

The Relation between Branding and Customer Loyalty: Examples from Eldoret Town, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Large companies that experience bigger market shares are now looking for new ways of enhancing business profitability, efficiency and productivity due to increased competition. Customer loyalty is a critical aspect in the current competitive, complicated market and Pay Television companies are no exception. Branding strategies can help a company to achieve total satisfaction, loyalty, profitability and total economic profit in front of its competitors. It's counter to this contextual that this paper addresses the association between branding and customer loyalty. The study was done in Eldoret Town, Kenya with focus on Pragmatic world view. A mixed study technique was applied. The target population comprised all individuals/homes who owned Pay TV decoders in Eldoret Town and stakeholders. Using Survey's (2015) formula, a sample of 400 participants was drawn using simple and snowball selection methods. Statistics were composed by means of questionnaire and interview schedule and analysed using descriptive technique and inferential statistics. From the findings, it was established that: age and sex determined the popularity of a pay TV brand; all age groups had different needs and different Pay TVs package their services to suit them. The study concluded that customer loyalty and satisfaction were wholly influenced by communication of the brand values by the creator of the brand.

Keywords: Branding, Customer loyalty, Advertising, Brand awareness, Eldoret.

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I. Introduction

Branding is a whole procedure entailed in making an exceptional term and appearance for a merchandise (goods and services) in the clients' attention, by advertising movements with constant theme. Branding strives to launch an important and distinguished existence in the shop that appeals and holds faithful clients. Products are observed as the main lasting properties of an association, outliving the organization's exact goods and facilities. Subsequently the product is highly valued than the entirety of an organization's assets, it should be cautiously established and accomplished.

It is, however, worth noting that branding involves lot more elements. A brand is extra than its title and symbol, as a product sticks out in customers' thoughts as carrying out somewhat extra than only the merchandise. What symbolises a product is that it discourses equal useful and emotive customer wants. The connection with customers is therefore no longer simply transactional. There are frequently mental, communal, and non-bodily factors intricate as well (Hougaard & Bjerre, 2009). This representative interchange can be defined as incorporating the feeling of what merchandise or amenity means to a person, and not only concentrating on what the merchandise or amenity can do (ibid).

For a long time, goods have been advertised nearly fully on practical profits. However, currently, corporations have the equivalent admittance to statistics and skill, goods tend to have similar purposeful importance. This makes it solid to distinguish the product on this stricture unaided in the thought of the customers. Service goods have frequently not been distinguished at whichever of the two factors. A brand similarly originates its worth from its capability to encounter independent emotive wants. This explains why sample vendors and policies chiefly emphasis on the emotive feature of labelling. Nevertheless, it must not be overlooked that if the product fails to carry out the practical importance anticipated by customers, it will fail.

Keller (2010) observes that though the specifics of unlike methods to hypothesize brand fairness diverge, they incline to segment a mutual principal: all meanings characteristically whichever indirectly or openly depend on product information constructions in the thoughts of customers- people or administrations- as the basis or groundwork of product fairness. Products are over just titles and signs. They are main essentials in the corporation's associations with customers. Products signify customers' insights and spirits about merchandise and its presentation- all that the merchandise or amenity means to customers.

Loyalty to a brand is considered as a major issue in today's business world. Although most companies have understood the importance of creating and maintaining loyalty as a factor which guarantees long-term profitability, it has become increasingly difficult in today's competitive atmosphere to do so (Russell-Bennett et

al., 2007). One of the preferences of customers in selecting products is reliability of brand. All market brands give a special identity to a product and link it to a specific group of society. This study therefore sought to establish the relationship between branding and customers loyalty with focus in Eldoret town, Kenya.

The Debate

Effective organizational performance in the current world markets and customer dynamics requires strategic knowledge and skills in branding. Competition among Pay TV companies for the consumer's share of wallet has pushed companies to look for new ways of enhancing business efficiency, productivity and profitability. Branding has been shown as one of the core and closest variables to customer's decision-making in buying. In Kenya, the past few years have seen an increase in the number of Pay TV providers. This is majorly attributed to the fact that all analogue TV signals were switched off to accommodate the transition to digital broadcast. To watch TV in Kenya, you must own a set top box, buy a digital TV (can only receive Free-to-Air channels) or use Internet connectivity to do a live streaming. The most sought after is the acquisition of Set Top Box (STB). The providers of STB are the Pay TV companies. You have to buy one if you have an analogue TV or if you have a digital TV and you are interested in more programming rather than the free channels.

One of the preferences of customers in selecting a product is reliability of the brand. The entire package of the brand has to attract the customer. This includes the clarity, pocket-friendly initial buying and installation of the STB, pocket-friendly premiums, reliable customer service in case of queries, etc. Brands communicate with the stakeholders and the target audience on many different levels. The communication may sometimes be intrinsic and non-verbal, which means that, it may be formed by the imagery and visual elements associated with the brand. Despite the brand owners (Pay TV companies) putting strategies to market their brands, there is still a void especially on the branding strategies. In the past, new entrants have entered the Kenyan Pay TV market and left soon, others have been introduced to the market and they do not seem to be a top-of-mind brand while for others, they are not performing well more so when the clients who own them do not renew their subscriptions which is a main revenue stream for Pay TVs. Customer loyalty has a bigger impact on a firm's profitability. This paper, therefore, investigates the relationship between strategic branding and customer loyalty to ensure customer retention among Pay TV companies in Eldoret Town, Kenya.

II. Literature Review

Aaker (1991) describes brand loyalty as the add-on that a client has to a product. Two dissimilar levels of customer loyalty, also referred to as faithfulness in this study are classified into behavioural and cognitive faithfulness (Keller, 1998). Behavioural faithfulness can be showed by a number of recurring purchases (Keller, 1998) or commitment to repurchase the brand as a main choice (Oliver, 1997, 1999). Cognitive faithfulness refers to the consumers' purpose to buy the product as the first choice (Keller, 1998; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Another indicator of faithfulness is the client's willingness to pay advanced price for a product in comparison with another product offering alike benefits (Aaker, 1996; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Srinivasan et al., 2004). Product devotion is a profoundly detained obligation to re-buy ideal merchandise or amenity continuously. Product faithfulness is dynamic as a faithful customer ignoble is anticipated to create a very likely sale and income stream. Supplementary, giving faithfulness as an advantage inspires constancy-structure agendas which can advance product fairness.

There is competition in Pay TVs market in Kenya. According to Deloitte (2012), Multichoice has been the main player in the Pay TV market for a number of years. However, competition in the Kenyan Pay TV market is increasing as many Pay TVs have successfully entered the market, the new major entrants include *StarTimes TV*, *Zuku* and *AzamTV*. Competition is developing currently at the lower end and middle of the Pay TV market, making Pay TV more affordable for Kenyans, and suggesting that there is untapped demand at that end of the market. With the introduction of digital TV, more providers are set to enter the market. There appears to be a significant scope for the size of the Pay TV market to grow and accord new entrants room to expand their market share.

East (1997) has made the dissimilarity of product faithfulness as the amount of spending for customers while he sees client faithfulness as commitment which is calculated by replication purchases; these are classically for durables, engineering buying and amenities. It also applies greatly to Pay TVs in that after buying the decoder the customer should be willing to pay for the premiums and this is a test on loyalty because, a customer might decide not to pay and still own the decoder or go for another company's decoder he or she perceives to be pocket friendly and caters for their needs. A strong product has an encouraging connection with customer faithfulness.

Pay TV studies scholars are just beginning to interrogate branding, and due to that lack of research, this paper engages in branding discourse to the field of Pay TV. Due to recent particular technological, industrial, cultural changes, labelling is more significant to the Pay TV manufacturing than ever earlier and thus should be

explored by researchers. The study drew from scholars such as Caldwell (2006), Rogers et al. (2002) and Johnson (2011), who argue that branding has become so significant that it illuminates the struggles and challenges an industry faces. Since it is so central, researchers should interrogate the role of branding strategies on organizational performance. Johnson (2011) refers to a brand as a “cultural artefact,” and through a brand’s relationship to its creators, the product/service it denotes to and how it is understood by various people, we glean a great deal about the Pay TV industry.

Lury (2004) has focused on how brands function as new media objects that operate as an interface to connect consumers, producers and workers by direct engagement and interactivity. Lury’s attention is not only on how customers use products, but also on how brands function within and navigate between processes of production and consumption. She asserts that they function in two ways: 1) subjective, in the form of communicating individual preferences; and 2) economical, in their relationship to the market. This study drew on Lury’s work about the role of branding in the manufacture and delivery of products and amenities, but diverted to the Kenyan market and focused on the role of branding strategies on organizational promotion and brand recognition in Pay TV.

In their investigation of how changes such as fresh forms of overwhelming television and the cooperating potential afforded by fresh media skills impact the structure and dynamics of the media industry, industry scholars like Lotz (2007) and Hesmondhalgh (2007) and cultural studies researchers, like as Jenkins (2006; 2008) and D’Acci (1994), provide a solid theoretical foundation and advance our understanding of branding. Volle (2001) investigated the quick-term outcome of store-stage elevations on store selection, and the controlling role of specific variables the short-range result of store-level elevations (weekly flyers, radio and outdoor publicizing) on grocery accumulation choice. The findings indicated that the short-range result of store-level elevations on store selection was important but weak store selection was chiefly driven by loyalty.

A recent market survey indicates a presence of stiff competition against Multichoice Kenya products like *GoTv* and *DSTv* from its competitors like *StarTimes* and *Zuku* (CCK, 2014). The stiff competition is as a result of existence of many companies in the Pay TV industry, where individual company wants to protect and guard its market segment. This has encouraged them to use dissimilar elevation tools in an effort to upsurge on sales income (Procter & Gamble, 2007). Promotional activities in the manufacturing are seen as factor of petition of a creation and amenity hence the campaigns are geared to making administrations offering perfect suitability by the people (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). In order for any company in the pay TV industry in Kenya to survive, there is a need to engage in promotion activities (Deloitte, 2012).

From the foregoing discourse, it is obvious that all these studies have been carried out on advertising as one of the aspect of promotion mix to govern the role of branding policies on organizational promotion and brand recognition in Pay TV. This study sought to fill the existing research gap by conducting a study to investigate the role of strategic branding by pay TV companies to enhance customer loyalty in Eldoret, Kenya.

III. Methodology

The study was conducted in Eldoret Town which is located in Rift Valley province, Kenya, and is also the administrative centre of Uasin Gishu County. Eldoret town was chosen because of its cosmopolitan nature with varying cadres and classes of people. It serves a population of approximately 996,998 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

The study embraced the pragmatic world view which is a combination of constructivism and interpretivism approaches. A mixed methods approach was employed, allowing the use of qualitative techniques through use of interview schedule and quantitative techniques through questionnaire (Creswell, 2012).

This study targeted all individuals/homes who owned Pay TV decoders in Eldoret town. A sample frame of 400 participants was drawn from the target population through use of simple random sampling and snowballing techniques for consumers and pay TV operators/stakeholders respectively. The administrative units are clustered under three major areas: Eldoret North, Eldoret East and Eldoret West. Numbers representing all the administrative units in each cluster were written on small pieces of papers and then rolled and placed in 3 bowls, each for each cluster. For each bowl, the pieces of paper were then shuffled each time before picking an estate so as to give an equal chance to be sampled. For Eldoret North, the study picked Huruma Estate, Kapsoya Estate for Eldoret East and Poiner Estate for Eldoret South. For the stakeholders/agents, the study employed the snowballing method (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The stakeholders were deemed important because for any successful brand, the organization cannot overlook the trade-oriented brand promotion as stated by (Mbogo, 2013; Adil & Khalid, 2013). After purposively identifying a few stakeholders in the Pay TV industry in Eldoret, the author requested the stakeholders to refer her to other persons in the field. Ultimately, the study ended up engaging 2 agents, and 4 stockists. The sample size was thus 394 Pay TV consumers and 6 stakeholders/agents totalling 400 respondents.

After data collection, responses from all questionnaire items were cross-checked to facilitate coding and processing for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences ver. 20.0 (SPSS v 20.0). Pearson

product moment correlation coefficient was computed to test strength of the relationship between variables. Simple linear regression analysis was computed to determine the statistical relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The interview sheets were read through carefully, labelling relevant words and phrases while coding them carefully. This was done repeatedly. Thereafter combining the codes to themes. The analysed data were presented in form of tables, charts and notes.

IV. Data Presentation And Interpretation

A total of 394 questionnaires were administered to the participants. Of these questionnaires, 340 were filled well and returned yielding a response rate of 86.3% which was deemed as being representative of the population.

In establishing the relationship between strategic branding and customer loyalty, the author considered various aspects that were drawn from the questionnaires and interviews collected during field work. These are presented in themes as follows.

Choice of Pay TV Decoder

The study sought to find out the type of Pay TV decoder the respondents were using. In most instances, the efficacy of advertising as an integral part of branding, depends on strategic determination of who is likely to purchase the Pay TV decoder. A local organization is likely to stick to advertising on the local level, but a national or international organization must market to a much bigger crowd by utilizing different platforms. From the study findings, it was established that the major Pay TV decoders owned by the respondents were *DSTV*, *GoTV*, *Star Times TV*, *Zuku TV* and *Azam TV* at 17 (4.9%), 106 (30.9%), 88 (25.9%), 58 (17.2%) and 71 (21.1%), respectively. This is presented in Figure 1.

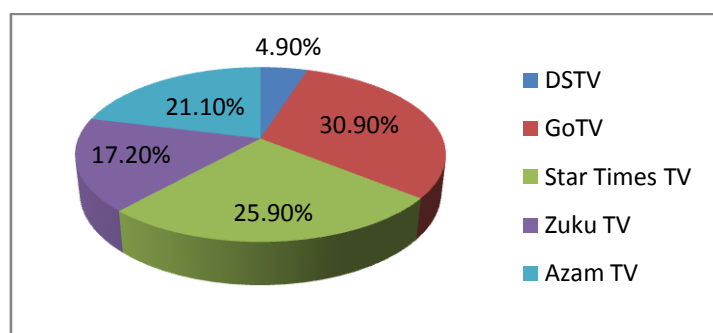


Figure 1. Respondents' Choice of Pay TV
Source: Field Data (2015)

Based on the results reported in the interview schedule, the following was established on the most preferred Pay TV Brand.

Agent 2: The most preferred brands are *Star Times*, *Go TV* and *ZukuTV*.

Stockist 1: We sell almost equal numbers of each brand save for *Dstv* that seems to be slower. We cannot overlook the fact that most clients come to purchase with a fixed mind set. They already know what they want to buy.

Stockist 3: We stock all brands and sometimes the purchasing rate for each depends on the season, offers and promotions.

Generally, all the respondents interviewed were in accession that the customers had already learnt of the brands and their popularity through various marketing arms. In addition, it was established that the respondents' choice of brand was based on their own personal preferences especially in regard to program packaging, clarity and availability of reception, cost of purchasing the decoder and the installation costs.

Knowledge about Pay TV Decoder

To determine their customer loyalty for various brands, the study sought to establish how each of the customers came to know about the Pay TV decoders. The information was necessary to establish whether respondents were aware of the different promo packages on offer by the Pay TV decoder and the different services provided for eligible customers. From the study findings, it was established that 197 (57.8%) of the respondents learnt through an advertisement, 78 (23.0%) of the respondents learnt through a friend or a neighbour while 65 (19.1%) of the respondents learnt through a list of choices given to them by a vendor. Advertising communicates to masses. Table 1 highlights these findings.

Table 1. Knowledge about Pay TV Decoder

Knowledge on Pay TV decoder	Frequency	Percentage
Through an advertisement [TV and Print Media]	197	58
Through a friend or neighbour	78	23
Through a list of choices given by a vendor	65	19
Total	340	100

Duration of Purchasing Pay TV Decoder

it was also deemed important to know how long it took the respondents to purchase their Pay TV decoder. This provided an understanding of how long it took for the respondents to get exactly what they wanted as a brand. It was found out that 20 (5.88%) of the respondents took 1-3 months, 88 (25.98%) of the respondents took 4-6 months, 68 (20.105%) of the respondents took 7-9 months whereas 164 (48.04%) of the respondents took over a year. The results in Figure 2 imply that most of the respondents took over a year to procure a pay TV decoder.

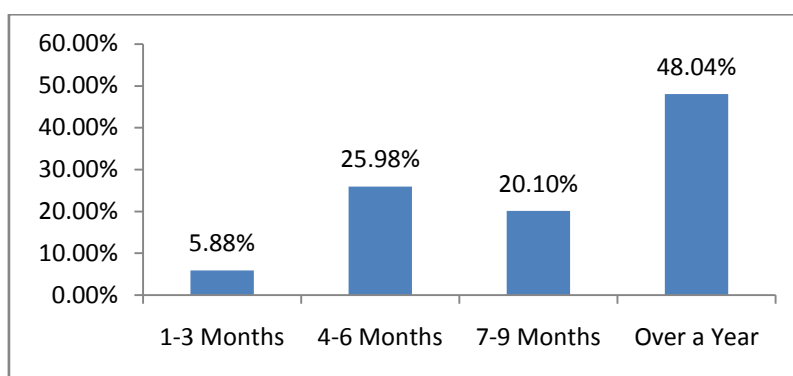


Figure 2. Duration of Purchasing Pay TV Decoder

Source: Field Data (2015)

Duration of Using a Pay TV Decoder

This theme aimed at reporting for how long the respondents had been using the Pay TV decoders. The study showed that 68 (20.1%) of the respondents had been using the Pay TV decoder for a period of 1-3 months, 98 (28.9%) of the respondents had been using the Pay TV decoder for a period of 4-6 months, 65 (19.1 %) of the respondents had been using the Pay TV decoder for a period of 7-9 months whereas 109 (31.9%) of the respondents had been using the Pay TV decoder for a period of over a year. As shown in Table 2, most of the respondents had used their Pay TV decoders for more than a year.

Table 2. Duration of Using a Pay TV Decoder

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 months	68	20.1
4-6 months	98	28.9
7-9 months	65	19.1
Over a year	109	31.9
Total	340	100

General Information

Reception of Decoders

This aspect provided an understanding of whether the decoders allow the respondents to watch TV programming-based on their subscription, in standard definition without challenge. The study showed that for 157 (46.1%) of the respondents, reception was highly available, for 65 (19.1%) of the respondents, reception was somewhat available whereas for 118 (34.8%) of the respondents, reception was available.

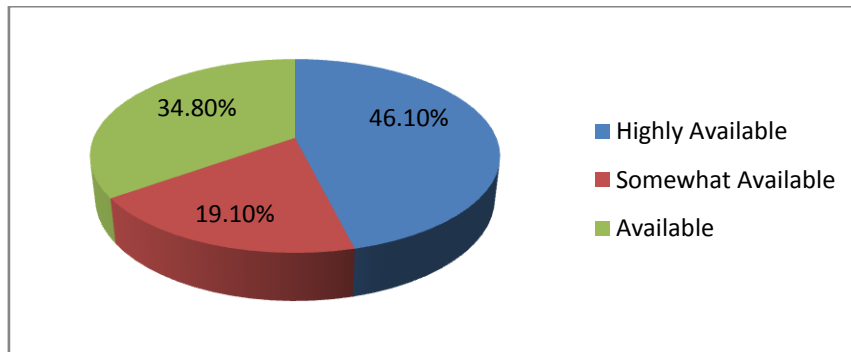
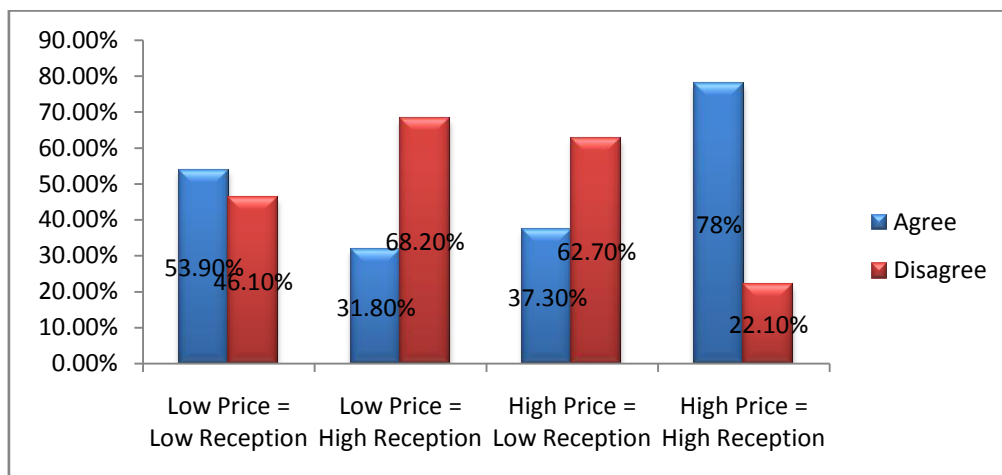


Figure 3. Receptions of Decoders
Source:Field Data (2015)

Price against Reception

On a likert scale of; low price = low reception; low price = high reception; high price = low reception; and high price = high reception; respondents were expected to indicate to which extent each aspect of price affected the reception of pay TV decoders. It was thus established that 65.9% of the respondents agreed that the price affected the reception whereas 34.1% of the respondents did not agree. While respondents generally had different arguments on the matter, it was notable that for a comprehensive program guide to see everything scheduled on all channels for days at a time, it would be necessary to pay. Figure 4 shows how the respondents' opinion on the influence of price on reception of Pay TV decoders.



* Mutiple Responses allowed
Figure 4. Price against Reception
Source:Field Data (2015)

Recommendation of the Decoder to a Friend

Based on the study findings, 268 (78.9%) of the respondents would have recommended the same pay TV Decoders to their friends whereas 72 (21.1%) of the respondents would not have recommended the Pay TV decoders to their friend. As show in Figure 5, majority of the respondents were comfortable recommending the decoders they were using to their friends. The respondents who agreed to recommend to other people indicated general satisfaction with the programs offered. The reception and clarity as well as the price was pocket friendly and it gave value for their money.

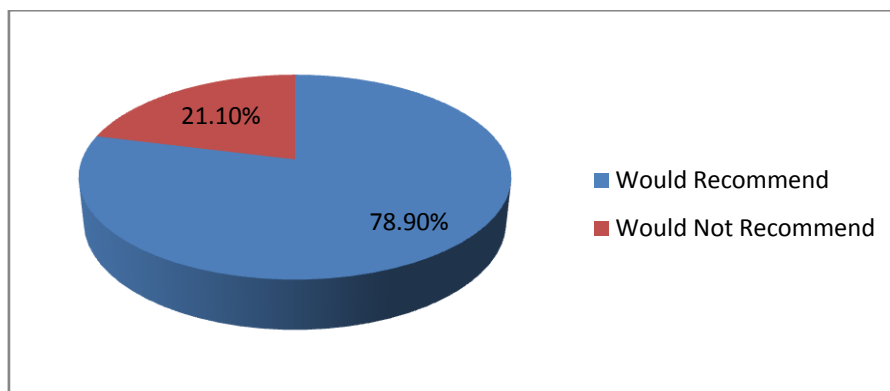


Figure 5. Recommendation of the Decoder to a Friend

Source: Field Data (2015)

Re-Purchase Intention for the Decoder

This determined whether the respondents were comfortable in buying the same decoders if given another chance. The study showed that 277 (81.4%) of the respondents were comfortable in buying the same decoder whereas 63 (18.6%) of the respondents would have gone for another decoder. This is shown in Figure 6.

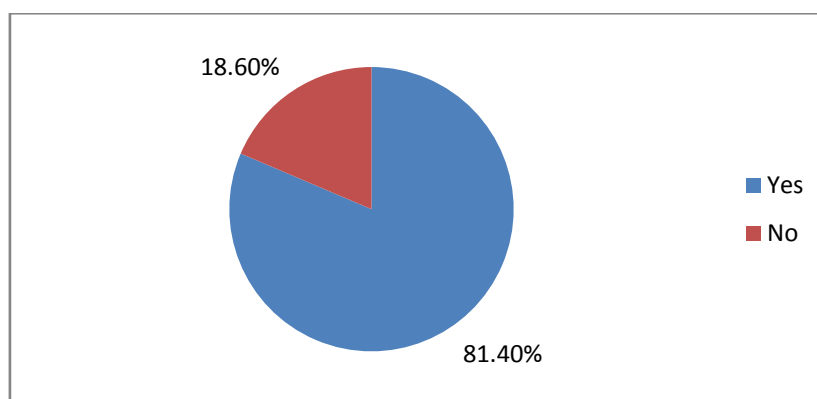


Figure 6. Re Purchase of the Decoder

Source: Field Data (2015)

findings in Figure 6 intimates that most of the respondents were comfortable with their Pay TV decoder and would be comfortable repurchasing it. This could be attributed to the respondents being satisfied with the services offered by the Pay TV providers.

Relation between Branding and Dimensions of Customer Loyalty

Branding and Behavioural Loyalty

To get information on behavioural loyalty, the study sought to find out whether the respondents would make repeat purchases of the Pay TV decoder they had and whether, given a choice, they would be committed to re-buy the brand as a primary choice. From the study findings, it was found out that a majority (71.6%) of the respondents would, provided with a choice, purchase their current Pay TV decoders again. As shown in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.10, these results concur with the sentiments of Oliver (1997; 1999) and Keller (1998) who assert that repeated purchases are an indication of customer loyalty. These results indicate that the respondents were attached to their current Pay TV decoders and loyal to the brands. This could be attributed to an effective implementation of the brand building tools by the respective Pay TV providers.

Table 3. Respondent’s Commitment to Making Repeat Purchase of Current Pay TV Decoder

Question	Response			
	Yes	%	No	&
Do you intend to make repeat purchases of your current decoder?	243	71.6	97	28.4
Given a choice, would you buy your current decoder as a primary choice?	192	56.4	148	43.6

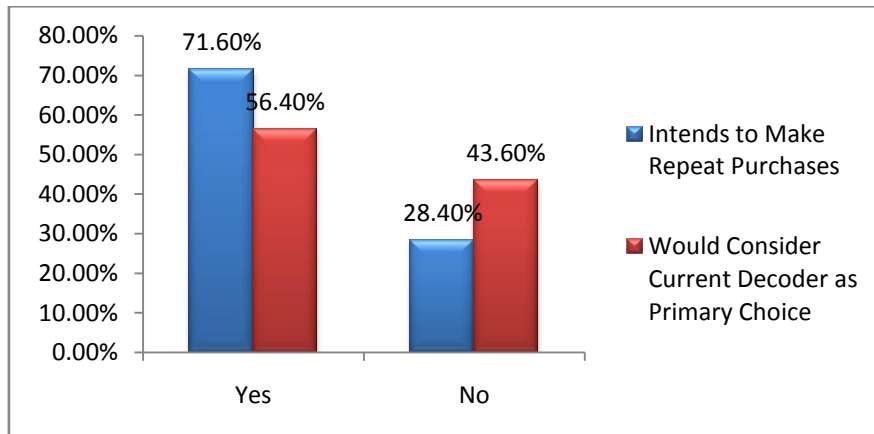


Figure 7. Behavioural Loyalty
Source:Field Data (2015)

Branding and Cognitive Loyalty

To gather data on cognitive loyalty, the study sought to find out if the respondents were willing to pay higher subscription costs and retain their current Pay TV decoders. This was set against the background that, at the time of study, there were competing Pay TV providers. In addition, the government was at the latter stages of ensuring a migration from analogue TV to digital TV. The respondents were thus asked to indicate whether they would remain loyal to their current Pay TV providers in comparison with the competition who were offering almost similar benefits but at a lower cost. As shown in Figure 8, it was established that 217 (63.7%) of the respondents were willing to pay a higher price for their current brand. However, 123 (36.3%) of the respondents indicated that they would not pay a higher price to retain the brand. These results show that a majority of the study respondents are loyal to their brands and would not mind paying more to retain the brands. Some of the reasons given by those who opted to retain the brand were brand salience, brand performance, brand imagery, brand judgments, brand feelings, and brand resonance.

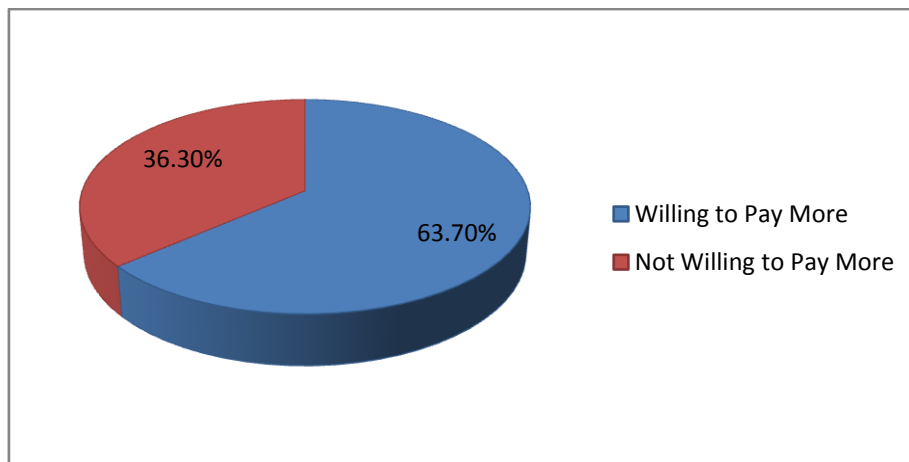


Figure 8. Willingness to Pay More for the Current Brand
Source:Field Data (2015)

The findings of this study are in tandem with Oliver’s (2007, p.392) postulation of the role of branding on customer loyalty as a “deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour”. For Pay TV providers, customer loyalty is a pathway to profitability (Hayes, 2008). The findings also concur with those of Chu (2009) who notes that branding leads to customer loyalty, which is a positive attitude and behaviour related to the level of re-purchasing commitment to a brand in the future. In addition, the study findings lend credence to the observation of Bowen and Chen (2001) that loyal customers are less likely to switch to a competitor solely because of price, and they even make more purchases than non-loyal customers. From the study findings, it was found out that a majority (71.6%) of the respondents would, provided with a choice, purchase their current Pay TV decoders again. These results concur with the sentiments of Oliver (1997; 1999) and Keller

(1998) who assert that repeated purchases are an indication of customer loyalty. These results indicate that the respondents were attached to their current Pay TV decoders and loyal to the brands. This could be attributed to an effective implementation of the brand building tools by the respective Pay TV providers.

V. Conclusion

This paper draws to the attention of readers that there is a relationship between branding and customer loyalty. Basically, brand presentation directly impacts on brand awareness. The study established that since a brand communicates to the consumer it is the role of the brand owner to package it to suit the current and future needs of the client. It is the customer's judgement of the brand that leads to purchase, loyalty, satisfaction and eventually a top of mind brand. According to these findings, branding instils a level of guarantee that a product will deliver a set of promises that are communicated in the branding of the product.

Through this feature, the decoders of Pay TV providers who had done adequate branding were in a position to stand out and gain a competitive advantage over a less known product whose organizations had not done adequate branding. This means that since the Pay TV providers are competing for the disposable income of consumers, they need to work on enhancing their image so as to capture the consumer's attention and influence their re-purchasing behaviour.

VI. Recommendations

The study asserts that there is a relationship between branding and customer loyalty. The brand instils a level of guarantee that a product will deliver a set of promises that are communicated in the branding of the product. Therefore, the study recommends that Pay TVs should ensure the customer gets exactly what they promised and this can be achieved by creating an efficient communication channel that a client can launch a complaint and feedback. The turnaround time for solving the problems should be efficient, effective and simple.

Acquiring a new client is key to achieving profitability but maintain an existing client through customer loyalty is of more importance. Pay TVs should not only focus on acquiring new clients but maintaining the existing clients majorly because they not only depend on the initial purchase of the decoder but most of the revenue is drawn from subscriptions. They should therefore strive to maintain the client by giving offers, remembering important dates, sending reminders on offers and when subscriptions are almost due and having a reliable communication channel. A satisfied customer is most likely going to repurchase the brand and by extension be a brand ambassador.

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