

# How to maintain alternative medicines consumption? Community learning about illnesses of the mind and inauthentic identity

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# How to maintain alternative medicines consumption? Community learning about illnesses of the mind and inauthentic identity

## **Abstract**

While alternative medicines serve to address the deficiencies in conventional healthcare, their limited medical efficacy poses constraints on sustained usage. In this article, we illustrate that consumers maintain their reliance on alternative remedies by acquiring a therapeutic framework that attributes illnesses to mental states. Through pathologizing their psychological conditions, perceived as outcomes of an externally imposed social identity, users of alternative medicine embark on a protracted therapeutic journey to forge a new identity considered authentic or natural, conducive to healing. The lack of improvement in health resulting from this therapeutic process is not interpreted as a reflection of the therapy's ineffectiveness, but rather as a personal shortcoming on the part of the patient in discovering their true identity. This may lead to a purposeless pursuit of identity, entailing financial, health, and social risks.

**Subject Areas:** *Consumer Behaviour, Customer Satisfaction and Delight, Hedonic Products*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour