CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND BRAND POSITIONING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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ABSTRACT

There has been a lot of study on how to develop a corporate brand that generates money, but few studies have examined how brand equity is produced and quantified in the internet age. Brand positioning strongly influences customer tastes and purchases. The research noted that brand positioning affects customer decision-making and may impact preference, loyalty, and buying behaviour. The research also finds that brand image, distinctiveness, perceived value, and emotional connection are key positioning determinants. The research used qualitative and quantitative methodologies to assess consumer purchasing attitudes based on brand positioning across demographic groupings. The research highlighted the importance of effective branding in consumerist competition and offered businesses tips on how to enhance brand positioning. This research examined brand positioning and customer involvement via digital marketing and social media. This study is for marketers, companies, and academics who want to understand how brand positioning and customer choice change in today's fast-paced market.

Keywords: Brand Positioning, Consumer Choice, Buying Behaviour, Factors Influencing Consumer Attitude, Perception.

1. INTRODUCTION

Brands are businesses' capital. Brands are becoming the company's major assets since they may generate over 60% value. Brands are crucial for manufacturers and consumers because of this. Brands will simplify shopping. Consumers need not analyse all items before buying. Brands may promise continuous quality when people purchase their products. Internet penetration increased approximately sevenfold from 6.5 percent to 43 percent of the global population between 2000 and 2015. Internet availability at home climbed from 18% in 2005 to 46% in 2015. Internet connection gives customers free and unlimited product information, including price, features, tools (like price comparison), and a vast number of providers, making brands unimportant.

Despite the dotcom industry crisis in early 2001 and the fatal prognosis of brand management due to e-commerce, the brand continued to deliver value to the organisation. Although e-commerce may have a large influence on companies, brand management is considered outmoded in the digital era due to new media and strategies like interactive marketing that make conventional brand management less successful. With the rise of new corporate brands like Amazon.com, Yahoo, Google, eBay, and Facebook in this digital age and their tremendous brand equity, they quickly outperform offline enterprises. As marketplaces expand and offer new sorts of competition, such as pure online firms and brick-and-click enterprises, organisations may require more than branding.

 In today's competitive digital business world, brand equity is a major problem in marketing research since it creates value for firms and consumers. In the digital era, organisations should be able to establish and deploy a digital force to grow their brand. For online retail enterprises, brand equity is tied to website design. The best way to create brand digital assets is via a website, so organizations must consider security, accessibility, and navigation.

Thus, our study will focus on customer-based brand equity in the digital age, particularly in e-commerce enterprises where trust is crucial. Because offline companies allow customers to touch and feel the goods, they develop different opinions than internet firms. Successful brand

management requires a consumer-centric knowledge of brand equity. Low manufacturing costs, larger profits, and more income might result from strong consumer-based brand equity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Alam et al (2025) adopted as a consequence, 407 replies were gathered and used into the research. Characteristics like privacy, trust, dependability, and electronic customer relationship management were used to evaluate the impact of digital marketing on consumer brand perception. All of these characteristics had a major influence. Social media, however, was determined to be unimportant. The research's primary shortcomings were its single-country focus, which could be broadened, the sample size, which could be raised, and the study variables, which might include more aspects. Organisations benefit from the study's understanding of changing customer traits and contemporary market perspectives. In order to better fulfil and satisfy consumer requirements, this data helps firms establish digital marketing platforms and shape their marketing campaigns. The study lays the groundwork for comprehending customers and determining how they see digital marketing initiatives. It assesses how consumers see brands in the digital era, allowing them to improve their competitive market positions and marketing tactics.

Ahmed et al (2015) concerned, has brought many advantages to the organisation and can be an extremely valuable marketing tool, but only if it manages to build a positive relationship between the brand and consumers and has a proportional advantage over its competitors. On the other hand, the digital age can set up many traps. This article examines the global market and key company sectors that are crucial to survival and success in the digital era. It shows customer awareness, thinking, and behaviour. This study introduces conceptual frameworks of branding in Internet form and shows how they may assist marketing strategists organise and integrate current information to establish effective Internet branding strategies. This presentation will demonstrate a prominent multinational brand that overcame digital age obstacles.

Gammoh et al (2011) indicated by an overall improvement in the respondents' attitudes towards the fictional brand when GCCP is employed in comparison to the usage of LCCP and the use of LCCP. Furthermore, our findings indicate that the amount of conviction that respondents have in global citizenship has a moderating influence on the success of the GCCP method. It was discovered that these findings were consistent across both samples. The findings of this research give particular strategic positioning guidance to brand managers who are competing in the global marketplace. Additionally, the study provides significant managerial insights into the potential value of the GCCP approach. As a result of the growth of global market segments, it is essential to provide assistance to brand managers who are looking to improve the equity of their brand in a worldwide marketplace that experiences intense competition. The purpose of this research is to make a contribution to the existing body of literature on worldwide brand positioning by conducting an empirical investigation into the practicability of GCCP as a strategic positioning guide for global marketing managers.

Dropulić, B. (2022) published in the Journal of Marketing in 1993 serves as a foundation for further study of the concept of brand equity. However, things have altered over the last ten years due to the rapid advancement of (communication) technology and, more recently, the COVID-19 epidemic. As a result, the majority of firms have shifted their operations to the online space. As such, the idea of brand equity has to be re-examined. This study examines the body of research on brand equity in the digital age, identifying gaps and promising directions for further study. To this aim, a narrative evaluation of publications published in the Web of Science database is carried out after bibliometric analysis. The study will add to the body of knowledge on brand management by providing avenues for further investigation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study examines how brand positioning affects customer target market choice using Max, a value-centric clothes store. The particular goals are:

1. Examine how brand positioning affects Max's consumer purchasing decision.

2. To determine brand positioning factors influencing Max consumer decision, including price, quality, trendiness, emotional appeal, and brand image.

3. Analyse the impact of consumer perception, trust, and value-for-money on Max brand loyalty.

4. Analyse the impact of Max's inexpensive, fast-fashion positioning on repeat purchases and brand loyalty.

5. All respondents will be sampled via consumer convenience sampling, or non-probability sampling. Data will be gathered from Max shoppers. Sample Size: To get a statistically viable sample, 100-150 customers will be contacted.

6. Research respondents will get pre-standardized questionnaires. All surveys evaluate brand awareness, perceived value, perceived quality, and emotional brand connection.

7. Statistical analysis, such as percentages, cross-tabulations, and correlation analysis, will be used to analyses consumer-perceived attributes influencing brand perception and purchase decisions.

3.1 SOURCES OF DATA

Primary Data: Respondents' preferences, attitudes, and reasoning concerning Max's brand are analysed using primary data. The Max shop sends clients systematic questionnaires and surveys. Answers are clarified via face-to-face interviews or brief client chats. To assess consumers' opinions of Max brand positioning versus price, quality, and shop layout. The goal is to discover the main customer decision-makers, such as brand image, emotional connection, or value for money.

Secondary Data: Secondary data comes from previously published sources that help explain the research challenge. Internal reports (if available), retail studies and publications, market research reports, and brand positioning white papers are sources. Academic publications, essays, and research papers on retail branding and customer behaviour are also significant. Web-based secondary data includes social media reviews, blogs, and user reviews. Provide context and assistance for analysis. To compare results to published knowledge and industry standards.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data collecting techniques for the Max research, "An Impact of Brand Positioning on Consumer Choice," are described here. The data collecting processes will help participants provide relevant, trustworthy, and accurate data to better understand Max's brand positioning's influence on customer behaviour.

Primary data collection method: Pre-designed questionnaires will be given to Max's retail customers to gather data. A measuring tool: The survey will be pre-designed to obtain quantitative data. Demographic questions (age, sex, income) and closed-ended questions (multiple-choice or Likert scales) will be in the survey.

Mode of distribution: The poll will be given at Max shops as people buy. The survey may be sent or completed online using a QR code or other electronic format.

Recording data: Customers' replies will be documented routinely on paper or electronically (e.g., an online spreadsheet) for analysis.

Techniques for the collection of Secondary Data: Secondary data will supplement main results with context. Secondary data sources include max sales statistics and documentation (if accessible), research studies or whitepapers, industry journals, and user-generated data from marketplaces, blogs, and social media. Consumer behaviour and brand positioning academic journal publications related to the inquiry.

Purpose: Finding brand positioning trends and category standards. Comparing the original study's results to others.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The study of 210 respondents showed a female majority.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 210)

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent (%)

Gender	Male	134	63.8%
	Female	76	36.1%
Age	18-21	77	36.6%
	22-25	104	49.5%
	26-32	26	12.3%
	33-44	3	1.4%
Income level	Below 20000	58	27.6%
	20000-50000	48	22.8%
	50000-80000	66	31.4%
	Above 80000	38	18.0%
visits	Once a week	24	11.4%
	Once a month	68	32.3%
	Once 3-6 month	68	32.3%
	Rarely	50	23.8%
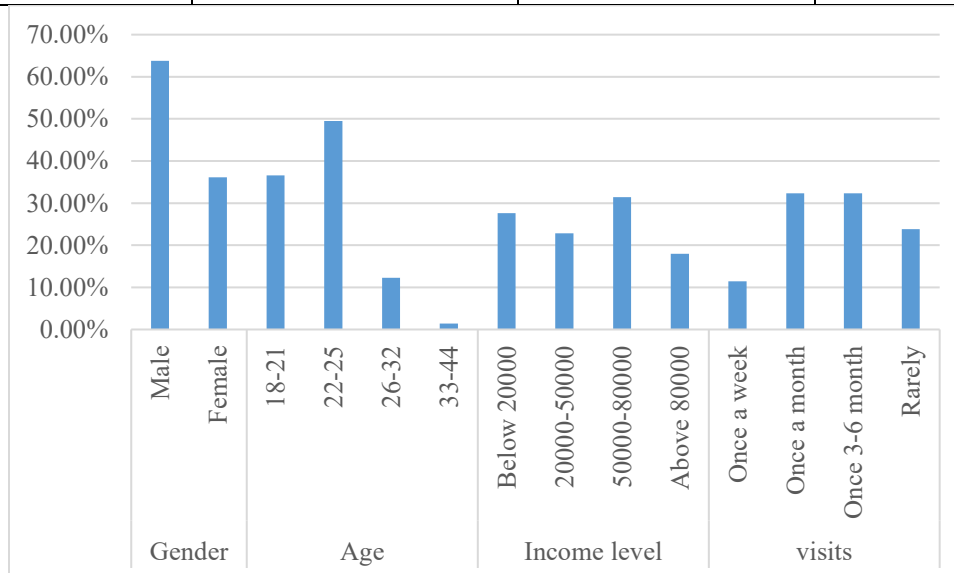
Fig.1 Represents the percentage of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 210)

Participant gender split was 63.8% (134) female and 36.1% (76) male. This suggests that the poll findings and overall numbers may favour women's preferences. For future data, we will address

gender bias and examine additional gender-dependent factors. Stratified analysis may help explore male and female comparison subgroups and inspire fascinating comparisons. If gender inequalities exist in any or both, we will have detected this restriction, and we may wish to examine how to alter it or deliver more equalised interest results in the future.

Presumably 210 survey respondents are young adults. In the 22-25 range, 49.5% of participants (n=104) are in their mid-20s. It seems that the population is younger since 36.6% (n=77) is 18-21. This age group comprised 12.3% of the sample (n=26). Only 1.4% (n=3) were 33-44.4. Due to a sample bias towards younger persons, these results are hard to extend to older groups. Age differences may affect other survey factors in follow-up surveys. Language attitudes, habits, and preferences may be statistically affected by age-group response frequency differences. Continued studies with a more balanced and age-diverse population will provide more full, representative data; findings.

Significant income diversity exists, with high-income groups ranging from ₹50,000 to ₹80,000. This category has 31.4% of respondents, 66, demonstrating a significant income continuum density between medium and upper-middle income. With 27.6% of respondents (58) earning under ₹20,000, the second-highest income group suggests poverty. Few individuals in the sample had greater salaries, with 22.8% (48) earning ₹20,000 to ₹50,000 and 18.0% (38) earning above ₹80,000. Individuals vary economically, according to the distribution. Income may positively explain other variables because respondent responses may vary between income groups, resulting in meaningful differences in spending, access to services, or perceptions of different items. Enhancing relative to total income may provide more valuable information.

210 respondents reported varying Max visit frequency. 32.3% (68 people) visit Max monthly. Visits are regular but not overexposure. They may visit Max seasonally, as 32.3% (68 people) said they did so every three to six months. Many interviewees were 23.8% "Rarely" (50). The most loyal buyers were 11.4% (24 people) who frequented Max. This graph depicts diverse shopping activity. In larger shops, monthly and tri-to-six-month customers frequent Max. The high irregular push indicates discovering any problems or areas for improvement that might raise

customer engagement in this category. The tiny but dense weekly shopping population showed MSU might gain consumers.

Table 2:

Variables	frequency	Percent
Price	70	33.3%
Product Variety	37	17.6%
in- Short Experience	68	32.3%
Availability of Trendy Products	35	16.6%

The 210 replies show how Max differs from Trends as a retail brand. Max may be a differentiator since 33.3% of respondents said it could accomplish "price" at a competitive price. Second largest mention (16.6%) was "trendy products". This suggests Max is the top shop for trending items. "Product variety," 17.6% of respondents said that they would pick a retailer's product variety, thus Max would be drawn to a wide selection. Finally, 32.3% prefer the "in-store experience," which is less essential than distinctiveness, although Max remains competitive in this area due to pricing and trends. This suggests that Max's success depends on affordability and fashionable items. Price and contemporary items differentiate more than in-store experience, although variety is still important. Based on this sample data, Max's competitive strength is value for money and fashion trends, not ambiance or variety.

5. DISCUSSION

Brand Positioning Influencing Consumer Choice The research showed the importance of brand positioning and forethoughtful brand image and impression manipulation in customer buying decisions. This research will show that excellent brand positioning goes beyond brand identification to relevance and the targeted consumer's overall desire, esteem, and values. This scientific report suggests positioning based on knowing the target customer. Consider schagrinat

demographics, psychographics, lifestyle, values, and purchase motive as well as demographics. Spend time and money on social customer value judgements, preferences, and unfulfilled needs.

The positioning statement will be succinct and unambiguous after investigation. To internal decision makers and external audiences, the positioning statement will continue to describe the brand identity. The positioning statement specifies target customer, brand value proposition, and competitive consumption environment. Position statements should be succinct, clear, memorable, and adaptable. Brands that convey stories resonate with consumers. Create a brand narrative that aligns with the target audience's beliefs and objectives and include it into all brand communications to engage customers across all contact points. Focus on Difference: A competitive market requires differentiation. Determine the brand's competitive advantages. To develop brand identity, focus on facilities, features, advantages, price, target market, or brand personality in all marketing communications.

Not Features: Customers purchase value, not frills or conveniences. Always emphasise the brand's worth to customers. Show how the brand solves a problem or improves their life.

Consistent Touchpoints: Every customer touchpoint needs consistency. Establish brand consistency throughout advertising, social media, in-store experience, and customer service. Customer confusion and brand dilution result from inconsistent messages.

Build Emotional Connection: People buy based on emotion, not rationality. Address their values, desires, and aspirations to engage emotionally. Use visuals, phrases, and tales to evoke positive emotions and tell a compelling narrative about how the brand helps them succeed or be happy. Measurement and Assessment: Quantify consumer engagement, brand awareness, brand perception, and sales keyword efficacy in your efforts to assess brand position.

Internal Branding Approach: Brand positioning goes beyond external brands. Brand positioning involves teams matching the exterior brand with the internal brand vision and values. All staff should know the brand position and be empowered to achieve it.

Investigate the Role of Digital Channels: Research how social media and internet advertising affect brand positioning and customer perceptions. Brand positioning should be examined using market and cultural tolerance criteria in cross-cultural research. Determine how culture affects customer behaviour. Identify specialised market brand positioning possibilities and difficulties. Discuss implications for targeting and engaging certain customer categories. More study is needed on tale aspects that engage customers and what influences, impacts, and creates brand loyalty.

6. CONCLUSION

This study shows how brand positioning influences customer choice. Brand positioning is a constant process that needs evaluation, adaptation, and enhancement. In today's competitive market, brands that invest in audience understanding, captivating narrative, and significant differentiation will succeed. If brand managers and marketers follow this study, they will construct resonant brand positions that drive purchase behaviour and promote brand loyalty. The offered study topics provide significant opportunity to understand the complicated relationship between consumer behaviour and brand positioning. Further study will help build effective brand strategies and understand customer choice in a fast-changing environment. Successful brand positioning involves connecting with customers, winning their confidence, and keeping the brand promise.

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