BRANDING STRATEGIES, SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE OIL INDUSTRY IN KENYA.

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award for the Degree of Master of Business Administration (Marketing Option) of Tharaka University

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of diploma or conferment of degree in any other University or Institution.

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Recommendation

This thesis has been examined, passed and submitted with our approval as University supervisors.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, who have supported me in all ways and the prayers offered during the academic journey. To my close friends and classmates who have always encouraged me to keep up whenever I had challenges and congratulated me in triumph. My achievement is theirs as much as it is mine.

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ABSTRACT

The Kenyan petroleum sector is a very competitive and dynamic market where companies like Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy and TotalEnergies make huge investments on branding strategies with an aim of ensuring customer satisfaction. In spite of these, issues relating to inconsistency in service provision, long lines, and volatility of prices still plague customer experiences. The purpose of this research was thus to identify how branding strategies (brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention) influence customer satisfaction in the oil industry of Kenya and the moderating effect of the service quality. The research was pegged on the Brand Equity Theory, SERVQUAL (RATER) Model and Expectation Confirmation Theory. The explanatory research design was adopted in order to draw causal relationships among the research variables. A total of 835 station managers with Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy and TotalEnergies were used as the target population. With the help of the Yamane formula, the sample of 270 respondents was chosen by means of proportionate stratified random sampling. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires and the questionnaires were tested in terms of validity and reliability where all Cronbach alpha coefficients were greater than 0.7. Data analysis was done based on descriptive statistics (means, frequencies, and standard deviations) to summarize responses and inferential statistics, such as correlation, multiple regression, and moderation tests, to test hypotheses and support conclusions. All data were analyzed using SPSS version 31.0 and data was collected under ethical standards approved. The results have been provided in form of tables and figures. The results showed that brand refresh, brand merger and brand reinventions all had positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction with a summative influence of brand refresh ($R\ 2 = 0.520$). Of the predictors, brand refresh and brand reinvention showed most significant effect but brand merger also had positive effect but with less impact. The findings also demonstrated that service quality, which was assessed based on the SERVQUAL dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, was a significant moderator of the relationship between branding strategies and customer satisfaction which reinforced the positive impacts of branding initiatives. The study concluded that branding strategies that were complemented by customer satisfaction and loyalty led to effective management in customer satisfaction and loyalty in the petroleum industry. It advises the oil marketing companies to embrace the concept of integrated branding which entails a combination of brand refresh, strategic mergers, and continuous reinvention as well as a consistent and quality customer service. The policy makers and specifically the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) were urged to come up with mechanisms that enhance transparency in branding and a standard that ensures minimum service quality in the industry. The research also did not cover all the oil marketing firms and regions (Nairobi, Machakos, and Kiambu), which might be restrictive to generalization. Future studies are advised to broaden the research area and include longitudinal study designs in order to determine the long-term impacts of the branding strategies on satisfaction. The results help enrich the marketing literature in terms of supporting the Brand Equity Theory, SERVQUAL Model and the Expectation Confirmation Theory in an emerging market environment, as well as to provide practical implications to marketers and regulators on how to match branding with customer satisfaction in the oil sector of Kenya.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALSAA	Al Shahin Al Asad Petroleum & Shipping FZC.
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
ECT	Expectation-Confirmation Theory
EPRA	Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority
EV	Electric Vehicle
Ksh	Kenyan Shilling
M&A	Mergers and Acquisitions
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
QR Code	Quick Response Code
RBV	Resource-Based View Theory
ROI	Return on Investment
SERVQUAL	Service Quality Model
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
USD	United States Dollar

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Customer satisfaction refers to the extent to which a company's products or services surpass or fulfill customer expectations. It is among the major determinants of business success, influencing customer retention, repeat sales, and brand loyalty (Kosasih, Hidayat, Hutahayan & None Sunarti. 2024). Good service quality instills customer trust and loyalty, whereas poor service characterized by inconsistencies, price fluctuations, and lack of personalized contact tends to create dissatisfaction (Kosasih et al., 2024). Customer satisfaction is one of the key indicators of business success, but it is a constant challenge to most organizations, especially in highly competitive and service-based businesses like oil retailing. In the recent years, fuel consumers have been dissatisfied due to the unstable fuel prices, poor service delivery, and lack of customer interaction in the retail stores. These aspects undermine trust, brand loyalty, and market share. In response to these issues, oil marketing companies have resorted to strategic branding programs such as brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention as conscious attempts to reinforce customer perception and increase satisfaction. Branding strategies are effective instruments in developing meaningful customer experiences, emotional relationships, and distinguishing firms in markets where core products are mostly homogeneous. Combined with good service quality, effective branding increases reliability, professionalism, and convenience, which are major motivators that strengthen satisfaction and long-term loyalty. As a result, the interplay between branding strategies and service quality becomes critical in determining customer outcomes within the oil industry setting.

Lim, Tuli & Grewal (2020) examined multinational oil firms and determined that branding strategies that involve the utilization of service quality promotion and transparent pricing significantly contribute to customer satisfaction. The research highlighted that the integration of digital payment systems, automated fueling, and reward programs improves customer experience and loyalty to the brand. The study concluded that digital brand differentiation improves convenience, thereby supporting customer retention in competitive fuel markets.

Karim et al. (2021) explored branding efforts and customer satisfaction in the oil retail sector in Africa. The study affirmed that customers in emerging markets appreciate digital brand experiences, service speed, and interactive modes of engagement. Companies that had embraced digital transformation such as mobile payments, fuel rewards through apps, and customer engagement platforms posted high customer satisfaction and loyalty levels. The study, however, noted that in spite of branding efforts, variability in service delivery and volatile fuel prices are matters that detract from the effectiveness of branding efforts.

Owino (2022) explored the impact of sustainability branding and digital convenience on customer satisfaction in the oil retail industry in Kenya. The research observed that oil firms like TotalEnergies and Engen have adopted sustainability-based branding efforts, such as green energy choices and digitalized loyalty programs, to enhance customer perception. Despite these investments, the study observed that inconsistent service delivery and volatile fuel prices pose a challenge to customer satisfaction in the Kenyan business context. The study calls for the harmonization of branding efforts with high levels of service quality to attain sustainable customer satisfaction.

1.1.1 Branding Strategies

Branding strategies serve essential functions to modify customer perspective while improving market standing and supporting long-term customer faith in the oil sector (Zafari, 2017). Succeeding in today's fuel market drives fuel retailers to implement multiple branding methods such as digital branding with sustainability elements and customer loyalty networks and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to compete effectively in their target markets. The oil industry giant Shell along with TotalEnergies use sustainability branding through renewable energy practices combined with carbon emission reduction initiatives while ExxonMobil has built digital branding through automated refueling systems and mobile payment platforms (Mulupi, 2016). The African fuel market requires brands to create specific branding approaches based on regional circumstances through schemes that combine affordability with community relations and ongoing customer relationships. Three main branding strategies including brand refresh, brand merger and brand reinvention serve as the primary focus of this research since Kenyan fuel retailers utilize them to enhance customer satisfaction.

The process of brand refresh includes modernizing branding elements to maintain core values by updating both the company identity and its communication approaches and customer outreach methods Wheeler (2017). The oil industry uses contemporary service station designs alongside fresh logos alongside technological payment solutions to deliver superior customer service. The research conducted by Putri et al. (2023) in Indonesia demonstrated companies that carried out brand refresh initiatives boosted customer satisfaction rates to 30% since modernized branding enhanced public perception and strengthened trust relationships. The energy for tomorrow campaign launched by Rubis Kenya (2021) showed this approach through its new brand image together with redesigned service stations and payment app development to help customers.

Brand merger involves companies uniting their brands by acquiring one another to gain market share along with strengthened service operations (Basu, K. 2006). As a strategic method it helps companies unite resources while increasing operational effectiveness and keeps customers through loyalty programs. A research study by Candra et al. (2021) discovered that brand mergers in the global oil sector succeeded when properly managed since they strengthened customer trust and provided consistent services which increased brand loyalty. They also established that due to poor merger management customers experienced service problems combined with branding confusion according to their research. Rubis Kenya performed two strategic acquisitions including KenolKobil (2019) and Gulf Energy (2020) to expand its network of service stations while establishing new loyalty programs to keep customers loyal.

Brand reinvention encompasses substantial shifts of brand identity together with business models and service offerings which occur because of market forces and technological or sustainability developments (Voelpel et al. 2004). This transformation methodology aims to shape company values and business directions for the long run in addition to visual rebranding initiatives. Based on their research Li et al. (2022) established that oil companies which adopted sustainability branding alongside green energy solutions managed to achieve higher customer satisfaction because customers looking for environmentally responsible choices favored brands which reflected their values. The brand reinvention at Rubis Kenya includes investments in solar-powered service stations and electric vehicle charging infrastructure that positions the company as Kenya's future-oriented energy provider within the oil market.

1.1.2 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is crucial for business success for fuel retail because factors such as price, branding strategies, and quality of service affect customers' attitudes (Poi and Opara, 2021). Service quality, in turn, is a moderating variable that enhances or reduces the impact of branding strategies on customers' satisfaction. High quality service has a potential for cementing the branding-customer loyalty connection, but low-quality service can weaken the connection.

Trends signal that customer satisfaction among fuel consumers is increasingly driven by digitalization, price competitiveness, and sustainability initiatives (Purohit et al). However, service quality remains paramount, with customers expecting seamless, efficient, and customer-oriented interactions. Post-COVID-19, consumer service quality expectations have shifted, with a high demand for digital options with low physical touch and high convenience. Digital payment through mobile app-based fuel transactions, automated fueling, and reward programs have emerged as a necessity for meeting these expectations. Accenture (2023) finds that 72% of consumers across the globe look forward to fuel retailers delivering digital convenience, highlighting a need for service quality improvement as well as brand initiatives.

Competitive fuel retailers have responded with service quality improvement through digitalization. ExxonMobil, for instance, has adopted mobile payment technology, which allows customers to refuel with little waiting time (Purohit et al., 2021). Such technology adoption improves service efficiency, thereby increasing the contribution of branding towards customer satisfaction. Additionally, McKinsey (2023) finds that fuel retailers that have invested in service quality, such as digitalized customer service and faster transactions, have better customer satisfaction compared to fuel retailers with monopolistic or state-controlled markets where service quality is not given priority.

Customer satisfaction has also been affected by sustainability as a primary consideration, with service quality being a vital ingredient on how fuel retailers implement environmentally friendly practices. Modern consumers are willing to do business with environmentally responsible brands, with fuel outlets that offer biofuels, electric vehicle charging points, and carbon offsetting being desirable (Ekechukwu & Simpa, 2024). The effects of these sustainability practices on customer satisfaction, however, are mediated through service quality. An effectively managed EV charging station, for example, enhances customer satisfaction, but a poorly managed one can cause irritation and deter repeat business.

1.1.3 Service Quality.

The concept of service quality has been broadly conceptualized in marketing and management literatures as a multidimensional construct in terms of whether or not a service met expectations or surpassed customer expectations in terms of its quality. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) define service quality as the difference that existed between the expectations of customers regarding a service and the actual service that they received. This definition is the basis of the SERVQUAL model that defines five main dimensions that determine the level of customer evaluation of the service performance: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles.

On the same note, Grönroos (1984) has defined the service quality as the result of a comparison between the expectancies of the customer of the service and their experience concerning the technical quality (what is provided) as well as the functional quality (how it is provided). His model puts much emphasis on process and outcome of service delivery.

In a different view, Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) suggested that the quality of services be measured through three dimensions namely physical quality (physical aspects), interactive quality (customer-service provider interactions), and corporate quality (image and reputation of the organization).

The conceptualization of Parasuraman et al. (1988) is taken to use in the current work as it offers the development of a detailed and empirically proven framework

(SERVQUAL) that can be applied to the situation of petroleum retail. The five dimensions including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles are very effective in encompassing the important elements of service delivery in fuel stations where the customers are judged through the reliability of the fuel dispensing machines, the courtesy of the staff, the neatness of the station and speed in offering the service. The model conforms to the aim of the study, which is to determine the presence of service quality in mediating the relationship between branding strategies (brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention) on customer satisfaction in the Kenyan oil industry.

1.1.4 Branding Strategies and Customer Satisfaction.

The relationship between customer satisfaction and branding strategies is a pivotal driver of competitive advantage in Kenya's oil retail market (Mwangi, H.K. 2008). The application of differentiated global and local strategies has been proven successful worldwide. Digital engagement, sustainability messaging, and transparent pricing enhance customer satisfaction as reported by Lim et al. (2020) in multinational oil companies and by (Karim et al. 2021) in Africa through digital brand experiences and reward-based engagement but hindered by inconsistent service delivery. The same has been reported by Owino (2022) through efforts by companies like Rubis Kenya and TotalEnergies in adopting sustainability branding and convenience through digital services. This has been done despite continued compromised service quality on issues like long queues and inconsistent fuel dispensing serving to dilute customer satisfaction.

The above studies narrow the relationship from generic theories like Brand Equity Theory supporting the argument that perceived value and loyalty improve through branding to specific strategies like brand refresh, mergers, and reinventions. Putri et al.'s (2023) findings state a 30% increase through visual brand refresh, Candra et al.'s (2021) facilitation of trust and consistency through good brand mergers but dissatisfaction resulting from poorly conducted mergers, Li et al. (2022) demonstrated brand reinventions through sustainability drives a 32% satisfaction level especially when aligned with consumers' eco-orientation. Critically, the provision of quality service through the SERVQUAL dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, and assurance serves as a moderating mechanism. Service quality reinforces the effect of branding and compromised service delivery diminishes it as noted on research like PwC Africa (2023) and Owino (2022). They both arrive at the conclusion that customer benefits through efforts of the brand only when coupled alongside quality and consistency in service delivery. In Kenya's oil market context, strategic branding coordination alongside quality and consistency in service delivery will be crucial if customers are to be maximally satisfied as a justification for the application of the Brand Equity Theory and Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) and also the SERVQUAL framework as conceptual guides.

1.1.5 Overview of Oil Industries in Kenya.

Kenya's oil sector forms the backbone of Kenya's economy as it plays a crucial role in producing energy, transportation, and industrial production (Yuwei, C. 2015). Its development began in the 1950s when the establishment of multinationals such as Shell and BP laid the path for Kenya's oil market. Over the years, their entry has been preceded by other key players in the form of TotalEnergies, Vivo Energy (Shell), and Rubis Energy that made the business a competitive market due to the participation of not only multinationals but also local enterprises.

The three main sectors of Kenya's oil business are upstream, midstream, and downstream. While upstream involves production and exploration, notable areas include those in Turkana where in 2012 the commercial quantities of oil were discovered. Midstream involves transportation, storage, and refining of petroleum's products with main activities undertaken by the Kenya Pipeline Company and independent marketers of oil. Downstream involves distribution and retailing and has players like Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies who operate their service stations. It is a competitive venture punctuated by branding, quality of service and customer experience in a bid to establish a market niche.

The sector is regulated by the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA), which licenses the industry and regulates pricing and quality standards. EPRA's regulatory system helps sustain fair competition, consumer welfare, and sustainability in the industry. The companies must follow the EPRA-regulated prices, which change monthly as a result of variations in the global oil prices and other variables.

Though it has expanded, Kenya's oil business has numerous challenges. Local pump prices are directly influenced by volatile global oil prices, prompting consumer dissatisfaction. Quality of service has also been a continuing concern, with customers often complaining about queueing at retail stations, irregular fuel dispensing, and poor customer care. The rollout of digital payment systems and reward schemes has also varied between and among companies and has not enhanced consumer convenience and involvement. Rubis, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies have invested in sustainable initiatives like the establishment of solar-powered stations and electric vehicle charging points, but this has not totally resolved consumer dissatisfaction about the quality of service and the stability of prices. For the future, the Kenyan oil industry will be influenced by digitalization, sustainability efforts, and changes in regulations. The industry will focus on green energy solutions, digital customer interaction, and improving the quality of services as a means of satisfying customers and keeping in line with competitiveness demands. The dynamic market situation presents a good platform for carrying out empirical studies on the role of brand strategies and the quality of services in determining customer satisfaction in Kenya's oil industry.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the oil industry, branding should improve the customer satisfaction by offering quality services, competitive prices, digitalization, and open operations. In Kenya however, dissatisfaction has been brought about by poor service, unstable fuel prices and less use of technology. EPRA notes that the use of petroleum declined by 2.1 percent in the 2023/2024 period, due to an increase in VAT on petroleum products. Kerosene use decreased by 47.6 percent and gasoline and diesel decreased by 2.83 percent and 2.29 percent respectively. Research points out that loyalty is directly linked to satisfaction, however, lack of consistency in service delivery and poor implementation of new technologies are some of the factors that hamper customer engagement. Standardization is also complicated by the high number of OMCs leading to inefficiency in spite of the high investments in branding. Poor customer satisfaction results in low customer retention rate, sales and market share. Conceptually, limited studies have investigated the effect of particular branding strategies, such as brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention, on customer satisfaction. In theory, not many studies have combined Brand Equity Theory, SERVQUAL, and Expectation Confirmation Theory to understand the joint influence of branding and service quality on satisfaction. Most of the previous studies are empirical and are based on non-oil or foreign markets, and the Kenyan oil retail context is under-researched. This research thus aims to fill these gaps by examining the effect of branding strategies on customer satisfaction, where service quality is a moderating factor among the key oil marketing firms in Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The study's general objective was to examine the effect of branding strategies on customer satisfaction and the moderating effect of service quality.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

i. To examine the effect of brand refresh strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.
ii. To establish the effect of brand merger strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.
iii. To assess the effect of brand reinvention strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.
iv. To determine the moderating effect of service quality on the relationship between brand strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

1.4 Hypotheses

H_{O1}: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand refresh strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

H_{O2}: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand merger strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

H_{O3}: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand reinvention strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

H_{O4}: There is no statistically significant moderating effect of service quality on the relationship between branding strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is crucial for industry players, consumers, government agencies and regulatory bodies, and academic researchers, particularly with respect to understanding how service quality functions as a moderator for brand strategies and customer satisfaction.

For industry players and marketing managers, especially fuel retailers such as Rubis Kenya and others, the study will provide insights into how quality service aids effective branding strategies for increasing customer satisfaction. The study will help fuel retailers refine their branding strategies, such as brand refresh, mergers, and reinvention, and make quality service a top priority for customer loyalty. By synchronizing branding campaigns with quality services, companies may increase customer retention, raise market positioning, and gain a competitive advantage for Kenya's highly competitive fuel retail business. The research may offer practical recommendations for fuel retailers seeking to balance branding strategies with service quality improvement for greater customer satisfaction and loyalty in a dynamic marketplace.

For policy makers and regulatory agencies, the research will offer a policy framework for policy development that not only assures fair competition but also fosters service quality as a core aspect of consumer protection. With pricing, service level, and consumer confidence, regulators can apply the findings from the research to implement minimum service quality requirements for fuel retailers. This will ensure branding efforts do not mislead consumers but instead equate into tangible service delivery improvements.

For oil firms' management the study will provide a feasible framework of how to synchronize branding programs with the operational guidelines that will ensure a uniform customer experience. The findings will allow managers to put frontline staff training and focus on service excellence as priorities and evaluate brand performance based on the customer satisfaction results.

For consumers, the study will emphasize how branding strategies shape service quality and, ultimately, customer satisfaction. Consumers will more clearly see the impact service excellence has on their overall experience with fuel retailers. Armed with this knowledge, they will more effectively be able to make informed choices, demand better service, and reward those brands that invest in branding innovation and excellent service delivery.

Academically, this research will contribute to what is known about service quality and branding in Africa's fuel retail industry. With little past research on how service quality affects branding strategies for emerging economies, the research provides valuable insights for future branding, customer satisfaction, and service marketing research.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study aimed to examine how branding strategies influence customer satisfaction within the oil sector in Kenya, with reference to Vivo Energy, Rubis Energy, and TotalEnergies. The study was informed by four broad scopes, namely thematic, geographical, temporal, and methodological.

Thematically, the research was based on three major branding strategies, namely brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention, as the independent variables, customer satisfaction as the dependent variable, and service quality as the moderating variable. The objective was to establish the effect of these branding strategies on customer satisfaction and the moderating role of service quality in the competitive petroleum market in Kenya.

The study was conducted geographically in Nairobi County and in selected areas of Machakos and Kiambu Counties. The selection of these areas was based on the fact that they have a high number of fuel stations run by Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies, which is why they are the best places to study branding practices and customer experiences in the oil retail industry. The incorporation of urban and peri-urban settings offered a balanced perspective of branding and satisfaction dynamics in various market settings. The study was carried out in 2025, and data was collected in September. This period enabled an up-to-date and pertinent evaluation of branding policies and their influence on customer satisfaction, which is a reflection of the recent trends in the oil industry in Kenya.

The study methodologically used an explanatory research design to determine cause and effect relationships among the study variables. The target population was station managers of Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies because they are the ones who directly execute branding and operational strategies at the retail level. The research was based solely on primary data gathered by use of structured questionnaires that were given to these managers. The analysis of data was performed with the help of multiple and moderated regression models to investigate the relationships between the variables and to test the moderating effect of service quality.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Time and resource limited the scope of the data attainable from station managers. Since there are many managers in Vivo Energy, Rubis Energy, and TotalEnergies filling stations in Kenya, all of them could not be included in this study. Nonetheless, through a focused sampling process in the busiest stations and a sequential selection process, this research attained a representative and diverse set of managerial insights from the three petroleum industries.

This research was based on oil marketing firms in Kenya, that is, Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy and TotalEnergies. Although this gave useful information on the local fuel retail market, the results might not be entirely applicable in other oil companies or markets that have various regulatory, economic or cultural settings. The research was also restricted to the contribution of the station managers in Kenya, and the views of the customers or other employees in operation were not captured. Such a contextual narrowing guaranteed a managerial level of view but limited the scope of the perspectives on the value chain.

The research analyzed three main branding techniques, namely brand refresh, brand merger and brand reinvention and their influence on customer satisfaction, and the service quality was used as a moderating factor. Additional potential factors affecting customer satisfaction including corporate image, pricing strategies or environmental sustainability were purposely omitted to stay on track of the branding-service quality-satisfaction nexus. The theoretical basis of the study was the Brand Equity Theory, SERVQUAL (RATER) and Expectation Confirmation Theory which is, although relevant, might not encompass the entire dimensions of the customer experience and their behavioral intention in the oil industry.

The sample of the station managers was selected based on time, resource constraints, and it was not feasible to sample all managers nationwide. To address the sampling bias, the systematic random sampling method was applied that guarantees representativeness in the three oil companies. Nevertheless, bias in the response of customers may have risen because some respondents might not have given a reflection of actual practices but given social desirable responses. This risk was reduced by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Also, the cross-sectional design does not allow the researcher to be able to determine the causality across time but was suitable in investigating the relationship between variables during a specific timeframe.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

This study was conducted under several basic assumptions that guide the research process and ensure the validity of its findings. First, there is an assumption that customer satisfaction is very much influenced by branding efforts and that customers can perceive and recall branding efforts like brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention at outlets of Vivo Energy, Rubis Energy, and TotalEnergies. The assumption plays a pivotal role in assessing how branding influences customer satisfaction.

Second, service quality is supposed to moderate the role played by branding strategies on customer satisfaction. It was anticipated that greater service quality strengthens the branding impact, but low service quality undermines it.

Third, participants would also respond with honesty and impartially when they are interviewed and asked to fill out questionnaires. To substantiate this, confidentiality was assured and participants were informed that their responses would only be used for research.

Additionally, the research assumed that the managers' sample from Vivo Energy, Rubis Energy, and TotalEnergies in this research was a representative of the views of managers in all three of the major players in the Kenyan oil business. Through interacting with managers, the research seeks to collect diverse and insightful comments from this important stakeholder group.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Brand Merger: A brand consolidation strategy wherein two or more former standalone brands are merged under a single market and operations identity in order to promote consistency in services and market share. Herein, it pertains to Rubis Energy's acquisition of KenolKobil and Gulf Energy and their impact on customer satisfaction via consolidated brands, enlarged service networks, and combined rewards schemes.

Brand Refresh: Strategic rebranding aimed at transforming a business's visual identity profile, customer interfaces, and communication manner without diluting its core values. From a Kenyan oil industry perspective, rebranding has taken the form of Rubis Energy's revamped service stations, refurbished logos, and upgraded mobile payments systems aimed at enhancing brand image and customer satisfaction levels.

Brand Reinvention: A full-scale rebranding and overhaul of a firm's business model and brand identity according to evolving market needs, particularly in digital innovation and sustainability. Taking Kenya's oil industry as an example, this is exemplified by Rubis Energy and TotalEnergies investments in green energy options like solar-powered stations and EV charging points as a transition toward energy branding for the future aimed at improving customer satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction: The dependent variable for this research is the level at which customers perceive their expectations having been fulfilled or surpassed by the services and branding strategies of oil companies. Customer satisfaction in Kenya encompasses repeat business, loyalty, positive experience of services, and perception of value as a result of the branding efforts from Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies.

Service Quality: A moderating variable herein refers to customer perception of overall service excellence as delivered by the five SERVQUAL dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Service quality for Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies encompasses available fuel at all times, courteous and well-informed attendants, good and well-maintained service stations, and quick service each of which affects the performance of branding efforts on customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Empirical Literature Review

Several studies have looked into branding strategies and customer satisfaction within the oil industry, with diverse methodologies and findings. Lim et al. (2020) tested brand image, digital engagement, and sustainability initiatives' effects on consumer confidence and loyalty, utilizing the Expectation-Confirmation Theory as a conceptual framework. The study used a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design, with data collection through structured questionnaires from 500 customers from five multinational petroleum companies. Findings indicated digital branding and sustainability initiatives had a 24% higher rate of customer satisfaction compared with those with traditional branding only. However, the study did not look into brand mergers and brand reinvention, which are vital in competitive markets. This study addresses the issue by examining the way brand mergers and brand updates influence how happy customers are in the petroleum sector.

Candra et al. (2021) looked at mergers and acquisitions as a branding strategy in the petroleum industry to measure their influence on brand recognition and how customers see the company. This study was supported by Brand Equity Theory and implemented as a qualitative case study through 30 detailed interviews with top managers working for 10 major petroleum companies worldwide. Researchers discovered that uniting successful brands gave customers greater trust in the brand and maintained reliable services. Even so, there were no studies in the literature examining how much customer satisfaction improved after the mergers, making it unclear how mergers change the way customers feel. This paper aims to fill that gap by examining how customer satisfaction is changed by brand mergers, offering additional views from customers following petroleum mergers.

PwC Africa (2023) tested branding strategies utilized within Africa's fuel retail, with a focus on digital branding, loyalty schemes, and sustainability initiatives, utilizing a quantitative survey research approach, collecting questionnaire responses from 800 customers from five African countries. The study found digital branding and personalized customer experience led to a 30% increase in satisfaction, but did not look into brand mergers and brand reinvention. The research is intended to examine if customer satisfaction changes as a result of brand mergers or brand reinvention in the oil industry.

Abah and Onuha (2020) tested branding and customer loyalty among Nigeria's petroleum industry through the Corporate Image Theory, utilizing a mixed-method approach, combining surveys and focus group discussions with 350 customers at fuel outlets in Lagos. Research had shown that brand identity and service differentiation enhanced customer loyalty, but the research had overlooked how branding influences customer satisfaction, a precondition to loyalty. The gap is covered by this study which assesses the effect of brand refresh, brand merger and brand reinvention on customers' satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

Gichuhi (2023) experimented with pricing frameworks and digital brand strategies in Kenya's petroleum sector, with a correlational research approach involving systematic questionnaires among 400 participants from Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu. It showed that mobile payments and price clarity raised satisfaction, but did not experiment with broader branding strategies beyond pricing.

Owino's (2022) qualitative case study explored customer dissatisfaction patterns in Kenya's petroleum industry by examining the correlation between consistency in branding and customer experience. Interviews were conducted among 50 customers and 10 managers of fuel stations from a number of fuel retail chains in Kenya. The results indicated incongruent branding in the form of inconsistent visual identity, variability in services from outlet to outlet, and difference in customer engagement at a macro level resulted in lower levels of customer satisfaction and loss of trust in the brands. While the study did emphasize the relevance of strong-brand alignment, it did not break down the effects of particular branding efforts like brand refresh, brand merger, or brand reinvention on satisfaction and also did not measure the extent of moderating effects of service quality variables like responsiveness or reliability on the relationship between branding and satisfaction. My research solves both these issues by quantitatively examining the effect of specific branding efforts namely brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention on customer satisfaction in Kenya's petroleum market and the extent to which service quality (operationalized through SERVQUAL constructs) moderates these effects in order to offer actionable feedback for alignment of brands and services.

McKinsey & Company (2023) quantitatively used Expectation-Confirmation Theory to measure the effects of digital personalization and omnichannel convenience on customer satisfaction in the global fuel retail market. Relying on structured questionnaires from 1,200 customers from five continents, the research determined that 72% of that surveyed favored personalized brand communication and reported satisfaction and brand engagement when digital self-service facilities and omnichannel integration were used. Likewise, Accenture Life Trends (2023) employed Brand Equity Theory utilizing a mixed methods approach through surveys (1,000 customers) and interviews (20 executives and 8 focus groups) to investigate the impact of emotionally engaging brand narratives and interconnected physical-digital aspects on satisfaction in various sectors. The studies found emotional narratives, green messaging, and customer-centric campaigns highly enhanced trust and commitment but completely neglected the effects of unique branding strategies like brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention on customer satisfaction and the moderating role of service quality. Additionally, the non-emphasis on the petroleum market in developing economies confines their relevance in Kenya's situation. My research rectifies this by testing the effects of brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention on customer satisfaction in Kenya's oil market and introducing a moderating role of service quality to offer context-relevant actionable recommendations.

Kral et al. (2020) used a qualitative approach drawing on the Theory of Corporate Image and examined the ways in which crises may be leveraged as catalysts for rebranding as a means of restoring consumer trust, especially in high-profile industries such as petroleum and gas. Based on a series of case studies and interviews conducted on five global energy companies, the research established that firms who repositioned their brand message strategically at times of crisis emphasizing customer care, safety, and openness reported enhanced customer trust and reputation restoration. Supporting this, Melnychenko (2021) employed a quantitative approach under the Theory of Brand Equity and surveyed 600 consumers of energy to explore the impact of CSR-driven brand reinvention on customer engagement. The research established a 29% incremental improvement in customer engagement and positive sentiment toward a brand when reinvention activities included CSR efforts such as environmental initiatives and local community investment. Both pieces of research did not measure customer satisfaction objectively or take service quality as a moderator of variable effect on the success of reinventing a brand. Additionally, neither research targeted developing economies or retail-tier fuel operations. My research bridges gaps by investigating the impact of brand reinvention together with brand refresh and brand merger on customer satisfaction in the Kenyan oil sector, moderated by service quality for context-specific and quantifiable insights.

Cui and his team (2024) used a quantitative approach rooted in consumer behavior theory to investigate the psychological effect of emotional branding on consumer attitude in fuel-sensitive markets on both sides of Asia and Europe. The researchers used structured questionnaires administered to 700 Asian and European fuel retail customers and found that emotive branding like tailored messaging and value-focused campaigns heavily boosted customer allegiance even when pricing features as a focal concern. The research did not explore emotional branding's positioning as part of wider branding ventures like brand refresh or reinvention or the integration of service quality as a variable. My research bridges this gap through a specific focus on structured branding tactics brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention in Kenya's oil market and a determination of their effects on customers' satisfaction level and has added service quality as a moderating variable through which the effects of the branded tactics will be tested to see if they're enhanced or diluted by service quality.

Hasaan et al. (2021) used the application of Brand Equity Theory in a quantitative inquiry of corporate narratives and heritage branding and their effects on brand trust and loyalty in the fuel retail industry. Data were obtained from 500 customers from a number of multinational fuel dealers and from what they found, brands that conveyed their heritage and identity through continuous narratives developed stronger customer trust and long-term allegiance. While the results upheld the worth of emotional engagement and brand history, the research did not locate the practices in specified branding approaches such as brand reinvention or brand refresh, nor did it examine customer satisfaction as a unique outcome. Service quality was not examined as a moderator or contributing factor either. My research mitigates this through examining the extent to which well-defined branding approaches in particular brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention impact customer satisfaction and in doing so controls for the moderating effects of the role of service quality in the Kenyan petroleum market.

Purohit et al. (2021) and Stefko et al. (2022) each undertook quantitative studies of the effects of strategic extensions like loyalty programs and premium fuel product offerings on value perception and customer satisfaction in the energy retail market. Both utilized surveys of well over 600 customers each and found that brand extensions raised satisfaction by as much as 26% where added-value services were part of the main offering. The two studies examined single tactics and did not look at whether the tactics formed part of a larger brand strategy like brand refresh, merger, or reinvention. They also did not test whether or how service quality might affect or reinforce the impact of such brand-driven interventions on satisfaction. My research addresses this shortcoming by categorizing the approaches to branding into systematic approaches brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention and examining their combined and standalone effect on customer satisfaction in Kenya's oil industry, with service quality as a moderating variable reflecting operation and experience aspects affecting customers' perceptions.

2.1.1 Brand Refresh and Customer Satisfaction

Brand refresh is a strategic move that aims at modernizing a company's image, enabling effective communication with customers, and maximizing service experience for greater brand appeal and competitiveness (Wheeler, A.2017). Brand refresh for the petroleum sector may involve visual identity refresh, digitalization, and refurbishment of service stations, all with a view to improving customer perception and engagement. Effective brand refresh enhances customer satisfaction through a modern, recognizable brand, greater service accessibility, and alignment with evolving consumer preferences.

Several studies have investigated brand refresh effects on customer satisfaction. Putri et al. (2023) tested visual rebranding and digital engagement strategies' effects on consumer perception, utilizing the Brand Equity Theory. The quantitative approach took a descriptive research design, collecting data from 600 customers of four multinational oil firms through structured questionnaires. Findings showed that companies that implemented brand refresh initiatives recorded a 30% rise in customer satisfaction through a modernized brand image, improved digital interactions, and greater customer engagement. The research, however, did not explore long-term customer loyalty following refresh, crucial for ensuring competitive superiority.

Similarly, Lockmun-Bissessur et al. (2021) tested brand refresh among energy firms, with a focus on how refreshed brand messages affect customer trust, utilizing the Corporate Image Theory. The qualitative case research approach entailed in-depth interviews with 25 marketing executives at leading oil firms. Findings indicated that a well-communicated brand refresh boosts customer trust and strengthens brand equity, but the research only took into account corporate perception rather than actual customers' responses toward brand refresh initiatives.

In Africa, PwC Africa (2023) examined how brand refresh influences consumers' preferences in Africa's fuel retail industry, using a survey-based research design and collecting data from 850 fuel consumers from Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana. Findings showed that those with service station rebranding and digital branding strategies recorded a 25% increase in positive reviews, with consumers enjoying modernized fuel stations, convenient payment, and quality fuel service experience. The study, however, did not establish whether service quality moderated brand refresh outcomes.

Locally, Gichuhi (2023) compared branding strategies for Kenya's fuel industry, with emphasis on digital transformation and customer loyalty, using a correlational research design and collecting questionnaire data from 450 customers from major urban centers. Findings showed that digital branding increased customer satisfaction by 28%, as customers liked seamless payment and loyalty schemes. The study, however, did not establish whether physical rebranding, for example, revamped service stations and logo, influenced customer satisfaction.

Owino (2022) analyzed customer dissatisfaction with Kenya's fuel sector, with brand inconsistency as a main issue, through a qualitative case study and interviews with 50 customers and 15 fuel station managers. Findings revealed customers wanted fuel stations with a modern look and distinct branding, but brand refresh's direct impact on customer satisfaction levels was not measured. These findings suggest brand refresh's significant contribution toward customer satisfaction but that its impact is dependent on ancillary factors such as service quality, digital accessibility, and operational consistency.

A brand refresh is crucial for remaining relevant and establishing brand equity within a competitive business landscape. Idris et al. (2015) examined the effects of brand refresh initiatives within the petroleum industry, utilizing a survey-based quantitative approach with 500 members from various fuel retailers. The study showed that those organizations that refreshed their visual brand, such as logo changes and station makeovers, registered a 22% increase in customer satisfaction through increased brand awareness and confidence. Similarly, Yuvaraj & Indumathi (2018) examined digital branding's influence on the fuel sector and found that brands that invested in mobile apps, digital payment platforms, and loyalty programs registered a 19% increase in positive consumer sentiment. Both studies, however, did not explore how a brand refresh influences long-term customer loyalty, thereby leaving a gap for understanding how refreshed brands retain customers over time.

2.1.2 Brand Merger and Customer Satisfaction

Brand merger is a strategic action where two or several brands come together for expanded marketplace reach, consolidation of resources, and expanded services (Kumar, 2018). Brand mergers, particularly among petroleum players, facilitate fuel retailers' operational efficiency, service extension, and consolidation of loyalty schemes. A successful merger increases customer satisfaction through ensuring service continuity, streamlining brand elements, and improving customer experience on merged platforms. Unsuccessful mergers, however, result in brand confusion, service disruptions, and inconsistent customer experience, which negatively impact satisfaction levels.

Some studies have concentrated on the relationship between brand mergers and customer satisfaction. Candra et al. (2021) examined mergers and acquisitions among international oil companies, utilizing the Brand Equity Theory to analyze the impact of merged brands on customer loyalty and trust. The study employed a qualitative case study approach, conducting in-depth interviews with 30 top managers from 10 multinational oil companies. Findings indicated that effective brand mergers increased customer trust and service consistency, but non-integrated service system businesses experienced customer dissatisfaction due to service disruptions and brand incongruity. However, the study did not quantify customer satisfaction levels following the merger, and therefore there is a lack of knowledge on the quantifiable impact of mergers on customers.

In Africa, PwC Africa (2023) examined fuel retail branding strategies, such as brand mergers, service alignment, and customer engagement. The study used a survey design, with data collected from 800 customers from Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana. Results showed that successful brand mergers raised customer satisfaction by 25%, particularly where fuel retailers maintained recognizable brand attributes after a merger. The study, however, did not examine how service quality influences customers' attitudes toward brand mergers, a gap that requires further research.

Abah and Onuha (2020) analyzed petroleum sector mergers, as well as their impact on customer retention and service efficiency, based on Corporate Image Theory. The study employed a mixed-method approach, consisting of surveys (quantitative) and interviews (qualitative) among 400 customers and 20 fuel station managers. Findings indicated that brand mergers positively affected customer perception if they maintained high service quality, but customer dissatisfaction increased if brand integration was not effectively managed. The study, however, did not investigate the moderating role played by service quality on satisfaction after a merger.

Gichuhi (2023) analyzed mergers and acquisitions in Kenya's petroleum sector, with emphasis on pricing strategy and competitiveness, through correlational research and questionnaire data from 400 customers for fuel products from Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu. The study revealed that brand mergers increased confidence among markets but had varying impacts on service consistency, with some customers struggling with adjusting to refashioned filling stations. The study, however, did not explore how integration into loyalty schemes influences customer satisfaction after a merger, which is crucial for customer retention after a merger.

Owino (2022) analyzed patterns of customer dissatisfaction among Kenya's fuel industry, with brand confusion and inconsistency of services following a merger as main issues, through a qualitative case study and interviews with 50 customers and 15 fuel station managers. The study discovered that customers struggled with adjusting to recently revamped filling stations, leading to short-term dissatisfaction. The study, however, lacked measurement of customer satisfaction levels before and after a merger, making it difficult to conclude if there is a causal impact on consumer experience as a result of mergers.

Brand mergers in the petroleum industry have a high potential for enhancing customer satisfaction, depending on whether the transition is successful. Tan and Sousa (2015) assert that effective brand integration, pricing, and service delivery models enhance customer satisfaction by 26%. Their study, with a mixed-method approach on 700 participants from recently merged petroleum companies, emphasized that consistency in branding and communication avoids consumer confusion and enhances confidence. Thorbjørnsen & Dahlén (2011) also investigated customer experience after fuel station brand changes after a merger in Nigeria and found that 40% of customers at first struggled with adjusting to new service models, leading to a short-term decline in satisfaction. The study, however, noted that companies that effectively communicated changes through marketing campaigns regained customer confidence at a faster pace. These findings highlight how strategic communication and continuity in services are essential for ensuring customer satisfaction after a merger.

2.1.3 Brand Reinvention and Customer Satisfaction

Brand reinvention is a strategic action in which a company drastically alters its brand image, business model, or service provision to address evolving market trends, technological advancements, and sustainability needs (Kapferer, Jean-Noel 2018). Unlike brand refresh, which focuses on revamping a brand's current image, brand reinvention involves an extreme shift in branding strategy, often embracing alternative energy sources, digitalization, and sustainability practices. In the context of the oil industry, brand reinvention is implemented for green energy alignment, EV charging facility development, and digital service models. Successful brand reinvention enhances customer satisfaction by meeting new consumer demands, improving service efficiency, and boosting brand confidence. Conversely, if poorly managed, brand reinvention can lead to brand confusion, customer resistance, and service inconsistencies, which negatively affect customer satisfaction.

There have been numerous studies on brand reinvention's impact on customer satisfaction. Li et al. (2022) have researched brand reinvention among multinational players within the petroleum industry, examining how companies transitioning towards renewable energy sources impact customer satisfaction, according to Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory. The study employed a descriptive research approach with a quantitative strategy, collecting data through structured questionnaires from 550 customers across four multinational petroleum companies. The findings showed that companies that invested in green branding and renewable energy sources registered a 32% increase in customer satisfaction, as consumers liked brands with a pro-environment value. The study, however, did not explore how customer demographics influence brand reinvention adoption, a topic that calls for further research.

PwC Africa (2023) examined fuel retail branding and reinvention trends, including sustainability initiatives and digitalization, through a data collection and survey-based research methodology with 800 customers from Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana. It came out that fuel brands that adopted solar-powered stations and alternative energy sources recorded a 28% increase in customer satisfaction. The research, however, did not examine customer resistance against brand reinvention, particularly among markets with high traditional fuel dependence.

Abah and Onuha (2020) analyzed brand reinvention in Nigeria's petroleum industry, digital transformation, and service innovation, from a Corporate Image Theory perspective. The study employed a mixed-methodology, with surveys and qualitative interviews with 400 customers at fuel outlets and 20 fuel station managers. Findings revealed that digital reinvention raised customer engagement but decreased overall satisfaction due to resistance among older customers towards mobile payment options. The study, however, did not investigate renewable energy adoption as a means for reinvention, which is increasingly relevant for the fuel sector.

Gichuhi (2023) analyzed branding initiatives for Kenya's petroleum sector, with emphasis on digital transformation and competitiveness, through a correlational research strategy, collecting questionnaire responses from 450 customers from Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu. Findings showed that digital transformation increased customer satisfaction levels by 28%, as customers preferred mobile payment and smart fuel outlets. The research, however, did not incorporate renewable energy projects and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure as part of brand innovation, a trend that is on the increase in Kenya's fuel sector.

Owino (2022) analyzed customers' dissatisfaction with Kenya's fuel sector, where branding inconsistency and service disruptions were main issues, using a qualitative case study strategy and interviews with 50 customers and 15 fuel station managers. The study revealed customers' aspiration for modernized fuel outlets but that resistance to innovation hindered overall satisfaction. The study, however, did not quantify customers' satisfaction levels before and after brand reinvention, leaving a gap for understanding quantifiable impacts of reinvention efforts.

Brand reinvention is a crucial response strategy for oil retailers seeking to address industry shifts, such as sustainability initiatives and digitalization. Idris et al. (2015) conducted a survey of global fuel retailers that have been reinventing themselves, using the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, and found that those that have embraced renewable energy alternatives, such as biofuel and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, recorded a 31% increase in customer satisfaction because of their commitment to environmental sustainability. Similarly, a study conducted research on digital reinvention among Kenya's petroleum industry and found that oil retailers adopting AI-based fuel management systems and cashless payment methods recorded a 25% rise in customer satisfaction. However, none of the studies discussed consumer resistance to brand reinvention, particularly where there is high dependence on traditional fuel services, creating a research gap.

2.1.4 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

How well a company provides services is a critical factor in the success of its branding strategies in the petroleum industry. Rather than being a direct cause of customer satisfaction, service quality increases or decreases the success of branding actions such as brand refresh, mergers and reinvention. Good service, marked by being reliable, responsive and trustworthy, reinforces branding efforts, but poor service weakens it and makes customers less satisfied (Singh et al. 2023).

Several studies have been conducted on service quality and customer satisfaction across the fuel retail industry. Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed the SERVQUAL model, which measures service quality on five factors: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. It has widely been applied across different sectors, including fuel retail, to quantify how service quality influences customers' perception. Lim et al. (2020) utilized the Expectation-Confirmation Theory, and descriptive research design with a quantitative approach, with data gathered through structured questionnaires from 500 customers at fuel outlets. Results indicated that organizations with better service consistency, faster fueling, and well-maintained facilities had a 27% increased rate of customer satisfaction. The study, however, did not examine how service quality supports branding strategies, a core gap in understanding customer experience across the petroleum industry.

PwC Africa (2023) conducted a fuel retail service quality study, exploring customers' perception of reliability and responsiveness, through a data collection and research design based on surveys for 800 customers from Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana. Findings showed that fuel retailers with proactive service initiatives, such as real-time monitoring of fuel availability and digital payments, raised customers' satisfaction level by 30%. The contribution of service quality, however, on brand trust and loyalty, which are vital drivers for long-run customer relationships, was not tested through this research.

Abah and Onuha (2020) analyzed service quality in Nigeria's petroleum industry, using Corporate Image Theory to analyze how service excellence affects brand perception. The study used a mixed-method approach, where surveys and qualitative interviews with 400 customers and 20 fuel station managers were conducted. The outcomes indicated that service quality is a primary driver for customer satisfaction, as customers value brands that are congruent with service delivery and professionalism among workers. The study, however, did not analyze how service quality mediates branding strategies for fuel industry players, with a gap still existing on how branding and service excellence can be integrated by organizations.

Gichuhi (2023) investigated customer satisfaction among customers of Kenya's petroleum sector, with emphasis on digital integration and service delivery efficiency, through correlational research design and collection of responses from 450 customers from major towns through a questionnaire. The study revealed that fuel outlets with digital payment and shorter waiting time at service recorded a 26% rise in customer satisfaction (Total Energies, 2021). The study, however, did not investigate employee engagement and physical station refurbishment as determinants of perception of service quality, which are vital for Kenya's fuel sector.

Owino (2022) analyzed customer dissatisfaction with Kenya's fuel industry, with variable service standards as a main issue, through a qualitative case study and interviews with 50 customers and 15 fuel station managers. Findings showed that customers complained about varying service at different outlets for a specific brand, leading to a reduction in brand confidence. The influence of variable service quality on total customer satisfaction, however, was not measured, and therefore, one cannot ascertain the influence of service improvements.

Service quality is a crucial component of customer satisfaction for the petroleum industry, affecting repeat business and long-term brand loyalty. Parasuraman et al. (1988) applied the SERVQUAL model to analyze factors for fuel retail service quality and found that responsiveness and reliability most highly correlated with customer satisfaction, with those performing well on these dimensions having a 29% higher customer retention rate. Similarly, Mgiba & Madela (2020) tested service quality perceptions for fuel retail in Africa, conducting a 600-subject customer survey across diverse countries. Their findings showed that clean facilities, prompt service, and friendly staff yielded a 27% increase in positive customer experience. Neither, however, tested how service quality interacts with branding strategies, providing a gap for understanding how integrated branding and service quality initiatives affect overall satisfaction.

Table 1: Summary of Research Gaps

Author	Year	Purpose of the Study	Methodology	Findings	Research Gaps (Type)	Relevance
Lim et al.	2020	Studied impact of branding (digital & sustainability) on satisfaction	Quantitative; 500 global customers	Branding improved satisfaction by 24%	Conceptual: Ignored brand mergers and reinvention	Examines full branding strategies (refresh, merger, reinvention) on satisfaction
Candra et al.	2021	Analyzed mergers and branding in oil firms	Qualitative; Interviews with 30 managers	Good mergers increased trust	Methodological: Did not quantify satisfaction impact; Theoretical: No service quality considered	Quantifies merger effects on satisfaction, moderated by service quality
PwC Africa	2023	Assessed branding strategies in African fuel sector	Quantitative; 800 customers	Digital branding improved satisfaction by 30%	Conceptual: Omitted reinvention & mergers; Theoretical: Lacked SERVQUAL moderation	Studies all 3 branding types with SERVQUAL as moderator in Kenya
Abah & Onuha	2020	Explored branding-loyalty link in petroleum sector	Mixed-methods; 370 respondents	Branding enhanced loyalty	Conceptual: Ignored satisfaction as precursor to loyalty	Measures satisfaction as branding outcome before loyalty in Kenya
Li et al.	2022	Investigated brand reinvention via sustainability	Quantitative; 550 global customers	Green branding improved satisfaction	Empirical (contextual): Did not address customer resistance or emerging markets; Theoretical: Missed service quality moderation	Analyzes reinvention in Kenya with service quality as moderator
Gichuhi	2023	Studied digital branding and pricing in Kenya	Correlational; 400 urban customers	Digital tools increased satisfaction by 28%	Conceptual: Focused only on pricing; Methodological: Did not test broader strategies or SERVQUAL	Tests all branding strategies with RATER framework as moderator
Owino	2022	Explored dissatisfaction in Kenya's fuel sector	Qualitative; 50 customers, 15 managers	Inconsistent branding caused dissatisfaction	Methodological: No quantitative testing; Theoretical: Did not measure SERVQUAL impact	Quantifies branding effects on satisfaction using SERVQUAL

Putri et al.	2023	Examined brand refresh effects	Quantitative; 600 customers; Brand Equity Theory	Refresh increased satisfaction by 30%	Conceptual: Ignored loyalty or service moderation	Studies brand refresh's influence with SERVQUAL as moderator
Lockmun-Bissessur et al.	2021	Studied brand refresh on customer trust	Qualitative; 25 executives	Refresh improved trust	Empirical (contextual): Did not include customers; Theoretical: Lacked satisfaction and service moderation	Measures refresh's customer-side satisfaction and moderation via service quality
Idris et al.	2015	Evaluated brand refresh and equity	Quantitative; 500 global customers	Visual refresh improved confidence	Conceptual: Did not explore loyalty or satisfaction linkage	Includes loyalty and satisfaction outcomes under brand refresh in Kenya
Yuvaraj & Indumathi	2018	Explored digital branding tools	Quantitative	Apps increased engagement	Conceptual: Did not analyze service quality or satisfaction	Tests satisfaction effects of digital branding under refresh strategy
Parasuraman et al.	1988	Developed SERVQUAL model	Theoretical	Defined RATER dimensions	Theoretical: Didn't apply to branding context	Applies SERVQUAL as a moderator in branding–satisfaction link
McKinsey	2023	Explored digital personalization in fuel retail	Quantitative; 1,200 global customers	Digital convenience improved satisfaction	Theoretical: Didn't integrate brand type or service quality	Evaluates digital branding as part of reinvention in Kenya with SERVQUAL
Cui et al.	2024	Investigated emotional branding in price-sensitive markets	Quantitative; 700 customers	Emotional branding increased loyalty	Conceptual: Did not classify within strategic branding types	Analyzes emotive tactics under refresh/reinvention in Kenya's oil industry

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The research uses three linked theories: Brand Equity Theory, SERVQUAL Model and Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT). All of this shows that when branding strategies (refresh, merger and reinvention) change, customer satisfaction can change and service quality plays a role in shaping their relationship. Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy and TotalEnergies all use different marketing and service ideas, as you can see when you visit one of their three major oil marketing companies in Kenya. These theories make it possible to study how the oil sector's consumer satisfaction improves as a result of their branding strategies. The study is anchored on Brand Equity Theory.

2.2.1 Brand Equity Theory

Brand Equity Theory, which was created by David A. Aaker in 1991, focuses on the fact that a brand does not only enhance the functional value of a product or service but also adds an additional value to the service or product. Aaker referred to brand equity as a collection of assets and liabilities associated with the name and symbol of a brand which contributes or removes to the value added to both the customers and the firm. He came up with five major categories, which contain ten dimensions, that culminate strength of a brand. These are brand loyalty (customer satisfaction, switching costs and commitment), brand recognition (image, personality and organizational reputation) on the one hand, and brand awareness (recognition, recall) as well as perceived quality (judgment of overall excellence) on the other hand.

The theory also argues that the combination of these dimensions determines consumer perceptions and consumer behavior so that firms are able to achieve price premiums, building loyalty and competitive advantage. Practically, companies adopt the framework by Aaker to manage brand-building, including positioning, mergers, extensions, and reinventions that increase customer trust and preference. The key strength of the theory is that it is comprehensive as it incorporates both tangible and intangible elements of brand value. Nevertheless, it may be hard to empirically measure and its first formulation fails to fully capture the rapidly changing landscape of digital marketing where brand interaction is less tangible.

The relevance of the theory to the present study is immense, as the theory forms the basis of the relationship between brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention and customer satisfaction. It intimates that the strategies increase brand loyalty, awareness, and perceived a quality, which in the long-term increases levels of satisfaction. The Aaker model is indispensable in the marketing field to comprehend the role of a strong branding in promoting long term customer relationship. Here, it forms the basis of correlating the branding tactics to customer satisfaction in the Kenyan oil sector especially among Vivo Energy, Rubis Energy, and TotalEnergies.

2.2.2 SERVQUAL Model (RATER Framework)

The SERVQUAL Model is the framework that was created by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1988 in order to measure service quality by creating a gap between the customer expectations and their perception of actual service performance. This model has a structure that is based on five important dimensions, which are represented by the acronym RATER: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness.

Reliability means the capability to provide promised services with care and precision, whereas Assurance reflects on the knowledge, courtesy and capability of employees to stimulate the trust of customers. Tangibles refers to the physical structures, machinery and looks of the staff that determine initial perceptions of quality. Empathy is associated with caring individual attention to the customers, and Responsiveness is an inclination to assist the customers and help them receive quick service.

The main idea of the model is the reduction of the difference between anticipated and perceived service serves to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Practically, organizations use SERVQUAL to establish the areas of service weakness, direct training programs, and set standards of delivering services. The beauty of it is that it can be easily employed in any industry and be used as a clear diagnostic instrument to evaluate the quality of the services. Nevertheless, it has been criticized because the model is subjective and cannot quite adapt to technology-driven service environments where a customer may be touching a screen instead of a physical object.

The SERVQUAL Model is explicitly applicable to this research because it informs the moderating variable, which is the quality of service, in the investigation of the extent to which the branding strategies affect the customer satisfaction level in the Kenyan oil sector. Using the dimensions of SERVQUAL, the study captures the reinforcement of a branding initiative like brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention through the service delivery practices. The model emphasizes in marketing that uniform, faithful, and sympathetic service improves customer trust and satisfaction thus bolstering brand performance in general.

2.2.3 Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT)

Richard L. Oliver came up with the Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) in 1980 to describe the way customer satisfaction and post-purchase behavior are built. According to the theory, consumers form expectations prior to buying a service or product then comparing their experiences with the expectations formed. The degree of satisfaction would be reached at when perceived performance is met or surpassed and dissatisfaction would be reached at when performance is not met.

The main postulate of ECT is that satisfaction is an aspect based on expectation and perceived performance and it has a direct impact on customer loyalty and repurchase intentions. Practically, the theory is highly applied in marketing, service management and consumer behavior studies to determine customer perceptions and future behavioral patterns in retention and advocacy.

A strength of ECT is that it is very practical in the measurement of the satisfaction as it is very clear in establishing the relationship between the pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase reviews. Its limitation, however is that it assumes that the expectations of customers remain constant and are fully formed prior to consumption which is not the case in dynamic markets where consumption constantly influences their expectations.

Compared to the present research, ECT forms the conceptual basis on how branding techniques such as brand refresh, brand merger and brand reinvention impact customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya. The more satisfied the customers are by their perceptions of a company, whether they feel that the company branding efforts have reached or managed to surpass their expectations in terms of providing better service stations, modernized identities or better experiences that they had, the more they are satisfied and more loyal they are towards it. Under this research, it is linked directly to the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of branding strategies moderated by the quality of service in generating positive customer perception and customer satisfaction among the customers of Vivo Energy, Rubis Energy, and TotalEnergies.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

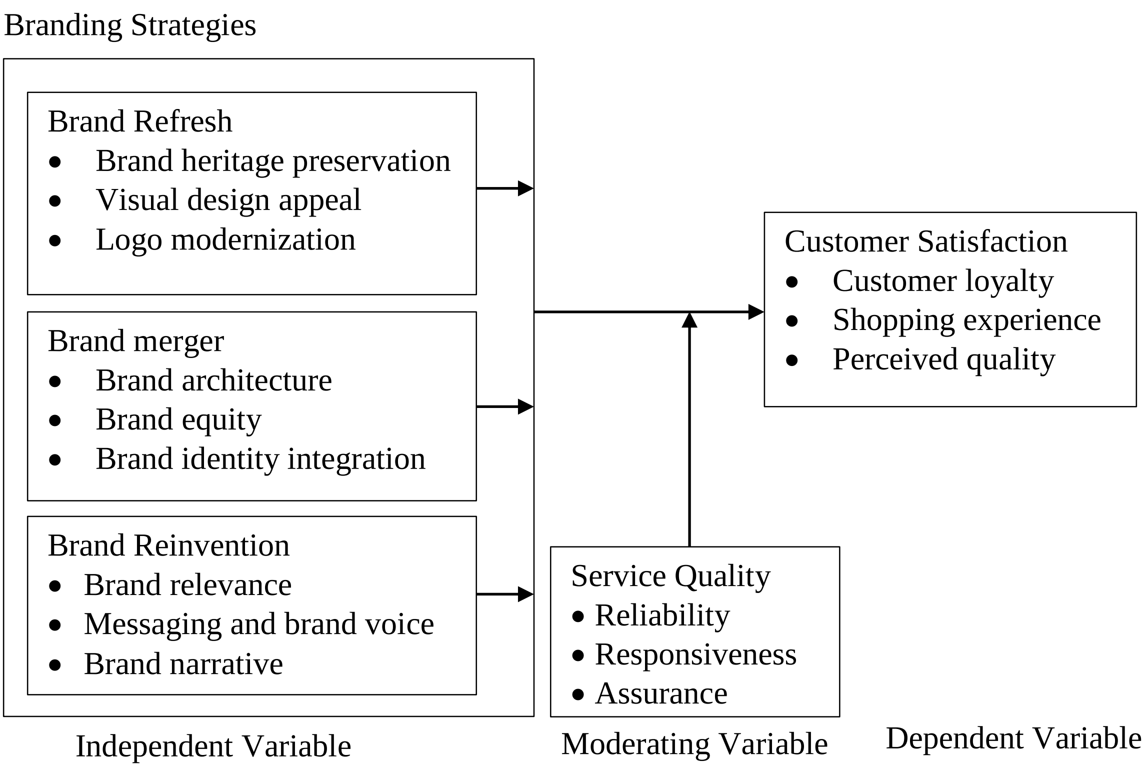

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Brand Refresh involves updating a brand's visual identity, messaging, or positioning without changing its fundamental nature. Brand Merger is the combination of two or more brands into one brand, typically after acquisitions, to create one market presence. Brand Reinvention involves a complete transformation of a brand, including its identity, values, and market position, to stay relevant or regain competitive advantage. Service Quality is the measure of the perceived level of service delivery, based on factors such as reliability, responsiveness, and customer expectations. Customer Satisfaction is the degree to which customers feel their expectations are being met or exceeded by a brand's products or services.

Table 2: Operationalization of Study Variables

Type of Variable	Name of Variable	Indicator
Independent Variable	Brand Refresh	Brand heritage preservation Visual design appeal Logo modernization
Independent Variable	Brand Merger	Brand architecture Brand equity Brand identity integration
Independent Variable	Brand Reinvention	Brand relevance Messaging and brand voice Brand narrative
Moderating Variable	Service Quality	Reliability Assurance Responsiveness
Dependent Variable	Customer Satisfaction	Customer loyalty Shopping experience Perceived quality

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Location of the Study

The study will be conducted across Kenya, in accordance with the competitive and dynamic nature of the oil industry in the country. Some of the biggest fuel retailers in Kenya include Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and Total Energies, with extensive chains of retail service stations and fuel depots distributed around the country. This wide coverage makes Kenya the ideal setting for studying branding strategies in the oil industry and their impact on customer satisfaction. The national coverage is necessary to derive a large representative sample that considers numerous customer interactions and branding activities across different locations in the country. With the scope of the oil industry at a national scale, the research remains relevant, easy to access, and the ability to draw generalized inferences across Kenya's oil industry.

3.2 Research Design

McCombes (2021) defines research design as a deliberate structure of testing research questions on the basis of empirical evidence. In this study, an explanatory research design was embraced because the aim of the study was to establish relationships between variables of cause and effect. The design was selected due to the fact that the study was to investigate the effect of various branding strategies, in this case brand refresh, brand merger and brand reinvention, on customer satisfaction in the oil industry of Kenya. This explanatory design helped the researcher to provide more than description because he established the nature and direction of relationships among these variables. Moreover, the study was cross-sectional in that it entailed the gathering of information on the station managers at one particular time to get a picture of the relationship between branding strategies and customer satisfaction. This design was found to be appropriate because it allows analysis of the existing associations in the industry, and it is time and cost effective.

3.3 Population of the Study

This study had the target population of the station managers of Rubis Energy Kenya, Vivo Energy Kenya and TotalEnergies marketing Kenya. These three oil marketing companies were identified due to the fact that they constitute the leading multinational players in the downstream petroleum industry in Kenya and have a majority of the branded service stations in Kenya. The three companies operate about 835 retail fuel stations around the country as reported by the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA, 2024) and their individual companies in the latest annual reports: Rubis Energy (270 stations), Vivo Energy (280 stations), and TotalEnergies (285 stations). The station manager, who oversees the day-to-day operations, customer relations, and the adherence to brand and service standards of a particular service station are in place. Thus the unit of analysis in this study was the station manager with the population size (N) being 835 managers which is the total number of operational stations as of 2024.The population would be suitable in the research since the station managers will be directly engaged in the implementation of branding strategies, management of customer experiences, and quality of service delivery at the retail level, which will meet the aims of the study regarding branding and customer satisfaction.

Table 3: Study Population

Company	VivoEnergy Kenya	TotalEnergies Marketing Kenya	Rubis Energy Kenya	Total
Total Retail Stations	315	220	300	835

Source: Company website.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The research design used stratified random sampling method to have equal representation of the station managers of the three major oil marketing corporations in Kenya, such as Rubis Energy Kenya, Vivo Energy Kenya, and TotalEnergies Marketing Kenya. The company ownership was used to define the strata and proportionate random sampling was performed in every stratum. The strategy was appropriate as it enabled one to include a wide range of operational conditions and branding strategies among firms of different sizes and market share.

On the basis of the information provided by the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA, 2024), as well as the annual reports issued by the companies, it can be said that the number of active fuel retail stations was approximately 835 and they were distributed as follows: Rubis Energy (270 stations), Vivo Energy (280 stations), and TotalEnergies (285 stations). These stations are located in the 47 counties of Kenya with concentrated populations in the large urban and peri-urban centers like Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Eldoret and Thika. The wide geographic coverage helped to include the stations throughout the country, instead of implementing them in Nairobi alone, to make sure that the outcomes were regional and made them more likely to be generalized.

For the sample size calculation using Yamane's formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{835}{1 + 835(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{835}{1 + 835(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{835}{3.0875)}$$

$$n = 270.45$$

Therefore, the required sample size is 270 (rounded to the nearest whole number).
For the proportionate stratified random sampling:
Vivo Energy Kenya:

$$n_1 = \left(\frac{N_1}{N}\right) \times n$$

$$n_1 = \left(\frac{315}{835}\right) \times 270$$

$$n_1 = 0.377 \times 270$$

$$n_1 = 101.86$$

≈ 102 retail stations

Total Energies Kenya:

$$n_2 = \left(\frac{N_2}{N}\right) \times n$$

$$n_2 = \left(\frac{220}{835}\right) \times 270$$

$$n_2 = 0.263 \times 270$$

$$n_2 = 71.14$$

$$\approx 71 \text{ retail stations}$$

Rubis Energy Kenya:

$$n_3 = \left(\frac{N_2}{N}\right) \times n$$

$$n_3 = \left(\frac{300}{835}\right) \times 270$$

$$n_3 = 0.359 \times 270$$

$$n_3 = 97.01$$

$$\approx 97 \text{ retail stations}$$

Total sample: 102 + 71 + 97 = 270 retail stations

Table 4: Sampling Frame

Company	Total Retail Stations	Proportional Sample Size
Vivo Energy Kenya	315	102
TotalEnergies Kenya	220	71
Rubis Energy Kenya	300	97
Total	835	270

Source: Researcher, (2025)

3.5 Research Instruments

The primary data was gathered by using a structured self-administered questionnaire which was administered to the station managers via drop-and-pick method. The chosen questionnaire offered the needed uniformity of data collection, the ability of the respondents to respond to the same questions in the same order, and an effective and efficient way to collect data on a geographically dispersed population (Taherdoost, 2016).

The questionnaire was based on the conceptual framework of the study and was based on the previously tested tools. It consisted of four key sections that were consistent with the study objectives and variables. The former segment collected demographic data of the station managers. The second part discussed the independent variable, which is branding strategies, which were further split into brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention. Brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention items were based on Maree, Halim, and Hamdy (2024), Ali, Arshad, and Ahmed (2022), and Rahman and Kalam (2021) respectively. The moderating variable was a measure of the quality of service and was captured in the third section and measured in terms of five dimensions known as SERVQUAL and the following dimensions: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988). The last part concerned the dependent variable, customer satisfaction, and was based on Expectation Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980) and Brand Equity Theory (Keller, 1993).

Each of the items was rated based on the Likert scale with 5 points with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. A pilot study was done on 27 station managers (10% of the sample) before the main data was collected to check on the clarity and reliability. To achieve content validity, the input of the academic supervisors and industrial professionals was taken into account, and the reliability was assured by the coefficients of Cronbach above 0.7 (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Main survey was conducted with the refined questionnaire to obtain the correct data on the branding strategies, quality of services, as well as customer satisfaction in the oil marketing industry in Kenya.

3.6 Pilot Study

According to Muasya and Mulwa (2023), pilot researches allow researchers to test research methods and tools in order to improve the reliability and validity of the main study's collected data. It identifies weaknesses, prompting proper and necessary adjustments of research tools. The findings of the pilot study finalized the research design before the actual full-scale study.

The pilot study was the initial attempt at establishing the effect of branding strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya, specifically Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and Total Energies. The study aimed to establish the potential weak areas in the measures, operationalize predictor variables, and isolate any ambiguously worded questions in the research instrument.

The pilot study was conducted in Ola energy Kenya and Be Energy Limited since they are among the big companies in Kenya. It helped identify any logistical problems in the research process. It assessed if research methods and instruments selected were suitable. Lucas and Brent Donnellan (2012) say a pre-test sample should range from 1% to 10% of the total sample size. Given the sample size for the actual study will be 270 respondents, the pilot study consisted of 27 station managers, or 10% of the sample size.

3.6.1 Validity of the Instruments

To guarantee the integrity of the research instrument, the researcher shall emphasize determining its validity with an eye on its content and construct validity. Content validity, in terms of determining that the items in the questionnaire cover all aspects of the constructs of customer satisfaction and branding strategies, will be tested rigorously (Lim, 2024). This was done through expert appraisal by university supervisors and specialists in the field of oil marketing, whose contributions were applied in fine-tuning the instrument and ensuring its comprehensiveness (Khidhir & Rassul, 2023). In complementarity, construct validity was tested in order to determine whether the questionnaire was measuring the expected theoretical constructs (Roy et al., 2023). This entailed investigating the relationships between the responses on the questionnaire and theoretically related constructs. Utilizing expert appraisals as well as potential pilot testing further improved both the content and construct validity by determining and rectifying any ambiguity or discrepancies, and ultimately ensuring that the instrument was capable of measuring the effect of branding strategies on customer satisfaction (Anggraini et al., 2023).

3.6.2 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability can be achieved by the use of the same testing procedures, testing a diverse sample of respondents, and having a high number of similar items in a measuring instrument. The positivist paradigm, according to Elliott et al. (2020), requires strict standards for objectivity and quality of research outcomes, necessitating proof that the findings apply to real-world contexts.

For this study, reliability was ascertained by using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha is a typical internal consistency check which computes the correlation between responses within an assessment tool (Kotter, 2012). Reliability was tested and the result obtained was 0.86. Since the acceptable threshold is 0.7, it indicated that instruments were highly reliable. Pilot study results were analyzed to determine the reliability coefficient in order to confirm if the questionnaire had high internal consistency before large-scale data collection. This approach aligns with the positivist paradigm which emphasizes objectivity and replicability. It ensured that findings are reliable and applicable in the real-world context.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Data was conducted through self-administered questionnaires which were given to station managers of the sampled oil marketing companies. The questionnaires were formulated in such a way that they could determine branding strategies, service quality and customer satisfaction in a systematic and consistent way. The questionnaires were to be completed within two days, and in exceptional cases within a time limit of five days to boost the response rate. All data collection was done in a span of two weeks, and then the questionnaires that were filled were tabulated, coded and ready to be analyzed. This method enabled consistency in data gathering and gave the time to the respondents to give proper and considerate feedback.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

Both inferential and descriptive data analysis were used in the research. Descriptive statistics, including mean, frequency, and standard deviation, were used to analyze the effect of each branding strategy on customer satisfaction. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, were used to determine the general effect of branding strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil sector in Kenya. Data that was analyzed was presented in tables and figures to facilitate interpretation and comparison of results.

3.9 Model Specification

A simple linear regression model and a multiple regression model were used in predicting the coefficients of the predictor variables versus the dependent variable. The models were used in examining the effects of branding strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

The models were as follows:

Bivariate Models

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \varepsilon_i$

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 x_2 + \varepsilon_i$

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_3 x_3 + \varepsilon_i$

Multivariate Regression Model

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \varepsilon_i$

Moderated Multivariate Regression Model

$Y = \beta_0 + \Sigma\beta_i x_i + \beta_4 Z + \Sigma\beta_i x_i.Z + \varepsilon_i$

Z-Moderator (Service Quality)

x_i-x_1, x_2, x_3.

Where:

- Y = Customer Satisfaction
- X_1 = Brand refresh
- X_2 = Brand merger
- X_3 = Brand reinvention
- Z = Moderator (Service Quality)
- β_0 = Intercept
- β_i = Coefficients representing the sensitivity of the dependent variable (Y) to changes in the predictor variables
- ε = Error term, accounting for variations not explained by the predictor variables

3.10 Diagnostic Tests

To ensure that the multiple and moderated regression models used in this study were appropriate and reliable, several diagnostic tests were conducted. These tests checked whether the data met the main assumptions behind linear regression analysis. The specific tests that were applied are the normality test, multicollinearity test, heteroscedasticity test, and linearity test. Each test is discussed below.

3.10.1 Normality Test

The normality test evaluated whether the residuals (errors) from the regression models are normally distributed. This assumption is crucial because it affects the validity of significance testing, such as the t-test and F-test, in regression analysis. In this study, normality was assessed using both statistical and graphical methods. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used due to its effectiveness in identifying departures from normality in small to moderate sample sizes.

3.10.2 Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity occurs when two or more independent variables are highly correlated, leading to unreliable and unstable estimates of regression coefficients. Since this study involved three branding strategies brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention it was important to ensure they were not too correlated.

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance were determined to check the intercorrelations amongst the independent variables. Gujarati (2004) determined that there was no multicollinearity when values of VIF were less than 10 and tolerance values greater than 0.1.

As noted by Lim (2020), studies in the petroleum sector that involve multiple strategic variables often face collinearity if the variables are conceptually related or gathered from similar sources. Therefore, assessing and correcting multicollinearity was crucial to maintaining the integrity of the model.

3.10.3 Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity happens when the variance of the residuals is not consistent across the values of the independent variables. When this assumption is not met, the standard errors of regression estimates become biased, leading to unreliable hypothesis testing.

In this study, heteroscedasticity was tested using both the Breusch-Pagan test and a visual examination of scatterplots of standardized residuals versus fitted (predicted) values. The Breusch-Pagan test is preferred for its ability to detect non-constant error variance across different predictors.

According to Wanjiru and Atieno (2022), heteroscedasticity is a common problem in consumer satisfaction studies, especially when responses come from diverse service stations across the country. Addressing this issue helps ensure valid statistical inferences.

3.10.4 Linearity Test

The assumption of linearity states that there should be a straight-line relationship between the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) and each independent variable (branding strategies). If this assumption is violated, it may lead to a poor fit of the model and incorrect relationship estimates between variables.

Scatter plots were plotted in order to determine whether the variables between the independent variables (brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention) and the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) were linear. The appropriateness of the regression analysis was supported using a straight pattern.

Mugambi and Mwangi (2021) argue that failing to establish linear relationships in branding studies could lead to underestimating effects, especially when variables like brand reinvention may follow curvilinear or threshold effects in their influence on customer satisfaction. Therefore, careful examination and correction of non-linearity will be performed.

Table 5: Data Analysis Matrix

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Test Statistic
H_{01}: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand refresh and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.	Brand Refresh	Customer Satisfaction	T- test
H_{02}: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand reinvention and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.	Brand Reinvention	Customer Satisfaction	T- test
H_{03}: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand merger and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.	Brand Merger	Customer Satisfaction	T- test
H_{04}: There is no statistically significant moderating effect of service quality on the relationship between branding strategies and customer satisfaction.	Service Quality (Moderator)	Customer Satisfaction	T-test

The F-test will be used to test the overall significance of the model at a 5% level of significance.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are the moral principles and rules that govern the conduct of researchers in their research. All researchers have the responsibility of upholding ethics throughout the research. In this study, the researcher ensured that all the information provided by respondents was treated as confidential and would not be disclosed to any unauthorized individual or third party. Respondents were assured of anonymity. To ensure that the information collected is utilized for academic use alone, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the university and a research permit from NACOSTI. The study proposal was also submitted to the ethics committee and the postgraduate board to determine that it met the required ethical standards prior to the commencement of data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, interprets and discusses the data collected and looks at the influence of the strategies taken on the aspect of branding on the customer satisfaction of the oil industry in Kenya and how service quality comes in as a moderator. Station managers of Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy and TotalEnergies were used to retrieve the data through structured questionnaires.

4.2 Response Rate

The section provides the count of respondents to the questionnaire of the station managers among the sampled respondents in the three oil marketing organizations, Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies.

Table 6: Response Rate

	Frequency	Percentage
Issued questionnaires	270	100%
Answered questionnaires	211	78.15%
Unanswered questionnaires	59	21.85%

Source: Researcher, (2025)

The overall percentage of response to the study was 78.15% which is satisfactory to analysis. The 78.15 percent overall response percentage in this research depicts a high rate of participation by the station managers and it shows the interest level associated with the topic to their branding and service quality activities in their day to day running of the establishment. The response rate also contributes to an increase in the reliability, validity and generalizability of the research results. As reference materials indicate, Richardson (2005, as cited in Luo, 2020), any response rate that is 60 percent or more is acceptable when conducting an academic study.

4.3 Pilot Findings

A pilot study was conducted to test the content validity and reliability of the research instruments before the actual data collection was done. The pilot included 27 station managers of Ola Energy and Be Energy Limited that were not included in the final study sample. The pilot aimed to determine whether there were any ambiguities in the questionnaire, whether the items were consistent, and whether the questionnaire would generate consistent results in the actual study.

The test of reliability was conducted through Cronbach Alpha coefficient of internal consistency. George and Mallery (2003) propose a value of over 0.70 as an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha, and anything nearer to 1.0 is an excellent indicator of reliability.

Table 7: Reliability Test Results

Section	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Brand Refresh	0.84	6
Brand Merger	0.87	6
Brand Reinvention	0.86	6
Service Quality (SERVQUAL)	0.85	6
Customer Satisfaction	0.88	6
Overall	0.86	30

Source: Researcher, (2025)

In Table 7, the Cronbach's Alpha values of all questionnaire sections are beyond 0.80, which corresponds to a strong level of internal consistency. The reliability coefficient of this instrument was determined to be 0.86, which is good internal consistency and justifies its application in the main study. Other studies in Kenya have established similar standards such as a (2023) study of international air travelers achieved Cronbach's alpha of 0.924 and found that the instrument was very reliable in measuring service quality, customer interaction and satisfaction. There was no significant need to alter the wording or format of the questionnaire questions, and the device was approved to be distributed to respondents.

4.4 Demographic Characteristics

In this section, demographic profiles are given of station managers participating in the study. The demographic information obtained was the gender of the respondents, number of years of service, and the affiliation of the company. To interpret the results within the background of the respondents, it is necessary to understand these attributes and it has information concerning the diversity and representativeness of the sample.

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used in analyzing the demographic variables. This fact is useful in determining the validity of the data because it indicates that a wide-spread variety was represented when it comes to the station managers of the three most significant oil marketing companies.

4.4.1 Gender of Respondents

This was done by checking the gender of the station managers to establish the extent of the gender representation in the oil marketing firms. Gender diversity plays a significant role when trying to understand the perspective of men and women as employees.

Table 8: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	112	53.1%
Female	99	46.9%
Total	211	100.0%

Source: Researcher, (2025)

In table 8 the gender distribution of the respondent is provided. Among the total of 211 station managers that took part in the study, 112 (53.1%) were males, whereas 99 (46.9 %) were females. This almost equal balance implies that the gender representation in the study was evenly represented which implies that both the male and female considerations in the study were sufficiently recorded. This low difference between the sex of the respondents will inform that there is enough inclusion of the gender issue in managerial positions of the oil marketing companies chosen. The results thus validate the data and allow one to draw general claims on the effect of gender inclusivity in the oil industry in Kenya.

4.4.2 Years of Service of Respondents

The research aimed at identifying the duration that the respondents have served in their respective oil marketing firms. A long period of employment indicates the degree of experience, branding-related experience, and the understanding of the service delivery system, which can play a role in determination of customer satisfaction and further service delivery.

Table 9: Years of Service

Years of Service	Frequency	Percent
0 to 4 years	108	51.2%
5 to 9 years	88	41.7%
10 to 14 years	15	7.1%
Total	211	100.0%

Source: Researcher, (2025)

Most respondents (51.2%) were within 0 to 4 years in the organizations as shown in Table 9, which means that the workforce is relatively young or it was promoted to the management roles only recently. This may be an indication of tightened hiring, internal transfers or movement of talents between stations.

The second-biggest group (41.7%) consisted people who had experience of 5-9 years as station managers, which most certainly translates into greater knowledge on operations and experience with the company branding requirements, customer service procedures and product quality.

This is because only 7.1 percent of the respondents served more than 10 years, which means long service in the same station as a manager is not a common phenomenon possibly because of subsequent career advancement or change, job transfer or restructuring.

4.5 Diagnostics Results

This section gives the diagnostic tests that were done to ascertain the validity and reliability of the regression analysis. The tests include linearity, heteroscedasticity multicollinearity and normality. Diagnostic results give confidence that the correlation and regression analyses that follow will produce strong and valid results by ensuring that the data met these statistical criteria.

4.5.1 Test for Linearity

In order to ensure that the assumption of linearity was fulfilled, the scatter plots were drawn to study the relationship between the independent (Brand refresh, Brand Merger and Brand Reinvention) and the dependent variable (Customer Satisfaction). To observe whether the relationships were more linear rather than curved, each of the predictor variables was plotted against the standardized residuals.

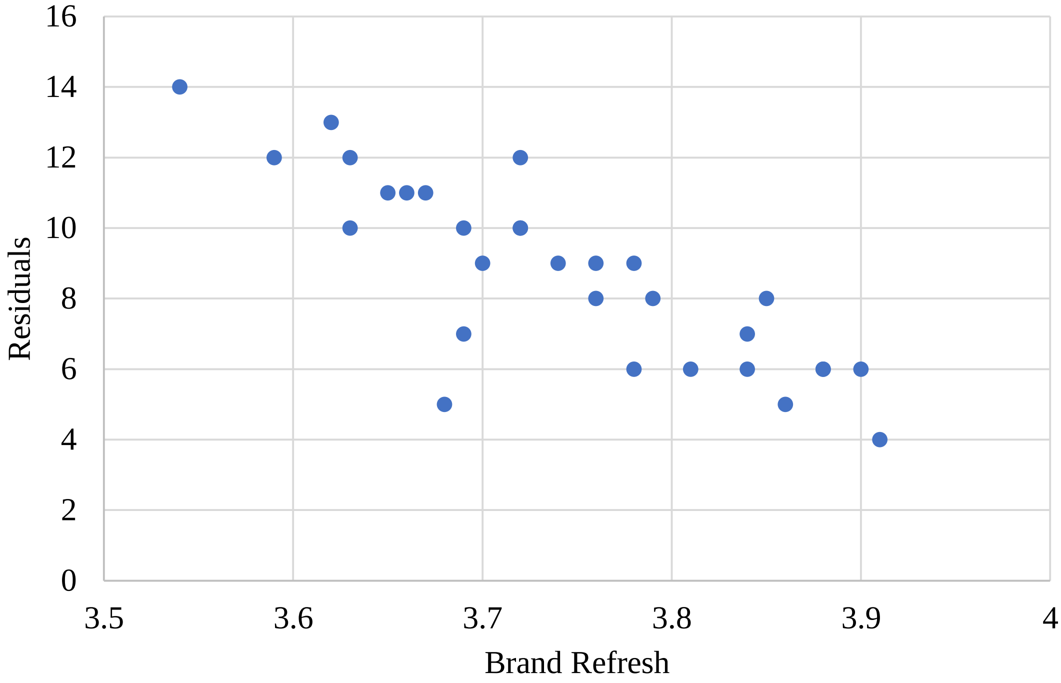

Figure 2: Brand Refresh vs. Residuals
Source: Researcher, (2025)

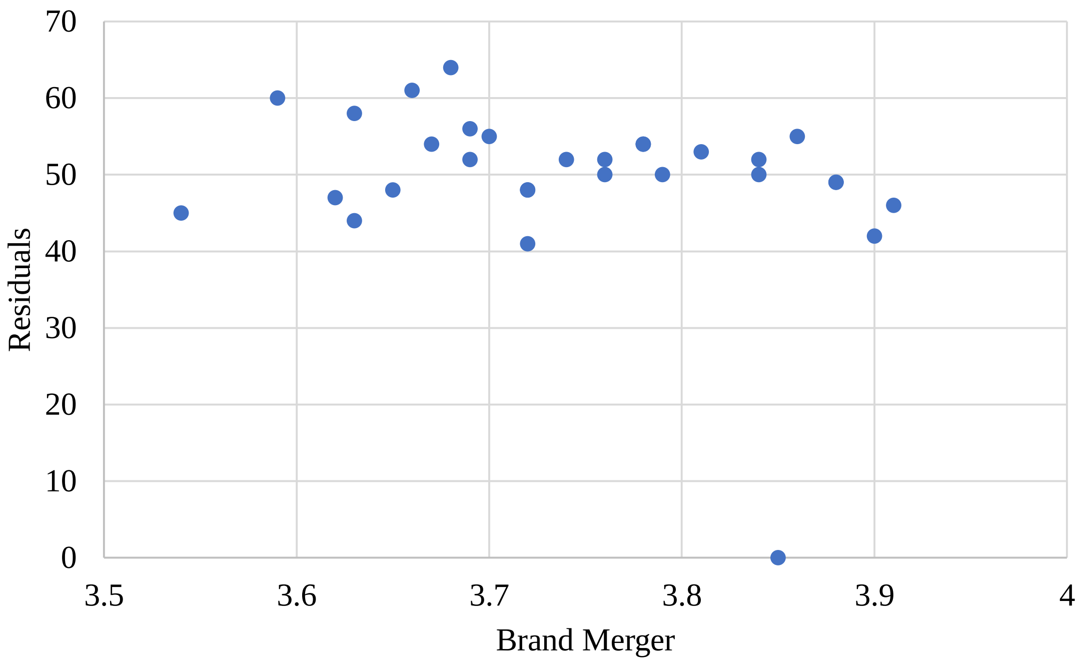

Figure 3: Brand Merger vs. Residuals
Source: Researcher, (2025)

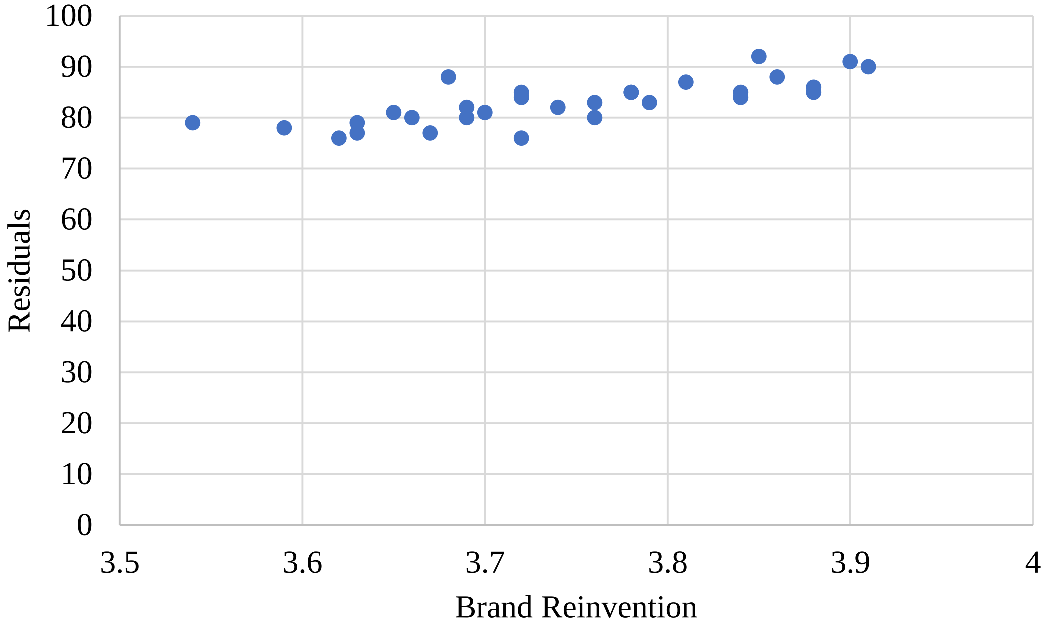

Figure 4: Brand Reinvention vs. Residuals
Source: Researcher, (2025)

In order to evaluate the assumption of homoscedasticity (renowned variance of residuals), standardized residuals across levels of predicted value scatter plots were calculated on each of the branding strategies: Brand Refresh, Brand Merger, Brand Reinvention, and the moderator Service Quality.

4.5.2 Heteroscedasticity

A scatter plot of standardized residuals against predicted values across each branding strategy, Brand Refresh, Brand Merger, Brand Reinvention, and moderator, Service Quality was in order drawn to test the assumption of the homoscedasticity (constant variance of residuals).

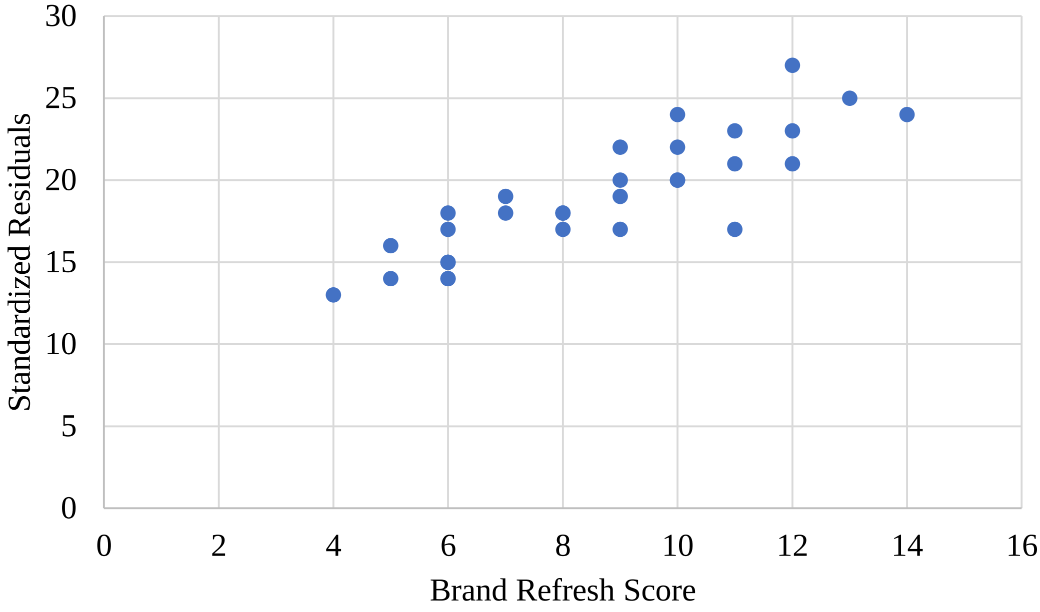

Figure 5: Brand Refresh vs. Residuals
Source: Researcher, (2025)

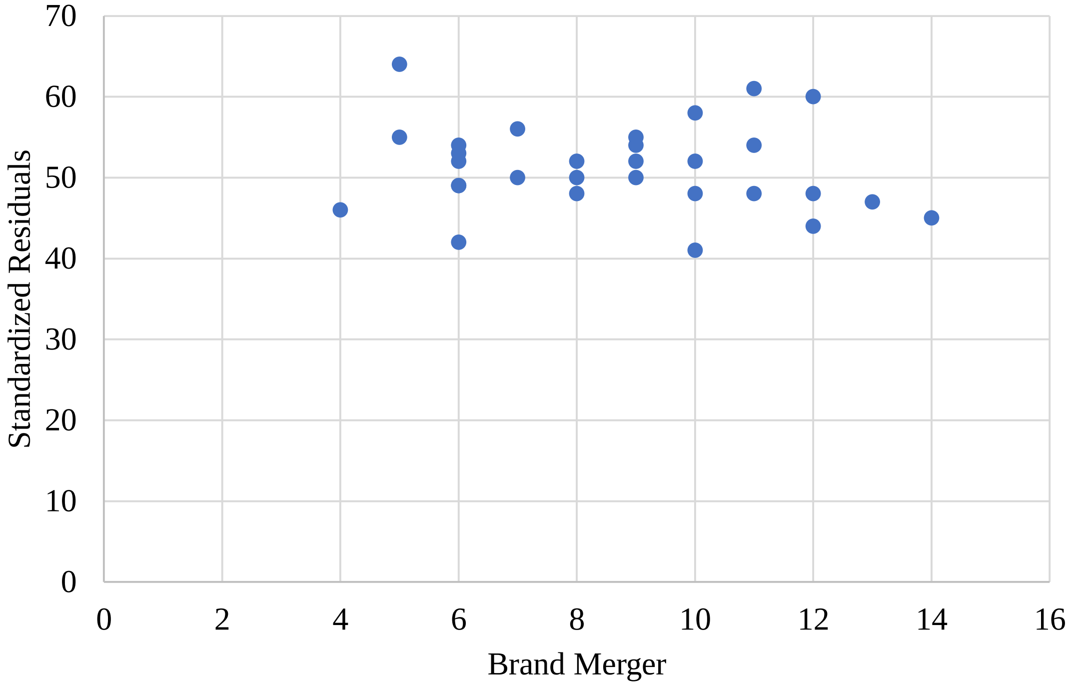

Figure 6: Brand Merger vs. Residuals
Source: Researcher, (2025)

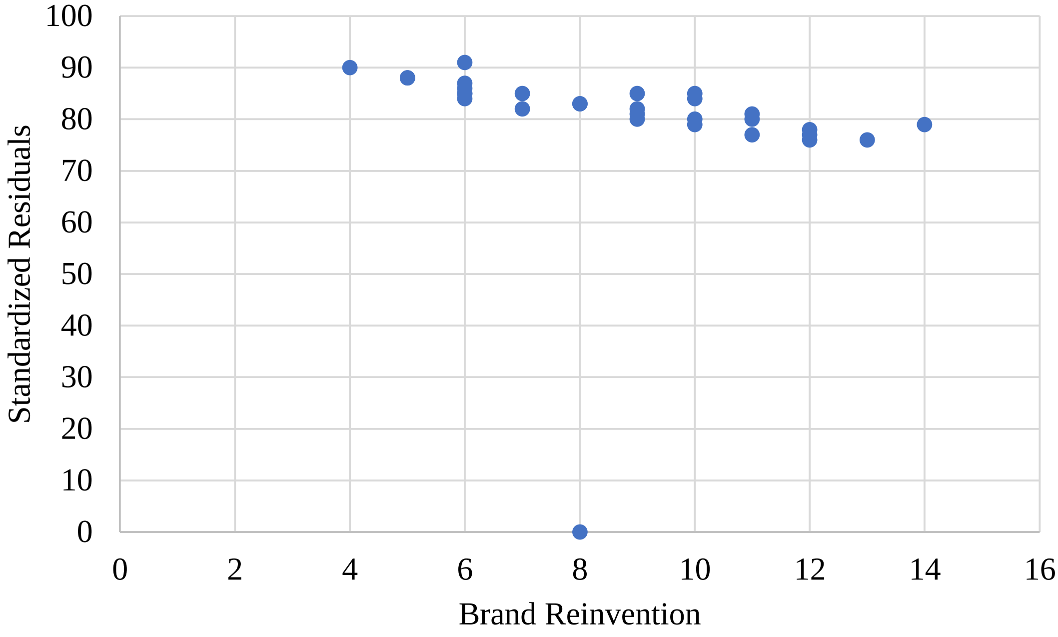

Figure 7: Brand Reinvention vs. Residuals
Source: Researcher, (2025)

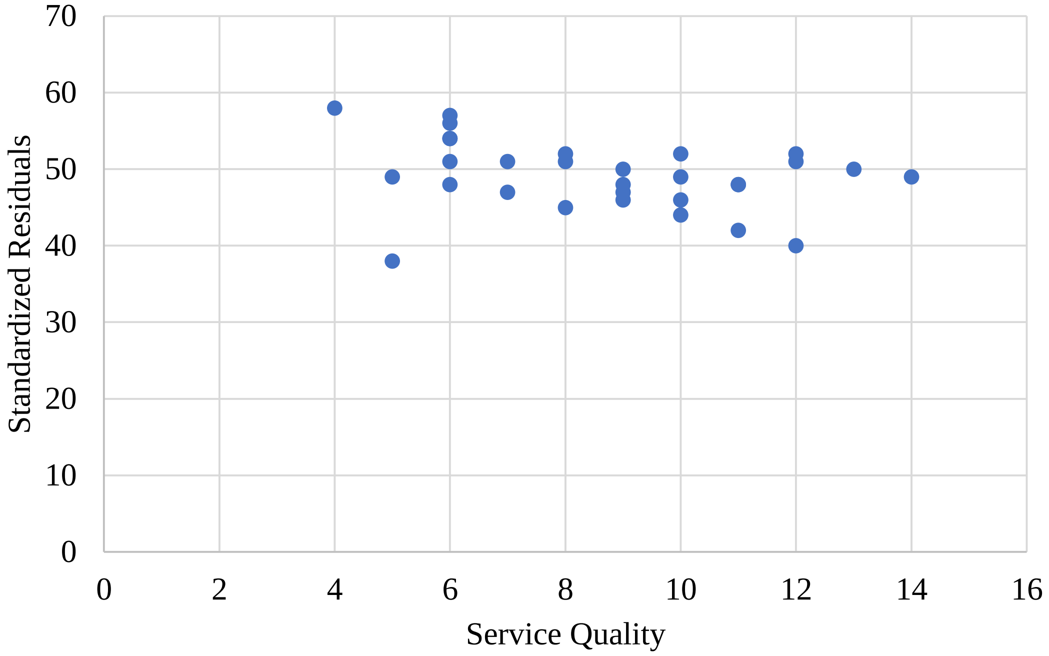

Figure 8: Service Quality vs. Residuals
Source: Researcher, (2025)

The graphical analysis of the scatter plots reveals that the residuals are distributed randomly on both sides of the horizontal axis and that no funnel shape, trend or any curve can be identified. This dispersion indicates that the variance of residuals is pretty constant at all levels of the values of the prediction variable. This means, hence, that homoscedasticity assumption is true, and the model is not subject to heteroscedasticity. This ascertains the validity of the regression estimates, and no biasedness of the standard errors as a result of uneven variance of error throughout the data.

4.5.3 Test for Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is a state of affairs when the independent variables in a regression equation are strongly correlated, and may then bias the estimation of the individual predictor effects. To establish the presence or absence of multicollinearity among the independent variables Brand Refresh, Brand Merger, and Brand Reinvention, a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values were determined. Upendra et.al (2023) states that a VIF value of greater than 10, or Tolerance of less than 0.1, suggest no significant problem in a regression model.

Table 10: Multicollinearity Test Results

Predictor Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Multicollinearity status
Brand Refresh	0.812	1.23	No Multicollinearity
Brand Merger	0.829	1.21	No multicollinearity
Brand Reinvention	0.817	1.22	No multicollinearity

Source: Researcher, (2025)

As it is presented in Table 10, all VIF values fall significantly below the critical level of 10, 1.21 to 1.23, and all Tolerance values exceed 0.8. These findings suggest that multicollinearity is not an issue in this model. The small VIF values indicate the independent variables are different enough to each other and can be added to the regression analysis without increasing the standard errors or invalidating the model coefficients. Therefore, the analysis is carried out with confidence that the regression estimates of branding strategies and their impact on customer satisfaction are statistically sound and without bias.

4.5.4 Normality Test

The assumption of normality is crucial for regression analysis, as it ensures that the model's residuals (the differences between observed and predicted values) are normally distributed. This test validates the significance tests (t-tests and F-test) used in the regression model. Normality was a statistical test (the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test).

Table 11: Normality Test Statistics

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
Statistic	0.058
df	211
Sig. (p-value)	0.095

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Source: Researcher, (2025)

This is supported by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results presented in the Table. The test yielded a significance value (p-value) of 0.095, which is greater than the conventional alpha level of 0.05. Since the result is not statistically significant, the null hypothesis that the data is normally distributed cannot be rejected. Therefore, the statistical tests confirm that the residuals are normally distributed, satisfying a key assumption for the subsequent regression analysis.

4.6 Descriptive Statistics

This section shows the descriptive statistics of the study variables, which are brand refresh, brand merger, brand reinvention, service quality, and customer satisfaction. The analysis gives the mean scores and standard deviations of the responses by the station managers. These descriptive findings are the basis of the further inferential analysis as they indicate the general trends, strengths, and weaknesses in the three oil marketing companies.

4.6.1 Descriptive Statistics on Brand Refresh

This part gives the descriptive statistics of the variable of Brand Refresh, which was assessed by six questionnaire items. These measures gauged the level to which and the regularity under which the oil marketing firms communicate with regard to changing its brand identity, environment, and messaging. Each of the statements was answered on a 5-point Likert scale (whereby 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for Brand Refresh (n = 211)

Code	Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
BR1	The rebranding retained key elements of the company’s original identity.	1	5	3.85	0.92
BR2	Communication of brand image reflects the company’s heritage.	1	5	3.90	0.95
BR3	The current visual design of the station attracts customer interest.	1	5	3.72	1.05
BR4	The station’s branding visuals are consistent and professional.	2	5	3.68	0.88
BR5	The updated logo has improved brand recognition at the station.	1	5	3.59	1.01
BR6	The new logo has made the brand more visible in a competitive market.	1	5	3.66	0.93
	Aggregate Mean and Standard Deviation	-	-	3.73	0.75

Source: Researcher, (2025)

Based on these findings, the study respondents tended to agree with the statements concerning brand refresh initiatives. The most commonly agreed to the question was: “Communication of brand image reflects the company heritage” (Mean = 3.90). The least-frequently-agreed question was: “The updated logo has improved brand recognition at the station.” (Mean = 3.59). The mean score was 3.73 and all the standard deviations were less than 1.10, indicating moderate to strong scale consistency in answers by the 211 participants in the survey of the managers.

The findings suggest a positive perception of brand refresh activities by the Kenyan station managers in oil business although communication strategies must not damage the heritage of a company. This implies that faith and loyalty improve with information on brand concrete and message reinvented without elimination of vestigial attributes of identity. The less functional mean of logo recognition indicates that alternations of this visual reporting are required; however, it might not be sufficient to promote stronger brand commitment without additional communication and enhancement of customer experience.

These observations concur with studies that indicate that effective brand refresh increases customer attitudes and loyalty, when they are frequently updated with a strategic message on a daily basis. Maree, Halim and Hamdy (2024) have discovered that customer loyalty was higher when the fast-food altering its logo using similar components weighted the similarity and modern relevance of the logo which enhanced its effectiveness in customer loyalty. On the same note, Kawamata and Moriguchi (2023) established, design shifts in brand logos positively affected customer brand vitality perceptions especially in conjunction with heritage-driven stories. The case of renewed imagery identity and heritage communication creates credibility and assurance of customers in the Kenyan context about the changes.

4.6.2 Descriptive Statistics on Brand Merger

The descriptive statistics of Brand merger were discussed in this section based on the six questions that were used in the questionnaire to evaluate the perceptions of station managers about their experiences in the merger process, communications, internal alignments and service outcomes. The responses were measured on 5-point Likert scale (Strongly disagree = 1; Strongly Agree = 5).

Table 13: Descriptive Statistics for Brand Merger (n = 211)

Code	Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
BM1	A clear brand structure is in place	1	5	3.78	0.94
BM2	Merged operations follow a unified model.	1	5	3.65	1.02
BM3	The merger has strengthened the brand's value in the eyes of customers.	2	5	3.81	0.89
BM4	The merger strengthened brand value.	1	5	3.54	1.10
BM5	The merged brand presents a consistent identity to customers.	2	5	3.69	0.91
BM6	The integration of previous brand identities was well executed.	1	5	3.63	0.96
	Aggregate Mean and Standard Deviation	-	-	3.68	0.76

Source: Researcher, (2025)

The outputs present a fairly favorable opinion on brand merger initiatives by station managers at Rubis, Vivo, and TotalEnergies. The strongest rating was: The merger has strengthened the brand's value in the eyes of customers. (3.81). The weakest score was: The merger strengthened brand value (3.54). The average summary score of 3.68 indicates that the overall viewpoint regarding the mergers was positive but not overwhelmingly so. The majority of responses were quite consistent (SD < 1.10) and it means that there is a commonality in the perceptions of the surveyed managers. These results correspond to Kapferer (2012) who stated that visual rebranding alone is not sufficient to achieve the goals of the successful brand merger, but one has to integrate the services, internal culture and the communication with the stakeholders of the brand. This suggests that oil marketing firms should carry out mergers as holistic processes; an incorporation of operations, culture, and communication, as opposed to visual or structural ones. This is to assure customers of actual service and trust additions. That is supported by other findings: Ali, Arshad, and Ahmed (2022) identified that the best mergers (in the banking industry) led to customer satisfaction due to service integration and cultural integration, and Ndung'u and Wanjau (2021) concluded that financial mergers in Kenya only brought about improved customer satisfaction, brand image, and customer loyalty in case of effective communication and internal alignment.

4.6.3 Descriptive Statistics on Brand Reinvention

This area shows descriptive statistics data on the construct, Brand Reinvention, which is evaluated in six items that determine the level of adaptation of the companies to the trends of the market, adoption of innovation and enablement of employees to keep on improving its brands. The statements were rated on a 5-point likert-type scale (Strongly disagree to strongly agree).

Table 14: Descriptive Statistics for Brand Reinvention (n = 211)

Code	Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
BRI1	The brand now aligns with emerging customer needs and trends.	2	5	3.84	0.91
BRI2	New services meet market needs.	1	5	3.72	0.97
BRI3	Messages follow a consistent tone.	1	5	3.88	0.89
BRI4	Communication reflects the new brand.	1	5	3.63	1.08
BRI5	The brand tells a clear transformation story.	1	5	3.76	0.93
BRI6	The story improves brand image.	1	5	3.70	0.92
	Aggregate Mean and Standard Deviation	-	-	3.76	0.75

Source: Researcher, (2025)

The responses show that brand reinvention practices are highly endorsed amongst the three oil marketing companies. The strongest rated item was: Messages follow a consistent tone. (Mean = 3.88), which has shown the effort of companies to be relevant in a dynamic market. The lowest item rating was: Communication reflects the new brand. (Mean = 3.63) and this is a clear indication that there is still room to enhance communication. Overall mean of 3.76 suggests that there is a moderate level of agreement that reinvention processes are actively pursued and effective. Moderate consistencies among respondents exist in standard deviations (<= 1.08). Such results are consistent with the views of Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) who affirmed that brands needed regular reinvention that would help them to remain relevant in very active and competitive sectors. It means that oil marketing companies must keep innovating and changing with the market trends, yet they must accompany reinvention with clear and transparent communication to achieve maximum customer satisfaction. Unless reinvention is communicated effectively, it may be misinterpreted or underestimated by customers. This is evidenced by the recent studies: Rahman and Kalam (2021) found that the cleanness and consistency of brand communication enhanced customer loyalty during reinvention and Liu and Mattila (2023) found out that a consistent brand voice among various channels gave rise to greater perceptions of authenticity and satisfaction. These lessons affirm that reinvention will always work best in cases that it is supported by strong, consistent communication.

4.6.4 Descriptive Statistics on Service Quality

The descriptive statistics of the moderating variable (that is, Service Quality) is available in this section. It was measured in six items which were in synchronization with the core dimensions of SERVQUAL including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. The responses were gathered using a 1-5 scale measure (Strongly Disagree-Strongly Agree).

Table 15: Descriptive Statistics for Service Quality (n = 211)

Code	Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
SQ1	Services are delivered as promised.	1	5	3.86	0.88
SQ2	Operations are consistent and dependable.	2	5	3.78	0.91
SQ3	Staff respond quickly to customer needs.	1	5	3.74	0.95
SQ4	Issues are addressed without delay.	1	5	3.62	1.02
SQ5	Staff are confident and professional.	1	5	3.69	0.90
SQ6	Customers feel secure during service.	1	5	3.67	0.93
	Aggregate Mean and Standard Deviation	-	-	3.73	0.74

Source: Researcher, (2025)

The results imply mainly high ratings in terms of assessing the quality of services at the sampled stations. The most highly rated item was; Services are delivered as promised. (Mean = 3.86), which communicated responsiveness as a strength. The lowest rated item was; Issues are addressed without delay (Mean = 3.62). The composite mean of

3.73 indicates substantial agreement regarding the service delivery reliability and professionalism. A low standard deviation (the values of standard deviation are small) means there is consistency in the responses to the different companies in the oil industry. The findings support the SERVQUAL concept (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988), in which it is believed that customer satisfaction has strong relationship with dimensions like responsiveness, reliability, assurance and tangible service cues.

This means that the delivery of services in a consistent, reliable, and professional manner is critical in strengthening customer satisfaction, yet oil companies need to work on quicker problem-solving to improve the customer experience even more. This is supported by the recent research: Chepkoech and Wanjau (2021) showed that responsiveness, reliability, and assurance were the key factors that enhanced customer loyalty in Kenyan retail companies. Equally, Gichuhi and Mwangi (2023) established that branding programs in Kenyan banks worked better when they were backed by timely and professional quality of service.

4.6.5 Descriptive Statistics on Customer Satisfaction

In this section, descriptive statistics of the dependent variable Customer Satisfaction are given that was measured with the help of six items concerned with the overall customer experience; repeat visit likelihood; perception of service quality; and customer loyalty. The measurement of responses took the form of the 5 point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 16: Descriptive Statistics for Customer Satisfaction (n = 211)

Code	Statement	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
CS1	Customers regularly return to our station for refueling and related services.	1	5	3.84	0.93
CS2	Brand efforts have helped sustain a loyal customer base at this station.	2	5	3.91	0.87
CS3	The overall customer experience at our station is positive.	1	5	3.76	0.95
CS4	Station cleanliness, layout, and ease of access enhance the customer experience.	1	5	3.72	1.01
CS5	Customers perceive the services at our station to be of high quality	2	5	3.88	0.90
CS6	Services meet expected standards.	1	5	3.79	0.92
	Aggregate and Standard Deviation	-	-	3.82	0.78

Source: Researcher, (2025)

According to the results, there is a high level of customer satisfaction on the three oil marketing companies. The most positively valued one was: Brand efforts have helped sustain a loyal customer base at this station. (Mean = 3.91), which implies that customers are loyal to the station. The least pronounced but still positive item was: Station cleanliness, layout, and ease of access enhance the customer experience. (Mean = 3.72), which implies that the expectations are met in general, not exceeded, although there is space to improve and exceed the expectations. The combined mean equal to 3.82 is a sign of a high level of satisfaction with all indicators, and the slightly low values of standard.

The findings conform to the Expectation-Confirmation Theory by Oliver (1999) who asserts that satisfaction will occur when customer perception matches or surpasses past expectations and results in trust, retention and advocacy of the brand.

4.7 Inferential Statistics

This section provides the inferential statistical tests to test the study hypotheses and to test the relationship between branding strategies, service quality, and customer satisfaction. Correlation and regression methods were used to establish the direction, strength and significance of these relationships. Moderation tests are also included in the analysis to determine the contribution of service quality in determining the impact of branding strategies on customer satisfaction. These findings give the empirical foundation to justify the conceptual framework of the study and answer its research questions.

4.7.1 Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was calculated to identify the nature and the strength of the relationships between the main key study variables of Brand Refresh, Brand Merger, Brand Reinvention, Service Quality, and Customer Satisfaction. The analysis gives an understanding of the extent to which variations in one variable are related to variations in another.

Table 17: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	1. BR	2. BM	3. BRI	4. SQ	5. CS
1. Brand Refresh (BR)	1				
2. Brand Merger (BM)	0.456	1			
3. Brand Reinvention (BRI)	0.402	0.418	1		
4. Service Quality (SQ)	0.511	0.437	0.498	1	
5. Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.624	0.586	0.609	0.668	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Researcher, (2025)

The correlation findings showed that brand refresh and customer satisfaction had a positive and statistically significant relationship ($r = 0.624$, $p < 0.05$), which means that the increased visual identity, in terms of updated logos, consistent station imagery, and coherent brand communication, significantly increases customer satisfaction in the oil industry. This observation suggests that regular brand refresh programs can be used to keep customers interested, build brand trust, and ensure long-term loyalty. These findings align with Maree, Halim, and Hamdy (2024), who determined that visual rebranding and heritage-based messaging enhanced customer loyalty in the fast-food industry, highlighting the universal applicability of strategic brand refresh programs across industries.

Likewise, brand merger had a moderately high positive relationship with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.586$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that mergers have the potential to increase customer satisfaction in cases where they reinforce brand identity and operational efficiency. Well-coordinated mergers within the oil sector in Kenya can thus enable the firms to establish better customer relations through consolidation of brand equity and enhancement of service delivery. These results are similar to Ali, Arshad, and Ahmed (2022), who discovered that effective cultural integration and service quality led to increased customer satisfaction in successful banking mergers.

The findings also showed that brand reinvention strategies were positively correlated with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.609$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that sustained reinvention, in the form of innovation, flexibility, and responsiveness to evolving customer demands, is a key factor in maintaining satisfaction. Reinvention enables oil marketing companies to be relevant and competitive in a changing market. This is in line with Rahman and Kalam (2021), who noted that reinvention in the service sector enhanced customer loyalty, especially when it was directed by constant feedback and communication with customers.

Lastly, customer satisfaction was most positively correlated with service quality, which highlights that the key to branding strategies is to deliver reliable, timely, and professional services. This highlights the fact that branding is not enough without excellent service performance. These results align with Gichuhi and Mwangi (2023), who established that service quality strengthened the impact of branding activities on customer loyalty in Kenyan banking organizations, which is in line with the SERVQUAL framework created by Parasuraman et al. (1988).

All the independent variables and moderator have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction, as exposure of the service increases customer satisfaction. Results of the correlation analysis suggest that the branding strategies and service quality are complementary towards creating a satisfaction feeling among customers.

4.8 Regression Results

The objective of the study was to examine the association between branding strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya with service quality as a moderating variable. Regression was done in two stages. In the former, the authors investigated the direct impact the three branding strategies have on customer satisfaction. The second model added the interaction terms to determine whether service quality moderates the effect of branding strategies on customer satisfaction and of strengthening or weakening the effect of branding strategies.

4.8.1 Regression Results for Brand Refresh and Customer Satisfaction

The first objective of the study was to examine the effect of brand refresh on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya. To assess the strength and direction of the relationship, the following null hypothesis was tested:

H_{O1}: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand refresh strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

The results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18: Regression Results for Brand Refresh and Customer Satisfaction

(a) Goodness of Fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.624	0.390	0.387	0.634

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Refresh
b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

(b) Overall Significance of the Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	65.91	1	65.91	163.85	0.000
Residual	103.09	209	0.493		
Total	169.00	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Refresh

(c) Individual Significance of the Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1.745	0.243	-	7.180
Brand Refresh	0.553	0.043	0.624	12.799

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
Source: Researcher, (2025)

As stated in Table 18(a), brand refresh positively impacted on customer satisfaction with a Pearson correlation coefficient (R) of 0.624. The R square of 0.390 means that brand refresh is able to explain 39 percentage of the change in customer satisfaction and the rest 61 percentage is due to other factors not included in this study. As table 18(b) indicates, the fitted regression model between brand refresh and customer satisfaction is significant ($F = 163.85$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) at 5 percent level of significance. This implies that the model is suitable and valid. Table 18(c) indicates the personal regression coefficient of brand refresh and it is positive and significant ($B = 0.553$, $p < 0.05$). It means that for a one unit rise in brand refresh activities, there is a rise in customer satisfaction.

The regression model is stated as:

$Y = 1.745 + 0.553X_1 + \varepsilon$

Where:

Y = Customer Satisfaction

X_1 = Brand Refresh

1.745 = Constant

0.553 = Regression Coefficient

ε = Error Term

The results show that brand refresh has a significant effect on customer satisfaction. It is in line with descriptive findings, where station managers recognized the usefulness of visual and environmental updates. These findings are in line with Keller (2013), who opined that prompt changes in brand identity may have a positive impact on customer perception, recollection, and loyalty of business sectors where it is combined with its competitors like the petroleum retail industry. The findings conclude that oil marketing firms that invest in consistent and visible brand refresh exercises would tend to enhance the level of customer satisfaction.

4.8.2 Regression Results for Brand Merger and Customer Satisfaction

The second objective of the study was to establish the effect of brand merger strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya. To determine the strength of this relationship, the following null hypothesis was tested:

HO2: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand merger strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

The regression results are presented in Table 19.

Table 19: Regression Results for Brand Merger and Customer Satisfaction
(a) Goodness of Fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.586	0.343	0.339	0.661

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Merger
b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

(b) Overall Significance of the Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	58.01	1	58.01	132.72	0.000
Residual	110.99	209	0.531		
Total	169.00	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Merger

(c) Individual Significance of the Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1.982	0.228	-	8.693
Brand Merger	0.494	0.043	0.586	11.519

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

Source: Researcher, (2025)

Table 19(a) tells that the Pearson coefficient ($R = 0.586$) reflects a relatively strong positive correlation between brand merger and customer satisfaction. The value of R Square which is 0.343 indicates that brand merger explains 34.3% of the difference in customer satisfaction. As established in Table 19(b), the regression model is statistically significant at 5% level ($F = 132.72$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) demonstrating that the model is appropriate in predictive analysis. Table 19(c) results indicate that brand merger has a positive and statistically significant coefficient ($B = 0.494$, $p < 0.05$) and a one-unit increase in brand merger effectiveness corresponds to an increase of 0.494 units of customer satisfaction, other variables being constant.

The null hypothesis is therefore rejected which proves that brand merger is having a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction in oil industry in Kenya.

The resulting regression model is expressed as:

$Y = 1.982 + 0.494X_2 + \varepsilon$

Where:

Y = Customer Satisfaction

X_2 = Brand Merger

1.982 = Constant

0.494 = Regression Coefficient

ε = Error Term

The results show that effective brand mergers, or those that are characterized by effective communication, alignment of employees and provision of better offerings, are likely to increase customer satisfaction. These findings are in line with the arguments of Kapferer (2012) where internal cultural integration and clarity of the customer was vital in post-merger brand identity transition. This fact supports the necessity not only to unite brand visuals, but also to provide a smooth and free transition to enhance the customer experience.

4.8.3 Regression Results for Brand Reinvention and Customer Satisfaction

The third objective of the study was to assess the effect of brand reinvention strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya. Brand reinvention was measured through items related to innovation, responsiveness to market trends, and strategic rebranding. To test this relationship, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

H_{O3}: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand reinvention strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

The regression results are summarized in Table 20.

Table 20: Regression Results for Brand Reinvention and Customer Satisfaction

(a) Goodness of Fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.609	0.371	0.367	0.647

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Reinvention
b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

(b) Overall Significance of the Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	62.74	1	62.74	149.81	0.000
Residual	106.26	209	0.508		
Total	169.00	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Reinvention

(c) Individual Significance of the Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1.875	0.231	-	8.117
Brand Reinvention	0.525	0.043	0.609	12.242

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

Source: Researcher, (2025)

As indicated in Table 20(a), the correlation co-efficiencies are as follows, whereas, R = 0.609, which represents a high positive correlation between brand reinvention and customer satisfaction. A value of 0.371 indicates that brand reinvention contributes to the level of satisfaction of the customers in the oil companies by 37.1 percent. Table 20(b) indicates that the regression model is statistically accepted at the 5% level ($F = 149.81$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), which confirms the relevance of the model to the analysis. Table 20(c) indicates that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant influence with the re-invention of the brand ($B = 0.525$, $p < 0.05$). It implies that an increase in the brand reinvention activities by one-unit results to an increase in customer satisfaction by 0.525-unit, other variables remaining constant. The null hypothesis is not accepted and this proves that brand reinvention has a significant effect on customer satisfaction.

The corresponding regression model is:

$Y = 1.875 + 0.525X_3 + \varepsilon$

Where:

Y = Customer Satisfaction

X_3 = Brand Reinvention

1.875 = Constant

0.525 = Regression Coefficient

ε = Error Term

These results reveal the fact that the introduction of new branding schemes, the responsiveness to market trends, and the brand development in an inclusive way have a positive effect on customer satisfaction. The outcomes confirm the claims made by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) that strategic brand reinvention improves customer connection and brand relevance, particularly in the fast-paced markets.

4.8.4 Moderating Effect of Service Quality on the Relationship Between Branding Strategies and Customer Satisfaction

The final objective of the study was to determine the moderating effect of service quality on the relationship between brand strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya. To evaluate this, interaction terms between each branding strategy and service quality were introduced. The following null hypothesis was tested:

H_{O4}: There is no statistically significant moderating effect of service quality on the relationship between branding strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya.

Table 21: Regression Results for the Moderating Effect of Service Quality

(a) Goodness of Fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.756	0.571	0.560	0.543

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Refresh, Brand Merger, Brand Reinvention, Service Quality, Interaction Terms
b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

(b) Overall Significance of the Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	96.52	6	16.09	54.49	0.000
Residual	72.48	204	0.355		
Total	169.00	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Independent and Interaction Terms

(c) Individual Significance of the Model

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.620	0.224	-	7.232	0.000
Brand Refresh	0.214	0.061	0.198	3.508	0.001
Brand Merger	0.197	0.059	0.197	3.339	0.001
Brand Reinvention	0.231	0.060	0.222	3.850	0.000
Service Quality	0.311	0.064	0.295	4.859	0.000

Source: Researcher, (2025)

The value of the adjusted R square of 0.560 stated in Table 21(a) shows that the model can explain 56 percent of the customer satisfaction variation when both the moderator (service quality) and interaction terms are taken into account. This is a step forward to the previous models, indicating that the service quality can be useful to prediction in the model. As indicated in Table 21(b), $F = 54.49$, $p = 0.000$ (less than 0.05) indicates the model is statistically significant at the 5 percent level, thus validating the model. Table 21(c) indicates that the three interaction terms, Brand Refresh and Service Quality, Brand Merger and Service Quality, and Brand Reinvention and Service Quality are all positive and significant ($p < 0.05$). This validates the fact that service quality mediates the relationship between branding strategies and customer satisfaction to a large extent.

The null hypothesis is not accepted, which means that the effect of branding strategies on customer satisfaction is enhanced in case the quality of services is high. The implications of the findings are that when oil companies integrate efforts focused on strong branding and high service quality, they have higher chances of attaining greater levels of customer satisfaction. This affirms the theoretical basis of the research especially the SERVQUAL model and Expectation-Confirmation Theory that points out that customer satisfaction is increased when branding is complemented with excellent service provision.

4.8.4.1 Moderating Effect of Service Quality on the Relationship Between Brand Refresh and Customer Satisfaction

The study investigated whether service quality moderates the relationship between brand refresh and customer satisfaction in Kenya's oil marketing companies. To assess this, the following null hypothesis was tested:

$H_{O4}a$: There is no statistically significant moderating effect of service quality on the relationship between brand refresh and customer satisfaction.

The results are shown in Table 21.

Table 22: Moderation Effect of Service Quality on Brand Refresh and Customer Satisfaction

(a) Goodness of Fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.692	0.479	0.473	0.589

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Refresh, Service Quality, Brand Refresh × Service Quality

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

(b) Overall Model Significance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	80.95	3	26.98	77.64	0.000
Residual	88.05	207	0.426		
Total	169.00	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Refresh, Service Quality, Interaction Term

(c) Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.652	0.216	-	7.648	0.000
Brand Refresh	0.267	0.053	0.246	5.038	0.000
Service Quality	0.298	0.055	0.282	5.420	0.000
Brand Refresh × Service Quality	0.124	0.038	0.109	3.263	0.001

Source: Researcher, (2025)

Table 22(a) indicates that the adjusted R 2 = 0.473 implying that the model accounts 47.3 per cent of customer satisfaction variance. Table 22(b) ascertains that the model is statistically significant (F = 77.64, p = 0.000 < 0.05). Table 22(c) suggests that brand refresh and service quality have a positive interaction term that is significant (B = 0.124, p = 0.001). This proves that the effect of brand refresh on customer satisfaction is moderated positively by service quality. In this way, the null hypothesis HO4a is discarded. The findings indicate that the positive contribution of brand refresh initiatives to customer satisfaction would be significantly increased when the quality of services was high. This discovery corroborates the Brand Equity Theory and SERVQUAL model which when combined serve to explain that a resurgent brand when presented through responsive and reliable service will lead to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

4.8.4.2 Moderating Effect of Service Quality on the Relationship Between Brand Merger and Customer Satisfaction

The Study further examined whether service quality moderates the relationship between brand merger and customer satisfaction in Kenya's oil marketing sector. To test this, the following null hypothesis was evaluated:

H_{O4}b: There is no statistically significant moderating effect of service quality on the relationship between brand merger and customer satisfaction.

The regression results are presented in Table 23.

Table 23: Moderation Effect of Service Quality on Brand Merger and Customer Satisfaction

(a) Goodness of Fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.675	0.455	0.449	0.601

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Merger, Service Quality, Brand Merger × Service Quality

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

(b) Overall Model Significance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	76.90	3	25.63	70.99	0.000
Residual	92.10	207	0.445		
Total	169.00	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Merger, Service Quality, Interaction Term

(c) Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.691	0.221	-	7.651	0.000
Brand Merger	0.245	0.052	0.235	4.712	0.000
Service Quality	0.306	0.056	0.285	5.464	0.000
Brand Merger × Service Quality	0.101	0.040	0.092	2.525	0.012

Source: Researcher, (2025)

Based on Table 23(a), 44.9 percent of change in customer satisfaction is explained by the model (Adjusted R 2 = 0.449). Table 23(b) demonstrates that the regression model is statistically significant (F = 70.99, p = 0.000 < 0.05), which proves its validity. According to Table 23(c), the interaction between brand merger and service quality cannot be ignored (B = 0.101, p = 0.012), and it presents a positive moderating effect. As a result, the null hypothesis HO4b is dismissed, and it proves that the quality of service mediates the bond between brand merger and customer satisfaction. The results indicate that the favorable impacts of brand combinations like service growth, rebranding and functional integrations are more effective when provided on the basis of providing high-quality service experiences.

These findings support the previous research by Kapferer (2012) and also confirm Expectation-Confirmation Theory, which states that customer satisfaction is enhanced once post-merger expectations are either achieved or surpassed by efficacious service provision.

4.8.4.3 Moderating Effect of Service Quality on the Relationship Between Brand Reinvention and Customer Satisfaction

The final moderation analysis explored whether service quality influences the strength of the relationship between brand reinvention and customer satisfaction in Kenya’s oil marketing companies. To assess this relationship, the following null hypothesis was tested:

HO4c: There is no statistically significant moderating effect of service quality on the relationship between brand reinvention and customer satisfaction.

The results are shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Moderation Effect of Service Quality on Brand Reinvention and Customer Satisfaction

(a) Goodness of Fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.698	0.487	0.481	0.582

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Reinvention, Service Quality, Brand Reinvention × Service Quality

b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

(b) Overall Model Significance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	82.37	3	27.46	81.08	0.000
Residual	86.63	207	0.418		
Total	169.00	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Reinvention, Service Quality, Interaction Term

(c) Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.709	0.219	-	7.805	0.000
Brand Reinvention	0.253	0.051	0.243	4.961	0.000
Service Quality	0.319	0.055	0.293	5.800	0.000
Brand Reinvention × Service Quality	0.138	0.041	0.121	3.366	0.001

Source: Researcher, (2025)

Table 24(a) indicates that the model accounts 48.1% of the change in customer satisfaction (Adjusted R 2 = 0.481), whereas Table 24(b) demonstrates that the model is statistically significant ($F = 81.08$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Table 24(c) shows that the interaction effect between brand reinvention and service quality is positive and significant ($B = 0.138$, $p = 0.001$) in that service quality has a significant influence on customer satisfaction of brand reinvention. Consequently, the null hypothesis HO4c is rejected. The results validate the fact that the association between brand reinvention in the form of innovations, market adjustment, and brand evolution and customer satisfaction is reinforced when there is a high service quality. This is in line with the Brand Equity Theory and SERVQUAL that propose that regular and continuous innovation and responsiveness in the market when offered with professional and reliable service would increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

4.8.5 Multiple Regression Results for Branding Strategies and Customer Satisfaction

The section describes the findings of a multiple linear regression analysis which studied the joint impact of brand refresh, brand merger and brand reinvention on customer satisfaction in the oil marketing companies in Kenya. The analysis would seek to establish the overall explanatory strength of the three branding strategies and evaluate the singular contribution of each one of them. The following null hypothesis was tested:

H_{O5}: There is no statistically significant combined effect of brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention on customer satisfaction.

The regression results are presented in Table 24.

Table 25: Multiple Regression Results for Branding Strategies and Customer Satisfaction

(a) Goodness of Fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.721	0.520	0.514	0.563

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Refresh, Brand Merger, Brand Reinvention
b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

(b) Overall Significance of the Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	88.21	3	29.40	92.45	0.000
Residual	80.79	207	0.390		
Total	169.00	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Refresh, Brand Merger, Brand Reinvention

(c) Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.921	0.265	-	3.478	0.001
Brand Refresh	0.332	0.071	0.306	4.676	0.000
Brand Merger	0.265	0.067	0.264	3.955	0.000
Brand Reinvention	0.289	0.069	0.283	4.188	0.000

Source: Research Data (2025)

As indicated in Table 25(a), the model has high explanatory power as adjusted R 2 of 0.514 signifies that customer satisfaction variation can be attributed to the combination of the three branding strategies to be 51.4 percent. Table 25(b) affirms that the general model at the 5% level ($F = 92.45$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) is statistically significant to interpret and forecast. Table 25(c) indicates that all three branding strategies are positive and statistically significant predictors of the customer satisfaction: Brand Refresh ($B = 0.332$, $\beta = 0.306$) had the strongest standardized effect, followed by Brand Reinvention ($B = 0.289$, $\beta = 0.283$), and Brand Merger ($B = 0.265$, $\beta = 0.264$).

The null hypothesis H_{O5} is rejected, confirming that brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention collectively and individually have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. The resulting multiple regression model is:

$Y=0.921+0.332X1+0.265X2+0.289X3+\varepsilon$

These results support the worth of involving branding in the development of improved customer performance and reinforce Brand Equity Theory, which demonstrates the strategic importance of coherent, innovating, and identity-based branding to generate perceived value and loyalty. Accordingly, the null hypothesis HO5 is rejected, confirming that brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention collectively and individually have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.

These results support the worth of involving branding in the development of improved customer performance and reinforce Brand Equity Theory, which demonstrates the strategic importance of coherent, innovating, and identity-based branding to generate perceived value and loyalty.

4.9 Hypotheses Testing Summary

This section summarizes the results of hypotheses tested in the study. Each hypothesis was evaluated using regression analysis to determine the significance and strength of relationships between branding strategies, service quality, and customer satisfaction in Kenya’s oil marketing companies.

Table 26: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	β (Beta)	p-value	Decision on H_O
H_{O1}	There is no statistically significant relationship between brand refresh and customer satisfaction.	0.624	0.000	Rejected
H_{O2}	There is no statistically significant relationship between brand merger and customer satisfaction.	0.586	0.000	Rejected
H_{O3}	There is no statistically significant relationship between brand reinvention and customer satisfaction.	0.609	0.000	Rejected
H_{O4}a	Service quality does not moderate the relationship between brand refresh and customer satisfaction.	0.109	0.001	Rejected
H_{O4}b	Service quality does not moderate the relationship between brand merger and customer satisfaction.	0.092	0.012	Rejected
H_{O4}c	Service quality does not moderate the relationship between brand reinvention and customer satisfaction.	0.121	0.001	Rejected
H_{O5}	There is no statistically significant combined effect of all branding strategies on customer satisfaction.	-	0.000	Rejected

Source: Researcher, (2025)

The regression findings indicate that brand refresh positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction (0.624, $p < 0.05$). This shows that the enhancement of the visual identity of a company, including new logos, uniform signage, and heritage-based messages, significantly increases the level of customer satisfaction in the oil industry. The finding confirms the claim of Maree, Halim, and Hamdy (2024), who discovered that rebranding that preserves brand heritage enhances customer loyalty. As a result, the null hypothesis $H_0 1$ is rejected, which proves that brand refresh has a significant impact on customer satisfaction in oil marketing firms in Kenya.

Findings show that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between brand merger and customer satisfaction (= 0.586, $p < 0.05$). This implies that mergers that unify brand identity and streamline operations lead to increased customer satisfaction. Respondents noted that the recent mergers in the oil industry in Kenya have enhanced product offerings and internal alignment. These results align with Ali, Arshad, and Ahmed (2022), who showed that effective mergers in the banking industry increased satisfaction due to cultural integration and better service delivery. Hence, H_{02} is rejected.

The analysis indicates that brand reinvention has a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction (= 0.609, $p < 0.05$). This means that the oil marketing companies can be relevant and more responsive to the changing market needs by constantly reinventing themselves through innovation, adoption of technology and responsiveness to the market needs. The results are consistent with Rahman and Kalam (2021), who have found that reinvention in service sectors increases customer loyalty, particularly when it is supported by active feedback systems. Therefore, H_{03} is rejected.

Service quality was also tested as a moderating variable between each branding strategy and customer satisfaction. The findings indicate that all three interactions have significant moderating effects:
Brand Refresh × Service Quality (= 0.109, p = 0.001)
Brand Merger × Service Quality (= 0.092, = 0.012)
Brand Reinvention × Service Quality (= 0.121, p = 0.001)

These results suggest that the quality of service enhances the impact of every branding strategy on customer satisfaction. That is, branding efforts are more successful in creating satisfaction when they are backed by credible, responsive, and professional service delivery. This finding is consistent with Gichuhi and Mwangi (2023) and the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which highlight that the positive impact of branding on customer experiences is enhanced by high service quality. Based on this, H_{04} a, H_{04}b, and H_{04}c are rejected.

The total regression equation that included all three branding strategies accounted 52 percent of the customer satisfaction variance (R 2 = 0.520, $p < 0.05$). This shows a high level of collective impact of brand refresh, brand merger and brand reinvention on customer satisfaction. Brand refresh had the highest standardized coefficient among these predictors, and it is therefore the most significant determinant of satisfaction in the model. The null hypothesis $H_0$5 is thus rejected, which confirms the strength of the conceptual framework of the study.

4.10 Moderation Analysis

This section reports the findings of the moderation analysis that tested the hypothesis that service quality mediates the relationship between branding strategies (brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention) and customer satisfaction among oil marketing companies in Kenya. The moderation testing was conducted in accordance with the framework suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986), which is still one of the fundamental methods of behavioral research, and was justified by more recent developments in moderation testing (e.g., Hayes, 2018; Aiken and West, 1991).

Baron and Kenny (1986) define a variable as moderating the relationship between an independent variable (X) and a dependent variable (Y) when the interaction term (X × M) is a significant predictor of Y, when the main effects of X and M are held constant. The moderation effect of service quality (M) was tested on each branding strategy through hierarchical multiple regression analysis in three steps:

Step 1: Customer satisfaction was regressed on the independent variable (branding strategy) to determine the direct relationship.

Step 2: The model was supplemented with service quality to identify its primary impact.

Step 3: To determine the moderation effect, an interaction term (Branding Strategy × Service Quality) was added.

A large change in R 2 or statistically significant 0 coefficient of the interaction term shows the existence of moderation.

Table 27*:* Summary of Moderation Analysis Results

Interaction Term (Moderator: Service Quality)	β (Beta)	ΔR^2	p-value	Interpretation
Brand Refresh × Service Quality	0.109	0.018	0.001	Significant moderation
Brand Merger × Service Quality	0.092	0.011	0.012	Significant moderation
Brand Reinvention × Service Quality	0.121	0.022	0.001	Significant moderation

Source: Researcher, (2025)

The interaction terms in Table 27 indicate that service quality plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between all three branding strategies and customer satisfaction ($p < 0.05$ all). The positive β values show that the effect of branding strategies on customer satisfaction is reinforced by the higher quality of the services. This implies that branding strategies are best applied in enhancing satisfaction when they are supported by credible, responsive, and professional service delivery. As an example, a renewed brand image (e.g., new logo and regular station appearance) positively affects customer satisfaction more strongly when customers are also exposed to timely, polite, and reliable service. These results are consistent with Aiken and West (1991) and Hayes (2018), who state that a significant interaction term proves the existence of a moderating effect and suggests that the magnitude of the impact of an independent variable on an outcome varies with the level of the moderator.

Theoretically, the findings are in line with the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988), which argues that the dimensions of service quality, including reliability, responsiveness, and assurance, are critical in determining the outcome of satisfaction. The results also support the Brand Equity Theory (Keller, 1993) that states that positive customer experiences increase the success of branding activities by increasing the perceived quality and emotional attachment to the brand.Gichuhi and Mwangi (2023) empirically found similar patterns in the banking sector of Kenya, where service quality amplified the effect of branding on customer loyalty, and Anning-Dorson (2022), who discovered that service quality mediated the relationship between brand innovation and satisfaction in African service industries.

The moderation analysis implies that branding strategies cannot be used to attain sustainable customer satisfaction without being complemented by high quality of service. Oil marketing companies must thus combine branding campaigns with service quality programs, such as employee training, online responsiveness, and uniform customer interaction procedures. This synergy builds customer perceptions, builds trust, and brand equity in the highly competitive oil retailing environment in Kenya.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research findings according to the research objectives. It presents the main findings of descriptive and inferential analysis, conclusions based on theoretical and empirical data, and practical suggestions to oil marketing companies, station managers, and policymakers. Lastly, it recommends future research to enhance customer satisfaction by effective branding and service delivery in the oil industry in Kenya.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

In line with the study objectives, a short description of the findings has been done. This research primarily aimed at determining whether branding strategy influenced the satisfaction of customers in Kenya oil industry with the mediating role of service quality. The study targeted three large oil marketing organizations Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies and received reactions of 211 station administrators.

The first specific objective was to examine the effect of brand refresh strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya. The majority of the respondents concurred that brand refresh exercises which included change in logos, new signage, new uniforms and bettering of the station environments increased customer perception and loyalty. The highest statement was agreed by the majority that the image of the company was communicated (Mean = 3.90) and the least, that the new logo has resulted in better brand recognition at the station (Mean = 3.59). The outcome of regression proved that brand refresh has a significant and positive effect on customer satisfaction and was the most influential branding strategy in the model. This observation suggests that oil marketing firms must focus on brand refresh exercises since their direct effect is to increase customer loyalty and satisfaction. The company heritage communication seems to be the most effective in building the customer trust, whereas the visual elements, such as logos, might need the more strategic support in order to gain recognition. This implies that managers should compromise between heritage-based messaging and more robust selling of revised visual identity to get the most benefits of brand refresh in enhancing customer satisfaction.

Other researchers support the value of brand refresh strategy in customer satisfaction development. In their study on the logo change of Burger King, Maree, Halim, and Hamdy (2024) discovered that a redesign that is well managed, that is, balancing familiarity and modern relevance of the logo, has a positive impact on brand loyalty due to the promotion of improved brand attitudes. This brings out the importance of companies having the visual changes like logos and signage supported by a strategic communication as opposed to doing this independently. Similarly, Kawamata and Moriguchi (2023) revealed that a change in the logo design including the use of more colors in the logo can enhance the beliefs in brand energy and better customer attitude especially to global brands. These results are consistent with the fact that although heritage-based communication cultivates trust and credibility, renewed visual identity messages serve a supportive function in strengthening perceptions and loyalty among customers in case of effectively implemented communications.

The second aim was to establish the effect of brand merger strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya. Most of the respondents affirmed that the latest mergers had a positive impact on the supply of products, brand image and internal alignment. The most consented was the fact that the merger has enhanced the value of the brand in the minds of the customers (Mean = 3.81), and the least concurred was that the merger has strengthened brand value (Mean = 3.54). Regression analysis also established that brand merger had positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction though the effect was relatively lower than brand refresh. This result suggests that the merging of oil companies increases customer satisfaction when the process is well managed especially through offering new products and reinforcing the brand perception. Nevertheless, the less convincing consensus on the overall brand value points to the fact that even though customers are aware of certain benefits of mergers, it requires a constant communication process and greater cultural integration to achieve all the desired benefits. The companies in oil marketing must hence consider not only the integration of operations and identity to offer a concise and steady message to their customers in order to generate value through mergers.

Recent studies emphasize that customer satisfaction can be enhanced through mergers that are well managed. Ali, Arshad, and Ahmed (2022) noted that the banking industry mergers helped to increase the level of customer satisfaction as it led to an improvement in the delivery of services and operational efficiency, but the total benefits could be received only through constant contact with stakeholders. In the same way, Ndungu and Wanjau (2021) observed that across Kenya, the financial services sector, mergers developed a better brand image and increased the product range, which positively affected customer trust and loyalty. Nevertheless, both articles emphasized the importance of the fact that the benefits of the integration process were conditional on the effectiveness of the implementation of the process, especially its ability to harmonize the organizational cultures and the absence of a differing brand message. These observations are in tandem with the current observations that as much as merger of oil companies increases customer perception and satisfaction, the long term value of the merger is based on continuous communication and cultural integration of the merging organizations.

The third goal was to assess the effect of brand reinvention strategies on customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya. Respondents indicated that over the last few years, their companies responded to the emerging trends in the market, implementing new practices and recreating their brand identities to suit the preferences of customers. The highest consensus was that messages are consistent in tone (Mean = 3.88), and the lowest one was that communication was a reflection of the new brand (Mean = 3.63). Regression analysis confirmed that brand reinvention positively and significantly influenced customer satisfaction, which proved customer satisfaction as a result of continuous brand development.

This observation means that oil marketing firms can enhance consumer satisfaction by being innovative and aligning their brand communication campaign with the changing customer demands. The fact that there is a high level of consensus on the importance of uniform messaging reflects the importance of tone and definitions on strengthening reinvention activities, whereas the low level of agreement on the aspect of communication effectiveness implies that companies have more to do in terms of clearly communicating new brand directions to consumers. Managers ought hence to accompany the reinvention programs with clear-cut, open communication programs to enable the customers to have full knowledge and value the change.

The recent research substantiates the opinion that brand reinvention policy improves customer satisfaction in the cases where companies can respond to the new trends by being innovative and providing a consistent message. On the success of reinvention by digital transformation and renewed brand communication, Rahman and Kalam (2021) demonstrated that clarity and consistency of tone were the key qualities in customer engagement and loyalty in the service sector. Similarly, Abdirahman, Muturi, and Wanjiru (2022) discovered that the influence of redefining the brand identity by the firms in the Kenyan market was higher when compared to firms that did not effectively communicate the new direction of the brand, resulting in increased customer satisfaction and trust. Recently, Liu and Mattila (2023) stressed that brand voice in all channels of communication was a strong factor in enhancing the meaning of authenticity, which further boosted customer satisfaction. These findings echo with the prevailing outcomes, an aspect that reinvention that is continuous can be of benefit to oil marketing companies so long as it is complemented with effective communication approaches that are coherent, clear, and transparent that will enable customers to appreciate and accept the changing brand identity.

The fourth was to determine the moderating effect of service quality on the relationship between brand strategies and customer satisfaction in the oil industry in Kenya. The results indicated that the service quality, in terms of responsiveness, reliability, assurance and tangible evidence, played a pivotal role as a moderator in this relationship. The regression model indicated that all terms of interaction were significantly different and thus branding strategies worked better to improve customer satisfaction when combined with high service quality. This means that branding strategies are not enough to ensure optimal customer satisfaction cannot be brought about without a good service delivery. Although customers would be aware of refreshed, merged or reinvented brands, their satisfaction can only be enforced when their service experience is either at the same level or higher than expected. The marketing companies in oil should consequently entail Indoctrinating marketing with regular service enhancements based on customer retention with prompt service response, reliable operations, and professional employee behavior. There is also an option of regulators and policymakers to establish minimum standards of service quality across the industry so that customer satisfaction is not sacrificed even though the branding strategies might be different.

Literature in the recent past confirms that service quality reinforces the relationship between branding strategies and customer satisfaction. Indeed, the quality of services as a moderating factor was verified in a study by Chepkoech and Wanjau (2021) on retail firms in Kenya, which indicated that responsiveness, reliability, and assurance greatly enhanced the impact of marketing strategies on customer loyalty. On the same note, Ali, Gupta and Arora (2022) established that rebranding and repositioning of a brand in the hotel industry could only lead to increased customer satisfaction only upon the backing of reliable and uniform service provision. More recently, Gichuhi and Mwangi (2023) showed that branding programs had a positive influence on the attitude of trust and loyalty in the banking sector in Kenya, but it was more pronounced when dimensions of service quality, such as professionalism and promptness, were included. These results are consistent with the existing ones, as refreshed, merged, or reinvented brands could help increase the visibility and perception; however, customer satisfaction in the oil industry depends mostly on the ability to meet and surpass the service quality standards.

In summary, the multiple regression analysis showed that the branding strategies had a combined value of over 50 per cent to explain the customer satisfaction variation among Kenyan oil marketing companies. Among the three strategies, brand refresh was the most individual impacting strategy, whereas brand reinvention closely followed with brand merger also having a positive influence albeit to a smaller extent. This shows that all the three branding strategies are effective in contributing customer satisfaction but brand refresh is the most influential factor.

5.3 Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the effects of branding strategies, namely brand refresh, brand merger, and brand reinvention, on customer satisfaction, and to determine the moderating effect of service quality in the oil marketing sector in Kenya. The study was informed by the Brand Equity Theory, SERVQUAL, and Expectation Confirmation Theory and employed descriptive and inferential statistics to assess the data of 211 station managers of Rubis Energy, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies. The results offer detailed information on the role of integrated branding strategies in determining customer satisfaction levels in a competitive service setting.

First, the research finds that brand refresh has the most powerful and the greatest impact on customer satisfaction. The regression analysis (= 0.624, $p < 0.05$) showed that the visual identity of a company, which is modernized by new logos, signage, uniforms, and station design, has a significant positive impact on the perceptions of professionalism and trust in the company by customers. The renewed brand image conveys consistency, vitality, and relevance, which together enhance emotional attachment and repeat patronage. This observation highlights the strategic value of having a contemporary and integrated brand image in the retention of customer loyalty in the oil retail industry.

Second, the research established that brand merger strategies also have a positive impact on customer satisfaction, but to a slightly smaller degree (0.586, $p < 0.05$). Effective integration was found to enhance brand identity, product offerings, and customer perception in successful mergers. Nevertheless, internal coordination, coherent communication, and cultural alignment are critical to the success of brand mergers. Unmanaged transitions can interfere with customer trust and reduce satisfaction. Therefore, oil industry mergers must focus on open communication and operational synergy to retain brand equity and ensure positive customer experiences.

Third, the study determined that brand reinvention is an important factor in improving customer satisfaction (= 0.609, $p < 0.05$). The ability to keep up with the changing customer demands and stay competitive in the fast-evolving market is made possible by continuous reinvention, which is achieved through innovation, adoption of technology, and responsiveness. Reinvention facilitates active interaction and trustworthiness by matching service provision with customer preferences and new trends. This observation supports the perception that brands should keep on changing to ensure that they remain relevant to their target markets and remain satisfied in a dynamic market.

Fourth, the research concludes that service quality plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between branding strategies and customer satisfaction. All three branding strategies had positive and significant interaction terms with service quality ($p < 0.05$), which validates the fact that excellent service delivery enhances the success of branding efforts. The effect of branding on satisfaction is enhanced when customers feel reliable, responsive, assured, empathetic, and physically quality. This observation is consistent with the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) and confirms the claim that service quality enhances the perceived value and credibility of branding activities in the oil industry.

Fifth, the combined model showed that the three branding strategies together accounted more than half of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.520$), which is a strong cumulative effect. This proves that brand refresh, merger, and reinvention are not mutually exclusive but complementary strategies that when combined, form a holistic and sustainable customer experience. The findings support the theoretical assumption of the Brand Equity Theory (Keller, 1993) that brand strength is a result of differentiated, consistent, and experience-based brand interactions.

Lastly, the general conclusion is that branding and service quality should be strategically combined to attain and maintain customer satisfaction in the oil marketing sector in Kenya. Branding brings about visibility and differentiation, whereas service quality provides the experiential consistency that strengthens customer trust and loyalty. The combination of them creates sustainable competitive advantage and retention of customers in the long term. These results support Expectation Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980), which highlights that satisfaction is achieved when perceived performance is as expected or better. Oil marketing companies that balance branding with outstanding service delivery will thus be in a better position to create brand loyalty and maintain market leadership.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Managerial Recommendations.

i. Improve Brand Refresh Programs. -The research determined that brand refresh was the most positively impactful on customer satisfaction (0.624, $p < 0.05$). To keep the brand attractive, oil marketing companies must constantly invest in visual identity enhancement, including updated logos, signage, and standardized station design. Customer attachment and loyalty can be further enhanced by incorporating interactive station spaces, digital displays, and emotionally resonant brand messages.

ii. Enhance Post-Merger Brand Integration. - Brand merger was observed to have a positive but moderate impact on customer satisfaction (= 0.586, $p < 0.05$). After mergers, managers should focus on the seamless integration through the maintenance of the same brand identity, open communication, and coordination of employees. Satisfaction can be maintained through joint training programs and integrated customer communication channels to avoid confusion when changing brands.

iii. Encourage Ongoing Brand Reinvention. -Customer satisfaction was greatly affected by brand reinvention (= 0.609, $p < 0.05$). Oil companies ought to invest in marketing that is driven by innovation, i.e. the introduction of new customer engagement platforms, reward systems, and technology-enabled convenience (e.g. digital payments, mobile apps). Constant reinvention keeps the brand relevant and competitive in the face of evolving customer needs and market forces.

iv. Combine Branding and Service Quality Improvement. -Service quality played a moderating role ($p < 0.05$), which means that branding is most effective when it is supported by high-quality service delivery. Service quality improvement programs based on the SERVQUAL dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles should be institutionalized by oil companies. Consistency and brand credibility can be ensured through regular service audits and staff training.

v. Embrace a Synergistic Branding Strategy. -As the combined branding strategies accounted more than 50 percent of the customer satisfaction variance (R 2 = 0.520), oil companies ought to use an integrated branding strategy, which is a combination of refresh, merger, and reinvention strategies. This integrated approach improves customer experience, competitiveness in the market, and brand equity.

vi. Standardize Customer Feedback Systems. -Branding and service delivery changes should be informed by continuous customer feedback. Digital surveys, loyalty programs, and social media monitoring should be used by managers to obtain customer insights, which can be used to make specific improvements in branding efforts and service quality.

5.4.2 Policy Recommendations

i. Establish Branding and Service Quality Standards. -Policy frameworks that promote healthy competition and focus on service quality as a performance indicator should be formulated by the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum and the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA). Such policies may involve service level standards and branding transparency standards to safeguard consumers.

ii. Reward Quality Improvement and Innovation. -Incentive programs should be introduced to oil marketing companies that have a consistent high level of service quality and innovative branding. Tax incentives or recognition schemes would help to motivate firms to invest more in customer-focused branding innovations.

iii. Encourage Consumer Awareness and Protection. -The regulatory bodies ought to sensitize the consumers on the relationship between branding and service quality and satisfaction and value. Customers can be empowered through public awareness campaigns to insist on quality service and to sue firms that make false claims about their brands.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

i. In this research, the study concentrated on the views of the station managers in three oil marketing companies. In future research customer views ought to be included to understand more on the way branding strategies are viewed in the outside world and the effect it has on customer satisfaction.

ii. The research design was cross-sectional, which only captured relationships at one point in time. The study can be replicated in future research with a longitudinal design to determine the effects of branding strategies and service quality on customer satisfaction in the long run, especially during and after significant branding changes. Moreover, the same research can be carried out in other industries, including manufacturing, transport, and telecommunications, to confirm and compare the relevance of the results in other settings than the oil industry.

iii. The present study was confined to Rubis, Vivo Energy, and TotalEnergies. Researchers are encouraged to conduct research on the branding strategies and level of satisfaction among smaller independent oil retailers in Kenya to enable them to compare them with other sizes of operations.

iv. This paper discussed branding in physical service provision. Further study can be in terms of how digital branding and online customer interaction affect the satisfaction of the customers in the petroleum industry.

v. Although this paper discussed the moderating effect of service quality, other likely moderators or mediators like brand loyalty, price perception, or corporate reputation can be investigated in future to achieve a better insight of the effect of branding on customer satisfaction.

vi. Finally, research may also evaluate the efficacy of Deffner and Muller, 2017, instruments, such as individual branding campaigns or messaging strategies, on customer perception, even in terms of environmentally sustainability, green energy transitions, or corporate social responsibility practices in oil business.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introductory Letter

Dear Respondent,

I am Mercy Naliaka, I will be conducting research on Branding Strategies, Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction from Tharaka University through the Department of Business Administration as part of my Master's Degree program in Business Administration. My research will be examining how service quality moderates the relationship between Branding Strategies and Customer Satisfaction. The analysis will focus on brand refresh, brand merger and brand invention. Through this request, I ask you to provide answers to the research questions based on your individual thinking and practical knowledge. The research will provide no direct advantages for study participants although gathered information will add to society's knowledge. All contributed information in this study will remain fully confidential and your identity has absolute protection throughout the research process.

Thank you.

Appendix II: Questionnaire

I am Mercy Naliaka, a Master of Business Administration student at Tharaka University. I am gathering information on branding strategies, service quality, and customer satisfaction in the Kenyan oil industry. Kindly cooperate by providing honest responses. All responses will be treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

Section 1: Background Information

1. Please indicate your gender by a tick [✓]:
   Male [ ]
   Female [ ]
2. Indicate your years of experience:
   0 to 4 years [ ]
   5 to 9 years [ ]
   10 to 14 years [ ]
   15 years and above [ ]
3. Indicate the oil company you work for:
   Rubis Energy Kenya [ ]
   Vivo Energy Kenya [ ]
   TotalEnergies Kenya [ ]

Section 2: Branding Strategies

Part A: Brand Refresh

Kindly indicate with a tick [✓] the extent to which you agree the following statements. (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree.

	Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.	The rebranding retained key elements of the company's original identity.					
2.	Communication of brand image reflects the company's heritage.					
3.	The current visual design of the station attracts customer interest.					
4.	The station's branding visuals are consistent and professional.					
5.	The updated logo has improved brand recognition at the station.					
6.	The new logo has made the brand more visible in a competitive market.					

Part B: Brand Merger

Kindly indicate with a tick [✓] the extent to which you agree the following statements. (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree.

	Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.	A clear brand structure is in place					

2.	Merged operations follow a unified model.					
3.	The merger has strengthened the brand's value in the eyes of customers.					
4.	The merger strengthened brand value.					
5.	The merged brand presents a consistent identity to customers.					
6.	The integration of previous brand identities was well executed.					

Part C: Brand Reinvention

Kindly indicate with a tick [✓] the extent to which you agree the following statements. (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree.

	statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.	The brand now aligns with emerging customer needs and trends.					
2.	New services meet market needs.					
3.	Messages follow a consistent tone.					
4.	Communication reflects the new brand.					
5.	The brand tells a clear transformation story.					
6.	The story improves brand image.					

Section 3: Service Quality

Kindly indicate with a tick [✓] the extent to which you agree the following statements. (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree.

	statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1.	Services are delivered as promised.					
2.	Operations are consistent and dependable.					
3.	Staff respond quickly to customer needs.					
4.	Issues are addressed without delay.					
5.	Staff are confident and professional.					
6.	Customers feel secure during service.					

Section 4: Customer Satisfaction

Kindly indicate with a tick [✓] the extent to which you agree the following statements. (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree.

1.	Customers regularly return to our station for refueling and related services.					
2.	Brand efforts have helped sustain a loyal customer base at this station					
3.	The overall customer experience at our station is positive.					
4.	Station cleanliness, layout, and ease of access enhance the customer experience.					
5.	Customers perceive the services at our station to be of high quality					
6.	Services meet expected standards.					

Appendix III: List of oil companies in Kenya.

Major Oil Marketing Companies in Kenya (Top by Market Share)

Rank Company

1 Vivo Energy Kenya Ltd (Shell)
2 Rubis Energy Kenya Plc
3 TotalEnergies Marketing Kenya Plc.
4 Ola Energy Kenya Ltd
5 Be Energy Limited
6 Hass Petroleum Kenya Ltd
7 Galana Energies Ltd
8 Stabex International Ltd
9 Lake Oil Limited
10 Petro Oil Kenya Ltd
11 Tosha Petroleum (Kenya) Ltd
12 Dalbit Petroleum Ltd
13 Oryx Energies Kenya Ltd
14 Towba Petroleum Company Ltd
15 Aftah Petroleum Ltd
16 Zacosia Trading Ltd
17 Gapco Kenya Ltd
18 Astrol Petroleum Company Ltd.
19 Sahara Energy Limited

Other Registered Oil Marketing Companies.

Apart from the leading players, we have a large number of smaller OMCs. The partial list of these is:

1. ALSAA Petroleum Kenya Ltd
2. EPPIC Oil (K) Ltd
3. Gasline Petroleum Ltd
4. Mogas Kenya Ltd
5. Bushra Energy Ltd
6. Eco Oil Kenya Ltd
7. Oxium Energy Ltd
8. Ranway Traders Ltd
9. Luqman Petroleum Ltd
10. Regnol Oil (K) Ltd
11. Sheikh Petroleum Inter (K) Ltd

Appendix IV: National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **682413**

Date of Issue: **11/September/2025**

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Ms.. Mercy Naliaka Walubengo of Tharaka University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: BRANDING STRATEGIES, SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE OIL INDUSTRY IN KENYA for the period ending : 11/September/2026.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/25/4179575**

682413

Applicant Identification Number

Ag. Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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See overleaf for conditions

Appendix V: Tharaka University Institutional Introductory Letter

THARAKA UNIVERSITY

P.O BOX 193-60215,
MARIMANTI, KENYA

Education for Freedom

Website: https://tharaka.ac.ke
Social Media: tharakauni
Email: info@tharaka.ac.ke
Phone : +254745 838 353

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

REF: TUN/BPGS/PL/22/25 **8th *August 2025.***

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: MERCY NALIAKA ADMISSION NUMBER CMT11/10072/23

Mr Mercy Naliaka is a postgraduate student at Tharaka University undertaking a Master of **Business Administration (marketing option)** degree. The student has completed her coursework and is expected to proceed for collection of data after successfully defending her proposal at faculty level. The title of the study is ***"Branding Strategies, Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Oil Industry in Kenya."***

Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

THARAKA UNIVERSITY
DIRECTOR BOARD OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES
08 AUG 2025
P. O. Box 193-60215
MARIMANTI, KENYA

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Ambrose Vengi, Ph.D.
Director, Board of Postgraduate Studies.

TUN is ISO 9001:2015 Certified... SGS UKAS *Education for Freedom/Elimu ni Uhuru*

7Appendix VI: Tharaka University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee Letter

THARAKA UNIVERSITY

Education for Freedom

P.O BOX 193-60215,
MARIMANTI, KENYA

Telephone: +(254)-0202008549
Website: https://tharaka.ac.ke
Social Media: tharakauni
Email: info@tharaka.ac.ke

INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

8th August 2025.

REF: TUNISERC/NSEC/ M062

Dear, Mercy Naliaka

RE: Branding Strategies, Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Oil Industry in Kenya.

This is to inform you that ***Tharaka University ISERC*** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is ***ISERC04023.*** The approval period is ***8th August 2025– 8th August 2026.***

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by ***Tharaka University ISERC***.
iii. Death and life threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to ***Tharaka University ISERC*** within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to ***Tharaka University ISERC*** within 72 hours
v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to ***Tharaka University ISERC***.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

THARAKA UNIVERSITY
ETHICS COMMITTEE
08 AUG 2025
CHAIRPERSON
P.O. BOX 193-60215, MARIMANTI

Dr. Fidelis Ngugi
Chair, ISERC Tharaka University