To Examine the Application and Practicality of Aakers' Brand Equity Model in Relation with Recurrent Purchases Decision for Imported Beauty Care products
(A study of female customers' of Pakistan)

Saima Ulfat *(corresponding Author)*

Institute of Business and Management, University of Engineering & Technology, Lahore

Email: ulfat.saima@gmail.com

Dr. Asif Muzaffar

Institute of Business and Management , University of Engineering and Technology Lahore Pakistan

Email: asifmuzaffar23@yahoo.com

Professor Dr. Muhammad Shoaib

Director, Institute of Business and Management, University of Engineering & Technology, Lahore

Abstract

Based upon Asker's renowned conceptual framework of brand equity, this study is employing Linear Regression analysis to investigate the causal relationships amongst all the dimensions of brand equity and recurrent purchase decision of females for imported beauty care products. In this study, responses of 211 actual customers from Pakistan have been used based upon Purposive sampling technique.

Research findings demonstrates, Brand Quality, Brand Loyalty and Brand Association are the significant dimensions while having recurrent purchase decision about any imported beauty care product whereas Brand Awareness has found weaker support for the same.

Significantly, this study is important for all worldwide manufacturers of beauty care products whose products are available in local market of Pakistan and it can appear as a source of female consumers' insight about brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association and brand quality which they may keep in mind while selecting their important beauty care products.

Keywords: Brand Quality, Brand Association, Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness, Re-current purchase, Beauty care products

1. Introduction (Research Motivation)

Since prehistoric era, it is natural to consume beauty care products by both males and females in order to look striking, gorgeous, elegant and presentable. Due consideration is developed that Females are more intended towards use of beauty care products than males.

Firm beauty in every culture is depicted with the character of Cinderella whose first traces were found in Chinese stories during early nineteen century (Miller, 2008). Likewise entire world, females of Pakistan are also indulged in rigorous use of beauty enhancement products especially face and body care products as desire to enhance physical appearance is seems to be natural phenomena (Adams, 1977). Pakistan is an underdeveloped country so as its beauty market. Penetration has been 90% increased of beauty market in Pakistan and maximum share is caught by skin care and hair care products (Manto, 2011). Scope of this thesis will reveal role of brand equity for whole female segment of Pakistan.

Overall beauty care products including facial skin care and body care creams and lotions are abundantly available in local markets of Pakistan including both local as well as imported. These products are radially used by almost all females. Appearing under two price tiers, there are two nominated categories of these products including first one as "mass fairness" a beauty care product with average price of Rs. 1.25 per ml. In second category, "mass premium fairness" products appear having price level up to Rs. 8.00 per ml and above (Manto, 2011). In both categories international as well as local companies are offering their products but in first price tier, mostly local beauty care products are appearing including English Fairness, Care Honey Cream and Lotion, Faiza Beauty Cream, Bio Nikhar, Tibbat Cream and many more and Fair & Lovely Pakistan, in later price tier mostly foreign companies products are appearing including Olay international, Pond's White beauty, Garner, Revlon Honey Lotion and L'Oreal etc. Other than all local manufacturers, mainly, six multinational giants are playing in beauty market of Pakistan having unique blend of their face and body care brands. These include L'Oreal, P&G, Avon , Unilever, Beiersdorf and Colgate (Manto, 2011). Steady perception of females while using all these beauty care products is to attain an ultimately fairness and beauty either after using products of any local brand or imported one. So every brand has established its brand equity in the minds of customers in its

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own ways. Since new and emerging trends are appearing in beauty industry of Pakistan, so brand equity of any selected product is also increasing if females move towards repurchase of that same brand's product again and again.

Since beauty is an embodied affective process said by (Coleman & Figueroa, 2010), so females always strive for best beauty care brands available in the market. For females of Pakistan, color tones of their skins are always a most important concern. To look fair appears as an adopted social trend so females tend towards regular use of face and body care products. Often or frequent, females use these beauty care products irrespective of their age bracket and social class. For females, there are specified reasons to use these products and to repurchase the same after first use if they are satisfied and they depict these reasons in their own specialized manners. As both local and international manufacturers are continuously enhancing features of their already launched products along with introduction of new products so special attention is drawn to measure the brand equity of launched products as already explained by (Liao & Chuang, 2004).

One effect of beauty care products is considered to minimize aging effects as females always demand a real, perfect and long lasting beauty from any single selected product. Marketers are well aware with this perspective and they treat females to pinch their soft feeling regarding this aspect in the way that females tend to purchase same products again and again and bring higher economic returns for the producers of beauty care products (Yu, 2007). Another appealing aspect of females' personality is to look superior to all by all means. They keep this fact higher while selecting their beauty care products. This desire adhere them to opt particular fashion trends at one hand and on the other hand, they decide radically about their face and body looks as well. (Johnston & Taylor, 2008). Females of Pakistan also consider the selection of specified beauty care products as special pose of their personality. Females are considered to be really "up-to-dated" if they adopt immediately and newly launched products and they play the role of trend setter for other females (Andrew, 2011). All international beauty care products manufacturers touch these feelings of our females whenever they launch their new products in this territory. In some situations, launched products may not bring same results for our females being a part of geographically different location as was launched in some other location but even then females incline to acquire the newly launched product at-least for once, being less aware with the actual features of the lunched brand. Since marketers are well aware with this fact, so they launch same advertisement campaigns as they used in some other geographical territory (Castañeda, 1997).

One reason of more awareness of foreign beauty care brands and products is to be more exposed with the variety of various products as increasing trends of globalization and advancement in technology and communication has made access easier with new variety of products of other countries. Previous study by (Wang, Siu, & Hui, 2004) has found, consumers psychological found products of other regions more valuable than their own. Another study by (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982) shows, consumers in developed countries feel more confidence while using brands of their own origin being superior in quality and functionality than the consumers of developing countries. Consumers of developing countries prefer to use imported products more as compared to local ones while possessing an impressive image about these products in their mind. With reference to Pakistan territory, this thing also provides a research gap to be analyzed.

This study has been conducted while keeping in view all the above aspects and various factors has been analyzed which make females forced to purchase same imported beauty care products time and again.

1.1 *Objective of the study*

The major objective of this study is stated as: **"To examine the impact of each dimension of brand equity as well as overall brand equity on re-current purchase decision of females for imported beauty care products"**

2. Literature Review

The concept of brand equity was introduced in 1980, and marketing academicians and practitioners took special interest to elaborate it with value of the brand in the minds of their target customers (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble, & Donthu, 1995). Thus brand equity is termed as added value endowed by the brand name in the minds of the customers (Myers, 2003). Brand equity is also a difference between multi attribute performance of a brand and preferences of the customers while selecting any brand of their choice (Wood, 2000). It also affects the overall quality and choice intension of the customers (Rao, Agarwal, & Dahlhoff, 2004).

Typically defined, brand equity is the set of assets or liabilities of a brand that are associated with its symbol or name. These symbols can or cannot add value to its product or services. A brand is the net present value of the goodwill consumers feel toward a product. (Lane, 2003) supports the notion that there is a continued emphasis on customer-focused marketing approaches in the marketing mix supporting the idea that brand equity rests in the mind of the consumer. Furthermore, "the brand is the thing" and that firms must properly build and leverage their brand equity. There remains much confusion within the marketing literature on the definitions of brand equity (Keller, 2009; Na, Marshall, & Keller, 1999). The initial notion of brand equity may have been based on product attributes but this has since evolved to a new focus on a number of non-product attributes such as personal service, price and trust (Keller, 2003).

Brand equity is the measure of overall brand fit for its target market so it can be used for marketing decision making. Brand equity can be measured with two perspectives, from companies' perspective as well as from customers' perspective. In literature of marketing, consumers' brand equity falls in two groups, consumer perception which covers, Brand Awareness, Brand association, Perceived Quality and consumer behavior which covers brand loyalty and willingness to pay high price (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Before this operationalization, (David A Aaker, 1991b) has already incorporated behavioral as well as perceptual dimensions in the definition of brand equity. (Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995) has further distinguished behavioral dimension of brand loyalty from perceptual dimension and according to him behavior appears as outcome of brand equity instead of brand itself.

Based on whole literature review, theoretical model is presented in Figure-01which gives the actual depiction and direction of brand equity relationship with recurrent purchase. Logical relationship will start from brand study and will end up on recurrent purchase factors important for customers while selecting their specified brands repeatedly.

There is several brand equity models are available in literature elaborated by many researchers after Aaker's work but all models have basic constructs evolved from Aaker's work which he presented in 1996. Aaker's first model was empirically tested in various studies as conducted by (W. G. Kim & Kim, 2004; Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). Presented below is the simple Equity model developed by Aakar in 1991 which will be used a first base line of this study.

Above mentioned dimensions of brand Equity are further endorsed by many later researchers and are used in same ways in their researches (Bendixen, Bukasa, & Abratt, 2004; H.-b. Kim, Kim, & An, 2003; Lassar et al., 1995; Motameni & Shahrokhi, 1998; Na et al., 1999; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). These agreed dimensions are discussed in details as under. Other proprietary assets are not usually studied alone. These are studied in emergence of rest four elements. So for this article, first four elements are selected to be studied.

According to (D.A. Aaker, 2011; O'Reilly, 2009) Consumers' Loyalty is: "The proportion of times a purchaser chooses products/services from the same producer, manufacturer, after being satisfied and/or provider in a specific category compared to the total number of purchases made in that category from all producers, manufacturers and/or providers, over a given time frame on a specified price, under the condition that other acceptable products/services are equally available having same value added services". So, a real loyal customer is ready to pay always a premium price to the product or service of his vital interest with which he or she is emotionally attached (Hallowell, 1996). Customer' priority selection also contribute a noticeable part in overall business success of the firm (Cohen, Gan, Au Yong, & Choong, 2006). Prominent Measures of customer' loyalty are shown in Figure 4.

Brand Awareness is second element in brand equity model. It is considered to be the first pre requisite of consumer' buying process (Oh, 2000). Customer needs to be aware with the product or brand before an actual buying is made. Customers always get advantages of recall and recognition of brands and if they are unable to place any brand in an appropriate purchasing context, they may not bring the product in their choice set (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). Brand related reactions create accumulation of experiences either positive or negative and these are directly related to the use or design of brand or role of media commentary (Macdonald & Sharp, 2003). It also creates brand strength in the memory traces of individuals and reflect the memorability of a brand under various conditions (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). Good brand awareness increases the probability of brand consideration while encountering the brands in selection procedure of customers.

Being appeared as third prominent dimension; Perceived product quality is defined as, "customer' perception about overall superiority or quality of any product that leads towards intended purchase of product". As defined by (David A Aaker, 1991b), quality is the most important preference of customers when they anticipate their purchases. Perceived quality is also directly related with the price of product (Iglesias & Guillén, 2004). Consumers assume lesser price of the brand if its quality is perceived to be lower. Premium price is paid for the brands having high quality (Lassar et al., 1995). Perceived product quality also have direct link with brand loyalty, if buyers are not able to judge any brand on the basis of other features, quality becomes one simple prospect select any product on any brand. Good perception brands increase brand loyalty which in return increase future sales of any firm (Keller, 2003). Once a good quality brand' tag is achieved by any brand, chances of long term future growth increases dramatically.

Lastly, Perceived positive mental image associated with any brand is called as brand association. There are many products features and attributes which contribute to create brand association. These include: Product use, products feature, product attributes, customers' related product benefits, Life-styles, product classes, competitors' range and product origins (J. L. Aaker, 1997). Brand associations exist with their due levels of strengths. Brand positioning is also based upon brand associations and differences of brand from competitors' brands (Chen, 2001).

Brand association remarkably effect the information recalling and processing, it also provides a real point of differentiation from competitors, provides a valid reason to opt, generates positives feelings and attitudes about a

brand and above all it serves as the basis of real time extensions (David A Aaker, 2012). Brand association directly affects the satisfaction and purchasing behavior of consumers. Good brand associations act as a barrier in selection of other brands even they make consumers to forget the incentives associated with the selection of other brands (David A Aaker, 1991b, 1996).

Based upon all above dimensions, recurrent purchase is the individuals' judgment to acquire same product of any brand once again. It is also a decision by the customer to remain with the product/service provide for future activities (Hellier, Geursen, Carr, & Rickard, 2003). Recurrent purchase occurs when customers decide to remain with one single brand owing to be satisfied with their supplier (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). Traces of recurrent purchase decisions lies in product quality firstly (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993). It also appears in marketing literature, customers' retention owing to repeat purchase behavior and customers' loyalty often used interchangeably. In actual these are two entirely different terms and are originated from different constructs. Customer retention is concerned with customers' satisfaction and it directly links with repeat purchase and in return it brings brand loyalty (Olsen, 2002). Brand loyalty is different from customer loyalty. Attitudinal aspects of customers' are covered under brand loyalty whereas customer loyalty is one step ahead and it covers behavioral aspects as well (Na et al., 1999). Behavioral aspects cover actual use of brand and customers' satisfaction after using the brand. Customer satisfaction appears after actual use of product and its suitability with the needs of the customers. Once any product fully fulfills expectations, it becomes part of repurchasing cart and customers tend to acquire it time and again (Hellier et al., 2003). For recurrent purchase, customers' circumstances and likely situations play the role of most important dependent variable. Based upon above mentioned literature traces, problem statement for this study has been generated as:

"Does brand equity affect female customers of Pakistan in recurrent purchase decision of imported beauty care products?"

For empirical testing of this problem statement, a hypothesized model is depicted in Figure. 1

Figure 1 - Schematic diagrams for the theoretical framework of Brand Equity Dimensions and Recurrent Purchase Decision of Imported beauty care products by females of Pakistan
Source: Brand Equity Model (David A Aaker, 1991a)

Independent Variable
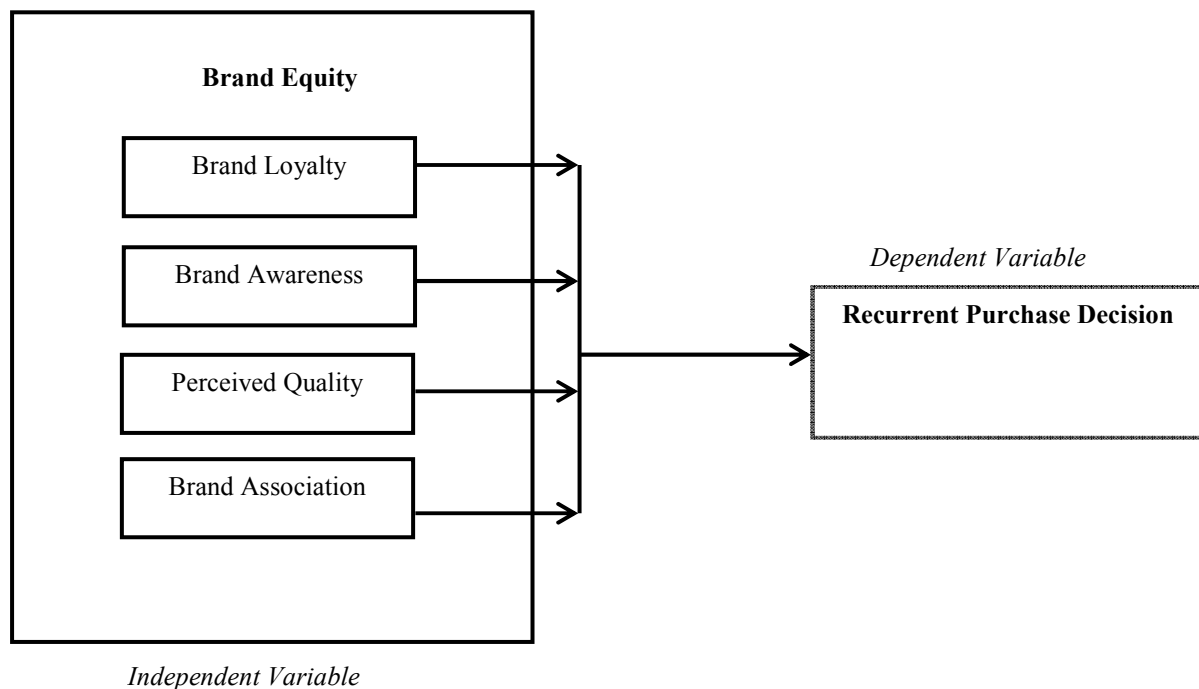
2.1 Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Generation

The above mentioned Figure shows the conceptual model depicting the relationship of various constructs of Brand Equity and decision of recurrent purchase of imported beauty care products by females of Pakistan. This research study investigates the relationship of four constructs of brand equity with the decision to recurrent purchase.

Each construct of the model has been analyzed logically to determine the strength of relationship with dependent variable of recurrent purchase decision. Five hypotheses under study are as under:

As, good quality products provide stout basis for product assortment (Wood, 2000) so considering this fact on same pace, hypotheses one has been postulated as under:

H₁: Brand Quality has a positive impact on recurrent purchase decision

Customers hold strong connections in their minds and create unique associations with their selected brands and these associations leads towards successive purchases if meets requirements (Chen, 2001) so based upon this notion hypothesis two for this study has been postulated as under:

H₂: Brand Association has a positive impact on recurrent purchase decision

As defined by (Na et al., 1999), brand recall and brand recognition, combines to build brand awareness which increases probability of a particular brand name appearing in mind when a cue is given related to a product category thus based upon this concept hypothesis three for this study has been postulated as under:

H₃: Brand Awareness has a positive impact on recurrent purchase decision

Being loyal to the product, a single dissatisfied aspect cannot lead the customers towards competitors' products (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998) so based on this aspect, hypothesis four has been postulated as under.

H₄: Brand Loyalty has a positive impact on recurrent purchase decision

Strong brand equity leads towards high perceived quality of product, favorable brand association, resilient brand awareness and endless brand loyalty (H.-b. Kim et al., 2003) . Summing up all in one verdict, hypothesis five has been postulated as under.

H₅: Brand Equity has a positive impact on recurrent purchase decision

3. Method of Research Study

This study is exploratory in nature and administers a causal relationship among the variables of brand equity model by (David A Aaker, 1991a) and dependent variable of recurrent purchase decision of females of Pakistan for imported beauty care products. All elements of Aaker's model were appearing as independent variable whereas recurrent purchase decision of females was appearing as a dependent variable.

Based upon indicators extracted from extensive literature review, an already tested structured and self-administered questionnaire was selected to collect the research data from sampled females for this study. Parts of research tool of this study were already sued by (Noone, 2010; Ponbamrungwong & Chandsawang, 2009) in their researches. 7 points Likert scale was used to measure the multi-item constructs of this research, as already used by Danaher and Haddrell (1996) and Oliver and Swan (1989) in their same researches,. Although previously were tested, but Cronbach of each scale was again measured to establish the reliability. The reliability of first scale (Noone, 2010) covering items, 2-38 was 0.910 whereas reliability of second scale (Ponbamrungwong & Chandsawang, 2009) covering items 39-45 was 0.711. Alpha values of both the scales were greater than .5 which acrosses the general acceptable level of .5 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1978). Hence, both scales reconfirmed the reliability standards and Alpha value for the complete tool was 0.915.

As research study was catering a specified group of females including only those who are users of imported beauty care products so "purposive sampling" technique was used to serve the specific purpose of this research. Based upon purposive sampling, responses of 211 females have been collected having age range from 18 years to 45 years with both single and married marital status. Also both professional and non-professional females have been analyzed under this research.

4. Data Analysis

For sensibility and theoretical assurance of each item in the data set of questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha Analysis was run on selected research tool while using SPSS V.19.

While analyzing the demographics of whole sample under study, following results are extracted.

Mean comparison of "Age" was done on the basis of Brand Equity, Recurrent Purchase Decision and the dimensions of Brand Equity: Product Quality (PQu), Brand Association (Bas), Brand Awareness (BAw.) and Brand loyalty (BLo). Results of the Table-01 showed that the mean scores of different age groups did not differentiate except on BAsso., BAwar. and BL. It means that there was no difference between the scores of age groups that how they perceive Brand Equity, Recurrent Purchase Decision and Product Quality.

Table-01: Demographic representation of Age

Age		PQu		BAs		BAw		BLo		BEq		RPD	
	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
18-25	37	4.95	0.83	4.66	1.00	4.61	1.21	4.93	0.61	4.79	0.72	4.45	0.98
26-30	86	4.99	0.68	4.62	1.01	4.53	1.20	4.87	0.72	4.75	0.76	4.45	0.80
31-35	51	5.21	0.64	5.11	0.91	5.15	0.88	5.15	0.59	5.16	0.57	4.57	0.90
36-40	27	5.32	0.56	4.98	0.91	5.22	0.86	5.29	0.44	5.20	0.49	4.88	0.75
41-45	10	5.14	0.55	5.18	1.15	5.06	0.88	5.17	0.61	5.14	0.65	4.37	0.69
F-Value		2.016		2.732		4.119		3.206		2.004		1.518	
P-Value		.093		.03		.003		.01		.095		.198	

Mean comparison of "Education" was done on the basis of Brand Equity, Recurrent Purchase Decision and the dimensions of Brand Equity: Product Quality (PQu), Brand Association (Bas), Brand Awareness (BAw.) and Brand loyalty (BLo). Results of the Table-02 showed that the mean scores of different education levels didn't differentiate except on Brand Association. It means that there was no difference between the scores of different education level that how they perceive Brand Equity, Recurrent Purchase Decision, Brand Quality, Brand Awareness, and Brand Loyalty.

Table-02: Demographic representation of Education

Education	PQu		BAs		BAw		BLo		BEq		RPD	
	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Matric	2	5.22	0.16	6.00	1.06	5.07	0.10	5.12	0.24	5.35	0.14	5.17	0.24
Inter	9	5.11	0.56	4.36	0.84	4.98	0.98	5.21	0.73	4.92	0.66	4.74	0.89
Grad	34	5.23	0.53	4.83	0.87	4.76	1.04	5.14	0.49	4.99	0.55	4.55	0.90
Masters	121	5.12	0.68	4.93	1.03	4.81	1.16	5.04	0.66	4.97	0.72	4.58	0.85
Diploma	45	4.87	0.82	4.54	0.96	4.79	1.10	4.83	0.70	4.76	0.75	4.30	0.80
F-Value	1.611		2.549		.099		1.454		1.054		1.329	
P-Value	.173		.04		.983		.217		.380		.260	

Mean comparison of "Occupation" was done on the basis of Brand Equity, Recurrent Purchase Decision and the dimensions of Brand: Product Quality (PQu), Brand Association (Bas), Brand Awareness (BAw.) and Brand loyalty (BLo). Results of the Table-03 showed that the mean scores of occupation (working and non-working) differentiate on Product Quality, Brand Association, Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty and Brand Equity except of Recurrent Purchase Decision. It means that there was significant difference in occupation (working and non-working) groups that how they perceive Brand Equity as a whole.

Table-03: Demographic representation of Occupation

Occupation	PQu		BAs		BAw		BLo		BEq		RPD	
	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Working	88	4.95	0.77	4.55	1.14	4.45	1.23	4.78	0.67	4.68	0.81	4.52	0.90
Non-Working	123	5.18	0.61	5.01	0.83	5.06	0.95	5.19	0.58	5.11	0.55	4.54	0.82
T-Value	-2.349		-3.184		-3.918		-4.774		-4.287		-.202	
P-Value	.020		.002		.000		.000		.000		.840	

Mean comparison of Marital Status was done on the basis of Brand Equity, Recurrent Purchase Decision and the dimensions of Brand: Product Quality (PQu), Brand Association (Bas), Brand Awareness (BAw.) and Brand Loyalty (BLo). Results of the Table-04 showed that the mean scores of Marital Status levels did not differentiate. It means that there was no difference between the scores of Marital Status (single or married) that how they perceive Brand Equity, Recurrent Purchase Decision and the dimensions of Brand Equity as a whole.

Table-04: Demographic representation of Marital Status

Marital Status	PQu		BAs		BAw		BLo		BEq		RPD	
	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Single	117	5.06	0.73	4.77	0.95	4.80	1.20	4.98	0.70	4.90	0.73	4.50	0.84
Married	91	5.12	0.63	4.86	1.06	4.80	1.00	5.05	0.59	4.96	0.67	4.55	0.86
T-Value	-.620		-.634		.026		-.751		-.543		-.373	
P-Value	.536		.527		.980		.453		.587		.710	

Mean comparison of "Monthly Buying/Spending" was done on the basis of Brand Equity, Recurrent Purchase Decision and the dimensions of Brand Equity: Product Quality (PQu), Brand Association (Bas), Brand Awareness (BAw.) and Brand loyalty (BLo). Results of the Table-05 showed that the mean scores of Monthly Buying/Spending differentiate on Brand Equity (Quality, Association, Awareness, and Loyalty) except of Recurrent Purchase Decision. It means that there was significant difference in Monthly Buying/Spending groups that how they perceive Brand Equity as a whole.

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Table-05: Demographic representation of Monthly Spending

Monthly Buy		PQu		BAs		BAw		BLo		BEq		RPD	
	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
No	34	4.66	0.75	4.25	1.10	4.15	1.18	4.66	0.65	4.43	0.75	4.42	0.69
500 to 800	30	5.08	0.62	4.58	0.90	4.62	1.35	4.97	0.66	4.81	0.77	4.52	0.57
900 to 1200	62	5.29	0.58	5.03	0.83	4.91	0.88	5.22	0.55	5.11	0.51	4.54	1.01
1300 to1600	50	5.15	0.63	5.11	0.91	5.13	0.79	5.11	0.61	5.12	0.52	4.55	0.82
Above 1700	35	5.05	0.79	4.79	1.12	4.96	1.33	4.93	0.74	4.93	0.86	4.60	0.98
F-Value		5.125		5.396		4.924		4.852		7.419		.200	
P-Value		.001		.000		.001		.001		.000		.938	

4.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Next To demographics, Mean, Standard Deviation and correlations of all the variables were studied as mentioned in Table-06. Product Quality, Brand Association, Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity and Recurrent Purchase Decision had means of 5.08, 4.82, 4.81, 5.02, 4.93, and 4.53 respectively. Brand Quality has the highest mean as compared to other dimensions of Brand Equity. There was a significant positive correlation between all the variables except Recurrent Purchase and Brand Awareness.

Table-06: Pearson correlations Analysis

Sr. #		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Brand Quality	5.08	0.69	1					
2	Brand Association	4.82	1.00	.504**	1				
3	Brand Awareness	4.81	1.11	.475**	.500**	1			
4	Brand Loyalty	5.02	0.65	.614**	.519**	.661**	1		
5	Brand Equity	4.93	0.70	.757**	.799**	.846**	.831**	1	
6	Recurrent Purchase	4.53	0.85	.344**	.247**	.128	.211**	.272**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

Linear Regression Analysis was used to test the hypotheses of this study. The objective was to find out the relation between Brand Equity, dimensions of Brand Equity and Recurrent Purchase Decision. First each dimension of Brand Equity was tested with Recurrent Purchase Decision and then Brand Equity was individually tested with Recurrent Purchase Decision. Therefore, following regression models were created with the help of linear regression.

$$RPD = \beta 0 + \beta 1 BQu \quad => 1$$
$$RPD = \beta 0 + \beta 1 BAs \quad => 2$$
$$RPD = \beta 0 + \beta 1 BAw \quad => 3$$
$$RPD = \beta 0 + \beta 1 BLo \quad => 4$$
$$RPD = \beta 0 + \beta 1 BEq \quad => 5$$

One by one hypothesis testing was performed according to the order of hypothesis listing.

Hypotheses 1 indicated a positive relationship between Brand Quality and Recurrent Purchase Decision. Following regression model was created with the help of linear regression.

$$RPD = 2.362 + 0.426\ BQu$$

Regression analysis was conducted to test if the Brand Quality significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision. Regression analysis results indicated that the predictor explained 11.8% of the variance (R^2 = .118, F (1,211) = 28.059, $p < .01$) as showed in Table-07, therefore model was valid and the overall regression was statistically significant. It was found that Brand Quality (β = .426, t (211) = 5.297, $p < .01$, 95% CI [.268, .585]) significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision score. The results showed that Brand Quality has a positive relationship with Recurrent Purchase Decision. There was no problem of autocorrelation as Durbin Watson = 1.751 which was within the limits (Neter, Wasserman, & Kutner, 1996)

Table-07: Regression Analysis for Hypotheses 1

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Decision
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.362	.413	5.719	.000	**Supported** 0.000 < 0.05
Brand Quality	.426	.08	5.297	.000	

r = .344, R^2 = .118
Dependent Variable: *Recurrent Purchase Decision*

Hypotheses 2 indicated the positive relationship between Brand Association and Recurrent Purchase Decision. Following regression model was created with the help of linear regression.

RPD = 3.51+ .212 Bas

Regression analysis was conducted to test if the Brand Association significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision. Regression analysis results indicated that the predictor explained 6.1% of the variance (R^2 = .61, F (1,211) = 13.533, p < .01) as mentioned in Table-8, therefore model was valid and the overall regression was statistically significant. It was found that Brand Association (β = .212, t (211) = 3.681, p < .01, 95% *CI* [.098, .325]) significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision score. The results showed that Brand Association has a positive relationship with Recurrent Purchase Decision. There was no problem of autocorrelation as Durbin Watson = 1.674 which was within the limits (Neter et al., 1996).

Table-08: Regression Analysis for Hypotheses 2

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Decision
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	3.51	.283	12.418	.000	**Supported** 0.000 < 0.05
Brand Association	.212	.057	3.681	.000	

r = .247, R^2 = .061
Dependent Variable: *Recurrent Purchase Decision*

Hypotheses 3 indicated not a positive relationship between Brand Awareness and Recurrent Purchase Decision. Following regression model was created with the help of linear regression.

RPD = 4.057 + .098 Baw

Regression analysis was conducted to test if the Brand Awareness significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision. Regression analysis results indicated that the predictor did not explained any relationship (R^2 = .016, F (1,211) = 3.469, p > .05) as mentioned in Table-08, therefore model was not valid and the overall regression was not statistically significant. It was found that Brand Awareness (β = .098 t (211) = .064 p > .05) was not significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision.

Table-09: Regression Analysis for Hypotheses 3

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Decision
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	4.057	.260	12.418	.000	**Unsupported** 0.064 > 0.05
Brand Awareness	.098	.053	3.681	.000	

r = .128, R^2 = .016
Dependent Variable: *Recurrent Purchase Decision*

Hypotheses 4 indicated the positive relationship between Brand Loyalty and Recurrent Purchase Decision. Following regression model was created with the help of linear regression.

RPD = 3.144 + .276 BLo

Regression analysis was conducted to test if the Brand Loyalty significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision. Regression analysis results indicated that the predictor explained 4.4% of the variance (R^2 = .044, F (1.211) = 9.729, p < .01) as mentioned in Table-09, therefore model was valid and the overall regression was

statistically significant. It was found that Brand Loyalty (β = .276, t (211) = 3.119, p < .01, 95% *CI* [.102, .451]) significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision score. The results showed that Brand Loyalty has a positive relationship with Recurrent Purchase Decision. There was no problem of autocorrelation as Durbin Watson = 1.653 which was within the limits (Neter et al., 1996).

Table-10: Regression Analysis for Hypotheses 4

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Decision
	B	**Std. Error**			
(Constant)	3.144	.448	7.019	.000	**Accepted** 0.00 < 0.05
Brand Association	.276	.088	3.119	.002	

r = .211, R^2 = .044

Dependent Variable: *Recurrent Purchase Decision*

Hypotheses 5 indicated the positive relationship between Brand Equity and Recurrent Purchase Decision. Following regression model was created with the help of linear regression.

$$RPD = 2.981 + .332\ BEq$$

Regression analysis was conducted to test if Brand Equity significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision. Regression analysis results indicated that the predictor explained 7.4% of the variance (R^2 = .272, F (1,211) = 16.740, p < .01) as mentioned in Table-11, therefore model was valid and the overall regression was statistically significant. It was found that Brand Equity (β = .332, t (211) = 4.092, p < .01, 95% *CI* [.172, .492]) significantly predicted Recurrent Purchase Decision score. The results showed that Brand Equity has a positive relationship with Recurrent Purchase Decision. There was no problem of autocorrelation as Durbin Watson = 1.685 which was within the limits (Neter et al., 1996).

Table-11: Regression Analysis for Hypotheses 5

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Decision
	B	**Std. Error**			
(Constant)	2.981	.404	7.149	.000	**Supported** 0.00 < 0.05
Brand Equity	.332	.081	4.092	.000	

r = .272, R^2 = .074

Dependent Variable: *Recurrent Purchase Decision*

5. Discussion

Strongest relationship of recurrent purchase decision was found with product quality as stated in H1, Product Quality has a positive impact on Recurrent Purchase Decision. Same was confirmed in this study and respondents were agreed with the statement. For customers, good quality of their selected beauty care brands leads towards recurrent purchase of same brand over the time. Findings of this study is showing, product quality as a major factor that influences customers' repurchase intention of same product which in turn influences customers' switching behavior. High level of product quality leads towards superior value of customers' satisfaction which enhances repurchase intentions.

Another strong and positive relationship has been found after support of H2 which indicated the positive relationship between Brand Association and Recurrent Purchase Decision of females for imported beauty care products. Current research shows, females make their strong brand associations with their selected beauty care brands if they are satisfied with their once selected brand. Brand association appears in different manners as asked from females in this study, Brand association mainly appears in selected beauty care products attributes.

H3 based upon brand awareness was not supported by the opinion of respondents which shows for females, brand awareness is not important while selecting their imported beauty care brands. This means several other factors contributes while selecting their imported beauty care brands in such a way that brand awareness does not appear as a prominent indicator while selecting their required brand. Two heads of brand awareness has been studied in this research including brand recognition and product knowledge.

H4 was related to the relation of brand loyalty with recurrent purchase decision. It was supported well while showing a positive relationship of brand loyalty with recurrent purchase decision. Total six extents of brand loyalty were studied via research tool of this research. First extent was related to 'personal services' associated

with selected imported beauty care brand. This extent was covering seven items based upon reliability, products updates, manufacturers' local market knowledge, manufacturer's approach, product speaks, manufacturer's trust worthiness in provision of quality products and recurring need fulfillment. Females supported the extract while endorsing that their selected important beauty care products are reliable enough to add up regular product updates in their products.

H5 was based upon relationship of overall brand equity with recurrent purchase decisions of female customers regarding their imported beauty care products. This postulate was stated in order to judge a combine effect of all four dimensions of brand equity including brand quality, brand association, brand awareness and brand loyalty. Need for this postulation was raised as instigation was found from previous researches, customer based brand equity occurs when customers have very high level of brand awareness, hold some strong brand association, have favorable perception about brand quality and have unique brand loyalty regarding their selected beauty care brands. (David A Aaker, 1991a; Keller, 2003) So keeping in mind this provocation, brand equity as a composite variable was studied in relation with recurrent purchase decision. All the items asked under each dimension of brand equity including Brand Quality, Brand Consciousness, Brand Awareness and Brand Loyalty separately were analyzed under single head of brand equity. This hypothesis was also supported and notion was, females like to be satisfied with maximum possible aspects of their selected imported beauty care products in order to repurchase the same product again and again.

Since total four dimensions of Aaker's Brand Equity Model were studied under this composite head, three out of four were supported well including product quality, brand association and brand loyalty except one as brand awareness. So significant contribution in brand equity model for females in selection of imported beauty care products comes from product quality, brand association and band loyalty which indicate, for females to repurchase their selected imported beauty care products repeatedly, they seek first of all quality as this head explains 11.8% variance then their association which indicates 6.11% variance with their selected imported beauty care products then comes their loyalty with the selected beauty care products which explains 4.4% variance. For females of Pakistan, major role in establishing brand equity lies in product quality. If product quality is found to be good every time, females establish their brand equity with their selected products well. Our current research also confirms the previous researches on same topic conducted by (H.-b. Kim et al., 2003; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Their findings contribute; strongest impact is demonstrated by product quality as essential role for developing brand equity. In addition, next contribution for brand equity comes from brand association which is also positively related to brand equity. Based on this impression, a study was conducted by (Tong & Hawley, 2009) on sportswear brands in China and again confirmed the same. This current study is also consistent with previous studies and further contributes, strong brand association support a competitively distinct and attractive brand position while creating a favorable feelings and behaviors towards the brand and bring lasting customers' satisfaction based recurrent purchase behavior of females of Pakistan. As statistical tests and empirical data in this study did not provide enough support for a direct and positive relationship of brand awareness and recurrent purchase decision, so in creation of brand equity, role of brand awareness is not demarcated. It indicates, having only a great brand name is not essential for customers to create brand equity for the brand rather in some ways, it may not contribute enough in repurchase intentions of same brand again and again.

Based upon all results congregated in this research, it has been found, Brand equity itself is a complicated phenomenon and presented model in this research (based upon (David A Aaker, 1991a) working) explains only 7.4% variance which in turn indicates, other than the dimensions studied in this research there could be many more dimensions that contribute for brand equity as a whole and leads females of Pakistan for recurrent purchase of their selected imported beauty care products.

6. Conclusion

Extracted from results of this research, females of Pakistan perceived foreign beauty care products as higher quality and they prefer to consume products of imported beauty care brands abundantly. This notion has been embedded that apart from any age group, any social status or having any spending range on their beauty care products, females always strive for imported beauty care products and preferred to consume them more as compared to local ones. Keeping in view this psychic thinking of females of Pakistan, this research study was started with the research question: "Does brand equity affect female consumers in recurrent purchase decision of imported beauty care products?" (David A Aaker, 1991a) Brand Equity Model has been selected to investigate the deep down insight of this research question. Due research settings has been made in order to investigate the notion. Based on this selected model, total five hypotheses were postulated keeping in view each dimension of the model (Product Quality, Brand Consciousness, Brand Awareness, Brand Loyalty and overall Brand Equity). Five postulated hypotheses are tested empirically while gathering data from females of Pakistan using products of imported beauty care brands. Conclusion is drawn from whole research study as; Consumers in every market confront various kinds of brand and products available in any market. Consumers always like to find more and more merchandises in their available market in order to get more opportunities to select their suitable provides.

Same is particularly true for cosmetic market of Pakistan. Here females have abundant market spread of both foreign and local beauty care products. Having concept of superiority nature of imported products, this study has been conducted. Since large number of products from all renowned cosmetics manufacturer companies are imported every year so at one hand product range of these imported products provides large variety chunk to females in order to select their own suitable products and at the other hand it provides highly competitive situation in which marketers have to work extensively in order to gain due market share in the form of continuous purchasing of once selected product. For this purpose marketers have to attain maximum customer satisfaction from their products. In order to judge satisfaction based recurrent purchasing of imported beauty care products, females products' quality consciousness, brand association, brand awareness and brand loyalty has been checked while using Aaker's brand equity model. Responses of 211 females have been analyzed in this research study. Previously, no such study was found particularly based upon females of Pakistan but notion was available, females had more positive attitude towards foreign brands as compared to local ones and they assume them more reliable than domestic ones. Brand equity model for all four dimensions was analyzed to contribute the literature regarding basis of females' recurrent purchase of imported beauty care products. Significant and favorable relation is found for brand quality, brand association and brand loyalty with recurrent purchase while a non-significant relation is found between brand awareness and recurrent purchase. First and very prominent instance was related to product quality and same has been confirmed from statistics of this research study as well. It has been concluded that product quality has a major contribution while selecting any imported beauty care product once to next. Females showed, less important of brand awareness for recurrent purchase decision of same brand whereas brand associations and brand loyalty also provide basis for recurrent purchase decision to females of our territory.

7. Value addition Contribution

This research study has its specified contribution in literature as all previous researches conducted in the context of Pakistan are mainly examine the relationship of brand quality, brand consciousness, brand awareness, brand association and brand loyalty independently and primarily were showing their liberated relation with product satisfaction as already studied by (Awan, Bukhari, & Iqbal, 2011; Razi et al., 2013) whereas this study is summing up all these elements in the form of "Aakers' Brand Equity Model" and moving beyond the customer satisfaction while analyzing "recurrent purchase decision" of customers which occurs after due satisfaction. In other words, this research is moving one step ahead than previously done researches in this area as no noticeable work has been done in Pakistan to investigate these four popular constructs of brand equity simultaneously while analyzing their relation with recurrent purchase decision of females. .

Secondly, this research is focusing on "female" members of society of Pakistan and again female focused researches, primarily on the topic studied in this research are not conducted before so again this research study has its own contribution keeping in view significance of gender based information summed up in this research.

Lastly, although imported beauty care products are abundantly in use of whole community of Pakistan but still not a detailed research covering all brand related aspects of these products is presentably available so this research study is filling this gap rigorously and will surely serve as mile stone for all future researches on this same topic.

8. Managerial implication

Managerial implications can be described in two ways, implications for foreign manufacturers and future implications for local managers.

8.1 Implications for Foreign Manufacturers

First and foremost managerial implication in the light of research results of this study is for the manufacturing managers of imported beauty care products. They should steadily concentrate on "brand awareness mechanisms" as this study is showing weaker brand awareness among the females of Pakistan for imported beauty care products. Managers must review their efforts which they are currently performing in order to create brand awareness among the females of Pakistan for their imported beauty care brands and products. For this, they may enhance their promotional mix while adding more promotional ways which are not currently the part of their promotional campaigns. For this managers could have more celebrity endorsements, sponsorships of various social activities, more advertisements across various medias, priceless promotions and revision of marketing strategies in order to make them more effective as endorsed by (J. L. Aaker, 1997; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Keller, 2009; Yoo et al., 2000).

Second implication for manufacturing managers of imported beauty care brands is, they must consider well the inter relationships of all four elements of brand equity, especially product quality, brand association and brand loyalty. They must clearly take into account the relation of brand quality and brand loyalty as keeping in account the results of this whole research, these are the most important elements of recurrent purchase decision. So managers should understand clearly, for getting recurrent purchases by same customers, they have to provide

continuous quality products with regular quality updates which will create loyal customers and these loyal customers will surely have recurrent purchases along with referring to new customers as well.

8.2 Implications for Local Manufacturers

For local managers, implication of this research can lie in creation of brand awareness about their own beauty care brands. Since this study has found weak relation of brand awareness with recurrent purchase decision so although females are indulged in use of imported beauty care products but even then lack of awareness is there. Local firms can get benefit of this situation while creating awareness of their own products in the minds of female customers of Pakistan. Since they are present within the market, they may better correspond with the customers instead of foreign managers so they must get benefit of this situation.

Second implication for local managers can be, as this study is showing, females are quality conscious about the beauty care products which they use in routine so they must pay special attention towards quality related aspects of their products and if flaws are there, they must eliminate them in order to cater their customers for longer run.

9. Research Limitations

First and foremost limitation of this study is, it is focusing to determine the brand equity based recurrent purchase behavior of females of Pakistan only which means it is mainly targeting half of the total population as no males attitudes and insights are judged by this research although males are also equally indulged now in use of beauty care products.

Secondly, this research is steering brand equity based recurrent purchase behavior of a specific product class only (imported beauty care products) although determined inferences of this research can also be implemented on other product categories but no route is defined for this as research implications of beauty care products may not correspond fully to other markets.

Lastly, this research was conducted in specified territories of Pakistan (including Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Faisalabad) so composition of selected sample is not analogous enough to represent maximum population of Pakistan.

10. Future Research Scope

Firstly, future research could be initiated while expending the sample range with males as well. While doing so, not only males' response will be gathered, also a comparative research based finding will be available which will surely give a complete picture regarding insight of whole beauty care product's market of Pakistan.

Secondly, while getting the basis from this current research study, future researches can be done on other product industries as well while judging the Brand Equity based behavior of both males and females for products of each industry.

Thirdly, to get more soft insights of respondents regarding feelings and attachments with their selected brands, a future qualitative measures based research can also be initiated either for same sample range or while expanding this range in any ways.

Fourthly, This research is broadly targeting the segment of 'beauty care products' although clear segregation of beauty care products has been defined now so future research should be category based and it must endeavor a large range of all those beauty care products which are radially available in the market of Pakistan.

Fifthly, while keeping in view managerial implications of this research, if more brand awareness campaigns are launched by various manufacturers of beauty care brands, same study can be repeated in future while judging the behavioral alteration in females of this territory.

Lastly, if covered larger geographical area in any future research, it will correspond a better representative sample size of females and results will be more generalizable.

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