

Marketing Communication Drivers and Herbal Drugs Brand Switching among Retirees in Southwest Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated how marketing communication drivers influence herbal drugs brand switching among retirees in Southwest Nigeria. Specifically, sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling were tested on brand switching. The study employed a survey research design and Linear Multiple Regression to analyze the data. The findings revealed that all the explanatory variables namely: sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling have positive effects on herbal drugs brand switching and all of the variables were found to be statistically significant on herbal drugs brand switching as all their P-values were found to be less than 0.05 level of significance. The study recommended among other things that sales promotion strategies should be actively used to drive the demand for new brands. Thus, it was concluded that sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling, all have positive and statistically significant effects on brand switching.

KEYWORDS: Marketing Communications, Personal Selling, Direct Marketing, Sales Promotion, Brand Switching.

1. INTRODUCTION

The growing number of retirees in South West Nigeria is drastically changing how people in the region consume health care, especially when it comes to herbal medicine. This population is increasingly turning to traditional herbal treatments, which have long been a mainstay of regional healthcare practices, to treat chronic conditions like diabetes, arthritis, and hypertension (Adebisi & Umar, 2023). Nevertheless, retirees have a number of obstacles that impair their capacity to make knowledgeable purchasing decisions, even in light of the deeply held beliefs and cultural legacy connected to herbal medicine.

The proliferation of false information regarding herbal medications is one of the main problems. Regarding the effectiveness, safety, and quality of different herbal medications, retirees are frequently inundated with contradicting information. Because they might not completely believe the claims provided by producers, this can cause them to be skeptical and hesitant when making purchases (Morrison et al., 2021). Inadequate knowledge of these items may also lead to improper use or dependence on inefficient therapies, which would ultimately jeopardize their health and well-being.

Furthermore, retirees' opinions of herbal treatment are greatly influenced by their cultural views; although many recognize the advantages of herbal therapies, there are also common misconceptions about how effective they are in comparison to conventional therapy (Onyango, 2014). Successful IMC tactics that take into account these cultural quirks may improve how herbal medications are viewed and promote wise purchasing choices.

Despite a very broad attention given to marketing communication in the literature, the attentions were given to its mix were focused on non-herbal products and carried out outside the Southwestern part of Nigeria with a focus on other respondents different from retirees. Adewale, Adeniran and Oluyinka (2019) examined the effects of personal selling and marketing on firm's sales growth; Ahmad, Mehmood, Ahmed, Mustafa, Khan and Yasmeen (2021) investigated the impact of sales promotion on consumers buying behaviour in Pakistan, Mackenzie and Lutz (2016) carried out an empirical examination of structural antecedents towards the ads in advertising pre-testing context while Mehta and Sivadas (2021) considered direct marketing on the internet, an empirical assessment of consumer attitude. Amongst the few considerations, the authors had divergent opinions and conclusions on what the effect of marketing communication messages could be. Most importantly, no

consideration has been given to the subject matter with a focus on herbal drugs brand awareness among retirees in South Western part of Nigeria. This has remained a prominent question yet to be answered in the literature. Thus, a need to investigate the effect of marketing communication drivers on herbal drugs brand switching among retirees in South West Nigeria.

Research Objectives and Hypotheses

The broad objective of this study is to investigate the effects of marketing communication drivers on herbal drugs brand switching among retirees in Southwest Nigeria with a focus on personal selling, Direct marketing and public relations and the hypotheses were stated in their null forms

- i. Personal selling does not significantly affect herbal drugs' brand switching among retirees in South West Nigeria
- ii. Direct marketing does not significantly affect herbal drugs' brand switching among retirees in South West Nigeria
- iii. Sale promotion does not significantly affect herbal drugs' brand switching among retirees in South West Nigeria

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarifications

Personal Selling

Personal selling is the personal communication between a company's sales force and customers for the purpose of making sales and building customer relationships, according to Kotler & Armstrong (2014). The practice dates back to ancient Greece. The Industrial Revolution increased the demand for salesmen, and the first decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of modern personal selling. In Great Britain, the Industrial Revolution started in the 18th century. Because of this, local economies were no longer able to support themselves, and it became more important to find new consumers to purchase the mass-produced goods. It was the beginning of the traveling salesperson. The main method of sending customers paid personal communications is through salespeople. The relationship-oriented consultative style approach to personal selling has become more popular in the early 21st century.

Personal selling is a vast area of marketing that is necessary for any marketing firm to remain in business. Personal selling, which involves one-on-one engagement with an audience that receives rapid reaction, is not taken into account by the majority of marketing organizations nowadays. Personal selling must be carefully thought out in order to succeed in today's fiercely competitive industry and attract more clients. According to Nasiru (2014), the selling strategy's methods are implemented through a procedure. Personal selling, also referred to as persuasion (i.e., convincing others to purchase your idea), is the process of persuading individuals to do something; their behaviors are altered along with their thoughts. Every sales presentation needs to persuade people because they are motivated by their desire for the advantage you provide. Personal selling is a dynamic process that involves direct contact between a company's salesperson and potential customers through written correspondence, in-person meetings, or telephone conversations. Adebabay (2022) further defined personal selling as the process of a salesperson or woman negotiating the sale of a company's goods or services.

Personal selling is face-to-face presentation by a representative from the firm to make sales and build customer relationships, according to Yousif (2016). Personal selling is particularly secure when selling to customers and resellers. Instant feedback is made possible by face-to-face communication. Representatives can show the consumer the product or service, persuade them of its worth, and, if successful, clinch the deal (Yousif, 2016).

Direct Marketing

Direct marketing, on the other hand, focuses on the customer. Three primary tasks are carried out using client information, which is typically stored in databases:

- 1) analyze consumer data,
- 2) create a marketing plan, and
- 3) put the plan into action to get direct feedback from customers (Karaxha, Tolaj, & Abazi, (2016).

One essential component of direct marketing is the analysis of consumer purchase patterns using databases (Stone & Jacobs 2014). Targeting and segmentation are just two of the many direct marketing applications that database analysis encompasses. The creation and execution of strategies entail the interactive use of advertising media to prompt a prompt shift in consumers' purchasing habits. To put it another way, the goal of these activities is to learn about the preferences of the customers so that marketers can specifically plan any future interactive approach to the customers based only on their demands (Karaxha, Tolaj, & Abazi, (2016).

Direct marketing contacts customers directly, bypassing middlemen, in an effort to acquire and retain them. Accordingly, direct marketing is the dissemination of goods, information, and promotions with the goal of engaging customers in interactive contact (Jobber and Lancaster, 2022). In 2022, the phrase "direct marketing" was coined. Lester Wunderman, an American pioneer, came up with this concept. The process of responding to customers directly is known as direct marketing (Baker, 2022). Direct marketing is a relevant process that involves trade, research, conversion, and upkeep through various sales channels and direct customer relations. Relational marketing, the research process, conversion and maintenance, information and control at the person level, and advertisements as a direct response are the four components of this description (Miglautsch & Bauer, 1992). One strategy that has rapidly grown in the American economy is direct marketing, which allows businesses to speak with customers directly. Direct mail is only one aspect of direct marketing. It involves a variety of tasks, including database administration, direct sales, telemarketing, and advertising via the internet, direct mail, and numerous other channels (Belch & Belch, 2018). Although direct marketing has always been a significant component of marketing campaigns, only large corporations have been able to use it due to its high cost. However, businesses have been able to reduce costs and boost efficiency by employing email in the direct consumer market and by increasing the number of internet users (Stokes, 2014). Although direct marketing is not an event, it is a very successful marketing process that includes tasks like forecast analysis, list compilation, audience campaign development and execution, and the endeavor to complete analytical marketing tasks. Direct marketing is being used by the majority of the world's top businesses, and the majority of advertising agencies have a direct marketing section (Subramanian, 2022).

Sales Promotion

Agbonifoh, Nnolim, and Nkamnebe (2022) define sales promotion as a direct enticement that provides distributors, sales representatives, or final customers with an additional value or incentive for the product. This makes it clear that sales promotion should target the sales team, intermediaries, and final customer. Tools for consumer promotion (such as coupons, samples, prizes, cash refunds, price packs, warranties, demonstrations, and contests), trade promotion (such as purchases, freebies, merchandise, cooperative advertising, advertising and display allowances, and dealer sales contests), and sales force promotion (such as bonuses, contests, and sales rallies) are all included in sales promotion. According to Tandoh and Sarpong (2022), sales promotion is a set of tools and incentives, usually brief, intended to encourage customers or businesses to buy a specific good or service more quickly. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), sales promotion also includes a variety of short-term tactics and incentives intended to encourage customers or businesses to buy a specific good or service more quickly. Any additional incentive used by manufacturers, retailers, and even non-profit organizations to temporarily alter a brand's perceived worth or price is also referred to as sales promotion (Gilbert & Jackaria, 2014). For instance, there are numerous promotions in the market that provide discounts of up to 50%, as well as numerous other programs aimed at luring buyers to purchase particular goods. These incentives, which might include free samples, gifts, discount coupons, demonstrations, shows, and competitions, are all provided by manufacturers or dealers in an effort to boost sales of their products. All of these actions typically encourage consumers to make larger purchases, which boosts product sales.

According to Kotler (2014), sales promotion is defined as a different set of inducement tools, usually short-term, planned to encourage more rapid and/or superior purchase of specific or all consumers' products. According to Gupta (1988), the word "sales promotion" encompasses a wide range of selling incentives and strategies intended to have immediate or long-term effects on sales (Gilbert & Jackaria, 2014). Tandoh and Sarpong (2022) questioned the notion that sales promotions may be droopily characterized as "extraordinary provisions." However, it is debatable whether or not sales promotions encourage people to buy more merchandise than they otherwise would (Gilbert & Jackaria, 2014). Although some writers disagree, others agree that sales promotions increase massive purchases, which in turn generate large revenue (Tandoh & Sarpong, 2022). Any inducement utilized by a seller to encourage trade and/or customers to buy a brand and to convince the transaction force to trade it insistently is referred to as a sales promotion. One of the most effective tools after advertising that increases sales volume is sales promotion (Tandoh & Sarpong, 2022)

One tactic to get people to try or purchase more of a product or service is promotion. Sales rise, more materials are consumed, and new clients are drawn in as a result. With the primary goal of generating an instant sale, sales promotion is thus a direct inducement that provides the sales force, distributors, or final customer with an additional value or incentive for the product (Gilbert & Jackaria, 2014). One strategy to encourage customers to try a product or service or make additional purchases is sales promotion. Increased sales, a greater utilization of materials, and the attraction of new customers are the results of promotion. Price promotions, for instance, are brief price reductions offered to customers or increases in supplies. The feature is that the shop would mark down

a certain percentage or amount of money saved on the goods or services (Agbonifoh, Nnolim, & Nkamnebe, (2022)).

Brand Switching

Research has shown that brand loyalty positively contributes to the long-term sustainability of a brand (Howell, 2014). However, fluctuations in brand loyalty can lead to brand switching, where consumers' willingness to purchase a particular brand varies. This stance is supported by Trivedi and Morgan (2014) and Klein (2022), who provided examples of loyal customers switching to competing brands. Factors influencing brand switching often include both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, such as the desire for variety or novelty and dissatisfaction with brand attributes. Additionally, curiosity can drive consumers to explore other brands and when a brand fails to meet expectations, customers are more inclined to switch (Van Trijp et al., 2014). Young adults, in particular, are more likely to switch brands due to budget constraints (Ness et al., 2022; Dick et al., 2014). Several studies have identified key factors like price, variety, and packaging as influencing brand-switching behavior (Abendoth, 2022; Shukla, 2014).

Brand loyalty is often assessed through brand preference, which indicates a consumer's choice of a specific brand amidst competing options. Consumers with brand loyalty will generally remain with their preferred brand but may opt for substitutes if their preferred brand is unavailable. Brand recognition, often linked with a brand franchise, is essential for maintaining market presence and loyalty. Experiences with a brand shape consumer attitudes, reinforcing loyalty. Additionally, consumers tend to align their brand choices with personal identity, which strengthens their loyalty and inclination to repurchase the same brand.

The process of building brand preference typically involves first entering the consumer's consideration set, then working to become their preferred choice. Preferences start forming early in life, and as they grow, consumers develop a set of favored brands within any product category. This preference set, typically comprising four or five favored brands, includes those that consumers are most likely to consider when making a purchase decision (Zuckermann, 1979).

Various factors such as price, promotions, and product availability heavily influence a brand's position in a consumer's preference set. When competing brands are equally available and priced, a brand's relevance to consumers becomes crucial. With the current market offering consumers numerous choices and extensive information, brand loyalty becomes increasingly challenging to maintain. Therefore, brands must not only meet but also exceed consumer expectations and deliver on their promises to build and retain loyalty. This involves developing a vigilant brand management strategy to keep the brand high in consumers' preference hierarchy (Morgan, 2014).

Brand loyalty is essential for a brand's sustainability, but maintaining it in a competitive market requires continuous effort and adaptability. When consumers perceive that their needs or preferences are not being met, they are likely to consider alternatives. Ehrenberg's (1988) skepticism about the permanence of brand loyalty reflects a realistic perspective on consumer behavior: loyalty can be temporary and influenced by various internal and external factors.

Intrinsic motivations, such as a desire for novelty or variety, drive consumers to explore other brands, challenging brand loyalty. This idea aligns with McAlister and Pessemier's (1982) findings that choices and variety act as primary motivators in switching behavior. Curiosity, a significant factor in consumer psychology, also plays a role. If a brand fails to maintain consumer interest or adequately differentiate itself, it risks being replaced in the consumer's preference set by more appealing alternatives.

3. THEORETICAL REVIEW

The Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of Reasoned action, which is operationalized in the expanded Fishbein model, provides a much simplified perspective on consumer behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This model has demonstrated remarkable heuristic utility in consumer behavior research and has been the focus of significant empirical validation. It is congruent with cognitivist thinking. According to the core hypothesis, purpose comes before behavior and is caused by a weighted combination of subjective norms—attitudes imposed by referent groups—and attitudes toward behavior. People who have a high degree of volitional control and make well-reasoned decisions among options are modeled by the theory of reasoned action (TORA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Over the course of several papers, Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen created and explained TORA. The Fishbein-Ajzen behavioral intents model, also referred to as the I-B model or the expanded model, is a development

The AIDA Model

The AIDA model, introduced by St. Elmo Lewis in 1898, represents a core marketing theory designed to guide advertisement strategies based on consumer psychology. The acronym AIDA stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, describing a sequence of stages that potential consumers typically go through during their interaction with marketing content. This model is crucial in modern marketing, helping advertisers structure campaigns in a way that aligns with how consumers perceive and respond to advertisements. As Mackey (2016) explains, AIDA begins with creating Awareness, focusing on consumer needs. The next stage, Interest, involves engaging consumers by emphasizing benefits over mere product features. Desire follows, where marketers aim to convince consumers that a product or service fulfills their needs, leading to Action—the ultimate goal where the consumer purchases or engages with the product. This approach aligns marketing efforts with customer-focused objectives, ensuring that each step is oriented towards moving the consumer closer to making a purchase decision (Li & Yu, 2014).

Empirical Review of Relevant Literature

The impact of sales promotion dimensions on sales volume was examined by Amusat, Adejumo, and Ajiboye (2014), specifically focusing on the industrial sector in Ibadan, southwestern Nigeria. Data from eighty (80) respondents was gathered using a structured questionnaire and a straightforward random sampling technique. The data was analyzed using regression analysis using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20. According to the results, sales volume was jointly predicted by sales promotion elements such as bonuses, coupons, free samples, price promotions, and premiums ($F(5,74) = 2.261$; $R^2 = 0.13$; $P < .05$). Together, the predictor variables accounted for 13% of the variation in sales volume; the remaining 87% may have been caused by unrelated factors including brand name, pricing, publicity, advertising, and product quality. The administration of Nigeria's manufacturing sector should allocate more funds for sales promotion and establish a more efficient department with knowledgeable employees, it was determined.

The effect of sales promotion on organizational performance in Ghana's automobile sector was evaluated by Tandoh and Sarpong (2022). The study was carried out at the retail location of PHC Motors Ghana in Accra, Ghana. The study's goals were to investigate the impact of sales promotions in the automotive industry, the relationship between sales promotions and organizational performance, and the obstacles that prevent them from being effective. The data was entirely quantitative, and the study employed a descriptive research methodology. Purposive and random sample methods were used to select thirty (30) respondents in order to accomplish this goal. SPSS was used to analyze the data that was collected from the field. The study found that sales promotions have a significant effect on PHC's organizational performance. Additionally, the majority of respondents concur that, from a management standpoint, sales promotions boost resellers' efficacy and demand while also offering additional incentives for purchases. The majority of sales promotions offer additional incentives for purchases and boost the efficacy and demand of resellers, according to the study that examined the relationship between sales promotions and organizational performance. Effective sales marketing has been shown to boost sales. Therefore, in order to boost their market share and profitability, the study suggested that PHC Motors' management implement more planned sales marketing.

Allaham, M. (2022). The effect of Sales promotion tools on brand image. In the study, one of the best components of the promotional mix that businesses frequently use when they are in highly competitive marketplaces is sales promotion. The purpose of the study was to determine whether sales promotions help businesses keep customers and to find out how consumers view the advantages of certain marketing strategies. The retail industry is currently very important to the Indian economy. The business launches a number of sales promotion initiatives in the marketplace, which draws customers and encourages them to buy the goods. One hundred clients were chosen using a convenience sampling technique and a descriptive study methodology. Through developmental effects on consumer sales promotion in the FMCG industry, the researcher in this work attempts to determine the expectations of consumers regarding sales promotions.

Olumoko, Abass, and Dansu (2014) investigated how personal selling contributes to higher customer satisfaction in the Nigerian insurance industry. 110 (one hundred and ten) respondents were chosen at random from a selection of insurance companies using a descriptive cross-sectional survey study design. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used for data processes, and the independent T-test was employed to assess the hypotheses. The results showed that the most effective marketing communication method that Nigerian businesses could use is the personal selling strategy. It can also be utilized to enhance the industry's reputation.

Adesoga (2016) investigated the value of personal selling in a few Nigerian bottling companies located in Lagos State. The survey research approach was used. Employees in marketing roles at particular organizations made up the study population. Selected samples were given a questionnaire, and the weighted mean was used to assess the significance of personal selling. According to the study, personal selling promoted relationship building, encouraged innovative selling, and effectively represented the business to clients. The study came to the conclusion that, even with the rise of digital marketing, personal selling was still important and a key component of successful marketing campaigns today.

Yousif (2016) sought to determine how personal selling affected young people's clothing-buying habits. Hypotheses were developed and tested on a sample of the target population consisting of 289 young men and women in order to meet the study's goals. Five dimensions made up the questionnaire design (32). Four of the dimensions were based on the personal traits of salespeople and how they display their goods, the fifth was about the characteristics of clothing stores, the promotion that salespeople do to sell clothing, and the fifth was about the purchasing habits of young people. According to the study's findings, 99.1% of women and 76.7% of men prefer to buy clothes from retail establishments. According to the sampling, retail salespeople are truthful when interacting with consumers, but they lack the capacity to bargain. They don't provide clients discounts, they don't have the necessary sales skills, and they don't contribute anything to boosting sales.

Karaxha, Tolaj, and Abazi (2016) investigated direct marketing and its role in consumer relations. The study considered direct marketing as crucial for building strong client relationships in order to provide new goods and services and to increase revenues in the interim. Direct marketing is incredibly versatile and provides instant feedback by using a variety of methods, including emails, phone calls, fairs, festivals, and other methods to contact directly with customers. This paper is divided into two sections. The first part reviews the literature on direct marketing, and the second part focuses on research done through company surveys that involved interviewing the director, general manager, marketing manager, and managers of other departments who have knowledge of the company's marketing.

Research Design

The study used a survey methodology known as the descriptive technique, which uses a questionnaire to gather data from participants about all of the explanatory variables being examined. It is generally accepted that this approach works best for gathering information about experiences, emotions, motivations, and thoughts that are hard to witness directly. Adoption of surveys is also seen to lessen the tendency toward manipulation.

Population of the Study

According to Nigerian Union of Pensioners (2026), there are 145,232 retirees in the study's population. Taking into account a five-year life expectancy, these are the current retirees in Southwest Nigeria as disclosed by the pension boards and the Nigerian Union of Pensioners of several states. In particular, the population consists of 145,232 pensioners, including 19,080 from Ogun State, 18,600 from Ekiti State, 19,480 from Osun State, 24,740 from Oyo State, 39,398 from Lagos State, and 23,934 from Ondo State. This was based on the data the researcher collected from the Nigeria Union of Pensioners.

Table 1: Population of the Study

States	Number of Retirees
Ekiti state:	18,600
Ogun state:	19,080
Osun state:	19,480
Oyo state:	24,740
Ondo	23,934
Lagos	39,398
Total	145,232

Source: Nigerian Union of Pensioners 2026

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Arising from the population, the sample for the study, using Yamane (1967) is 398 respondents. This is considered to be the lowest level of acceptable responses to maintain a confidence level of 95% and a 5% error level. The sample size is arrived at through a formula developed by Yamane (1967) as stated below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

For the population of 81,900, the sample size is computed below

$$n = \frac{145,232}{1 + 145,232(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{145,232}{1 + 145,232(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{145,232}{1 + 363.08}$$

$$n = \frac{145,232}{364.08}$$

$$n = 398$$

In order to ensure appropriate administration of research questionnaire for this study, heterogeneous proportionate sampling technique was used. This is because the respondents are not in the same state. The respondents in the Southwest States are considered to be influenced by different factors. This means their experiences are influenced by heterogeneous factors. The population was grouped as:

$$n = \frac{N!n!}{N}$$

Table 2: Sample Size for each State

States	Computations	Sample Size
Ekiti state:	$n = \frac{18600(398)}{145,232}$	50
Ogun state:	$n = \frac{19080(398)}{145,232}$	53
Osun state:	$n = \frac{19480(398)}{145,232}$	54
Oyo state:	$n = \frac{24740(398)}{145,232} =$	68
Ondo	$n = \frac{23934(398)}{145,232} =$	65
Lagos	$n = \frac{39,398(398)}{145,232} =$	108
Total		398

Source: Author's Computation, 2026

Research Instrument

Data were this study shall be gathered from primary sources by the use of a well structured questionnaire of four (4)-point Likert scale, adapted from Onyengo (2014) and Proctor & Kitchen (2022). which shall be divided into six sections of A – F. Section A gathered information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Sections B,C and D focused on marketing communications and herbal drugs brand awareness variables.

Method of Data Analysis and Model Specifications

Analysing data for this study, a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics shall be employed. The descriptive statistics that shall be employed include Frequency Table, Charts and Percentages while the inferential statistics employed was Linear Multiple Regression Technique

Model Specification

$$\text{BRANS} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ PSELL} + \beta_2 \text{ DIRMA} + \beta_3 \text{ SPRO} + \epsilon \dots\dots\dots 3.2$$

Where BRANS = Brand Switching

PSELL = Personal Selling

DIRMA = Direct Marketing

SPRO = Sales Promotion

β_0 = Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ are the coefficients of the explanatory variables

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Administered Questionnaire

Table 3: Distribution of Questionnaire by States

S/N	States	Nos Distributed	Nos Returned	Return Rate
1	Lagos	108	103	25.9
2	Ogun	53	52	13.1
3	Oyo	68	66	16.6
4	Osun	54	51	12.8
5	Ondo	65	62	15.6
6	Ekiti	50	50	12.6
TOTAL		398	384	96.6

Source: Researcher's Data Output (2026).

A total of 398 questionnaires were distributed across six states, resulting in 384 completed and returned responses. This impressive return rate of 96.48% signifies a strong level of engagement from the retiree population, which is critical for ensuring the validity and reliability of the study's findings. Such a high response rate suggests that retirees are not only interested in the topic but also actively engaged in discussions surrounding herbal drug usage influenced by marketing communications. Examining the individual states reveals noteworthy variations in return rates that may reflect the effectiveness of IMC in influencing purchasing behaviour. In Lagos, 108 questionnaires were distributed, with 103 returned, resulting in a return rate of 95.37%. This significant level of participation from retirees in this urban center indicates that integrated marketing communications may resonate well with this demographic, highlighting their awareness and interest in herbal drugs. Similarly, Ogun state exhibited a remarkable return rate of 98.11%, with 53 distributed and 52 returned. Such a high response rate suggests that the IMC strategies implemented in Ogun may be particularly effective in capturing the attention of retirees, potentially encouraging them to explore herbal drugs.

The state of Oyo also demonstrated strong engagement, with a return rate of 97.06% from 68 distributed questionnaires, of which 66 were returned. This high participation rate implies that the integrated marketing communications have likely made a positive impact on the retirees' perceptions and behaviours regarding herbal drug purchases. In Osun, the return rate was slightly lower at 94.44%, with 54 distributed and 51 returned. While this rate is still commendable, it suggests that there may be specific factors at play influencing the level of interest among retirees in this state, warranting further investigation. Ondo showed a similar trend with a return rate of 95.38% from 65 distributed and 62 returned, reinforcing the overall pattern of high engagement across the states. Meanwhile, Ekiti achieved a notable 100% return rate, with all 50 distributed questionnaires returned. This complete participation indicates a particularly strong inclination towards herbal drugs among retirees in Ekiti, which may be indicative of effective marketing strategies that resonate deeply with this demographic.

Test of Research Hypotheses

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis results for the effect of integrating marketing communication on herbal drugs brand switching among retirees in Southwest, Nigeria.

Independent Variable	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficients	T	P-Value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.055	.566		3.629	.000
Sales Promotion	.631	.039	.190	4.233	.000
Direct Marketing	.118	.053	.108	2.233	.026
Personal Selling	.538	.054	.474	9.897	.000
R = 0.624			Adj. R ² = 0.382		
R ² = 0.390			F = 48.270 (0.000)		
Std Err. = 1.33101					
Dependent Variable: Brand Switching					

Source: Data Output, 2026

From Table 4.8, the model summary values of the regression analysis of the effects marketing communication drivers (sales promotion, direct marketing, and personal selling) on herbal drugs brand switching among retirees in Southwest Nigeria with coefficient value (R) = 0.624 showed a positive linear relationship among the dependent and independent variables of the model. The reported R^2 value of 0.382 signifies that the regression model explained 38.2% variance in herbal drugs brand switching among retirees in Southwest, Nigeria while 61.8% changes were accounted for by other extraneous dimensions beyond the scope of the model. The regression coefficients of the independent variables show that 1% change in sales promotion will lead to 63.1% change in brand switching; 1% change in direct marketing will lead to 11.8% change in brand switching while 1% change in personal selling will lead to 53.8% change in herbal drugs brand switching among retirees in Southwest Nigeria. All coefficients revealed positive relationship with herbal drugs brand switching among retirees in Southwest, Nigeria

Testing the hypotheses with consideration of the P-values of the independent variables, sales promotion has a P-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis that sales promotion does not significantly affect brand switching is therefore rejected.

The P-value of direct marketing is 0.026 which is less than 0.05 level of significant. As a result of this, the null hypothesis that direct marketing does not significantly affect brand switching is rejected

Finally, the P-value of personal selling is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis that personal selling does not significantly affect brand switching is rejected.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Since personal selling significantly affects brand switching among retirees, it is recommended that herbal drug companies invest more in marketing communication. In particular, personal selling, should be prioritized by employing dedicated sales personnel to directly interact with retirees.
- ii. The significant positive effect of sales promotion on brand switching suggests that these strategies should be actively used to drive demand for new brands.
- iii. Since direct marketing significantly increases brand switching among retirees, herbal companies should focus on this tactics to communicate the existence of their brands to customers in this circle that have the tendency to switch from their existing brand to new ones.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concluded marketing communication messages have statistically significant effects on herbal drugs brand awareness among retirees in South West Nigeria.

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