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The Role of Brand Recognition in Enhancing Customer Retention in the Pharmaceutical Retail Sector of Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Pharmacies in Chinhoyi, Mash West, Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

This study was based on the role of brand recognition in enhancing customer retention in the pharmaceutical retail sector of Zimbabwe because brand recognition and customer retention have become popular subjects in recent years since it is believed that customers are the life blood of any business. Accordingly, the study made use of self –administered questionnaires in collecting data from customers and employees of retail pharmacies in Chinhoyi, Mash West province in Zimbabwe and the respondents were selected through stratified random sampling. Consequently, the data was analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis supported by quantitative analysis to make sure the results were genuine. Therefore, the research findings show that brand recognition does not exist in the pharmaceutical retail sector in Zimbabwe even though the majority of respondents agreed that branding especially brand recognition plays a significant role in shaping customer loyalty as well as customer retention. Furthermore, the study also shows that the attributes of branding include familiarity with brand, relevance of pharmacy brand, differentiation of pharmacy brand, perceived quality of a brand, reliability and esteem of a brand are positive influencers of customer loyalty by so doing enhancing customer retention.

Keywords: Branding, Brand recognition, Customer Loyalty, Pharmaceutical retail sector, Customer retention.

INTRODUCTION

It is worth noting that the global private retail pharmacy market is estimated to be generating over $683 billion in revenue with $280 billion of that in markets outside Europe, Japan and the United States of America (World Bank, 2020; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Hence, the retail pharmacy sector in the modern world is the most important sector in the world. Hence, the world's biggest economies are making use of the retail pharmacy sector as an important instrument for growth (Munyoro & Dewhurst, 2010; Hameli, 2018; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). In short, this shows that retail pharmacies also known as community pharmacies are playing an important role in healthcare delivery (Schumacher, 2016). In fact, these health care institutions are providing health services such as provision of drug information, medication

review, treatment of minor ailments, clinical interventions, health screening, counselling on lifestyle changes, provision of both non-pharmacological and pharmacological treatments plus documentation and prevention of drug interactions or adverse drug interactions to the public (Okai et al, 2019). Hence, retail pharmacies in some economies are widely spread in many communities, with elongated trading hours and serving walk in customers without prior booking of an appointment (Wiedenmayer et al, 2006; Brooks et al, 2008; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Therefore, making them more reachable compared to other health care facilities and in the process immensely contributing to the health care delivery system of the world (Wiedenmayer et al, 2006; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). As a result, without doubt this then makes the retail pharmacy sector the most important sector in the world including Zimbabwe.

Despite being an important industrial sector in the world, retail pharmaceutical industry world over as the world moves farther into the 21st Century is facing a range of challenges among them adaption of digital landscape, maintenance and building of patient bases, reduced cash flow, embracing change for a positive future, securing collaborative practice agreements, growing competition and consolidation of retail pharmacy chains, socio-economic problems. This has led to poor service quality, inaccurate diagnosis, medication mistakes, inappropriate or unnecessary treatment, inadequate or unsafe clinical facilities or practices, a lack of adequate training and expertise, the need to travel great distances to access healthcare in clinics and hospitals despite constitutional provisions requiring governments to guarantee this fundamental right to their citizens, and severe shortages of drugs and medical staff, including doctors and nurses. Indeed, the list is endless, and all these challenges have a knock-on effect on the performance of the retail pharmaceutical industry in the world including Zimbabwe especially with the mushrooming of unregistered and rogue retail pharmacies, which came as a result of the black indigenization policy which presented an opportunity for inception of many state-owned and private retail pharmacies. As a result, competing for market share in a nation where a failing economy has eroded consumers' purchasing power is grim (Simba & Nyandoro, 2016) and branding and customer loyalty (Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Hence, the need for retail pharmacies to work towards differentiating themselves from competitors through branding and brand recognition (Dall'Olmo, et al, 2016; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). Hence, the goal of this study is to determine the role of brand recognition in enhancing customer retention in the pharmaceutical retail sector of Zimbabwe with a focus on retail pharmacies in Chinhoyi, Mash West, Zimbabwe.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Retailing

The term "retail" is derived from a French word that means "to cut again" and in the world of trade, this refers to one who cuts off big portions of merchandise into smaller portions of goods (Reardon et al, 2003; Munyoro et al, 2017). Likewise, retailing is also defined as the final delivery of the product to the final consumer personally even though the process is completed by several intermediaries that enables the transfer of goods produced from the producer to the retailer (Berman & Evans, 2001; Nedbard, 2011; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). In short, the common misconception here is that retailing only refers to the sells goods in stores, but retailing also refers to the sale of services such as those offered in a restaurant, parlour or by car rental agencies (Munyoro et al, 2017). Consequently, in this study, retailing refers to a process through which goods are procured from producers, transported, warehoused, and

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finally sold to the final consumers. It is worth noting that retailing industry is always developing, quickly adjusting and modifying retailing models, approaches and processes in order to satisfy the needs of its ultimate customers profitably (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2007; Munyoro et al, 2017). Equally, a retailer is an agent, agency, company or organisation which is instrumental in reaching the goods, merchandise or services to the ultimate consumer or are involved in facilitating the passage of goods, merchandise or services to the ultimate consumer and that the selling should not necessarily take place through a store by can be done through email, internet, door-to-door visits or any channel that can be used to connect with the consumer (Berman & Evans, 2001; Munyoro et al, 2017).

The Theories/ Models of Retailing

Environment Theory:

It is worth noting that there are several retailing theories such as environment theory which suggests that for any given retailer to survive, it should evolve according to environmental needs or else might be pushed out of business (Basi, 2014; Munyoro et al, 2017). Accordingly, the factors that affect the survival of retailers consist of technology, consumers, financial system, expertise, society, culture, legal framework and competitors (Blizzard, 1976; Brown, 1978; Munyoro et al, 2028).

Retail Wheel Hypothesis:

The next theory of retailing is the retail wheel hypothesis which is based on two strategic characteristics of the retailing industry (McNair, 1957). Thus, the first strategic characteristic in this case is that there are no barriers to entry in this market apart from set of laws on the establishment of outlets and therefore a profitable originality can be quickly imitated by competitors (McNair, 1957; Das-Nair & Dube, 2015; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Whilst the second strategic characteristic emphasise on the potential for differentiation of a retail format which in this case is very limited as it lies in the management of the product variety, the relative price level, site, and the outlet design (McNair, 1957; Wu et al, 2007; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). In a nutshell, it is stated that the hypothesis holds that new-fangled types of retailers usually enter the market as low-status, low margin, and low-price operators but gradually the retailers acquire more elaborate establishments and facilities with both increased investments and higher operating costs, and finally they mature as high cost and vulnerable establishments (McNair, 1957; Hollander, 1960; Wu et al, 2007). Thus, it is worth noting that a wheel of retailing is one of the most recognised theories in the world regarding institutional changes in retailing (Munyoro et al, 2018). Consequently, the concept states that in retailing industry, changes take place in a cyclical manner and those retailing institutions undergo evolutionary life cycles that also transform them (Hollander, 1960; Wu et al, 2007; Munyoro et al, 2017). Consequently, it also suggested that retailers attempt to capture market share and brand value as they enter with rock bottom prices and profits, then gradually work their way up to increase prices, profits and image (Hollander, 1960; Pingjun et al, 2006; Wu et al, 2007; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023).

The Sustainability Retailing Theory:

The third retailing theory is the sustainability retailing theory which is the embracing of business approaches and activities that meet the present needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders while protecting, sustaining and enhancing future human and natural resources needs (Yang et al, 2017). Thus, the essence of this theory is that sustainable development at the

societal level is not very likely without the utilization of a sustainable business model as a key initiating component of corporate sustainability (Schaltegger et al, 2015; Yang et al, 2017). Thus, this theory precisely emphasises on sustainability impacts associated with a retailer's processes as social, community, and inclusion impacts (Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023).

Retail Philosophy Used in this Study

Therefore, it is significant to note that retail philosophies are responsible for explaining how different retail formats result from, and these philosophies give rise to modelling of preferred retailing behaviour and therefore, a business model is a well specified system of interdependent structures, activities, and processes that serves as a firm's organising logic for value creation (for its customers) and value appropriation (for itself and its partners) (Basi, 2014; Munyoro et al, 2017). In a nutshell, retail business model articulates how a retailer creates value for its customers and appropriate value from its market and therefore, this is how pharmaceutical retails should be set up around one of the retailing theories in order to achieve their goals (Idachaba et al, 1985; Sorescu et al, 2011). Thus, it is worth noting that a wheel of retailing is one of the most recognised theories in the world regarding institutional changes in retailing (Munyoro et al, 2018). Consequently, the concept states that in retailing industry, changes take place in a cyclical manner and those retailing institutions undergo evolutionary life cycles that also transform them (Hollander, 1960; Wu et al, 2007; Munyoro et al, 2017). Consequently, it also suggested that retailers attempt to capture market share and brand value as they enter with rock bottom prices and profits, then gradually work their way up to increase prices, profits, and image (Hollander, 1960; Pingjun et al, 2006; Wu et al, 2007; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023).

What is a Retail Pharmacy?

Pharmacy is the science and practice of discovering, producing, preparing, dispensing, reviewing and monitoring medications, aiming to ensure the safe, effective, and affordable use of medicines (Thomas, 2018; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). It is a miscellaneous science which links health sciences with pharmaceutical sciences and natural sciences (Thomas, 2018; Sharif, 2018). In short, the pharmacy profession is thus mainly concerned with the knowledge of medicine and astuteness of their uses (Sharif, 2018; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Whilst the pharmaceutical practice involves everything to do with medicine availability, access and proper use at population and individual level and it encompasses research, development, distribution, access and use of medicines (Scahill et al, 2017). Thus, the scope of pharmacy practice includes more traditional roles such as compounding and dispensing medications on the orders of physicians, and it also includes more modern services related to patient care, including clinical services, reviewing medications for safety and efficacy, and providing drug information (www.pharmacy.cuhk.edu.hk; medlineplus.gov/genetic; Govo et al, 2008; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Pharmacists, therefore, are experts on drug therapy and are the primary health professionals who optimize medication use to provide patients with positive health outcomes (www.pharmacy.cuhk.edu.hk; medlineplus.gov/genetics). In fact, there are numerous types of pharmacy practices such as hospital pharmacy, industrial pharmacy, wholesale pharmacy, retail pharmacy, clinical pharmacy, regulatory pharmacy, teaching and research. In addition, pharmacy also has a social and administrative side which deals with pharmacoepidemiology, pharmacoeconomics, pharmaceutical policy, organizational behaviour and pharmacist practices (Scahill et al, 2017; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Accordingly, this study focuses on the retail pharmacy sector and in Zimbabwe retail pharmacies are private

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owned while the government operates hospital pharmacies. Whilst, retail pharmacy is both a business and facilitator of societal health delivery and the terms pharmacy and drugstores are commonly used in Canada and USA, whereas a more common term of pharmacy in Great Britain is chemists (knowleswellness.com; ell.stackexchange.com; Khoza, 2016; Thomas, 2018; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Thus, in this case drugstores refers to the stores which sell medicines and miscellaneous items such as confectionery, cosmetics, office supplies, toys, hair care products and magazines and occasionally refreshments and groceries (Thomas, 2018; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023).

That said, in developing countries, retail pharmacies are among the most important providers of pharmaceutical advice due to the availability of medicine, ease of access, convenient operating times, no waiting and cheaper products in their shops (Goel et al, 1996; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). In low- and medium-income countries like Zimbabwe, pharmacies are normally the first port of call within the health care system, and they are also the favoured agents for buying medicine (Miller & Goodman, 2016). However, the legal framework in Zimbabwe prohibits dispensing of prescription medication to members of the public in the absence of a prescription and this is a hindrance when it comes to profitability of the pharmacy sector (Khoza, 2016; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). For example, Ramos et al (2017) suggests that the flow of cash, flexible working hours, community engagement in the business and guaranteed customers are among the reasons why pharmacists engage in retail pharmacy businesses of their own and that the ever-changing business environment is a great threat to retail pharmacy business survival. In addition, international public health communities and governments have actually ignored the role played by the private sector in the provision of medicine and related health services while it has been established that in the majority of low- and middle-income countries, private pharmacies are the community's first means to access the health care system and retail pharmacies are the leading source of health care for the poor in developing countries (Miller & Goodman, 2016).

In addition, Perepelkin & Zhang (2011) and Munyoro & Mapfunde (2023), explain how the retail pharmacy sector has become a competitive sector with acceleration and this has been precipitated by the need for a piece of the market share and thus independent pharmacies lock horns with multinational and national chains. As a result, the small independent retail pharmacies which are now common in Zimbabwe are finding it difficult to survive in the highly competitive pharmacy industry (www2.deloitte.com; www.digitalpharmacist.com). Yet, pharmacists are very good at giving therapeutic advice and serving the role of health care professionals but on the downside, they tend to be reactive, inward looking and have a short-term approach to business (Jameson et al, 1991; Mohiuddin, 2020). Correspondingly, there has also been increasing controversy surrounding pharmaceutical marketing and equally, there have been accusations and findings of influence on doctors and other health professionals through drug representatives favouring certain drugs and pharmacies over others especially upcoming pharmacies (Kaufman, 2005*;* Goldacre, 2014; Kollewe, 2014; Lipton & Thomas, 2017). It was also noted that this is prevalent in health-related journals lobbying physicians to favour certain pharmacies than others especially upcoming ones (Moynihan, 2003*;* Lipton & Thomas, 2017*).* Although many people prefer to buy medicines from pharmacies as it is perceived that the pharmacy medicine is safer than medicine purchased from drug peddlers and vendors but the competition in the pharmaceutical retail sector is still stiff as the diversity of products sold in all pharmacies is very analogous (Gavaza et al, 2009; Marume et al, 2018).

Likewise, Pereira et al (2021) also supports that in retail pharmacy, customer loyalty is a huge challenge mainly because of the similar products making it difficult to recognise the brand of your choice as well as the presence of large retail chains and hence, the prices and price ranges are also almost the same. Hence, there are some suggestions in the literature that the pharmacies should be able to show the advantages of buying from them compared to other pharmacies in order to win over the competition (Brooks et al, 2008; Simba &Nyandoro, 2016). Additionally, some of the issues considered by customers when choosing pharmacy to buy from include price affordability, location of the pharmacy, service quality of the pharmacy and the general perception of the various pharmacies (Noor, 2020). Furthermore, other factors influencing the decision-making process of customer include availability of easy parking, convenient location and low price (Pereira et al, 2021). Consequently, none of the studies have focused on branding especially brand recognition as a means of returning customers and in the process enhancing customer retention. Thus, this study will focus on the role of brand recognition in enhancing customer retention in the retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe.

What is Branding?

The Chartered Institute of Marketing defines marketing as the "management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably." Marketing is also defined as on-going communications exchange with customers in a way that informs, educates and builds a relationship progressively something that is missing in the retail pharmacy in Zimbabwe as suggested elsewhere in the study (Keller & Kevin, 1993; Ranchhod, 2004; Munyoro & Nyereyemhuka, 2019; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Therefore, one means of informing, educates and builds a relationship progressively is branding and which is defined as a symbol, name or logo that is used to identify as well as differentiate products and services in the market (Wheeler, 1946; Aaaker. 1991; Ghodeswar, 2008; Haigh, 2014; Fahy & Jobber, 2015; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). Thus, branding is key to marketing as it creates a perception of added value linked to the brand image thus steering a continuous competitive advantage (Davis, 2007; Haigh, 2014; Fahy & Jobber, 2015; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). Hence, marketers invest huge amounts of capital, research and development to come up with the perfect components to construct their brand as an unmatched benchmark thus leading to marketing (Haigh, 2014; Fahy & Jobber, 2015; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). In fact, marketing is an assisting gadget that helps companies to create an unequalled brand strategy for their brand (Haigh, 2014; Fahy & Jobber, 2015; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Thus, the definition of a brand has no uniformity as different writers define the concept in different ways (Alemu, 2019; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Hence, branding can be seen as a name, sign, term, design, symbol or some combination that identifies the products or services of one organisation and differentiates them from competitors offering (Akpan, 2018; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). Similarly, Dar & Tariq (2020) and Munyoro & Sithole (2023) described a brand as a name, tagline, design, logo or packaging and any other component that differentiates one brand from another. In other words, any specific constituent of a component that is not interchangeable with that of another company. Alternatively, Alemu (2019) and, Munyoro & Hodzi (2023) explains a brand as a promise of consistency, quality and fulfilment of customer expectations and needs. While Perepelkon & Zhang (2011) and, Munyoro & Gorejena (2020) simplifies the term brand to mean a symbol that summarizes the association made with that name. Simply put, branding becomes the process that creates the distinguishing elements of a brand (Dar & Tariq, 2020; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023).

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Today branding is recognised as the key to success in business by providing value to consumers via the buying process hence, assumes value to the firm through customer attraction and loyalty stimulation (Akpan 2018; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Thus, the basic feature of a brand is that it generates loyal customers, and the most crucial feature of a strong brand is having a mass of loyal customers (Kron, 2015; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). In fact, brands are now an indispensable asset on the economic landscape therefore, developing countries can learn from developed countries as the principles of developing a strong resilient brand are the same across different cultures (Haigh, 2014; Fahy & Jobber, 2015; Cayla & Arnould, 2008; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). Hence, Akpan (2018) and, Munyoro & Hodzi (2023) suggest that branding points to customer satisfaction by saving decision making time, providing peace of mind, creating differentiation, value addition, providing safety and the chance to express who we are thus giving the customer a reason to share with other potential customers. Apart from other approaches, branding can help capture and further build goodwill and reputation associated with the business thus enhancing trade revenue and strengthening competitive position on the market (Alemu, 2019; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023).

It is key to note that successful brands will only exist if the product or service offering is of good quality (Dar & Tariq, 2020; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). This is so because brands are those priceless intangible assets that allow a number of benefits to the firm and its customers hence need to be carefully managed as businesses prosper by acquiring, keeping and growing their customer base (Seturi, 2017; Alemu, 2019; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). In short, a brand has two important dimensions which are the psychological and physiological dimensions (Akpan 2018; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023) and the customer's perception is a cognitive relationship of the product and consumer while the perception and image give value (Dar & Tariq, 2020; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). Consequently, customers' perception may be shaped by emotional and functional experiences therefore most favoured recognition occupies the correct corner in the mind of the customer and it becomes a brand (Seturi, 2017; Alemu, 2019; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Contrastingly, the physiological dimension of the brand is its symbol or logo which helps to build a long-lasting impression in the customer's mind (Dar & Tariq, 2020; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). The most important goal of a business is to build a very strong brand which yields long term revenue and fruitfulness (Shahid et al, 2017; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). In a hypercompetitive business environment brands are not only identifiers or symbols but also have economic function and thus, the value of a brand is its capacity to create an absolute, prominent and positive meaning in the customer's mind (Dar & Tariq, 2020; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). Therefore, it is key to note that a brand has the power to build a long-lasting belief on the customers which results in brand loyalty and draws loyal customers to the organisation (Ishak & Ghani, 2013; Shahid et al, 2017; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). Accordingly, there are many different aspects and types of branding, some of which are discussed below.

Aspects of Branding

Corporate Branding:

It is becoming progressively important for small enterprise such as small retail pharmacies to attract attention in the current marketplace hence branding by small enterprises is an expanding area of academic interest (Mitchell et al, 2015; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). Thus, retailers should be more innovative and creative when developing store brands to ensure that they attract more customers as well as differentiate their services or products from those of competitors (Abdullah et al, 2012; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023) because effective business

performance in the present world market and the dynamics of customers requires skills and knowledge in marketing and branding (Chepchumba, 2020; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). In short, most contemporary retailers are highly likely to develop a store brand as it has a high potential of obtaining loyal customers (Abdullah et.al, 2012; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023) and strong brands seem to be a guarantee of consistency, quality and superior service delivery (Chepchumba, 2020; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). In addition, corporate branding can be defined as the process of maintaining and continuously creating a positive corporate association and reputation leveraging on the power of a brand (Kotler, 2009; Frazen &Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). In other words, it is a systematically planned and executed process aimed at creating and maintaining a positive image and good reputation for the organisation as a whole and hence a corporate brand serves as a representation of customers' mind-set, their encounters, experiences and perceptions of the company (Kotler, 2009; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Ajike et al, 2015; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Consequently, Kotler (2009) and Pereira et al (2021) define corporate brand as the verbal, visual and behavioural articulation of the company's distinctive business model and they further explain that the corporate brand symbolizes the link between the company, its suppliers, customers and all other stake holders. Similarly, corporate branding has the strength to align a company's resources to the development of strategic competitive advantage (Kotler, 2009; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Thus, the significance of corporate branding can be viewed as two dimensional. Firstly, a unique and sustainable differential advantage can be formed through successfully nurtured corporate identity and secondly, a strong corporate brand motivates, enables, and harmonises employees around the corporate brand hence result in consistent customer service interactions (Kotler, 2009; Jones, 2010; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Hence, today's companies are unable to control what is said about them thus necessitating corporate brand reputation management (Pereira et al, 2021; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023).

Furthermore, corporate brands are more significant in the service context where employees can either break or build the brand when interacting with customers thus corporate brands that intend to deliver outstanding customer experiences have to carefully manage employee-customer interactions through addressing customer expectations and needs (Kotler, 2009; Jones, 2010; Frazen and Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). Hence, companies intending to nurture long term, enduring relationships with their customers should build strong corporate brands (Kotler, 2009; Jones, 2010; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Markovic et al, 2018). Hence, Kotler (2009) and Perepelkon & Zhang (2011) highlight that there is a relationship between consumer perceived corporate brand, the attitude and loyalty of the customer since a corporate brand mirrors the actions and valued of the business. Consequently, brands are becoming progressively competitive hence keeping and growing relationships depends on the ability to convey a customer experience bespoke to ever changing customer needs and values coherent with the brand's promise (Akpan, 2018; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Hence, Kotler (2009) and Methaq (2016) argue that unlike product branding which is often dealt with by marketers, corporate branding processes require organisation wide practices which play a part in developing corporate identity. In this case, corporate branding encompasses intangible components which are not directly related with the product, such as employee relations, social responsibility, and corporate trust (Kotler, 2009; Jones, 2010; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). In this case, it targets all stake holders for example employees, suppliers, customers, regulators, shareholders, and the community thus a corporate

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brand is not specific to one product but brings together the company's services and products benefits, social values, relationships, and corporate credibility (Methaq, 2016; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020).

Product Branding:

Product brands and corporate brands are identified as different entities, in fact they are occasionally considered to be equivalent since they both share the objective of bringing about differentiation from competitors (Kotler, 2009; Jones, 2010; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). In fact, the level of synergism between the product brand and corporate brand depends on the brand engineering (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009; Kotler, 2009; Jones, 2010; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Likewise, potent corporate branding can gear up any new service or product with instant value and credibility that cannot be imitated by any other product /service focused marketing campaign (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009; Kotler, 2009; Jones, 2010; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Therefore, it is very important for businesses that intend to build and protect a resilient company to embrace corporate branding since corporate brands give out facts about the organisation and communicate the quality and attributes of services or products offered by the organisation (Ajike et al, 2015; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023).

The Brand Awareness Concept

Kotler and Keller (2016) defined brand awareness as fostering people's ability to recall or recognize the brand in sufficient detail to make a purchase. Thus, in support of this, Maven (2018) established that in this current era consumers have many product options available to them, having a differentiated message and an audience that can easily pick out a company's brand from that of rivals is detrimental for success. In addition, when shoppers are aware of the product that a company offers, they are more likely to go straight to that company if they need that product, instead of researching other places that are offering that particular product (Maven, 2018; Munyoro & Gorajena, 2020). In a nutshell, brand awareness is detrimental for company success so companies should generally direct their marketing efforts towards creating brand awareness. In addition, brand awareness is labelled as the ability of a consumer to recognise and recall a certain brand given different situations (Keller, 1993; Rizwan, 2008). Furthermore, brand awareness aids consumers in understanding the service category of the brand and recognising which services and products are sold under that particular brand (Lombard, 2007; Dhurup, 2014). Thus, it is essential to bear in mind that brand awareness is a very sensitive discipline as at times consumers tend to purchase brands which they have information about and are aware of that brand for example banks such as Standard chartered have created awareness as quality associated banks something retail phamarcies could also do (Kapferer, 2008; Njeri, 2011). For that reason, Hunter (2013) and Huang and Sarigollu (2012) are of the opinion that brand awareness can be built through some of the marketing mix elements, such as distribution, which allows the accessibility and link between a brand and the product category; advertising, which also affects brand awareness positively by frequently exposing brands to customers and also increasing chances of the brand /product being included in a consumers consideration set; price, which can be an awareness tool in terms of affordability and match ability to quality. Consequently, when consumers are aware of the end product that a firm offers, they are most likely to go directly to purchase that brand when need arises (Keller, 2013; Munyoro & Nhevere, 2019). As Aaker (2001) suggests brand awareness

helps brand awareness levels such as brand recognition, and top of the mind awareness to appreciate the importance of ensuring brand awareness at all costs.

The Concept of Brand Recognition

It is important to note that brand names provide memory shortcuts (Jacoby et al, 1977; Keller, 2003). Hence, consumers under time constraint are more likely to buy brands with names they recognize (Chevan, 1992; Kotler et al, 1996; Munyoro et al, 2023). Since an individual has limited memory capability to overcome this people bundle small bits of information into large chunk in their memory and use brand as means to recall these information chunks (Miller, 1956; Kotler et al, 1996; Munyoro et al, 2023). However, brands are more than mental associations as strong brands have also intense emotional association (Kotler et al, 1996; Kapferer, 2004). Equally, brand recognition is one of the brand awareness levels, which is the extent to which a customer can correctly classify a product or service just by viewing the product or services logo, tagline, packaging or advertising campaign (Bornmark, 2005; Schwager & Meyer, 2007). Additionally, brand recognition usually relies on other visuals such as packaging; category reminders, trash bags, salad dressing and not brand names (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Percy & Rossiter, 1992; Munyoro & Gorajena, 2020). Again, upon going to the store the consumer will not yet have realised the brand that they wish to buy, thus they have to get help identify the brand's the category need (Heath et al, 2006; Munyoro et al, 2023), and this is why Munyoro and Gorajena (2020) and Aaker (1991) went on to suggest that brand recognition is often aided through auditory or usual signifiers like slogans, logos, as presented or seen by the advertising. Hence, brand recognition requires the customer to recall prior knowledge and in order to build brand recognition an organisation must frequently provide consumers with unswerving visual or auditory learning experience (Wheeler, 2009; Munyoro et al, 2023). Thus, the term brand recognition also refers to the ability of consumers to identify a specific brand by its attributes over another one (Aaker, 1991; Munyoro & Gorajena, 2020). Accordingly, brand recognition is the ability of consumers to recognize an identifying characteristic of one company versus a competitor and therefore, a company is perceived as having successful brand recognition when consumers are able to recognize the firm through visual or auditory cues alone, even without hearing the company's name (Aaker, 1991; Farhana, 2012; Munyoro et al, 2023). Hence, brand is considered to be successful when people are able to recognize a brand through visual or auditory cues such as logos, slogans, packaging, colours, or jingles rather than being explicitly exposed to a company's name (Farhana, 2012; Munyoro & Gorajena, 2020). Thus, in support of this, Maven (2018) and Munyoro & Gorajena (2020) established that in this current era consumers have many product options available to them, having a differentiated message and an audience that can easily pick out a company's brand from that of rivals is detrimental for success.

Thus, to add on, it can also be noted that when shoppers are aware of the product that a company offers, and they are more likely to go straight to that company if they need that product instead of researching other places that are offering that particular product (Maven, 2018; Munyoro & Gorajena, 2020). For that reason, companies often conduct market research to determine the success of their brand recognition strategies. Similarly, brand recognition is also referred to as aided brand recall, meaning the capacity of customers to remember a brand name off on top of their heads when told to consider a specific product category as noted by Kotler and Keller (2012). Likewise, brand recognition is often paired with brand recall, which is why it's also known as aided brand recall as argued by Dew and Kwon (2010). That said,

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aided brand recall is the ability of customers to think of a brand name from their memory when told to think of a category of products and brand recall tends to indicate a stronger connection to a brand than brand recognition (Dew & Kwon, 2010; Kotler & Keller, 2012). For example, people tend to think of more brand names when prompted by a product than by a category and rand recall is also called unaided recall or spontaneous recall (Kotler & Keller, 2012; Munyoro et al, 2023). In view of that, companies tend to invest a lot of time and money in order to create brand recognition and this is done in order for brand recognition to work, thus companies need to find a way to help consumers recall their brand (Dew and Kwon, 2010; Munyoro et al, 2023). In that process, a company's marketing department often comes up with different cues—both audio and visual cues—to help set their brand apart in the marketplace (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Thus, they do this through the use of logos, colours, marks, or jingles. Thus, logos like the Nike (NKE) swoosh and the Golden Arches from McDonald's (MCD), and taglines like "They're magically delicious" from Lucky Charms cereal and "I'm a big kid now" from Huggies Pull-Ups diapers all help further brand recognition (Munyoro & Nherera, 2019).

Attaining Brand Recognition:

There are different ways in which firms can create brand recognition in this era and age and it has been revealed that and some of these strategies are all meant to create a differentiated message (Munyoro & Gorajena, 2020). Accordingly, as noticed by Mavin (2016), having a distinguished message is important when organisations want to make profits and generate competitive advantage. Consequently, ensuring brand recognition and awareness is also of paramount importance to an organisation or company during every stage of the product life cycle even though some may argue that brand recognition and awareness is needed more during the introduction stages so as to build habitual buying (Marton & Bopth, 1997; Munyoro et al, 2023). Consequently, the way of achieving brand awareness are as follows.

Social Media Tools:

Social media plays a vital role in brand recognition, in this technologically involving era, social media has stamped out as a powerful tool with which information is travelling (Newman, 2009; Munyoro et al, 2023). Hence, Hutter (2013) states that the world cannot deny the comprehensive power of unification which has been brought about by social media and as a matter of fact about 60% of our time is spent online. For that reason, social media can be used as a brand awareness creating tool as a lot lies within it (Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). Thus, in order to touch the hearts of consumers, platforms on social media such as YouTube and Facebook allow accompany to express its intended message effectively through the aid of visual pictures (Newman, 2009; Munyoro et al, 2023). In view of that, Newman (2009) and Hoffman & Fodor (2010) believe that a picture on social media carries the weight of a thousand words and platforms such as WhatsApp, allow one to promote the brand story through circulation of visual images. Hence, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and Lassa (2013) are of the opinion that social media has over the years advanced to become the most sought-after marketing technique of all time and its influence was felt in Mexico where it has been used by small businesses to create brand awareness and to enhance the performance of brands. Similarly, Fornell (2008), Yoo et al (2010) and Haut (2010), also noted that social media is a powerful platform because the company can obtain new ideas and share images of its products and promotions throughout the world within seconds and without a lot of effort.

Personality and Celebrity Endorsement:

The establishment of brand recognition efficiently and economically is considered a significant goal for advertising and is even argued to have an important impact on consumers (Aaker, 2010; Munyoro & Nhevere, 2019). That being said, celebrity endorsement has been connected with brand awareness in both developing as well as developed countries (McCracken, 1989; Ateke, 2013). Hence, Munyoro & Nhevere (2019) state that in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, celebrity endorsement is convincingly advanced as an operative for creating brand awareness thus, positively affecting consumer tastes and preferences as well as improving advertising effectiveness. Additionally, Melford & Nwulu (2015) ascertained that celebrity endorsement enhances persuasion and creates a positive association for the endorsed product even though, the technique is attached to costs of hiring the celebrity as the brand ambassador. Hence, Hoyer & Brown (1990), McCracken (1989), Aaker (2013) and, Munyoro & Nhevere (2019) showed that there are positive results that can come from the technique in relation to the creation of brand awareness. Thus, celebrity endorsement has shown success stories in countries such as USA, Germany, China, Brazil, Ghana, and South Africa. For example, in the USA, Mark Parker who is the CEO for Nike noted that celebrity endorsement has been one of pillars for his company's success since Nike has strong relations with celebrities such as Tiger woods, Michael Jordan, Christiano Ronaldo, Beyoncé and so on (Munyoro and Nhevere, 2019).

Car Wrap Advertising:

Wrap advertising or a vehicle wrap is known as the marketing practice of entirely or partly covering (wrapping) a vehicle in a vinyl or advertising material, which is usually for a colour change, advertising or custom delivery (Yu, 2008; Munyoro et al, 2023). In a nutshell, car wraps are customised designs that can cover an entire car with the exclusion of windows and move around advertising as people see the moving vehicle (Potts, 2018; Munyoro et al, 2023). Furthermore, car wraps are different from print adverts where the viewer has time to read and read repeatedly, instead car wraps are a unique strategy which is highly suitable for small businesses that wish to enter into the market especially in developing countries (Hutchinson, 2015; Munyoro et al, 2023). Nevertheless, car wraps in general are such an effective branding tool for businesses especially stunning colour graphics that convert cars into premium advertising space (Hutchison, 2015; Potts, 2018). Therefore, the main objective and result of this process is essentially a mobile billboard moving around with the advert and thus this improves and increases product recognition and also promotes habitual buying on consumers (Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). Although there is space for more roads in developing countries, but the challenge is that there are not many as the roads are limited and as a result there is a high chance that customers will see the branded car once in a month or so unlike in developed countries (Shizha & Kariwo, 2011; Munyoro et al, 2023). Hence, Yu (2008) and, Munyoro and Gorejena (2020), suggest that small sector businesses should brand their trucks so as to attract a substantial amount of attention.

Giveaways:

Rudzki and Li (2007), Banerjee (2009) and Huang et al (2016) underlined that using giveaways is another possible strategy that can be used in brand recognition, and this involves awareness through the use of free stuff also known as freebies. As noted by Rudzki and Li (2007), and Banerjee (2009), freebies require little effort and one example of a company that used this strategy was Sunlight Dish liquid which attached a washing sponge to its dish washing liquid bottles to try to increase brand awareness and recognition which retail pharmacies in

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Zimbabwe can also use. Concisely, freebies can include custom pens, shirts, custom plastic bags, paper weights, custom tote bags and water cups with straws (Brown, 2016; Munyoro et al, 2023). Nonetheless, proper timing has to be considered when dealing with freebies in order to include the issue of costs (is the money that is used to acquire the freebies) and to also ensure that the intended customers receive the message (Nedungadi, 2005; Munyoro et al, 2023).

Innovation and Differentiation:

It is also important to note that a company can realise brand recognition by being an innovator (Munyoro and Gorejena, 2020). This is also supported by Aaker (1991) and Bornmark (2005), who stated that many products of today seem alike, and Apple is one example of a company that has tried to completely differentiate its products through innovation. Accordingly, Apple is now a powerful brand which has emerged from its cluster as one of the top innovators and this has been necessitated by its outstanding software development which competitor brands are failing to imitate (Hutchison, 2015; Potts, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted phenomenology research philosophy in undertaking this study because phenomenology research requires a researcher to act in capacity of a social actor (Saunders et al, 2012; Munyoro, 2014). In short, this research philosophy studies the human behaviour, interaction and interpretation as is the case with this study as it looked at how brand recognition could enhance customer retention in the Pharmaceutical Retail Sector of Zimbabwe (Myers, 2008; Munyoro, 2014; Saunders et al, 2019). Thus, in this study, the researchers were given freedom to observe, see and have their own perception and understanding of reality and this is important in qualitative research (Patton, 2002; Myers, 2008; Munyoro, 2014; Saunders et al, 2019). Thus, the researcher used qualitative method because it gives a clear picture and understanding on some aspects of social life as well as generating words as compared to numbers (Dawson, 2002; Munyoro, 2014; Saunders et al, 2019). Similarly, the descriptive research design was adopted for this study mainly because it was used to measure any changes in variables over time and it served time, had a better and higher external validity, was comprehensive and also easy to conduct (Fisher, 2010; Yin, 2014; Munyoro, 2014). In addition, the research design was significant for the reason that it provided the most correct and valid answers to research questions which were derived from the objectives (Sekaram & Bougie, 2012; Gibson, 2014; Saunders et al, 2019).

Furthermore, this study made use of the non-probability sampling technique due to limited time and restricted availability of the respondents especially customers who were hesitant in taking part in the research (Sedgwick, 2014; Munyoro, 2014; Zheng et al, 2015). For that reason, to guarantee and ensure that the sample was a representative of the population, the sampling methods that were used were judgmental sampling which was used for selecting respondents across the different sectors of the market and random sampling was used for choosing respondents within outlets (Sekaran & Bougie, 2012; Munyoro, 2014). Thus, for the purpose of this study, a self-administered, closed ended and open-ended questionnaires were used for reason that they are reliable, obligatory and unblemished (Mathers, 2007; Gilham, 2008; Krosnick & Presser, 2009; Oluwatayo, 2012; Fowler Jr, 2013; Munyoro, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 38 questionnaires were send to customers whilst, 12 were for retail pharmacies and the response was very good. Thus, 58.6% of the respondents were male whilst, 41.4% were female. In addition**,** 3 8.6% of the respondents were aged 20 years and below, 22% were aged 20-30 years, 36.2% were aged 30-40 years, 15.5% were aged 40-50 years and 6.9% were aged 50 years and above and this indicates that the greater part of the respondents was aged 30 years. Furthermore, 6.9% of the respondents had O level and below, 17.2% had A level, 19% had certificates, 29.3% had diplomas and 27.6% had degrees as their highest educational qualifications and these results show that majority of respondents had at least a diploma as their highest educational qualification, thus were highly educated, independent, and well informed.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis and presentation was organized and grouped making use of thematic analysis and the SPSS software package and was also used where recurring themes emerged in the process categories of the findings were then done to distinguish critical factors as well the relationship with the data (Munyoro, 2014; Saunders et al, 2019; Munyoro and Mapfunde, 2023). Consequently, in this research, data analysis was then done at three levels namely content, discourse and thematic and as result new concepts were established, conceptual definitions were also formulated and the relationship among the people was examined and concluded. Thus, the conceptions formulated were linked to each other in terms of sequence or opposite to give meaning to the events. Additionally, similarities and glaring differences that emerged from the data of focus group discussions and interviews were also outlined. Equally, qualitative data in this research or study was integrated and analysed using qualitative data analysis whereby both questionnaire and interview data was converted into some form of justification of the respondent's understandings on the topic under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009; Munyoro, 2014; Munyoro and Mapfunde, 2023). The researcher also used (ANOVA) Analysis of Variance as part of inferential statistics.

Findings

The first objective of the study shows that 96.6% of the respondents answered no and 3.4% answered yes to the question of whether or not retail pharmacies have a clearly visible brand name and logo. Thus, this shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents disagreed with the notion that retail pharmacies have a clearly visible brand name and logo. Thus, the results indicate that brand advertising is non-existent hence, had a mean score of 4.02 with a standard deviation of 0.93 and this shows that most of the respondents indicated that retail pharmacies' brands are not very frequently advertised to the general public. For that reason, the standard deviation was less than showing that most of the respondents were of the same view that the use of advertising as a brand recognition strategy was non-existent in the retail.

In addition, the mean score for poor brand promotion was found to be 4.05 with a standard of 0.83 and this shows that the respondents indicated that the retail pharmacies' brands were not frequently promoted to the general public and that this view was shared by the majority of the respondents. Besides, questionnaire respondents were also asked to indicate the degree to which they consented to several statements concerning a number of brand recognition attributes at retail pharmacies and the responses were averaged, and standard deviations calculated. Thus, results show that the mean for brand knowledge was found to be 4.43, with a

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standard deviation of 0.53 and this shows that the majority of the respondents were in strong agreement with the notion that there is high brand knowledge in the retail pharmacies even though it's not being used. Hence, the notion that the retail pharmacies' brands are relevant to the needs of customers was found to be 4.33 with a standard deviation of 0.5, even though they are not being utilised which is not in line with Kotler and Keller (2014) who have asserted the positive role played by branding in fostering customer loyalty.

Furthermore, the results also show that most of the respondents agreed that the retail pharmacies' brands are highly relevant to the needs of customers. Hence, the mean score on the notion that there is high perceived brand quality was found to be 4.31 with a standard deviation of 0.6, which indicated that most of the questionnaire respondents agreed with the notion that retail pharmacies' brands are highly relevant to the needs of customers. Similarly, brand differentiation had a mean score of 4.28 with a standard deviation of 0.59 and these results indicate that the majority of the respondents were in agreement with the notion that the retail pharmacies' brands are not differentiated from other retail pharmacies' brands. Thus, this was also supported by low standard deviation which showed that this perception was shared by most of the questionnaire respondents. Hence, the mean score for low brand esteem was found to be 4.49 with a standard deviation of 0.5 and these findings showed that most of the respondents were in strong agreement with the notion that retail pharmacies' brands have low esteem among customers. Likewise, the notion that retail pharmacies' brands is not recognized by customers was found to be 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.7. Thus, this indicate that the majority of the questionnaire respondents agreed that the retail pharmacies' brands are not highly recognized by customers because they have not seen them. For that reason, these results thus indicate the non-existence of most important attributes of brand recognition retail pharmacies in Chinhoyi and beyond. Thus, these results disagree with Akpoviroro et al (2020)'s notion that indicate that most customers now prioritize brand recognition in enhancing their sales.

Furthermore, the study also asked interviewees about brand recognition at the retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe and the majority of the interviewees indicated that the retail pharmacies do not prioritise brand recognition as one of their marketing strategies. In this case, they said that advertising on traditional media was non-existent and it's not one of the key strategies used by the retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe in order to enhance its brand recognition. Thus, one of the interviewees stated that, "*We do not advertise to make our products known*". Another interviewee stated that "*Yes we do not put adverts on ZTV which shows that the retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe do not advertises their products*". In addition, the interviewees showed that the retail pharmacies do not even use social media to advertise and promote their brands even though advertising especially social media marketing was identified by interviewees as a key brand recognition strategy that can be utilised by the retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe. In the words of one interviewee, "*Yes the retail pharmacies do not advertise their products on social media*". Another interviewee indicated that, "*There are no adverts on social media, Twitter, Facebook -what for really*". Thus, these outcomes are not in line with Kuo et al (2013) who stated that advertising is one of the strategies that companies use to make their brands known and recognizable to customers. Thus, the results also do not agree with Ayesh et al (2021), who identify social media marketing as a great opportunity to promote brand awareness and recognition among customers.

In addition, the study was aimed at determining the contribution of brand recognition in enhancing customer retention of the retail pharmacies' brands in Zimbabwe. Thus, the questionnaire respondents were first asked to indicate whether or not customers buy the retail pharmacies' brands because they recognize the brand, and the results show that 98.3% of the respondents answered No while 1.7% of the respondents answered Yes to the question of whether or not customers buy the retail pharmacies' brands because they recognize them. Accordingly, the findings indicate that an overwhelming majority of the respondents did not agree with the notion that customers buy the retail pharmacies' brands that they recognize. This was not in agreement with Rodríguez-Molina et al (2019) who found out that brand recognition is an important determinant of customer buying behaviour while researching on the branding of tourist destinations. Likewise, the respondents were then asked whether or not customers would prefer buying the retail pharmacies' brands they know, and thus, the results indicate that 96.6% answered yes whilst, 1.7% answered not sure and another 1.7% answered no to the notion that customers buy the retail pharmacies' brands they know. Consequently, the results thus show that the bulk of the respondents were in agreement with the notion that customers would prefer to buy the retail pharmacies' brands they know. Thus, the results of the study concurred with sentiments by Herrero et al (2017), who argues that customers are more likely to purchase brands that they know of, and the opposite is true. Furthermore, questionnaire respondents were also asked on the extent at which they were in agreement with a number of statements regarding the contribution of brand recognition to customer retention at the retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe. The responses were averaged, and standard deviations calculated, and the results show that.

Table 1: Contribution of brand recognition to customer retention the retail pharmacies

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std Dev
Buyingbecauseofbrand	54	4.69	.47
Customersatisfactionbecauseofbrand	56	4.25	.44
Buyingbecauseofbrandfamiliarity	56	4.29	.68
Continuousbuyingduetofamiliarity	56	4.20	.67
Premiumpricebecauseofbrand	56	4.32	.61
Recommendationbecauseofrecognition	56	4.29	.53
Valid N (listwise)	58		
Missing N (listwise)	4		

Source: Authors

Thus, the Table above shows that the mean score on the notion that customers buy the retail pharmacies' brands they know and that they buy them because they recognize the brands was found to be 4.69 with a standard deviation of 0.47. Thus, this shows that the majority of the respondents were in strong agreement with the notion that customers buy the retail pharmacies' brands because they recognize the brand and this agrees with Kim et al (2012), who research on the importance of brand recognition in stimulating buying behaviour. Thus, the notion that customers are satisfied by consuming the retail pharmacies' brands because they know the brand was found to be 4.25 with a standard deviation of 0.44. Hence, these results show that most of the respondents agreed that customers are satisfied by consuming the retail pharmacies' brands because they know the brands. Thus, the positive impact of brand recognition on customer satisfaction is also supported by several scholars including Malik et al

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(2012). Hence, the mean score on the notion that customers buy the retail pharmacies' brands because they are familiar with the brand was found to be 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.68 which indicated that most of the questionnaire respondents agreed with the notion. Therefore, the notion that customers continuously buy the retail pharmacies' brands because they are familiar with the brand had a mean score of 4.20 with a standard deviation of 0.67. Thence, these results indicated that the majority of the respondents were in agreement with the notion that customers would buy the retail pharmacies' brands because they are familiar with the brand.

Thus, the low standard deviation showed that this perception was shared by most of the questionnaire respondents including Chou et al (2013), who also show that brand familiarity causes customers to buy the product. Hence, the mean score on the notion that customers are willing to accept a premium price for buying the retail pharmacies' brands was found to be 4.32 with a standard deviation of 0.61. Thus, these findings show that most of the respondents were in strong agreement with the notion that customers are willing to accept a premium price for buying the retail pharmacies' brands as also noted by Zavattaro et al (2015), who underscored that brand recognition has an important attribute which enable a business to charge prices slightly higher than competitors. Thus, the notion that customers would recommend the retail pharmacies' brands if they were available to others is true because they recognize the brand was found to be 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.53. As a result, the majority of survey respondents agreed that customers traditionally would recommend the retail pharmacies' brands to others because they recognize the brand. Thus, these results are supported by Nazir et al (2016)'s study which highlighted the importance of brand recognition in ensuring customer referrals while studying the impact of branding on customer retention in Pakistan.

The study also sought to analyse the effect of brand recognition on customer retention among customers with habitual buying behaviour of the retail pharmacies' brands. Thus, to achieve this objective the study used regression analysis with customer retention as the dependent variables and various attributes of brand recognition as independent variables. Thence, the independent variables included brand knowledge, brand relevance, brand perceived quality, brand differentiation, brand esteem and brand recognition. Before analysing the results, the significance of the whole model was tested for significance using the F test statistic at 5% significance level. The table below shows the F calculated and corresponding p value.

Table 2: ANOVA

ANOVA (CustomerRetention)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.05	6	.51	5.09	.000
Residual	4.79	48	.10		
Total	7.85	54			

Source: Authors

The Table above shows that the F test of the whole model produced a p value of 0.00. This value is less than 0.05 that shows that the regression model was tested at 5% significance level. The results in the table below show the regression coefficients and their p values.

Table 3: Regression results Coefficients (Customer Retention)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.35	.59	.00	2.30	.026
Brand Knowledge	.12	.09	.15	1.28	.019
Brand Relevance	.28	.10	.38	2.77	.008
Brand Perceived Quality	.03	.08	.05	.35	.025
Brand Differentiation	.12	.08	.18	1.42	.162
Brand Esteem	.08	.10	.11	.83	.042
Brand Recognition	.03	.07	.06	.50	.029

Source: Authors

The table above shows that the constant coefficient was 1.35 with a p value of 0.026. Thus, this indicates that customer retention would change by 1.35 units in the absence of all the independent variables and the p value was higher than 0.05 showing that the constant was significant at 5% significance level. The beta coefficient for brand knowledge was found to be 0.12 with a p value of 0.019. Thus, this shows that brand knowledge has a positive effect on customer retention. Hence, a rise in brand knowledge by 1 unit would lead to a rise in customer retention by 0.12 units. Whilst brand relevance had a beta coefficient of 0.28 with a p value of 0.008. Thus, this indicates that brand relevance has a positive effect on customer retention with a unit increase in brand relevance leading to a 0.28-unit increase in customer retention. Similar, brand perceived quality had a beta of 0.03 with a p value of 0.025. Thus, the results show that brand perceived quality has a positive impact on customer retention and that a unit rise in brand perceived quality would lead to a 0.03 unit rise in customer retention.

The findings also show that the beta coefficient for brand differentiation was found to be 0.12 with a p value of 0.162. As the p value was greater than 0.05 and the findings indicated that brand differentiation has no significant impact on customer retention among customers with habitual tea buying behaviour. Therefore, brand esteem had a beta coefficient of 0.08 with a p value of 0.042. Thus, this indicates that brand esteem has a positive effect on customer retention with a unit increase in brand esteem leading to a 0.08-unit increase in customer retention. Likewise, brand recognition had a beta of 0.03 with a p value of 0.029. Thus, the results show that brand recognition has a positive impact on customer retention and that a unit rise in brand perceived quality would lead to a 0.03 unit rise in customer retention. Thence, the research confirms the positive influence of brand recognition on customer retention at retail pharmacies' brands as noted by Akpoviroro (2020), who stated that brand recognition causes customers to continuously buy a product. In addition, several studies including Tandoh (2020) have found brand recognition as having a positive influence on customer loyalty and retention.

The researcher went on to compute the R-squared as indicated in the table below to find out the coefficient of determination of the regression model. The table below shows that an Rsquared value of 0.39 was found from the results and this result shows that the regression model explained 39% of variations in the dependent variable customer retention, thus was very strong in modelling customer retention among customers with habitual retail pharmacies' brands buying behaviour.

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Table: 4: R-squared

Model Summary (CustomerRetention)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.62	.39	.31	.32

Source: Authors

FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

Findings

Retail Pharmacies' Brands do not Exist in Zimbabwe:

The study shows that the retail pharmacies' brands do not exist in Zimbabwe and this was indicated by an overwhelming majority of respondents who agreed that retail pharmacies' brands are not clearly visible in Zimbabwe and yet brand names and logs help retail pharmacies' brands to stand visibly among its competitors, especially when these brands are dominated by habitual buying behaviour as retail pharmacies' brands do not need much effort to buy them as noted by American Marketing Association (1960). This is good for retail pharmacies' brands especially at a time the consumption of retail pharmacies' brands in the whole world is decreasing as most people are now turning to traditional medicine especially in Zimbabwe (https://www.thezimbabwemail.com; https://globalpressjournal.com). In fact, the powder of herbs used for easing period pain in Zimbabwe cost $1.50, whilst painkillers cost $3.78 and females needs 16 painkillers per month yet most of them are not working and hence, the use of traditional herbs has increased over the past ten to twenty years due to currency crisis which has seen prices of drugs surging out of reach of many Zimbabweans (https://www.thezimbabwemail.com; https://globalpressjournal.com). In addition, consumers of retail pharmacies' brands are also facing challenges from foreign products from South Africa, China and India some of which are being smuggled into the country and are very cheaper than local products (Truong, 2017; Munyoro and Gwisai, 2020). Thus, with the flooding of foreign products then there is no guarantee that the retail pharmacies' brands consumers will continue buying local retail pharmacies' brands (Munyoro et al, 2023). Hence, the need to have the presence of retail pharmacies' brands with names, terms, designs, symbols, or a combination of them will help retail pharmacies' brands consumers who intend to buy retail pharmacies' brands especially in supermarkets such as Pick and Pay to identify retail pharmacies' brands because they have been able to differentiate retail pharmacies' brands from local and foreign competitors (Meadows, 1983; Balmer, 1995; Aaker, 1996; Munyoro et al, 2023). In other words, brands are a means to differentiate from the competitors (or future competitors) and in this case retail pharmacies' brands are diametric from foreign produced retail pharmacies' brands (Arnold, 1992; Crainer, 1995 Balmer, 1995; Aaker, 1996; Munyoro et al, 2023). Furthermore, as stated by the respondents in this study retail pharmacies' brands are not limited to a name, term, design, symbol, or a combination of them but to quality and colour (blue) which help in identifying the retail pharmacies' brands in the retail pharmacies (Bennett, 1988; Dibb et al, 1997; Kapferer, 2004).

The Effect of Brand Recognition on Customer Retention for Retail Pharmacies' Brands:

In this study, the results show that brand recognition and brand characteristics contributes towards customer loyalty, and this is also supported by similar research was carried out the Peshawar region of Pakistan a developing country too (Kahn, 2012; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). In this case, brand recognition is driven by factors such as advertising, personal selling, sale promotion and public relation whilst, brand characteristics include product, price, product

quality, brand image and packaging (Keller, 2001; Kuhn, 2008; Kahn, 2012). In a Pakistan study, the findings show that customer loyalty contribute vastly towards habitual buying behaviour as well as customer retention (Keller, 2001; Kahn, 2012; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Nonetheless, it was also shown that brand characteristics have more influence on customer loyalty as well as customer retention something that respondents in this study encouraged retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe to work on in order to increase their sales (Kuhn, 2008; Kahn, 2012; Munyoro and Mapfunde, 2023). Furthermore, in Italy, it was recognized that brand recognition and brand recall are positively related to purchase intention for consumers as well as customer retention as a result of brand awareness (Kim, 2008; King et al, 2010). Thus, this outcome shows that customers buy from a familiar and popular product brand regardless of the size of the firm as a result of brand recognition. Thus, in this case the respondents of the study included people from Chiayi in Italy which is a developed economy and slightly differently from Zimbabwe which is a developing economy but interestingly the results are the same (Kim, 2008; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). This study also shows that brand recognition represents a purchase dedication in the future purchase whereby consumers will not change their brand loyalty under different situations and can also make repeated buying of the same product without any problems (Kim, 2008; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Similarly, the study show that brand recognition is ominously and positively related to perceived quality and brand loyalty as people in Italy substantiated that they purchase what they know and are familiar with and are also very sensitive to high quality as is the case with retail pharmacies' brands customers (Kim, 2008; King et al, 2010).

Recommendations

Employing Brand Recognition Strategies:

The study suggests that retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe should effectively employ brand recognition strategies to ensure higher levels of customer retention especially at a time sale are low and should also exploit both traditional such as sales promotions, publicity, competitions and roadshows as well as modern ways of promoting tea products such as social media. Thus, this will be intended to ensure that retail pharmacies' brands in Zimbabwe are more recognizable among customers of retail pharmacies' brands in order to fend off foreign retail pharmacies' brands from mainly China and India. It is worth noting that even although brand recognition has been found to be enhancing company's performance in in other countries, but Lassar (2013) argue that the brand recognition is more superior in Mexico through the use of social media podiums since Mexicans are internet addicts and also spend most of their time on social media platforms. Consequently, Keller (2001) and Lassar (2013) also expounded that Mexico has successfully accommodated technology in business and in the marketing of products and services throughout the country and has also invested a lot in information technology. In relation to this study, which was done in Mexico, it was found that brand awareness is making firms in Mexico to be known globally and contributing towards customer retention according to Keller (2001). To add on, it was also noted that social media is the ideal way to build brand recognition for countries that use of technology in order to enhance customer retention (Kuhn, 2008; Lassar, 2013). Thus, even though the study was limited to customer retention and brand recognition, there is an indication that brand recognition contributes to company performance through customer retention (Keller, 2001; Kuhn, 2008; Lassar, 2013). Hence, the need for retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe to enhance the use of social media in order to build brand recognition and enhance customer retention in the sector that involves habitual buying behaviour such as retail pharmacies' brands.

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Product Improvement Through Marketing Research:

For retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe to blossom they should constantly strive to improve their brands by using high-quality blends, which can be accomplished by conducting frequent market research to keep up with rapidly fast changing customer preferences in order to always satisfy customer needs profitably (Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Thus, this will also help them to make their brands well respected and memorable among habitual retail pharmacies' brands buyers (Keller, 2001; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Consequently, this can be achieved through sales promotions using social media such as face book among others. Thusly, this will obviously increase retail pharmacies sales and profits. As noted by an Iraq study, social media is the ideal way to build brand recognition for firms in the food manufacturing sector, fast moving consumer goods, retail industry, textile industry just but to mention a few (Keller, 2001; Safian, 2018).

Sales Promotions:

It can be noted in the study that the regression evidently pointed out that there is a correlation between the sales promotion and, customer retention and profitability (Keller, 2001; Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Thus, retail pharmacies should also undertake corporate social responsibility initiatives such as testing HIV, Cancer among other diseases in areas where they get their operate as well as donating funds to the vulnerable people in these areas where retail pharmacies' brands consumers live to ensure that their brands are well known (Munyoro & Mapfunde, 2023). Furthermore, they can enhance their sales promotions activities such as personal selling, advertising and events marketing such as OK Bazaar grand challenge among others. Thus, this will create the brand awareness to the population and also reduce the force of rivals tapping the company's share through strong competition.

Personality and Celebrity Endorsement:

Retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe should make use of celebrity endorsement as this has been found to be connected to brand awareness and brand recognition in both developing and developed countries as highlighted by McCracken (1989) and Ateke (2013). Hence, Munyoro and Nhevere (2019) state that in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, celebrity endorsement is convincingly advanced as an operative for creating brand awareness thus, positively affecting consumer tastes and preferences as well as improving advertising effectiveness. Additionally, Melford and Nwulu (2015) ascertained that celebrity endorsement enhances persuasion and creates a positive association for the endorsed product even though, the technique is attached to costs of hiring the celebrity as the brand ambassador. Hence, Hoyer and Brown (1990), McCracken (1989), Aaker (2013) and Munyoro and Nhevere (2019) showed that there are positive results that can come from the technique in relation to the creation of brand awareness. Thus, celebrity endorsement has shown success stories in countries such as USA, Germany, China, Brazil, Ghana, and South Africa as well Zimbabwe. For example, in the USA, Mark Parker who is the CEO for Nike noted that celebrity endorsement has been one of pillars for his company's success since Nike has strong relations with celebrities such as Tiger woods, Michael Jordan, Christiano Ronaldo, Beyoncé and so on (Munyoro & Nhevere, 2019). This can be achieved by using University Professor and well-known musicians such as Jah Prazaah and Wink D.

Car Wrap Advertising:

Retail pharmacies should also use wrap advertising or also known as vehicle wrap which involves entirely or partly covering (wrapping) a vehicle in a vinyl or advertising material, which is usually for a colour change, advertising or custom delivery but they need to use it on current make and brand-new cars that attracts tea products consumers unlike their current fleet (Yu, 2008; Munyoro et al, 2023). In fact, the main objective of using this process is essentially to have a mobile billboard which is used for moving around with the advert and consequently, this improves and increases product recognition and also promotes habitual buying on consumers (Potts, 2018; Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). It is also worth noting that car wraps are ideal for developing countries because they are different from print adverts where the viewers have time to read and read repeatedly and by so doing this helps viewers to be aware of the presence of a brand and can then recognise the brand every time, they come across it in the shop (Hutchinson, 2015; Munyoro et al, 2023). Hence, Yu (2008) suggests that these branded cars and trucks should attract a substantial amount of attention especially when using bright colours such as blue. In fact, with reference to Zimbabwe in particular and Africa in general, car wraps in general are such an effective branding tool for businesses especially stunning colour graphics that convert cars into premium advertising space (Hutchison, 2015; Potts, 2018).

Social Media:

Lastly but not least social media plays a vital role in brand recognition, especially in this technologically involving era and hence the need to use in enhancing brand recognition. In short, social media has stamped out as a powerful tool with which information can travel (Newman, 2009; Munyoro et al, 2023). Hence, Hutter (2013) states that the world cannot deny the comprehensive power of unification which has been brought about by social media and as a matter of fact about 60% of our time is spent online. For that reason, social media can be used as a brand awareness creating tool as a lot lies within it (Munyoro & Gorejena, 2020). Thus, in order to touch the hearts of consumers in the retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe, platforms on social media such as YouTube and Facebook should be used to hence brand recognition because they allow companies to express their intended message effectively through the aid of visual pictures (Newman, 2009; Munyoro et al, 2023). In view of that, Newman (2009) and Hoffman & Fodor (2010) believe that a picture on social media carries the weight of a thousand words and platforms such as WhatsApp, which allow one to promote the brand story through circulation of visual images. Hence, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) and Lassa (2013) are of the opinion that social media has over the years advanced to become the most sought-after marketing technique of all time and its influence was felt in Mexico where it has been used by small businesses to create brand awareness and to enhance the performance of brands. Similarly, Fornell (2008), Yoo et al (2010) and Haut (2010), also noted that social media is a powerful platform because the company can obtain new ideas and share images of its products and promotions throughout the world within seconds and without a lot of effort.

There is need for retail pharmacies in Zimbabwe to promote product and corporate brands even though product brands and corporate brands are identified as different entities. In fact, they are occasionally considered to be equivalent since they both share the objective of bringing about differentiation from competitors (Kotler, 2009; Jones, 2010; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023). In a nutshell, the level of synergism between the product brand and corporate brand depends on the brand engineering (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009; Kotler, 2009;

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Jones, 2010; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Likewise, potent corporate branding can gear up any new service or product with instant value and credibility that cannot be imitated by any other product /service focused marketing campaign (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009; Kotler, 2009; Jones, 2010; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Sithole, 2023). Therefore, it is very important for businesses such as retail pharmacies that intend to build and protect a resilient company to embrace corporate branding since corporate brands give out facts about the organisation and communicate the quality and attributes of services or products offered by the organisation (Ajike et al, 2015; Frazen & Moriaty, 2015; Munyoro & Hodzi, 2023).

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