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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY IN GHANA THE CASE OF ERNEST CHEMIST

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Executive Master of Business Administration and that to the best of my knowledge it contains no material previously published by another person, nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

The challenge for pharmaceutical firms is how to effectively design and deploy consistent, personalized communications across the growing range of communication delivery channels. This study assessed the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry. A convenient sampling technique was adopted in selecting fifty (50) customers. The purposive sampling technique was used to select (3) respondents each from doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers and chemical sellers. Questionnaires and interview were used to collect data from the respondents. The study revealed that the marketing communication strategy adopted by Ernest Chemist was to use Medical Sales representatives, Advertising, Public Relations and Sales promotion that offer excellent service to their customers. The end results of this should be the quality of services offered by Ernest Chemist, which should begin with the company's marketing personnel and pharmacist having good relations with doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers, and licensed chemical sellers and educating them about the effectiveness of the company's products. The respondents indicated that the communication process of the company was effective. The study revealed a lot of challenges that Ernest Chemist faces in its operations and these included competition and buying drugs at the counter without prescription. Ernest Chemist had adopted effective policies aimed at improving marketing communication.It was recommended that the amount of money allotted for marketing communication should be increased. It was also recommended that, all the stakeholders in the pharmaceutical industry collaborate, brainstorm and find workable and lasting solution to the selling of pharmaceutical products through the application of marketing communication.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my children, Animah, Frimpomaah and Kash.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This work focuses specifically on effectiveness of marketing communication and also identifies the challenges and recommends the best strategies in communicating effectively. This section presents the background of the study which highlights some major problems encountered in marketing communications in the pharmaceutical industry. Based on this, the chapter presents the research problems, objectives and significance of the study. This study is meant to impress upon the reader a view that strategic measures taken by organisations towards effective marketing communication can potentially improve the organisations output.

1.2 Background of the Study

Communication can be considered as a process that involves the transfer of information (Katrandjiev, 2000). Kumuyi (2007) emphasized that through communication marketers explain and promote the value proposition of their firm. Heinonen and Strandvik (2005) on the other hand stated that communication is an essential part of service and can, consequently, create or destroy customer perceived value. They added that, communication effects, in addition to technical quality of service, shape the image of the organization in the minds of customers, as well as prospective clients. According to Clow and Baack (2007), eeffective communication is an essential component of organizational success.

Historically, major pharmaceutical companies marketed their drug offerings to patient gatekeepers, that is, physicians and healthcare professionals (Moghadam, 2003). According to Woolley *et al.* (2006), companies used sales representatives to detail doctors by educating them and promoting prescription drugs. Busy doctors relied on the major pharmaceutical companies to inform them of the new available treatments, supplemented by industry journal reviews and articles, educational seminars and event sponsorships. The companies also provided drug samples to the gatekeepers to indirectly gain exposure to and trial by patients. Through physician-pharmaceutical representative relationships, drug companies attempted to increase patient use and sales. These promotional tactics were (and still are) performed behind the scenes, not blatantly visible to patients.

According to Healy (2004), the primary challenge for pharmaceutical firms today is how to effectively design and deploy consistent, personalized communications across the growing range of communication delivery channels and to leverage valuable customer information throughout the enterprise. Implementing an enterprise personalization platform is, perhaps, the greatest opportunity to simultaneously cut costs, grow revenue, and increase the loyalty and satisfaction of customers and other stakeholders. Leading pharmaceutical companies are taking a careful look at the way they communicate with all their stakeholders and understand that, effective communications can drive service improvements and customer satisfaction, thereby, becoming a strategic resource and competitive differentiator. Moghadam (2003) emphasized that those pharmaceutical firms that can improve customer communications across all channels will be in a position to break away from the competition. In order to effect change, pharmaceutical companies must be organized around their customers rather than their products. Thus, when it comes

to producing customer-facing communications, pharmaceutical firms often find themselves struggling to co-ordinate multiple, separate applications, systems, and processes developed around individual products.

Interactive and new media have now supplemented traditional marketing tactics (Blech & Blech, 2004). Pharmaceutical companies are leveraging futuristic marketing trends as they utilize new technology for a campaign to promote their products. Pharmaceutical companies are pairing up their broadcast commercials with interactive television, through which interested individuals can request information and be connected to the brand's web site. Viral email campaigns are increasing in popularity and depend on grassroots efforts of consumers to communicate the existence, benefits and results of a new prescription drug product. Online games and drawings also offer a pharmaceutical company an opportunity to collect information on interested individuals, which is used to develop a marketing database.

Establishing a drug's brand through direct-to-consumer marketing reaps rewards for the pharmaceutical businesses. Ross *et al.* (2008) emphasized that using interactive marketing communication in which advertising, public relations, direct marketing and other tools are utilized, pharmaceutical companies have been able to convey clear and consistent messages to consumers and doctors about each drug. This study assessed the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry.

1.3 Statement of the problem

In today's fiercely competitive environment, providing timely and relevant communications is a critical component of any effective customer service strategy. Consumers in today's marketplace are informed customers, even in healthcare. As more and more consumers seek information regarding their health and wellness, a consumerism movement in the pharmaceutical industry has evolved. Consumers are able to play a more active role in their treatment decision-making. As a result of these factors, the pharmaceutical industry is undergoing a tremendous transformation. It is now commonplace for pharmaceutical companies to directly market prescription medicines to and communicate with consumers.

As the pharmaceutical industry undergoes tremendous transformation, pharmaceutical firms are evolving their marketing tools. Customer-centric brand communications play an increased role in securing a market category for a company's drug. Integrated marketing campaigns allow these companies to convey consistent and powerful messages to all stakeholders, especially to patients. However, drug marketers have a responsibility to the public to act in an ethical manner. The healthcare industry is simply different from other consumer good businesses. As direct-to-consumer marketing becomes more prominent for healthcare products, pharmaceutical related companies need to embrace and address consumers' universal healthcare concerns. It is for this reason that this research sought to assess the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry.

1.4 Research Objectives

This main objective of the study is to assess the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry. The specific objectives are;

1. To identify the marketing communication processes adopted by Ernest Chemist

2. To examine the effectiveness of the marketing communication processes adopted by Ernest Chemist

3. To identify the challenges that management of Ernest Chemist face in its marketing communication process

4. To identify and examine the measures Ernest Chemist has put in place to circumvent its communication challenges.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were seen as relevant to guide the study:

1. What is the marketing communication strategy adopted by Ernest Chemist

2. How effective is the marketing communications strategy adopted by Ernest Chemist

3. What challenges do management face in its marketing communication process

4. What are the measures Ernest Chemist has put in place to circumvent its communication challenges?

1.6 Justification of the Study

This study will help management of pharmaceutical firms to assess the impact of marketing communication to the development of their organisation. This would improve their understanding in the demands of customers and their preferences. The study will develop management and staff awareness of kinds of communication skills that are important to organisations. This will enhance management knowledge on how to manage and satisfy the need of customers through the effective channel of marketing communication.

The study will have far reaching implications for management as far as the delivery of the pharmaceutical product are concerned and indeed for other services as well.

Findings can also help management cope with the changing needs of customers and the pharmaceutical industry at large. It will also help them to assess the present customer relation performance and fill any gaps if necessary. It will also help to unearth exactly which issues are important to customers so that the firm can focus on performance improvement initiatives appropriately. Again, findings will enable pharmaceutical firms meet the expressed and unexpressed needs of customers that will enhance setting of priorities and allocation of resources. Finally the results of this study will provide critical information which pharmaceutical firms can use for promoting services and also help gain a thorough insight into customer demands.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research is on the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry. This research was Limited to Ernest Chemist. It was further limited to the operations of Ernest Chemist in the Kumasi metropolis.

1.8 Overview of Research Methodology

In the case of this research an explanatory design was adopted to assess the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry. The study used both primary and secondary data. The population for the research was doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers, licensed chemical sellers and customers. The study also captured the pharmacists and marketers of Ernest Chemist.

The study was narrowed to Ernest Chemist's operations in the Kumasi Metropolis. In order to arrive at an appropriate sample size for the research, the purposive sampling procedure was used to arrive at a sample size of 50 customers. The random sampling technique was also adopted to select doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers, and licensed chemical sellers. Interview and questionnaires were used to elicit information from the respondents. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to summarize the quantitative data. Pattern matching and explanation building were also employed in the analysis of the qualitative data.

1.9 Structure of the Research

Chapter One was the introduction and presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, justification, review of methodology, scope and the organization of the study. Chapter Two was the literature review and the chapter carried out a review of relevant literature on the concept of effective communication in organisations. Chapter Three was the research methodology and presented a detailed explanation on the research methodology that was used in the study. It captured the research paradigms, purpose of the study, sampling procedures, data collection methods, and data analysis. The chapter also captured the quality and the ethics and limitations of the research. Chapter Four was the data analysis and presentation. Chapter Five captured the discussion of the analysis and Chapter Six was on the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review of the relevant areas covering the study. Concept of communication, communication process and types of interpersonal communication were reviewed generally. The chapter also captured the barriers to communication, integrated marketing communication and communication in the pharmaceutical industry.

2.2 The Concept of Communication

Communication comes from the Latin word 'communicare', which means to share. It is fascinating to note that the French word 'communis' means common or to hold in common (Banahene & Sarfo, 2008). Simply put, communication is a negotiation of a shared meaning. Great many authorities in the field of communication have different perspectives about it. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) emphasized that communication is the most visible or audible of marketing activities in the service industries. To Farese *et al.* (2003), it is a process of exchanging information, ideas and feelings. They further assert that it is essential for interpersonal relationship and, also, important for conducting successful business activity. Their perspective connotes a two-way process, unlike many a household of writers who portray communication as a message from the sender to the receiver without feedbacks.

According to Robins and Judge (2007), communication must include both the transfer and the understanding of meaning. They argued that an idea, no matter how great it is, is useless,

until it is transmitted and understood by others. They succinctly opined that perfect communication, if there were such a thing, would exist, when a thought or an idea was transmitted so that, the mental picture perceived by the receiver was exactly the same as envisioned by the sender.

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (2000) also emphasized that communication is the lifeblood of the organization; because it is a universal human activity, directed at:

a. Initiating action (for example, by request, instruction or persuasion).

b. Making known needs and requirements.

c. Exchanging information, ideas, attitudes and beliefs.

d. Establishing understanding, and perhaps, also, exerting influence or persuasion.

e. Establishing and maintaining relations.

According to Lucas (2001), good communication is audience-centred and these questions must be asked before the process starts. With whom am I speaking? What do I want them to know, believe or do as a result of the communication? How do I compose and present it to accomplish that aim? This seems to suggest that communication is intentional, a deliberate effort to bring a response, and also transactional; participants are involved (Picton & Broderick, 2001).

2.3   The Communication Process

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, designed the first model of the communication process. This model depicted a communicator (sender) transmitting a thought, idea or feeling to another person (receiver) in a linear process. According to Zogrosen (2005), the linear

process-oriented model and its components are straightforward, but it is the quality of linkage between the various elements in the process that determines the success of communication. To Holm (2002), the linear models focus on transmission effectiveness, efficiency and measurability. Similarly, Robins and Judge (2007) also noted that, before communication can take place, a purpose expressed as a message to be conveyed is needed which passes between the sender and the receiver. Thus, the message is passed by way of some medium (channel) to the receiver, who retranslates (decodes) the message initiated by the sender. This results in transfer of meaning from the sender to the receiver with subsequent feedback from the receiver to the sender as captured in the model below:

Figure 2.1: The communication process
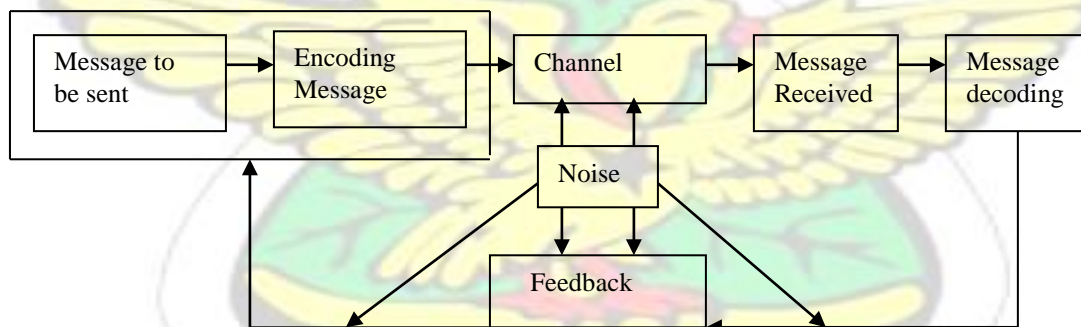
Source: Adapted from Robins and Judge 2007

Figure 1 depicts the communication process. The model has important parts, which are the sender, encoding, the message, the channel, decoding, the receiver, noise and feedback. The basic processes involved are discussed below.

2.3.1 The Sender

The sender is the source of idea, intentions, desires, information or initiator of communication. The sender could be: a person; newspaper, reports, professional journal, organizational memorandum, letters, emails gestures, and mannerism. The sender encodes a thought and the message is the actual physical product from the sender's encoding. Lucas (2001) stressed that the success of the message depends on the credibility of the source, the knowledge-base of the sender, the sensitivity to the occasion and the target audience. This reflects an audience-centred approach, but there should be a fit between communication and the organizational strategy (Holm, 2002). If the sender is an organization, then, its financial capabilities will affect its communication strategy (Kitchen & Schultz 2000). Varner (2000) sees the choice of language and literacy levels of target audience as a crucial issue in sending messages.

2.3.2 Encoding

This is the stimulus that is presented to the audience; it can be an idea, a thought, an impulse, symbols or gestures that can be translated into a mode or a meaningful form (Sarfo, 2007). The result of the encoding process is a message. It may include facial expressions and signals from the arms.

2.3.3 Channel/Media

According to Sarfo (2007) a medium/channel is a pathway of communication. He further argued that, the word "medium", comes from the Latin word "medium", meaning between. His taxonomy of media is of four types, namely: projected media, non-projected media, motion media and audio media. To Sarfo (2007), non-projected media includes iconic

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models and relia (real objects), while projected media includes projectors and media that require electricity for their operation. The audio media constitutes sound, while motion media constitutes sound and visual imagery.

Target audience uses a combination of channels to research and purchase goods (Zygon, 2002). Farese *et al.* (2003) identified various channels as face to face, sight and sound, written word, emails, letters, memos, and reports. Sarfo (2007) also includes the following: model and mock ups which are edited models as channels of communication. However, Macharan and Catterall (2002) are of the view that organization prefers many channels to one channel. Robins and Judge (2007) classify channels as formal and informal communication channels. They believe that organizations should use formal channels in transmitting messages that are related to professional activities of their members. The informal channels they noted are spontaneous and emerge as a response to individuals' choices which are personal or social in nature, within the organization. Smith and Taylor (2002) maintain that channel can be technological, but Lovelock (2002) thinks that technological channels should be integrated with the operations of the company. Sands (2003) contended that, technological channels, particularly, the internet, presents a new mode of relationship building.

2.3.4 The Message

The message is the information, the thought, ideas or feeling the receiver shares with the sender. Messages are represented by symbols, which can be anything that stands firm Farese*et al.*(2003). Lucas (2001) also highlights the need for ideas to be organised clearly and must be expressed with words that are clear, vivid and appropriate, so that listeners can

follow them without getting lost. It can therefore be inferred that a message can be verbal or non-verbal, but what is important is the meaning it carries, thus, reinforcing the views of Heinonen and Stradvik (2006) who see content relevance of a message as an influential tool in transmitting a message.

2.3.5 The Receiver

This is the target of communication. The target receives and decodes the message. Without the receiver, there is no communication. According to Lucas (2001), the message is filtered through receivers' frame of reference, as well as their perception. Mullins (2006) is positive that communication and perception are in extricable bound because how we communicate with our colleagues, bosses, subordinates, friends and partners depends on our perception of them. Kotler and Keller (2006) pointed out that listeners decode information in their perceptual framework, which is the process individual selects, organizes and interprets information to create a meaningful picture out of it. To them, receivers decode information, based on their perception under the following processes. The first is selection attention and this is where listeners would give attention to messages that relate to their needs. Under selective distortion they emphasized that messages do not always come across in the way their creators intended.

Selective distortion is the tendency to distort information and interpret it into personal meanings and, in a way that will support rather than change their perceptions. Under selective retention they stated that people are bombarded with a lot of information daily, but tend to learn and retain information that supports only their attitudes and beliefs (Kotler, 2000).

2.3.6 Decoding

This is translating or interpreting message received. It is the final link in the linear model of the communication process. The decoding process is enhanced by the encoding process as well as the medium. If the first two are wrong, the decoding process will be ultimately affected because the success of a communication process would depend on the quality of linkage between the various elements (Zogrosen, 2005).

2.3.7 Feedback

This refers to the response the sender gets from the receiver Farese *et al*., (2003). Lucas (2001) pointed out that, like any kind of communication, feedback is affected by one's frame of reference. To Robins and Judge (2007), it is a check on how successful a sender has been in transferring his message as originally intended. The attitudinal change as well as behavioural change of target audience, makes it visible. Feedbacks can be verbal and non-verbal which may be in the form of sensory cues, like gestures, touch and hearing. Feedbacks can therefore be positive, negative or neutral.

2.4 Types of Interpersonal Communication

Three types of interpersonal communication were identified by Wickham (2004) as oral, written and visual communication.

2.4.1 Face To Face (Oral)

This is a verbal type of communication considered as the highest and richest. It involves capturing patterns of thought and giving meanings to words or phrases. This includes both formal and informal discussion, where issues are openly discussed. Speeches, informal rumour or grapevine are other forms of oral communication. The advantage of oral communication, according to Robins and Judge (2007) is that, there is instant feedback. In service marketing, oral communication helps service providers to provide the required service to customers. This is why Heinonem and Strandvik (2006) look at communication as part of a service offering. Although face to face is the richest type of communication, it cannot be as good as written communications when the message is for record purpose. Robins and Judge (2007) identified other forms of verbal communication as electronic communication transmitted over the radio, as well as the telephone line; this type of communication is rich in carrying messages from one person to another, but does not permit the sender to observe the body language and facial expressions. Also, the voice of the sender is transmitted in the right tone, without any bull-whip effect (distortion). Other form of oral communication they seem to appreciate is audio-visual communication, which appeals to visual and auditory learners at the same time.

2.4.2 Written Communications

Messages such as rules and regulations, policies, announcement of changes in procedure, can be in writing. It is also useful in communicating instructions about how to use machinery or manuals to individuals and organizations. This may include memos, letters, fax transmissions, electronic mail text messages, and organizational periodicals, notices

placed on bulletin, boards or any written records that are placed on notice boards. Robins and Judge (2007) maintain that more care is taken in written communications than it is in the oral one.

Written communications may be well thought out, logical and clear, but their drawback is that they are time-consuming, and lack feedbacks Mullins (2006). Besides, feedback may be in the form of writing, or action, though they may not be instant, as opposed to the instant feedback in face to face communication. Also, feedbacks may not be given, if the receiver's literacy level is not considered and jargons used cannot be decoded; this may lead to semantics and, ultimately, lack of communication. This is why Varner (2000) thinks that written communications should be evaluated for clarity, readability and specificity.

2.4.3   Visual Communication

This includes a stare, a smile; a frown, a glance, and a provocative body movement, the physical distance between the sender and the receiver, as well as the intonation are examples of non-verbal communication. Robins and Judge (2007) emphasised that, intonation can change meaning of messages, while physical distance between two people can suggest intimacy, or business. Apart from these, they also identified other forms of non-verbal communications: electronic mail, instant messages, intranet and extranet.

2.5   Barriers to Communication

According to Farese *et al.* (2003), detractors and emotional blocks interfere in the understanding of a message. Kotler *et al.* (2005) identifies selective perception in which the receiver selectively hears, based on their needs, motivation, experience, background

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and other personal characteristics. Also, other forms of barriers to communication are lack of clarity and physical barriers – distance, noise as well as long chain of command. Additionally, the timing of communication, semantic barriers, wrong use of words, lack of clear objectives as well as poor human relationship can affect the communication process. Among the barriers to effective communication is communication gap. This occurs when there is a break in smooth flow of expected communication, as a result of an undue delay of message. This is why Hult (2002) thinks that success in communication is based on time efficiencies and flexibility.

2.6 Integrated Marketing Communication Process

Below are the integrated marketing communication processes.

2.6.1 Planning and Implementation

Integrated Marketing communication has the rudimentary elements of effective communication model. However, marketing communication concentrates on consumers' specific responses to communications (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

Below are some micro models for analysing customer responses to IMC

Table 2.1: Micro Models for analysing customer responses to IMC

Stages	AIDA Model	Hierarchy of effects model	Innovation adoption model	Communication Model
Cognitive stage	Attention	Awareness ↓ Knowledge	Awareness	Exposure ↓ Reception ↓ Cognitive
Affective stage	Interest ↓ Desire	Liking ↓ Preference ↓ Conviction	Interest ↓ Evaluation	Attitude ↓ Intention
Behaviour stage	Action	Purchase	Trial ↓ Adoption	Behaviour

Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller 2006

Four classic responds hierarchy models for analysing target audience/consumer responses was identified by Kotler and Keller (2006). These models assume that, the buyer passes through: cognitive, affective and behavioural stage in the order, Learn-feel-do sequence, or head-heart and hand. Kotler and Keller (2006) based on the assumption that the buyer has high involvement with products category aptly describe the application of the hierarchy of effects model in marketing communication under awareness, knowledge, linking, preference, conviction and purchase. With the issue of awareness, they indicated that if most of the target audience are unaware of the object, the communicator's task is to build awareness. With the issue of knowledge, the target audience might have brand awareness as their objective but may not know much. The communicator may decide to select brand knowledge, as his/her objective. Under liking they indicated that if target audience knows

the brand, how do they feel about it? If their feeling is unfavourable, the communicator would have to find out, if it is based on real problems, and, if so, then the communicator's task would be to communicate its renewed quality. Under preference they emphasized on the fact that the target audience might like the product, but might not prefer it to others; if this happens, then, the communicator's task is to build consumer preference through positioning its quality value performance and other features that can outperform competitors.

Under conviction they discussed that a target audience might prefer a particular product, but might not develop a conviction about buying it. The communicator's task is to build conviction and purchase intent among interested audience. With the purchasing, they described that some members of the target audience might have the conviction to buy, but might not quite get around to making the purchase. The communicators must lead these consumers to take the final step, perhaps by offering the product at a low price, offering a premium or letting consumers out.

2.7 Effective Integrated Marketing Communication Planning

Essentially, the synergy and focus derived from effective IMC can provide valuable information and add tangibility to service (Mattila, 2000). According to Wood (2007), marketing communication planning is the structured process that leads to a co-ordinated set of specific response, based on clear marketing direction and objectives for targeted customer segments. She further stressed that, integrated marketing communication

planning covers all the tools used in the most visible and flamboyant manner to reach the audience.

Notwithstanding the plethora of planning difficulties, practitioners and academics are united in their agreement that, the process of planning is beneficial to organizations (Yeboah, 2002). IMC planning may take different forms, yet, in each case, the underlying thrust is the co-ordination of various marketing communication devices to create a unified message (Cornelissen & Lock, 2000). Yeboah (2002) outlines some reasons why IMC planning is important. One of the reasons is that it imposes a degree of order upon potential chaos and allocates the organization's resources in the most effective way. IMC also integrates and co-ordinates the marketing mix in order to generate synergy from the individual element of marketing. It also helps in adapting and coping with changes in the environment.

Despite the fact that some authors have questioned IMC planning, other studies have reported a positive association between well-conceived plans and organizational performance. Yeboah (2002) suggests six different models and these are the planning, interpretative, political, logical incremental, ecological and the visionary leadership models. The planning model is scientific or rational and views planning as a sequential, planned and a rational process. The interpretative model is referred to as the 'cultural model', which thinks of planning as the result of the prevailing attitudes, values and ideas of an organization. The political model holds that, planning tends to emerge through conflict, compromise and consensus among interested stakeholders. The logical

incremental model views planning emerging from strategic sub-systems and tends to be incremental. It is not structured or analytical. The ecological model on the other hand thinks changes are prescribed by the environment and thus, there is no choice. With the visionary leadership model, planning emerges as a result of the leader's vision and energy. Yeboah (2002) noted that, in all the models enunciated, one cannot repudiate the fact that, the organization and the environment remain inseparable and that the planning processes are perceived as necessary to cope with change. Thus, integrated marketing communication planning should maintain a viable fit between the organization, audience, and the changes in the marketing environment.

2.8 Selecting an Appropriate Frame Work for Effective IMC Planning

These are several well-known integrated marketing communication models notably; McDonald's Planning Model, Communication Mix Model and, hierarchy of effect model. Whilst there is no single best model for IMC planning, the eight steps of marketing communication planning model of Kotler and Keller (2006) offers an appropriate conceptual framework. The relevance of this model persists, because the model provides a fit between the business environment, the organization, culture, income, perception and learning behaviours of its target audience. It also provides a systematic picture of how to formulate effective integrated communication strategies within the budget constraints of an organization. Finally, it encapsulates the rest of the micro models for IMC planning.

Figure 2.2: Kotler and Keller's 8 steps of effective Marketing Communication

Planning Model
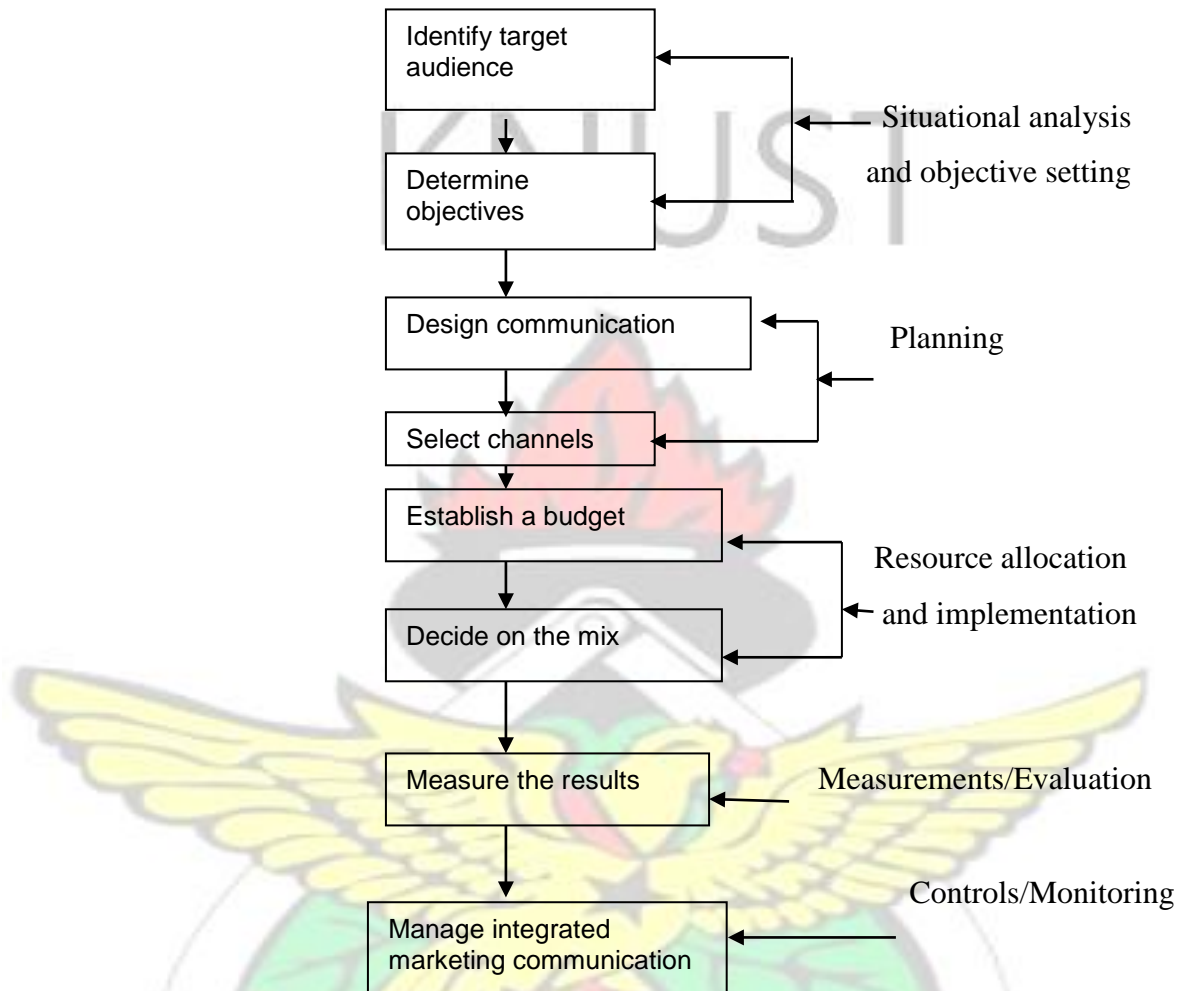
Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller (2006)

There are numerous tools for marketing communication planning, collectively called "promotional mix" (Pickton & Broderick, 2001). The numerous possible combinations illustrate the complexities of IMC, making the handling of IMC a strategic issue rather than a tactical issue (Schroeder, 2002). The whole IMC planning task starts with situational analysis, identification of audience and objective settings.

2.9 Situational Analysis and Objective Setting Phase

This is concerned with the development of an objective, taking into consideration, the vision, mission, target audience, stakeholders, business ethics, corporate governance and cultural context of the organization (Yeboah, 2002). Lucas (2001) maintains that the main objectives of IMC are to educate, persuade and entertain and grouped marketing communication objectives as follows: Need category, Brand awareness, Brand attitude, and Brand purchase intentions. According to Kotler and Keller (2006), the most effective IMCs can achieve multiple objectives.

The target audience includes potential buyers, deciders or influencers; individual groups, particular public or the general public and consumers (Ducoffe, 2000). According to Heinonen (2004), the audience has a critical influence on the communication value, which may be created through four factors, content (what to say) presentation, (how to say it), time (when to say it), place (where to say it). Kotler and Keller (2006) added people (To whom to say it) and (who should say it).Audience can be segmented in terms of usage and loyalty; they also think that, image analysis should be conducted by assessing the current image of the company/industry, its products and its competitors. The role of marketing is shifting from selling and telling to genuine involvement with the customer through communicating and sharing knowledge.

2.10 Design Communication

Effective marketing communication design can be essential in both inter and intra company communication. In order to design and implement an integrated marketing communication

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to achieve the desired response, these problems must be solved: message strategy, as well as the creative strategy (Kotler & Keller, 2006). In the message strategy, communicators look for appeals, themes and ideas that will tune into brand positioning. Marcella and Davies (2004) revealed that consumer literacy level and culture, when neglected, when designing IMC, would lead to loss of potential sales and excessive advert expenses.

The creative strategy, on the other hand, deals with how the message is being expressed, as well as the content of the message itself. The creative strategies can be either informational/rational appeals, or transformational/emotional appeal (Kotler & Keller, 2006). An informational appeal elaborates on products or service attributes or benefits, whereas transformational appeal elaborates on a non-product related benefit or image. It often attempts to stir up emotions that will motivate purchase. It must be noted, however, that both appeals work best when their sources of information are credible. Positive emotional appeals such as love, humour, pride and joy or negative emotional appeals such as fear, guilt and shame, help to act or to stop an act. Besides, IMC can use motivational or borrowed interest devices, such as popular music, to catch attention and raise involvement of the audience. The drawback is that, borrowed interest can also distract attention from the focus of the communication. Thus, the communicator has to break through the cluster and merge the two to attract attention.

In a print, the communicator has to decide on the headline, copy, illustration, colour and language (Verner, 2000). For a radio message, the communicator has to choose words, voice, qualities, and vocalizations which is analysed and actualized. On TV, or in person, all these elements plus body language and other non-verbal cues, have to be planned. Presenters must pay attention to facial expressions, gestures, dresses, posture and hairstyle.

Also, if the message is carried by product or its packaging, special attention is paid to its colour, texture, scent, size and shape.

Again, visual imagery has potentially powerful drive for global marketing and development of international brands such as Coca-Cola, Nike, Levi Strauss or Mercedes, to achieve a consistent brand across many languages and culture (Segar & Brehm, 2000). It follows then that, when designing a message, the perception, the culture, the beliefs and the literacy level of your audience should be taken into consideration (Branthwaith, 2002). Kotler and Keller (2006) noted that, in order for firms to get the necessary attention the credibility of the source is important. In short, communicators must vary their messages to suit different cultures and products (Verner, 2000). They should likewise, be sensitive to the changes in their environment.

2.11 Select Communication Channels

Target audience illiteracy should influence a message, source and channel determination by word of mouth, one of the most powerful channels that are currently being overlooked. In a study of 7,000 consumers in seven European countries, 60% of the respondents said, they were influenced to use new brands by family, and friends (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Words about good companies travel fast and words about bad companies travel, even, faster. The implication of this is that, many companies are becoming acutely aware of the power of word of mouth. Finally, they concluded that, personal communication is more effective than mass communication; hence mass communicators should direct their messages at opinion leaders and let them carry the message to others.

2.12 Establishing the total marketing communication budget

Two common forms of budget setting in marketing communication planning have been identified by Smith and Taylor (2002), namely; scientific and heuristic budget setting approach. With the scientific approach, they highlighted four types which are objective and tactics, modelling, payback period and profit optimisation. Objective and tactics is where budgets are set based on the strategy and tactics and the cost to achieve them. Modelling has to do with the use of simulation techniques to model how various budget may affect performance. Payback period is the time taken for an integrated campaign to pay back the costs of the IMC. Profit optimisation advocates continued investment in integrated marketing communications, as long as marginal revenue exceeds the marginal cost. Kotler and Keller (2006) described heuristic budget setting under four method and these are affordable, percentage of sales, competitive party and arbitrary methods. The affordable method is where promotion budget is set at what the company can afford. The percentage of sales method is where promotion budget is set at a specified percentage of past or anticipated sales. Competitive party method also uses competition and its relevant marketing spends as a yardstick whilst the arbitrary method uses a senior manager to arbitrate between different views of the marketing team.

2.13 Deciding on Marketing Communication mix

Traditionally, advertising and marketing communication have been considered as sales generating function (Heinonen & Strandvik, 2005). But, in the service industry everything communicates something about a firm regardless of whether marketers accept this and act upon it or not (Gronroos, 2000).

According to Kotler *et al.* (2005), there is a shift from mass marketing to target marketing as markets have fragmented. To them, this accounts for the reason why integrated marketing should blend promotional tools carefully into a co-ordinated promotional mix. The promotional tools, according to Wood (2007), includes, advertising, sales promotions, public relations and publicity, event and experience, direct marketing and personal selling. Each communication tool has its unique characteristics and cost.   Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) in a critical analysis of the service industry, suggest that, different communication elements have distinct capabilities and the kind of message it conveys.

It must be noted, however, that Advertising is good at raising awareness, while sales promotions campaigns offer a distinctive purchase invitation. Public relations are: high credibility, off guard and dramatization; direct marketing is based on databases, containing the names and characteristics of potential customers and target audience selection is far more precise. Combining the IMC tools in a well-balanced campaign is more effective, because, it gives chance to low budget and is suitable for low-growth economies (Katrandjieu, 2001).

2.14   Measuring the Result

Previous research was synthesised by Ducoffe (2000) on consumer reaction to marketing communication in four factors which are Informativeness, Deceptiveness, Irritation and Entertainment. Informativeness was seen to have a positive influence on advertising value, because, it provided information about a product. Entertainment was seen to create a positive value, as well, since it fulfilled consumers' need for variety and stimulation. Deceptiveness, in contrast, was seen to be likely to decrease the advertising value, because

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of lack of credibility. By Irritation, they denoted that, the advertising was perceived as annoying, manipulating or insulting. Ducoffe (2000) found out that Deceptiveness and Irritation were highly correlated and unwanted results. Farese *et al.*

(2003) concluded that Irritation influence the effectiveness of IMC. Kotler and Keller (2006) highlight the need for firms to measure the outcome, after implementing the communication plan, by looking at its impact on the target audience by assessing their previous and current attitude. The audience response, in terms of the number of purchase, as well as the real pay-offs, should be measured. This they believe will give a signal whether to adapt or change the communication technique on a particular product.

2.15   Managing the integrated marketing communication

Integrated marketing communication, according to Kotler and Keller (2006) should be co-ordinated along multiple channels and suggested the combination of adverts and promotions. They also highlighted the need for online communication in the modern dispensation and technological change. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) believe that, variety of communication media, when used in a cost effective way, promotes the firm's value and, ultimately, teach prospects and clients what they have to know. Kotler and Keller (2006) are of the view that, companies can out-source their integrated marketing communication planning and implementation to agencies, in order to cut down cost. Windham and Orton (2000) concluded that, marketing communication, should not evade privacy since unsolicited e-mails and spam mails have actually become a problem for many consumers.

2.16 Communication in the Pharmaceutical Industry

According to Moghadam (2003) pharmaceutical companies formally marketed their products to physicians and healthcare professionals using sales representatives to detail doctors by educating them and promoting prescription drugs. Doctors also relied on the major pharmaceutical companies to inform them of the new available treatments. They also assessed information on various drugs through journal reviews and articles, educational seminars and event sponsorships. Drug manufacturing companies also provided drug samples to physicians to try on patients. Woolley *et al.* (2006) indicated that drug companies attempted to increase patient use and sales through physician- pharmaceutical representative relationships. These promotional tactics, they indicated were performed behind the scenes. A major problem faced by most pharmaceutical firms nowadays is how to effectively design and deploy consistent, personalized communications across the growing range of communication delivery channels and to leverage valuable customer information throughout the enterprise (Healy, 2004).

According to Healy (2004) the greatest opportunity to simultaneously cut costs, grow revenue, and increase the loyalty and satisfaction of customers and other stakeholders is the implementation of an enterprise personalization platform is, perhaps. Pharmaceutical firms are now taking a careful look at the way they communicate with all their stakeholders and understand that, effective communications can drive service improvements and customer satisfaction, thereby, becoming a strategic resource and competitive differentiator.

To break away from the competition, Moghadam (2003) emphasized that pharmaceutical firms need to improve customer communications across all channels.Pharmaceutical companies must be organized around their customers rather than their products in order to effect change. Pharmaceutical firms often find themselves struggling to co-ordinate multiple, separate applications, systems, and processes developed around individual products when it comes to producing customer-facing communications. Interactive and new media has now supplemented traditional marketing tactics (Blech & Blech, 2004).

Pharmaceutical firms are thus utilizing new technology for a campaign to promote their products. Pharmaceutical companies are pairing up their broadcast commercials with interactive television, through which interested individuals can request information and be connected to the brand's web site. Viral email campaigns are increasing in popularity to communicate the existence, benefits and results of a new prescription drug product. Online games and drawings also offer a pharmaceutical company an opportunity to collect information on interested individuals, which is used to develop a marketing database. Establishing a drug's brand through direct-to-consumer marketing reaps rewards for the pharmaceutical businesses. Ross *et al.* (2008) emphasized that using interactive marketing communication in which advertising, public relations, direct marketing and other tools are utilized; pharmaceutical companies have been able to convey clear and consistent messages to consumers and doctors about each drug. This study assessed the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry.

Advertising according to Healy (2004), paves the way for consumer-targeted promotional tools such as event and sport sponsorships, celebrity spokespersons and mailing campaigns.

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With the ability to use a complete marketing arsenal, the pharmaceutical industry has embraced integrated marketing. The integrated marketing communications (IMC) approach helps pharmaceutical companies maintain contact with its consumers throughout the many touch points these consumers have with a company and its brands.

Interactive and new media as emphasized by Gibson (2003) has now supplemented traditional marketing tactics. Pharmaceutical companies are leveraging futuristic marketing trends as they utilize new technology for a campaign to promote their products. Pharmaceutical companies are pairing up their broadcast commercials with interactive television, through which interested individuals can request information and be connected to the brand's web site. Viral email campaigns are increasing in popularity and depend on grassroots efforts of consumers to communicate the existence, benefits and results of a new prescription drug product. Online games and drawings also offer a pharmaceutical company an opportunity to collect information on interested individuals, which is used to develop a marketing database.

Establishing a drug's brand through direct-to-consumer marketing reaps rewards for the pharmaceutical businesses. O'Connell (2002) showed that most patients who inquired about utilizing a drug by name ultimately received a prescription for it The industry embraced a strategy similar to that of any consumer good: brand the product so it is asked for by name or easily recalled and leverage the brand to create a competitive advantage. Using IMC, in which advertising, public relations, direct marketing and other tools are utilized, the drug companies have been able to convey clear and consistent messages to consumers and doctors about each drug.

Confronted with a changing marketplace, pharmaceutical companies are embracing and leveraging marketing and branding strategies. According to Moghadam (2003), the public traditionally viewed major pharmaceutical companies as strong research and development institutions. Today, these companies also boast robust marketing arms with practices that rival traditional marketing efforts of consumer goods companies such as

Nike, Coca-Cola and Nestle (Gibson, 2003). Consumers in today's marketplace are informed customers, even in healthcare. As more and more consumers seek information regarding their health and wellness, a consumerism movement in the pharmaceutical industry has evolved. Consumers are able to play a more active role in their treatment decision-making with information readily available through the internet, dedicated health publications and television shows. As a result of these factors, the pharmaceutical industry is undergoing a tremendous transformation. It is now commonplace for pharmaceutical companies to directly market prescription medicines to and communicate with consumers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research assessed the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry. The research questions can be effectively addressed only by employing appropriate research methodology. This chapter addresses the methodological issues concerning the research and the particular or combination of methods chosen for the study. The chapter involves a detailed discussion of the research paradigms, the purpose of the study and sampling procedures. The chapter also captured the data collection procedures the quality measures taken and also the limitations and ethics of the study.

3.2 Research Paradigms

According to Zikmund *et al.* (2009), a paradigm is a broad view or perspective of something. Additionally, Sekaran and Bougie (2010) described paradigms as patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished. This study assessed the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies was necessary to encompass the different aspects of marketing communication that pharmaceutical firms adopt in reaching their consumers.

According to Weaver and Olson (2006), the paradigms most commonly utilized in research are the phenomenological (qualitative) and the positivist (quantitative) paradigms to research. The positivist paradigm arose from the philosophy identified as logical positivism and is based on rigid rules of logic and measurement, truth, absolute principles and prediction. The positivist philosophy argues that there is one objective reality. Therefore, as a consequence, valid research is demonstrated only by the degree of proof that can be corresponded to the phenomena that study the results stand for (Robson, 2002). Questionnaire was the data collection instrument that was used to access data from customers.

Qualitative methodologies were also incorporated into the research design. The qualitative methodology shares its philosophical foundation with the interpretive paradigm which supports the view that there are many truths and multiple realities. Qualitative researchers are more concerned about uncovering knowledge about how people feel and think in the circumstances in which they find themselves, than making judgments about whether those thoughts and feelings are valid (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The research adopted a mixed method in ascertaining the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry. The qualitative data was collected through interviews with pharmacists and marketing officers of Ernest Chemist, doctors, pharmacists, nurses and health officers and licensed chemical sellers.

3.3 Purpose of the Study

There are many approaches to a research study, and these include the explorative, descriptive and explanatory approaches (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The purpose of a descriptive research has to do with describing and achieving a clearer picture concerning a phenomenon. This is based on the fact that there is an existence of knowledge in the area being investigated. The explanatory approach explains a particular occurrence or specific set of events. As in the descriptive approach, the problem is already structured. The difference however is that the aim of the explanatory approach is to ascertain the causal connections between the different variables within the research, instead of just describing them (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Explorative research approach on the other hand deals with collecting as much information as possible within a given area to serve as a foundation with which to generalize ideas. The information gathered can be used in other studies. An explanatory approach was adopted in ascertaining the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry. This was due to the fact that the main problem and research questions were represented by how and what questions.

3.4 Sampling Procedures

This section looked at the target population, sampling and the sampling techniques used in selecting the respondents.

3.4.1 Population and Sample

Population is the aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specifications (Sekaran, 2003). The term, population refers to the complete set of individuals (subjects), objects or events that have common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested in studying. Cooper and Schindler (2006) also described population as the total collection of elements about which some inferences can be made. The population for the research was doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers, licensed chemical sellers and customers. The study also captured the pharmacists and marketers of Ernest Chemist. The study was restricted to Ernest

Chemist's operations in the Kumasi Metropolis. Ernest Chemist has two (2) pharmacists and four marketing personnel in Kumasi.

A sample was defined by Zikmund *et al.* (2000) as a subset of some part of a larger population, a population being any complete group of people or companies that share some set of characteristics. Sekeran (2003) emphasized that a sample of a population consists of that proportion of the number of units selected for investigation. A sample size of fifty (50) customers of the company was selected for the questionnaire administration.

A sample of three (3) respondents each from the doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers and chemical sellers were also selected for the interview. Also two pharmacists and marketing officers who were employees of Ernest Chemist were also selected for the interview.

3.4.2 Sampling Technique

In selecting a sample, it is important to have the target population in mind Cooper & Schindler (2006). The group should possess information relevant to the researcher. Due to the budget and time constraints, the researcher could not cover the entire population. The sampling method was adopted, because it could, as well, be used to generalize the findings to show a clear representation of the population. A convenient sampling technique was adopted in selecting the customers (walk in customers). In all fifty (50) customers were selected for the administration of the questionnaires.

The purposive sampling technique (which is a technique where respondents are selected for a particular purpose) was adopted in selecting doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers and chemical sellers and staff of Ernest Chemist for the interview. Three (3) respondents each from the doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers and chemical sellers were selected for the interview.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Data is a collection of facts, such as values or measurements. Saunders *et al.* (2009) described data collection method as the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions. The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities, and business. While methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same. Regardless of the field of study or preference for defining data (quantitative, qualitative), accurate data collection is essential to maintaining the integrity of research. Both the

selection of appropriate data collection instruments and clearly delineated instructions for their correct use reduce the likelihood of errors occurring (Walliman, 2005).

3.5.1 Sources of Data

Data for the research were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data consist of data obtained for the specific purpose at hand (Saunders *et al.,* 2007). The researcher used primary data because of the need for current and fresh data to address the objectives of the study. However, primary data proved very costly as the researcher had to spend substantial sums of money to print questionnaires and bear travel costs to meet respondents. Primary source of data was obtained from interviews conducted with doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers, licensed chemical sellers and customers who patronised Ernest Chemist's products.

Secondary data consists of information already in existence somewhere, having been collected for some other purpose Saunders *et al (*2007). Secondary data was accessed from published annual reports, house journals and internal reports.

3.5.2 Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires and interviews were the main instruments used to gather data from respondents.

Questionnaire is described by Sekaran (2003) as a form containing a set of questions. Questionnaire was the data collection instrument that was used to access data from customers. Questionnaire was deemed appropriate because literate respondents were selected. Also, most of the questions were largely close-ended, which made coding easier. Again, the questionnaires were constructed taking into consideration the views of Denzin & Lincoln (2005), who argued that, questionnaires should collect precise data required to answer research questions and meet the objective of the research. Also, the questions were drafted based on the suggestion of Sekaran (2003) who is positive that, questionnaires should not contain personal questions, and also avoid jargons or specialised language. Furthermore, in accordance with the view of Cooper and Schindler (2003) who think close-ended questions provide precise answers, whilst open-ended questions offer rich and deeper insights or understanding, open-ended questions were included in the questionnaires. These helped the research to elicit response in a consistent manner.

An interview which is described by Zikmund *et al* (2009), as the questioning of a person, was also conducted with pharmacists and marketing officers of Ernest Chemist, doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers and licensed chemical sellers using a semi-structured interview guide. The interviews were conducted with the respondents at their various places of work when they were less free. During the interview the researcher posed the question and allowed the respondents to respond to the questions and if there were any misunderstandings, a follow up questions were further asked to clarify the response given.

The interview provided valuable data and offered insight into issues that otherwise would have been difficult to gather by other means.

3.6   Data Analysis

Data Analysis consists of analysing categories, tabulating, testing or otherwise combining both quantitative and qualitative evidence (Yin, 2003). Zikmund (2009) noted that, interpreting data, involves looking for explanations, contradictions and their resolutions, identify and rank findings and organize them and finally, present the findings simply through charts, graphs, tables that illustrate the point. Prior to the actual analysis, fictional responses were generated from the data that were collected from the pilot studies. These dummy activities helped researcher to analyse the data collection techniques as to whether they were right or wrong, so that researchers do not go through pains to collect data only to realise that they cannot be analysed.

In this study, pattern matching and explanation building were also employed in the analysis of the qualitative data. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) noted that, these are used, where the goal is to analyse qualitative data by building explanation about a situation.

3.7 Quality of the Research

There are, basically, three criteria for quality measurement, and these are validity, reliability and objectivity (Neuman, 2005). The validity of a measure depends on how we have defined the concept it is designed to measure (Goodwin, 2005). Soliciting input from

the supervisor, choosing participants who were knowledgeable, as well as gathering data from Ernest Chemist contributed significantly to the validity of the work.

Reliability on the other hand, is the extent to which a test or procedure would produce similar results under constant conditions on all occasions (Walliman, 2005). As a way to increase the reliability, much information was collected about the company prior to the research. Also some questions were asked twice by framing them differently under the same circumstance. With regards to objectivity, the researcher made sure that, his involvement, values and beliefs did not have any effect on the study. Thus, his neutrality was ensured, during the collection and analysis of the data.

3.8 Research Ethics and Limitations

For the purpose of minimizing the fears of the respondents and also to have access to the respondents, consent was sought from the Regional Head of Ernest Chemist. Letters for permission were written to the various hospitals, pharmacy outlets and chemical shops that the research was conducted. In the preamble to the questionnaire, the respondents were made to understand that the study was meant for academic purpose and were therefore urged to be frank in the responses to the questionnaire.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a detailed explanation on the research methodology that was used in the study. It captured the research paradigms, purpose of the study, sampling procedures, data collection methods, and data analysis. The chapter also captured the quality and ethics and limitations of the research. The data collected have been presented

in tables and graphs to show a quick visual and numeric impression about the study in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter involves the data analysis, discussion and presentation of the data collected from respondents. The chapter presents the findings of the study with the aim of answering the research question. Statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used which was presented in the form of tables, charts and graphs.

4.2 Response Rate of Respondents

The questionnaires were administered to fifty (50) customers. Out of these, two (2) of the questionnaires that were administered were not returned. Data analysis was therefore conducted on forty eight (48) useable questionnaires, representing a ninety six percent (96%) response rate. An interview was also conducted with pharmacists and marketing officers of Ernest Chemist, doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers and licensed chemical sellers.

4.3 Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 below depicts the characteristics of respondents. The tables describe the sex, age, the length of time that a respondent had patronized Ernest Chemist's products and the highest education attained by individual respondent.

Table 4.1:   Demographics of Respondents

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	22	46
Female	26	54
TOTAL	**48**	**100**
Age		
Below 20years	1	2
21-30years	3	6
31-40years	5	10
41-50years	9	19
51-60years	11	23
Over - 61years	19	40
TOTAL	**48**	**100**
Educational Level		
Post Graduate	1	2
Graduate	9	19
Higher National Diploma (HND)	13	27
Secondary	15	31
Others	10	21
TOTAL	**48**	**100**
Years of patronizing company's products		
Less than 1 year	2	4
1-2 years	4	8
3-4 years	7	15
Over 5 years	35	73
TOTAL	**48**	**100**

Source; Field data, 2014

4.3.1   Sex of Respondents

From the responses gathered it was revealed that majority of the respondents were females.

It was realised from the responses gathered that 22 of the respondents that had a percentage

of forty six (46%) were males and 26 respondents that represented 54% of the respondents were females.

4.3.2   Age of Respondents

It is generally believed that age has a significant influence on how people view things around them; the value people attach to things, items, goods and resources has been found to vary with age (Frempong, 2008). The ages of the respondents generally ranged below 20 years and over 61 years. One (1) respondent was below 20 years and represented 2% of the responses gathered, with 3 respondents having a percentage of 6% also being between the 21-30 years. Whilst 5 respondents were aged between 31-40 years and represented 10%, 9 respondents were between the ages of 41-50 years and represented 19%, with 11 respondents representing 23% and being between the ages of 51-60 years. The responses gathered also revealed that 19 respondents were over sixty one years and represented 40% of the total number of respondents.

Table 4.1 shows that in terms of chronological age, the respondents were matured people. The total figures indicate that the majority of them were over 61 years, followed by those between the ages of 51 and 60 years and that of those between 41 and 50 years and then those between 31 and 40 years. It is important to note that most of the respondents were adults who had had some experiences in life and as such could make reasonable judgments. This suggests that the information provided in response to the various questions could be relied on.

4.3.3 Educational Level of Respondents

For a drug to be effective and to yield the needed result, one should be able to understand how the drug should be administered. The user should also be able to read and understand the side effects and actually be able to understand what those reactions could lead to. If a person is allergic to a particular component in a drug he or she must be able to discuss that with the prescriber of the drug. In other words, a person who is going to take a pharmaceutical product or to administer it to his or her ward has the responsibility of understanding the use of the product and its effects. This anchors on the notion that, the level of education of users is paramount in the effective administration of a pharmaceutical product.

Here, an item was to find out the level of education of the customers of the company's products. The data gathered revealed that one respondent that represented 2% of the respondents was a post graduate, with 9 respondents that also had a percentage of 19% also being graduates. Thirteen (13) respondents that represented 27% of the respondents had HNDs, whilst 15 respondents that represented 31% of the responses gathered also having secondary school education. The results also revealed that 10 of the respondents with a percentage of 21% had other academic qualifications different from those listed. These were middle school leaving certificates (MSLC), association of certified chartered accountants (ACCA), chartered institute of management (CIM), and diploma in business studies (DBS).

From the responses gathered it was realised that all the respondents have had some form of education. They would therefore be able to provide information on the communication processes and hence their answers to the various questions could be considered as reliable.

4.3.4 Length of using Ernest Chemists Products

Years of patronising the company's products was also considered to be very vital to the study, since it could also determine the ability of the respondents to appreciate the effectiveness of the communication process of the company and also to be able to assess respondents satisfaction with the communication procedures. The study revealed that 2 respondents that represented 4% of the respondents had patronized the company's products for less than a year, with 4 respondents representing 8% of the respondents having patronized the products between 1-2 years. Seven respondents that represented

15% of the responses gathered had patronized the company's products for between 3-4 years, whilst 35 respondents that represented 73% had patronized the products for over 5 years. It could be inferred from the responses that a large number of the respondents had patronized the company's products for quite some time.They would therefore be able to assess the communication strategies adopted by the company. Thus, the responses gathered from them might have emanated from their personal experiences. This suggests that the information provided in response to the various questions could be considered as authentic.

4.4 Means of knowing the Product

With the issue of how the respondents got to know of the product of the company, 18 respondents that represented 38% of the responses gathered indicated that they got to know of the product through prescription by a doctor. Ten (10) respondents, representing 21% of the respondents indicated that they got to know of the product through a recommendation by a by a nurse/health officer/pharmacist or chemical sel1er. Whilst 15 respondents that represented 31% of the responses gathered got to know the product through someone who had used the product before, 5 respondents that represented 10% of the responses gathered stated that they got to know of the product through TV or radio advert. The responses gathered revealed most of the respondents got to know of the product through recommendation by a nurse/health officer/pharmacist or chemical seller or by someone who had used the product before.

Figure 4.1: Means of knowing the Product
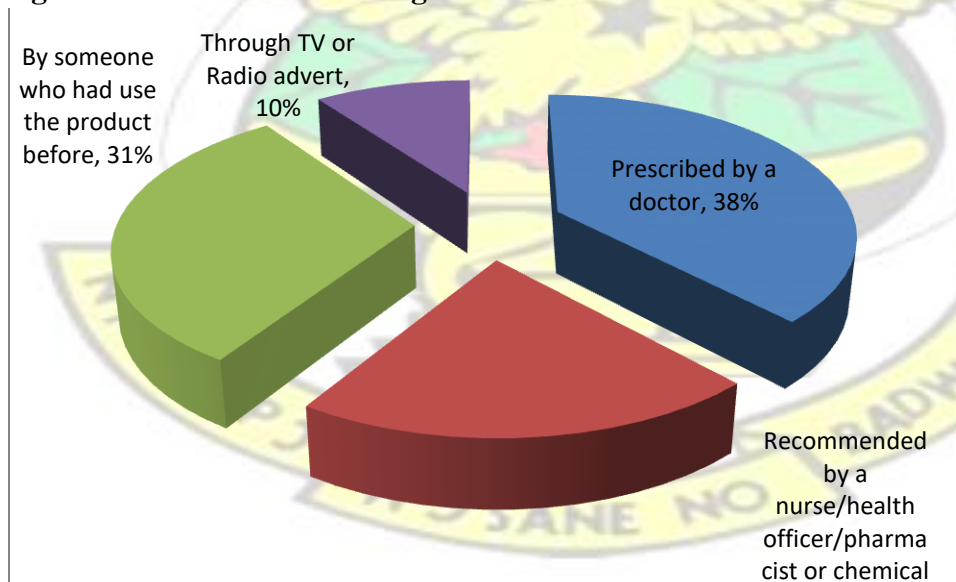
Source; Field data, 2014

4.5 Customer Satisfaction with products of Ernest Chemist

With the issue of how satisfied customers were with the products offered by Ernest Chemist 11 respondents that represented 23% indicated that they were very satisfied, with 21 respondents that had a percentage of 44% stating that they were satisfied. Whilst 3 respondents that represented 6% were uncertain, 8 respondents that represented 17% were not satisfied. Five (5) respondents that represented 10% of the respondents on the other hand indicated that they were not at all satisfied. This indicates that the customers were generally satisfied with the products of Ernest Chemist.

Figure 4.2:   Customer Satisfaction with products by Ernest Chemist
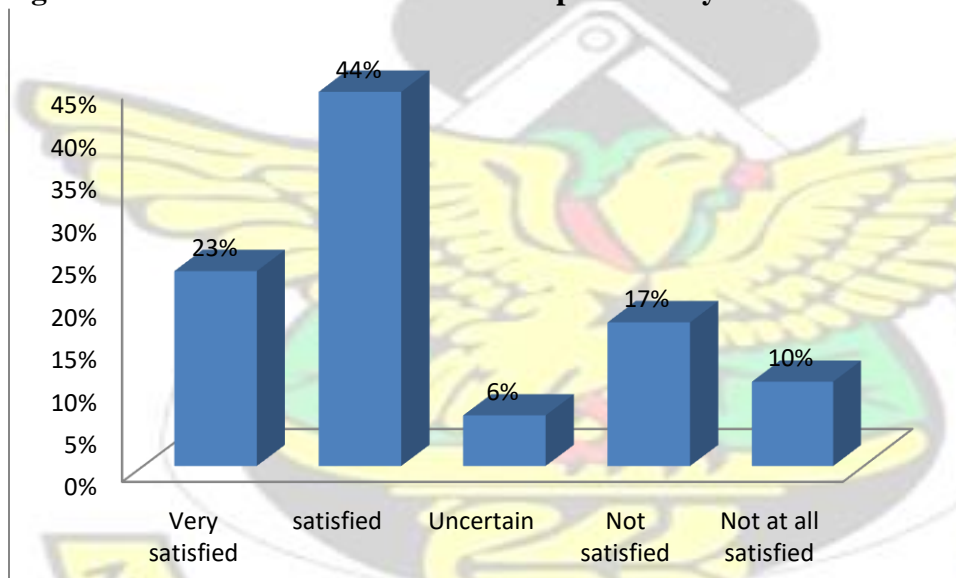
Source; Field data, 2014

4.6 Effectiveness of the Marketing Communication Strategies

In finding out how customers perceived the effectiveness of the marketing communication strategies adopted by Ernest Chemist, it was revealed that, majority of respondents perceived the communication process as effective. From the responses gathered 3

respondents that represented 6% of the respondents were neutral on the issue. Eleven (11) respondents that represented twenty three percent (23%) of the respondents indicated that the communication strategies were very effective, with 20 respondents that represented 42% also stating that the communication strategies were effective. Whilst 10 respondents that represented 21% felt that the strategies were not effective, 4 respondents that represented 8% indicated that the strategies were not at all effective.

Figure 4.3: Effectiveness of the Marketing Communication Strategies
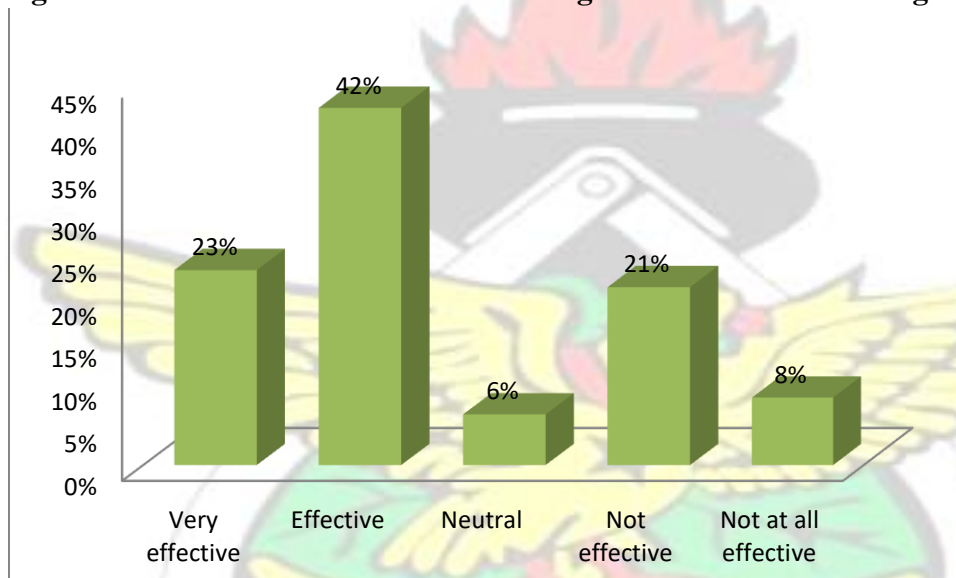
Source; Field data, 2014

4.7 Recommending Products to Prospective Customers

When the customers were further asked if they would recommend the products of Ernest Chemist to a prospective customers, 33 respondents that represented 69% of the respondents were positive that they would recommend the products of Ernest Chemist to prospective customers. Fifteen respondents that represented 31% of the respondents on the other hand emphasized that they would not recommend the products of Ernest Chemist to

prospective customers. The results indicated that most customers were willing to recommend the products of Ernest Chemist to prospective customers.

Figure 4.4: Recommending Products to Prospective Customers
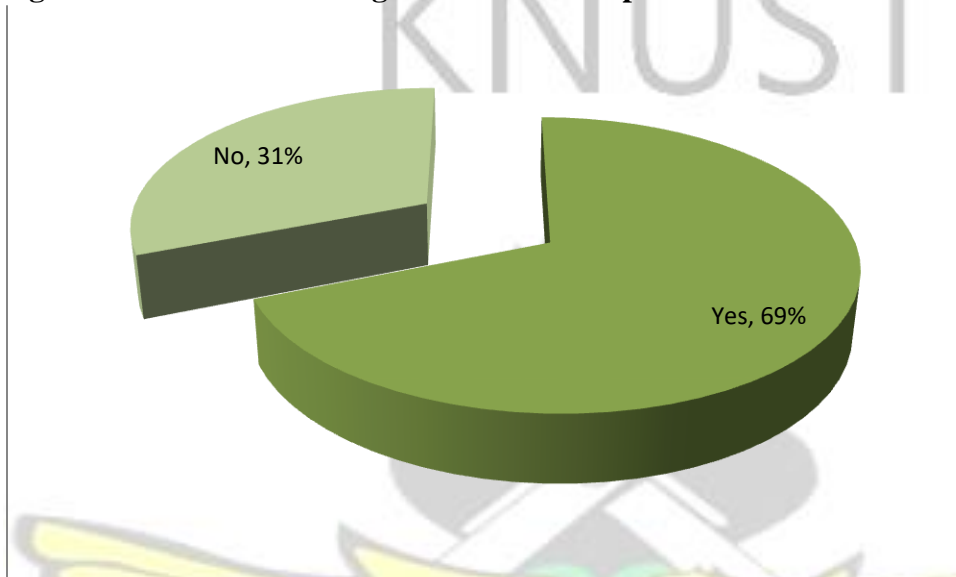
Source; Field data, 2014

4.8 Marketing Communication and its effect on Pharmaceutical Firms

With the issue of whether effective marketing communication has an impact on performance of pharmaceutical firms 17% of the respondents disagreed. Whilst 4% of the respondents were uncertain 79% of the respondents felt that effective marketing communication has an impact on performance of pharmaceutical firms.

When the respondents were asked to state whether customers are attracted to a pharmaceutical company that embark on massive marketing communication, 33% of the respondents were of the view that customers are not attracted to a pharmaceutical company that embark on massive marketing communication. Six percent (6%) of the respondents

were uncertain whilst 61% of the respondents were of the view that customers are attracted to a pharmaceutical company that embark on massive marketing communication.

Table 4.2:   Marketing Communication on Pharmaceutical Firms

Statement	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
Effective marketing communication has an impact on performance of pharmaceutical firms	(3) 6	(5) 11	(2) 4	(23) 48	(15) 31
Customers are attracted to a pharmaceutical company that embark on massive marketing communication	(5) 10	(11) 23	(3) 6	(19) 40	(10) 21
Marketing communication procedures of Ernest chemist have contributed to the performance of the organisation	(5) 10	(12) 25	(2) 4	(21) 44	(8) 17
Effective marketing can attract more customers to a product of a pharmaceutical firm	(3) 6	(8) 17	(4) 8	(19) 40	(14) 29

Source; Field data, 2014

The responses gathered revealed that 35% of the respondents perceived that Marketing communication procedures of Ernest chemist have not contributed to the performance of the organisation. Sixty one percent (61%) of the respondents on the other hand felt that marketing communication procedures of Ernest chemist have contributed to the performance of the organisation.

The study further revealed that 23% of the respondents never believed that effective marketing can attract more customers to a product of a pharmaceutical firm. Eight percent (8%) of the respondents were uncertain whether effective marketing can attract more customers to a product of a pharmaceutical firm. On the other hand 69% of the respondents felt that effective marketing can attract more customers to a product of a pharmaceutical firm.

4.9 Challenges faced by the Company in its marketing Communication

The study revealed a lot of challenges that Ernest Chemist faces in its operations. These challenges were known as result of the interviews conducted mainly with the Pharmacists and the marketing personnel of the company. These included the highly competitive industry that the company finds itself. The pharmaceutical industry is very competitive and as such organisations operating in the industry resort to many strategies to attract its customers and also to retain existing ones.

Other challenge is that people buy pharmaceutical products on the counter without being prescribed by a doctor. This is dangerous as the right doses might not be taken by the patient which could result in drug failure due to drug under dose or result in serious adverse drug reaction due to drug over dose.

The media is choked with lots of advertisements of pharmaceutical products and it is a major concern to the company. The market is saturated with so many products from other Pharmaceutical companies and thus has affected our communications in terms of TVs and Radios advertisements as one pharmacist of the company retorted.

4.10   Strategies Adopted to circumvent the Challenges facing the Company The pharmaceutical industry is very competitive and as such organisations operating in the industry resort to many strategies to attract new customers and also to retain existing ones. The multinational pharmaceutical companies such as Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Sanofi are well established and have the resources to break the competition in the industry. In order to withstand the new wave of competition, which, invariably, calls for management to improve on its position in the industry, It was found out that, the company holds departmental meetings in discussing market trends, changes in market trends, how to increase profitability and striving to achieve competitive edge in the industry.

Management had also realised that the role of marketing is, shifting from selling and telling to genuine involvement with customers through communication and sharing knowledge. Therefore the most important contribution the marketing department can make is to be exceptionally clever in getting everyone else in the organization to practise marketing communication. Again, management has realised that there must be continuity and consistency for effective communication, and that communication skills are vital to the development of effective communication.

One major challenge that Ernest Chemist encounters was that some people bought pharmaceutical products over the counter without being prescribed by a doctor. In order to circumvent this challenge, Ernest Chemist has a policy to educate the licenced chemical sellers from time to time at least twice annually to enable them acquire the needed knowledge in the dispensing of pharmaceutical products. The company has also liaised with other pharmaceutical companies to embark on education of the general populace on the dangers of drug abuse.

Another challenge that the company faced was that of the media being choked with TV and Radio advertisements of pharmaceutical products. The company had realised that brochures and web sites can also show customers the work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure good service delivery and in the selling of a company's products. The company had therefore developed a web site that customers could freely access and channel their grievances and receive response from the company.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings.

5.2 Means of knowing the Product

According to Robins and Judge (2007), before communication can take place, a purpose expressed as a message to be conveyed, is needed which passes between the sender and the receiver. Thus, the message is passed by way of some medium (channel) to the receiver, who retranslates (decodes) the message initiated by the sender. Perception is the process by which individuals select information from the surrounding environment and synthesize it into a world-view. To Robins and Judge (2007), it is a check on how successful sender has been in transferring their messages as originally intended. It determines whether understanding has been achieved or not.

It was observed from the study that most of the respondents patronized Ernest Chemists products through prescription by a doctor and recommendation by either a nurse/health officer/chemical seller or by someone who had use the product before. This shows that, with improvement in marketing communications, the company could improve tremendously in areas of market share and customer growth. The interview with marketing officers of the company also revealed that to a greater extent, marketing communication tools were especially effective in the marketing of the company's products. Effective

marketing communication helps create powerful images and a sense of credibility, confidence, and reassurance which in one form or the other is essential to the company's success. However, effective service quality delivery should be the benchmark. The finding, in one way or the other, agrees with Lovelock and Wirtz, (2007), who asserted that, without effective communication, prospects might never learn of a company's existence, what it has to offer prospective customers, the value proposition of each of its products, and how to use them to the advantage of the user. Customers might be more easily lured away by competitors and competitive offerings, since marketing communication concentrates on consumers' specific responses to communications (Kotler & Keller. 2006).

Techniques for keeping in touch with customers and building their loyalty are direct mail and contacts by telephone or other forms of communications, including email, websites, and even text messages sent via mobile phones. This is necessary, because through communication, companies are able to explain and promote the value proposition that their firm is offering. The implication is that, effective communication would inform existing or prospective customers in the target segments about product features and benefits, price and other costs, the channels through which products are delivered, and when and where it is available. The findings also agree with Kumuyi (2007) who indicated that communications must be viewed more broadly than just the use of paid media advertising, public relations, and professional salespeople. Today, there are many other ways for producers to communicate with current and prospective customers.

Corporate design features, such as consistent use of graphic elements, the appearance and behaviours of employees, the design of a website, all contribute to an impression in the

customer's mind that reinforces or contradicts the specific content of formal communication messages.

5.3 Customer Satisfaction with products by Ernest Chemist

The importance of customer satisfaction is derived from the generally accepted philosophy that for a business to be successful and profitable, it must satisfy customers. Reinartz and Kumar (2003) emphasized that satisfaction is strongly associated with repurchase intentions and also serves as an exit barrier, helping a firm to retain its customers. They concluded that it costs more to gain a new customer than it does to retain an existing one. Rowley and Dawes (2000) further indicated that having satisfied customers also means that organization receives fewer complaints, hence reducing costs in handling failures. They maintain that satisfied customers are willing to pay more for the benefits they receive and are more likely to be tolerant of an increase in price. In addition, customer satisfaction also leads to favourable word-of-mouth publicity that provides valuable indirect advertising for an organization. Through satisfying customers, organizations could improve profitability by expanding their business and gaining a higher market share as well as repeat and referral business. The responses gathered revealed that customers were generally satisfied with the products of Ernest Chemist. This was because 73% of the respondents emphasized that they were satisfied with the products offered by Ernest Chemist.

5.4 Recommending Products to Prospective Customers

Customer satisfaction can result in positive word-of-mouth. Satisfied customers are likely to tell others about their favourable experiences and thus engage in positive word of mouth

advertising. Positive word-of-mouth coming from existing and satisfied customers can translate into more new customers coming to the firm. Also, satisfied current customers often buy more products more frequently and are less likely to defect to competitors as compared to dissatisfied customers (Mehdi &Venkatesh, 2011).

Customers that are satisfied with a particular service offering after its use are likely to engage in repeat purchase and may try other line extensions since customer satisfaction is a key influence in the formation of customers' future purchase intentions (Rowley & Dawes, 2000). Johnson and Sirikit (2002) have argued that certain behavioural responses provide a strong indication that customers are becoming bound to the organisation. Inclinations to buy again, to praise the organisation or to recommend the service to others go to indicate their satisfaction with the service. According to Wang *et al.* (2004), customer retention, repurchase decision and word of mouth are indicators of customer satisfaction and retention. Service providers should therefore create value for customers for the objective of increasing the retention, repurchase and word of mouth.

However, pharmaceutical products are offered to the market not only for attention, but also acquisition, and use that satisfies the needs of both the company and the users. Consumer behaviour reflects the totality of consumer's decisions with respect to the acquisition and consumption over a period of time. Although, the manner in which consumers buy is extremely important to marketers, it is not the only thing of interest. Recommending to prospective customers is also very critical. When the customers were asked if they will recommend the products of Ernest Chemist to prospective customers, the

responses gathered revealed that more than two thirds (69%) of the customers stated in the affirmative.

5.5 Marketing Communication Strategy adopted by the Company

The study revealed that, the marketing communication strategy adopted by Ernest Chemist was that the company's main common approaches to educating customers, is to show service delivery in actions, although, television and FMs are good media. The end results of this should be the quality of services offered by Ernest Chemists, which should begin with the company's marketing personnel and pharmacist having good relations with doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers, and licensed chemical sellers and educating them about the effectiveness of the company's products and conditions in the products offering. The company had realised that when doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers, and licensed chemical sellers are actively involved, they need to be fully educated on the products and the reactions of these products on patients. The company therefore consistently organises conferences to educate its target group on the company's product offerings and its effectiveness, to be able to administer and recommend the products well.

Improving productivity often involves making innovations in service delivery. However, the desired benefits would not be achieved, if customers resist old products or avoid product alternatives. Even if customers understand what a product could offer, they have difficulty distinguishing products from competitors. In high-contacts services, front-line personnel are central to service delivery. Their presence makes the service more tangible and, in many cases, more personalized, and that shows employees at work help prospective customers

understand the nature of the products offering and that implies a promise of the personalized attention that they can expect to receive.

The company had also realised that advertising, brochures and web sites can, also, show customers the work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure good service delivery and in the selling of a company's products. The company had therefore developed a web site that customers could freely access and channel their grievances and receive response as such.

5.6 Effectiveness of the Marketing Communication Strategies

In the pharmaceutical industry of which Ernest Chemist finds itself, marketing communication is especially important because, they help create powerful images and a sense of credibility, confidence, and reassurance. Marketing communication's effectiveness, in one form or another, is essential to a company's success. Lovelock and Wirtz (2007) contended that, without effective communications, prospects may never learn of a firm's existence, what it has to offer them, the value proposition of each of its products and how to use them to the best advantage. Customers might be more easily lured away by competitors and competitive offerings, and there would be no proactive management and control of the firm's identity. Communication efforts serve not only to attract new users but, also, to maintain contact with an organization's existing customers and build relationships with them. The findings suggest that, greater percentage of the respondents indicated that, the practice of Ernest Chemist marketing communication strategies were effective as it was supported by about two thirds of the respondents.

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In finding out how staff perceived communication between the company and customers, staff indicated that the process was effective. Respondents indicated that the strategy of the company was to offer products and services to users and sellers of the company's products such that they would be satisfied and willing to recommend to prospective udders. Interview with doctors, nurses, pharmacists and licensed chemical sellers also revealed that communication between the company and customers was effective.

5.7   Challenges faced by the Company in its marketing Communication

The study revealed a lot of challenges that Ernest Chemist faces in its operations. These included the highly competitive industry that the company finds itself. The pharmaceutical industry is very competitive and as such organisations operating in the industry resort to many strategies to attract its customers and also to retain existing ones. The industry also experiences the influx of foreign firms that are well established internationally and have the resources to break the competition in the industry.

Another challenge that the company experience is that most people buy pharmaceutical products on the counter without being prescribed by a doctor. Those people might not know the actual dosage of those products and this can cause an abuse of the drug. Other times too, those drugs might not be the one intended for the particular sickness that the user intended to use the drug for. This might end up making the drug presumed to ineffective by the user. This can affect customers' perception and as more people get to know of drugs through recommendation from others it might affect the products

credibility.

Another challenge that the company faces is that the media is choked with advertisements of pharmaceutical products. Anytime one puts on his radio or turn a TV on, he is confronted with so many advertisements of pharmaceutical products from different companies. This has made the system to be choked with so many advertisements of different kinds. It has therefore become very difficult for prospective customers to adopt a particular product. This has affected the company's communications in terms of its TV and Radio advertisements.

5.8 Strategies Adopted to circumvent the Challenges facing the Company The study revealed that the pharmaceutical industry is very competitive and as such organisations operating in the industry resort to many strategies to attract new customers and also to retain existing ones. The industry also experiences the influx of foreign firms that are well established internationally and have the resources to break the competition in the industry. In order to withstand the new wave of competition, which, invariably, calls for management to improve on its position in the industry, Ernest Chemist has adopted effective policies aimed at improving service quality. These strategies include organizational restructuring, emphasis on customer service, customer retention strategies, improvement in processes and procedures through information technology, modernizing the internal business environment, prompt processing and supply of customers' demands, repositioning of the company, among others. By so doing, Ernest Chemist has enhanced its effort in marketing its products.

Due to the nature of the job, especially, with the selling and communicating the products of the company to health officers, management generally recruits males, who go to the public for prospecting for new customers and educating health officers on the products of the company. There is, also, well-equipped monitoring team, who makes sure those pharmaceutical outlets that sells the company's products sell according to the requirements of the company. The company also had marketing personnel who visit the various pharmaceutical outlets to see how the products of the company are faring.

One of the main strategies of the company was to develop a framework within which reliable information can be collected and analysed such as added value per employee (pharmacists and marketers), productivity and measures of employees' behaviour towards both doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers, licensed chemical sellers and customers and prospective customers and benefits of the company's products to the customers of the customers.

For any organization in an intense competitive industry, investment in training and developing employees are the means of attracting and retaining human capital, as well as getting better returns from those investments. These returns are expected to be improvements in performance, productivity, flexibility and the capital to innovate that should result from enlarging the skill base and increasing levels to knowledge and competence. This proposes that, sustainable competitive advantage is attained when the firm has a human resource pool that cannot be imitated or substituted by its rivals. Management has therefore adopted a strategy whereby it conducts consistent training for

pharmacists and marketers who markets the company's products. Training could assume various forms, including classroom training, mentoring, cross–training, business meetings, team meetings, skilled–based workshops and seminars, job rotation, and job enlargement and enrichment.

One major challenge that Ernest Chemist encounters was that some people bought pharmaceutical products over the counter without being prescribed by a doctor. Those people might not know the actual dosage of those products and this can cause an abuse of the drug. The company had therefore liaised with other pharmaceutical firms to embark on massive campaign against the abuse of drugs. They organises campaigns and educational programmes to people on the usage of drugs and the effects of drug abuse.

Another challenge that the company faced was that of the media being choked with TV and Radio advertisements of pharmaceutical products. The company had realised that brochures and web sites can also show customers the work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure good service delivery and in the selling of a company's products. The company had therefore developed a web site that customers could freely access and channel their grievances and receive response from the company. It was further found out that, the company holds departmental meetings in discussing market trends, changes in market trends, how to increase profitability and striving to achieve competitive edge in the industry. Management had also realised that the role of marketing is, shifting from selling and telling to genuine involvement with customers through communication and sharing knowledge. Therefore the most important contribution the marketing department can make

is to be exceptionally clever in getting everyone else in the organization to practise

marketing communication. Again, management has realised that there must be continuity

and consistency for effective communication, and that communication skills are vital to the

development of effective communication.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter captures the summary, conclusion and the recommendations of the study. The chapter summarizes the results of the findings and makes recommendations to enhance communications in the sale of pharmaceutical products.

6.2 Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings are captured below.

6.2.1 Marketing communication strategy adopted by Ernest Chemist

The marketing communication strategy adopted by Ernest Chemist was that the company's main common approaches to educating customers, is to show service delivery in actions and the end results of this should be the quality of services offered by Ernest Chemists, which should begin with the company's marketing personnel and pharmacist having good relations with doctors, pharmacists, nurses, health officers, and licensed chemical sellers and educating them about the effectiveness of the company's products and conditions in the products offering. The company also organised conferences to educate its target group on the company's product offerings and its effectiveness, to be able to administer and recommend the products well. The company had also realised that advertising, brochures and web sites can also show customers the work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure good service delivery and in the selling of a company's products. The company had

therefore developed a web site that customers could freely access and channel their grievances and receive response as such.

6.2.2 Effectiveness of the Marketing Communications Strategy of Ernest Chemist

The findings suggest that, greater percentage of the customers indicated that Ernest Chemist's marketing communication strategies were effective. The staff also indicated that the process was effective and emphasized further that the strategy of the company was to offer products and services to users and sellers of the company's products such that they would be satisfied and willing to recommend to prospective customers. Interview with doctors, nurses, pharmacists and licensed chemical sellers also revealed that communication between the company and customers was effective.

6.2.3 Challenges in Marketing Communication Process

The study revealed a lot of challenges that Ernest Chemist faces in its operations. These included the highly competitive industry that the company finds itself. Another challenge that the company experience is that most people buy pharmaceutical products on the counter without being prescribed by a doctor. Those people might not know the actual dosage of those products and this can cause an abuse of the drug. This might end up making the drug presumed to be ineffective by the user. Another challenge that the company faces is that the media is choked with advertisements of pharmaceutical products.

6.2.4 Measures to circumvent Communication Challenge

Ernest Chemist had adopted effective policies aimed at improving service quality. These strategies included organizational restructuring, emphasis on customer service, customer retention strategies, training of employees, improvement in processes and procedures through information technology, modernizing the internal business environment, prompt processing and supply of customers' demands, repositioning of the company, among others. By so doing, Ernest Chemist has enhanced its effort in marketing its products. The company also organises campaigns and educational programmes to people on the usage of drugs and the effects of drug abuse. It had also developed a web site that customers could freely access and channel their grievances and receive response from the company.

6.3 Conclusions

Marketing communication has encouraged new development in areas such as communication strategy, public relations, corporate identity, branding and brand-naming, packaging, media sales, sales promotions and direct response from employees. Segregation of marketing communication activities can also be seen within the structures of client organization. It is common for the integrated marketing communications functions to be the responsibility of different workforce ranging from senior staff to the lower rank which operate autonomously of each other.

In this competitive environment, indeed, every aspect of organization should not be taken for granted. This reinforces the views of Gronroos (2000), who is positive that, whatever an organisation does, it communicates something to the present prospective customer.

This brings to the fore the concept of holistic selling and marketing of the company's products, which should be based on the development, design and implementation of marketing communication programmes, processes and activities that recognize the breadth and inter-dependences. It recognizes that, everything matters in marketing and that broad, integrated perspective is often necessary. Successful marketers are those who fully satisfy their customers.

Pharmaceutical firms are thus utilizing new technology for a campaign to promote their products. Pharmaceutical companies are pairing up their broadcast commercials with interactive television, through which interested individuals can request information and be connected to the brand's web site. Viral email campaigns are increasing in popularity to communicate the existence, benefits and results of a new prescription drug product. Online games and drawings also offer a pharmaceutical company an opportunity to collect information on interested individuals, which is used to develop a marketing database. Establishing a drug's brand through direct-to-consumer marketing reaps rewards for the pharmaceutical businesses. Ross *et al.* (2008) emphasized that using interactive marketing communication in which advertising, public relations, direct marketing and other tools are utilized; pharmaceutical companies have been able to convey clear and consistent messages to consumers and doctors about each drug. This study assessed the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry.

In sum, it could be concluded that, Integrated Marketing Communication serves as a pivotal role by which firms attempt to inform, persuade and remind customers directly or indirectly about the products that they offer. In a sense, marketing communication could represent

the "voice" of the brand and is a means by which it can establish a dialogue and build relationships with customers and then encourage an upward improvement in the marketing of pharmaceutical products, since an effective integrated marketing communication could allow the company to link their product brands to other potential

clients.

6.4 Recommendations

From the summary and conclusions, the researcher wishes to put forward the following recommendations, which will go a long way to improve the marketing communication processes of the company.

The study revealed that the affordable method was used by management of Ernest Chemist for allotting budget for all sorts of communication. This means, the communication budget was determined to suit Ernest Chemist financial status. Management ignored competition and demand, and only evaluated what the company considers affordable which may itself simply be a subjective judgment. The respondents rated the method as ineffective, since it does not take into account factors like inflation, competition, and past sales. Due to the intensity of competition in the industry, it is recommended that, the amount of money allotted for marketing communication should be increased. This also calls for intense campaign in the selling of the company's products.

In addition, the channels through which communications are effected should be carefully selected, in line with the changes in environment, since the prospective customers perceives those channels as the company. Currently, face to face and direct mailing of brochures had

been identified as the highest and richest, but the internet also presents a new form of relationship building.

It is also recommended that, all the stakeholders in the pharmaceutical industry collaborate, brainstorm and find workable and lasting solution to the selling of pharmaceutical products through the application of marketing communication. This can be achieved through organization of conferences for stakeholders, particularly, firms operating in the country.

Interaction with the customer should be a key aspect of the company. It should comprise all actions designed to transform both prospective and actual customers who patronise the products of the company into active and effective customers. Feedback should be an important part of the core of interactive management. Customer feedback should be considered as a key step of the communication process and this would be the best way for the company to keep in touch with their customers' perceptions. This could be facilitated by identifying the customers' desires and supplying to those customers products and services that meet their expectations.

Principally, it can be stated that customers that are satisfied with products offered by the company will be willing to recommend Ernest chemist's products to prospective customers. This was indicated by their response to recommend the company's products to others. On the other hand customers that were unsatisfied with the products provided by the company would not be willing to recommend the company's products to prospective customers. This is an inclination for management to work on completely satisfying their

customers in order to have their complete commitment and therefore recommend the company's products to prospective customers.

It is recommended that the company organise educational programmes for staff. Educational workshops and training should be organized for pharmacist and marketing staff to ensure efficient and effective integrated marketing communication as a tool in enhancing higher sales in the company's products. Effective marketing communication must not only be limited to customers but employees as well. It is recommended that the company considers its employees as part of the change process.

In Ghana, there is a perception among Ghanaians that you can walk into any pharmaceutical outlet and buy a drug provided the licensed seller is prepared to give out the drug. There is poor communication in the pharmaceutical industry in terms of the fact that some products should not be sold out on the counter if it had not been prescribed by a medical practitioner. This perception among Ghanaians may be attributed to lack of communication, more especially, by the authorised agents, lack of information and education among Ghanaians on the effects of drug abuse. This might result in a lot of complications if the drug is not administered as required by the producers. There is therefore the need for pharmaceutical industries to close any such communication gap between users and producers and then, consistently, satisfy the value expectations of the customers. This might enable the customer become loyal to the organization. Satisfied customers, will therefore, become assets, being attached to the firms, which will result in loyalty, which in turn, will develop into long-term relationship

6.3. Suggestions for Further research

It is recommended that future researchers interested in this area should look into the area

of developing and designing an effective integrated marketing communication in the

selling of pharmaceutical products.

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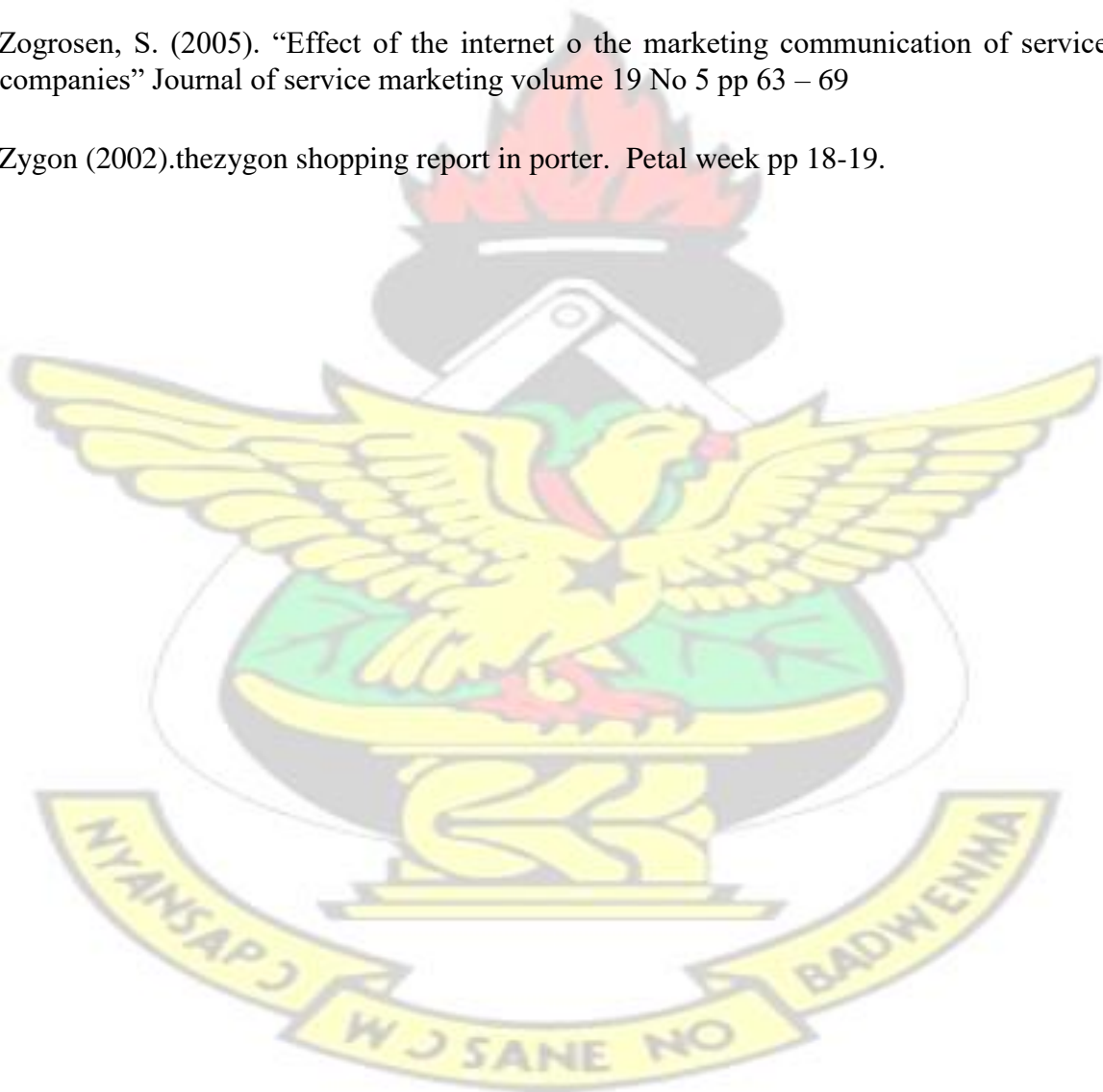
APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CUSTOMERS OF ERNEST CHEMIST

Thank you for accepting to participate in this research on assessing the effectiveness of marketing communication in the pharmaceutical industry, the objective of which is to satisfy an academic requirement only. Confidentiality of any information provided by you shall be guaranteed and your identity will not be disclosed under any circumstance. Your kind co-operation is very much appreciated.

Please tick (√) where appropriate and provide details where necessary. Thank you.

Background Information

1.   Sex
        [] Female
        [] Male

2.   Age
        [] Below 20years
        [] 21-30years
        [] 31-40years
        [] 41-50years
        [] 51-60years

3.   Highest academic attainment
        [] Masters (MA, Msc or MBA)   [] Bachelors (BA, Bsc or BBA)
         [] Higher National Diploma (HND)   [] Secondary
        [] Others, please state..

4.   For how long have you personally patronised Ernest Chemist's products?
        [] Less than 1 year
        [] 1-2 year
        [] 3-4years
        [] Over 5 years

5.   How did you get to know of product?
        [] Prescribed by a doctor
        [] Recommended by a nurse/health officer/pharmacist or chemical seller
        [] By someone who had use the product before
        [] Through TV or Radio advert

6.   How satisfied are you with products by Ernest Chemist?
       [] Very satisfied
       [] Satisfied
       [] Uncertain
       [] Dissatisfied
       [] Very dissatisfied

7.   Will you recommend the products of Ernest Chemist to a prospective customer?
       [] Yes
       [] No
8.   Please give reason(s) for your answer
       ……………………………………………………………………………
       ……………………………………………………………………………
       ……………………………………………………………………………

9.   How do you perceive the marketing communication strategies adopted by Ernest
       Chemist?
       [] Very effective
       [] Effective
       [] Uncertain
       [] Not effective
       [] Not at all effective

Marketing Communication and its effect Pharmaceutical Firms
14 Please indicate how you agree or disagree with the following statements

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
10. Effective marketing communication has an impact on performance of pharmaceutical firms					
11. Customers are attracted to a pharmaceutical company that embark on massive marketing communication					
12. Marketing communication procedures of Ernest chemist have contributed to the performance of the organisation					

13. Effective marketing can attract more customers to a product of a pharmaceutical firm					

14. How satisfied are you with the marketing communication strategies adopted by Ernest Chemist?
   [] Very satisfied
   [] Satisfied
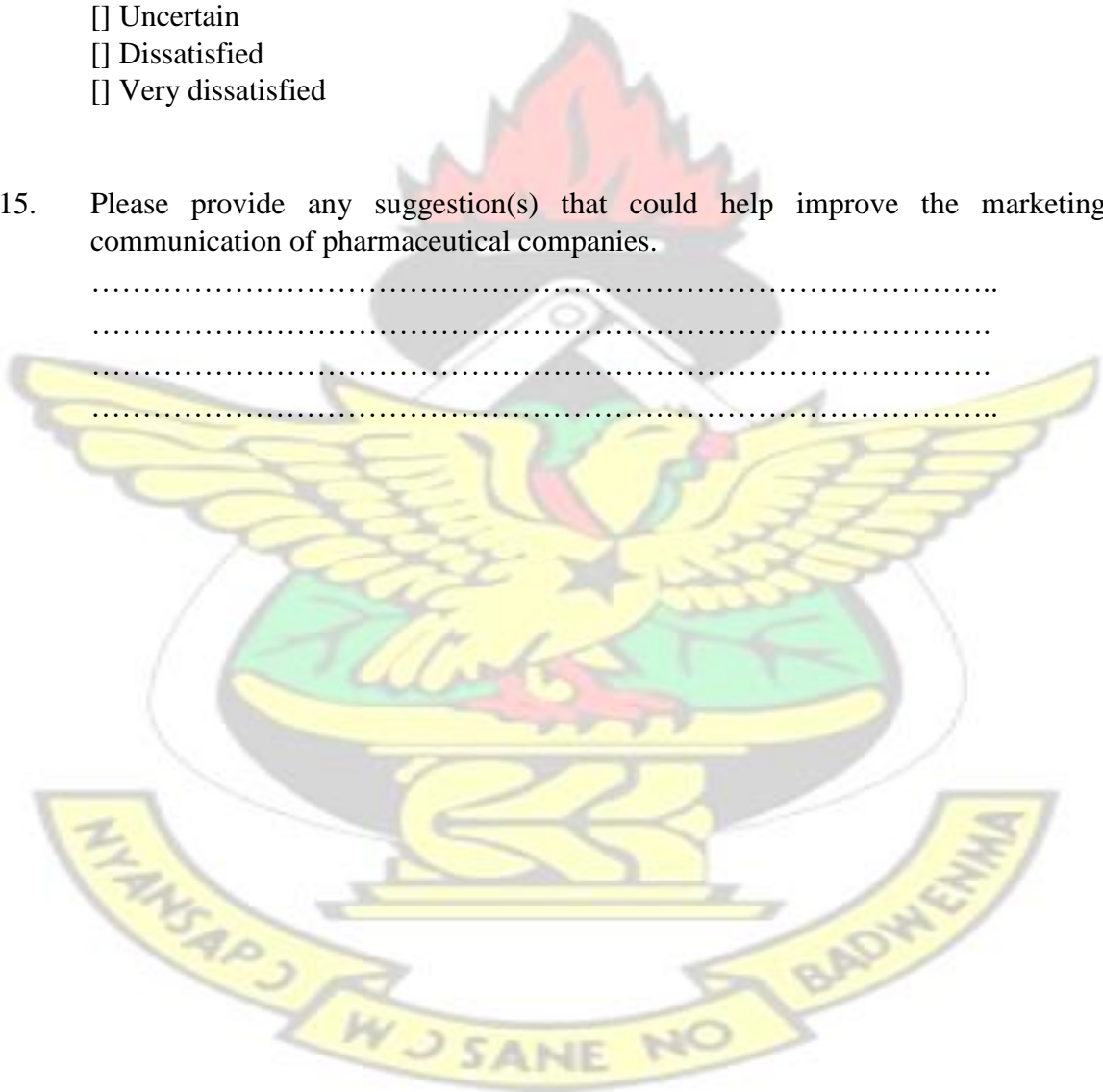   [] Uncertain
   [] Dissatisfied
   [] Very dissatisfied

15. Please provide any suggestion(s) that could help improve the marketing communication of pharmaceutical companies.
   …………………………………………………………………………..
   ………………………………………………………………………….
   ………………………………………………………………………….
   …………………………………………………………………………..

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAFF OF ERNEST CHEMISTS (PHARMACISTS AND MARKETING OFFICERS)

1. What is the marketing communication strategy adopted by Ernest Chemist?

2. How effective is the marketing communication strategy adopted by Ernest Chemist?

3. How do you perceive communication between marketing personnel staff of Ernest Chemist and customers who patronise the company's products?

4. How frequently does the company organize training on sales techniques, promotions and product value?

5. How do you rate the effectiveness of the Internal marketing Communication in the selling of the company's products?

6. Does the Marketing Department of Ernest Chemist interact with customers to learn how best to serve them?

7. Does the company circulate documents, mails and articles that provide information on products to customers?

8. Does the Marketing Department disseminate data on customer satisfaction at all levels in the company on a regular basis?

9. How often does Management organize educational programmes on its products?

10. How often do you interact and educate customers on the benefits, conditions and other implications fn your products?

11. How do you rate the budget allotted for marketing communications?

12. What challenges do management face in its marketing communication process?

13. Please provide recommendations for effective marketing communication process?

APPENDIXIII

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DOCTORS, PHARMACISTS, NURSES, HEALTH OFFICERS AND CHEMICAL SELLERS

1. In your opinion, how do you perceive the marketing communications strategy adopted by Ernest Chemist?

2. How do you perceive communication between marketing personnel and staff of Ernest Chemist and customers who patronise the company's products?

3. How frequently does the company organize forums to educate stakeholders of their products?

4. How do you rate the effectiveness of the marketing communication process adopted by Ernest Chemists in selling their products?

5. How often does Ernest Chemists organize educational programmes on its products?

6. How often does marketing personnel of Ernest Chemist interact and educate customers on the benefits, conditions and other implications of their products?

7. How do you assess the effectiveness of the marketing communication process used by Ernest Chemist to market their products?

8. Please provide recommendations for effective marketing communication process?

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