and run educational campaigns on e-pharmacy safety and benefits. Maintain a continuous feedback loop to adapt to evolving user preferences and enhance delivery, usability, and product variety.

CONCLUSION

E-pharmacies cater predominantly to young, educated users, with the 21–35 age group being the largest demographic. To capitalize on this, targeted marketing campaigns and university partnerships can drive engagement, while simplifying interfaces and providing assisted shopping options can attract older and less tech-savvy users. Gender-neutral promotions emphasizing convenience and affordability can appeal to both males and females, given their nearly equal usage rates. Additionally, providing detailed product descriptions and certifications builds trust among educated consumers, while outreach efforts using simple communication can expand adoption among less educated groups. Lastly, emphasizing data security, patient safety, and customer feedback will enhance trust and ensure e-pharmacies meet evolving user needs.

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