

# Brand Positioning and Consumer Loyalty: Evidence from the 2M Brand in the City of Nampula

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**Abstract:** This article analyses the relationship between the positioning of the 2M brand and consumer loyalty in the city of Nampula, Mozambique, during the period from 2021 to 2023. The study is based on the assumption that, in competitive markets, brand positioning constitutes a strategic factor in shaping consumer perception and strengthening loyalty. The objective was to examine how the positioning strategies of the 2M brand influence consumer loyalty, considering dimensions such as visibility, communication, perceived value, trust, satisfaction and emotional attachment. From a methodological point of view, the study adopted a mixed approach of a descriptive and explanatory nature. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey administered to brand consumers and semi-structured interviews conducted with professionals from the commercial and marketing areas. Quantitative analysis was based on frequencies and percentages, while qualitative analysis was developed using the content analysis technique. The results show that the 2M brand has high market recognition and is predominantly associated with attributes such as accessibility, tradition and cultural identity. It was also found that consumers display high levels of trust, satisfaction and emotional identification with the brand, factors that directly contribute to repurchase intention, recommendation and continued preference. It is concluded that the positioning of the 2M brand positively influences consumer loyalty, highlighting the existence of a direct relationship between positioning, perception and loyalty in the context studied.

**Keywords:** Brand Positioning; Consumer Loyalty; Consumer Behaviour; 2M; Nampula.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, brand positioning has emerged as one of the central elements of strategic marketing management, particularly in markets characterized by intense competition and increasingly demanding consumers. Beyond simply differentiating products and services, positioning enables the construction of meaning, strengthens brand identity, and influences how consumers perceive a brand in the marketplace. According to Kotler and Keller (2012), positioning a brand involves designing its offering and image in such a way that it occupies a distinctive and valued place in the minds of the target audience.

In increasingly dynamic business environments, consumer loyalty has also become a priority objective for organizations. Consumer loyalty represents a strategic asset, as it reduces a brand's vulnerability to competition, reinforces repeat purchasing behavior, and encourages positive word-of-mouth. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) argue that loyalty goes beyond repeat purchases, encompassing trust, satisfaction, and identification with the brand.

The literature has demonstrated a strong relationship between positioning and loyalty, as clearly positioned brands tend to generate more favorable perceptions, higher perceived value, and stronger emotional bonds with consumers (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2006). However, despite the relevance of these concepts, most studies have focused on developed contexts, leaving limited scientific evidence on how this relationship manifests in African markets, particularly in Mozambique.

In the Mozambican context, the beverage market presents specific characteristics resulting from the interplay of economic, sociocultural, and identity-related factors. In this environment, brands compete not only on functional attributes but also through symbolic and cultural meanings that influence consumer preference and loyalty. The city of Nampula, given its economic importance, sociocultural diversity, and commercial dynamism, represents a relevant context for analyzing these dynamics.

It is within this framework that the present article examines the relationship between the positioning of the 2M brand and consumer loyalty in the city of Nampula, Mozambique, during the period from 2021 to 2023. The objective is to assess how the brand's positioning strategies influence consumer perception and the levels of loyalty observed in the market. In doing so, the study seeks to contribute to the advancement of the debate on branding and consumer behavior in emerging African contexts, providing empirical evidence with both theoretical and practical relevance.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ➤ *Brand Positioning*

Brand positioning occupies a central place in marketing literature and is widely recognized as one of the main instruments for competitive differentiation and value creation in the marketplace. In business environments characterized by intense competition, product diversity, and increasingly demanding consumers, brands no longer compete solely based on functional attributes such as price, quality, or availability, but also through the meanings they are able to construct and communicate to their target audience. In this sense, positioning becomes a determining factor in how a brand is perceived, evaluated, and remembered by consumers.

According to Kotler and Keller (2012), positioning refers to the process of designing a company's offering and image in such a way that it occupies a clear, distinctive, and valued place in the consumer's mind. This definition highlights that positioning goes beyond the mere promotion of a product; it involves the construction of a coherent value proposition capable of communicating to consumers why a particular brand should be chosen over others. From this perspective, positioning represents a strategic synthesis between brand identity, consumer needs, and differentiation from competitors.

Aaker (1996) further develops this understanding by arguing that effective positioning depends on the brand's ability to establish a strong and consistent identity. For this author, brand identity consists of the set of associations that an organization seeks to create or maintain in the consumer's mind. Thus, positioning results from translating this identity into messages, symbols, and experiences that generate recognition and preference. A well-positioned brand not only

differentiates itself but also builds connections that make it relevant to the consumer.

In the same vein, Kapferer (2012) emphasizes that a brand should be understood as a system of meanings, encompassing values, culture, personality, and promise. The author argues that the strength of a brand depends on the coherence between what it communicates and what it actually represents in the marketplace. This implies that positioning is not an isolated act of communication but rather a process of meaning construction through which the brand becomes intelligible and significant to the consumer.

Keller (2006), in turn, proposes the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model, according to which brand value is progressively built from consumer perceptions. This model is structured into four levels: brand identity, brand meaning, consumer response, and brand relationships. At the first level, the primary concern is to ensure awareness and recognition; at the second, the focus is on building functional and symbolic associations; at the third, consumer judgments and feelings are analyzed; and at the fourth, the existence of a long-term relationship is assessed. This model is particularly relevant to the present study, as it demonstrates that positioning constitutes the foundation upon which consumers' emotional and behavioral responses are developed.

Therefore, the literature shows that brand positioning is simultaneously a strategic, symbolic, and relational process. It defines how a brand occupies space in the consumer's mind and plays a decisive role in shaping its image and relevance in the marketplace.

### ➤ *Consumer Loyalty*

Consumer loyalty represents one of the primary objectives of marketing management, particularly in sectors characterized by intense competition, where customer retention is essential for organizational sustainability. In general terms, loyalty refers to a brand's ability to maintain stable relationships with consumers, ensuring continuity of purchase, preference, and recommendation.

Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) define loyalty as a phenomenon that goes beyond repeat purchasing, encompassing dimensions such as trust, satisfaction, and identification with the brand. This definition is particularly important because it moves away from the idea that loyalty can be measured solely through repeated buying behavior, emphasizing instead its affective and cognitive components. A loyal consumer is not merely one who purchases frequently, but one who maintains a positive perception, develops trust, and demonstrates a willingness to recommend the brand.

Oliver (1999) proposes a process-oriented approach to loyalty, arguing that it develops through different stages: cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioral. At the cognitive stage, the consumer rationally recognizes the brand's

superiority; at the affective stage, positive feelings toward the brand are developed; at the conative stage, the intention to maintain the relationship is formed; and finally, at the behavioral stage, this intention translates into actual acts of repurchase and preference. This perspective highlights that loyalty does not emerge immediately but results from a cumulative process of positive experiences and evaluations.

Aaker (1996) considers brand loyalty one of the most important assets for a company, as it reduces competitive vulnerability and strengthens the stability of its market position. Later, Aaker (1998) developed the so-called loyalty pyramid, distinguishing different levels of loyalty, ranging from the absence of loyalty to committed loyalty. The higher levels of the pyramid are characterized by consistent preference, resistance to switching, and active advocacy of the brand, demonstrating that loyalty represents an advanced form of relationship between the consumer and the brand.

Another central element in the development of loyalty is satisfaction. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) argue that satisfaction results from the comparison between expectations and perceived performance. When the consumption experience meets or exceeds consumer expectations, the likelihood of building trust and loyalty increases. In this sense, loyalty can be understood as an outcome of consistent positive experiences with the brand.

It is also important to highlight the role of trust, which is often identified as a key pillar of loyalty. Consumers who perceive a brand as reliable, consistent, and secure are more likely to develop long-term relationships with it. Therefore, consumer loyalty emerges as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by rational, emotional, and experiential components.

#### ➤ *Relationship between Brand Positioning and Consumer Loyalty*

The relationship between brand positioning and consumer loyalty represents one of the most relevant axes in contemporary marketing literature. In general, studies suggest that clearly positioned brands tend to generate more favorable perceptions, thereby increasing levels of trust, satisfaction, and loyalty among consumers.

Keller (2006) argues that brand value is built from consumer perceptions and that, within this process, positioning plays a decisive role. When a brand is able to establish awareness, meaning, and positive responses, the likelihood of reaching the highest level of the CBBE model—corresponding to a strong and enduring relationship between the consumer and the brand—increases. This implies that successful positioning not only enhances brand visibility but also supports the development of emotional and behavioral bonds with consumers.

Similarly, Aaker (1996) contends that brand identity and positioning are antecedents of loyalty, as they shape how

consumers interpret the value proposition. When positioning is clear, consistent, and aligned with the values of the target audience, the brand becomes more trustworthy and preferable. From this perspective, loyalty does not arise solely from product quality but from how the brand is perceived and experienced in the marketplace.

Kotler and Keller (2012) reinforce this argument by emphasizing that the effectiveness of positioning depends on the brand's ability to align functional and symbolic attributes with consumer expectations. In markets where consumption is also influenced by identity and cultural values, this alignment becomes even more critical, as the brand is chosen not only for what it offers but also for what it represents.

In summary, the literature indicates that brand positioning and consumer loyalty are interdependent dimensions. Positioning guides perception and structures the brand's value proposition, while loyalty represents the translation of that perception into repeat purchasing, recommendation, and long-term commitment. It is precisely within this relationship that the present study seeks to understand the behavior of 2M brand consumers in the city of Nampula.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### ➤ *Approach and Nature of the Study*

The present study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative procedures, with the objective of providing a comprehensive understanding of the influence of the 2M brand's positioning strategies on consumer loyalty in the city of Nampula, during the period from 2021 to 2023. This approach was selected because the phenomenon under investigation involves both measurable dimensions such as levels of brand recognition, trust, satisfaction, and repurchase intention and interpretative dimensions, including perceptions, meanings, and institutional perspectives regarding the brand's performance in the market.

According to Creswell (2009), a mixed-methods approach enables the integration of the descriptive robustness of quantitative data with the interpretative depth of qualitative data, thereby fostering a more consistent and holistic understanding of the research problem.

In terms of its nature, the study was both descriptive and explanatory. It was descriptive insofar as it sought to identify and present the main characteristics associated with the positioning of the 2M brand and consumer behavior. It was also explanatory because it aimed to examine the relationships between brand positioning, consumer perception, and observed levels of loyalty. In this sense, the study went beyond merely presenting data, seeking instead to understand how specific variables interact within the analyzed context (Gil, 2017).

➤ *Context and Study Area*

The study was conducted in the city of Nampula, located in the northern region of Mozambique. The selection of this geographic area was based on its economic, commercial, and demographic relevance, as well as its sociocultural diversity, factors that make it particularly suitable for analyzing consumer behavior and brand positioning strategies in the beverage sector.

Nampula is a significant urban and commercial center, characterized by diverse consumer profiles and dynamic market interactions. This context provides a rich environment for examining the relationships between brand presence, consumer perception, and loyalty.

The temporal scope of the study covered the period from 2021 to 2023, which is considered relevant due to the post-pandemic context marked by shifts in consumer behavior and business practices. This period witnessed transformations in consumption patterns, communication strategies, and brand-consumer relationships.

➤ *Population and Sample*

The study population consisted of consumers of the 2M brand in the city of Nampula and professionals from the commercial, marketing, and management areas with direct knowledge of the brand's positioning strategies.

The quantitative sample was composed of 120 consumers, selected based on accessibility and relevance criteria related to the study objectives. This component allowed for the collection of data on brand recognition, perceived value, trust, satisfaction, emotional attachment, repurchase intention, recommendation, and preference.

For the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from the commercial and marketing areas, selected according to their professional roles and experience. This approach enabled the collection of in-depth insights into the construction of brand positioning, institutional interpretations of consumer behavior, and the factors that sustain loyalty from an organizational perspective.

➤ *Data Collection Techniques and Instruments*

Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire survey, administered to consumers of the 2M brand. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions designed to capture both sociodemographic information and variables directly related to the study objectives. The use of Likert-type scales enabled the measurement of constructs such as brand recognition, perceived value, trust, satisfaction, emotional attachment, and loyalty, ensuring standardized and comparable data suitable for statistical analysis.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, conducted using a previously developed interview guide. This instrument facilitated the exploration of key

thematic areas while allowing flexibility to probe emerging issues and capture participants' interpretations of the phenomenon under study. According to Yin (2018), semi-structured interviews are particularly effective in studies aiming to understand organizational processes and institutional perspectives.

➤ *Data Analysis Techniques*

Quantitative data were processed using descriptive statistical analysis, focusing on absolute frequencies and percentages. This approach enabled the identification of general trends in consumer responses and the clear and systematic presentation of findings.

Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis, following the methodological framework proposed by Bardin (2016). This process involved careful reading of interview transcripts, identification of meaningful units, and organization of data into thematic categories aligned with the study objectives. The integration of these analytical techniques allowed for the combination of numerical evidence with interpretative insights, enhancing the analytical robustness of the research.

➤ *Ethical Considerations*

From an ethical standpoint, the study adhered to the principles of confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Participants were informed about the objectives of the research and the exclusively academic use of the data collected. Both interviews and questionnaire responses were handled with discretion, ensuring that the information was used solely for scientific purposes and that no individual participant could be identified.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ *Brand Positioning Strategies*

The results indicate that the 2M brand demonstrates a strong positioning in the market of the city of Nampula, supported by high levels of recognition and visibility. The majority of surveyed consumers reported recognizing the brand at high levels, which reflects a strong market presence and the effectiveness of the communication and activation strategies implemented during the period under analysis. In addition, the brand was predominantly associated with attributes such as accessibility, tradition, and cultural identity, elements that reinforce its value proposition.

The interviews conducted provided further insight into these findings, showing that the positioning of 2M is not built solely through formal advertising, but also through consistent presence at points of sale, participation in events, and brand activation in socially relevant contexts. Participants from the marketing area emphasized that the brand seeks to integrate itself into real moments of consumption and social interaction, which contributes to making it closer to consumers. Meanwhile, professionals from the commercial area highlighted the

importance of visibility and physical availability of the product, indicating that positioning also depends on the consistency of the brand's presence in the marketplace.

These findings align with the perspective of Kotler and Keller (2012), who argue that effective positioning depends on a brand's ability to occupy a distinctive and valued place in the consumer's mind. Similarly, they support Keller's (2006) view that brand awareness and meaning are fundamental dimensions in the construction of brand equity. In the case of 2M, positioning appears to balance functional elements, such as price and accessibility, with symbolic dimensions related to tradition and cultural belonging.

#### ➤ *Consumer Perception of the Brand*

With regard to consumer perception, the data reveal a largely positive evaluation of the 2M brand. The majority of respondents indicated that the brand offers a satisfactory relationship between quality and price, demonstrating high levels of perceived value. Likewise, strong trust in the brand was observed, accompanied by significant levels of satisfaction and emotional identification.

Qualitative findings reinforce this interpretation, showing that the positive perception of the brand is continuously constructed through the consumer's experience in the market. Interviewees from the marketing and sales areas reported that consumer trust stems from the brand's consistency, that is, its ability to maintain a recognizable standard in terms of presence, quality, and communication. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the brand is associated with socially meaningful experiences, such as gatherings, celebrations, and moments of social interaction, which contribute to strengthening consumers' emotional attachment.

In light of Keller's (2006) Customer-Based Brand Equity model, these findings fall within the consumer response dimension, as they reflect positive judgments and favorable feelings toward the brand. The observed levels of trust and satisfaction confirm that positioning not only enhances brand visibility but also influences how it is evaluated and internalized by consumers. This interpretation is also consistent with Zeithaml and Bitner (2000), who argue that satisfaction results from the alignment between expectations and perceived performance. In the case of 2M, the positive perception appears to derive precisely from the consistency between what the brand communicates and what consumers experience.

#### ➤ *Relationship Between Positioning and Consumer Loyalty*

The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between the positioning of the 2M brand and consumer loyalty in the city of Nampula. This relationship is evident in the indicators of repurchase intention, brand recommendation, and continued preference, all of which showed high levels among the surveyed consumers.

Repurchase intention was found to be high, suggesting that most consumers are inclined to continue consuming the brand. Similarly, the willingness to recommend 2M to others proved to be significant, indicating not only satisfaction but also a level of trust strong enough to transform individual experience into social endorsement. The continued preference for the brand, even in the presence of competitors, further reinforces the idea that the observed loyalty goes beyond occasional consumption, reflecting a more stable and consolidated relationship.

The interviews helped to explain the factors underlying this loyalty. Participants indicated that consumer loyalty results from a set of consistent experiences over time, where brand presence, perceived quality, accessibility, and emotional identification play a decisive role. The testimonies revealed that consumers who identify with the brand tend to be more resistant to competition and maintain more stable consumption habits.

These findings can be interpreted in light of the loyalty pyramid proposed by Aaker (1998), according to which consumers evolve from lower levels of attachment to higher levels of loyalty, characterized by preference, commitment, and recommendation. In the case under analysis, the observed indicators suggest that a significant portion of consumers are at advanced stages of loyalty, particularly because their preference for the brand persists even when alternatives are available in the market.

At the same time, the relationship between positioning and loyalty can also be understood within the relationship level of Keller's (2006) CBBE model, as the brand appears to have achieved, among part of its consumers, a form of attachment that goes beyond functional consumption and assumes emotional and identity-based characteristics. Thus, the study confirms that coherent, relevant, and contextually aligned positioning directly contributes to consumer loyalty.

#### ➤ *Integrated Discussion*

The integrated analysis of the results demonstrates that the positioning of the 2M brand exerts a direct influence on consumer perception and, consequently, on the observed levels of loyalty. The brand exhibits strong recognition, clearly defined distinctive attributes, and an image that combines functional value with symbolic meaning. This combination contributes to the development of trust, satisfaction, and emotional attachment, which in turn translate into repurchase intention, recommendation, and continued preference.

Thus, the findings confirm the assumptions of the literature, which argue that brand positioning goes beyond mere market differentiation and constitutes a key antecedent of consumer loyalty (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2006; Kotler & Keller, 2012). In contexts such as Nampula, where cultural and social factors strongly influence consumption patterns, this relationship becomes even more evident, reinforcing the need for positioning strategies that are sensitive to local realities.

## V. CONCLUSION

This article analyzed the relationship between the positioning of the 2M brand and consumer loyalty in the city of Nampula, during the period from 2021 to 2023, based on the understanding that positioning constitutes a strategic factor in shaping consumer perception and strengthening brand loyalty.

The findings revealed that the 2M brand demonstrates consistent positioning in the market, supported by strong recognition, high visibility, and association with attributes such as accessibility, tradition, and cultural identity. It was also observed that consumers exhibit largely positive perceptions of the brand, reflected in high levels of perceived value, trust, satisfaction, and emotional attachment.

The analysis further showed that these elements directly influence consumer loyalty, as evidenced by repurchase intention, willingness to recommend the brand, and continued preference over competing alternatives. Therefore, it can be concluded that the positioning of the 2M brand positively influences consumer loyalty, confirming the existence of a direct relationship between positioning, perception, and loyalty within the studied context.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces the relevance of the contributions of Keller (2006) and Aaker (1998), demonstrating that brand value and consumer loyalty are built upon consistent experiences and positioning that is meaningful to the target audience. From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that strengthening brand activation strategies, communication, and presence in socially significant contexts can contribute to the consolidation of consumer loyalty.

Finally, the study contributes to expanding the discussion on branding and consumer behavior in Mozambican contexts by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between positioning and loyalty within a specific regional market. It is recommended that future research further explore this relationship in other geographic contexts and across different brand categories, in order to broaden the understanding of this phenomenon in emerging African markets.

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