

A Study on Brand Positioning and Customer Perception

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PUDUCHERRY

ABSTRACT

The Project is undertaken at CHENNAI under the title “A STUDY ON BRAND POSITONING AND CUSTOMER PERCEPTION”. The Project helped in gaining knowledge in the area of Marketing management, which enlightens the focuses on understanding how customers recognize, evaluate, and differentiate a brand within a competitive market. The study highlights how brand positioning strategies influence customer perception, brand recall, and purchase decisions. It involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting customer opinions to understand how brand image, promotional activities, and product attributes shape their attitudes. The responses from customers were analyzed using statistical tools such as correlation, chi-square, and percentage analysis. The findings of the study provide insights into customer preferences, perception patterns, awareness level, loyalty factors, and the overall effectiveness of the brand’s positioning strategy in influencing customer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Le Royal Méridien, Chennai was established in December 2000 and is managed under the Marriott Group, with its administrative operations headquartered internationally in the United States.

The main activity of the hotel is to provide premium hospitality services, including luxury accommodation, fine dining, banqueting, conventions, and wellness facilities. The property primarily caters to domestic and international guests, drawing clientele from corporate sectors, business travelers, and tourists from different parts of the world.

The hotel, which initially started with a limited number of rooms, has gradually expanded to offer more than 200 luxury rooms and suites along with multiple restaurants, banquet halls, and leisure amenities.

At present, Le Royal Méridien is recognized as one of the leading 5-star properties in Chennai in the hospitality sector. The hotel has also been appreciated for its consistent excellence in service quality and continues to maintain a reputed position in the competitive hospitality industry.

NUMBER OF WORKERS IN THE COMPANY

Officers	40
Office staffs	70
Workers	250
Contract Labours	123
Total No. Of workers	483

Le Royal Méridien, Chennai, established in December 2000, is a five-star deluxe property managed under the Marriott Group. Conveniently located on GST Road between Chennai International Airport and the city’s business district, the hotel features around 240 luxury rooms and suites along with extensive banqueting and convention facilities that can host over 1,500 guests. The property offers a wide range of hospitality services including premium accommodation, fine dining, conferences, leisure and wellness experiences. It houses several specialty restaurants such as Navaratna for Indian cuisine, Kayal for seafood, Cilantro for international dining, Le Gourmandise for bakery items, and The Dome bar, in addition to a fitness centre, outdoor swimming pool, and the Le Mirage Spa. The hotel also provides modern

business services, travel desk support, and 24-hour guest assistance. Over the years, Le Royal Méridien has earned recognition such as the Best Business Hotel in Asia-Pacific (2002) by PATWA, the Today's Traveller Award (2011) for Best Business Hotel in South India, and awards for innovative HR practices. With a staff strength estimated at around 400-600 personnel, comprising officers, office staff, workers, and contract labour, the hotel is regarded as one of the leading five-star properties in Chennai, delivering consistent excellence in service and hospitality standards.

FACILITIES OF THE COMPANY

- ☐ **Accommodation:** ~240 luxury rooms and suites with modern amenities and elegant interiors.
- ☐ **Restaurants & Dining:**
 - Navaratna – Indian cuisine
 - Kayal – Seafood specialties
 - Cilantro – International cuisine
 - Le Gourmandise – Bakery and desserts
 - The Dome – Bar and lounge
- ☐ **Banquet & Conference Facilities:** Grand Madras Ballroom and multiple meeting halls; capacity up to 1,500 guests.
- ☐ **Recreational Facilities:** Fitness centre, outdoor swimming pool, whirlpool, landscaped gardens.
- ☐ **Wellness:** Le Mirage Spa offering body treatments, facials, and wellness therapies.
- ☐ **Guest Services:** 24-hour front desk, concierge, travel desk, room service.
- ☐ **Business Facilities:** Business centre, conference rooms, audio-visual equipment.
- ☐ **Additional Services:** Laundry, dry-cleaning, and accessibility features for guests with special needs.

Palani. G. Periyasamy PARTY

Mr. Palani G. Periasamy served as the Chairman of Le Royal Méridien, Chennai. He is an industrialist and educationalist who began his teaching career in 1962 as a lecturer in Economics at PSG Arts College and later became a professor (tenured) at the University of Baltimore, Maryland. He has received several accolades, including the Outstanding Educator of America in 1974 and 1975, and has been honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by Saveetha University in 2013. Additionally, he has been appointed as the Honorary Consul of Rwanda for Chennai.

Under his leadership, Le Royal Méridien, Chennai, received several prestigious awards, such as:

- **Best Business Hotel in Asia Pacific (2002):** Awarded by the Pacific Area Travel Writers Association (PATWA) at the International Travel Bourse (ITB), Berlin.
- **Innovative HR Practices (2003):** Recognized by Deccan Herald Avenue.
- **Today's Traveller Award (2011):** Best Business Hotel in South India.

These awards highlight the hotel's commitment to excellence in service and hospitality during his tenure.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:

To study the brand positioning and customer perception of Le Royal Meridien , Chennai.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES:

- To examine the concept of brand positioning and its significance in creating a distinct identity in the consumer's mind.
- To analyze consumer perception towards brands and the factors influencing their attitudes and preferences.
- To study the relationship between brand positioning strategies and consumer buying behavior.
- To identify the role of brand image in shaping consumer trust, loyalty, and purchase intention.

To evaluate the impact of advertising and promotional strategies on consumer perception of brand positioning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**CHANNEL STRATEGIES**

For a study on **brand positioning and customer perception**, especially in the context of a business like a hotel, retail brand, or consumer product, companies typically use multiple **customer acquisition channels**. Here's a detailed list you can include:

Customer Acquisition Channels**1. Digital Marketing**

- **Social Media Marketing:** Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter) are used to engage audiences and build brand awareness.
- **Search Engine Marketing (SEM & SEO):** Paid ads (Google Ads) and organic search optimization help attract customers actively searching for relevant services or products.
- **Email Marketing:** Sending personalized offers, newsletters, and promotions to potential or existing customers.

2. Offline Marketing & Traditional Media

- **Television and Radio Ads:** Still effective for mass awareness campaigns, especially for luxury or consumer brands.
- **Print Media:** Newspapers, magazines, and brochures can target specific demographics.
- **Billboards and Outdoor Advertising:** Useful for location-based businesses like hotels or retail outlets.

Referral and Word-of-Mouth Marketing

- Encouraging existing customers to refer friends and family.
- Reviews and testimonials on platforms like Google Reviews, TripAdvisor, or Yelp.

3. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Tie-ups with travel agencies, corporates, or online platforms for lead generation.
- Influencer collaborations and sponsorships to reach target audiences.

4. Events and Experiential Marketing

- Organizing or participating in exhibitions, trade shows, or product launches.
- Hosting webinars, workshops, or live demos to engage customers directly.

5. Mobile and App-Based Channels

- Mobile apps or loyalty programs that encourage repeat purchases.
- Push notifications for offers or updates to acquire and retain customers.

6. Online Travel Agencies / Aggregators (for hotels)

Platforms like Booking.com, MakeMyTrip, Airbnb, or Expedia drive bookings and attract new customers.

Factors Pertaining to the Middlemen

In the hospitality industry, middlemen such as **travel agents, tour operators, online travel agencies (OTAs), event management companies, and corporate travel planners** play a crucial role in connecting the hotel with potential customers. These middlemen influence customer bookings based on **commission benefits, business relationships, package rates, service quality, and negotiation flexibility** provided by the hotel. The effectiveness of the middlemen depends on factors like **communication and coordination**, timely availability of booking information, competitive pricing, promotional support, and the level of **trust and reliability** between the hotel and the intermediaries.

The following are the main factors concerned with the middlemen:

(1) Services Provided by Middlemen:

The selection of the middlemen be made keeping in view their services. If some product is quite new and there is the need of its publicity and promotion of sales, then instead of adopting the agency system, the work must be entrusted to the representatives.

(2) Scope or Possibilities of Quantity of Sales:

The same channel should be selected by means of which there is the possibility of more sales.

(3) Attitude of Agents towards the Producers' Policies:

The producers generally prefer to select such middlemen who go by their policies. Very often when the distribution and supply policies of the producers being disliked by the middlemen, the selection of middlemen becomes quite limited.

(4) Cost of Channel of Distribution:

While selecting the channel of distribution, the cost of distribution and the services provided by the middlemen or agents too must be kept into consideration. The producers generally select the most economical channel.

IV. Factors Pertaining to the Producer or Company

The following factors, concerning the producer, affect the selection of the channel of distribution:

(1) Level of Production:

In the context of **brand positioning**, the **level of production refers to the scale and consistency with which the hotel delivers its brand experience to customers**. For Le Royal Méridien, the level of production is not just about the number of rooms or services offered, but about **how consistently the luxury experience, comfort, and hospitality standards are maintained across all customer touchpoints**. This includes the uniformity in service quality, ambience, behavior of staff, food standards, room presentation, and overall guest experience..

(2) Financial Resources of the Company:

Financial resources refer to the monetary strength and funding capacity that a company possesses to operate its business activities. These resources play a crucial role in brand positioning, marketing strategies, production processes, and market expansion.

(3) Managerial Competence and Experience:

Managerial competence and experience play a crucial role in building and maintaining the brand's market image. Strong leadership, effective decision-making, and strategic planning contribute to a positive perception of the brand among customers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**MEANING**

Research is an art of scientific investigation. The advanced learner's dictionaries of current English lay down the meaning of research as, "a careful investigation (or) inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge".

DEFINITION

Redmen and Mory defined Research as a "systematic effort to gain knowledge".

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The Research Design undertaken for the study is descriptive one. A study, which wants to portray the characteristics of a group or individuals or situation, is known as descriptive study. It is mostly qualitative in nature. The main objective of descriptive study is to acquire knowledge. In the present study, descriptive method is used to study the prevailing organizational climate.

DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH

This type of research design is undertaken in many circumstances. When the researcher is interested in knowing the characteristics of certain groups such as age, sex, education level, occupation or income etc. The objective of such study is to answer the "Who, What, When, Where, and How" of the subject under investigation, so in this project study comes under descriptive research design.

DATA COLLECTION

In order to apply the statistical methods to any of enquiry it is essential that statistical data be collected as statistical analysis is not possible in the absence of quantitative data. Data are obtained either through a survey or experiment. In Social sciences where the use of statistical methods is indispensable, data can be collected only through statistical surveys. The research should keep in mind two types of data: i.e.

- Primary Data
- Secondary Data

PRIMARY DATA:

Primary data means the information which is collected directly. It is also called first-hand information. Primary Data was collected through personal Interview. The structured interview schedule was drafted to get information regarding the impact of training on the performance of employees at Le Royal Meridien, Chennai (60016). The structured interview schedule contains 25 questions, which included open-ended and close-ended questions. The interview was conducted in English, Tamil & Hindi.

SECONDARY DATA:

Secondary data was collected from various Published books, Newspapers, Magazines, Company Records, and Journals.

QUESTIONNAIRE CONSTRUCTION:

Questionnaires are one of the most popular methods of conducting scholarly research. They provide a convenient way of gathering information from a target population or a questionnaire is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic. When properly constructed and responsibly administered, questionnaires become a vital instrument by which statements can be made about specific groups or people or entire populations.

- Open ended questions
- Close ended questions
- Multiple Choice questions

DEFINING THE POPULATION

The population can be finite or infinite. The population is said to be finite if it consists of fixed number of elements so that it is possible to enumerate it in its totality. For instance, the populations in the city, the number of workers in a factory are examples of finite population. Hence in this study finite population has been taken. It consists of 483 employees.

SAMPLING PLAN

Due to enormity of the cost and time involved in collecting information from all the respondents, it becomes a compulsion to choose represent sample of population. Sample plan explains the sampling unit, sample size and sampling method.

SAMPLING DESIGN

Population Size : The Entire Group Of Customer Of Le Royal Meridien in Chennai.
Sample Size : 240
Sampling Method : Descriptive Method
Sampling Unit : Individual Customer who uses the services of Le Royal Meridien , Chennai.

COMPLETE ENUMERATION METHOD

Complete Enumeration sampling method is based on a complete survey of all the Retailers available in the organization. It is the study of every unit, everyone or everything, in a population which means a complete count. Under this method of the information are collected from each and every unit of the population.

SURVEY PERIOD

July-2025 to August-2025.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

These are tools, which helps to analyze the collected data. This analysis contains various approaches like comparisons, detecting, accuracy, estimation etc. In my survey I applied some statistical tool for analyzing raw data.

The applied statistical tools are:

- Percentage method
- Chi square method
- Correlation method
- Anova table method

SPSS

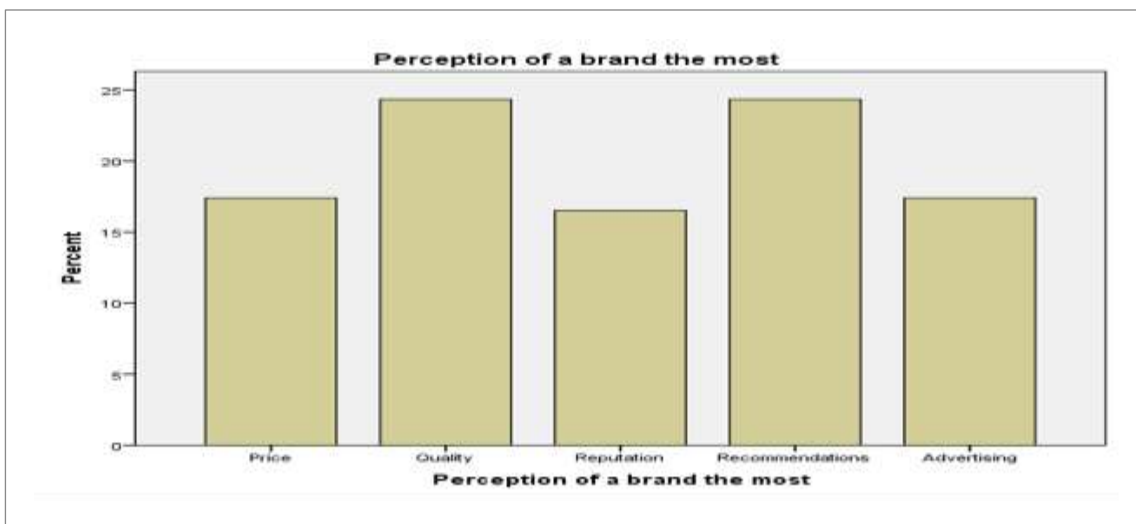
The researcher uses SPSS software (16th edition) for analysis and interpretations purpose with regard to this project.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

TABLE No.5.1.11

Perception of Marriott				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Premium	9	7.8	7.8	7.8
Affordable	36	31.3	31.3	39.1
Stylish	20	17.4	17.4	56.5
Reliable	20	17.4	17.4	73.9
Innovative	30	26.1	26.1	100.0
Total	115	100.0	100.0	

CHART No. 5.1.11



INFERENCE

From the above table, it is observed that **31.3%** of respondents perceive Marriott as **Affordable**, followed by **26.1%** who perceive it as **Innovative** and **17.4%** each who perceive it as **Stylish** and **Reliable**. Only **7.8%** of respondents view Marriott as **Premium**.

CHI-SQUARE

ANALYSIS OF OPINION OF RESPONDENTS REGARDING EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

NULL HYPOTHESIS(H_0):

There is no significant association between the two variables.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS(H_1):

There is a significant association between the two variables.

OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDERS

TABLE No. 5.2.1

Occupation	Friends / Word of Mouth	TV / Radio	Total
Student	8	0	8
Working Professional	2	5	7
Self Employed	8	1	9
Homemaker	5	3	8
Other	7	6	13

OCCUPATION

TABLE No. 5.2.2

CHI-SQUARE TESTS

Test	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.660	16	0.236
Likelihood Ratio	23.761	16	0.095
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.594	1	0.107
N of Valid Cases	115	—	—

a. Since the p-value 0.236 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted.

RESULT

- Calculated Value (χ^2) = 19.660
- Degrees of Freedom = 16
- Significance Value (p-value) = 0.236

INFERENCE:

Hence, **there is no significant association** between the two variables.

This means that the variables are **independent** of each other and do **not influence** one another.

CORRELATION

ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONDENTS TOWARDS THE MEANS AND MODES AND SUPPLY NORMS OF Le ROYAL MERIDIEN, CHENNAI

Correlations

Analysis of opinion of response regarding hypothesis:

Brand's positioning influences customer purchase decision and this positioning also influences their buying behavior.

Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant relationship between Brand's positioning while making purchase decisions and Influence on buying behavior.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a significant relationship between Brand's positioning while making purchase decisions and Influence on buying behavior.

Correlations

Correlations	Brand's Positioning While Making Purchase Decisions	Itself Influences My Buying Behavior
Brand's Positioning While Making Purchase Decisions	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	—
	N	115
Itself Influences My Buying Behavior	Pearson Correlation	0.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.411
	N	115

RESULT:

R = 0.077

p-value = 0.411

Since the calculated p-value 0.411 is greater than 0.05, therefore:

Null Hypothesis (H_0) is Accepted.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1) is Rejected.

INFERENCE:

The correlation value $R = 0.077$ indicates a very weak positive relationship between the Brand's positioning during purchase decision and the influence of positioning on buying behaviour.

However, since the significance value (0.411) is greater than 0.05, the relationship is not statistically significant.

ANOVA

Feel more confident in my purchase decision

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.376	4	.844	.372	.828
Within Groups	249.406	110	2.267		
Total	252.783	114			

Inference

The ANOVA test was carried out to examine whether there exists a significant difference among various groups with respect to their perception of "feeling more confident in their purchase decision." The results revealed an F-value of 0.372 and a significance value (p-value) of 0.828. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05, it indicates that there is no statistically significant difference among the groups. Therefore, it can be inferred that respondents across different groups share similar levels of confidence in their purchase decisions, and any observed variations are likely due to random chance rather than actual differences among the groups.

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

The study was conducted among 120 respondents to understand Brand Positioning and Customer Perception towards Marriott. The key findings are as follows:

1. Demographic Profile

Respondents were distributed across age groups, with a notable share in the Below 18 and 45–54 categories.

The sample consisted of Male, Female, and other gender categories, reflecting diverse responses.

2. Occupation and Income Levels

Respondents included students, working professionals, self-employed individuals, homemakers, and others.

A considerable number of respondents had monthly incomes above ₹1,00,000, indicating presence of high-purchasing-power consumers.

3. Brand Awareness

55.7% of respondents did not uniquely identify Marriott before this survey.

Awareness of Marriott mainly came through Friends/Word of Mouth and social media, showing that informal communication plays a significant role.

4. Perception of Marriott

Marriott was primarily perceived as Affordable (31.3%), Innovative (26.1%), and Reliable & Stylish (17.4% each).

This indicates that Marriott holds a balanced positioning of quality and brand modernity.

5. Factors Influencing Brand Perception

Quality and Recommendations (Word of Mouth) were the most influential factors shaping brand perception.

Advertising and Price were less influential comparatively.

6. Strongest Point of Marriott Customer Service was identified as Marriott's strongest attribute. This suggests that Marriott's service-driven brand positioning is effective.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to examine the brand positioning and customer perception towards Marriott. Based on the analysis of responses from 120 participants, it is evident that Marriott is recognized as a reliable and innovative brand with a strong reputation for quality customer service. However, the study also revealed that a considerable number of respondents were not fully aware of Le ROYAL MERIDIEN unique brand identity before the survey, indicating that brand awareness needs to be strengthened further.

While consumers appreciate Marriott's service quality and modern appeal, the findings show that brand positioning does not strongly influence their purchase decisions by itself. Many respondents remained neutral or unconvinced about the direct link between Marriott's positioning and their buying behavior, suggesting that the brand's communication strategies must be more impactful and emotionally engaging.

Overall, Marriott holds a positive brand perception and competitive market presence, particularly in comparison with other well-known hotel chains. However, to build stronger consumer loyalty and influence customer decision-making more effectively, the brand must enhance its promotional efforts, personalize customer engagement, and communicate

its value proposition more clearly. With improved marketing and positioning strategies, Marriott can reinforce its identity and establish a more meaningful and long-lasting connection with consumers.

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