The Role of Marketing Intelligence in Brand Positioning:
Perspective of Marketing Professionals

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ABSTRACT

The presented study explains the role of Marketing Intelligence (MI) in the brand positioning of select consumer durable goods. This involves examining the usage and application of Marketing Information System (MkIS) by the various marketing professionals for formulating brand positioning strategies related to various consumer durable goods offered by their respective organizations. One of the aims of this study is to design a scale that examines the impact of MI on the identified brand positioning factors derived from the extensive review of literature and exploratory factor analysis. Survey method has been used to collect the responses of marketing professionals working in the select consumer durable companies. The principles of reliability, validity, and sensitivity in the design of scale have been applied to enhance the rigor of the scale thus developed. The study tries to advance the understanding of MkIS and MI research by investigating relationship among marketing intelligence and factors of brand positioning.

KEYWORDS

BI - Business Intelligence, BP - Brand Positioning, CI - Competitive Intelligence, MkIS - Marketing Information System, MI - Marketing Intelligence

INTRODUCTION

Researchers within the stream of marketing literature have given intensive attention to explain the various strategies of brand positioning and how a company can position its brand in the mind of its targeted customers. With the advent of competition, marketing managers are focusing more on online sources of marketing intelligence (MI) along with the traditional mode of offline sources. In India, there are companies who are doing market research or market orientation to get the information about customers, competitors, markets, and suppliers. The ultimate aim is to get the accurate internal and external information of the company, competitors, and market through both offline and online sources to raise the overall capability of the organization.

In the domain of marketing, MI plays a dominant role in the brand positioning in terms of performance of not only the product offered by the organization but also the whole organization as a single entity (Narver & Slater, 1990; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Pelham, 1997). Technological advances in computer- based information systems have dramatically changed approaches to marketing management and these advances are moving marketing managers into the corporate spotlight by providing new tools with which to respond to market opportunities. It is important to note that MI is a broader term and Marketing Information System (MkIS) is a tool that assists in generating intelligence for marketing applications (Matsuno & Mentzer, 2000). Company-wide, MI is seen as an uninterrupted and interactive structure of individuals, equipment, techniques and methodology to collect, select, evaluate and disseminate relevant, timely and precise information to all the concerned stakeholders. This information is specifically used by marketing professionals to refine their marketing planning along with its application, execution, and control with a special reference to MkIS (Tan & Ahmed, 1999). The importance of MI can be viewed in terms of long term planning operations, product marketing, brand evolution and new product development with its role being more prominent in the brand positioning context.

Brand positioning is immensely crucial in the development of the brand image. The decryption of a brand image in the target market rely on strategies made by marketing professionals for positioning, executed by an organization and the way a message is designed and presented to consumers. The large number of marketing professionals insists that positioning focuses mainly on effective and potential marketing communications like sales promotion and advertising. Positioning is influenced by pricing, distribution, and the kind of the goods (Dibb & Simkin, 1991). The ways for positioning are about boundless for any given brand and can be explained in many distinguished methods. An accurate positioning of a brand is basic to its competitive-edge (Aaker, 1996) while an inaccurate or inexact positioning can ruin a brand to collapse. Thus, to reach at ideal positioning for a given brand, the hunt for it, begins in the consciousness of the consumer at the brand image level. However, at the brand identity level, (Pelham, 1997) the role of Marketing Intelligence (MI) with the use of Marketing Information System (MkIS) becomes extremely important in enhancing Brand Positioning (BP) of the product. It is emphasized that researchers need to focus on the various ways in which MkIS can assist marketing professionals in identifying customers at brand identity level to make refined, appropriate and confident decisions regarding customer needs and preferences (Marshall & LaMotte, 2011). However, questions still remain regarding the contribution of MkIS to marketing professionals' decision-making and ultimately its usage impacts organizational performance (Hunt & Lambe, 2000) specifically in consumer durable sector where consumers get a varied number of choices of products and they need to decide while purchasing.

The electronics market and consumer durables in provincial and semi-civic areas report around 40 percent of the total market and is growing at about 30 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) (EY, 2015). The consumer durables market is anticipated to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14.8 percent to US$ 12.5 billion in Financial Year 2015 from US$ 7.3 billion in Financial Year 2012. At present, the consumer electronics and durable industry is estimated at around Rs 34,000 crore (EY, 2015). The demand for consumer electronics and durables is steered by emerging vogue of these goods among young population allied with growing disposable incomes (Rao & Sairam, 2009).

This study examines the role of MI in the identified factors of brand positioning and identifies the factors of brand positioning with the perspective of marketing professionals of consumer durable organizations. The next section reviews relevant literature on brand positioning leading to a discussion on the significance of Marketing Information System (MkIS) in generating Marketing Intelligence (MI) for better brand positioning. The section on literature concludes with the identification of brand positioning factors impacted through use of MI.

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