

Research article

## The impact of sales promotion techniques on consumer purchase decisions within community pharmacies

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### Abstract

The study analyzes how sales promotions affect customer behaviour in community pharmacies by looking at psychological factors, economic incentives, and ethical issues. The goal of the study is to offer practical insights and evidence-based suggestions to make sales promotion strategies more effective and ethical in community pharmacies. The objective is to study is to examine the influence of sales promotions on consumer behaviour in community pharmacies, with a specific focus on whether sales promotions effectively improve drug sales to customers. The findings suggest that a combination of product availability, brand trust, cost savings, and professional advice drives consumer decisions. Convenience-related services are particularly attractive to consumers, with 43.8% valuing extended hours and 21.5% appreciating delivery services. This influence of sales promotion highlights the need for pharmacies to consider various promotional strategies to cater to different consumer preferences. The study concludes that while sales promotions do impact consumer buying decisions at local pharmacies, their influence varies widely among individuals. Factors such as product availability, brand loyalty, price discounts, and pharmacist recommendations also play significant roles. Most of the time customers aren't influenced by sale promotions because they might be confused about whether the products are expired or if there's something wrong with the stock. The study concludes that effective promotional and service strategies should take into account these diverse consumer preferences to boost customer satisfaction and increase sales.

### Introduction

In the pharmaceutical industry, promoting products is different from how it's done in the consumer goods sector. Instead of targeting the general public, most promotional efforts are aimed at doctors. Because doctors act as gatekeepers to patients, pharmaceutical companies focus on them, promoting their products and giving them various incentives. These efforts include providing doctors with promotional materials, holding detailed product sessions, placing ads in medical journals, participating in conferences, offering continuing medical education (CME), and giving

out drug samples. This multi-faceted approach helps communicate the benefits of the drugs to doctors, who then share this information with their patients. The pharmaceutical industry uses various promotional strategies to reach different segments of the market, each with its own specific needs. These strategies are designed to build trust, credibility, and awareness among healthcare professionals. To understand how effective these strategies are, it's important to analyze each one thoroughly. The most common way pharmaceutical companies market their products is through brand sales promotions, especially using

detailed personal selling [1]. This involves direct interactions with doctors, dentists, and other professionals to maintain the product's reputation and ensure it is prescribed or distributed. Recently, digital marketing has grown rapidly in the pharmaceutical industry due to advanced technology. This change has significantly transformed traditional marketing methods, requiring companies to stay connected with customers online. As a result, marketers now heavily rely on the internet to promote their products and services, leading to a major shift in how pharmaceutical promotions are conducted. Understanding how sales promotions influence consumer purchase decisions is essential for community pharmacies [2]. These promotions can take many forms, from discounts and special offers to loyalty programs and in-store displays. By examining how these techniques affect buying behaviour, pharmacies can better meet customer needs and improve their business strategies. This topic explores the various ways sales promotions can impact consumers and the implications for community pharmacies. Implementing effective promotions can lead to increased foot traffic, higher sales, and improved customer loyalty. Additionally, by analyzing the results of various promotional activities, pharmacies can gain insights into which techniques are most effective and adjust their strategies accordingly [3]. The impact of sales promotions on consumer purchase decisions is a critical area of study for community pharmacies. By leveraging discounts, special offers, loyalty programs, and in-store displays, pharmacies can enhance their appeal to customers, increase sales, and build long-term customer relationships. Understanding and effectively implementing these promotional techniques can provide a competitive edge in the retail pharmacy market [4].

## Materials and methods

### Sampling

The study will target customers of various community pharmacies. A convenience sampling method will be employed, inviting customers who visit the selected pharmacies during the study period to participate.

### Data collection

Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire administered to participants. The questionnaire will consist of multiple-choice questions, check-box options, and rating scales to gather information on demographics, perceptions of sales promotions, purchasing behaviours, and overall customer experience [5, 6].

### Questionnaire design

The questionnaire will include the following sections [5, 6]:

- a. Demographic Information: Age, gender, occupation, income level, frequency of pharmacy visits, etc.
- b. Perceptions of Sales Promotions: Attitudes towards sales promotions, preferred types of promotions, etc.

c. Purchasing Behaviour: Frequency of purchasing promoted products, factors influencing purchase decisions, satisfaction with promotions, etc.

d. Impact and Experience: Perceived impact of promotions on purchasing behaviour, satisfaction with the promotional offers, likelihood of recommending the pharmacy to others, etc.

e. Data Analysis: Quantitative data collected from the survey will be analyzed using statistical techniques to find trends in consumer behaviour related to sales promotions in community pharmacies [7].

f. Ethical Considerations: The study will adhere to ethical guidelines ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants [8].

## Results and discussion

The survey aimed to explore how sales promotions influence consumer buying decisions at local pharmacies. Out of the 162 participants, 65.4% were females, 34.6% were males, and one participant chose not to disclose their gender.

Among 162 study participant 144 (88.9%) were people between 18 - 36 age among the participants 2 were 56 or older age persons. The frequency of age wise distribution details is summarized in Table 1.

Older people are less likely to respond because they rely on doctors' recommendations and prioritize convenience and accessibility. They value trust, personalized service, and clear communication with community pharmacies, which influence their purchasing decisions.

**Table 1. Age wise distribution.**

Age	Frequency	% (Percentage)
Under 18	7	4.3
18 -36	144	88.9
37 - 55	9	5.6
56 - older	2	1.2

The responses from people with bachelor's degrees are mainly influenced by social interactions, product availability, and brand loyalty. Those with doctorates or higher education choose pharmacy products based on the availability of over-the-counter drugs and prescription refilling services and at the same time the educated consumers trust both pharmacists and doctors, valuing their advice and being open to discussing treatment options with both [8]. The unemployed people are more open to advertisements because they have explorative minds. Retired people, being more experienced, tend to have traditional mindsets and are less likely to accept new strategies.

In this survey 57.4% consumers confirms that their purchase decision is influenced by the recommendation by a pharmacist. This response shed light on the impact of pharmacist recommendations on consumer purchase decisions within community pharmacies. They emphasize

the significant role that pharmacists play in influencing consumer behavior and the level of trust that consumers place in their recommendations. Understanding the influence of pharmacist recommendations can help pharmacies better serve their customers by prioritizing staff training and ensuring that pharmacists are equipped to provide accurate and helpful advice to consumers [9].

The survey asked participants about their attraction to various services offered by pharmacies and responses obtained are given in Table 2.

**Table 2. Responses to various services offered by the pharmacies.**

Options	Frequency	% (Percent)
Delivery service	41	21.5
Opening and close time (like 24 x 7)	71	43.8
Prescription refilling service	21	13
Availability of "over the counter" drugs	29	17.9

These responses provide insights into what services attract consumers to pharmacies within their community. Convenience seems to be a significant factor, as evidenced by the appeal of services like delivery, extended hours, and prescription refills. Additionally, having a variety of over-the-counter drugs available also contributes to the attractiveness of a pharmacy.

Having a pharmacy open 24 hours allows people to take their time and not rush to get their medications. Plus, they can clear up any doubts or questions they have whenever it's convenient for them, even late at night or early in the morning. This convenience makes it easier for people to manage their health.

Many people prefer using delivery services for their pharmacy needs because it offers the convenience of ordering medications from anywhere, especially if the medicines they need aren't available nearby. This way, they can get their prescriptions filled and delivered to their doorstep without having to travel long distances [10, 11].

Consumers repeat purchases if they are satisfied with the brand that is being promoted and prescription refilling services are often the least chosen by consumers.

The 21% of respondents indicated that sales promotions are mostly influential in their decision-making process. 35.2% of response as its moderately, 30.6% slightly and 13.6% are slightly influential. Most of the time customers aren't influenced by sale promotions because they might be confused about whether the products are expired or if there's something wrong with the stock.

These responses highlight the varying degrees of influence that sales promotions have on consumer purchase decisions within community pharmacies. While some participants are heavily influenced by promotions, others may consider them only to a limited extent or not at all. Understanding the level of influence of sales promotions can help pharmacies tailor

their promotional strategies to better meet the needs and preferences of their customers.

A good number of consumers (34.6%) mentioned that the availability of the product is what influences their decision. This means they are more likely to buy something if the pharmacy has it in stock.

Brand loyalty was a big factor for many respondents (29%). This means they stick to buying products from brands they trust, even if there are other options available.

Price discounts also play a role for some people (14.8%). This suggests that if there's a good deal or discount available, they're more likely to make a purchase. Interestingly, recommendations from pharmacists were also mentioned by a significant portion of respondents (21.6%). This shows that they trust the advice of pharmacists and might be influenced by their recommendations when choosing what to buy [11]. The results are summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3. Factors influence the decision making of purchase of pharmaceutical product.**

Option	Frequency	% (Percent)
Price Discount	24	14.8
Brand loyalty	47	29
Product Availability	56	34.6
Recommendation from Pharmacist	35	21.6

These responses reveals that there are different factors that influence people's decisions when buying pharmaceutical products at community pharmacies, i.e, availability, brand loyalty, price discounts, and pharmacist recommendations, all these play a role in shaping consumer behavior in this context.

The responses to the question how much people are influenced by sales promotions when choosing over-the-counter medications at local pharmacies is summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4. Influence of sales promotion on over the counter medication.**

Options	Frequency	% (Percent)
Majorly Influential	28	17.3
Somewhat Influential	61	37.7
Minimally Influential	54	33.3
Not Influential at all	19	11.7

The survey shows that sales promotions influence people differently when buying over-the-counter meds at local pharmacies. While some customers are highly influenced by deals, others prioritize different factors. This highlights the complexity of consumer behavior and suggests that pharmacies should consider various factors when planning promotions [14].

## Conclusion

This study looked at how sales promotions influence people's buying decisions at local pharmacies, considering different demographic factors and preferences. The results offer useful insights into what drives consumer behavior and how effective sales promotions are. These findings suggest that a combination of product availability, brand trust, cost savings, and professional advice drives consumer decisions. Convenience-related services are particularly attractive to consumers, with 43.8% valuing extended hours and 21.5% appreciating delivery services. This influence of sales promotion highlights the need for pharmacies to consider various promotional strategies to cater to different consumer preferences. The study concludes that while sales promotions do impact consumer buying decisions at local pharmacies, their influence varies widely among individuals. Factors such as product availability, brand loyalty, price discounts, and pharmacist recommendations also play significant roles. The availability of 24-hour pharmacies significantly enhances consumer convenience, allowing individuals to obtain medications and seek answers to their health-related questions at any time, thereby facilitating better health management. The growing preference for delivery services underscores the importance of convenience and accessibility in consumer choices, particularly when specific medications are not readily available nearby. The study highlights the multifaceted nature of consumer behavior in the context of community pharmacies. Consumers generally feel well-informed about their options, leading them to evaluate alternatives and make selections often guided by pharmacist recommendations. However, despite the valuable advice pharmacists provide, many consumers exhibit a stronger trust in their doctors for medical decisions. The effective promotional and service strategies should consider these diverse consumer preferences to enhance customer satisfaction and drive sales.

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## Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

## Funding statement

The author has no relevant financial or non-financial interest to disclose.

## Ethics approval and consent to participate

There are no ethical issues related to the conducted study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in the study.

## Data availability

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published article.

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