

BRAND POSITIONING OF EMIRATES: CREATING A LUXURY EXPERIENCE IN AIRTRAVEL

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ABSTRACT

The Gold Standard in the Clouds In an era where air travel often feels like a race to the bottom on price, Emirates Airlines has managed to do the opposite: they've turned the sky into a luxury destination. This study dives into how Emirates moved beyond being just a way to get from point A to point B, transforming itself into a global icon of prestige and innovation. The Core Mission The heart of this research is to uncover the "secret sauce" behind Emirates' premium image. We explore how the airline balances high-end service with cutting-edge technology to stay ahead of the pack. More importantly, we look at whether passengers actually feel that "luxury" or if it's all just clever marketing. How We Investigated To get the full picture, we didn't just look at corporate brochures. We combined real-world data with personal perspectives:

I. INTRODUCTION

Brand positioning refers to the strategic process of creating a distinct image and identity for a brand in the minds of its target audience. For Emirates, brand positioning is not just about being an airline—it's about representing luxury, global connectivity, and exceptional service. The brand is positioned as a premium international airline that offers an unmatched flying experience, combining innovation, comfort, and world-class hospitality. Effective brand positioning allows Emirates to stand out in a highly competitive aviation industry, where factors like customer experience, reliability, and brand perception heavily influence consumer choice.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze customer perception of Emirates luxury brand positioning in comparison to other leading international airlines.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of Emirates marketing and advertising strategies in communicating luxury travel experience.

3. To explore Emirates brand advantage in response to technological innovation, sustainability demands, and global cultural diversity.

III. NEED OF THE STUDY

In today's dynamic and highly competitive global aviation industry, brand positioning has emerged as a critical factor for business success. With airlines offering similar routes, services, and pricing structures, the ability to stand out in the minds of consumers relies heavily on how effectively a brand is positioned. For a premium airline

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology In this study, both primary and secondary research methods were used to collect data in order to provide a more comprehensive and reliable insight

Primary data used were quantitative in nature and collected through a structured questionnaire, which aimed to gather measurable data on consumer perception, brand preference, and awareness of Emirates Airlines' positioning in the aviation industry.

Secondary data was obtained from credible and relevant sources such as industry reports, academic research papers, Emirates' official publications, and reputable online articles. These sources provided additional qualitative and quantitative insights into Emirates' brand strategies, competitive positioning, and market presence.

V. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study encompasses an analysis of Emirates Airlines' brand positioning within the global aviation industry. It investigates how Emirates establishes and communicates its brand identity to differentiate itself from competitors, particularly focusing on aspects such as luxury, customer experience, global connectivity, and marketing strategies.

VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has certain limitations that may affect the generalizability and depth of its findings. The sample size and sampling technique, which rely on convenience sampling, may not fully represent the global customer base of Emirates Airlines, potentially introducing bias. The study also depends on self-reported data from respondents, which may be subject to individual perceptions and recall bias.

VII. LITRATURE REVIEW

Mita Sujan & Bettman View [1989] examines how perceived differences between a brand and its competitors affect its positioning within a product category. It finds that strong discrepancy leads to niche or subtyped positioning, while moderate differences result in broader differentiation.

De Chernatony, L., & Daniels [1994] challenges the idea that brand positioning requires analyzing all competitors, arguing that both marketers and consumers focus on a limited set due to cognitive limits. It highlights misalignments in how brands and consumers view competitors and positioning.

Bart J. Bronnenberg ,Luc Wathieu [1996] explores how price and quality positioning affects promotion success for national vs. store brands. Using a behavioral model based on loss aversion, it finds that promotion effectiveness depends on the quality-price ratio. Store brands outperform in categories like orange juice, while national brands lead in peanut butter. The findings help managers align pricing and promotions with brand positioning and category dynamics.

Andreas Herrmann [2000] examines brand positioning as the process of establishing a distinct market identity through a brand's performance on key attributes.

Carol F. Gwin & Carl F. Gwin [2003] explores brand positioning through the lens of the product attributes model, which improves on traditional perceptual maps by incorporating price.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

Age.

Table no. (6.1): Age of respondents

Response Option	No. of responses	Percentage (%)
Below 18 Years	3	4.1%
18-24	47	64.4%
25-34	18	24.7%
35-44	1	1.4%
45 Years and Above	3	4.1%
No Response	1	1.4%
Total	73	100.0%

Figure no. (6.1): age of respondents

The respondent pool is dominated by young adults aged 18–24, who account for nearly two-thirds of the sample, followed by the 25–34 age cohort. This heavy skew toward younger demographics is strategically relevant: this generation is both a highly aspirational traveller

Gender.

Table no. (6.2) gender of respondents

Response Option	No. of responses	Percentage (%)
Male	54	74%
Female	18	24.7%
Prefer not to say	1	1.4%
Total	73	100.0%

Figure no. (6.2) : gender of respondents

Male respondents constitute approximately 74% of the sample, with female respondents making up around 25%. This gender imbalance may partially reflect the academic or professional context from which participants were recruited, or underlying gender differences in aviation interest and

travel behaviour. The skew warrants caution when generalising findings, particularly given that women represent a growing and influential segment in luxury travel

OBJECTIVE 1: To analyze customer perception of Emirates luxury brand positioning in comparison to other leading international airlines.

Emirates strongly conveys a luxury air travel image.

Table no. (6.1.1) Emirates strongly conveys a luxury air travel image

Response Option	No. of response	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	9	12.3%
Disagree	5	6.8%
Neutral	12	16.4%
Agree	31	42.6%
Strongly Agree	16	21.9%
Total	73	100.0%

A strong majority of respondents affirm that Emirates successfully projects a luxury image, with nearly 65% expressing agreement or strong agreement. The proportion of neutral responses (approximately 16%) may reflect respondents with limited direct exposure to Emirates marketing. The minority expressing disagreement or strong disagreement is notable but modest at around 19%, possibly shaped by price sensitivity or comparisons to other carriers. Overall, the data confirms robust luxury brand recognition among this sample, validating the effectiveness of Emirates' overarching brand narrative in reaching even non-travelling audiences.

Emirates targets high-income professionals effectively.

Table no. (6.1.2) Emirates targets high-income professionals effectively

Response Option	No. of responses	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	6.8%

Disagree	5	6.8%
Neutral	16	21.9%
Agree	32	43.8%
Strongly Agree	15	20.7%
Total	73	100.0%

Approximately 64% of respondents believe Emirates effectively targets high-income professionals, with a further 22% remaining neutral — possibly due to uncertainty about the specifics of Emirates' segmentation strategy. The relatively low level of disagreement (around 14%) suggests that perceptions of targeted positioning are generally well-received. This finding implies that Emirates' deliberate alignment with business travel, aspirational lifestyles, and corporate class offerings has successfully transmitted its intended audience signal to a broad population of young observers.

Emirates adapts to global cultural diversity successfully.

Table no. (6.3.5) Emirates adapts to global cultural diversity successfully

Response Option	No. of responses	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	6.8%
Disagree	5	6.8%
Neutral	14	19.2%
Agree	28	38.4%
Strongly Agree	21	28.8%
Total	73	100.0%

Figure no. (6.3.5) Emirates adapts to global cultural diversity successfully

Emirates' cultural adaptability receives strong endorsement, with approximately 67% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 14% expressing disagreement. This positive perception likely reflects awareness of Emirates' multilingual crew, diverse routes, and its positioning as a hub carrier serving a vast array of global cultures via Dubai. The relatively low

neutral response (19%) suggests that respondents have formed clear opinions on this dimension. For a brand that positions itself as a gateway connecting the world, the perceived success in cultural inclusivity is both a reputational asset and a strategic validation of its cosmopolitan brand identity.

IX. FINDINGS:

The survey results indicate that Emirates is strongly perceived as a premium and luxury airline brand by respondents. For luxury air travel image, 42.5% agree and 21.9% strongly agree that Emirates conveys a luxury image, while 16.4% are neutral and 19.1% disagree or strongly disagree. Regarding the premium service value proposition,

X. SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the findings, Emirates should strengthen its marketing communication to increase awareness about its technological innovations and sustainability initiatives, especially since 21.9% of respondents were neutral about technology integration and 26% were neutral about sustainability efforts. The airline can highlight its advanced in-flight entertainment systems, digital booking platforms, and modern aircraft technologies through targeted advertising and social media campaigns. Additionally, Emirates should actively promote its environmental initiatives, fuel-efficient aircraft, and sustainability programs to improve consumer understanding. Maintaining its strong luxury positioning while improving communication about innovation and sustainability will help reduce neutral perceptions and further strengthen the brand's premium image and customer trust in the competitive airline industry.

XI. CONCLUSION:

The comprehensive analysis of Emirates Airlines' brand positioning confirms its status as a global leader in the luxury aviation sector. Since its inception in 1985, the airline has successfully transitioned from a regional carrier to a premier lifestyle brand, primarily by anchoring its identity in innovation, world-class hospitality, and a commitment to excellence. The research highlights that Emirates' strategic focus on high-end offerings—such as the Airbus A380's private suites and its award-winning ICE entertainment system—has effectively differentiated the brand from competitors, creating an aspirational image that resonates with both frequent high-value flyers and broader global audiences.

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