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**‘Green’ Benefit Positioning:
Dimensions and Implications for Branding**

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Abstract:

Purpose: The article investigates benefit positioning to construct 'green' benefit positioning scale. It further examines the effect of green benefit positioning scale and innovative combinations of green benefit dimensions on branding objectives.

Design/methodology/approach: A theoretical model of levels and branding effects of benefit positioning was developed. To investigate benefit positioning, a questionnaire method was employed amongst 189 marketing practitioners working in India for green consumer products. Statistical analyses and interpretation developed benefit-positioning scale. Further was studied the effect of benefit positioning on branding objectives for a set of green products. 356 green consumers were surveyed using snowball sampling and a questionnaire having items for branding objectives. Also, innovative combinations of green benefit positioning dimensions were tested for their effects on branding objectives. Concluding remarks discuss theoretical, managerial and social implications with limitations and directions for future research.

Findings: The study resulted in dimensions of benefit positioning for green consumer products and having positive effect of benefit positioning scale on branding objectives. Also, combinations of benefit positioning dimensions were tested positive for specific branding objectives. These combinations were proposed to address green consumer segments having specific characteristics.

Research limitations/implications: The study is limited to consumer products and benefit base of positioning. On the other hand, it contributes towards developing benefit-positioning scale for green consumer products and its effect on branding objectives. Thus, it leads to conceptual development in context of green marketing.

Practical implications: Carefully chosen, planned and strategically proactive benefit-positioning innovations can result in development of effective environmental marketing communication plans and thus, success of green brands.

Originality/ Value: This article contributes to the green marketing literature by analyzing dimensionality of benefit positioning for green brands, and suggesting strategic positioning tools for brand managers.

Keywords: Green marketing, green consumer products, benefit positioning, branding, India

‘Green’ Benefit positioning: dimensions and implications for branding

Introduction

Knowledge about power of positioning brands in achieving brand objectives has always been an aspect of great interest to marketing researchers as well as professionals. Positioning reveals individuality of a brand in terms of its attributes and benefits. It enables managers to choose perceptual brand attributes and related distinct information for positioning it to a target market. It further drives consumer emotions towards the brand and generates reaction to the brand in terms of consumers’ perception of brand attributes, brand quality and brand prestige, memory of consumers to recall brand features and their importance, and brand evaluation (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2002; Sujan and Bettman, 1989). Thus, it builds brand attitude in the minds of consumers, which influences their product selection and purchase. Therefore, companies translate these brand attributes into characteristics and integrate with the levels of marketing mix variables (Kaul and Rao, 1995). Authentically addressed consumer emotions tend to forge deep and enduring affective bonds between consumers and the brand, which acts as a central pillar of product differentiation and sustainable competitive advantage (Thompson *et al.*, 2006).

In green marketing literature, the concept of positioning has emerged as one of the eight fundamental strategic activities of green marketing management (Polonsky and Rosenberger III, 2001). It aims at fostering different image of brands from their conventional and established counterparts to meet new challenges from environmentally conscious consumers. Hence, it is determined to take a different direction in the future (Rosen and Sloane III, 1995) and needs to make considerable changes in design of positioning strategies (Kotler, 2011). This study intends to study different (benefit) positioning approaches in meeting specific branding objectives.

Theoretical development

Kotler (2000) defines positioning as an ‘act of designing the company’s offering and image to occupy a distinct place in the target market’s mind’. ‘Brand positioning sets the strategic direction of marketing activities and programs’ (Keller and Lehmann, 2006, p. 740). It aims to fulfill various functional, symbolic and experiential (or hedonic) needs (MacInnis, 2012). It is an iterative process which consists of deliberate and proactive marketing actions (Kalafatis *et al.*, 2000), and involves interaction of all marketing tools, with an accentuated role for marketing communications (Hartmann *et al.*, 2005). Consumers’ preference for attributes of brands and their benefits outline the central theme of product differentiation and their positioning (Gwin and Gwin, 2003; Lancaster, 1975). So, meeting consumers’ needs in terms of quality, features and innovation build a sustainable competitive advantage of the brand and shape its distinct consumer perceptions in their minds (Gwin and Gwin, 2003; Kaul and Rao, 1995). The way customers identify, evaluate and consider brands for their need fulfillment (Punj and Moon, 2002) results in achieving specific branding objectives. Hence, positioning and repositioning strategies aim to positively influence brand image, marketing profits and firm performance in a competitive environment (Blankson and Crawford, 2012; Fuchs and Diamantopoulos, 2010; Kaul and Rao, 1995; Park *et al.*, 1986).

Positioning, at present, intends to manage environmental imperative as well to address rising environmental concern of consumers. Green marketing literature recognizes significance of consumer benefits of green brands in influencing consumer behavior. So, in line with

traditional marketing approach of differentiating new products based on their attributes and consumer benefits (Gwin and Gwin, 2003), benefit positioning of green brands has caught attention of researchers in the marketing domain. A set of tangible and intangible attributes that provide consumer benefits through forms and functions in terms of their ingredients, functionality, durability, usage and disposal (Fuller and Ottman, 2004) act as differentiator in positioning green brands. Positioning of green brands takes into account corporate-level environmental values, environmental behaviors and activities, environmental strategies and achievements, and its products and services (Polonsky and Rosenberger III, 2001). These environmental activities and strategies are well evident in the academic literature related to environment management (Eltayeb *et al.*, 2011). They are related to product and packaging design changes (recyclability, reusability, degradability, no harmful ingredients, and low resource consumption during usage etc.), changes in manufacturing processes (process improvement, energy and resource conservation, waste minimization, and emission reduction etc.), recycling, and changes in supply chain. These environmental activities, strategies, and achievements, when effectively communicated to consumers, aim to direct them towards less environmentally harmful consumption. It further ensures the survival of green brands in the market (Kassarjian, 1971) and enables managers to achieve branding objectives.

In green marketing, environmental information, in its true, clear, transparent and verifiable form, primarily develops brand image of green products. So, information is the central theme in developing positioning strategy for green brands. In information-driven positioning strategy, brands should be positioned exclusively for their benefits and attributes because it results in positioning brands more superiorly than any other positioning bases (Pham and Muthukrishnan, 2002). Also, benefits positioning is found most significant in performance from consumers' perspective (Fuchs and Diamantopoulos, 2010). So, marketers primarily focus on positioning green brands based on their consumer-related environmental attributes and benefits such as health benefits, quality, safety, value for money, social value etc. (Oliver and Lee, 2010; Pickett-Baker and Ozaki, 2008; Thøgersen, 2006; Leire and Thidell, 2005; Laroche *et al.*, 2001). These environmental attributes and benefits form the basis for differentiating green brands from their counterparts. Green marketing literature witnessed that two broad themes of consumer benefits i.e. functional attributes and emotional appeal (symbolic and experiential) have gained popularity in green advertising literature (Park *et al.*, 1986; Banerjee *et al.*, 1995; Shrum *et al.*, 1995; Urban, 1975). Functional benefits of green brands are based on their relevant environmental advantages in its physical properties, and during its usage and post-usage; compared to comparable and conventional ones. These benefits include operational efficiency and accuracy, resource consumption, disposability, ease of handling, and ease of understanding its functional aspects. And, emotional benefits of green brands are based on altruistic actions, socially visible consumption, nature-related benefits, nature-related feelings of wellbeing and sensations (Hartmann *et al.*, 2005). Consumers feel a sense of belongingness with the brand if it offers them a sense of pride, reasons to celebrate with, reasons to acknowledge their contribution towards the environment, financial benefits, and extended benefits. Some green brands extend emotional benefits by offering them opportunities to interact with corporate professionals behind the brand, involving in corporate actions and decision-making, and by honouring consumers for their product-related success stories. Other emotional benefits of green brands include offering opportunities for consumers to highlight their talent and creativity, involving them in online as well as offline social communities and a brand umbrella, providing regular updates about green products, and enabling brand inculcating social and family values in future generations. Thus, engaging consumers with green brands is well acknowledged in green product offerings (Table 1);

aiming to achieve specific branding objectives (Kohli and LaBahn, 1997) i.e. brand association, brand identification, brand feeling, and brand experience (Figure 1). Brand association occurs when a brand is differentiated from its competing brands for its benefits; product-based or non-product based (Broniarczyk and Alba 1994; Droge and Darmon, 1987), that what consumers consume has comparatively less impact on the environment and offers them environmental benefits. 'Green' brand identification results when consumers are able to define their self-identities as functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits of a brand (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010). Consumers are highly rejuvenated that their 'green' brands have reduced environmental impact during its factory and transport processes, consumption, and post-consumption, as well as it has improved utility and operational performance. 'Green' brand feelings are evoked in consumers (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002), that consumers develops strong sentiments towards social importance of the brand i.e. what they consume is not harmful to the environment, provide them sense of pride and accomplishment, favors the social needs, is positively acknowledged in the society, and improves their status in the society. 'Green' brand experience is resulted (Brakus *et al.*, 2009), if consumers are so involved with the brand that their brand identity, interaction, shopping, service, and consumption experiences result in consumer delight, satisfaction and loyalty. Accomplishing these branding objectives builds consumer attitude towards green brands and further influences their brand preference.

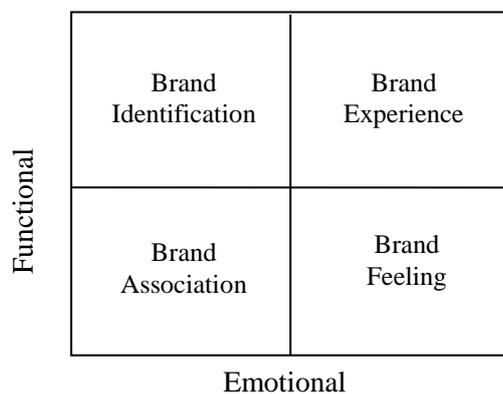


Figure 1: Consumer-related environmental benefit matrix

Further, consumer-related environmental benefits can be further expressed in two levels: (i) personal benefits, and (ii) social benefits (Figure 2). Personal benefit is related to environmental benefits to an individual and their kin, such as appearance, ease-of-use, safety, speed, efficiency, accuracy, durability, reduced consumption of energy, and financial benefits etc. Social benefit is related to the environmental benefits for the society at large, such as lowering pollution, disposability, low disposal cost, social acceptance, and social image etc. Green products can be categorized based on the extent of these levels and can be marked on personal-social benefits matrix (Figure 2). For example, jute bag and paper bag are perceived to have high social benefits rather than personal benefits. On the other side, resource-efficient electrical and electronic products have higher personal benefits than social benefits. And, there are true green products i.e. electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles, LED products, low-VOC paints, and organic products those have high social benefits as well as high personal benefits. The extent of the levels for green products is generally subjective in nature. Environmentally conscious consumers generally seek high social as well as personal benefits in the products they intend to purchase though there are other factors to influence their decision-making such as need, availability, price etc. Positioning strategies developed by incorporating personal and social dimensions of each of the two consumer-related environmental benefits results in

reinforcement of green brand image (Keller, 1993), and development of green brand relationship (Heath *et al.*, 2006; Hoeffler and Keller, 2002).

Social	High	Socially green products (jute bags, paper bags etc.)	True green products (electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles, LED products, low-VOC paints, organic products etc.)
	Low	No green products	Ordinary green products (resource-efficient electrical and electronic products etc.)
		Low	High

Figure 2: Consumer-related environmental benefits dimensions matrix

Developing benefit positioning scale

Item generation and selection

The first step is to generate specific items for personal and social levels of functional and emotional benefits. Scale development procedures were guided by the extant scaling literature (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Gerbing and Anderson, 1988; Churchill, 1979). An extensive literature search and review was conducted focused on functional and emotional benefits of green products (Eltayeb *et al.*, 2011; Polonsky, 2011; Collins *et al.*, 2007; Maignan and Ferrell, 2004; Prakash, 2002; Oyewole, 2001; Dobscha and Ozanne, 2001; Menon and Menon, 1997; Banerjee *et al.*, 1995; Rosen and Sloane III, 1995; Zeithaml and Zeithaml, 1984; King and Cleland, 1974). Relating the literature with the relevance of examples of benefits in Table 1, a pool of 84 items was generated that scaled both the levels of functional and emotional benefits. They were included in questionnaire in random order. A total of 71 items were retained after initial screening and then, following a structured procedure of interviews, follow-up interviews and reviews from a panel of academic experts and senior professionals (Churchill, 1979) who have been working for minimum two years in either of the domains of green marketing, social media marketing, environment management, and corporate social responsibility, as well as through information gained from advertisements and publicity materials for green products. The panel consisted of three professors from top Indian business schools, four senior marketing executives, and three senior consultants working at global brand agencies based in India. Rating for representation of items for product-benefit positioning was obtained from them (Zaichkowsky, 1985). All possible efforts were made to enhance content validity.

To address face validity concerns, a series of pretest with other marketing professionals in India was conducted. Further, a pilot study of 34 marketing professionals conveniently selected from the sampling frame was conducted. Items not rated by more than 10% of the respondents were

removed (Thomson et al., 2005). This series of activities reduced the number of items to 62, which was included in the final survey.

Item reduction and dimensionality of the scale

This part of the paper aims to identify dimensions of benefit positioning for green brands. The study is descriptive in nature research having a quantitative paradigm and uses a survey method. A structured questionnaire with 62 items measured on a five-point Likert scale was used to collect the data from sampling frame. To avoid the limitations of subjective interpretation of answers in questionnaire method of data collection, a space in which respondents could express their opinions or clarifications was included and the questionnaires were anonymously applied. Sampling frame consisted of all top and middle-level executives working for 'green' products in the marketing domain of Indian organizations having B2C focus. A pilot study with 44 marketing professionals in India selected from the sampling frame based on non-probability snowball sampling was conducted to ensure reliability of the questionnaire. Reliability analysis yielded 0.892 as value for Cronach's Alpha, which allowed collecting the data further. After respondents being approached by telephonic conversation, and follow up e-mails for research purpose and the questionnaire for a period of 25 months, responses from 189 marketing executives from across India was drawn. First 90 responses were chosen as calibration sample to develop the scale and next 99 responses were considered as validation sample to verify the scale dimensionality and establish its psychometric properties (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Churchill, 1979).

Reliability and exploratory factor analysis

Reliability tests for each original subscale were conducted. Those items were also removed who contributed in decreasing the value of Cronbach's Alpha for each scale. Thus, Cronbach alphas for each subscale ranged from 0.73 to 0.85, exceeded 0.7, which is considered a satisfactory level of reliability and assured internal consistency of the scale (Churchill, 1979; Nunally, 1978). This resulted in 59 items. Using a calibration sample size of 90, a Principal component factor analysis with Varimax rotation, an exploratory factor analysis was performed (Hair et al., 1998). It resulted in Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2= 5484.2$, $p<0.000$, $df=1378$) and KMO (0.883) which confirmed the suitability of the dataset for exploratory factor analysis. Using multiple decision rules, single items factors were eliminated, and factors having multiple items and Eigen values greater than 1 were selected. These criteria resulted in 52-item solution having factor loading more than 0.4 and the set of twelve factors accounted for 78.7% of the variance explained (Table 2). This was confirmed by scree plot as well. The twelve factors were distinction, memorial, usage, exposure, involvement, preservation, interaction, extended, educative, monetary, disposal-related and technological. No item-to-total correlations were less than 0.3.

Confirmation of the dimensions

To test the stability of the scale, validation sample was employed and both exploratory and confirmatory analyses were conducted. This also revealed 52 item solution having factor loading more than 0.4 and the set of twelve factors accounted for 87.7% of the variance explained. As well, reliability scores of all the scales were in acceptable limits and average item-to-total correlations exhibited internal consistency.

Structural equation modeling was used to test exploratory results. Maximum Likelihood method was chosen for confirmatory factor analytic model using AMOS V16.0.1; using a range of indices to assess model fit. It demonstrated broadly satisfactory levels of fit across all

samples (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). This analysis was done for calibration, validation and full samples, and GFI and CFI were obtained 0.818, 0.795, 0.857 and 0.832, 0.813, 0.896 respectively. The RMSEA was 0.05 for all samples (Table 3). The twelve-factor model had the best overall fit to the data with a χ^2 statistic of 169.39, goodness of fit index of 0.857, an adjusted goodness of fit index of 0.819, and a root mean square residual of 0.056. Thus, it can be inferred that brands are best positioned along twelve dimensions.

Standardized item loadings on their hypothesized dimensions for the calibration, validation and full samples highly significantly ranged from 0.61 to 0.94, 0.55 to 0.96 and 0.58 to 0.91 respectively. Across all three samples the average dimension correlation was $r=0.68$ with the smallest $t=3.87$. This proves a strong interaction effect between dimensions.

Composite reliability and construct validity

Composite reliabilities were calculated from the validation sample (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) which was in acceptable limits (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) i.e. distinction (0.96), memorial (0.87), usage (0.76), exposure (0.88), involvement (0.81), preservation (0.82), interaction (0.79), extended (0.69), educative (0.72), monetary (0.76), disposal-related (0.91) and technological (0.88).

Further, three tests assured convergent validity. First, all average variance extracted values were greater than 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Second, the smallest item test statistic was greater than 1.96 ($t=5.8$; $\alpha=0.001$) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Third, all standardized factor loadings were greater than 0.5. Discriminant validity was assessed in two ways. First, the χ^2 for the unconstrained twelve-factor model was significantly lower than the χ^2 of each constrained model (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). Second, all estimated confidence intervals (\pm two standard errors) for each dimension correlations did not contain the value 1 (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

The results were also validated by sending a summary of the findings to all the managers who responded for the survey for their comments and suggestions. Many of them responded in time and in general, they agreed with the summaries and the final discussion of the paper incorporated their suggestions and corrections. Also, comments on the paper were sought from three academics with expertise in quantitative research and the subject area.

‘Green’ benefit positioning scale

From the empirical analysis, it can be witnessed that a set of dimensions for benefit positioning scale have emerged (Table 4) and are described as follows.

Distinction benefits: A green consumer product offers distinction benefits for its uniqueness in product features, functionality (such as efficiency, speed, ease of operation and accuracy etc.), durability, ‘easy to understand’ operation for consumers and ease for consumers to repair in case of failure in its functionality. Use of bio-plastics in Nokia phones, and lesser operational time and higher efficiency for electronic products of Samsung, Panasonic and Sony are such examples.

Memorial benefits: A green consumer product offers memorial benefits when the product offering has national, international and cultural associations for celebration and joy to the

consumers. Companies like Philips, Samsung etc. launch their products with special financial and non-financial benefits at special national and festival occasions.

Usage benefits: A green consumer product offers usage benefits during consumption for its objectives, resource consumption, safety, disassembly, and financial savings. Camera, television, air-conditioner, refrigerator, washing machines, home appliances etc. from Sony, Panasonic, Samsung, and Godrej have lesser weight, easy-to-handle, easy-to-use, personalised and intuitive functions, savings in power consumption, auto-sensibility, no harmful constituents, and safe for human. For example, Samsung's air-conditioner has 'Bio sleep' mode that offers effective sleep efficiency (eases into sleep by dropping the temperature), pleasant skin temperature (pleasant skin temperature is maintained to make body more relaxed and comfortable).

Exposure benefits: Consumers recognize exposure benefits of green products when they are members with corporate groups and clubs, are updated about green products and the offerings, and are demonstrated (self or professional assisted) green products in promotional events to recognize how the product usage enables them to contribute towards environmental protection. Panasonic has formed 'CLUB Panasonic' that is engaged in registering consumers with itself for communicating and promoting and green products, inviting them in product launches and special events, participating in fun activities, and for sharing their feedback and keeping in touch with the company through social networking platforms.

Involvement benefits: A green consumer product offers involvement benefits to consumers for being facilitated to participate in brand promotional events, to network with company professionals, to showcase their creativity and talent, and to contribute in corporate decision-making. Philips offers opportunities to young scientists to showcase their plans for new product development and to work with them for a definite period of time.

Preservation benefits: A green consumer product offers preservation benefits for its favor to nature, safety to product users and kids, and health benefits to consumers. Nerolac and Asian Paints have launched paints with no lead and low VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) that contribute in lowering the pollution. They are replaced with plant-based biologically generated aqueous solvents such as Isoprene etc.

Interaction benefits: A green consumer product offers interaction benefits to consumers by offering them opportunities to interact with company professionals through social networking channels so that they can gain information related to environmental benefits of products and are rewarded for their success stories for contribution towards the environment. The corporate website of Asian Paints has a section 'Come talk to us' that sets up an interaction platform between consumers and corporate professionals.

Extended benefits: A green consumer product offers extended benefits to consumers if it enables them to gain some financial and non-financial benefits to avail benefits from some other products and/ or avail some other services with. Godrej's muziplay refrigerator has MP3 player, FM radio and powerful speakers to entertain consumers in kitchen. Similarly, Asian Paint's 'Colour SCHEME PRO' for Android offers consumers to design their colour of paint, and Shell's 'INSIDE ENERGY innovation app' for iPad offers consumers to explore interactive stories on innovations and its role in producing energy to power and sustain our lives, to discover new ways of finding energy, to learn about advances in technology, and to meet people involved in making it happen.

Educative benefits: A green consumer product offers educative benefits to consumers if it influences emotions of their kids and teens for family and social values; for example respecting parents, and offering helping hands in household works etc. P&G's fun-oriented tips for house-ladies help them to engage kids and teens in laundry at home.

Monetary benefits: A green consumer product offers monetary benefits to consumers if it offers green product at a lower price than its conventional and competing counterparts, more value for the money, and provide exchange offers for old, conventional products. Godrej's 'Green Bonus' offers financial savings to consumers if they upgrade from energy guzzling appliances to energy efficient Godrej products.

Disposal-related benefits: A green consumer product offers disposal-related benefits to consumers if it is accompanied with a disposal-instruction manual, offers safety in disposal process, and has low cost of disposal to consumers as well as government and non-government organizations in disposal-related activities. Nokia has launched a campaign 'we: recycle' for collecting used electronic products of any brands for the purpose of disposal, recycle and reuse.

Technological benefits: A green consumer product offers technological benefits to consumers if it is transformed to an eco-friendly version by using technologies for its resource consumption during its production/ transportation/ consumption, improved aesthetics, and improved functionality. Panasonic's Evonavi technology senses water temperature and wash load in washing machine for optimum energy and water consumption. Sensor-based televisions from Samsung and Sony are other examples.

Effect of benefit positioning on brand objectives

Theoretical development in the paper has developed the arguments of having effect of benefit positioning (*dependent measure*) on achieving branding objectives (*independent measure*) which further intend to improve consumer attitude towards the green brands. So, this part of the paper tests this by developing a set of hypotheses, which are as follows:

H1: Benefit poisoning has positive effect on brand association.

H2: Benefit poisoning has positive effect on brand identification.

H3: Benefit poisoning has positive effect on brand feeling.

H4: Benefit poisoning has positive effect on brand experience.

Methodology

A structured questionnaire based on 5-point Likert scale (Table 5) was developed based on the literature (Hughes and Ahearne, 2010; Brakus et al., 2009; Garretson and Niedrich, 2004; Hoeffler and Keller, 2002; Gareff, 1996; Keller, 1993; Droge and Darmon, 1987; Keller, 1987; Allison and Uhl; 1964). A total of 302 green consumers participated in this survey in Mumbai, India in a period of 10 months; irrespective of their education, profession, income, origin and other demographic characteristics. The only qualifying criteria for selecting the respondents were their environmental knowledge, their awareness about green brands in the market, and their past and/ or expected purchase of green products (consumer durables and electric vehicles). The sample in the study was selected mainly by using a snowball sampling technique, which relied on chain referrals to recruit eligible participants. A pre-test with a convenience sample showed that respondents could successfully complete the questionnaire, and the items were comprehensible and easy to interpret.

Statistical analysis

A reliability test (Cronbach alpha as 0.872), an exploratory factor analysis (24-items, 4 factors solution), and discriminant validity analysis with composite benefit positioning scale confirmed the appropriateness of the scale. Further, structural equation analysis assessed the effect of composite benefit positioning scale on brand association, brand identification, brand feeling and brand experience which indicated significant positive influences ($p = 0.000$) and the model fits the data reasonably well ($GFI = 0.81$, $CFI = 0.89$, and $RMSEA = .07$, with $\chi^2 = 673.4$). As predicted, composite benefit positioning scale has positive effect on brand association, brand identification, brand feeling and brand experience.

Further, arguing that it is difficult and irrational for managers to apply composite scale of benefit positioning in a particular positioning strategy, innovative approaches should be adopted to develop 'green' benefit positioning strategies. In this direction, combinations of factors were formed based on the examples of green brands (Table 1) and were tested for their branding objectives. The effective role of combining two or more approaches for developing positioning strategies is found significant from consumer perspective as well (Fuchs and Diamantopoulos, 2010). So, the combinations of factors in benefit positioning scale for the examples (Table 1) identified which resulted statistical values in acceptable limits are case-wise explained as follows:

- (i.) *Mahindra's 'Reva'*: A combination of technological and educative benefits (**dependent measure**) has positive effect on brand identification (**independent measure**). It may be useful to target young consumers segment that is passionate for technological developments as well as educative benefits may inculcate family and social values in them.
- (ii.) *Philips LED products*: A combination of monetary and extended benefits (**dependent measure**) has positive effect on brand feeling (**independent measure**). It may attract consumers who are willing to extract maximum possible value from the price they pay for green products. Philips's range of LED products stands valid here that offers savings in operation with associated benefits (promotional offers).
- (iii.) *Public events and exhibitions*: A combination of usage and exposure benefits (**dependent measure**) has positive effect on brand association (**independent measure**). It may attract those consumers who are the real users of green products. Public events and exhibitions from Samsung, Panasonic etc. are the valid cases for this.
- (iv.) *Nokia's we:recycle*: A combination of disposal and educative benefits (**dependent measure**) may attract those consumers who are the real users of green products has positive effect on brand feeling (**independent measure**). It may aim at developing a sustainable society and address young consumer segments. Nokia's we:recycle is an example.
- (v.) *Panasonic CLUB*: A combination of usage, memorial and involvement benefits (**dependent measure**) has positive effect on brand experience (**independent measure**). It may attract segments who are deeply attached with green products, their development and features, and who capture their interaction with green products as memories. 'Panasonic Club' is an excellent case for this combination that involves consumers with

its green products by making them a part of and by enabling their participation in product-related innovative activities and offerings.

- (vi.) *Sony festival offers*: A combination of preservation, usage and monetary benefits (*dependent measure*) has positive effect on brand identification (*independent measure*). It may attract those who have concern for environmental preservation, consider environmental dimension in their regular behavior as well as wish to gain appropriate value for the money. Sony festival offers fit in this.
- (vii.) *Samsung festival offers*: A combination of preservation, distinction / usage, monetary and interaction benefits (*dependent measure*) has positive effect on brand experience (*independent measure*). It may be useful for those who have a quest to gain knowledge about green products have a life-cycle approach towards them. Samsung festival offers fit in this.

Discussions

It is witnessed that benefits arise in different settings, such as gaining familiarity with products, interaction with them, product usage, and involvement. It is conceptualized that 'green' benefit positioning can be broken down in twelve parts, which are differentially evoked by various 'green' brands. The 'green' benefit positioning scale developed is broad, reliable, internally consistent and consistent across samples, and it positively affects brand association, brand identification, brand feeling, and brand experience. Together with its importance in academic research, marketing professionals can also use this scale while developing and assessing their positioning strategy and advertising plan for green products.

Further, though the composite scale of 'green' benefit positioning has positive effect on branding objectives, a combination of two to four benefits is identified as a useful approach. Based on the cases discussed above, it can be inferred that selection of benefits is dependent upon the managerial preference for promoting a particular set of product attributes, and the branding objective(s). It is argued here that there can be path to achieve acceptance of green brands i.e. when a green brand is introduced in a market, brand association is the first objective. Further, it moves to brand identification and brand feeling which ultimately lead to brand experience. Thus, selection of benefit scale depends on the stage a green brand is in.

Though the study has fulfilled its objectives of exploring green benefit positioning and revealed positive relationship with branding objectives, there are some key observations from the findings of the study. A major observation in the study is that each factor in scale of 'green' benefit positioning has a mix of items from functional and emotional benefits and no set of items from one of the benefits have emerged as one factor in the analysis. It may be concluded that the factors identified cannot be segregated between functional and emotional benefits, and the two, together, result in other benefits. It can also be inferred that the two benefits do not exist entirely independent and there may be an inter-relationship among the items, or there is a cause-effect relationship, though studying these is not within the scope of this article.

Another observation is related to performance of green products. In responses to the items of functional benefits by marketing professionals, most of the products are marked to have higher performance than their conventional and competing counterparts; in terms of life, ease of use, energy consumption, resource consumption, duration to complete the job, efficiency, accuracy,

and safety etc. It contradicts the general perception of comparatively lower performance of green products. Assuming scientific reasons behind these claims made by the marketers, it can be inferred that 'green' products have considerably been improved on performance front and are able to compete with their conventional counterparts.

Further, there are some items, which have negative factor loading in factor analyses (Table 2) for 'green' benefit positioning scale. These items demand description, which is based on researcher's interaction with the marketing professionals.

- (i) *Offer opportunities to consumers to develop ideas contributing to product improvement:* Marketing professionals intend to involve consumers with their green products in order to gain from their innovative ideas, which can contribute in improving market performance of the product. But, in Indian setting, green products are still at introduction stage and many of the consumers are in the process of improving their familiarity with the products. At this stage, their ideas turn more as queries related to the product or existing features rather than acting as inputs to the company. Such consumers are very less in percentage those can practically contribute towards product improvement.
- (ii) *My green product is easy to use:* Many of the green products such as LED lights, televisions, and electrical vehicles etc. are newly designed and/ or they are added with unique features. They requires thorough consumer understanding for their usage. Since marketers understand its importance for acceptance of green products in the market, they address usability issue while positioning their green products. And, at the same time, they ensure in their advertising that newness of the product does not turn off consumers for its acceptance.
- (iii) *My product offerings provide low purchase price:* Academic researchers have highlighted that higher price of green products has been a major obstacle for acceptance of green products in the markets across the world. Innovative approaches of marketers in Indian market such as highlighting financial benefits during the usage, adopting bundled pricing, discount pricing, and product exchange offers etc. have attempted to in increase the value of green product with the higher prices.

Another observation is related to the internet technology and related innovations, which enable marketers to connect with their consumers in innovative and interactive manners and to network, better with consumers for green products. Corporate websites and social networking media such Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and Google+ etc. have significant role in green marketing to establish two-way communication with their consumers, to introduce their green products, to spread information, to correspond product benefits with regular clarifications, to put their explanations on product-related rumours, to resolve their queries, and to move beyond in terms of consumer involvement with corporate decision making and better understanding the consumers' needs and mindsets. Thus, social media marketing has facilitated interactive platforms to advance green marketing communication to a higher stage. And, positioning and advertising has moved beyond traditional and passive methods to interactive modern methods, and technological innovations are found to have greater implications for marketers of green brands. Since advertising of green brands has issues related to claims, their verification, accuracy of information, and consumer influence, this way can be useful to influence

consumers for their brand preference and purchase. A combination of the types of benefit positioning is found to be a useful approach in the study.

Another observation in the study is related to price and value for the money, which is still the critical issues in deciding effectiveness of positioning strategy of green products in influencing consumer behavior. Findings of the study direct us towards the need to maintain an appropriate placement of the brand in price-quality quadrant (Bronnenberg and Wathieu, 1996) to develop effective positioning strategies and to achieve desired branding objectives.

Managerial implications

The study suggests marketing professionals to adopt a combination of two or more dimensions of benefit positioning identified in the study. Since, they are needed to monitor the effectiveness of brand positioning and to reposition their products when needed (Gwin and Gwin, 2003), a combination or a blend of two or more identified can be more effective and useful approach. This is justified using certain examples. These combinations of constructs determining brand objectives are stated to address green consumer segments with specific characteristics. These segments are not based on literature, are purely arguable and varies based on the brands, market, and nature of consumers. They are purely based on author's experience gained during the research work and the understanding drawn from the study and its findings. So, managers should apply the findings of the study in a broader perspective.

It is also suggested that blending two or more dimensions of benefit positioning should be chosen carefully with preventive measures as it may have certain drawbacks. Confusion to consumers arises when brand managers may send mixed messages to their target markets (Alden *et al.*, 1999). So, these positioning innovations should be planned enough and strategically proactive so that managers can foresee their implications and ensure good 'health of their value position from the customers' perspective' (Burton and Easingwood, 2006). Also, Alden *et al.* (1999)'s model to examine their communication strategies can be beneficial for marketing professionals to overcome expected threats.

Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to limited literature on green marketing in marketing domain. The suggested typology enables researchers in developing a broad understanding of benefit positioning of green brands. Based on the case examples, drawing relationship between dimensions of benefit positioning scale and branding objectives can serve as propositions for further studies. Thus, results of the study act as node between green products and their marketing communication plan, and further green branding. This can further guide to development of green marketing mix and in developing indices for evaluation of green product performance. Thus, it serves as a guideline to develop strong green brands and proves a milestone for green branding literature.

In context of green products, it also depicts that green products can have social as well as personal benefits which can result in better involvement of consumers with the brand and hence, in developing brand loyalty. Also, study is useful to understand the significance of 'consumer involvement' in contexts of green marketing as well as social media marketing. It can further be developed in theory building for consumer involvement from the two perspectives.

Social implications

Positioning green brands based on the types of benefit positioning identified can offer consumers a better understanding of environmental issues related to product consumption, increase in mutual understanding between corporate and consumers, inculcate family and social values in future generations and thus can lead to development of sustainable society.

Conclusion

The statistical examination of the conceptual development has miraculous findings. It identifies twelve dimensions of green benefit positioning which are used by marketing practitioners to position their green products in the market based on the nature of target segments. The study further examines the effect of benefit positioning scale on branding objectives i.e. brand association, brand identification, brand feeling, and brand experience.

The aim of this research was to make inferences about the benefits positioning for green products in the Indian market. Using a set of items for functional and emotional benefits, the underlying factors for benefit positioning for green products are identified. Also, the effect of benefit positioning scale is measured on branding objectives. The benefit positioning scale is useful for marketing professionals to position their green products in the marketplace and to serve the corresponding consumer segments. It is believed that the results can be considered as a starting point for future investigations in positioning of green brands.

Several limitations of the present study need to be acknowledged. This study is conducted in B2C setting and is limited to green consumer products. So, findings can be generalized to consumer product category only. Also, the research did not take into consideration the other positioning bases, which might have given a broader view of green positioning. But, at the same time, it could probe into benefit positioning per se. This study does not cover inferences aspect of consumers about malleability of a brand's personality traits; which is an important dimension of marketing communication (Yorkston et al., 2010).

Future investigations should study relationship between functional and emotional benefits and further explore the interdependency between the dimensions of benefits positioning scale. The positively and negatively worded items of the scale can be explored and their impact on branding objectives can be investigated further. Future research should also examine behavioral impact of types of benefit positioning and their long term consequences. Testing the scale on industrial products and services perspectives will be a remarkable phenomenon. Researcher can apply analytical rigor to fictional attributes to explore wide range of different functional attributes and focused creativity to explore wide range of shades of emotions within each attributes. This study could be repeated using qualitative methods such as personal interviews etc. as research method. Findings of the study are also useful to further converting consumers' responses and actual experiences of the brands to create customer-defined positioning for green products. Green consumer segments described in the discussion section can be explored and conceptualized. Also, it may be ideal to insist upon a longitudinal study, which may provide richer information about positioning activities and subsequently enhance suggestions for normative guidelines.

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APPENDIX A:

<p>Asian paints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Come talk to us – your voice - Asian paints LEAD FREE GURANTEE - Green assure from Asian Paints <i>beyond VOC</i> - Many of our colours have changed. Except Green 	<p>Mahindra REVA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stay updated - clean, convenient, connected, clever, cost effective
<p>Nokia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nokia Asha 311 - Live fast , live free - Our ground-breaking Nokia Lumia 920 with PureView technology - Nokia Lumia 920 - The most innovative smartphone - we: recycle 	<p>Kansai Nerolac</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your phone can now redesign your home. - Discover the ‘Nerolac Colour style’ App - Effective paint solutions for all corrosion problems - Kuch change kare. Chalo paint kare
<p>P&G</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pantene - GET YOUR FREE TRIAL AND DISCOVER THE TOP CELEBS’ SECRETS TO LONG-LASTING HAIR LENGTH - Pantene - Get free samples from the best of international brands by Reward Me - Duracell – QUALITY THAT LASTS - Tide – Break the rules of white 	<p>Panasonic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting Front Loading washing machine with Hydroactive technology - Challenge the NAVI - Panasonic Lumix Contest Triple your chances to meet your favorite Lumix Ambassador - Welcome to CLUB Panasonic
<p>Godrej</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High Tech Engineering To Consumer Products - India’s most energy-efficient AC - Rock ‘n’ Roll in your kitchen with Godrej EON Muziplay - Protect who you love with what you love - Thoughtful design 	<p>Tata green batteries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable, easy on pocket - Weatherproof, enduring performance - Instant start, any time every time - Xtra Power. Xcellent Performance
<p>Shell India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience world class engineering - Go cashless with Shell Cash 	<p>Garnier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All our experts answers to your questions - Take care
<p>HUL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SurfExcel plays Santa for over 300 children 	<p>TVS scooty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AGAR AWAAZ MEIN HAI DUM... TOH AAPKI LIFE BADAL DENGE HUM
<p>Philips</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Take home a Philips LED TV for only Rs. 10/-</i> - <i>Experience every detail with Philips HD LED TV with DDB technology</i> - The joy of extra brightness with Philips lighting 	<p>Samsung</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SamsungON, SavingsON - Samsung India Like us on Facebook - Samsung India Follow us on: Twitter

Table 1: Examples of benefit positioning

I invite my customers to participate in promotional events for promoting my green product.					0.401								0.788
I offer opportunities to consumers to develop ideas contributing to product improvement.					-								0.777
I offer opportunities to consumers to apply their creativity.					0.404								0.697
My green product offers safety to the kids if they come in interaction with it.						0.920							0.808
My product offerings are related to the health benefits to the users.						0.685							0.809
My product offerings are related to the safety benefits to kids.						0.663							0.764
My green product offers relate consumer emotions with the nature.						0.428							0.660
I discuss about my; product features and benefits with consumers on social networking websites.							0.812						0.862
I connect with my consumers through social networking websites.							0.716						0.731
My green product offers environmental benefits than its non-green counterparts.							0.562						0.753
I have a profile of my product on social networking websites.							0.528						0.767
I honor success stories of my product users in the promotional events.							0.505						0.835
I discuss about my product offerings with consumers on social networking websites.							0.439						0.836
My product offerings relates it to the other popularly used products such mobile phones, laptop etc.								0.883					0.884
My product offerings relates it to the other popularly used services such movies, saloon etc.								0.798					0.821
My product offerings direct emotions of teens towards family values.									0.858				0.656
My product offerings encourage involvement of kids in household work.									0.668				0.850
My product offerings direct emotions of teens towards respecting their parents.									0.582				0.780
My product offerings direct emotions of teens towards social values.									0.405				0.849
My product offerings provide low purchase price.										-			0.690
My product offerings provide exchange offers for old products.										0.829			0.728
My product offerings provide more value for a price.										0.772			0.633
My product offers very low lost to the consumer for its disposal.										0.627			0.743
My green product is associated with a manual for disposal instructions.											0.906		0.825
My green product offers safety during its disposal.											0.840		0.660

My product offers very low cost to the recycling organizations.												0.525		0.696
My green product produces no / same amount of / lesser amount of noise in its operation.													0.858	0.726
Technological change in the product design improves product appearance.													0.566	0.788
Technological change in product design enables the product to have lesser impact on the environment during its production / transportation / consumption.													0.541	0.738
Eigen value	9.022	3.728	3.323	3.164	2.918	2.683	2.509	2.075	1.811	1.670	1.541	1.331		
% of Variance	17.023	7.033	6.271	5.970	5.506	5.062	4.734	3.916	3.418	3.151	2.908	2.512		
Chorbach's Alpha	0.881	0.758	0.901	0.828	0.712	0.921	0.725	0.769	0.810	0.793	0.746	0.864		
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.														

Table 2: Rotated component matrix

APPENDIX C:

	χ^2	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
C	139.98	0.818	0.832	0.05 (0.04–0.06)
V	144.68	0.795	0.813	0.05 (0.04–0.06)
F	169.39	0.857	0.896	0.05 (0.04–0.07)
C=calibration sample (n=90), V=validation (n=99) and F=full sample (n=189).				

Table 3: Measurement model fit indices

APPENDIX D:

Distinction benefits	My green product has better / same efficiency than its non-green counterparts.
	My green product has better / same life than its non-green counterparts.
	My green product has better / same accuracy than its non-green counterparts.
	My green product is easy to use.
	Consumers can easily understand the operation of my green products by reading product literature.
	In case of any malfunctioning, it is easy for consumers to repair my green product themselves.
Memorial benefits	My green product offers are related to national pride such as Independence Day etc.
	My green product offers are related to international celebrations.
	My green product offers are related to cultural festival celebrations.
Usage benefits	My green product is useful in solving its purpose of usage.
	My product offerings provide financial savings during product usage.
	My green product consumes same / lesser energy (i.e. water, electricity etc.) as its non-green counterparts.
	My green product offers safety to the users during its usage.
	My green product can be easily disassembled for disposal.
	My green product completes the job in lesser / same time than its non-green counterparts.
	My green product fulfills the purpose of the product in its usage.
Exposure benefits	I regularly update my consumers about my product and the offerings.
	My green product is accompanied with a self-service manual.
	In the social group / club, I organize promotional events for my product.
	I have formed a social group / club for my consumers.
	Using my green product, consumers are able to recognize their contribution towards the environmental protection.
Involvement benefits	I offer platforms to consumers for direct interaction with company professionals regarding my green product.
	I offer opportunities to consumers to showcase their talents.
	I invite my customers to participate in promotional events for promoting my green product.
	I offer opportunities to consumers to develop ideas contributing to product improvement.
	I offer opportunities to consumers to apply their creativity.
Preservation benefits	My green product offers safety to the kids if they come in interaction with it.
	My product offerings are related to the health benefits to the users.
	My product offerings are related to the safety benefits to kids.
	My green product offers relate consumer emotions with the nature.
Interaction benefits	I discuss about my product features and benefits with consumers on social networking websites.
	I connect with my consumers through social networking websites.
	My green product offers environmental benefits than its non-green counterparts.
	I have a profile of my product on social networking websites.
	I honor success stories of my product users in the promotional events.
	I discuss about my product offerings with consumers on social networking websites.
Extended benefits	My product offerings are related to the other popularly used products such mobile phones, laptop etc.
	My product offerings are related to the other popularly used services such movies, saloon etc.

Educative benefits	My product offerings direct emotions of teens towards family values.
	My product offerings encourage involvement of kids in household work.
	My product offerings direct emotions of teens towards respecting their parents.
	My product offerings direct emotions of teens towards social values.
Monetary benefits	My product offerings provide low purchase price.
	My product offerings provide exchange offers for old products.
	My product offerings provide more value for a price.
Disposal-related benefits	My product offers very low cost to the consumer for its disposal.
	My green product is associated with a manual for disposal instructions.
	My green product offers safety during its disposal.
	My product offers very low cost to the recycling organizations.
Technological benefits	My green product produces no / same amount of / lesser amount of noise in its operation.
	Technological change in the product design improves product appearance.
	Technological change in product design enables the product to have lesser impact on the environment during its production / transportation / consumption.

Table 4: Final benefit positioning scale for green products

APPENDIX E:

<i>Brand association</i>
1. Green brands are unique for their benefits.
2. I am well aware of relevant attributes of green brands.
3. Green brand offer me the unexpected.
4. Green brands attract my attention in their appearance
5. Green brands are not generic products.
<i>Brand identification</i>
1. Green brands have no ingredients harmful to the environment.
2. Green brands fulfill its purpose in its usage.
3. Green brands offer me safety during their usage.
4. Using green brands, I am able to recognize my contribution towards environmental protection.
5. Performance of green brands generates my confidence in their attribute beliefs.
6. I can make a distinction of green brands against other brands.
<i>Brand feeling</i>
1. Green brands justify my self-worth to others.
2. I believe, others look favorably on green brands.
3. I feel a sense of pride in using green brands.
4. Green brands are the ones I do not want to own.
5. Using green brands improves my image in my mind.
6. Green brands meet with my personality.
7. I prefer green brands because people expect me to do so.
<i>Brand experience</i>
1. Green brands induce my feelings and sentiments towards it.
2. I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter green brands.
3. Green brands stimulate my curiosity and problem solving.
4. Green bands result in bodily experiences.
5. My experience with green brands is memorable.
6. Once I assess a green brand, I more likely to refer to my existing evaluations.

Table 5: Scale development for measuring branding objectives