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REBRANDING IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

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Abstract: *The aim of this study was to examine the impact of the perception of successfully implemented rebranding of Nektar beer on the level of consumer confidence in a crisis situation. The research was conducted using a quantitative approach through a survey among 124 consumers of the Banja Luka Brewery brand. The questionnaire contained ten claims that measure the perception of rebranding and trust, and the responses were rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The results show that the majority of respondents positively perceive the authenticity and sincerity of changes, especially in questions that measure learning from previous mistakes and the clarity of brand communication. A positive perception of rebranding directly affects consumers' willingness to buy again and recommend the brand to others. The reliability analysis shows high Cronbach α coefficients (0.85–0.88), while the Pearson correlation ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$) and linear regression ($\beta = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$) confirm the significant positive impact of the perception of rebranding on trust. While some respondents expressed caution about future crises, the overall results show that authentic and consistently communicated changes significantly increase trust, strengthen loyalty, and contribute to maintaining a positive brand image. These findings have practical value for managers and marketing professionals, providing guidance for strategic rebranding and crisis communication in order to restore and strengthen consumer trust.*

Keywords: *Nektar beer, strategic rebranding, crisis management, consumer confidence, consumer perception*

JEL classification: M31, M38, M10, D12

INTRODUCTION

In the modern business environment, brands not only face the challenges of competition, but also unforeseen crisis situations that can seriously damage their reputation and consumer trust. Crisis situations are defined as unforeseen events that can adversely affect a business's business, reputation, and brand perception, including financial losses, reputational scandals, security incidents, or broader societal crises (Chowdhury & Chowdhury, 2024). It is in such circumstances that companies resort to a strategy of strategic rebranding, in order to renew their image, regain consumer trust and adapt to new market conditions. For example, in 2021, Banja Luka Brewery presented a new look and communication of the Nektar brand as part of an organizational strategy aimed at modernizing its visual identity and strengthening its market position. This represents a broader approach to rebranding, including visual and communication changes that focus on consumer trust and loyalty.

Rebranding is defined in the literature as a strategic process of changing the visual identity, messages, values and communication of a brand with the aim of improving consumer perception and adapting to market changes (Ahmad & Shaari, *The Relationship Between Rebranding and Brand Reputation After a Brand Crisis: The Mediating Role of Brand Loyalty* PDF: Rebranding and Brand Reputation After Crisis., 2024). This process can be initiated by various factors, including changes in the market environment, technological innovations, competitive pressures, but also the consequences of crisis situations that require the restoration of consumer trust and the maintenance of brand loyalty. In crisis situations, the perception of a successfully implemented strategic rebranding becomes a key element for creating a positive image and trust, as consumers often react to the authenticity and transparency of communication (Singh, Crisafulli, Quamina, & Xue, 2020)

The need for this research stems from the fact that, although there are many theoretical considerations about rebranding, empirical data on its impact on consumer confidence, especially in the local context, is still limited. Research, such as (Selvakumar, Babu, & Prasad, 2025) and (Kunal, 2023), show that the perception of changes, their scope and authenticity directly affects consumer confidence and their willingness to continue using a brand's products or services. Such knowledge makes the research relevant for local companies, such as Banja Luka Brewery and its Nektar brand, which face the challenges of preserving their reputation after crisis situations and want to understand how strategic rebranding can positively shape consumer attitudes and behavior.

The aim of this paper is to examine the impact of the perception of a successfully implemented strategic rebranding of the Nektar brand on the level of consumer trust in the context of crisis situations, using the example of Banja Luka Brewery. Through the analysis of relevant literature and empirical research through a consumer survey, the paper seeks to confirm the hypothesis that clear and authentic rebranding increases consumer trust, strengthens loyalty and restores brand reputation.

A REVIEW OF SIMILAR STUDIES

The perception of the rebranding of Nektar beer and consumer trust are key topics in modern marketing, especially in the context of crisis situations that can seriously damage the reputation of the brand. (Ahmad & Shaari, *The Relationship Be-*

tween Rebranding and Brand Reputation After a Brand Crisis: The Mediating Role of Brand Loyalty PDF: Rebranding and Brand Reputation After Crisis., 2024) They point out that strategic rebranding, when carried out after a crisis situation, significantly improves the reputation of the brand. Similarly, (Chowdhury & Chowdhury, 2024) It emphasizes the importance of transparent and authentic communication during social crises. Their findings show that companies that clearly communicate change and demonstrate responsibility manage to maintain or increase consumer trust, even in high-risk situations. These papers confirm that consumer trust is sensitive to the perception of brand activity in crises.

(Singh, Crisafulli, Quamina, & Xue, 2020) They add a layer of understanding with the role of digital influencers in crisis situations. They indicate that carefully selected influencers can boost a positive brand image and consumer trust, while careless performances can result in the opposite effect. This finding is significant because it shows that the perception of rebranding includes not only corporate activities, but also the way a brand is presented through external communication channels, especially in the digital environment. (Kunal, 2023) It explores the impact of corporate rebranding in the textile industry and confirms that changes in visual identity, messaging and marketing activities have a significant impact on consumer attitudes and their level of trust. (Ahmad, Okechukwu, & Shaari, The effect of rebranding on brand loyalty: Brand reputation as mediator, 2022) They also confirm that rebranding improves the reputation of the brand, and the reputation then indirectly increases customer loyalty and trust.

The added more recent studies broaden the previous perspective and allow for a more detailed analysis of trust mechanisms. (Selvakumar, Babu, & Prasad, 2025) Explore the impact of rebranding on consumer perception, trust, and loyalty using a combination of surveys and case studies. Their results show that consumers respond better when rebranding involves real, visible changes, not just cosmetic or marketing. (Monfort, López Vázquez, & Sebastián Morillas, 2025) They emphasize the importance of value perception, customer satisfaction, customer support, and a consistent brand image. Their research shows that all these factors have a strong impact on consumer trust, especially in the context of sustainable brands, which is also relevant for local brands looking to regain trust after the crisis.

These papers further confirm that the perception of rebranding success is not only a function of changes within the company, but also how consumers perceive brand consistency and integrity across all communication channels. The paper also points to several key conclusions relevant to the H1 hypothesis. First, the perception of successful rebranding in a crisis situation has a direct and positive impact on consumer confidence. Second, trust increases when changes work authentically, transparently, and consistently across all aspects of the brand, including communication and digital channels. Third, brand reputation often acts as an intermediary between rebranding and trust, which means that external factors, such as influencer perceptions or online content, also have a significant impact.

METHODOLOGY

Given the nature of the research problem, a quantitative research approach was applied, based on empirical analysis of data collected through a consumer survey. This approach enabled precise measurement of respondents' attitudes and statistical testing

of the hypothesis: The perception of a successfully implemented rebranding of Nektar beer in a crisis situation significantly positively affects the level of consumer trust towards the brand.

The respondents were selected using purposive sampling among Nektar beer consumers residing in the Republic of Srpska, based on their relevance to the research objective. A total of 124 valid responses were collected. Respondents were between 18 and 66 years of age. The sample comprised 82 men (66%) and 42 women (34%). Regarding educational attainment, 9 respondents (7%) had completed primary school, 63 (51%) had completed secondary school, 42 (34%) held a university degree, and 10 (8%) had completed postgraduate education. The regional distribution included 44 respondents (35.5%) from the Banja Luka Region, 21 (16.9%) from the Doboј Region, 31 (25.0%) from the Bijeljina Region, 13 (10.5%) from the East Sarajevo Region, and 15 (12.1%) from the Herzegovina Region. Because purposive sampling was used, the findings should be interpreted within the surveyed population and should not be generalized to all Nektar beer consumers.

Table 1. Demographic and regional characteristics of respondents (n = 124)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Men	82	66.0
	Women	42	34.0
Educational attainment	Primary school	9	7.0
	Secondary school	63	51.0
	University degree	42	34.0
	Postgraduate education	10	8.0
Region	Banja Luka Region	44	35.5
	Doboј Region	21	16.9
	Bijeljina Region	31	25.0
	East Sarajevo Region	13	10.5
	Herzegovina Region	15	12.1

Note: Respondents were 18–66 years old. Source: Authors' research (2026)

The survey was administered online from 1 February to 1 March 2026. Invitations to participate were distributed by e-mail, social media, and through Viber and WhatsApp groups. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that their responses would be used exclusively for research purposes. The inclusion criteria required respondents to be at least 18 years old, reside in the Republic of Srpska, be familiar with Nektar beer, have previously consumed the product, voluntarily consent to participate, and complete the questionnaire in full. Responses that did not meet these criteria or contained incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analysis.

The instrument of data collection was a questionnaire, consisting of ten statements related to the perception of the rebranding of Nektar beer and consumer confidence. Responses were measured using a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1 stands for “I don't agree at all” and 5 stands for “Strongly agree.”

This methodological approach has enabled a systematic and objective examination of the research problem, combining quantitative analysis with empirical evidence from concrete business practice. This gives a clear picture of how the perception of the rebranding of Nektar beer affects consumer confidence, which provides practical guidance to managers and marketing experts in crisis situations.

RESULTS

The results of the survey, conducted among 124 consumers of the Nektar brand, show that the majority of respondents positively perceive the rebranding of Nektar beer and that their trust in the brand has increased after the crisis.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents' responses on the perception of the rebranding of Nektar beer and consumer confidence (n = 124)

R. br.	Claim	(I don't agree at all)	(I disagree)	3 (Neutral)	(I agree)	(I totally agree)
1	I believe that the Banja Luka brewery has successfully carried out the rebranding of Nektar beer after the crisis.	8	12	20	55	29
2	The changes in the rebranding of Nektar beer seem honest and authentic.	7	14	25	42	36
3	The rebranding of Nektar beer clearly shows that the Banja Luka brewery has learned from its mistakes.	6	10	22	25	61
4	The new communication related to the rebranding of Nektar beer instills more security than before the crisis.	8	15	20	62	19
5	I believe that the rebranding of Nektar beer was not just a marketing move, but a real change in the offer and communication.	9	13	23	49	30
6	After the rebranding of Nektar beer, I have more confidence in this brand.	5	12	20	50	37
7	The rebranding of Nektar beer makes me believe that the Banja Luka brewery is more responsible towards consumers than before the crisis.	6	11	19	62	26
8	I'm ready to buy the rebranded Nektar beer again.	7	13	22	21	61
9	I would recommend the rebranded Nektar beer to others despite the previous crisis.	6	12	21	37	48
10	I believe that a similar crisis and problems related to the Nektar brand will not be repeated in the future.	5	10	25	71	13

Source: Author's research (2026)

The results of a survey conducted among 124 consumers of the Nektar brand show that the majority of respondents positively perceive the rebranding of Nektar beer and that their trust in the brand has increased after the crisis. The results of the re-

search are presented below through five key analytical units: perception of rebranding, consumer trust, reliability of scales, correlation analysis and regression model.

1. Perception of rebranding

An analysis of the first five questions, which measure the perception of a successful rebranding of Nektar beer, shows that the majority of respondents agree or fully agree with the claims about the changes made by the company after the crisis. In particular, question 3 (“The rebranding of Nektar beer clearly shows that the Banja Luka brewery has learned from its mistakes”) records the highest number of high marks, with 61 respondents marking “I strongly agree”. This result suggests that respondents perceive the rebranding as an honest and authentic attempt by the company to improve its image.

On the other hand, a smaller number of respondents indicated neutral or negative attitudes, which indicates the presence of a certain reservation or skepticism in a smaller part of consumers, but in the aggregate these values do not diminish a clear positive tendency of perception. The mean for question group 1–5 is approximately 4.0, confirming a generally high level of positive perception.

2. Consumer trust

Questions 6–10 measure respondents’ trust in the brand after the rebranding of Nektar beer. The results show that trust has significantly increased compared to the pre-crisis situation. Of particular interest is question 8 (“I am ready to buy rebranded Nektar beer”) where 61 respondents out of 124 indicate “Strongly agree”, indicating the positive impact of rebranding on buying behavior and loyalty.

Question 10 (“I believe that a similar crisis and problems related to the Nektar brand will not be repeated in the future”) shows a relatively lower average rating, suggesting that respondents still maintain a certain amount of caution towards future crises. These findings suggest that while rebranding increases trust, consumers are still monitoring the company’s behavior and its ability to prevent future problems.

3. Scale reliability

The aim of this analysis was to check the internal consistency of the questions within each measurement scale, i.e. to determine the extent to which items belonging to the same group measure the same concept. Cronbach’s alpha (α) coefficient was used to assess reliability, where values greater than 0.70 are considered an indicator of satisfactory reliability, while values above 0.80 indicate high internal consistency of the scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

In the study, two groups of variables were analyzed. The first group was the perception of rebranding (questions 1-5), while the second group included Consumer Confidence (questions 6-10).

Table 3. Scale reliability

Group of variables	Number of questions	Cronbach α	Reliability level
Perception of rebranding (questions 1-5)	5	0,82	High
Consumer confidence (questions 6-10)	5	0,85	High

Source: Own data processing in SPSS Statistics

The results of the analysis showed that, for the Rebranding Perception scale, Cronbach α is 0.82, which indicates high reliability. This value confirms that the questions within this scale are mutually aligned and that they consistently measure the same concept, i.e. the respondents' attitude towards the rebranding process.

For the Consumer Confidence scale, a Cronbach value of $\alpha = 0.85$ was obtained, which also represents high reliability. This means that the items that measure the level of confidence of respondents are consistent and that together they form a stable and reliable measurement unit. A high alpha coefficient value indicates a strong internal correlation between questions and consistency of respondents' answers.

Given that both Cronbach values α the coefficient are above the recommended threshold of 0.70, it can be concluded that both scales are reliable and suitable for further statistical data processing. This implies that aggregate scores (average or summary values) can be used for the purposes of correlation and regression analysis.

4. Correlation and linear regression

(Kim, 2015) (Kim, 2015), To quantify the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the perception of rebranding and consumer trust. (Kim, 2015). Correlation analysis can determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the positive experience of brand change and the level of user trust, which is an important indicator of the success of rebranding.

Table 4 shows the results of the Pearson correlation, including coefficient values, significance level, and number of respondents, providing an overview of the underlying association between these variables.

Table 4. Pearson correlation (extended)

Variables	Perception of rebranding	Consumer confidence
Perception of rebranding	1	0,72**
Consumer confidence	0,72**	1

Source: Own data processing in SPSS Statistics

Additional data: $n = 124$; $p < 0.01$ - significantly at the level of 1%

The results show a strong positive correlation between the perception of rebranding and consumer confidence ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$). This means that when respondents evaluate the rebranding process more positively, they also show a higher level of trust in the brand. The high statistical significance confirms the reliability of these findings and indicates that successful rebranding can significantly contribute to strengthening consumer loyalty and positive attitude.

5) Linear regression

To examine whether the perception of rebranding predicts consumer confidence, a simple linear regression model was estimated, as expressed in Formula 1 (Maulud & Abdulazeez, 2020). The dependent variable was the average consumer confidence score calculated from questions 6–10, while the only independent variable was the average perception of rebranding score calculated from questions 1–5. Demographic characteristics, including age, gender, educational attainment, and region, were not entered as control variables. Therefore, the reported regression coefficient represents the unadjusted association between the perception of rebranding and consumer confidence.

Formula 1

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$$

where:

Y - average score of consumer trust (questions 6-10),

X - average rating of the perception of rebranding (questions 1-5),

β_1 is a coefficient that shows how much change in perception affects trust.

β_0 - intercept, i.e. the initial value of trust when perception = 0,

ε – model error.

Source: (Maulud & Abdulazeez, 2020)

The results of the regression analysis, shown in Table 5, indicate that the intercept is $\beta_0 = 2.15$, while the coefficient is $\beta_1 = 0.46$. This means that each increase in the average perception score by one unit increases confidence by 0.46. The model explains the 52% variability in trust ($R^2 = 0.52$), indicating that the perception of rebranding has a significant impact on consumer attitudes. A standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.71$ confirms a strong positive effect, while statistical tests t and p (<0.001) confirm the significance of the model. The parameter $R^2 = 0.52$ further indicates that the model is stable and well adapted to the sample.

Table 5. Results of linear regression

Parameter	It's a U.S.	Interpretation of results
β_0 (intercept)	2,15	The initial value of trust when perception is 0
β_1 (slope)	0,46	Each unit of increase in average perception increases confidence by 0.46
R^2	0,52	52% of trust variability explains perception

Source: Own data processing in SPSS Statistics

P is a value of $(\beta_1) < 0.001 \rightarrow$ the effect is statistically significant

These results clearly show that the perception of successful rebranding directly affects consumer trust, i.e. that the perception of successfully implemented rebranding in a crisis situation has a significant positive impact on the level of consumer trust in the brand.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of individual questions shows that respondents particularly value the authenticity and sincerity of changes (questions 2 and 3), which is in line with the findings (Singh, Crisafulli, Quamina, & Xue, 2020) who point out that consumers react strongly to consistent and authentic communication in crisis situations. The results also show that the positive perception of the rebranding of Nektar beer directly affects consumers' willingness to buy again and recommend the brand to others (questions 8 and 9), which is in line with the findings (Ahmad, Okechukwu, & Shaari, The effect of rebranding on brand loyalty: Brand reputation as mediator, 2022), who have found that rebranding can increase loyalty by improving brand perception.

A comparative analysis with similar studies confirms the compatibility of the results: (Ahmad & Shaari, The Relationship Between Rebranding and Brand Reputation After a Brand Crisis: The Mediating Role of Brand Loyalty PDF: Rebranding and Brand Reputation After Crisis., 2024) They state that rebranding, when carried out strategically and transparently, improves the reputation of the brand after crisis situations.

Linear regression further confirms these findings. The results show that the perception of rebranding significantly predicts consumer confidence ($\beta = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$).

(Chowdhury & Chowdhury, 2024) They point out that crisis situations directly threaten consumer confidence, and a positive perception of change acts as a key factor in restoring trust.

(Kunal, 2023) It confirms that the perception of corporate rebranding in the textile industry has a positive impact on customer attitudes and loyalty, which is methodologically and conceptually similar to this research. (Selvakumar, Babu, & Prasad, 2025) They stress the importance of perceiving the scale and sincerity of changes in shaping consumer confidence.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the local context, such as the Banja Luka Brewery, confirms global trends: successful rebranding affects not only brand perception, but also consumer behavior, including loyalty and recommendations. While the majority of respondents expressed a high level of confidence, a number of neutral and negative responses (in particular question 10) suggest that consumers remain wary of the resurgence of crisis situations. This indicates that the rebranding must be continuously accompanied by authentic communication and maintaining the quality of the product.

Also, the results of the research confirm that a clear and authentic perception of the rebranding of Nektar beer is key to restoring consumer confidence, and the findings are fully compatible with previous research and provide additional confirmation of the importance of strategic rebranding in crisis conditions. This has practical value for managers and marketing professionals, as it allows them to plan and implement rebranding that not only improves the image, but also directly increases consumer trust and loyalty.

The practical implications of these results are manifold. First, the authenticity and transparency of changes are crucial, as consumers value honest and consistent brand transformations, while marketing moves without real changes cannot restore trust in the long run. Secondly, clearly perceived rebranding increases the willingness of consumers to buy products again and recommend the brand to others, which directly affects loyalty and sales. Third, companies need to continuously monitor consum-

er perceptions and ensure consistent communication about changes, especially in the post-crisis period. Finally, the local context confirms that strategic rebranding can be an effective tool for preserving and restoring trust in markets where consumer loyalty has a significant impact on competitiveness.

When generalizing the findings, it should be borne in mind that the research was conducted in a limited territory and with a small number of respondents, whose answers reflect subjective perception. Also, the analysis focused on one brand and referred to short-term consumer reactions, so long-term changes in trust were not included.

Despite these limitations, the results clearly indicate the practical value of rebranding in crisis situations. Authentic and consistently communicated changes have been shown to significantly increase consumer trust, strengthen customer loyalty, and provide companies with concrete guidelines for strategic reputation management in challenging conditions. These findings also confirm that carefully planned rebranding can be an effective tool for preserving and improving customer relationships, even in markets where trust is a key factor in competitiveness.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this research point to the significant role of the perception of rebranding in the process of renewal of the relationship between the brand and the consumer after crisis situations. The results show that consumers respond positively to changes that are perceived as real, consistent and aimed at improving product quality and communication with the market. giving companies concrete guidelines for strategic reputation management and communication with consumers. Such a perception contributes to strengthening trust in the brand and increases the willingness of consumers to buy the product again and recommend it to others. This confirms that a successful rebranding can have a direct impact on consumer behavior and loyalty.

Statistical analyses further confirm the existence of a strong correlation between the perception of change and the level of trust, indicating that the way consumers interpret and value brand transformation is a key factor in the process of reputation recovery. At the same time, the results suggest that trust has not been fully restored among all consumers, as a certain proportion of respondents continue to show caution about the future stability of the brand.

The findings also have significant implications for companies facing reputational crises. Organizations must approach rebranding as a long-term strategic process that implies real changes in business, transparent communication and continuous monitoring of consumer perception. Only such an approach can contribute to the permanent restoration of trust and the sustainable strengthening of the brand's market position.

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