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A Study on How Rebranding of Air India Changed Customers Perceptions

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ABSTRACT: The accomplishments and shortcomings of Air India's rebranding campaign were examined in research to determine how effective the campaign was. Rebranding effectively raised brand recognition, perceptions of service quality, and brand image. Some consumers, however, thought that the pricing had become less competitive, which emphasizes the need for better pricing plan communication. This implies that to make sure that its value proposition is understood by all target audiences, Air India may need to improve its messaging. The report also emphasizes how crucial cultural sensitivity is in the contemporary, global aviation industry, where airlines must take a range of customers from different cultural backgrounds into account. Furthermore, the study raises the prospect of promoting customer co-creation, whereby customers actively participate in shaping the brand's narrative. This could entail taking steps like asking customers for their opinions on new routes, facilities, or services, or even using their own content created specifically for marketing purposes. This could entail taking steps like asking customers for their opinions on new routes, facilities, or services, or even using their own content created specifically for marketing purposes.

KEYWORDS: Aviation, Airlines, Air India, Brand perception, Customer perception, Rebranding, privatization.

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, Air India launched a massive rebranding campaign, fully revamping its appearance and feel to project a more polished and contemporary image. A new logo, visual identity, messaging, and general brand experience were all part of this. With a focus on highlighting the beauty and diversity of India, the new design has a modern look with clean lines, a sophisticated colour palette of Air India red, aubergine, rose gold, and touches of gold. The airline also wants to appeal to a younger generation of passengers while maintaining a fine balance in honouring its rich history as India's national carrier. The messaging now highlights Air India's dedication to providing exceptional service standards along with an emphasis on providing a pleasant, entertaining, and educational travel experience that meets contemporary needs. This strategy hopes to appeal to a worldwide audience as well as domestic tourists looking for a link to their heritage, especially younger traveller groups looking for an innovative and immersive travel experience.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to examine how customers' perceptions have been affected by Air India's recent rebranding campaign. To gauge the change in customer attitude about Air India, the study will examine sentiment data from a variety of touchpoints. Additionally, it will highlight the rebranding campaign's most effective components and call out any persistently unfavourable impressions. This will give Air India important information about how to improve its positioning and brand strategy in the cutthroat aviation industry. Other airlines thinking about rebranding campaigns of a similar nature may find the findings useful as a guide.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

This review examines the effectiveness of rebranding in rebuilding brand reputation and loyalty. Drawing on the case of Malaysian Airline System's (MAS) post-disaster rebranding, it analyses a quantitative study (n=372) to explore the relationships between these concepts. While rebranding may enhance reputation, the research suggests a limited direct effect on loyalty. However, a strong brand reputation appears to be a key mediator, influencing customer loyalty after



rebranding efforts. This finding offers valuable insights for brand managers, highlighting the importance of prioritizing reputation-building alongside rebranding for sustainable customer loyalty. ([Roslizawati Ahmad, Worlu Okechukwu, Hasnizam Shaari](#), 2022)

Evolving customer expectations and a dynamic digital landscape necessitate a shift in airline branding strategies. While traditional approaches focused on emotional connection, successful future branding requires a customer-centric focus on problem-solving, clear communication, and effective storytelling. By prioritizing customer experience throughout the branding process and leveraging the power of narrative to engage diverse market segments, airlines can establish lasting emotional connections and drive brand loyalty in the digital age. ([Nawal K. Taneja](#), 2020)

A critical examination of existing research reveals a complex relationship between rebranding and firm performance. While rebranding is often considered essential for businesses to adapt to changing markets, the current literature suggests its impact on brand equity and ultimately firm performance may be indirect. This research suggests the need to explore the mediating role of customer experience in understanding the effectiveness of rebranding strategies. ([Sohini Nana Rejoice Tobias-Mamini Norman Chilima Eugene Tafadzwa Mazzarri](#), 2019)

This study examined customer response to Kenya Airways' rebranding efforts. The study, which surveyed 200 clients from Kenya Airways' sales offices, found a high level of awareness regarding the airline's new logo, colour scheme, and presentation style. Interestingly, the study also revealed that Kenyan women exhibited a higher level of awareness compared to their male counterparts. These findings suggest that rebranding initiatives can be successful in generating brand awareness, though further research is needed to explore potential demographic variations in receptiveness to rebranding efforts. ([Kenya Airways, by Chimaek, Tutee T.](#), 2005)

This literature review examines how consumers react to rebranding efforts undertaken by established brands. Research suggests a negative correlation exists between initial consumer sentiment towards the rebranding and their pre-existing loyalty to the original brand. This negative association appears to be mediated by brand perceptions – essentially, how consumers view the brand overall. Furthermore, the strength of this loyalty's influence on perceptions of the redesigned brand is moderated by the perceived level of similarity between the original and revamped brand image. These findings offer valuable insights for marketers seeking to optimize consumer acceptance of rebranding initiatives. ([Liu Shukwon](#), 2011)

IV. DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

The study's data analysis methods are broken out into greater depth below:

Analysing qualitative data: The research will predominantly utilize qualitative data analysis methodologies as the questionnaire collects non-numerical responses such as opinions and experiences. With this method, the "why" underlying consumer perceptions is comprehended more thoroughly than just the quantity of responses.

Tables of frequencies: We will begin the data analysis process with these tables. The responses will be arranged according to question type, with the number of respondents indicated for each option. In terms of consumer sentiment about the rebranding, this will assist in identifying any prevailing trends or tendencies. A frequency table, for instance, might show that, although a lesser percentage of respondents thought the service quality had increased, most respondents were aware of the rebranding.

Content analysis: This method examines the written answers to the questionnaire in greater detail. The material will be methodically categorized and examined by researchers to ascertain the rationale behind consumer opinions. Finding underlying themes or intentions that may not be immediately clear from simply looking at the frequencies is made easier with the aid of content analysis. For example, content analysis could show that consumers thought the rebranding made Air India seem more contemporary, while those who did not like it thought the improvements were flimsy.

Thematic analysis: This method will find recurrent themes and patterns in each response, building on the knowledge gained from content analysis. This enables researchers to comprehend the larger narratives around consumer experiences and go beyond single comments.



V. DATA INTERPRETATION

The results from the data analysis part are summarized as follows in brief:

- a) Brand awareness: According to the poll, 57.1% of respondents were extremely familiar with the rebranding campaign, and 32.4% were moderately familiar. There's still space for development because 10.5% did not know.
- b) Prior travel experience: Although most respondents (74.3%) had taken an Air India flight within the previous year, the efficacy of the rebranding cannot be gauged from this data.
- c) The primary factor (41%) for selecting Air India was price competitiveness, which was followed by prior pleasant experiences (22.9%). The influence of brand reputation was marginally lower (13.3%).
- d) Awareness of changes in Air India's branding: More than two-thirds (67.6%) of respondents said they were aware of these changes, indicating the success of an awareness effort. But 18.1% had failed to notice the makeover.
- e) Pre-branding service satisfaction: Most participants (53.8%) expressed "somewhat satisfaction" with Air India's services prior to the rebranding, while a smaller percentage (26.4%) expressed less pleasure. This is used as a starting point to gauge the effect of the rebranding.
- f) Rebranding has had a favourable effect on how people perceive the brand. 10.4% expressed a less favourable view, whilst nearly two-thirds (61.3%) said the brand's image had improved.
- g) Views on service quality following rebranding: Of respondents, 58.5 percent thought it got better after the rebranding, while 31.1 percent thought it stayed the same.
- h) Future flight decisions may be impacted by rebranding: It appears that decisions are being influenced by the rebranding initiatives. Of those surveyed, more than 83% said they had been influenced (50.5% significantly, 33.3% little).
- i) Probability of endorsing Air India: This also has a favourable effect. While a fifth (21.9%) were less likely, over half (53.3%) were very likely to suggest Air India.
- j) View of pricing strategy following rebranding: 53.8% of respondents said Air India's rates had become more competitive following the rebranding. But 15% thought they were less competitive, which emphasizes the importance of ongoing communication.
- k) Client loyalty: It seems that the rebranding is having a favourable impact on loyalty. While 8.6% of respondents indicated decreased loyalty, over 60% of respondents expressed greater loyalty.

Have you noticed any changes in Air India's branding or image in the past year?	Count	Relative Frequency
a) Yes, there have been noticeable changes	72	0.679245283
b) No, I have not noticed any changes	19	0.179245283
c) Not sure	15	0.141509434
Grand Total	106	

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with Air India's services before the rebranding initiatives?	Counts	Relative Frequency
1	6	0.056603774
2	8	0.075471698
3	20	0.188679245
4	57	0.537735849
5	15	0.141509434
Grand Total	106	



To what extent do you believe Air India's rebranding efforts have influenced your decision to choose the airline for future flights?	Count	Relative Frequency
a) Significantly influenced	53	0.504761905
b) Somewhat influenced	35	0.333333333
c) Not influenced	17	0.161904762
Grand Total	105	

VI. RESEARCH OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

The analysis concluded that Air India's rebranding was effective. More than two-thirds observed the alterations, and most thought that both the brand's image (61.3%) and the quality of the services (58.5%) had improved. Customer behaviour was also impacted by the rebranding: over 83% of respondents said it had an impact on their decision to fly with Air India, with over half suggesting a significant influence. Client loyalty rose as well; following the rebranding, almost 60% of consumers reported feeling more devoted. Still, there's space for development. Among those surveyed, 41% still consider pricing to be important, and 15% thought prices had become less competitive. To guarantee that the rebranding appeals to a larger audience, more study can be done to better understand their viewpoints.

VII. CONCLUSION

The rebranding campaign of Air India has commenced, and the initial progress seems promising. More than two-thirds of the customers acknowledged the improvements, and a sizable majority felt that the brand's image and level of service had improved. This favourable impression resulted in a notably higher level of customer loyalty as well as a discernibly bigger influence on decision-making. But turbulent travels happen to even the best-laid plans, and Air India's rebranding is no exception. A portion of consumers (about 15%) voiced worries regarding pricing competitiveness, emphasizing the necessity for more precise communication tactics. Furthermore, a little proportion (about 10%) expressed no discernible change or a decline in commitment, highlighting the significance of comprehending their viewpoints.

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