

**GROWTH AND SATISFACTION LEVEL TOWARDS ONLINE MEDICINE BUYER'S-  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY**

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**INTRODUCTION**

India is one of the largest generic drug distributors in the world. Indian pharma industry fulfils the need of 40 percent of various vaccines globally. Moreover the 40 per cent of USA and 25 per cent of UK generic medicines demand is catered by the Indian pharma industry. India is recognized as the core pharmaceutical drug exporter worldwide. The country also has a large scale of scientists, researchers, pharmacists, manufacturers and technical engineers who have potential to push the industry few steps ahead from the current position. With the advent and propagation of globalization retail era it has become same tough to sustain for a longer period of time not only in the global marketbut also in the national market. The pharmaceutical industry is also one of the industries which is facing the harsh competition in global era as here, In the drug selling process In India takes place through two different modes: offline mode and online mode. In offline mode the medicines are sold out through physical counters such as retail shops, pharmacy, hospitals and mega malls but on the other hand there is an online mode which operates on the principle of mobile application, websites telecalling etc. Hence, these are the two different ways through which we get the required medicines. Nowadays pharmaceutical sector has widened its scope and is gradually acting as an advanced fast- moving consumer goods industry.

The consumers are getting everything under a single canopy whether it's fruits, vegetables, garments and now the medicines too. pharma industry is fulfilling the needs of worldwide population by exporting the branded as well as generic medicines and it also caters to the needs of Indian population by domestic distribution. In domestic distribution process, it is achieved through retail market and institutional market such as Sun pharma, Medlife, Himalaya, Dabur etc. Retail marketing further proceeds with the help of unorganised pharmacy (i.e.) local pharmacy stores or chemist shops. In India there is high number of such unorganised stores. Now when it comes to the point of distribution through organised stores, Religare pharmacy, Apollo pharma are the big tycoons in this particular segment. Online pharmacy is the new way of purchasing medicines online in Indian market. i.e. Medlife, pharm etc. (Rajan Mishra and Pranav Mittal (et.al), 2019)

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**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Many research studies have been conducted on the subject of online-medicine and buyers in respective areas. These studies have revealed that certain variables are consistently correlated with online-medicine as well as buyers. This segment presents a brief review of earlier literature relevant to the study of **“Growth and Satisfaction Level Towards Online Medicine Buyer's-With Special Reference to Coimbatore City”**. The collection of reviews has been made from various studies undertaken by academic journals, magazines, publication, working papers, books and the like.

**(a) Study Conducted in India**

A few reviews collected and presented on study conducted and measured on awareness and perception online medicine buyers in Indian context from the various academicians and experts.

**(b) Study Conducted in Abroad**

A few reviews collected and presented on study conducted and measured on awareness and perception online medicine buyers in outside the Indian context from the various academicians and experts.

1	2020	Nicola Cobelli and Andrea Chiarini	Improving Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty Through M-health Service Digitalization New Challenges for Italian Pharmacists
2	2020	Wazahat Anwara and Tushar Guptaa (et.al)	Factors Leading to Preference for buying Online Medicines and their Effects on Actual buying Behaviour
3	2020	Neha Chaudhari, Shubham Bhatt and K.G. Bhutkar (et.al)	Impact of Several Factors on Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards OTC Medicines
4	2020	IA Ariffin, Mohd Shukri Ab Yajid and S.M. Ferdous Azam	Impact of Trust and Perceived Risk on Online Purchasing of Medicaments
5	2021	Dipankar Dutta and Bedanta Bhattacharjee	Consumer Preference and Buying Pattern of Medicines Through E-Pharmacy During the Covid-19
6	2021	Senthilkumar.L	A Study on Consumer's Awareness and Preference of E-Pharmacy with Special Reference to Coimbatore City
7	2021	Ammar Abdulrahman Jairoun, Sabaa Saleh Al-Hemyari and Naseem Mohammed Abdulla (et.al)	Online Medication Purchasing During the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Pilot Study from The United Arab Emirates
8	2021	Kirti Arekar, K.J., Rinku Jain, K.J and Surender Kumar	Predictive Model to Study the Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards E-Pharmacy Through Social Media Influence: A Cross Country Study
9	2021	Maha N. Abu Hajleh <sup>1</sup> and Ali AL-Samydai (et.al)	Factors Affecting Purchasing Behaviors of Generic Drugs Versus Originator Counterparts in Jordan
10	2022	Mohamad Saleem Anis, Mohamed Azmi Hassali	Pharmaceutical marketing of over-the-counter drugs in the current digital era: A review

### IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH GAP

From the above reviews of empirical work, it is clear that different authors have approached awareness and perception online medicine buyers' different ways in varying different levels of analysis. As an evident from the many earlier and recent studies conducted which have recognized by the evolution of online pharmacies, personal determinants of purchasing of pharmaceutical products online, attitude of patients and customers regarding purchasing drugs online, buying decision between offline and online medicines – a comparative study and consumer behaviour: experience, price, trust and subjective norms in the OTC pharmaceutical market. These are all the studies to provide base for the researcher to getting new idea and design for the present study to do the *“Consumer's Awareness, Perception and Satisfaction Towards Online Medicine Buyers - With Special Reference to Coimbatore City”*.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### (a) E-pharmacy in Indian Context

The E-pharmacy is the one of the fastest growing sector India right now. In India e-pharmacies have increasingly gained transaction in the last few years and currently to represent 2 per cent -3 per cent of overall medicine sales. E-pharmacy is still at its transient stage in India, but it has the potential to be a

large industry segment in the near future. The purchase of online medicines is gaining momentum in India. It is expected that e-pharmacy model could account for 15 per cent -20 per cent of the total Medicine sales in India over the next 10 years. The e-Pharmacy market India was estimated to be around US \$512 million (3500 Crores) in 2018 and is estimated to grow at CAGR of 63per cent to reach US \$3,657 (25,000 Crores) by 2022. The pandemic situation has contributed majorly to the growth of e-Pharmacies. Nineteen State Governments declared e-Pharmacy as an essential service during lockdown. The households using e-pharmacies grew 2.5 times in COVID 19 lockdown. In 2020, Covid-19 has pushed many consumers towards buying their medicines online. A report also shows that over 60 to 70 per cent of the medicines that are ordered through e- Pharmacy platforms are from chronic patients as it more affordable and accessible for them. (Dipankar Dutta and Bedanta Bhattacharjee,2021)

### **PROBLEM THAT HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON THE STUDY**

Nowadays, consumers are inextricably linked to the internet and conduct their healthcare research. Pharmaceutical companies, in turn, should keep track of what their consumers are doing and have access to the same places where their consumers are at the right time, as well as adopt a more flexible organizational structure and revised business plan to keep up with advanced marketing tools and technological innovations. These internet-related innovations are becoming highly involved in pharmaceutical marketing management across the industry, and they started to change some aspects of the traditional environment of drug marketing approaches. All of this leads to an increase in the use of products due to their ease of access and reasonable cost, which enhances the value of its market as a more viable business.

India is a booming online market more than one decade in the world with almost everything available through online and recently medicines also under this category. There are more than 60 e-pharmacies doing business in India. But the awareness about the e-pharmacies is comparatively less in most of the regions, people are either unaware of the e-pharmacies or they do not prefer it over the traditional pharmacies.

In the present study, the researcher wants to know whether Coimbatore City consumers are aware of the experience of buying an online pharmacy / e-pharmacy in their hometown and its concept with satisfaction. By conducting this study, the researcher will be able to provide better insight into how the Indian pharmaceutical industry and online pharmacy providers are improving their services. With this backdrop the researcher has made an attempt to analyze the *“Consumer’s Awareness, Perception and Satisfaction Towards Online Medicine Buyers - With Special Reference to Coimbatore City”*. Hence, the researcher wants to know the answers for the following research questions:

- What is the growth profile of the respondents in Coimbatore City?
- Is there a satisfaction for online medicine buyers in Coimbatore City?

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- ❖ To examine the growth of Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore City.
- ❖ To analyse the satisfaction of services about Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore city.
- ❖ To offer implications and conclusion of the study

### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

**H<sub>01</sub>** = There is no association between demographic profile and satisfaction of Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore City

### **METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS**

#### **(a) Sources of data**

The study is based on the primary. The primary data was collected for the period of 3months from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2023 on interview schedule method. In addition, other required data was

collected from various journals, magazines, various newspapers, website, unpublished thesis work and reports.

**(b) Techniques of Analysis**

The collected data have been used for analysis with the help of statistical tools. The statistical techniques percentage analysis, Mean Score Rank, Cross tabulation with chi-square test, ANOVA.

**(c) Sampling Design**

The primary data for the study has been collecting from a sample population of 117 respondents based on purposive sampling method, using a well-structured interview schedule. The data have been collected from the general online pharmacy / e-pharmacy users in Coimbatore City. The sample size of 117 is determined by the total population of the city of Coimbatore.

**(a) Execution of Percentage Analysis**

The following table -1 shows the analysis of *Objective – 1: To examine the growth of Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore City.*

**Table – 1 Demographic Profile of Online Medicine Buyers in Coimbatore City During the Study Period**

Particulars	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	74	63.20
	Female	43	36.80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Age	18 to 35 Years	30	25.60
	36-40 Years	3	2.60
	41-45 Years	21	17.90
	46-50 Years	26	22.20
	51-55 Years	34	29.10
	56 Years and Above	3	2.60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Educational Qualification	Primary School	12	10.30
	Higher Secondary / Diploma	9	7.70
	Undergraduate (UG)	8	6.80
	Postgraduate (PG)	78	66.70
	Professional	10	8.50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Type of the family	Nuclear family	81	69.20
	Joint family	36	30.80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Monthly Income	Less than Rs. 15,000	72	61.50
	Rs.15,001- Rs.25,000	5	4.3
	Rs.25,001- Rs.35,000	37	31.6
	More than Rs.35,001	3	2.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Primary Data

Table – 1 exhibit that the demographic profile of electronic bike consumers in Coimbatore city during the study period. The 63.20 per cent of the respondents were in the male and remaining of 36.80 percent respondents were in the female. *It is shows that majority of the respondents categorised under the male.*

The value of 29.10 per cent of the respondents were in the age groups between 51-55 years followed by 25.60 per cent of the respondents belong to the age groups between 18 - 35 years, 22.20 per cent of the respondents belongs to the age group of 46-50 years, 17.90 per cent of the respondents

belongs to the age group of 41-45 years, 2.60 per cent of the respondents belongs to the age group of 36-40 years and 2.60 per cent of the respondents belongs to the age group of above 56 years and above. ***It is reported that majority of the respondents belongs to the age groups between 51-55 years.***

The value of 66.70 per cent of the respondents were in the Postgraduate (PG) followed by 10.30 per cent of the respondents are Primary School, 8.50 per cent of the respondents are Professional, 7.70 per cent of the respondents are Higher Secondary / Diploma and 6.80 per cent of the respondents are Undergraduate (UG). ***It is reported that majority of the respondents under the category of Postgraduate (PG).***

The high value of 69.20 per cent of the respondents were in the nuclear family and followed lowest by 30.80 per cent of the respondents comes under the category of Joint family. ***It is reported that the majority of the respondents under the category of nuclear family.***

The highest value of 61.50 per cent of the respondents under the category of Less than Rs. 15,000 scale and followed by 31.6 per cent of the respondents under the category of Rs.25,001-Rs.35,000 scale, 4.3 per cent of the respondents under the category of Rs.15,001- Rs.25,000 scale. The lowest value of 2.6 per cent of the respondents under the category of More than Rs.35,001 scale. ***It is found that the majority of the respondents under the category of Less than Rs. 15,000 scale.***

**(b) Cross tabulation with chi-square test Analysis**

The following table -2,3,4 and 5 reveals the analysis of ***Objective – 2: To examine the satisfaction of Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore City.***

**Table – 2 Satisfaction About Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore City During the Study Period**

**Source:** Primary Data

Table – 2 exhibits that the Awareness About Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore City During the Study Period The 100 percent of the respondents agreed that the people of Coimbatore are well aware of Online Medicine.

**SELECT DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

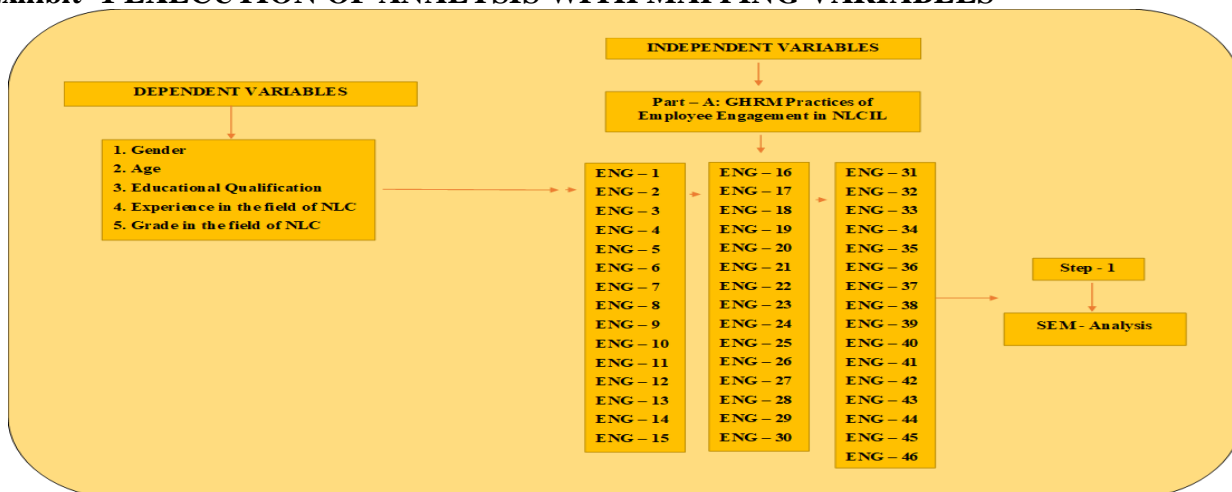
This chapter/study consider select socio-economic profile of the respondents’ as follows;

- a. Gender
- b. Age
- c. Educational Qualification
- d. Monthly Income

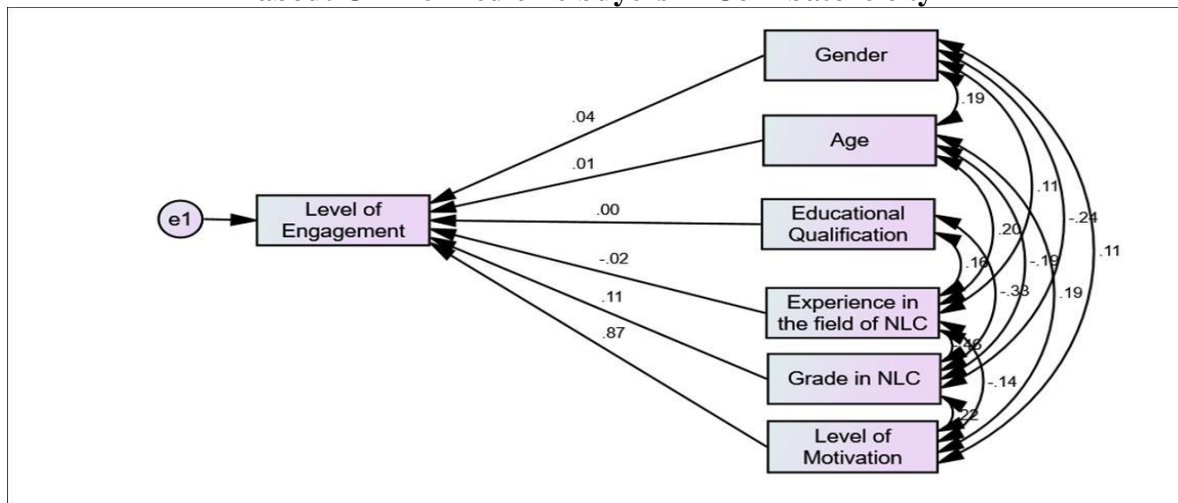
**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Satisfaction of services about Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore city

**Exhibit -1 EXECUTION OF ANALYSIS WITH MAPPING VARIABLES**



**Exhibit – 6.2 Proposed Structural Equation Model for Assessing the satisfaction of services about Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore city**



Source: Primary Data

**Proposed Structural Equation Model for satisfaction of services about Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore city (SEM: Path Analysis)**

The causal relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable could be best analyzed by using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Hence, for this study, Structural Equation modelling (SEM) has been used to analyze the data and to generate the models using AMOS version 23. AMOS is used to specify, estimate, assess and present the model in an intuitive path diagram to show hypothesized relationships among variables.

**Unstandardized and Standardized Estimates**

In path analysis, both Unstandardized and standardized estimates of the model fit will be presented. AMOS’s default method of computing parameter estimates is called maximum likelihood, and it produces estimates with very desirable properties. In an Unstandardized model, the regression weights, covariance, intercepts (only when mean structures are analyzed), and variances will be displayed in the path diagram. Regression weights represent the influence of one or more variables on another variable. In contrast, in a standardized model, the standardized regression weights, correlation, and squared multiple correlations will be displayed. The standardized regression weights and the correlations are independent of the units in which all variables are measured, and will not be affected by the choice of identification constraints.

**Measurement of goodness fit**

The SEM model explains the various factors that influence the level of engagement among employees in NLC India, Neyveli. The structural equation model was performed, along with a goodness-of-fit measures examination to verify the model’s fitness. The SEM results in a Chi-square statistic of 12.384 with 3 degree of freedom (P< 0.006). The following table shows the selected model fit statistics (i.e., RMSEA, GFI, NFI, CFI, IFI and TLI). As shown, all the model fit statistics not only meet the recommended standard value but also imply a better model fit. In particular, GFI, NFI, CFI and RMSEA are within the threshold limit i.e., GFI is 0.996 which is greater than 0.90, NFI is 0.994 which is greater than 0.90, CFI is 0.994, which is greater than 0.90, and RMSEA is 0.059, which is less than 0.08. Thus, the reported fit indices are within the criteria for goodness-of-fit.

**Table – 2 Proposed Structural Equation Model for Assessing the satisfaction of services about Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore city (SEM: Path Analysis)**

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Remarks
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Gender</b>	2.248	.777	2.895	.004	<b>H1 Accepted</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Age</b>	.138	.167	.827	.408	<b>H2 Rejected</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Education Qualification</b>	.026	.285	.090	.928	<b>H3 Rejected</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Monthly Income</b>	-.585	.405	-1.444	.149	<b>H4 Rejected</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Family Size</b>	2.462	.380	6.481	***	<b>H5 Accepted</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Location</b>	1.109	.019	57.827	***	<b>H6 Accepted</b>

**Parameter Estimates: Path coefficients in SEM**

**Regression Weights of the Variables Included in the Structural Equation Model**

\*\*\* Significant at 1% level (p<0.001)

Note: N = 400; The C R (Critical Ratio) is the commonly recommended basis for testing statistical significance of SEM Components with C.R. values beyond  $\pm 2.58$  establishing significance at  $P < 0.01$  level.

**Table – 6.2 Standardized Regression Weights for Level of Engagement**

			Estimate
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Gender</b>	<b>.042</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Age</b>	<b>.012</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Education Qualification</b>	<b>.001</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>.023</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Family Size</b>	<b>.113</b>
Level of Engagement	<---	<b>Location</b>	<b>.865</b>

Standardized Regression Weights shows predictive strength of exogenous (independent) variables measured in standard deviation units. Hence a direct comparison between the exogenous variables is possible. From the above table it can be seen that organizational level of engagement of the respondents was influenced by overall level of motivation ( $\beta = 0.865$ ) followed by level of engagement of the respondents was influenced by Grade in NLC ( $\beta = 0.113$ ), level of engagement of the respondents was influenced by gender of the respondents ( $\beta = 0.042$ ).

**TESTING OF SEM PATH HYPOTHESES**

**H<sub>06</sub> (a): Proposed Structural Equation Model for Assessing the satisfaction of services about Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore city.**

It was hypothesized that the Perception of green human resource management practices and its relationship with employees' gender of the respondents has positively influenced the level of engagement. The maximum likelihood estimator of this relationship was 2.248 and the standard error was 0.777 with a critical ratio of 2.895. The P-value was found to be significant. Hence, the hypothesis (H1) is accepted. It shows that respondents' gender had a high level of organisational engagement. The R<sup>2</sup> estimated 0.042 and P-value was significant. Hence, it supports the hypotheses. It may be inferred that gender of the respondents has influence at the 4.2 percent level on respondents' perception towards overall level of engagement in the organisation.

**H5: Proposed Structural Equation Model for Assessing the satisfaction of services about Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore city (Supported).**

It was hypothesized that the respondents' grade in NLC towards organisational climate has positively influenced their level of engagement. The maximum likelihood estimator of this relationship was 2.462 and the standard error was 0.380 with a critical ratio of 6.481. The P-value was found to be significant. Hence, the hypothesis (H5) is accepted. It shows that the respondents who have a highest Grade in NLC had a high level of organisational engagement. The R2 estimated 0.113 and P-value was significant. Hence, it strongly supports the hypotheses. It may be inferred that attitude towards grade in NLC has influence at the 11.3 percent level on respondents' organisational engagement.

**H6: Proposed Structural Equation Model for Assessing the satisfaction of services about Online Medicine buyers in Coimbatore city (Supported).**

It was hypothesized that the respondents' level of engagement has positively influenced by the organisational motivation. The maximum likelihood estimator of this relationship was 1.109 and the standard error was 0.019 with a critical ratio of 57.827. The P-value was found to be significant. Hence, the hypothesis (H6) is accepted. It shows that the respondents who are engaged in the green human resource management and motivation had a high level of organisation engagement. The R2 estimated 0.865 and P-value was significant. Hence, it strongly supports the hypotheses. It may be inferred that motivation has influence at the 86 percent level on respondents' organisational engagement.

**(e) Policy for Implications of the study**

The following implications are outcome of the analysis *Objective – 4: To offer implications and conclusion of the study*

- ✓ It was found with the help of percentage analysis that all the respondents had sensible knowledge about online medicine in Coimbatore city and many of them actually used the online platform. Therefore, the production companies and dealers are promoting the online medicine features and new photo maps taken with buyers through banners and social media. This will help to increase the best volume of customers.
- ✓ To increase an optimum usage of online medicine in Coimbatore city, the production companies and dealers should ensure quality and services. Frequent review of the above issues may help the management to mitigate on short-term issues.

**Conclusion of the study**

The E- Pharmacy in India is a new and attractive business model which can contribute positively to the healthcare system. The supply of medicine in every corner of the country is becoming easier after e-pharmacies came into the Indian market. Due to the other advantage of e-pharmacy like a discount, good customer relationship management, contactless doorstep delivery, etc. the business model of e-pharmacy is becoming popular among the customer. But there are also various types of risk associated with e-pharmacy for example drug resistance, drug abuse, illegal reselling of medicine, etc. While conducting this survey convenience sampling technique was used.

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