THE FUSION OF MEDICINE AND E-COMMERCE: CRAFTING INTEGRATED MARKETING SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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ABSTRACT

Technology has grown to play a significant role in our daily lives. The use of digital marketing has been expanding across all industries. Unfortunately, the pharmaceutical business has not yet mastered digital marketing outside the Internet. As part of their broader marketing plan, some companies are attempting to grasp digital's real worth, while others are incorporating it. To understand why, even if retail pharmacies are still there, more and more individuals are opting to purchase healthcare items and medications online, this article examines the role of digital marketing in this sector. According to the results of this research, digital marketing is here to stay, and digital direct marketing, discounts/offers, and the like are driving consumers to purchase healthcare items and medications online.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Online purchase, Medicines, Healthcare Products

I.   INTRODUCTION

In terms of investment, new jobs, and overall economic activity, today's healthcare industry is among the most active and expansive in the world. We have come a long way in enhancing public health, increasing life expectancy, and achieving universal convergence. Nevertheless, concerns over the limited resources and their allocation, as well as approaches to enhance the fairness, efficacy, and efficiency of healthcare services, persist. E-commerce is a fantastic healthcare solution since it makes the most effective use of limited resources to support the nation's health. With its many advantages, including the ability to provide remote self-service and stronger interactions between business partners, the Internet has recently emerged as the preferred interactive medium. Because of its worldwide reach and high level of interactivity, it allows for the immediate fulfilment of consumer demands anywhere in the globe. The healthcare industry has been painfully sluggish when it comes to adopting the Internet, even while it is certainly not impossible. Institutional hurdles are often mentioned as the primary reason for the delayed adoption of the Internet, despite technical difficulties and a considerable growth in the importance of human interactions. Medicine is evolving into a worldwide marketplace that is more informed, patient-centred, and responsive, thanks to the new networked healthcare environment and eHealth. As a result, it has altered the dynamic among the many stakeholders in the healthcare industry, including patients, doctors, pharmaceutical firms, medical device makers and suppliers, insurance companies, carriers, technology integrators, and medical device manufacturers and suppliers.

A. E-business in healthcare

E-business is more than merely doing business online or bringing new technology to traditional methods. E-business, or electronic business, is a worldwide phenomenon that encompasses all of an organization's internal and external business operations. Its primary goal is to improve connections between companies and their partners via the integration and synchronization of relevant electronic technologies [1]. One advantage of doing business online is the decrease in transaction costs, which is especially true of process expenses and the enhancement of information exchange. Electronic business, or e-business, is a prevalent strategy in any industry since it facilitates all (business) company activities via the use of electronic instruments. From doctors' offices to pharmaceutical companies, the word may apply to any electronic health record system. There are other words, like telemedicine, that clearly denote electronic communication processes between health care practitioners and patients. Therefore, this is usually how people in the healthcare industry understand e-business. E-Health is a relatively new concept that has arisen with the expansion of the Internet. The phrase "e-business" is somewhat similar to it. Either health care tied to business or health care provided to patients exclusively via electronic means is referred to as eHealth. Among the most popular explanations, eHealth encompasses the meeting point of public health, business, and medical informatics. One subgroup of eHealth, which includes the business domain, is e-business in healthcare.

Consequently, the eHealth business encompasses not only all supply and production operations in the healthcare industry but also all e-supported healthcare delivery procedures that originate from business management [1]. Figure 1 illustrates the interconnection of healthcare e-health, e-business, and e-business. The term "e-business in health care" refers to the application of e-business strategies and technologies to the unique aspects of the health care industry.
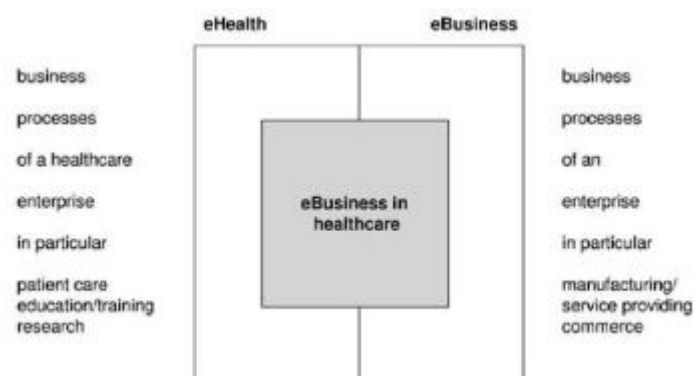

Figure 1: Relationship between e-business and e-health

### B. The role of e-commerce in healthcare.

Electronic commerce, or "e-commerce," is the buying and selling of products, services, and data conducted entirely online. It combines corporate processes with digital infrastructures, allowing for the digitalization of conventional transactions that were previously limited by physical or geographical constraints. Online shopping is already widely used in the healthcare business, which might help with their efforts to reorganize [2]. The digital health industry is expected to see a substantial compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 28.5% from 2020 to 2026, according to the analysis company Global Industry Insights. A growing part of online retail, e-commerce is opening up new possibilities for the healthcare industry, particularly in telemedicine and tele-pharmacy, thanks to the proliferation of internet-connected mobile devices and apps [3]. People have higher expectations for the quality of health care due to the rapid advancements in technology. Healthcare providers, including hospitals and clinics, are under pressure to satisfy these demands economically and efficiently.

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Online shopping has the potential to greatly affect the overall quality, efficiency, and cost of healthcare delivery and administration [4]. The use of IT, particularly the Internet, may help healthcare organizations become more efficient [5]. Achieving efficient and cost-effective healthcare management is possible with well-planned and executed e-commerce business models. Healthcare providers, particularly those still relying on antiquated paper-based methods, might greatly benefit from implementing e-commerce tactics into their operations. Therefore, doctors and hospitals may save patients a lot of time by reviewing their complete medical records and making an accurate diagnosis [4]. As the e-commerce sector and online medicine sales continue to rise, there is a rising demand in the worldwide healthcare e-commerce business. A new market for healthcare has emerged thanks to e-commerce suppliers, as more and more people seek medical treatment online. As the healthcare e-commerce sector continues to develop, more and more medical supplies are finding their way into consumers' hands via online marketplaces. Accordingly, the worldwide healthcare e-commerce market is anticipated to see an increase in total sales during the next few years. Pharmaceuticals are now available for purchase online, thanks to investments in the e-commerce sector. Famous venture capitalists have put much money into the worldwide healthcare e-commerce business because of all the money it can make. Because of this tendency, the growth graph of vendors in the global healthcare e-commerce industry has been quite robust. There will likely be more openings for Internet vendors in the healthcare business in the next decade. A strong verification method for online healthcare items has been developed, which supports this prediction [6]. With the proliferation of channels for sales and purchases, the healthcare sector has evolved into a complex and multi-faceted arena. The worldwide healthcare e-commerce sector has grown in recent years, driven in part by the increasing popularity of online sales channels among consumers.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

To guarantee the nationwide delivery of safe, effective, and high-quality medications, the following statutes and regulations control and regulate the import, manufacture, and distribution of pharmaceuticals in India: the Pharmaceuticals and Cosmetics (D and C) Act, 1940; the D and C Rules, 1945; the Pharmacy Act, 1948; and the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 [7]. In the absence of an approved legal framework, such as the Draft Rules, e-pharmacy businesses in India are required to adhere to offline laws [8]. In this part, we will examine a few of the difficulties that have been overcome without a strict structure [Figure 1].
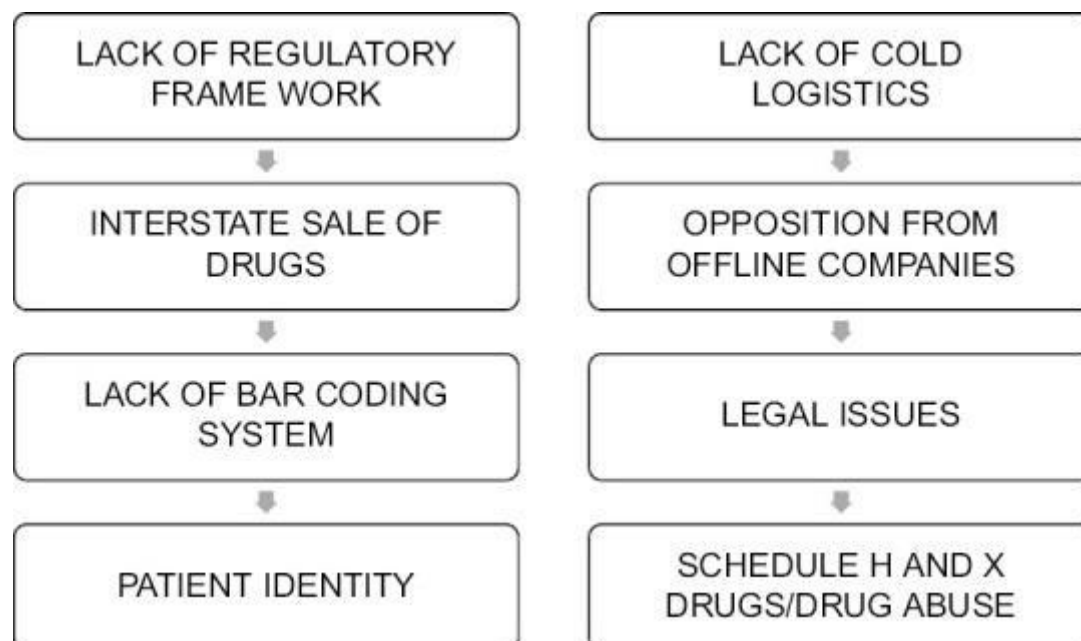
Figure 2: Challenges of an online pharmacy

Many major investors have yet to invest in India's burgeoning e-pharmacy business due to the country's lax regulatory framework. According to the existing D and C Act, a registered premise and a valid licence are necessary for a chemist to keep and sell medications securely. As a result, e-pharmacy enterprises in India need to have a physical location in order to function [9].

There is a great chance that medications that are legal in one state can be deemed illegal in another since the regulations surrounding the selling of pharmaceuticals across state lines are not well defined. As E-pharmacy companies consist of a vast network of pharmacies integrated into one platform, rigorous monitoring of the sources from which these drugs are procured or delivered will be a major task for this sector. The Mumbai Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has already recorded a similar incident, and further incidents like these are expected to increase on page 34. Another area where Indian legislation is unclear is the practice of collecting payment prior to pharmaceutical delivery. Because they accept payment methods that are not legally binding, such as mobile wallets and credit/debit, e-pharmacy businesses may be held liable for breaking the rule that states money should only be collected once the medicine has been delivered [10].

The management of medications under Schedules H and X requires an all-encompassing regulatory system. Antibiotics and other medications with the potential to cause addiction may only be sold in the presence of a licenced chemist who has a current prescription. The simplicity and accessibility of electronic pharmacies may result in a rise in drug misuse; however, there is a risk that users may submit the same prescription many times via the portal [11].

The lack of regulation for the sale of pharmaceuticals to minors and the difficulty in verifying the validity of uploaded prescriptions provide further challenges to patient identification when it comes to online drug purchases [11].

The current need for a barcoding framework at the assembly level poses a potential threat to the uninterrupted distribution of medications. To increase openness and precision in data management systems, the government should intervene and require barcoding for the online delivery of drugs [12].

Since India does not have enough pharmaceutical manufacturing or supply at the manufacturer level, the country's government should consider passing legislation to promote technical innovation. With government support, the e-pharmacy industry may streamline its processes, increase automation, and decrease operating costs [13].

The main goal of e-pharmacy firms is to improve healthcare services for the general population nationwide. Unfortunately, people living in remote areas cannot be well served by E-pharmacy store locations when it comes to things that need cold storage due to inadequate cold chain logistics and a lack of temperature surveillance [12].

The pushback from traditional drugstores has been becoming steadily stronger. The All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists is leading the campaign against the major Internet shops [14]. The allure of E-pharmacy sectors' deals and discounts may also affect the expansion of offline markets. Electronic drugstores' home delivery of medications violates the D and C Act, which states that some medicines may be supplied only with a prescription, and several groups have drawn attention to this fact [15]. Despite the centre's announcements that the final notice would be released by December 2018 and a subsequent extension to July 31, 2019, in response to the August 2018 draft's publication, these rules were never

finalized [16]. The following are some of the drawbacks of offline pharmacies and the steps that should be taken to address them.

Table 1: Some disadvantages of the offline pharmacy

Issue	Action
Drug abuse	The sale of Schedule X should be prohibited Validation of the scanned prescription Name and address of the patient to be included for audit purposes
Medication errors	Registered pharmacists behind the screens The pharmacist's contact information should be provided in case of any inconvenience.
Counterfeit medicines	A receipt should contain all the necessary information right, from the pharmacist who dispenses the medicines to the batch number of the medicines and the place of manufacture.
Substitution	The e-pharmacist should decline the order if the required brand is unavailable.
Pharmacovigilance	All the supplies and demands are recorded for easy tracking. Invoice to be provided to allow product recalls-patient's information to be recorded

III.   METHODOLOGY

Our objective was to get a deeper comprehension of customer confidence in the healthcare e-commerce market. Our goals in this study were to(1) identify the most essential aspects of e-commerce health care for building customer confidence and(2) determine the relative relevance of these aspects in making online purchases. We did not go out to create a brand-new model or theory. We combed through research on consumer trust and healthcare e-commerce to identify potential trust-building elements. Our empirical investigation was led by the elements that were shown to be relevant. We aimed to determine the relative importance of several aspects from the consumer's point of view in our empirical investigation. The best way to get a feel for how customers felt about it was to administer a survey in the form of a questionnaire. The purpose of our poll is to examine customer confidence in e-commerce healthcare services generally rather than focusing on a particular online vendor or website.

C. Data Collection
Secondary Data

A variety of secondary sources, including books, periodicals, and the Internet, have been used by us. Much of the material we combed through was either written in English or Swedish and related to our subject. To set the stage for the reader, we also wanted to provide a brief history of the Internet and an overview of e-commerce. For that reason, we also looked for literature on the subject. Electronic commerce is a dynamic industry that is always evolving. As with any change, this may bring about both new possibilities and new uncertainties, which might affect mixed customer trust. We have made an effort to examine material that is

reasonably recent for this reason. Various researchers tend to focus on various aspects when trying to identify what makes a difference in establishing customer trust. The many facets and elusive nature of trust are shown here. Accordingly, we have included some of the most often noted elements crucial for developing customer trust into our theoretical framework, and the literature we have examined covers a variety of trust domains.

Primary Data

A questionnaire was used to gather our main data. We wanted to know how customers value various trust elements, so we designed a survey to find out. Considerations from our literature analysis informed the questionnaire's question structure. Our poll aims to examine customer confidence in e-commerce generally rather than focusing on a particular Internet vendor or website, as has been done in previous research.

People of all ages, beginning at 18 and above, were given the questionnaire. It was also our intention to poll men and women at equal rates. We opted to survey people in the Noida and Greater Noida areas. Since we distributed the surveys face-to-face, we could keep collecting responses until we had collected the 100 questionnaires we had originally planned.

A questionnaire's efficiency as a data collection tool is one of its main selling points. The fact that all responders provide the same answers is an additional perk. When data is standardized, it may be numerically stated and analyzed quantitatively, making comparisons much easier. One drawback of questionnaires is the difficulty in crafting questions that are both intelligible by respondents and offer researchers the information they need to achieve their goals. In addition, respondents may understand the questions in a way that the researchers did not intend. One probable explanation is that in order to keep a questionnaire as basic as possible, it is not feasible to offer detailed explanations.

IV.   RESULTS

Q1. In what ways do you feel about buying healthcare goods and services online?

It shows how people feel about making purchases online. The consumer's attitude towards online purchasing is reflected in their opinions of shopping convenience, as described in our theoretical framework.
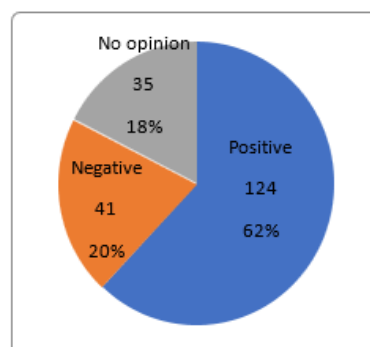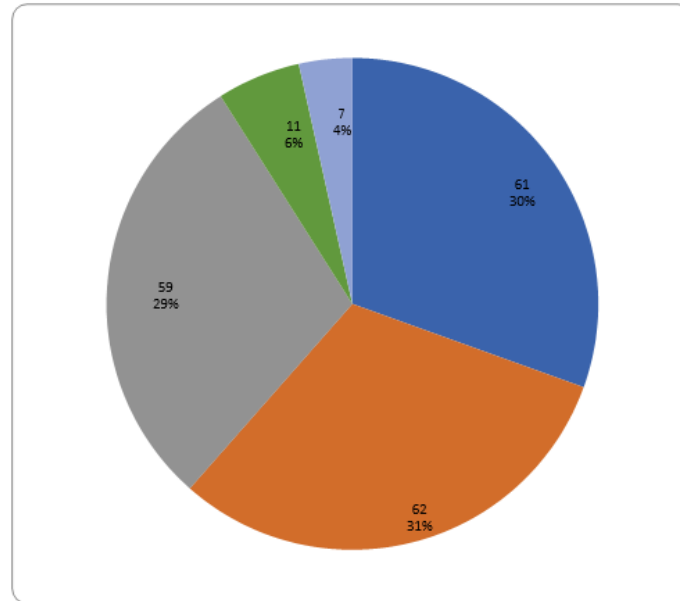

Analysis

About 62% of those who took the survey felt positive about it, while 17.5 per cent were unsure. This shows that people's perspectives on the Internet and other forms of modern technology vary. Given that 59% of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 39, this may have affected the outcome of this question.

Q2. How often do you purchase pharmaceutical products online?

You can see how frequently the people who took the survey buy prescription drugs online.

The Consumer Actions of the Respondents

Analysis

Nearly 70% of those who took the survey had shopped for medication online. The bulk of respondents who have shopped for medication online do so very little, with just a small percentage making monthly purchases or more often. The other one-third said they needed to gain knowledge as they never purchase online.

Q3. Should the healthcare industry prioritize providing better services on e-commerce healthcare platforms to attract people?
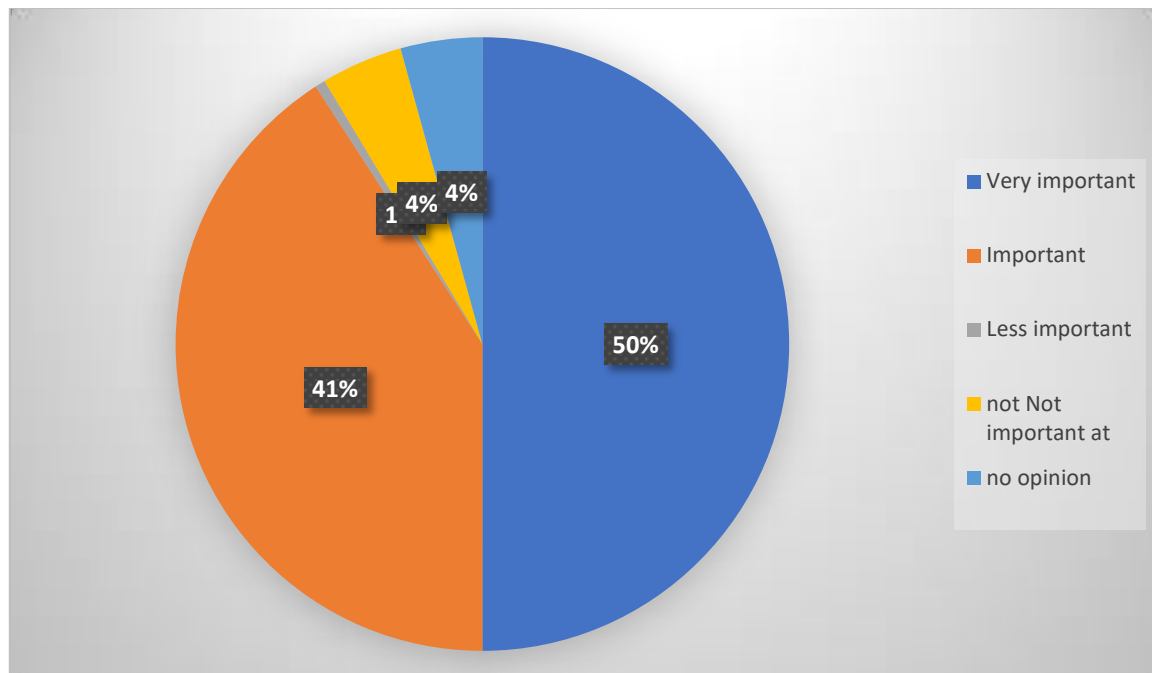
Reasons for Choosing Online Shopping:
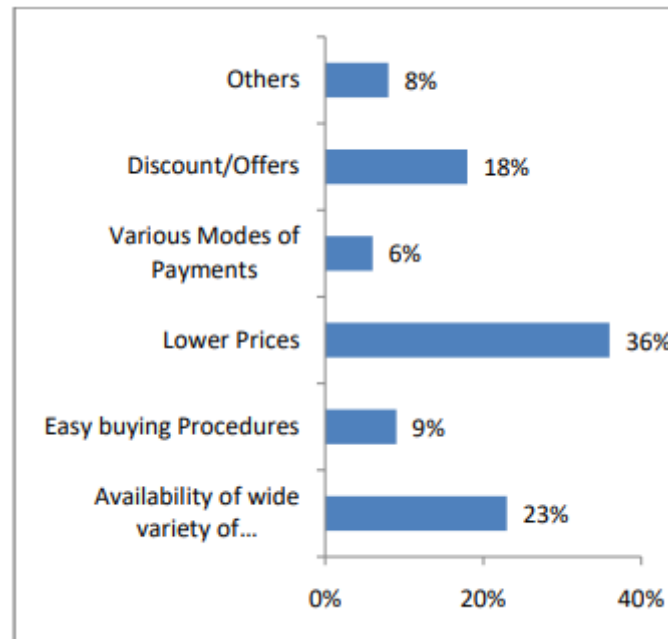
According to the data shown above, 36% of people purchase healthcare and medicine online because of the reduced pricing, while 23% shop because of the vast selection of items offered. The following factors contributed to the rise of online shopping: convenience(9%), a variety of payment methods(6%), sales and promotions(18%), and others (8%).

V.   CONCLUSION

When it comes to national policy agendas, health care is usually at the front. It has grown into a major economic force, driving innovation, spending, and new employment opportunities over the years. The quality of population health, life expectancy, and universal convergence have all seen remarkable improvements. On the other hand, questions about the sufficiency and present use of resources persist. Obstacles such as fast technology advancement, increasing patient demands, and an ageing population have only served to heighten the urgency of the need for enhancement. The industry has shifted its focus from direct communication and medical expertise to technology and community data as a result of waves of technological integration and scientific discoveries. More decentralized and patient-oriented care services are the future of the healthcare industry, and telemedicine is a major step in that direction.

Patients might get local treatment, guidance, or other care without spending time and money travelling to specialized centres, and providers could access a bigger market. Established businesses had to make adjustments when new entrants to the market emerged. However, health care was primarily a problem-oriented, reactive endeavour that focused on curing illness. Although anticipated, the adoption of the Internet has been much delayed compared to other sectors. The causes for the sluggish adoption of the Internet are attributed to factors such as induced demand, third-party finance systems, ambiguous or nonexistent regulation, and technology. In any case, health care has moved from remote locations, where telemedicine had left it, into the patient's house, and more recently, with the advent of mobile Internet, to any location and at any time the patient needs it, all thanks to this new web-enabled environment. Medical care is being pushed into a worldwide market activity that is information-backed, patient-centred, and just-in-time. Health care is shifting its focus from treatment to prevention as a result of the gradual (and sometimes incorrect) emergence of internet health information, which empowers people. By using the lobbying strength of online groups, the increasingly influential e-health consumer is able to resist the draw of technology and start pushing the market. Despite this rapid expansion, Internet users still constitute a sizable portion of the global

health consumer market. Their empowerment widens the distance between themselves and the unjustly excluded and information-deprived people.

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