

Impact of Brand positioning strategies on consumer standpoint (A consumer's Perception)

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Abstract

Brand positioning is considered to be the most sensitive element to take the brand to the sky or nowhere the marketers try hard to come up to the mark of the consumers because every consumer is different and have a different mindset and contains different perceptions and different value. This research is conducted to see an impact of brand positioning strategies on consumer's perception. The research basically revolves around 3 strategies of positioning i.e. beneficial positioning, surrogate positioning (Psychological), Competitive positioning the impact of these strategies being checked by showing 250 consumers random brands in television commercials which contains the above said positioning strategies the questionnaires has been designed in a way that tells the responsiveness of different consumers by watching the ads of the brands and what they feel and what is their perception about the particular brand whether highly negative, negative, neutral, positive or highly positive. The outcome of the research revealed that surrogate positioning by the brands showed the highest positive response, while the other two positioning strategies came out more or less on the negative side in terms of consumer perception. The analysis technique used is one sample t test and the software used is SPSS.

Keywords: Consumer Perception, Brand Positioning, Consumer Standpoint, Strategies

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

These days brand positioning plays a vital role to grab the attention and retention of the consumer, as the correct positioning will force consumer to buy the particular brand products and services. From the marketing perspective Brand positioning represents the expansion by which marketers try to generate a figure in the minds of their targeted consumers for their product. As the study is conducted to go through the impact of brand positioning and its strategies on consumer perception in this research the study revolves around 3 strategies of brand positioning i.e. beneficial positioning, surrogate /Psychological positioning, Competitive positioning and what is the impact of it on consumers perception whether it is positive or negative and what make consumer to buy the product more frequently. The basic classification and correspondence of brand positioning is based on the differentiation, rectifiable worth, and brand's advantage over other. Copycat/imitator brand positioning only works if the business offers its solutions at a significant discount over the other competitor. Flourishing each and every brand there is always a proper "brand positioning" that is develop in consumers mind to like the product and without it no brand can be that much popular. The effectiveness of the positioning is concerned it is more or less dependent on the brand's exclusiveness and its attributes that how it will be different for the consumer to consume as the brand position has its cycle that should be develop by marketers to get the product hit firstly it should be classified the competition that exists in the industry, secondly the assessing the rival brands that what they have done to position their brand in a current scenario, thirdly it should be in written form that how they will positioned their brand fourthly distinguishing the positioning that is created and documented with the rival brands that exist, fifthly portraying the well defined assessment based brand positioning last but not the least the creation and the execution of the positioning that has been stated and delivering to the target market variety of channels can be used like TVC, print media, internet, BTL includes the flyers brochures etc.

To make a brand on a level that it should be at it is very important to make sure the positioning is made very perfectly as if it would be perceived tremendously by the consumer than it will urge them to buy the product of the particular brand and they will also keep recommending it to their fellow beings and this is how the positioning of certain brands get flourished and it get great success in the market.

1.2. Problem Statement

What is the impact of brand positioning strategies on consumer standpoint?

1.3. Proposed Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Benefit positioning has positive impact on consumer standpoint.

H2: Surrogate positioning has positive impact on consumer standpoint.

H3: Competitive Positioning has positive impact on consumer standpoint.

1.4. Outline of the Study

This study contains 5 chapters. The first chapter constitutes an overview to communicate the problem on which the research is taken out and concerning the Cosmetic industry of Pakistan. It also briefs the variables in general. Chapter 2 explains the theoretical background and literature review. Chapter 3 includes discussions and the methodology, which includes sources of information and data collection method. In chapter 4 the analysis of data collection is covered. Chapter 5 is regarding the conclusions and limitations.

1.5. Definitions

1.5.1. Consumer perception:

It is basically a practice by which an entity picks, classify and understand incentive / Stimuli into a momentous image of the brand. How a consumer makes his / her interpretation about the brand that how it will be beneficial for them or might be harm them.

1.5.2. Brand Positioning:

It is basically define as the product and brand attributes communicated to the mind of the customers. As we know that every customer is different and they have different ideas in their mind about the brand or product and they have different expectations from the brand or product.

1.5.3. Beneficial Positioning

It is basically defined as the beneficial attributes of the product that how the product will be beneficial for the individual it plays a vital role In oral care, hair care, skin care products and almost all the FMCG's adopt this form of positioning strategies in pushing their products to the consumers.

1.5.4. Surrogate/ Psychological Positioning

It is basically defined as the positioning created on a psychological theme it is basically designed to make consumer connections about exterior characteristic of a brand as for instance something about the particular brand allows the consumer to come to the individual finale not the features and benefits making of indirect connections refers to vague side of the brand.

1.5.5. Competitive Positioning

It is defined as the positioning that focuses your product ,service and company aside from your rivals it is basically how a brand or product is different from the other and how it will be good in contrast with the alternatives it is how one differentiate the offering and make value for market it is just about that making out a mark in the competitive background placing your pledges in the view and getting success and winning the minds in the market place and getting the faith of the consumers being really known for something innovative and exclusive.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present era is of 21st century and to plug-in the theme of any of the offering either it is a tangible good or an intangible service. Positioning has a very vital role to play in it. Positioning is basically related to a mind of a human being how a particular service or physical good or product is designed to target the audience who are the consumers it is basically how the marketers play with the mind of the audience to make sure the concept and picture they want to communicate to the target audience. The most effective weapon to achieve efficient positioning is TVC (Television commercials). To get rid of the flaws of the major positioning idea it is very significant to distinguish among brand positioning and planned or to reach a certain level positioning. Positioning is basically an aggressive market status of any brand in opposition to its opponent. (Porter & Evans, 1996). Brand positioning is the brand icon that builds in consumer mind by his or her idea it is basically shaped from side to side consumer psychoanalysis whether normal or exciting (Zinkhan & Dobni, 1990).

To get better ideas of brand positioning a discrepancy between conventional, real and clear positioning needs to be drawn. Expected or predictable positioning is how the consumers evaluate the brand it is basically the perceived value from the consumer side. The actual or authenticated positioning is basically the positioning the company or a brand tends and wants the consumer to perceive the gadgets used to form it is the TVC television commercials, advertising the main weapon to make the positioning (Krishnan, Lilien & Rangaswamy, 2003). Marketing wires a bridge for positioning (Dillon & Seggev, 1986). As far as any illustration commercial is concerned it consists of a distinctive & inventive element the innovative part contains the brand information, which is represented to grab the attention of the consumer, and so it is directed to the brand positioning (Easingwood & Mahajan, 1989). Rivkin and Trout (1996) gave their support to the commercial with images only and without any positioning claim that is associate to the mind frame of the consumer give the consumer refusal cause on the way to purchase the particular product or brand since they find no need to buy that. Therefore the disparity intended or projected and actual or authenticated positioning what is essentially converse mendacity in the carrying out of the advertisement plan (Blankson, Kalafati & Roth, 2007).

Sustaining the authenticated or genuine positioning as confined in the ad as well as the word of mouth

and intuitive thinking about the brand consumers build their own observation or perception about the brand and position the conclusions about the brand inside their minds this is apparent or perceived positioning which basically point out the bundle of emotions ,feelings ,values, view points and impressions consumer thinks for the brand compared to the rivals of that particular brand (Ellson, Ries & Trout, 1986). Recognize apparent or positioning may vary depending upon the individualism of the consumers because consumer may interpret the exact positioning information as the brand claims in a different way depending on their personal understanding and their personal school of thoughts, values or practice circumstances (Friedmann & Lessig, 1987; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). Preliminary a brand's positioning is a long term process which may goes for 3 to 5 years with huge investments particularly in advertisements (Bhat & Reddy, 1998) choosing companies wrong positioning strategies may decreases their sales because of the un sufficient from the consumers view point not differentiating the brand from the competitors brands it also runs the perceived value of harming the brand positioning. Menacing problems might be occur if the projected positioning is very well selected but the implementation that is the authenticated or actual positioning fall short to produce an outcome in a successful perceived positioning by consumers. Although the combination of the two wrong positioning can be result in a sound strategy as it can be compromised the positioning effectiveness selecting the wrong positioning strategy (Poor projected positioning) and poor authenticated or actual positioning. The consequence of ambiguity for different brands features or property in more broad-spectrum defined like brand position in the attribute aspect on consumer selection has been the center of economics comes close to to branding efficiently. Ambiguity hits consumer perceptions or standpoint of brand features the difference of their viewpoint and their knowledge worth. The writing in the two i.e. financial side and marketing has pointed on quality vagueness which is evaluated and designed as a multiple assemble. Aaker (1991) other factors remain constant the brand with strong demand are connected with highest seeming superiority which refers to trust for excellence. Uncertainty about quality also involves that there is a difference with end user viewpoint about quality for a provided consumer it builds consumer apparent risk and consumer become a risk unenthusiastic in most of the circumstance. Risk aversion an attitude of the consumer hits the consumer decision-making in several means (Rao & Bergen 1992; Shimp & Bearden, 1982). Risk Averse consumers are afraid of vague commodities assessment. In the circumstance brands minimize professed risk by consistent mark of quality (Redem & Swait, 1998; Montgomery & Wernerfelt, 1992). When there is quality vagueness for the brand particularly in the occurrence of risk aversion consumer's start searching more knowledge and reviews about the product quality prior to making the judgment to get it. (Money, Gilly & Graham, 1998; Shipm & Bearden, 1982). Trustworthiness is defined as the believability of an individual purpose at a specific time. Trustworthiness has major parts. Expertise & dependability (Rao & Ruekkert, 1994; Wernerfelt, 1988).

On the whole brand trustworthiness or brand standing is the brand belief by the consumer that the information or knowledge that is communicated and positioning that has been created in the brand it requires that consumers supposed the brand as having the capacity and eagerness to deliver on a regular basis that has been promised as it can leads to the signals of brands because if there would be no promise fulfilling the brand equity might be erased or eliminated. The researches in the past also said about the link of brand selection to different cultural extent (Cray & Mallory, 1998; Trompenaars & Hampden-turner, 1997; Voich, 1995) significant effort on cultural cross assessment scheme recognize different characteristic of cultures that can vary the brand choice as the concept is given by Hofstede. He conducted the research in organizational setup the value he define more or less connected with the consumer behavior like consumer tipping behavior or attitude (Lynn, Zinkhan & Harris 1993). A significant trait of a brands position in a product grouping is how similar or differentiated the brand is perceived to be in contrast with the other brands available in the market and in evaluation with the product category. For a positioning of a brand that is newly born or bit old several choice are there for the marketers initially he can make a positioning of the brand different in the overall market. By this advancement the brand is positioned and it shows a mix features and characteristics of the product in the grouping with different products and it shows as better on the differentiating the features of the product (Dickson & Ginter, 1987). Secondly similarly based on the differentiating perspective it is like differentiating the brands from the other brands includes an effort to generate a different submarket for the newly born brand. With this approach an effort is made to setup the brand apart from the generic grouping slightly than to position the brand within the entire market as in the 1st phase the differentiating features is used to build a solid perception of difference and it makes that the brand is in a class by itself. A subtype is consequently a brand exclusive enough in contrast with the other brands in the market that a fine distinct perceptual state line differentiates it from the other rival brands upsetting marketing behaviors like brand changing and going for another better brand. (Day, Shocker, & Srivastava, 1979; Srivastava, Alpert & Shocker, 1984). Quality that is perceived is the universal evaluation by the consumer that they judge about the better product or brand. (Zeithml,1988) .

Contradictory prove whether best quality perceptions of the center brand boost consumer assessments of an addition owing to the relocate of positive quality associations from the center brand to the addition. Center brand quality to forecast addition and center brands assessments may not be adequate when used in segregation

(Aaker & Keller, 1990). The recommendations are the best fit judicious move of center brand quality to the addition (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Bottomley & Doyle, 1996). Comparatively it is also been planned that the impact of fit on addition or extension and center brand assessments is temperate by the point of quality (Keller & Aaker, 1992). Last viewpoint is assumed and symbolized in the proposed framework specially forecasted that the professed quality of the center brand temperate the affiliation among fit and consumer assessments for the extensions i.e. addition and the center brand. The vital mechanism of positioning are the picking up the right customer targets, picking up the competitor targets and briefing down the competitive advantage as it is the unique attribute that the brand holds against its rivals which is very important in gaining the trust of the consumers and making a positive perception for consumers (Brooksbank, 1994). Being a manager of the brand as it holds a very significant role to play to make a brand to success or a failure he or she must have the confidence in the brand and must communicate the perception of the brand to the target consumer's mentality. (Ghodeswar, 2008). In creating a positioning strategy and to make it a successful weapon marketer must make sure and deem the target market and communicate to them that how the product is better from the other available rival brands and how it will be beneficial for them (Gwin & Gwin, 2003). Association with the marketing is in fashion for more than decades (Harger & Egan, 2006).

Its promoter see it as an growing model that guarantee so much and so in a way customer satisfaction and customer loyalty the best prominent definitions to relationship marketing as attracting and keeping customer in the extended term. The motive is to alter buyer actions and standing from informal comes a crossing, through marketing interference. Association marketing favors satisfied that can no longer be only rising, selling and carrying products where the importance given to the customers rather than keeping them. It is more or less getting anxious with the expansion and protection of jointly pleasing relationships with customer (Buttle, 1996) and clutches the customers keeping trustworthy (Gummesson, 1994; Bulger, 1999). In classify to obtain touching competitive advantage on the market the brand must be understood and get by the target prospects. The consequence of the successful positioning strategy is the representation of the clear image in the mind of the consumer that what it means to them and what they perceived for it. A clear identification inside mind of the consumer about the brand is the most significant goal in marketing. The marketing attempt is that a company focused on getting a desired position in a target consumers mind. A marketer must be keen to make a difference between the actual positioning and the desired thinking because the reluctant among the two is pretty thin and could lead to give a brand a grand success or huge defeat. A sturdy brand and a durable position should be manage and achieve jointly by any small and medium enterprise (SME) because they can differentiate among the survivors from the moldy, the champion from the rabble and the influential from the chaser it clearly meant that the product form package size and price as compared to competition today we are in an era where the significant value of both the tangible characteristics of the product to the company image regardless to it. Positioning has its origin in the wrap up products where the concept called product positioning the main theme of positioning is to create a right message in the audience mind and to grab their confidence about the particular brand.

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Method of Data Collection

Survey method has been used to collect the data from the consumers with the help of a questionnaire, which contains 12 questions regarding 12 brands which contain different positioning strategies. The SPSS statistical package Is used to process the collected data.

3.2 Sampling Technique

Unrestricted non-probability sampling was used to collect data from 250 consumers who were brand conscious and do frequently buy items of different brands.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size is 250 random consumers.

3.4 Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument for the data collection is a Questionnaire.

3.4.1 Validity and Reliability Test

Table 1 – Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	238	33.3
Excluded ^a	476	66.7
Total	714	100.0

a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 2 – Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.666	22

3.5 Research Model Developed

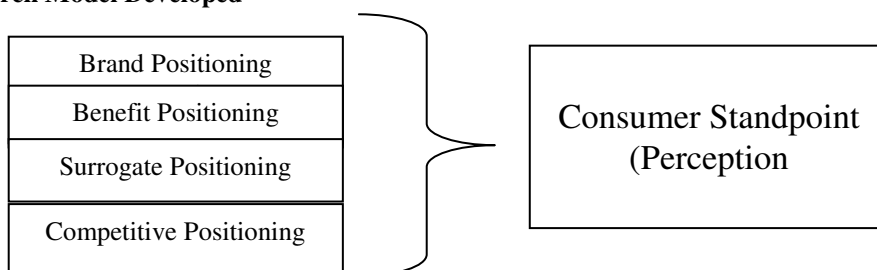


Figure 1 – Research Model

3.6 Statistical Technique

The statistical technique that has used for the finding of this research study is “one sample t test” it is being use because one sample t test is a condition when constant data is available commencing a single random sample. It supposes the population is normally scattered. It is moderately vigorous to breach of this assumption for sample sizes equal to or greater than 30. As in this case the data collection of 250 consumers so that is why this technique is used. This research analyzed impact of brand positioning strategies on consumer perception that which one is highly positive for them and which one is low or highly negative for them.

4: RESULTS

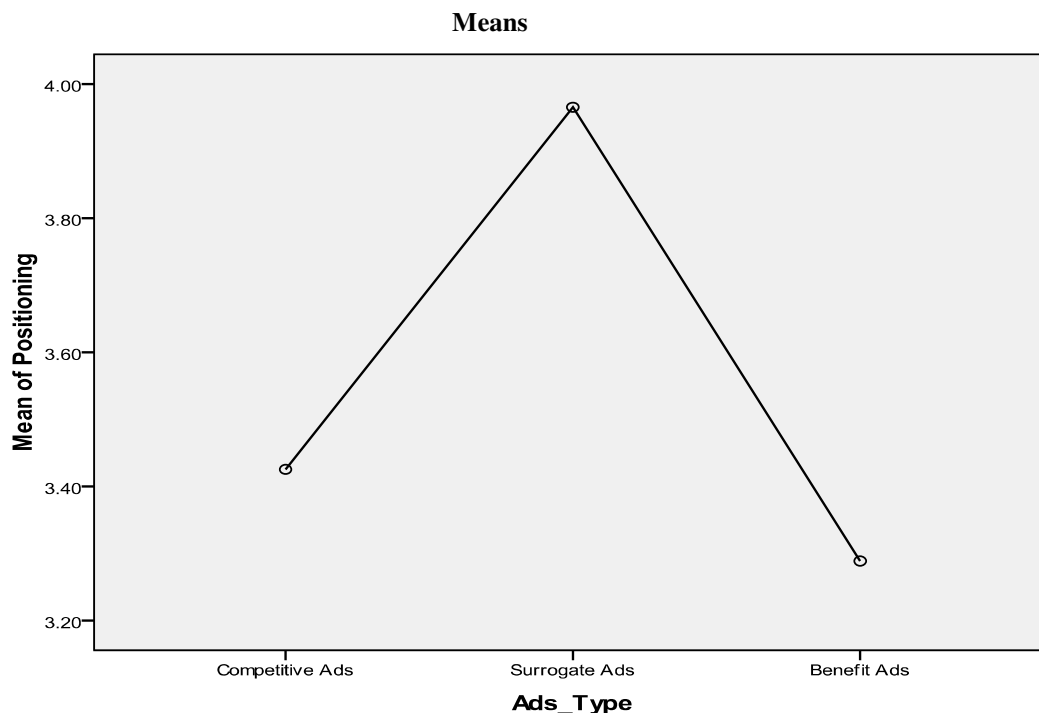
4.1 Findings from the collected data (using SPSS)

Table – 3 One-Sample t-Test Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Competitive_Ads	238	3.4254	.70070	.04542
Surrogate_Ads	238	3.9653	.53919	.03495
Benefit_Ads	238	3.2889	.54329	.03522

Table 4 – One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 4					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Competitive_Ads	-12.650	237	.000	-.57458	-.6641	-.4851
Surrogate_Ads	-.992	237	.322	-.03466	-.1035	.0342
Benefit_Ads	-20.193	237	.000	-.71113	-.7805	-.6418



Plots

Figure 2 – Mean Plots

4.2 Interpretation

The research study tested one sample t test on the data collected through 250 respondents that are consumers the interpretation is given by analyzing the test and facts and figures that the impact in consumers perception regarding surrogate positioning is positive as the significant value that revealed is .322 that is $\text{sig} > 0.05 = H_2$ (Hypothesis 2) (MV=TV) (Mean value is equal to test value) as clearly shown in the finding that the mean value is showing positivity and it is equal to the test value the grouping of the positivity and negativity is posted the test value in these orders 1=highly negative, 2= negative, 3= neutral, 4= positive and 5= highly positive , so surrogate positioning valued calculated as 3.9653 which is almost 4 so it is hence proved, where as the significant values for beneficial positioning and competitive positioning is less than 0.05 (MV≠TV) the mean value is far away from 4 I.e. 3.4254 H3 (Hypothesis 2) for competitive positioning and 3.2889 for H1 (Hypothesis 1) beneficial positioning so that is why its significant value is rejected because it is less than 0.05. It shows that the impact of brand positioning strategies i.e. surrogate positioning on consumer perception is positive where as the impact of competitive and beneficial positioning is negative.

4.3 Hypothesis Assessment Summary

Hypothesis	Sig. Value	Empirical Conclusion
H:1 = Benefit positioning has positive impact on consumer standpoint.	.000	Rejected
H:2=Surrogate Positioning has positive impact on consumer standpoint.	.322	Accepted
H:3=Competitive Positioning has positive impact on consumer standpoint.	.000	Rejected

5. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, IMPLIATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusion

The importance of brand positioning has its role in consumer’s perception and to attract them to buy certain brand and to buy it again and again as the study tells much for brand positioning and its vital importance these days one should don’t forget that every consumer is different from the other every consumer has a different school of thought while going to buy the product or service for a particular brand some goes for quality, some goes for brand and they show loyalty for the particular brands and some buy randomly not thinking any think they just consume it and forget it and so on and do forth the process goes on and on. The findings of this research really enlightened the positioning of the brand and its importance as the findings showed that Consumer Showed

positive behavior and perception when they have seen television commercials of certain brands and they tend to be positive on the surrogate positioning which revolves on human psychology they perceive on a positive note for these positioning of the brand where as the competitive positioning which always showed the brands strategy which always ends in a fighting and to prove one another brand best of the best consumers perception for them is negative or may be neutral to some extent same is the case with the case with the beneficial positioning where the marketers more emphases on selling products to masses regardless of the quality and customer loyalty. The conclusion revealed that as a marketer one should think holistically and to make consumer remember their products and brands for decades they should sell the quality and to gain the confidence of the consumer so as many giant brands are doing in the world and they have phenomenal rating when comes to the brand positioning as a brand the company must spend time on the R&D and educate the consumers in their ads whether print or visual that what the brand is for them for this companies must keep on educating the employees to win the consumers as it is made for them .

5.2 Discussions

There is 3 hypothesis in this research i.e. H: 1 (Beneficial positioning) H:2 (Surrogate positioning) H:3 (Competitive positioning) out of 3, 2 is rejected and one is accepted it showed that Surrogate positioning have the positive impact on consumer perception therefore it is accepted where as the competitive and beneficial positioning have the negative impact on consumer perception therefore it is rejected.

5.3 Implications

The implication of this research study is concerned one can really get best of it because it really spelled out the hard core reality that how consumer perceive about certain brands and what urge them to buy more and what make them delight and satisfied and for which brand they like to do the long discussions and promotions as a marketer one should never forget word of mouth of the consumers it is really major weapon to make the brand success full as the study suggests that the psychological i.e. surrogate positioning has shown the positive impact on consumer perception while the competitive and beneficial positioning showed negative perception of consumers by this assessments one can say that the marketers must be focus on the vision of their brand that where they want to see their brand. This research suggest that they should seek an umbrella where they can make a strategy in a way that will be an innovative and exclusive thing in the market because these days the consumers are really conservative about the quality, brand name , brand image and the promise the brand do with their consumers so there is a roam available is a market and for that being a marker one should try to fill that gap in the industry which are missing this study can really help out to implement and to think out of the box one cannot be as a copy cat this research can create a certain image In the mind of the consumer that what position exemplifies as a new brand In a market one can implement this study and take a deep help out of it.

5.4 Future research

By analyzing this research one can come to the point that in future aspect the research can be pursued regarding what are the parameters on which consumer accept or reject the brand. Moreover, how they perceive a new brand in the market and what are their expectations from a brand. The question regarding how positioning triggers the consumer to buy product of particular brand could also be answered in future researches.

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