



The effect of KIA's rebranding on consumer's perceptions of brand image.

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A research project submitted in fulfilment of Bcom Honours in Strategic Brand Management and Leadership at Vega School, a brand of the Independent Institute of Education (IIE) on 25 October 2019.

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bcom Honours in Strategic Brand Management and Leadership degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

12 692 Words

Abstract

In an era where innovation and progression prevail, consumers look towards brands who make a conscious effort to integrate their values and brand identity into the changing preferences of their consumers. KIA has attempted to illustrate their future focused vision by implementing a rebrand that is aimed at repositioning themselves in the minds of consumers. However, brands within safety sensitive industries must weigh the costs and risks of rebranding to determine whether these changes will have a lasting positive effect on the perception of their brand image.

Considering this, the researcher aimed to determine whether KIA's recent rebrand has affected the way in which consumers perceive the brand's image. To accurately determine this, both demographic - and 19 five-point Likert scale questions were distributed in the form of a survey to quantitatively gather the necessary objective data. All questions within the survey were derived from Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism and were measurable through descriptive and inferential statistics to ensure that the data was deemed fit for this research.

Ultimately, the three sections being measured were focused on self-image, reflection, and physique after KIA's rebrand. Positive and significant relationships were found between each of these sections and the perceptions of consumers, therefore indicating a positive effect. This research illustrates the effect of rebranding in industries that have very few instances thereof and serves as an indication to other automotive brands what the potential effect of a rebrand within the South African context might be.

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Introduction

Contextualisation

KIA is a Korean brand that has been operating within the automotive industry since it was founded in 1944 (KIA, 2022). As a member of the Hyundai-Kia Automotive Group, KIA has become an established and dynamic brand which has grown to be the fifth largest vehicle manufacturing brand globally (KIA, 2022). KIA has recently attempted to transform themselves into an innovative and modern brand within the current automotive industry by implementing a rebrand (Kimberley, 2012; KIA, 2022). Their main elements of the rebrand is their new logo and their adapted slogan, which they have transformed to be the main indicators of their innovative brand identity in the consistent industry of automobiles (Kimberley, 2012; KIA, 2022).

The automotive industry has always been a dominant market, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic the sales of cars have been fluctuating (Carlier, 2021). Treanor (2020) however, predicts that this industry is on the rise again. Due to this change in circumstances automotive brands need to take action to establish themselves within the minds of consumers once again, in a new way (Hofstätter, Krawina, Mühlreiter, Pöhler & Tschiesner, 2020). KIA has taken the initiative to rebrand themselves in every aspect of their brand, from the logo and slogan to what the car looks like and what it provides the consumer (Ng, 2021). Certain industries have been studied more than others, such as the vast amount of literature in the banking industry compared to the minimal literature done within the automotive industry (Nduku, 2018).

Rationale and Problem Statement

The automotive industry can be considered to be a safety sensitive industry, as brands are responsible for keeping their consumers safe in their cars to a certain degree (Nichell, 2019; Worlu & Ahmad, 2019). Consumers are very sensitive towards these safety sensitive industries due to the large amount of trust they need to have in the brands (Nichell, 2019; Worlu & Ahmad, 2019). Brands in the automotive industry who have implemented rebrands as large as KIA's are very

scarce, therefore through this research the need for literature on the rebranding within the automotive industry will be satisfied (Nduku, 2018; Ng, 2021). The research will contribute to the current body of literature by filling the gap of automotive industry research as well as looking at the consumers' perceptions of this rebrand within a safety sensitive context. A very little amount of rebranding research studies has been conducted in South Africa thus this study will be adding the findings to this knowledge (Nichell, 2019; Nduku, 2018). A rebrand as radical as KIA's does however leave a question on whether consumers will perceive the rebranding to be in line with their new brand image or if consumers will be reluctant in changing the brand image they currently have of KIA.

Rebranding has become increasingly popular and advantageous for brands to remain relevant or to shift their focus to how they would like consumers to perceive their brand (Kimberley, 2012). KIA has taken this leap of transforming themselves into an innovative brand to make sure consumers know they are still relevant (Brewer, 2021). This leap entails risks that KIA will have to overcome regarding their consumers and their current brand reputation (Stapley, 2021). The risk of losing their identity as a brand and what they stand for after the rebranding process could alienate KIA's current consumers, while leaving a confused feeling within prospective consumers (Stapley, 2021). When considering the major expenses of a rebrand, it could do KIA great damage if the rebrand were to fail due to mistrust through confusion (Brewer, 2021). The problem KIA is facing can be concluded as a risk of losing consumers due to mistrust and disconnect and thus suffering a great financial loss. Any safety sensitive industry risks losing all or some of their consumers' trust when making changes to their usual operations or brand image, therefore when consumers do not feel comfortable with change or adaptations, they might refrain from making use of these specific brands (.Stapley, 2021; Brewer, 2021).

Research Question, Hypotheses and Objectives

Therefore, the purpose of this research will be to determine whether the rebranding of KIA has had an effect on the perception consumers have of their brand image. The aim of this research will be based on the main research question of how does

the rebranding of KIA affect consumer's perceptions of their brand image? Three null hypotheses (H0) have been set, along with their alternatives, and will lead to the acceptance or rejection of the main hypothesis. For the first hypothesis:

H0 = The change of KIA's physique does not have an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image.

H1 = The change of KIA's physique has an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image.

This is then followed by:

H0 = KIA's rebrand does not have an effect on the self-image of consumers.

H2 = KIA's rebrand has an effect on the self-image of consumers.

And for the third hypothesis:

H0 = KIA's reflection after the rebrand does not have an effect on consumers.

H3 = KIA's reflection after the rebrand has an effect on consumers.

These three hypotheses will enable the researcher to accept or reject the main null hypothesis which has been derived from the main research question as:

H0 = KIA's rebrand does not have an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image.

H4 = KIA's rebrand has an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image.

The above-mentioned hypotheses have all been formulated to achieve the purpose of this research by ultimately answering the main research question which is also the focus of this research report. Some objectives that will be achieved in this research is:

1. Understand how physique influences consumer perception of KIA's brand image by conducting a literature review.
2. Understand whether KIA's reflection has changed according to consumers by

conducting a literature review.

3. Understand whether the self-image of consumers with regards to KIA has changed by conducting a literature review.
4. Collect quantitative data through cross sectional, closed ended surveys.
5. Analyse data through descriptive statistics to understand how consumers perceive KIA's brand image due to the rebrand.
6. Draw conclusions on how consumers perceive KIA's brand image due to the rebrand.

The following document will be a proposal of conducting research and give insight into the effect of rebranding of an automotive brand on the perceptions of consumers brand image (Diaconeasa & Lădaru, 2019). For this research KIA will be the specific automotive brand being researched and the research will be titled as: **The effect of KIA's rebranding on consumer's perceptions of brand image.**

Theoretical Foundation

A literature review will evaluate and synthesise the current body of knowledge and literature, where consumer perception, brand image, rebranding and brand identity will be operationalised as key concepts in the research. The Brand Identity Prism and the Revolutionary and Evolutionary Rebranding Theory will provide the theoretical framework and will be used to test the data findings (Kapferer, 2008; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). The way in which the data for this research will be collected and analysed will be explained in the research methodology, whereafter the ethical considerations and limitations of this research will be brought forth.

Literature Review

Theoretical foundation

The Brand Identity Prism

Kapferer (2008) introduced the Brand Identity Prism in 1996 for brands to create long lasting brand equity by enabling brands to evaluate and craft the message they send to the public as their brand identity. This enables the brand to assess the brand image that is being perceived by the consumers (Janse, 2019). The brand identity prism (Figure 1 below) consists of two dimensions namely the picture of sender versus the picture of receiver, and internal aspects versus external aspects (Pirvani, 2009).

Both abovementioned dimensions use a combination of six separate factors to create a brand identity and brand image (Janse, 2019). Physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image make it possible to have an insight into the internal, as well as the external aspects, of a brand and what it stands for (Janse, 2019). Internalisation, which reflects the brand identity of a brand, uses personality, culture, and self-image to communicate the internal values of the organisation, while externalisation portrays the components seen by the public with physique, relationship, and reflection and represents the brand image (Hayden, 2021). For this research both dimensions are important, as they cannot function separately, but in essence the picture of sender versus the picture of receiver portrays the core of the research by indicating that this is where the brand image (what creates consumer's perception) and brand identity (what the company intends for the consumer to see) meet and interact (Hayden, 2021).

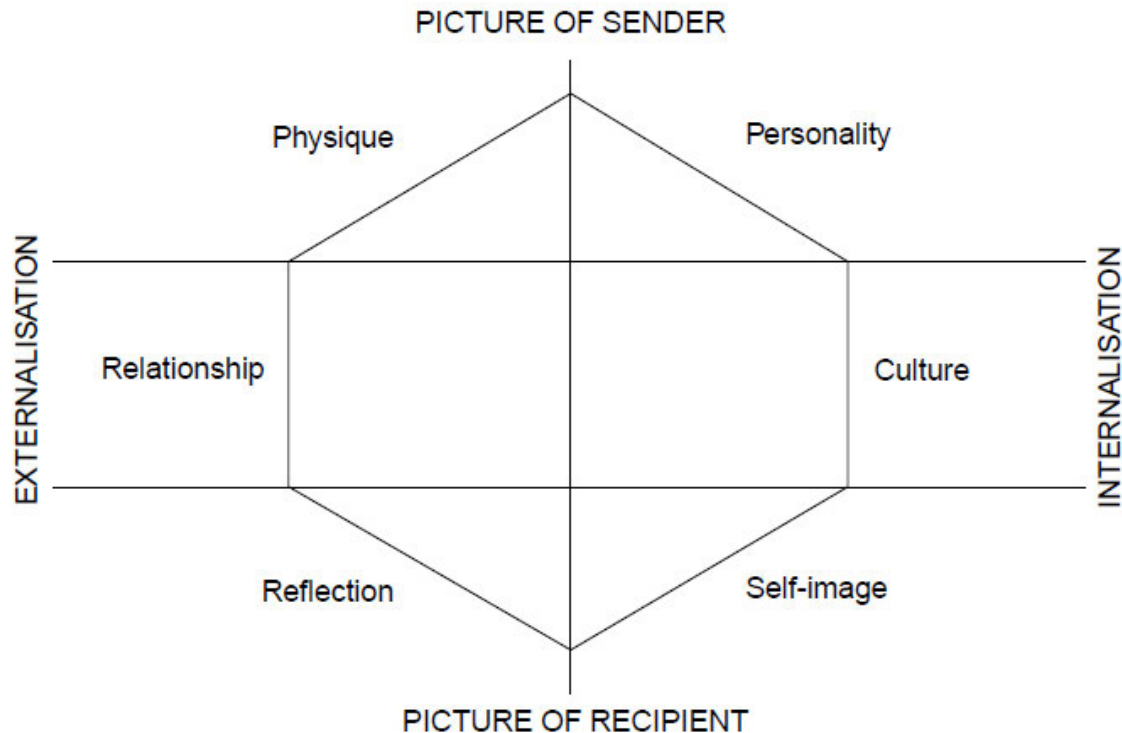


Figure 1: Kapferer, J. N. 1998. *Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism*. (Arpit Srivastava, 2017).

It is important to note that this research will be using Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism to compare the new brand image of KIA to its new brand identity instead of creating long lasting brand equity. This will establish whether their recent rebrand has had an effect on how KIA's brand image is perceived by consumers. This will be achieved in cooperation with the Revolutionary and Evolutionary Theory (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006) by using the identified degree of rebranding to establish changed factors to be discussed. Looking at the different factors separately, the relevance of the Brand Identity Prism theory will be strengthened.

Physique

The physical attributes and qualities of a brand that can create resonance in the minds of consumers towards that brand are categorised as an external factor (Hayden, 2019). These external attributes are created by the company, or the

sender, to signify their brand (Hayden, 2019). KIA's physique would entail their new logo in a continual font as well as their wide range of sizes in cars.

Personality

As an internalisation factor, the personality of a brand is created by the company to encourage consumers to relate to their brand (Pirvani, 2009). Consumers enjoy brands with personality as it is easier to relate to a brand that has certain human characteristics (Strouther, 2020).

Relationship

The way in which a brand treats its consumers is an externalisation factor that has a big effect on how consumers perceive the brand (Pirvani, 2009). Treating consumers well and creating a relationship with them can be done by simply making a good and lasting impression through customer service (Pirvani, 2009). This is relevant to all consumers; due to the impression the brand creates about what a consumer would receive if they were to become a client of this brand (Kapferer, 2008).

Culture

The culture within a brand is often set internally based on the brand's values (Pirvani, 2009). Due to this reason consumers tend to be drawn to brands that openly and strategically display these values because they relate to them (Pirvani, 2009). But Kapferer (2008) does not only refer to the values of brands as culture, but also encourages taking the context in which the brand is operating as a big driver of internal culture. KIA takes pride in their culture that aims to inspire their staff and consumers and makes it known that they have a forward-thinking culture represented in their new slogan and logo symbolising their movement in the automotive industry (KIA Worldwide, 2021).

Reflection

To brands, identifying the target audience early is crucial in having a successful company, but according to Kapferer (2008) the external reflection of this prism focusses on the stereotypical consumer of the brand, which is not necessarily the

identified target audience. This affects consumers subconsciously as they assume that if they become a consumer of a brand, they are the same as the reflection the brand currently has of their stereotypical consumers (Pirvani, 2009; Kapferer, 2008).

Self-image

Self-image refers to the way consumers feel and the way they think they look when they associate with the brand and their products or services (Pirvani, 2009). This is a component that the brand needs to create for their consumers to benefit from it (Pirvani, 2009). The self-image of a brand is influenced by the rest of the internalisation factors and if these factors change due to a rebrand such as KIA's, consumers might expect to experience a different self-image due to the changes (Janse, 2019).

Revolutionary and Evolutionary Theory

Laurent Muzellec and Mary Lambkin initially formulated the Revolutionary and Evolutionary Theory to describe and evaluate the degree of a rebrand due to the change in aesthetics (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). Rebranding can take place to different degrees depending on the reason therefore and the changes wanted for the company after the rebrand is done (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). These rebrands are identified as being a revolutionary or an evolutionary rebrand, depending on the elements that are changing (Calisir, Lehtinen & Östberg, 2017). Revolutionary rebrands tend to the large changes that were made to the brand (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). By changing the physical appearance of a logo or especially the name of the company, as KIA did by removing 'Motors' from their name, their positioning will shift due to consumers possibly creating a new perception of brand image within their minds (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). To the contrary, evolutionary rebrands are classified as minor rebrands because the changes made to their aesthetics and positioning which might not even be easily seen by consumers (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). Minor changes include actions such as refining of an old logo or changing the gradient of colour associated with the brand, which will not cause a definite shift in positioning of the brand (Calisir *et al.*, 2017).



Figure 2: Muzellec, L. and Lambkin, M. 2006. Rebranding as a continuum.

For this research Muzellec and Lambkin's (2006) Revolutionary and Evolutionary Theory will be applied to determine which type of rebrand has taken place within the KIA rebrand strategy, according to the requirements of both degrees of rebranding within this theory. This will then give the researcher a better indication as to what aspects of the brand's positioning have changed and whether an effect on the brand image of KIA in the minds of the consumers is to be expected.

This identified theory will be assisting the researcher in using the Brand Identity Prism by identifying the changes made to the brand identity of KIA, as well as the possible changes to the brand identity and brand image within the mind of the consumer.

Conceptualisation and Operationalisation

Rebranding

According to Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) a rebrand aims to change the aesthetics and certain elements of a brand to establish a new position in a consumer's mind. In essence, rebranding is the action of recreating a brand's original identity into what is relevant, needed and sought after by the company and consumers (Kimberley, 2012). Ramaditya (2019) enhances this statement by explaining that a rebrand can benefit brands by enhancing their brand image to excite new consumers, while maintaining a relationship with current consumers.

Rebranding is not a definite set of changes brand's make, but can be done to different degrees, thus adding to Muzzelec & Lambkin's (2006) Theory of Evolutionary or Revolutionary Rebranding. There are four elements that create the core of rebranding and can be seen as stages the brand goes through such as the repositioning, renaming, redesigning, and relaunching of a brand (Clasir *et al.*, 2017). These elements each contribute to effective communication of the rebrand to the public (Clasir *et al.*, 2017). However, rebranding is a process that must be planned for and set in motion (Kimberley, 2012).

The process of rebranding can have a ripple effect on the company through the difference in how the different stakeholders perceive the new brand identity (Nichell, 2019). Hannelius and Petterson (2021) further explain by stating that a rebranding strategy is indeed a complex process and should be well analysed before implementation to avoid causing damage to the core image of the original brand. Within this research the risk KIA has taken regarding the changes they have made will be analysed through the eyes of the consumer to establish whether their brand image of KIA has been affected.

When referring to rebranding within this research it will be defined as the process of changing visual elements of a brand to adapt the brand's brand identity.

Consumer Perception

Consumer perception according to Otieno (2019) is defined as the interpretation of diverse pieces of information regarding a brand to then make decisions. By examining and interpreting the stimuli given by the brand, consumers can understand what the brand is trying to communicate and therefore create a consumer perception (Diaconeasa & Lădaru, 2019).

For the context of this research the *Cambridge Dictionary* (2022, [s.a.]) defines perception as: 'the way that someone thinks and feels about a company, product, or service'. By understanding the type of perception consumers make use of to create a combined concept of consumer perception, the research can accurately use it as an integral factor to observe the effect of KIA's rebrand

Brand image and consumer perception work cohesively together, as the image a consumer creates of the brand within their mind grows from their perception of that brand (Kimberley, 2012). This image can however be influenced by the level of knowledge the consumer has of the brand, therefore if they are a novice consumer they will create a perception of the brand very quickly, whereas if they are considered an expert in knowledge of the brand, they will take longer to take on a new perception (Diaconeasa & Lădaru, 2019).

By taking these definitions of consumer perception into consideration, the definition which will be used for this research when referring to consumer perception will be the consumer's interpretation of the brand and its various components which influences the consumer's decision making.

Brand Image

Brand image can be defined as the message being received and interpreted by the consumer about the brand (Kapferer, 2008). Brand image stems from all the different elements of a brand, such as the products, packaging, employees, or aesthetics (Kimberley, 2012). These elements serve as direct or indirect communications of a brand and build the brand image (Blazques Cano, Mattich, Henninger & Helberger, 2019).

The brand image a consumer receives is an integral part of any brand's success or failure because the brand image portrays what the consumer thinks it stands for (Blazques Cano *et al.*, 2019). It is important to note that brand image is a concept on the receiver's side and whether it is stakeholders, consumers, or employees, Otieno (2019) explains that this image can be changed. In the terms of this research, KIA has changed brand elements including their logo and slogan through a rebranding strategy, and this can potentially result in consumers altering the brand image they currently have of KIA either positively or negatively.

According to Nichell (2019) the brand image is a determining factor of the reputation of a brand and how the visual aspect of that brand impacts consumers. By taking this into account, brands need to know what their brand image is through the eyes of their consumers to be able to excel in the market they are in. Therefore, in operationalising brand image for this research, brand image will be further defined as the image consumers have of a brand due to the interpretation of the brand's direct and indirect communications.

Brand Identity

Collinson (2019) states that brand identity is the way the brand wishes to be portrayed to consumers through the associations consumers make with the brand elements. If the brand identity is strong, the consumer will be able to recall and recognise it easily (Collinson, 2019). Therefore Kimberley (2012) refers to brand identity as a tool that is used to communicate the meaning of the brand, in the way the brand intends it to be done.

Brand identity is, to the contrary of brand image, a concept on the side of the sender or in this instance the brand (Kapferer, 2008). Kapferer (2008) surrounds his Brand Identity Prism around the concept of brand identity, as well as brand image and the internal aspects thereof to indicate the importance of both these concepts to brands. The internal aspects of brand identity in this model indicates that the use of personality, self-image and culture, the complexity of a brand's identity is far broader than simply the image the brand wishes portray (Kapferer, 2008).

By taking these definitions of brand identity into consideration the definition which will be further used for brand identity within this research is the message a brand wants to send consumers through their brand elements.

Review of previous literature

Rebranding

Whilst doing research on the key aspects of the study it became apparent that rebranding has caught the eye of other academics, as many research studies have been conducted on this concept (Collinson, 2019; Clisir *et al.*, 2017; Ramaditya, 2019). The process of rebranding has become one of the main strategies to remain relevant as a company in rapidly changing environments (Clisir *et al.*, 2017). As mentioned earlier, rebranding aims to change the aesthetics and certain elements of a brand to establish a new position in a consumer's mind (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). Ramaditya (2019) explains that ideally, rebranding causes excitement within prospective consumers, while also maintaining a good relationship with the consumers they currently have.

Rebranding can take place in any industry, but it has especially been implemented within the banking industry (Collinson, 2019; Otieno, 2019; Nduku, 2018). It has been found that within this industry, trust and excitement was restored to damaged brands as a new connotation was made towards the brand after the rebranding process (Otieno, 2019; Nduku, 2018). This was also shown to be accurate within the safety sensitive industry such as airlines trying to revitalise or establish themselves as up to date and relevant (Nichell, 2019; Worlu & Ahmad, 2019). Due to the safety sensitive nature of automotive vehicles, KIA will also be grouped within this bracket.

The existing literature has however shown a reoccurring problem with rebranding, in indicating that the biggest problem of implementing a rebrand is that the risk factor is extremely high in terms of potentially alienating both current as prospective consumers (Williams & Son, 2021; Gikonyo, 2016; Worlu & Ahmad, 2019). Hannelius and Petterson (2021) add to this problem by explaining that a rebrand

that causes negative effects is worse to a brand than positive effects are beneficial, thus increasing the importance of planning when formulating a rebranding strategy.

Revolutionary rebranding

Within the literature sourced, it became clear that brands rarely change their names but are prone to changing their defined colours and their logo (Williams & Son, 2021; Otieno, 2019; Calisir *et al.* 2017). Rebrands like this can be classified as either revolutionary or evolutionary rebrands (Muzzelec & Lambkin, 2006). Within the current literature revolutionary rebrands, such as KIA's, are quite absent due to the risk factor associated with these types of rebrands (Williams & Son, 2021; Gikonyo, 2016; Worlu & Ahmad, 2019).

Implementing a revolutionary rebrand requires taking very big risks, especially within a safety sensitive industry (Nichell, 2019). By managing this risk and planning extensively, a revolutionary rebrand can have sufficient benefits such as a revitalisation of the brand and excitement of the attention given to the upkeep of the brand (Nichell, 2019; Worlu & Ahmad, 2019; Nduku, 2018; Gikonyo, 2016).

Revolutionary rebranding carries a big risk of not being recognised by the consumers, to the contrary of evolutionary rebranding (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). In the instance of a logo, slogan, name or colour change, consumers might not immediately recognise the brand due to the drastic difference in appearance (Collinson, 2019).

On the other hand, revolutionary rebrands provide the benefit of creating conversation and become focal points of news (Chatterjee, 2019). Chatterjee (2019) explains how this can be crucial to influence the brand's prospective consumers and increasing the intensity of the conversations surrounding the rebrand in a positive way can provide the brand with better brand image.

Rebranding and brand image

Brands that execute a rebranding strategy on their companies need to plan and focus on different implications thereof after the rebrand has been completed. Research has been conducted numerous times on aspects such as brand equity, consumer attitude, and consumer buying behaviour to assist brands in making decisions regarding their rebrand (Collinson, 2019; Williams & Son, 2021; Mittal, 2019). Nichell (2019) argues that brand image is heavily impacted by a rebrand due to the sensitivity of how a brand is portrayed. For this reason, brand image will be incorporated into the research study as it will give the most insight into the thoughts of consumers.

Rebranding has been found to have positive repercussions on aspects such as brand equity, consumers attitudes, and consumer buying behaviour by satisfying consumers' needs for forward thinking and innovation, thus improving the chances of retaining consumers (Hannelius & Pettersson, 2021; Blazquez Cano *et al.*, 2019). Failed rebrands occur when the consumers reject the rebrand due to a misalignment regarding the brand's core, which they are very passionate about, as well as when there is no reaction to the rebrand due to consumers not noticing (Mittal, 2019; Prakash, 2012). Therefore, a combination of brand image and consumer perception is extremely important to take into consideration when discussing a rebrand. Jain, Shah, and Ganesh (2018) explain that there are three dimensions that are key to brand image, these are the service provider's image, the user's image and the practice of the service's image itself. For this research the user's image as will be the focal point of the three dimensions, due to the focus on the consumers' perceptions.

The current literature entails the consumer's perception of rebranding as well as the consumer's perception of a brand's brand image, but very little research has been done where these two have been combined (Chatterjee, 2019; Diaconeasa, 2019). Therefore, this research will contribute to the current body of knowledge by adding key aspects to the study, such as analysing consumers' perceptions of the brand after the rebranding has been done, as well as focusing on brand image, rather than brand attitude or brand equity.

Rebranding and consumer perception

To date there has not been a conclusive definition for consumer perception that we can use. Therefore, we will rely on the definition supplied by Otieno (2019) as the consumer's interpretation of diverse pieces of information regarding a brand to then make decisions. Consumer perception is very important to brands as this is something that they have limited control over, thus creating a positive impression on consumers will lead to overall positivity of the brand (Collinson, 2019).

Consumer perception is easily influenced by small factors such as the way in which information is communicated to them (Chatterjee, 2019; Hannelius & Pettersson, 2021). Collinson (2019) explains a ripple effect that is initiated with bad communication and continues to affect other aspects of the brand through a negative consumer perception that was created through the way in which information was given to them. When a brand undergoes a rebranding process, it can cause the consumers to reevaluate their current perception of a brand and convert this into a better or worse perception, depending on the effectiveness of this rebrand (Kabindio, 2016; Gikonyo, 2016)

Through the existing literature it was shown that consumer perception is extremely important for brands and the success of their implemented rebrands. Therefore, consumer perception will be in integral concept in the research study as it will indicate the success or failure of the KIA rebrand.

Research Methodology

Research paradigm

For research to be effectively addressed and answered, a relevant paradigm must be chosen and followed to assist the researcher in this (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). According to Kuhn (1962) a paradigm was first defined as a set of common beliefs and agreements that are used by researchers, helping them in understanding how to address and understand problems.

This research will adopt the positivist paradigm to analyse whether consumers' perceptions of KIA's brand image has been affected after their rebrand. Positivism is an objective way of analysing truthful evidence in a measurable manner (Park, Konge & Artino, 2020). Therefore, quantitative methods will be used in order to measure and analyse the research (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). This paradigm has been chosen due to the belief that through quantitative methods the researcher will be able to determine if the rebranding of KIA has an effect on consumers perceptions of the brand image.

In line with the aim of the research, which is to determine the effect of KIA's rebranding on customer perceptions of brand image, this aligns with the epistemological position of positivism (DuPlooy-Cilliers, 2014). Valid knowledge can only be obtained from objective, observable, and empirical evidence (DuPlooy-Cilliers, 2014). As a result, only knowledge that can be confirmed by the senses is considered as knowledge (DuPlooy-Cilliers, 2014). The purpose of positivist research is to discover evidence that will either confirm or fail to confirm the research question on whether the rebranding of KIA has affected consumers' perceptions of their brand image (Park *et al.*, 2020). This is done without any relationship between the researcher and the respondents of the online surveys for objectivity and therefore, the collection of data will be valid and reliable data (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014; Park *et al.*, 2020).

The ontological position of positivism is that reality is external and governed by scientific laws making it objective and stable and therefore able to be measured (DuPlooy-Cilliers, 2014). This is supported by the fact that the ontological position

of positivism refers to the one reality that exists and can therefore be identified, measured, and understood (Park *et al.*, 2020). Positivists rely on the laws that govern reality and therefore view reality as ordered and regular. This allows positivists to view previous rebranding literature and apply the principles to this study. Therefore, within this study the researcher will rely on the belief that reality is ordered due to previous literature on rebranding and consumer perceptions (DuPlooy-Cilliers, 2014).

In an axiological stance, the research will be done in an objective manner to accurately understand the consumers' perceptions of KIA's brand image, which will be untainted by personal bias (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The researcher will not be involved in the online surveys, thus ensuring the objectivity needed for a positivist axiological implementation and ensuring that there will be no external factors influencing this research (Park *et al.*, 2020).

Research design and approach

This research will be conducted through quantitative methods, which entails gathering numerical data in order to analyse this with the use of averages, modes, and medians (Bhandari, 2021). In this quantitative approach the research will also be done deductively and therefore the researcher will rely and refer to existing literature on the known concepts of rebranding, consumer perception and brand image to successfully implement the proposed research of the effect KIA's rebrand has on consumers' perception of their brand image (Dudovskiy, 2018).

A non-experimental approach will be followed, and the research will be conducted as cross-sectional, therefore the research will be conducted once and not be repeated in the future (Thomas, 2022). The respondents of the research's closed ended survey will not be manipulated or controlled and therefore the research can be described as descriptive, hereby allowing the researcher to gather reliable and accurate data (McCombes, 2022).

Population and Sampling

Population

Within the proposed research, a target population as well as an accessible population exists (Fetzer, 2020). This is due to the large number of consumers who qualified to answer the closed ended survey but was only accessible to a smaller group of consumers (Fetzer, 2020). The target population consisted of consumers that have access to traditional or digital media marketing and who were then able to form a perception about KIA's rebrand and brand image. This included all consumers and not only KIA car owners to gain knowledge of general perceptions.

However, not all consumers who have a perception of KIA's brand image were able to answer the closed ended survey due to the accessibility of this survey. Therefore, the targeted population was refined to the accessible population which consisted of consumers that were part of the researcher's Instagram and WhatsApp data base. These consumers still had to be able to form a perception of KIA. The unit of analysis within the population was humans, as they were the respondents completing the closed ended surveys (Bhandari, 2021; Fetzer, 2020). The accessible population was thus formulated by the 512 WhatsApp contacts of the researcher and the 1848 users that make up the researcher's Instagram data base. The relevant populations have been ethically revised and approved as seen in Annexure C.

Sampling

The accessible population led the sampling method, considering the data was collected through probability sampling by the fact that any person with access to these platforms had the chance to fill in the survey (Fetzer, 2020). The sampling method of this research was however further refined to random sampling as the surveys being filled out stemmed from any consumers who were accessible through the researcher's Instagram and WhatsApp database. The sample was not limited to KIA consumers exclusively, therefore increasing the amount of data that could be analysed and interpreted to gain better knowledge of general consumers' perceptions. Using a closed-ended self-administered online survey allowed for an

increased sample size due to time convenience, wider reach, and the effectiveness of measuring the collected data through descriptive and inferential statistics.

In conclusion the sampling method for the proposed research was probability and random sampling and had an original aim of a minimum of 30 respondents in order to collect adequate number of responses in relation to the accessible population to ensure the accessible population was well represented (Bhandari, 2021). After distributing the survey, it yielded 52 responses and therefore exceeded the minimum number of respondents. The accessible population was therefore well represented, and made the data collected trustworthy for an overall view.

Data Collection

As the proposed research has been done through quantitative methods, numerical data was gathered (Bhandari, 2021). The process of collecting data was vital to the research as this influenced the findings and paved to the type of research conducted. In order to acquire numerical data, questions had to be precise and closed ended to allow for the necessary analysis to take place (Bhandari, 2021). All questions were formulated with the research problem in mind and related to the safety sensitive industry and potential disconnect of consumers from KIA after the rebrand, while also attempting to accept or reject the four null hypotheses formulated below:

H0 = The change of KIA's physique does not have an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image.

H1 = The change of KIA's physique has an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image.

This is then followed by:

H0 = KIA's rebrand does not have an effect on the self-image of consumers.

H2 = KIA's rebrand has an effect on the self-image of consumers.

And for the third hypothesis:

H0 = KIA's reflection after the rebrand does not have an effect on consumers.

H3 = KIA's reflection after the rebrand has an effect on consumers.

These three hypotheses and their alternatives were derived from Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism components that are important to the research and allow the researcher to then answer the main research question by determining whether the overall null hypothesis should be accepted or rejected:

H0 = KIA's rebrand does not have an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image.

H4 = KIA's rebrand has an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image.

Data was collected using a closed-ended self-administered online survey (*Annexure B*). The survey consisted of a demographic section and five-point Likert scale sections to determine consumers perceptions of physique, self-image, and reflection of KIA's rebrand. Likert scale questions asked consumers to rate their level of agreement with various statements relating to KIA's rebrand, where 1 – Strongly Disagree and 5 – Strongly Agree. ,

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.1 KIA's new logo is unique	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Table 1: Example of Likert Scale Questions (Source: Own)

The survey was drafted and conducted using Microsoft Forms, which is a platform that allows for the creation and distribution of electronic surveys (Microsoft, 2022). Due to the survey being conducted electronically, a click-through link was created and placed on the researcher's Instagram profile story and on the researcher's WhatsApp status. The link was accompanied by a two-sentence description explaining the purpose of the research. This method of distribution allowed for geographical limitations to be avoided and kept the participation open to males,

females, and non-binary respondents. The survey link was available from the 30th to the 31st of July, therefore a period of two days. Instagram stories and WhatsApp statuses remain visible for 24 hours and therefore the link was posted on both of the above-mentioned days.

Each question was allowed one answer and therefore the participant had to choose one of the five answer options. This allowed for simplified data to be collected and made it easy and quick for respondents to answer the survey.

The research followed a deductive approach and therefore relied on and used previous literature and the chosen theories to formulate relevant survey questions (Dudovskiy, 2018). The chosen theories for this research are Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism and therefore its six factors, as well as the Revolutionary and Evolutionary Theory by Muzellec and Lambkin (2006). The chosen survey format and questions have been sourced from Nduku (2018). Nduku's (2018) research was conducted on the effects of rebranding on consumer perception in terms of the Sidian Bank, and therefore the questions were adapted to suit the proposed research. These adjusted questions were formulated and reviewed, whereafter they were reworded and continually adjusted until it was certain that the main research question could be answered. The format of Nduku's (2018) survey was applicable to that of this research as it already contained five-point Likert scales as questions, therefore strengthening the reliability and validity of the survey, as it has been used and checked before.

Data Analysis Methods

For the research to be analysed each of the answers available on the Microsoft Forms survey were coded and given a number to ensure that numerical data was collected for the quantitative research. This data was directly transmitted and linked to the researcher's Microsoft Excel due to the interconnectivity between the Microsoft Forms and Microsoft Excel platforms (Microsoft, 2022). The numerical data was coded in Microsoft Excel as indicated in the tables below.

Gender	Previous KIA owner	Aware of the rebrand
Female = 1	Yes = 1	Yes = 1
Male = 2	No = 2	No = 2
Non-binary = 3		
Prefer not to say = 4		

Likert scale questions	Word describing KIA after the rebrand
Strongly Disagree = 1	Sincere = 1
Disagree = 2	Exciting = 2
Neutral = 3	Competent = 3
Agree = 4	Sophisticated = 4
Strongly Agree = 5	Rugged = 5

Age	
18-24 = 1	46-52 = 5
25-31 = 2	53-59 = 6
32-38 = 3	>60 = 7
39-45 = 4	

Table 2: Data Coding (Source: Own)

Microsoft Excel allowed the researcher to go about analysing the collected data with the use of descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistic method on Microsoft Excel is shown through the formulation of percentages and represented with the use of pie charts. Through these presentations of the data, the researcher was able to sort the data and derive patterns and insights from the charts and percentages (Microsoft, 2022). To further enhance the descriptive statistical method of analysing

the collected data a correlation coefficient data analysis was run in an attempt to determine whether the four set hypotheses should be accepted or rejected as mentioned within the data collection.

The correlations were run through SPSS v.23 and allowed the researcher to make use of the Spearman Correlation Coefficient to interpret the relevant data and to interpret the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the reliability of the survey being used. The five-point Likert scales were used and measured as separate variables to determine the relationship and strength between these variables (Schober, Boer & Schwarte, 2018).

Spearman Correlation Coefficient

The Spearman Correlation Coefficient is measured both in direction and in strength, and takes place between two ranked variables (Gupta, 2021; Schober et al., 2018). Correlations of data are measured between 1 and -1, therefore any correlation greater than 0 is a positive direction and any correlation smaller than 0 is a negative direction (Gupta, 2021). The table below indicates the strength ranges correlations can qualify as:

Value of coefficient (positive or negative)	Meaning
0.00 – 0.19	Very weak correlation
0.20 – 0.39	Weak correlation
0.40 – 0.59	Moderate correlation
0.60 – 0.79	Strong correlation
0.80 – 1.00	Very strong correlation

Table 3: The Strength of a Correlation (Gupta, 2021)

Cronbach Alpha Coefficient

Within this research it is essential to have reliable data which indicates consistency in the variables being measured by the survey (Frost, 2022). The Cronbach Alpha

Coefficient was used to calculate and indicate the reliability of the distributed survey and therefore the data which has been collected and correlated with the use of SPSS v.23. The reliability is measured between 0 and 1, therefore the internal consistency and reliability of the survey was measured in different ranges indicated in the table below (Frost, 2022):

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha Measurement (Frost, 2022)

For this research there were 19 five-point Likert scale variables. Each of these variables were divided into three sections, including physique, self-image, and reflection. The sections are derived from Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism but are all measured as 19 separate variables, which had the answer options from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for these 19 variables yielded 0.904, which classifies as 'excellent' as is shown when referring to *Table 4*. The data as well as the survey is thus very consistent and reliable (Frost, 2022).

Findings and Interpretations

The findings are derived from both demographic questions and 19 Likert scale questions. The following findings are divided into descriptive and inferential statistics to interpret the findings accurately.

Descriptive

Through descriptive statistics the sample and other characteristics thereof are made easily understandable and describe what the applicable data shows (Bhandari, 2022; Trochim, 2019). The following descriptive statistics are focused on summarising the key demographic characteristics of the current sample to create context of the research conducted.

For the purpose of this research, the sample consisted of males (25%) and females (75%) who are part of the researcher's Instagram and WhatsApp database and resulted in a majority of female respondents. The data collected further revealed that the respondents fell within the age groups of 18-24 (75%), 25-31 (21.2%), and 46-52 (3.8%). Due to the distribution platforms of the survey being the researcher's Instagram and WhatsApp database the age groups are accurate as these are the age groups who most likely would make use of Instagram, while the researcher's WhatsApp contacts' age are subject to the researcher's age to a degree (Dixon, 2022).

The following graphs are visual representations of how the previously mentioned sample's gender as well as age groupings for the data collected are divided.

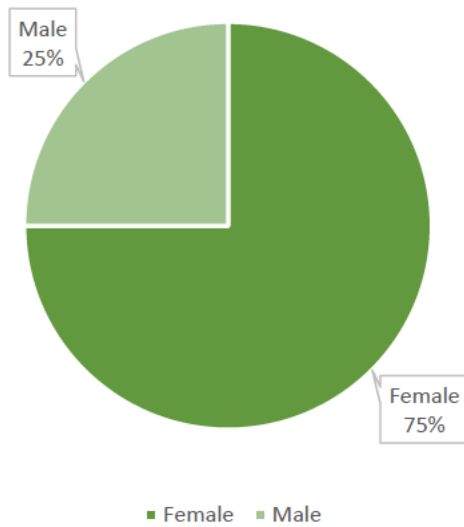


Figure 3: Pie Chart of Gender

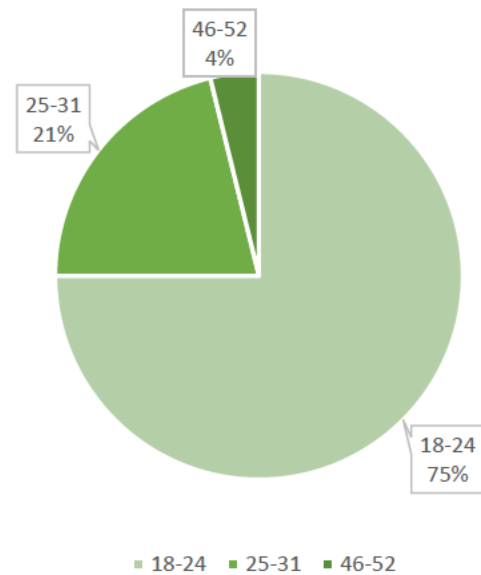


Figure 4: Pie Chart of Age Groups

To further link the sample to the relevant research, the respondents' knowledge and connection towards KIA and its rebrand was tested. As a result the survey revealed that the majority of the sample has not previously owned a KIA, and therefore indicates that the data collected has the perceptions of both previous KIA owners (23.1%), as well as those who are not (76.9%). Chipeta (2020) explains that confirmation bias typically occurs when respondents want to maintain their pre-existing views and therefore do not want to answer the given survey in a contradicting light. This combination, however, allows for accurate data as it is an unbiased group of respondents that make up the sample of the research.

It became apparent that when asked, 76.9% of respondents did in fact know of KIA's rebrand and have had time to formulate their opinions on the changes, but for the remaining 23.1% of respondents the picture of the new logo and slogan, provided in the survey to be used as reference, was their first introduction to KIA's rebrand. Although these respondents make up the minority of the sample, it is important to note that their answers to the survey questions were based on first impressions and initial perception. By combining the answers of respondents who are aware of the rebrand with the answers of those who are not, the research has been strengthened in terms of different stages of consumer perception of KIA's brand image.

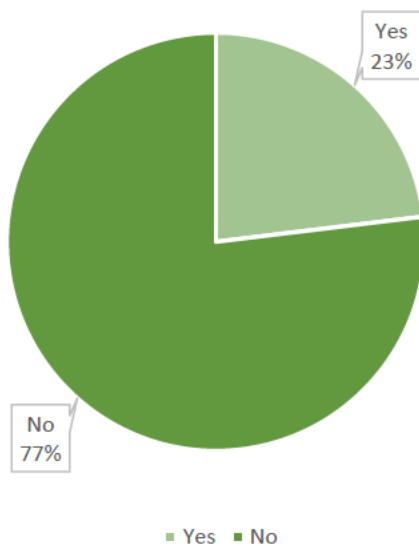


Figure 5: Pie Chart of Previous KIA owners

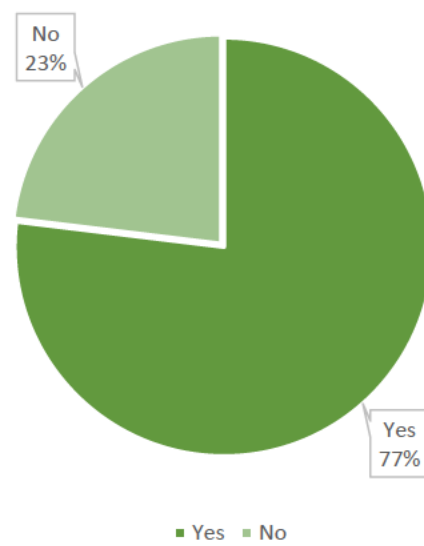


Figure 6: Pie Chart of Aware of Rebrand

Further on in the survey respondents were asked to indicate what word described KIA's rebrand to them and were given options between "Sincere" (19.2%), "Exciting" (34.6%), "Competent" (21.2%), "Sophisticated" (23.1%), or "Rugged" (1.9%). These options were chosen with guidance from the Kapferer (2008) brand identity prism's personality component, but the words such as "Exciting", "Competent", and "Sophisticated" are also in agreement with KIA's objectives for the brand identity after the rebrand (Mthethwa, 2021; Gear, 2022).

KIA set out to portray a sleek and innovative brand through excitement and sophistication after their rebrand, while also being known for their competence to succeed within the automotive market (Mthethwa, 2021; Gear, 2022). As seen in *Figure 5* below, the respondents proved that KIA has successfully formulated their brand identity to align with the brand image being received from consumers, as 78.9% of the sample chose these characteristics to describe KIA's rebrand.

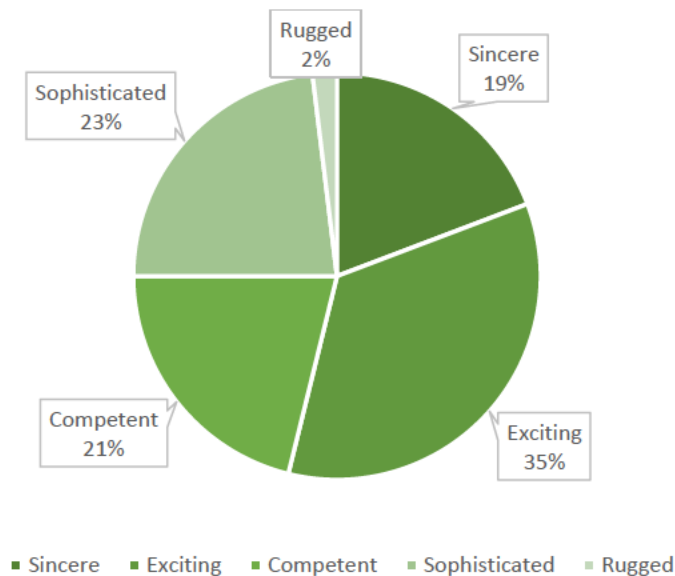


Figure 7: Pie Chart of Word Describing KIA

It is interesting to note that 35%, which is also the largest percentage of respondents, chose "Exciting" as the appropriate word to describe KIA's rebrand, even though the survey did not give any context or explanation as to which component of the rebrand the word refers to. Therefore respondents could be referring to the changed logo and slogan, the potential changes due to the removal of "Motors" from their name, the rebranding process, or the risk KIA took to rebrand themselves in a highly competitive market. The word "Exciting" is therefore interpreted as a summarising word and indicates that consumers are perceiving the rebrand as positive.

Although the answers to this survey question was dominated by "Sincere", "Exciting", "Competent", and "Sophisticated", there were still respondents who chose to describe KIA's rebrand as "Rugged". This choice might not be very

significant but does bring to light that there might still be consumers who do not perceive KIA's brand image to align with their proposed brand identity. These respondents remind KIA of the risk of rebranding by potentially confusing and alienating current or potential consumers (Stapley, 2021).

Inferential

The use of inferential statistics allows the researcher to derive data from the sample, test the hypothesis, and answer the research question by measuring the data collected from the sample to each other (Pietersen & Maree, 2019). Through measuring this data as different variables relationships between these variables come to light to then indicate key aspects in accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis (Pietersen & Maree, 2019; CFI, 2021).

To infer the collected data and enable the researcher to analyse the relationships between the different variables, which will determine whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected, SPSS v.23 was used. This software is used to calculate various statistical tests and makes complex data simpler to analyse and compare (Alchemer, 2021). For the purpose of this research the Cronbach Alpha as well as the Spearman's Correlation will provide the most value and will therefore be used to analyse the data and its relationships.

Spearman Correlation Coefficient

To calculate the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables of the survey, the Spearman Correlation Coefficient was used (Glen, 2021). *Table 5* presents the relevant correlations that are valuable to the research findings.

	Logo is a symbol of value	Rebrand reflects innovation	Rebrand improved reputation	Rebrand has increased my trust in quality of their safety measures	I want to be associated the new KIA rebrand	I completely identify myself with KIA's rebrand	In comparison, I would buy a KIA over any other brand	I have a positive attitude towards KIA after the rebrand	KIA's competitiveness in the market has improved after their rebrand
Gender							-0.319*		
Logo is Appealing	0.623**	0.600**	0.648**					0.648**	
Rebrand reflects innovation								0.618**	
I want to be associated the new KIA rebrand.						0.661**		0.785**	0.712**
I completely identify myself with KIA's rebrand								0.655**	0.643**
I have a positive attitude towards KIA after the rebrand									0.652**
In comparison, I would buy a KIA over any other brand				0.369**					
Rebrand improved reputation					0.764**			0.725**	0.765**

Table 5: Spearman Correlation Findings (Source: Own)

The correlations seen above within *Table 5* have been brought to light by the researcher to act as a visual summary and representation of the valuable data and relevant variables. These correlations are all statistically significant, therefore indicating that most of the relevant variables have a strong or very strong correlation (Glen, 2021). This is especially true for the positive correlations as they are all ≥ 0.600 , however one correlation does not have a strong relationship but has been included as a relevant insight to the research. Even though the negative correlations are not considered to be strong they add significant value to the findings of this research.

When taking a bird's eye view, the vast majority of the correlations are in a positive direction, therefore indicating that when a variable increases, the other relevant variable will also increase (Glen, 2021). The opposite is applicable for the negative correlations, indicating that some variables decrease while their relevant variables increase (Glen, 2021). Due to the five-point Likert scale format, the data has been coded as Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; and Strongly Agree = 5, as explained in the data analysis section.

The most apparent change KIA has made in their process of rebranding is the introduction of their new logo, therefore when taking note of the "logo is appealing" variable, it is clear that there is more than one strong positive correlation to it. The appeal of KIA's new logo correlates strongly towards "logo is a symbol of value" ($r = 0.623$), "rebrand reflects innovation" ($r = 0.600$), "rebrand improved reputation" ($r = 0.648$), and "I have a positive attitude towards KIA after the rebrand" ($r = 0.648$).

By considering that two of these variables are focused on improvement with regards to reputation and attitudes, the more consumers feel positively towards KIA's physical presence through their logo, the awareness and perception of their brand image is seen to increase as well. This is a direct result of the importance of the link between consumer perceptions and brand identity to create and strengthen brand awareness, which is crucial to KIA in the risky environment of a rebrand (Kanner, 2021). Through the "value" and "reflection" of KIA's new logo having strong relationships with the perceptions of consumers, KIA is also able to see that by

taking the risk of rebranding their most visible component, it appears consumers become intrigued about the newfound development within the auto motive industry.

The variable, “I want to be associated with the new KIA rebrand”, also correlates with multiple variables, but in addition to the number of variables the strength of these correlations remains strong positive relationships. The need to be part of KIA’s rebrand correlates strongly with “I completely identify myself with KIA’s rebrand” ($r = 0.661$), “I have a positive attitude towards KIA after the rebrand” ($r = 0.785$), and “KIA’s competitiveness in the market has improved after their rebrand” ($r = 0.712$).

Jones (2021) reminds businesses that it is incredibly important to make consumers want to be part of your brand, and for KIA it is to foster the current association of innovation they have created within the automotive industry. The strong correlation of consumers wanting to be part of KIA’s rebrand and how they identify themselves with that, draws the researcher’s attention to the sophistication, excitement, and competence KIA claims to strive towards after their rebrand. When KIA explains what they strive to be, consumers see that potential not only in the brand but want to see it in themselves and therefore identify themselves with those characteristics too (Jones, 2021; Schmidt, 2020). This influences both the attitudes of consumers as well as the external factors such as KIA’s competitive position within the market. The attraction of consumers through their rebrand applies pressure to competing brands that have not improved themselves to be the top-of-mind brand as times change.

By keeping with the notion that KIA’s reputation has improved within the auto motive industry, it is interesting to note that the variable, “Rebrand improved reputation”, also correlates strongly positive with a very similar combination of variables as has just been interpreted. This combination is, “I want to be associated the new KIA rebrand” ($r = 0.764$), “I have a positive attitude towards KIA after the rebrand” ($r = 0.725$), and “KIA’s competitiveness in the market has improved after their rebrand” ($r = 0.765$).

An improved reputation for KIA can be caused by many different attributes of the rebrand, or a combination of them, but in essence is a result of a change in

perception from consumers (Peer-to-Peer, 2022). This notion is proven by the strong positive correlation between KIA's reputation improvement and whether consumers have a positive attitude towards them. KIA focused their online and physical resources, such as the drone revealing of the new logo, to ensure that consumers knew about the effort and the planning that took place within this rebrand (Mthethwa, 2021; Gear, 2022). By generating good word of mouth and initiating conversations surrounding these efforts, the correlations show that KIA has gained brand awareness in perceptions as well as association stemming from this improved reputation consumers want to be part of. Ernest-Jones (2021) supports these resulting correlations by explaining that an increase in reputation can result in improvements across many different aspects of the brand, especially the brand's market share, as seen with the strong positive correlation to the variable on their increased competition within the market.

The "I completely identify myself with KIA's rebrand" variable also correlates strongly positive with consumers that have a positive attitude towards KIA after the rebrand ($r = 0.655$), and whether KIA's competitiveness in the market has improved after the rebrand ($r = 0.643$). When referring back to the interpretation of how this variable strongly correlates with consumers wanting to be associated with the rebrand, it becomes clear that KIA's competitiveness within the market is heavily influenced by consumers who are intrigued by the rebrand and perceive KIA now as a brand that portrays characteristics they identify with. The link between all these variables suggests that KIA has correctly identified the characteristics their rebrand should portray in order to attract consumers and create trust.

KIA's competitiveness in the market also has a separate strong positive correlation to the variable, "I have a positive attitude towards KIA after the rebrand" ($r = 0.652$). This indicates to the researcher that Mizuno, Aoyama and Fujiwara (2021) similarly explain that competition between brands not only is initiated by the preference of consumers, but also creates positive associations towards the brands that actively compete within the market. This is a result of the assumption consumers make that competing brands have high quality products and are desirable. This illudes to the fact that KIA has become more desirable through re-establishing themselves within

the auto motive market but also sees potential in branching towards other segments through removing “Motors” from their name. The pro-active shifts KIA makes creates a positive and competitive brand image within the minds of consumers.

To ground this, the researcher refers to the strong correlation between the positive attitude of consumers and the variable, “rebrand reflects innovation” ($r = 0.618$). KIA has shown consumers that they are willing to take risks to reconfigure and adapt their brand to the changing environment around them. KIA has used their rebrand to take on the rise in electric cars and shows consumers that through innovation they do not have a passive brand strategy (Mthethwa, 2021; Gear, 2022). The strong positive correlation between these variables shows that consumers recognise KIA for the steps they are taking to be within the leading pack of brands that innovate to re-establish themselves and do not shy away from the innovation happening in the market.

As mentioned earlier within this research, KIA finds themselves within the safety sensitive industry. By knowing the effect of consumers’ trust in the brand on other variables, it will provide insight into how consumers react to rebranding with regards to a safety sensitive industry brand. By including the correlation between “Rebrand has increased my trust in quality of KIA’s safety measures”, and “In comparison, I would buy a KIA over any other brand” ($r = 0.369$), it is interesting to note that the relationship between these variables move in a positive direction. This indicates that an increase in trust of KIA after the rebrand improves the chances of buying a KIA when in comparison to their competitors to some degree. However, the correlation has a weak relationship and is interpreted that KIA’s rebrand does not drastically increase or decrease consumers’ willingness to buy from the brand.

The weak correlation draws the researcher’s attention to the notion that KIA’s rebrand did not make consumers wary of them due to the changes they have made, but also does not heavily increase consumers’ attraction to the brand based on newly found trust. Knowing the effect of changes to a brand on consumers within the safety sensitive industry is critical, as some consumers might not feel the same level of confidence in the brand after they made as many changes as those of KIA (Nichell, 2019). This can be damaging to consumer perceptions, but as indicated by

the weak positive correlation, KIA consumers do not see the changed brand with a sense of skepticism.

When referring to *Table 5*, not all relevant correlations are in a positive direction. The correlation between “Gender” and “In comparison, I would buy a KIA over any other brand” ($r = -0.319$), moves in a negative direction indicating that these variables do not increase together but rather moves against each other. Within the coded data females were coded as 1 and males as 2. When the gender is put into context with the Likert scale coding, which has been previously explained, it indicates to the researcher that females are more prone to be in agreement with buying a KIA in comparison to other brands, unlike males who would be in disagreement. The strength of the correlation is weak therefore both males and females would not necessarily strongly disagree or strongly agree, but still maintain the negative relationship.

According to Karipinska-Krakowiak (2021) the reason for this could be that females are more likely to adapt their preferences to brands that are unknown to them, whereas males do not want to waver from the brands they are loyal to and know. For KIA this could mean that even though their rebrand reflected well and has improved consumer attitudes towards their brand, KIA might not see a lot of male purchases compared to that of females. This is not a complete downfall for KIA, because it has been found that females influence up to 85% of car purchases internationally, therefore KIA can still make the impact concerning the increase of car sales that they would like (Newman, 2019).

During the interpretation of the valuable data provided in *Table 5*, it became apparent that consumers are in favour of the changes KIA has made within their rebrand. By stating this the researcher refers to the strong positive correlations found between the majority of variables in terms of how the rebrand has affected KIA's reputation and the attraction consumers now have towards KIA.

When referring to previous literature there is a big shortage of rebranding cases within this automotive industry, therefore explaining the attraction consumers feel towards the newness of a rebranded logo and vision such as KIA's (Nduku, 2018;

Ng, 2021). Consumers look to brands they can identify and associate themselves with, and from the provided data consumers appear to be resonating with the characteristics of KIA after they have been rebranded.

Through making use of Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism the data relates and refers to the components of KIA's internal and external brand, as the survey questions were formulated from this theory. The three factors that served as segments, namely physique, self-image, and reflection were therefore accurately tested and interpreted to find that there is indeed an effect on consumers' perception of the brand image of KIA after their rebrand. Due to the safety sensitive industry within KIA finds itself, it was critical to test consumers' sensitivity towards brands that make changes and take risks to rebrand themselves. The data found that consumers did not lose trust and confidence in KIA due to their changes, which benefits KIA in knowing they did not scare off consumers who could be weary towards uncertainty in a safety sensitive industry.

Validity and Reliability of Findings

Throughout the process of deriving findings and the analysis thereof, the researcher ensured the validity and reliability of these outcomes would be strongly maintained to ensure the usability of this research. By following a clearly stipulated research methodology, consisting of a detailed research design and approach, as well as a thoroughly planned data collection process, the validity of this research has been ensured. The survey that has been used to collect the relevant data has been adapted from a previously used survey, of which the validity and reliability has been readily tested because of its quantitative nature and has also been pilot tested after the adaptations for this study (Nduku, 2018). The formulated questions were continually revised to ensure a high grammatical standard was upheld and that respondents could answer the questions easily without any confusion, to therefore translate into the findings. In the process of distributing the survey, neutral platforms were used where the researcher had no influence in whether the respondents immediately answered the survey or not. Through making the click through link

freely available for 48 hours, the 52 respondents exceeded the minimum required respondents of 30, thus ensuring enough information to have reliable data.

Throughout the analysis of the relevant findings, the researcher ensured to remain objective and made use of the credible analysing methods of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. With the use of graphs and percentages in the descriptive statistical analysis, the information has been clearly portrayed thus ensuring that an objective conclusion could be made of the given statistics. The inferential statistics were run through a credible software program, SPSS v.23, but had to be interpreted through inference which remained objective through the comparison of relationships between variables. The hypotheses were set at the beginning of the research, therefore ensuring that it could not be adapted to the research findings, but rather accepted or rejected after the statistical interpretation thereof.

Conclusion

Research Question and Hypothesis Addressed

To conduct this research, quantitative methods were used to answer the proposed question, 'How does the rebranding of KIA affect consumer's perceptions of their brand image?' These quantitative methods required an online survey to be distributed where 3 factors were derived from Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism in order to collect the necessary data. As the data was processed and analysed, it proved to be valuable in answering the set research question due to the finding that the four null hypotheses set in the beginning of the survey can be rejected, and therefore their alternatives are accepted.

For H1, the alternative hypothesis was accepted by focussing on KIA's new logo and the findings that were based on what the relationship between the attractiveness thereof and the other variables are. This relationship proved to be strongly positive correlated according to the Spearman Correlation Coefficient with all relevant variables. The physique of KIA's rebrand in terms of the logo proved to be a symbol of value as indicated by a 0.623 correlation, but it was 0.648 correlation to whether consumers have a positive attitude towards KIA due to their new logo, that indicated to the researcher that H1 could indeed be accepted.

The second factor, self-image, is represented as H2 and has been tested through survey questions relating to self-association, trust, and attitude of consumers after the rebranding of KIA. These variables correlated strongly to numerous relevant variables, but especially with each other. The strong correlation between the variables within this factor, represented the strength of how consumers now would view themselves when being associated with KIA and in conclusion to this effect, for H2 the alternative hypothesis has been accepted and the null hypothesis has been rejected. This then led to the acceptance of the alternative for H3.

The alternative hypothesis for H3 is based on the reflection of KIA to its consumers and has been compiled by variables such as the luxuriousness of KIA, the affordability, and target market, but was heavily influenced by the strong correlations found within the reputation and perception variables. These variables were found to

continually correlate strongly with other variables both within and outside the factor. This then led the researcher to accept the alternative of H3 and reject the null hypothesis through how these variables have shown a relationship with many of the other factors. Not only did the reputation and perception variables play a big role in the acceptance of the alternative of H3, but also in H4.

Lastly, H4 is the alternative to the overall null hypothesis that was derived from the main research question and was subject to the acceptance or rejection of H1, H2, and H3. This is due to their foundation of formulation that can be found within Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism and is therefore based on this theory and can assist in answering the research problem. The acceptance of the alternatives, H1, H2, and H3, allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative H4 and thus indicates that KIA's rebrand has indeed had an effect on the consumer perceptions of brand image.

This then also provides an answer to the main research question that consumer's perceptions of KIA's brand image have been affected by their rebrand, but in order to adequately answer the main research question, the answer must go further. Through the analysis it has been proven that the rebranding process has positively affected consumers' perceptions, however the positive effect has not been strong enough to sway loyal consumers and increase their sales. This indicates to KIA that a rebrand has been a successful venture but could possibly still need time to have a stronger positive effect on their sales.

Due to the answer stated for the main research question, concluding that KIA are reaping the benefits of positive perceptions, the initial research problem that KIA is at risk of losing consumers due to mistrust and disconnect and thus suffering a great financial loss, has been solved. The rebrand has drawn positive attention towards the brand and has indicated that the relevant changes to KIA's physique, reflection and self-image have not alienated consumers but rather helped them to remain relevant. The financial expenses linked to the implementation of the rebrand do not pose a risk to KIA as a refreshed and relevant brand, but time will be a determining factor in whether KIA will experience increasing profits.

Implication of Findings

This research has provided an insightful and accurate representation of how KIA's rebrand has affected consumer's perceptions of brand image and has addressed the risks that are connected to a rebrand. As stated in the research problem, KIA risked a disconnect with consumers and could possibly lose the trust of weary consumers by changing their brand within the safety sensitive industry. However, through the thorough data analysis and interpretation these problems and risks have been denied. KIA has implemented their rebrand successfully and managed to re-establish themselves as an innovative and exciting brand, without having to sacrifice the favour of consumers.

Brands within the automotive industry now have the opportunity to follow KIA's lead due to the knowledge and research this study has provided. The research has contributed to both the automotive industry as well as the rebranding process and enhanced the possibilities of rebranding within the automotive industry, as currently there is a lack of knowledge thereof. Lastly, this research is indicating to relevant industries that consumers are accepting of changes and rebrands that serve in their best interests regarding innovation and self-association, therefore brands who accurately determine their target market's want and needs can greatly benefit from a rebrand.

Final conclusions

To conclude this research, the objectives have been met and the hypotheses have been tested, which also allowed the researcher to adequately answer the main research question. In light of this, the research was successful and has provided the necessary answers to have significant relevance for future use within the automotive – or any safety sensitive industries. However, the research problem could be done in further depth and from different perspectives.

To fulfill these potential enhancements of the research problem the following suggestions can be considered when conducting further research to enhance the value of contribution:

The current research has been done short after the rebrand has launched and became active in South Africa, therefore it would be interesting to conduct similar research after an extended period of time on either the same brand or in a similar industry. This approach would provide the researcher with valuable information as to how, or whether, consumers' perceptions change when a significant amount of time has been given for them to become acquainted with the rebranded image of the relevant brand.

Furthermore, by limiting the population to that of the specific consumers of the brand would allow the research to portray the thoughts and perceptions of consumers who are directly involved with the brand. This research has not been limited to these specifications and is therefore very broad, however by reducing the population researchers can provide literature on how rebrands affect consumers that have previously decided to be associated with the brand and what the effect would be on them.

This research study has also been conducted in isolation and has not taken other competing brands into account; therefore, a different perspective could be shown if future studies were to compare consumers' perception of rebranded brands to that of their competitors. By involving competitors, brands within the relevant industries could also find this perspective valuable through analysing the effect a potential rebrand could have on their consumers, and whether current resonance should not be tampered with.

Lastly, this research has been conducted in a quantitative manner, thus providing the researcher with measurable data, however conducting future research on KIA or other brands in relevant industries could provide more insight as to the emotive outlook consumers have towards rebranding in safety sensitive industries. By making use of qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups, the researcher would be able to identify which aspects of the rebranding process, or the

rebranded elements resonate the most or the least with consumers. Through a qualitative approach better recommendations could be taken from the findings as the researcher would have had an in-depth conversation with the consumers to understand the context of their answers, rather than the anonymity of a quantitative survey.

Ethical considerations

The research follows a set of principles in order to have ethically sound research and is conducted according to the ethical criterion of the IIE, which can be found as Annexure C (Bhandari, 2022). All respondents that will be conducting the survey will be kept anonymous and will not be asked to provide their names or any form of identification to ensure confidentiality but will indeed be asked for consent to use the data of their answers (Perez, Rapiman, Orellana & Castro, 2017). The survey, and all questions within it, will be answered voluntarily by the potential respondents who are made aware of how and for what the information and answers within the survey will be used.

All respondents will be ensured that no negative repercussions will take place if they do not complete the proposed survey, but it is important to note that no incentives will be provided to the respondents that do in fact complete the survey. The data obtained from the surveys will not be used in any way other than stipulated in the survey and therefore will only be used for the proposed research. This data received from the surveys will not be distorted or manipulated to deliberately pave the outcome of the research (Bhandari, 2022; Perez *et al.*, 2017).

Clear instructions will be provided within the survey as to how questions should be answered and that no participant completing this survey may be younger than 18 years of age. The researcher will however not be present when respondents conduct the survey to ensure the previously mentioned anonymity but also to avoid respondents feeling pressure or experiencing manipulation (Perez *et al.*, 2017). The ethical consent form that supports this and has been given to all respondents is available in Annexure A.

Limitations

Within the relevant research limitations exist that could influence the research (Chetty, 2016; Chukwuemeka, 2021). The main limitations of this research is that of time sensitivity and a limited population. Only a year has been allocated to complete this study and influences the research design as well as the research plan. With more time the conducted research could be elaborated and studied more in depth (Chetty, 2016). Resources such as financial means or an increased number of social media platforms could be collected and used to enhance the quality of the data.

The relevant research can only be conducted on an accessible population limited to the potential respondents on the researcher's Instagram and WhatsApp database. With this limitation the conducted research is deprived of access to a larger group of respondents which could produce a more accurate generalisation of the population. In light of the survey being voluntary, the accessible population that will indeed be able to answer the survey might decide not to and then decrease the number of responses of the research and ultimately limit the depth of analysis for this research (Chetty, 2016; Chukwuemeka, 2021).

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Appendix

Annexure A: Ethical Consent Form

I am an Honours student at IIE Vega currently doing my research study needed to complete my degree.

The purpose of this research is to determine whether the rebranding of KIA has had an effect on the consumers' perception on their brand image. The research is being conducted by Lucile de Villiers at Vega Johannesburg in the fulfilment of the Bcom Hons. Strategic Brand Management. You are invited to be a part of this research by completing the following survey.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may choose not to stop or withdraw at any time if you do indeed start completing the survey. No negative consequences are connected to the decision to not take part in this research.

This survey is distributed and completed online and will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. All responses will be kept confidential, and you will not be required to provide any identification. The answers to these questions will be collected through five-point Likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and will be asked in the context of KIA's recent rebrand.

The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only and no information will be manipulated or changed. If you have any questions about the research study, please contact [REDACTED]

This research has been reviewed according to the IIE ethical procedures for research involving human participants.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that

- you have read the above information
- you voluntarily agree to participate
- you are over the age of 18 years

If you do not wish to participate in this research, please decline participation by clicking the "disagree" button.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

Annexure B: Research Instrument

Section A: General information

Please respond to the questions below by clicking the appropriate box provided.

1. Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Prefer not to say

2. What is your age?

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-31

☐ 32-38

☐ 39-45

☐ 46-52

☐ 53-59

☐ 60 or older

3. Have you previously been a KIA consumer?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. Are you aware of the KIA rebrand?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Section B: Research Topic

In 2021 KIA rebranded its previous red logo and “The power to surprise” logo to the new black logo and “Movement that inspires” slogan.



Hypothesis 1: What is the effect of the change of logo of KIA’s recent rebrand affect consumer perception of brand image?

Please click on the choice that you feel suits your level of agreement from the choices provides by the Likert scale.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
7.1 KIA’s new logo is unique	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.2 KIA’s new logo is very appealing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7.3 KIA's new slogan is inspiring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.4 KIA's rebrand reflects a true customer perspective	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.5 KIA's new logo portrays symmetry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.6 KIA's rebrand reflects a new business direction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.7 KIA's new logo is a symbol of the value promised to customers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.8 KIA's rebrand reflects innovation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. Based on KIA's rebrand, which of the following best describes KIA as a car brand?
(Please select only ONE)

- ☐ Sincere (down-to-earth, honest, trustful and cheerful)
- ☐ Exciting (imaginative, up-to-date, inspiring, edgy and spirited)
- ☐ Competent (reliable, responsible, intelligent and efficient)
- ☐ Sophisticated (upper class, charming and luxurious)
- ☐ Rugged (outdoorsy, tough and masculine)

Hypothesis 2: How has the reflection of KIA changed according to consumers?

Please click on the choice that you feel suits your level of agreement from the choices provides by the Likert scale.

1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly Agree
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	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
10.1 KIA's rebrand has improved their reputation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.2 KIA's rebrand has changed my perception of the brand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.3 KIA's rebrand reflects a sense of luxury.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.4 KIA's rebrand reflects a brand targeted at all age groups.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.5 KIA's rebrand reflects a brand that is affordable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Hypothesis 3: How has the self-image of consumers changed with regards to KIA in terms of how they would see themselves when using KIA products?

Please click on the choice that you feel suits your level of agreement from the choices provides by the Likert scale.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
11.1 I want to be associated the new KIA rebrand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.2 I completely identify myself with KIA's rebrand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.3 When comparing similar products, I would buy a KIA over any other brand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11.4 I have a positive attitude towards KIA after the rebrand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.5 KIA's rebrand has increased my trust in the quality of their safety measures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11.6 KIA's competitiveness in the market has improved after their rebrand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Annexure C: Ethical Clearance Letter

3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor name:

Dr. Tish Taylor

Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC):

Mrs Nicole Mason

Signature:



Date Signed: 24th July 2022

- participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.

Annexure D: Updated Concept Document

<u>Proposed Title</u>	
Title	The effect of KIA's rebranding on consumer's perceptions of brand image.

<u>Research details</u>	
Problem statement	Rebranding is a strategy used to adapt companies to ever changing environments and hereby trying to keep the brand of that company relevant to consumers' needs (Knott, 2021). While rebranding is exciting and bares potential, the risks thereof cannot be ignored (Krasinski, 2020). Even in an industry that is as established as the automotive industry, rebranding must be a well thought out plan, as rebranding can cause brand loyal and consistent customers to withdraw or be lost if they do not perceive the brand image to be what the company intended the brand identity to be (Krasinski, 2020). Therefore, the biggest problem KIA will be facing is the risk of alienating their current consumers as well as any prospective consumers due to them not connecting to the new brand identity KIA is aiming to portray. This is a big risk as the automotive industry is one of the safety sensitive industries and consumers do not want to make use of a brand that they do not trust (Nichell, 2019; Worlu & Ahmad, 2019).
Purpose statement	The aim of this research is to determine whether KIA's rebrand has had an effect on consumer's perceptions of their brand image.
Research question/s	Main research question: How does the rebranding of KIA affect consumer's perceptions of their brand image?

Hypotheses/ Objectives	Hypothesis: H0 = The change of KIA's physique does not have an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image. H1 = The change of KIA's physique has an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image. H0 = KIA's rebrand does not have an effect on the self-image of consumers. H2 = KIA's rebrand has an effect on the self-image of consumers. H0 = KIA's reflection after the rebrand does not have an effect on consumers. H3 = KIA's reflection after the rebrand has an effect on consumers. H0 = KIA's rebrand does not have an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image. H4 = KIA's rebrand has an effect on consumers' perceptions of brand image. Objectives: 1. Understand how physique influences consumer perception of KIA's brand image by conducting a literature review. 2. Understand whether KIA's reflection has changed according to consumers by conducting a literature review. 3. Understand whether the self-image of consumers with regards to KIA has changed by conducting a literature review. 4. Collect quantitative data through cross sectional, closed ended surveys. 5. Analyse data through descriptive statistics to understand how consumers perceive KIA's brand image due to the rebrand. 6. Draw conclusions on how consumers perceive KIA's brand image due to the rebrand.
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Research rationale	The automotive industry has always been a dominant market, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic the sales of cars have been fluctuating (Carlier, 2021). Treanor (2020) however, predicts that this industry is on the rise again. Due to this change in circumstances automotive brands need to take action to establish themselves within the minds of consumers once again, in a new way (Hofstätter, Krawina, Mühlreiter, Pöhler & Tschiesner, 2020). KIA has taken the initiative to rebrand themselves in every aspect of their brand, from the logo and slogan to what the car looks like and what it provides the consumer (Ng, 2021). Certain industries have been studied more than others, such as the vast amount of literature in the banking industry compared to the minimal literature done within the automotive industry (Nduku, 2018). There is no other brand within the automotive industry that has rebranded themselves as radically as KIA has, therefore this research will be filling the gap of the lack of rebranding in the industry. A very little amount of rebranding research studies has been conducted in South Africa thus this study will be adding this knowledge. A rebrand as radical as KIA's does however leave a question on whether consumers will perceive this – already established brand – in line with their new brand image or if consumers will be reluctant in changing the brand image they currently have of KIA.
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<u>Literature overview</u>	
Key theories	Kapferer's brand identity prism. Revolution and Evolution Theory.
Seminal authors/sources	Jean-Noël Kapferer: Kapferer, J.N. 2012. <i>The new strategic brand management: advanced insights and strategic thinking</i>. 3rd ed. London: Kogan

	Page. Laurent Muzellec & Mary Lambkin Muzellec, L. and Lambkin, M. 2006. Corporate rebranding: destroying, transferring or creating brand equity?. <i>European Journal of Marketing</i> , 40(7/8): 803-824. [Online]. DOI: 10.1108/03090560610670007			
Literature review themes	<u>Theme 1</u> Rebranding	<u>Theme 2</u> Brand image	<u>Theme 3</u> Revolutionary rebranding	<u>Theme 4</u> Consumer perception
Sources	- Gikonyo, C. N. 2016. Influence of rebranding on consumer perceptions: A case of National Bank of Kenya. <i>University of Nairobi</i>, 1(1): 1-66. [Online]. Available at: http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/99738/Gikonyo Influence%20of%20Re-branding%20on%20Customer%20Perceptions-%20a%20Case%20of%20National%20Bank%20of%20Kenya.pdf?sequence=1 - Nduku, M. J. 2018. The effects of rebranding on consumer perception: A case of Sidian Bank. <i>United States International University – Africa</i>, 1(1): 1-61. [Online]. Available at: http://erepo.usiu.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11732/3932/MWANZIA%20JUDY%20NDUKU%20MBA%202018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y#:~:text=The%20study%20concluded%20that%20indeed,to%20rebrand%20should%20consider%20greatly. - Prakash, S. 2012. Consumers' perceptions of the rebranding of Vodacom. <i>University of KwaZulu-Natal</i>, 1(1): 1-72. [Online]. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10413/12147 - Chatterjee, J. 2019. Consumers' perception towards			

	rebranding: HeroMotoCorp. <i>Journal of Modern Accounting and Auditing</i>, 15(4): 210-219. [Online]. DOI: 10.17265/15486583/2019.04.004 - Williams, A. S. and Son, S. 2021. Sport rebranding: the effect of different degrees of sport logo redesign on brand attitude and purchase intention. <i>Kinesiology</i>, 23(1):155-172. [Online]. DOI: 10.1108/IJSMS-01-2021-0016 - Kabindio, S. C. 2016. Effect of corporate rebranding on consumer attitudinal responses among Kenya power business customers in Nakuru Town. <i>JOMO Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology</i>, 1(1): 12-71. [Online]. Available at: http://ir.jkuat.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/3504/SOLA%20KABINDIO%20RESEARCH%20PROJECT.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y - Jain, V., Shah, H. S. and Ganesh, B. E. 2018. Factors affecting the brand image of Yoga: Perceptions of consumers and instructors. <i>South Asian Journal of Management</i>, 25(4): 151-172. [Online]. Available at: https://www.proquest.com/openview/4d64bb0ca507e9b6bd8e7805310f3ce4/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=46967 - Mittal, M. 2019. A study of logo redesign and impact on consumers' brand attitudes. <i>International Journal of Research in Engineering Application & Management</i>, 5(2): 798-810. [Online]. DOI: 10.35291/2454-9150.2019.0134 - Calisir, M., Lehtinen, A. and Östberg, F. 2017. Rebranding a century-old brand. <i>Textilhögskolan</i>, 1(13): 1-41. [Online]. Available at: http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1144805/FULLTEXT01.pdf - Collinson, P. 2019. The impact of rebranding on customer-based brand equity: an exploratory study on
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	Absa Bank. <i>The Independent Institution of Education</i>, 1(1): 121. [Online]. Available at: http://iiespace.iie.ac.za/handle/11622/348 • Nichell, S. C. 2019. Corporate rebranding and its effects on consumers' attitudes and behaviour – An analysis of the Lufthansa rebranding case. <i>Newcastle University</i>, 1(1): 1-76. [Online]. Available at: https://feb.studenttheses.ub.rug.nl/24669/1/S_Nichell.pdf • Worlu, O. and Ahmad, R. 2019. Does rebranding as name change rebuild or destroy brand equity (customer loyalty and brand reputation) after brand crisis?: The case of Malaysian Airline System (MAS). <i>Journal of Technology Management and Business</i>, 6(2): 11-22. [Online]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.30880/jtmb.2019.06.02.002 • Ramaditya, M. 2019. Exploring the impact of perception after rebranding and customer satisfaction on corporate image. <i>Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research</i>, 74(5): 174-178. [Online]. DOI: 102991/aicmar-18.2019.38 • Diaconeasa, M.C. and Lădaru, G. R. 2019. Consumers perceptions on rebranding strategies for Romanian food products. <i>AGROECOINN Project</i>, 2(1): 285-323. [Online]. Available at: https://www.uaic.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/AGROECOINN_O2-volum.pdf#page=287 • Hannelius, J. and Petterson, J. 2021. Rebranding of stereotypical food brands – How Nordic consumers perceive the product rebranding and its impact on brand equity. <i>Jönköping University</i>, 1(1): 1-113. [Online]. Available at: http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1565301&dswi
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	d=-9900 • Kimberley, T. 2012. Rebranding to redefine international brand identity – A case study to evaluate the success of Sonera's rebranding. <i>University of Applied Sciences</i>, 1(1): 1-67. [Online]. Available at: https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/51768 • Otieno, A. S. 2019. Influence of corporate visual identity rebranding on consumer perceptions: A case study of the National Bank of Kenya Limited. <i>School of Journalism and Mass Communication University of Nairobi</i>, 1(1): 1-70. [Online]. Available at: http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/108435 • Blazques Cano, M., Mattich, K., Henninger, C. and Helberger, E. 2019. The effects of rebranding on consumer-based brand equity. <i>International Journal of Business and Globalisation</i>, 22(1): 1-25. [Online]. DOI: 10.1504/ijbg.2019.10009406
Key concepts	Brand identity, Brand image, Rebranding, Consumer perception.

<u>Provisional Research Approach</u>				
	<u>Paradigm</u>	<u>Epistemology</u>	<u>Ontology</u>	<u>Axiology</u>
Paradigm	The positivist paradigm will be used for this research on how consumers perceive KIA's brand image after their rebrand, to make sure the research can be measured and analysed (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).	In terms of the epistemological stance on this research, the collection of data about the perceptions of consumers on KIA's brand image will be measurable as well as objectively obtained to contribute to the trustworthiness and value of knowledge (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).	An ontological assumption about the research on consumers' perception of KIA's brand image is that it will be measurable and when analysed, these research findings will be clear to all who would like to examine it in one reality (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).	In an axiological stance, the research will be done in an objective manner to accurately understand the consumers' perceptions of KIA's brand image, which will be valuable (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).
Approach / design	This quantitative research will be non-experimental closed ended surveys, where humans will be the unit of analysis.			

<u>Provisional Research Plan</u>	
Population	Targeted population: Any consumers that have access to

	traditional or digital media marketing who can then form a perception about KIA's rebrand and brand image. This includes all consumers and not only KIA car owners. Accessible population: The targeted population will be refined to the accessible population to consumers that are part of the researcher's Instagram and WhatsApp data base, this is not restricted to KIA owners.
Sampling	For this research sampling will be done through probability sampling using the simple random sampling method. The aim is to have a minimum sample size of 30 respondents.
Data collection method(s)	A closed ended survey will be formulated containing questions that will be answered using five-point likert scales, whereafter a link to this survey will be posted on the researcher's Instagram profile story for users to click on and complete the survey. The previously mentioned link will also be sent to WhatsApp groups for users to complete. Therefore, keeping the demographic specifications open to both males and females of all ages.
Data analysis method(s)	The research will be taking a deductive approach and will be using cross sectional surveys. These answers will be analysed on Microsoft Excel, using descriptive statistics to analyse whether the rebrand of KIA has had a positive, negative, or neutral effect on the consumer perception of KIA's new brand image.

Ethical considerations and limitations

Ethics	The surveys for the research will be kept anonymous and filled in voluntarily where the participant can quit at any time. No incentives will be given to the respondents and the first question of the survey will be whether the participant gives consent for their answers to be used. The surveys will be conducted online to ensure that the respondents are not influenced or pressured by the researcher.
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Limitations	This research is time sensitive, as only a year has been provided. The finances for the research are limited and scarce and accessibility to a very wide range population is limited.
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