

Marketing Management and Policymaking for Medical Cannabis: Overcoming Barriers and Shaping Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Medical cannabis has emerged as a promising therapeutic option, but its market acceptance faces significant regulatory, societal, and scientific challenges. This study explores pharmaceutical business managers' perspectives on marketing strategies, brand architecture, and the value proposition of medical cannabis, aiming to identify approaches to overcome these barriers and guide policymaking. **Method:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 pharmaceutical managers to explore key challenges and strategies. **Results:** Key themes included the need for extensive scientific research, targeted communication to address stigma, effective marketing tactics, and long-term sustainability. Participants stressed the importance of rigorous, disease-specific research to establish medical cannabis' therapeutic efficacy and build trust with healthcare providers and patients. Societal stigma was identified as a major barrier, with participants advocating for communication strategies that distinguish medical cannabis from recreational use and educate stakeholders. Marketing strategies focused on creating a unique value proposition, strong brand identity, and adaptive approaches to meet the diverse needs of healthcare professionals, regulators, and patients. Additionally, phased market entry strategies, beginning with pilot programs in regions with progressive regulatory environments, were recommended to pave the way for broader market expansion. **Conclusions:** This study offers valuable insights into the marketing management and policymaking necessary for integrating medical cannabis into the pharmaceutical market. By addressing regulatory uncertainties, societal stigma, and scientific gaps, pharmaceutical companies can unlock the full potential of medical cannabis as a credible therapeutic product. These findings lay the groundwork for future research and policymaking to promote sustainable growth in the emerging medical cannabis market.

Key words: = medical cannabis; marketing strategy; brand architecture; value proposition; pharmaceutical market

The global interest in medical cannabis as a therapeutic intervention has grown significantly in recent years, driven by its potential benefits in

the management of conditions such as childhood epilepsy, spasticity in multiple sclerosis, chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting,

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chronic non-cancer pain, and other disorders (Bukowska, 2024; Grimison et al., 2024; Jeddi et al., 2024). However, despite the expanding body of evidence supporting its efficacy, the path to market entry for medical cannabis remains fraught with challenges. Regulatory hurdles, societal stigma, and gaps in scientific evidence continue to impede its broader acceptance and integration into healthcare systems (Ntais et al., 2023a; Ntais et al., 2023b). These complexities underscore the need for robust marketing strategies and brand positioning to bridge the gap between therapeutic potential and consumer acceptance.

Pharmaceutical companies face unique challenges when entering the medical cannabis market. Unlike traditional pharmaceutical products, medical cannabis operates within a patchwork of regulatory frameworks that vary across jurisdictions, influencing both product development and marketing efforts (Ruheel et al., 2021; Ryan et al., 2021). Moreover, societal perceptions of cannabis, rooted in its recreational use and historical criminalization, present additional obstacles to brand acceptance (Fehr et al., 2024; King et al., 2024). Addressing these barriers requires an informed and nuanced approach to branding and value proposition development that aligns with the expectations of healthcare providers, patients, and regulatory bodies.

This study examines the perspectives of pharmaceutical business managers regarding the marketing strategies, brand architecture, and value proposition for medical cannabis. By leveraging insights from semi-structured interviews with 12 pharmaceutical industry professionals, this research examines key themes, including the need for rigorous scientific research, the impact of stigma on brand positioning, and the strategic imperatives for product development and marketing. The selection of key topics for the interviews was guided by existing literature on medical cannabis marketing and branding, as well as the regulatory challenges faced by industry stakeholders. Given that medical cannabis is positioned at the intersection of healthcare, business strategy, and policy, understanding how pharmaceutical companies navigate these complexities is crucial. Business managers were selected as the primary participants because they play a central role in

shaping the commercial trajectory of medical cannabis. Their expertise in strategic decision-making, market positioning and regulatory navigation makes them well-suited to provide valuable insights into how medical cannabis can be successfully marketed and responsibly integrated into the healthcare landscape. By synthesizing business managers' insights, this study offers actionable recommendations for overcoming barriers to market entry and fostering greater acceptance of medical cannabis. In doing so, it aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on how pharmaceutical companies can navigate the complex landscape of medical cannabis to deliver value while addressing regulatory and societal challenges.

METHODS

Study Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore pharmaceutical business managers' perspectives on marketing strategies, brand architecture, and value proposition for medical cannabis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit in-depth insights, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences and viewpoints. The study followed an inductive approach, using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes.

Participants

Twelve participants were recruited through purposive sampling, targeting pharmaceutical business managers with relevant expertise in marketing, product development, and strategic management within the healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors. Recruitment efforts leveraged professional networks, industry conferences, and direct outreach to individuals known to be involved in medical cannabis-related discussions or projects.

To ensure diverse representation, we considered participants from different organizational backgrounds and geographic locations, particularly from Europe and North America, where regulatory frameworks and market dynamics vary significantly. Eligibility criteria required participants to have a minimum of five years of managerial experience, ensuring

that insights were drawn from professionals with substantial industry knowledge.

No financial or material incentives were offered to participants. Instead, participation was voluntary and individuals were informed about the study’s objectives and potential contributions to the evolving discourse on medical cannabis marketing and policy. This ethical approach helped ensure candid responses and maintained the integrity of the data collection process.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted between September 2022 and February 2023, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes each. Participants were interviewed via video conferencing platforms

to accommodate geographic diversity. A semi-structured interview guide was developed based on the study objectives and existing literature on medical cannabis marketing and branding (Table 1). Key topics included:

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- Perceived challenges in marketing medical cannabis
 - Strategies for overcoming societal stigma
 - Approaches to brand positioning and value proposition development
 - The role of scientific research in enhancing market credibility

Interviews were audio-recorded with participants’ consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. All interviews were conducted in English language.

Table 1. Topic Guide

Section	Questions
Introduction	-Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of this interview is to explore your perspectives on medical cannabis. Your insights will inform marketing strategies and policymaking for medical cannabis. -Your responses will be confidential, and you are free to withdraw at any time.
Therapeutic Potential and Research Needs	1. From your perspective, how does the current body of research support the use of medical cannabis in treating specific conditions like chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, multiple sclerosis, or chronic pain? 2.What research gaps do you believe are critical to address for wider acceptance by healthcare providers and patients?
Addressing Societal Stigma	3. How has societal stigma around cannabis affected your strategies for marketing or branding medical cannabis? 4. What role do you think education and targeted communication play in overcoming this stigma?
Developing a Strong Value Proposition	5. How do you perceive the competitive landscape for medical cannabis compared to traditional pharmaceuticals? 6. What key components should a value proposition for medical cannabis highlight to differentiate it from recreational cannabis and traditional pharmaceuticals? 7. How can real-world evidence, such as case studies or testimonials, strengthen this value proposition?
Branding and Marketing Strategies	8. In building a brand identity for medical cannabis, which aspects do you think are most important to emphasize to healthcare professionals and patients? 9. How can marketing campaigns balance scientific accuracy with accessibility to diverse audience groups?

	10. How can marketing strategies be tailored to address the specific needs and concerns of patients?
Navigating Regulatory Challenges	<p>11. What are the key obstacles you've faced in dealing with the regulatory framework for medical cannabis in your region?</p> <p>12. How viable do you think phased market entry strategies, such as pilot programs, are for overcoming initial regulatory challenges?</p>
Collaboration and Policy Advocacy	<p>13. How do partnerships with government bodies, healthcare professionals and private organizations support the integration of medical cannabis into mainstream healthcare?</p> <p>14. What role do you think healthcare endorsements play in establishing credibility for medical cannabis?</p> <p>15. What role do pharmaceutical companies play in advocating for favorable regulatory policies for medical cannabis?</p> <p>16. How can industry players contribute to public education campaigns to support policy changes?</p>
Long-Term Market Sustainability	<p>17. What adaptive strategies are essential to maintain a competitive edge in the evolving medical cannabis market?</p> <p>18. How can medical cannabis be integrated into established healthcare models, such as chronic care frameworks?</p> <p>19. How can medical cannabis be positioned alongside other therapeutic options in treatment protocols?</p>
Future Outlook	<p>20. In your view, how is the medical cannabis market likely to evolve over the next decade?</p> <p>21. What regulatory or societal changes would you like to see to facilitate growth in this sector?</p>
Conclusion	<p>-Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered?</p> <p>-Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences. Your insights will contribute to ongoing research and strategic development.</p>

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted following the six-step framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Initial coding was performed independently by two researchers to identify meaningful segments of text and discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Codes were organized into broader themes, guided by both

inductive insights and deductive categories derived from the interview guide. NVivo 14 software was used to facilitate data organization and analysis (Lumivero, 2023).

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research principles, including voluntary participation,

informed consent and confidentiality. Ethics approval was obtained from the University of Nicosia Research Ethics Committee (Ref. No UREC/2022/14 dated 19 July 2022), and participants were assigned aliases (BM1-BM12) to ensure anonymity. Data were securely stored and accessible only to the research team.

RESULTS

Demographics

The sample included seven males (58%) and five females (42%), with ages ranging from 35 to 60 years ($M = 46.8$ years). Participants represented organizations operating in Europe ($n = 9$) and North America ($n = 3$), reflecting regions with varying levels of regulatory acceptance for medical cannabis. Industry experience ranged from 8 to 25 years ($M = 15.4$ years), with specific involvement in medical cannabis ranging from 1 to 5 years.

Thematic Axes

Medical Cannabis as a Therapeutic Product

Participants expressed nuanced perspectives on the current status and potential of medical cannabis as a therapeutic product. While some were optimistic, they emphasized the need for further development and validation. BM1 stated, *“Cannabinoids have demonstrated their ability to treat several diseases effectively, with fewer side effects. However, more evidence is needed to establish reliability and broaden acceptance.”* BM2 agreed, highlighting that *“medical cannabis has shown promise for specific conditions, but targeted research is necessary to confirm its effectiveness across a wider range of indications.”*

A subgroup of respondents acknowledged the strides made in positioning medical cannabis but warned of challenges due to its fragmented development. BM4 remarked, *“Medical cannabis is on the cusp of becoming a credible therapeutic option, but additional research is required to transform it into a trusted standalone brand for serious illnesses.”* BM5 echoed this sentiment: *“Cannabis has potential as a therapeutic option for many conditions, but the industry must demonstrate its safety and efficacy through rigorous validation to build trust among prescribers and patients.”*

Other participants were more skeptical, noting the premature nature of cannabis’ medical applications. BM7 observed, *“Despite the emergence of various cannabis-based products worldwide, their multi-usage creates confusion among physicians and patients, undermining the credibility needed for medical cannabis to achieve a trusted status.”* BM10 shared a similar concern, stating, *“Without sufficient primary and secondary data supporting its therapeutic properties, medical cannabis will struggle to move beyond its supplementary treatment role.”*

The Need for Extensive Research

Across the board, participants emphasized the importance of extensive, disease-specific research to validate medical cannabis’ efficacy and safety. BM4 noted, *“Pharmaceutical products are held to high standards of validation, and medical cannabis must meet these requirements to gain acceptance. More focused clinical trials and long-term studies are essential.”* BM7 emphasized the value of collaborative efforts, suggesting that, *“partnerships between government bodies and private companies are necessary to fund and execute the large-scale studies required to unlock medical cannabis’ full potential.”*

Several respondents highlighted specific research priorities. BM9 remarked, *“Detailed research is mandatory, given the complexity of cannabis’ active compounds. Efforts should focus on isolating and testing these components to ensure accurate dosing and consistent efficacy.”* BM1 suggested that *“comprehensive clinical trials exploring medical cannabis’ effectiveness in conditions like cancer, glaucoma, and multiple sclerosis would go a long way in establishing its medical relevance.”*

The educational impact of disseminating research findings was also stressed. BM10 emphasized, *“Transparent communication of research results is critical to equipping healthcare providers with the confidence to prescribe cannabis-based therapies. This will facilitate its transition from an alternative therapy to a mainstream treatment option.”*

Addressing Stigma Through Strategic Communication

The stigma surrounding cannabis emerged as a significant barrier to its medical acceptance. Participants identified strategic communication as a key tool in overcoming societal resistance. BM4 remarked, *“Managing the dissemination of data and framing it appropriately is crucial in mitigating negativity and skepticism surrounding medical cannabis.”* BM7 elaborated, *“Physicians require solid scientific information to trust cannabis treatments. Releasing credible evidence will help increase confidence among healthcare professionals and patients alike.”*

Participants suggested that messaging should be tailored to specific audience segments. BM9 noted, *“A targeted approach is essential. Policymakers, healthcare providers, and patients each require customized messaging that addresses their unique concerns.”* BM6 emphasized the value of professional endorsements, suggesting, *“Advocacy from trusted healthcare providers could accelerate the acceptance of medical cannabis among both patients and the wider public.”*

Some participants highlighted the role of storytelling in destigmatizing cannabis. BM5 stated, *“Case studies showcasing successful medical cannabis treatments can humanize its benefits and provide relatable examples for skeptics.”* BM10 added, *“Educational campaigns should focus on differentiating medical cannabis from its recreational counterpart, emphasizing its therapeutic applications.”*

Marketing Strategies

Participants recognized the importance of robust marketing strategies to navigate the challenges of stigma and misinterpretations. BM4 proposed, *“A differentiated value proposition that highlights the functional and experiential benefits of medical cannabis will help position it effectively in the market.”* BM10 suggested a focus on customer engagement, stating, *“Marketing strategies should prioritize addressing misconceptions while building trust through credible and transparent messaging.”*

Branding was consistently highlighted as a critical component of success. BM7 remarked, *“Establishing a strong brand identity and image is vital, especially in the introductory stages. Branding strategies must emphasize medical cannabis’ reliability, safety and efficacy.”* BM11

recommended a multi-pronged approach, noting, *“Brand equity and line extension strategies can help enhance customer trust and establish medical cannabis as a legitimate therapeutic option alongside traditional pharmaceuticals.”*

Some participants advocated for leveraging existing research and testimonials to bolster branding efforts. BM8 observed, *“Aligning branding strategies with validated research findings and real-world case studies will strengthen the value proposition of medical cannabis products.”* BM5 added, *“Effective branding can help shift public perception, positioning medical cannabis as a credible medical treatment.”*

Regulatory and Social Challenges

The dual challenges of regulatory ambiguity and societal resistance were consistently identified as significant hurdles. BM7 noted, *“The legal and stigmatized status of cannabis has created substantial barriers to market entry. Strategic efforts are needed to align branding with regulatory requirements and public expectations.”* BM10 suggested phased market entry strategies, stating, *“Launching pilot programs in regions with progressive regulatory environments could help establish credibility while paving the way for broader adoption.”*

Participants also emphasized the importance of engaging healthcare professionals in overcoming resistance. BM6 remarked, *“Collaboration with physicians and other healthcare providers is essential to promote acceptance and build trust in cannabis-based therapies.”* BM5 highlighted the role of advocacy, noting, *“Professional endorsements and partnerships with trusted medical organizations could help counter societal skepticism and accelerate regulatory approval processes.”*

Long-Term Strategic Approaches

Participants stressed the importance of adopting adaptive, long-term strategies to ensure the sustained growth of medical cannabis in the pharmaceutical market. BM4 suggested integrating cannabis into broader therapeutic frameworks, stating, *“Positioning cannabis products within chronic care models can help align them with existing healthcare paradigms*

and promote acceptance.” BM11 emphasized collaboration, remarking, *“Ongoing data-sharing initiatives between industry and regulators will foster a transparent and supportive ecosystem for medical cannabis.”*

Market feedback was identified as a crucial factor in refining strategies. BM9 noted, *“Consumer insights and experiences must inform the development of marketing and branding efforts to ensure they remain relevant and effective in an evolving market.”* BM8 highlighted the importance of flexibility, adding, *“As perceptions and regulations shift, companies must be prepared to adapt their approaches to meet changing market demands.”*

Insights on Market Readiness.

Participants expressed diverse views on market readiness, reflecting regional and cultural differences. BM6 observed, *“Market readiness varies significantly across regions, driven by differences in regulatory progress and societal openness.”* BM10 cautioned against over-reliance on early adopters, stating, *“While niche markets can serve as a foundation, a broader focus on mainstream patient populations is essential for long-term success.”* BM3 added, *“Progressive regions that have embraced medical cannabis can serve as models for expanding into more conservative markets, but strategies must be tailored to local contexts.”*

Logistical considerations were also highlighted. BM8 stated, *“Readiness involves more than public perception. Stable supply chains, consistent quality assurance, and efficient distribution channels are critical to ensuring the successful integration of cannabis products into the healthcare system.”*

DISCUSSION

This study highlights the complex interplay of scientific, societal, and strategic factors that shape the marketing and branding of medical cannabis. By analyzing the perspectives of pharmaceutical business managers, it offers a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in the medical cannabis market. The findings align with existing literature while providing practical insights into how stakeholders can address barriers to market

entry and foster acceptance of medical cannabis as a legitimate therapeutic option.

Participants recognized the therapeutic potential of medical cannabis, reinforcing its growing credibility. Studies have demonstrated its efficacy in managing chronic pain, multiple sclerosis, and chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting (Bukowska, 2024; Grimison et al., 2024; Jeddi et al., 2024). However, in line with the observations of Jean-Jacques et al. (2021), the need for condition-specific research emerged as a critical concern. Managers highlighted the premature state of cannabis' therapeutic development, echoing calls for intensified R&D to ensure clinical validation.

This developmental uncertainty highlights a tension between optimism and skepticism. While some managers celebrated recent regulatory approvals and market entries as indicators of progress, others expressed concerns over limited data and inconsistent clinical trial outcomes. These findings suggest that to achieve broader adoption, medical cannabis must transition from being perceived as an alternative therapy to a mainstream medical option backed by rigorous evidence.

The consensus among managers regarding the importance of research aligns with existing recommendations in the literature. Disease-specific clinical trials are essential for establishing efficacy and safety profiles for targeted medical conditions (Cooper et al., 2021). Collaborative efforts between government agencies and private companies could alleviate resource constraints and expedite research efforts (Ellison et al., 2021).

Stigma emerged as a pervasive barrier to the acceptance of medical cannabis. Societal attitudes often hinder its medical application (Hulaihel et al., 2023). Research indicates that patients undergoing treatment with cannabis-based medicines perceive stigma from various societal sectors, including government officials and medical professionals. This stigma can impede access to treatment and open communication with healthcare providers (Troup et al., 2022).

Participants emphasized the importance of strategic communication in overcoming stigma. Public education campaigns have been shown to shift perceptions and reduce negative biases (Clobes et al., 2021). Tailoring messages to specific stakeholders - such as healthcare professionals,

policymakers, and patients - was identified as a critical strategy. A qualitative review highlighted the importance of targeted communication efforts, emphasizing the need for different approaches for different audiences (Reid, 2020). Additionally, endorsements from trusted healthcare providers could be instrumental in mitigating skepticism (Ntais et al., 2023a).

The study's findings regarding differentiation and branding align with established marketing principles, emphasizing the importance of a clear value proposition (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Managers stressed that branding strategies should highlight reliability, efficacy, and safety - reflecting the cautious approach that healthcare providers and patients adopt toward new therapies.

Implementing multi-brand strategies can help address diverse therapeutic needs, a well-established practice in the pharmaceutical industry (Ntais et al., 2023b). Additionally, developing tailored messaging for each indication is crucial for successful multi-indication product launches (Gores & Scott, 2023). The focus on targeted campaigns and cultural sensitivity underscores the importance of adapting strategies to regional contexts, which is critical for international market expansion (Prahalad & Doz, 1987).

Regulatory ambiguity and societal resistance were identified as major hurdles for market entry. The complex and evolving regulatory landscape requires stakeholders to continually adapt to remain compliant and competitive (de Souza et al., 2022). Participants recommended phased market entry strategies, including pilot programs and collaboration with healthcare professionals, to build credibility and facilitate acceptance. For example, Denmark's medical cannabis pilot scheme has been instrumental in assessing the feasibility and impact of medical cannabis, with plans to expand into a fully legalized market (Stevens, 2024).

Managers emphasized the need for long-term strategies to sustain market presence. Integrating medical cannabis products into broader therapeutic frameworks aligns with chronic care models that prioritize patient-centric and holistic treatment approaches (Wagner et al., 1996). Additionally, data-sharing initiatives could foster transparency and build trust among regulators, healthcare providers and patients.

The diverse perspectives on market readiness reflect the varying levels of acceptance and regulatory progress across regions. Early adoption in progressive markets provides valuable blueprints for broader expansion, echoing findings from prior studies on innovation diffusion (Rogers, 2003). However, participants cautioned against over-reliance on niche markets, stressing the importance of targeting mainstream patient populations to ensure sustained growth.

While this study primarily focuses on marketing and management, policymaking remains an implicit and crucial element. Regulatory ambiguity and evolving legal frameworks highlight the significant role policymakers play in shaping the medical cannabis market. Addressing stigma through targeted communication further underscores the importance of public policy in fostering societal acceptance.

Effective policymaking around education and awareness campaigns could help reduce stigma. Additionally, pilot programs and phased market entry strategies — often requiring collaboration with regulatory bodies — emphasize policymakers' role in facilitating early commercialization. Finally, the long-term strategic approaches for integrating medical cannabis into healthcare systems point to policymaking as key to the future growth and regulatory landscape of medical cannabis.

Market-Driven Recommendations

This study offers actionable recommendations for pharmaceutical companies seeking to enter or expand in the medical cannabis market. Key strategies include prioritizing disease-specific research to generate robust evidence, leveraging targeted communication campaigns to educate stakeholders and address stigma, developing a strong brand identity aligned with patient needs, and using phased marketing strategies to build trust and expand market reach. Collaborative efforts with regulators, healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders are crucial in navigating the challenges and unlocking the therapeutic potential of medical cannabis.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the data collected, this study underscores the following policy recommendations:

Establish clear and consistent regulatory guidelines. Governments should create standardized regulatory frameworks that define medical cannabis' legal status, quality control measures and prescribing protocols. This would reduce market uncertainty and encourage investment in research and development.

Support large-scale clinical research initiatives. Policymakers should facilitate partnerships between pharmaceutical companies, healthcare institutions, and academic researchers to fund and conduct rigorous, disease-specific studies on medical cannabis' efficacy and safety.

Develop physician training and education programs. Medical cannabis should be incorporated into medical curricula and continuing professional development programs to ensure that healthcare providers are well-informed about its therapeutic applications, dosing strategies and potential risks.

Implement public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma. Policymakers, in collaboration with industry stakeholders, should develop targeted public health campaigns that emphasize the medical legitimacy of cannabis and differentiate it from recreational use.

Encourage pilot programs in progressive regulatory environments. Governments should consider phased implementation strategies, such as pilot programs in jurisdictions with favorable regulatory conditions, to gather real-world evidence and refine best practices before broader market expansion.

Limitations and Future Research

This research is subject to some limitations. While the sample size was relatively small, practical research suggests that a sample of 12 participants may be sufficient to reach data saturation within a relatively homogeneous population (Boddy, 2016). However, a larger sample could have provided additional nuances. Another limitation of this study is the consolidation of participant perspectives across different regulatory frameworks. While the study acknowledges that medical cannabis operates within a patchwork of regulations, responses from participants in different regions were analyzed

collectively without extensive differentiation based on their specific regulatory environments. While regulatory landscapes differ, the overarching themes and strategic considerations — such as the need for scientific validation, stigma reduction, and adaptive branding — remained similar among all respondents. However, this approach may overlook nuanced regional differences in market dynamics, policy constraints, and stakeholder perceptions.

Additionally, the study does not provide detailed descriptions of the specific regulatory environments in which participants were operating, nor does it attempt to compare or contrast the perspectives of participants working in different jurisdictions. As a result, potential variations in how regulatory frameworks shape marketing strategies and industry challenges may not be fully captured. Future research could adopt a comparative approach, providing a more granular understanding of the interplay between varying regulatory environments and market dynamics. Additionally, future studies could explore the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as healthcare providers, patients, and policymakers, to provide a more comprehensive analysis. Finally, a potential future research direction would be to focus participant recruitment within a specific region to gain a more in-depth understanding of the challenges and opportunities within a single market. Conducting a region-specific study would allow for a more detailed analysis of the interplay between local regulations, consumer perceptions, and market strategies. This approach could also help identify best practices and region-specific barriers, offering targeted insights for policymakers, businesses, and healthcare professionals operating in that particular regulatory environment.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on the strategic considerations pharmaceutical companies must address to successfully market medical cannabis. By examining the perspectives of business managers, the research identifies key challenges, including regulatory ambiguity, societal stigma, and insufficient scientific validation, which hinder market acceptance. It also highlights actionable strategies, such as the need for

rigorous disease-specific research, targeted communication to address stigma, and adaptive branding and marketing approaches that emphasize reliability, efficacy, and safety.

Importantly, the findings reveal an intricate connection between marketing strategies, public perception, and policy evolution. Effective branding and strategic communication were emphasized as essential tools for overcoming societal stigma and securing broader medical acceptance. However, these efforts must be supported by clear policy frameworks that facilitate research, ensure product standardization, and provide guidelines for physician education. Without regulatory clarity, even the most well-executed marketing strategies will struggle to gain traction in a fragmented and inconsistent legal landscape.

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