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**BRAND LOGO CHANGE: EXPLORING OMANI CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES  
TO RE – BRANDING OF OMAN AIR AND NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN**

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**Brand Logo Change: Exploring Omani Consumers' Attitudes to Re – Branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman**

By

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## DEED OF DECLARATION

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## Abstract

In today's globalised market, brands and branding which include logos has shifted to a new and higher level of importance. Brands and logos should have universal appeal and must align with the target audiences' aspirations. Thus, companies are eager to develop effective strategies that will help them satisfy their consumers' expectations and be ahead of their competitors in the market.

The objectives of this study are to examine the consumers' attitudes towards Omani corporations' brands that have changed their logos recently. The corporations used as cases in this study are Oman Air and National Bank of Oman (NBO), which both underwent rebranding strategies and changed their logos in 2009. In addition to that, this study intended to find out the most important factors affecting the consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes in the Omani corporations which had rebranding procedures.

The research used qualitative investigation to explore the topic, and obtain consumers' views and feelings on rebranding. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the real consumers of Oman Air and NBO.

Quantitative data collection and analysis was conducted through an online survey. The survey investigated the existing consumers of Oman Air and NBO who are working in the Sultan Qaboos University.

The findings suggest that the consumers' have positive attitudes towards the brands despite changes in their logos. However, the consumers' loyalty towards the brands after the logo changes was negatively affected. The results reveal that the individual consumer does not replace their existing attitudes and accept all the new information as a whole, but a new attitude is formed by integrating, mixing, and combining their previous personal experiences with the new information.

Moreover, the research findings illustrate that the demographic factors have a significant relationship with the consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes, and 'gender' is the main factor playing an important role in shaping the final attitudes of the consumer towards the brands after changing their logo.

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# Chapter 1 : Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction and Background

Currently, numerous corporations are rebranding in order to enhance their performance and adapt to the new challenges they face every day in the market. According to Spaeth (2005 p.18) *“from a CEO’s perspective, there are just two kinds of rebranding”: “have to and want to”*. Nevertheless, whether it be a “have to” or a “want to” scenario, rebranding is an increasing phenomenon worldwide.

Due to the substantial rapid changes and challenges in consumer markets, corporations are encouraging marketers to develop different strategies to stay ahead of their competitors. Multinational corporations such as Intel, Credit Suisse, Kodak, KFC, and Vonage - and locally, Oman Air, Al Maha Petroleum, National Bank of Oman, Oman Mobile, and Al Ahlia Insurance Company - rebranded their corporate images, specifically, they changed their logos to respond to internal and external changes in their business environment.

Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) argue that rebranding arises due to four broad categories of change: the first category is change in ownership structure, including mergers and acquisitions, spin-offs and demergers, private to public ownership and sponsorship. The second category is change in corporate strategy, consisting of diversification and divestment, internationalization and localization. The third category is change in competitive position, arising as a result of erosion of market position, outdated image and reputation problems. The final category is change in the external environment, caused by legal obligations and major crises or catastrophes (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006:810).

Rebranding involves revitalization and rejuvenation of the brand by changing visual brand elements such as colour and logo, and launching marketing programs, for example integrated marketing communications, in order to create new brand associations and enhance customers’ purchase intention (Keller, 1999; Daly and Moloney, 2004; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006).

However, outcomes vary for different brands. Some brands are successful with new brand images, while others fail to impress or be accepted by loyal consumers following such changes. It is a common belief that the best customers are loyal ones as they cost less to serve, are willing to pay more and often act as word-of-mouth marketers (Reinartz and Kumar, 2002).

Capturing and maintaining brand loyalty are always regarded as strategic goals for corporations to preserve their business and their profits (Amine, 1998). Marketers have to implement rebranding strategies with caution, so that changes introduced will not affect the good brand impression held by the existing loyal customers.



Although rebranding exercises are considered to be of great importance to corporations and their products or services, they have received minimal attention in academic research (Muzellec, Doogan, and Lambkin, 2003). Research on rebranding focuses on performance and finances through event studies, and on name changes (Howe, 1982).

The consumer side of rebranding has received less attention, specifically consumer attitudes towards logo changes. Several studies show the importance of getting customers' feedback on logos and logo changes (Hem and Iversen, 2004). Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate how existing customers perceive the rebranding strategies, especially with changing the corporation's logo, in order to identify the possible indicators of rebranding success.

In the last decade, the Sultanate of Oman has witnessed a number of governmental and private corporations rebranding their corporate images for various reasons, including integration with new companies, the desire to keep up with the evolution of Omani society and the aspirations of new generation consumers for better services or products. In some cases, brands wish to re-position themselves in the Omani market, as well as to face competitors by using modern approaches. The increasing rebranding phenomena in Oman includes changing the entire corporate identity, or in some cases changing the corporate logo and colours only.

However, according to this researcher's knowledge, to date there is no academic study that has been done in Oman or in the Arabian Gulf Countries discussing this problem in general, and specifically looking to understand the consumers' attitudes and reactions towards such changes in their favorite corporations brands.

The purpose of this research is to explore the overall existing consumers' attitudes towards rebranding following logo changes, by taking two Omani corporations as cases. These corporations are Oman Air and National Bank of Oman (NBO) who changed their logos within the last seven years (Table 1.1). With more organisations in the Sultanate of Oman leaning towards rebranding as a method to compete effectively both locally and internationally, it is important that they understand the attitudes of their consumers, so that they can create strategic and effective campaigns (Muzellec and Lambkin 2006). This report is required to immediately fill in a gap of information in the Sultanate of Oman.

**Table 1.1 Summaries of two selected rebranding cases from Oman context**

Company Name	Old Logo	New Logo	Rebranding Year
Oman Air			2008
National Bank of Oman (NBO)			2009

Exploring the consumers' attitudes will help indicate possible rebranding success for these corporations (Singh et al, 2012). Academic research in this area in Oman will help guide the corporations to understanding the importance of knowing what is on the minds of their existing consumers.

## 1.2 Sultanate of Oman Profile

### 1.2.1 Oman Geography

The Sultanate of Oman is an Arab country and its primary religion is Islam. Oman shares borders with the Republic of Yemen to the South West, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the West, and the United Arab Emirates to the North. In terms of land, Oman is the second largest country among the six Arab Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC), with an area of 309,500 square kilometers. It is located in the extreme South-Eastern corner of Arabian Peninsula.

From a geographical perspective, Oman offers important economic features as it overlooks the Gulf of Oman on the Arabian Sea and the Arabian Gulf. In this regard, the Sultanate of Oman has recently established the city of Duqm Economic Area (in the southern part of the Sultanate overlooking the Arabian Sea) which is supposed to attract investments of approximately USD three billion dollars in the first phase by the end of 2020.

### **1.2.2 Oman Governorates**

According to Royal Decree No. 114/2011, issued on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2011, Oman comprises of 11 governorates. Each governorates has its own distinctive administrative, geographical and economic significance and comprises a number of Wilayats “districts”. The entire Sultanate has a total of 61 Wilayats and the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for overseeing the governorates, with the exception of Muscat and Dhofar. (Oman 2012).

### **1.2.3 Oman Demography**

According to the National Center for Statistics and Information, Oman’s total population is 3,623,947, with males making up 51% and females 49%. However, 1,530,000 of this population are expatriates. The average Omani household size is 7.5. The most populated governorate is Muscat with 875,878 people, whereas the least populated governorate is Wusta with just 55,111. The census in 2010 shows that the population growth rate is 2.023% (General Census of Population, 2010).

### **1.2.4 Oman Economic System**

The global economy has strengthened recently (IMF, 2015), largely driven by the advanced economies, where easier financial market conditions and gradually improving consumer and business confidence have supported growth. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) the global economy grew at 3.0 percent in 2013 as compared to 3.2 percent in the previous year. The advanced economies grew by 1.3 per cent in 2013 (1.4 percent in 2012).

On the other hand, domestic demand in many emerging market economies has remained weaker than expected, but most of them have benefited from the stronger external demand. The growth rate in the Emerging Market and Developing Economies (EMDEs) was 4.7 per cent in 2013 (5.0 per cent in 2012).

The growth rate of countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) slowed down to 4.1 percent in 2013 as oil production reached a plateau from 5.6 percent in 2012 and 7.7 percent in 2011. The inflation rate in GCC countries was lower at 2.9 percent in 2013, marginally higher than 2.4 percent in 2012.

Economically, The Sultanate of Oman depends heavily on oil for income. Although oil production has begun to subside; in recent years it has helped revive the country’s budget by aiding work to achieve abundance in trade surplus, and increasing the liquidity of foreign exchange. Oman joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in November 2000 and has continued to liberalize its economy. In September 2006, Oman ratified a free-trade agreement with the United States of America. Oman also seeks through the GCC to conclude similar agreements with the European Union, China, and Japan.

As a result of the reduction of oil production, Oman is striving towards implementing its development plans on diversification, industrialization, and privatization, with the aim of reducing the oil sector's contribution to GDP to 71% by 2020 (Research, 2011). Oman is also making efforts to localize jobs, by replacing foreign workers with citizens.

The Sultanate's Gross Domestic Product grew by 2.8 percent during 2013 compared to 11.5 percent in 2012 (CBO, 2013). The Omani government is actively trying to attract foreign investors to invest in the fields of industry, information technology, tourism and higher education. The industrial development plans focus on gas and metal manufacturing, petrochemicals, and international shipping and tourism. The use of modern techniques in oil extraction had the greatest impact in increasing production. In addition, the increase in global oil prices in 2010 gave the country greater financial resources and adequate time to invest in non-oil sectors.

### **1.2.5 Aviation Industry in Oman**

Globally, the aviation industry supports tourism and international business by providing the world's only rapid worldwide transportation network. Airlines transported 2.8 billion passengers and 47.6 million metric tonnes of air cargo in 2011, connecting the world's cities with 36,000 routes. By providing these services, the aviation industry plays an important role in enabling economic growth and providing various economic and social benefits.

According to Tony Tyler, the CEO of International Air Transport Association (IATA), the global spend on air transport is expected to reach \$746 billion in 2014, which equals 1% of world GDP. The number of passengers is expected to reach 3.3 billion as travelers benefit from a growing global network and airfares that are expected to fall 3.5% in real terms (after inflation). Businesses are also benefiting from the growth in connectivity and a 4% fall in freight rates, after inflation.

The catalytic benefits of aviation are seen within the \$621 billion in tourism spend that the industry will facilitate over the course of the year, as well as the \$6.8 trillion worth of goods that will be delivered by air. Employment supported by aviation has reached approximately 58 million jobs worldwide. In addition, airlines are making enormous investments in modernizing fleets. In 2014, the industry will make delivery of 1,400 aircraft worth around \$150 billion (Kutty, 2014).

These benefits are generated and investments made, despite persistent weak profitability and a tax burden which this year is expected to reach \$121 billion (up from \$113 in 2013). Airlines are expected to earn a net profit in 2014 of \$18.0 billion for a net profit margin of 2.4%. This will be up from earnings of \$6.1 billion in 2012 and \$10.6 billion last year. These and other figures are aggregated at the industry level.

They are not indicators of individual airline performance. Investors will see more favourable returns from airlines in 2014. The industry average return on invested capital (ROIC) is expected to reach 5.4% in 2014 (up from 3.7% in 2012 and 4.4% in 2013).

The Omani government has a strong policy on the diversification of the economy, and transportation plays a significant role in that, particularly for the tourism sector. Transportation also supports a wide range of industrial activities in Oman, such as trading inside and outside the country (Ministry of Transportation and Communication, 2012). As a result, aviation and related industries in Oman have grown steadily over the past few years. With a robust aviation investment program currently underway, the growth outlook remains positive. Current aviation investment projects include major terminal developments underway at Muscat and Salalah International Airports, as well as completion of four new regional airports in Sohar, Al Duqm, Ras al Hadd, and Adam.

The economic contribution of these developments will speed the already upward-trending growth of related markets in Oman. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the tourism industry currently represents about 7% of Oman's total GDP, or 5.3 billion dollars. This figure is predicted to grow by 5.5% per year, surpassing 9.7 billion dollars by 2023.

Travel and tourism sector investment activity is also expected to rise, from less than 1 billion dollars, or 5.2% of total investment in 2013, to over 1.9 billion dollars, or 6.5% of total investment, by 2023. The growth of the aviation sector will be one of the main drivers of overall travel and tourism growth, and Oman's government has budgeted significant resources for aviation under the 8th five-year plan.

The aviation investment is expected to cost 6.1 billion dollars over five years. Aviation investment projects represent the largest part of the country's budgeted capital investments totaling nearly 40% of all spending in the 8th five-year plan. While 8% of the funds are earmarked for the completion of the 4 regional airports, 92% is going towards the country's 2 primary airports in Muscat and Salalah.

Mr. Vic Allen, Acting CEO, Oman Airports Management Company (OAMC) stated that *"We currently have 8m passengers per annum in Muscat airport, which is the gateway airport through Oman. The growth has been averaging 16% for some years now. We expect that to continue into the future, and maybe even grow stronger than that when the new airport comes on stream. The new airport is designed for 12m passengers, but it is easily extendable to 24, 36, and even 48m ultimately. There is no shortage of capacity planned, and we know we are confident that we will support aviation growth for many years to come"* (Prospect, 2013).

### 1.2.6 Oman Air profile

Oman Air, the flagship company of the Sultanate of Oman's Civil Aviation sector, commenced operations in 1993. Starting off as a regional player, Oman Air, as Oman's national carrier, has witnessed rapid growth since it was established and plays a major role in making Muscat a major traffic hub in the Middle East. This provides a boost to commercial, industrial and tourism activities. Oman Air rebranded its corporate image through changing its logo in February 2008 (Wings of Oman, 2008).

Oman Air currently operates direct flights to major Gulf destinations such as Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Doha, Kuwait and Riyadh from Muscat. The airline also flies to ten international destinations including India, Chittagong in Bangladesh, Karachi in Pakistan, Male in the Maldives, Colombo in Sri Lanka, Kathmandu in Nepal, Bangkok in Thailand, Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, Dar Es' Salaam and Zanzibar in Tanzania (Oman Air, 2008).

The previous CEO of Oman Aviation Services (Oman Air) Ziad bin Karim Al Haremi, had stated at the time of revealing the current branding that the new identity would project the airline's transformation into a world-class airline. The airline has vigorously rejuvenated itself as a major carrier in the region. He noted that the new corporate identity is considered a defining milestone in the process of change, making the brand more relevant to global markets and matching with international customers (Oman Air, 2008).

It is important to note that the colors that have been used in the old brand of Oman Air (Red, Green, and White) represent those that are on the Omani flag (see figure 1.1). This has a special significance for the Omani people because, white represents peace and prosperity, red recalls battles against foreign invaders, and green symbolizes the fertility of the country. In addition, the Oman Air's old brand contains the khanjar (dagger) which is a symbol of a man's origin, his manhood, courage and the national dress is not complete without it. Men wear the khanjar on all formal public occasions and festivals to date. The khanjar has played an important role in Oman's history and this fact is reflected in the incorporation of its image into the Omani national flag.



**Figure 1.1: The Flag of Sultanate of Oman.**

### **1.2.7 Banking Industry in Oman**

There is growing optimism that both the world economy and the banking industry are recovering from the impact of the financial crisis in 2008. However, the financial world has changed permanently, both in terms of the balance of power within the industry and how banks will be allowed to operate in future.

Banks in emerging markets are now well-capitalized, well-funded and big enough to compete directly against their western counterparts in the global marketplace. They have greater potential for growth because of the relatively immature development of their domestic financial markets, and their rapidly growing economies. Regulations might become an issue in emerging markets just as is in the more established western markets and may result in a return to more traditional business models.

However, the regulatory environment differs greatly from one country to the next. The stronger role of national governments within banking means the future model for banking and corporate governance is likely to be a hybrid of a regulated free market approach and so-called 'state capitalism'.

In Oman, there are seven locally incorporated banks in operation, in addition to ten branches of foreign banks and two specialised banks. There are a total of 496 branches operating across Oman. Bank Muscat and HSBC Bank Oman have the largest branch networks, with 133 and 85 respectively.

Oman's banking sector is dominated by Bank Muscat, (table 1.2) which controls approximately 36% of the banking sector's total assets. The three largest banks control approximately 62% of the banking sector's total assets. All commercial banks are privately owned. The government owns a minority stake in National Bank of Oman and Bank Muscat.

Aggregate foreign ownership in locally incorporated banks is limited to a maximum equity share of up to 70%. Bahrain's Ahli United Bank has a 35% stake in Ahli Bank, Commercial Bank of Qatar has a 34.9% stake in the National Bank of Oman and Dubai Financial Bank has a 15% stake in Bank Muscat. Islamic banking services became available in Oman in May 2012. Bank Dhofar and Bank Muscat, among others, are in the process of rolling out Islamic services. Foreign banks including Bank Melli Iran, Bank of Baroda, HSBC, Standard Chartered Bank and State Bank of India are active and prominent in Oman. In 2012, HSBC acquired a 51% stake in Oman International Bank. The renamed entity is HSBC Bank Oman.

**Table 1.2: Major Banks in Oman**

<b>Name of the bank</b>	<b>Total assets (USD Millions) 31 Dec 2011</b>	<b>Branches</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>
<b>Bank Muscat</b>	18,750	136	1981
<b>National Bank of Oman</b>	5,782	65	1973
<b>Bank Dhofar</b>	5,086	61	1990
<b>Bank Sohar</b>	3,715	26	2007
<b>Oman Arab Bank</b>	2,891	52	1973
<b>Ahli Bank</b>	2,411	14	1997
<b>Oman Housing Bank</b>	584	9	1977

*Source: www.bankersalmanac.com, March 2013 and Central Bank of Oman, 2013.*

The financial health of banks in terms of assets quality, provision coverage, capital adequacy and profitability remained strong. The total assets of commercial banks increased by 7.2 percent to RO 22.4 billion in December 2013 from RO 20.9 billion in the end of 2012. Of the total assets, credit disbursement accounted for 67.9 percent and increased by 6.0 percent in 2013 to RO 15.2 billion. The ratio of bank credit to overall GDP increased to 49.6 percent in 2013 (CBO, 2014).

### **1.2.8 National Bank of Oman (NBO) Profile**

National Bank of Oman (NBO) was founded on 23 February 1973 as the first local bank in Oman. NBO is considered today to be one of the largest banks in Oman with a paid up capital of RO (Omani Rials) 110.8 million (US\$ 288 million) and a regulatory capital of RO 345.3 million (US\$ 897 million) as of 31 December 2012. The Bank serves its customers in Oman through 66 Branches and 173 ATM's and CCDM's as well as one branch in Egypt and one in UAE (NBO, 2013).

NBO launched a new corporate identity on 19 March 2009. Murray Sims, Chief Executive Officer of NBO, said that *"launching a new identity is an important milestone for the bank and its employees and for the dreams and aspirations of its customers"*. He also stated: *"We are delighted that the new logo reflects our national identity, it encapsulates the bold new vision that we are laying out for the bank. More than just a change in identity, it signifies new commitment and a new promise to our customers that is summed up in the new positioning statement: 'For you. For our Nation'".* (Business Today, 2009).



The old logo of the National Bank of Oman included the colours navy blue and white with bright red. Inside their brand was a globe, which may suggest that the commercial operations of the bank targeted some other countries and was not limited to the Sultanate of Oman. This brand has represented clients of the old NBO and held great importance because they used it for a long period of time. Thus it became important in the historical periods and it bound together customers in the past, especially since the National Bank of Oman is the first local bank in Oman.

### 1.3 Rationale for Rebranding

Both cases ‘Oman Air and NBO’ witnessed new circumstances and faced different challenges that pushed them to go for the rebranding process in order to re-position themselves in their markets. For Oman Air, following the withdrawal of Oman from Gulf Air in 2007, the rebranding exercise became essential as Oman Air management changed its business focus from being a leading regional airline serving routes within the Middle East or between the Gulf to Indian cities, to establishing itself as an international carrier.

As a result of the new vision, Oman Air rebranding has replaced the red, green and white ‘national’ colors with blue, silver and gold which are more align with the internationals aviation market. The new brand of Oman Air dispensed of the Omani dagger ‘Khanjar’ and replaced it with the smoke symbol of burning frankincense. The aspect of Oman symbolized here looks to express Omani hospitality as well, since frankincense is used in many social events of all Omanis. The new brand kept the name of the airline "OMAN AIR" but they removed the old slogan "Fly with friends". They may have found that they have to attach this slogan practically to their products and services to their customers.

All this changes happened in the brand of Oman Air because the management plans to be a competitive player in the international aviation market. Thus, the airline expanded its wings and Oman Air's network reached 43 destinations by December 2013, from 25 destinations in 2007 (Oman Air, 2008). The following table (1.3) shows Oman Air’s performance after it rebranded in 2008.

According to the table (1.3), the performance of Oman Air annually improved in terms of the number of passengers and flights, however, the company started losing after the rebranding. Oman Air’s Chairman H.E Darwish Al Balushi indicated that the company losses were because *‘our company invest significantly in new narrow-body and wide body aircraft, new destinations, technology and staff. The size of our fleet is expected to increase as per this plan to 50 aircraft by 2018, with a further increase to 70 aircraft being achieved by 2020’* (Oman Observer, 2015).

Additionally, the Oman Air’s Chairman indicated that a recent study on the contributions made by businesses to the national economy showed that Oman Air’s operational activities have delivered social and economic returns for Oman of OR 420 million (US\$ 1,090 billion). This underlines the importance of

the role played by the national carrier in fulfilling the social and economic objectives of the national economy (Trade Arabia, 2015).

**Table 1.3: Oman Air Performances from 2007 – 2012**

Element	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Passengers	1,513mn	1,984mn	2,4mn	3,3mn	3,8mn	4,430mn
Flights	23428	23194	27986	33775	34555	37188
Profits/loss	\$ 10,389mn	\$ (111mn)	\$ (167mn)	\$ (204mn)	\$(286mn)	\$(253mn)

*Sources: Oman Air's Annuals Reports (2007 – 2012).*

The previous NBO General Manager stated that there were many reasons that encouraged the management to rebrand. NBO faced severe asset quality trouble between 2001 and 2003. Mr. Taqi Ali Sultan added that the bank had a new shareholder after which the Commercial Bank of Qatar (CBQ) bought a 34.9% stake in NBO in 2004.

Furthermore, the old NBO logo was a globe that did not reflect the local nature of NBO, as the main focus has always been Oman. The management wanted to clearly project the image of a locally focused bank. The bank wanted to evolve further and keep up with the changing times and the decision to rebrand was made at the end of 2006.

The new NBO brand contains the colors of the Omani flag (red, white and green), which directly links the brand to all Omanis, as it represents their history and civilization, culture and identity token over time. The idea was to have a logo that reflected Omani history and culture. The 'National' colors and a stylized representation of the Omani flag have replaced the old symbol (Business Today, 2009).

The bank's distribution network has been upgraded and expanded as a part of the rebranding process that began in 2009. The number of branches increased from being 44 in 2007 to 66 in 2013 (NBO, 2013). Table 1.4 displays the NBO performance after introducing a new corporate identity brand to its market. It shows that the net profits of the NBO decreased dramatically in the year of 2009 when the bank started the rebranding process, however, in 2012 the net profits increased to reach more than \$105 million.

**Table 1.4 NBO Performances from 2007 – 2012.**

Element	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Loan</b>	\$2,355 bn	\$3,639 bn	\$3,535 bn	\$3,541 bn	4,339 bn	\$4,965 bn
<b>Customer Deposit</b>	\$2,431 bn	\$3,485 bn	\$3,356 bn	3,441 bn	4,155 bn	\$4,900 bn
<b>Net Profits</b>	\$115,886 mn	\$117,871 mn	\$54,819 mn	\$70,575 mn	\$88,836 mn	\$105,616 mn

*Sources: NBO's Annuals Reports (2007 – 2012).*

The rationale that drove this researcher to select “Oman Air and NBO” Corporations as the cases for this study are that both cases have been practicing rebranding for more than five years; subsequently, their customers have had enough time to establish their final attitudes towards the brands changing.

Moreover, NBO is owned by the private sector, whereas Oman Air is owned by the government sector, so this difference in background and management styles may enrich this research by offering understanding on how the consumers reacted towards both companies when they changed their logos.

Furthermore, ‘Oman Air’ shifted its corporate identity brand from being a local brand to a global brand, while, ‘NBO’ shifted its corporate identity brand from being an international brand to a local brand. This may also provide the opportunity to find out how customers think and react towards such changes.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Corporations today operate in a highly dynamic and challenging business environment. The level of brand acceptance by consumers is a powerful factor as it enables firms to stay profitable and competitive in today's market. Rebranding is a method that corporations use to improve their competitive advantage as well as appeal to new customers and improve loyalty amongst existing customers (WIPO, 2013).

Rebranding aims to improve the image, performance and market share of an organization thereby improving its profitability. However, rebranding activities do not always attain positive results as the costs of rebranding are very high. An issue of rebranding that should be considered is whether the companies are able to improve performance through rebranding, as the success and failure of rebranding lies in consumer acceptance of the change. Therefore, it is important that the benefits of rebranding outweigh the costs of rebranding (Estelle and Krishna, 2014).

Reinartz and Kumar (2002) claim that re-branding events in many cases fail to give new brand images to consumers. Some brands such as the New Coke, Ford Edsel car and Sony Betamax failed to be accepted by loyal and existing consumers. In addition to that successful companies such as Virgin, McDonald's, IBM, Coca-Cola, General Motors and many others have made rebranding mistakes which cost them large amounts of money. This occurred because those corporations did not understand how consumers frame their attitudes towards rebranding strategy.

Oman Air changed the way it handled operations in 2007 when it withdrew from Gulf Air. For this reason, it was essential for Oman Air Management to re-establish their corporate image as they changed focus from being a regional airline to an international carrier. Cultural aspects that had helped establish Oman Air as a local brand needed to be incorporated into the new logo to ensure that customer attitude towards the brand remained positive.

National Bank of Oman experienced various changes that led to their rebranding. These included the incorporation of a new major shareholder, as well as asset quality trouble. They rebranded in an attempt to localize and better connect with the local consumer. The focus of the new logo was Omani history and culture.

Based on the literature, most researchers have addressed the issue of rebranding from the financial performance of the company, and the effects before and after rebranding. There are minimal studies that address the consumer side of rebranding, so as to shed light on whether consumers react positively or negatively to rebranding strategies and exercises. In addition, there have been no studies carried out on rebranding from the consumer attitude perspective in the Sultanate of Oman. In order to bridge this gap in the literature, this study intends to evaluate the rebranding strategies of two companies in Oman. Understanding consumers' attitudes to rebranding strategy should be given top priority and is the rationale for undertaking this research.

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

### **1.5.1 General Objectives**

The main objective of this research is to examine the Omanis' consumers' attitudes towards two Omani corporations' after rebranding through logo changes, including the effect of the consumers' attitudes towards the new brands.

### **1.5.2 Specific Objectives**

- To determine whether the existing consumers have positive or negative attitudes towards the brands after logo changes.
- To identify the most important factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes in the Omani corporations following the rebranding process.
- To examine how the relationship between the factors affecting consumers' attitudes and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes varies when taking into account the socio-demographic antecedents.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

The research aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the attitudes of Omani consumers to the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman?
- 2) What are the significant factors that influence the Omani consumers' attitudes to the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman?

- 3) What are the socio-demographic antecedents of the consumers whose attitudes have been affected by the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman?

## **1.7 Significance of the Research**

Past research has devoted minimal attention to the study of a direct link between the rebranding strategy and the existing consumers' attitudes towards the brand after rebranding through logo changes. An overview of the financial information indicates that the rebranding process can affect the overall profitability of an organisation.

Therefore, it is valuable and essential to explore these underlying factors affecting the effectiveness of rebranding and the indicators of rebranding success. In this way, organisations can ensure that they do not incur significant losses as they try to upgrade their image. Both theoretical contributions and managerial implications are stated below.

### **1.7.1 Theoretical Contributions of Research**

There is very little research in marketing literature which examines the influences on existing consumers' attitudes towards the brand after it has changed its logo. Therefore, this research study adds to the existing literature by investigating how consumers assess the rebranding strategies, with the effect of their perceived new logo of their brand. Moreover, the study enhances the knowledge of the researchers with regard to the concept of consumer attitudes towards rebranding, and their importance for the success of the business. In addition, the research lays ground for further studies on similar topics.

### **1.7.2 Managerial Contributions of Research**

This research study tries to assess how consumers with different levels of perceived brand loyalty towards the initial brands evaluate rebranding strategies. Moreover, this study aims to identify the factors that might affect consumers' attitudes towards a brand after having new logos.

Through understanding those factors, marketers can design a suitable and comprehensive strategy with more caution on these factors, and thus achieve their marketing goals and strike a right balance between the needs and expectations of the existing consumers and potential customers. It then also becomes possible to maintain good profitability levels.

In addition, Walsh et al. (2006) mentioned that consumers who are loyal to brands are less willing to accept the changes, which might obstruct the effectiveness of rebranding as well as harm the relationship between the consumers and the brands. Hence, this study aims to remind marketers of the importance of

understanding the consumers' characteristics and the impacts of the demographic factors when designing and implementing rebranding strategies.

### **1.8 Assumptions**

The assumptions to this study include:

All customers in some way have an opinion about the rebranding process. To check on the viability of this assumption, a pilot study shall be conducted, and this will clarify whether the results will address the research problem as well as answer the research questions.

The next assumption is that all customers will give their honest opinion when answering questions during interviews and the survey. For this to occur, the anonymity and confidentiality of all the respondents will be preserved, and the participants will voluntarily participate. They will also be free to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any ramifications.

The third assumption is that those who participate in this study fully represent the customers of both companies in this study. To ensure this, they shall be randomly selected. In this way, it will be possible to avoid bias.

### **1.9 Limitations**

The most pertinent limitation of this study is time. Consumer attitudes may vary at different stages of the rebranding process, but due to limited time available for the study, their attitudes are generalised as part of the entire rebranding process. Therefore, the results only give a snapshot of information.

To deal with this limitation a recommendation for future studies in this area is given, as a longitudinal study may clear up any background issues.

### **1.10 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter provides a base for the construction of the dissertation and the background of the research study leading to the formulation of the research objectives. The chapter also details the significance of the study.

The subsequent chapters detail the implementation and progression of the concepts, processes and analyses applied to the data to achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions.

## **1.11 Thesis Layout**

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the thesis, and clearly outlines the research questions and objectives, as well as defining the problem statement and providing information on the general assumptions and limitations of the study.

The second chapter contains a literature review, which evaluates the theoretical background of branding, and explains the relevance of this in the rebranding process. It goes deeper and critically analyses consumer perceptions and attitudes towards branding and rebranding process.

The third chapter contains the theoretical justification of the study factors, and explains the basis of these factors.

The fourth chapter looks at the methodology that will be used to carry out the study. An explanation is given to explain the reason why a mixed-methodology was most appropriate for this study.

The fifth chapter contains an analysis of the data that was collected from the respondents of the study, both for the qualitative research and the quantitative research.

The final chapter contains a discussion of the results from the analysis, and concludes the thesis. In addition, practical recommendations are provided for future study and application.

## Chapter 2 : Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews previous studies relevant to the topic of this study. Specifically, literature from studies focusing on branding and rebranding strategies is highlighted, including definitions, reasons, research cases and studies. In addition, literature on logos, logos design, dimensions, and logo changes is reviewed. Following this, the consumers' attitudes theories are highlighted.

### 2.2 An Overview of the 'Brand' concept

The concept of "the brand and branding" dates back centuries. Moore and Reid (2008) argued that the origin of the brand can be traced back 4000 years. Keller (2006) confirmed that old people used ancient pottery and stonemason marks, and applied them to handcrafted goods in order to determine the source and quality of those products. This type of mark was named 'proto-brand' (Moore and Reid, 2008: 430). The 'proto-brands' were involved with information (either inherently or physically) attached to a product or product packaging. People used 'proto-brands' for different reasons; for example, they provided information about the original place of a given raw material. Through elaboration of this information some of the basic functions of marketing were performed. 'Proto-brands' helped remove uncertainty for customers, thereby reducing risk in purchase decisions and increasing perceived quality (Moore and Reid, 2008).

At the present time, besides the key role played by 'proto-brands' as conveyors of information about "origin and quality", the concept of the brand has become more complex. Whereas in the past, a brand was simple a means of communicating a products origin and quality, today the brand plays the key role of connecting a product to a customer by creating differentiation and preference for a product or service in the customer's mindset (Keller, 2006).

According to Kapferer (1997), the brand is a symbol whose role is to distinguish one company's product from another's. Knox (2000: 266) described the brand as "*a product or service, which a customer perceives to have distinctive benefits beyond price and functional performance*". The definition of a brand according to the American Marketing Association (AMA) is a "*name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition*" (Keller, 2006). These descriptions support the notion that the brand function fundamentally changed from descriptions of origin to objects of artifice. Keller (2006) identified different roles that brands play for both consumer and manufacturing parties.



On the consumers' side, brands serve as an identification of the source of product, assignment of responsibility to product maker, risk reducer, search cost reducer, promise, bond, or pact with maker of product, symbolic device, and a signal of quality (Keller, 2006:8).

The meaning imbedded in brands is more profound than before. Between the customer and brands, there exists various types of bonds. Customers offer their trust and loyalty to the brand, believing that the brand will behave as expected. Brands provide realizable advantages and benefits and derive satisfaction when purchased.

On the manufactures' side, brands serve as a means of identification to simplify handling or tracing, a means of legally protecting unique features, a signal of quality level to satisfied customers, a means of endowing products with unique associations, a source of competitive advantage and a source of financial returns (Keller, 2006:9)

To a firm, brands represent enormously valuable intangible assets, which enable the firm to influence customer behavior and establish inimitable competitive advantage to sustain long-term development (Keller, 2006). In the twentieth century, many advertising agencies gathered brands into strategic planning through developing the concept of brand hierarchies to implement single-line marketing, without losing flexibility of established proprietor brands as endorsements. Thus, brands offered immediate benefits to firms to protect their competitive advantage. In addition, they left a long-term legacy to facilitate further developments such as brand architecture. To some extent, the brand is synonymous to the company's name and reputation (Wheeler, 2006).

Today, brands have become powerful tools for manufacturers, especially when they are seeking to market their products or differentiate themselves in the market (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2012). With the passage of time, their brands become more seasoned – meaning they become more of a staple in the market. If they are powerful enough, they may be used to describe an entire product category, for example, asking for Colgate when you want toothpaste. This will only occur though, if the brand has successfully managed to remain relevant in the minds of consumers.

Those brands that have become seasoned and gained a good foothold in the market get to a point whereby they need to update to fit with new times. In addition, the customers are also likely to change, and in order to keep the interest of a new demographic, change becomes inevitable. Therefore, in order for the brand to survive, it must go through an intense process known as rebranding (Collange, 2015).

### **2.2.1 Branding Theories**

A significant part of marketing today revolves around branding. In fact, most people will identify with elements of a brand before they identify with a product, its uses and its various components. In this way, branded products have much more value than unbranded products.

There are numerous theories that surround branding, and most of them are aimed at measuring the value of a brand (Roper & Parker, 2006). One of the earliest theories was founded by Smith in 1956. It was through him that the concept of segmentation was born. He suggested that different variables depend on categories that consumer's target.

Also in 1956, Cunningham explored brand loyalty as a concept. It was heavily debated at the time, and was controversial, leading to marketers wondering whether it was worth striving for. In 1958, Martineau developed the theory of brand personality at exactly the same prices, similar quality and with equally good service, and customers were able to reveal a preference to one store over the other. This led to understanding the power behind a brand (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011).

Theories on branding started being further developed in the 1970's and 80's. At this point, branding theories revolved around the masses – mass producing, mass communication and mass marketing. By the time the 1990's was coming around, brands were developing to create an impression in the mind of the consumer through telling a story about the brand, hoping that there would be associated meanings attached (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011).

The theoretical aspects that started gaining importance at this juncture included positioning of a brand and brand equity.

Branding in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is also following a new theoretical perspective, and that includes the financial value of the brands. Theories now focus on brand equity, the value that the brand holds in the mind of the consumer. That is how to tell whether a brand is powerful or not.

Brands are now created using frameworks and processes to make them highly effective.

### **2.2.2 Branding Framework**

Brand development begins with brainstorming, where new ideas are expressed and discussed and then evaluated and scrutinized. The result of this brainstorming is a brand framework. A brand framework is the starting point of the brand. It is a structure that offers a large amount of flexibility, so that new thoughts can be considered in addition to the original idea (Giacomin, 2014).

The framework offers conceptual support and structure. This can later be transformed into the real representation of the brand. Using the framework, it is possible to continue building on an idea until there is a structure that proves to be highly useful.

Following the brainstorming, the framework is created and it has depth due to varying levels of information. All the concepts should be considered, and by doing so, the framework ends up with information that is overlapping and interrelated. It is this framework that forms the guide of the rationale behind the brand development, and will determine the information that you will consider relevant and that which you discard (Gardner, 2013).

Developing a framework requires the input of a team of people. The result of a framework is a unique evolution of the brand. The lack of rigidity allows brand exploration in a host of areas. Frameworks promote fluidity in brand development allowing for the accommodation of changing conditions, discovering new information, and having breakthroughs in branding insights.

During the process of rebranding, one can test various frameworks as they are being developed. There are likely to be many changes along the way, though at the core of brand development is room for continuous brand evolution.

### **2.2.3 Branding Process**

When a brand is being developed, it goes through a detailed and step by step process. This process is a systematic series of actions, the end of which results in the brand (Manthiou, et al., 2015).

Depending on the nature of the brand being developed, there will be some guiding principles and practices enacted, so that the brand is able to meet some predetermined deliverables. For any brand to succeed, it needs to be well thought out, clearly and accurately defined, and should have an issue or need that it is addressing. All this helps create a brand that is more predictable.

When rebranding, following a branding process is vital. This process will ensure that there is a level of consistency in the brand, particularly in its size and shape for a product, and composition or aesthetic for a service (Skaalsvik & Olsen, 2014). A process reveals that something which was previously imperfect has been taken and molded into something well-polished and standardized.

Brand processing ensures that the brand is able to meet certain deliverables. These include a clear distinction on the positioning of the brand, a brand story, a proper system of brand identity, all the elements that contribute to the architecture of the brand, and the brand promises (Gardner, 2013).

This allows for the brand to be easily replicable, especially if it is to be represented in more than one city or country. With a proper brand process, you meet the main criteria of delivering a brand, particularly when

rebranding. A good process ensures that the message your brand intends to communicate is clear and well received.

### **2.3 An Overview of Rebranding**

There are about as many reasons to rebrand a business as there are ways to do it. Some of these reasons are positive (two organizations have merged or a company has significantly expanded its offering), while others are less rosy (the current brand has been tainted in some way or has become outdated).

Regardless of the reason for rebranding, there are right and wrong ways to go about it. Before any changes are made, the extent of the rebranding should be determined. The basis of this decision will rest in why the business wants to change market perception.

Occasionally, rebranding is defined as revitalizing, rejuvenating or repositioning a brand – and sometimes, in essence, a brand is “reborn” (Muzellec et al, 2003). Muzellec et al (2003: 32) defined rebranding as “*the practice of building a new name representative of a differentiated position in the mind frame of stakeholders and a distinctive identity from competitors*”. Generally, the process of changing or updating of a brand image in the perception of numerous stakeholders is known as rebranding.

Rebranding is a strategic approach of firms to form new and differentiated positions and images in the minds of customers. Rebranding involves accepting new brand elements such as new name, slogan, logo, design or a mixture of them for established brands (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). Through these changes, brand perceptions are updated in customers’ minds as new brand elements can form new brand associations and meanings (Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007).

Despite the mounting popularity of using this strategy, numerous previous cases show that rebranding can be a risky and challenging strategy that could lead to serious damage of brand loyalty as well as brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). This strategy can be a costly practice with certain levels of reputation risk (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006; Stuart and Muzellec, 2004).

Despite these disadvantages or barriers to rebranding, Oman Air and National Bank of Oman have still taken the necessary steps towards achieving a rebranding goal. At the very least, they have updated their logo, both intending to send out a new message about what their organization’s stand for. These changes however, need to be done in such a way that the customers are still able to relate to all the elements that made them loyal to the brand. If anything, the rebranding process should enhance the core brand values.

Customers hold in high regard certain core brand values and if they perceive that these have been changed, they may feel betrayed by the rebranding exercise (Haig, 2003). Companies must work hard and ensure all rebranding steps are accurate to persuade their clients about the new vision. Rebranding strategy has become more popular in the market (Daly and Moloney, 2004; Keller, 1999; Muzellec and Lambkin,

2006). By changing the visual brand elements and repositioning, marketers try to stimulate the demands of existing customers and attract new ones by expanding the customer base. Many practitioners believe that a successful rebranding strategy can enhance brand image, brand attitudes, and brand associations (Andrews and Kim, 2007) and further stimulate consumer usage.

Rebranding may seem like a logical option for any business that is looking to refresh its image and reach a new target market. However, many companies tread carefully with rebranding because of one important factor – the possibility of failure. It is when the reward outweighs the risk, that rebranding becomes the most viable option for strengthening a brand (Chhibber & Shah, 2015).

## **2.4 Rebranding Failure Cases**

History has shown that rebranding has a light and a dark side. Rebranding can be a risky and challenging step, leading to serious damage to brand loyalty as well as brand equity in the market (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). There are numerous examples of companies re-branding and getting things horribly wrong. For example, in 1985, Coca-Cola rebranded by replacing their best and most successful drink with a new version. This in turn led to reduced sales as well as losing public consumer loyalty. Although the new drink may have tasted better than the original, they made one crucial mistake. They underestimated the strength of their brand, and therefore Coca-Cola needed to re-launch its original formula later in order to win their customers' hearts again.

British Airways, one failure example, changed its corporate look by “de-britishing” itself in the mid-1990s (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). This act made their loyal customers complain that the core elements of “Britishness”, which represented the traditional British culture of the airline, were gone. From these cases, it can be seen that the act of alienating their brand heritage, and disconnecting the initial and revitalized brands can upset existing customers and stimulate negative reactions towards the changes. It appears that the ability of preserving core brand values during rebranding could be one of the most important elements for customers to evaluate a renovated brand. Thus, the reaction of existing customers towards rebranding strategies with different perceptions of brand changes is investigated in this study.

Many studies on branding strategies have shown that making some changes to the original brand generates negative attitudes and feedback from customers (e.g. Walsh et al. 2006). For example, customers may not adjust to a change if they are emotionally bonded, or loyal to a brand as they may compare their past feelings and experiences during the new brand evaluation process. (Bloemer and Kasper, 1993) (Hem et al. 2003). Brand extension studies suggest that customer dissonance to the changes can be reduced by the perception of high brand image similarity (Hem et al. 2003).

## 2.5 Rebranding Framework

In the past few decades, rebranding has been a concern to both practitioners and researchers. Despite the increase in the popularity of rebranding issues, LaForet and Saunders (1994) and Keller (2002) maintained that no uniform branding strategies can be employed by all firms for all products and services because different firms have different structures and objectives. Rebranding strategies should also be modified for different firms based on their own needs and requirements, and for this reason, it is difficult to apply a common formula for rebranding.

Based on the analysis of former studies, there is no general framework for rebranding that has been generated (Merrilees, 2005). This explains why there is a lack of well-established guidelines to deal with consumer responses, which can affect the effectiveness of rebranding strategies' implementation. Many researchers are still trying to provide accurate definitions and useful insights on rebranding strategies for practitioners, as there should be some common problems faced by marketers when devising their own rebranding strategies.

According to Keller (1999), rebranding aims to expand the depth and/or breadth of brand awareness and improve the brand image made up by strength, favorability and uniqueness of brand associations. For Stuart and Muzellec (2004), it is a method that the firms use to improve and enhance the brand's image. Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) further describe this strategy of developing novel and differentiated brand images by building new brand elements such as name, symbol, terms or a combination of them.

In practice, marketing actions including advertising communication efforts, renovation of retail settings and changes in visual brand identities, are always taken when reinforcing refreshed brand images and sending a signal to the marketplace about brand changes when undergoing rebranding strategies (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). Numerous studies have discussed the motivations for firms which decide to rebrand. According to Keller (1999) and Andrews and Kim (2007), negative publicity, quality issues, changes in customers' needs and preferences, competitive actions, and new developments in the marketing environment are some reasons that firms may decide to revitalize their brands..

Apart from these, rebranding may happen because of some operational decisions, such as acquisition and divestment (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). Decisions to rebrand can also be attributed to changes of economic conditions. Few rebranding exercises occurred to create socially responsible corporate images.

There are extensive discussions on rebranding in different forms and natures in previous literature. Keller (1999) describes successful rebranding strategies as parts of repositioning without harming existing brand loyalty. The process of rebranding strategies could be done by modifying old sources and creating new sources of brand equity, which may contain new marketing programs, brand extensions and new distribution channels, in order to retain existing customers and tap into new markets.

Rebranding can be achieved with changes of brand identity which can be divided into three main types: Name, Logo and Slogan changes (Stuart and Muzellec, 2004). There are five types of possible combinations and these are: (1) Name plus Logo; (2) Name plus Logo plus Slogan; (3) Logo only; (4) Logo plus Slogan and (5) Slogan only. The extent of rebranding varies based on how many types of changes are involved. A change in only one of the elements can be regarded as a slight change to the brand while changes in all elements can be regarded as radical.

Instead of solely focusing on brand identity changes, rebranding can also be viewed as a continuum which can contain changing some or the whole of tangible (physical expressions) and intangible (values, image, feelings) elements (Daly and Moloney, 2004).

Rebranding that involves the changes of full name and the alterations in brand values and promises can be viewed as a complete change, creating a new position and image. However, the change of aesthetics or brand appearances from a simple face lift and repositioning of an existing brand to a new image via marketing tactics can be described as minor or intermediate changes.

While Daly and Moloney (2004) considered renaming as one of the crucial processes of rebranding, Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) asserted that both changes of marketing aesthetics and repositioning can also be rebranding approaches; minor to intermediate changes on logos and slogans can be classified as evolutionary, whereas complete changes symbolized by creating new names can be described as revolutionary. Beyond changes in marketing aesthetics, the level of repositioning is also important for the rebranding exercise which is related to the change of positioning of the brand. Some brands may choose to keep the same positioning even though visual elements of brand identity may be different in the course of the rebranding. In Muzellec and Lambkin's study (2006), the concept of rebranding can be classified into evolutionary rebranding and revolutionary rebranding, depending on the degree of changes in the marketing aesthetics and in the positioning of brands.

Evolutionary rebranding refers to the firms that add some few changes in their positioning and marketing aesthetics such as logo and slogan. Take the rebranding strategy of Circle K, for example; it revamped and renewed its store design and marketing communication programs to make an impression of "innovative and always something new" in customers' minds through a series of cumulative adjustments.

In contrast, revolutionary rebranding refers to the firms with a major change in their positioning. Aesthetics that can be considered as major changes in positioning may provide an important differentiation from old images for customers. For example, people may perceive Brand (A) as a mass market brand before rebranding but now consider Brand (A) as a luxury brand after rebranding. Furthermore, brand renaming is always used as a signal for revolutionary rebranding. Either one of the changes being perceived as significant, can be described as revolutionary rebranding.

Perceptions of the customers can be changed through rebranding, as well as the customers positions within the market (Andrews and Kim, 2007). For instance, when marketers fulfill rebranding, a new name, term, symbol, design, and visual identity device or mixture of each of them for an established brand may be created to differentiate the new position of both internal organizations and external markets (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006; de Chernatony and Riley, 1998). When new items are offered to the target market, new customer also find encouragement to make purchases.

## **2.6 Rebranding Studies in Marketing Literature**

This section reveals and discusses the previous studies that have been conducted in the area of branding and rebranding strategies in marketing literature (table 2.1).

There is a lack of studies on the attitudes of existing consumers towards different rebranding strategies. Majority of studies on rebranding emphasise the view point of the firm and their rebranding decisions (Munthree, Bick and Abratt, 2006) or the management of rebranding process, such as modifying employees' conduct and visual identity program (e.g. Melewar et al., 2005; Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006; Gotsi and Andriopoulos, 2007 ; Merrilees and Miller, 2008).

Numerous studies now evaluate co-branding as a part of rebranding (Singh, et al., 2014), and analyse how customers react to these strategies. There are also studies that look at the customers perceptions of rebranding strategies (Chhibber & Shah, 2015) (Collange, 2015) and their reaction to the strategies, but there is still a significant gap in studies that look at the customers attitudes towards rebranding strategies.

Andrews and Kim (2007) examined the consequences of rebranding from customer perspective, focusing on a multinational brand that is negatively perceived by the local consumers for various reasons including poor quality or negative publicity.

Table 2.1 reveals that only one study explored rebranding effectiveness by measuring customer perception towards brands after rebranding (Andrews and Kim, 2007). The other studies were mainly qualitative research and case studies and only three of them adopted the survey design.

Respondents of all these studies were students and staff members rather than actual customers (Hankinson and Lomax, 2006; Alshebil, 2007; Andrews and Kim, 2007). Most of the studies were undertaken in western settings. Two of them were conducted in African settings (Ewing et al., 1995; Munthree et al., 2006).

Quantitative study focusing on the impact of customer characteristics on the evaluations of rebranding is limited, while these characteristics have been investigated in other branding strategies, such as brand extensions (Hem et al., 2003). Only one research measured attitude towards rebranding from the staff perspective (Hankinson and Lomax, 2006).



**Table 2.1: Previous Studies in Rebranding**

SN	Research by	Objective	Motivation	Methodology and Target	Results
1	Ewing, Fowlds and Shepherd (1995)	To analyze the rebranding strategy of a brand with an established but undifferentiated position	Mazda brand in South Africa	Archival data	Rebranding strategies can be long-term battle and voice of customer is important for building a strong brand
2	Keller (1999)	To summarize the processes for reinforcing and revitalizing Brands and the impacts on customer based brand equity	--	Theory	--
3	Muzellec, Doogan and Lambkin (2003)	To explore the phenomenon of corporate rebranding by using renaming approaches	Vodafone Ireland	In-depth interview Management, employees and customers	A corporate rebranding framework dealing with renaming is proposed
4	Stuart and Muzellec (2004)	Rebranding motivation, types of changes and evaluation of corporate rebranding effectiveness	Discussion of rebranding Organizations from different industries	Archival materials	Concluding the reasons for rebranding, categorizing the changes and providing evaluation guidelines
5	Melewar, Hussey and Srivoravilai (2005)	To investigate the rebranding process from corporate visual identity perspective	France Telecom	Archival materials	Rebranding has positive feedbacks but still remains some confusions on structure and visual identity
6	Hankinson and Lomax (2006)	Evaluation of staff knowledge, staff attitudes and staff behaviors	10 large UK charities	Quantitative, survey 465 charity staff	Knowledge, Attitudes: Behavior (staff retention)
7	Muzellec and Lambkin (2006)	To understand the drivers of rebranding and the impact of rebranding on brand equity	166 rebranded companies and Case studies	Descriptive data; In-depth interviews 10 customers and 2 ex-employees	Structural changes are main reasons for rebranding;
8	Munthre, Bick and Abratt (2006)	To investigate how large organization revitalize brands using a line extension into premium categories	Beverage brands in South Africa	In-depth interview 11 senior marketers	An upscale line extension can be an effective rebranding strategy

<b>10</b>	Andrews and Kim (2007)	Factors influencing the revitalization of a multinational brand with negative publicity	Multinational brand original in USA	Quantitative surveys (Pilot test and Main study 210 US students and 213 US students	Innovative product improvements, Warranty programs, Third party appraisal, Advertising communications.
<b>11</b>	Gotsi and Andriopoulos (2007)	Generate empirical insights on the pitfalls in corporate rebranding process	UK telecommunication firm	Qualitative study and (In-depth interview) 14 executives	Highlight four key pitfalls in corporate rebranding (e.g. disconnecting with the core, multiple identities)

*Source: Developed for this research*

Following extensive review and search by this researcher, no other studies provide empirical evidence on another consequence of rebranding, i.e. consumers attitudes towards the renovated brand which has changed its logo. In view of the above, this study sets out to provide empirical findings for understanding consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.

## **2.7 Rebranding Methods**

The literature discloses several methods for rebranding processes.

Berry (1988) introduced seven steps for the implementation of rebranding programs. He recommended that initially, a marketer needs to create a brand association of excellent quality and then review how a consumer perceives the brand quality. Following this, appropriate establishment of a relationship between customers and the brand should be done including recognition of customer needs. The marketer needs to be aware of the perceived brand values which are important for the brand. These values should be retained and expressed to the customers. To ensure that a unique image is formed for the customer, the marketer needs to identify and promote differentiating characteristics or marks of the brand. Customers have multitudinous sources of brand perceptions and they need to organize their marketing mix to ensure that a uniform message is given during rebranding. Finally, to increase customer awareness of rebranding strategies, impressive and eventful promotion campaigns can be used.

Berry (1998) suggested rebranding guidelines, however, these may be too broad for marketers who need to address diverse issues when work on varying approaches to rebranding, such as, logo design and renaming. Also, it has been realized by practitioners that accomplishing the rebranding process may be difficult as customer expectations and the market change rapidly.

Merrilees and Miller (2008), proposed six principles which remind practitioners to be more attentive to the potential traps so as to make rebranding more effective. First, it is recommended that brand visions should be fit for rebranding processes and work hard on satisfying the core ideology of the brand and, at the same time, remain relevant to contemporary conditions. Second, some core or peripheral brand concepts may need to be retained as they can bridge the gap between studies and the desires of the new target market thoroughly if the purpose of rebranding is to increase market share.

Third, they must consider the needs of existing customers in order to enhance the relationship. Fourth, communications, training and internal marketing can be used to offer a high level of brand orientation to employees so as to raise the effectiveness of the rebranding process. Fifth, rebranding messages can be sent effectively to customers through a high level of integration and coordination of all aspects of marketing mix with aligning brand elements. Sixth, promotion is very important to notify the stakeholders about the revitalized brand.

Although the discussed points highlight the rebranding process, Keller (1999) recommends a thorough brand audit on brand health through checking brand equity sources. This should be undertaken prior to revitalizing brands from both the company and customer perspectives. By understanding the current and desired brand knowledge structures, companies can best refresh old sources of brand equity or create new sources to accomplish the intended outcomes with the guidance of the customer-based brand equity framework. Such understanding can also imply the importance of the similarity between the initial and renewed brand images.

For this study, both Oman Air and National Bank of Oman appear to have had the customers in mind when they were making changes to their brands. Their incorporation of imagery that was culturally relevant to their rebranding logos is in line with the recommendations given by Berry (1989). Both brands have also taken on board the principles by Merrilees and Miller (2008) by ensuring that there was adequate time spent promoting the rebranding exercises, so as to ensure that all the stakeholders were in the know.

Finally, they did not go the extreme in their rebranding exercises and change everything about the brand. Both companies maintained organizational structures and operations, so that the rebranding process was primarily aesthetic, and then followed by limited operational updates.

## **2.8 Rebranding, Brand Extensions and Co-Branding**

In order to create rebranding, marketers frequently use both brand extensions and co-branding. Numerous studies have suggested that rebranding, brand extensions and co-branding are effective for strengthening brands and creating new brand values (e.g. Keller 1999, Kapferer 2004; Munthre et al. 2006). One common strategy in marketing is brand extension. In brand extension, an existing and established brand name is used to introduce new product categories. Due to the familiarity that consumers have, as well as

their product and brand knowledge, the brand can have more of an impact as the consumers are able to form favourable attitudes towards the extended brand, as well as strengthening the image of the parent brands (Aaker and Keller, 1990). A marketing strategy where two or more established brands are jointly presented to consumers is known as co-branding (Simonin and Ruth, 1998).

Consumer attitudes and experiences towards original brands can be affected by attitudes and behavioral intention towards the co-branded products (Helmig et al. 2007; Park et al. 1996). Rebranding strategies, brand extensions and co-branding share some similarities based on the literature. Primarily, development of customer recognition towards brands and the implementation of the other approaches normally does not visualize customers' brand recognitions.

Next, these approaches intent to retain existing customers while tapping into new markets through preservation of the core brand values from the existing brands and new value and image creation from extended and revamped brands (Keller, 1999; Martinez and de Chernatony, 2004).

Subsequently, transformation of customer attitudes and perceptions towards the initial brands may occur when assessing the rejuvenated or extended brands for perceived similarities between the initial brands and the “new” brands (Hem et al. 2003; Andrews and Kim, 2007).

Depending on these similarities, the research' outcomes on brand extension are applied to make some predictions and inferences into the rebranding context while studies on rebranding strategies from customer perspective are comparatively restricted.

## **2.9 Outcomes of Rebranding**

Rebranding as a broadly used branding strategy, looks to enhance brand equity in the minds of customers through enhancing and refreshing the brand perceptions and images, as well as improving sales performances of the firm. The definition by Aaker (1991:15), states that brand equity can be viewed as added value given by the brands, in terms of *“a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a company and/or to that company's customers”*. In other words, it is imperative to understand how brand value is created in customers' minds and translates into their purchase behaviors.

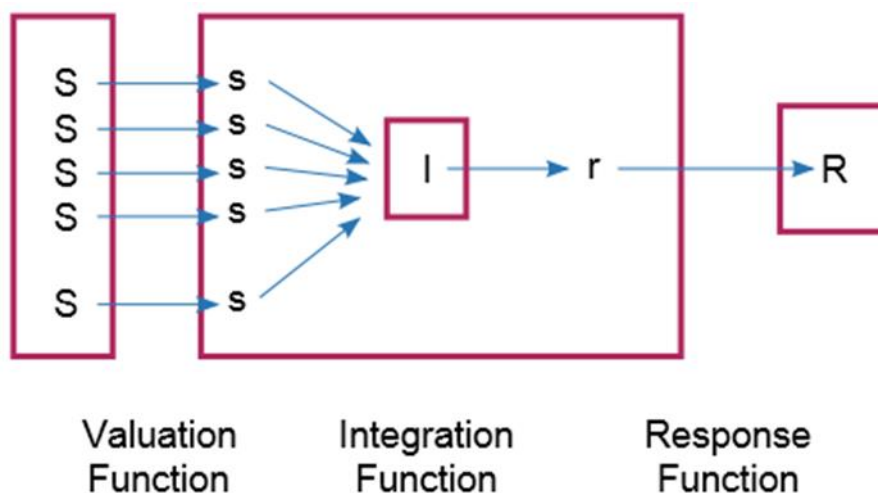
According to Cobb-Walgren et al (1995), operationalization of brand equity from a customer basis comprises customer perceptions (e.g. Brand association and images) and customer behavioral intention (e.g. repurchase over time). Successful rebranding should also help develop customers' perceptions towards the brands and encourage their consumptions (Keller, 1999). As a result, developments in customers' perceptions towards the restored brand and their behavioral intentions can be taken into consideration for evaluating the effectiveness of rebranding in strengthening customer-based brand equity.

When evaluating the outcomes of rebranding, it is critical to have information based on consumer attitudes and perceptions. It is from these that the relevance of the rebranding strategy will be evaluated, so that one can examine the profitability possibility of the rebranding that is carried out.

## 2.10 Consumers' Attitudes Development towards Rebranding Strategies

A study by Peter and Olson (2005) found that the consumers' evaluation of rebranding strategies can be considered in terms of attitude towards the concepts or affective responses of consumers (Peter and Olson, 2005). Many scholars tried to measure the consumers' attitudes towards different branding strategies or the brands from an attitudinal perspective (e.g. Hem et al. 2003; Helmig et al. 2007; Salinas and Perez, 2009).

An individual's attitude is essentially formed through motivation to get new information and integrating personal experiences, knowledge and beliefs. This section identifies various related literature and research studies to illustrate ways that attitudes are created and measured in the context of some branding strategies.



*Source: Adopted from Anderson, 1981*

**Figure 2.1: Information Integration Theory, Anderson (1981)**

Various factors clarify the ways that attitudes before rebranding strategies are formed and there are one theory and one model can be applied to describe such attitude formation. The first one known as “Information Integration Theory (figure 2.1)”. According to Anderson (1981), when presented with new information, an individual will not agree with it fully or replace an existing attitude. Alternatively, a new attitude can be formed in the individual's mind through mingling, integrating or joining their own current attitudes and new information. Therefore, new attitudes to some extent, may be affected by updated information or current attitudes rather than either one of them.

According to this theory, once marketing strategies are launched, it can be inferred that customers tend to appraise marketing strategies and form new attitudes impacted by their existing attitudes and new

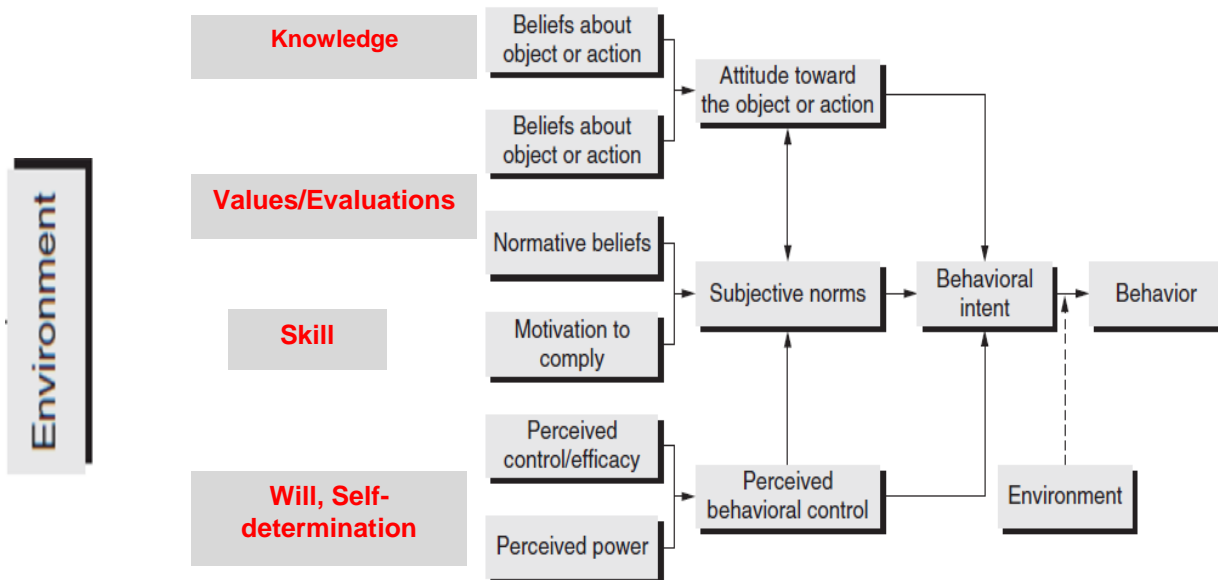
information gained. In agreement with this theory, Czellar (2003) recommends that customers may evaluate brand extension strategies with the influence of their own established attitudes towards the parent brand. He maintained that customers who are not familiar with the parent brand may probably assess the extension solely on the basis of their experience with the extended brand. In contrast, customers tend to evaluate the new extension of the brand on the basis of the attitude towards the parent brand, with the result of the perception of similarities between the parent brand and the extensions.

Similar arguments could also be applied to rebranding strategies that contain both the original brand and revived brand when customers probably possess knowledge and attitudes towards both the original and revived brand.

The “Expectancy Value Model” (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), is one of the most popular conceptualizations of attitude formation and it is used to explain the process of attitude formation. Ajzen (2001) stated that an individual’s overall attitude towards an object can be affected by the subjective values or beliefs towards the objects in interaction with evaluations towards them. In other words, customers’ overall attitudes towards branding strategies can be shaped by blending all salient beliefs of customers towards the strategies interacted with the strength of evaluation of each of the beliefs as good or bad (Pitta and Katsanis, 1995).

The concept of attitude is always theoretically associated with evaluative criteria in the marketing field, which can also be applied on diverse theoretical orientations. Customers will have favorable attitudes if they believe some of their functional desires (e.g. durability, fragrance) and unconscious motives (e.g. need for femininity, power) can be achieved by the products or services (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

Smith and Swinyard (1983) indicated that the attitude measure depends on the expectancy value model as they believed that assessment is frequently viewed as a multi-attribute decision process. In their study, attribute evaluations can be measured by asking respondents to evaluate each attribute with seven-point scales from “extremely bad” to “extremely good”.



*Source: Adopted from Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980*

**Figure 2.2 Expectancy Value Model, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980)**

When customers are exposed to marketing communications and experiences associated with the brand, brand attitude can be formed in customers' minds which may encourage their purchase intention (Aaker, 1991). In another study by Aaker and Keller (1990), attitude is conceptualized in terms of customers' perceptions of the overall quality of the brand, which is a global assessment of consumer judgment on the superiority of a product. Yet, brand attitude can be described as effective evaluations that customers make of a brand, which can be positive or negative feelings held about the association (Haugtvedt et al., 1992; Garvin, 1984; Keller, 1993).

Generally, based on previous studies, brand attitude can be regarded as a multiplicative function of (1) the strengths of associated attributes and benefits that are noticeable for the brand (the extent to which customers believe the brand possesses particular qualities and benefits) and (2) the evaluative judgment or favorability on those beliefs (how good or bad it is that the brand possesses those qualities and benefits) (Keller, 2008). Furthermore, brand attitude can also be reflected from consumers' favorability, perceived quality and likelihood of trying (Salinas and Perez, 2009; Aaker and Keller, 1990). Despite many articles investigating the influence of rebranding strategies on organizations and internal staff, not much empirical research has concentrated on the measurements of the effects of rebranding strategies from the consumers' perspective.

Brand image and brand association can be regarded as the elements of brand knowledge which form customer-based brand equity in attitudinal nature (Keller, 2003). Consequently, the key for branding strategies to succeed is to establish a positive brand image in terms of favorability, strength and uniqueness

of brand association and as a result, customers probably respond positively, and different types of customer-based brand equity can be produced relying on the development of brand knowledge.

It is believed that a successful rebranding strategy can help develop customer-based brand equity of the firm, which means that the strength, favorability and uniqueness of brand associations have been improved and made a better brand image and brand attitude directly based on current or new brand association, and the improvement of brand association perceptions tends to lead to a favorable behavior intention (Keller, 1999). Moreover, a study by Andrews and Kim (2007) asserts that brand images, brand attitudes and brand associations as certain aspects of brand equity, could display positive improvements proven by a successful revitalized brand. As a result, brand perceptions of customers, reflected by brand images, brand associations and brand attitudes, can act as good measurements on rebranding outcome.

Brand image is the current view by customers about a brand (Aaker, 1991). It is also described as the overall impression in the consumer's mind that is formed from all sources (Biel, 1992). Keller (1993) further explained brand image as a multi-dimensional concept which can be described as consumers' perception of a brand which is reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. A positive brand image can strengthen the effectiveness of marketing communication and enhance the brand equity which can bring various competitive advantages. For example, better brand image can positively impact perceptions towards quality, value and price.

Consequently, developing a brand image strategy is considered as the most important step when planning to position a brand in the marketplace (Park et al., 1986). If companies take a series of marketing actions containing advertising communication efforts, renewal of retail settings and changes in visual brand identities - as parts of rebranding strategies - the change of brand image may appear in customers' minds when new associations are formed from the new marketing actions.

These changes in brand image will often directly affect the attitude of a consumer, where the consumer associates the change with something positive or negative. The basis of this is the behavioural intention of the updated brand image. The company will be looking to elicit a particular response from the customer with every move that they make to change the product image.

## **2.11 Behavioural Intentions**

Based on past research, actual behavior can be predicted by behavioural intentions, which are determined by attitudes and subjective norms (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977, 1980). Fishbein and Manfredo (1992) also expound and explain that these intentions could be accurate predictors of most social behaviors.



A significant element in making customer based brand equity operationalization is behavioural intention. A customer change in behavioural intention may be a reflection of ways in which brand equity is enhanced following marketing of brands. Strong customer based brand equity can entice customers to purchase more in terms of frequency and quantity and eventually help firms to make greater profits (Keller, 2008).

At the start, uni-dimensional measures are used to evaluate behavioural intention by adopting a purchase intention scale (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). Later, additional indicators including willingness to pay more and word of mouth are used to predict the behavioral intentions. Zeithaml et al. (1996) conducted a comprehensive study to describe the ways in which customer's intent to act and they recommended that behavioural intentions be evaluated based on perspectives which were favourable or unfavourable.

These perspectives offer certain indicators. Zeithaml et al found that favorable behavioral intentions relate with a service provider's ability to support its customers to act in the following ways: 1) positive word-of-mouth, 2) suggestion of service of the company to other consumers, 3) remaining loyal to companies (i.e., repurchase intentions), 4) increase in spending with the company, and 5) likelihood of paying price premiums. However, behavioural intentions which were unfavourable included switching to competitors, complaining, spending less with the company and saying negative things.

These listed indicators have been adopted in research studies which evaluate the behavioral intentions of customers. One of the significant aims of implementing marketing communications is to obtain favorable responses from customers (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998).

Evaluating behavioural intention rather than actual behavior is done for three main reasons (Río, Vázquez and Iglesias, 2001). First, brand strength affects not only actual behavior, but also sales promotions among other motives. Second, controlling and measuring actual behaviours in research is difficult; by contrast, Sherman (1980) showed that intention of individuals can lead to behaviors consistent with their stated intention. Third, behavioral intention can reflect and expect the autonomous tendency of an individual to act in a definite way in the near future (Franzen, 1990); and in that way potential influences of rebranding strategies entailing upon the brand can be approximated.

A largely adopted predictor of actual behavior is behavioural intention. Behavioural intention measures how effective marketing strategies are as they generate profits and improve sale performance as these are the ultimate goals of launching marketing strategies (Helmig et al., 2007). In addition to these, behavioral intention is an indicator to appraise how customers perceived the services in many previous studies. For example, behavioral intention is used to evaluate the influence of quality, value and customer satisfaction in service environments to know whether and how better quality, value and higher satisfactions are perceived by customers which can induce favorable behavioral intention (e.g. Zeithaml et al., 1996; Cronin et al., 2000).

Also, numerous studies on brand extension (e.g. Lane, 2000; Bhat and Reddy, 2001) discuss behavioral intention in experimental settings so as to have a deeper understanding of the impact of brand extension strategies on customers' behaviors. Yet given the existing literature in rebranding, empirical evidence on behavioral intention is still limited and rather indirect.

## **2.12 Brand Preferences**

Brand preference is a consumer's bias towards a particular brand. In other words, it refers to the fact that consumers prefer a service or a product of a company even though there are other companies offering the same product or service in the market. When a consumer prefers products or services of a particular company this reflects the cognitive or emotional factors formed in his memory that made him prefer this brand, which, in turn, contributed to the growth of loyalty towards the brand (Hellier et al, 2003).

Preference for brands is not only subject to consumer behaviour factors or those adopted during the campaign advertising and promotion, but also to other perspectives for the construction of preferences (Hoeffler and Ariely, 1999). For example, the model of consumer buying behaviour assumes that individual's brand preference is shown to directly influence his sensitivity to and distortion of information. This is may be due to the need to defend the cognitive meanings and resulting preferences which, from previous experience or information, have been attached to various brands.

Hoeffler and Ariely (1999) pinpointed that economic theory supposed that consumers' choices indicate their underlying needs and wants which are tapped from their existing preferences, and the constructive perspective argued that consumers form their preferences at a given situation based on the task and factors which are present during the choice elicitation.

However, there is another assumption (Heilman et al, 2000), which confirms that the preference for the brand evolves in the final stage of the purchasing process. It happens at the stage of consolidation of information with the consumer who has a great deal of previous experience, as the relative degree of information reflects the level of previous experience and knowledge of the product or service. Furthermore, the product experiences provide the consumer with learning and more credible information resulting in product preference (Hamilton and Thompson, 2007).

Marketing is moving towards the perspective that consumers learn from their previous experiences and adapt their consumption behavior over time to reflect both their own learning and changes in their environment. With increased experiences, consumers' preferences can change and stabilize over time (Hoeffler and Ariely, 1999). Accordingly, brand preference might be an important consequence of a consumer's prior experience with brands. Preferences for an object can change radically with experience while its properties remain constant.

## 2.13 Brand Loyalty

The marketing literature has different definitions of brand loyalty. For example, Aaker (1991) defines brand loyalty as *“the attachment that a customer has to a brand”*, whereas Oliver (1999) identifies brand loyalty as *“deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetition of same-brand or same brand set purchasing, despite situational influence and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviors”*. A third definition is provided by Yoo and Donthu (2001) who concluded their research on brand loyalty by assuming that brand loyalty is the tendency to be loyal to a brand, and this can be shown by the intention of the consumer to buy the brand as a foremost choice.

From the previous definitions, it is obvious that the definition of brand loyalty in terms of behavior deals with the sincerity of brand loyalty, which is to buy and re-buy a product of that brand; while, in terms of attitudes it emphasizes that there is an intention purely for the brand.

Brand loyalty can be divided into two approaches: the first one is the behavioral approach and the second is the attitudinal approach (Odin et al, 2001). The behavioral loyalty approach is comprised of reported purchases of the brand, its advantage being that it measures observable behaviors rather than self-reported deposition or intention. It is easier and cheaper to measure (Dekimpe et al, 1997).

The attitudinal loyalty approach can be referred to as the extent of dispositional promises with respect to some particular advantages connected with the brand, while behavioural loyalty has to do with the intention to repeat a purchase (Chaudhuri and Holbrooks, 2001).

There are four different stages the consumer goes through to reach the stage of complete loyalty to the brand (Oliver, 1997). These are beliefs, effects, intentions and actions. The consumer moves from one stage to another during spaced times and it all depends on the deal which he gets from the company.

The first phase of brand loyalty, cognitive loyalty, begins by known consumer knowledge and preliminary information on the brand attributes that the consumer has, and thereby his or her beliefs. This phase is the weakest phase of brand loyalty where the company can lose the consumer easily, based on his/her recent negative experience with the product provided or service obtained. However, if the consumer feels that the brand has offered him/her a new and good experience, it could lead him/her to go to the second phase of brand loyalty, the affective loyalty phase (Oliver, 1997).

The second phase in the model of Oliver (Oliver, 1997) is called the stage of affective loyalty, which is based on the emotions and mood of the consumer as well as the stage of satisfaction obtained by the consumer in the first phase. In this second stage, the consumer has formed an opinion towards the brand based on the use of the product or service in the first phase and the satisfaction he/she received previously

from this experience. Unlike the first phase, it is difficult at this stage to change the impression of the consumer towards other brands because he/she had formed an opinion about this brand - usually this view was the result of convictions deeper than just a product or service experience. With all that, companies must consider the development of their relationship with consumers even when they are deeply convinced with the brand to prevent them from switching brands.

The third phase in the model is called conative loyalty; the word conative refers to the intention to act or behave in a certain way. At this stage, it is clear that the consumers are satisfied with the performance of a frequently-provided service or product, with this satisfaction leading to strong commitment towards the brand. This commitment, in turn, leads to an intention to buy the brand in the future as a result of raising consumer loyalty to the brand. Here it should be noted that the consumer at this stage will have the intention to buy the brand, but perhaps not to turn to the actual performance. In fact, the consumer at this stages has the intention to buy the brand only, without the implementation of these intentions in practice. Therefore, the company should understand and encourage consumers to move to the fourth stage of loyalty.

In the fourth stage of loyalty model, the final phase is called action loyalty, which is the most powerful and the most profound form of loyalty. In this stage the consumers transform their intentions to buy a brand into real action. Oliver (1997) believed that the repeated purchase of the brand necessarily leads to a higher degree of loyalty towards that brand. In addition to this, the consumer will be willing to use his/her time and resources to search for a particular brand because it is favored by the rest of the brands on the market.

## **2.14 Brand Association**

Brand association construct always occurs and its impact on various areas has been debated in recent studies as brand association can assist customers to create an image and generate an attitude towards the brand. Brand association, defined as any association linked to the brand in memory, is one of the most important parts of consumer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993). Brand association is anything which is deep-seated in the customer's mind about the brand.

Simply speaking, brand association involves the meaning of the brand for customers by linking information of brands in terms of product attributes, perceived benefits, usage situations and many summaries of appraisals of brands (Farquhar and Herr, 1993; Broniarczyk and Alba, 1994).

Customers tend to depend on the brand association to form a brand image (Biel, 1992) and then appraise the brand by favorability, strength and uniqueness of the association (Keller, 1993). For example, when you are talking about a well-known brand to the consumer, the consumer remembers the features of this brand's products, the benefits obtained by the consumer of those products, and uses of the product, lifestyle, and the layers of the product, competitors and the country origin of that product. This exists with varying degrees from one brand to another.

Marketers can create associations in customers' minds through building brand identity and launching suitable marketing programs like product positioning and advertising to formulate desired features of the brand in a customer's mind (Pitta and Katsanis, 1995). Brand should be associated with something positive so that the customers relate it to being positive. Brand associations are the attributes of the brand which come into the consumer's mind when the brand is talked about. Likewise, any changes in both marketing actions and product attributes associated to the brand can alter customers' memories related with the brand which create new images and attitudes towards the brand.

An association with a brand can affect processing and remembering information about its products or services, and the points of difference between them and their counterparts. It also provides a real reason to buy them, which is the creation of positive attitudes and feelings towards the brand. The association that is established towards a certain brand can affect the buying behavior and the satisfaction of its users. Even when the association with a brand is not at task, users can play an important role in reducing the incentive to try or experience other brands in the market (Aaker, 1992).

Brand associations may take different forms. One of the methods used to distinguish between brand associations is the level of abstraction, and this volume summarizes the information in the brand associations. Within this dimension, the types of brand associations can be classified into three main types: (1) attributes, (2) benefits, and (3) attitudes - and within these three main categories many additional differences can be found according to the nature of the association (Tuominen, 1999).

The first type of brand associations are brand attributes (Tuominen, 1999). Brand attributes are *"those descriptive features that characterize a product or service"* (Keller, 1993: 46). Attributes can be distinguished according to the extent they relate directly to the performance of the product or service. They can be divided into two parts: the first is product-related and the second is non-product-related (Tuominen, 1999).

The type of product-related attributes are related to ingredients necessary for the performance of primary product or service that are being looked for by the consumers, therefore they relate to the physical formations of the product or service requirements provided to the consumers (Keller, 1998). Product-related attributes can be further distinguished according to essential ingredients and optional features, either necessary for a product to work, or allowing for customization and more versatile, personalized usage (Tuominen, 1999).

Non-product-related attributes as external aspects of the product or service that relate to its purchase or consumption (Tuominen, 1999). They may affect unrelated products on the purchase or consumption processes but do not directly affect the performance of the product because they are not concerned with its internal aspects. The four main types of non-product-related attributes are (1) price information, (2)

packaging or product appearance information, (3) user imagery i.e., what kind of a person uses the product or service, and (4) usage imagery, i.e. where and in which situations the product or service is used.

## **2.15 Beyond Logos**

One of the contemporary studies (though somewhat preliminary) that looked at the importance of logos was that by Manville (1965). He reported on an experiment where two identical ads were experienced for effectiveness through unaided recall and aided recall. Both advertisements were accurately identical except for the logo used; one was “the usual logotype Philips, the other was a ‘dummy’ logo. The advertisement with the well-known brand name logo was better received than the other one.

Does the presence of a logo (symbol) add any value to a brand name? Schechter (1993) provided a way of measuring the added value of a logo through its image participation and recognition/association. Subjects were separated into three main groups: the first was shown the company/brand name only in black, the next was shown the icon (symbol) only in color, and the third was shown both the name and icon together in color.

*“The difference in scores between the “Full Logo” cell and the “Name Only” cell determined the image contribution of the logo design”*. Fifty five percent of the logos seemed to influence image perception whether positively or negatively, but at the same time 45% of the logos had an insignificant effect. Moreover, it was found that in terms of image contribution, pictorials and letter symbols seemed to have significantly higher scores than characters, abstracts, and word marks. On the other hand, in terms of recognition, characters and letter symbols scored better than pictorials and much better than abstracts.

Another study Giberson and Hulland (1994) found that when a product category is cued in a logo, the logo is retrieved faster from memory. In another study, Fang and Mowen (2005) focus on factors that would influence the effectiveness of a logo’s design.

Based on Henderson and Cote’s (1998) logo design dimensions, the authors manipulated two logo design characteristics. These are namely the representative/abstract and angular/rounded dimensions. The dependent variables used were: attitude towards the logo, attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the companies, and the perception of companies’ modernisms. The results showed that the effect of roundness of the logo on the different evaluations was moderated by the product category (i.e. an angular logo was chosen for the building and a round logo was chosen for the vase). Additionally, the effect of logo representativeness and roundness on evaluations was also moderated by visual arts orientation (an individual difference factor).

In “creating effective logos,” Kohli, Suri and Thakor (2002) provided their thoughts on the “two facets of logo design: content and style,” where content referred to the “elements contained in the logo, including

text and graphic representation” and style referred to “how these elements are presented” in a graphical sense. The authors provided some guidelines to making effective logos, and of the guidelines presented, they said that a logo design image should be carefully chosen, since “a strong image may take a long time to build but an even longer time to shed”.

Logos should also reflect the “big picture, and guarantee stability over time and between the variety of elements” of brand identity, i.e. the name, logo, and slogan. Firms were also advised not to run after fads in logos designs, and to remain concentrated on a brand’s specific marketing objectives when designing logos. Finally, the authors advise managers that logos have to be showed to the market before launching and that feedback has to be obtained not only from designers but consumers as well.

### **2.15.1 Logo and Organization Performance**

The logo evaluation was extended to the evaluation of the organization itself by Stafford, Tripp and Bienstock (2004). They investigated the relationship “between consumers’ perceptions of a logo, the organization it represents and the organization’s performance”. The relationship between the perceived image of the logo and the organization perceptions was found to be positively significant.

In addition, the relationship between organization perceptions and performance perceptions was also found to be positively significant. A significant positive relationship was found upon further analyses of logo attractiveness and performance perceptions. Nevertheless, Stafford, Tripp and Bienstock (2004) stated that the relationship between logo image and performance perceptions “*occurs to be mediated by organizational perceptions*”.

Similarly, the effect of a logo design on attitude towards the firm and the perception of the firm’s modernism were studied by Fang and Mowen (2005). They found that the respondents had a better attitude towards the firm for a round logo versus an angular logo (but only for the vase logo stimuli and not the building logo). Moreover, subjects who were high in visual orientation (an individual factor) perceived the firm as more modern than those with a low visual orientation (for the building logo). On the other hand, subjects who had low visual orientation perceived the firm as more modern when the logo was abstracted versus realistic.

### **2.15.2 Logo Changes**

Van Riel et al (2001) conducted a study focusing on a Dutch bank logo and customer assessments before and after the launch of the updated logo. These assessments compared the new logo with an additional two competitor’s logos. More associations (graphical and referential) were generated towards a highly familiar logo than that to a new logo (without the name). “The new logo did not only evoke more clusters of meanings” but “it also evoked a wider variety of interpretations”. When the subjects were shown the name

of the company with the new logo, the set of associations were further increased. After the launch of the new logo, which was implanted within a nation-wide advertising campaign, *“the positive associations increased and the negative evaluations decreased”*.

Hem and Iversen (2004) presented a framework for destination logo development (related to travel and tourism) and reflected the important stakeholders involved. They presented three partners that were involved in developing a destination logo: the logo owner (employees, stakeholders and cooperating sub-companies), the logo recipient (tourist segments, travel agencies, and tour operators), and the logo developer (consultants, designers, and printing agents). Those that were recognizable, meaningful and positively affective were considered good logos.

Hem and Iversen (2004) used the Fjord Norway destination organization logo in their study. They addressed the “vision of how the destination should be perceived” and conducted some qualitative interviews with the three partners involved to get their views on the current logo (which was thought to be in need of updating). A survey collected input from the logo recipients about their logo familiarity, design evaluation, and representativeness thought between the logo and its destination (meaning how well the logo represents and fits the travel destination). This was then followed by a third study, where a number of destination logos were developed and the recipients were asked to select the best. The choice reflected by most of the logo recipients did not seem to agree with that of the logo developers (designers).

The authors finally created a flow diagram for developing a destination logo that depends mainly on two major phases (logo assessment and logo creation). In the logo evaluation phase, the vision required from the logo is assessed and the response from the logo owner, developer, and recipient about the existing logo is considered. In the second phase, a series of logos are presented and the logo recipients’ top choice is adopted.

In the case of a logo change, there are some guidelines: “if a logo is changed, the change should be made in (1) content, when it is warranted by a change in brand strategy, or (2) style, when the need for an update is felt” (Kohli et al., 2002). However, the changes to the logo should be kept to a minimum. They further say that if logos are to be changed, “they should be changed for content, not for style, and the change should be incremental” (Kohli et al., 2002).

The consumer’s perceptions of a logo change were perhaps first studied by Pimentel and Heckler (2000). Through a number of studies, they found that consumers “preferred” no change to a logo (logo characters were used) but small changes were well “tolerated.” They stated that changes will be accepted by consumers as long as they are “slight enough so that the new logo design falls within the consumers’ latitude of acceptance”. They concluded that social judgment theory helps explain consumer’s preference to such logo changes rather than discrepancy theory.



Under discrepancy theory (Haber, 1958; Hansen, 1972), when an *“individual has become adapted to a stimulus, slightly altered versions of the stimulus (e.g., logo) would allow for novelty effects and would be preferred over the current version”* (Pimentel and Heckler, 2000). Discrepancy theory suggests slight changes to stimuli (and in this case logos) would be preferred whereas social judgment theory posits that slight changes would be tolerated but not preferred (no change is preferred). However, both theories seem to agree that extreme changes are generally not preferable.

More recently, consumers’ attitudes towards a logo change or redesign were also studied by Walsh, Page and Mittal (2006). They investigated the effect of different degrees of redesigned logos on consumers’ brand attitude towards them, with the moderating effect of brand commitment. The logos used were for two product categories (athletic shoes and bottled water) and were modified from angular to more rounded logos. The authors found that highly brand committed consumers showed more negative attitudes towards the changed brand logo, with a higher negative brand attitude for a higher degree of logo change. The authors explained that the negative brand attitude towards the logo change implied that strongly-committed consumers have a “connection” with the brand which gets changed when the logo is changed and thus, produces a negative attitude.

On the other hand, consumers who were less brand-committed had a more positive brand attitude when shown the modified logos as compared to the unchanged ones. Here, consumers are thought to perceive this change as a “novel” one leading to a more positive evaluation and more positive brand attitude. It was also found that logo evaluation partially mediated the relationship between brand commitment and brand attitude. Furthermore, participants’ cognitive responses towards the changing logos showed more negative brand thoughts for more highly brand-committed consumers and more positive brand thoughts for less committed consumers, which increased with a higher degree of logo change.

### **2.15.3 Curiosity towards Logo Change**

Is curiosity important to the human being? Einstein once said “I have no special talents, I am only passionately curious”. Many consider that curiosity is a complex feeling accompanied by a desire to know what is not known; and there is a lot of research that initially talked about animals that by incentive curiosity have attempted to identify and explore their environment to find food and water (Berlyne, 1954; Day, 1971; Kreitler and Kreitler, 1976; Boyle, 1989). Curiosity plays an important role in stimulating new learning and discovery in humans, especially by professionals, in order to increase the store of knowledge in the world to access new discoveries which could benefit humanity. Apples fell frequently before Newton, but only Newton had the curiosity to look at the reasons behind the fall of apples, which later led him to the invention of the universal law of gravity that changed the life of humanity ever since (Hansen, 1972).

Although human curiosity is important, its mechanisms are still poorly understood. Psychologists and philosophers similarly have described curiosity as an appetite for knowledge, a drive like hunger and thirst (Loewenstein, 1994), and the hunger pang of an “info-vore” (Biederman and Vessel, 2006). In reinforcement learning, a novelty bonus is used to motivate the choice of unexplored strategies (Kakade and Dayan, 2002); curiosity can be thought of as the psychological manifestation of such a novelty bonus.

This research is aligned in part with the theory that curiosity arises from an “information gap” or incongruity where there is a discrepancy between what one knows and what one wants to know (Loewenstein, 1994). This theory assumes that the desired level of knowledge increases sharply with a small increase in knowledge, so that the size of the information gap grows with the initial learning. When someone is knowledgeable enough, however, the gap is reduced in this case and as a result curiosity falls. If curiosity is like hunger for knowledge, little information will lead to the desire for more information; on the contrary, curiosity comes down when one is satiated by the information provided.

Studies on curiosity have shown that it has two dimensions: the first one is an “interest” dimension (Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Kashdan et al., 2004; Collins, Litman, and Spielberger, 2004) and the second is a “deprivation” dimension (Litman and Jimerson, 2004). The deprivation dimension has been previously stated by Loewenstein (1994) in explaining his knowledge-gap theory as he declared that curiosity may be viewed “as a form of cognitively induced deprivation that results from the perception of a gap in one's knowledge” and that the person wants to fill this gap. What may be important to mention here is that the “interest” dimension of curiosity seems to be more of a “positive, emotional motivational system that energizes and directs novelty-seeking behaviors, with the ultimate goal of stimulating one's interest (Litman, 2005; Litman and Jimerson, 2004). On the other hand, the “deprivation” dimension reflects more “feelings of uncertainty and tension” and with “some degree of negative affectivity” (Litman and Jimerson, 2004). The validity of this model of “Interest/Deprivation” curiosity was further established by Litman and Silvia (2006).

Based on the above discussion, a logo change can be viewed from an information gap theory perspective. The bigger degree the logo change is, the bigger the information gap will be – and thus the bigger the gap that results is the higher the curiosity degree will be. More specifically, by looking at the logo change from the “incongruity” aspect, perhaps it can also be said that a logo change can evoke a “violation of expectations” especially if the change is big and the new logo is really different from the old one, or even unexpected. In such a case, it can be said that the higher the incongruity between the old and new logo is seen, the higher the degree of curiosity is. Thus, the researcher would argue that both the “interest” and “deprivation” types of curiosity would likely exist together and that they need to be accounted for and treated as two separate constructs.

### **2.15.4 Scepticism towards Advertising – an application to logo changes**

Scepticism toward advertising has been defined either as a mistrustful predisposition (Boush, Friestad, and Rose, 1994) or a negatively valenced attitude (Mangleburg and Bristol, 1998) towards motives and claims made by advertisers. Although scepticism toward advertising is mostly considered to be a predisposition (i.e., a trait), Mangleburg and Bristol (1998) sustain that scepticism can also be produced by situational variables that induce a temporary state of disbelief such as marketing stimuli like the advertising of a new product.

Advertising is seen continuously with suspicion and the idea that advertising is based on deceiving people and making them buy things that they probably do not need is widespread. Even children become skeptical of advertising and its objectives from an early age and therefore they grow as skeptical consumers (Chan, 2001).

A demonstration of this was a study set up to measure the American public opinion and their view of the advertisements, which covered the period from 1930 to 1992. This study was carried out by Calfee and Ringold (1994) who found that people were greatly skeptical of advertising and its claims and those attitudes stayed almost constant for all this time in spite of changes in advertising regulations.

Furthermore, a scale indicator has developed by Gaski and Etzel (1986) to measure consumer sentiment towards marketing so as to illustrate the importance of the scepticism theme in the field of marketing. This indicator has proved that when a company decides to change its logo either for the product or the entire company, this can be considered as the event marketing. To illustrate deeper, it is a brand logo change which can be considered as a form of advertising that the brand announces.

From the types of advertising claims discussed previously it might be argued that the experienced advertising claims seem to stand. However, search advertising claim which “can be evaluated before purchase by consumers using prior knowledge, direct product inspection, reasonable effort, and normal channels of information acquisition, such as consumer reports is unlike an experience advertising claim which “can be accurately evaluated only after the product has been purchased and used for a period of time” (Ford, Smith and Swasy, 1990). It was also found that there was greater scepticism for experience advertising claims than for search claims and more for subjective claims than objective claims (Ford et al., 1990).

A product with an updated or new logo is usually evaluated following experience or purchase of the changed product. In the same way, a store that has a new logo is valid for evaluation following a visit or experience of the store to see whether there is any difference in customer service or product quality for example. An experience claim would be viewed following the idea of a new logo, and this gives the research a reason for increased scepticism. Upon seeing the new logo, consumers cannot verify what the

change is about but they have to either purchase the product with the new logo or to visit the store with the new logo so that they can better evaluate and experience it.

#### **2.15.5 Resistance to Logo Change**

Resistance always seemed to come to mind when talking about change because naturally people stand against change in the beginning, but if change produces positive results people accept it. Resistance to change is “any conduct that serves to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to alter the status quo” (Zaltman and Duncan, 1977).

Resistance to change is one of the concepts that have been dealt with as a concept of great importance in the organizational change in management literature: Woodward, 1968; Powell and Posner, 1978; Stanislaio and Stanislaio, 1983; Folger and Sharlicki, 1999; Piderit, 2000; de Jager, 2001; and Stanley, Meyer and Topolnytsky, 2005. It has also been tackled in the innovation literature; for example, Ram and Sheth, 1989; Ellen, Bearden and Sharma, 1991; Dent and Goldberg, 1999; and Oreg, 2003. So it seems that there was a prevailing general thought that when you think of change you think of resistance to change.

Speaking deeper about the resistance to change, it was found that there is a list of sources that feed the resistance to change, including denial and cynicism (del Val and Fuentes, 2003), and that these two sources were considered the most important sources to identify the intentions of the resistance to change in the organization which tries to adapt new change to its system. In addition, it was justified that the resistance to change may be more powerful when the targeted change is extremely strategic or radical. Further, while resistance to change may be less powerful when the targeted change consists of the development of certain aspects of the institution or minor changes in general (Del Val and Fuentes, 2003).

In another empirical study in the field of innovation and products (Ram, 1985) it was found that there is a strong relationship between the resistance to change and the products’ innovation; “the higher the discontinuity of an innovation, the higher the resistance is likely to be” (Ram, 1985). A new logo can be viewed as a new product innovation depending on how new it is to its consumers. An innovation may also create “a high degree of change in the consumers’ day-to-day existence and disrupt their established routines” (Ram and Sheth, (1989).

Based on the discussion above, it can be generally stated that the higher the resistance towards the logo change is, the more influence on the consumer attitude towards a brand after the logo has been changed.

#### **2.15.6 Consumer Perception of Effective Logo**

The corporate logo serves as an important asset for companies. It has an important role in connecting with consumers and, thus, identifying and understanding the various factors that influence consumer perceptions

of the logos. It is a key aspect in the creation of brands and in building the enterprise identity of the companies. Logo contributes mainly in the representation of the company's organizational culture, identity, values, and legitimacy to all stakeholders in the company, specifically to consumers for services or products offered by the company to them (Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin, 2008).

People basically belong to the logos subconsciously. They understand the meaning of the logos through their opinions and ideas and linking with the visual elements of the logo, which means that the contents of the emblem of the values and meanings of the logos lead to the development of a comprehensive identity for the company among consumers. The consumer then has developed a reaction when he/she sees the visual elements of the logo in the future and links them directly to the emotions or ideas that were formed previously about the brand (Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin, 2008).

The social context of the logo could provoke an emotion or reaction directly from the consumer, and consumers are more willing to comply with requests when those requests are made by an organization that appears more legitimate. Legitimacy is socially constructed symbols like logoed materials and clothing that become established with compliance which is defined as “one party accepting or responding positively to a request made by another party” (Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin, 2008). As companies must strive to develop branding that exerts legitimacy and provides a visual representation of the company, campaigns need branding and logos to fulfill the same needs.

The Consumer responses to requests from representatives of organizations and companies are quicker when logo is recognized and the image appears legitimate. In a study comparing industries and trade logos, it was found that logos must fall within the framework of what is socially acceptable for certain industry. For example, people believed that the skulls and crossbones is a bad logo and socially unacceptable to be the logo of the company; in return, the white smocks with doctors are acceptable to people with ease, because it fits with their thoughts and emotions (Rafaeli, Sagy, and Rozin, 2008).

Research on logos and branding suggests that individuals prefer the simplest logos, with a preference multiplicity of meaning in one logo, or logos that have multiple elements that may each have their own potential interpretations, because every consumer has his/her own impression about any logo that they see or deal with (Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001). Subliminal and repetitive exposure to a graphic will result in a “relationship between exposure and affect because there is no opportunity to attribute the fluency to prior exposure” (Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001). In a measurement of consumers’ reactions to exposure, it was found that “75 percent of studies showed a positive response to graphics following repeated exposure to those graphics ranging from nonsense syllables, words, slogans” to “abstract drawings, pictures, faces” (Janiszewski and Meyvis 2001).

An experiment was created where subjects were exposed to logos a different number of times and were asked to express preferences, rate complexity and guess industries of the logos. The result of this experiment clarifies how subliminal and repetitive exposure does influence the viewer, and the influence, or fluency, cannot be attributed to prior exposure. The experiment also shows how participants preferred simpler logos with more repetitions over multi-meaning logos (Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001).

It was concluded that subliminal and repetitive exposure to a graphic will result in a “monotonic relationship between exposure and affect because there is no opportunity to attribute the fluency to prior exposure” (Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001). This study establishes that consumer recognition of, and inclination to choose, a specific logo are classified as “fluency”. Fluency of a graphic which is increased with exposure is a bell curve with complexity, and consumption is increasingly fluent when the logo is subliminally presented.

## **2.16 Consumer’s Lifestyle Perception**

Lifestyle has become an important variable in the development of marketing strategies, because every product or service has a different intended target market, and thus differentiation through market segmentation is necessary to create the preferences of each group separately. Lifestyle serves as an excellent segmentation variable because it reflects the way of living by a person or a group, which typically includes social relations, consumption, entertainment, clothing styles, and the work that the person prefers (Li, 2009). Moreover, the way of life usually reflects the attitudes and values of a person and his/her taste as well as vision for life (Hung, 2009).

The lifestyle concept has become popularly-used in sociology since 1980. It is important to try to understand the consumers’ views and vision of what services or products are on offer to them. It is also used as an effective identifier of consumer behavior. Lifestyle research produces empirical typologies of lifestyles, for example, it determines groups that are similar as much as possible to each other in lifestyle factors that influence their behavior (Rao et al., 2000).

Different sociological lifestyle approaches exist. Objectively-oriented approaches develop lifestyle groups according to objective factors, like what household income is spent on (Sobel, 1981). Subjectively-oriented approaches focus on subjective factors like needs, wishes, and attitudes of people. In addition, there are integrative approaches that integrate subjective and objective factors in typologies (Kureger, 1991).

Bourdieu’s lifestyle approach (1990); has inspired the majority of lifestyle approaches that were developed later. It is made up of elements from the social field and from the field of lifestyles. Elements comprise capital volume, capital structure, social career, and ways of thinking, perceiving, evaluating and acting, as well as lifestyle factors such as distinction, pretension, or necessity (Rao et al., 2000).

Independent from the development of the lifestyle concept in sociology, lifestyles were also acknowledged in market and consumption research. While in the U.S. the lifestyle approach has been used since the 1960s, mainly for consumption goods like cars, beer or furniture, the lifestyle approach started to be employed in Europe at the end of the 1970s by publishing houses and advertising agencies for their marketing (Rao et al., 2000).

## **2.17 Demographic factors influencing Consumers' Attitudes towards the Brand**

This section provides an overview of the influence that consumer demographic factors have on the brand attitude after the logo change. Kotler (2000), believes that demographic factors including age, family size, gender, income, occupation, education, religion, race, nationality, and social class affect the reactions of consumers towards branding strategies. Other researchers (for example, Hawkins, Best and Coney, 1998) consider that demographics indicate the size (number of individuals in the community), structure (the age, gender, income, level of education, and profession), and distribution of the population (the physical location of individuals in the geographical area or site, whether rural or urban suburbs). Most researchers agree that all these elements affect how individual consumers think, feel and act towards any situation (Hawkins, Best and Coney, 1998; Kotler, 2000).

A number of studies in the marketing field (Bonfield, 1974, Zuckerman, Eysenck and Eysenck, 1978) have tried to link the science of marketing with demographic variables in order to understand consumer behavior and, thus, determine the markets' homogeneity, but results were weak. However, other recent studies tried to combine a range of variables such as demographics and lifestyle, which resulted in an improvement of the hypothesized correlations (Orth, 2005 and Orth and Kahle, 2008). In addition, Orth (2005) emphasizes the importance of mixed segmentation methods which include both demographic and psychological variables, because it provides better information about consumer characteristics and style of thinking that followed and the decisions taken by a preference for a particular brand.

The segmentation of consumers into similar groups within a single market contributes to the understanding of the characteristics of each group separately and thus provides them with products commensurate with their aspirations and expectations. Smith (1956) was the first to introduce the concept of market segmentation as a counterpart to the huge production where the same product is offered to the whole market due to its low cost. Smith found that consumers are different from each other but can be divided into homogeneous groups involved in similar attitudes and behaviors.

There are three main types of segmentation: geographic segmentation, demographic segmentation, and volume segmentation (Haley, 1986). The first type refers to a product used only in certain areas, the second to consumer characteristics such as age and gender, whereas volume segmentation means identifying frequent users of the product type. Nowadays there are many different variables which can be used to

group segments together, for example demographics (Kish and Busse, 1968), values and lifestyle (Kahle, Beatty and Homer, 1986), and life cycle stage (Wells and Gubar, 1966).

Numerous studies that show the differences between the responses of females compared with males towards the branding and rebranding events (McCracken and Roth, 1989; Zaichowsky, 1985; O'Cass, 2000) found that female consumers respond more to a brand that has been refurbished, and they have better perceptions than males. This can be attributed to the difference between the sexes and the awareness that females are better at interpreting fashion information and tend to be involved in fashion purchasing. Male consumers are more likely to be less aware of and less interested in clothing (Bakewell, Mitchell and Rothwell, 2006).

The study by Steenkamp, Hofstede and Wedel (1999) argued that younger consumers naturally tend to look for new and innovative ideas and can adopt them easily, thus they are more accepting of change, compared to older consumers who seem to be less favorable toward change as they prefer stability. This fact leads us to assume that young consumers are more likely to deal with logo changes and rebranding events positively, while older consumers might consider rebranding or logo changes as a threat of their stabilities. As a result they might reject it and have their attitudes affected negatively towards the renovated brand.

In regard to the effect of education level, some studies found that the levels of education can affect the loyalty towards the original and renovated brands, as well as the attitudes toward changing the logos. Less educated consumers tend to be more loyal to the original brand, while educated consumers are less loyal to the original brand, because those consumers are more amenable to new ideas and more receptive to the change in general compared to the less educated consumers (Tellis, Yin and Bell, 2009).

## **2.18 Factors influencing Consumers' Attitudes towards Brands after Logo Changes**

According to the literature there seems to be a number of factors that influence the Consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes. These factors include: preferences of brand after the logo change, loyalty to brand after the logo change, association with brand after the logo change, curiosity towards logo change, scepticism toward logo change, resistance towards logo change, and consumer perception of effective logo and consumer lifestyle.

## **2.19 Conclusion**

In this chapter the researcher reviewed literature that is relevant to branding and rebranding. This critical review begins by explaining exactly what branding is, and why companies choose to rebrand.

When companies face problems with their brands and stakeholders, they may look to improve their image in the market by rebranding, which can also be referred to as repositioning, revitalizing, or rejuvenating the original brand. Muzellec et al (2003: 32) defined rebranding as *"the practice of building a new name*



*representative of a differentiated position in the mind frame of stakeholders and a distinctive identity from competitors*”. So, in general, rebranding represents updating or changing the image of a brand in the minds of the different stakeholders involved.

Rebranding has become an important phenomena and is considered to be a strategic approach used by firms to develop new and differentiated positions and images in the minds of customers. Rebranding is done by accepting new brand elements such as new name, slogan, logo, design or a mixture of these for their own established brands.

Rebranding also bears some risk as it can lead a company to serious damage to brand image in their market. Moreover, it is a costly process which is both expensive and time consuming due to numerous, long and complex steps. Despite these facts, history has revealed that there are different examples of companies re-branding and getting things horribly wrong for different causes. One of these important causes is consumers who did not accept the changes in brands.

Regardless of the increase on rebranding phenomena worldwide, there is no general framework for rebranding that has been generated, or even fixed guidelines (Merrilees, 2005). This could be a result of various factors including size of firm, industry, products and stakeholders.

In order to evaluate a customer’s attitude towards a logo change, this information explains why a logo change would be necessary in the first place. The review then provides examples of cases that have addressed rebranding strategies, including their successes, failures, challenges and ideas to ensure success of this process.

It was determined from the information available that consumer perception is given significant attention, however, consumer attitudes still require to be looked into in detail. What has been outlined so far is the related theories to the concept of consumers’ attitudes, in a bid to use this information as a basis for developing the framework for this study.

Previous studies have evaluated many aspects of rebranding, including why companies choose to rebrand, what steps are taken for rebranding, the results of the rebranding efforts and even the imagery behind logo development. However, there exists a significant gap in the literature, which is addressing or understanding the attitudes that customers have when a company goes through the rebranding process.

The following chapters consist of the proposed framework, and the analysed research hypothesis.

## **2.20 Chapter Summary**

Following the critical review of the literature, this summary contains the key points that are highly relevant for this study.

Firms consider brands as valuable intangible assets which enable the firm to influence customer behavior and establish inimitable competitive advantages to sustain long-term development.

The customer is the main focus of any profitable firm, as firms try to attract him/her using different marketing approaches to continuously buy their products or services so as to stay ahead in the market. However, customer attitudes towards rebranding strategies has received minimal attention in academic research (Muzellec, Doogan, and Lambkin, 2003).

Many factors can clarify how consumer attitudes are formed towards rebranding strategies and there are two theories which can be applied to describe such attitude formation. “Information Integration Theory Anderson, 1981” and "Expectancy Value Model Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975” are the most popular theories which discuss and explain the consumer's attitude formation.

The concept of attitude is always theoretically associated with evaluative criteria in the marketing field, which can also be applied on diverse theoretical orientations. Customers have favorable attitudes if they believe some of their functional desires (e.g. durability, fragrance) and unconscious motives (e.g. need for femininity, power) can be achieved by the products or services (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

Behavioral intention is considered a significant element in operationalization of customer-based brand equity. Change of behavioral intention of customers can reflect how brand equity can be enhanced after the marketing of brands when strong customer based brand equity can entice customers to purchase more in terms of frequency and quantity and eventually help firms to make greater profits (Keller, 2008).

There have been several studies that show the significance of having a suitable symbol 'logo' to a brand. Aaker (1991) indicated that “*when products and services are difficult to differentiate, a symbol can be the central element of brand equity, the key differentiating characteristic of a brand*” (pg. 197). The presence of a logo can add value to a brand name through its image participation and recognition/ association. Giberson and Hulland (1994) found that when a product category is cued in a logo, the logo is retrieved faster from memory.

The literature review reveals nine factors that might have an effect on the consumer's attitude towards revived brand. These are as follows:-

- 1- Brand preferences: consumers prefer a service or product of a certain company (Hoeffler and Ariely, 1999).
- 2- Brand loyalty: "the attachment that the customer has to a brand" (Aaker, 1991: 39).
- 3- Brand Association: anything which is deep-seated in the customer's mind about the brand (Keller, 1993).

- 4- Curiosity toward logo change: it has two dimensions "interest dimension which seems more positive" (Peterson and Seligman, 2004).
- 5- Deprivation curiosity dimension which seems more negative (Litman and Jimerson, 2004).
- 6- Scepticism: Negatively valenced attitude towards motives (Mangleburg and Bristol, 1998).
- 7- Resistance: "any conduct that serves to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to alter the status" (Zaltman and Duncan, 1977: 83).
- 8- Consumer perception of an effective logo: opinions, ideas and linking with the visual elements of the logo (Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin, 2008).
- 9- Consumer lifestyle perception: reflects the way of living by person or group of people (Li, 2009).

## **Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Following a review of the literature on rebranding, and looking at the definitions and factors associated with consumers' attitudes towards brands' logo changes, this chapter highlights the theoretical justifications of the study factors. Furthermore, it presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this study. Also, the chapter states the study hypothesis.

### **3.2 Theoretical Justifications of Study Factors**

This section presents and highlights the theoretical justifications for choosing the nine factors, which form the basis of the independent variables for this study.

#### **3.2.1 Preferences of Brands after Logo Changes**

Consumer preferences for products or services of a particular company reflect the cognitive or emotional factors formed in their memory that create preferences for these brands, which in turn, contribute to the growth of positive attitudes towards the brands (Hellier et al, 2003).

The economic theory suggests that consumers' choices indicate their underlying needs and wants tapped from their existing preferences, and the constructive perspective argues that consumers form their preferences at a given situation based on the task and factors present during choice elicitation (Hoeffler and Ariely, 1999). This study argues that the preferences factor is a good base to examine the relationship between the original brand and the consumer's attitudes towards the brands after logo changes.

#### **3.2.2 Loyalty to Brands after Logo Changes**

Numerous studies have found that purchase behaviors of brands are affected by the emotional commitment formed between consumers and the selected brands (Beatty al., 1988). This psychological affection plays a crucial role for information development and decision making. Changes to brand elements and brand positions have the potential of changing the meaning of the brand to consumers.

When consumers are loyal to a brand, they build strong beliefs and images around it, and may react negatively to any changes to their preferred brand. This is consistent with the concept of cognitive dissonance psychological theory (Festinger, 1957), which claims that humans have a basic need to avoid dissonance and establish consistency. Therefore, dissonance might be formed if the brand is changed and the beliefs towards the prior brand are not valid.

Walsh et al. (2006) stated that consumers who have strong beliefs about a brand will have more negative attitudes toward the brand when there are any changes of the logo. In contrast, consumers who are less committed to a brand tend to have more positive attitudes toward the brands changes.

### **3.2.3 Association with Brands after Logo Changes**

Customers depend on brand associations to form a brand image (Biel, 1992) and then appraise the brand by favorability, strength and uniqueness of this association (Keller, 1993). Brand association involves the meaning of the brand for customers by linking information about the brands in terms of product attributes, perceived benefits, usage situations and many summaries of appraisals of brands (Broniarczyk and Alba, 1994). An association with brands may provide a real reason to buy them. The creation of positive attitudes and feelings towards the brand can affect buying behavior as well as the satisfaction of its users (Aaker, 1992).

Pitta and Katsanis (1995) argued that marketers can create associations in customers' minds through building brand identity and launching suitable marketing programs like product positioning and advertising, to formulate desired features of the brand in the customers' mind. Any changes in both marketing actions and product attributes associated to the brand can alter customers' memories related to the brand, which creates new images and attitudes towards the brand. Consequently, any change in the brand including its logo might affect the association of consumers with the brand.

### **3.2.4 Interest and Deprivation Curiosities towards Logo Changes**

Curiosity arises from an "information gap" or incongruity where there is a discrepancy between what one knows and what one wants to know (Loewenstein, 1994). This theory assumes that the desired level of knowledge increases sharply with a small increase in knowledge, so that the size of the information gap grows following the initial learning.

Studies on curiosity have shown that it has two dimensions: the first one is an "interest" dimension (Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Kashdan et al., 2004; Collins, Litman, and Spielberger, 2004) and the second is a "deprivation" dimension (Litman and Jimerson, 2004).

The deprivation dimension has been utilised by Loewenstein (1994) in explaining his knowledge-gap theory as he declared that curiosity may be viewed "*as a form of cognitively induced deprivation that results from the perception of a gap in one's knowledge*" and that the person wants to fill this gap.

The "interest" dimension of curiosity seems to be more of a "*positive, emotional motivational system that energizes and directs novelty-seeking behaviors, with the ultimate goal of stimulating one's interest*" (Litman, 2005; Litman and Jimerson, 2004).

The “deprivation” dimension reflects more “feelings of uncertainty and tension” and with “some degree of negative affectivity” (Litman and Jimerson, 2004). The validity of this model of “Interest/Deprivation” curiosity was further established by Litman and Silvia (2006).

A logo change can be viewed from an information gap theory perspective. The bigger the degree of the logo change, the bigger the information gap will be – and thus the bigger the gap that results, reflects a higher curiosity degree. More specifically, by looking at the logo change from the “incongruity” aspect, a logo change can evoke a “violation of expectations” especially if the change is big and the new logo is really different from the old one, or even unexpected.

### **3.2.5 Scepticism towards Logo Changes**

A scale indicator has been developed by Gaski and Etzel (1986) to measure consumer response towards marketing and illustrate the importance of scepticism in the field of marketing. This indicator proved that when a company decides to change its logo either for a particular product or the entire company, it can be considered as event marketing. A brand logo change can be considered a form of advertising for the brand.

A new brand logo may represent an experience claim more than a search claim since the product with the new logo can only be evaluated after the purchase and experience of the logo-changed product. Consequently, the notion of having a new logo would be viewed as an experience claim and would provide the research with the reason for increased scepticism.

### **3.2.6 Resistance to Logo Changes**

Resistance to change is “*any conduct that serves to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to alter the status quo*” (Zaltman and Duncan, 1977: 83). Naturally people stand against change, but if it produces positive results they accept it. Resistance to change is one of the concepts that have been dealt with as one of great importance in organizational change in management literature: (Woodward, 1968; Powell and Posner, 1978; Stanislao and Stanislao, 1983).

The resistance to change may be more powerful when the targeted change is extremely strategic or radical. In an empirical study by Ram in the field of innovation and products, it was found that there is a strong relationship between the resistance to change and the products’ innovation; “*the higher the discontinuity of an innovation, the higher the resistance is likely to be*” (Ram, 1985: 7).

A new logo can be viewed as a new product innovation depending on how new it is to its consumers. An innovation may also create “*a high degree of change in the consumers’ day-to-day existence and disrupt their established routines*” (Ram and Sheth, 1989: 6).

### 3.2.7 Consumer Perceptions of an Effective Logo

People basically understand the meaning of logos through their opinions and ideas and link that to the visual elements within the logo, which means that the contents of the emblems, and the values and meanings of the logos lead to the development of a comprehensive identity for the company among consumers. The consumer then has a reaction when viewing the visual elements of the logo in the future and links them directly to the emotions or ideas that were formed previously about the brand (Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin, 2008).

The social context of the logo could provoke an emotion or reaction directly from the consumer, and consumers are more willing to comply with requests made by an organization that appears more legitimate. Legitimacy involves socially constructed symbols, like logoed materials and clothing that become established with compliance. This is defined as *“one party accepting or responding positively to a request made by another party”* (Rafaeli, Sagy and Rozin, 2008: 846).

Consumer responses to requests from representatives of organizations and companies are quicker when the logo is recognized and the image appears legitimate. In a study comparing industries and trade logos, it was found that logos must fall within the framework of what is socially acceptable for a certain industry (Rafaeli, Sagy, and Rozin, 2008). Research suggests that individuals prefer the simplest logos, with a preference multiplicity of meaning in one logo, or logos that have multiple elements that may each have their own potential interpretations, because every consumer has their own impression about any logo that they see or deal with (Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001).

An experiment was created where subjects were exposed to logos at different times and asked to express preferences, rate complexity and guess industries of the logos. The results of this experiment clarified how subliminal and repetitive exposure influences the viewer, and the influence, or fluency, cannot be attributed to prior exposure. The experiment also showed how participants preferred simpler logos with more repetitions over multi-meaning logos (Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001).

### 3.2.8 Consumer's Lifestyle Perceptions

Lifestyle is an important variable in the development of marketing strategies, because every product or service has a different intended target market, and thus is differentiated through market segmentation to create the preferences of each group separately. Lifestyle reflects the way of living by a person or a group, including social relations, consumption, entertainment, clothing styles, and the work that the person prefers (Li, 2009). Moreover, the way of life usually reflects the attitudes and values of a person and their taste as well as their vision for life (Hung, 2009).

The lifestyle concept has been popularly-used in sociology since 1980 to understand the consumers' views and visions of what services or products offer them and as an effective identifier of consumers' attitudes (Rao et al., 2000).

Different sociological lifestyle approaches exist. Objectively-oriented approaches develop lifestyle groups according to objective factors, like what household income is spent on (Sobel, 1981). Subjectively-oriented approaches focus on subjective factors like needs, wishes, and attitudes of people. Further, there are integrative approaches that integrate subjective and objective factors in typologies (Kureger, 1991).

Accordingly, it can be generally stated that the higher the lifestyle perception is, the more influence on the consumer attitude towards a brand after logo changes will be.

### **3.3 Theoretical Framework**

The focus of this study is to identify the consumers' attitudes towards brands after logo changes. Essentially, the attitude of an individual is molded from motivation of new information and integration of his/her own experience, beliefs, or current knowledge (Peter and Olson, 2005). Many scholars have tried to measure consumers' attitudes towards different branding strategies or the brands from an attitudinal perspective (e.g. Hem et al. 2003; Helmig et al. 2007; Salinas and Perez, 2009).

The literature review revealed two theories which can be applied to describe the consumers' attitudes towards rebranding strategies. These are 'Information Integration Theory' (Anderson, 1981) and 'Expectancy Value Model (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

Anderson (1981) argued that individuals do not replace existing attitudes and completely agree with all new information when it is attained. Instead, new attitudes in individuals' minds are formed by integrating, mingling, and combining their current attitudes and the new information. Thus, new attitudes can be affected to some extent by both current attitudes and new information rather than either one of them.

This theory assumes that once marketing strategies are launched, customers appraise marketing strategies and form new attitudes impacted by their existing attitudes and new information gained. Consistent with this concept, Czellar (2003) recommended that customers may evaluate brand extension strategies with the influence of their own established attitudes towards the parent brand. He maintained that customers who are not familiar with the parent brand may probably assess the extension solely on the basis of their experience with the extended brand.

In contrast, with the expectancy value model, customers tend to evaluate the new extension of the brand on the basis of the attitude towards the parent brand, with the result of the perception of similarities between the parent brand and the extensions. Their behavior is a function of the expectancies that they have, and the value of the goal they are working towards. In this rebranding scenario, the Expectancy Value model would



apply if the study was on perception. However, this study is evaluating attitudes of the customers towards both the original and revived brand.

This study investigates how changing the logo could affect the existing consumers' attitudes towards the brands. The theory of 'Information Integration' is more compatible with this study, as it is unclear if the consumers of Oman Air and NBO have positive or negative attitudes towards their brands before rebranding. Furthermore, applying this theory might provide the original consumers' attitudes towards their brands so the results can be compared. In addition, this theory would be ideal for more accurate results, as the Expectancy Value Theory primarily deals with perception.

### **3.4 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework illustrates the dependent and independent variables. Following a review of the literature and the theoretical justifications of research factors, nine factors were identified that influence consumers' attitudes towards brands' logo changes. These nine factors are the independent variables for this study. They are as follows: -

- a) Preference of brands after logo changes
- b) Loyalty to the brand after logo changes
- c) Association with brand after the logo changes
- d) Interest curiosity toward logo changes
- e) Deprivation curiosity toward logo changes
- f) Scepticism toward logo changes
- g) Resistance toward logo changes
- h) Consumer perception on effective logos
- i) Consumers lifestyle perception

The dependent variable for this study is consumers' attitude towards the brands after logo changes. The moderator variables for this study are gender, age, nationality, location and education. These moderator variables influence the strength of the relationship between the other two variables.

The conceptual framework is illustrated as follows (Figure 3.1).

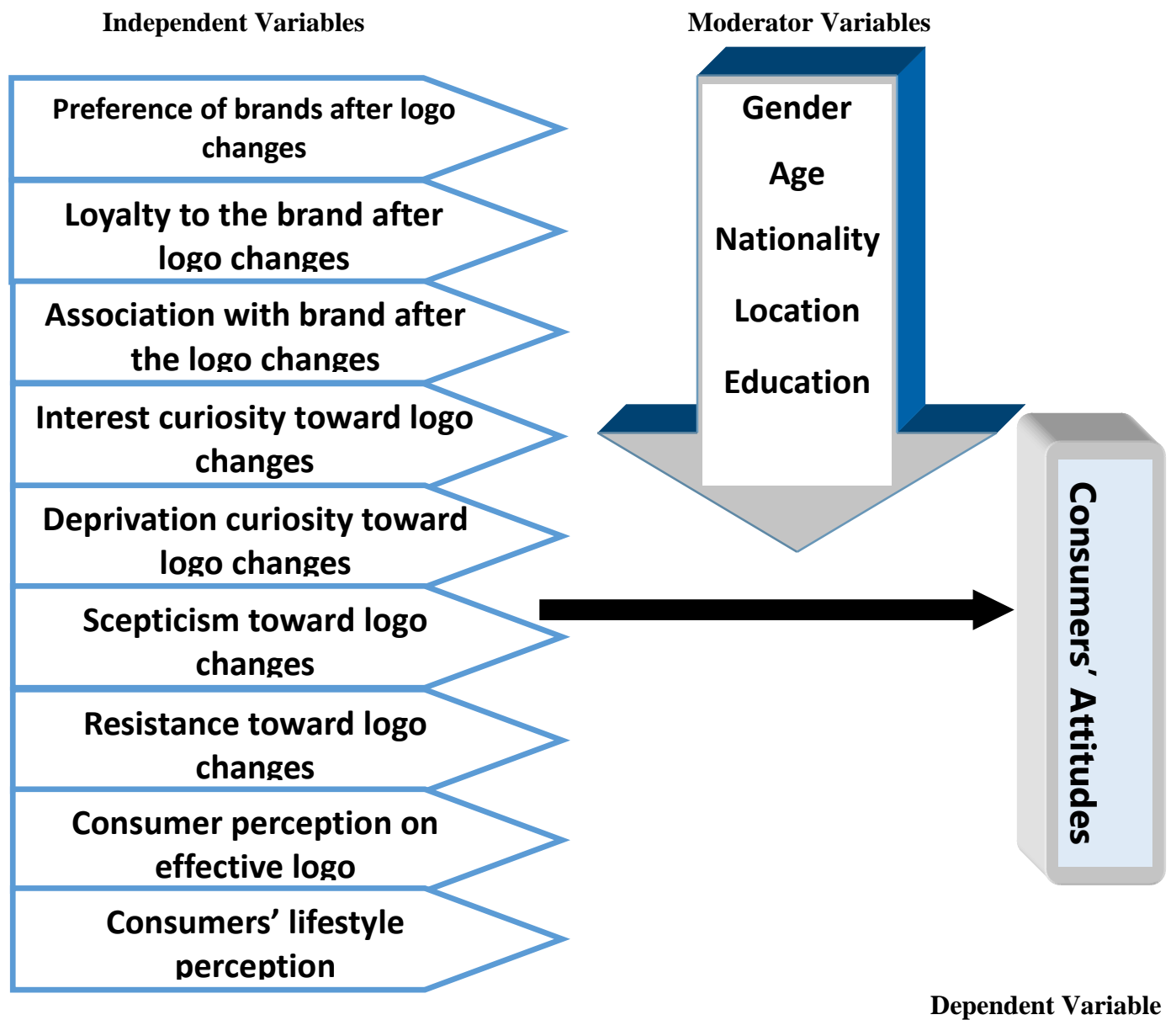


Figure 3.1 The Conceptual Framework

### 3.5 Research Questions and Hypothesis

This research aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the attitudes of Omani consumers to the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman?
- 2) What is the nature of the relationships between consumers' attitudes and various factors that influence the consumers' attitudes towards the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman?
- 3) What are the socio-demographic antecedents of the consumers whose attitudes have been affected by the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman?

Hypothesis testing is utilised to test a claim or hypothesis about a parameter in a population by using data measured in a sample.

The hypothesis generated from the variables of this study are as follows: -

#### Hypothesis 1

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>01</sub>): *There is no positive attitude amongst consumers towards the brands after the logo changes.*

#### Hypothesis 2

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>): *There is no relationship between consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands after the logo changes.*

#### Hypothesis 3

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>03</sub>): *There is no positive relationship between respondents' preference of brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

#### Hypothesis 4

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>04</sub>): *There is no positive relationship between respondents' loyalty to the brands after the logo change, and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

#### Hypothesis 5

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>05</sub>): *There is no positive relationship between respondents' association with brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

#### Hypothesis 6

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>06</sub>): *There is no positive relationship between interest curiosity toward logo change, and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

Hypothesis 7

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>07</sub>): *There is no positive relationship between deprivation curiosity toward logo change, and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

Hypothesis 8

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>08</sub>): *There is no positive relationship between scepticism towards logo change and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

Hypothesis 9

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>09</sub>): *There is no positive relationship between resistance to logo change and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

Hypothesis 10

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>010</sub>): *There is no positive relationship between perception on effective logo, and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo change.*

Hypothesis 11

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>011</sub>): *There is no positive relationship between lifestyle perception and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

Hypothesis 12

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>012</sub>): *There is no relationship between respondents' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change and factors of (gender, age, nationality, location and level of education).*

### **3.5.1 Demographical characteristics**

There are many elements that contribute to the diversity of consumers within the single market, and it may be viewing them from the perspective of gender, age, occupation, financial income, level of education, religion, culture, among others that may contribute to determine the reactions of consumers towards a particular brand (Kotler, 2000).

Some researchers have found that demographical variables such as gender, age, nationality, location and educational level have some effects in determining the nature of the attitudes of consumers towards

branding strategies (McCracken and Roth, 1989; Zaichowsky, 1985). Therefore, for this study, in order to identify the nature of the attitudes deeper, the demographical characteristics are represented by the consumers' gender, age, nationality, location and level of education.

The following chapter explores the research methodology that will be used in this study.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology in this study to test the impact of consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes for two Omani brands. The chapter highlights the paradigm for this study. The research design is discussed and the quantitative and qualitative research objectives statements identified. The sampling design is described and the choice of data collection methods are justified. The questionnaire design is then defined and an evaluation of the study in relation to its validity and reliability is detailed. The steps of survey administration are outlined. Ethical considerations regarding the research design are discussed. Finally, conclusions are drawn.

### 4.2 Justification of Paradigm

A paradigm is a basic orientation to theory and research. The idea of a paradigm was made famous in 1970 by Thomas Kuhn (Neuman, 2006). Paradigm is also defined as a holistic approach underlying a research methodology (Kassim, 2001). It is a *“general organizing framework for theory and research that includes basic assumptions, key issues, model of quality research, and methods for seeking answers”* (Neuman, 2006: 81). Therefore, one of the key factors in the design of the research methodology for this study was the determination of which paradigms to use when addressing the research problem.

This study uses a mixed methods (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) design, which is a procedure for collecting, analyzing and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative data in the research process within a single study, to understand a research problem more accurately (Creswell, 2003). The rationale for this approach is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods were sufficient for capturing the situational trends and details on their own. When used together, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for more complete analysis (Greene, Caracelli, and Graham, 1989; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Quantitative research relies on numerical data (Charles and Mertler, 2002). Post-positivist claims are used for developing knowledge, such as cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables, hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories. Variables are isolated and causally related to determine the magnitude and frequency of relationships. In addition, a researcher determines which variables to investigate and chooses instruments that will yield highly reliable and valid scores.

Alternatively, qualitative research is *“an inquiry process of understanding”* where the researcher develops a *“complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting”* (Creswell, 1998: 15). In this approach, the researcher makes knowledge claims based

on the constructivist (Guba and Lincoln, 1982); or advocacy/participatory (Creswell, 1998) perspectives. In qualitative research, data is collected from those immersed in the everyday life setting in which the study is framed. Data analysis is based on the values that these participants perceive within their world. Ultimately, it “*produces an understanding of the problem based on multiple contextual factors*” (Creswell, 1998).

In a mixed methods approach, knowledge is built on pragmatic grounds (Creswell, 2003) and asserting truth is “what works” (Howe, 1988). Approaches are chosen, including variables and units of analysis, based on how appropriate they are for finding an answer to the research questions (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). A major tenet of pragmatism is that quantitative and qualitative methods are compatible. Thus, both numerical and text data, collected sequentially or concurrently, can help better understand the research problem.

While designing a mixed methods study, three issues need consideration: priority, implementation, and integration (Creswell, 2003). Priority refers to which method, either quantitative or qualitative, is given more emphasis in the study. Implementation refers to whether the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis comes in sequential or in chronological stages, one following another, or in parallel or concurrently. Integration refers to the phase in the research process where the mixing or connecting of quantitative and qualitative data occurs.

### **4.3 Research Design**

A research design requires setting a master plan, where the researcher draws and identifies the methods and procedures for the collection and analysis of information necessary for the research (Zikmund, 1997). It is used as a plan of action to solve a particular problem for researchers and determine the type of information to be collected, data sources, and procedures used (Cooper and Schindler, 2001; Davis and Cosenza, 1993; Frazer and Lawley, 2000). A good design ensures that the collected data is consistent with research objectives and uses an accurate and economical process (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996).

After determining the ‘*Mixed Methods*’ methodology for this research, the next stage addresses the development of an appropriate research design, in order to collect the necessary data to test the research questions and hypotheses and address the research problem.

#### **4.3.1 Quantitative Methodology**

In this study, descriptive research is used to describe and measure the data in order to allow greater understanding of the research problem (Zikmund, 1997). Descriptive research helps in understanding consumers’ attitudes towards the brand of the company after changing its logo, which allows the researcher to make specific predictions and provide ideas for further research (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996; Sekaran,

2000). Descriptive research is unlike exploratory research; it is highly structured and rigid in its approach to data collection (Stevens et al., 2000).

Furthermore, descriptive studies are based on previous understanding of the nature of a research problem (Zikmund, 1997), as it was established in this research study. This design, is appropriate to test the research hypotheses on the impact of Omani companies' brands on their consumers' attitudes towards changing its logos as developed in the preceding chapters.

#### ***4.3.1.1 Quantitative Research Objectives Statement***

The quantitative research methodology tests the hypotheses regarding those factors influencing the consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes, which were developed through the literature review and via a self-administrated web-based online survey. The independent variables included moderator variables and variables influencing consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes. The dependent variable was defined as consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes.

#### ***4.3.1.2 Quantitative Research Sampling***

There are seven stages in sampling procedures (Zikmund, 2003). These stages are: (1) identifying the target population, (2) selecting the sampling frame, (3) determining the sampling design and method, (4) planning the procedure for selecting the sampling units, (5) determining the sample size, (6) selecting the actual sampling units, and (7) conducting the fieldwork. Sampling design decisions are an important part of research design and include both the sampling plan to be used and the sample size that will be needed. The sampling procedure for this study is detailed below: -

***Stage One (Population):*** The identification of the target population is the first step in the sampling process. The process of identifying the target population should be specific and relevant to the research project under investigation (Sekaran, 2003).

In this study, the identified population were customers of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman in the Sultanate of Oman. The population frame were the customers of Oman Air and NBO who are working as employees in the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) the only government university in the Sultanate of Oman. This population frame was chosen over all universities and colleges in Oman because according to the *SQU Statistical Year Book 2010/2011*, the number of SQU staff as of December 2010 was 5769 persons (SQU, 2012). This large number of employees makes it easier to draw a sample that adequately represents the target population.

Further, SQU is the first University in Oman, it was started in 1986 and it has a high level of prestige in the community. Actually, it is believed that SQU represents the Omani society to high extent, because SQU's employees are from all the different governorates in Oman. In addition, the expatriate professors working in Oman choose SQU as their first option.



University employees were chosen over university students because it would be easier to retrieve the completed questionnaire, and the researcher is also able to communicate with the employees on a peer level to ensure they answered the questions.

As the study is localized, giving the students the questionnaires to fill may lead to invalid answers, especially if international students fill in the form as well.

Another rational justification of choosing the employees instead of students was that the employees get paid monthly, so they have the financial ability to test the study's selected cases products and services, as they may fly with Oman Air, or have an account with NBO.

**Stage Two (Sampling frame):** After defining the target population, a sampling frame was created. The sampling frame is described as a list of elements from which the sample might be drawn (Zikmund, 2003).

For the research results to be generalized, choosing an accurate sampling frame is important (Sekaran, 2003). The sampling frame in this study was 2914 employees in SQU aged over 18 years old, who are existing consumers for both Oman Air and NBO.

**Stage Three (Sampling method):** After selecting the sampling frame, the sampling design was formed. The sampling design is the approach used to select the units of analysis for study (Sekaran, 2003). There are two types of sampling design; the first one is non-probability sampling and the second one is probability sampling (Zikmund, 2003).

A non-probability sampling method is one where the sampling elements are selected using something other than a mathematically random process (Neuman, 2006). The sample units are selected on the basis of availability/convenience or desire of the researcher (Zikmund, 2003). As such, the potential members of the sample do not have an equal chance of being selected. According to Neuman (2006) non-probability sampling is categorized into seven types: convenience, quota, purposive, snowball, deviant case, sequential, and theoretical.

The probability sampling method is a sample selection process carried out such that all members in the population have an equal chance of being selected. Probability samples are preferable because they are more likely to produce representative samples and they also enable estimates of the sample's accuracy to be made. According to Neuman (2006) probability sampling techniques are categorized into five categories: simple random, systematic, stratified, cluster, and multi-stage.

In this study, probability sampling design using a simple random sampling method was chosen. According to Neuman (2006), a simple random sample is created from a sampling frame that uses a pure random process to select cases, so that each sampling element in the population will have an equal probability of

being selected. In this case, the sample was drawn from the working population frame using a random number table.

**Stage Four (Sample plan):** In this stage the process for selecting sampling units was planned. The plan of sampling indicates the operational processes and methods to obtain the desired sample. It also leads the researcher to determine the sample size, the method of collecting data from the samples, the level of accuracy, time and resources, and, as a result, it minimizes potential errors in the sampling process (Sekaran, 2003; Zikmund, 2003).

In this study, the population frame was defined as Sultan Qaboos University employees and the sampling frame was Oman Air and National Bank of Oman consumers who are working in SQU. A simple random sampling method was decided. The management of SQU agreed to assist the study process by sending an email to 5769 employees to identify the real consumers of Oman Air and NBO, and 2914 employees replied as consumers. This study used a survey instrument to collect data within a four -week collection period. The data received was checked and adjusted to make it ready for coding and transferred to data storage. The purpose of checking and adjusting data is to ensure the completeness, accuracy, and reliability of data before analysis (Davis, 2005).

**Stage Five (Sample size):** After deciding on the sampling plan ‘simple random sampling’, the sample size was determined. The sample size is the selected number of people chosen to represent the population (Zikmund, 2003). It should be large enough to test the hypotheses and address the research questions as well as to represent the target population (Salkind, 2003). However, having a sample size which is too large will not increase the precision of the research.

Two criteria in determining the sample size are justified by Sekaran (2003): precision and confidence. Precision allows the researcher to know how close the estimate is to the true population characteristics. It is a function of the range of variability in the sampling distribution of the sample mean. That is, the closer the researcher wants the sample results to reflect the population characteristics, the greater the precision required and the larger the sample size needed (Punch, 2003; Sekaran, 2003). The second criteria that could be used in determining the sample size is confidence. It refers to how certain the results based on the sample statistics will also hold true and reflect the true population characteristics (Punch, 2003; Sekaran, 2003).

With regards to this research, and after taking into consideration the above, the following sample size formula will be adopted in order to select the needed sample size.

$$ss = \frac{Z^2 * (p) * (1-p)}{c^2}$$

Where:

Z = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

p = percentage picking a choice, expressed as decimal

(.5 used for sample size needed)

c = confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g., .04 =  $\pm 4$ )

A reasonable sample size is approximately 40 % of the sampling frame. The researcher randomly selected 40% (1166 persons) from 2914 employees, which was appropriate for this study and manageable in terms of size, cost, and time.

**Stage Six (Sample units):** At this stage the researcher selects the sampling units, which are the working units to study before proceeding to conduct the fieldwork (Zikmund, 2003).

In this study which applies a simple random sampling method, a total of 1166 SQU employees were selected to represent the sample units of this research. This sample was drawn from a list of total 2914 SQU employees who considered themselves as real consumers for either Oman Air or NBO.

**Stage Seven (Proceeding):** Once these six stages are completed, the researcher is ready to proceed with data collection. In this study, an online survey instrument was delivered to the selected sample of 1166 respondents by email.

#### **4.3.1.3 Data Collection Methods**

There are different ways of collecting data for business research in different settings (field or laboratory), and from different sources (Sekaran, 2003). According to Zikmund (2003) there are four main categories for data collection methods used in descriptive and causal research: (1) surveys, (2) experiments, (3) the secondary data studies, and (4) observation. The facilities available, the degree of accuracy required, the availability of time, the resources, as well as the type of research being conducted, are all factors that determine the data collection method required to complete the research (Sekaran, 2003).

This study used two kinds of data collection methods, collected in two stages: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources: in the first stage, a total of twelve existing consumers of Oman Air and National

Bank of Oman took part in face-to-face semi-structured interviews to explore the issues of the consumer's attitudes towards brands that changed their logos recently, with concentration on their feelings, thoughts, reactions and attitudes.

The purpose of this initial interview was to gauge the existing feedback on the re-branded corporations, with the intention that this information will be of help in the development of the questionnaire.

Here is a list of the questions that were asked in these face-to-face interviews. As the questions were open ended, it made it easier for the respondents to provide exhaustive responses. The responses to these questions were rich, and it is from these responses that the questions for the quantitative questionnaire were derived.

### **The Interview Questions:**

#### **Personal Information:**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years.
2. Gender:
  1. Male
  2. Female
3. Education: (the highest level completed)
  1. High school
  2. Associate degree
  3. Masters degree
  4. PHD/DBA/JD/MD
4. Do you concern about brands in your everyday life? What top three brands do you concern? Why do you concern them? If don't concern brands, why not?
5. What do these brands mean to you? Why? May you elaborate please?
6. Have you noticed any brands that have “changed its logo” or had a “new look” or rebranded? How appropriate do you find this change? Why?
7. From your point of view what are the specifications of effective logos?
8. Are you aware of the logo changes at Oman Air/NBO? How?
9. How you encountered a changed in Oman Air/NBO logo? Why?
10. What changed in Oman Air/NBO logo?
11. How do you feel about this logo change? Why?

12. What do you do about this logo change? Can you explain?
13. From your point of view, why Oman Air/NBO changed its logo? May you explain?
14. What do you think of this new logo of Oman Air/NBO comparing to the old one? Why?
15. What do Oman Air /NBO new logo mean to you? Can you explain?
16. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you look at this new Oman Air/NBO logo? Why?
17. Is this logo changed related to Oman Air/NBO? How?
18. What changes would you like to see on this new logo in future? Why?
19. Do you think the new logo improve Oman Air/NBO image in the market? How? Why?
20. Are there other ideas you would like to add on this logo change about Oman Air/NBO?

In the second stage of primary sources, the researcher utilised a questionnaire that consisted of 58 questions covering the study purpose (this questionnaire can be seen in Figure 4.1). Secondary information was gathered from several sources including websites, magazines, reports' of Oman Air and NBO, Airline industry reports, Banking industry reports, electronic databases, books, e-books, seminars, newspapers, Central Bank of Oman, official sites of Oman particularly Ministry of Information and National Centre for Statistics and Information. In addition, the secondary sources included academic studies in marketing, branding, rebranding and consumers perceptions, behaviors and attitudes towards rebranding.

#### ***4.3.1.4 Questionnaire Design***

Many researchers believe that surveys are the most common methods used to collect the primary data from a representative sample of individuals (Punch, 2003; Sekaran, 2003). Zikmund (2003) referred to a survey as a research technique in which information is collected from a sample of people through the use of a questionnaire. Questionnaire surveys or interview surveys are commonly used to collect data by mail survey, telephone interview, face to face, and through other communication media. The term 'sample survey' is often used since the survey is expected to obtain a representative sample of the target population (Salkind, 2003; Zikmund, 2003).

When conducting surveys, the researcher should be aware of various forms of errors as a result of sampling and should attempt to minimize these errors to maximize the information content and provide generalized results (Sekaran, 2003). The advantages and disadvantages of some typical survey methods are summarized in table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Advantages and disadvantages of typical survey methods**

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Door to Door Interview</b>	<b>Mail Intercept Interview</b>	<b>Telephone Interview</b>	<b>Mail Survey</b>	<b>Online Survey</b>
<b>Speed of data collection</b>	Moderate	Fast	Very fast	Slow	Instantaneous, 24/7
<b>Geographic flexibility</b>	Limited to moderate	Confined	High	High	High, worldwide
<b>Respondent cooperation</b>	Excellent	Moderate to low	Good	Moderate	Varies
<b>Versatility of questioning</b>	Quite versatile	Extremely versatile	Moderate	Not versatile	Extremely versatile
<b>Questionnaire length</b>	Long	Moderate to Long	Moderate	Varies	Moderate
<b>Item non-response rate</b>	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Software can assure none
<b>Possibility of misunderstanding</b>	Low	Low	Average	High	High
<b>Degree of influence</b>	High	High	Moderate	None	None
<b>Cost</b>	Highest	Moderate to high	Low to moderate	Lowest	Low

*Source:* Adapted from Zikmund (2003)

This study uses a self-administered web-based online survey by using “Google Survey Tools” in order to gather the primary data from the participants. This data collection method was chosen because of the following benefits and advantages:

- An online survey is cost effective, especially when it involves a large sample size and requires multiple reminder postings.
- Time is saved as the speed of response is almost instantaneous and therefore the data collection period can be shortened substantially.
- An online survey can be programmed to ensure that no illegal multiple answers to questions are possible.
- It allows the researcher to gather specific data to answer the research questions.

- It allows respondents time to think about their replies, which minimizes the possibility of researcher bias.
- Busy employees prefer to answer surveys at their own time and pace.
- An online survey allows highly confidential questions to be conducted.
- Consumers in general prefer anonymous surveys to protect their confidentiality.
- It is appropriate for reaching a geographically dispersed population (Zikmund, 2003) as is the case in this study in which the respondents are from throughout Oman.

However, the online survey has some weaknesses, such as lower response rates compared to other survey methods as well as the inability to ensure that the respondents will answer all the questions of the questionnaire (Zikmund, 2003).

For this study, in order to achieve a high response rate, the Department of Information Technology and Media at SQU agreed to send an introductory e-mail with the links to the survey website with two versions of the survey (Arabic and English) distributed to all employees of SQU. The introductory email states that the respondents' identities would be kept anonymous and confidential so to assure the respondents' that their information will not be explicitly reported.

Respondents were able to choose to participate and had the right not to complete the questionnaire or to withdraw at any time. However, once they decided to participate, they had to complete all questions within the questionnaire to send back; otherwise the system would not accept it. It was also agreed with the relevant department at SQU to send the survey over three times during ten days to get the highest possible response rate. Using interesting and carefully designed questions to assist and simplify responses as well as arranging the questions in a structured and neat looking web-based online survey questionnaire format were methods employed with the intention of maximizing the cooperation of the respondents.

To collect quantitative primary data, many researchers, including Zikmund (2003), considered that the design of the questionnaire is one of the key stages in the process of survey research. The researcher must translate the necessary information to a set of specific items when designing the questionnaire. The questionnaire would also stimulate the participants to complete it with a lot of factors considered, for example the clarity of the questions and the overall shape of the questionnaire (Sekaran, 2003).

It is important that the questionnaire design principles focus on three important areas: (1) wording principles which refer to wording of items. (2) The measurement principles which include issues related to the classification of variables, inclusion, and coding after receiving responses. (3) The general principles "getup", which focus on the overall appearance of the questionnaire (Sekaran, 2003).

In this study, a questionnaire (see Appendix D), as the quantitative data gathering instrument, was designed followed a rigorous developmental process. In this case, the survey questionnaire was developed based on the principles advocated by Sekaran (2003).

#### ***4.3.1.5 Wording and Survey Items***

In the wording principles, the respondent's understanding of the word survey items is essential for an effective survey (Sekaran, 2003). Some factors should be taken into account when a researcher is developing the questionnaire, for instance; the language, the choice of words and the usage of terms and idioms in different cultures is important in achieving validity of the survey information collected. Besides, the questions asked should not be too long as respondents tend to get tired or lose interest in answering long questions. Further, the survey items should not lead, or be loaded, to suggest answers to the respondents.

The construction of the type of survey items and measurement scales used in the questionnaire is essential in determining how the researcher wants each item to be addressed (Zikmund, 2003). The researcher might use the open or closed ended type of items in their surveys. Open-ended items allow respondents to respond to them in any way they choose, whereas closed-ended items ask respondents to make choices among a set of alternatives provided by the researcher (Sekaran, 2003).

For this study, the researcher developed the survey items as closed-ended questions in order to code the information easily for subsequent analysis as well as to ensure that the alternatives were mutually exclusive (Brace, 2004). The total survey items are 60 in which the respondents are asked to choose the one closest to their own viewpoint.

In this online web-based survey, the sequence of questions and the layout were designed to generate respondents' interest as this can affect the response rate (Zikmund, 2003). The opening items were interesting and simple to understand. In order to prepare the respondents well to answer, the researcher designed the demographic questions at the beginning of the questionnaire, so that these might encourage them to share their information, thoughts, and feelings while completing this survey (Zikmund, 2003).

Figure 4.1 is the questionnaire that was sent to the respondents online. The questionnaire was derived from the conceptual framework, and was designed to indicate the way that the independent variables are able to explain the dependent variables.

To being with, each factor in the conceptual framework is represented by a minimum of four questions. Following the preliminary interaction with a sample of respondents, it was ascertained that some of the independent variables required more questions to ensure that there is a thorough response for the sake of analysis.



The questions in the questionnaire are designed to measure attitude, so that the respondent can freely give their opinion and their point of view. The Likert scale makes it easier to ascertain the mindset of the respondents in relation to the question that is being asked. As measuring the consumer attitudes forms the basis of the dependent variable for this study, having questions that directly address this is crucial.

Take for example, question 14 which states that after the logo changed, this brand is my first choice in the industry. This requires the respondent to provide information regarding whether their choice is based on the logo changing or not. This offers insight into their attitude towards the changes.

There are also some moderator variables that have been taken into consideration, and these form five of the six questions that are present at the beginning of the questionnaire.

#### **Figure 4.1: Questionnaire**

##### EXPLORING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OMANI BRANDS AFTER LOGOS CHANGE

---

#### **1- Gender\***

- ☐ Male
- ☒ Female

#### **2- Age\***

#### **3- Nationality\***

- ☐ Omani
- ☒ Expatriate

#### **4- Location\***

- ☐ Muscat Gov
- ☒ Other Gov

#### **5- Education: (the highest level completed)\***

#### **6- I consider myself a customer of\***

Please choose an appropriate number from 1 to 5 that best reflects your opinion for each word or statement.

7- How would you rate this brand after the logo changed? \*

1 2 3 4 5

Considerably worse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Considerably better
--------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	---------------------

8- How would you rate this brand after the logo changed? \*

1 2 3 4 5

Negative change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Positive change
-----------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------

9- How would you rate this brand after the logo changed? \*

1 2 3 4 5

Unfavorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Favorable
-------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------

Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement for each statement by mark the box that best describes your response.

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

Preference between brands\*

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neither agree nor disagree      Agree      Strongly agree

10- After the logo changed, this brand has stronger image.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

11- After the logo

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
changed, this brand become simpler than it did before.					
12- After the logo changed, I feel that this brand reflecting the Omani nationality, than it did before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13- After the logo changed, my opinion that this brand more favorable than it did before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Loyalty to the brand after logo change*</b>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
14- After the logo changed, this brand is my first choice in its industry.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15- After the logo changed, I consider myself to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
be highly loyal to this brand.					
16- After the logo changed, I always recommended this brand to people I know.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17- I would be prouder to own/use a product of this brand than I would have before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Association with the brand after the logo changed\*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
18- This brand offers additional services to me than it did before changing the logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19- This brand offers more personality to me than it did before changing the logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
20- Their products/services become satisfy my needs after having new logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21- I feel that the new logo increase the acceptance of brands' products and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Interest curiosity toward logo change*</b>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
22- I am curious to know more about this new logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23- I would be interested to find out more about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24- I am eager to know more about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25- I feel that investigating the new logo would	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
be worthwhile.					

26- I would like to learn more about this logo change.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

### Deprivation curiosity toward logo change\*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
27- I wonder why they changed the logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28- I wonder what the problem was with the old logo.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

29- I want to know what was wrong with the old logo.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

30- I feel I need to know the reason for this logo change.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

31- It does not make sense to me why they would change the logo.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

### Scepticism towards logo change \*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
32- I feel suspicious about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33- I feel distrustful about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34- I feel skeptical about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35- I feel skeptical about this logo change. I feel doubtful about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36- I believe that this logo change is meant to deceive me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37- They changed the logo to make it seem like a new product when it really is not.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Resistance toward logo change *</b>					

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
38- I do not want the logo to change because I am used to the old logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39- If I had a choice I would stick with the old logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40- I am not comfortable with this logo change without a good explanation for it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41- I prefer they leave a logo alone rather than change it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42- If it was up to me, I would not have changed the logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
43- I hope that they did not change the product/service with the logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
44- I am afraid that the product/service may not be the same as old.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45- I would be upset if the product/service changes with this new logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46- It worries me that the product/service may change after this new logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Effective logo *</b>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
47- Logo must have simplicity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
48- Logo should have specific identity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
49- Logo should reflect the company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
business.					
50- Logo should contain fewer colors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
51- Logo should contain fewer words.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
52- Logo should contain slogan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
53- Logo should reflect clear meanings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Consumer lifestyle\*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
54- I like to continue doing the same old things rather than trying new and different things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
55- I like to experience novelty and change in my daily routine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
56- I like a job that offers change, variety, and travel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
57- I am continually seeking new ideas and experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
58- I like continually changing activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
59- When things get boring, I like to find some new and unfamiliar experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
60- I prefer a routine way of life rather than an unpredictable one full of change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### **4.3.1.6 Measurement Scales**

There are four types of measurement scales. They are nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio scales (Zikmund, 2003). A nominal scale is the simplest type but has no intrinsic ordering. An ordinal scale is similar to a nominal scale; however, the difference between the two is that there is a clear ordering of scales. Even though the order can be classified, it is hard to determine whether the space between each of the levels is equal. An interval scale is similar to an ordinal scale except that the intervals between each level are equally spaced. On the other hand, the ratio scale has absolute rather than relative quantities (Zikmund, 2003).

Another two scales are justified by Sekaran (2003). They are rating scale and ranking scale. These two scales are considered as attitudinal scales. The rating scale is used to elicit responses with regard to the object, event, or person studied, and it has several categories. On the other hand, ranking scales elicit the preferred choices and make comparisons among or between objects, events, or persons (Sekaran, 2003).

In this questionnaire, the nominal scales were used on demographic particulars to categorize each item in the spectrum. Rating scales using a five-point Likert scale were used to measure the intensity of the respondents' attitude in the second section of the questionnaire, comprising items that measure consumers' attitude towards the brands after logo changes. In the third section of the questionnaire, ordinal measurement scales using a five-point Likert scale were used to measure the factors that influence consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes.

The final survey instrument, following refinement through the pilot study, contained ten groups of variables intended to measure consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes, and the factors influencing these attitudes.

#### 4.3.1.7 Likert Scale

The rating scale question type functions in a similar way. This is typically considered an “agree – disagree” scale. Likert scales are given scores or assigned a weight to each row in the matrix, usually from 1 to 5. The purpose of the Likert scale is to sum the scores for each respondent (the rating average) and its intent is that the statement will represent different aspects of the same attitude. In this study, the researcher used a five-level Likert item whose format is shown in the table below:

**Table 4.2: Format five-level Likert items**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>Value</b>	1	2	3	4	5

The following table (4.3) shows how the decision will be taken regarding the level Likert scale.

**Table 4.3: Criteria for judging study phrases**

<b>Rating the degree of approval</b>	<b>Over the arithmetic mean</b>	<b>The degree of approval</b>
<b>High level</b>	<b>3.5 – 5</b>	<b>4.50 – 5.00</b>
<b>Middle level</b>	<b>2.5 – 3.49</b>	<b>4.49 – 3.50</b> <b>2.50 – 3.49</b>
<b>Low level</b>	<b>1 – 2.49</b>	<b>1.50 – 2.49</b> <b>1.00 – 1.49</b>

#### 4.3.1.8 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are central issues in all measurement (Neuman, 2006). Researchers use them to assess the goodness of data obtained for their research. Reliability shows how steadily and consistently the items tap the variable; while, validity indicates how well a technique, instrument, or process measures a particular concept (Sekaran, 2003). In other words, reliability and validity are two essential characteristics of a good measurement tool (Zikmund, 2003). Therefore, the measurement tools that will be used to test the hypotheses must be reliable and valid; if not, the researcher may act incorrectly in accepting or rejecting the research hypothesis (Salkind, 2003).

A test can be reliable but not valid, but a test cannot be valid without first being reliable. Also reliability is necessary, but not a sufficient condition of validity (Salkind, 2003). Therefore, the criteria of reliability and

validity were considered carefully in this research as the relationship between reliability and validity is straightforward.

Reliability is “*dependability or consistency*” (Neuman, 2006: 188). It is “*the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results*” (Zikmund, 2003: 300). It tests the consistency and stability of a measurement instrument (Punch, 2003). It is the degree to which a measure indicates its uniformity without bias and hence ensures consistent measurement over time and across the various items in the instrument (Sekaran, 2003). Two dimensions that underlie the concept of reliability are repeatability and internal consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the goodness of a measure (Salkind, 2003; Sekaran, 2003; Zikmund, 2003). In the quantitative research component of this research, reliability issues were addressed by carrying out principal components analysis and calculating the coefficients of reliability or Cronbach’s alpha.

The Cronbach’s alpha is a commonly used method to examine the reliability coefficient, within a particular set of items, by correlating performance on each of the items in a test or a scale with overall performance on the test or scale across participants (Salkind, 2003; Sekaran, 2003; Zikmund, 2003). Cronbach’s alpha is computed in terms of the average inter-correlations among the items measuring the concept (Sekaran, 2003). The closer Cronbach’s alpha gets to 1.0, the higher the reliability (Sekaran, 2003; Zikmund, 2003).

Regarding validity, it is the extent to which the information collected in a research study truly reflects the phenomenon being studied (Ticehurst and Veal, 2000). It is “*the ability of a scale or measuring instrument to measure what it is intended to measure*” (Zikmund, 2003: 302). If the measuring instrument does not measure what it is designed to measure, there will be problems in the research results. Hence, validity is an issue of research concern because it determines the confidence researchers have in the results of the study. The way that questionnaire items are examined for validity is to observe whether the items focus on the results of the study and whether the results are understood within the context of the research purpose (Punch, 2003; Salkind, 2003).

Several types of validity tests are used to test the goodness of measures. They are grouped broadly as content validity, criterion-related validity and construct validity. Content (face) validity is a measure of how well the items represent or tap the concept (Sekaran, 2003). Criterion validity is the ability of some measure to correlate with other measures of the same construct (Zikmund, 2003). Construct validity, however, is the extent to which the results of a test are related to an underlying construct (Salkind, 2003).

To determine validity in this research study, content (face) validity was undertaken to ensure that the questionnaire designed would collect the required information to address the research questions and research problem respectively. To establish the content validity for this research, previous studies were reviewed to identify possible items to be included in the scale, experts in research fields were consulted to

obtain their comments on the measurement instrument, then the measurement instrument was tested in a pilot study on a group of respondents similar to the population being studied, to ascertain whether or not revision was needed before modifying the measurement based on the feedback from the pilot study as in accordance to Davis's (2005) four-step process.

#### ***4.3.1.9 One Sample T-test Statistics***

A one sample t-test measures whether a sample value significantly differs from a hypothesized value. Researchers use the one-sample t-test when they collect data on a single sample drawn from a defined population. In this design, they have one group of subjects, collect data on these subjects, and compare sample statistics ( $m$ ) to the population parameter ( $M$ ). The population parameter tells what to expect if the sample came from that population. If the sample statistic is very different (beyond what would be expected from sampling error), then the statistical test allows the researcher to conclude that the sample came from a different population. To sum up, in one-sample t-test, researchers will compare the mean ( $M$ ) calculated on a single set of scores (one sample) to a known population mean ( $m$ ).

#### ***4.3.1.10 Independent Sample T-test Statistics***

The independent samples t-test is the single most widely used test in statistics. It is used to compare differences between separate groups. In psychology, these groups are often composed by randomly assigning research participants to conditions. However, this test can also be used to explore differences in naturally occurring groups. For example, we may be interested in differences of emotional intelligence between males and females. Any differences between groups can be explored with the independent t-test, as long as the tested members of each group are reasonably representative of the population. However, there are some technical requirements as well. Principally, each variable must come from a normal (or nearly normal) distribution.

#### ***4.3.1.11 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)***

One-way analysis of variance (abbreviated one-way ANOVA) is a technique used to compare means of two or more samples (using the F distribution). This technique can be used only for numerical data. The ANOVA tests the null hypothesis in samples where two or more groups are drawn from the same population. To do this, two estimates are made of the population variance. These estimates rely on various assumptions. The ANOVA produces an F statistic, the ratio of the variance calculated among the means to the variance within the samples. If the group means are drawn from the same population, the variance between the group means should be lower than the variance of the samples, following central limit theorem. A higher ratio therefore implies that the samples were drawn from different populations.

The degrees of freedom for the numerator are  $I-1$ , where  $I$  is the number of groups (means). The degrees of freedom for the denominator is  $N - I$ , where  $N$  is the total of all the sample sizes. Usually, the one-way

ANOVA is used to test for differences among at least three groups, since the two-group case can be covered by a t-test. When there are only two means to compare, the t-test and the F-test are equivalent.

#### **4.3.1.12 Correlation Coefficient**

The correlation coefficient is a concept statistic to measure of how well trends in the predicted values follow trends in past actual values. It is a measure of how well the predicted values from a forecast model "fit" with the real-life data. The correlation coefficient is a number between 0 and 1. The correlation coefficient can also take any negative values in this range. If there is no relationship between the predicted values and the actual values the correlation coefficient is 0 or very low (the predicted values are no better than random numbers). As the strength of the relationship between the predicted values and actual values increases so does the correlation coefficient. A perfect fit gives a coefficient of 1.0. Thus the higher the correlation coefficient the better. This study shall use the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

The formula for r (correlation coefficient) is:

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (Y_i - \bar{Y})^2}}$$

#### **4.3.1.13 General Appearance**

The overall appearance of the questionnaire should include an appropriate introduction; the instructions should be clear with appropriate and understandable choices for participants. All of these factors contribute to get the largest number of respondents (Sekaran, 2003).

In this survey, the questionnaire was designed to look attractive, with a total of 60 items. Words and instructions used were kept simple and understandable to the respondents to assist them to complete the survey. In addition, an introductory email with an Information Sheet for the survey was sent to introduce the project, the purpose of the survey and the importance of the results from the survey, while assuring the respondents of confidentiality.

#### **4.3.1.14 Questionnaire Pre-testing**

Before the distribution of a questionnaire, it is tested with a group of respondents who represent the target of the survey sample. In this step the researcher makes sure that there are no problems related to the design or lack of resolution and clarity in the instructions or the language used in the questionnaire (Zikmund, 2003).

In this study, the draft questionnaire was tested on a sample of 29 respondents so as to identify potential problems. All aspects of the questionnaire were tested, including item content, wording, format, sequence, and layout.



The sample in the pre-test was similar to those later included in the actual survey in terms of the characteristics and familiarity with the subject. The researcher selected the pre-test respondents based on two factors: they should be consumers of one of the two cases in this study (Oman Air or National Bank of Oman) and they should be employees of Sultan Qaboos University.

The researcher did not use this sample in the actual survey. To refine the questionnaire, draft copies were circulated among three academic experts in the field for comments and feedback. The final questionnaire (see Appendix D) was designed on the basis of the results of the pre-test and the observations, comments, and recommendations of these academic experts.

#### ***4.3.1.15 Pilot Study***

The researcher had to ensure the effectiveness of online quantitative survey before starting a full-scale survey operation by conducting a pilot study on 19 respondents. Pilot study helps the researcher to obtain valuable information about the actions carried out and also gives important indications about the amendments that must be made to avoid any problems in the future (Zikmund, 2003). The researcher decided to conduct this pilot study for several reasons. The most important reasons were to ensure appropriate design of the questionnaire to the targeted respondents and to evaluate the research method and protocol. The researcher has benefited from the results of this pilot study through paying attention to all the feedback that helped to develop the final survey questionnaire for this study.

#### ***4.3.1.16 Questionnaire Administration***

In order to manage the online survey questionnaire, the following stages were observed:

1. Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) was selected to get a sample search to complete this study.
2. The researcher visited the Office of the Adviser of the Academic Affairs on 3 March 2013 to find out the procedures for publishing the questionnaire. As a first process, an official letter was submitted on 6 March 2013.
3. The approval letter of non-objection to select the sample from SQU was received on 13 March 2013. The researcher was instructed to coordinate with the Department of Media and Public Relations in SQU as the survey would be sent through SQUs' e-mail data base. An official sent the initial email to all 5769 employees in order to identify the Oman Air and NBO consumers. This was done on 17 March, and the employees were reminded on 20 March 2013. The reply received was that there were 2914 employees who considered themselves as consumers for Oman Air and NBO.
4. The number of 2914 represents the total number of Oman Air and NBO consumers working in SQU aged above 18 years. The researcher randomly selected 1166 people to represent 40% of the total

population for this research. This research was conducted via an online web-based survey; the Google Tools were used to publish this survey online.

5. The survey of 1166 employees was manageable in size, cost and time. The survey took a total of four weeks for data collection.
6. An introductory email with an Information Sheet for the Survey was sent by the Department of Media and Public Relations (DMPR) at SQU to each respondent on 2 April 2013 (see Appendices D). These described the details of the study, some general instructions and encouraged the respondents to participate via an integrated web link to the online survey.
7. The DMPR sent an email as a follow-up reminder to each respondent every 7 days for the next 3 weeks with an integrated link to the survey. This was done in order to increase the participation rates.
8. Four weeks after the introductory email was sent, on 1 June 2013 the data collection stage was concluded. A total of 782 questionnaires were returned with responses for data analysis stage.
9. The collected data was coded, tabulated, and entered into SPSS data analysis software version 19 for further analysis.

#### ***4.3.1.17 Ethical Considerations***

There are many ethical considerations taken into account in this research, as they are important in business research as in any other field of human activity (Ticehurst and Veal, 2000). This section of the study will shed light on a number of ethical issues that have been observed namely harm, privacy, informed consent, and research ethics.

It is argued that the harm which may affect this study's respondents relates to confidentiality of data and privacy rather than anything else (Cooper and Schindler, 2001), and therefore the identity of the respondents remained anonymous. In addition, the privacy of all respondents was respected in the implementation and reporting of this research study.

Informed consent is a written statement that illustrates aspects of the study to participants and asks for their voluntary agreement to participate before the start of the study (Newman, 2006). Thus, when there is a risk of harm to the subject, the researcher should clarify those risks to participants in advance in order for them to be fully aware of these risks and give their informed consent to participate in the research or not (Ticehurst and Veal, 2000). In this study, each participant was provided with an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study prior to the survey. This information sheet described the objectives of the study with contact particulars for further details if required. Several ethical practices were applied in

this study, as described in table 4.4 In brief, this study attempts to minimize ethical issues in order to meet the standard of research ethics.

**Table 4.4: Ethical practices used in this study**

Principle of ethics	Application in this study
<b>The right to free consent.</b>	Potential respondents were requested, rather than demanded, to participate in the survey. The sentence stating <i>“I would like to request your cooperation in completing the attached questionnaire”</i> was included in the cover letter. The survey contents included only relevant questions that were consistent with the research objective.
<b>The right to informed consent.</b>	Care was taken to maintain the rights of participants, and they were given a choice in whether or not to cooperate. <i>“Your participation is voluntary”</i> .
<b>The right to confidentiality.</b>	The promise of confidentiality was made to respondents as a sentence stated: <i>“please be assured that records of your participation and may data collected will be anonymous”</i>
<b>The right to privacy.</b>	In exploratory research, research participants had the right to withhold information about which they felt uncomfortable.
<b>The right to anonymity.</b>	Care was taken to keep respondents anonymous. The questionnaire did not ask for the respondent’s names or addresses.
<b>The right to contact researcher for further details.</b>	Care was taken to give respondents chance to obtain further details if required as a sentence stated: <i>“If you have any question regarding this project please feel free to contact myself on (sahb1000@hotmail.com), or the Binary University, Human Research Ethics Committee. (valerie@binary.edu.my)”</i> .
<b>Appropriate research reporting.</b>	The results from the survey and conclusion will be reported in a complete and unbiased manner. Moreover, the research results will be used only for the stated objectives and will not be utilized in any other manner.

**Source:** adapted from Cooper and Schindler (2001), Sekaran (2000), and Zikmund (1997) for this thesis

#### 4.3.2 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research is primary research conducted to clarify and define the nature of a problem (Zikmund, 1997). Additionally, exploratory research is useful in that it generates new ideas about the problem, explains the problem’s variables for reviewing the preliminary research for the next phase of a study (Cooper and Emory, 1995). It is especially useful for this study because of the lack of previous studies in this area related to the Omani context.

Exploratory approach is more concerned with individual attitudes. This kind of research does not seek statistical analysis as much as it seeks insight analysis (Bell, 1989: 60). This research deals with opinions

and beliefs, so the researcher needs to present deeper explanation and to develop further understanding of the topic. *"The researchers doing qualitative research will attempt to obtain an inside view of the phenomenon, getting as close as possible to the subject of the research in order to collect resonant, fertile data to enable the development of a social construct through the dynamic process of research"* (Walliman, 2001: 247).

The qualitative research is designed *"to understand the nature of a business situation, to grasp the "whys" and "how's" of market dynamics, and to explore the interrelationships of issues"* whereas the *"quantitative research is designed to answer a research question in terms of numerical quantities"* (Wallace, 1984: 181).

The qualitative approach seems to have a flexible design and the skillful researcher can adapt it to fit into the research demands. In addition, this approach might be used before a quantitative approach (Robson, 1993). Qualitative research is used *"to construe the attitudes, beliefs and motivation within a subject; it can also perform a preparatory role in quantitative research"* (Walliman, 2001: 247).

However, the qualitative approach is limited as the researcher can only use a small sample. Consequently, the result cannot be generalized meaning that the results cannot be used for different contexts. Denscombe (1998: 299) argued that the reader of the research can use the information from the findings to reach a judgment about how far it would apply to other comparable instances. One of the critical views about the qualitative approach is that it can be highly subjective because it is affected by the researcher's own view and experiences about the situations. However, qualitative approach data gives the full picture though it is limited and time consuming.

The qualitative approach helps offer a deep explanation and allows depth, flexibility, and broad coverage. Davies (2007) stated that many students prefer the qualitative approach because it is more manageable in a limited time frame and the researcher does not need to have statistical skills. There is a belief that the qualitative approach is more human and more social. Moreover, researchers will be part of their projects because they will interact directly with the people they investigate either by interviewing or observing.

As the topic investigates consumers' brand attitudes after the logos change in Omani corporations, there is a need to investigate individual views. This increases the validity of the study through testing what is supposed to be tested and making the study more accurate by situating the researcher in the real world which will make the vision clearer. Qualitative research is indeed *"a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible"* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003).

#### **4.3.2.1. Qualitative Research Objectives Statement**

The objective of this qualitative research is to confirm the factors that influence the consumers' attitudes towards Omani brands after changing their logos, by using face-to-face in-depth interviews. This qualitative research results in a description of the theme factors influencing the consumers' attitudes, as well as identifying any other factors that might not have been established in the literature review.

#### **4.3.2.2 Data Collecting Methods**

The face-to-face in-depth interview method was chosen as the qualitative methodology for this research because its objective is *"to obtain rich, detailed data that reflects the informant's language, experience, and perspective "in depth"* (Hudson and Ozanne 1994, cited in Kwortnik 2003: 119). This is added to its advantage of discovering new ideas or variables to be used in the Omani context for this study (Zikmund, 1997).

The interview is one of the research techniques which involves the researcher asking questions to people one-to-one. *"Interviewing as a research method typically involves you, as a researcher, asking question and hopefully, receiving answers from the people you are interviewing"*, (Robson, 1993: 267). Sometimes the researcher might be involved in a group interview.

The main purpose of interviews in research is to collect in-depth data. It is *"to find out what is in and on someone else's mind"* (Patton, 1980 cited in Greenfield, 1996:169). The rationale of interviews is to collect more detailed information and to explore someone's experiences and feelings in order to develop the research model.

There are three types of interviews. The first one is a structured interview which means that the questions are tightly controlled. *"Structured interviews involve tight control over the format of the questions and answers. In essence, the structured interview is like a questionnaire which is administrated face to face with a respondent."* (Denscombe, 1998: 112).

The second type is a semi-structured interviews which is more flexible than the first one, so the researcher can develop more ideas through the process of the interview. *"It has predetermined questions, but the order can be modified based upon the interviewer's perception of what seems most appropriate"* (Robson, 1993: 270). Through this kind of interview, Greenfield (1996:171) asserts that the flexibility is related to the individual circumstances of the respondents which means that the researcher can adapt the questions or reformulate them according to the situation.

The third type is the unstructured interview which is an informal interview because the interviewer and the interviewee will have a general topic which concentrates on the research theme; *"the interviewer has a general area of interest and concern, but lets the conversation develop within this area. It can be*

*completely informal*" (Robson, 1993: 270). The interview technique has some weaknesses and strengths; therefore, the researcher should be aware of those weaknesses and strengths.

Interviews in general are time consuming because they need numerous arrangements such as; preparing the questions, choosing the sample, the appointments with the interviewees, then the process of interviewing then the transcriptions and analysis. *"All interviews require careful preparation-making, arrangement to visit, securing necessary permissions which takes time and notes have to be written up; tapes if used must be transcribed"* (Robson, 1993: 273).

In addition interviews might have problems with the data such as subjectivity and the personality of both the interviewer and the interviewee. Greenfield (1996) said that interviews are difficult to replicate which means that the researcher cannot get the same results if the interviews were repeated and they depend on the honesty of the interviewees and how skillful the interviewer is. Denscombe (1998: 137) stated that interviews might be very strong on validity but they might have a lack of reliability.

Interviews can help the researcher to search in depth in a flexible and valid way. They are *"particularly good at producing data which deals with topics in depth and in detail"* (Denscombe, 1998: 136). They can investigate and follow up interesting responses and through them the researcher can gain unexpected insights and the non-verbal clues might offer some message to assist the researcher in understanding the verbal responses. Interviews require simple equipment and they are flexible for data collection. They are also considered valid instruments because the researcher collects information directly from the respondents. Finally, some people enjoy being interviewed, so they try to give more explanations about their attitudes.

Due of the type of the data needed, the researcher used the "semi-structured" interview which features "some prearranged questions to guide the dialogue towards specific topics" (Kwortnik, 2003: 119). This is also because one aspect of the research is to focus on the relationship between logo change perceptions, and consumers' attitudes after the logo changes.

#### **4.3.2.3 Qualitative Research Sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organizations) from a population of interest. *"The quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted"* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000: 92)

There are many advantages of using sampling instead of studying the complete context because the sample represents the genuine context. The whole context cannot be studied because it is time and money consuming. Moreover, sampling might achieve the purpose of the study if it is valid and reliable, and the

use of sampling can help in depth study of most of the details. On the other hand, high quality results need a larger sample; also bias might affect the selection of the sample.

For qualitative researchers, Flick (1998, cited in Neuman 2006) stated that *“it is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which people to be studied are selected”*. As the sample includes the existing consumers of the selected cases of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman in Oman, the researcher used “Purposive Sampling Strategy” (Neuman, 2006); as the nature of the study concentrates on exploring the topic and investigating on the themes that might have an affect the consumers’ attitudes towards the brands after logo changes.

#### **4.3.2.4 Pilot Interviews**

Two pilot interviews - one for each case - were conducted before the study itself to test that the methodology would yield viable data, and to identify and rectify any inconsistencies before embarking on the main study’s data collection. In particular, it was important to discover any shortcomings in the design and administration of the interview questions and to assess the clarity and precision of the instructions. The pilot interviews attempted open-ended topics and identified how and when supplementary questions or prompts were required to ensure the depth, range, and quality of information.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter describes the research methodology. The appropriate research design and data collection methods used are detailed. The sampling procedures for both quantitative and qualitative methods are outlined and the operational definitions developed.

This mixed methodology was determined to be ideal for several reasons. The first was to enable the researcher to get an in depth view of the respondents understanding of the topic through the pilot interviews. The next reason was to allow for the extraction of the information from the qualitative study to develop a relevant questionnaire for quantitative testing. The reason that quantitative analysis was important was to enable the production of statistically relevant information that can be applied and referred to in a large number of scenarios.

The combination of these two research methods will help to ensure clarity of the information gathered and reliability of results. Other studies may opt to use either a qualitative approach or a quantitative one. A purely qualitative approach is very time consuming, and the answers may be challenging to analyse, especially if they differ greatly from the predetermined codes. A purely quantitative approach will produce quick, statistical information. However, without the opportunity to conduct some preliminary interviews, the questions asked may be invalid, leading to the responses in the entire study being rejected. To counter the issues that could arise, a mixed methodology was used.

## Chapter 5: Data Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter contains a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology for this study. This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected from Oman Air and NBO consumers using both qualitative and quantitative statistical techniques. It begins with the internal consistency and reliability for the questionnaire followed by an outline of the respondents' profiles. Next, the analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data collected from a web-based online survey and interviews are illustrated. Finally, a summary of the hypotheses findings from quantitative and qualitative data are presented and conclusions drawn.

### 5.2 Data Collection Process

Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) employees were the population frame for data collection in this study. The sampling frame consisted of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman consumers working at SQU. The management of SQU agreed to aid the study by sending an email to all the 5769 employees to identify the population frame. 2914 replies from consumers of either Oman Air or NBO were received.

A probability sampling design were used. A stratified random sampling method was used to divide the population into subpopulation "homogeneous" groups before sampling, in order to improve the representativeness of the sample by reducing sampling error. However, the responses received were not adequate in number to support this technique. Therefore, a simple random sampling method was utilized instead. Using the sampling frame as a guide (table 5.1), the sample size of approximately 40% was utilized, 40% of the population (1166 persons) were randomly selected from 2914 employees as a sample. 1166 emails were distributed and 782 responses were received, resulting in a final response rate of approximately 67%.

**Table 5.1: Sampling frame**

	Number	Percentage
<b>Population Frame</b>	2914	100 %
<b>Sample size</b>	1166	40 %
<b>Responses received</b>	782	67 %



### 5.3 Quantitative Data Analysis

This study uses a mixed methods approach. Qualitative research was conducted to validate the constructs and linkages between constructs and quantitative research, and to test those constructs and relationships.

This section indicates the results of the quantitative research. The consistency of the questionnaire, and descriptive analysis are outlined.

#### 5.3.1 Reliability and Consistency Tests by Cronbach's Alpha for Questionnaire

Cronbach's alpha test was used to measure the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire items. A random sample of 130 respondents were selected. Table 5.2 shows Cronbach's Alpha values for the independent and dependent variables used. The Cronbach's Alpha overall is calculated as (0.910). Thus, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the items in the Likert type scale is acceptable, as it's more than (0.7) of alpha.

**Table 5.2: Reliability and consistency results for study**

No.	Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
1	Consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes	0.891	3
2	Preference of brands after the logo changes	0.710	4
3	Loyalty to the brand after logo changes	0.913	4
4	Association with brands after logo changes	0.883	4
5	Interest curiosity towards logo changes	0.924	5
6	Deprivation curiosity towards logo changes	0.910	5
7	Scepticism towards logo changes	0.909	6
8	Resistance to logo changes	0.911	9
9	Consumer perceptions on effective Logo	0.912	7
10	Consumer's lifestyle	0.715	7
	Total	0.910	54

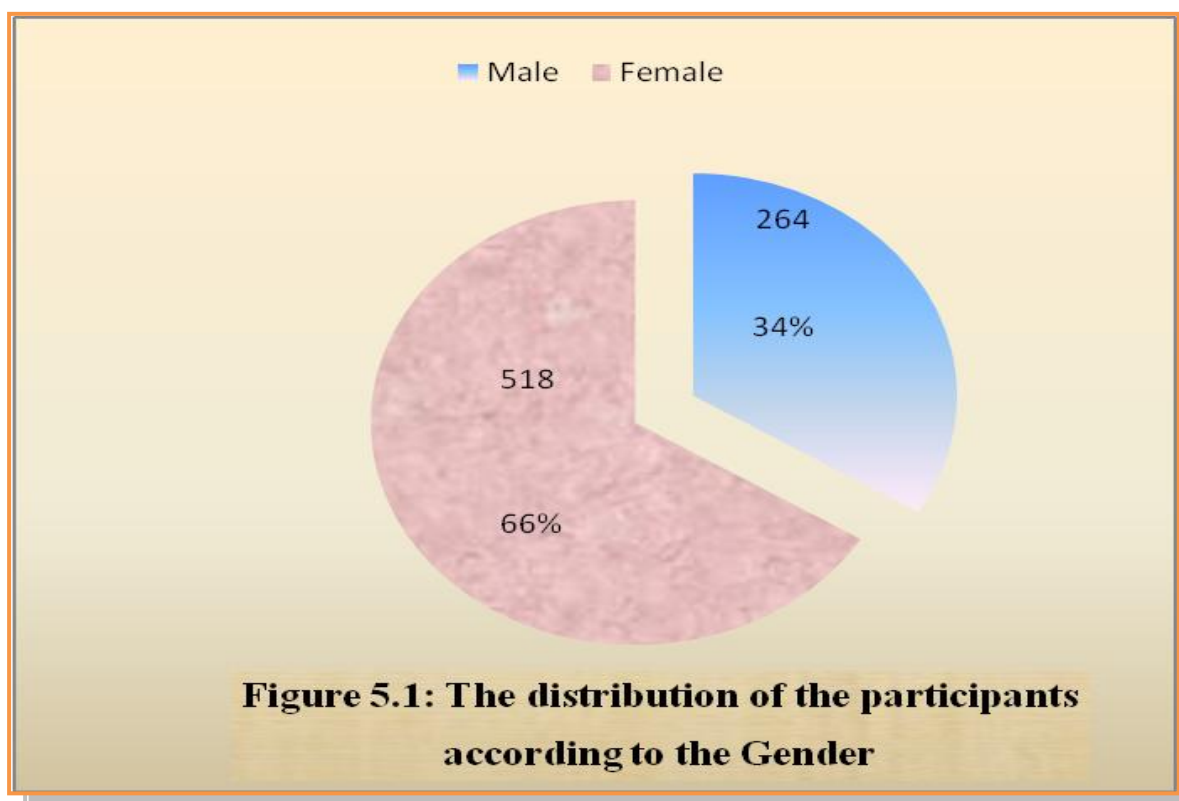
### 5.3.2 Descriptive Analysis

This section presents the descriptive analysis of the sample population. It highlights the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, namely gender, age, nationality, place and level of education.

**5.3.2.1 Gender:** Table 5.3 (translated into figure 5.1) shows the distribution of the participants according to gender. The majority of the participants were females (66.2%) compared to males (33.8%). The significant participation of females in this research may illustrate that female respondents are more likely to participate in academic research that uses an online survey to communicate than males. This is in line with the study by Jackson et al. (2001: 363); which confirmed that *"females are more likely to engage in online activity characterized by communication and exchanging of information whereas males are more likely to engage in online activity characterized by seeking of information"*.

**Table 5.3: The distribution of the participants according to gender**

Age Group	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	264	33.8	33.8
Female	518	66.2	100.0
Total	782	100.0	

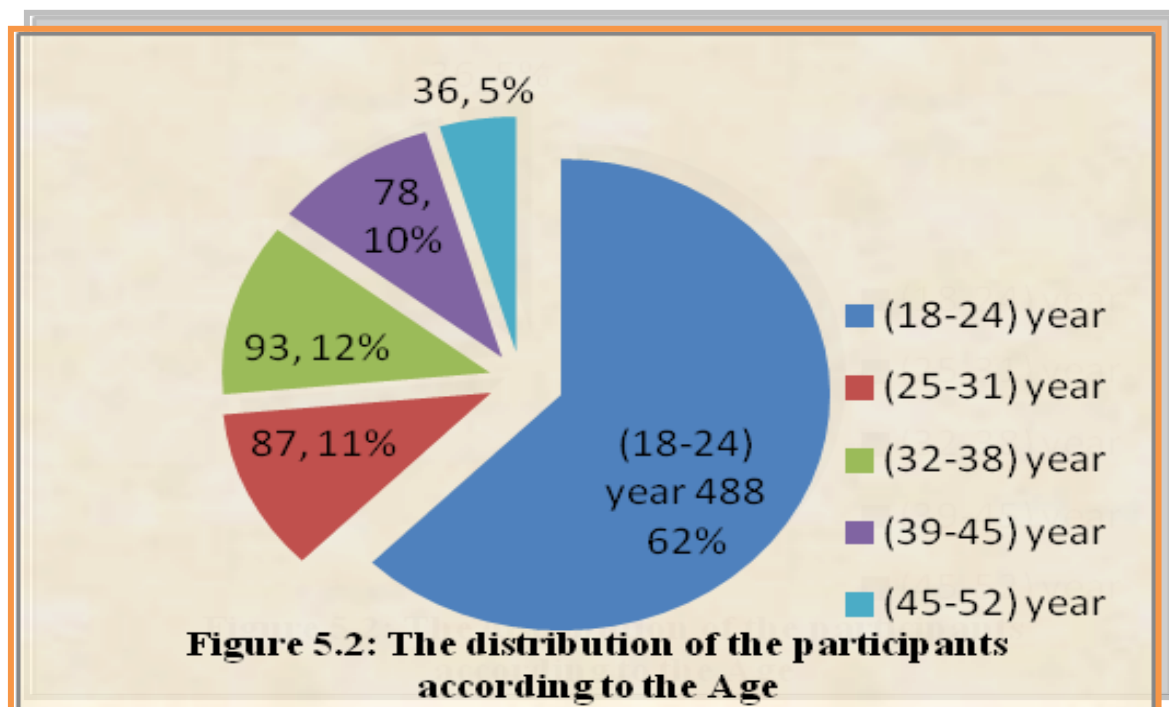


**5.3.2.2 Age:** Table 5.4 (translated into figure 5.2) shows the distribution of the participants according to age. The majority of the participants (62.4%) were between the ages of 18 – 24 years old. The age group of 25 – 31 years old had 11.9% participants, followed by the age group of 32 – 38 years old which had 11.1% participants. The age group of 39 – 45 years old was represented by 10% of the participants, and only 4.6% of the participants were above 45 years old.

The proportion of the size of age groups of (18-38 years) equaled 85.4% of the total number of participants in this study which to a large extent reflects the demographic makeup of the Omani society at the end of 2013 (National Center for Statistics and Information, 2012).

**Table 5.4: The distribution of the participants according to age**

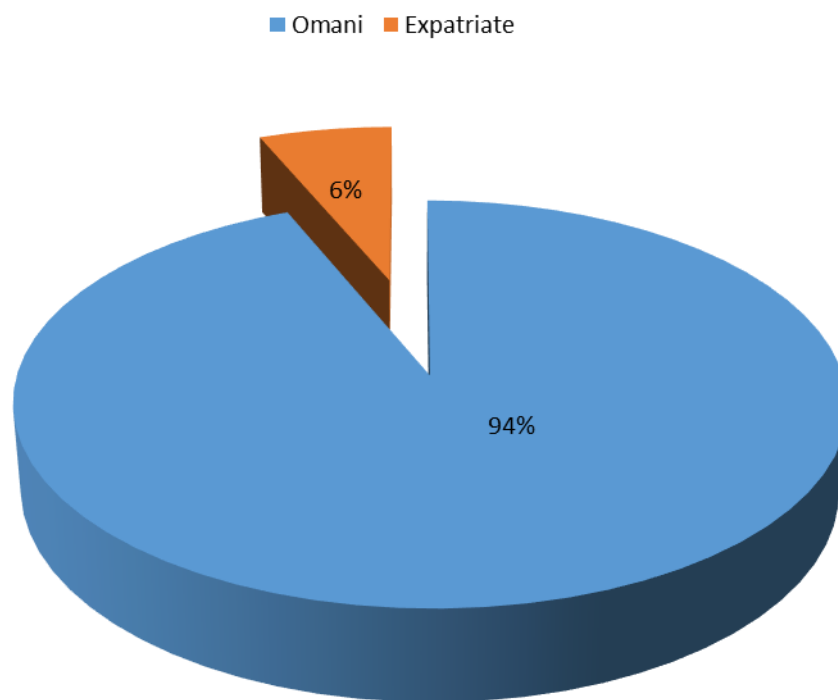
Age Group	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-24	488	62.4	62.4
25-31	87	11.1	73.5
32-38	93	11.9	85.4
39-45	78	10.0	95.4
46-52	36	4.6	100.0
Total	782	100.0	



**5.3.2.3 Nationality:** Table 5.5 (translated into figure 5.3) shows the distribution of the participants according to nationality. The majority of the participants were Omanis (93.7%) compared to expatriate (6.3%).

**Table 5.5: The distribution of the participants according to nationality**

Nationality		Frequency	Percent
	Omani	733	93.7
	Expatriate	49	6.3
	Total	782	100.0

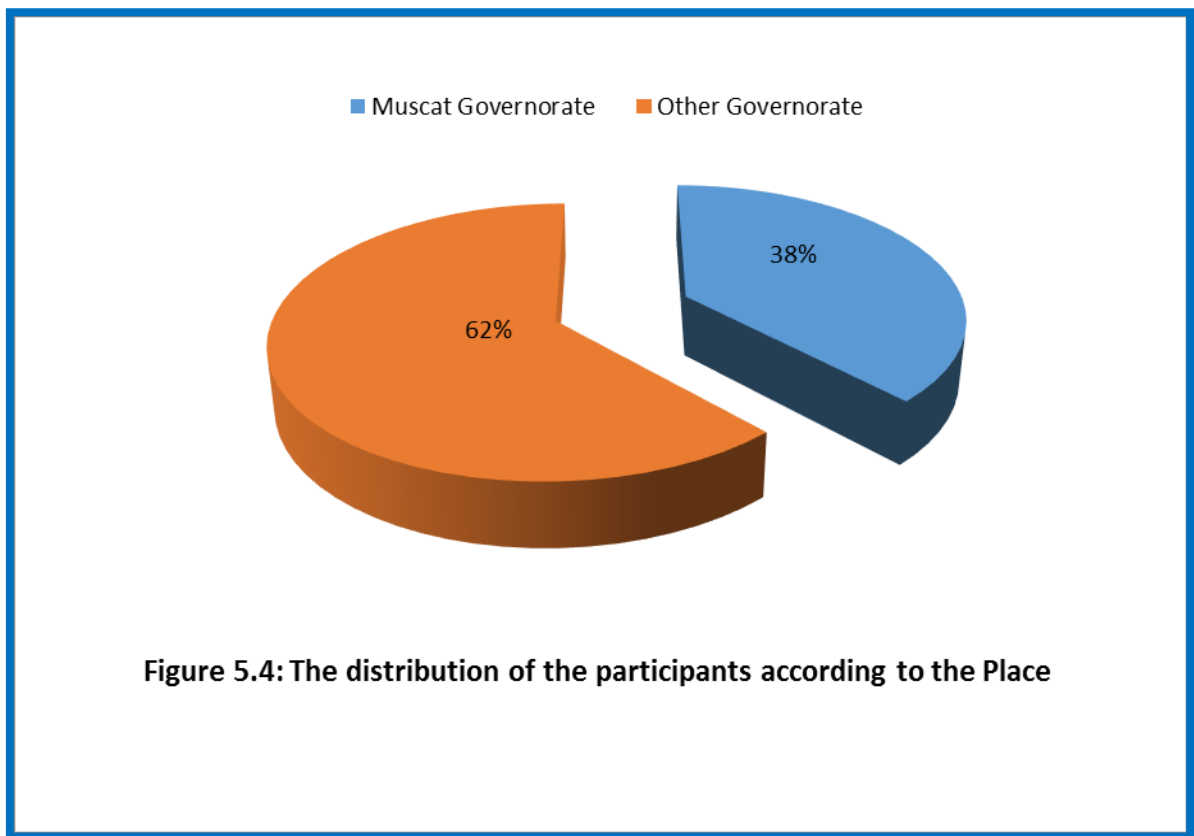


**Figure 5.3: The distribution of the participants according to the Nationality**

**5.3.2.4 Location:** Table 5.6 (translated into figure 5.4) shows the distribution of the participants according to location. The majority of the participants (62%) were from other governorates in Oman. The rest (38%) were from Muscat governorate.

**Table 5.6: The distribution of the participants according to location**

Governorate		Frequency	Percent
	Muscat Governorate	297	38.0
	Other Governorate	485	62.0
	Total	782	100.0

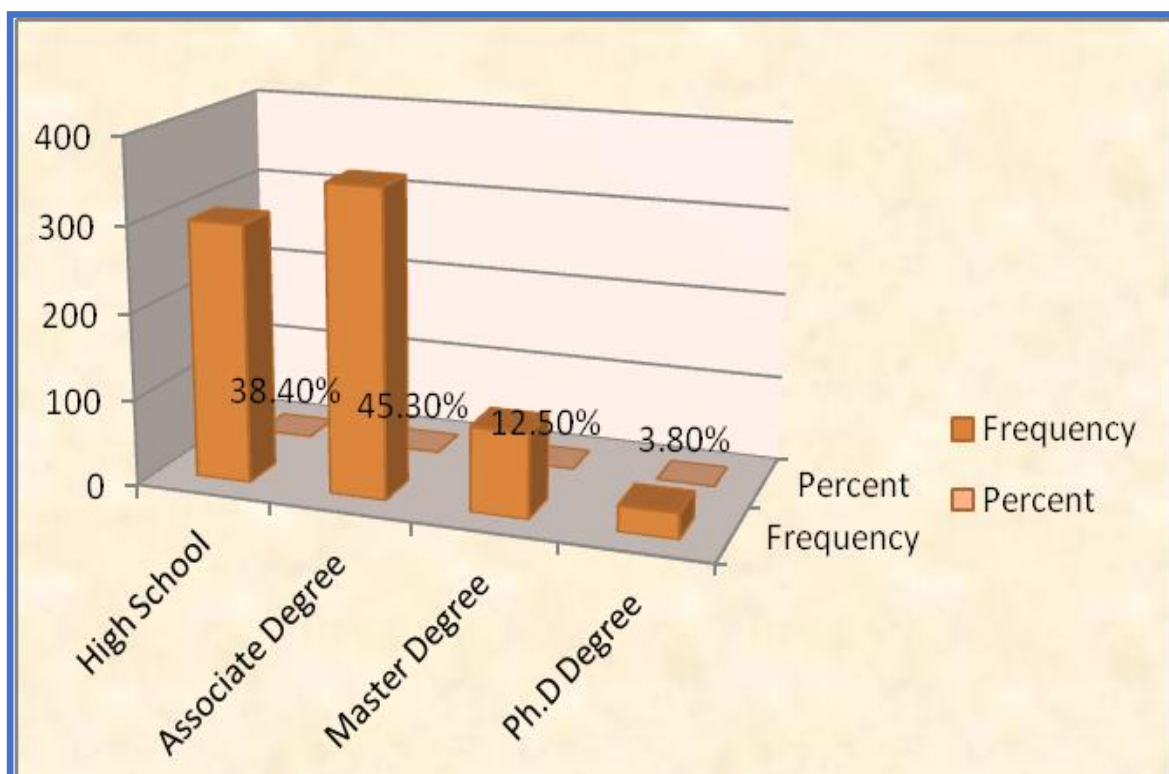


**5.3.2.5 Education:** Table 5.7 (translated into figure 5.5) displays the distribution of the participants by education level. The majority of participants (45.3%) were Associate degree holders. These were followed by high school holders at 38.4%. Master and PHD holders represented 12.5% and 3.8% respectively out of the total number of participants.

Participants with higher levels of education (MA and Ph.D.) were the least responsive to this research. This may be attributed to their connectedness with their families, profession and their social affairs compared to those who have lower educational levels. Those with lower educational levels might have more time to address the surveys sent to them electronically.

**Table 5.7: The distribution of the participants according to the level of education**

Education	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid High School	300	38.4	38.4
Associate degree	354	45.3	83.6
Master degree	98	12.5	96.2
PHD/DBA	30	3.8	100.0
Total	782	100.0	



**Figure 5.5: The distribution of the participants according to Education**

Following the demographic information about the respondents, the next section addresses the analysis of the hypothesis in light of the study findings.

## 5.4 Hypothesis Tests Outcomes

In this section the test of normality is done. The data is analyzed according to each factor's result, demographics factors, level of education, and significant effects on respondents' attitudes are indicated.

### 5.4.1 Test of Normality

In general, 'Normality Tests' are used with a large population to determine if the data set is well-modeled by a normal distribution and to compute how likely it is for a random variable underlying the data set to be normally distributed.

For this study, there is normal distribution, meaning we can use parametric hypothesis tests for the research (please refer to table 5.8). As the main parametric test is the t-test in this study, the statistics are based on comparing means in order to calculate measures of significance based on a stated null hypothesis and confidence level. For more details please refer to appendix E.

**Table 5.8: Test of normality**

Gender	Kolmogorov – Smirnova		Sig.	Shapiro - Wilk		
	Statistic	Df		Statistic	Df	Sig.
Attitude Male	.175	264	0.061	.952	264	0.104
Female	.187	518	0.061	.955	518	0.121

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

### 5.4.2 Consumers' Attitudes Towards the Brand after Logo Changes

Ho: average **Consumer Attitudes** = 3

H1: average of **Consumer Attitudes**  $\neq$  3

The results of the analysis reveals that consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes are positive. This is illustrated in table 5.9. The results of the t-test show that the sig value is (0.000). As it is less than 0.05, therefore, we do not accept Ho. The mean value is (3.5149), which means that consumers had positive attitudes towards the brands after the logo changed.

**Table 5.9: One sample test for consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes**

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	T	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Interval Difference	Confidence of the
					Lower	Upper
Consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo change	13.886	781	.000	.51492	.4421	.5877

### 5.4.3 Consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands

*Ho: There is no relationship between consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands.*

*H2: There is a relationship between consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands.*

The results in table 5.10 display that all significant values are less than (0.05) meaning that Ho is not accepted. There is a relationship between consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands after the logos changed.



**Table 5.10: ANOVA for consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands**

		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Consumers' attitude after the logo change</b>	Between Groups	338.371	8	42.296	65.208	.000
	Within Groups	501.399	773	.649		
	Total	839.770	781			
<b>Preferences of brands after logo change</b>	Between Groups	15.563	8	1.945	6.070	.000
	Within Groups	247.724	773	.320		
	Total	263.287	781			
<b>Loyalty to the brand after the logo change</b>	Between Groups	47.639	8	5.955	7.972	.000
	Within Groups	577.410	773	.747		
	Total	625.049	781			
<b>Association with brand after the logo change</b>	Between Groups	34.521	8	4.315	7.035	.000
	Within Groups	474.127	773	.613		
	Total	508.647	781			
<b>Interest curiosity toward logo change</b>	Between Groups	54.126	8	6.766	7.896	.000
	Within Groups	662.367	773	.857		
	Total	716.492	781			
<b>Deprivation curiosity toward logo change</b>	Between Groups	39.948	8	4.993	5.445	.000
	Within Groups	708.833	773	.917		
	Total	748.781	781			
<b>Scepticism towards logo change</b>	Between Groups	20.804	8	2.601	3.644	.000
	Within Groups	551.711	773	.714		
	Total	572.515	781			
<b>Resistance towards logo change</b>	Between Groups	19.465	8	2.433	3.677	.000
	Within Groups	511.547	773	.662		
	Total	531.013	781			
<b>Consumers perception on effective logo</b>	Between Groups	36.259	8	4.532	7.095	.000
	Within Groups	493.825	773	.639		
	Total	530.084	781			
<b>Consumer lifestyle</b>	Between Groups	28.186	8	3.523	9.104	.000
	Within Groups	299.143	773	.387	65.208	.000
	Total	327.329	781			

Following the test of relationship between consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands after the logos changed, the next section displays the type of relationship between consumers' attitudes towards brands and each factor that affects the consumers' attitudes by use of the Pearson Correlation test:

#### **5.4.4 Preferences of Brands after Logo Changes**

*(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no positive relationship between respondents' preference of brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

*H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between respondents' preference of brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

The results of the analysis reveal that the relationship between consumers' preferences of brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes is positive. This is illustrated in table 5.9. The results of the correlation test indicate that if the sig is (0.014), which is less than 0.05, then we do not accept H<sub>0</sub>. The value of correlation is (0.088).

#### **5.4.5 Loyalty to the Brands after Logo Changes**

*(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no positive relationship between respondents' loyalty to the brands after the logo change, and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

*H<sub>4</sub>: There is a positive relationship between respondents' loyalty to the brands after the logo change, and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

The results of the analysis reveal that the relationship between consumers' loyalty to the brands after logo changes and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes is negative. This is illustrated in table 5.9. From the results of the correlation test if the sig of (0.083) is more than 0.05 then we do not reject the H<sub>0</sub>. The value of correlation is (-0.072).

#### **5.4.6 Association with Brands after the Logo Changes**

*(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no positive relationship between respondents' association with brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

*H<sub>5</sub>: There is a positive relationship between respondents' association with brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

The results of the analysis reveal that the relationship between consumers' association with the brands and their attitudes towards the brands after logo changes is negative, as illustrated in table 5.9. The results of

the correlation show that if the sig of (0.091) is more than (0.05) then we do not reject the Ho. The value of correlation (-0.022).

#### **5.4.7 Interest Curiosity towards Logo Changes**

*(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no positive relationship between interest curiosity toward logo change, and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

*H<sub>6</sub>: There is a positive relationship between interest curiosity toward logo change, and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

The results of the analysis reveal that the relationship between consumers' interest curiosity towards logo changes and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes is positive. This is illustrated in table 5.9. The results of the correlation show that the sig of (0.00) less than 0.05 and so the Ho is not accepted. The correlation value is (0.211).

#### **5.4.8 Deprivation Curiosity towards Logo Change**

*(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no positive relationship between deprivation curiosity toward logo change, and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

*H<sub>7</sub>: There is a positive relationship between deprivation curiosity toward logo change, and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

The results of the analysis reveals that the relationship between consumers' deprivation curiosity towards logo changes and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes is negative. This is illustrated in table 5.9, where the results of the correlation show that the sig is (0.601) which is more than 0.05 and therefore the Ho is not rejected. The correlation value is (0.019).

#### **5.4.9 Scepticism towards Logo Change**

*(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no positive relationship between scepticism towards logo change and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

*H<sub>8</sub>: There is a positive relationship between scepticism towards logo change and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

The results of the analysis reveal that the relationship between consumers' scepticism towards logo changes and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' after logo changes is negative. This is illustrated in table 5.9, where the results of the correlation show that the sig is (0.257), and if it is more than 0.05, then we do not reject the Ho. The correlation value is (-0.041).

#### **5.4.10 Resistance to Logo Change**

*(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no positive relationship between resistance to logo change and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

*H<sub>9</sub>: There is a positive relationship between resistance to logo change and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

The results of the analysis reveal that the relationship between consumers' resistance to logo changes and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes is negative. This is illustrated in table 5.9, whereby the results of the correlation show that the sig is (0.060), which is more than 0.05, and therefore the H<sub>0</sub> is not rejected. The correlation value is (-0.067).

#### **5.4.11 Consumer Perception on Effective Logos**

*(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no positive relationship between perception on effective logo, and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo change.*

*H<sub>10</sub>: There is a positive relationship between perception on effective logo, and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo change.*

The results of the analysis reveal that the relationship between consumers' perception on effective logos and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes is positive. This is illustrated in table 5.9, with the results of the correlation showing that the sig is (0.000), which is less than 0.05, and therefore the H<sub>0</sub> is not accepted. The correlation value is (0.131).

#### **5.4.12 Consumer Lifestyle**

*(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no positive relationship between lifestyle perception and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

*H<sub>11</sub>: There is a positive relationship between lifestyle perception and respondents' attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.*

The results of the analysis reveal that the relationship between consumers' lifestyle perception and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes is positive. This is illustrated in table 5.11, where the results of the correlation indicate that the sig is (0.000), which is less than 0.05, and the H<sub>0</sub> is not accepted. The correlation value is (0.229).

**Table 5.11: Correlation between consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands**

S.N	Factors affecting consumers' attitudes		Attitudes	Decision	Type of correlation
1	Preferences	Pearson Correlation	.088*	There is positive relationship	Weak positive correlation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.014		
2	Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	-.072**	There is negative relationship	Weak negative correlation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.083		
3	Association	Pearson Correlation	-.022**	There is negative relationship	Weak negative correlation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.091		
4	Interest curiosity	Pearson Correlation	.211**	There is positive relationship	Weak positive correlation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
5	Deprivation curiosity	Pearson Correlation	.019	There is negative relationship	Weak negative correlation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.601		
6	Scepticism	Pearson Correlation	-.041	There is negative relationship	Weak negative correlation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.257		
7	Resistance	Pearson Correlation	-.067	There is negative relationship	Weak negative correlation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.060		
8	Consumers perception on effective logo	Pearson Correlation	.131**	There is positive relationship	Weak positive correlation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
9	Consumer lifestyle	Pearson Correlation	.229**	There is positive relationship	Weak positive correlation
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		

### 5.4.13 Consumer Gender

*Ho: There is no relationship between respondent's gender and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

*H12: There is a relationship between respondent's gender and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

The results in table 5.12 show that the significant value is (.001), which is less than 0.05, therefore Ho is not accepted. There is a relationship between respondent's gender and consumers' attitudes towards brands' logo changes.

**Table 5.12: Independent sample test for consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes and gender**

Independent Samples Test							
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Consumers' attitudes towards brands' logo changes	Equal variances assumed	11.089	.001	-2.042	780	.042	-.15976
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.925	453.251	.055	-.15976

### 5.4.14 Consumer Age

*Ho: There is no relationship between respondents' age range and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

*H13: There is a relationship between respondents' age range and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

The results in table 5.13 display the significant value as (0.384), which is more than 0.05 meaning that Ho is not rejected. There is no relationship between respondents' age range and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo changes.

**Table 5.13: ANOVA for consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes and age**

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.485	4	1.121	1.043	.384
Within Groups	835.285	777	1.075		
Total	839.770	781			

#### 5.4.15 Consumer Nationality

*Ho: There is no relationship between respondents' nationality and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

*H14: There is a relationship between respondents' nationality and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

The results in table 5.14 display the significant value as (0.111), which is more than 0.05 meaning Ho is not rejected. There is no relationship between respondents' nationality and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo changes.

**Table 5.14: Independent sample test for consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes and nationality**

Independent Samples Test							
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Consumers' attitudes towards brands' logo changes	Equal variances assumed	2.551	.111	-1.256	780	.210	-.14843
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.482	57.800	.144	-.14843

#### 5.4.16 Consumer Location

*Ho: There is no relationship between respondents' location and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

*H15: There is a relationship between respondents' location and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

The results in table 5.15 display the significant value as (0.849), which is more than 0.05 meaning Ho is not rejected. There is no relationship between respondents' location and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo changes.

**Table 5.15: Independent sample test for consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes and location**

Independent Samples Test							
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Consumers' attitudes towards brands' logo changes	Equal variances assumed	.036	.849	-.734	780	.463	-.04335
	Equal variances not assumed			-.743	649.531	.458	-.04335

#### 5.4.17 Consumer Level of Education

*Ho: There is no relationship between respondents' level of education and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

*H16: There is a relationship between respondents' level of education and their attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.*

The results in table 5.16 show that the significant value is (0.625), which is more than 0.05, and therefore, Ho is not rejected. There is no relationship between respondents' level of education and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.



**Table 5.16: ANOVA for consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes and education**

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.888	3	.629	.584	.625
Within Groups	837.882	778	1.077		
Total	839.770	781			

#### 5.4.18 Summary of Hypotheses Analysis

To sum up, the analysis above reveals that consumers of Oman Air and NBO have positive attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes. Moreover, the analysis shows that there are relationships between consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands after the logos changed. Furthermore, the investigation displays that there is a positive relationship between the consumers' preferences of brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.

However, the analysis demonstrates that there is negative relationship between the consumers' loyalty to the brands after the logo changes and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes. Moreover, it displays the negative relationship between the consumers' association with brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.

The analysis above shows that there is a positive relationship between the consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes and their interest curiosity towards logo changes. Whereas, the deprivation curiosity towards logo changes does have a negative relationship with the consumers' attitudes after the logo changes.

The analysis also reveals that the factor of scepticism towards logo changes has a negative relationship with the attitudes of the consumers towards the brands after the logo changes. Further, it shows that there is a negative relationship between resistance to logo changes and the consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.

Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that the consumers' perception on effective logos has a positive relationship with consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes. The consumers' lifestyle factor also has positive attitudes with the consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.

Finally, the analysis discloses that there is a relationship between the respondents' gender and the attitudes towards brands after the logo change. However, the age and the level of education factors did not show a relationship with attitudes towards the brand after the logo changes (refer to table 5.17).

**Table 5.17: Summary of hypotheses results**

S.N	Factors	Hypothesis	Type of test	Significant value	Decision
1	Consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo change	H1: There is no positive attitude among consumers towards the brands after the logo changes.	t-test One sample	0.000	Not supported
2	Consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands	H2: There is no relationship between consumers' attitudes and factors affecting consumers' attitudes towards brands.	ANOVA	0.000	Not supported
3	Preferences of brands after logo change	H3: There is no positive relationship between consumers' preference of brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.	Pearson Correlation	.014	Not supported
4	Loyalty to the brand after logo change	H4: There is no positive relationship between consumers' loyalty to the brands after the logo change, and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.	Pearson Correlation	.083	Supported
5	Association with brand after the logo change	H5: There is no positive relationship between consumers' association with brands and their attitudes towards the brands after the logo changes.	Pearson Correlation	.091	Supported
6	Interest curiosity towards logo change.	H6: There is no positive relationship between interest curiosity toward logo change, and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.	Pearson Correlation	.000	Not supported
7	Deprivation curiosity towards logo change	H7: There is no positive relationship between deprivation curiosity toward logo change, and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.	Pearson Correlation	.601	Supported
8	Scepticism towards logo change	H8: There is no positive relationship between scepticism towards logo change and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.	Pearson Correlation	.257	Supported
9	Resistance towards logo change	H9: There is no positive relationship between resistance to logo change and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.	Pearson Correlation	.060	Supported

10	Consumer perception on effective logo	H10: There is no positive relationship between perception on effective logo, and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.	Pearson Correlation	.000	Not supported
11	Consumer's lifestyle perceptions	H11: There is no positive relationship between consumer's lifestyle perception and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.	Pearson Correlation	.000	Not supported
12	Gender and consumers' attitudes	H12: There is no relationship between the respondent's gender and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.	t-test Independent samples	.001	Not Supported
13	Age and consumers' attitudes	H13: There is no relationship between the respondent's age and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.	ANOVA	0.384	Supported
14	Nationality and consumers' attitudes	H14: There is no relationship between the respondent's nationality and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.	Independent samples	0.111	Supported
15	Location and consumers' attitudes	H15: There is no relationship between the respondent's location and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.	Independent samples	0.849	Supported
16	Level of education and consumers' attitudes	H16: There is no relationship between the respondent's level of education and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change.	ANOVA	0.625	Supported

## 5.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

A mixed methods research methodology, using both qualitative as well as quantitative approaches, was utilised in this study. A systematic process was used to analyze 12 'face-to-face' semi-structured interview transcripts. This process of data management and analysis was drawn from the dominant research paradigm (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Data analysis was determined inductively through multiple readings of interview transcripts and multiple interpretations of data, leading to findings connected to the research objectives. Findings arose directly from the analysis of raw data. This process enabled the development of classifications from the raw data to get a richness and depth of data on the subject. The names of the participants used here have been changed for anonymity purposes.

### 5.5.1 Interviews Overview

Between August and October 2012, face-to-face interviews were conducted in Oman with twelve participants representing the consumers of Oman Air and NBO on the subject of brand attitudes after logo changes. Snowball sampling approach was used as participants were selected on the basis of contact with friends of the researcher, who also proposed friends and relatives. These interviews were conducted at a time and place each of the respondents suggested. The in-depth face-to-face interviews were semi-structured and each lasted between 50 minutes and an hour. Many of the interviews took place in Muscat in coffee shops, colleges, or in the interviewees' homes. For each interview the researcher provided real brand logo changes of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman so that the interviewees could identify the changes. The participants were asked to talk about the change and give their views, feelings, and thoughts on it. The logos used in the interviews were printed in color.

Table 5.18 shows the participants' characteristics as consumers for Oman Air and NBO. They were nine males and three females and the average age was 33 years old. Education level ranged from high school to PhD holders. The general outline of the interview questions and the logos used is provided in appendix B.

**Table 5.18: The characteristics of interviews participants**

S.N	Category type	Interviewees number
1	Oman Air Case	6
2	NBO Case	6
3	Males	9
4	Females	3
5	Location	6 from Muscat Gov, the rest out of Muscat
6	Nationality	7 Omanis, the rest non-Omani
7	Age mean	(33 years old)
8	Level of education	High school, Bachelor, Master, PhD

### 5.5.2 Interviewing issues

**Females:** As a male researcher, the preference to interview women in private was not culturally appropriate, as Islam does not encourage meetings between men and women in private. Consequently, the researcher struggled with this issue, and attempted to interview females in the presence of their husbands/brothers or friends. This was not successful as the Omani female interviewee felt uncomfortable to express her thoughts and views on the topic. An attempt to find a female interviewer to conduct the rest of the interviews with females was not successful. Therefore, there is a shortage in the number of female interviewees compared to the original plan.

**Interpreter:** All interviews were conducted without an interpreter and Arabic was the preferred language of choice. This entailed translating the English language research questions into forms that were linguistically and culturally relevant while keeping a faithful and accurate translation of the original English questionnaire. Similarly, the accurate translation of responses into a format which met the rigorous data analysis procedure of this thesis provided further challenges.

**Interview techniques: Semi-structured** open-ended questions were used to build upon answers and thus to explore themes and issues related to attitudes towards the brands after logo changes in Omani corporations. The questions sought to explore factors relevant to the research questions by probing participants' perceptions, experiences, views and reasoning, with further questioning eliciting concrete examples and deeper explanations of certain issues.

During the initial telephone contact with interviewees, the researcher introduced himself and the research topic. The majority of the participants expressed a desire to participate in this study and some were willing to be interviewed immediately.

The participants were assured that confidentiality procedures were in place; and permission to tape-record the interview was obtained in all cases. The participants were further assured of the erasure of responses upon completion of the research. Most of the interviews were conducted in the Arabic language and a few were in the English language.

**Digital voice-recorder:** All participants agreed that the researcher could record the interviews by using a digital voice recorder.

### 5.5.3 Qualitative Data Findings

After the qualitative data from face-to-face in-depth interviews had been collected and reduced; common key themes and recurring patterns were confirmed. From the analysis carried out using Miles and Huberman's (1994) coding and analytic technique, the following findings are presented. Nine themes were confirmed and these are – preference of brands after the logo change, loyalty to brands after the logo

change, association with the brands after the logo change, interest curiosity towards logo change, deprivation curiosity towards logo change, scepticism towards logo change, resistance towards logo change, consumer's perception on effective logo, and consumer's lifestyle.

#### **5.5.3.1 Consumers' Attitudes towards the Brand after Logo Changes**

All participants were fully satisfied about changing the logo in both cases. Some participants believed that the change should only be made after a long time, while others believe that these changes may reflect the intense competition taking place in the business sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

Some participants in the interviews found that the new logos for Oman Air and National Bank of Oman are much better than the previous logos, and they stated that the reason for this is the previous logos were old and did not keep pace with the values and ideas that are enjoyed by the Omani consumer.

For example, Adel said *"There is no comparison between the old logo of Oman Air and the new, the new logo is more harmonious and attractive, I was for the idea of changing the logo long time ago, and I was waiting for this step"*.

Ahmed, one of the NBO consumers consistent with Adel in terms of the importance of changing the logo, said: *"the old logo of the National Bank of Oman does not contain a clear vision, I am grateful for the change"*.

#### **5.5.3.2 Preference of Brands after the Logo Changes**

When participants were asked about their preferences between the brands before and after the logo changes, most agreed that the new logos improved the brands for both cases studied (Oman Air and NBO) and are more modern. However, some highlighted issues that related to the preferences between the brands.

Saleh, who has been a consumer of Oman Air for the last seven years, claims that there are some points that should be considered regarding the new logo and brand, such as the strange colors that are used in the new logo. However, he explained that he is satisfied with Oman Air after they changed their logo.

Adel, considers himself a loyal customer for Oman Air. He liked the overall new logo and brand but argued that the new logo does not match with the new vision of Oman Air as a local brand. Nina mentioned that she is happy with the simplicity on the new logo, but she is wondering about maintaining the Omani culture in the Oman Air brand after the logo change.

With respect to the NBO case, most of the interviewees prefer the revived brand. For example, Rahma was a bit excited about the new logo of the NBO, especially the colors. She declared that the new logo colors are much better than the old ones because, *"they reflect our flag colors, which means our identity"*. Another customer, Nadia, admitted that the new logo of the NBO is considerably better compared to the old one. She feels that change reflects a new vision for everything related to any company.

However, there were some respondents with differing points of view. Ahmed liked the new logo, but he believed that NBO made a mistake when they decided to choose the colors on their new logo, as it reflects the Omani flag colors in the logo of a bank which is owned by both local and international investors with expatriate consumers as well.

#### **5.5.3.3 Loyalty to brands after Logo Changes**

During the interviews a number of participants expressed their loyalty after seeing the new brand logo changes of Oman Air. Many of those interviewed articulated their overall acceptance of the new logo. However, the majority argued that the new logo has not contributed to the increase of their loyalty to Oman Air Company. They believe that the new logo colors do not reflect the culture of Oman.

These participants agree with the change of logo, though they hoped that the new logo reflected the identity of the country, and in spite of their dissatisfaction with the new logo, they still consider Oman Air as their first option for travel as they support any government institution even if they oppose some of its decisions.

The expatriate participants are satisfied with the new logo, and believe that the new Oman Air logo's colors express a global view which may help the company appeal to a worldwide audience. For example, Nina an expatriate consumer of Oman Air said: *“Oman Air management is planning to get as many customers as possible and to achieve this they preferred to present themselves to the market without removal of the local tradition in their logo so as to be accepted by everyone, and also to keep up with globalization”*.

In the same way, some of the NBO customers made it clear that they are fully satisfied with the Bank's new logo compared with the old one. Most of the Omani participants explained that the change contributed to the increase in their loyalty for the bank and its services in general and made them encourage their relatives and friends to become new customers of the bank. They link this attitude with the colors that have been used in the new logo which are the same colors of the Omani flag.

However, the expatriate participants disagree with the colors of the new logo. They are considering this change as a message that the NBO welcomes only Omani citizen customers, instead of being a financial institution for different nationalities. Hadi an expatriate customer was hoping that NBO management develops something better than this logo. He justifies his expectation by saying: *“because the new logo concentrates on the Omani identity, the new logo looks like the Omani flag. In addition the colors as well... It seems like a signal that the bank welcomes Omani customers more than other customers, and this will affect the number of non-Omani customers in the long run as a result of this logo change”*.

#### **5.5.3.4 Association with the Brands after Logo Changes**

Although many of the participants in the interviews have made it clear that they prefer the revived brand of Oman Air, they do not believe that the new logo is associated with them. They have different reasons for this view, for example the new logo's colors and culture were not accepted by them. For instance, Adel

declares that *‘the new logo does not improve the acceptance of Oman Air brand in general’*. This is *‘because the new logo is not related to the history, heritage, and culture of Oman as a country that owns this airline!’*

Likewise, a number of NBO case interviewees shared the same views; they did not feel that the NBO brand is associated with them. For example, Abdullah said: *“The current brand of NBO failed to build a positive relationship with me as a consumer, I do not find the new logo being able to create a clear relationship between the bank as an institution and consumers”*.

#### **5.5.3.5 Interest Curiosity towards Logo Changes**

Another factor that the participants emphasized during the interviews is the “interest curiosity” towards the logo change in Oman in general. The participants remarked that there are many Omani Corporations that have practiced logo changes in the last five years. For the Oman Air logo change, they supposed that the change is because the logo is an important element in marketing the company’s products and services to their consumers.

Robert, an Oman Air customer, also states that he doesn’t know the exact reasons that pushed Oman Air to change its logo but he guessed: *‘Probably they are trying to cope with Oman tourism policy and opportunities, as you know there is a big market in the West, so Oman Air would like to attract them to visit Oman’*. Another customer, Adel, *“is not sure about the reasons for the change”*.

Similarly, with the NBO case, the participants wondered about the reasons the bank changed its logo. However, they had their own answers as they did not get any official answer from the NBO management on the question why NBO decided to change their logo.

For instance Salim, said: *“as a customer of NBO, nobody informed me why this change should take place? But I think they changed their logo, because they wanted to fix their mistakes in the previous logo”*! And Nadia declares: *‘I think NBO changed their logo in order to draw the attention of the market’*.

#### **5.5.3.6 Deprivation Curiosity towards Logo Changes**

In both cases the participants reflect deprivation curiosity towards the logo changes. This was clear by asking some questions towards the companies' logo changes in a negative way. For example Adel said: *“I’m still wondering, why Oman Air decided to make a complete shift?”*. Ahmed, said: *“I don’t know how much it cost the NBO to change their entire logo, but it has to be a very expensive process!! My question is why did they change the logo?”* Nadia also said: *“I still need to know from the NBO officials, why they changed the logo?”*.



### **5.5.3.7 Scepticism towards Logo Changes**

Scepticism is another factor that some of the participants reflected during the interviews. Some of them used specific words like 'skeptical', 'subspecies', and 'doubtful'. For example, Khamis expressed his reaction on the new logo of Oman Air; he said: *"I feel suspicious about this new logo, because they changed the logo without any notice to the public!! Suddenly we heard that Oman Air has a new logo! Without answering and the question is why"*. Another participant, Adel, expressed the same scepticism, he said: *"I have my doubts about this change"*.

Abdullah was surprised by the new logo of NBO, because NBO used the Omani flag colors with a commercial bank that is not owned by the government. He has his own distrust of the new NBO and said: *With the NBO I couldn't find big changes that appeared with this new logo"*. So he wonders: *"why they changed the logo?"*.

Ahmed guesses that they might have changed their logo *"because NBO had new management at that time, and the new management wanted to show the bank's shareholders that they are doing something new for the bank"* and he said *"I feel skeptical about this logo change"*.

### **5.5.3.8 Resistance towards Logo Changes**

Resistance to the logo change is one of the factors that the majority of interviewees from both cases shared. Some participants expressed their refusal to change the logo for various reasons. For example, the color that was chosen for the new logo of Oman Air does not reflect the expectations of Omani customers. Other participants justify their rejection of the new logo of Oman Air because they do not know the real reasons behind this change. For instance Khamis declares that: *"without clear explanations of changing the old logo of the company, it's hard to accept the new one..!"*.

The same views were expressed in the case of NBO. Most of the participants emphasized their desire for change, but they needed to know the reasons that promoted the bank to change its old logo. For example, Abdullah states: *"The new logo of NBO is good in terms of shape, but the colors used make us wonder about the future vision of the bank... will the bank focus on domestic operations only?!"*.

### **5.5.3.9 Consumer Perception on an Effective Logo**

Most of the participants in the interviews relating to both case studies had similar ideas about the components of the effective logo. These components include simplicity; a logo should reflect the future vision of the company, the nature of the company work, specific identity, few words, and colors. The majority of them agreed that both cases have effective logos compared to their old logos. For instance, Robert said: *"I believe the simplicity is the most important factor in any effective logo, and Oman Air now has this kind of logo!"*.

With regard to the NBO case, for example Ahmed affirms that: *“I would say in general NBO’s new logo is simple, with good shape, with less words! ”*.

#### **5.5.3.10 Consumer’s Lifestyle**

In both cases, the consumer lifestyle was an interesting factor that all the participants used to describe their attitudes during this qualitative study. It seemed that the interviewees differed in their answers according to what they like, what they do not like, and their families’ attitudes towards specific brands or friends’ behaviors, their jobs background, and their own lives.

To illustrate this, for example Saleh states: *“I’m a person who likes to deal with brands that try to change their image all the time, because, this is my character”*. Khamis had his own belief about the change: *“I can’t accept any change! Because some time that change may conflict with my own belief of something!”*. Robert described that his education background affected his view on things, he said: *“as a person who is coming from the academic field, I do not accept easily any information coming from others. Instead, I do search on my own for the right information. Because, I do believe that when any event happens around us it should have two sides, and the media gives us only one side! ”*.

Nina justified herself by stated that: *“for me, it’s very hard to accept new change... I consider myself as a person who needs a long time to deal with new change! ”*. Whereas, Adel likes the change, but it should be according to his own conditions: *Although I’m a person who supports changing, I can’t accept the change without relational justifications and reasons behind this change! ”*. And Ahmed said about himself that: *“if I have a choice I would love to change my job every year, because I get bored quickly! ”*.

#### **5.5.4 Summary of Qualitative Analysis**

The following findings summarize the analysis of the qualitative investigation:

- 1- All participants have positive attitudes towards the brands after changing logos, due to the old logos of these companies losing value in the market over a period of time.
- 2- Most participants prefer the revived brand to both companies, but they have some reservations about these brands, for example, the colors used do not fit these companies. Oman Air is an Omani company owned by the Omani government, while the colors used are not relevant to the culture of Oman. On the other side, NBO institution owned by local and foreign investors, while the colors used are the same colors of the Omani flag.
- 3- An interesting observation is that, in spite of a positive attitude among participants towards the brands after logo changes, loyalty towards the brands after logo changes for the majority of the participants was affected negatively for different reasons.

- 4- Despite the preference for the revived brands, the participants believe that the new logos are not related to them, nor can they create a relationship between them and the companies.
- 5- Participants do not know the real reasons for the logo changes. This led those to have interest curiosity to know more about the reasons that led to these change.
- 6- Participants have deprivation curiosity towards logo changes, due to the lack of information about this logo changes.
- 7- Most of the participants are skeptical about changing the logos, because the change was sudden and was done without informing the customers. Customers considered that changing the logos is very costly and the companies might not get benefits from these changes in return.
- 8- Most of the participants support the idea of changing the logos, but at the same time indicated their refusal towards current logos for many reasons.
- 9- Participants have their own specific components for effective logos, which might affect their views on a certain logo.
- 10- Participants' lifestyles affect their views and reactions towards the brands and rebranding phenomena.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative findings in light of the hypotheses presented in the previous chapters. The following chapter will deal with the implications of these findings and draw conclusions of the study.

## Chapter 6: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1 Introduction

This study was conducted at the Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. The aim of this study was to examine how changes in two Omani brands logos affected consumers' attitudes. The literature review and qualitative analysis were used to develop and confirm the study hypothesis. Nine factors that could affect consumers' attitudes towards changes in the logos for Oman Air and NBO were identified. These factors are (1) preference of the brand after logo change; (2) loyalty to the brand after logo change; (3) association with the brand after logo change; (4) interest curiosity towards logo change; (5) deprivation curiosity towards logo change; (6) scepticism towards logo change; (7) resistance towards logo change; (8) consumer perception on an effective logo; and (9) consumer's lifestyle perceptions. Ten hypotheses were developed to test the effects of these factors. The demographic factors consisted of gender, age, nationality, location and level of education. A mixed method approach was used to test the study's hypotheses.

In the previous chapter, the research findings from the quantitative and qualitative data were presented with a detailed description of the data analysis procedures and the statistical tests performed. This chapter presents the discussion of the research findings for each hypothesis in relation to the literature review. Thereafter, research findings that address the research questions and their conclusions are examined. Next, the study's contribution to knowledge, its implications for theory, as well as practical study are addressed and followed by a discussion on the limitations of the study. Finally, recommendations for future research are presented, and the study conclusion is stated.

### 6.2 Section One: Consumers' Attitudes towards the Brands' Logo Changes

This section contains a discussion on the consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes based on *Research Question 1; "1) What are the attitudes of Omani consumers to the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman?"*

*H1: There are no positive attitudes among consumers towards brands after the logo changes.*

The qualitative study found that the consumers of Oman Air and NBO have positive attitudes towards the brands, in spite of their logo changes, as the old logos of these companies lost value in the market over a period of time. This result is compatible and empirically supported by the quantitative data results. This result is attributed to the consumers' desire to change in general, which fits with the innate nature of human beings who like everything new.

This result may explain the consumers' previous attitudes towards the brands before logo changes. The literature review identified two popular theories that explain the formation of consumers' attitudes towards

rebranding strategies; the “Information Integration Theory” (Anderson, 2009) and “Expectancy Value Model” (Fishbein and Ajzen; 1975 Salinas and Perez, 2009).

The Information Integration Theory appears compatible with the study results as it states that consumers are affected by both their already-existing attitudes towards the brand and new information which arises from rebranding. Consequently, the new attitude of the consumers of Oman Air and NBO is comparable to their original attitudes based on the quality of new information provided by companies during the stage of logo changes (Anderson, 1981).

Due to the lack of significant statistical results from the survey’s data analysis, the hypothesis that “*there is no positive attitude among consumers towards the brands after logo changes*” cannot be empirically supported. This conclusion, therefore, implies that changing the logos of Oman Air and NBO would avoid negatively influencing their consumers’ attitudes towards their brands.

### **6.3 Section Two: Factors that influence Consumers’ Attitudes towards the Brands’ Logo Changes**

This section discusses the factors that influence consumers’ attitudes towards the brands’ logo changes in relation to ***Research Question 2 “What is the nature of relationships between consumers’ attitudes and various factors that influence the consumers’ attitudes towards the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman?”***

*H2: There is no relationship between consumers’ attitudes and factors affecting consumers’ attitudes towards brands after the logo changes.*

The findings from the quantitative analysis in the previous chapter indicate that there is a relationship between consumers’ attitudes and the factors that affect consumers’ attitudes towards brands after the logos changed. This result means that those factors which have been developed from the literature review and qualitative study having a kind of relationship with the consumers’ attitudes.

Due to the lack of significant statistical results from the survey’s data analysis, the hypothesis that “*there is no relationship between consumers’ attitudes and factors affecting consumers’ attitudes towards brands after the logo changes*” cannot be empirically supported. The following part will discuss the quality of the relationship between each factor and the dependent factor ‘consumers’ attitudes’. The aim is to discover whether the relationship is positive or negative, and how it affects the final consumer’s attitudes towards the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman.

#### **6.3.1 Consumers’ Attitudes vs. Preferences of Brands after Logo Changes.**

*H3: There is no positive relationship between consumers’ preference of brands and their attitudes towards brands after the logo changes.*

The findings from the qualitative analysis indicate that in spite of a few comments on the renovated brands of Oman Air and NBO, the consumers have positive attitudes towards preferences of the brands after logo changes. This result is consistent and empirically supported by the quantitative data statistical results. This result supports the argument that Oman Air and NBO consumers were ready for the logo changes and, therefore, their attitudes towards preferences of the brands were positive after the companies' change of their logos. This positive result might be attributed to the fact that Oman Air and NBO have made huge improvements in their services and products after changing their logos. As a result, consumers have reacted positively in their preferences of the brands.

The literature demonstrated that when a consumer prefers products or services of a particular company, this reflects the cognitive or emotional factors formed in their memory that made them prefer this brand (Hellier et al, 2003). Consumers learn from their previous experiences and adapt their consumption behavior over time to reflect both their own learning and changes in their environment. Thus, with increased experiences, consumers' preferences can change and stabilize over time. Consequently, brand preferences might be an important consequence of a consumer's prior experience with brands (Hoeffler and Ariely, 1999).

Due to the lack of significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no positive relationship between consumers' preference of brands and their attitudes towards brands after the logo changes"* cannot be empirically supported.

This conclusion implies two facts: first, there is a relationship between the consumers of Oman Air and NBO preferences of their brands and their attitudes towards brands after the logo changes. Second, the consumers' preferences of brands factor does not negatively influence their attitudes towards Oman Air and NBO brands after having new logos.

### **6.3.2 Consumers' Attitudes vs. Loyalty to the Brand after Logo Changes**

*H4: There is no positive relationship between consumers' loyalty to the brands after the logo changes and their attitudes towards brands after the logo changes.*

Although the qualitative and quantitative data findings indicate that consumers have positive attitudes towards brands after the logo changes, they also show that consumers have negative attitudes towards loyalty to the brands after the logo changes. This result means that consumers accepted the renovated brand, but their loyalties were affected. This argument is supported by Anderson (1981) who noted that the individual does not replace existing attitudes and accept all the new information as a whole. Instead, the new attitude in the individual mind is made up by integrating, mixing, and combining the previous personal experiences with the new information.

The literature review indicated that the loyal consumers' reaction towards the initial brand was negatively related to their attitudes towards rebranding strategies. According to the study by Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) on how rebranding can harm and destroy consumers' based equity, consumers who are more loyal tend to be less favorable towards rebranding processes. In contrast, consumers who are less loyal appear to have more positive attitudes towards rebranding strategies. This finding might be explained by the cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) which proposes that people tend to establish consistency and keep up all things unchanged because they want to maintain their current situations. Therefore, it can be inferred that loyal consumers who have already built emotional bonds with their best brand might be opposed to changes to the brand because of potential disagreement arising from rebranding.

The interviewees supported the rebranding events and logo changes, and have no problem with the change in general, though the revived brands including the new logos do not reflect their expectations, cultures and identities. For example, the rebranding of Oman Air was concerned with encouraging foreign travelers to visit the country, so they introduced a new logo that might better associate with the sizeable international market, instead of the small local market. According to the Oman Air mission statement *"As the national carrier we are committed to support the local community and to promote in-bound tourism to the Sultanate"* (Oman Air, 2010). This ties in with their desired goal is to attract tourists to destinations within Oman.

An interesting finding is that a large number of Omani citizens think of Oman Air as the first option when considering travel, though they do not agree with the change of the logo as it does not reflect their culture and identity. However, they use Oman Air products and services, because it is an Omani company owned by the government of Oman and therefore, should be supported. This might reflect the higher nationalistic feeling of Omani consumers.

To conclude this argument, it is believed that the consumers in both cases support the change, but they worry about the outcome of these changes.

Consequently, due to statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no positive relationship between consumers' loyalty to the brands after the logo changes, and their attitudes towards brands after the logo changes"* can be empirically supported. This conclusion, therefore, implies that Oman Air and NBO consumers' loyalty towards brands after logo changes has been affected negatively.

### **6.3.3 Consumers' Attitudes vs. Association with Brands after the Logo Change**

*H5: There is no positive relationship between consumers' association with brands and their attitudes towards brands after logo changes.*

The qualitative analysis found that the consumers of Oman Air and NBO prefer renovated brands compared to original brands. However, they do not believe that the new logos of these brands are associated with them. Colours, culture, and the identities that are represented by these logos are the main issues that affect the consumers' attitudes negatively towards the renovated brands.

This result is consistent and empirically supported by the quantitative data statistical results. The quantitative data analysis for this factor indicates that Oman Air and NBO consumers have negative attitudes regarding the association with the brands after logo changes. The result of this element is normal and consistent with the previous result of loyalty to brands after changing their logos. The consumers here disbelieve that the brand might express their personality, or the brands increased their acceptance among consumers after changing their logos. The consumers' overall evaluations of the brand will positively or negatively affect their attitudes towards this brand (Tuominen, 1999).

The literature review demonstrated brand association as any mental linkage to the brand (Aaker, 1991), thus the consumer will remember the features of a brand's products or services and the benefits obtained by him/her from those products or services. An association with a brand can affect processing and remembering information about its products or services as well as points of difference between them and their counterparts. It also provides a real reason to buy them, which is the creation of positive attitudes and feelings towards the brand (Aaker, 1992).

The literature also shows that the internal aspects, 'brand associations', are determined by cultural values. Consequently, different cultural backgrounds will have an impact on the overall brand image. This means that associations are made by consumers through judgments. These judgments are controlled and influenced by their own cultural backgrounds. The culture-related associations might identify the traits that a consumer thinks as part of the personality of the brand (Aaker, 2001).

With statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no positive relationship between consumers' association with brands and their attitudes towards brands after the logo changes"* can be empirically supported. This conclusion implies that Oman Air and NBO consumers' associations with brands after logo changes affected their attitudes towards brands negatively following the logo changes.

#### **6.3.4 Consumers' Attitudes vs. Interest Curiosity towards Logo Change**

*H6: There is no positive relationship between interest curiosity towards logo change and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.*

The qualitative study found that consumers in both cases have curiosity towards logo changes. They wanted more information on these logos changes, in order to satisfy their stimulation towards the



information they might have missed out on. This result is consistent and empirically supported by the quantitative data statistical results.

The quantitative results indicate that there is a positive relationship between interest curiosity towards logo changes and Oman Air and NBO consumers' attitudes towards brands after logo changes. These results are attributed to the fact that consumers of Oman Air and NBO are eager to find out and know more information about these logo changes. This is supported by the literature review (Loewenstein, 1994); curiosity arises from an 'information gap' or 'incongruity' where there is a discrepancy between what consumers know and what they want to know.

The "information gap theory" which assumes that the desired level of knowledge increases sharply with a small increase in knowledge. Thus, the size of the information gap grows with the initial learning. When someone is knowledgeable enough, however, the gap is reduced in this case and as a result curiosity falls (Loewenstein, 1994). Furthermore, the literature viewed the 'interest' curiosity to be a more positive emotional motivational system that energizes and directs novelty-seeking behaviors, with the ultimate goal of stimulating consumers' interest (Litman, 2005; Litman and Jimerson, 2004).

Due to a lack of significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that "there is no positive relationship between interest curiosity towards logo changes and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes" cannot be empirically supported. This conclusion implies that Oman Air and NBO consumers' attitudes towards brands after logo changes is affected positively by their interest curiosity towards logo changes. In addition, the data analysis shows that there are relationships between consumers' attitudes towards interest curiosity to the logo changes and gender, age as well as the level of education.

### **6.3.5 Consumers' Attitudes vs. Deprivation Curiosity towards Logo Change**

*H7: There is no positive relationship between deprivation curiosity towards logo change and consumers' attitudes towards brands after logo change.*

Both selected cases have made big changes in their logos as they dropped their core corporate colours, and identity. These kinds of changes might be unexpected and lead consumers to ask negative questions as a result. This is proven by the qualitative study findings, where the consumers from both cases wondered about the real motives that pushed the officials in Oman Air and NBO to decide and make a complete change in their logos. Eventually this might direct the consumers towards having negative attitudes for the renovated brands. This result is consistent and empirically supported by the quantitative data statistical results.

As reported by the research findings, there is a negative relationship between deprivation curiosity towards logo changes and the consumers' attitudes of Oman Air and NBO after their logos changed. This implies that consumers are not sure about this logo change and they want to know why the companies decided to change logos as the "deprivation" dimension reflects more "feelings of uncertainty and tension" and with "some degree of negative affectivity" (Litman and Jimerson, 2004).

Therefore, due to the significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no positive relationship between deprivation curiosity towards logo change and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes"* can be empirically supported.

### **6.3.6 Consumers' Attitudes vs. Scepticism towards Logo Change**

*H8: There is no positive relationship between scepticism towards logo change and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.*

The qualitative study found that consumers of Oman Air and NBO share scepticism towards the logos changes. This result is consistent and empirically supported by the quantitative data statistical results. The data analysis in the previous chapter proves that Oman Air and NBO consumers have negative attitudes towards brands after the logo changes as a result of the increases of the level of scepticism on the logo changes event. The finding is attributed to consumers' doubt and scepticism about the reasons that push these companies' managements to change their logos. Consumers might believe that this change happened due to re-advertising the companies in the market by using rebranding strategies instead of improving their services or products. This is supported by Calfee and Ringold (1994); in their study of American public opinion polls over sixty years between 1930 and 1992, where they found that people were greatly skeptical of advertising and its claims, and those attitudes have stayed relatively the same in spite of changes in advertising regulation.

As a result, due to significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no positive relationship between scepticism towards logo changes and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes"* can be empirically supported.

This conclusion therefore implies that Oman Air and NBO consumers' attitudes towards brands after logo changes was affected negatively by the consumers' scepticism towards the logo changes.

### **6.3.7 Consumers' Attitudes vs. Resistance towards Logo Change**

*H9: There is no positive relationship between resistance to logo change and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.*

With regard to this factor, the qualitative study discloses that Oman Air and NBO consumers have negative attitudes towards resistance to logo changes. Accordingly, this affects their attitudes towards brands after logo changes negatively, and this was empirically supported by the quantitative data due to statistically significant results.

This result is consistent with the fact that people naturally stand against change, specifically when change produces negative results or creates some unexpected situations. Thus, it seems that there was a prevailing general thought that when you think of change you think of resistance to change.

In an empirical study in the field of innovation and products (Ram, 1985) it was found that there is a strong relationship between the resistance to change and the products' innovation; *"the higher the discontinuity of an innovation, the higher the resistance is likely to be"* (Ram, 1985: 7). The rebranding event and specifically the new logo can be viewed as a new product innovation depending on how new it is to its consumers. An innovation may also create *"a high degree of change in the consumers' day-to-day existence and disrupt their established routines"* (Ram and Sheth, 1989: 6).

However, the researcher attributes this result to the fact that the consumers of Oman Air and NBO are receptive to the idea of logo change in general, but they reject the outcome of these logo changes, because they found that the new logos do not express their expectations and also do not relate to their identity and represent their culture as well.

As a result, due to the significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no positive relationship between resistance to logo change and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes"* can be empirically supported. This conclusion, therefore, implies that Oman Air and NBO consumers' have resistance towards logo changes.

#### **6.3.8 Consumers' Attitudes vs. Consumer's Perception on Effective Logo**

*H10: There is no positive relationship between consumers' perception on effective logo and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.*

The qualitative study in chapter five indicated that Oman Air and NBO consumers have positive attitudes towards the perception on an effective logos. This result is consistent and empirically supported by the quantitative data statistical results.

Thus, this positively affects their attitudes towards brands after change of logo, meaning that those consumers found the new logos of Oman Air and NBO to be much better than the old ones, even though they do not really express their identity or culture. This might demonstrate the simplicity, colors, and good shape of the new logos for these companies after changing the old logos.

Research on logos and branding supports this result. It is suggested that consumers prefer the simplest logos, with inclination to multiplicity of meanings in one logo or logos that have multiple elements that may each have their own potential interpretations, because every consumer has his/her own impression about any logo that they see or deal with (Janiszewski and Meyvis, 2001).

Therefore, due to the lack of significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no positive relationship between perception on effective logo and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes"* cannot be empirically supported. Hence, this conclusion implies that Oman Air and NBO consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes are affected positively by the consumers' perceptions on effective logos.

### **6.3.9 Consumers' Attitudes vs. Consumers' Lifestyle Perceptions**

*H11: There is no positive relationship between consumers' lifestyle perceptions and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.*

Oman Air and NBO consumers have positive attitudes towards life style perceptions. This positively affects their attitudes towards brands after the logo changes. This result is consistent and empirically supported by the quantitative data statistical results. This result is attributed to the fact that those consumers might have found that the new logos of these companies may relate to their lifestyle in some way that may lead them to have a positive attitude towards Oman Air and NBO renovated brands.

This finding is supported by Li (2009) and Hung (2009) who argued that the lifestyle of consumers serves as an excellent segmentation variable because it reflects the way of living by person or group, which typically includes social relations, consumption, entertainment, clothing styles, and the work that a person prefers. In addition, the way of life usually reflects the attitudes and values of a person and his/her taste as well as vision for life in general.

Due to a lack of significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no positive relationship between consumers' lifestyle perceptions and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes"* cannot be empirically supported. Thus, this conclusion implies that Oman Air and NBO consumers' attitudes towards brands after logo changes are affected positively by the consumers' lifestyle perceptions.

## **6.4 Section Three: Demographics Effects**

This section addresses *Research Question 3 "What are the socio-demographic antecedents of the consumers whose attitudes have been affected by the re-branding of Oman Air and National Bank of Oman?"*

## **Gender**

*H12: There is no relationship between the respondent's gender and the consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes.*

The analysis in the previous chapter demonstrates that there is a relationship between respondents' gender and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes. It justifies that female consumers have more positive attitudes towards brands after the logo changes than male consumers; the female mean is 3.5689, whereas the male mean is 3.4091. Despite the slight differences between the gender results, the studies found that female' consumers are better at interpreting fashion information, compared with male consumers who are less interested in this area (Bakewell, Mitchell and Rothwell, 2006).

Though women got a later start in development in Oman, gender-neutral development is enabling them catch-up fast in every sphere of achievement. Omani women have enthusiastically embraced change in their economic and social roles, improved life-style status, and exhibited an independent mind receptive to change. This higher positive value in attitude to logo change than males may be explained by the massive positive changes that women themselves are undergoing in terms of empowerment and emancipation bestowed to them through education and equal opportunities.

Therefore, due to the lack of significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no relationship between the respondent's gender and the consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change"* cannot be empirically supported.

## **Age**

*H13: There is no relationship between the respondent's age and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes.*

The findings from the quantitative data statistical results indicate that there is no relationship between respondents' age and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes. This result, however, contradicts the study findings by (Hawkins, Best and Coney, 1998) which argued that the element of age affects how individual consumers think, feel and act towards any situation.

Therefore, due to the significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no relationship between the respondent's age and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change"* can be empirically supported.

## **Nationality**

*H14: There is no relationship between the respondent's nationality and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes.*

The findings from the quantitative data statistical results indicate that there is no relationship between respondents' nationality and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.

Therefore, due to the significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no relationship between the respondent's nationality and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change"* can be empirically supported.

### **Location**

*H15: There is no relationship between the respondent's location and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes.*

The findings from the quantitative data statistical results indicate that there is no relationship between respondents' location and consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes.

Therefore, due to the significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no relationship between the respondent's location and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after the logo change"* can be empirically supported.

### **Level of education**

*H16: There is no relationship between the respondent's level of education and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes.*

The results in the previous chapter show that there is no relationship between the respondent's level of education and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes. These findings are not consistent with some studies (e.g. Tellis, Yin and Bell, 2009) which found that the levels of education can have effects on the loyalty towards the original and renovated brands, as well as the attitudes toward changing the logos.

Therefore, due to the significant statistical results from the survey's data analysis, the hypothesis that *"there is no relationship between the respondent's level of education and consumers' attitudes towards the brand after logo changes"* can be empirically supported.

## **6.5 Additional Key Results**

This section aims to expose some key underlying results from the study by using the researcher's observation, frequencies and means tests of the study and official websites. The first objective of this study was to identify the consumers' attitudes towards two Omani corporations; Oman Air and NBO brands after the logos change.

The results revealed that consumers for both cases disclosed positive attitudes towards the new logos, as proven by the quantitative data analysis. From the qualitative data analysis, it was observed that all the participants from both cases expressed 100% acceptance for the rebranding (table 6.1) since from their perspective, the previous logos had lost their values over time.

85.4% of the quantitative respondent's age groups in this study were between 18-38 years of age. To a large extent, this figure reflects the demographic makeup of Omani society by the end of 2012 (National Center for Statistics and Information, 2013). This in turn leads to the assumption that the Omani corporations which still have an old logos may need to start the process of re-evaluating their brands in order to find out to what extent their consumers have positive attitudes to those brands and their logos specifically.

**Table 6.1: Summary of consumers' attitudes in qualitative study**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Interviewees number</b>	<b>Positive attitudes after logo change</b>	<b>Negative attitudes after logo change</b>
Oman Air	6	100%	0
NBO	6	100%	0

It is interesting to note from the interviewees their disagreements of the outcomes in either cases. In the Oman Air case, most of the respondents declared that Oman Air as a national carrier should be using a logo which consists of colors that represent the Omani identity (red, green and white).

However, in the case of NBO, some of the respondents expressed their disagreement with the outcomes of the logo change. They argued that financial institutions should be using colors which represent their mission statement and core industry.

These negative attitudes were supported by the quantitative study results which showed a significant effect on consumers' loyalty towards the brands after they changed their logos. This might be as a result of contradicting messages from both cases' mission statements and ownerships structure.

Oman Air considers itself the national carrier of Oman by the government of Oman (table 6.2), however, the management dropped the Omani favorite historical colors. They used instead, gold and silver. In the long run for the company, this contradictory message might affect the company's business, leading to the loss of a substantial local market share as a result of current consumers' attitudes to their revived brand.

In contrast, NBO considers itself to be one of the largest banks in Oman with net profits of more than \$110m in 2012. The mission statement of bank *"To be the bank of choice"* means they are open to have any customers including expatriates. Their updated logo currently consists of Omani flagship colours. This

might lead to the loss of the expat consumers, who make up more than 42% from the total population of Oman in 2013.

**Table 6.2: Facts about Oman Air and NBO**

Company	Mission statement	Old color in logo	New colors in logo	Ownership
Oman Air	As the national carrier we are committed to support the local community and to promote in-bound tourism to the Sultanate	red, green, white	gold, silver	government of Oman
NBO	To be the bank of choice	blue, white, brown	red, green, white	local and international investors

This leads to the suggestion that corporations have to take into account that their rebranding strategies, including the change of logo must match and represent their; 1) core identity and culture; 2) background industry; 3) mission statements and long terms objectives. Their loyal consumers might get negatively affected if the change mismatches any one of those elements.

Another interesting observation from qualitative data in this study was that interviewees presented their expectations on the effectiveness of the logo. They identified that the simplicity and identity of the logo are the most vital elements for an effective logo. However, the frequencies from the quantitative data analysis reveal that the most important factor for any effective logo is a reflective clear meaning to the consumers of the brand (76.1%). The table 6.3 lists the elements according to the frequencies for each one.

These results would be an excellent base for theoretical and practical recommendations for those corporations which are operating in the Omani business environment and are willing to change their logos in the future.

**Table 6.3: Rank for the important elements on effective logo**

Rate	Element	Frequency	Percentage
1	Reflect clear meanings	595	76.1 %
2	Specific identity	585	74.8 %
3	Simplicity of logo	573	73.3 %
4	Fewer words	523	66.9 %
5	Reflect company business	522	66.7 %
6	Contain slogan	480	61.4 %
7	Fewer colors	449	57.4 %



## **6.6 Section Four: Conclusion**

This section presents the contributions of this study. It also states its limitations and the scope for future studies. Next, it puts forward some recommendations and suggestions. Finally, it concludes the whole study.

### **6.6.1 Contributions of this Study**

This study presented an important investigation on the topic of Omani consumers' attitudes towards brands after logo changes. It provides a better understanding of branding, rebranding, and logo changes.

From the theoretically perspective, it is apparent that previous studies mainly focus on the analysis of rebranding processes from the viewpoint of firms. Relatively little attention has been devoted to the factors that have different levels of effects on the consumers' attitudes towards brands that have changed their logos. Thus, this research adds to the existing literature by conducting empirical research on the factors that could impact consumers' attitudes towards those brands which have changed their logo. Furthermore, this results of this study also prove that consumers might have positive attitudes towards changes of a brand, including the logo, though their loyalty towards the renovated brand could be affected because the total outcomes of the change may not reflect their expectations, cultures and identities. Further, this study confirmed the study of (Bakewell, Mitchell and Rothwell, 2006) which pinpoints that female consumers have more ability in interpreting branding information compared to male consumers.

From a managerial perspective, by showing the importance of understanding the consumers' attitudes towards rebranding strategies and those factors which have different levels of impact on consumers' reactions towards brand logo changes, marketers can design more suitable rebranding strategies to increase the existing consumers' loyalty towards the renovated brand, which are considered as difficult tasks for rebranding. Moreover, this study reminds marketers to consider the characteristics of their existing consumers when designing their rebranding strategies as some consumers characteristics might influences consumers' attitudes towards rebranding.

### **6.6.2 Limitations of this Study and Future Study**

This study results revealed a positive attitude towards changed logos of two companies from different industries: airlines and banking and finance. In one case, i.e. in the case of Oman Air, the population irrespective of age accepted a changed logo (preference of brands after logo change) which was devoid of Omani identities like Khanjjar (a type of dagger) and the Omani tri-color which were present in its earlier one; while in the case of National Bank of Oman (NBO) the changed logo still retained the tri-color albeit in a more contemporary frame. It is an interesting response: Oman Air is more international in its business

and services; the business of National Bank of Oman is largely within the national boundaries of Oman. However, there are some facts that should be stated:

1. The present research study had limitations to explore the various reasons of gender bias towards a changed logo; this would give an idea of how and why gender differences are there in the selection of services.
2. While concluding parts of this study, one area which this study could not reach and, therefore, could be a cause for a separate study is the relationship between positive attitude to changed logo and behavior of loyalty expressed through persistent use of the products and services of these companies.
3. In a separate and further study, it would be interesting to observe the respondents' reasons in understanding logo change for brands which compete in different arenas – international and domestic. A young aspiring Omani may like international products and services to have the look, feel and deliverables of international standards, to compete with other products and be at the forefront, while a domestic company may still carry the identities of culture and nationality.

### **6.6.3 Recommendations and Suggestions**

The management of Oman Air and NBO should understand that their consumers accept their revived brands in general; however the loyalty of their consumers was affected based on this study's findings. This is supported by the literature which demonstrates that consumers may not accept all the new information. Therefore, these companies should give more attention to their consumers' loyalty as ignoring this factor may negatively affect the consumers' attitudes towards the brands overall. Further, the research findings revealed that consumers' attitudes towards brands are affected negatively because of the high level of consumers' scepticism towards logo changes.

In the course of this study it was broadly stated that Omani consumers believe the outcome of the Oman Air rebranding does not reflect the Omani culture, history and identity. In order to deal with these issues in the case of Oman Air, it is recommended that the company should organize and implement a strategic plan that focuses on communication. The primary objective of this plan would be to communicate and interact with the Omani consumer and especially the young Omanis as they represent the largest proportion in the community. The result would be to explain the new corporate identity brand, and to focus on the features in the new logo, which are linked in different forms with the identity and culture of the Omani society. Due to the demographic being approached, it should be noted that in addition to using traditional media such as television, radio and newspapers, social media use will effectively allow for reach to all segments of Omani society.

The management of Oman Air might use corporate social responsibility (CSR) and donations as a strategic approach to associate their brand with different projects that contribute to the development of the Omani society. For instance, a company may opt to financially support the development of sports clubs located in all governorates in the Sultanate. This could be done through a plan targeting the institutions that embrace and contribute to the development of young Omani talents.

In the case of the National Bank of Oman, the new corporate brand appears to focus primarily the Omani identity and culture. It is hereby suggested that the bank's management should implement a plan to communicate more with expatriates, as they make up almost 40% of the Omani society. This will help to clarify that the NBO also welcomes foreigners. This can be done by sponsoring the activities that are carried out by expatriates' communities, as well as providing special services and facilities for them.

Finally, the both companies' management should keep in mind that the gender factor is the most important factor within the demographic variables according to this study's findings. This factor might affect the overall attitudes towards brands. Both companies' advised to develop a Targeted Marketing Strategy to deal effectively with this factor. On the basis of the analysis findings it can be concluded that females are more likely to hold positive attitudes towards the outcomes of both revived brands than male. The Oman Air management should consider introducing new services that target female consumers. On the other hand, NBO could concentrate on offering female banking services. Both companies should therefore ensure that their rebranding offers special products just for the female consumer.

It is expected that the implementation of these recommendations may perhaps contribute significantly to the reduction of negative attitudes towards the outcomes of the re-branding in general of both Oman Air and National Bank of Oman, in order to increase their consumers' loyalties as a short and medium terms.

However, it is also recommended that a review of logos of the two institutions be carried out, and the possibility of developing some of the changes according to the expectations of their consumers be considered as a long term solution.

#### **6.6.4 Conclusion**

In today's globalised market, brands and branding including logos, have shifted to newer and higher levels of importance. Brands and logos should have a universal appeal and must align with the targeted audience aspirations. In fact, the most distinctive skill of marketers is their ability to build and manage brands (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). This is because brands, as powerful assets, represent the essence of a company (the differentiator in customer decision-making) (Keller, 2008) and they outlast the company's specific products and facilities; thus, they must be carefully developed and managed. When the brand is renovated through re-branding, a fine balance of the managing emotional bonding of the current customer

base, while simultaneously reaching out and connecting to the emotional cord of the new target customer constituent, is paramount.

The objective of this study is to explore the research problem relating the effect of rebranding from the consumers' perspective. The findings of this research benefit both the academic and practitioner arena, contributing to an improved understanding of the factors influencing the consumers' attitudes towards brands after logo changes. The population frame selected for this study was the employees at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. This study was carried out in Oman from March 2011 to December 2013, with Oman Air and NBO rebranding as cases for this study. The mixed methods research methodology employed in this study includes qualitative methods through in-depth interviews in the exploratory research stage and quantitative methods using an online survey questionnaire in the descriptive and causal research stage to test the hypotheses developed from the literature review.

From the literature review carried out, several factors were found that have an impact on the consumers' attitudes towards the brands' logo changes. These include preferences of brand, brand loyalty, brand association, interest curiosity to logo change, deprivation curiosity to logo change, scepticism to logo change, resistance toward change, perception on effective logo and consumer's lifestyle perceptions. Therefore, hypotheses were developed based on these factors to be tested in the descriptive and explanatory research. These factors were further validated in the qualitative study. Cronbach's Alpha test was run to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire. Subsequently, an online survey instrument in the form of a questionnaire was designed with all of these factors as variables, the questionnaire was then deployed on-line using Google online tools.

The study presented a detailed analysis of the data collected using quantitative and qualitative statistical techniques in order to test the developed hypotheses. Then, it discussed the hypotheses' findings carefully in connection to literature studies. Finally, its contributions to knowledge were submitted as well as its limitations and scope for future studies.

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## Appendix (A): Official Letters to Oman Air, NBO and Replies.

30 June 2012

To Mr. Saleem Bin Amanullah Bin Abdul Hussain.

Oman Air, GM Customer Services.

### **Subject: Logo Changes Research**

Dear Sir,

I am presently doing a doctorate degree in Business Administration at Binary University (Malaysia), my thesis will be on (Rebranding) which will focus on investigating the consumer perception of rebranding, specifically the changes in the Omani corporations' logos.

And since your esteemed company has changed its logo recently, I feel it would be a very good case study as far as my research is concerned. Therefore, I would request your approval on allowing me to conduct a research on the effect of rebranding (Logo Changed) on OA customers.

If my request is approved I will highlight five themes in my research, which are as following:

- Perceived Valence of Logo Changes.
- Curiosity toward Logo Changed (Deprivation Curiosity).
- Curiosity toward Logo Changed (Interest Curiosity).
- Perceived Degree of Logo Change.
- Scepticism toward Logo Change.

I do believe that your approval of using OA logo case will enrich my research as your company a very well-known organization. On the other hand, in this study I will ask your customers to participate in a questioners and interviews concerning their thoughts and feelings about OA brand logos and logo changes. So, I think that you might get benefits from this research, by knowing how your consumers evaluate and acts toward your brand logo. Hence, I would be grateful for any kind of support that OA would offer to make this research real. And I must state that your brand and logo will be used in this study for academic research purposes only.

If you have any questions regarding this project please feel free to contact myself, Sulaiman Al-Balushi (on 96969682), or the Binary University Human Research Ethics Committee (Valerie@binary.edu.my).

Thank you for your Cooperation in this study in advance, and your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Sulaiman Ali Al-Balushi

25 July 2012

**To: Mr. Hassan Abdul Amir Shaban**

**National Bank of Oman, Assistant General Manager - Government Deposits**

**Subject: Logo Changes Research**

Dear Sir,

I am presently doing a doctorate degree in Business Administration at Binary University (Malaysia), my thesis will be on (Rebranding) which will focus on investigating the consumer perception of rebranding, specifically the changes in the Omani corporations' logos. And since your esteemed organization has changed its logo recently, I feel it would be a very good case study as far as my research is concerned. Therefore, I would request your approval on allowing me to conduct a research on the effect of rebranding (Logo Changed) on NBO customers.

If my request is approved I will highlights five themes in my research, which are as following:

- Perceived Valence of Logo Changes.
- Curiosity toward Logo Changed (Deprivation Curiosity).
- Curiosity toward Logo Changed (Interest Curiosity).
- Perceived Degree of Logo Change.
- Scepticism toward Logo Change.

I do believe that your approval of using NBO logo case will enrich my research as your Bank a very well-known organization. On the other hand, in this study I will ask your customers to participate in a questioners and interviews concerning their thoughts and feelings about NBO brand logos and logo changes. So, I think that you might get benefits from this research, by knowing how your consumers evaluate and acts toward your brand logo. Hence, I would be grateful for any kind of support that NBO would offer to make this research real. And I must state that your brand and logo will be used in this study for academic research purposes only.

If you have any questions regarding this project please feel free to contact myself, Sulaiman Al-Balushi (on 96969682), or the Binary University Human Research Ethics Committee (Valerie@binary.edu.my).

Thank you for your Cooperation in this study in advance, and your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Sulaiman Ali Al-Balushi



Our Ref: GMM/AJ/js/lett12

24th July 2012

Dear Sulaiman,

Thank you for your e-mail of 30 June 2012 addressed to Saleem Amanullah Abdul Hussain our General Manager Customer Services whereby you have detailed your proposed project with regard to Oman Air's Logo and its recent changes. Saleem kindly passed your e-mail to our Marketing Department.

You have requested that Oman Air give permission for you to conduct your study and, in doing so, you may be approaching our customers. In this respect we are very happy that you have chosen Oman Air as your topic and we will be happy to grant permission and also assist you with any guidance you may need, subject to the following conditions only:

1. You let us know how you intend to approach customers: internet? street survey?, etc.;
2. You ensure that if you intend to publish any interviews in any way given by any of our customers, that you have their written permission to do so;
3. You make it clear to the customers that this is a personal study and has not been commissioned by Oman Air; and
4. As mentioned in your email, you will use our logos and the study itself only for submission for your doctorate degree and that any other publication will be subject to our written consent.

If you are agreeable to the above, please can you sign and return a copy of this letter to us before you begin your study.

We wish you the best of luck.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Mohammed Al Shikely  
General Manager Marketing

Acknowledged and Agreed By:

Mr Sulaiman Al Balushi

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ 2012

## Confidentiality Agreement

This agreement is dated 26 November 2012

### Parties

- (1) **National Bank of Oman SAOG**, a company incorporated in Oman with commercial registration number 370 (**Bank**); and
- (2) **Sulaiman Ali Al-Balushi**, an Omani national with identity card number 1621444 (**Recipient**)

(each a **Party** and together the **Parties**).

### Introduction

- (A) The Recipient wishes to collect data from Customers in order to research the consumer perception of the Bank's recent change of corporate logo (**Project**).
- (B) In connection with the Project, the Bank and/or its Customers will or may disclose to the Recipient certain Confidential Information.
- (C) The Bank wishes to ensure that Confidential Information disclosed to the Recipient in connection with the Project remains confidential and is not used by the Recipient for any purpose other than the Permitted Purpose.

### Agreed terms

#### 1 Definitions and interpretation

##### 1.1 Definitions

**Agreement** means this confidentiality agreement.

**Confidential Information** means the existence and contents of the Agreement and all information, data and other material both written and unwritten, in whatever form, relating directly or indirectly to the Project or to Customers or to the business or any other aspect of the Bank, including its employees, which has been or may be disclosed by or on behalf of the Bank and/or the Customers to the Recipient in connection with the Project.

**Co-Supervisors** means the Recipient's co-supervisors at Binary University For Management & Entrepreneurship in Malaysia, Dr. A. Latif Al-Balushi and [●]. [Ass. Prof. Dr. John Thava].

**Customer** means a customer of the Bank.

**Permitted Purpose** means preparing a thesis on the consumer perception of rebranding.

## 1.2 Interpretation

In the Agreement, a reference to a person includes anybody corporate, unincorporated association or partnership as well as natural persons, and a reference to the singular includes the plural (and vice versa).

## 2 Use of information

### 2.1 The Recipient agrees:

2.1.1 to keep and retain as confidential the Confidential Information and to use it solely and exclusively for the Permitted Purpose and in accordance with the terms of the Agreement;

2.1.2 that he will only make copies of the Confidential Information (**Copies**) to the extent necessary for the Permitted Purpose; and

2.1.3 that he will implement and maintain, with regard to the Confidential Information, such security precautions and procedures as the Recipient customarily implements and maintains with regard to information and materials of his own which he considers to be confidential or, in the absence of any existing precautions and procedures of his own, as would otherwise be considered reasonable in the circumstances.

### 2.2 The Recipient must not disclose (whether directly or indirectly), nor allow to be disclosed, the Confidential Information to a third party without the prior written consent of the Bank, except to the extent that the Confidential Information:

2.2.1 is in the public domain otherwise than as a result of a breach of the Agreement by the Recipient; or

2.2.2 is required to be disclosed by the Recipient to comply with any applicable law.

### 2.3 In the event of any disclosure made pursuant to clause 2.2.1 or 2.2.2, the Recipient shall immediately notify the Bank of such disclosure or, if reasonably practicable, give notice to the Bank as soon as possible prior to such disclosure so as to enable the Bank to contest such disclosure or otherwise agree the content, procedure and timing of such disclosure.

### 2.4 The Recipient may disclose the Confidential Information for the Permitted Purpose to:

2.4.1 the Co-Supervisors;

2.4.2 persons to whom the Bank agrees in writing may receive the information; and

2.4.3 the extent permitted by clause 2.2,

but in every case each disclosure shall be only to the extent strictly necessary for the Permitted Purpose.



- 2.5 Before disclosing any of the Confidential Information to any person under clause 2.4, the Recipient shall procure that the proposed recipient of such Confidential Information is made aware of the terms of the Agreement, and is bound to the Recipient to maintain confidentiality of such Confidential Information under contract or by professional confidentiality each on terms no less onerous than those set out in the Agreement.
- 2.6 The Recipient shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Bank against any loss, damage, costs or expenses suffered by the Bank arising out of:
- 2.6.1 the disclosure of the Confidential Information by any person to whom it has been disclosed directly or indirectly by the Recipient; and
- 2.6.2 any breach by the Recipient of any term of the Agreement.
- 2.7 Neither the Bank nor any of its directors, employees or advisers accepts responsibility, makes any representation or gives any warranty about the quality, accuracy or completeness of the Confidential Information. Accordingly, neither the Bank nor any of their directors, employees or advisers will be liable for any direct, indirect or consequential loss or damage suffered by the Recipient as a result of any reliance on any statement contained in or omitted from the Confidential Information.

### 3 Customer contact **[T&H: FOR INSTRUCTION]**

- 3.1 In no circumstances shall the Recipient contact any Customer directly without the Bank's prior written consent.
- 3.2 The Recipient shall prepare a written questionnaire in relation to the Project in a form which is first approved by the Bank (**Survey**). The Bank shall then distribute the Survey to a select number of Customers and the Bank will forward to the Recipient all completed Surveys it receives.
- 3.3 The Recipient will provide the Bank with a list of Customers who he would like to conduct follow-up interviews with in connection with the Survey (**List**). **[T&H: OR WILL HE INTERVIEW A RANDOM SAMPLE OF CUSTOMERS?]** Subject to the Bank first approving the List, the Bank will use its reasonable endeavours to assist the Recipient to conduct one-on-one interviews with those Customers named on the List. For the avoidance of doubt, the Bank or a Customer may reject any request to interview a Customer without being obliged to give a reason.

### Duty to return information

- 3.4 The Confidential Information shall remain the property of the Bank. As soon as practicable after a demand in writing from the Bank, all originals of the Confidential Information shall be retrieved and returned by the Recipient to the Bank and the Recipient shall undertake the following actions no later than 10 days following a request by the Bank to do so and give notice to the Bank that he has:
- 3.4.1 destroyed all Copies and, subject as provided below, material containing data derived from the Confidential Information in his possession;

3.4.2 taken all reasonably practicable steps to erase permanently all Confidential Information and data derived from the Confidential Information from computer media; and

3.4.3 procure that all persons to whom the Recipient has disclosed Confidential Information (or any part thereof) comply with this clause 0 save that for the purposes of this clause 3.4.3 such provisions shall be construed as if references to the Recipient were references to such persons.

#### **4 Waiver**

No waiver of any term of the Agreement shall be valid unless it is in writing and signed on behalf of the Party by whom it is given.

#### **5 Third party rights and intellectual property**

5.1 The Agreement is made for the benefit of the Parties to it and their successors and legal heirs, and is not intended to benefit, or be enforceable by, any other person.

5.2 None of the Confidential Information is the property of the Recipient. The disclosure to the Recipient of any Confidential Information shall not give the Recipient any licence or other rights whatsoever in respect of any part of such Confidential Information beyond those rights contained in the Agreement.

#### **6 Severability**

If any provision of the Agreement is held invalid, illegal or unenforceable for any reason by any court of competent jurisdiction, such provision shall be severed and the remainder of the provisions of the Agreement shall continue in full force and effect as if the Agreement had been executed with the illegal or unenforceable provision eliminated.

#### **7 Notices**

7.1 All notices to the **Bank** in relation to any matter in connection with or arising out of the Agreement shall be addressed to **[T&H: INSERT NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS, INCLUDING FAX NO.]**.

7.2 All notices to the **Recipient** in relation to any matter in connection with or arising out of the Agreement shall be addressed to **(Sulaiman Ali Al-Balushi, Mob: 96969682, Email: sahb1000@gmail.com)**.

#### **8 Remedy and duration**

8.1 Without prejudice to any other rights or remedies that the Bank may have, the Recipient agrees that the Confidential Information is valuable and that damages may not be an adequate remedy for any breach by the Recipient of the terms of the Agreement. Accordingly, the Bank will be entitled without proof of special damage to the remedies of an injunction and other equitable relief for any actual or threatened breach of the terms of the Agreement.



8.2 The obligations set out in the Agreement will continue in full force and effect for a period of One year from the date of the Agreement unless earlier terminated in writing by the Parties.

9 **Governing law and arbitration**

The Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Sultanate of Oman.

**Signed as an agreement**

signed [•]  
as an authorised signatory of  
**National Bank of Oman SAOG**

)  
)  
)

signed by  
**Sulaiman Ali Al-Balushi**

)  
)



## Appendix (B): Interviews Questions

### Interviews Questions

#### Oman Air/National Bank of Oman

##### Old Logo



##### New Logo



Old Logo



New Logo



## **Interview Questions**

### **Personal Information:**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years.
2. Gender:
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
3. Education: (the highest level completed)

1. High school
2. Associate degree
3. Master degree.

### **4. PHD/DBA/JD/MD**

3. Do you concern about brands in your everyday life? What top three brands do you concern?  
Why do you concern them? If don't concern brands, why not?
4. What do these brands mean to you? Why? May you elaborate please?
5. Have you noticed any brands that have “changed its logo” or had a “new look” or rebranded?  
How appropriate do you find this change? Why?
6. From your point of view what are the specifications of effective logos?
7. Are you aware of the logo changes at Oman Air/NBO? How?
8. How you encountered a changed in Oman Air/NBO logo? Why?
9. What changed in Oman Air/NBO logo?
10. How do you feel about this logo change? Why?
11. What do you do about this logo change? Can you explain?
12. From your point of view, why Oman Air/NBO changed its logo? May you explain?
13. What do you think of this new logo of Oman Air/NBO comparing to the old one? Why?
14. What do Oman Air /NBO new logo mean to you? Can you explain?
15. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you look at this new Oman Air/NBO logo?  
Why?
16. Is this logo changed related to Oman Air/NBO? How?
17. What changes would you like to see on this new logo in future? Why?
18. Do you think the new logo improve Oman Air/NBO image in the market? How? Why?
19. Are there other ideas you would like to add on this logo change about Oman Air/NBO?

Sultan Qaboos University

OFFICE OF THE ADVISOR  
FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



جامعة السلطان قابوس

مكتب المستشار  
للشؤون الأكاديمية

لمن يهمه الأمر

نفيدكم علماً بأنه لا يوجد مانع من قيام الباحث / سليمان بن علي البلوشي،  
طالب دراسات عليا (دكتوراه) من جامعة باينري-ماليزيا، بتوزيع الاستبانة المرفقة  
والمتعلقة بالدراسة التي يقوم بها حول:

"انطباعات المستهلك تجاه العلامات التجارية : دراسة حالة على تغيير الشعار في  
الشركات العمانية"

يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمته خلال فترة توزيع وتجميع الاستبانات المرفقة.

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the University has no objection of Mr.  
Sulaiman Al -Balushi, from Binary University-Malaysia,  
distributing the attached questionnaire for his research on:

***"Consumer perception of rebranding, specifically the  
changing in the corporations brands and logos"***

Kindly cooperate with him to obtain the data required for his  
research.

د. طاهر بن عبدالرحمن باعمر

مستشار رئيس الجامعة للشؤون الأكاديمية



الموافق: ١٣/٣/٢٠١٣ م

التاريخ: ١ جمادى الأول ١٤٣٤ هـ

## Appendix (D): The Online Survey

The screenshot shows a web browser window with a Google Forms survey. The browser's address bar displays the URL <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1fA0nMiZ...>. The browser's taskbar at the top shows several open tabs, including 'Logging in to t...', 'Outlook - sahb...', 'Questionnaire ...', 'Academic Stu...', 'EXPLORING...', 'Inbox - sahb10...', and 'New Tab'. The survey title is 'EXPLORING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OMANI BRANDS AFTER LOGOS CHANGE'. The survey content is in English and includes a greeting, a description of the study, a request for participation, and contact information for the researcher and supervisor. It also provides links to the old and new logos for Oman Air and the National Bank of Oman. The survey is in Arabic, as indicated by the 'تعديل هذا النموذج' (Edit this form) button in the top right corner. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system clock as 11:58 AM on 3/23/2013.

**EXPLORING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OMANI BRANDS AFTER LOGOS CHANGE**

تعديل هذا النموذج

Dear Participant,

I am a Doctorate Business Administration candidate at Binary University of Management & Entrepreneurship (Malaysia), investigating the consumer perception of rebranding, specifically the changing in the corporations' brands & logos.

I would like to request your cooperation in completing the attached questionnaire. In this study you will be asked to participate in a questionnaire concerning your thoughts and feelings about brand logos and logo changes. Your participation is voluntary and please be assured that records of your participation and may data collected will be anonymous and responses will only be presented in the aggregate form. The brands and logos used in this questionnaire are used for academic research purposes only and are not affiliated with any company. The questionnaire will take you on average 10 - 15 minutes to complete. Please answer ALL the following questions in the order presented, and DO not leave any questions unanswered. If you have any question regarding this project please feel free to contact myself on ([sahb1000@hotmail.com](mailto:sahb1000@hotmail.com)), or the Binary University, Human Research Ethics Committee ([Valerie@binary.edu.my](mailto:Valerie@binary.edu.my)).

Supervisor: Prof Dr. Zulkifli Hj Senter.

For the Oman Air participants, please kindly check out these sites before start answering the questions:

Oman Air Old Logo: <http://www5.0zz0.com/2013/03/14/04/413009948.png>

Oman Air New Logo: <http://www5.0zz0.com/2013/03/14/04/476267276.jpg>

For the National Bank of Oman participants, please kindly check out these sites before start answering the questions:

National Bank of Oman (NBO) Old Logo: <http://www9.0zz0.com/2013/03/19/13/739610018.jpg>

National Bank of Oman (NBO) New Logo: <http://www9.0zz0.com/2013/03/19/13/477818198.jpg>

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Sulaiman Al-Balushi

EN 11:58 AM 3/23/2013

## EXPLORING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OMANI BRANDS AFTER LOGOS CHANGE

Dear Participant,

I am a Doctorate Business Administration candidate at Binary University of Management and Entrepreneurship (Malaysia), investigating the consumer perception of rebranding, specifically the changing in the corporations' brands and logos. I would like to request your cooperation in completing the attached questionnaire. In this study you will be asked to participate in a questionnaire concerning your thoughts and feelings about brand logos and logo changes. Your participation is voluntary and please be assured that records of your participation and may data collected will be anonymous and responses will only be presented in the aggregate form. The brands and logos used in this questionnaire are used for academic research purposes only and are not affiliated with any company. The questionnaire will take you on average 10 - 15 minutes to complete. Please answer ALL the following questions in the order presented, and DO not leave any questions unanswered. If you have any question regarding this project please feel free to contact myself on ([sahb1000@hotmail.com](mailto:sahb1000@hotmail.com)), or the Binary University, Human Research Ethics Committee. ([Valerie@binary.edu.my](mailto:Valerie@binary.edu.my)).

Supervisor: Prof Dr. Zulkifli Hj Senteri.

For the Oman Air participants, please kindly check out these sites before start answering the questions:

Oman Air Old Logo: <http://www5.0zz0.com/2013/03/14/04/413009948.png>

Oman Air New Logo: <http://www5.0zz0.com/2013/03/14/04/476267276.jpg>

For the National Bank of Oman participants, please kindly check out these sites before start answering the questions:

National Bank of Oman (NBO) Old Logo: <http://www9.0zz0.com/2013/03/19/13/739610018.jpg>

National Bank of Oman (NBO) New Logo: <http://www9.0zz0.com/2013/03/19/13/477818198.jpg>

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.  
Sulaiman Al-Balushi

## EXPLORING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OMANI BRANDS AFTER LOGOS CHANGE

مطلوب\*

### 1- Gender\*

- ☐ Male  
☒ Female

### 2- Age\*

### 3- Nationality\*

- ☐ Omani  
☒ Expatriate

### 4- Location\*

- ☐ Muscat Gov  
☒ Other Gov

### 5- Education: (the highest level completed)\*

### 6- I consider myself a customer of\*

تعديل هذا النموذج

## EXPLORING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OMANI BRANDS AFTER LOGOS CHANGE

مطلوب\*

Please choose an appropriate number from 1 to 5 that best reflects your opinion for each word or statement.

### 7- How would you rate this brand after the logo changed? \*

1 2 3 4 5

Considerably worse

، إلى Considerably worse حدد قيمة تتراوح بين 1،  
، Considerably better 5.

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Considerably better

### 8- How would you rate this brand after the logo changed? \*



1 2 3 4 5

Negative change						Positive change
،Negative change، إلى 5، Positive change، حدد قيمة تتراوح بين 1، change،.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

9- How would you rate this brand after the logo changed? \*

1 2 3 4 5

Unfavorable						Favorable
،Unfavorable، إلى 5، Favorable، حدد قيمة تتراوح بين 1، .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

## EXPLORING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS OMANI BRANDS AFTER LOGOS CHANGE

مطلوب\*

Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement for each statement by mark the box that best describes your response.

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

Preference between brands\*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
10- After the logo changed, this brand has stronger image.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11- After the logo changed, this brand become simpler than it did before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12- After the logo changed, I feel that this brand reflecting the	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Omani nationality, than it did before.					
13- After the logo changed, my opinion that this brand more favorable than it did before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Loyalty to the brand after logo change*</b>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
14- After the logo changed, this brand is my first choice in its industry.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15- After the logo changed, I consider myself to be highly loyal to this brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16- After the logo changed, I always recommended this brand to people I know.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17- I would be prouder to own/use a product of this brand than I would have before.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Association with the brand after the logo changed\***

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
18- This brand offers additional services to me than it did before changing the logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19- This brand offers more personality to me than it did before changing the logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20- Their products/services become satisfy my needs after having new logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21- I feel that the new logo increase the acceptance of brands' products and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Interest curiosity toward logo change*</b>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
22- I am curious to know more about this new logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23- I would be interested to find out more about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24- I am eager to know more about	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
this logo change.					
25- I feel that investigating the new logo would be worthwhile.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26- I would like to learn more about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Deprivation curiosity toward logo change*</b>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
27- I wonder why they changed the logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28- I wonder what the problem was with the old logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29- I want to know what was wrong with the old logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30- I feel I need to know the reason for this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31- It does not make sense to me why they would change the logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Scepticism towards logo change *</b>					

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
32- I feel suspicious about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33- I feel distrustful about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34- I feel skeptical about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35- I feel skeptical about this logo change. I feel doubtful about this logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36- I believe that this logo change is meant to deceive me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37- They changed the logo to make it seem like a new product when it really is not.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Resistance toward logo change *</b>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
38- I do not want the logo to change because I am used to the old logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39- If I had a choice I would	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
stick with the old logo.					
40- I am not comfortable with this logo change without a good explanation for it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41- I prefer they leave a logo alone rather than change it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42- If it was up to me, I would not have changed the logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
43- I hope that they did not change the product/service with the logo change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
44- I am afraid that the product/service may not be the same as old.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45- I would be upset if the product/service changes with this new logo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46- It worries me that the	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
product/service may change after this new logo.					
<b>Effective logo *</b>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
47- Logo must have simplicity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
48- Logo should have specific identity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
49- Logo should reflect the company business.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
50- Logo should contain fewer colors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
51- Logo should contain fewer words.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
52- Logo should contain slogan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
53- Logo should reflect clear meanings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Consumer lifestyle*</b>					

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
54- I like to continue doing the same old things rather than trying new and different things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
55- I like to experience novelty and change in my daily routine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
56- I like a job that offers change, variety, and travel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
57- I am continually seeking new ideas and experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
58- I like continually changing activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
59- When things get boring, I like to find some new and unfamiliar experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
60- I prefer a routine way of life rather than an unpredictable one full of change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Appendix (E): SPSS Output

### Normality Tests Case Processing Summary

		Cases					
		Valid		Missing		Total	
		N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
attitudes	Male	264	100.0%	0	.0%	264	100.0%
	Female	518	100.0%	0	.0%	518	100.0%

### Descriptive

Gender			Statistic	Std. Error
attitudes	Male	Mean	2.8333	.05037
		95% Confidence Lower Bound	2.7342	
		Interval for Mean Upper Bound	2.9325	
		5% Trimmed Mean	2.8405	
		Median	3.0000	
		Variance	.670	
		Std. Deviation	.81843	
		Minimum	1.00	
		Maximum	5.00	
		Range	4.00	
		Interquartile Range	1.00	
		Skewness	-.134	
		Kurtosis	.169	
	Female	Mean	3.0290	.03449
		95% Confidence Lower Bound	2.9612	
		Interval for Mean Upper Bound	3.0967	
		5% Trimmed Mean	3.0248	
		Median	3.0000	
		Variance	.616	
		Std. Deviation	.78497	
		Minimum	1.00	
		Maximum	5.00	
		Range	4.00	
		Interquartile Range	1.00	
		Skewness	.148	
		Kurtosis	-.043	

### Test of Normality

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
attitudes	Male	0.175	264	0.061	0.952	264	0.104
	Female	0.187	518	0.061	0.955	518	0.121

### a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

## attitudes

## Stem-and-Leaf Plots

attitudes Stem-and-Leaf Plot for  
Gender= Male

Frequency	Stem and Leaf
1	0   0
1	0   1
1	0   2
1	0   3
1	0   4
1	0   5
1	0   6
1	0   7
1	0   8
1	0   9
1	1   0
1	1   1
1	1   2
1	1   3
1	1   4
1	1   5
1	1   6
1	1   7
1	1   8
1	1   9
1	2   0
1	2   1
1	2   2
1	2   3
1	2   4
1	2   5
1	2   6
1	2   7
1	2   8
1	2   9
1	3   0
1	3   1
1	3   2
1	3   3
1	3   4
1	3   5
1	3   6
1	3   7
1	3   8
1	3   9
1	4   0
1	4   1
1	4   2
1	4   3
1	4   4
1	4   5
1	4   6
1	4   7
1	4   8
1	4   9
1	5   0
1	5   1
1	5   2
1	5   3
1	5   4
1	5   5
1	5   6
1	5   7
1	5   8
1	5   9
1	6   0
1	6   1
1	6   2
1	6   3
1	6   4
1	6   5
1	6   6
1	6   7
1	6   8
1	6   9
1	7   0
1	7   1
1	7   2
1	7   3
1	7   4
1	7   5
1	7   6
1	7   7
1	7   8
1	7   9
1	8   0
1	8   1
1	8   2
1	8   3
1	8   4
1	8   5
1	8   6
1	8   7
1	8   8
1	8   9
1	9   0
1	9   1
1	9   2
1	9   3
1	9   4
1	9   5
1	9   6
1	9   7
1	9   8
1	9   9

[illegible]

Stem width: 1.00  
Each leaf: 1 case(s)

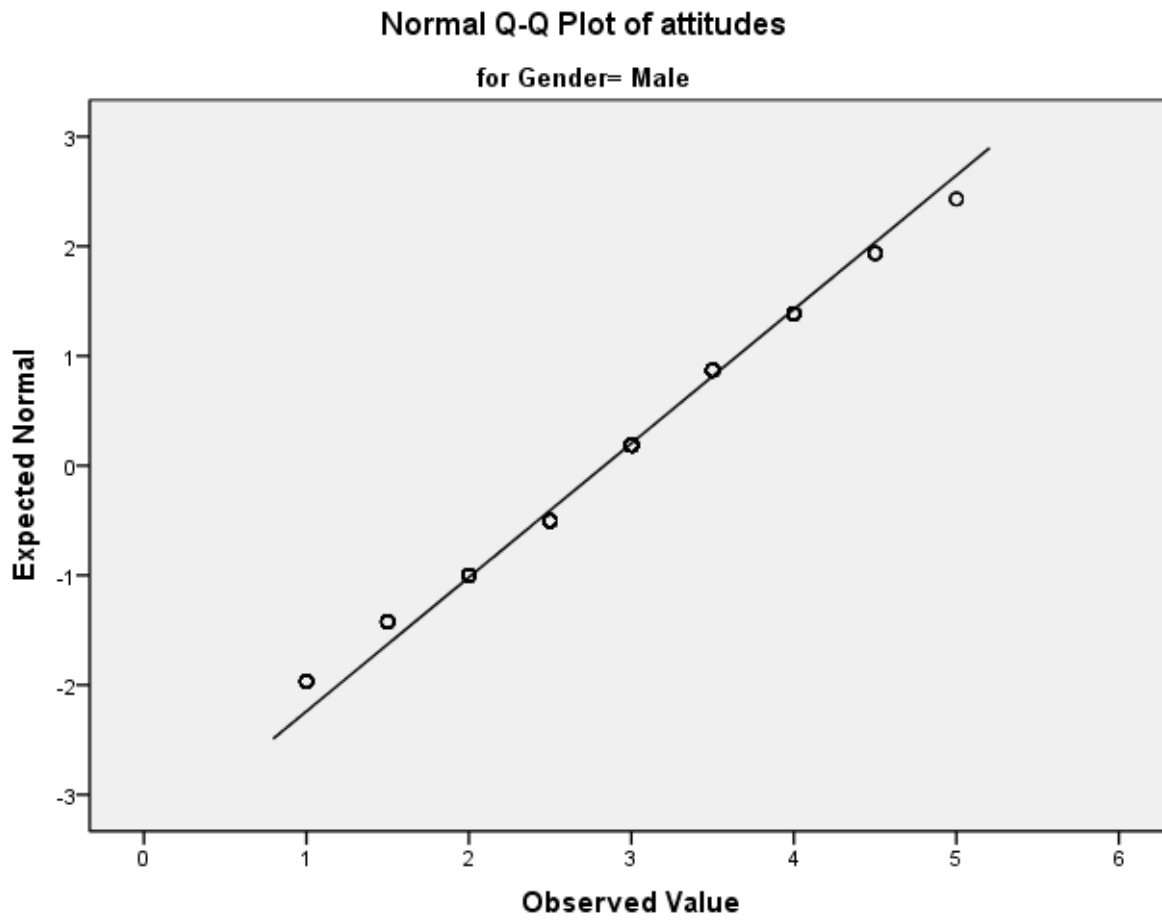
attitudes Stem-and-Leaf Plot for  
Gender= Female

Frequency	Stem and Leaf
1	0   0
1	0   1
1	0   2
1	0   3
1	0   4
1	0   5
1	0   6
1	0   7
1	0   8
1	0   9
1	1   0
1	1   1
1	1   2
1	1   3
1	1   4
1	1   5
1	1   6
1	1   7
1	1   8
1	1   9
1	2   0
1	2   1
1	2   2
1	2   3
1	2   4
1	2   5
1	2   6
1	2   7
1	2   8
1	2   9
1	3   0
1	3   1
1	3   2
1	3   3
1	3   4
1	3   5
1	3   6
1	3   7
1	3   8
1	3   9
1	4   0
1	4   1
1	4   2
1	4   3
1	4   4
1	4   5
1	4   6
1	4   7
1	4   8
1	4   9
1	5   0
1	5   1
1	5   2
1	5   3
1	5   4
1	5   5
1	5   6
1	5   7
1	5   8
1	5   9
1	6   0
1	6   1
1	6   2
1	6   3
1	6   4
1	6   5
1	6   6
1	6   7
1	6   8
1	6   9
1	7   0
1	7   1
1	7   2
1	7   3
1	7   4
1	7   5
1	7   6
1	7   7
1	7   8
1	7   9
1	8   0
1	8   1
1	8   2
1	8   3
1	8   4
1	8   5
1	8   6
1	8   7
1	8   8
1	8   9
1	9   0
1	9   1
1	9   2
1	9   3
1	9   4
1	9   5
1	9   6
1	9   7
1	9   8
1	9   9

[illegible]

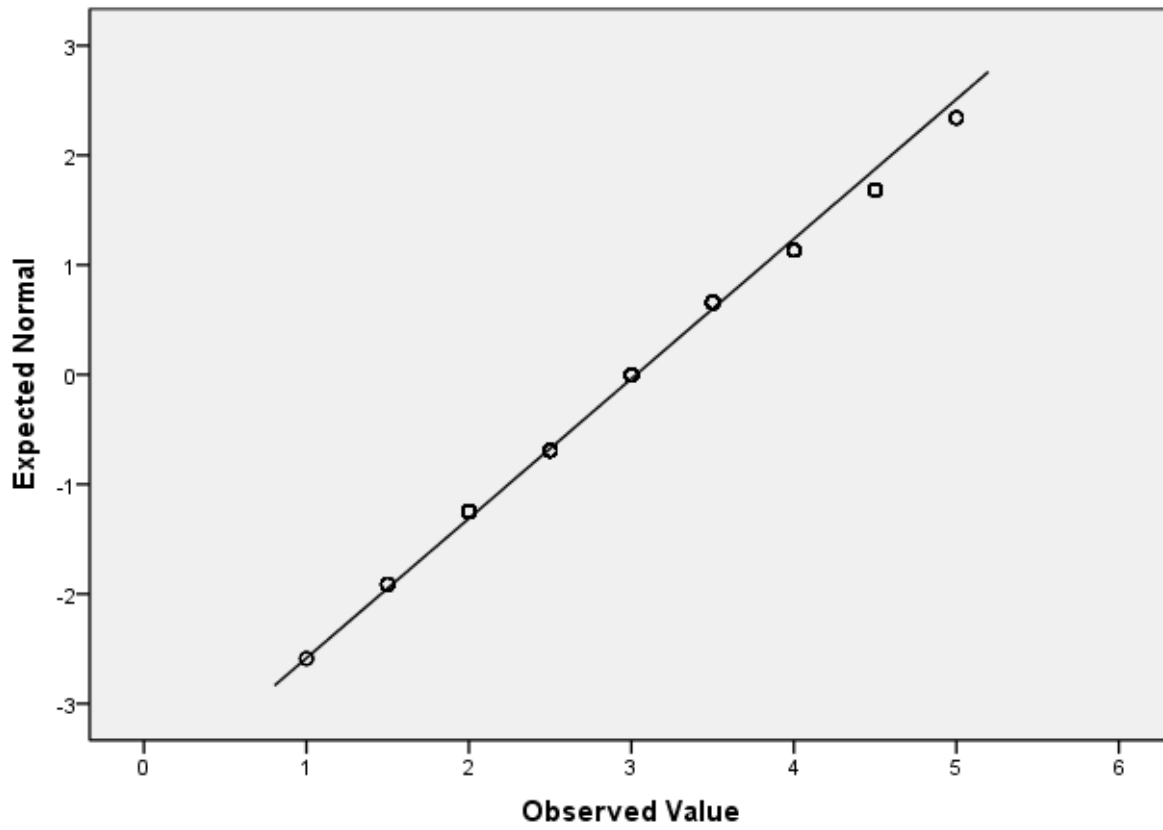
Stem width: 1.00  
Each leaf: 2 case(s)

## Normal Q-Q Plots



### Normal Q-Q Plot of attitudes

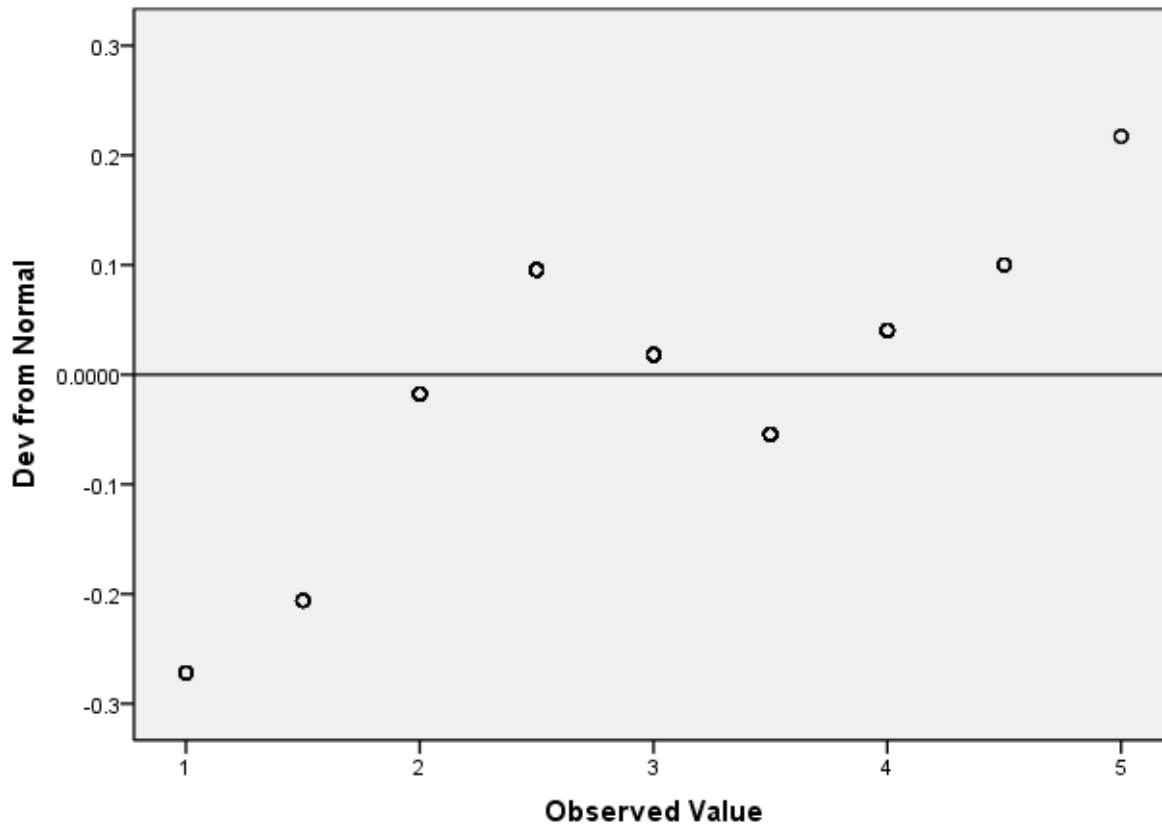
for Gender= Female



### Detrended Normal Q-Q Plots

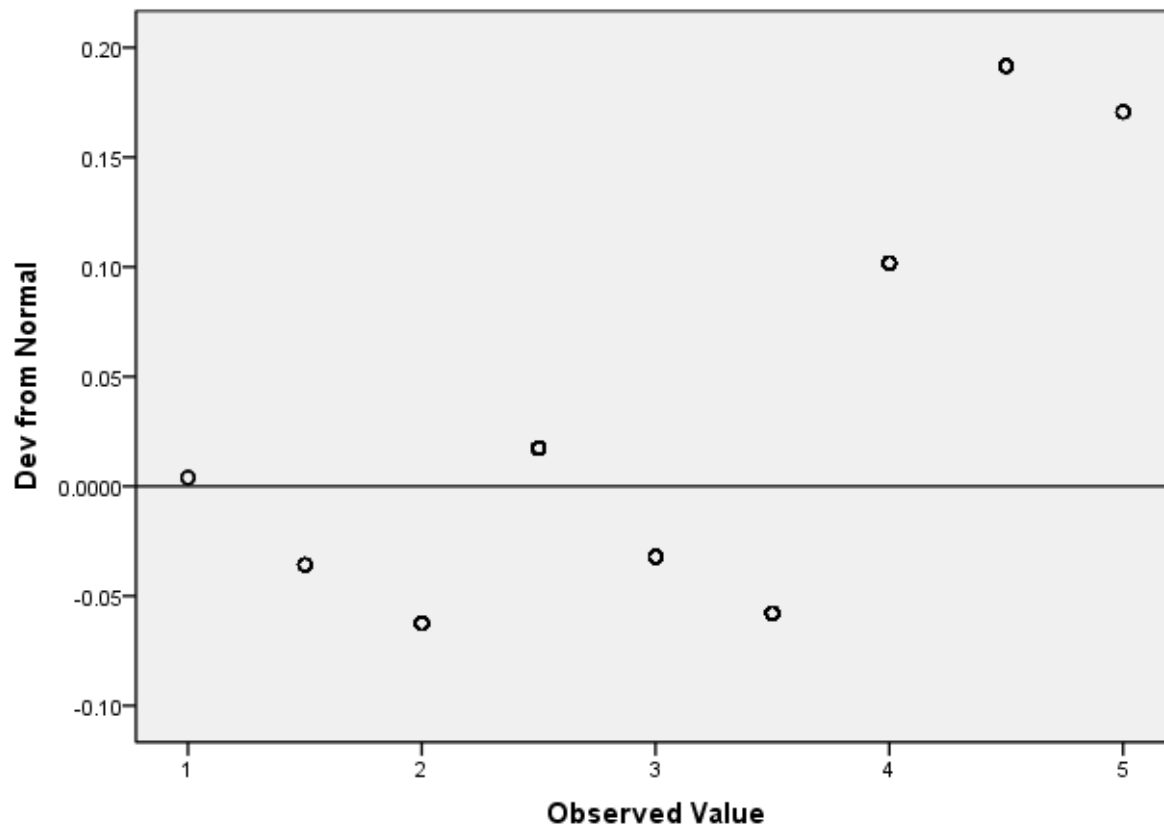
### Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of attitudes

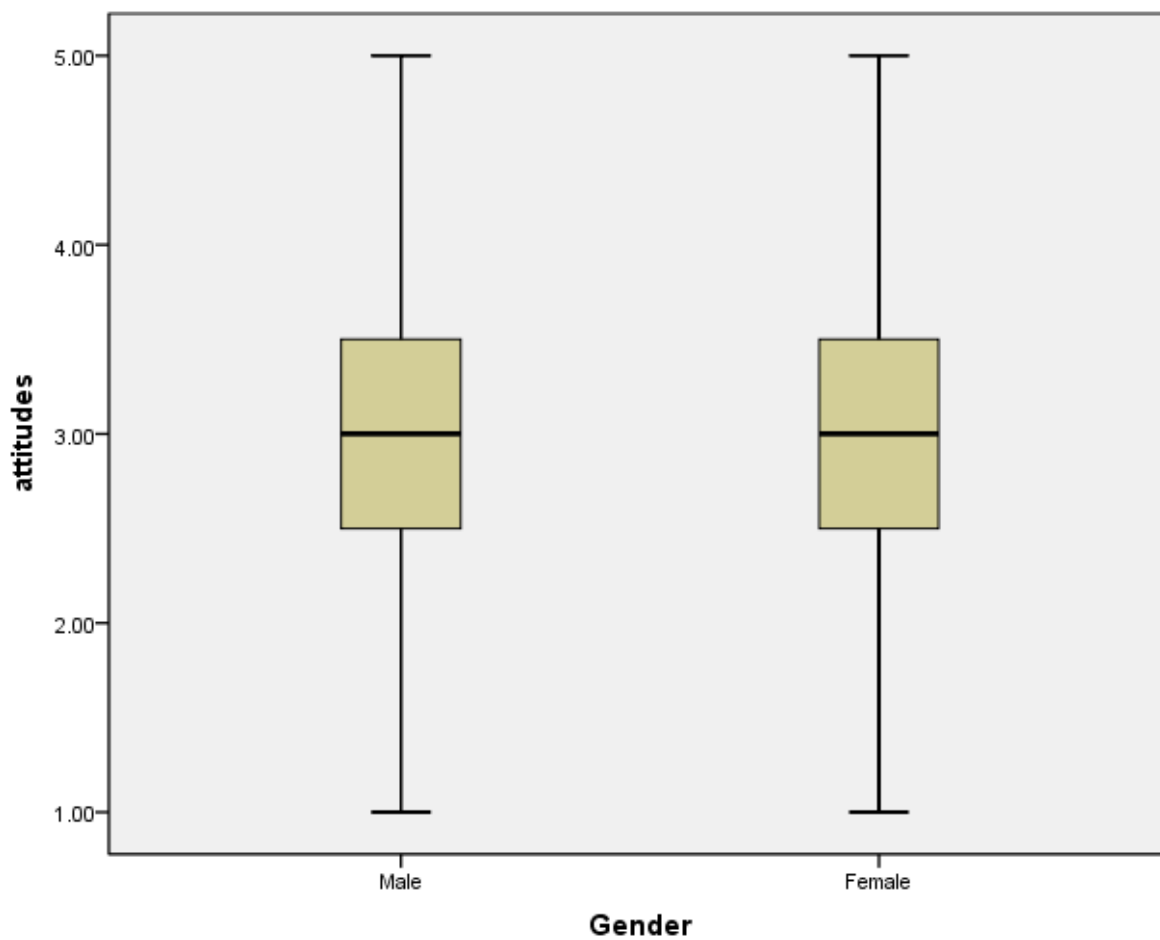
for Gender= Male



### Detrended Normal Q-Q Plot of attitudes

for Gender= Female





### Consumers' attitudes towards the brands after logo changes

#### One sample test for Consumers' attitudes towards the Brands after logos change

##### One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Consumers' attitudes towards the Brands after logos change	782	3.5149	1.03694	.03708