





Exploring the Impact of Brand Image on Consumer Behavior with Regard to Over-the-counter Drugs: A review

*Ms. Anurinder Kaur¹,, Dr. Anil Chandhok², Dr. Saurabh Kumar Banerjee³

¹Research Scholar, School of Business Management, Chandigarh University, Punjab,
anurinderkaur319@gmail.com,.

² Professor University School of Business Management, Chandigarh University, Gharuan,
anil.e4863@cumail.in

³Dean & Associate Professor, School of Pharmaceutical Management, IIHMR University, Jaipur, saurabh@iihmr.edu.in

Abstract: A comprehensive review followed a systematic approach and attempted to explore the concept of brand image and its relation with consumer behavior targeting pharmaceutical sectors with special reference to over-the-counter drugs. Approximately 200 articles were collected that were published from 2000-2022. The study utilized databases: Research Gate, Google Scholar, PubMed, and Science Direct. The research mining was done through keywords: Over-the-counter drugs, Brand Image, Consumer Behavior, and Attitude, Purchase intentions, Reference groups and Demographics. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were performed through a screening process to select 40 papers that were read entirely and included in the final study. The review study explored brand image and its various components, their relation with purchase intentions, and consumer buying behavior. The mediation role of attitude was also highlighted. Demographics of consumers and referral groups were studied performing their moderation role. Exploration of consumer behavior and their intentions will be a boon for the marketing companies to understand favorable and non-favorable attitudes of consumers toward particular brands which will enhance their existence in the competitive market.

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Keywords: Brand Image, Consumer Behavior, Purchase Intention, Attitude, Over-The-Counter Drugs, Reference Groups, Demographics.

1. Introduction

India is a developing country which is under development in all sectors. Being considered a pharmacy of the world, India holds an accountable share of the global market. Indian government increased the expenditures on the pharmaceutical sector, by 9-12% with a vision to make India among the top 10 manufacturing units (www.ibef.org). The major pharmaceutical hub of India are in Vadodara, Kolkata, Pune, Hyderabad, Baddi (Himachal Pradesh), Ankleshwar, Vapi, Ahmedabad, Sikkim, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai, Ahmadabad, and Aurangabad. Based on the effectiveness and safety profile of over-the-counter drugs, these drugs can be purchased directly from glossary stores, airport shops, and gas stations without any intervention of the physician. Countries: United States, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom have established rules, systems, and regulations for classifying and using OTC drugs. India does not have specific rules or regulations for OTC drugs. The drugs that come under Schedule H, H1, and X are prescription-only drugs and the drugs out of these schedules are considered to be over-the-counter drugs. A brand can be identified through its personality, name, and identity, whereas brand image can be consumers' perception of a particular brand. The concept of consumer behavior is the most important concern for marketing companies. Companies requested factor is to know the behavior of consumers because consumers go through several stages before purchasing a product or service. Before making any decision regarding the purchase of any product consumers move toward the evaluation of alternatives available. Based on their beliefs about the product, familiarity with the product, quality, and indication from the visual appearance of the product, consumers select the products. After satisfaction, consumers make purchases followed by post-purchase evaluation [42]. The literature study highlighted the least explored factors in the pharmaceutical sector. Based on a literature review of empirical studies related to

consumer behavior, brand image, pharmaceutical industry, and over-the-counter drugs, the study spotlight many questions that were not well explored in previous studies. How the brand image, referral groups, and demographics of consumers influence the purchase intentions and buying behavior of the consumers. How mediation and non-mediation role of attitude influenced consumer buying behavior. Keeping in mind the research questions the current review study was required to focus on the brand image of over-the-counter medications and its relation with consumer intentions and buying behaviors. Least anticipated factors: referral groups and demographics of consumers for over-the-counter drugs were also targeted. The mediation role of attitude also required attention for over-the-counter drugs. The highlighted factors by the research work would be a stroke of luck for the pharmaceutical companies. The investigation of attitudes, consumer intentions, and buying behavior of consumers, will help the marketing manager to develop innovative marketing strategies. The choice criteria of consumers will be helpful for companies to improve and modify their products concerning the geographical regions.

1.1. Review Strategy

The systematic study of literature published from 2000-2022 was included in the current review study. The exploratory search involved a maximum of empirical studies and a few secondary studies. Most of the studies dealt with brand image, consumer behavior, over-the-counter drugs, attitude, purchase intentions, referral groups, and demographics of consumers. The study shed light on many questions which were not well explored in previous studies.

2. Material and Method

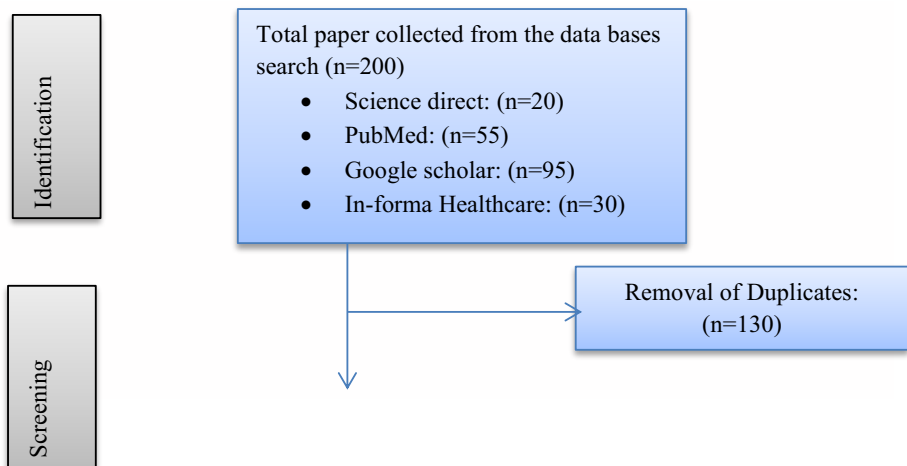
2.1. Search Strategy

For the review study, publications from databases: Science Direct, Research Gate, Google Scholar, and PubMed were selected. Studies concerned with consumer behavior, over-the-

counter drugs, attitudes, demographics, brand images, purchase intentions, consumer buying behavior, and referral groups, were majorly targeted. The exploratory search was conducted, and used the keywords: Over-the-counter drugs, consumer behavior, and the attitude of consumers, brand images, packaging, and reputation of brands, purchase intention, and decision-making of consumer, referral groups, and demographics of consumers. Furthermore, research focused on the studies concerned with the image of brands and its influence on purchase intentions and purchase behavior of consumers. The mediation role of attitude was also studied. Relationships of referral groups and demographics with purchase intentions and purchase behavior were also focused. .

2.2. Study Selection

The study aimed to assess the impact of brand image on purchase intentions and purchase behavior of consumers about over-the-counter drugs. A total of 200 articles were collected. Screenings of papers were conducted, following inclusion and exclusion criteria that removed 130 duplicate articles. More clarity on article selection was spotted after removing 30 more articles based on title and abstract. Finally, 40 papers in the English language were included in the final study. The flow of the selection process is presented in **Figure no. 1**.



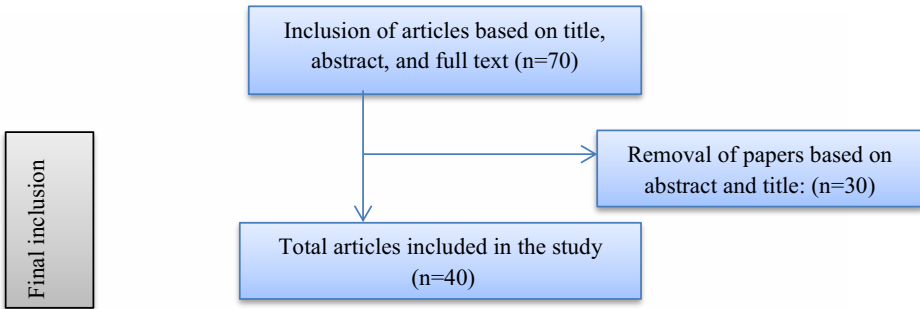


Figure no. 1: Flow diagram shows paper selection process.

2.3. Data Abstraction

Screening techniques were used for the inclusion and exclusion of articles. The extraction of articles included 1) Authors, 2) Study area, 3) Sample size, 4) Country, 5) Study design, 6) Sampling techniques, 7) Factors associated, and 8) Findings of the study.

3. Literature Review Findings

A total of 40 published studies were identified, including 35 empirical studies, 2 secondary studies, 2 review articles, and 1 doctoral thesis. Selected studies used a wide range of data collection, utilization techniques and used different scales to measure the constructs. Variations were found to be related to geographic factors, different methodologies, design factors, and analysis techniques. Of majorly nine countries India, the US, Europe, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ghana, Finland, and the UK were focused. A review of previous literature highlighted the behavioral intentions of consumers. Consumers are the owners of their own choice for their purchase of OTC drugs. Brands and their instruments have specific spaces in consumer minds that can influence their behavior. Consumer behavior and its influencing factors were extensively

covered in existing literature [47]. An empirical study conducted by Bhattacharyya and Das [7] found packing characteristics like instructions on packing, manufacturing, expiry date, quality mark, and price of products were the considerable factors by the respondents while making their purchase decision similarly Spence [44] studied that consumers turn toward the brands, specifically influenced by the shape of packing, color, and multisensory design of packing. Packing characteristics of brands had visual influences creating an image of brands in the consumer's mind. Bhattacharyya and Das [7] explored some packing characteristics: expiry date, instructions for use, quality mark, and manufacturing date influence the buying behavior of consumers. Past experiences of consumers with any brand predict the favorability of consumers following their decision-making for a particular brand [41] similarly an investigation revealed purchase decision-making was found to be influenced by previous experiences of consumers with a choice of brands [4]. The quality of products has the capability to fix their position in consumer cognition whereas Aufeger et al. [1] analyzed perceived quality mediate purchase intentions. Adlakha and Sharma [3] investigated brand image created through the quality of any brand draws consumer attention which further influences their decision-making behavior. Wang and Chen [50] and Ago et al. [2] provided evidences that quality has little influence on decision making of consumers for generic drugs whereas Srivastava [39] investigated the negative relation of quality with consumer behavior. Attitude of consumers determines their choices across different kinds of products and services. A strong relationship between mindset and intentions were studied whether to buy or not to buy. Umbarkar and Pawar (2021) investigated a significant role of attitude in the decision-making of consumers. Siripatthanakul et al. [41] attempted to describe the significant role of attitude toward the purchase intention of consumers for organic food. Attitude analyzed the performance of consumers may be negative or positive towards target buying [5]. A more recent study, by Rizwan [35] suggested colors, images, thoughts, and past experiences with any brand were found to be closely related to attitude and purchase intentions further leading to their purchase behavior for OTC drugs. Relation of past experiences of consumers with any brand was established between

attitude and purchase intention further predicting their buying decision [24]. The image of any brand and the beliefs of consumers influence the intentions of respondents [40]. The purchase decision process was found to be effectively driven by purchase intention [9]. Demographics are the kind of indicators that we can use in economic analysis and marketing campaigns [23]. Income, age, gender, and education are the core elements that impact the purchase behavior of consumers [1]. Being a single-dimensional factor age was generally used to segment categories of consumers into different age groups [34]. A significant association between buying behavior and income was determined [45]. Ashinze et al. [5] explored demographic factors: income, gender, age, and education positively influenced the purchase intentions. Buying powers and purchase decisions of consumers were generally associated with income, and their level of income determines their buying capacity [33]. Income has a different meaning as per the desire of the consumer. Siddiqui et al. [38] found monthly income make the consumers to take a decision for the products. Education is a crucial factor having a major impact on consumer behavior in developing countries. Aufegger et al. [1] Stated education impacts the OTC drug buying behavior of consumers. Education was found to be the primary determinant of OTC drug-buying behavior [11]. Kumar and Kumar [22], and Roblek et al. [37] found education played the most important role in making online purchases. Alarsali and Aghaei [4] investigated the role of reference groups (Family/friend, doctor/pharmacist) in the decision-making of consumer. Similar studies by Srivastava and Wagh [39], Habash and Al-Dmour [18], Pujari et al. [30] stated that suggestions from friends and family pharmacists influence the purchase intentions of consumers. Kohli and Buller [21] found a least influence of advice from friends/family and healthcare provider on buying behavior of consumers. An empirical study conducted by Bhattacharyya and Das [7] found consumers considered packaging characteristics: instructions on packing, manufacturing and expiry date, quality mark, and price of product before purchase of products. Image of brands impacts the purchase behavior of respondents [16]. Duranni et al. [14] declared brand image and extrinsic cues responsible for the decision-making of consumers. Ago et al. [2] explored the motivational role of

brand associations creating image of brands further influencing decision-making of consumers.

4. Discussion

An exploratory study of existing literature was conducted on brand image, consumer behavior, attitude, and demographics concerning the pharmaceutical field targeting over-the-counter drugs. An exploratory study of the literature stated that existing literature was lacking in:

- Concept of brand image and its relation with consumer behavior.
- Pharmaceutical sectors concerning geographical regions with special reference to over-the-counter drugs.
- Relationship of demographics, reference groups, with purchase intentions and consumer buying behavior.
- Role of consumer attitude and its relation with purchase intentions and purchase behavior of consumers about over-the-counter drugs.

The reviewed studies in the literature were mostly covering cross-sectional studies, following descriptive design. Maximum studies applied convenience sampling technique [21, 17, and 38], random sampling [11, 31] and stratified random sampling techniques [1, 5] utilized multistage and random sampling techniques to collect responses from the respondents. The literature review involved studies conducted at different geographic locations, in India [47, 10]; UK: [24, 28]. Different methodological designs were used. Maximum studies used structured questionnaires [5], close-ended questions, open-ended and dichotomous questions [16, 27]. Some studies focused on self-administered questionnaires [4, 20] attempted to conquer the responses using close-ended

questions. Applications of both primary and secondary data collection techniques were applied to approach consumer responses [31, 13]. Sapatnekar [43] conducted a secondary study based on previous empirical studies, and targeted newspapers, magazines, and published empirical studies. Tiwari, Bhattacharyya and Das, Spence, Siripipatthanakul et al, Alarsali and Aghaei, Dehingia and Khan, and Adlakha and Sharma [47, 7,44, 41, 4,12,4] have given great idea related to brand image and consumer buying behavior. Consumer responses were analyzed by applying different analytical techniques [27, 41, and 49]. Aufegger et al. [1] applied sensitive analytical techniques to analyze the data. The influence of demographics was well described [37]. Referral groups (family, friends, recommendations from doctors, and pharmacist advice) were also investigated in many studies Alarsali & Aghaei; Cirstea, et al.,; Hasan & Siddique,; Tiwari; Temechewu & Gebremedhin, [4,10,16,47,48]. Consumer attitude and buying behavior was targeted in many research papers [6, 49] whereas Nguyen [28] studied purchase intention. Spence [44] revealed that the shape of packing, color, and design of packing influenced the purchase decision-making of consumers. In contrast, Dehingia and Khan [12] found there is no relationship between packaging and consumer' decision-making. Quality influence buying behavior of consumers [1, 38] whereas Wang and Chen, Nasermoadeli and Maghnati, Ago et al., [50, 29, 2] stated very low influence of quality on decision making of consumers. The involvement of doctors/ pharmacist improved the awareness of consumers [12, 47]. Lodorfos et al. [24] Stated past experiences and attitude of consumers were significantly related whereas a study by Lu and Nien (2017) [25] declared a negative relationship between attitude and past experiences with purchase intentions. Segu et al., [45] in their investigation found that purchase decision-making and income were positively concerned whereas Rizwan et al., [35] found a very small role of income in decision-making of consumers. Habash and Al-Dmour [18] found family, friends, and doctors/ physicians have positively influenced the buying behavior whereas Kohli and Buller [21] declared a negative concern between referral groups and consumer buying behavior. Most of the studies reviewed found gaps in brand image, their relation with purchase intentions, and consumer buying behavior with

respect to geographic locations and different demographics. A review of the literature gives ideas related to poorly explored factors: brand image, packaging, quality, purchase intentions, and attitude of consumers. Demographics: age, income, education, and referral groups were also the least focused factors.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion concerning brand image, and its relationship with consumer behavior the study concluded that the image of brands played an important role in purchase intentions and purchase behavior of consumers for over-the-counter drugs. The product factors that can improve the purchase intentions and consumer buying behavior include quality, goodwill, past experiences and packaging characteristics of brands. The experience of consumers with brand items had a visual impact on their buying decisions. The study determined other factors: referral groups: family/friends, physician/pharmacist, and demographic of consumers that influence purchase intentions and consumer buying behavior. The moderation role of demographics and referral groups could have an impressive impact on consumer behavior. According to the review of literature attitudes of consumers had elucidated favorable and non-favorable behavior thus conclusion of the study stated a mediation role of attitude that further defines the intentions of consumers. To the best of our knowledge, this paper is one that combined major research studies and has given output concerning the influence of the image of brands on consumer intentions and purchase behavior and also highlighted mediating and moderating factors forwarding variations in consumer behavior. The current scenario of pharmaceutical sectors and future directions for researchers can be predicted through this study.

6. Implication for future research

The current review study focused on over-the drugs, further research can consider FMCG, herbal products, cosmetics, and prescription drugs. Search on online behavior of

consumers would be base of new research. The pharmaceutical field has a wide scope for research scholars. The review study could be helpful for marketing companies to target specific markets and get market share. The current study will be helpful, to know how consumers think and how their attitude changes purchase intentions and purchase behavior. With this study marketing companies will get an idea about which factors have a great impact on consumer mind and their decision-making process.

7. Limitations

The current review study remained fixed on over-the-counter drugs; other domains of pharmaceutical drugs can also be accessed.

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