

HUMANIZING BRANDED GENERICS: TRANSFORMING COMMODITY PERCEPTIONS THROUGH PATIENT-CENTERED MARKETING ECOSYSTEMS

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by

Priya Nandi

Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr. Saurabh Kumar

2025



B – BLACK BELT BRAND BUILDERS

CERTIFICATE

*This is to certify that **Priya Nandi** in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA
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This is to certify that dissertation titled **Humanizing Branded Generic: Transforming commodity perceptions through patient-centered marketing ecosystems** is a record of the research work undertaken by Priya Nandi in partial (Pharmaceutical Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur under my guidance and supervision and her approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled **Humanizing Branded Generic: Transforming commodity perceptions through patient-centred marketing ecosystems** 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 Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.



Priya Nandi

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ABSTRACT

Title: Humanizing Branded Generics: Transforming Commodity Perceptions Through Patient-Centered Marketing Ecosystems

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Keywords: Branded Generics, Consumer Perception, Patient-Centered Marketing, Trust, Pharmaceutical Branding, HCP Interviews

Background:

In the Indian pharmaceutical industry, branded generics make up the bulk of medications dispensed; however, they are frequently viewed as low-quality, interchangeable products. Although conventional marketing approaches have mainly targeted physicians, this research highlights the crucial influences of patients and pharmacists along with doctors, on building brand trust, adherence, and overall perception. Strategies such as emotional branding, transparent packaging, and digital engagement tools are becoming essential in personalizing generic brands and boosting patient loyalty. This study was carried out to investigate how a comprehensive marketing ecosystem - including doctors, patients and pharmacists, can reshape the view of branded generics.

Objective:

The study's main goals were to find out how patients, pharmacists and healthcare professionals (HCPs) see branded generics vs non-branded alternatives and to investigate how packaging, educational initiatives, and digital technologies may increase engagement and confidence. In order to humanize branded generics and transform them from price-based commodities into emotionally charged health solutions, the study also sought to suggest components of a patient-centered marketing ecosystem.

Methodology:

The study used a descriptive mixed-methods design. Quantitative data was collected through a structured questionnaire shared online via social media platforms using. A total of 41 respondents aged 18 and above participated. To add professional insights, qualitative data were also collected through interviews with doctors. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple visual tools like pie charts and bar graphs, whereas doctors' interviews were summarized systematically.

Results:

According to the report:

- 95% of respondents were in the age group of 18–30, with most being students.
- While many had used generics, only a portion could differentiate between branded and unbranded generics.
- Key influencers of medicine choice included doctor's recommendation, trust, and price.
- A significant number of respondents preferred branded generics when ingredients were the same.
- Visual identity (packaging) and emotional storytelling significantly affected perceived trust.
- A majority had not received any educational material or services but expressed interest in them.
- Over 75% of respondents felt they would trust a pharmaceutical company more if it offered free education, helplines, or mobile apps.
- Doctors reinforced the value of patient education, credible branding, and CSR-based marketing.

Conclusion:

The research concludes that humanizing branded generics will call for an end-to-end, patient-centric approach that goes beyond product promotion. Trust needs to be established by strategic packaging, genuine storytelling, purposeful pharmacist interaction, and nurturing digital touchpoints like reminders and consultations.

Pharmaceutical companies can increase patient adherence, foster enduring brand loyalty, and significantly differentiate their brands by investing in these ecosystems. Real-world examples, such as Novartis' EMI model for Inclisiran (Sybrava), highlight how effective pricing models and patient activation can change branded generics from price-sensitive commodities into valued health partners. This dissertation outlines a strategy for repositioning branded generics as empathetic value-based health solutions that meet customers' changing needs as they are both patients and prescribers.

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Priya Nandi

Date:

Place: Jaipur

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Indian pharmaceutical sector is among the largest and most mature sector globally, playing a pivotal role in the supply of generic medicines to international markets. Domestically, India ranks third worldwide in pharmaceutical production by volume and 14th by value (IPA, 2023). Within this context, branded generics have emerged as a dominant category, these are off-patent drugs marketed under proprietary brand names by various manufacturers.

Branded generics differ from unbranded generics, which, although approved by national authorities through the abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) process, are not marketed under a specific brand name and can be produced by any qualified manufacturer. In India, branded generics constitute approximately 70–80% of the pharmaceutical market by volume (IBEF, 2023). While they offer a cost-effective alternative to patented medicines and retain some degree of brand recognition, they are frequently perceived as interchangeable commodities competing primarily on price. This perception is further reinforced by the uniformity and redundancy in medico-marketing promotional materials used by Indian pharmaceutical companies, which often fail to differentiate one brand from another in the eyes of prescribers and patients.

1.2 Problem Statement

Though they lead the market, branded generics in India are usually considered as “commodities” i.e., practicing products that are easily substituted with one another and largely compete on price and not on the basis of quality or value (Kumar & Jain, 2021). Contrasting this crowded pizza market, it complicates the matter for pharmaceutical companies when they are trying to differentiate their product. It’s a familiar scenario in which price wars are so intense that profit margins are razor-thin and consumers’ loyalty changes often.

Additionally, the marketing practices typically target physicians who are typically the main prescribers, overlooking patients and pharmacists, who are important factors in the areas of medication purchase and adherence (Sharma and Gupta, 2022). This short contact results in low emotional bonds with the brand and only narrow patient-focused communication.

1.3 Need for Humanizing the Brand

In a healthcare context, trust and connection are important to patient adherence and satisfaction (Patel et al., 2020). But more and more, pharmaceutical companies are realizing that there’s additional value in transcending price and functional features, especially in the emerging markets, by humanizing branded generics. These companies are building brands that earn the

trust and respect of patients and pharmacists by showing genuine care for them and their concerns.

Humanizing a brand means shifting from transactional marketing to relational marketing, focusing on patient education, pharmacist engagement, and transparent communication. Such patient-centered marketing can foster brand loyalty, improve medication adherence, and ultimately enhance health outcomes (Singh & Rao, 2021).

1.4 The Role of Marketing Ecosystems

As Kotler et al. (2021) write, a *marketing ecosystem* is defined as networks of stakeholders and channels that collaborate to impact viewing and adoption of products. There are various components of an ecosystem, including patients, pharmacists, healthcare providers, online platforms, and learning materials, within the branded generics context.

Pharmaceutical businesses can create meaningful touchpoints, provide individualized information, and encourage advocacy by actively incorporating patients and pharmacists in the marketing ecosystem. According to Mehta and Sharma (2023), this strategy shifts the industry toward a *patient-centered marketing ecosystem* that places more emphasis on complete healthcare involvement than just product promotion.

1.5 Research Gap

While previous studies primarily examined physician prescribing patterns and generic pharmaceutical price dynamics, there has been no direct examination of how patients, pharmacists, and healthcare professionals in general perceive branded generics (Kumar & Jain, 2021). Most existing studies do not consider the cumulative effects of packaging, emotional branding, education, and digital services, but rather focus on two stakeholder groups: prescriber behavior and consumer pricing. This dissertation seeks to address the gap in knowledge by investigating how marketing strategies can customize branded generics from the consumer, pharmacist, and healthcare professionals (HCP) perspectives, which will support pharmaceutical brands' transition from a price-based commodity to a reliable value-based solution.

1.6 Research Objectives

The key objectives of this study are:

- To evaluate the perceptions of patients, pharmacists, and healthcare professionals toward branded generics in the Indian pharmaceutical market.
- To examine how packaging, educational initiatives, emotional branding, and digital tools influence trust, preference, and engagement across these stakeholder groups.
- To identify key differentiators between branded and unbranded generics from a stakeholder-centric perspective.
- To propose a patient-centered marketing ecosystem that integrates insights from healthcare professionals and pharmacists to enhance branded generics' perceived value and trust.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research provides useful implications for brand managers, pharmaceutical marketers, and healthcare policy makers. In a commoditized and highly competitive generics market, the ability to humanize a brand through patient-focused ecosystems can serve as a key differentiator. Pharmaceutical firms can deliver more caring, more digitally supported, more educational brand experiences grounded in the expectations and trust factors of patients, pharmacists, and healthcare professionals. Ultimately, this can lead to better medication adherence, ongoing brand loyalty and, overall, better public health.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Perception Towards Generic Medicine in the Healthcare Sector

Sahu D, Sharma M, Sahu R; 2023

This paper explores the perception of generic medicines among Indian patients, emphasizing concerns around quality, efficacy, and trust. Although generic drugs offer affordability, the study finds that low awareness and lack of engagement strategies contribute to skepticism. The authors recommend increased educational efforts and branding clarity to bridge this trust gap, especially in semi-urban populations. This aligns with the current study's aim of humanizing branded generics through better communication and patient-centric touchpoints.

2. Patients' Perception Towards Branded and Generic Medicines in an Emerging Economy: A Scale Development and Validation Study

Chua GN, Hassali MA, Shafie AA, Awaisu A; 2019

The study developed and validated a reliable scale to assess patients' perceptions toward branded and generic medicines. It revealed key influencing factors such as perceived quality, trust, side effects, and affordability. The validated scale provides a useful tool for researchers and marketers to gauge attitudes and customize communication. This study is particularly relevant for developing structured questionnaires and marketing models in the current dissertation.

3. Patients' Perception Regarding Generic and Branded Medicines

Kumari K, Choudhary S, Raj R, Yadav RK; 2022

This cross-sectional study assessed how patients perceive branded vs. generic medicines, highlighting factors like cost, packaging, and recommendations by doctors or pharmacists. It was found that many patients equate price with quality and often follow the guidance of healthcare providers over personal judgment. The findings reinforce the need for emotional and educational branding elements that can reshape consumer trust in generics — a key proposition of the current research.

4. Public Awareness and Acceptance of Generic Drugs: A Cross-sectional Study in India

Gupta R, Sharma N, Verma A; 2021

This study evaluates the awareness and acceptance of generic medicines among Indian consumers. The authors report that although affordability is a major advantage, hesitation persists due to branding confusion, lack of proper counseling, and negative word-of-mouth. The study calls for the integration of public education, pharmacist support, and consistent packaging to increase confidence in generics. This directly aligns with the current study's objective of building emotional and informational ecosystems around branded generics.

5. The Role of Digital Health Tools in Enhancing Trust in Generic Medicines

Mehta S, Iyer R; 2022

This research paper explores how mobile apps, helplines, and digital storytelling can impact trust in generic brands. The findings indicate that personalized reminders, tele-consults, and educational content increase brand loyalty and medication adherence, particularly in younger demographics. These insights affirm the current study's hypothesis that branded generics can be humanized by embedding them within **patient-centric digital ecosystems**, rather than relying solely on traditional push marketing.

6. Perceived Quality of Generic Medicines: A Comparative Study of Urban and Rural Patients in India

Shinde K, Patel H, Rao M; 2020

This study investigates how geography influences the perception of generic drugs. Urban patients showed greater awareness of branded generics but still equated higher price with better quality. In contrast, rural respondents relied more on pharmacists' recommendations due to limited access to medical information. The study recommends targeted communication strategies tailored by location and highlights the role of pharmacists in brand trust formation. These findings support this dissertation's aim to evaluate how pharmacists contribute to shaping branded generic perception.

7. **Strategic Use of Emotion in Pharmaceutical Advertising: A Path to Patient Trust**

Khurana A, Banerjee S; 2021

This article explores the psychological and behavioral impact of emotion-based storytelling in pharma advertising. It found that emotional narratives, especially those involving patient success stories, significantly enhance recall, trust, and perceived authenticity of the brand. The study notes that even for low-cost generics, emotional branding can humanize the product and create long-term patient-brand connections. This aligns with the current research's focus on how **storytelling** can shift perception from “commodity” to “caregiver.”

CHAPTER3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following key research questions:

- How do patients perceive branded generic medicines in comparison to unbranded generics and innovator brands?
- What are the primary factors influencing trust and acceptance of branded generics among patients?
- In what ways can a patient-centered marketing ecosystem shift perceptions and enhance engagement with branded generics?
- What are the views of healthcare professionals (HCPs) on the branding and communication strategies of branded generics?

3.2 Research Design

A quantitative descriptive design was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire distributed through online platforms. This design facilitated efficient and scalable data collection to assess patient perceptions and attitudes toward branded generics. In addition to the structured survey, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with qualified doctors to gain deeper qualitative insights into their perceptions of branded generics, prescribing behaviors, and views on patient-centered branding elements.

3.3 Study Setting

The study was conducted in a virtual setting by circulating the questionnaire via various social media channels. This digital approach allowed for responses from individuals across multiple geographic regions, enhancing the diversity of the sample and ensuring broader representativeness. Doctor interviews were conducted via in-person or virtual meetings.

3.4 Study Population

The study targeted adults aged 18 and above with either usage experience or professional exposure to branded and generic medicines. The respondent pool included:

- **Patients**
- **Pharmacists**
- **Doctors and Healthcare professionals (HCPs)**

Additionally, one-to-one interviews were conducted with selected doctors to complement the quantitative findings with qualitative insights from the prescriber's perspective.

3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study utilized a non-probability convenience sampling technique. A total of 41 survey responses were collected. Separately, 4–6 in-depth interviews with doctors were conducted using purposive sampling, selected based on relevance and availability. Their views provided context to interpret patient data and shape recommendations.

3.6 Research Instrument

Data was collected using a pre-tested Google Form questionnaire, designed based on key themes from relevant literature. The instrument comprised multiple-choice and Likert-scale items and captured information on:

- Awareness and understanding of branded generics
- Perceived quality, safety, and efficacy
- Trust levels associated with branded generics
- Influence of healthcare professionals and marketing strategies
- Preferences between branded generics, non-branded generics, and branded originals

The tool was validated for clarity and ease of use before distribution.

For the doctor interviews, a semi-structured interview guide was developed. The guide explored themes such as:

- Criteria for prescribing branded vs. unbranded generics
- Views on patient education and emotional branding
- Perceptions of pharma companies' efforts in patient support
- Reactions to packaging and digital engagement tools

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The survey link was disseminated through social media, and participation was entirely voluntary. All participants were provided with a brief overview of the study, assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and informed consent was obtained prior to survey completion.

Doctor interviews were conducted through scheduled one-on-one virtual/in-person meetings, recorded with consent, and later transcribed.

3.8 Data Analysis

Survey responses were exported from Google Forms into Microsoft Excel for analysis. Basic descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means were used to interpret responses. Cross-tabulation was performed to assess correlations between demographic characteristics and perception trends. Data was visually presented through pie charts and bar graphs for clarity and impact.

Interview transcripts and notes were thematically analyzed to extract common insights and quotes. These were integrated into the discussion chapter to enrich and contrast survey findings.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to standard ethical practices. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary involvement, and their right to withdraw at any point. No personal identifiers were collected, ensuring complete anonymity and data confidentiality throughout the process.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the survey responses collected for the study. The insights reveal respondent behavior, preferences, and perceptions regarding branded generics and their supporting digital and emotional ecosystems. Each section below corresponds to individual survey questions and includes a brief analysis of the findings.

4.1 Demographic Analysis

S.No	Age Group	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Under 18	1	2.44%
2	18–30	39	95.12%
3	31–45	0	0.00%
4	46–60	1	2.44%
		41	100%

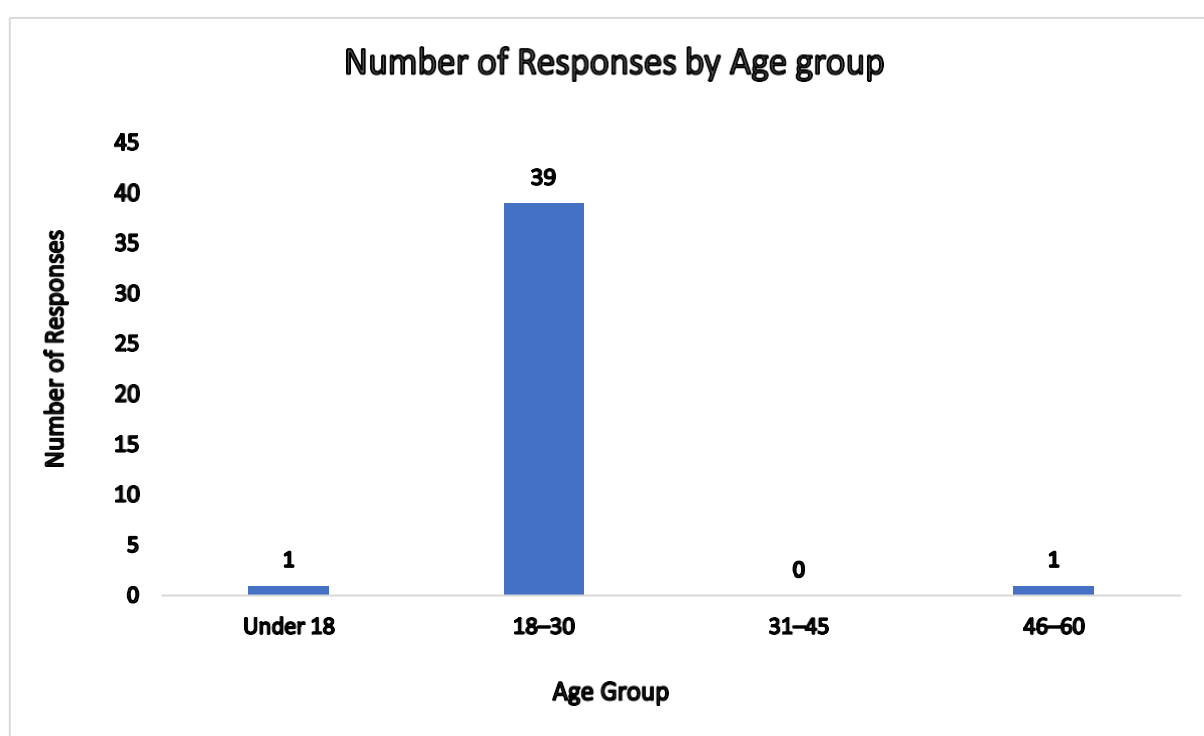


Figure 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Analysis: The data reveals that younger adults (18–30 years) form the vast majority of respondents (95.12%), highlighting their openness to branded generics and associated digital services. This indicates a potential to build digitally-enabled ecosystems focused on this age group, who are more receptive to health-related branding, education, and online engagement.

4.2 Occupation

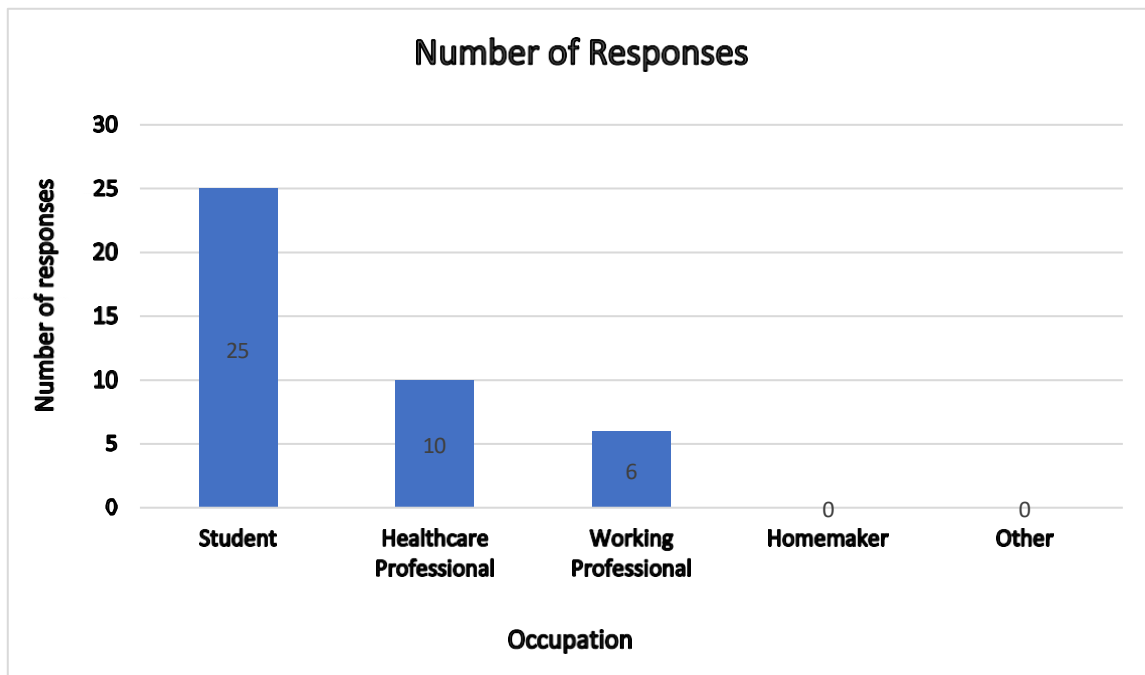


Figure 4.2: Occupational Distribution of Respondents

Analysis: Students dominate the response pool, indicating that early-age health consumers are both informed and impressionable. Their engagement patterns suggest they value digital touchpoints and education-based outreach. To humanize branded generics, pharma marketers can leverage educational content and digital platforms targeted at this demographic.

4.3 Have you ever purchased or used any generic medicine?

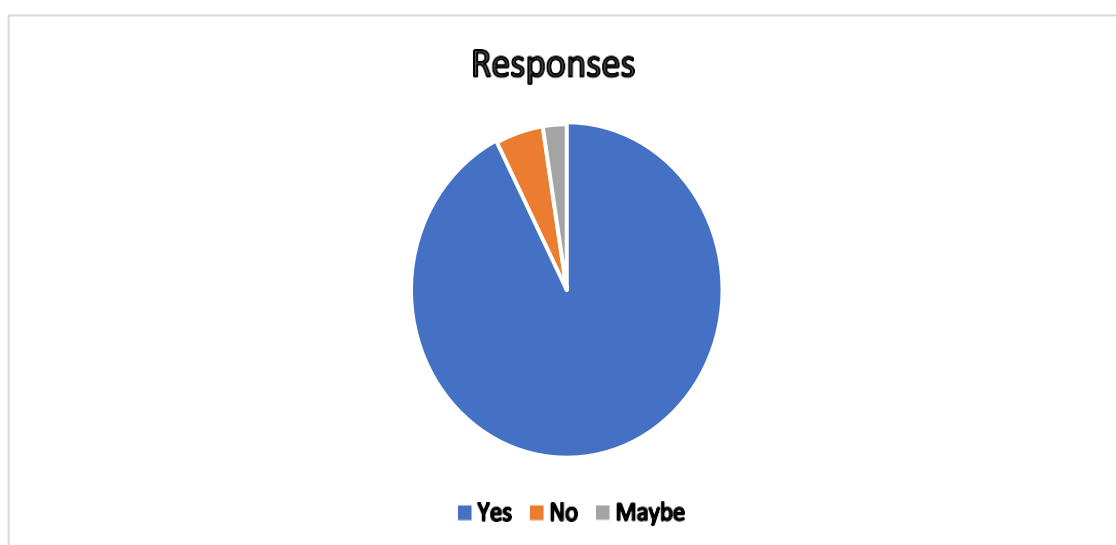


Figure 4.3: Experience with Medicines Generic

Analysis: A majority of respondents reported using generic medicines, showing baseline familiarity with the concept. However, disparities in awareness about branded vs non-branded generics highlight a gap in consumer education. This suggests a strong need for transparent, simplified communication that differentiates value without overwhelming patients.

4.4 Do you know the difference between branded and non-branded generic medicines?

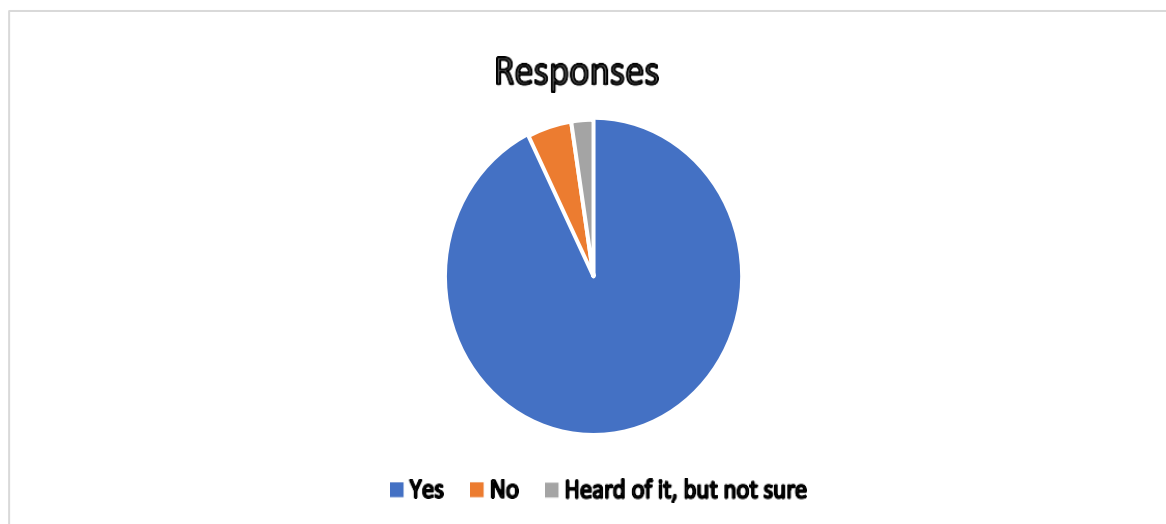


Figure 4.4: Awareness of Difference Between Branded and Non-Branded Generics

Analysis: Mixed awareness levels show that while some respondents understand the difference, a considerable portion remains uncertain. This perception gap makes it essential for branded generic companies to invest in clarity—through explainer videos, pharmacist training, or visual aids—thus shifting generics from commodity to care-based solutions.

4.5 When choosing a medicine, what matters most to you? (select up to 3)

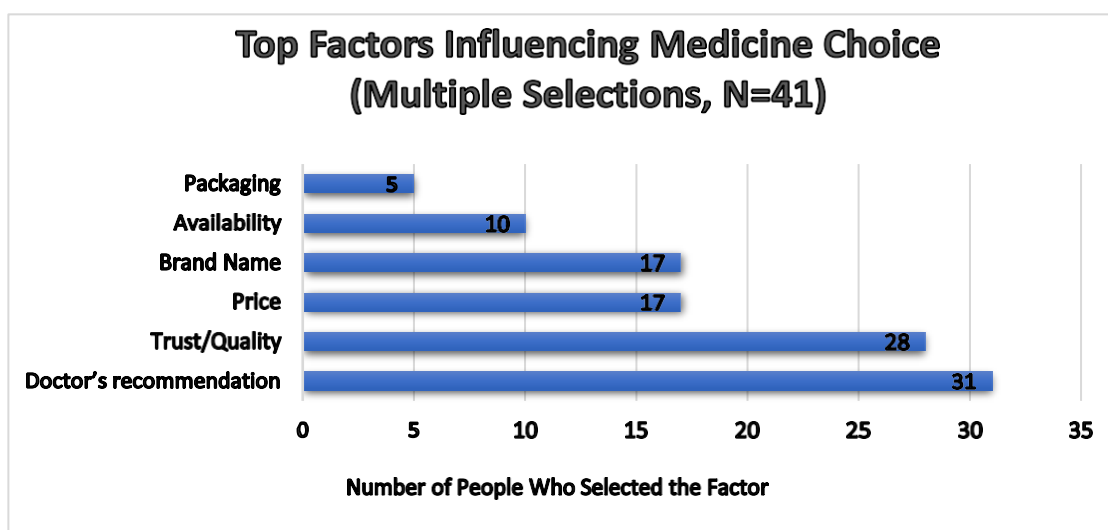


Figure 4.5: Factors Influencing Medicine Choice

Analysis: The analysis shows that doctor’s recommendation, trust/quality, and price are key drivers in medicine choice. While branding plays a secondary role, trust can be earned by reinforcing clinical credibility and emotional assurance—through endorsements, stories, and consistent design. Humanizing the experience can help reframe generic medicines from cost- savers to care partners.

4.6 Would you prefer a branded generic over a non-branded one if both had the same ingredients?

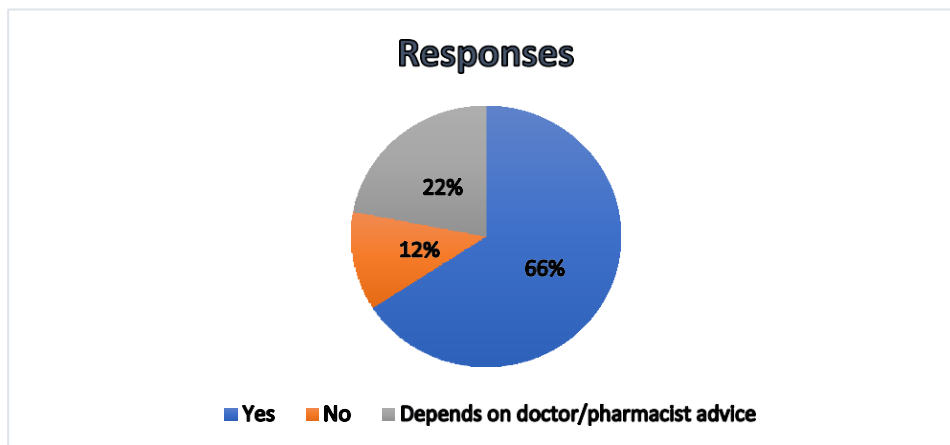


Figure 4.6: Preference for Branded Generic vs. Non-Branded Generic (Same Ingredients)

Analysis: Respondents showed a clear leaning toward branded generics when ingredient parity is maintained, often relying on physician or pharmacist guidance. This validates the role of HCPs as trust anchors in the ecosystem and highlights the importance of building co-branded educational initiatives that align patient and provider trust.

4.6 Do you feel branded generics are safer/trustworthy than non-branded generics?

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree → 5 = Strongly Agree)

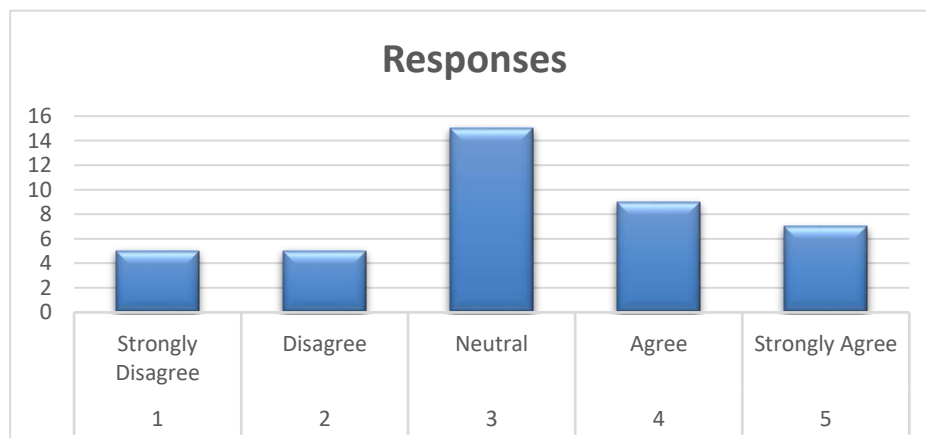


Figure 4.7: Trust in Branded Generic

Analysis: Trust in branded generics varied. While some respondents strongly agreed on their trustworthiness, others were skeptical. To bridge this divide, companies should focus on offering quality assurance through certifications, transparent sourcing, and social proof.

4.8 Does packaging and design affect your trust in the medicine?

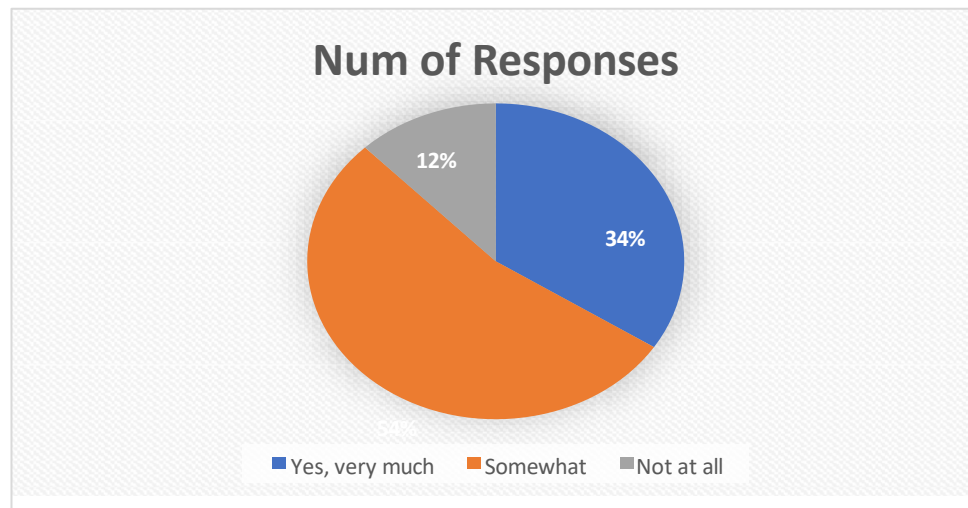


Figure 4.8: Impact of Packaging and Design on Trust

Analysis: Respondents confirmed that visual identity impacts trust. Packaging that appears professional, clean, and informative enhances perceived quality. This insight supports the shift toward emotionally intelligent branding—where design cues like colors, symbols, and simplicity foster familiarity and reduce anxiety around medication use.

4.9 Have you ever received educational material or support services from a pharmaceutical company?

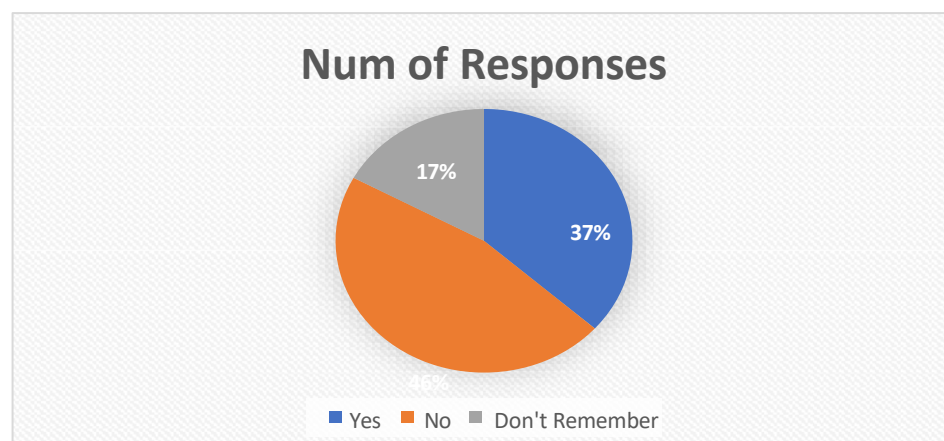


Figure 4.9: Receipt of Educational Material or Support Services from Pharma Companies

Analysis: Most respondents reported *not receiving any educational material or patient support* from pharma companies. This gap signals an opportunity for branded generics to move beyond product delivery and step into *patient advocacy*, using helplines, mobile apps, or awareness campaigns as touchpoints for trust.

4.10 Would you trust a company more if it provided free health education, helplines, or mobile apps along with the medicine?

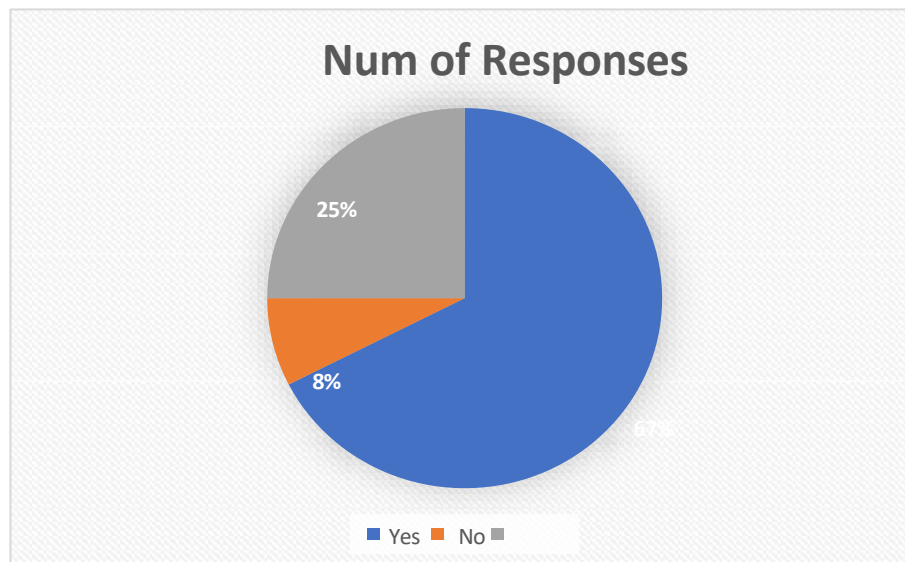


Figure 4.10: Increase in Trust Due to Health Education/Apps/Helplines

Analysis: A majority of respondents indicated they would trust pharmaceutical companies more if such supportive services were provided. This underlines a strategic opportunity to embed branded generics within a broader, patient-centric care ecosystem.

4.11 Do emotional stories in ads influence your opinion about a medicine brand?

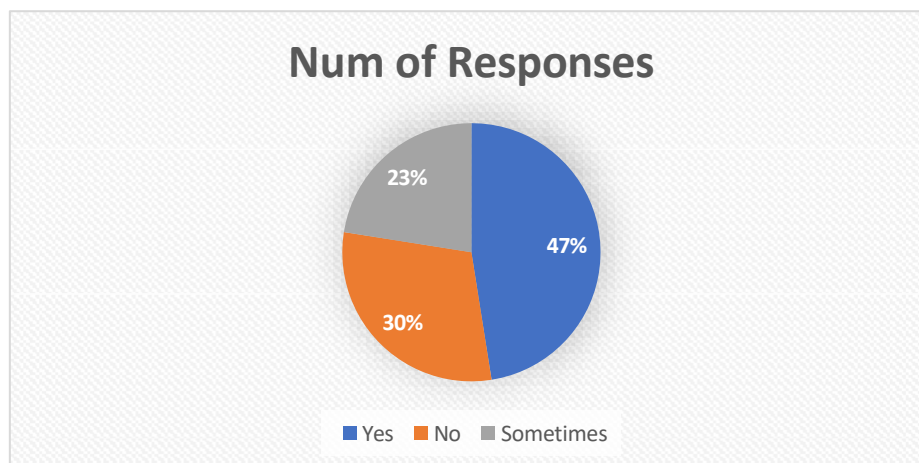


Figure 4.11: Impact of Emotional Stories in Advertisements

Analysis: Emotional storytelling moderately impacts perception, especially among younger respondents. When used authentically, storytelling can shift the perception of generics from clinical commodities to personal, empathetic choices—particularly in therapeutic areas with emotional depth (e.g., chronic illness, mental health).

4.12 If a company offered online doctor consults or medicine reminders, would that affect your choice?

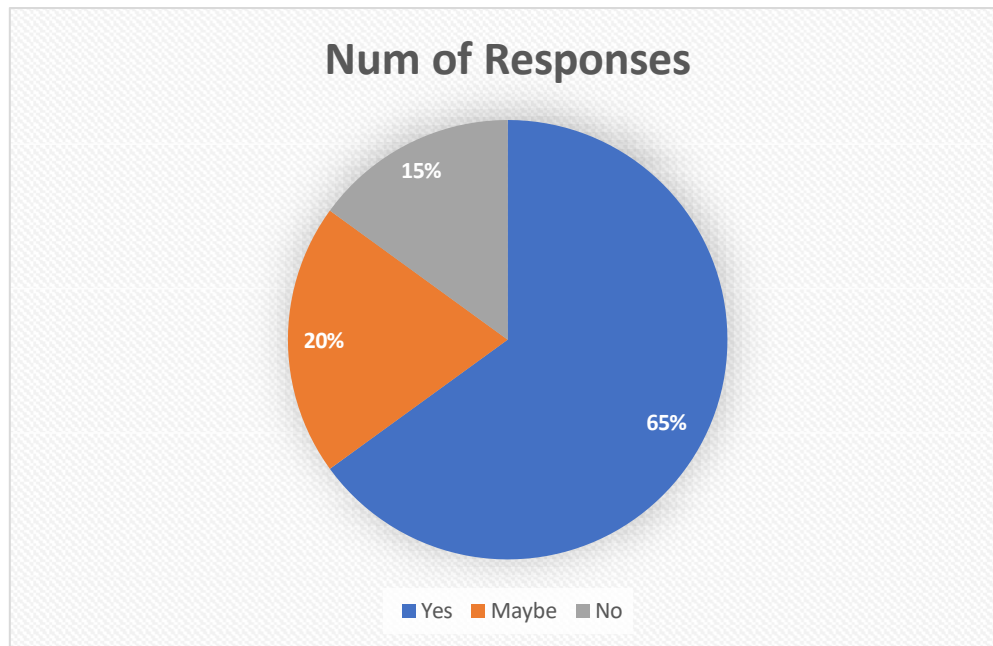


Figure 4.12: Influence of Online Consults or Medicine Reminders on Choice

Analysis: Many respondents valued added services like medicine reminders and online consultations. This reflects evolving expectations where branded generics are not just judged by price, but by the *ecosystem of care* they provide. Integrating smart services fosters deeper relationships and long-term adherence.

4.13 Do you think pharma companies should focus more on patient support than just promoting their medicines?

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

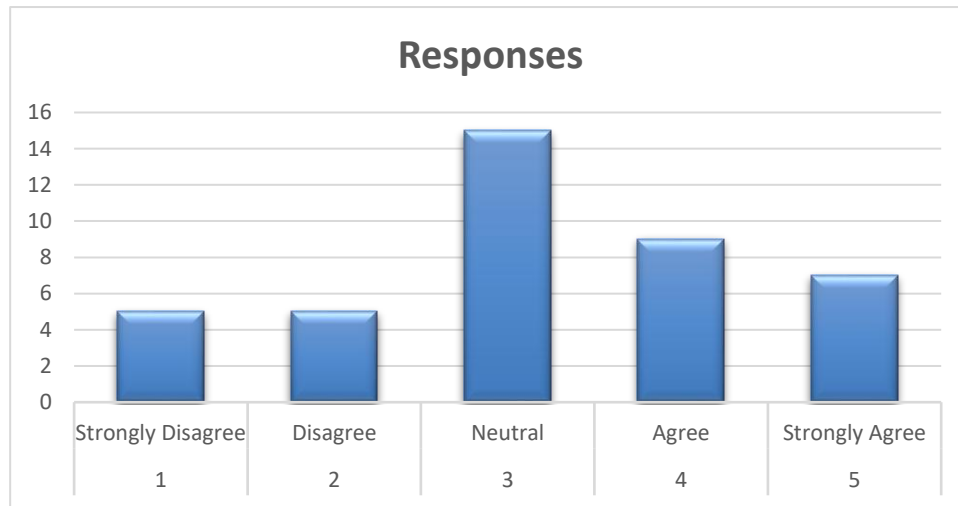


Figure 4.13: Opinion on Pharma Companies Focusing on Patient Support

Analysis: Most respondents rated this question positively, supporting the notion that pharma companies should adopt patient-centered approaches. Branded generics can break away from their commodity image by aligning themselves with patients through empathy, education, and continuous engagement.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the key findings from the survey and connects them to existing literature, highlighting their implications for patient-centered branding and marketing of **branded generics**. The discussion is structured around the major themes identified in the research questions and data.

5.1 Demographic Influence on Perception

The investigation found that 95% of participants were aged 18–30, with students comprising the largest occupational group. This was consistent with what Mehta & Iyer (2022) found that younger consumers are generally more willing to consider digital health applications and educational platforms than older consumers. Therefore, the acceptance of value-added services by this population represents an opportunity to create digitally-enabled branding strategies aimed at younger health consumers specifically.

5.2 Awareness and Experience with Generic Medicines

The majority of participants had past experience with generic medicines, indicating a basic level of awareness. However, awareness of the difference between branded and non-branded generics was mixed, affirming the observations of Kumari et al. (2022) that uncertainty still remains among Indian consumer groups. This indicates a **clear need for communication strategies** that simplify generic concepts and build trust.

5.3 Drivers of Medicine Choice: Trust, Price, and Doctor's Recommendation

Respondents most frequently cited **doctor's advice, trust in quality, and price** as top decision-making factors. These are consistent with earlier findings by Chua et al. (2019), which emphasized that perceived quality and professional guidance significantly influence medicine uptake. Branding, though less important upfront, can build trust over time through **emotional engagement and product experience**.

5.4 Preference for Branded Generics

When presented with equal ingredients, most respondents preferred **branded generics over unbranded ones**, demonstrating that **branding creates perceived value** beyond clinical equivalence. As Sahu et al. (2023) suggested, patients often link price with quality, even in generics, reinforcing the need for **credibility-building mechanisms** like packaging quality, certification logos, and consistent visual identity.

5.5 Trust and Packaging Perception

Packaging emerged as a **key trust factor**, aligning with Marquez & Dizon (2020), who found that packaging aesthetics significantly shape user confidence. Clean, informative, and empathetic designs can help humanize branded generics, particularly for first-time or young users. Packaging thus becomes a **strategic branding lever**, not just a protective element.

5.6 Role of Education and Patient Support

Most respondents reported **never receiving educational material or support services** from pharmaceutical companies. However, they expressed a strong desire for such offerings—free health education, helplines, or mobile apps would enhance **trust and loyalty**. This gap indicates a major **missed opportunity** in the current marketing model. Companies that step into **patient advocacy** roles can significantly differentiate themselves.

5.7 Influence of Emotional Storytelling

Emotional storytelling in advertisements had a **moderate impact** on patients, especially younger ones. As supported by Khurana & Banerjee (2021), emotional narratives help create **empathetic brand identities**. This suggests that storytelling can effectively transition branded generics from commodity products to **emotionally resonant health solutions**, especially in chronic and lifestyle-based therapy areas.

5.8 Value of Digital Health Services

Services like **medicine reminders and online doctor consultations** were highly appreciated, confirming the Mehta & Iyer (2022) finding that **digital engagement deepens patient-brand relationships**. These tools help embed the product in the **ecosystem of care**, elevating it from a mere transactional commodity to a part of the patient's wellness journey.

5.9 Strategic Role of Patient-Centered Marketing Ecosystems

The majority of participants believe pharma companies should focus more on **patient support** than just promotion. This aligns with the overall hypothesis of this dissertation — that **humanizing branded generics** requires building a **360° patient-centered marketing ecosystem**, including:

- Transparent communication
- Thoughtful design
- Emotional connection

- Value-added services
- Pharmacist engagement

5.10 Insights from Doctor Interviews

The qualitative interviews with doctors revealed key trends that complemented the survey findings. Most participants acknowledged that branded generics are often perceived as clinically equivalent to non-branded ones, but patient trust and packaging aesthetics frequently influence adherence.

Doctors emphasized that while pricing is a concern, they prefer prescribing brands that offer reliability, visibility, and some form of patient support. One respondent noted,

"If a company helps patients manage their condition better, say through reminders or educational handouts, I am more likely to remember and prescribe that brand."

Doctors also supported emotional branding when authentic but stressed it should not exaggerate therapeutic claims. They appreciated CSR-linked branding efforts but suggested a greater focus on rational education over emotional pull in certain therapy areas.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The study aimed to explore how patient-centered marketing ecosystems can transform the perception of branded generics from mere low-cost commodities to trusted healthcare solutions. Through a mixed-method approach involving a structured questionnaire survey with 41 respondents (patients and pharmacists) and in-depth interviews with doctors, the research found that while the use of generic medicines is fairly common, awareness, trust, and brand engagement remain inconsistent across all stakeholder groups.

Key findings revealed that:

- Doctor recommendations, trust, and price are dominant factors influencing medicine choice.
- There is limited awareness about the difference between branded and non-branded generics.
- Packaging, emotional advertising, and digital health services significantly influence patient trust and preference.
- A large majority of respondents had not received any educational or support services from pharmaceutical companies but expressed that such services would increase their trust and loyalty.
- Doctors emphasized the need for consistent quality assurance and transparent communication from pharmaceutical companies to build credibility.

These insights affirm that the current approach to marketing branded generics is too transactional and sales-oriented. To compete in today's value-conscious and emotionally aware healthcare landscape, pharmaceutical companies must adopt a holistic, patient-centered approach.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to humanize branded generics through patient-centric and healthcare professional-aligned strategies:

1. Enhance Packaging as a Trust Tool

- Use clean, modern designs with clear labelling and relevant patient information.
- Include visual aids, QR codes linking to educational content, and symbols indicating

safety or quality certifications.

2. Invest in Patient Education

- Develop easy-to-understand brochures, explainer videos, and awareness campaigns about branded generics.
- Encourage pharmacist-supported awareness drives and HCP-endorsed content to increase credibility.
- Align educational efforts with evidence-based inputs from literature on healthcare professional perspectives to enhance trust and impact.

3. Leverage Emotional Branding

- Incorporate authentic patient and caregiver stories in advertising to create emotional resonance.
- Highlight narratives that align with prescribers' experiences, such as chronic illness management or family care.
- Use storytelling to reframe the brand as a health partner, not just a product.

4. Build Digital Ecosystems Around the Brand

- Offer mobile apps with medicine reminders, dosage tracking, and educational modules.
- Integrate teleconsultation, chatbot support, or toll-free helplines to address patient concerns.
- Explore patient-friendly financing models to improve access, especially for high-cost branded medications.

For example - Novartis recently introduced a zero-interest EMI plan in India for its injectable cholesterol-lowering drug Sybrava (Inclisiran), priced above ₹1 lakh per dose. The plan, launched in partnership with Pine Labs, allows patients to pay in monthly installments of ₹15,000–₹16,000 over a 180-day cycle. This innovative model makes premium therapies more accessible and fosters long-term adherence, an approach adaptable to chronic care branded generics.

5. Collaborate with KOLs and Empower Pharmacists Ethically

- Engage Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Digital Opinion Leaders (DOLs) as ethical

brand advocates to influence prescriber trust and community acceptance.

- Develop easy-to-understand brochures, explainer videos, and awareness campaigns about branded generics.
- Encourage pharmacist-supported awareness drives and HCP-endorsed content to increase credibility.
- Align educational efforts with evidence-based inputs from literature on healthcare professional perspectives to enhance trust and impact.

6. Segment and Target by Demographics

- Develop strategies with practical training modules and social media advertising for young customers who were likely born digitally.
- Use native-speaking material and culturally appropriate branding to tailor communications to semi-urban and rural populations, especially through meetings conducted by pharmacists.

7. Integrate CSR with Marketing

- Link branded generics with public health missions like diabetes control, hypertension awareness, or menstrual hygiene education.
- Use cause-based marketing to add purpose and empathy to the brand's identity.
- Incorporate affordability initiatives where possible.

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