Positions of Mobile Phone Brands on University Students’ Mind

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is determine the perception of Turkish university students of mobile phone brands. To achieve this, brand, brand positioning concepts and brand positioning strategies were mentioned. 417 questionnaires were carried out from university students. The results obtained from the questionnaires have been analysed by multi-dimensional scaling method. Then findings have been explained by using perceptual maps. The results have revealed that Nokia is the highest perception level among university students. Nokia is followed by Samsung, Sony Ericsson, LG and General Mobile (GM) respectively. Moreover, perceptual maps have shown that Nokia and GM are perceived as the most different brands and, Sony Ericsson-LG are perceived as the least different brands by university students.

KEYWORDS

Brand, Brand Positioning, Mobile Phone, Perceptual Map, Positioning Strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays fierce competition conditions, firms are looking for a tool for competitive advantage. At this point branding is seen to be one of the most important options by corporates. However, branding is singly insufficient for competitive advantage and corporates should be positioned their brands to right position on consumer mind. Because consumers have so many alternatives in purchasing decision process and they mostly act considering positions of brands on their minds. This study aims at determining positions of mobile phone brands on Turkish university students’ mind. Accordingly, brand, brand positioning concepts and brand positioning strategies explained after positions of mobile phone brands were presented through perceptual maps.

2. BRAND AND BRAND POSITIONING CONCEPTS

According to American Marketing Association (AMA) a brand is a name, term, design, figure or any other feature which is used for differentiate one seller’s good or service from the others (AMA, 2014). Many researchers (see, Aaker 1991: 25, Keller, 1993, de Chernatony and Dall’Olmo, 1998b) define to brand parallel to this definition, and concentrate on differentiating feature of brand. Hence it can be denoted that brand distinctiveness is one of the most important function for firms.
Corporates try to make a different position from competitors on consumers’ minds and positioning concept is an effective tool for this. Positioning concept was mood by Ries and Trout in 1972. According to those researchers positioning is what you do the mind of consumers’ minds. In the literature, so many authors defined to positioning concept. According to Aaker (1996: 176) positioning is closely related with association and image concepts and it can also be used to reflect how a corporate is trying to be perceived. According to some part of literature (Doyle and Saunders 1985, Dibb and Simkin, 1993, Tybout et al., 2005, Slater et al. 2007) positioning is the final stage of segmentation and target market selection process and at this stage corporations determine their brands’ differences from the competitors’. Keller (2008: 98) defines to positioning as position on consumers’ mind at the end of promotional activities towards brand image. However according to Aaker (1991: 110) this definition explains to position and corporates should practise several strategies to make a position on consumers’ mind. Based on above definitions, positioning can be defined as position which wins through positioning strategies on consumers’ mind. In the coming section some strategies is to be explained that corporates can be used in positioning.

3. BRAND POSITIONING STRATEGIES

In the literature it is possible to encounter different approaches about brand positioning strategies. One of the most popular approach is offered by Aaker and Shansby (1982). According to their approach firms can use six positioning strategies which are positioning by attribute of product, positioning by quality/price, positioning by usage, positioning by user, positioning by category, positioning by competitors.

As one of the most frequently used strategy, positioning by product attribute is strategy which product associates with one or more attributes or consumer utility. Volvo has emphasized durability of their cars and showing commercials of crash tests. Aquafresh which is a toothpaste brand, positions itself as tooth bleacher, refresher and carious warrior in the market (Kotler, 2005: 69). In the positioning by quality/price two points are important. On the one hand corporates should be cost leader in the market, on the other hand, target market consists of price-sensitive consumers (Hooley et al. 1998). Aldi is paragon of positioning by quality/price. Aldi is pretentious with low-costs and low-perceived quality in retail market. Positioning by usage explains that usage aim of a brand different than the others. For example, Gatorade positions their sports drink as replacement of lost fluids during summer (Kotler ve Armstrong, 1991: 236, Kotler, 2009: 73). Positioning by user is another positioning strategy which is a product associated with a user or users class (Porter, 1996). Brand personality helps corporates for using this strategy. Johnson & Johnson put baby and youth shampoos on market for increase own market share (Kotler ve Armstrong, 1987: 221). In the positioning by category corporates try to involve product-class associations their brands (Aaker and Shansby, 1982). The aim here is attributed to the corporate expertise and critical question is “which is a field are your brand in?” For example, some margarine brands determine their positions vis-à-vis to butter in the market (Kotler and Armstrong, 1987: 221). Ries and Trout (2000:) have expressed importance of positioning by category “It’s difficult to make a difference in where everything” so firms which are want to use positioning by category should focus on a specific field. Finally positioning by competitors refers why consumers prefer our brand instead of competitors’ brands. At this point corporates should clearly indicate what their differences are from the competitors (Levitt, 1980). These differences be due to product, type of production, image etc. Avis is in the case of point of positioning by competitors. In the rent-a-car industry Avis used “Avis is only No. 2 in rent-a-cars,
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