

Understanding the effect of change in logo elements on brand attitude: A study of three logos

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Abstract

Proper selection of logo elements has been associated with the formation of either a positive or a negative attitude towards a brand, but very few studies have examined the same phenomenon when such elements are changed. This study attempts to fill this gap by investigating change in three brand logos, one of which has changed in colour only; another has a modified design and font; and the third has all the three elements modified. Furthermore, the association and impact of three cases of change on the formation of brand attitude would help to understand the appropriateness of the intended modification. Identification of the emotions reflected by each element in a logo, its association with positive and negative brand attitude, and its role in attitude formation are the motivations behind this study. In all three cases, the results show that not all but some of the changed elements were instrumental in creating a positive brand attitude based on the modified logo.

Keywords

Logo, modification in logo, colour, font, and design of a logo, brand and attitude, association of logo and brand

Introduction

A corporate brand name and/or its logo serve as an important tool in creating awareness and recognition about the brand (Balmer & Gray 2003). Its significance as an asset has been realised increasingly by both product and service companies (Keller 2002). Brands as sophisticated marketing tool offers a primary

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point of differentiation between competitive products. This allows a firm to successfully garner a high monetary value by enticing consumers towards their products/services (Wood 2000). Companies wish to maximise such value by communicating their strategy through different aspects of the brand such as name, slogan, or logo. They face a major challenge when to achieve this aspect of communication they want to change some or all of these elements. Such need for a change might arise because of changing demographic or their aspirations or intention to diversify into different product lines and markets (Muzellec et al. 2003). This forces the company to redefine their identity and attempt to change the perceptions of the image among external stakeholders through the process of rebranding (Muzellec & Lambkin 2006). Rebranding can be introduced on a minor or a major scale and it can extensively impact brand equity. Major rebranding, which may include name change, is often a result of structural changes in the company. Minor rebranding, on the other hand, is concerned with a change in the colour, font, and/or the design of the logo and as such does not affect the company at the corporate level (Stuart & Muzellec 2004). Nevertheless, the process can be costly. Also the customer loyalty is at risk, which can negatively affect the brand equity (Causon 2004; Kapferer 2004). Both authors agree that a transfer of brand would cause danger such as loss of choice, loyal customers, and market share. Thus, such changes should be undertaken carefully and gradually as any change can either create a perception of curiosity or of scepticism. Daly and Moloney (2004) suggested that major changes in the logo result in scepticism and resistance to change whereas minor changes follow a gradual path corresponding to slow evolution of company. A change in the logo is an effective strategy and might make people curious about such changes if it continues to ensure consistency over time and between various elements of the brand identity, i.e., name, logo, and slogan (Kohli et al. 2002).

This study proposes a model to investigate the effect of minor changes in a logo, i.e., change in colour, design, or the font of the logos of selected brands on consumer perception towards such change. These perceptions were measured on the scales of familiarity and similarity. High familiarity towards a change in the logo would imply that the change has resulted in the formation of a positive brand attitude whereas high similarity between both old and new logo would imply resistance towards such change, resulting in the creation of a negative brand attitude (Praxmarer & Gierl 2009).

Theoretical background

Logos are the most salient visual elements among a wide range of communication tools, from packaging and promotional materials to business cards and letterheads (Walsh et al. 2010). Instantly identifiable logos can easily influence consumer behaviours (Pittard et al. 2007). Logos act as a differentiation tool while providing the overall brand meaning to influence consumer choice. They can be used in conjunction with the name or they can be used in place of the brand name. Prior research suggests that well-designed logos should be recognisable, evoke positive affect, and communicate a set of shared associations (Kohli et al. 2002). Easily recognised logos create a sense of familiarity. Familiarity can benefit a logo because it can increase the affect by influencing the attitude towards overall brand positively. Furthermore, logos that look familiar tend to be perceived and processed faster. Keller (2002) argued that logos as marketing stimuli should communicate one clear message that is difficult to misinterpret. The author also emphasised that logos evoke certain feelings which can be both negative and positive. Success of a logo depends on the intensity of positive emotions that it exudes. Thus, a change in the elements of logo governed by utmost essential reasons should be effectively communicated to the targeted customers through emotions reflected by the new elements.

Logo elements

A logo is represented by a combination of colour, design (symbol), and font style. Appropriate content and style of a logo representing personality traits contributes in developing an effective logo (Kohli et al. 2002). In the process of development of an effective logo, emotions evoked by each element of the logo, which are associated with individuals' personality traits, should be given due consideration. These elements involved in logo transfer information from the company to its customer, which is perceived, processed, and translated, leading to the formation of an attitude towards the company (Adir et al. 2015). Seimiene and Kamarauskaite (2014) investigated the brand elements or attributes that influence formation of brand perception the most. They suggested that the perception of brand personality was most affected by the design and colour of the logo. These varying emotions reflected by different elements of the logo generate different responses related to brand attitude such as familiarity and similarity (Walsh et al. 2010).

Hem and Iverson (2004) suggested that a logo design reflecting a meaning and high recognition would positively influence its evaluation. Machado et al. (2015) categorised the design of a logo as abstract, natural, and cultural and studied their impact on consumer perception. The authors conclude that natural designs are most influential, followed by cultural designs while abstract designs have the worst impact on consumer perception. Figurativeness as an important logo design element was suggested by Henderson et al. (2003) as an important design element. The authors illustrated that elaborate, natural and harmonious logos create a positive affect and a perception of quality. Rodriguez et al. (2013) examined the implication of logo designs in tourism industry and concluded that logo design plays an important role in the evaluation of the image of a country and the tourists' willingness to visit the country. It was found that a properly designed logo created a positive attitude for the country.

Doyle and Bottomley (2004) and Mikaere (2011) in their studies illustrated *font* as an important element of the visual identity of a brand and conclude that the font used in a logo enhanced the brand's identity and increased the likelihood of the brand getting chosen. The studies signified the selection of a proper font style in bringing congruency between personality traits that it reflects and what the brand intends to offer. The visual properties of typography and the importance of a font style was found significant in helping consumers to memorise and create a positive perception towards the brand (Childers & Jass 2002). Aziz et al. (2014) inferred that the physical aspects of the font such as case, weight, contrast, width, angle, and their being serif or sans serif seemed to be helpful in memorising the logo. A study by Henderson et al. (2004) substantiated the view that fonts and their physical characteristics are helpful tools for a brand to express itself. They suggested that different fonts by varying the elements of elaboration, harmony, natural, flourish, weight, and compression could be used to project a brand identity as pleasing, engaging, reassuring, or prominent. Oosterhout (2013) in a similar study associated different font styles with various responses that fonts evoke. Different font styles were grouped into traits such as business-like, modern, personal, luxurious, or playful. Depending on the company's intention to reflect itself under one of the traits, the logo can be developed with a particular font.







Colours are everywhere and marketers often investigate messages or emotions they evoke which would mitigate undesirable behaviour towards company's offerings (Bagchi & Cheema 2013; Deng et al. 2010; Lindsey et al. 2010). Understanding the meaning that each colour communicates can help a marketer to create a logo with a specific colour that is associated with the personality trait of the targeted market. Colours are associated with specific psychological meanings and associations. Babin et al. (2003) studied such psychological associations in the context of store environment. The authors suggested that colour in the store plays an important role in projecting price of product as fair resulting in positive

purchase decisions. A similar study was conducted by Elliot et al. (2007) who specifically investigated the motivations associated with red colour. It was suggested that the selection of a particular hue depends on the context for which it is used. Emotions specifically evoked by red were also studied by Bagchi and Cheema (2013). Red was found to be associated with aggression and arousal. Thus, campaigns or events where such emotions are targeted tend to primarily use red colour. Bock et al. (2012) suggested that behaviours towards a promotional campaign become more acceptable if the background colour is similar to the foreground. This can have a significant implication in designing of logos where colour of the text is not be too distinct from the colour in the background. Labrecque and Milne (2012) confirmed that colour is an important driver of brand personality and demonstrated that the combination of the logo shape and logo colour influences likability and familiarity.

Thus, the relevant literature has highlighted these aspects: firstly, change in the current logo is one of the major and important ways of refurbishing a brand; secondly, a logo can be modified by changing colour combination, font, and/or design; thirdly, identifying a particular colour, font style, and design to be used in the logo is necessary as each element evokes different emotions; lastly, logos as the face of the brand result in creating either a positive or a negative feeling towards the brand. However, minimal or no literature was found regarding two aspects of telecom company under study: firstly, if a company undertakes the process of redesigning its logo, should it modify only one element of its logo or their combination? Secondly, with a change in the elements of the logo, what is the impact on consumer perception towards that change? Do they consider it unnecessary or understand its significance and accept it?

These research gaps are addressed by studying three modified logos, which were selected by using two criteria: firstly, the logo was modified by changing one or a combination of at least two elements. This was done to understand and distinguish the effect of different types of changes on brand attitude. The second criterion was the reason behind redesigning. According to Muzellec et al. (2003), there are four general drivers of rebranding: (1) a change in the ownership structure involving merger and acquisition and spin-offs and demerger; (2) a change in the corporate strategy involving diversification and internationalisation and localisation; (3) a change in the competitive position involving erosion of the market position, outdated image, and reputation problem; and, lastly, (4) a change in the external environment involving legal obligation or major crises. By using these two criteria, logos were selected (Table 1).

Table 1. Selected logos

Logo	Brand	Reason for rebranding	Method of rebranding	Logo before rebranding	Logo after rebranding
Logo 1	Airtel	Internationalisation (change in corporate strategy)	Change in colour, design, and font		
Logo 2	Hero MotoCorp Ltd.	Demerger (change in ownership structure)	Change in design and font		
Logo 3	Godrej	Change in colour			

Undoubtedly, there could be other combinations of change in the elements of a logo but these three logos which most recently underwent rebranding and fulfilled the criteria. No logo was found to undergo modification because of legal obligation or a major crisis. Thus, none was selected in this category.

The objective of understanding the relationship between the way of changing a logo and the impact of the change in building positive or negative attitude towards the new logo was fulfilled in three steps. *Firstly*, the literature as discussed showed that the elements of the logo (colour, font, and design) evoke specific emotions related to the context. Thus, the first part for each logo involved identification of emotions associated with the logo elements (both old and new). *Secondly*, the association of the identified emotions related to a particular logo element was examined with brand attitude. Brand attitude was measured using the concepts of familiarity and similarity. The literature about branding does indicate that a high similarity between old and new logo would create doubts among consumers regarding the need of such change and thus result in the formation of a negative brand attitude. On the other hand, high familiarity regarding the changed elements indicates acceptance, resulting in the formation of a positive attitude. The aim was to assess the change in *which* a logo element had a significant effect on the formulation of a positive brand attitude after the change. For instance, in the case of Airtel, all three elements were changed. In colour, the new logo had only red and white whereas the old had red, white, and black. Thus, the analysis of this step would indicate whether the emotions evoked by only one or more colours results in the formulation of brand attitude. The results of this analysis led to the influence and contribution of all modified elements in Step 2 on overall brand attitude towards new logo, which was studied in Step 3. The application of multiple regression analysis would help to demonstrate the effect of identified aspect of change on formation of attitude towards the new logo and thus help practitioners to focus on only certain aspects of the logo element(s) to increase a positive brand attitude.

Logo I: Airtel

Part I

This part studies the change in brand attitude with a change in the colour element of the Airtel logo. The new logo is similar in colours except black was omitted from the colours. Although the change was minor, it was necessary to study the emotions regarding all three colours to understand change, if any, in the emotions regarding changed colours.

Step 1: Identification of the emotions associated with colour

Method

Focus group interviews were conducted for this step of the study. Three logos each with one of logo colour were created with the name “Telecom” in capital letters (Figure 1). The shown logos were font- and design-neutral. Also, grey was selected as the background as it is considered a neutral colour (Fehrman & Fehrman, 2004). Three focus groups each involving a batch of 20 MBA students were shown the different logos. As the emotions evoked by colours are context-specific, the subjects were informed about two aspects of telecom company under study: (1) the telecom’s need to undergo rebranding and the significance of colour in communicating the brand’s message to the targeted customers and (2) it was indicated that a successful telecom company growing globally, looking to refurbish its image to target the needs of new age customers, felt the need to project its ambitions through a modified logo.



Figure 1. A fake logo in different colours

Results

The participants were encouraged to express their emotions pertaining specifically to the colour. Content analysis of the data allowed us to select the following emotions reflected by a particular colour. Majority of the respondents who were shown the red logo associated red with *youthfulness*, *aggressiveness*, and *growth traits*. Second batch was shown the black logo and they associated black with the traits of *sadness*, *expensiveness*, and *fear*. Thus, black was perceived to evoke negative emotions; however, a few considered it a colour of luxury. The third batch, shown the white logo, indicated white to represent *peace*, *simplicity*, and *stability*.

This categorisation was further substantiated empirically by conducting a primary survey involving a bigger batch of randomly selected 100 MBA students out of which 96 responses were found analysable. The participants were administered a structured questionnaire asking them to score nine traits as reflected by a particular colour on a scale of 1 to 5. For instance, a participant could select *youthful* as a trait and assign *black* a score from 1 to 5 to represent that trait. A similar process was carried out for all traits. One-way ANOVA was applied to evaluate the association.

The results shown in Table 2 validated the focus group outcomes. Significant F values implied association of a trait with a colour. Majority of the respondents suggested association of *youthful*, *aggressive*, and *growth* with red. This was also reflected by a higher mean score. Similarly, *peace*, *simplicity*, and *stability* were associated with white, and *sad*, *expensive*, and *fear* with black.

Step 2: Association between identified traits and brand attitude

Method

This step required development of six questionnaires to be administered to a batch of 50 MBA students each resulting in a total sample size of 300. Three questionnaires were about the old = style Airtel logo

Table 2. Emotions associated with different colour of assumed logo

Emotional trait	Number of respondents (Red)	Average score	Number of respondents (White)	Average score	Number of respondents (Black)	Average score	F value
Youthful	64	4.13	21	3.21	11	2.14	6.12*
Aggressive	42	3.85	28	3.11	26	3.01	4.75*
Growth	63	4.22	10	2.10	23	3.32	4.57*
Peace	12	2.10	75	4.41	09	3.05	6.23*
Simplicity	19	2.23	65	3.98	12	2.21	5.51*
Stability	25	3.11	52	4.12	19	3.35	4.23*
Sad	07	1.45	37	3.75	46	4.01	7.26*
Expensive	22	3.23	15	3.13	59	4.23	8.57*
Fear	29	3.79	05	1.54	62	4.09	9.77*

*p < 0.05

Old logo in red	Old logo in black	Old logo in white
Airtel	Airtel	Airtel
New logo in red	New logo in black	New logo in white
airtel	airtel	airtel

Figure 2. Airtel logos in different colours

with each questionnaire developed for a particular colour. Thus, a batch of 50 students was shown the old-style Airtel logo in red. Similarly, two other batches of 50 students were shown the same in black and in white, respectively. Three other batches of 50 students underwent the same process with new-style Airtel logo (Figure 2).

Each questionnaire involved three categories of questions. First category measured on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = least representative, 5 = most representative) the representativeness of the identified trait in Step 1. Second category measured similarity and familiarity of all the shown versions of both old and new logos. For instance, the batch of respondents who were shown the old logo in red was asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = high similarity, 5 = low similarity) its similarity with the old logo in black and white. Similarly, similarity was observed for all other versions (six in total) of the logo. Similarly, similarity was observed for the other versions of the logo.

Familiarity was also measured by using the same method. The scores were recorded on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = low similarity, 5 = high similarity). A high score would imply high familiarity implying a positive effect of a certain colour element on brand perception. Lastly, the third category sought responses regarding overall brand attitude towards the shown version of the logo. A five-point bipolar scale involving three dimensions was applied with 'good', 'desirable' 'nice' on the positive side whereas 'bad', 'undesirable' and 'awful' on the negative side (Ahluwalia et al. 2000). ANCOVA was applied twice to examine the results. Similarity or familiarity was considered as a dependent variable and the type of the logo (old or new), logo element (red, black, and white) as categorical independent variables. Emotions associated with each colour were considered as covariates.

Results

The results of ANCOVA with familiarity as a dependent variable suggested that the type of logo (old or new) significantly ($F = 4.55$, $p = 0.034$) contributed in the formulation of a positive brand attitude whereas both emotions associated with different colours and the type of colour had no association with the familiarity of brand attitude. However, results indicated a significant combined effect of these variables ($F = 3.098$, $p = 0.047$), implying that the formulation of a positive brand attitude is influenced

by a simultaneous rather than individual effect of these variables. This combined effect was further analysed by applying multiple comparison tests to deduce which logo and which colour with the specific traits resulted in a positive brand attitude. The results suggest that familiarity score with regard to the red colour was more than that of white and black colours (meanred = 4.142, meanwhite = 4.066 and meanblack = 4.020). The effect of this change in mean values (b) of colour from black to red was found to be positive and significant ($b = 3.556, t = 2.75, p = 0.006$) whereas it was insignificant for the change from black to white, implying that red played a predominant role in building the brand attitude. On similar lines, more importantly, it was inferred from the results that the type of logo, i.e., new, type of colour, i.e., red, and the traits associated with red of the new logo had a positive and significant ($b = 1.191, t = 2.465, p = 0.014$) association in building familiarity towards new logo.

ANCOVA results with similarity between colour element of old and new logo showed a combined effect of type of colour, type of logo, and emotions as covariates in the formation of a negative brand attitude ($F = 3.504, p = 0.031$). Multiple comparison tests indicated that changing the logo from old to new and the colour from black to red with its corresponding emotions have a negative ($b = -1.147$) and significant effect ($t = -2.646, p = 0.009$) on the similarity score of brand attitude. Negative effect implies that with an increase in the red in new logo, respondents would consider it to be less similar to the old logo. Thus, the dominant presence of red in the new logo was found to be acceptable and to create a positive brand attitude.

Part 2

This part studies the change in brand attitude with a change in the font of the logo.

Step 1: Identification of emotions associated with the font

Method

A similar approach used for the steps in Part 1 was used in Part 2 to identify the emotions associated with both old and new font of the logo. The subjects (20 MBA students) were shown a logo with name “Telecom” written in the font style of the old logo and another batch (20 MBA students) was shown a similar logo with the name written in the font style of new logo (Figure 3). In this case, the logos had same design and colour and were designed with change only in font style. This was done to capture responses only with regard to a different font style.

Results

The purpose was to find which emotions were thought to be reflected by a particular font style. Content analysis indicated that old font style was considered to be more structured, tight, and formal, whereas

Old font style	New font style
Telecom	telecom

Figure 3. A fake logo with different font styles

Table 3. Emotions associated with different font style of assumed logo

Emotional trait	Number of respondents		Number of respondents		t value
	(old font)	Average score	(new font)	Average score	
Formal	51	3.79	39	3.13	5.23*
Pleasant	58	3.65	32	2.98	4.79*
Interesting	49	3.25	41	3.01	6.23*
Emotional	42	3.78	48	3.15	1.08
Fun	28	3.12	62	3.89	5.65*
Gentle	31	2.74	59	4.52	7.23*

the new font style was regarded as more friendly, informal, graceful, and elegant. In the focus group discussions, traits of *formal*, *pleasant*, and *interesting* were associated with the old font style whereas traits of *emotional*, *fun*, and *gentle* with the new font style.

This categorisation was further investigated by subjecting a set of questions related to the six traits found from the focus group data analysis to a randomly selected group of 100 MBA students, out of which 90 responses were found to be analysable. Two sample independent *t*-tests were applied to evaluate the association.

The results shown in Table 3 validated the focus groups outcomes. The only deviation was for the emotional trait, which was considered to have no association with a particular font style. Thus, this trait was not used for the next step. On the other hand, significant *t* values implied association with identified traits and the type of font. Majority of respondents suggested the association of *formal*, *pleasant*, and *interesting* traits with the old font style. Higher mean scores also corroborate the same. Similarly, *emotional*, *fun* and *gentle* were reflected in the new font style.

Step 2: Association between identified emotions and brand attitude

Method

The methodology used in Step 1 was used to find the association between brand attitude and change in the font style as well. Two batches of 50 MBA students who were different from previous category of students were shown logo of company written in old font style and new font style (Figure 4).

The only difference was change in style keeping other things such as colour and design constant. The data was collected regarding old and new font style logo from two batches of 50 MBA students each through structured questionnaire consisting of three parts of questions. First part was devoted to record

**Figure 4.** Airtel logos with different font styles

intensity of identified emotions in step 1 with regard to different font style logos by using five point semantic differential scale, second part observed brand attitude in terms of similarity and familiarity response on similar scale and lastly data regarding overall brand attitude with regard to font style of shown version of logo was observed. Thus, proposed model involved brand attitude with similarity or familiarity as dependent variable and logo element with old or new font style as categorical independent variable whereas emotions associated with each type of font as covariate.

Results

Analysis of ANCOVA about the change in font style of the Airtel logo showed insignificant association between emotions associated with both old and new font style and both positive (familiarity) and negative (similarity) brand attitude. However though insignificant but higher mean score of old font style (mean = 4.055) than new (mean = 3.998) with regard to familiarity whereas lower mean score of old (mean = 4.00) than new font style (mean = 4.055) with regard to similarity suggested acceptance of old font style by respondents.

Part 3

This part studies the change in brand attitude with *change in design* element of the Airtel logo.

Step 1: Identification of emotions associated with design

Method

Every logo is constructed using different shapes. Everything has a shape, but the basic shapes, circles, squares, and triangles, can be very effective in designing a logo. These shapes have certain subconscious meanings. The circle is protective or infinite. The square denotes stability, equality, and honesty. The triangle suggests tension or conflict or action. Participants of one focus group were shown logos with squares and rectangles similar to the design of old Airtel. Second focus group was shown logos using more rounded shapes as is in the new Airtel logo.

Results

Content analysis and focus group discussions revealed no clear distinction among traits of two categories of differently designed logos. Both groups inferred almost similar traits. Thus, we conflated the two categories as one, which consisted of the traits of balanced, simple, active, trendy, unforgettable, gentle, innovative, fun, and sophisticated.

For a clear distinction and categorisation, a primary survey on the lines of categorisation of emotions in case of colour and design was done and 76 analysable responses were received. Two sample independent *t*-tests were applied to infer the association between the type of design and the emotions evoked by them.

The results shown in Table 4 categorised emotions with regard to assumed old and new design style logos. The logo of companies shown to respondents which resembled features of old logo of Airtel were inferred to reflect the traits of *balanced*, *gentle*, and *sophisticated*. On the other hand, the new logo was considered *active*, *trendy*, *unforgettable*, and *innovative*. Participants did not associate the traits *simple* and *fun* to any design as indicated by the insignificant *t* value. Thus, these traits were not considered for further analyses.

Table 4. Emotions associated with different design of assumed logo

Emotional trait	Number of respondents		Number of respondents		t value
	(old design)	Average score	(new design)	Average score	
Balanced	40	3.89	26	3.14	5.67*
Simple	39	3.54	37	3.23	0.265
Active	27	2.78	49	4.14	4.23*
Trendy	25	2.89	51	4.24	6.78*
Unforgettable	21	3.08	55	3.98	7.89*
Gentle	56	3.65	20	2.79	5.13*
Innovative	31	2.56	45	3.95	3.89*
Fun	40	2.78	36	2.65	1.43
Sophisticated	49	4.12	27	3.20	4.87*

Step 2: Association between identified emotions and brand attitude

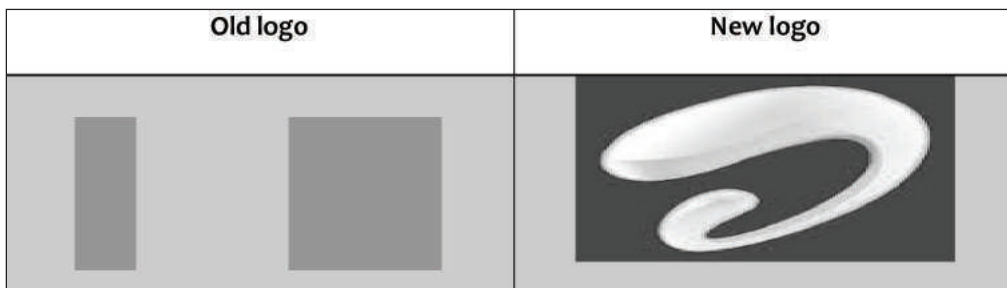
Method

As suggested in first step clear distinction was found between two categories of designs thus respondents divided into groups were asked to rate their association level regarding identified emotions on a five-point semantic differential scale. The responses were collected from a batch of 50 MBA students each for both old and new design (Figure 5). Each emotion was represented by both positive and negative aspect. Second category recorded positive or negative brand attitude responses in terms of familiarity and similarity between design of old and new logo respectively on similar scale. Lastly data regarding overall brand attitude was recorded.

The only difference was change in design keeping colour either constant or neutral. ANCOVA was applied twice with similarity or familiarity as dependent variable and logo element with old or new font style as categorical independent variable whereas emotions associated with each type of font as covariate.

Results

Lastly, emotions associated with design of logo as covariate was found to significantly affect building positive brand attitude ($F = 6.768$, $p = 0.01$) whereas no such association was suggested in formation of negative brand attitude. Majority of respondents considered new design (mean = 4.131) to be more acceptable than old design (mean = 4.086). Multiple comparison analysis suggested that effect of difference in these mean values when associated with significant role of covariate has positive ($b = 0.270$) and significant ($t = 2.465$, $p = 0.014$) role in creating familiarity towards change in design of logo.

**Figure 5.** Airtel Logos with different designs

Thus, in conclusion red colour of new logo and change in design were instrumental in making the change more acceptable and likeable as they had important contribution in resulting positive brand attitude. Importantly, white colour and noteworthy change in font style was not found to contribute effectively in familiarity towards new logo.

Finally, to understand the role of each contributor identified in above analysis towards building positive brand attitude their impact on overall brand attitude was studied by applying regression analysis. The results suggested that 23.35% (adjusted R square = 22.95%) variation in overall brand attitude was explained significantly ($F = 7.16$, $p = 0.0019$) by emotions associated with red colour and design of new logo. Red colour was found to have major impact ($b = 0.594$, $p = 0.0016$) whereas design had milder effect ($b = 0.274$, $p = 0.066$) on overall brand attitude.

Logo 2: Hero MotoCorp Ltd

As shown in Table 1, both the design and the font style of the company's logo has been modified.

Part I

This part involved understanding the effect of changing the *font style* of the logo on brand attitude. This was achieved in three steps.

Step 1: Identification of emotions associated with font

Method

The subjects were made conversant about reasons of rebranding of a leading global motorcycle manufacturer. The company under study due to demerger from its partner wanted to project its independent image and catering to the needs of young demography of the country. To identify the emotions associated with both old and new font style 20 MBA students each were shown a logo entitled "Motorcycle". Both colour and design were kept constant with only change in font style (Figure 6). Even the background was kept neutral.

Results

The purpose was to find which traits were considered as reflected by a particular font style. Similar methodology as adopted for Airtel revealed that the fake logo with old font style was characterised as *formal*, *likeable*, and *interesting* whereas the new style was considered to reflect the traits of *pleasant*, *emotional*, *fun*, and *gentle*.

Old font style	New font style
MOTORCYCLE	MOTORCYCLE

Figure 6. A fake logo with different font styles

Table 5. Emotions associated with different font style of assumed logo

Emotional trait	Number of respondents (old font)	Average score	Number of respondents (new font)	Average score	t value
Formal	24	3.25	62	4.12	5.69*
Pleasant	45	3.74	41	2.23	3.68*
Interesting	49	3.99	37	2.75	4.71*
Emotional	37	2.78	49	3.01	0.587
Fun	40	2.35	46	2.78	0.458
Gentle	34	2.46	52	3.98	6.85*

This was further examined through a quantitative survey wherein 100 randomly selected subjects were asked to rate the degree of association between font style and the traits it reflected it on a scale of 1 to 5, of which 86 responses were analysable. The results of two sample independent *t*-tests are shown in Table 5.

The results shown in Table 5 interestingly provide some different results as compared to the focus group discussions. Out of the six traits *emotional* and *fun* were found to have no association with the font style. The old design, which resembled the old logo, was found to reflect traits of *pleasant* and *interesting*. On the other hand, as suggested by significant *t* values the new font style was considered to represent *formal* and *gentle* traits.

Step 2: Association between identified emotions and brand attitude

Method

This step of the study involved evaluating the category of the identified traits in Step 1, which would form either a positive or a negative brand attitude towards the change in the font element of a logo. As was done previously, a structured questionnaire with questions regarding the traits reflected by the font style was administered and brand attitude in terms of similarity and familiarity between the two versions of the logo (Figure 7) and overall brand attitude was recorded.

The data was recorded from two different batches of 50 MBA students. Again, ANCOVA was applied twice to assess the role of different traits reflected by the font style in the formation of either positive or negative brand attitude. Familiarity or similarity was considered as a dependent variable, which was proposed to be influenced by the logo with old or new font style, which was the categorical independent variable whereas the traits associated with each font style as covariates.

**Figure 7.** Logo with different font styles

Results

ANCOVA results suggested formation of positive brand attitude towards the logo as due to the traits associated with the font style ($F = 10.899, p = 0.001$). No distinction was found between the font styles of old and new logo when the similarity between the logos was inferred ($F = 0.098, p = 0.754$), implying that the respondents did not consider logos to be exactly similar. These preliminary results thus indicated the association of change in font style in facilitating familiarity towards such a change. Multiple comparison tests were conducted to infer the traits associated with the font style of the logo. Results show that the new font style of the logo was found to generate more positive responses (mean = 3.833) than old font style (mean = 3.750). The effect of this change in mean value (b) on familiarity was found to be positive ($b = 0.314$) and significant ($t = 2.005, p = 0.046$), implying that the font style of the new logo would result in a positive brand attitude. Thus, changing the font style of the logo was found to have a positive association, making the change more acceptable.

Part 2

This part involves understanding the influence of a change in the design of a logo on brand attitude.

Step 1: Identification of emotions associated with design

Method

Traits reflected by the old and new logo were extracted from secondary literature. Similar methodology was adopted as in Part 3 of Logo 1. Two sets of features and traits of the two logos were obtained through discussions with a focus group of 20 randomly selected students.

Results

Content analysis showed *balanced, unforgettable, innovative, and sophisticated* as traits of the old logo whereas *active, trendy, gentle, and simple* as those of the new logo. This categorisation was further assessed through analysis of data from a primary survey (N = 79). The results shown in Table 6 show somewhat different results from those obtained from focus group discussions. Old design was considered more *balanced* and *sophisticated* whereas the new design was regarded as *trendy, gentle, and innovative*.

Table 6. Traits associated with different design of the fake logo

Emotional trait	Number of respondents		Number of respondents (new design)		t value
	(old design)	Average score	design)	Average score	
Balanced	48	4.12	31	3.17	5.89*
Simple	41	3.14	38	3.05	1.32
Active	38	2.11	41	3.12	0.254*
Trendy	30	3.02	49	3.98	5.69*
Unforgettable	39	2.91	40	2.78	0.638
Gentle	24	2.52	55	4.23	8.54*
Innovative	26	3.23	53	4.02	6.41*
Sophisticated	50	3.89	29	2.85	4.36*

The difference in traits *simple*, *active*, and *unforgettable* derived from both logos was insignificant ($t = 1.32, 0.254, \text{ and } 0.638$ respectively). These traits were not used in the next step.

Step 2: Association between identified emotions and brand attitude

Method

Similar methodology of administering a structure questionnaire to two batches of 50 MBA students each was adopted for Step 2. One batch was administered a questionnaire on the design of old logo and another batch that of new logo (Figure 8). As can be seen, the only difference was the change in the design whereas other aspects of logo elements like font and colour were kept unchanged. This methodology would clarify only the influence of traits as reflected in the design of the logo on brand attitude. ANCOVA was applied to see if brand attitude towards old or new design can be predicted from the categorical independent variable, the type of the logo, old or new, and the traits associated with each as covariates.

Results

Results with regard to change in design shows that emotions associated with design of logo irrespective of old or new have significant association in creating both positive (familiarity, $F = 8.154, p = 0.005$) and negative (similarity, $F = 28.061, p = 0.000$) brand attitudes. Further analysis shows that new design had significant ($F = 183.20, p = 0.000$) effect in formation of positive brand attitude whereas insignificant for negative attitude. Also old design was found to have insignificant effect on both positive and negative brand attitude. Analysing only the results for positive brand attitude, respondents considered the design of the new logo as contributing to it more (mean = 3.699) than did the old logo (mean = 1.823). The effect of this difference in perception ($b = 0.489$) was found to be significant ($t = 13.53, p = 0.000$), which means that the design of new logo was more acceptable.

Changing the font style and the design of the new logo was able to explain 20.38% (adjusted R square = 19.74%) of variation in overall brand attitude ($F = 4.71, p = 0.042$). The font style of the new logo was inferred to have a higher effect in forming the overall brand attitude ($b = 0.2055, p = 0.035$) than its design ($b = 0.184, p = 0.0063$).

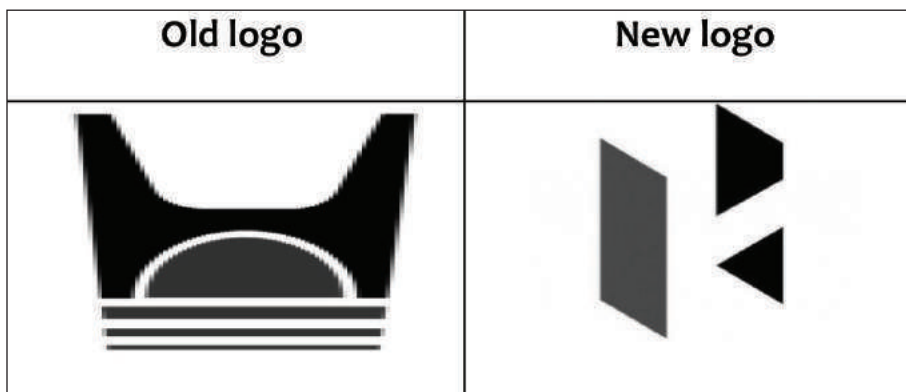


Figure 8. Logo with different designs

Logo 3: Godrej

This logo was selected to study the effect of change in only one element, i.e., the colour of the logo, on brand attitude.

Step 1: Identification of emotions associated with colour

Method

The old logo of the company was in blazing red colour whereas the new logo is formed using three colours, mild red, citrus green, and sky blue. A batch of 20 MBA students was shown a fake logo with “FMCG” written in red like the old Godrej logo. The purpose was to observe emotions associated only with a specific colour by keeping other elements constant. As the new logo had three colours, three batches of 20 MBA students each were shown the same “FMCG” logo in these three colours (Figure 9). They were informed students that FMCG is an established and very popular brand with products in almost every consumer category and that the brand took an exercise to change colour of its logo to refurbish its old image by providing new and innovative products to the young customers of the country.

Results

Focus group discussions revealed three categories of traits about the red, citrus green and sky blue colours of the fake logo. Interestingly, participants did not separate the traits of ruby red from the blazing red as they considered the latter a milder version of the former. *Aggressiveness*, *royalty*, and *growth* were clearly associated with red whereas blue was considered as evoking *coolness*, *adaptability*, and *reliability*. Green represented traits of *nature* and *freshness*.

These findings were quantitatively tested through a primary survey using structured data. The results in Table 7 were obtained from the data collected from a group of randomly selected 78 students. Each participant was asked to select blazing red or ruby red or citrus green or sky blue and rate the degree of its association with the inferred traits on a scale of 1 to 5.

Insignificant F value regarding *reliability* implies its non-association with any of the colours. Majority of respondents associated coolness ($N = 44$, mean = 4.24) and adaptable ($N = 32$, mean = 3.87) with sky blue. Similarly, citrus green was categorised as reflecting the traits of nature ($N = 39$, mean = 4.22) and freshness ($N = 32$, mean = 4.12). A significant F value regarding the traits of aggression ($F = 5.63$), royalty ($F = 7.58$) and growth ($F = 6.87$) implied association of red with these traits. As blazing red and ruby red were not differentiated, the traits associated with both were categorised under single category. Insignificant values from two sample independent t -tests ($t = 1.16$) suggested no difference between these two colours in evoking these traits. Higher mean values, though insignificant, representing a higher degree of association between ruby red and the traits allowed us to categorise these traits with ruby red colour.

Blazing red	Ruby red	Citrus green	Sky blue
FMCG	FMCG	FMCG	FMCG

Figure 9. Fake logo in different colours

Table 7. Traits associated with the selected colour

Trait	Number of respondents (Blazing Red)	Average score	Number of respondents (Ruby red)	Average score	Number of respondents (Citrus green)	Average score	Number of respondents (sky blue)	Average score	F value
Aggressiveness	26	3.56	24	3.91	11	2.79	17	2.15	5.63*
Royalty	23	3.54	25	4.12	14	3.01	16	2.99	7.58*
Growth	25	3.25	28	4.08	15	2.45	10	2.14	6.87*
Coolness	07	2.11	07	2.06	20	3.54	44	4.24	8.91*
Adaptability	09	2.05	12	3.10	25	3.14	32	3.87	7.52*
Nature	05	2.01	10	2.56	39	4.22	24	3.84	5.64*
Reliability	15	3.54	21	3.08	19	2.54	19	2.97	1.58
Freshness	10	2.15	09	2.78	32	4.12	27	3.98	9.87*

*p < 0.05

New logo colour (citrus green)			New logo colour (sky blue)			New logo colour (ruby red)		
	Godrej			Godrej			Godrej	

Figure 10. The logo in different colours

Step 2: Association between identified emotions and brand attitude

Method

Three different questionnaires pertaining to three different colours (Figure 10) and traits associated with each identified in Step 1 were constructed and administered to three batches of 50 MBA students each. The first part of the questions pertained to the identified traits associated with a particular colour, rated on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = least representative, 5 = most representative). The second part involved questions regarding positive and negative brand attitudes in terms of familiarity and similarity. Lastly, overall brand attitude was measured by using the scale developed by Ahluwalia et al. (2000).

The data was analysed by using ANCOVA twice: once for similarity and again for familiarity as the dependent variable was associated with one categorical independent variable, i.e., colour (ruby red, citrus green and sky blue) and the traits associated with that colour as a covariate.

Results

From the ANCOVA results, it was inferred that the colour and the traits associated with each colour had a combined effect ($F = 3.316$, $p = 0.039$) in creation of familiarity towards the change in the colours of the logo. On the other hand, an insignificant association between all three independent variables with similarity of brand attitude led to conclude that changing the colour was significantly related with positive brand attitude only. Inference regarding which colour(s) play a major role in forming such attitude was examined through contrast analysis by taking red as the reference colour (it was changed to ruby red, which is in the same spectrum). Results showed that red (mean = 3.654) had a more significant effect ($b = 0.639$, $t = 2.513$, $p = 0.013$) on familiarity than sky blue (mean = 1.913) or citrus green (mean = 2.006). Contrasting traits associated with citrus green with other colours showed its significant ($b = 0.474$, $t = 1.819$, $p = 0.041$) contribution in creating positive brand attitude. Thus, out of the three colours changed in the logo, ruby red and citrus green generated a positive brand attitude.

On the other hand, mean response towards similarity between the colours of old and new logos were found to be similar and insignificant (mean_{red} = 2.173, mean_{blue} = 2.169, mean_{green} = 2.149).

Regression results suggested that 25.38% (adjusted R square = 24.12%, $F = 35.75$, $p = 0.007$) of the variation in overall brand attitude was contributed by traits associated with ruby red, sky blue, and citrus green colours. Both ruby red and citrus green had a positive ($b_{red} = 0.092$, $b_{green} = 0.1139$) and significant ($p_{red} = 0.051$, $p_{green} = 0.049$) impact in forming the overall brand attitude towards the changed logo.

Discussion

The relationship between change in a logo and its impact in affecting the consumer perception was investigated in the study. A logo involves three elements, namely, colour, design, and font. A company can modify or change its logo by modifying any one of or a combination of these elements. The purpose

of the study was illustrated by conducting three investigations. In the first, the new logo of Airtel was studied, which has undergone change in all three elements of a logo. Second study involved studying change in the design and font of the logo of Hero MotoCorp. In the third, Godrej FMCG was investigated whose logo was modified only by changing the colour. The modification in the existing logo of a company is a major exercise. It is not frequent and must be driven by very rational and quantifiable reasons. For instance, the demerging of Hero and Honda forced Hero to create a new logo. Similarly, competition, change in the demographic, and change in the strategy to focus on meeting aspirations of the youth were the major reasons for Godrej and Airtel to modify their logos. The logo, which is the face of a company's brand, communicates the strategy and approach it adopts for its customers. Thus, the elements of logo have to be right and reflect the personality traits of customers. For instance, different colours are associated with different emotions. The same can be said about different designs and font styles. Our study focused on whether such changes are liked or disliked by the customers. These changes might not encourage an individual to buy or adopt a company's products but might make him/her curious or sceptical about such changes. The study investigated consumer perception towards change in the logo in terms of the degree of attractiveness a new logo would have created. Similarly, the change might result in questions being asked about the need for such a change. The doubts created by intentions behind such changes were measured in terms of similarity between old and new logo in the current study.

The results showed appropriateness of adoption of minor and gradual changes in the process of rebranding. This was in agreement with previous studies (Stuart & Muzellec 2004; Daly & Moloney 2004). It was found that in the case of the logo of Godrej, where only colours were altered, the change resulted in forming a maximally positive overall brand attitude (R square = 24.12%) as compared to changes undertaken by Airtel and Hero. Thus, modification in a one logo element was found to be more effective than changing multiple elements. Muller et al. (2013) inferred that the degree of change in a logo has a varying impact on brand loyalty, brand attitude, and brand modernity. Our study focussing only on brand attitude concurred with the findings, and it was observed that not all changes lead to forming a positive brand attitude. For instance, the change in the font style of Airtel had an insignificant effect on the formation of any positive brand attitude. On the other hand, red out of three colours was the predominant colour in creating such an effect. Similarly, in case of Godrej, this was achieved by adding two more colours to and softening the original colour.

Managerial Implications

Logo change as part of the rebranding exercise is undertaken by various companies. Such endeavours have long-term implications in creating a positive or negative perception about the company's intention to undertake such a change. One of the most important managerial implications of this study would be the effect of changes in a logo in three different ways. The consequences of modifying only one element or a combination of elements were studied to answer questions such as should a manager adopt a minor or major approach towards changing the logo. For instance, Airtel adopted a major approach by modifying all three elements whereas Godrej adopted a minor strategy by modifying only the colour. The findings helped in identifying emotional traits that would lead to an acceptance of or create doubts about the change. Lastly the findings also mentioned certain challenges faced by companies as a consequence of rebranding. For instance, Airtel was not able to create a brand differentiation as its logo was considered to be similar with few other companies. Also, it would be interesting to understand the conundrum of projecting themselves as companies of young generation without losing connect with old and existing

customer base. Thus, managers could use the approach and model developed in this study in deciding the company's strategy through a change in its logo.

Future Research

The research focused on understanding the reasons behind positive or negative perceptions towards change in a brand, especially of its logo elements. Creation of positive or negative brand attitude among consumers would ultimately impact brand recall and recognition. Future researches should investigate the impact on these aspects of brand equity. As discussed, each colour, design, or font reflects certain emotional associations. As these associations are psychological constructs, a better understanding from an interdisciplinary study could be undertaken. Our sample consisted of respondents from one age group from a particular department of a University. A larger and cross-sectional sample could be used to see any differences in the selection of traits. For instance, Godrej is a more than 100 years old brand which rebranded itself and launched products keeping in mind the youth of India. It would be interesting to know the acceptability of a change by recording observations of the older generation. Lastly, a major chunk of forming the attitude towards new logo was left unexplained by the variables. i.e., emotions used in the study. This could be explored further by examining other aspects of a change, such as a change in the name.

In conclusion, the study highlighted the importance and complexity of rebranding process by discussing only three cases. There could be other ways of modification for a brand but the limited scope of the study emphasised understanding concrete reasons which should be asked for rebranding, attributes that each element reflects, and the limited but vital influence of logo elements in shaping up consumers' attitude towards the changed logo and the company.

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