Nexus Between Brand Focus Positioning and Market Performance of Insurance Firms in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Brand positioning strategy is a critical element in marketing, particularly for insurance firms seeking to enhance their market performance. In Kenya, the insurance sector faces intense competition from international firms and banc-assurance products offered by commercial banks, resulting in low market penetration, poor customer experiences, and high default rates. Many insurance firms struggle with under-positioning, over-positioning, or confused positioning, which creates a gap between customer expectations and actual experiences. This study sought to examine the relationship between brand focus positioning and the market performance of insurance firms in Kenya. The research was guided by Keller's Expectancy Theory and adopted a mixed-method approach incorporating correlational and cross-sectional research designs. The study targeted 220 top-level managers tasked with implementing brand positioning strategies, and data were collected from the entire population using a census approach. Structured questionnaires were used for data collection, with expert validation ensuring content, face, and construct validity. The reliability of the research instrument was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a threshold of 0.7 indicating acceptable reliability. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations summarized the data, while simple linear regression analysis tested the hypothesized relationship. The results revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between brand focus positioning and market performance ($\beta = 0.266$, $p < 0.005$). The study concluded that brand-focused positioning strategies significantly influence the market performance of insurance firms in Kenya. It recommends that insurance firms adopt effective brand positioning strategies that align with customer expectations to create competitive advantage and enhance performance in a competitive market environment.

Keywords: Brand Focus Positioning, Market Performance, Insurance Firms, Kenya, Brand Strategy, Regression Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive global marketplace, brand positioning has become an essential strategic tool for firms seeking to differentiate their products, enhance customer loyalty, and improve market performance. In the 21st century, customers are increasingly attracted to affordable, high-quality, and reputable brands, prompting organizations to refine their brand positioning strategies in pursuit of a competitive edge (Stankevich, 2017). In developed economies such as Europe, the United States, and parts of Asia, brand positioning strategies are heavily informed by customer research and innovation, with a strong emphasis on service quality and brand reputation as critical determinants of purchase intentions (Guan, Yusuf, & Ghani, 2020). In Iran, for instance, Iyer et al. (2019) demonstrated that market orientation and positioning strategies significantly impact firm performance, particularly in the dairy sector. Similarly, Sehrawala and Karaduman (2015), in their study in Turkey, found that brand positioning significantly influences perceived product quality, though its direct relationship with market performance remained underexplored.

Across African markets, firms are increasingly embracing brand-focused positioning strategies to respond to rising consumer expectations and intensified competition. Damar, Rintari, and Muema (2018) emphasized that brand elements such as image, identity, and personality positively influence organizational performance among multinational corporations. African businesses are recognizing that brand positioning—whether based on price, benefits, or customer focus—plays a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions, creating distinctiveness, and

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driving competitive advantage (Saqid, 2021; Kawira, 2021). In Nigeria, Amadi and Obayi (2022) found a positive relationship between brand quality positioning and sales performance among SMEs, highlighting the broader impact of strategic branding across various sectors.

In the East African region, Kenya leads in insurance market development, with over 51 registered insurance companies and an estimated penetration rate of 3% (KPMG, 2017). The Kenyan insurance sector comprises diverse players, including underwriters, brokers, loss adjusters, and reinsurers, offering both general and life insurance products such as motor, medical, life assurance, annuities, and pensions (IRA, 2022). Major players like Old Mutual, Britam, Jubilee Insurance, and CIC have adopted brand and product innovations to remain competitive. Old Mutual, for example, leverages over a century of insurance experience and a strong regional presence to offer tailored investment, health, and life insurance products (Ajowi & Reuben, 2019).

Despite these advancements, the Kenyan insurance industry faces persistent challenges. As of 2017, only 10 of the 55 licensed underwriters held over 60% of the market share, suggesting an uneven competitive landscape (IRA, 2017). More concerning is the consistent decline in insurance penetration—from 2.7% in 2015 to 2.2% in 2021—accompanied by a drop in Return on Assets (from 3.8% to 1.6%) and Return on Equity (from 11.4% to 5.1%) over the same period (Kenya Financial Stability Report, 2021). The market is further strained by fraud, unethical practices, and weak customer trust, resulting in product defaults and a deteriorating brand experience (Mwongela, 2023).

Moreover, many insurance companies continue to struggle with poor branding practices, including under-positioning (failing to highlight unique value), over-positioning (narrow brand definitions), and confused positioning (mixed brand messages), which have led to a mismatch between customer expectations and experience (Kraujaliene & Kromalcas, 2022). Although previous studies in Kenya, such as by Damar, Rintari, and Muema (2018) and Okoth (2015), have examined brand personality, elements, and image in relation to performance, these investigations have largely focused on multinational corporations or measured performance in terms of profitability and customer loyalty, leaving a gap in understanding the impact of brand focus positioning on market performance within the insurance industry.

Therefore, given the declining market penetration, weak brand differentiation, and customer dissatisfaction plaguing Kenya's insurance firms, it is imperative to explore strategic brand focus positioning as a pathway to enhancing market performance. This study thus seeks to investigate the relationship between brand focus positioning and market performance of insurance firms in Kenya, addressing a crucial gap in empirical literature and offering practical insights for strengthening competitiveness in the insurance sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Kevin Lane Keller in 1993 created the Keller Brand Enquiry model, also known as the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) model. According to Keller's viewpoint, the relationship between customers and brands can be visualized as a pyramid, with customer recognition at the base and brand resonance at the top (Keller, 2000). In actuality, the CBBE model also referred to as the Brand Equity Pyramid is a pyramid that illustrates how to develop brand equity through target market awareness and appropriate use of tactics. Hence, a relationship between the brand at the top of the pyramid and the customer at its base results in positive brand equity. Brand equity gives an organization the ability to attract and keep customers, giving the company and the product brand a competitive advantage (Mionic&Lindgärde, 2020). Four levels make up Keller's brand equity model (Keaton, 2019).

The first level is brand identity, which refers to how consumers view a brand and differentiate it from others. From the viewpoint of the consumer, it is how the brand characterizes itself (Keller, 2001). This objective must be attained through the growth of brand salience, or awareness. This means that the brand must be distinctive in order for the consumer to quickly recognize it. This can be accomplished, according to Mionic and Lindgärde (2020), by conducting market research to better understand clients and establish market segments for various needs related to the brand. Determine how the customer chooses the right brand from among the available options.

Keller (2020) identifies the second level as occurring after brand recognition is attained through customer surveys. It is possible to develop brand meaning that alludes to a product's or company's functionality or purpose. Brand performance and brand imaging make up the two main components of brand meaning.

For the consumer, the brand's performance is crucial. Five components make up the model's definition of performance: price; style and design; empathy of the provided services; effectiveness and efficiency; product serviceability, durability, and dependability; and fundamental traits and features (Dubravka & Domagoj, 2015). On the other hand, brand imagery refers to the image that customers associate with the brand. These are based on how the customer feels.

The third level is where customer expectations and brand performance are represented by brand reaction (Keller, 2001). This can be divided into two categories: judgment and feelings. Consideration, credibility, brand, and quality excellence are all present in judgment. The emotional reaction to a product is called feeling, and it might be anything from comfort to enjoyment, security, social acceptance and to self-respect.

Keller's idea of brand equity has been criticized since, according to Grassl (2000), it does not take into account the financial aspects of brand equity. Aaker (2004) argues that it is crucial to also consider the cost because it indicates whether a consumer is willing to pay a premium price to be satisfied. In most cases, price may have a detrimental effect on Keller's model application, influencing the steps utilized to develop brand loyalty.

Therefore, when there is brand resonance, brand equity can be achieved, according to Keller (2009). The most ideal situation is one in which customers have a strong psychological connection to the brand. Brand fidelity, attitude attachment, a sense of belonging, and participation are the outcomes. Kuhn (2008) discovered that corporate purchasers place more value on staff, credibility, and the corporate brand than they do on individual brands and their associated dimensions. According to the model, brand loyalty and brand awareness go hand in hand. However, it also shows how to create a brand identity that satisfy customers.

Empirical Review

Brand positioning is a method that aids businesses in creating an effect in the minds of consumers rather than literally situating the brand. Marketers should continuously review the procedure and modify the brand as necessary (Marsden, 2002, p. 307). Branding offers consumers more than just financial value for their money, it also addresses their psychological needs. According to Kraujaliene and Kromalcas (2022), the top errors marketers make while branding are confused positioning, overdone positioning, and insufficient positioning, all of which have a negative impact on the final experience of the client and poor performance.

The effects of branding strategy on performance of multinational corporations in Kenya were investigated by Damar, Rintari and Muema (2018). The study examined 122management employees were incorporated in the study and they analyzed data using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The findings reveal that firms actively used branding. Further, they posit that brand personality, brand element, the multinational corporations have adopted brand image and brand identity. Only brand identity and brand personality were found to significantly influence the performance of multinational corporations. The study concludes that implementation of branding strategies in MNCs is to improve organizational performance. The study focused on corporations in Kenya while the current study focused on insurance firms in Kenya. The study focuses on brand personality, element, image and identity as brand strategies where brand personality and identity were the only one significant on performance of MNCs. The current study mainly focused on brand focus positioning rather than brand strategies where brand personality, image and identity used as indicators. This study also determined market performance rather than organizational performance.

In Turkey as study by Sehrawala and Karaduman, (2015) establish brand positioning strategies of coffee shops. The study was conducted on comparative basis and used qualitative and quantitative approach. The results reveal that brand positioning strategy used the coffee shops had significant relationship with quality factors. Brand positioning strategy examined in this study focused on quality of coffee shop in Turkey, whereas the current study mainly focused on market performance of insurance firms in Kenya. In order to achieve the relationship, a correlation design was adopted in contrast with comparative basis used by the authors.

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Azmat and Lakhani (2015) looked at brand positioning from the standpoint of the customer in terms of benefit, surrogate, and competitive positioning. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to examine how consumer perceptions were affected by brand positioning efforts.

The study looks at positioning techniques such as competitive positioning, surrogate positioning, and beneficial positioning. The effectiveness of these strategies is tested by displaying 250 randomly selected products in television adverts that use the aforementioned positioning tactics. The study's findings revealed that the consumers viewed the other two positioning strategies more or less unfavourably, but surrogate positioning by the brands had the most positive response.This study main focus examined brand positioning using benefit, surrogate, and competitive perspective. The proposed study examined brand positioning in terms of brand identity, image and personality.

Vural *et al.,* (2021) carried out a study in Turkey which looked at how transport companies use sustainable branding positioning methods to increase their market performance. The main goal was to look at how sustainability policies affected market performance. 13 container-shipping businesses made up the target demographic; they were all chosen from the top 10 container shipping companies worldwide, as identified by Alphaliner. The 13 firms' social media accounts were examined to gather the data, and then a qualitative content analysis was performed to contrast the different types and characteristics of communications. The data was then examined using network analysis and descriptive approaches. It was discovered that each participant's unique positioning tactics and the market performance through a content analysis of their social media communications. It was noted that a well-organized sustainable positioning approach, produced better market results in terms of awareness, client loyalty, and brand reputation. In order to achieve long-term profitability, it concluded that container companies should prioritize sustainable positioning.

Brand relationship with competitive advantage was evaluated by Rua and Santtos (2022). The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between brand and the competitive advantage obtained through differentiation, along with the role that positioning and market orientation play as mediators. Utilizing a quantitative methodology, an empirical study was created. Portuguese footwear exporting businesses were the study's target, and a questionnaire survey was used to collect data. The results show that market orientation has no significant effect on competitive advantage through differentiation; positioning directly influences competitive advantage through differentiation; and positioning mediates the relationship between market, competitive advantage through differentiation, and brand. Brand has a significant direct impact on positioning, market orientation, and competitive advantage through differentiation. The study examined brand in relation with positioning, market orientation and competitive advantage. This creates a gap between brand and brand positioning whereas the current study examined brand positioning and market performance.

The study by Amadi and Obayi (2022) examined the association between brand quality positioning strategy and sales performance of food and beverage manufacturing business owners in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector in Rivers State, Nigeria. Information from 490 consumers and business owners in Port Harcourt that assist SMEs was used in the survey's descriptive and quantitative phases. Five demographic questions were included in a well-designed questionnaire with 16 total items to extract information from the respondents. With the aid of SPSS, inferential statistics carried out to ascertain the association between brand quality positioning strategy and sales performance after data editing and instrument reliability analysis. A moderately good association between the brand quality positioning strategy and sales performance found by the inferential statistical study. The empirical investigation concluded that brand quality significantly influences sales performance. In order to increase their ability to draw customers, the study advised food and beverage manufacturing enterprises to concentrate on raising the quality of their goods.

Ekmekçi (2010) looked at brand and product positioning as a global marketing approach for maintaining competitive advantage in Turkey. The study's initial goal is to illustrate the relationship between brand and product positioning, worldwide branding strategies, and maintaining competitive advantage. The literature provided justifications for the study of the significance of organizations' worldwide branding and product positioning orientations as a foundation for building competitive advantage. It is stated that the key factors in multinational management and worldwide business domains are the organizations' product positioning, global branding orientations, and ability to preserve competitive advantage. The goal of this study is to assess how corporations' product positioning and global branding strategies have affected their respective industries and global brands. The study therefore, dues relate product positioning to market performance which the current study addressed. This was able to examine the impact of brand focus positioning strategy on market performance of insurance firms in Kenya.

In the context of the Iranian's dairy product market, Iyer et al. (2019) set out to investigate the combined impacts of market orientation and positioning strategy on brand performance. The study focused on Iranian dairy product companies, with a sample size of 52.

Multiple-item scales were used in the cross-sectional study design for the questionnaire surveys. The data was analyzed using correlation analysis, and structural equation modeling. According to the study's findings, both market orientation and positioning strategy significantly affect how well Iranian dairy product companies' performance. Furthermore, the findings showed that positioning strategies' mediation effect on market orientation had an indirect impact on brand performance. In order to increase brand performance, the study's conclusion emphasized the necessity for dairy product companies to implement proper market and positioning oriented strategies.

According to Sehrawala and Karaduman (2015), the objective of their study in Turkey was to assess the brand positioning strategies of coffee shops there through a comparison of Starbucks and Costa. This practical investigation examines the current literature logically, paying particular attention to the appraisal of a fictitious setting. Due to the numerous competitors, coffee shops in Turkey are concentrating on their brand positioning strategy. As a marketing plan, however, coffee shops must deliberately find a way to outperform their rivals. A self-structured online questionnaire survey that adopted both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used to complete the study. Consumers answered the questions on the surveys to obtain primary data. According to the findings; Starbucks' success and Costa Coffee's exit from the Turkish market were directly tied to the quality of coffee shops' brand positioning strategies.

Organizations can implement a variety of positioning strategies to boost performance, including differentiation strategies, perceived quality strategies, market strategies, price strategies, and brand positioning strategies (Maoto, 2017). This study focused on the effectiveness of Nairobi's five-star hotels' strategic positioning and complete quality management systems. The study sample 40 hotels, with 98-star hotels being the study's target population. The study considered differentiation strategy, pricing strategy, costing, and promotion, all of which were discovered to have a significant impact on the performance of the hotels. The study also established that adopting positioning strategies improves organizational performance by establishing customer relationship management and reducing issues with competition in the market. The proposed study looked at positioning techniques that are not already envisioned.

In summary, empirical studies were done in multinational companies, coffee shops, small and medium enterprise and transport companies. However, there are gaps in the insurance industry on the relationship between brand positioning strategies and market performance.

These studies were also done in different countries in Europe, however, there is room to conduct in Kenya. The study done in Kenya found different aspect of brands were found to have different effects on performance. The current study intends to examine brand positioning in respect to market performance.

Identification of Knowledge Gap

The current study attempted to fill in the contextual gap left by the study conducted by Rintari et al. (2018), which examined the impact of branding strategies on organizational performance. In contrast to the current study, the previous one used four branding strategies: brand personality, brand image, brand identity, and brand element.

Conceptual gap in Damar, Rintari and Muena (2018) which focused on brand strategies and performance was achieved by focusing brand positioning in relation with market performance in the current study. Azmat and Lakhani (2015) did examine brand positioning but focused on benefit, surrogate and competitive positioning. The study did not examine the market performance whereas the current study focused on brand image, identity

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and personality in relation with market performance to fill the conceptual gap. Another study by Rua and Santtos (2022) focused mainly brand and competitive advantage leading to a gap of knowledge impact of brand positioning on market performance. This conceptual gap was filled by the current study where brand positioning was examined in relation with market performance.

A study that did research on brand positioning by Sehrawala and Karaduman (2015) focused mainly in obtaining comparative design among coffee shops in Turkey. The current study used correlational as well as cross-section to fill the methodological gap since it opted to test the relationship between brand positioning strategy on the market performance of insurance firms in Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the positivist research philosophy, which is grounded in the belief that knowledge is best acquired through observable and measurable facts. This approach emphasizes objectivity, quantification, and empirical validation, making it suitable for investigating relationships between variables in a structured manner. A cross-sectional and correlational research design was employed to analyse the relationship between brand focus positioning and market performance. The cross-sectional nature allowed the collection of data at a single point in time, while the correlational aspect enabled the assessment of the strength and direction of the relationship between the study variables.

The target population comprised 220 managerial-level respondents drawn from all 55 insurance companies registered with the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) in Kenya. Given the relatively manageable population size, a census approach was adopted, involving all 220 respondents to ensure comprehensive and representative data collection across the sector.

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires developed based on the study's conceptual framework and specific objectives. To ensure face validity, the instrument was reviewed by academic peers and research supervisors to confirm its clarity, relevance, and logical consistency. Construct validity was established by ensuring that each questionnaire item directly aligned with the key variables and indicators outlined in the study's conceptual model. A pilot study was conducted involving 20 respondents drawn randomly from selected Kenyan insurance brokerage firms. The pilot test helped refine the questionnaire and assess its reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the instrument was 0.795, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7, and indicating satisfactory internal consistency and instrument reliability.

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data. To test the relationship between brand focus positioning and market performance, simple linear regression analysis was conducted. Statistical significance was determined at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$), ensuring rigorous and meaningful interpretation of the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Brand Focus Position

Brand focus positioning was presented in frequency, percentage frequency, mean and standard deviation. This examined the extent to which brand focus positioning was implemented among the insurance firms. The results were summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Brand Focus Positioning

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our company have associated the brand with specific benefit to the customer	12 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)	46 (23.6%)	64 (32.8%)	73 (37.4%)	3.9538	1.08072

The insurance firm associates its product with the brand of the organization during promotion and marketing.	5 (2.6%)	10 (5.1%)	19 (9.7%)	95 (48.7%)	66 (33.8%)	4.0615	.93407
The insurance firm has developed marketing promotion campaign that ensure our brand is well known to the customer.	6 (3.1%)	3 (1.5%)	6 (3.1%)	94 (48.2%)	86 (44.1%)	4.2872	.85530
The insurance firm has developed corporate image through public relation to improve on our brand image.	4 (2.1%)	1 (0.5%)	20 (10.3%)	137 (70.3%)	33 (16.9%)	3.9949	.69235
Our firm identifies itself with specific value and motto while selling the product.	4 (2.1%)	3 (1.5%)	16 (8.2%)	84 (43.1%)	88 (45.1%)	4.2769	.84049
The insurance firm has branded the products in the market to attract customer to our products.	18 (9.2%)	1 (0.5%)	8 (4.1%)	107 (54.9%)	61 (31.3%)	3.9846	1.10050
Aggregate						4.0932	0.65256

Table 1 output showed that the insurance had associated the brand with specific benefit to the customer as strongly respondents by 73(37.4%) who were the majority. This had a mean of 3.9538 and standard deviation of 1.08072 which implied that insurance firms used brand association based on product benefits, however, there was high variation between the different insurance firms. A significant 95(48.7%) respondents agreed that the insurance firm associates their product with the brand of the organization during promotion and marketing. With a mean of 4.0615 and 0.93407, brand association assist insurance firms in marketing and promoting their products to the customers.

A response of 94(48.2%) agreed that the insurance firm had developed marketing promotion campaign that ensure their brand is well known to the customer. The mean of 4.2872 and standard deviation of 0.85530, strongly show that marketing promotion campaigns were mainly used in selling insurance brands to customer. It was also evident that 137(70.3%) of respondents agreed that the insurance firm had developed corporate image through public relation to improve on their brand image. This resulted to a mean of 3.9949 and 0.69235 which implied that public relation played an important role in development of corporate image as well as brand image of the insurance firm.

The findings showed that 88(45.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the firm identified itself with specific value and motto while selling their product. It a mean of 4.2769 and standard deviation of 0.84049 implied that that firm value and motto played an important role in marketing insurance products. Finally, the study found that 107(54.9%) agreed that the insurance firm had branded the products in the market to attract customer to their products. This had a mean of 3.9846 and standard deviation of 1.10050, which implied that the insurance firm adopted brand positioning as mean of attracting customers.

The aggregate mean of 4.0932 and a standard deviation of 0.65256 for brand focus positioning suggest that, overall, insurance firms actively implement brand positioning strategies to strengthen their market presence. However, the variations in standard deviation imply differences in the extent to which different firms adopt and execute these strategies. The findings conclude that strong brand positioning, through association, promotion, corporate identity, and value alignment, plays a critical role in enhancing market performance and customer engagement in the insurance sector.

Market Performance

The results in Table 2 offer valuable insights into the market performance of insurance firms, evaluated through frequency, percentage frequency, mean, and standard deviation. This analysis sales volume, service quality, market share, and customer share level in insurance.

Table 2: Market Performance

	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company has improved on the sales volume.	9 (4.6%)	9 (4.6%)	23 (11.8%)	75 (38.5%)	79 (40.5%)	4.0564	1.06097
The insurance firm increased number of customers over the past one year.	0 (0.0%)	10 (5.1%)	9 (4.6%)	86 (44.1%)	90 (46.2%)	4.3128	.78621
Our firm have improved in market share where we have developed new products for new market segments.	5 (2.6%)	4 (2.1%)	9 (4.6%)	110 (56.4%)	67 (34.4%)	4.1795	.82086
The insurance firm has expanded to other markets in other regions within and outside Kenya.	11 (5.6%)	2 (1.0%)	2 (1.0%)	93 (47.7%)	87 (44.6%)	4.2462	.97437
Aggregate						4.2072	.60492

The findings on market performance indicate that insurance firms have made significant strides in sales growth, customer acquisition, employee satisfaction, market expansion, and geographical reach. The results, as summarized in Table 2, provide a comprehensive assessment of these performance indicators using frequency, percentage frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

The study revealed that a substantial proportion of respondents agreed that their firms have experienced improved sales volume, with 38.5% agreeing and 40.5% strongly agreeing. The mean of 4.0564 and a standard deviation of 1.06097 suggest a generally positive perception of sales improvement, though some variability exists across firms. Additionally, an overwhelming majority—44.1% agreeing and 46.2% strongly agreeing—reported that their firms had successfully increased the number of customers in the past year. The mean of 4.3128 and standard deviation of 0.78621 confirm that most firms are experiencing growth in customer numbers, a critical indicator of market performance.

Another key performance metric examined was market expansion. The study found that 56.4% of respondents agreed and 34.4% strongly agreed that their firms had improved their market share by developing new products targeted at new market segments. The mean of 4.1795 and standard deviation of 0.82086 suggest that firms are actively engaging in product diversification to enhance their competitive edge.

Furthermore, the results highlighted geographical expansion efforts, with 47.7% of respondents agreeing and 44.6% strongly agreeing that their firms had expanded into new markets both within and outside Kenya. This was supported by a mean of 4.2462 and a standard deviation of 0.97437, signifying that insurance firms are increasingly looking beyond traditional markets to grow their business.

The aggregate mean of 4.2072 and standard deviation of 0.60492 indicate that, overall, insurance firms in Kenya have demonstrated strong market performance, driven by increased sales, customer growth, employee satisfaction, and strategic market expansion. These findings suggest that firms that invest in customer-focused services, competitive product offerings, and market diversification strategies are more likely to achieve sustained growth and competitive advantage in the industry.

Test of Hypothesis

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant relationship between brand focus positioning and market performance of insurance firms in Kenya.

The first hypothesis was examined using simple linear regression model that tested the direct relationship between brand focus positioning and market performance.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.287[a]	.083	.078	.58091	.083	17.366	1	193	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), BP									

This table presents the incremental contribution of Brand Focus Positioning Strategy (BP)in predicting market performance (MP). The results show a significant relationship between brand positioning and market performance, with R=0.287 and R^2=0.083, indicating that brand positioning explains 8.3% of the variance in market performance ($F_{(1,193)} = 17.366$, $p<0.001$).

Table 4: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.860	1	5.860	17.366	.000[b]
	Residual	65.130	193	.337		
	Total	70.990	194			
a. Dependent Variable: MP						
b. Predictors: (Constant), BP						

The ANOVA results confirm the statistical significance of the models of the first hypothesis. The results indicated reveals a significant effect of Brand Focus Positioning Strategy (BP) on market performance (MP) ($F_{(1,193)}$=17.366,$p<0.005$).

Table 5: Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.117	.265		11.767	.000
	BP	.266	.064	.287	4.167	.000
a. Dependent Variable: MP						

In Table 5, BP has a positive and significant effect on MP (B=0.266, t=4.167, $p<0.005$). The results of the first objective, indicating that Brand Focus Positioning Strategy (BP) has a positive and significant effect on market performance (MP) (B=0.266, t=4.167, $p<0.005$). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative was accepted.

This aligns with several studies that underscore the importance of brand positioning in driving market success. One of the study is by Marsden (2002), which asserts that effective brand positioning creates a strong psychological impact in the minds of consumers, which ultimately contributes to enhanced market performance. This finding is reflected in the current study, where insurance firms in Kenya that strategically positioned their brands experienced a notable improvement in market performance. The positive relationship between brand positioning and market performance corroborates the assertions of Kraujaliene and Kromalcas (2022), who highlight the importance of clear and effective positioning to avoid errors that could otherwise diminish a brand's impact.

The study by Damar, Rintari, and Muema (2018) also provides context for the current findings. Their research focused on multinational corporations in Kenya, highlighting the positive influence of brand identity and personality on organizational performance. While their study cantered on organizational rather than market performance, the findings are relevant in demonstrating the pivotal role of strategic branding efforts in achieving positive outcomes. Similarly, the current study's focus on brand positioning, particularly its effect on the market performance of insurance firms in Kenya, further emphasizes that clear, targeted positioning—akin to brand identity and personality—leads to better market outcomes. This contrasts with Damar et al.'s focus on brand identity, but the commonality lies in the central role of brand-related strategies in influencing overall performance.

Sehrawala and Karaduman’s (2015) study on coffee shops in Turkey revealed a significant relationship between brand positioning and quality perceptions, which influenced their market performance. Although the study’s focus was on coffee shop quality, the results echo the findings of the current study, where a well-executed brand positioning strategy significantly impacts market outcomes. The current research, however, distinguishes itself by investigating the broader concept of brand focus positioning in the insurance sector, as opposed to a singular focus on quality. This distinction highlights how different industries, such as coffee shops and insurance firms, can benefit from tailored brand positioning strategies, suggesting that while positioning strategies are universally beneficial, their specific applications may vary depending on the sector.

Additionally, the findings of Azmat and Lakhani (2015) regarding customer perceptions of brand positioning tactics resonate with the results of the current study. Their research found that consumers had a more favorable response to surrogate positioning, demonstrating how consumer perceptions of brand positioning can impact brand success. While Azmat and Lakhani focused on the consumer’s perspective, the current study emphasizes the importance of brand positioning as a strategic tool that enhances market performance within the business context. The positive effect of brand positioning on market performance observed in the insurance firms aligns with their findings, but it extends beyond consumer perception to include tangible business outcomes, offering a broader understanding of how brand strategies influence market success.

The results of the first objective, indicating a positive and significant effect of brand positioning on market performance, are consistent with the broader literature on branding. This includes findings from various industries, such as multinational corporations, coffee shops, and even SMEs, where effective brand positioning strategies have been shown to improve performance. However, the current study contributes a unique perspective by examining the relationship between brand positioning and market performance specifically within the Kenyan insurance sector, thereby addressing a gap in the literature. The positive correlation between brand positioning and market performance in this context underscores the importance of developing clear, focused positioning strategies for organizations seeking to enhance their market standing.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary Results of Brand Focus Positioning and Market Performance

The findings highlight that brand positioning plays a crucial role in enhancing market performance for insurance firms. The results reveal that most respondents recognize the association of brands with specific benefits, such as product value and corporate image, as key strategies. Insurance firms use branding as a way to communicate these benefits effectively through marketing campaigns and promotional efforts. These campaigns are instrumental in making the brand well-known and trusted among customers. Additionally, public relations strategies that enhance the corporate image further contribute to strengthening the brand's identity and appeal. Such efforts demonstrate that a well-positioned brand helps organizations differentiate themselves in a competitive market.

Furthermore, the study shows that firms use specific values, mottos, and branding techniques to attract and retain customers. These strategies not only make the products more appealing, but also create a strong sense of identity and loyalty among customers. The analysis confirms that brand positioning significantly impacts market performance, with customer experience playing an enhancing role. By aligning brand values with customer expectations and maintaining consistent promotional efforts, insurance firms can leverage their brand positioning to achieve better market performance outcomes. This highlights the importance of integrating brand positioning with strategic marketing and customer experience management.

Conclusions

The findings conclude that brand focus positioning has a significant and positive relationship with market performance. Insurance firms that strategically associate their brands with specific customer benefits, organizational values, and corporate identity are more likely to attract and retain customers. The use of targeted marketing campaigns, public relations efforts, and clear value propositions enhances brand visibility and customer loyalty, thereby driving market performance. Furthermore, aligning brand positioning with customer experience amplifies this relationship, showcasing the importance of integrating customer-centric strategies with branding efforts. Overall, brand focus positioning emerges as a critical determinant of market success in the insurance industry.

Recommendations

The study recommends that insurance firms should prioritize brand focus positioning as a strategic tool to enhance market performance. This can be achieved by clearly defining and communicating the unique benefits of their products and aligning them with customer needs and expectations. Firms should invest in targeted marketing campaigns that highlight their brand values and leverage public relations to strengthen their corporate image. Emphasizing consistent and customer-centred branding efforts, such as adopting memorable mottos and showcasing organizational values, can improve brand recognition and loyalty. Additionally, integrating customer experience into branding strategies will further increase the impact of brand focus positioning on market performance. These initiatives will enable firms to differentiate themselves in a competitive market, attract more customers, and achieve sustainable growth.

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