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**CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS DIGITAL MARKETING OF
APOLLO PHARMACY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO TUMAKURU CITY**

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ABSTRACT

Advancement of technology has brought a lot of changes in day to day life and these changes become a part and parcel of life. Recent trends in technology have made everything go digital. We can easily trace out huge changes in the various aspects of human life, business, education, culture etc. Marketing is the most dynamic sector to adopt and adapt the technological changes. Digital Marketing is booming in the world and become mandate in present situation. Due to current pandemic situations digital operations have become indispensable. This is not except for the pharmaceutical industry. Apollo Pharmacy is being a leading and reputed Online Pharmacy stores not only in India but in Asia as well, providing healthcare services in urban and semi-urban segments of the market and is accessible to all types of customers.

In this study the authors make an effort to analyze the perception and buying attitude of consumers towards Digital Marketing of Apollo Pharmacy at Tumakuru City. Data has been collected from 60 respondents under market survey method, assuming Non-Random based Convenience Sampling Technique. The study is based on the Primary and Secondary Data. Data collected through the questionnaire will be analysed by using recommended Statistical Technique.

Introduction

In a traditional sense, Marketing is a place where buyers and sellers meet each other to purchase and sell goods. This concept of marketing became vague in the recent trends with the advancement of technology in the field of marketing. It has suffered

from a lot of limitations such as difficulty to reach large customers, huge processes, expensive, lack of proper information etc. This led to the emergence of a new platform in the marketing field i.e., Digital Marketing.

Digital marketing being one of the most preferred and trending platforms is leading the world today. It refers to the process of using the various digital channels such as the internet, mobile devices, social media, display ads, search engines etc, to reach customers. As we are in the era of technology, going digital has become a fundamental necessity. As most of the customers prefer digital operations it is fundamental for every organisation to follow the same. There are different channels used in digital marketing. Few were discussed below:

- Search engine optimization
- Pay per click
- Website design
- Social media marketing

1. **Search engine optimization:** Search engines are the software systems that help the users to get required information. Being one of the strongest forms of digital marketing, it helps buyers to get required products in time.

2. **Pay per click:** In this form of digital marketing customers can get their required products just by clicking on the short videos or slides that appear in the webpage.

3. **Website design:** Whenever the customers want to buy a particular company's product, they tend to search on the website of the organisation. This is why website design is taking much importance nowadays irrespective of the size of the business. A good website offers customers all the information through written, visual and audio content.

4. **Social media marketing:** Today's world is an era of social media. Everybody is accessed to various forms of social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter etc. These social media can also be used to promote the products. All these modes of digital marketing help customers to get easy access to their required information.

The various advantages of digital marketing can be seen in two perspectives; one is from the company perspective and another one is the buyer's perspective. Every organisation irrespective of its size is getting benefit from digital marketing at large. Through digital marketing one can get easy access to a large group of customers at a single click. The best example of this will be social media marketing where we can reach out to many customers in a very short time. The cost incurred for the implementation of digital marketing is very less as compared to the traditional marketing techniques. The cost of transportation can be easily eliminated with the help of digital marketing as customers have no need to visit outlets for purchasing goods. A company can easily attract its target customers by providing offers and discounts by using the amount of money saved here. Expansion and diversification of organisational activities has become easy with digital marketing.

Going digital has become an emergency requirement for the survival of every organisation and to be competitive in respective industries.

Rapid increase in the usage of the internet has made most of the customers prefer digital marketing to perform their daily operations. They can easily get access to a variety of products, which has become more convenient in today's busy world.

Customers can easily avail needed information and can compare the required product with others to select the best and suitable product. Availability of rare and quality products, attractive deals and discounts, faster, safe and timely purchase and home delivery of products are the main reasons to prefer online purchase. Adoption of digital marketing has a greater impact on the frequency of buying products from the customers.

Impact of digital marketing is not restricted to any industry or sector, it covers all the areas. Drastic changes in the Pharmaceutical industry can be traced easily due to digital marketing.

In order to be competitive in the growing industry all the pharmaceutical companies are also offering medicines through digital marketing. Apollo Pharmacy being one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in India as well as in Asia has started online pharmaceutical services to all the medicine needs of the customer. Being a most trusted online medical store of India it has offering hundred percent genuine medicines as and when required. Besides offering medicines it is also providing additional services like doctor consultation, Lab test, FMCG products and other medical devices.

Review of Literature

Namdev Vishnu Warang (2021): Author concludes that, the factors that typically influence the getting behaviour of the consumer includes, lifestyle, attracting the opposite sex, getting power, family background, employment standing of the consumer, intervention of Western culture, educational qualification etc. Most of the merchandise which is of recent innovation becomes obsolete too quickly. Innovation kills innovation. This creates many challenges to the marketers. Majority of the respondents feel that any time purchase is possible through online. Respondents feel that customers take terribly less time to purchase.

Dr. Uma Sharma and Prof K.S. Thakur (2020) in their study says that, in digital marketing, recognizing customer behaviour is crucial to commercial performance because customers have adopted the usage of the Internet and online socializing technologies. It has been observed that there is a connection among monthly income & goods they buy. Many of the Consumers were pleased with the items bought by Digital Network. A business will achieve even better with digital media because it knows and implements what the customer wants.

Hardik Panchal (2018): This study concludes that there is a relationship between monthly income and the products purchased by them. It has also been found that there is a significant difference between the satisfaction level of customers purchasing products online. Most of the Customers are satisfied with the products purchased through Digital Channels. A company can do a lot more through Digital Marketing if they understand and deliver what consumer expectations are.

K. R. Mahalaxmi and P Ranjith (2016): The study conducted on the impact of digital marketing on customer purchase in Trichy. The findings revealed that customers are aware of digital channels despite their educational qualifications and they prefer digital channels to purchase any kind of products.

Statement of the Problem

Digital marketing has become a mandate and is leading today's world. In the current pandemic situation it has become indispensable. Apollo Pharmacy being one of the

leading pharmaceutical companies of India catering the needs of the customers by offering them required medicines through its physical outlets. It has also made a prompt effort to reach the customers online. A study is needed to know and analyse perception of Consumers in this regard. Hence, the research on "**Consumer Perception Towards Digital Marketing of Apollo Pharmacy with Special Reference To Tumakuru City**" has taken up to find out solutions for the research gap.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the effectiveness of Digital Marketing strategies of Apollo Pharmacy in Tumakuru City.
2. To identify the impact of Digital Marketing on the buying behaviour of Apollo Pharmacy Customers in Tumakuru City.
3. To provide suitable suggestions to Apollo Pharmacy for improving Digital Marketing strategies in Tumakuru City.

Hypothesis (H₁)

- There is significant impact of digital marketing awareness and digital marketing strategies on buying behaviour.

Sample Size

The Research Methodology of the study is based on the Primary and Secondary Data. The study mainly depends on primary data collected through the questionnaire with Five-point Likert Scale to draw out the well considered opinions of customers of Apollo Pharmacy.

The study is confined to S S Puram, Tumakuru City, Karnataka, India only.

60 respondents were selected under market survey method, assuming Non-Random based Convenience Sampling Technique. The period of the study is 1 month, data collected through the questionnaire have been analysed using recommended Statistical Techniques.

Tools for Data Analysis

In this analysis, some of the quality tools like Bar Charts and Pie Charts have been used in this study to arrive at a qualitative result. A Bar chart, Pie Charts is used to graphically summarize and display the distribution of a process data.

The data collected through the questionnaire were input in an electronic spreadsheet to analyze the results. Multiple choice rather than open-ended questions were used in the questionnaire so that the data input could be facilitated. Some open-ended questions were used where greater freedom of expression was required. Then, it was necessary to code the answers taking care of response non-misinterpretation. In some cases, an affinity diagram was used to group the information. Most of these answers were considered in terms of frequency that consumers responded. In fact, most of the analysis was based on the frequency of response, i.e. the number of consumers that ticked the option.

The information gathered through the questionnaire has been analyzed with Descriptive Statistics.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study mainly focused on the medicines purchased by customers at Apollo Pharmacy and FMCGs are excluded from this study. It is confined to 60 respondents of Tumakuru City only. The perception of consumers mainly differs from time to time. Hence, the present study may not be applicable in longer duration.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

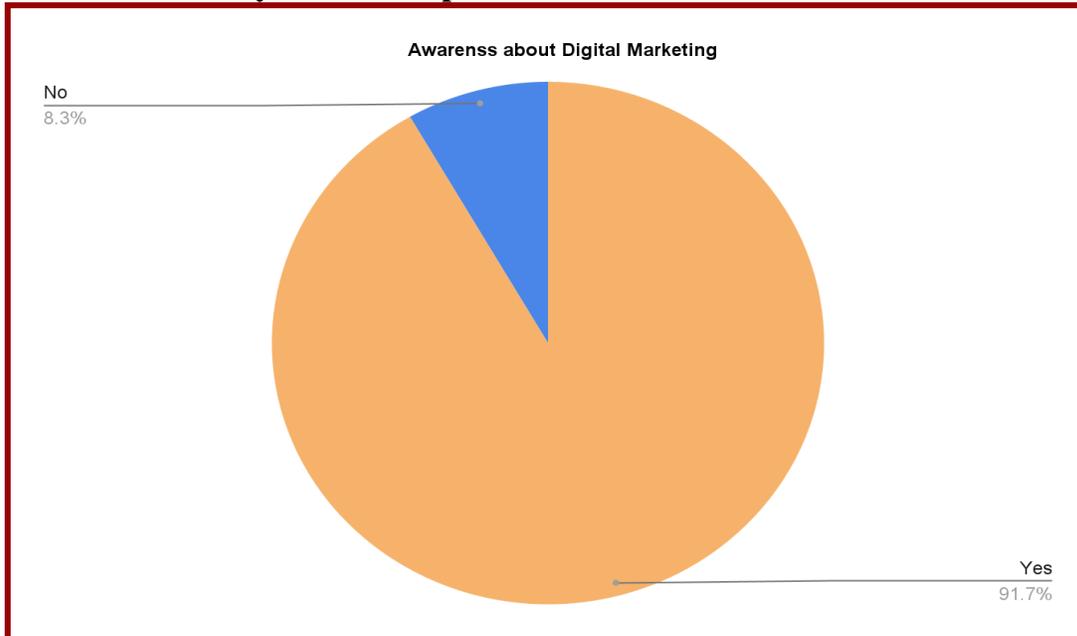


Chart-1

Analysis and Interpretation:

The above chart reveals that the majority of the respondents (92%) are aware of Digital Marketing and the remaining 8% are not aware of Digital Marketing.

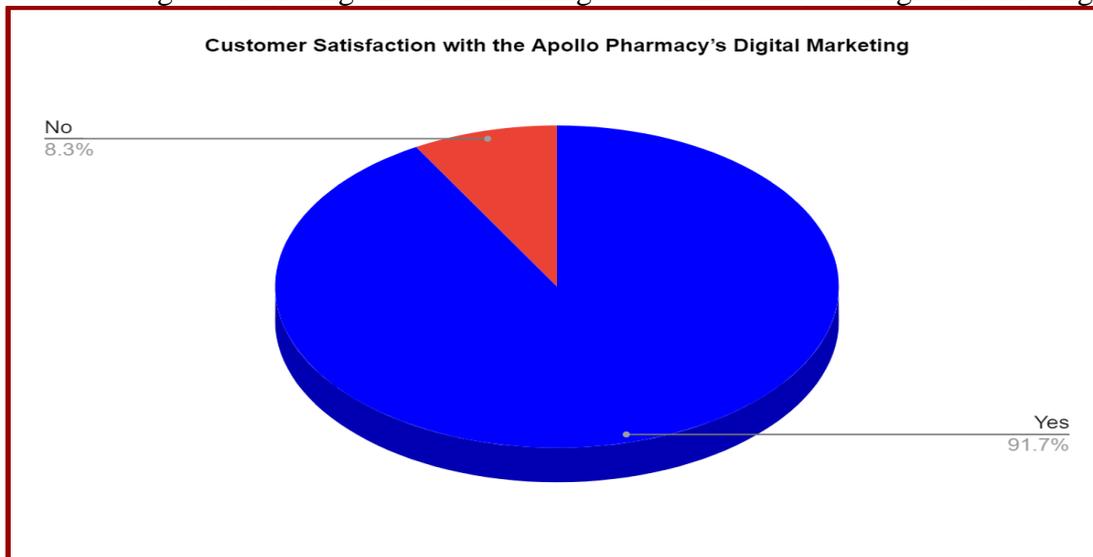


Chart-2

Analysis and Interpretation:

The above Pie chart reveals that 92% of the respondents are satisfied with the Apollo Pharmacy's digital marketing whereas the remaining 8% of them are not satisfied.

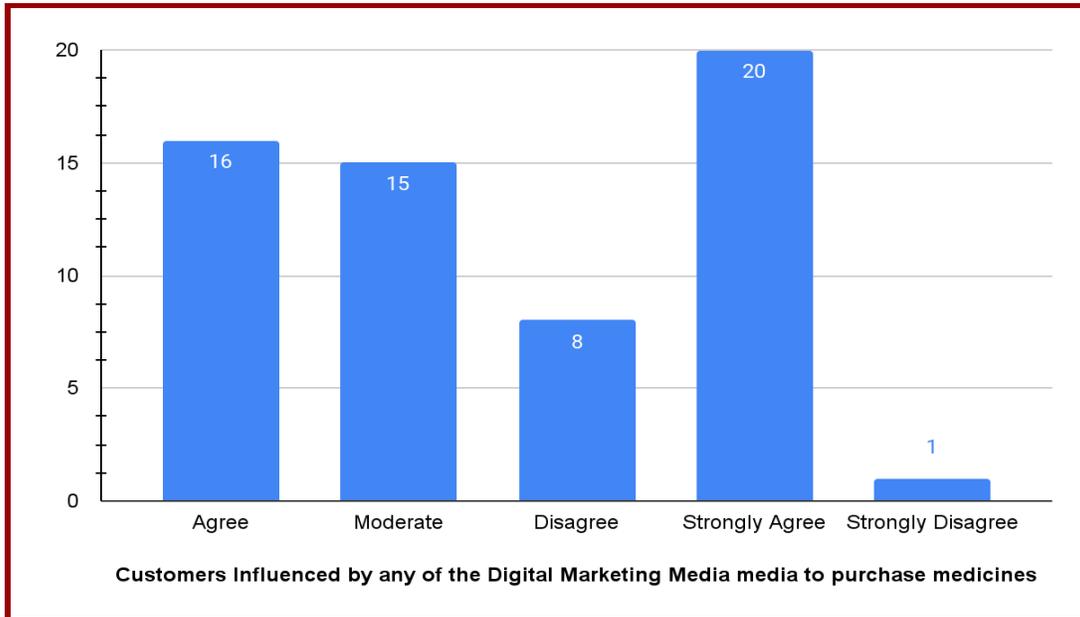


Chart-3

Analysis and Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be interpreted that the majority of the respondents (58%) are highly influenced and only 15% of respondents are not influenced by any of the Digital Marketing media to purchase medicines.

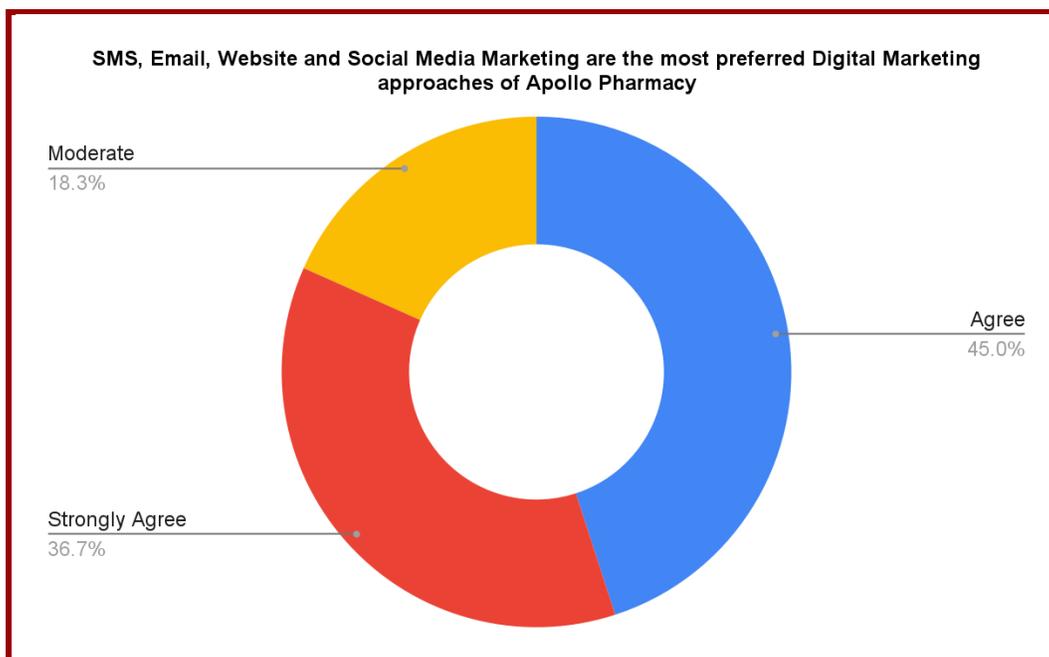


Chart-4

Analysis and Interpretation:

From the above chart it is clear that the majority (82%) of the respondents prefer SMS, Email, Website and Social Media Marketing as media of Digital Marketing.

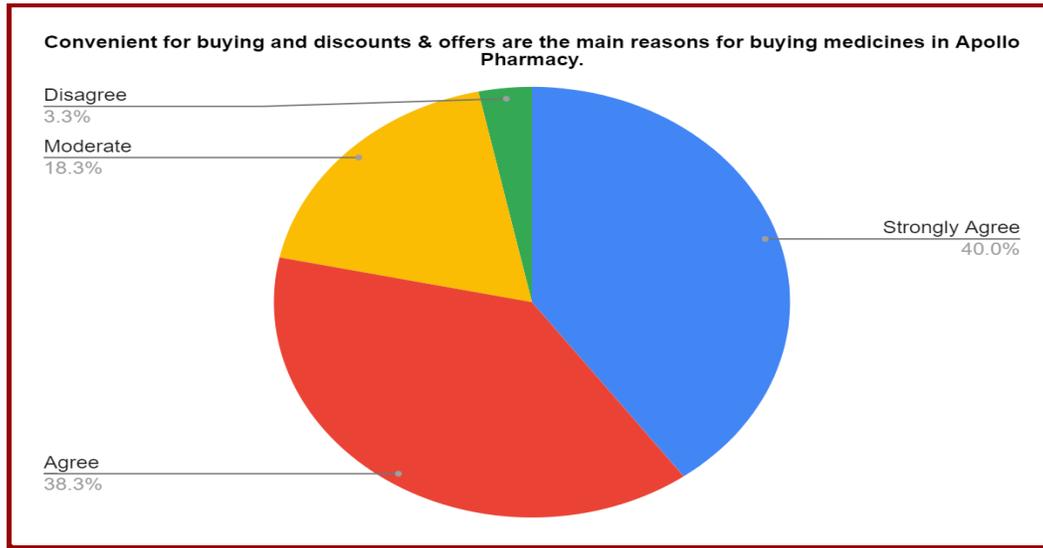


Chart-5

Analysis and Interpretation:

The above Pie-Chart explains the respondents opinion regarding the reasons for buying medicines in Apollo pharmacy. Majority (78%) of the respondents strongly agreed. Only 3% of them have disagreed.

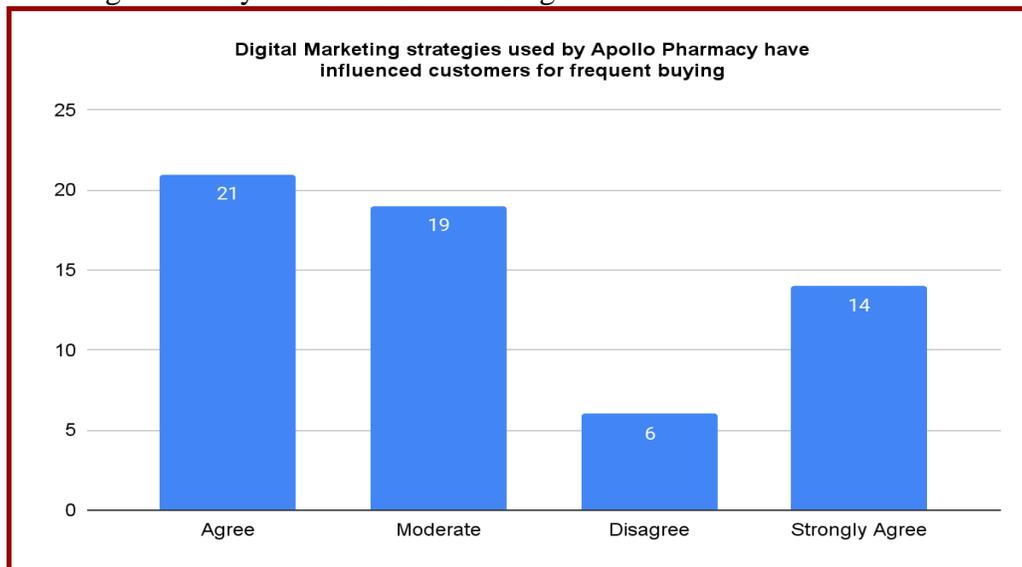


Chart-6

Analysis and Interpretation:

From the above graph it stated that the majority (58%) of the respondents are influenced to buy the medicines frequently. Remaining (10%) respondents have not influenced frequent buying.

Descriptive Statistics

Particulars	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	N
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Customers have been influenced by any of the digital marketing media to purchase medicines.	3.766667	4	5	1.110301023	60
SMS, Email, Website and Social Media Marketing are the most preferred Digital Marketing approaches of Apollo Pharmacy.	4.183333	4	4	0.724666298	60
Convenient for buying and discounts & offers are the main reasons for buying medicines in Apollo Pharmacy.	4.15	4	5	0.840197717	60
The medicines which customers are getting from Apollo Pharmacy are as same as seen in its Digital marketing.	4.083333	4	4	0.743141902	60
Digital Marketing strategies used by Apollo Pharmacy have influenced customers in frequent buying.	4.116667	4	4	0.975838043	60

- From the above table it shows that mean value is more than 3 and standard value is <0.5 indicates that Apollo pharmacy digital marketing is very effective and influence the buying behaviour of customer.
- The hypothesis that there is a linear relationship between the digital marketing awareness and digital marketing strategies on buying behaviour are positively correlated that is there is significant impact of digital marketing awareness and buying behaviour.

Correlation

Particulars	Customers awareness about Digital Marketing.	Digital Marketing strategies used by Apollo Pharmacy have influenced customers in frequent buying.
Customers awareness about Digital Marketing.	1	
Digital Marketing strategies used by Apollo Pharmacy have influenced customers in frequent buying.	0.586817	1

The above table demonstrates that there is positive relationship between awareness and buying behaviour. Here respondents viewed that for Digital Marketing strategies and awareness leads to enhance of buying behaviour and sales.

Findings and Suggestions

Findings drawn from the study describe that the majority of the respondents are aware of digital marketing. SMS, Email, Website and Social media marketing are

their most preferred digital marketing approaches to purchase medicine from Apollo Pharmacy. They feel that buying medicines online is convenient as they are getting discounts and offers on their purchase.

Only 58% of the respondents have been influenced by Apollo's digital marketing for frequent buying. Hence, it has to work in this regard to increase the frequency of buying among its customers. 92% of the respondents are satisfied with the digital marketing strategies of Apollo Pharmacy.

Most of the Apollo Pharmacies are doing well in urban areas but it has to extend its service to rural and semi-urban areas. They can also ensure that rare medicines are easily available to the customers to make them more delighted.

Conclusion

Digital Marketing can be used as an important tool to promote the brand of the company and to fulfil the needs and expectations of the buyers. Medicines, one of the fundamental necessities of human life, can be delivered to the doorstep of the customers with the help of digital marketing. Digital Marketing has become a golden opportunity for the organisations to retain its customers' loyalty. It offers enormous advantages to both buyers and sellers and becomes much easier for the customers than the traditional marketing technique.

Scope for Further Research

The present study is confined to analyse the perception and buying behaviour of customers towards Apollo Pharmacy's Digital Marketing in Tumakuru City. Study can further be conducted to know the consumer perception of FMCGs available at Apollo Pharmacy and to analyse the consumer perception of other Pharmacy Companies.

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