The Impact of Brand Positioning Strategies on Customer Perception

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***Abstract*—This research examines the relationship between brand positioning strategies and customer perception at Alco Aluminium Products, Thiruvalla. The core objective was to determine how Alco's approach to positioning, specifically its actions on product quality, pricing, promotion, and communication translates into customer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase decisions.**

Data was gathered from 100 customers using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through percentage analysis and visual tools. The findings strongly suggest that brand positioning is a powerful driver of customer opinion, fostering greater trust, preference, and repurchase intent. The most impactful factors identified were consistent product quality, effective advertising efforts, and a robust brand image.

The study demonstrates that Alco Aluminium can enhance its market position and sustain customer loyalty by maintaining a strategic, customer-focused brand image. These insights are vital for management looking to refine their branding efforts and secure a competitive edge in the aluminium products sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Brand positioning is critical in today's competitive business landscape, serving to establish a unique and differentiating image in the minds of consumers, which is particularly vital for sectors like aluminium products where competition and product similarities are high. Alco Aluminium Products, Thiruvalla, a prominent firm facing stiff local and regional competition, must understand how its current positioning strategies encompassing product quality, pricing, promotion, and brand communication influence customer attitudes and purchasing decisions. This study is therefore dedicated to examining the direct impact of Alco Aluminium's brand positioning on customer perception, with the explicit aim of generating actionable insights to enhance customer satisfaction and strengthen the company's market presence against its rivals.

1.2 INDUSTRY PROFILE

As one of India's fastest-growing sectors, the aluminium industry is fundamentally linked to the country's building and manufacturing boom. The metal's popularity stems from its lightweight durability and corrosion resistance, making it perfect for modern construction applications like window and door frames. This strong demand, spurred by rapid urbanization, has intensified the need for specialized fabrication services. Within this context, Kerala's aluminium fabrication industry, particularly in areas like Thiruvalla, plays a crucial role by providing high-quality, customized solutions to local builders and consumers. Alco Aluminium Products exemplifies this regional segment, capitalizing on the market's increasing preference for eco-friendly, long-lasting materials and advanced design technologies, thus signalling strong potential for future growth.

1.3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Brand positioning is the deliberate act of carving out a unique space for a brand in the minds of its consumers. Drawing from the work of Al Rise and Jack Trout (1981), positioning ensures that a brand's identity and value proposition are seen as distinct from the competition. This strategy is critical because it fundamentally melds customer perception into how customers interpret the brand's quality, reliability, and overall value. For customers, their perception is continuously formed through tangible factors, including the quality of the product, the pricing structure, the promotional campaigns they encounter, and the clarity of brand communication. Consequently, Alco Aluminium Products must strategically align these elements to establish a

powerful, differentiated brand image capable of drawing in customers and preserving its competitive standing in the market.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The primary challenge for Alco Aluminium Products, Thiruvalla, is maintaining its market share and growth amid intense local and regional competition offering functionally similar aluminium fabrication products. While the company provides quality products, it's unclear whether its current brand positioning strategies are effectively distinguishing the brand, shaping positive customer perception, or fostering loyalty.

• Whether Alco Aluminium's brand positioning creates a distinct image in the minds of customers.

• How brand positioning strategies affect customer perception and satisfaction.

• Whether factors like product quality, pricing, and promotion influence customer preferences.

• To what extent current positioning strategies help the company maintain competitiveness in the market.

1.5 NEED FOR THE STUDY

1. Evaluate Brand Positioning Effectiveness

The study is necessary to understand how effectively Alco Aluminium Products communicates its unique selling propositions, such as quality, design, durability, and service, to its target customers.

2. Understand Customer Perceptions

There is a need to assess how customers perceive Alco's brand in comparison to competitors, including factors like trust, satisfaction, and loyalty.

3. Analyze Market Competitiveness

The aluminium products market in Kerala and surrounding regions is highly competitive. Studying Alco's brand positioning will reveal its strengths and weaknesses relative to both regional and national competitors.

4. Identify Opportunities for Improvement

Insights from this study can guide Alco in enhancing its marketing strategies, product offerings, and service quality to strengthen its market presence.

5. Support Strategic Decision-Making The study will provide management with data-driven insights that can help in refining promotional strategies, pricing policies, and customer engagement practices.

6. Contribute to Academic Knowledge The research adds value to the field of marketing and brand management by providing a case study on brand positioning in the regional aluminium industry.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study customer perceptions and preferences regarding Alco's products compared to competitors.

2. To evaluate the effectiveness of Alco's marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) in creating a strong brand image.

3. To identify strengths and weaknesses in Alco's brand positioning strategy.

4. To understand the role of sustainability and quality in influencing customer choice in the aluminium industry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Positioning Defined

Brand positioning is the strategic act of cultivating a unique and desirable place for a brand in the minds of its consumers. According to influential marketing thinkers Rise and Trout (1981), successful positioning differentiates a brand from its competitors by clearly communicating its specific value to the target audience. This is executed through focused strategies related to the marketing mix, including product quality, pricing, promotion, and brand image.

Impact on Customer Behavior

This strategic foundation directly dictates customer perception, which refers to how consumers evaluate a brand based on their experiences, expectations, and marketing messages. A well-executed brand position

is crucial because it leads to tangible business results: research consistently shows that a strong position heightens customer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty (Keller, 2013). This positive perception is what ultimately drives purchasing decisions, while a weak, undifferentiated position can leave customers indifferent.

2.2 RESEARCH GAPS

1. Lack of Local Market Research

There is little research focused on Thiruvalla or similar local markets where customer preference and brand image may differ from urban areas.

2. Customer Perception in Industrial Products

Most studies focus on consumer goods, not on industrial products like aluminium doors, windows, and profiles.

3. Influence of Dealers

The role of dealers and distributors in shaping customer perception of brands like Alco Aluminium is not well studied.

4. Gap Between Brand Image and Customer View

Few studies have explored the difference between how Alco positions itself and how customers actually view the brand.

5. Limited Empirical Data

There is a lack of primary data from customers in the aluminium sector to measure how brand positioning impacts their perception.

2.3 HYPOTHESIS

• H1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the clarity of Alco's brand positioning and the overall favourability of customer perception.

• H2: Customers who can correctly articulate Alco's key points-of-difference (PODs) will demonstrate significantly higher levels of brand loyalty and willingness to pay a premium than those who cannot.

• H3: Alco's positioning on "Quality and Durability" has a stronger positive impact on customer-perceived value and trust than its positioning on "Price and Affordability."

• H4: A positioning strategy emphasizing "Superior Customer Service and Installation" is a more significant predictor of positive word-of-mouth recommendations than a strategy emphasizing "Product Features and Aesthetics" alone.

• H5: Customers exposed to Alco's "Sustainable/Green" positioning (if applicable) will report a more favourable brand image and higher perceived value, even if sustainability is not their primary purchase driver.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

he study follows a descriptive research design, which helps in understanding and analysing the current status of brand positioning strategies adopted by Alco Aluminium Products.

It focuses on how these strategies influence customer perception in Thiruvalla.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used to get a clear picture of customer opinions, preferences, and satisfaction levels.

3.2 STUDY AREA

The research is conducted in Thiruvalla, where Alco Aluminium Products has its main operations and customer base.

3.3 SOURCE OF DATA

Primary Data: Collected through questionnaires and personal interviews with customers and dealers of Alco Aluminium Products in Thiruvalla.

Secondary Data: Gathered from company reports, journals, websites, and previous research papers related to brand positioning and customer behavior.

3.4 SAMPLING AND SAMPLE SIZE

Sampling Method: Data was collected using a convenience sampling method, focusing on customers who have purchased or are aware of Alco Aluminium Products.

Sample Size: Approximately 100 respondents

3.5 TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

• Percentage Analysis – to show the proportion of responses for each question.

• Mean / Average – to find the overall customer rating for different brand attributes.

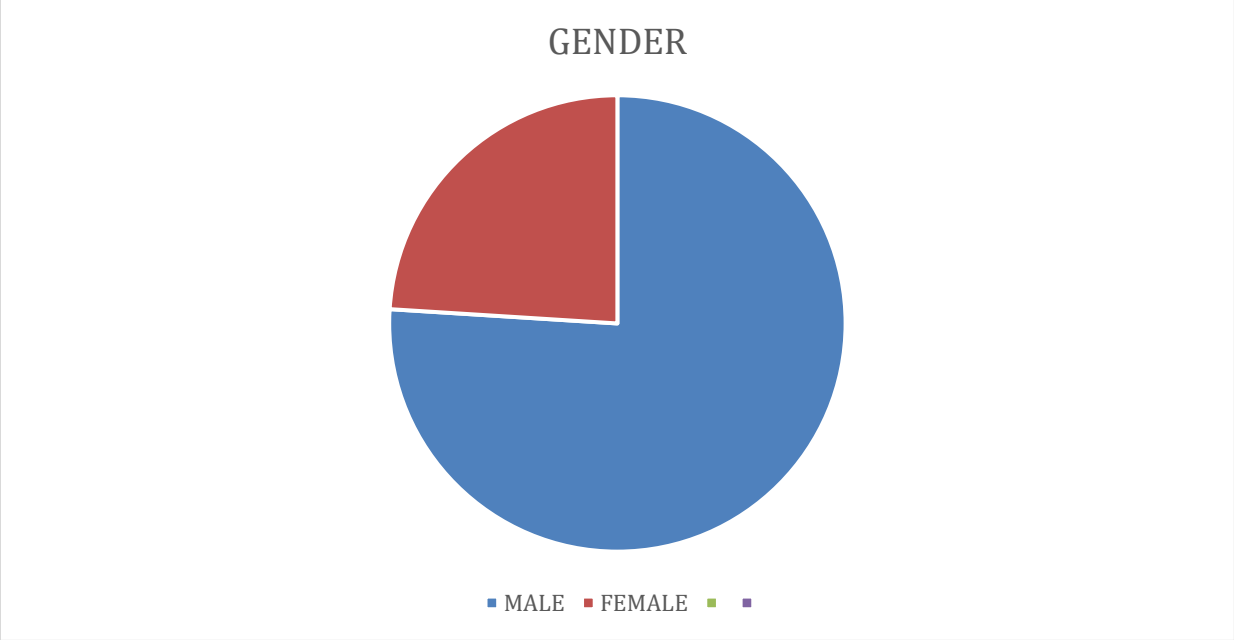
• Ranking Method – to identify the most preferred factors influencing customer perception.

• Charts and Graphs – to visually represent data for easier interpretation.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 GENDER

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	76	76%
Female	24	24%
TOTAL	100	100%

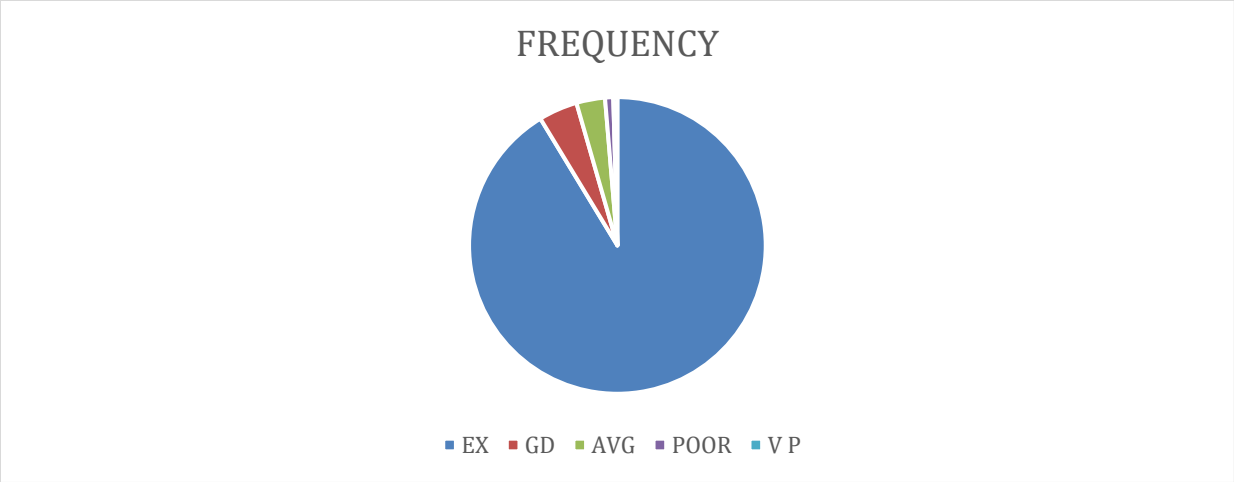


Interpretation

The survey is dominated by male respondents(76%), strongly indicating that men are the primary decision-makers or key influencers in the purchase of aluminium products. The 24% female representation is a substantial minority, suggesting a significant segment of women is also involved in these decisions, likely for household applications.

4.2 BRANDING

RATING	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Excellent	22	22%
Good	38	38%
Average	28	28%
Poor	8	8%
Very poor	4	4%
TOTAL	100	100%

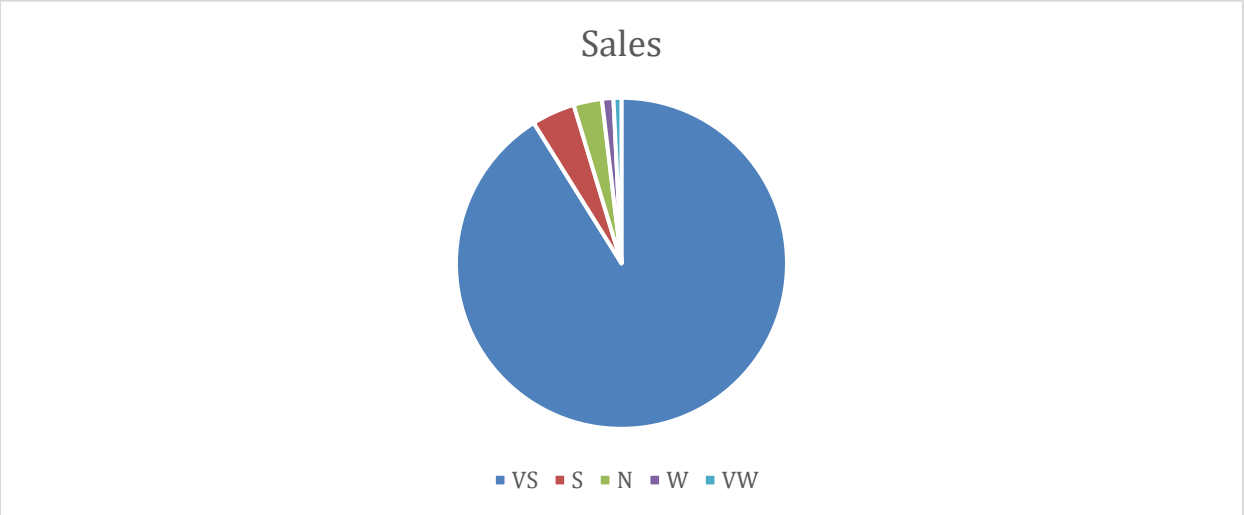


Interpretation

60% of respondents rate branding and advertising as Good or Excellent, suggesting that Alco Aluminium's marketing strategies have a positive but improvable impact on customer perception.

4.3 MARKET STANDING IN KERALA

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very Strongly	20	20%
Strongly	38	38%
Neutral	25	25%
Weakly	10	10%
Not at all	7	7%
TOTAL	100	100%

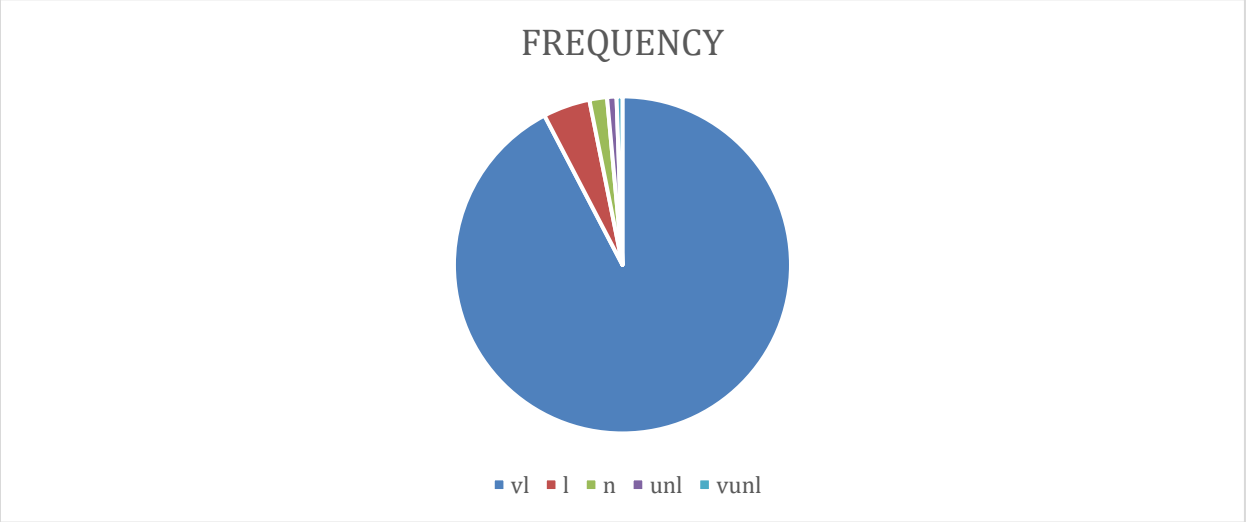


Interpretation

58% of respondents believe Alco Aluminium stands out strongly in the Kerala market, reflecting a competitive and recognizable brand positioning.

4.4 REPURCHASE INTENTION

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very Likely	32	32
Likely	40	40
Neutral	15	15
Unlikely	8	8
Very Unlikely	5	5
TOTAL	100	100%



Interpretation

72% of respondents are very likely or likely to repurchase, indicating high customer retention and a strong perception of brand reliability.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Alco Aluminium's brand positioning is a primary driver of customer perception, satisfaction, and loyalty, with quality, pricing, promotion, and brand image being the critical influencing factors. While the brand reputation is strong, the company should focus on enhancing its marketing and communication approach.

Bolster Digital Reach: Significantly increase digital presence through targeted social media and online marketing campaigns.

Boost Loyalty: Drive repeat business by implementing loyalty programs, referral incentives, and special offers.

Innovate Product: Maintain high product quality while proactively exploring and introducing innovative designs.

Strengthen Service: Improve customer engagement and after-sales service to enhance the overall customer experience.

Ensure Consistency: Guarantee consistent branding across all communication and sales channels.

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