


**A STUDY ON HOW BRAND POSITIONING HELPS THE BUSINESS TO STAND-OUT
DISTINCTIVELY IN SATURATED MARKET: A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO SELECT
SUPERMARKETS**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received 31 July 2023</p> <p>Accepted 30 October 2023</p>	<p>Purpose: The purpose of this research is to examine how strategic brand positioning has affected the performance of select supermarkets stores in saturated market. This study aims to provide light on how brand positioning may contribute to market differentiation and create competitive advantage by analysing the positioning techniques used by these supermarkets and measuring consumer perceptions</p>
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Brand Positioning; Saturated Market; Supermarkets; Customer Satisfaction; Retention; Loyalty; Branding.</p>	<p>Theoretical framework: The study demonstrates that customers are motivated to visit supermarkets based on factors such as price, quality, location, hygiene, and personal experience. However, the establishment of customer loyalty and long-term retention can only be achieved by implementing various differentiation variables of brand positioning, including segmentation, benefits offered, product class categorization, brand name, and customer relationship management.</p> <p>Design/Methodology/Approach: The study was conducted in the city of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India; primary data were collected by disseminating a questionnaire via Google Form and conducting face-to-face interviews. The sample consisted of 114 participants</p>
	<p>Findings: The study found that customers are motivated to visit supermarkets based on factors such as price, quality, location, hygiene, and personal experience. However, the establishment of customer loyalty and long-term retention can only be achieved by implementing various differentiation variables of brand positioning, including segmentation, benefits offered, product class categorization, brand name, and customer relationship management also it was found that ability of supermarkets to stand out significantly in a crowded market will continue to depend on their ability to establish and maintain strong relationships with their customers through effective brand positioning.</p> <p>Research, Practical & Social implications: It is recommended that future studies emphasise the contributions by doing study on the same select supermarkets in other cities.</p> <p>Originality/Value: The distinctive feature of this study lies in the absence of prior research conducted on the brand positioning of certain supermarkets in different cities.</p> <p>Doi: https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i11.3411</p>

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UM ESTUDO SOBRE COMO O POSICIONAMENTO DA MARCA AJUDA O NEGÓCIO A SE DESTACAR DISTINTAMENTE EM MERCADO SATURADO: UM ESTUDO COM REFERÊNCIA A SUPERMERCADOS SELECIONADOS

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo desta pesquisa é examinar como o posicionamento estratégico da marca afetou o desempenho de lojas selecionadas de supermercados em mercados saturados. Este estudo tem como objetivo esclarecer como o posicionamento da marca pode contribuir para a diferenciação de mercado e criar vantagem competitiva, analisando as técnicas de posicionamento utilizadas por esses supermercados e medindo as percepções dos consumidores.

Referencial teórico: O estudo demonstra que os clientes são motivados a visitar os supermercados com base em fatores como preço, qualidade, localização, higiene e experiência pessoal. No entanto, o estabelecimento da fidelização e retenção de clientes a longo prazo só pode ser alcançado através da implementação de diversas variáveis de diferenciação do posicionamento da marca, incluindo segmentação, benefícios oferecidos, categorização de classes de produtos, nome da marca e gestão de relacionamento com o cliente.

Desenho/Metodologia/Abordagem: O estudo foi realizado na cidade de Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, Índia; os dados primários foram coletados por meio da divulgação de um questionário via Google Form e da realização de entrevistas presenciais. A amostra foi composta por 114 participantes

Resultados: O estudo concluiu que os clientes são motivados a visitar os supermercados com base em fatores como preço, qualidade, localização, higiene e experiência pessoal. No entanto, o estabelecimento da fidelização e retenção de clientes a longo prazo só pode ser alcançado através da implementação de diversas variáveis de diferenciação do posicionamento da marca, incluindo segmentação, benefícios oferecidos, categorização de classes de produtos, nome da marca e gestão de relacionamento com o cliente. Destacar-se significativamente em um mercado concorrido continuará a depender de sua capacidade de estabelecer e manter relacionamentos fortes com seus clientes por meio de um posicionamento de marca eficaz.

Implicações de pesquisa, Práticas e Sociais: Recomenda-se que estudos futuros enfatizem as contribuições fazendo estudos nos mesmos supermercados selecionados em outras cidades.

Originalidade/Valor: O diferencial deste estudo reside na ausência de pesquisas prévias realizadas sobre o posicionamento da marca de determinados supermercados em diferentes cidades

Palavras-chave: Posicionamento de Marca, Mercado Saturado, Supermercados, Satisfação do Cliente, Retenção, Fidelização, Branding.

UN ESTUDIO SOBRE CÓMO EL POSICIONAMIENTO DE MARCA AYUDA AL NEGOCIO A DESTACARSE DISTINTIVAMENTE EN UN MERCADO SATURADO: UN ESTUDIO CON REFERENCIA A SUPERMERCADOS SELECCIONADOS

RESUMEN

Propósito: El propósito de esta investigación es examinar cómo el posicionamiento estratégico de la marca ha afectado el desempeño de supermercados selectos en un mercado saturado. Este estudio pretende arrojar luz sobre cómo el posicionamiento de marca puede contribuir a la diferenciación del mercado y crear una ventaja competitiva analizando las técnicas de posicionamiento utilizadas por estos supermercados y midiendo las percepciones de los consumidores.

Marco teórico: El estudio demuestra que los clientes se motivan a visitar los supermercados en función de factores como el precio, la calidad, la ubicación, la higiene y la experiencia personal. Sin embargo, el establecimiento de la lealtad del cliente y la retención a largo plazo sólo se puede lograr mediante la implementación de diversas variables de diferenciación del posicionamiento de la marca, incluida la segmentación, los beneficios ofrecidos, la categorización de clases de productos, el nombre de la marca y la gestión de las relaciones con los clientes.

Diseño/Metodología/Enfoque: El estudio se realizó en la ciudad de Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India; Los datos primarios se recopilaron mediante la difusión de un cuestionario a través de Google Form y la realización de entrevistas cara a cara. La muestra estuvo compuesta por 114 participantes.

Hallazgos: El estudio encontró que los clientes están motivados para visitar los supermercados en función de factores como el precio, la calidad, la ubicación, la higiene y la experiencia personal. Sin embargo, el establecimiento de la lealtad del cliente y la retención a largo plazo sólo se puede lograr mediante la implementación de diversas variables de diferenciación del posicionamiento de la marca, incluida la segmentación, los beneficios ofrecidos, la categorización de clases de productos, el nombre de la marca y la gestión de las relaciones con los clientes. También se encontró que la capacidad de los supermercados destacar significativamente en un mercado saturado seguirá dependiendo de su capacidad para establecer y mantener relaciones sólidas con sus clientes a través de un posicionamiento eficaz de la marca.

Implicaciones de investigación, Prácticas y Sociales: se recomienda que estudios futuros enfatizen las contribuciones realizando estudios en los mismos supermercados selectos en otras ciudades.

Originalidad/Valor: La característica distintiva de este estudio radica en la ausencia de investigaciones previas realizadas sobre el posicionamiento de marca de determinados supermercados en diferentes ciudades.

Palabras clave: Posicionamiento de marca, Mercado Saturado, Supermercados, Satisfacción del Cliente, Retención, Lealtad, Branding.

INTRODUCTION

According to Murphy (1988), branding has been used to differentiate things from one another since ancient times. The utilisation of branding has seen substantial transformations throughout history, particularly during the past century. Operating in saturated marketplaces usually creates a difficulty for many sectors in today's fiercely competitive business environment. A saturated market is one in which numerous companies offer identical products or services, resulting in fierce competition for market share and consumer engagement. In such environments, businesses must differentiate themselves and stand out in order to obtain a competitive advantage. Effective brand positioning is crucial in this regard. Brand positioning is the act of establishing the offer and the product image, seeking to occupy a distinct place in the mind of the consumer, using as a reference to other market competitors (Ostermann et al., 2019). According to Kotler (2000), brand positioning is the process of creating a company's offer and image such that it "occupies a distinct and valued place in the target consumer's mind." The significance of the brand concept is in its ability to encompass the cognitive framework associated with a particular product or service, while also including the experiences and perceptions of the intended consumer base (Feldwick, 2002).

In a saturated market, one of the primary objectives of brand positioning is to create a competitive advantage. Businesses can differentiate themselves from competitors and create a perception of value and quality in the minds of consumers by creating a distinct and meaningful brand identity. This distinctiveness helps in capturing and retaining customer attention, leading to increased market share and customer loyalty. Additionally, brand positioning affects how customers perceive quality and reliability. Customers frequently feel overloaded with options in a saturated marketplace, therefore they generally rely on well-known brands that they believe to be reliable and trustworthy. Effective brand positioning aids in the development of a business's image for dependability and quality, building consumer confidence and influencing their purchasing behaviour.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

While a brand's communication activity is the primary focus of the positioning idea, it is increasingly emphasised that positioning has a larger market influence and relates to a brand's widely defined marketing activity. Therefore, brand positioning refers to all of an organization's external operations while also determining behaviour within the organisation (Ellwood, 2009). According to Guidry (2011), one of the important factors influencing a company's competitive market position is brand positioning.

According to Erciş et al. (2010), the effective element in international brand choices is prestigious positioning. On the other side, prestige is a personality trait. Consumers support highly aware brands that provide them with status, a sense of belonging to a certain group, and a sense of identity in the purchase process. According to Mujianty et al. (2022), brand awareness and brand positioning with a partial or simultaneous effect are good and significant to purchase decisions.

Successful brand positioning is a significant capacity of a company that allows it to deliver its services distinctively and plays a critical part in developing best marketing strategies (Larsen, 2018) by defining the brand's essence in the eyes of customers (Blankson et al., 2017). A good brand positioning assists in guiding marketing strategies by clarifying what a brand is all about (Gaustad et al., 2018), how it is unique (Shin et al., 2017), how it differs from competing brands (Batra et al., 2017), and why customers should choose a specific brand (Sharma et al., 2016).

Proper brand positioning, according to academic scholars (Lin et al., 2017; Wang, 2017), connects consumer expectations with the brand's valuable characteristics. The positioning should be capable of generating product differentiation in the minds of consumers and a competitive advantage over rival brands based on tangible or ethereal product attributes (Keller, 2009). Smith and Paladino (2010) argue that knowledge of brand positively impacts the development of brand attitudes.

An ad-hoc approach considering that a product or service category is specific and requires development of an adapted brand personality scale. This approach has been applied for the measurement of store personalities by d'Astous and Levesque (2003). They argue that some sources of references for personality construction are unique for stores (such as the sales personnel) and that the valence of store personality traits need not be positive (as in the case in the Aaker brand personality scale).

Martineau (1958) introduced the concept of store personality but was actually more referring to functional attributes and store image. Store image or associations that customers have with store name (such as quality, luxury and excellence associated with the farmer's Parisian store, French style and good price for money associated with Galeries Lafayette in Paris) have been shown to influence store choice and loyalty (Bellenger et al., 1976; Macintosh et Lockshin, 1997). Beyond image, retail stores (and services in general) are places within which numerous relationships develop (Macintosh and Lockshin, 1997). Straightforward relationships are interpersonal ones between customers and sales personnel or between customers themselves. This relationship might favor thinking of a store having a personality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

On their study on "The role of customer satisfaction in improving the performance of sail (steel authority of india ltd)," (Baa and Chattera, 2023) found that, the reform policies had a considerable impact on customer satisfaction which in turn impacts the organizational performance.

A study on "Competitiveness of the cities: branding and positioning" conducted by Saygin, M. (2023) reveals that process of city positioning entails assessing a city's competitive advantages and disadvantages and creating a plan to leverage on those advantages

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the city of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India; primary data was collected by disseminating a questionnaire via Google Form and conducting face-to-face interviews. The sample consisted of 114 participants. The purpose of this study is to determine how brand positioning helps a business stand out in a saturated marketplace in the select supermarkets.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study targets to understand and explore the importance of brand positioning strategies and its impact to stand out distinctive in the saturated markets. For this the researcher limits his study to select supermarkets and applying various differentiation variables to understand their impact on the market. The researcher select a few well known stores i.e., Reliance, Spencer's and more supermarkets for conducting further research. The research

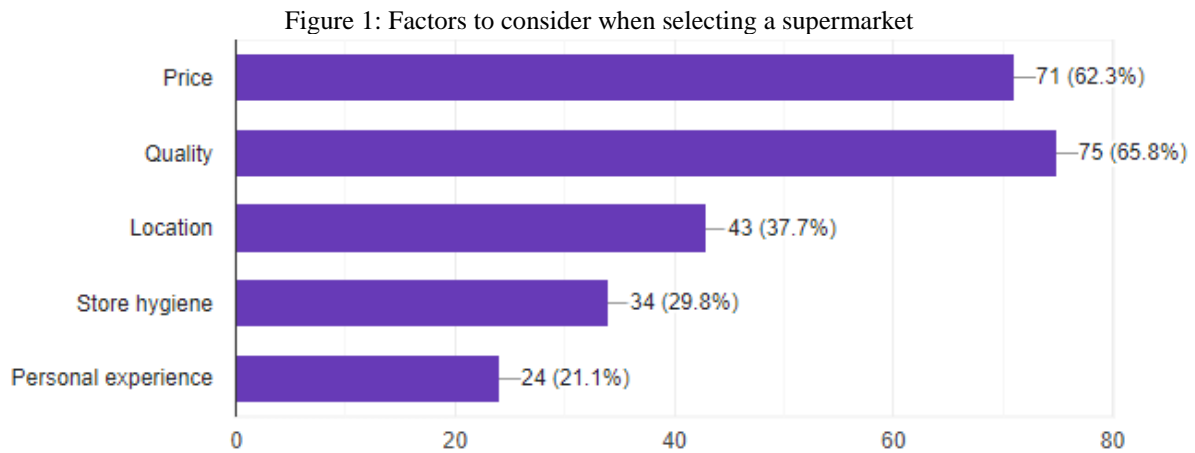
consists of primary data collecting by disseminating a questionnaire through using online platform i.e. google form and also by conducting face to face interviews.

There are 114 respondents participated in the study, out of which 59.6% are male and 40.4% are female. Furthermore the sample is divided into various age groups to understand their differences based on their demographic which is 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64 and 65 & above. The sample is further segregated on the bases of occupation which is self-employed, employed, student, house-wife and retired.

Although there are many supermarkets, the researcher chose More, Spencer's, and Reliance because they are the most well-known and well-liked ones. However, the researcher also gave the sample the option to select any other supermarket they preferred besides the three mentioned above. The study discovered that most respondents chose to visit Reliance out of all the supermarkets mentioned, with 46.5% of the vote, followed by More with 26.3%, Spencer's with 11.4%, and others (Dmart, Loyal City, Star, Local supermarket) with 15.8%.

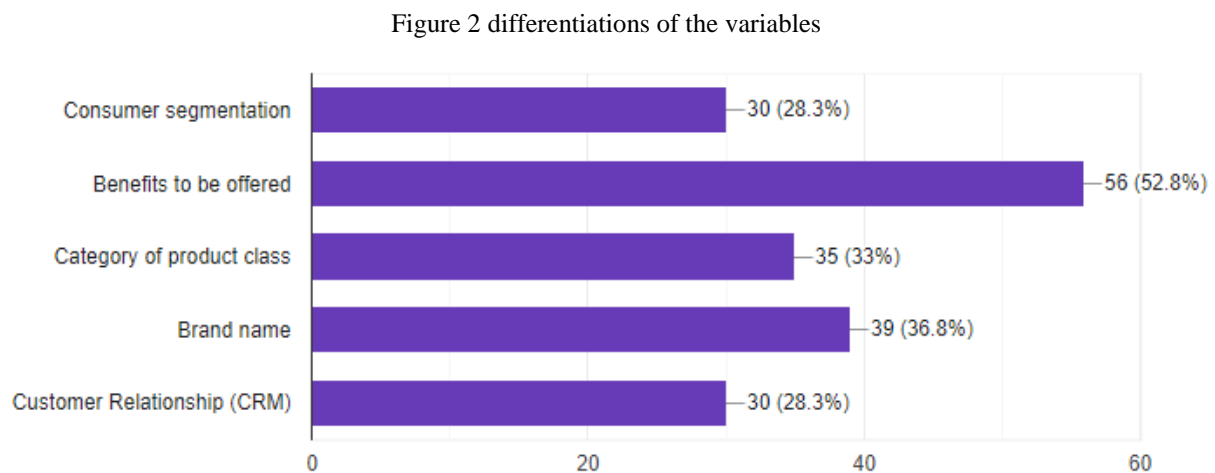
In an interesting finding, the researcher found that 90.4% of the people who answered the survey agreed that their favourite supermarkets are different from the others because of things like customer segmentation, benefits to be offered, product class, brand name, and customer relationship management (CRM). Under the heading of results, the study's detailed analysis and interpretation are presented.

Fig.1 shows that among five factors to consider when selecting a supermarket, the most significant factor is quality followed by price, location, store hygiene and personal experience. Out of 114 participants, 65.8 percent believe that quality is the most significant factor while selecting a supermarket, whereas 62.3 percent consider price as an important factor, moreover, the study reveal that 37.7 percent of participant chose location, 29.8 percent selected store hygiene while 21.1 percent considered personal experience as an important factor while selecting a supermarket.



Source: Prepared by Authors (2023)

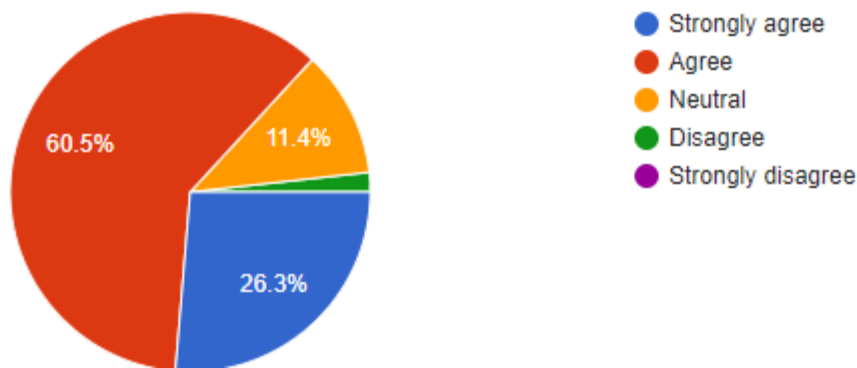
Figure 2 illustrates the differentiation variables observed in a sample of 114 participants. The aspect of "benefit to be offered" was deemed most significant by 52.8% of the participants, whereas "brand name" was chosen by 36.8% of the respondents. The survey results indicate that both customer relationship management and customer segmentation are favoured by an equal amount of respondents, accounting for 28.3% each. A specific brand category was opted for by 33% of the respondents..



Source: Prepared by Authors (2023)

According to the data presented in Figure 3, it is evident that among the 114 participants, a majority of 60.5% express a strong agreement about the favourable impact of brand positioning strategies on the store, brand value, and consumer loyalty. Additionally, 26.3% of the participants agree with this statement. The remaining participants maintain a divergent viewpoint.

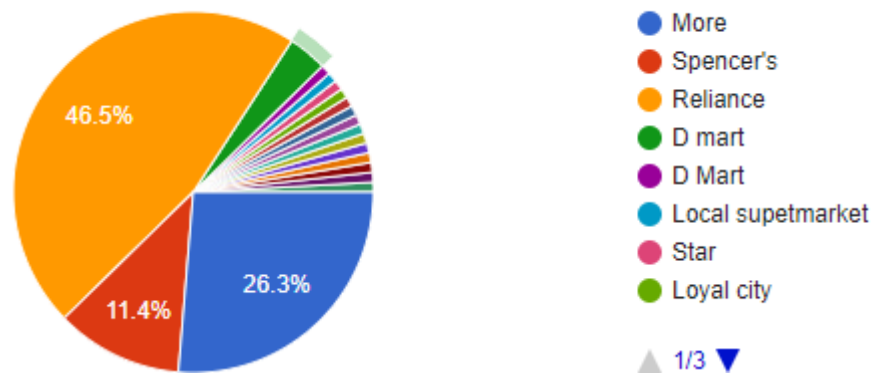
Figure 3: Impact of the stores on brand value and customer loyalty



Source: Prepared by Authors (2023)

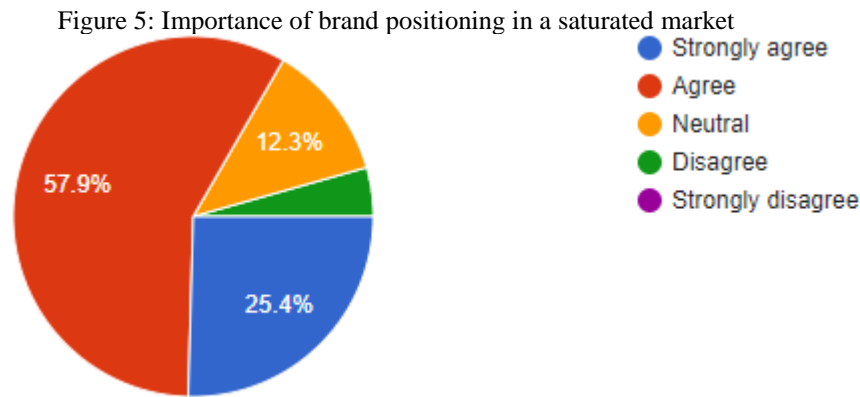
Based on the data presented in figure 4, it can be observed that approximately 46.5% of the total respondents (n=114) indicated Spencer's as their preferred store for shopping. Additionally, around 26.3% of the respondents selected More as their preferred store. Furthermore, slightly over 11% of the respondents expressed a preference for Spencer's, while approximately 15.8% of the respondents chose alternative stores such as Dmart, Loyal City, Star, Vijeta, and local supermarkets.

Figure: 4 Supermarkets



Source: Prepared by Authors (2023)

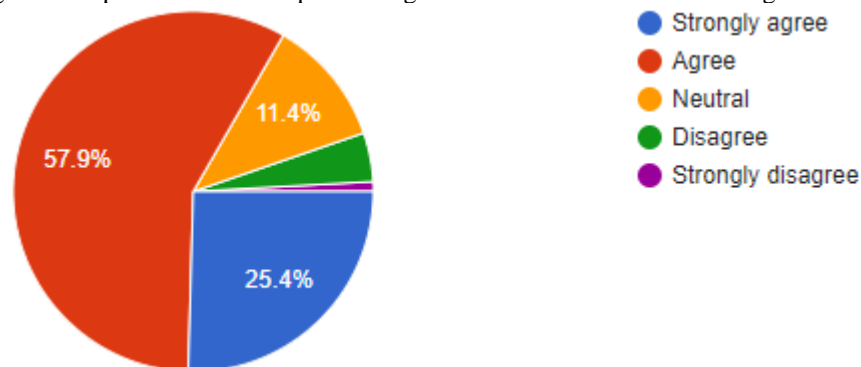
According to the data presented figure 5, it can be observed that a majority of the respondents, specifically 57.9%, strongly agreed with the notion that brand positioning holds significant importance in saturated markets, particularly in the context of supermarkets, as it contributes to achieving the goal of customer satisfaction. A total of 25.4% of the participants expressed agreement with the statement in question, while the remaining respondents maintained a neutral stance.



Source: Prepared by Authors (2023)

Figure 6 presents an intriguing observation regarding the respondents' agreement levels with the statement, "brand positioning is crucial in saturated markets, particularly in the context of supermarkets, for the purpose of customer retention." The data reveals a substantial consensus of 92% among respondents who either strongly agree or agree with this statement.

Figure 6: Importance of brand positioning in a saturated market in retaining customers.



Source: Prepared by Authors (2023)

CONCLUSION

By using Philip Kotler's statement, "The art of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place," the researcher argues that effective positioning requires a balance between current and future perspectives. It needs to be somewhat aspirational so the brand room to grow and improve. The above study gives an understanding of the importance of brand positioning and its implication of strategies in the saturated markets especially in the supermarkets (retail businesses).

The study reveals that, although the factors like price, quality, location, hygiene and personal experience motivates the customers to visit the supermarket but creation of customer loyalty and longer retention of them are only possible through practicing the various

differentiation variables of brand positioning like segmentation, benefit offered, category of product class, brand name and customer relationship management.

Brand positioning will remain as a pillar of success for supermarkets to stand out distinctively in a saturated market conditions and also assists in the fulfillment of achieving customer satisfaction, customer retention and customer loyalty.

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