

## **POST COVID–19 ERA: THE IMPACT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ON THE MARKETING OF MEDICAL & HEALTHCARE PRODUCTS IN NIGERIA.**

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**Abstract:** The coronavirus crisis has created a profound shift in how people interact and economy's function. Policy mandates and fears of becoming infected or infecting others have impelled populations to shelter at home, socially distance, and otherwise reduce direct, in-person interactions with others. This study aimed to examine Post COVID – 19 Era: The impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on the marketing of medical & healthcare products in Nigeria. Other specific objectives are: to ascertain the influence of digital marketing on the supply of healthcare products by pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria and to examine how digitalization influences the relationship between pharmaceutical companies and its customers during Post COVID – 19 Era in Nigeria. The study used survey descriptive research method. Interviews were carried out on the staff of Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Limited Enugu. The overall finding of the study shows that digital marketing played a significant role in the supply of healthcare products by pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria during and after COVID-19 pandemic. The result also shows that digitalization influences the relationship between pharmaceutical companies and its customers during Post COVID – 19 Era in Nigeria. The study concludes that information and communication technology (ICT) have a significant impact on the success of marketing of medical & healthcare products in Nigeria. Among other recommendations, the study recommends that pharmaceutical companies need to understand the importance of digital marketing and be selective in marketing strategy.

**Keywords:** Post COVID–19 Era, Information, Communication, Technology, Marketing, Medical, Healthcare, Products, Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 outbreak has been deemed "the biggest worldwide danger the world has faced since WWII." It is neither the deadliest or most contagious illness known, but because of the globe's degree of globalization and connectivity, it is highly devastating to communities throughout the world (Africa Center for Strategic Studies,

2020). SARS-CoV-2, a newly found coronavirus strain, causes COVID-19, a novel infectious illness (World Health Organization, 2020). It's a worldwide epidemic that initially surfaced in Wuhan, China, in 2019 (Huang, 2020). On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) designated the outbreak a public health emergency of worldwide concern, and on March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was classified as a worldwide pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). As of July 2020, there have been over 11.3 million cases recorded in over 188 countries, with over 531,000 fatalities and 6.11 million recoveries (John Hopkins Centre for Systems Science and Engineering, 2020).

COVID-19 has an influence on all part of company, regardless of size or kind of ownership, it is widely accepted (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). During the pandemic crisis, the majority of organizations have struggled to survive and expand. During the coronavirus pandemic, companies such as Pizza Hut, Gold Gym, JCrew clothing chain, Hertz car Rental Company, and Aldo Shoe Company declared bankruptcy. However, companies with a solid digital platform, such as Zoom, Amazon, Uber Eats, and Slack, attracted a large number of new consumers and saw robust growth, but the majority of businesses failed to generate revenue and keep consumers. Using digital marketing, companies like Mahindra Tractors were able to increase sales in rural regions (Asmelash & Cooper, 2020).

Meanwhile, people's purchasing patterns have changed as a result of the pandemic, since everyone has stayed in their homes. The COVID-19 pandemic changed consumers' product demands, shopping and buying behavior, and post-purchase satisfaction levels, according to Mason, Narcum, and Mason (2020). According to Kim (2020), 46 percent of respondents expect to cut back on their expenditures during the pandemic, despite increasing demand for certain categories such as foodstuffs and household goods.

The nature of the pandemic scenario has also caused the corporate sector to rethink its strategy and organisation. Companies are trying to implement the digital transformation by transferring their operations to e-commerce or online platforms. After the COVID 19 outbreak, web traffic grew by 16 percent, and e-commerce sales climbed five times faster than in-store retail. In 2019, about 90% of retail sales took place in-store (Kim, 2020). Digital ad agencies discovered that digital marketing is one of the most effective ways for their clients to engage with potential customers, and 34% of digital agencies said that their clients boosted their digital marketing spending (Vapiwala, 2020).

Several studies (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020; Hwang, Nageswaran & Cho, 2020; Habes et al., 2020) have said that adopting digital is one of the most effective approaches to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, many hospitals and clinicians throughout the world have turned to telemedicine to treat patients. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of video-based medical consultations for COVID-19 patients has steadily climbed (Greenhalgh et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 lockdown, customers spent an increasing amount of time on digital channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, and WhatsApp (He & Harris, 2020). Thus, the use of digital marketing to reach out to customers became important for organizations.

Furthermore, since 2015, the pharma business has seen continuous growth for its medicinal items sold through an online platform. Because of the growing popularity of eCommerce, many online pharmacies (also known as E-pharmacies) throughout the world are now delivering doorstep delivery as a common service. The Coronavirus has raised demand for online pharmaceuticals, which has already been boosted by the expanding reach of e-commerce and a growing population that prefer to shop online. According to Mason, Narcum, and Mason (2020),

google search volumes for COVID-19-related health items have increased by 200 percent. Medical items such as face masks, hand sanitizers, and antibacterials, on the other hand, have climbed by 817 percent online, while purchases of cough, cold, and common-flu medications have climbed by 198 percent, according to an eCommerce analysis (Giselle, 2020).

As a result, the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on the medical and healthcare industries is clear. The importance of information and communication technology (ICT) in health education, knowledge exchange, health monitoring, data collection and analysis, care delivery, and fulfilling globally agreed-upon health objectives for a variety of disorders (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). According to Geissuhler, Ly, Lovis, and L'Haire (2013), ICTs have had a significant impact on health care in developing countries like Nigeria, and their role during the COVID-19 outbreak cannot be overstated, as it ensured that long distances and poor infrastructure did not prevent patients from accessing health services. Therefore, it is on this note that this study aimed to examine the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on the marketing of medical & healthcare products in Nigeria during the Post COVID – 19 Era.

### **Statement of Problem**

COVID-19's emergence has had a worldwide influence on the economy, disrupting production in important nations that are sole makers of raw materials, intermediate products, and consumer goods, causing supply chain and market disruption, as well as the financial effect on enterprises and financial markets. There has been a considerable decline in production and exports of raw materials as well as completed products (pharmaceuticals) across different nations as a result of the pandemic's spike, which led to the eventual lockdown of the economy throughout impacted countries. These greatly affected the ease of access to these medicines by the consumers who need them either for treating acute ailments or for the management of chronic diseases.

Because most developing nations are still in the early phases of pharmaceutical development, they rely on medicine, raw material, and equipment imports from nations outside the area, particularly India and China. Nigeria's medical requirements are heavily reliant on other countries. In Nigeria and most other African nations, almost 70% of pharmaceuticals are imported from China and India (Mason, et al., 2020). The lockdown in Nigeria, which was accompanied by the closing of borders and a cross-state travel prohibition, resulted in a considerable decline in the number of vital medicines in health facilities, making it impossible for customers to obtain the medications they require.

Even though many businesses suffered losses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the long run, the ICT industry was one of the few that was still surviving and, in many ways, stronger than before the pandemic. However, not all enterprises in the market will have an easy time. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of information and communication technology (ICT) on the marketing of medical and healthcare goods in Nigeria during the post-COVID era. Many studies have been conducted on the influence of information and communication technology (ICT) on the marketing of non-medical and non-healthcare related items (Tucker & Chetty, 2014).

### **Objective of the study**

The main objective of this study is on Post COVID – 19 Era: the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on the marketing of medical & healthcare products in Nigeria. Other specific objectives are:

- i. To ascertain the influence of digital marketing on the supply of healthcare products by pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria.
- ii. To examine how digitalization influences the relationship between pharmaceutical companies and its customers during Post COVID – 19 Era in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

- i. How does digital marketing influence the supply of healthcare products by pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria?
- ii. How does digitalization influence the relationship between pharmaceutical companies and its customers during Post COVID – 19 Era in Nigeria?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Conceptual**

#### **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

Information and communication technology (ICT) is a phrase that has been defined in a variety of ways across the literature. Some researchers define it as a phrase that embraces a wide range of operations including the gathering, storage, processing, and transmission of data through the use of specially built software and hardware. Information and Communication Technologies, for example, are those technologies that allow access to information via telecommunications, according to Bature (2017).

ICT is an integrated system that includes the technology and infrastructure required to store, manipulate, deliver, and transmit information, as well as the legal and economic institutions that regulate ICT access and usage, as well as the social and interpersonal structures that allow information to be shared, facilitate access to the ICT infrastructure, and enable innovation (Wangwe, 2017). According to Olasanmi, Ayoola, and Kareem (2012), information and communication technology (ICT) is defined as computer systems, telecommunications, networks, and multi-media applications that enhance knowledge for the execution of a task that entails skills and processes required for carrying out activities in a given context.

The degree of ICT infrastructure held and utilised by a country influences the generation of high-quality health-care service. As a result, having a robust ICT infrastructure is a must for improving a country's well-being. According to Gates (2019), intra- and interorganizational networks in some sophisticated nations act as a company's digital neural system. As a result, he claims, health-related communication has transitioned from a mostly manual or physical documentation mode to digital communication. He went on to say that having access to ICTs has aided in the dissemination of information to the rest of the globe. According to Gates, American doctors may cooperate as often and as rapidly as they want with other medical experts across the world using ICTs in the medical industry (Eysenbach & Wyatt, 2012).

However, in Nigeria, the use of ICT in the pharmaceutical industry has accelerated the marketing of pharmaceutical goods. On their websites, pharmaceutical businesses are increasingly using online technologies such as e-mail, web conferencing, and direct to consumer links (DTC) (Gibson, 2014). Pharmaceutical businesses are also incorporating information and communication technology (ICT) into their product marketing strategies in order to maintain market share and gain a competitive and economic edge.

#### **Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing (also known as data-driven marketing) is a broad phrase that refers to the promotion of products or services using digital technology, such as the internet, but also mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital media (Pinaki, Nitin & Sheela, 2016).

Digital marketing is a type of direct marketing that uses interactive technologies like email, websites, online forums and newsgroups, interactive television, cellular communications, and others to link customers with merchants electronically (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Digital marketing, according to Pieiro-Otero & Martnez-Rolán (2016), is a projection of traditional marketing, tools, and tactics onto the internet. Digital marketing uses the same methods of contact with customers as conventional marketing, with the exception of the use of science and technology. The digital marketing spectrum has broadened to accommodate customer "servicing" and "engagement," which includes customer acquisition and retention.

However, pharmaceutical digital marketing is defined by Lakshmi and Swapnil (2020) as the use of online social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and online video platforms such as YouTube for the promotion of pharmaceutical brands. Pharmaceutical digital marketing plays an important role to disseminate information to the doctor, patient regarding various medical products, disease, and medical services.

### **Importance of digital marketing during pandemic**

According to a Nielsen Total Audience Report released on eyesafe.com in February 2020, screen usage peaks at over 13 hours per day during covid-19, and the agency predicts a 14 percent growth in mobile and work-related gadgets. The tactics used to keep your brand in front of your customers are referred to as digital marketing. Customers may frequently be segmented to make advertising more focused. The following are some of the other reasons why digital marketing is important during a pandemic:

#### **Creates brand recognition**

Consumers want to spend their money on brands that they are familiar with. Social media plays a critical role in drawing customers to companies. According to a study (Sarah, 2020) from a major technology oriented online news source, Facebook usage has climbed by 37%, while WhatsApp usage has climbed by 51% in the final stages of the epidemic. This social media allows us to view new brands every day that we have never seen before, as well as inform clients about new products (Sarah, 2020).

#### **Lead Generation**

Lead data collection aids in the improvement of the business. Only a few social networking sites have the capability of collecting consumers' interests based on their frequent searches. This aids in determining the tastes and preferences of customers in terms of products and services. This internet marketing is assisting businesses in locating leads, particularly during this epidemic.

#### **Enhanced audience engagement**

Digital marketing enables communication between the consumers and the company which was not possible with the traditional marketing. Companies are keeping their customers engagement in various means during the pandemic using social media.

#### **Cost effective**

Digital marketing is more affordable than the traditional marketing as it does the duty of many marketing agents for the company. With a cost efficiency the company can cover wide area of the audiences when compared to the normal traditional marketing which is restricted to the specific area (Jyoti & Sawan, 2020).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Relationship Marketing Theory:**

Berry (1983) state that the relationship with marketing attracts, maintain and strengthens customer relationships. Berry and Parasuraman (2004) propose that: “relationship marketing concerns attracting, developing, and retaining customer relationships.” Relationship marketing directed towards the consumer, business partners, society, and the environment, also called external marketing, is carried out for the purpose of building interconnections” (Yaneva 2018).

Globalization, technical advancement, and the importance of the internet characterise a modern economy (Berisha & Berisha, 2007). (2015). The contemporary economy is evolving into a culture of interconnection and interaction. Companies can quickly react to change thanks to the internet. The distinction between the client and the manufacturer is blurring in the new economy. Producers are required to provide items that are tailored to the needs and tastes of each consumer. In today's economy, digital marketing communication tactics are becoming a critical strategic force for establishing relationships, particularly between corporate actors and customers.

As a result, the most visible technological tools in dig are valuable web contents, electronic commerce/a system for registration and ordering, web design/functionality, search engine optimization (SEO), direct marketing/personalization, email marketing, online advertising, social media profiles/pages, social media applications, mobile applications (mobile site versions), and blogging.

Customer loyalty is an essential component in commercial relationships that affects the long-term viability of companies and organizations. As a result, studies (Yaneva 2018) have shown that relationship marketing is used to build a connection between a company and its customers, while digital marketing is used as a modern strategy to achieve the same goal, where both use various methods to improve and enhance customer loyalty in their businesses. Relationship marketing places a greater emphasis on customer information in order to have a better grasp of their target market. Furthermore, by maintaining positive interactions with clients, businesses and organizations create emotional links with them. Customer loyalty is also emphasized in internet or digital marketing. As a result, digital marketing is seen as a new form of relationship marketing that uses the above-mentioned digital tools and techniques to increase consumer loyalty.

Companies are emphasizing the use of advanced technological tools to reach out to customers in order to build relationships, and when online customers have access to those modern facilities, they are more likely to share information or feedback that aids the producer in developing new products and services. These days, companies employ a variety of technical tools, techniques, and mediums to communicate with customers and get information/feedback from them in order to build their products. Relationship marketing and digital marketing, as seen, both work hard to promote consumer loyalty (Wole & Olufunke, 2009).

Communication, on the other hand, is what distinguishes relationship marketing from digital marketing. It is vital to cultivate and create connections with consumers in relationship marketing in order to promote client loyalty to firms or organizations. Salesmen, for example, will engage with customers to establish strong connections, comprehend and draw information from clients, and be aware of their expectations. This aids in the development

of rapport and the ability to form long-term relationships. During the process, it builds emotional bond in the customer. Consequently, when the customers' expectations and requirement are met, they feel satisfied and thus, increasing the customer loyalty (Shien & Yazdanifard, 2014).

### **Empirical Review**

Wole and Olufunke (2009) investigated reproductive health workers' (RHWs) use of ICTs, the effects of ICTs on their job functions, and the challenges limiting full exploitation of ICTs. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Stratified sampling technique was used to select a sample of 360 RHWs of the University College Hospital, Nigeria. A questionnaire obtained the data, and frequencies and percentage distributions were the analytical techniques adopted. Findings revealed that RHWs indicated extensive use of ICTs in their job functions. Faster access to relevant medical information, easy exchange of information with colleagues, and increased efficiency were the major impacts of ICT usage on their activities. The information accessed through ICTs was primarily educational, health, and research. Findings equally revealed that the major challenges in ICT use were erratic power supply and inadequate access to ICT facilities.

Pandey (2021) examined digital marketing practices during the post-COVID-19 period of five companies using an abductive case study analysis approach. It analyzed their digital marketing strategies, growth drivers, the shift in approach, challenges, and strategies used to manage the crisis by these organizations. The findings from the primary data using semi-structured interviews from executives working in the industry highlighted the importance of safety-related communication, creative persuasive communication, paid media, adaptability, and support from top management as key aspects in managing crisis by organizations.

Nwoke, Ofomata, Amadi, Jibuaku, Akahome and Nwagbo (2020) examined the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ease of access to essential medicines by end users. A cross-sectional survey using electronic questionnaires was conducted on study participants across the 36 states of Nigeria. They were assessed on socio-demographics, health characteristics, and challenges in accessing essential medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20, IBM, Armonk, NY) with overall impact of the pandemic operationalized as  $< 60.0\%$  or  $\geq 60.0\%$  access to essential medicines by respondents as maximal and minimal impact, respectively. The results showed that 35.2% of the respondents managing chronic illnesses had difficulties accessing essential medicines during the COVID-19 lockdown, with 84.0% experiencing deteriorating chronic health conditions in the light of difficulty in accessing their medicines. The proportion of respondents who sourced for orthodox medicines before COVID-19 lockdown (98.4%) was significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) higher than that of those who sourced for the same during the lockdown (89.0%). Increase in cost of medicines was observed by 77.7% of participants, with 73.9% of respondents living with chronic illness affirming that their income was negatively affected by the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic had minimal impact on consumers' ability to access essential medicines. However, important challenges identified were poor availability of means of transportation, reduced income, and high cost of medicines, as well as fear of contracting the virus.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study used survey descriptive research method. This is because descriptive research presents facts concerning the nature and status of the situation as it exists at the time of the study. The descriptive method was used because it describes things the way they are (Neuman, 2007).

### **Research Approach**

This research begins with literature reviews, which are used to compare empirical findings. During interviews with a group of people from a pharmaceutical firm, qualitative data was gathered. Qualitative research examines attitudes, behaviour, and experiences using methods such as interviews and questionnaires to gain a more in-depth understanding of participants from the pharmaceutical industry during the work process.

### **Population of the Study**

In this study the participants were full-time employees and key decision maker of marketing department of a pharmaceutical company in Enugu State. We have selected four employees (2 Senior Territory sales officer, 1 Head of Marketing, who is the key decision maker of Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Limited Enugu, 1 marketing executive) for an in-depth interview who have willingly participated in the study. They are in the field of marketing from many years before and after the COVID-19.

### **Data Collection**

In this study, we have developed an IDI (In-Depth Interview) guideline to collect the information. In the guideline we have prepared open-ended questions to get more descriptive data. We had framed the interview questions keeping the marketing transformation in view from traditional marketing to digital marketing. We focused on what are the marketing challenges the company faced during the lockdown for its marketing and also about what are the solutions the Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Limited Enugu has implemented to overcome the challenges.

### **Empirical Findings**

We had an interview with Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Limited's marketing department bosses. We learned about the difficulties that pharmaceutical industry encountered during the Pandemic. We also learned about the positive effects of the pharmaceutical industry's use of a digital platform for keeping customer loyalty through the use of the modern Information communication technology.

We organized the study's findings according to the defined research questions and the responses provided by Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Limited's two area sales officers, one marketing executive, and one head of marketing. As the needs of the customer have evolved, this company has moved to digital marketing. Customers are spending more time on the internet for online purchasing and are looking for door-to-door deliveries to keep social distance. The first and most important finding from our research is that pharmaceuticals are the only company that cannot employ digital marketing for all of its goods since pharma sales are based on the needs of the patient, not on digital promotions. However, we discovered that the pharmaceutical business may utilise digital marketing to promote open-to-trade items like hand sanitizers, face creams, hair oils, cough syrups, and pain reliever oils, among other things.

### **RQ1: Dealing with the Pandemic challenges:**



The company has realised that digital marketing is the only way for them to run their business from a distance during this Pandemic, and as part of digital marketing, the Pharma company has designed their advertisements with the goal of boosting immunity because their products are critical during COVID-19.

To meet the challenge, the company has used a variety of social media marketing channels to promote their ads, including new blogs where customers can write about the products and the Fituber channel, which allows users to post videos related to health and fitness and has a large number of subscribers. The firm has offered additional discounts if orders are submitted through the Nemel Pharmaceutical official website, in an attempt to attract customers away from Amazon and Flipkart in order to avoid delivery difficulties and sales fees.

All of the digital media outlets, according to the corporation, have helped to advertise and grow sales. Through their tracking, the firm is getting more reactions from YouTube videos. The company has its own WhatsApp promotions to promote products internally, and the company designed all of the what's app ads with yoga poses on its own, rather than purchasing them from advertising agencies, and forwarded them to 1000 people per day with a very strong disciple among the employees, and forwarded these ads on what's app for almost two months from the start of the lockdown until the end of the lockdown.

When compared to traditional marketing, digital marketing allowed the organisation to maintain a neutral sales % with no growth or drop. All conventional sales are being covered up by the internet platform, the corporation realises. The corporation claims that its e-commerce sales have surged tenfold over the previous year. Due to digital marketing through commercials and promotions, they are now receiving 1000 orders instead of 10 orders, and they believe that digital marketing will continue to be beneficial to them in their future business operations.

Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Limited has concentrated its efforts on three key COVID-19 medicines. During the lockdown, such as cough syrup, pain relief oil, and hair oil to focus on hair for ladies, and this hair oil has exhibited the strongest sales out of the three new goods produced during the pandemic. Before or after the epidemic, the corporation had no marketing campaign. However, just a few things are advertised on TV before COVID-19 in religious channels. When opposed to traditional marketing, Med Manor realised that digital marketing makes it easier to reach a big number of target clients.

During the pandemic, internet marketing was used to raise awareness of new products because traditional promotion was unavailable due to the lockdown, and the result was a large number of sales and the development of sanitizers based on market demand. The corporation recognises that through digital marketing, they will be able to determine which sections of the country have the highest demand for their product, which will aid them in planning future geographical distributions for conventional sales in those areas. The firm can obtain real-time feedback from customers on how they are using the items, which is not achievable with traditional marketing.

## **RQ 2: How does digitalization influence the relationship between pharmaceutical companies and its customers during Post COVID – 19 Era in Nigeria?**

With constant contact with consumers about delays in services or deliveries owing to non-availability of transit or a disrupted supply chain network during the lockdown, Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Limited has been able to maintained customer loyalty. This organisation has benefited greatly from digital marketing in terms of staying in touch with clients and building brand recognition in their thoughts. Employees are available to consumers 24 hours a day, seven days a week to minimise delays in delivery from e-commerce websites, and the company has created deals on its own websites with special prices to keep its business afloat during the lockdown.

In our literature section, we discussed crucial components of relationship marketing such as loyalty, sustainability, and availability. During the shutdown, Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Limited made care to apply all of these crucial components in restructuring their business. They had shifted to a digital platform for marketing in order to keep their firm afloat during this difficult period. The corporation has taken into account the needs of its clients and has created items that would be helpful during the pandemic. Customers could find them on all social media platforms through their ads, videos, banners, blogs, and online sales through Flipkart and Amazon, and they sought for all available venues to engage with customers directly or indirectly. Nemel Pharmaceutical Company Limited has taken several risks in order to make its products available to its clients at the proper time and location.

### **Discussion of findings**

By comparing the findings to the existing information from prior literature reviews, we assessed the study results from our questionnaire, interview, and detailed conversation with participating firms.

Due to the Pandemic, people have begun to utilise the Internet to pass the time during lockdowns, and as a result, the company has devised deals for its clients who place purchases through Nemel Pharmaceutical's official website. YouTube and Fitube have paid them more, and we may deduce that video commercials penetrate people's thoughts more deeply than traditional promotional banners.

Modern marketing strategies, according to Rajiv (2016), give a cost-effective marketing platform for reaching millions of clients in a short period of time. In line with our empirical investigation, we discovered that Med Manor Organics encountered several obstacles in running their business during the Pandemic, including the fact that the firm was closed for over a month and that they were unable to meet their clients in the typical manner. When compared to conventional marketing, the firm was able to reach more clients internationally after converting its marketing operations to digital channels. This included advertisements on television, WhatsApp banners, YouTube videos, and blogs.

Digital marketing, according to Zhang (2013), has had an influence on raising sales income, particularly for items where buyers can read reviews and write products about their personal experiences. In accordance with the literature, we discovered that by migrating to a digital platform, Med Manor Organics could collect feedback on its goods that they couldn't acquire through traditional marketing. Customers began to leave comments below the YouTube video commercials as well as on the product's blog. This has aided Med Manor Organics in not just receiving feedback and increasing sales, but also in understanding the requirements, tastes, and preferences of clients, which will aid the firm in personalising future goods.

People are increasingly concerned about their health and safety during this epidemic, according to Rohit (2020). According to our study and empirical findings, Nemel Pharmaceutical Company adopted digital marketing during the pandemic, and this is the only method for the company to retain sales and consumers following social distance. According to the above literature, this company began manufacturing health and safety products that are useful during the Pandemic period, such as sanitizers, face masks, face shields, hair care oil, and knee pain oils, with the health and safety of its customers in mind, and this has helped Med Manor organics to maintain their business during these difficult times. Even after the pandemic, the corporation feels that digital marketing will be a long-term strategy for them.

According to Sunil, Gowda & Shivakumar (2020), Pharmaceutical marketing is an essential activity that ensures the availability of medicines at right place and time. In line with our empirical studies, Med Manor Organics has

launched the products which have huge demand during the pandemic. They could sustain in the market only by launching COVID-19 related products such as sanitizers, masks, face shield, cough syrup, and pain relief oil for the elders to concentrate on their knee pains during this lockdown rest. Though the Nemel Pharmaceutical Company could not be available to customers through physical stores but still they are available through all types of online medium and with the products that are essential during COVID-19. As per our analysis we also see that though there are online sales during the Lockdown the orders could not deliver to customers at right time due to non-availability of transport to remote areas. It means, the online sales also depend on many factors and this did not benefit the company much, rather gave negative impression to its customers as the company failed to fulfill the orders.

### **Conclusion**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital adoption increased. Meanwhile, it had a poor penetration rate among the general public at first, but as the time go on with the continuance of the lockdown people were being pushed to adapt to the online way of doing things. They used to solely watch TV, but now that students are going to online education and workers are being compelled to work from home, Internet penetration is increasing, and digital marketing is at an all-time high thanks to Covid-19. Covid-19, on the other hand, has both a short and long-term effects. Demand shifts, regulatory adjustments, research and development process adjustments, and a movement toward digital marketing, tele-communication, and tele-medicine are all short-term effects of the Covid-19 epidemic. To take advantage of such short-term impact, the pharmaceutical sector has turned to digital marketing to boost sales and sustain brand image. In order to have a long-term influence, the pharmaceutical business is focusing on the trend of changes in health-market products. Hence, the study concludes that information and communication technology (ICT) have a significant impact on the success of marketing of medical & healthcare products in Nigeria.

### **Recommendation**

Although certain digital marketing technologies, such as tools and platforms, may be overly difficult, costly, and useless, we believe that all pharmaceutical firms might profit from using digital marketing principles that incorporate all aspects of ICT. New technologies and tools are always being developed in the market, and conventional marketers might use them as a test project for their marketing effort. In addition, due to financial constraints, businesses might use such tools and techniques by a small group of employees or employ a consultant to assist them in adapting to digital marketing. Most important thing is, companies need to understand the importance of digital marketing and be selective in marketing strategy.

Employees, particularly those in the marketing department, should be schooled in digital skills, especially those who engage with consumers on a regular basis even if they are not in the sales department. According to our research, the majority of employees at this small pharmaceutical firm that use traditional marketing strategies lack expertise of digital marketing and the notion of relationship marketing. A lack of understanding of digital marketing and the notion of relationship marketing might lead to failure in the future, such as the inability to gather insight data prior to the launch of new medical goods and services. It is also important that this digital marketing practice occurs in two-way communication between customers, the pharmaceutical company and suppliers. So, keep track of the business is important to face any challenges like Covid- 19 pandemic to designing digital marketing campaign, budget in future.

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