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STUDY ON EFFECT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS 194 – 200

Mr. Dipak Umbarkar, Adv. Meenakshi Pradeep Kulawade, Mr. Rowland Lopes and Mr. Abhinandan Ashok Sawant

A STUDY ON SCENARIO OF REALTY BUSINESS SECTOR WITH REFERENCE TO RERA ACT 201 – 207

Prof. Sujata J. Gada

“YES FOR SHARING” “NO FOR LEARNING”: USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACADEMICS 208 – 212

Dr. Sarika Sagar

A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS ON THE GROWTH OF FANTASY SPORTS IN INDIA 213 – 218

Ms. Sarita Gopinath Nair and Dr Shradha Mayuresh Bhome

MORAL COMMITMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION 219 – 221

Dr. Sanjay Jagtap and Dr. Shriniwas V. Joshi

A STUDY ON STRESS FACED BY TEACHERS DUE TO HYBRID TEACHING 222 – 225

Sadhana Chhatlani

A STUDY ON DYNAMICS OF DIGITAL PAYMENTS IN INDIA – PRE AND POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC ERA 226 – 232

Dr. Shradha Bhome and Mr. John A. Menezes

A STUDY ON IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR TOWARDS RETAIL / CONSUMER GOODS 233 – 238

Mrs. Shravani S. Mandalkar and Mr. Prathamesh R. Bobhate

A STUDY OF STRESS LEVEL ON SELF HELP GROUPS DURING COVID-19 IN THANE CITY 239 – 242

Shakinakhatun Ansari

A STUDY OF INCREASE IN THE USE OF PHARMACY APPS DURING THE PANDEMIC 243 – 248

Mr. Rohit Ratnakar kadam and Dr. Varsha Mayuresh More (Guide)

RECENT TRENDS IN E-COMMERCE 249 – 251

Ms. Unnati Kamble

A STUDY OF INCREASE IN THE USE OF PHARMACY APPS DURING THE PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, peoples don't want to go out of their home. Peoples want to order online and receive their pharmacy products at their home. An online pharmacy app allows to peoples that they can get delivery of pharmacy product at their doorstep. An online pharmacy app is the game-changer in the pharmaceutical industry. Customer can use the pharmacy delivery app to browse different types of categories of pharmacy products or medicines and proceed to checkout order, make instant payment and get delivery at their doorstep.

Keywords: Pharmacyapp , Online medicine & Pharmacists

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare is constantly evolving. Modern technologies offer scope for more effective ways to manage disease. Over the course of the last two decades of pandemic , the Internet has transformed the way in which information is accessed. Mobile devices (i.e. smartphone and tablet platforms) took this a step further by allowing users to have remote access to the World Wide Web at their fingertips. Such devices now outnumber personal computers and will soon become the most common way to access data. Interest generated in this technology may be ascribed to the availability of over one and a half million applications, or ‘apps’, available for download. Apps may be described as software packages that are used to enhance the efficiency of a device or to add functionality. Mobile apps can provide the healthcare professional with opportunity for a quick, user-friendly way of accessing important medical information to support patient care.

Challenges faced by pharmacy apps

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. Failure to maintain the quality of medicines | 2. Re-ordering of drugs in the same prescription |
| 3. Storage facility of drugs | 4. Self-medication |

| | |
|--|--|
| 5. The sale of substandard and falsified medicines | 6. Consumer fraud and lack of data privacy |
| 7. Deliver medicines at the time | 8. Order allocation |

Advantage& Disadvantage of pharmacy apps

Advantage: pharmacy apps offer better pricing than offline stores, with increased access, lower transaction and product costs, convenience and greater anonymity for consumers. They offer accessibility to people with limited mobility and people in remote areas.

Disadvantage: One of the disadvantages of Pharmacy apps is that there is no one you can contact face to face. When patients want to ask questions about the drugs they are taking, it is very difficult for them to reach a licensed pharmacist. For this reason, it may not be possible for patients to access their medication on the same day.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. According to (Shankar et al. 2011) now customers are using social media like Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn etc. and depend on them for taking marketing shopping decisions, thus promotion through these media has become important.
2. Curran et al. (2011) opined that social media sites such as Facebook is much better option than other advertising processes as it stores information of its users thus. Web marketing has several benefits to boost up their performance like “24 hours online; multimedia compatible; globally available; interactive; micromarketing compatible; integration ready” (Rowley, 2004).
3. Winer (2009) highlighted the opportunity of advertising on blogs also.

4. (Lu et al.2010) Internet advancement today has introduced new systems in business one such good example is social media such as online communities.
5. (Gruzd et al.2011) Accessibility of internet has given individuals immense opportunity to use social media and they can use and interact through email, Twitter and Facebook without physical meetings.
6. (Jacobian,2014) Now a day companies sell through website both prescription drugs as well as other products related to healthcare and buying medicines through online is a popular phenomenon. However, few rogue stores are available which promotes illegal medication & unapproved drugs.
7. (Anand& Sethi, 2010) Purchase of medicines through online is also cost saving due to lower overhead costs.
8. (Siegel,1997) WHO already cautioned about purchasing medicines if there is no competent rules and regulations available for that because of endangering public health and risk for individuals.
9. According to (Ovaskainen,2001) WHO is really concerned with internet sales which may bypass national drug regulatory authorities, allow medical products on to the market which are un approved, fraudulent, unsafe or ineffective even.
10. George (2009) studied on internet pharmacies and recommended regulation approach on global basis.
11. (Priyanka & Ashok, 2016) Increasing internet and smart phone users prove that India have a bright future of online pharmacy, although this will bring few challenges with opportunity.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the challenges faced by the pharmacy apps in india.
2. To understand the advantages & disadvantages of pharmacy apps.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary Data :-For this research the data is collected from 30 peoples who are actually using these apps.

Secondary Data :- The paper is also based on secondary data collected from various sources like reports and websites. **Data Analysis**

| <p>Table no. 1 satisfaction of users ?</p> <p>Particular Frequency</p> <p>Very satisfied 33.3</p> <p>Satisfied 44.4</p> <p>Neutral 22.2</p> <p>Interpretation : The above graph states that majority of respondents are of group of satisfied.</p> | <p>Graph 1. How satisfied are the users with these pharmacy apps ?</p> <p>1. How satisfied are you with these online pharmacy apps ? 18 responses</p> <table border="1" style="display: none;"> <caption>Data for Graph 1</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Satisfaction Level</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very satisfied</td> <td>33.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Satisfied</td> <td>44.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>22.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disatisfied</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Very disatisfied</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Satisfaction Level | Percentage | Very satisfied | 33.3% | Satisfied | 44.4% | Neutral | 22.2% | Disatisfied | 0% | Very disatisfied | 0% |
|---|---|--------------------|------------|----------------|-------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|-------------|----|------------------|----|
| Satisfaction Level | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Very satisfied | 33.3% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Satisfied | 44.4% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Neutral | 22.2% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disatisfied | 0% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Very disatisfied | 0% | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| <p>Table no. 2 how often users using these apps ?</p> <p>Particular Frequency</p> <p>Daily 11.1</p> <p>Monthly 38.9</p> <p>Rarely 44.4</p> <p>Never 5.6</p> <p>Interpretation : The above graph states that majority of respondents are from the group of rarely.</p> | <p>Graph 2. Representing how often users using these pharmacy apps ?</p> <p>2. How often do you use these pharmacy apps ? 18 responses</p> <table border="1" style="display: none;"> <caption>Data for Graph 2</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Usage Frequency</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Daily</td> <td>11.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monthly</td> <td>38.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rarely</td> <td>44.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td>5.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Usage Frequency | Percentage | Daily | 11.1% | Monthly | 38.9% | Rarely | 44.4% | Never | 5.6% |
|--|--|-----------------|------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|--------|-------|-------|------|
| Usage Frequency | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | |
| Daily | 11.1% | | | | | | | | | | |
| Monthly | 38.9% | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rarely | 44.4% | | | | | | | | | | |
| Never | 5.6% | | | | | | | | | | |

| <p>Table no. 3 : How friendly is these apps to use ?</p> <p>Particular Frequency</p> <p>Extremely 22.2</p> <p>Very 44.4</p> <p>Moderatel 27.8</p> <p>y</p> <p>Slightly 5.6</p> <p>Interpretation : The above graph represents the majority of people find it very friendly to use these pharmacy apps.</p> | <p>Graph 3 : Representing how friendly is these apps to use ?</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Graph 3</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Extremely</td> <td>22.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Very</td> <td>44.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moderatel</td> <td>27.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>y</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Slightly</td> <td>5.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Category | Percentage | Extremely | 22.2% | Very | 44.4% | Moderatel | 27.8% | y | 0% | Slightly | 5.6% |
|---|--|----------|------------|-----------|-------|------|-------|-----------|-------|---|----|----------|------|
| Category | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Extremely | 22.2% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Very | 44.4% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Moderatel | 27.8% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| y | 0% | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Slightly | 5.6% | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| <p>Table no. 4: How effective was these pharmaceutical apps in service ?</p> <p>Particular Frequency</p> <p>Excellent 27.8</p> <p>Good 55.6</p> <p>Fair 16.7</p> <p>Interpretation: The above graph represent that majority of app users find it good in service.</p> | <p>Graph 4 : Representing the apps in service</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Graph 4</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Excellent</td> <td>27.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good</td> <td>55.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fair</td> <td>16.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Category | Percentage | Excellent | 27.8% | Good | 55.6% | Fair | 16.7% | Poor | 0% |
|--|---|----------|------------|-----------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|----|
| Category | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | |
| Excellent | 27.8% | | | | | | | | | | |
| Good | 55.6% | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fair | 16.7% | | | | | | | | | | |
| Poor | 0% | | | | | | | | | | |

| <p>Table no. 5 : Pharmaceutical apps like to use by users</p> <p>Particular Frequency</p> <p>Netmeds 16.7</p> <p>PharmEasy 44.4</p> <p>Medlife 11.1</p> <p>Apollo pharmacy 16.7</p> <p>Practo 5.5</p> <p>Other 5.6</p> <p>Interpretation: The above graph represent that majority of people use PharmEasy app to buy pharmacy.</p> | <p>Graph no. 5 : Represent the apps prefer by users</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Graph no. 5</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Netmeds</td> <td>16.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PharmEasy</td> <td>44.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medlife</td> <td>11.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Apollo pharmacy</td> <td>16.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Practo</td> <td>5.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ing</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>5.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Category | Percentage | Netmeds | 16.7% | PharmEasy | 44.4% | Medlife | 11.1% | Apollo pharmacy | 16.7% | Practo | 5.5% | Ing | 0% | Other | 5.6% |
|---|--|----------|------------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|-----|----|-------|------|
| Category | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Netmeds | 16.7% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PharmEasy | 44.4% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Medlife | 11.1% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Apollo pharmacy | 16.7% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Practo | 5.5% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ing | 0% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other | 5.6% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table no. 6 : Purchase experience of app users
 Particular Frequency
 Excellent 27.8
 Good 61.1
 Fair 11.1

Interpretation : The above graph represent that the majority of users experience find it good in purchasing medicine online through app.

Graph no. 6 : Represent the purchase experience of app users

6. When you tried to purchase medicines via an pharmacy app, what was your experience?
 18 responses.



Table no.7 : Pharmacy apps make buying medicine easy through pandemic
 Particular Frequency

Absolutely yes 44.4
 yes 50
 sometime 5.6

Interpretation: The above graph represent that majority of app users say yes that pharmacy apps make buying medicine easy through pandemic.

Graph no. 7 : Representing pharmacy apps make buying medicine easy through pandemic

7. Does these pharmacy apps make buying medicine easy through pandemic?
 18 responses.

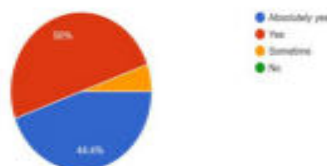


Table no. 8: the factor that will stop app users from purchasing medicine online.
 Particular Frequency

High price 22.2
 Slow delivery service 27.8
 Lack of trust 44.4
 Little personalized service 5.6

Interpretation : The above graph represent that majority of app users feel lack of trust while purchasing medicine online.

Graph no. 8: Representing the factor that will stop app users from purchasing medicine online.

8. Name one factor that would stop you from purchasing your medicines online?
 18 responses.

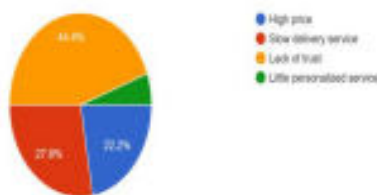


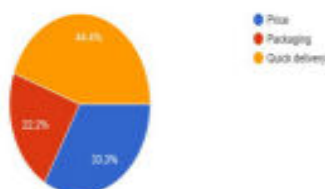
Table no.9: The factor users consider the most while purchasing medicine online.
 Particular Frequency

Price 33.3
 Packaging 22.2
 Quick delivery 44.4

Interpretation: The above graph represent that majority factor people purchase online medicine is quick delivery.

Graph no.9: Representing the factor users consider the most while purchasing medicine online.

9. What factor would you consider the most while purchasing a medicine online?
 18 responses.



| <p>Table no.10: Representing the place from people usually buy medicines.</p> <p>Particular Frequency</p> <p>Medical stores 66.7</p> <p>Online pharmacy 27.8</p> <p>supermarket 5.5</p> <p>Interpretation : The above graph represent that majority of peoples purchase medicines from medical stores.</p> | <p>Graph no.10: Representing the place from people usually buy medicines.</p> <p>11. From which place do you usually buy your medicines from ? 18 responses</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Graph no.10</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Place</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Medical stores</td> <td>66.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Online pharmacies</td> <td>27.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supermarket</td> <td>5.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Place | Percentage | Medical stores | 66.7% | Online pharmacies | 27.8% | Supermarket | 5.5% |
|---|---|-------|------------|----------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------------|------|
| Place | Percentage | | | | | | | | |
| Medical stores | 66.7% | | | | | | | | |
| Online pharmacies | 27.8% | | | | | | | | |
| Supermarket | 5.5% | | | | | | | | |

| <p>Table no.11 : The time of medicine delivery</p> <p>Particular Frequency</p> <p>2-4 hours 77.8</p> <p>24 hours 16.7</p> <p>2-3 days 5.6</p> <p>Interpretation: The above graph represent the majority of people expect medicine in -4 hours.</p> | <p>Graph no.11: Representing the time of medicine delivery</p> <p>10. How fast would you expect your medicines to be delivered to you ? 18 responses</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Data for Graph no.11</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Time</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2-4 hours</td> <td>77.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24 hours</td> <td>16.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2-3 days</td> <td>5.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Time | Percentage | 2-4 hours | 77.8% | 24 hours | 16.7% | 2-3 days | 5.6% |
|---|--|------|------------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|----------|------|
| Time | Percentage | | | | | | | | |
| 2-4 hours | 77.8% | | | | | | | | |
| 24 hours | 16.7% | | | | | | | | |
| 2-3 days | 5.6% | | | | | | | | |

CONCLUSION

1. At present the leading e-Pharmacy players are- 1mg, Netmeds, pharmeasy, practo, Medlife, apollo pharmacy etc.
2. Today around 150 startups are currently operating as online pharmacy.
3. India needs an effective regulatory mechanism regarding this aspect.
4. The objective should be implement online pharmacy without further delay because delay will not be beneficial for these service providers and customers.
5. Both the AICOD and IIPA have right to demand.
6. Government should come with proper solution so that both the parties are benefitted. India is a vast country and online pharmacies need to operate.
7. At present e-Pharmacy is at its initial stage in India, but it has the great potential in the near future.
8. The factors leading to the demand for e-Pharmacy in India is mainly because of unsatisfied medical needs due to larger population and increase the usage of internet.
9. As the consumer behavior in India is fast changing, there is a huge demand to access wide range of products at the click of computer, and at competitive prices.
10. We need to think that most of the rural places there are no internet facilities even today.

SUGGESTIONS

1. It is suggested that these apps should give multi language option so that everyone can use this app.
2. It is also suggested that these apps should improve their security path of the app which will reduce frauds and hackers.

3. Pharmacy companies should optimize their app so that it can avoid users from virus, bugs and glitches.
4. Pharmacy companies should add order tracking features in their apps so that users can have a detail of transportation of his/her products.
5. Pharmacy companies should provide detail information of their products.
6. It is most important to these pharmacy apps to not to give products to the users without medical prescription.

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