

SYNOPSIS

Introduction & Background

India's healthcare industry is undergoing a transformative phase marked by increasing digitization, heightened patient awareness, evolving regulatory frameworks, and intensified competition. In this context, healthcare branding goes beyond mere promotion—it has become a strategic tool for building trust, engagement, and long-term loyalty across various stakeholders.

The dissertation addresses the growing inadequacy of traditional branding methods in healthcare. These conventional approaches often deliver a uniform message to all stakeholders, which fails to resonate in the sector's complex, emotionally charged, and trust-dependent environment. To remain competitive, healthcare brands must adopt adaptive brand positioning—a dynamic and stakeholder-sensitive approach to brand communication and value delivery.

The study was conducted during an internship at B – Black Belt Brand Builders, under the guidance of Mr. Vivek Hattangadi and faculty mentorship from IIHMR University. It seeks to understand how healthcare organizations can co-create and communicate value across stakeholder groups such as patients, doctors, insurers, and regulators.

Research Objectives, Methodology & Findings

Objectives:

- To explore the concept and relevance of brand positioning in healthcare
- To identify key adaptive branding elements in Indian healthcare organizations
- To understand stakeholder-specific perceptions of brand value
- To assess the effectiveness of current branding practices
- To propose a conceptual framework for multi-dimensional brand value

Methodology:

A mixed-methods approach was used:

- Qualitative: 12 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from hospitals, pharma firms, insurance companies, and health-tech platforms.

- Quantitative: A structured survey with 150 responses using Google Forms.
- Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, Excel, and NVivo.

Stakeholders were segmented into different categories to uncover perceptions of trust, adaptability, service quality, and transparency. The survey also captured demographic and professional backgrounds to identify influencing factors.

Key Findings:

- Trust was the most critical brand attribute, especially in healthcare decision-making.
- Service quality, empathy, and transparency emerged as top value drivers.
- Stakeholders expect personalized and digital-first communication from healthcare brands.
- Organizations that adapted their branding strategies post-COVID—such as through telemedicine or digital outreach—enjoyed higher brand loyalty.
- One-size-fits-all branding does not work in healthcare; adaptive, stakeholder-centric strategies are necessary.

Conceptual Framework, Implications & Conclusion

Proposed Framework:
The study introduces a conceptual model where:
- Adaptive Brand Strategy forms the core axis.
- Stakeholder Value Needs (emotional, functional, digital, and ethical) serve as pillars.
- Environmental Triggers (technology shifts, regulatory changes, competition) act as catalysts.

The model integrates:
- Freeman's Stakeholder Theory
- Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model
- Service-Dominant Logic
- Osterwalder's Value Proposition Canvas

Practical Implications:
- Healthcare brands must segment stakeholders and personalize communication.
- Investing in digital infrastructure and CRM tools enhances engagement.
- Internal branding (aligning staff behavior with brand values) is as important as external messaging.
- Organizations should continuously assess brand performance using feedback from patients and professionals.

Conclusion:

Adaptive brand positioning is no longer optional—it is a strategic necessity. In India's dynamic healthcare landscape, brands that align with stakeholder expectations, build trust, and demonstrate value across emotional and functional dimensions will be better positioned for long-term success. The dissertation provides a roadmap for healthcare organizations to evolve from service providers to trusted health partners, driving both organizational growth and public health impact.