**Journal of Journalism, Media Science & Creative Arts**
ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 3, Issue 2 Page 134-155, December 31, 2023


# Audience Perception Of Medical Advertisements On FM Radio

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## Abstract

Many consumers use the medicines they need without consulting any doctor or health professional in Pakistan, due to which there is not only an unnecessary use and wastage of medicines but also these unnecessary medicines have serious effects on the health of consumers. FM radio is a popular medium among the people with low SES specifically. Medical advertisements can be frequently heard on almost any radio channel in Pakistan. The objectives of this study were to examine the audience perception of the medical/health advertisements on FM Radio, their perception and procurement behaviors. A thorough quantitative survey concluded that audiences not only consider radio as an authentic medium, also they believe that the content of medical advertisements is useful for them. They were willing to purchase the advertised drugs without any doubt in their mind and considered it safe as they believe in authenticity of the medium advertised on.

*Keywords: Drug Advertisements on Radio, medical advertisements on radio, radio audience awareness on medical advertisements, illegal drugs sale through radio*

## Introduction:

The use of medicines is increasing day by day in Pakistan because a large number of consumers use the medicines they need, without consulting any doctor or health professional, due to which there is unnecessary use and wastage of medicines and on the other hand, these unnecessary medicine also have

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ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

serious effects on the health of consumers. A huge size of population in Pakistan, nearly around 25%, take medication without consulting doctor (The Dawn Newspaper's Staff Reporter, 2022). There are many reasons for this overuse, but one of the main reasons is medical advertising. Medical advertising reaches people through a variety of sources, of which FM radio is an important medium. Radio has access to more remote urban and rural areas than other sources of newspapers and television (Hemantha, Nilantha, Sajeeva, Thirupathy, & Palitha, 2022). Medical advertisements played on FM radio have a profound effect on the minds of the audience. Radio prepares the program with complete freedom to meet the needs of the audience (Anila, Wajiha, Maria, & Awais, 2021). People usually take care of their own health by purchasing medicines from any nearby medical store or pharmacy under the influence of these medical advertisements running on FM radios. Therefore, this case study examines listeners' perceptions of the practices of FM radio-enabled medical advertisements in Pakistan. This study focuses on the technique, linguistic style, tone, and appearance and message of medical advertisements played on FM radio through audience perception.

Marketing communications make extensive paid use of media to inform or familiarize the target audience through advertising, today communications are stronger and stronger and medical organizations are benefiting greatly from it. Advertising, marketing is a method of communication that uses paid media to communicate the message to a wider audience, the method that is most effective for the engagement of current and potential patients (Elrod & Fortenberry, 2020). The scope of research has become very wide, pharmaceutical companies have promoted investment in radio marketing which has led to brand awareness, increased site traffic and uncertainty in sales Pharmaceutical companies are active in their brand awareness campaigns to strengthen their

reputation (Fuld & Company) This case study illustrates that pharmaceutical FM radio campaigns can not only change the audience's perception but also create a strong demand for the items shown in the advertisement.Radio has a special importance among people due to advertisements that affect the adoption of medical and health care, the ability of radio, powerful media to influence the choice, it informs the yen about who and where they will get the necessary medical supplies or facilities. Radio is best suited for delivering audio content for businesses that cater to the local market (Petersen, 2019).

In the recent past, some radio advertisements purchased by major pharmaceuticals were unbranded, meaning they did not even mention medicines. Instead the place placed special emphasis on educating the audience about a particular disease or illness. Unbranded advertising can also be intended to be a pharmaceutical treatment for a condition that can affect consumers (Teresa, et al., 2017) . Before sending an audience to an educational website about a particular disease, the imaginative often starts buying the ad to the website, in general, "Are you suffering from (different symptoms of different diseases)? Wali was sponsored by the drug, which was intended to send listeners online to learn more about the drug, what its treatment might be and what possible side effects are. FM radio is a very standard technology whose setup budget is low and the cost of austerity is negligible. As an audio medium, it has the services of people who are powerless within the limits of reading and writing , and it is very appropriate to deliver content in local languages. For these reasons, it is perhaps not surprising that FM radio has transformed into a well-known and very large presence all over the world and, at the same time has penetrated isolated areas of the poorest undeveloped states due to , deregulating frequencies occurring in many developing countries and acknowledging that F M-Radio is a cheap and effective means of communicating issues related to medical, health, policy and distribution of

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

health services.In this age of competition, advertising is the powerful tool that not only significantly increases the number of customers, but also presents the services and products of the firm in such a way that customers are impressed and choose only these products. In the field of medicine, many groups are producing a large number of products on different grounds, during the promotion of which various techniques are used, which affect the target people to the highest level. Drug advertisements on FM radio clearly encourage the use of medicine, which is truly the basis for success in poor states and societies without medical infrastructure. Medical brands can create significant influence, brand fairness development, and sales boost by addition AM/FM radio to the broadcasting strategy (Lauren, 2019). Radio promotion of products and services in Pakistan is normal, this development played a very positive role in gaining consumer interest in order to inform, improve quality and educate the benefits compared to the sale of products.

Medical businesses, including hospitals, health centers, and pharmaceutical companies, have taken full advantage of FM radio's unique broadcasts for their advertising campaigns such as:

- Using FM radio classification to take advantage of a target audience or a particular area.
- Creating a promotional campaign to facilitate audience awareness of new facilities or products.
- Keeping the audience engaged through a celebrity or live address.
- Sponsorship is a great strategy for any brand awareness, if regular sponsorship promotions are run, such as giving a documentary, news, weather report or sponsoring a public report, brand awareness has a profound effect on the audience.

A major study has found that target audiences may agree to change their health behaviors if threats or fear appeals are imposed on them. However,

many people have rejected the appeals of fear, they believe in the deontological theory, according to which it is absolutely wrong to make someone afraid or create trouble in order to prove their point, the appeals of fear should not be so strong that they can stand in the way of personal choice. At the same time, there is another aspect, according to which if repeated messages related to health risks can cause people to suffer from indifference in the long run, even the most obvious and powerful symptoms lose their effect simply because they have been repeated again and again (Christian, 2007, pp. 7-8).

Durfeman and Wallock, (717,1993) say that the campaigns or messages for the good of the people that are heard on various media is nothing but a commercial process and its purpose is to spread its business advertising to the people.

Since herbal medicines are easily available from any medical or superstore, etc., without the supervision of a doctor or medical personality, radio advertisements of these un-prescribed medicines are commonly broadcast. These herbal medicines are also advertised through various sources, in which some professionals sell these medicines by telling the utility of these medicines while people are traveling in public transport i.e. buses etc. But most radio and television successfully market these products. The fame of radio as a supreme medium of marketing is achievement ground between herbal medicine manufacturers apparently for profitable improvements (Yangyang, 2019). Since radio has access to remote areas, it is more useful. In radio advertisements of herbal medicines, professionals very unpretentiously fake definitions of their products, which may be highly unsuitable for consumer health, but in the promotion of these medicines, most advertisers ignore this.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

**Rationale of Research**

The purpose of this study was to examine the trend of medical advertising in radio organizations, which has created a method that is very important to the audience. Medical experts in Pakistan seem to be playing a key role through FM radio in promoting and developing their services and the efficacy of medicines. With the help of this study, it will also be clear whether there is a relationship between the perception of drug advertising on FM radio and the sale and purchase of such medicines among the people of Pakistan.

FM Radio has a wide audience and is the most popular means of reaching them, when it comes to educating people about new facilities or products through medical or health care advertising campaigns, a large number of people can be reached through radio itself. Due to its affordability and informal access, radio is a very common approach of communication in Pakistan and is generally used through the crowds for entertainment and education purposes (Muhammad, Abdul, Robina, Muhammad, & Afifa, 2020). Most users prefer radio simply because it is the best medium for miscellaneous advertising, for example, when a patient sitting in his rest room listens to an advertisement related to a medicine or health care on FM radio, he is sitting at home keeping in mind the information he heard on the radio, not only. He gets access to the relevant medicine or facilities, but also easily orders it without wasting time. But while this is a big advantage of radio, there is also a big disadvantage that, when the patient hears various advertisements related to medicines on the radio, he sits at home and uses those medicines, but when one medicine does not matter, someone uses another. This happens and the situation becomes more complicated.

**Research Problem:**

Radio has been a traditional medium of infotainment for decades. The FM based community broadcast has opened new avenues of advertising products and

services to the locals. On the other hand the credibility of advertised content has also been questionable specially when it comes to the drugs and healthcare services.

This study was planned to examine the audience perception of the medical/health advertisements on FM Radio in Lahore city of Pakistan. The survey based quantitative study will further explore their perception regarding legality, access and procurement behavior.

**Research Question**

RQ1: What is audience perception of the medical/health advertisements on FM Radio?

RQ2: What is the legal status of advertised medicines/medical facilities?

RQ3: What is the effects of medical advertisements on procurement attitude and behavior of the listeners?

**Theoretical Framework**

Grounded approach was adopted for this research as evidence from the literature review was insufficient to establish a theoretical framework.

**Research Objectives**

1. To examine the audience perception of the medical/health advertisements on FM Radio.
2. To examine What is the legal status of advertised medicines/medical facilities.
3. To examine What is the effects of medical advertisements on procurement attitude and behavior of the listeners.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

1. **Testing and Analysis**:

    - The nature of the study was descriptive so hypotheses were not formulated. The study investigated three research questions. Descriptive statistics were used as per the nature of the data to measure the central tendency. Cross-tabulation technique was used to analyze and present the data.

2. **Expected Outcomes**:

    - The questionnaire was checked for reliability and is supposed to answer the research questions accordingly.

**Limitation of Research**

- Study was time and resources restraint. Data from Lahore city was focused only.
- A larger and probable sample would have given a detailed and more reliable picture of the facts.

**Literature Review**

The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan has registered a large number of herbal medicines, some of these medicines are manufactured in Pakistan while a large number are imported from foreign countries. The promotion of these herbal medicines, whether on print or electronic media, is not possible without the permission of the Po Drug Regulatory Authority, but despite this, advertisements of many unregistered herbal medicines are commonly heard on the radio and these medicines are also sold openly in the market. According to the Drug Regulatory Authority, herbal medicines should be advertised in such a way that all the information about the relevant products should be complete and clear to the general public so that health care can be easily and confident (ADVERTISEMENT OF THERAPEUTIC GOODS GUIDELINES, PHSR/GL/AD/004, 2021)

PSN & ADOM (2021) This study conducts some research on the discussion of the promotion of herbal medicines on radio. In this study, different languages, styles, and exposure to radio attention regarding the promotion of herbal medicines. He selected three types of herbal medicine ads from an FM radio channel for research purposes. These selected products included Sibor Tonic, New Kingdom Ginseng Power Capsule and News Angel Natural Capsule. The study looked at the high quality of style and communication. For the sake of theory, it reflected framing theory, in this study, discourse analysis was used in research to collect data because the relevant discussion was related to the radio propagation of herbal medicines.

Stephen (2010) published in his article about drug advertising on TV and radio may need to be more explicit about the risks consumers face. He spoke about the FDA's rules regarding medical advertising on radio and television. According to his article, if a large or clear statement is presented in a neutral manner, the FDA examines it in four ways to determine or research it.

1. Is the information presented in a language that users can easily understand?
2. Is the audio information being used capable of being understood because of its appearance feature?
3. Is the background or image drawn in the text capable of easily accessing information?
4. Does advertising include content i.e. images or sounds that are useful in diverting attention?

Salvador, Clara, & maria (2018) published their article in which they give a brief overview of a form of brand personality building, this study is an investigation into the presence and use of interpreter personality and its variants in radio advertising. In this study, 12 commercial radio stations in Spain, which had a large audience, examined the advertising content in the advertisements broadcast on these stations. Ads that included speakers had 3,890 units. People who are less famous use voices through radio, which damages the reputation of celebrities whose advertisements are being broadcast on other media.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

James & John L. (2020) published an article as, “Advertising in BMC Health Services Research, Health and Medicine the Use of Mass Media to Interact with Patients”. According to this article, advertising is an excellent communication process in delivering a large number of messages to the target audience, due to which consumers are engaged in an effective state. Due to some traditional sources, it has been taking a long time to provide services to promote labor, but in today's time, the insulation system has taken a strong and modern form. Communication to remote areas is involved in promoting health and medical services. It is important for medical advertising and those associated with it to stay connected with modern information and keep innovating in this system, so consumers will continue to perform their engagements successfully. Anila S. , Wajiha, Maria, & Awais (2021) published their article on “the impact of radio programs on audience health care in Pakistan”. The study discussed the impact of the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), also known as Radio Pakistan, in central Punjab from 2008 to 2013. This is the first study to highlight radio Pakistan's role in the economic and social development of central Punjab to promote the health of the people of Pakistan. To find out the usefulness of the programs, this study collected information from the audience and program broadcasters through surveys and interviews, which revealed the themes and nature of the programs to meet the needs of the target audience. According to who, Radio Pakistan acts like development support communication, due to which the proper planners and beneficiaries and due to which these projects are implemented and all are connected in one bond. In this study, the authors started the research through two questionnaires, of which 35 were designed for the creators of radio programs and 1,000 audience interviews. According to the content, topic, and other information presented in the programs in this study, obtained from the entries of other audiences and programs, radio works hard to exchange information between the audience and the broadcasters during its daily 18-hour broadcast (healthcare transmission) and meet the expectations of the audience. The entries obtained in this study also show that radio programs have limitations to policies and nation topics. The lack of attention of the government institutions, low budget, untrained staff and lack of research and development are the major obstacles in improving the situation of the sources.

The sixty-second ad is fine with today's outlook. Drug manufacturers declare that their medications can control symptoms that are specific and emerge under certain conditions.

Christian (2007) has published in his master's thesis, in which the advertisements used in health promotion have been welcomed in the audience. This research study investigates how fear appeal is often used in the reception of smoking-related advertisements. Thanks to this research, the process has been taken into account through consumers' ability to make choices, perceptions and understanding. Instead of examining the impact of anti-smoking messages in this project, the use of surprising and scary images can also prove to be the best appeal of fear. It's not that these stunning image ads have a different environment, but viewing and feeling ads have a greater impact than ads from other contexts and are also used in health-promoting activities. The research of this study shows that audiences undoubtedly support anti-smoking advertising but do not play a very important role in attracting audience attention, so the audience does not seem to be very sensitive to these appeals of fear. The results obtained show that using anti-smoking fear appeals are translated into the context of many sources, while identifying smokers from the media has a prominent place in the diverse way of consumers.

Salvador, Clara, & Luis M. (2020) in which they give a brief general idea of alcohol and betting radio advertising in Spain. Analysis of minor safety time slots related to media responsibility. In this study, radio advertisements related to sports betting, alcoholic beverages and betting have been analyzed in the presence of radio. It analyzed all the programs broadcast in Spain on the popular and most heard radio channels Coupe, Cadena Sur and Onda Cerro. The results of this research show that sports betting and several advertisements were clearly mentioned on these three channels. It also became clear that the safe time slot was not respected by any radio channel as alcoholic beverages and betting advertisements were broadcast between 6:00 and 21:59 pm. These results feel the need for public health advocates to control a system that is severely lacking in regulations.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

María, Juan, & Mónica (2021) in which he gives a brief impression of social responsibility and misleading advertising of health products on radio. This research study focused on professional opinions related to advertising that are from agencies. In this study, substantial results were obtained in terms of different types of responses and over-selection through health radio, as well as ethical and social responsibility associated with following the rules of professionals through a specific survey and advertising that affects health. The results showed that only 10% of them were familiar with the laws, while the remaining 90% considered it important to have laws. It should be kept in mind that a large number of professionals present in this survey should not only consider the rules and regulations necessary but also follow the rules and regulations in health promotion because most consumers believe that health advertisements in the field of advertising should be reliable and factual. However, it is not yet clear who is responsible for advertising, messaging or media in a promotion. A competent media is known to radio in such a way that the effects of misinformation are very low. The essence of this research is that the professionals of the agencies are not able to identify misleading content in health advertisements, nor do they say that radio is a medium on which misleading advertisements are high, but according to them, if the loss of the audience is seen, then health and medical advertising is a dangerous field. Abena, Clement, Florence, & Paul (2022) in which they give a short-lived impression of radio-medicine and public health in rural Ghana. In this study, research was done to test the advertising of medicines and the advertising of medical services on the radio. The factors that lead to the promotion of medicines on radio were identified and the effects of these medicines were also highlighted. In this study, 50 people from different walks of life were interviewed, who were associated with ten professional groups. These professional groups included tailors, cobblers, farmers, drivers, shopkeepers, barbers, teachers, women in the market, unemployed people and students respectively. According to the results obtained, the number of people who listen to radio only once a day is 44.0%, the number of people who listen every hour is 14.0%, people who listen to radio all day are 42.0%. Medicines that are advertised on the radio were discussed by 24% of people talking to each other about their patronage, 12% said that guardianship would be patronizing, in this 12.0% chose because of being cheap and effective, 8.0% said good, 4.0% were

satisfied by suppliers, 4.0% said there would be no significant effect, 12.0% said no special effect. 10.0% chose because they did not have time to go to the hospital, 8.0% said so because of minor solutions, 6.0% chose first aid and other symptoms, 68.0% chose because they met their criteria, but 32.0% said that the medication did not work according to their criteria. The study concluded that people use radio all day and some people discuss medication information through interaction. A large number of respondents think that they are affected by these medicines while they do not care about it. The promotion of medicines on radio needs laws and regulations, such reports were brought to the notice of the health department.

Edward, Dadson, & John (2013) in which they give a brief overview of the impact of radio advertising on the sales of herbal products in Ghana. According to him, radio has its unique popularity in both rural and urban areas due to its extensive coverage, due to which radio is known as a wonderful medium of advertising in the marketing world. These days, the promotion of herbal medicines through radio is witnessing a rise as it is expected to bring substantial commercial benefits to those manufacturing herbal medicines. The study analyzed Radio's herbal medicine ads affecting people's purchasing choices. The study was conducted by 50 people, including 10 herbal medicine sellers and 40 herbal medicine users. Answers were collected from herbal sellers through interview guides while answers were collected from customers through questionnaires. This research showed that a large number of consumers were aware of herbal products due to radio advertising, as well as other analyses showed that 60.7% of herbal product sales were due to advertising.

**Research Methodology**

The study was quantitative in nature and survey methodology was adopted. Radio listeners from Lahore city were taken as population for the study while a purposive sample of 385 respondents was drawn through sampling formula. Questionnaire was the tool of data collection which was distributed and collected both electronically and physically. Age, Education and Residence were taken as demographic variables.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

## Analyses and Interpretations

Majority of the respondents who had Up to Graduation and Masters level of education and most of them were males agreed that FM Radio is a source of useful health information. The agreed that they listened the health product advertisements on FM radio and were of the view that Information in medical advertisements is reliable. A larger number of the female respondents who had Up to Graduation level of education agreed that FM Radios follow their social responsibility on health communication. They also perceived that Radio channels follow the legal requirements regarding health communication.

Greater number of the male respondents with Graduation level of education agreed that the advertisements of health products/medicines are based on true information. While the female graduate respondents perceived that all the advertised medicines/products are registered with Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan and other legal bodies.

Slightly over half of the Graduate male respondents agreed that it is legitimate to advertise alternative or herbal products/services on radio without any approval. Many of them responded that they personally availed an advertised health service or bought an advertised health product. Male respondents with Masters level of education revealed that they aware of how to verify the legality of an advertised medicine/service, while a second majority of female respondents who had Up to Graduation level of education disagreed to that.

Similarly, most of the female graduates remained neutral when asked whether they verify the legal status (whether registered) before availing or buying any advertised health service/medicine/product, while a second majority .

Large number of the male graduate perceived that the health services/products advertised through FM radio are safe to avail/buy, but majority of them remained neutral when asked whether they should seek any expert advice before buying any advertised health service/ medicine. A second majority of male graduate respondents perceived agreed to the question. Moreover, majority of the male graduates agreed that advertised health services/products are always legal/ legitimate/registered. Female graduate respondents agreed that there is no

harm in buying advertised health service/medicine because they believe that FM radios cannot advertise harmful medicine/service. While the Male with graduate level of education disagreed to that.

**Discussion**

PSN & ADOM (2021) opined that different languages, styles, and exposure to radio attention regarding the promotion of herbal medicines. In this study, discourse analysis was used in research to collect data because the relevant discussion was related to the radio propagation of herbal medicines. The current study affirmed with PSN & ADOM (2021).

Rodero (2020) published in his article, Radio is a great tool to deal with crises. The results of this study have proved that just as radio played a role throughout Spain's history, it played a major role in dealing with this crisis during the lockdown due to the Corona epidemic. The current study revealed that the greater numbers of respondents agreed that FM Radios follow their social responsibility on health communication.

Anila S. , Wajiha, Maria, & Awais (2021) published their article on “the impact of radio programs on audience health care in Pakistan”. This is the first study to highlight radio Pakistan's role in the economic and social development of central Punjab to promote the health of the people of Pakistan. According to the content, topic, and other information presented in the programs in this study, obtained from the entries of other audiences and programs, radio works hard to exchange information between the audience and the broadcasters during its daily 18-hour broadcast (healthcare transmission) and meet the expectations of the audience. Drug manufacturers declare that their medications can control symptoms that are specific and emerge under certain conditions. The present study discovered that the greater numbers of respondents agreed that Information in medical advertisements are authentic.

Kara, Lennon, & Vivienne (2013) have published their article in which they give a brief overview of “consumer attitudes toward advertising by medical professionals”. The study examined consumer perceptions of what they thought about medical ads

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

that were broadcast by professionals and the nature of the difference between different groups. The recent study shown that the greater numbers of respondents agreed that the information provided in sponsored health programs on FM radios is credible and helpful.

Goldman et al. (2005) According to a study that compared health systems in Asia and European countries, traditional medicines are used in Asia, due to which the best health services are characteristic. The current study revealed that the greater numbers of respondents were neutral, second majority were agreed and the third large population was disagreed that peoples do not need any expert advice before buying any advertised health service/ medicine.

Atta U. R., et al. (2021) published a research article, according to the points that are familiar with this study, if the general public of Pakistan is trained with medical and general knowledge, then it proves to be a better protective tool against Covid-19 or any epidemic. In their opinion, during this period i.e. till the first and second phases, people were trained through electronic media information and the use of electronic media created awareness among the people. The study concluded that education and awareness about the detection and safety measures of the corona epidemic increased over time. People continued to raise awareness about COVID-19 through the media and a large number of people benefited. Therefore, the continuation of medical and health promotion campaigns is important to increase consumer information. The present study exposed that the greater numbers of respondents agreed that the information provided in sponsored health programs on FM radios is credible and helpful. Abena, Clement, Florence, & Paul (2022) in which they give a short-lived impression of radio-medicine and public health in rural Ghana. In this study, research was done to test the advertising of medicines and the advertising of medical services on the radio. The study concluded that people use radio all day and some people discuss medication information through interaction. A large number of respondents think that they are affected by these medicines while they do not care about it.

. The present study also show away that the bulk numbers of respondents agreed that they listened the health product advertisements on FM radio.

Bernard, et al. (2022) have given a brief overview, this study confirmed that along with discussions through mobile phones and conversations, radio programs can give the best and strongest spirit to the vaccination of young children, due to which the disease can be controlled in children who need more samples and successful experiments to expand results etc. The present study also revealed that the greater numbers of respondents agreed that Medical advertisements on radio is credible.

**Conclusion**

Majority of the respondents were agreed that FM Radio is a source of useful health information and they listened the health product advertisements on FM radio. They also agreed that Information in medical advertisements is authentic. Medical advertisements on radio were credible for most of them. Large number of the respondents were agreed that FM Radios follow their social responsibility on health communication. Greater number of the respondents were agreed that the advertisements of health products/medicines are based on true information. They though all the advertised medicines/products are registered with Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan and other legal bodies. More than half of the respondents were agreed that it is legitimate to advertise alternative or herbal products/services on radio. About half of the respondents responded that they know how to verify the legality of an advertised medicine/service so the majority was willing to buy the advertised drugs without any doubt in their mind.

**Recommendations;**

All of the respondents were men and women, most of whom were highly educated and often middle-educated, so the chances of the results not being accurate are very low, but there are other reasons that should not be part of such research in the future. This study will help those who examine the audience perception of the medical/health advertisements on FM Radio,

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

who examine the legal status of advertised medicines/medical facilities and also evaluate the effects of medical advertisements on procurement attitude and behavior of the listeners. Moreover, the study will be helpful in devising some policies for advertising illegal or unregistered healthcare facilities and drugs on media in Pakistan.

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