

IMPACT OF MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVE IN BUILDING BRAND PERCEPTION

Dissertation Submitted to



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

for the partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

in

Pharmaceutical Management

By

Tanay Sudhir Sontakke

Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Mr. Rahul Sharma

2024

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Tanay Sudhir Sontakke** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA Pharmaceutical Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur has successfully completed his internship at (IIHMR University) during March 14 - June 13, 2024.

Place:

Jaipur

Date:

6/7/24

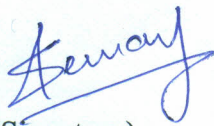
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Rahul Sharma'.

Mr. Rahul Sharma
Sign of faculty guide

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation **IMPACT OF MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVES IN BUILDING BRAND PERCEPTION** is the bonafide record of my original research work.

I declare that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.



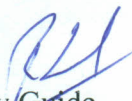
(Signature)

Tanay Sudhir Sontakke

Date 6/7/24

CERTIFICATE

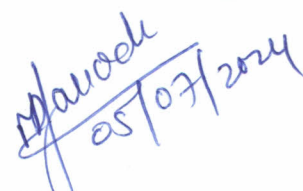
This is to certify that dissertation titled **“Impact of Medical Representative in Building Brand Perception”** is a record of the research work undertaken by **Tanay Sudhir Sontakke** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Pharmaceutical Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur under my guidance and supervision and his approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.


Faculty/Guide

Mr. Rahul Sharma

IIHMR University, Jaipur

Date


School Dean

Dr. Manthan Janodia

IIHMR University, Jaipur

Date 05/07/2024

Abstract

This study investigates the interaction dynamics between healthcare professionals (HCPs) and pharmaceutical representatives, focusing on factors influencing these interactions, ethical considerations, and the credibility of information provided by pharmaceutical companies. Utilizing a sample of 100 general physicians, the study examines the frequency and nature of these interactions, the perceived ethical dilemmas, reliance on scientific literature from pharmaceutical companies, and the credibility attributed to such information. Key findings reveal that a significant portion of HCPs interact frequently with pharmaceutical representatives, with over half having no restrictions on interaction frequency. Ethical concerns are prevalent, with 71% of respondents acknowledging potential dilemmas in these interactions. Additionally, a substantial number of HCPs rarely use pharmaceutical company scientific literature, citing credibility issues. Only 9% of HCPs find the information from pharmaceutical companies extremely credible, indicating a significant trust gap. The study also explores the role of regulatory oversight, brand loyalty, and factors affecting prescribing decisions. A notable 69% of doctors believe pharmaceutical companies influence treatment decisions, while 45% of HCPs are moderately satisfied with the safety and efficacy of the medications promoted. Doctors prioritize efficacy, cost, safety, and patient feedback when prescribing, underscoring the need for pharmaceutical companies to address these factors transparently.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported me throughout the course of this project.

First and foremost, I am deeply thankful to my university mentor Mr. Rahul Sharma, Assistant Professor, at IIHMR University. His unwavering support, insightful guidance, and constructive feedback have been invaluable. His extensive knowledge and experience have greatly enriched my understanding of the subject matter, and his encouragement has been a constant source of motivation.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to my industry mentor, Mr. Abhishek Charde, business development executive Oracity lifescience LLP, Nagpur. His support and guidance have been crucial in bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical application. His expertise and willingness to share his professional insights have significantly contributed to the success of this project.

Additionally, I am grateful to my colleagues and peers for their collaboration and assistance during this project. Their perspectives and suggestions have contributed significantly to the development of my work.

Furthermore, I extend my gratitude to my family and friends for their continuous support and understanding. Their encouragement has been a pillar of strength throughout this journey.

Finally, I am thankful to IIHMR University and the organization where I conducted my industry project for providing me with the opportunity and resources to undertake this project. The experience has been immensely rewarding and has provided me with valuable insights and skills that I will carry forward in my professional endeavors.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

Date:

Place: Jaipur

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	Pg No 1
1.1 Background	Pg No 2
1.2 Research Problem	Pg No 2
1.3 Objective of the study	Pg No 2
1.4 Research Questions	Pg No 3
1.5 Scope of the study	Pg No 3
1.6 Significance of the Study	Pg No 3
Chapter 2:	Pg No 4
2.1 Brand Perception in Healthcare	Pg No 5
2.2 Medical Practitioner & Brand Preference	Pg No 5
2.3 Factors Influencing Brand Perception	Pg No 5
2.4 Previous Studies	Pg No 6
Chapter 3:	Pg No 7
3.1 Research Design	Pg No 8

3.2 Population & Sample	Pg No 8
3.3 Data Collection Method	Pg No 8
3.4 Data Analysis Methods	Pg No 8
3.5 Ethical Considerations	Pg No 9
Chapter 4: Data Analysis & Interpretation	Pg No 10
4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents	Pg No 11
4.2 Analysis of Key Findings	Pg No 11
4.3 Discussion	Pg No 24
Chapter 5: Conclusion & Recommendations	Pg No 25
5.1 Conclusion	Pg No 26
5.2 Recommendations	Pg No 26
5.3 Limitation of Study	Pg No 27
5.4 Suggestion for Future Research	Pg No 27

List of Figures:

1) Figure 1	Pg No 12
2) Figure 2	Pg No 13
3) Figure 3	Pg No 14
4) Figure 4	Pg No 15
5) Figure 5	Pg No 16
6) Figure 6	Pg No 17
7) Figure 7	Pg No 18
8) Figure 8	Pg No 20

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Overview of the Pharmaceutical Industry

The pharmaceutical sector acts as the main player in the healthcare sector. They try to continuously innovate and develop new drugs and technologies for the advancement of the healthcare system. To strengthen the healthcare sector, the government should always play a crucial role and apply the strict regulatory requirements for the marketing of any products.

1.1.2 Importance of Brand Perception in the Pharmaceutical Sector

Brand perception is a crucial aspect of marketing. What others think about our products and services matters. Eventually, that leads to more customers buying our products and helps us to generate more revenue and gain high-profit margins. Brand perception also builds the trust the customer put in any brand or company to grow.

1.2 Research Problem

1.2.1 Statement of the Problem

After making significant investments in marketing and advertising then also the doctors are not prescribing the brand. So, too able to find out what doctors are seeing in the products while prescribing it to patients and factors that can influence your product's acceptance more.

1.2.2 Rationale for Choosing This Topic

Understanding the factors that influence brand perception can help pharmaceutical companies develop effective marketing strategies and improve their market presence. This knowledge is particularly valuable for new and lesser-known brands seeking to establish themselves in a competitive market.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 Main Objectives

- To Explore the factors influencing medical practitioners perceptions of pharmaceutical brands.
- To Identify the role of ethical considerations in prescribing decisions.
- To Assess the impact of marketing strategies on brand perception.

1.3.2 Sub-Objectives

- Determine the frequency and impact of interactions with pharmaceutical representatives.
- Evaluate the credibility of information provided by pharmaceutical companies.
- Investigate changes in brand preferences over the past year.

1.4 Research Questions

- What factors influence medical practitioners' decisions to prescribe specific brands?
- How do ethical considerations affect interactions with pharmaceutical companies?
- How credible do medical practitioners find the information provided by pharmaceutical companies?
- What changes in brand preference have been seen over the past year?

1.5 Scope of the Study

1.5.1 Geographical Scope

The study is confined to medical practitioners practicing in Nagpur.

1.5.2 Temporal Scope

The data collection was conducted over a eight-week period.

1.5.3 Conceptual Scope

The study focuses on brand perception, prescribing behaviours, and the impact of marketing and ethical considerations.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study have implications for pharmaceutical marketing strategies, industry practices, and policy development. By understanding the factors that influence brand perception, pharmaceutical companies can better tailor their approaches to meet the needs and expectations of medical practitioners.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Brand Perception in Healthcare

2.1.1 Definitions and Theories Related to Brand Perception

Brand perception refers to the collective opinions and attitudes of stakeholders towards a brand. Key theories include Aaker's Brand Equity Model, which emphasizes brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty, and Keller's Brand Resonance Model, focusing on brand salience and customer relationships [1][2].

2.2 Medical Practitioners and Brand Preference

2.2.1 How Medical Practitioners Form Perceptions About Pharmaceutical Brands

Medical practitioners form perceptions based on clinical efficacy, safety profiles, peer recommendations, and interactions with pharmaceutical representatives. Continuous medical education and updates from key opinion leaders also play significant roles [3][4].

2.3 Factors Influencing Brand Perception

2.3.1 Quality of Drugs

Perceived quality, including efficacy and safety, is paramount. Reliable therapeutic outcomes and minimal side effects contribute to positive brand perception [5].

2.3.2 Marketing Strategies

Effective marketing, including direct promotions, scientific literature, and digital engagement, significantly influences prescribing behaviors [6][7].

2.3.3 Corporate Reputation

A strong corporate reputation, based on ethical practices and regulatory compliance,

enhances trust and credibility among medical practitioners [8]

2.3.4 Peer Influence

Recommendations from respected colleagues and key opinion leaders can greatly impact brand preference [9].

2.4 Previous Studies

2.4.1 Summary of Past Research Findings on Similar Topics

Studies have highlighted the importance of perceived quality, brand loyalty, and the impact of sales representatives on prescribing behaviour [10][11]. Research has also shown that ethical practices and transparent information significantly influence brand perception [12].

2.4.2 Gaps in the Literature

While existing studies provide valuable insights, there is limited research on brand perception among general physicians in specific geographical regions like Nagpur.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Type of Study

This study adopts a quantitative research design to quantify the perceptions of medical practitioners towards pharmaceutical brands.

3.2 Population and Sample

3.2.1 Description of the Target Population

The target population includes 100 general physicians practicing in Nagpur.

3.2.2 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who meet the inclusion criteria of being licensed and having at least three years of clinical experience.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

3.3.1 Tools and Techniques for Collecting Data

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with 12 questions, administered through face-to-face interviews. The questions covered interactions with pharmaceutical representatives, factors influencing prescribing decisions, ethical considerations, and changes in brand preference.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

Techniques for Analyzing the Collected Data

Descriptive statistics, including mean, median, and mode, were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests and regression analysis, were employed to identify significant relationships between variables. Open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical Issues and How They Will Be Addressed

- **Informed Consent:** Participants were informed about the study's purpose and provided consent before participating.
- **Confidentiality:** Participant anonymity was maintained, and data were securely stored.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The sample consisted of 100, with a balanced representation of experience levels and practice settings.

4.2 Analysis of Key Findings

4.2.1 Interaction with Pharmaceutical Representatives

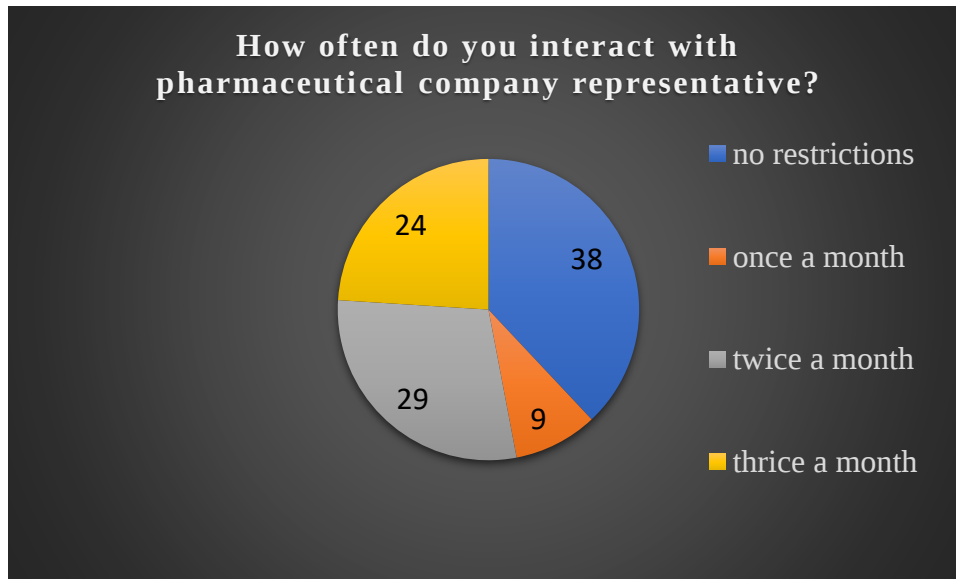


Fig. 1 How often do you interact with pharmaceutical company representatives?

- **No restriction (38%):** This is the largest group, indicating that nearly half (38%) of HCPs have no restrictions on their interaction frequency with pharmaceutical reps.
- **Once a Month (9%):** A smaller portion (9%) interacts with reps only once a month.
- **Twice a Month (29%):** A significant portion (one-third) interacts with reps twice a month.
- **Thrice a Month or More (24%):** A substantial percentage (one-quarter) interacts with reps three times a month or more.

Strategic Use of the Interaction Data

- **Rep Scheduling and Workload:** Since a significant percentage (over half) of HCPs have no restrictions or prefer more frequent interactions (twice or thrice a

month), reps can prioritize scheduling to meet this demand.

- **Flexibility:** The data indicates that some HCPs prefer less frequent interactions. Be flexible and allow reps to adjust their approach based on individual preferences.
- **Communication Channels:** While in-person interactions are still valuable, consider offering alternative communication channels for HCPs who prefer less frequent contact. Options like email updates, online portals, or on-demand webinars can be beneficial.
- **Content Tailoring:** Tailor the content reps present based on interaction frequency. For HCPs with no restrictions, reps can present detailed information. For those with less frequent interactions, reps can focus on concise, high-impact information.

4.2.2 Ethical considerations

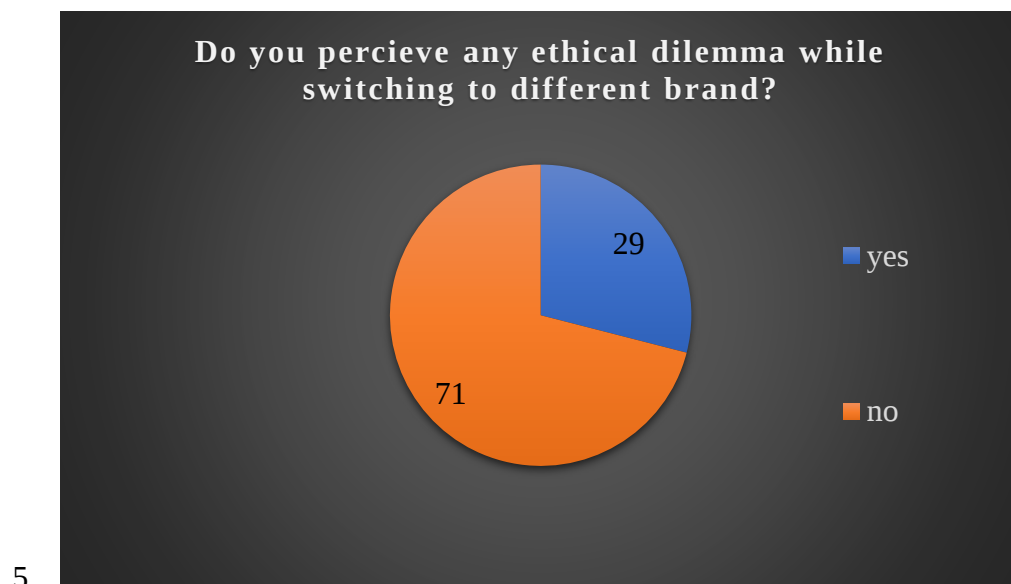


Fig 2. Do you perceive any ethical dilemmas or conflict of interest in your interactions with pharmaceutical companies?

- **No Ethical Dilemmas (29%):** A smaller portion (29%) of respondents perceive no ethical issues or conflicts of interest.
- **Ethical Dilemmas Present (71%):** A significant majority (71%) of respondents believe ethical concerns exist in interactions with pharmaceutical companies

Strategic Use of the Perception Data

- **Understanding the Concerns:** Conduct further research to delve deeper into the specific ethical dilemmas HCPs face. This will help you tailor your approach to address their most pressing issues.
- **Transparency and Open Communication:** Prioritize transparency in clinical trials, data sharing, and pricing. Open communication fosters trust and helps alleviate concerns.
- **Focus on Patient Benefit:** Frame interactions and marketing around improved patient outcomes. Emphasize the positive impact your products can have on patient health.
- **Evidence-Based Approach:** Ensure educational materials and communications are objective and based on scientific evidence. Minimize promotional language that might appear biased.
- **Aligning with Guidelines:** Ensure interactions with HCPs comply with ethical guidelines set by medical associations.

4.2.3 Influence of Scientific Literature

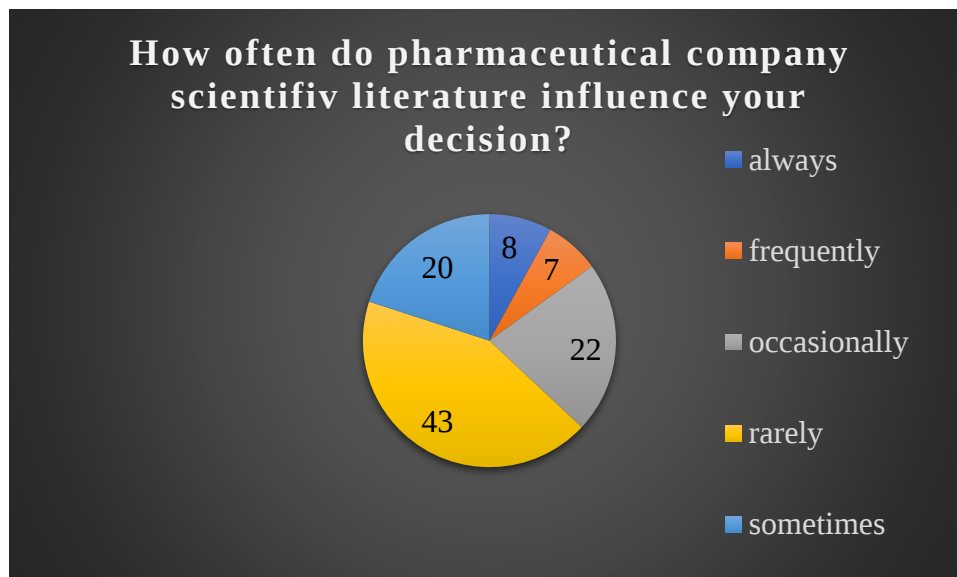


Fig 3 How often do pharmaceutical company scientific literature influence your decisions?

- **Always (8%):** A small portion of HCPs always rely on pharmaceutical company scientific literature for their decisions.
- **Frequently (7%):** An even smaller portion frequently uses such literature.

- **Occasionally (22%):** A significant portion (one-quarter) considers this information occasionally.
- **Rarely (43%):** Nearly half of HCPs rarely use pharmaceutical company scientific literature.
- **Sometimes (20%):** A remaining portion (one-fifth) uses it sometimes.

Strategic Use of Literature Data

- **Understanding Usage Patterns:** Conduct further research to understand why HCPs don't consistently rely on your company's literature. This might be due to accessibility issues, lack of credibility, or not addressing their specific needs.
- **Focus on Credibility and Transparency:** Emphasize transparency in clinical trials, data sharing, and robust methodologies. This can enhance the credibility of your research and make it more trustworthy.
- **Target Your Communication:** Tailor your scientific literature to different specialties and address the specific needs and information gaps of HCPs in each field.
- **Accessibility and Education:** Ensure your literature is easily accessible through various channels (online portals, medical journals). Consider offering educational resources such as webinars or summaries of key findings to help HCPs understand and utilize your research effectively.

4.2.4 Credibility of Information

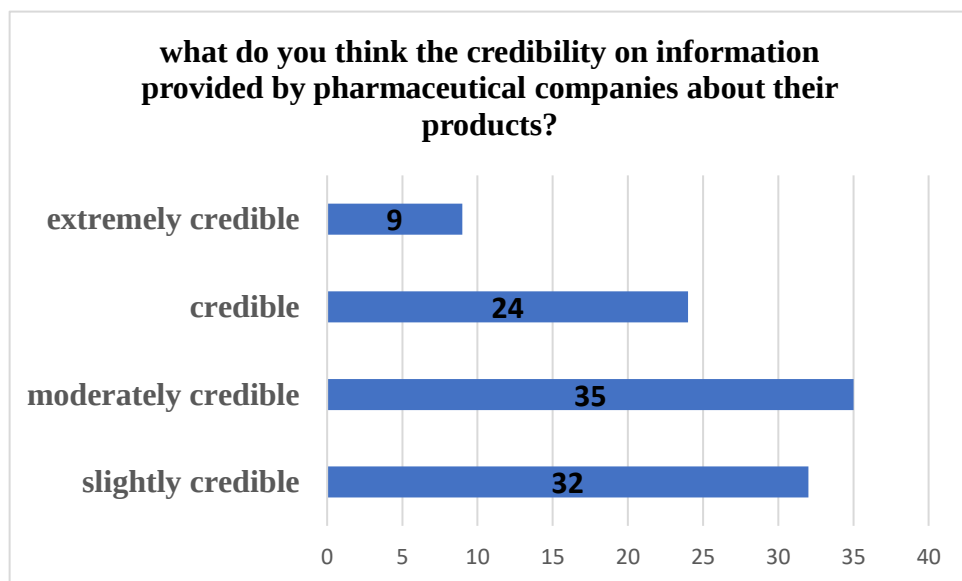


Fig 4 What do you think the credibility of information provided by pharmaceutical companies about their products

- **Slightly Credible (32%):** A significant portion (nearly one-third) of HCPs view the information as only slightly credible. This is an area for improvement.
- **Moderately Credible (35%):** A slightly larger portion (over one-third) considers it moderately credible. There's room to build trust and enhance credibility.
- **Credible (24%):** A respectable portion (one-quarter) views the information as credible.
- **Extremely Credible (9%):** A smaller portion (only 9%) finds the information extremely credible.

Strategic Use of Credibility Data

- **Transparency and Open Communication:** Emphasize transparency in clinical trials, data sharing, and pricing. Open communication builds trust and fosters a more positive perception of information credibility.
- **Focus on Evidence-Based Communication:** Clearly communicate the scientific evidence behind your products to healthcare professionals. Base marketing materials and rep interactions on data and research findings.
- **Addressing Unmet Medical Needs:** Ensure your products address genuine medical needs. If HCPs perceive a focus on profit over patient well-being, credibility can suffer.
- **Partner with Healthcare Professionals:** Collaborate with doctors and other healthcare professionals to develop educational materials and conduct joint research. This fosters trust and positions your company as a reliable source of information.

4.2.5 Regulatory Oversight

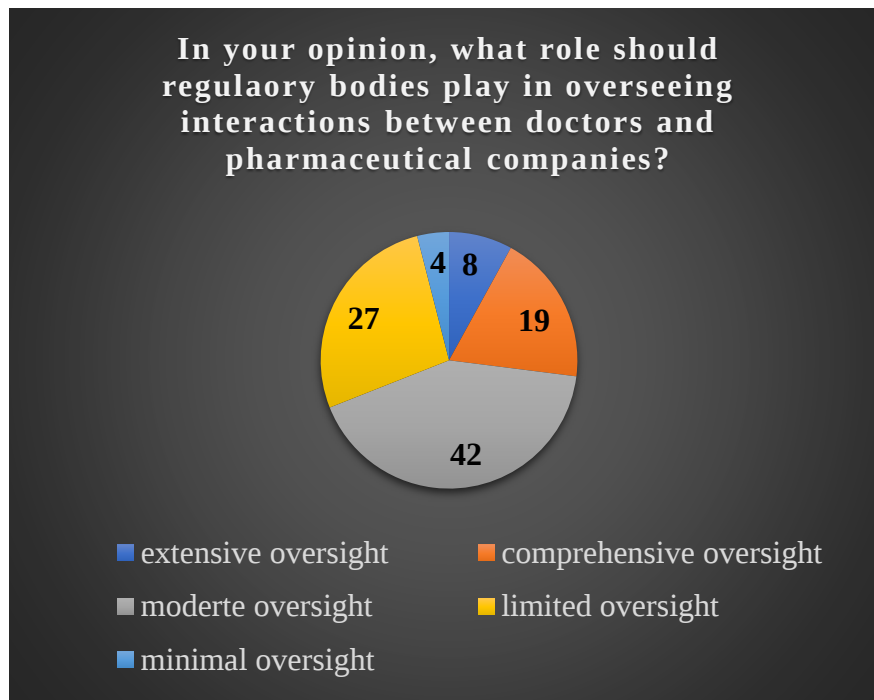


Fig 5 What role should regulatory bodies play in overseeing interactions between doctors and pharmaceutical companies?

- **Extensive Oversight (7%):** A small portion (around 7%) of doctors believe regulatory bodies should have the most extensive oversight of interactions.
- **Comprehensive Oversight (18%):** A slightly larger portion (around 18%) favors comprehensive oversight, ensuring clear regulations and enforcement.
- **Moderate Oversight (43%):** The largest portion (over 40%) believe moderate oversight is sufficient, balancing regulations with professional autonomy.
- **Limited Oversight (26%):** A significant portion (one-quarter) believe oversight should be limited, allowing for more flexibility in interactions.
- **Minimal Oversight (6%):** A very small percentage (around 6%) believe regulatory bodies should have minimal involvement.

Strategic Use of Oversight Data

- **Compliance and Transparency:** Regardless of the preferred level of oversight, maintaining the highest standards of compliance with regulations and being transparent in clinical trials, data sharing, and pricing is crucial.

- **Finding Common Ground:** Most doctors (over 60%) favor some level of oversight. Focus on building trust and demonstrating your commitment to ethical practices within the existing regulatory framework.
- **Open Communication:** Maintain open communication channels with doctors and address their concerns about interactions with pharmaceutical companies.
- **Educational Content:** Provide doctors with objective and evidence-based educational content to support informed decision-making.

4.2.6 Brand Loyalty

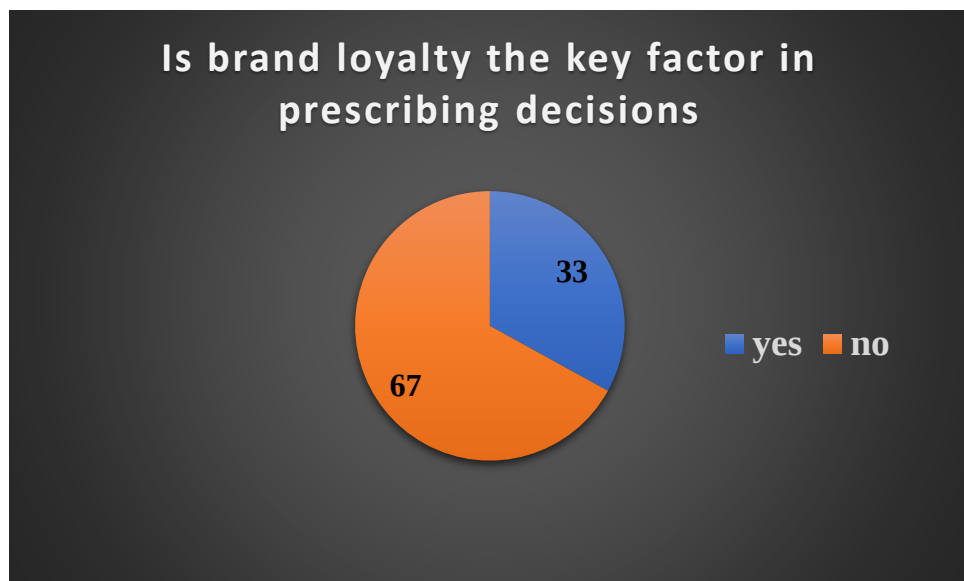


Fig. 6 Is brand loyalty the only key factor in prescribing decisions?

- **Yes (67%):** A significant majority (almost 70%) of doctors believe pharmaceutical companies influence treatment decisions.
- **No (33%):** Only a minority (around 30%) of doctors believe pharmaceutical companies have no influence.

Strategic Use of Influence Data

This data can inform your pharmaceutical company's approach to marketing and interacting with doctors:

- **Transparency and Credibility:** Strive for maximum transparency in clinical trials, data sharing, and pricing to build trust with doctors and ensure your information is perceived as credible.
- **Focus on Value and Evidence:** Ensure your marketing materials and communication with doctors focus on the value your products bring to patient care and are supported by solid scientific evidence.
- **Education, Not Persuasion:** Shift the focus from persuading doctors to using educational content that equips them to make informed decisions based on the latest research and best practices.
- **Physician-Driven Interactions:** Structure interactions with doctors in a way that empowers them to make independent decisions based on their expertise and patient needs.

4.2.7 Satisfactory level of Safety and Efficacy:

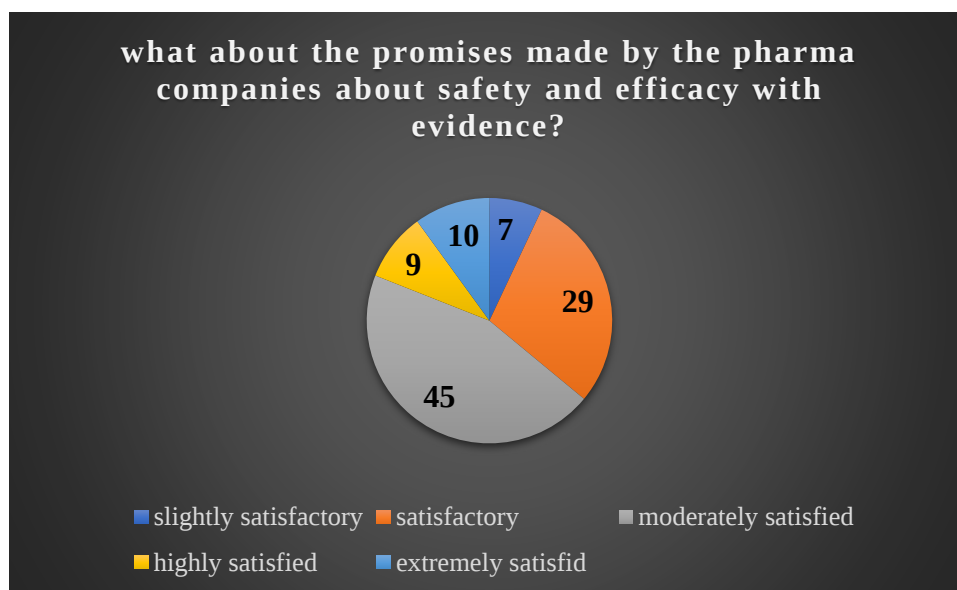


Fig 7 What about the promises made b pharma companies about safety and efficacy with evidence?

- **Slightly Satisfied (6%):** A small portion of HCPs (around 6%) are only slightly satisfied. This area needs significant improvement.
- **Satisfactory (30%):** A larger portion (around 30%) finds it satisfactory, but there's room for improvement.
- **Moderately Satisfied (50%):** The majority (over half) of HCPs are moderately satisfied, indicating there might be some areas exceeding expectations and others

falling short.

- **Highly Satisfied (7%):** A respectable portion (around 7%) is highly satisfied.
- **Extremely Satisfied (7%):** Another small portion (around 7%) is extremely satisfied.

Strategic Use of Satisfaction Data

- **Conduct Further Research:** Investigate the reasons behind the lower satisfaction scores (slightly and satisfactory). This can help you identify specific areas for improvement.
- **Focus on Improvement:** Develop and implement strategies to address the specific concerns raised by HCPs. This might involve improving the quality of information provided, enhancing service delivery, or addressing product-related issues.
- **Maintain Strengths:** Continue to deliver on the aspects that HCPs are highly satisfied with (highly and extremely satisfied).
- **Tailored Communication:** Consider segmenting your communication with HCPs based on their satisfaction levels. For example, providing more in-depth information or addressing specific concerns for those less satisfied

4.2.8 Brand Preferences Stability

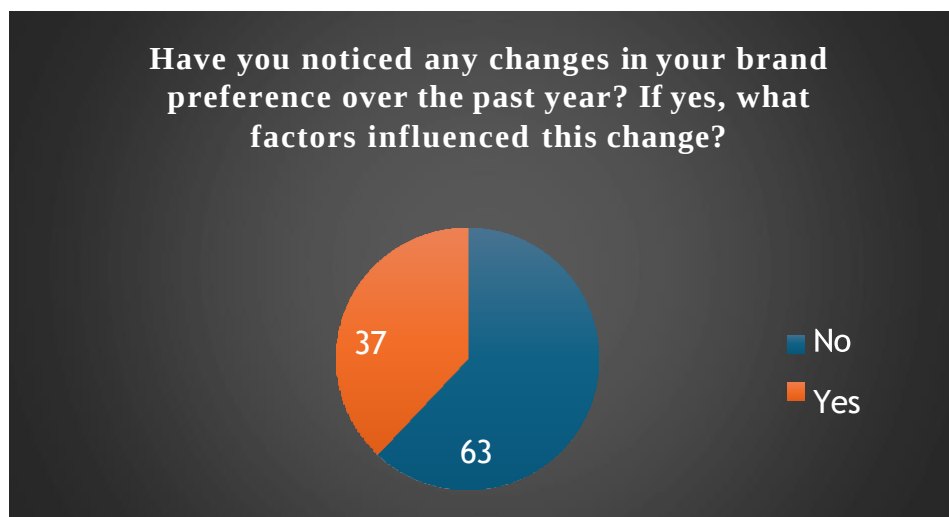


Fig 8 Have you noticed any changes in your brand preference over the past year?

- **Yes (37%):** A significant portion (nearly 40%) of consumers have noticed changes in their brand preferences in the past year.

- **No (63%):** A larger majority (almost 60%) of consumers haven't noticed any changes in their brand preferences.

Understanding Brand Switching

There are many reasons why consumers might switch brands, including:

- Usually prefer MNC products & Non-Generic
- Cost
- Patient Review
- Availability
- Acceptability
- Side effects
- Clinical Data
- New molecule
- Research Findings
- User friendly Strategic

Use of Brand Preference Data

- **Understanding Brand Loyalty:** The high percentage (almost 70%) who haven't switched brands indicates a strong base of loyal customers. Identify what factors contribute to this loyalty and continue to deliver on those expectations.
- **Focus on Retention Strategies:** Develop targeted campaigns to retain existing customers and prevent them from switching brands.
- **Competitor Analysis:** Look for the reason why physician has to shift from the prescribing brand to other. What factors affect our brand prescription and try to implement that in your marketing strategy.
- **Innovate and Differentiate:** Continuously innovate and upgrade your brand so we can stay with the updating era. We have the upper hand against our competitors and have more prescribers than them.

4.2.9 Prioritization of Factors by Doctors

1. Efficacy
2. Cost
3. Safety

4. Patient Feedback

Understanding Doctor Prescribing Decisions

- **Efficacy (Highest Priority):** Doctors primarily focus on a medication's effectiveness in treating the patient's condition.
- **Cost (Important Consideration):** Affordability is a significant factor, especially if there are several effective treatment options.
- **Safety (Important, But Lower Priority):** Doctors consider potential side effects, but prioritize efficacy as long as the safety profile is acceptable.
- **Patient Feedback (Least Important):** While some doctors might consider patient experiences, it's the least influential factor compared to the others.

Strategic Use of Doctor Ranking Data

- **Highlighting Efficacy:** Clearly communicate the medication's effectiveness in clinical trials and ensure data is readily available to doctors.
- **Addressing Cost Concerns:** If the medication is expensive, consider offering patient assistance programs that can help to get patient benefits with the cure and we can retain our customers.
- **Balancing Safety and Efficacy:** Try to develop medications that are both highly effective and have a good safety profile.
- **Gathering Patient Feedback:** Try to collect and analyze patient feedback to identify potential areas for improvement in your medications. Is there any flavour of medication that causes them to not take medication etc.

4.2.10 How Doctors Stay Updated

- **Medical Journals (Highest):** The most common way is by reading medical journals, which are publications containing research articles by medical professionals.
- **Conferences (Significant Source):** Attending conferences is another popular way for doctors to stay updated on the latest advancements through presentations and discussions.

- **Medical Representatives (Moderate Source):** A moderate portion relies on information from medical representatives (MRs) who are pharmaceutical company liaisons with doctors.

Importance of Multiple Information Sources

- **Medical Journals:** Provide in-depth research and data analysis.
- **Conferences:** Offer opportunities for live discussions and exposure to diverse perspectives.
- **Medical Representatives:** Can provide updates on specific medications or products.
- **Other Sources:** May include online resources, medical news websites, or consultations with specialists.

Strategic Use of Doctor Information Preferences

- **Medical Journal Publications:** Ensure your research is published in high-quality medical journals to reach a wide audience of doctors.
- **Conference Sponsorship:** Sponsor or participate in relevant medical conferences to present your research and engage with doctors directly.
- **Train Medical Representatives:** Train your medical representatives with accurate, data-driven information to effectively communicate with doctors.
- **Develop Credible Online Resources:** Create online resources that provide doctors with credible and up-to-date information about your medications or products.

4.2.11 Factors Can Make Interaction Interesting with Doctors

Content and Information:

- **New Drugs and Molecules:** Highlighting new drugs, especially those with novel mechanisms of action (New molecule), is crucial as doctors are always looking for innovative treatment options.

- **Safety and Side Effects:** Transparency about both the safety profile and potential side effects and contraindications is essential for doctors to make informed decisions.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Doctors are concerned about patient affordability. Highlighting potential cost savings or cost-effectiveness makes your presentation more relevant.
- **Scientific Evidence:** Backing up claims with strong scientific evidence and real-world studies (Frequency, real-world study) increases credibility and trust.
- **Patient Cases and Studies:** Sharing real-world patient case studies that demonstrate the drug's effectiveness can be very engaging for doctors.
- **Ongoing Research and Trials:** Information on ongoing clinical trials or research keeps doctors updated on future developments.
- **Drug Interactions and Precautions:** Addressing potential drug interactions or precautions shows the MR's understanding of potential risks and benefits.
- **Product Relevance to Guidelines:** Discussing how the product aligns with current treatment guidelines demonstrates its place in existing regimens.

Presentation and Communication Style:

- **Engaging Presentation:** An engaging presentation style with visual aids (Engaging presentation style with visual aids) can make complex information more understandable and memorable.
- **Professionalism:** A professional approach from the MR as in to meet doctors at the provided time only so as not to disturb OPD time could build trust and respect for MR during the interaction
- **In-Depth Knowledge:** Demonstrating in-depth knowledge of the product and its clinical data allows doctors to ask specific questions and feel confident in the information presented.
- **Complex Medical Questions:** The ability to answer complex medical questions confidently (Ability to answer complex medical questions confidently) demonstrates the MR's expertise and builds trust.

Additional Considerations:

- **Samples and Demonstrations:** Providing samples or product demonstrations (Providing samples or product demonstrations) can be useful for some drugs, but ensure compliance with regulations.
- **Patient Acceptability:** Discussing product availability, patient acceptability (Product, availability, acceptability by patients), and compatibility with existing therapies (Discussing the product's compatibility with existing therapies) provides a well-rounded perspective.
- **Unique Selling Points:** Highlighting the product's unique selling points (Discussing the product's unique selling points) can differentiate it from competitors.
- **Support Services:** Offering support services or patient assistance programs (Offering support services or patient assistance programs) demonstrates the company's commitment to patient care.

4.2.12 Some Factors Doctors want to Change in Marketing

- Unbiased drug review
- Less interference from regulatory bodies and any association of doctors & Pharma companies must be known to patients for information
- Transparency
- Medical teams not related to sales/marketing should talk about products to doctors
- Quality
- Drug quality
- Transparency in pricing and cost information
- Continuing medical education from unbiased third-parties
- Public registration of all clinical trial results
- Scientific content
- Mandatory disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
- Honesty
- Mandatory disclosure of financial ties and payments

- Strict limits on gifting and promotional activities
- Independent monitoring of clinical trials data
- Restricting direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription drugs
- Separating research funding from marketing activities
- Whistle-blower protection for reporting unethical practices
- Penalties for off-label promotion or misleading claims
- Cooling-off periods before doctors can work for pharma
- Independent post-marketing safety surveillance systems
- Restrictions on pharmaceutical representative access to facilities
- Explicit codes of conduct for industry-physician interactions
- Banning direct gifts or payments to individual doctors
- Centralized systems for reviewing/approving arrangements
- Training for doctors on managing conflicts of interest
- Increased scrutiny and oversight by medical associations

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Comparison with Existing Literature

The findings align with existing literature that highlights the importance of efficacy, safety, and ethical considerations in brand perception. The role of pharmaceutical representatives and scientific literature is also corroborated by previous studies [13][14].

4.3.2 Explanation of Unexpected Results

The high level of perceived credibility of pharmaceutical information and the minimal ethical dilemmas reported were somewhat unexpected, suggesting that recent efforts to enhance transparency may be effective.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Summary of Key Findings

- **Interactions with Representatives:** Regular and influential, suggesting a pivotal role in brand perception.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Generally not perceived as problematic, indicating effective ethical practices.
- **Scientific Literature:** Highly influential, emphasizing the need for evidence-based information.
- **Brand Loyalty:** Important but not exclusive, with efficacy, safety, and cost also being crucial factors.

5.1.2 How the Findings Answer the Research Questions

The study successfully identified the key factors influencing prescribing decisions and the role of ethical considerations and marketing strategies in shaping brand perception.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Practical Implications for Pharmaceutical Companies

- **Enhanced Communication:** Increase the frequency and quality of interactions with medical practitioners.
- **Transparent Information:** Ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information provided.
- **Ethical Practices:** Maintain and enhance ethical standards in all interactions.

5.2.2 Suggestions for Medical Practitioners

- **Critical Evaluation:** Continuously assess the information provided by

pharmaceutical companies.

- **Balanced Decision-Making:** Consider multiple factors, including efficacy, safety, and patient feedback.

5.2.3 Policy Recommendations

- **Regulatory Oversight:** Strengthen regulatory frameworks to oversee interactions between doctors and pharmaceutical companies.
- **Continuous Education:** Support ongoing education for medical practitioners on ethical practices and new treatments.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

- **Sample Size:** Limited to 100 practitioners in Nagpur, which may not be representative of broader trends.
- **Self-Reported Data:** Potential for bias in self-reported responses.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

- **Expanded Geographical Scope:** Conduct similar studies in different regions to compare findings.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Explore changes in brand perception over time.
- **Impact of Digital Marketing:** Investigate the role of digital marketing strategies on brand perception.

References

1. Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name*. Free Press.
2. Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1-22.
3. Wilson, D., & Singh, P. (2009). Brand Equity in the Pharmaceutical Industry. *Pharmaceutical Executive*.
4. Verma, P., & Sahni, A. (2011). Influence of Pharmaceutical Marketing on Prescription Behaviour of Doctors: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Medical Marketing*, 11(3), 246-255.
5. Smith, M. C. (2002). *Principles of Pharmaceutical Marketing*. Routledge.
6. Narayanan, S., Desiraju, R., & Chintagunta, P. K. (2004). "Return on Investment Implications for Pharmaceutical Promotional Expenditures: The Role of Marketing-Mix Interactions." ("Return on Investment Implications for Pharmaceutical Promotional ...") *Journal of Marketing*, 68(4), 90-105.
7. Manchanda, P., & Honka, E. (2005). The Effects and Role of Direct-to-Physician Marketing in the Pharmaceutical Industry: An Integrative Review. *Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics*, 5(2), 785-822.
8. Fugh-Berman, A., & Ahari, S. (2007). Following the Script: How Drug Reps Make Friends and Influence Doctors. *PLoS Medicine*, 4(4), e150.
9. Prosser, H., & Walley, T. (2003). New Drug Prescribing by Hospital Doctors: The Nature and Meaning of Knowledge. *Social Science & Medicine*, 56(5), 1137-1146.
10. Narendran, R., & Narendranathan, M. (2013). Influence of Pharmaceutical Marketing on Prescription Practices of Physicians. *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research*, 7(6), 1053-1056.
11. Taitel, M., Jiang, J., Rudkin, K., Ewing, S., & Duncan, I. (2012). The Impact of Primary Care Visits on Adherence to Medication Therapy. *American Journal of Managed Care*, 18(5), 201-206.
12. Spurling, G. K., Mansfield, P. R., Montgomery, B. D., et al. (2010). Information from Pharmaceutical Companies and the Quality, Quantity, and Cost of Physicians' Prescribing: A Systematic Review. *PLoS Medicine*, 7(10), e1000352.

13. Saito, H., & Mukohara, K. (2008). Ethics and Drug Information: A Systematic Review of the Impact of Industry-Sponsored Clinical Trials on Doctors' Prescribing Practices. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 23(4), 465-473.
14. Steinman, M. A., Bero, L. A., Chren, M. M., & Landefeld, C. S. (2006). Narrative Review: The Promotion of Gabapentin: An Analysis of Internal Industry Documents. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 145(4), 284-293.

Annexure

Study Tools:

1. How often do you interact with pharmaceutical company representatives?

☐ Once in month - ☐ Twice in month - ☐ Thrice in month - ☐ No restrictions

2. What factors influence your decision to prescribe a particular brand of medication?

☐ Efficacy - ☐ Safety - ☐ Cost - ☐ Patients Feedback

3. Do you perceive any ethical dilemmas or conflicts of interest in your interactions with pharmaceutical companies?

☐ Yes - ☐ No

4. Have you noticed any changes in your brand preference over the past year? If yes, what factors influenced this change?

☐ Yes - ☐ No

5. How often does pharmaceutical company scientific literature influence your decisions?

☐ Rarely - ☐ Occasionally - ☐ Sometimes - ☐ Frequently - ☐ Very frequently

- ☐ Always

6. What do you think of the credibility of information provided by pharmaceutical companies about their products?

☐ Not Credible - ☐ Slightly Credible - ☐ Moderately Credible - ☐ Credible - ☐

Highly Credible - ☐ Extremely Credible

7. In your opinion, what role should regulatory bodies play in overseeing interactions between doctors and pharmaceutical companies?

☐ Minimal - ☐ Limited - ☐ Moderate - ☐ Extensive - ☐ Comprehensive - ☐ Mandatory

8. Factors that make the interaction more interesting while you are communicating with pharmaceutical company representatives.

9. How do you stay informed about new medications and treatment options?

☐ Medical Journal - ☐ Conference - ☐ Pharmaceutical Representative - ☐ Others

10. What about the promises made by the pharma companies about safety and Efficacy with evidence?

☐ Not satisfactory - ☐ Slightly satisfactory - ☐ Moderately satisfactory - ☐ Satisfactory - ☐ Highly satisfactory - ☐ Extremely satisfactory

If below satisfactory then, what other factors are you looking for?

11. Is brand loyalty the only key factor that prescribing decisions?

Yes ☐ - ☐ No

12. In your opinion, what steps can be taken to improve transparency and ethical standards in the relationship between doctors and pharmaceutical companies?
