

UNDERSTANDING REBRANDING USING IDENTITY- IMAGE DYNAMICS: A CASE SURVEY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Rebranding is a widely used branding strategy to resuscitate an ailing brand. It is commonly conceptualised as change in visual brand identity and brand positioning. In the light of rising importance of brands in present day organizations, we find this extant conceptualization is restrictive. We have argued that for effective and efficient management of rebranding strategy rebranding conceptualization should be founded on the present understanding of brand. This led us to the concept of brand identity and identity-image dynamics that shows that brand identity adapts itself in its quest to generate a favourable brand image. We used this identity-image dynamics to build our model of rebranding. In our model rebranding has been conceptualised as change in existing brand identity, triggered by a felt brand image discrepancy. Our model is based on the model of dynamic organization identity.

We tested our model using case survey methodology. This is a mixed method which involves surveying the relevant teaching and research cases, to unravel a common pattern present across these cases. This way this method quantifies the qualitative information present in the case and then the quantified data is used to do the statistical analysis. We did PLS-SEM analysis of our structural model. Based on the results of our analysis we could establish construed brand image discrepancy as an important trigger of the rebranding process. In addition we were able to show that rebranding involves change in other brand identity elements as well hence the prevalent bi-dimensional conceptualization of rebranding is indeed restrictive. In contrast we propose and prove that rebranding involves a comprehensive change in the existing brand identity which is done to correct the construed brand image discrepancy. Our model also helps to differentiate rebranding from other similar brand image management strategies.

As the second research objective we wanted to identify important enablers and barriers of rebranding process. We found that quality of change communication, leadership and employee participation are important enablers of rebranding initiative whereas brand age hampers the process of rebranding. In addition we also propose that organization structure, policies and procedures would also have

moderating influence over the rebranding process. Our study makes significant theoretical and managerial contributions.

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