

WHICH POSITIONING STRATEGY OUTPERFORMS?

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ABSTRACT: The effectiveness estimation of positioning strategies perceived by consumers is a challenge for marketers and confusion is still there in their minds, at the same time in the mind of strategy makers that which strategy is more successful. Successful positioning and its well established perception on consumer side are the symptoms of company's long run progress and product's success. Empirical, the relative effectiveness of taken positioning strategies is measured. A multidimensional scale is used to measure the effectiveness. The scale is constituted by the four dimensions including dissimilarity, uniqueness, favorability and credibility. Each dimension is assessed by the associated elements that are seventeen in total. Practically, three print advertisements from cellular industry are selected with the experts' opinion. Each advertisement represents the given positioning strategy. Quantitative data were gathered by showing these advertisements to the 100 consumers that are selected via purposive sampling technique. The statistical technique, ANCOVA is applied herein the study. The results showed both benefit positioning strategy and surrogate strategy received the much higher and significant score against the three dimensions of positioning effectiveness (i.e., favorability, dissimilarity and uniqueness) whereas results are not significant for credibility dimension.

Keywords: Positioning, Positioning Strategy, Surrogate Positioning, Direct Benefit Positioning, Indirect Benefit Positioning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Blankson and Kalafatis [1] have expounded that limited research existed in past on the brand positioning effectiveness i.e., how effectiveness (of a brand positioning) should be measured. Fuchs [2] also supported that there are scant studies that address to measure the effectiveness of brand positioning. Furthermore, he has explained that there is no authentic instrument that could measure the effectiveness of brand positioning.

The effectiveness estimation of positioning strategies perceived by consumers is a challenge for marketers and confusion is still there in their minds, at the same time in the minds of strategy makers that which strategy is more successful.

The main concern of positioning is consumer's perception (i.e., how consumers perceive the launched positioning) either positioning is directed to the individual, brand or company [3]. The formulation phase of positioning strategy is not as simple as it is considered. Companies are facing intense competition in building "brand positioning" and constructing hurdles continuously on the consumer side.

Massive and growing competition, continuous differentiation in mobile phone brands, introduction of me-too brands, technological advancement (i.e., shortening product life cycle because of rapidly changing technology), new brands entry (like Q Mobile in Pakistan), availability of more options for consumers and behavior changing choices have enhanced the significance of positioning strategies. Of course, such kind of fair competition is demanded in highly competitive environment. There is absence of generally accepted (universal) positioning topology that fulfills the requirements and desires of consumers. However, some sort of classification exists in literature that addresses the requirements of different fields like sales.

The positioning is the most important notion in the field of marketing. If positioning strategy achieves its real purpose that is the clear recognition of consumer's perception then it is considered as positioning success [4]. Successful positioning and its well established perception on consumer side are the symptoms of company's long run progress and product's success. The most critical, serious and discouraging issue is that many marketing personnel are unaware of the positioning notion and even functionalities of positioning strategy [3]. In the contemporary era of marketing it is a core concern of consumer satisfaction, providing values, conveying benefits and giving solution to problems. The real soul of present marketing philosophy and its central theme is merely consumer care. The claimed promises during marketing communication are required to fulfill rather than just communicating the benefits [5].

From the above debate, a dilemma is extracted that is related to formation phase of positioning strategy. Positioning strategy must be of distinctive nature with respect to the rival in the ongoing cutthroat competition.

The basic research question that is being answered in this piece of research is "which positioning strategy is more effective than the other i.e., benefit positioning or surrogate positioning"?

2. LITERATURE BACKGROUND

There are two views regarding the term position and positioning. The opinion varies because of different scholars. Researchers differentiated position from positioning and other used these terms interchangeably. Position is static concept in which consumers grasped an image of a product in their minds. It means that the place held in the mind of consumer is constant. The concept of positioning is dynamic in nature. It changes in the consumer mind by the company marketing efforts. Positioning is continuously managed by marketing team. It means both the stakeholders (i.e.,

consumer and company) are active in building the appropriate image of a brand. In short, positioning is an active process[6]. The second view vis-à-vis first one is different and researchers didn't make any difference between these two terms (i.e., position and positioning) and interchangeable[7]. In a current study both the term position and positioning are used without distinction.

More specific term in a marketing field that scholars used is brand's position. There are three aspects of this term; a) place of product, b) product ranking, c) mental approach. The place of product explains the product acceptability, awareness, circulation in its market. Product rank variable revealed the product with respect to competitors. Product is being evaluated by various dimensions either the specific product is fair against the competitors' product. Prescribed dimensions evaluated the given product in many ways like quality, market share, positive word of mouth, good will in market etc. The third aspect of brands' position is mental approach that exposes the consumer trends towards the product. Consumers' attitude towards each product is different. In mental approach marketer observed the consumer cognitive behavior, affective behavior and purchase decision behavior towards the product[8].

Now there is need to draw the clear line between the two terms brand positioning and strategic positioning. The notion of strategic positioning is associated with the literature of strategic management and has a distinct explanation from the brand positioning concept. Strategic positioning is being done by company owned capacities and competencies whereas brands' positioning is managing the brands' imaginations (e.g., perception and images) in consumers' mind [9, 10]. Strategic positioning is a stability of a firm in a competitive environment [11]. In short, it is a primarily depended on the resources of the organization[12]. DiMingo [13] defined the strategic positioning in a more comprehensive vein. He explains that it is a step wise process in which following steps are involved:

1. Identify the segment in a market
2. Select the segment having business potential
3. Target the competitors that have to compete
4. Formulate the strategy to compete the targeted competitors

The main focus of strategic positioning is on the product market by the organization[14]. Thus, firms try to organize their resources to gain the positional benefits in product market[15]. Suppose, if any cellular phone manufacturing company's management in Pakistan claims that their company is leader in innovation, it is necessary to invest in R&D. Further, to sustain such positioning (innovative leader) there is need to allocate organizational resources on permanent basis and need to hire the entrepreneurs, creative minded personnel and skilled workers.

Table 2.1

Crux of Concepts

<i>Concept</i>	<i>Nature of concept</i>	<i>Literature Extracts</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Position	Static in	Rigger, 1995;	Unilever brand

	nature	Sarel, 1980	“lifebuoy” static position is “red soap” only
Positioning	Dynamic in nature	Kerin, Hartley & Rudelius, 2007	Company changed the consumer perception by introducing new color and packaging of lifebuoy.
Brand's position	Psychological in nature	Wind, 1982	Now consumers of lifebuoy are psychologically satisfied that their brand has distinct place in market and created positive image in their mind.
Strategic Positioning	Strategic in nature	Porter,1985; Day &Wensley, 1988;Evans, Moutinho& Raaij,1996; Fahy&Smithe e, 1999; DiMingo 1988; Kald, Nilsson & Rapp, 2000; Morgan, Strong & McGuinness, 2003	Unilever is dealing the lifebuoy as a separate brand and building its image in a unique way with respect to competitive product. Company allocated separate advertising budget for this brand. Thus, company resources, capabilities and competencies are being used to sustain the brand image.

Source:Constructed by Author

Porter [16]has exposed the contradicting view in such a way that positioning is strategic decision. Of course, strategic nature decisions are taken by the company. The positioning concept is not merely addressed with respect to consumer view point but managerial activity too. So, positioning is a consumer concept as well as managerial concept.

Generally, more than one aspects of positioning exist in literature. The meaning of positioning is different from the consumer lens and has a different look from the company lens, employees perceived it in a different way and similarly competitor lens provided a totally different view. These four stakeholders perceive the positioning concept in a different way and at a same time angle of perception is different [17, 18]. Hence, the level of understanding or interpretation of positioning among the various stakeholders may differ. Practically, the response to the query “what is effective in terms of positioning” might be different in case of each stakeholder [2].

The positioning activities start from the company side and have intention to position products according to its nature. The implementation of intended positioning is circulated via marketing activities (advertising, packaging, sales promotion etc.). Actually, the intended positioning is for the consumer. Consumers interpret the intended positioning which is done

by marketing communication [19, 20]. It is not necessary for the consumers that they perceive the intended positioning with 100% accuracy. Thus, the difference is there in intended and perceived positioning. This difference originated from the implementation of advertising campaign which is a part of communication activities[1]. The difference between perceived and intended positioning can be identified by conducting market survey. After a thorough analysis, the corrective measures will be taken by the think tank and feedback will be shared to the company management. The focus of present study is to measure the effectiveness of positioning empirically.

2.1 Discussion on Positioning Strategies

The description of positioning strategies can be explained in different ways; theoretically, there are two ways; in a first way single base (positioning) is used and in a second way multiple positioning bases are used. Further, single base positioning is known as pure positioning whereas multi-base positioning is known as hybrid positioning. Hybrid positioning can be further subdivided into two parts a) balanced positioning and b) dominant positioning strategy. In a balanced positioning strategy multiple bases/dimensions are employed and almost equal importance is assigned to the applied dimensions. In a second case which is dominant positioning, multiple bases/dimensions are employed and almost unequal importance is assigned to the applied dimensions moreover importance varies according to the nature of brand [2]. With special reference to the current study, if mobile phone is positioned by using only surrogate strategy (as Nokia actual ad is used here in this study) is a best example of pure positioning. If a mobile phone is positioned by applying direct benefit and indirect strategy simultaneously it is an example of hybrid positioning. The scope of this study is grounded on pure positioning and hybrid positioning is beyond the scope of this study. Fuchs and Diamantopoulos [21] has decorated the name of pure positioning strategy as “depth” positioning strategy in which one dimension of a brand is highlighted.

In the present study two positioning strategies are under discussion 1) Benefit positioning 2) surrogate positioning strategy. Benefit positioning strategy has been further segregated in two parts a) direct benefit b) indirect benefit. Direct benefit positioning strategy emphasizes mainly on functional advantages of the brand[22]. Indirect benefit positioning strategy emphasizes mainly on non-functional advantages of the brand[22]. Surrogate positioning strategy emphasizes on certain usage of the brand[23]. Relative effectiveness of positioning strategies (direct benefit, indirect benefit and surrogate) is measured empirically regarding consumer viewpoint.

2.2 Study Conceptualization

The effectiveness of said positioning strategies is being measured in this piece paper. The most important aspect of

this research is consumers i.e., positioning strategies are measured with the consumer lens. There are three interrelated dimensions that are helped to measure the effectiveness of positioning strategies. The dimensions are: a) Differentiation (dissimilarity and uniqueness) b) Favorability and c) Credibility. Practically, there are four dimensions because differentiation is explained by two sub-dimensions i.e., 1) Favorability 2) Dissimilarity 3) Uniqueness 4) Credibility. The study model is placed in figure 1. Each dimension in the model is measured by elements. Later on these elements are provided the basis to develop study instrument. Consumer perception related to the positioning strategies is being measured by applying the study model[24].

Evidence of these four dimensions is there in literature. The brand is said to be favorable for consumer, if satisfaction is there regarding the feature of the brand. There is no question on the favorability of brand if it appeals to the consumer head and/or heart[25]. Dissimilarity shows the expected association that consumer perceives in different competing brand. These associations are features base (i.e., cognitive set of association) that a product class represents [26]. The association with a specific brand (within a product category) is organized because of its expectations and philosophies working in the consumers’ mind[27]. Categorization model explains that the brands are being recognized by their categories. Defined categories are associated with consumers’ memory[28]. Categorization model is more consistent with a mathematical theory name as “set theory” in which sets are being studied; the brand is considered as set (i.e., with its elements of an object) because of its associations. Here elements of an object mean features of a brand. Consumers associate with brands via its features. For instance, a consumer may associate with ROLEX (watch brand) by perceiving it as “expensive,” “luxurious,” “prestigious,” and “rich user” [29]. A generic example is there which explains how consumers recognize the brands by observing its features. The features like “feather”, “beak and “wings” present the image of bird [30]. Generally, dissimilarity reports the “common” associations with brand in relation to the rival brands[31]. Porter [32] has advocated that uniqueness in the companies offering is important because there is no option in the competitive environment to sustain the growth. Further, marketing team prepares various value propositions for different consumer groups (segments). This practice varies brand to brand. After the preparation of value proposition marketers position the focal brand with respect to competitors[33]to gain the uniqueness advantage. Other than favorability, dissimilarity and uniqueness there is another dimension termed as credibility; which plays a vital role in the measurement of positioning effectiveness[27, 34-36]. The main theme and core notion of credibility move around the believability variable[27, 34,37-41].

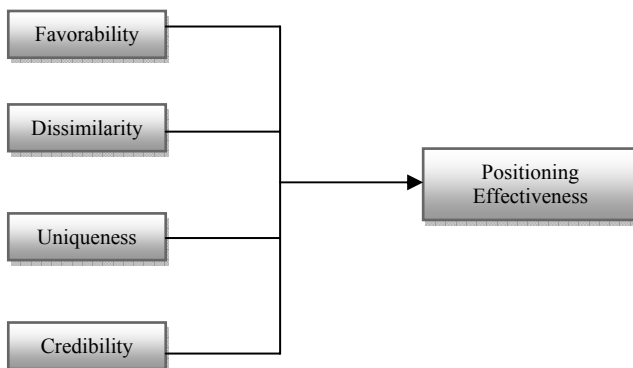


Figure 1 Study model to measuring the effectiveness of brand positioning strategies **Source:** Fuchs (2008)

2.3 Hypothesis Discussion

It is normally recognized that benefit positioning strategy superior to surrogate positioning [8, 42]. The superiority of benefit strategy over surrogate is extracted from the view that consumers grade the brands on the basis of supposed benefit [43]. The basic stimuli for the consumers are the brand benefits because brand benefits solve the consumers' expected problem [44, 45]. Benefits positioning information is working like a motivator that addresses or helps in forming consumer preferences in comparison of feature and surrogate positioning. The inference of performance shaping behavior of benefits positioning is that the relative effectiveness of benefits strategy is more than the surrogate one [46]. Evidences exist in literature in favor of surrogate positioning with respect to benefits positioning strategy. One particular aspect of surrogate strategy is the association creation with the brands. As a result of surrogate positioning consumers associate with the brand by perceiving external aspects and such kind of association differentiates focal brand from their competitors [25, 47, 48]. One most positive aspect of surrogate positioning is individuality. It gives individual touch to the consumer. The associativity of consumers made by surrogate provided information is so perfect and appropriate that it addresses the consumer requirement better than benefit positioning. Surrogate helps marketers to target a particular segment in a more attractive way and the most suitable for key brands [49, 50]. Along with the strengths of both the strategies (i.e., benefit positioning and surrogate position) there is evidence of weak points associated with these strategies. Benefit positioning and feature positioning are applied simultaneously by the marketers to introduce brand which is one of the disadvantages of benefit positioning strategy. Disadvantage in a sense that feature positioning is the most commonly used one [51]. Thus consumers get confused and tired by observing both strategies (i.e., feature positioning and benefit positioning) regularly. One risk is involved in surrogate positioning strategy which is not in benefit positioning that is it may confuse the brand image in the mind of consumer. The reason behind this risk; surrogate positioning strategy may give different meaning for different consumers [49]. On positive aspect of surrogate positioning is turned into a negative one. Surrogate positioning (it makes association with the external aspects of focal brand) is only feasible if

association already exist [19, 25, 52]. The nature of hypothesis is not directional but exploratory because of both strategies (benefit and surrogate) have their own advantages and disadvantages. It is difficult to postulate benefit positioning is more effective than surrogate and vice versa but postulated as:

H: Benefit and surrogate positioning differ in terms of their effectiveness.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Herein the study the numeric data is supposed to collect, the study is quantitative study. Further descriptive study mode is selected because of its nature. Orodho [53] and Kothari [54] have illustrated the descriptive research as a most appropriate to solve the unique problem, it is good representative of particular situation. Questionnaire is used as a survey tool; it is an evidence of minimum interference of researcher. Actually positioning strategies are developed by keeping the consumers at the back scene. So, it is decided that users of cell phones were the unit of analysis (individual) for the current study. It is predicted that the nature of positioning concept is "dynamic". It changes with the passage of time because of competitors' continuous up gradation in their brands. Eventually, it is concluded that the present research is cross-sectional study (One-shot) because data are collected for a single time to support the present study [55, 56]. The sample size that is selected for the study is 100. The selected consumers are educated and residing in Punjab province belongs to Lahore city. The reason of 100 sample size is purposive sampling that allows in selection of small set of respondents [57]. The involvement of random selection does not mean the probability sampling technique is accordance with the theory of probability and the absence of random selection does not mean that non-probability is not accordance with the theory of probability. Hence, if non-probability technique is not against the theory of probability then it is not against the generalizability (i.e., true picture of population) concept. The data is collected by visiting the respondents via survey. Fuchs [2] study is source of questionnaire i.e., it is an adopted tool. Appendix "A" presents the summary of measuring items that are seventeen in total. Lilien and Rangaswamy [20] have explained that advertisement is important tool in the positioning building process, that's why advertisements are used in the study to measure the positioning effectiveness. Crawford [51] has enlightened that the magazine advertisements are the major source to position the brand. Furthermore, he has claimed that up to 74% positioning comes from the print advertisements. Practically, print advertisements are used by Fuchs and Diamantopoulos [24] in their study to assess the positioning strategies. Three print advertisements are selected after the expert opinion of the faculty members of marketing department, Virtual University of Pakistan. Advertisement "1", Advertisement "2", Advertisement "3" are representing the "direct benefit", "indirect benefit" and "surrogate" positioning strategy respectively. Finalized ads are showed to the users' of cell phone. The decided users (i.e., sample size) for this study are 100. The background of consumers is differing in term of their occupation, age and education. The ratio of male and female is 44:53 out of 100

responses (45% male and 55% female). The given brands (shown in ads) are evaluated by the consumers on the provided positioning dimensions that are *favorability, dissimilarity, uniqueness, and credibility.*

4. RESULTS & INTERPRETATION

4.1 Analysis Procedure

The statistical technique that applied on the data set was analysis of covariance (ANCOVAs) by using SPSS version 19. All the basic assumptions of ANCOVA were verified in a pre-testing stage. The results of basic assumptions were satisfactory, so ANCOVA test was performed. The ANCOVAs test applied on the four dimensions of positioning effectiveness with the pair of positioning strategy. The desired pair of positioning strategy is “benefit vs. surrogate” that is required to investigate the relative effectiveness. Practically, analysis of covariance (ANCOVAs) applied by taking all four effective dimensions one by one with the pair “benefit vs. surrogate” positioning strategy by considering age and monthly income as a covariates. Socio-demographic variables are very important elements in observing the consumers’ view point with respect to positioning concepts[21, 50,58-60]. The socio-demographic data that addressed in this study are age, gender, marital status, education, monthly income and occupation.

4.2 Interpretation of Results

Findings and interpretation are based on the analysis procedure explained above. Further, statistics of every dimension is captured in a table and author interprets each table separately.

Table 4.1

Statistical Results for H w.r.t Favorability

Position Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Coefficient of Variation (CV) %
Direct Benefit	2.75	1.18	97	42.90
Indirect Benefit	3.20	1.43	97	44.69
Surrogate	2.62	1.22	97	46.56
Total	2.86	1.30	291	
Favorability	F-value = 5.448 p-value = .005 < α			
Covariates	Age & Monthly Income	F ^{3a} F = 1.183 & F ^{3a} p = .278 > α F ^{3b} F = 1.513 & F ^{3b} p = .220 > α		

Table 4.1 opens the door of discussion for the hypothesis by considering the favorability dimension of positioning effectiveness. The Table (4.1) values predict that direct and indirect benefit positioning strategy is more effective in comparison of surrogate positioning strategy. It should not be ignored that the discussion is going on by taking the positioning dimension one by one. So, the superiority of direct and indirect benefit positioning over the feature is with respect to the favorability dimension. Statistically, the numeric value (mean) of direct benefit positioning strategy is 2.75 and the numerical value (mean) of indirect benefit positioning strategy is 3.20 and it is higher than the mean value of surrogate positioning strategy that is 2.62. Hence, on the basis of discussion above and numerical values in a

Table 4.1, it is concluded that benefit positioning strategies outperform the feature positioning strategy in term of favorability. Here, the conclusion is obvious that the results are consistent with the hypothesis.

Further, it is necessary to explain the significance of result presented in Table 4.1. No doubt, the Table values reveal that direct and indirect benefit strategies lead over the feature positioning strategy with respect to the favorability. Moreover, the difference of means among the positioning strategies with respect to favorability in Table 4.1 is significant because p-value < α (F = 5.448 & p = .005 < α). Age and monthly income are the covariates in the current study and here producing insignificant effects on positioning effectiveness dimension that is favorability. The evidence of insignificance of these covariates is there in a form of statistical tests (repeated measures ANCOVA on favorability). The p-value of both age and monthly income is greater than alpha i.e., p-values > α and their respective F values are given here (F^{3a}F = 1.183 & F^{3a}p = .278 > α; F^{3b}F = 1.513 & F^{3b}p = .220 > α).

Last column of Table 4.1 is presenting the values of “coefficient of variation” CV. The percentage value of CV against direct benefit positioning strategy is 42.90%. This value in the CV column is lower than the other two values (i.e., surrogate and indirect benefit). In the light of these values in the Table, author concludes that direct benefit positioning provides more consistent performance as compared to the feature and indirect benefit positioning strategies.

Table 4.2

Statistical Results for H w.r.t Dissimilarity

Position Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Coefficient of Variation (CV) %
Direct Benefit	4.52	1.55	97	34.29
Indirect Benefit	5.31	1.36	97	25.61
Surrogate	5.42	1.44	97	26.56
Total	5.08	1.50	291	
Dissimilarity	F-value = 11.431 p-value = .000 < α			
Covariates	Age & Monthly Income	D ^{3a} F = .101 & D ^{3a} p = .750 > α D ^{3b} F = 3.302 & D ^{3b} p = .070 > α		

Table 4.2 opens the door of discussion for the hypothesis by considering the dissimilarity dimension of positioning effectiveness. The Table (4.2) values predict that direct and indirect benefit positioning strategy is less effective in comparison of surrogate positioning strategy. It should not be ignored that the discussion is going on by taking the positioning dimension one by one. So, the superiority of surrogate positioning over the direct and indirect benefit positioning is with respect to the dissimilarity dimension. Statistically, the numeric value (mean) of direct benefit positioning strategy is 4.52 and the numerical value (mean) of indirect benefit positioning strategy is 5.31 and is lower than the mean value of surrogate positioning strategy that is 5.42. Hence, on the basis of discussion above and numerical values in a Table 4.2, it is concluded that surrogate positioning strategy outperforms the benefit positioning

strategies in term of dissimilarity. Here, the conclusion is obvious that the results are consistent with the hypothesis. Further, it is necessary to explain the significance of result presented in Table 4.2. No doubt, the Table values reveal that surrogate strategies leads over the direct and indirect benefit positioning strategy with respect to the dissimilarity. Moreover, the difference of means among the positioning strategies with respect to dissimilarity in Table 4.2 is significant because $p\text{-value} < \alpha$ ($F = 11.431$ & $p = .000 < \alpha$)

Age and monthly income are the covariates in the current study and here producing insignificant effects on positioning effectiveness dimension that is dissimilarity. The evidence of insignificance of these covariates is there in a form of statistical tests (repeated measures ANCOVA on dissimilarity). The p-value of both age and monthly income is greater than alpha i.e., $p\text{-values} > \alpha$ and their respective F values are given here ($F^{D3a} = .101$ & $F^{D3b} = .750 > \alpha$; $F^{D3b} = 3.302$ & $F^{D3b} = .070 > \alpha$).

Last column of Table 4.2 is presenting the values of “coefficient of variation” CV. The percentage value of CV against indirect benefit positioning strategy is 25.61%. This value in the CV column is lower than the other two values (i.e., surrogate and direct benefit). In the light of these values in the Table, author concludes that indirect benefit positioning provides more consistent performance as compared to the surrogate and direct benefit positioning strategies.

Table 4.3
Statistical Results for H w.r.t Uniqueness

Position Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Coefficient of Variation (CV) %
Direct Benefit	3.95	1.47	97	37.21
Indirect Benefit	3.32	1.46	97	43.97
Surrogate	2.79	1.30	97	46.59
Total	3.35	1.48	291	
Uniqueness	F-value = 16.604 p-value = .000 < α			
Covariates	Age & Monthly Income	$F^{U3a} = .014$ & $F^{U3a} = .907 > \alpha$ $F^{U3b} = 3.303$ & $F^{U3b} = .070 > \alpha$		

Table 4.3 opens the door of discussion for the hypothesis by considering the uniqueness dimension of positioning effectiveness. The Table (4.3) values predict that direct and indirect benefit positioning strategy is more effective in comparison of surrogate positioning strategy. It should not be ignored that the discussion is going on by taking the positioning dimension one by one. So, the superiority of direct and indirect benefit positioning over the feature is with respect to the uniqueness dimension. Statistically, the numeric value (mean) of direct benefit positioning strategy is 3.95 and the numerical value (mean) of indirect benefit positioning strategy is 3.32 and it is higher than the mean value of surrogate positioning strategy that is 2.79. Hence, on the basis of discussion above and numerical values in a Table 4.3, it is concluded that benefit positioning strategies outperform the surrogate positioning strategy in term of uniqueness. Here, the conclusion is obvious that the results are consistent with the hypothesis.

Further, it is necessary to explain the significance of result presented in Table 4.3. No doubt, the Table values reveal that direct and indirect benefit strategies lead over the surrogate positioning strategy with respect to the uniqueness. Moreover, the difference of means among the positioning strategies with respect to uniqueness in Table 4.3 is significant because $p\text{-value} < \alpha$ ($F = 16.604$ & $p = .000 < \alpha$)

Age and monthly income are the covariates in the current study and here producing insignificant effects on positioning effectiveness dimension that is uniqueness. The evidence of insignificance of these covariates is there in a form of statistical tests (repeated measures ANCOVA on uniqueness). The p-value of both age and monthly income is greater than alpha i.e., $p\text{-values} > \alpha$ and their respective F values are given here ($F^{U3a} = .014$ & $F^{U3a} = .907 > \alpha$; $F^{U3b} = 3.303$ & $F^{U3b} = .070 > \alpha$).

Last column of Table 4.3 is presenting the values of “coefficient of variation” CV. The percentage value of CV against direct benefit positioning strategy is 37.21%. This value in the CV column is lower than the other two values (i.e., surrogate and indirect benefit). In the light of these values in the Table, author concludes that direct benefit positioning provides more consistent performance as compared to the surrogate and indirect benefit positioning strategies.

Table 4.4
Statistical Results for H w.r.t Credibility

Position Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Coefficient of Variation (CV) %
Direct Benefit	3.01	1.10	97	36.54
Indirect Benefit	3.39	1.36	97	40.11
Surrogate	3.08	1.31	97	42.53
Total	3.16	1.27	291	
Credibility	F-value = 2.434 p-value = .090 > α			
Covariates	Age & Monthly Income	$F^{C3a} = 2.008$ & $F^{C3a} = .158 > \alpha$ $F^{C3b} = .043$ & $F^{C3b} = 836 > \alpha$		

Table 4.4 opens the door of discussion for the hypothesis by considering the credibility dimension of positioning effectiveness. The Table (4.4) values predict that indirect benefit positioning strategy is more effective in comparison of surrogate positioning strategy. It should not be ignored that the discussion is going on by taking the positioning dimension one by one. So, the superiority of indirect benefit positioning over the surrogate is with respect to the credibility dimension. Statistically, the numeric value (mean) of indirect benefit positioning strategy is 3.39 and it is higher than the mean value of surrogate positioning strategy that is 3.08. Hence, on the basis of discussion above and numerical values in a Table 4.4, it is concluded that benefit positioning strategies outperform the surrogate positioning strategy in term of credibility. Here, the conclusion is obvious that the results are consistent with the hypothesis.

Further, it is necessary to explain the significance of result presented in Table 4.4. No doubt, the Table values reveal that indirect benefit strategy leads over the surrogate

positioning strategy with respect to the credibility. Moreover, the difference of means among the positioning strategies with respect to credibility in Table 4.4 is significant because $p\text{-value} < \alpha$ ($F = 2.434$ & $p = .090 < \alpha$).

Age and monthly income are the covariates in the current study and here producing insignificant effects on positioning effectiveness dimension that is credibility. The evidence of insignificance of these covariates is there in a form of statistical tests (repeated measures ANCOVA on credibility). The p-value of both age and monthly income is greater than alpha i.e., p-values $> \alpha$ and their respective F values are given here ($^{C3a}F = 2.008$ & $^{C3a}p = .158 > \alpha$; $^{C3b}F = .043$ & $^{C3b}p = .836 > \alpha$).

Last column of Table 4.4 is presenting the values of "coefficient of variation" CV. The percentage value of CV against direct benefit positioning strategy is 36.54%. This value in the CV column is lower than the other two values (i.e., surrogate and indirect benefit). In the light of these values in the Table, author concludes that direct benefit positioning provides more consistent performance as compared to the surrogate and indirect benefit positioning strategies.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Discussion

There are four layers to support hypothesis (H). Each layer contains one positioning effectiveness dimension. If majority of dimensions are in favor of H then overall it harmonizes with our expectations. Table 4.1 clearly indicates that direct and indirect benefit positioning strategies outperform surrogate strategy. Further, the value of coefficient of variation is consistent with the expectation. The coefficient of variation against the direct benefit shows the lower value among the three positioning strategies (i.e., surrogate, direct and indirect). So, inference can also be drawn that benefit positioning strategies give consistent performance in comparison of surrogate positioning strategy. Favorability dimension of positioning effectiveness supports H that benefit positioning strategy is superior to surrogate.

Corollary 1: Eventually, it is stated on the basis of facts and figures in Table 4.1 and subsequent discussion that benefit positioning strategy is superior, outperforming, effective, consistent and leads to position the brand in a better way at least in the market of cellular category with respect to favorability dimension of positioning effectiveness in comparison of surrogate positioning.

The second layer of hypothesis (H) belongs to the second dimension of positioning effectiveness that is dissimilarity. Table 4.2 clearly specifies that surrogate positioning strategy outperforms the direct and indirect positioning strategies. The difference of means among the positioning strategies is also significant. The significance reflects in p-value. The coefficient of variation against the indirect benefit shows the lower value among the three positioning strategies (i.e., surrogate, direct and indirect). So, inference can also be drawn that benefit positioning strategies give consistent performance in comparison of surrogate positioning strategy. Dissimilarity dimension of positioning effectiveness

supports H that benefit positioning strategy and surrogate positioning differ regarding their effectiveness.

Corollary 2: Finally, it is stated on the basis of facts and figures in Table 4.2 and subsequent discussion that surrogate positioning strategy is superior, outperform, effective, consistent and leads to position the brand in a better way at least in the market of cellular category with respect to dissimilarity dimension of positioning effectiveness in comparison of benefit positioning.

The third layer of hypothesis (H) is described by considering the third dimension of positioning effectiveness that is uniqueness. The output in Table 4.3 meets the study expectation and fulfills the requirements of H. The uniqueness dimension is consistent, supportive and congruent with H. The results in Table 4.3 are obvious and predict that benefit positioning strategy outperforms the surrogate positioning strategy. The difference between the benefit and surrogate positioning strategy is also significant in term of uniqueness that is in favor of hypothesis ideology. The p-value reflects the results are significant. The coefficient of variation against the direct positioning shows the lower value among the three positioning strategies (i.e., surrogate, direct and indirect). So, inference can also be drawn that benefit positioning strategy gives consistent performance in comparison of surrogate positioning strategy. Uniqueness dimension of positioning effectiveness support H that benefit positioning strategies surrogate differ in effectiveness.

Corollary 3: Eventually, it is stated on the basis of facts and figures in Table 4.3 and subsequent discussion that benefit positioning strategy is superior, outperforming, effective, consistent and leads to position the brand in a better way at least in the market of cellular category with respect to uniqueness dimension of positioning effectiveness in comparison of surrogate positioning.

The fourth layer of hypothesis (H) is described by taking the fourth dimension in to account of positioning effectiveness that is credibility. The outputs in Table 4.4 moves parallel to the study expectation and fulfill the requirements of H. The credibility dimension is consistent, supportive and congruent with H. The results in Table 4.3 are obvious and predict that benefit positioning strategy outperforms the surrogate positioning strategy. There is problem of significance regarding the credibility dimension. The difference of means among the positioning strategies is insignificant. As Table 4.4 predicts that the p-value is greater than alpha (α) so, the difference between the two strategies (i.e., benefit and surrogate) is insignificant. Hence, credibility dimension of positioning effectiveness does not support H. Surrogate and benefit positioning appears to be identical in term of credibility dimension.

Corollary 4: Eventually, it is stated on the basis of facts and figures in Table 4.4 and subsequent discussion that surrogate positioning strategy and benefit positioning appear to be identical in their superiority, performance, effectiveness, and consistency and unable to differentiate the brand at least in the market of cellular category with respect to credibility dimension of positioning effectiveness.

6.2 Conclusion

As projected by H, the corollaries 1, 2 & 3 are fully in favor of hypothesis; the indirect benefit positioning strategy yields significantly greater value against the favorability effectiveness dimension as compared to surrogate positioning. Corollary 2 shows the result that the surrogate positioning strategy also attains significantly higher value against the dissimilarity effectiveness dimension as compared to benefit positioning. Corollary 3 also endorse the results in corollary 1 & 2; benefit positioning achieves the much better score against the uniqueness dimension of positioning effectiveness in comparison of surrogate positioning. After combining the results of corollary 1, 2 & 3 it is stated that benefit positioning strategy and surrogate strategy received the much higher and significant score against the three dimensions of positioning effectiveness (i.e., favorability, dissimilarity and uniqueness). Corollary 4 is meaning less for H because results are not significance regarding credibility dimension. On the basis of corollary 1 to 3 the results can be finalized for H.

Here, the conclusion is obvious that the results are consistent with the hypothesis (H) that the performance of benefit positioning strategy and surrogate strategy outperforms in term of favorability, dissimilarity and uniqueness. Hence, the study analysis, finding, interpretation, description and discussion are inclined towards the acceptance of H in favor of Ho.

6.3 Limitations and Associated Opportunities for Future Research

Following are the limitations of the present study and associated future directions:

1. In general, there are two broad categories of market offerings; first one is product categories and second one is services specific. The present research is associated with the product related categories and services are not being discussed in the study. The future research may extend the scope of the study by conducting it in the services brands. For instance, the positioning strategies may be evaluated by taking the airline companies.
2. One more restriction of the study is print ads. Print ads are used to collect the consumers' responses. A typical nature of positioning is established by the print ads. So, there is need to conduct future studies by applying the electronic media advertisement.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Measures for Variables

Measurement Items

<i>Compared to competing strategies, this strategy is:</i>		<i>(Dissimilarity)</i>
1.	Identical/Distinct	
2.	Similar/Dissimilar	
3.	Does not set itself apart /Sets itself apart	
4.	Same/Different	
<i>What is your opinion regarding the strategy?</i>		<i>(Favorability)</i>
1.	Good/Bad	
2.	Like/Dislike	
3.	Positive/Negative	
4.	Appealing/Not appealing	
<i>Compared to competing strategies, this strategy is:</i>		<i>(Uniqueness)</i>
1.	Unique/Not unique	
2.	Extraordinary/Ordinary	
3.	Atypical/Typical	
4.	Special/Standard	
<i>The differences between this strategy and competing one is:</i>		<i>(Credibility)</i>
1.	Believable/Not believable	
2.	Plausible/Implausible	
3.	Convincing/Not convincing	
4.	Trustworthy/Untrustworthy	
5.	Realistic/Unrealistic	

Source: Adopted from Fuchs (2008).

Appendix B: Reliability of Instrument
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.824	.837	17