

Consumer behavior in buying Medicine

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Abstract— Choosing between generic and branded medicine is a cost to the patient's mind due to its quality and effectiveness. This study determined the consumer behavior in buying medicines in terms of: personal, social and marketing. Also, it determined the significant relationship between and among the profile of the respondents and the factors of consumer behavior in buying medicines. This study used the quantitative descriptive research method and circulated a survey questionnaire to a total of 145 employees consisting of 63 private sector and 82 public sector from different institutions in Nueva Ecija. Based on the results of the study, it is then concluded that social factors affect the most of consumer behavior in buying medicines where they consider recommendations from other people. Noticeably, consumers prefer branded than generic medicines because of its safety, effectivity, market value, brand reputation, and other people's recommendations. Consumers' income affects the personal and marketing factors of consumer behavior in buying medicines. It is recommended that weighing all the factors of consumer behavior in buying medicines should be taken into consideration by everyone. Thus, information dissemination about the branded and generic medicines should be made available to the consumers. When recommending medicines to consumers, medical practitioners must consider the capability of the consumers to buy what they prescribed without sacrificing its effectivity, safety, and efficiency of medicines to the end users. Further studies are also recommended regarding this topic.

Keywords— Consumer Behavior, Branded Medicine, Generic Medicine, Consumer Preference.

I. INTRODUCTION

Choosing between generic and branded medicine is a cost to the patient's mind due to its quality and effectiveness. Consumers do not have the awareness or ability to distinguish the price of various medicines, so brands with a quality guarantee are a customer guideline (Cheng, 2018). Those who set up a business and use marketing must understand consumer behaviours (Santos, 2020).

Timely and efficient use of medicines can ensure successful care of many diseases, and prevent or postpone patients' need for expensive medical care as generic medicines can effectively treat many of today's diseases (Hassali et al., 2009).

To raise awareness of the OTC brand, pharmaceutical companies should use relevant promotional and advertising outlets, as well as pharmacists and other healthcare professionals to promote their OTC brand among the mass population (Dadhich & Dixit, 2017). The ability to improve cost-effective use of medication in a number of developing

countries through a change in demand from originator brands to lowest-priced generics (Cameron et al., 2012).

With these insights, the researcher would like to know the consumer behavior in buying medicines in the province of Nueva Ecija.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Few patients have raised concerns about the safety or side effects of generics, only a minority think brand-name drugs are more effective than generics, and most agree that generics are a better "value" than brand-name drugs (Shrank et al., 2009).

Social, personal, cultural, and psychological factors are the decision-making factors influencing pharmacy choice and the choice of generic and similarly priced medicines (Pujari et al., 2016). Consumers depended primarily on the knowledge of prior use for the purchasing of medicines, secondly on the pharmacist's opinion and thirdly on the quality of the drug (Kevrekidis et al., 2018).

Compared with more serious and complex illnesses, patients were more likely to use generic medicines to treat common symptoms such as headache, flu and fever (Al-Gedadi et al., 2008).

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the consumer behavior in buying medicines in terms of: personal, social and marketing. Also, it determined the significant relationship between and among the profile of the respondents and the factors of consumer behavior in buying medicines.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study used the quantitative descriptive research method, as it is often paired with compare and contrast calculation, description, interpretation, and evaluation (Stone et al., 2008). The researcher circulated a survey questionnaire with likert-scale responses (Vagias, 2006) to a total of 145 employees consisting of 63 private sector and 82 public sector from different institutions in Nueva Ecija.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. Marketing Factors that Affect Consumer Buying Behavior

Statements	M	VI
1. Generic medicines are less effective than branded medicines.	3.03	A
2. Branded medicine is greatly influenced by its company's reputation.	2.99	A
3. Branded medicine usually has more ingredients than generic medicine.	2.95	A
4. Branded medicine is on par with its cost because of quality than generic medicine.	2.99	A
5. An expensive medicine is better than cheap medicine.	2.94	A
6. Branded medicines are more accessible on drug stores than generic medicines.	2.32	A
7. Generic medicines have packaging that are less durable than branded medicines.	3.03	A
General Weighted Mean	2.91	A

LEGEND	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)	1.75 – 2.49	Disagree (D)
	2.50 – 3.24	Agree (A)	1.00 – 1.74	Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 1 shows the marketing factors that affect consumer behavior in buying medicines. Based on the result, marketing factors got a general weighted mean of 2.91 which has a verbal interpretation of "Agree". The respondents agreed that the generic medicine medicines are less effective than

branded medicines (M = 3.03) and that generics medicines have packaging that are less durable than branded medicines (M = 3.03). These imply that respondents perceived that branded medicines are more effective, better quality, and more accessible than generic medicines.

Table 2. Social Factors that Affect Consumer Buying Behavior

Statements	M	VI
1. My peers think that branded medicines are way better than generic medicines.	2.95	A
2. Doctors usually advice patients to buy branded than generic medicines.	2.97	A
3. My family prefers to use branded medicines over generics.	2.97	A
4. Our company clinic often provides us branded medicines.	3.47	SA

5. Drug store personnel always offer branded medicines when consulted.	3.15	A
6. Our family least prioritizes the purchase of generic medicines.	2.96	A
7. Hospitals encourage patients to take branded medicines.	3.02	A
General Weighted Mean	3.07	A

LEGEND	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)	1.75 – 2.49	Disagree (D)
	2.50 – 3.24	Agree (A)	1.00 – 1.74	Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2 presents the results on how social factors affect consumer behavior in buying medicines which got a general weighted mean of 3.07 which has a verbal interpretation of “Agree”. To highlight, respondents said that their company clinic often provides them branded medicine (M = 3.47, “Strongly Agree”). Further, they agreed that drug store personnel always offer branded medicines when consulted

(M = 3.15). They also agreed that hospitals encourage patients to take branded medicines (M = 3.02). The results suggest that social factors are ones to be considered by the respondents in buying medicines. Respondents rely on the recommendations given to them by their company clinic, drug stores, and hospitals.

Table 3. Personal Factors that affect consumer buying behavior

Statements	M	VI
1. I am more comfortable taking branded medicines.	2.94	A
2. I prefer medicines that that will treat my condition even it is generic medicine.	3.10	A
3. I choose medicines with brand reputation.	2.97	A
4. I can only purchase generic medicine because it affordable.	2.97	A
5. It is easy for me to remember the name of branded medicine compared to generics.	2.98	A
6. I always trust branded medicines.	2.97	A
7. I feel safe taking branded medicines.	3.09	A
General Weighted Mean	3.00	A

LEGEND	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)	1.75 – 2.49	Disagree (D)
	2.50 – 3.24	Agree (A)	1.00 – 1.74	Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 3 shows the personal factors that affect consumer behavior in buying medicines. It can be noted that this factor got a general weighted mean of 3.00 which has a verbal interpretation of “Agree”. Respondents agreed that they prefer medicines that will treat their condition even it is generic medicine (M = 3.10). This means that regardless the medicine is branded or generic for as long as it will help

them for their treatment then they will buy it. However, respondents also agreed that they feel safe taking branded medicines (M=3.09). This suggests that respondents perceived that in taking medicines it is okay to buy branded or generic since both can still help but they feel safe if it will be branded medicines.

Table 4. Relationship of Respondents' Age, Sex, and Income to the Factors of Consumer Buying Behavior

	Personal	Social	Marketing
Age	-.064	.079	.032
Sex	-.136	.003	-0.82
Income	.581*	.021	.793*

*p < .05 Sex: 1-Male 2-Female

Table 4 shows the significant relationship of age, sex, and income to the factors (personal, social, marketing) that affect the consumer behavior in buying medicines. Results showed that positive significant relationships were found between income and personal factors ($r = .581$, $p < .05$) and income and marketing factors ($r = .793$, $p < .05$). These results imply that the respondent as consumers consider their income in buying medicines. Further, the higher the income of the consumers the more they consider personal and marketing factors.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, it is then concluded that social factors affect the most of consumer behavior in buying medicines where they considers recommendations from other people. Noticeably, consumers prefer branded than generic medicines because of its safety, effectivity, market value, brand reputation, and other people's recommendations. Consumers' income affect the personal and marketing factors of consumer behavior in buying medicines.

It is recommended that weighing all the factors of consumer behavior in buying medicines should be taken into consideration by everyone. Thus, information dissemination about the branded and generic medicines should be made available to the consumers. When recommending medicines to consumers, medical practitioners must consider the capability of the consumers to buy what they prescribed without sacrificing its effectivity, safety, and efficiency of medicines to the end users. Further studies are also recommended regarding this topic.

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