Academic Research:

Impact of Branding on Consumers' Decision-Making Process in Case of Sportswear Market in Azerbaijan

by

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Acknowledgement

I want to endorse that the author of this work is me, who has written all of the chapters of this thesis by myself and referred to the works of other researchers and scholars with a great respect. I want to give my special thanks to my supervisor, who helped a lot in the process of writing this thesis, as his guidelines and feedbacks provided a chance for me to complete this work. Finally, I want to thank to my family because without their moral support, I could not complete this project in case of experiencing challenges while executing this research.

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Executive Summary

The research topic is to analyse the impact of branding on consumers' decision-making process in case of sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In this context, the general research objective is to explain the relationship between branding and customers' purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. The key concepts of research were determined as branding and customers' purchasing process in this study. In the research, the primary data about branding and customers' purchasing process was generated via questionnaire that was responded by 157 customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. There were four methods of data analysis used to analyse the relationship between branding and customers' purchasing process in this study, which were descriptive statistics, reliability test, linear regression and independent T-test. The statistics software used to execute the data analysis process was SPSS. The key research findings presented that branding positively influenced the purchasing process of customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In particular, the findings identified that each stage of customers' purchasing process was empirically influenced by different components of branding, such as brand awareness, image, loyalty, preference and perceived quality. In this regard, the research concluded that branding was a determinant of the customers' purchasing behaviour, as it influenced customers' problem recognition, information search, alternatives' evaluation, purchase choice and post-purchase behaviour steps of customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan.

Keywords: Branding, Purchasing Process, Brand Equity, Consumer Behaviour, Sportswear Market

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The third wave of globalization that has started since the end of 1990s has marked the turning point in the global business environment. In particular, after the third wave of globalization, the extent of competition between the business companies has intensified as an outcome of the integration of previously closed national markets into the international marketplace and liberalization of free trade throughout the vast majority of regions. In this domain, the business companies in their domestic and foreign markets have encountered with the challenges associated with the activities and operations of their rivalries. In other words, an increasing access of the multinational companies into the previously closed markets and emerging new competitors in the global market after the late 1990s have led the participants in the competitive marketplace to look for new means of competitive advantage. Moreover, the survival and maintenance of the corporate performance of the business enterprises in their domestic and foreign markets have become critically dependent on their success in gaining and improving the competitive advantage. In this regard, branding has become one of the keys for enabling the business companies to develop and maintain their competitive advantage in highly competitive marketplace (Kotler and Keller, 2016). According to Kotler and Keller, (2016), the brand-related corporate assets provide an opportunity for business companies to differentiate their goods or services that are similar to those of the direct competitors in the same marketplace, in terms of their function, design, benefits and value for customers. In the highly competitive marketplace, one of the critical sources of competitive advantage is considered to be branding, as it enables the companies to keep their sales rate and customer base despite of the operations and attempts of rivalries. The reason that leads the business companies to regard branding as a potential source of competitive advantage is related to its possible impact on the consumer behaviour (Emari et al., 2012). The customers in the present markets have become more brand-oriented, as their preferences in the purchasing process have been increasingly shaped by the value of brands in their minds. Once the customers perceive a particular brand as valuable to purchase, they become motivated to spend their financial resources for purchasing the products of the respective brand (Perera and Dissanayake, 2013). Therefore, the principal focus of this research is to identify the potential role of branding in shaping the customer purchase behaviour, which is critical determinant of the short-term profitability and long-term survival of the companies operating in the competitive marketplace.

1.2 Research Problem

The business companies consider the brand-related corporate assets, including the brand image, logo, name, symbol and others as a valuable means for boosting their sales rates and financial resources. There six fundamental contributions of branding for the business companies. First of all, branding enables the goods or services of companies to become recognizable (Khurram, 2018). The brand-related assets of companies enable their goods or services to be detected by the customers in the marketplace. The elements of brand produce information for customers about the value, price, quality and other basic tenets of products, which is regarded as the differentiating ability of brand-related corporate assets. Another main contribution of branding is related to its capability of making the corporate products meaningful to purchase (Khurram, 2018). Furthermore, the brand-related corporate assets improve the customer perceptions about value of purchasing the branded goods or services of the companies because the brand elements make the goods or services more worthy and status-enhancing means. Accordingly, this is the third contribution of branding, as it makes the products become more likeable among the customers (Khurram, 2018).

The fourth contribution of branding is linked with its capability of transferring the brand-related corporate assets across different product or service portfolios (Prashar et al., 2012). In particular, the transferrable function of branding enables the organizations to transfer their brand-related corporate assets, especially brand name, logo, symbol across different products, which leads the customers to quickly detect the relevant products in the marketplace. The capability of modifying the brand-related corporate assets is another contribution of branding because the organizations are able to adjust the brand elements of their products according to the changes in the external environment, in terms of alterations in the customer expectations, government regulation and others (Prashar et al., 2012). The final contribution of branding is linked with its capability of protecting customer preferences despite of the emergence of the similar products at the lower prices in the marketplace (Prashar et al., 2012). In this domain, the role of branding is related to its ability to reduce the potential impact of the imitation of their products by rivalries on their sales-related performance, as the branding leads the customers to prefer the branded products over others regardless of their higher prices. According to Prashar et al. (2012), the principal factor leading the companies to utilize branding as a means of competitive advantage is linked with its role in shaping and improving the customer perceptions about the value, worthiness and status-enhancing

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capability of branded products, which encourages the customers to buy the relevant products. Therefore, in the eve of globalized world, the potential contributions of branding encourage the business companies to utilize the brand-related elements as a means to improve their competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Since the sportswear market is characterized by the existence of intense competition between the leading manufacturers, like Nike, Adidas, Puma, Reebok and others, there is a need for considering the role of branding as an opportunity for gaining competitive advantage in the respective market and, consequently, maintaining and improving the market share in expanse of the rivalries. In this context, due to the contributions of the branding to the customers' behaviour, the current study addresses to identify the role of branding in affecting and directing the customers' behaviour while purchasing the sportswear products in Azerbaijan.

1.3 Research Objectives and Question

The general research purpose is to find out the impact of brand on the customers' purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In this case, the principal focus of research is to reveal the relationship between branding and customers' purchasing behaviour in the sportswear market in Azerbaijan.

There are certain factors leading to select the sportswear market as possible destination for the purpose of this study. The global sportswear market experienced growth over the last three years despite of COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the market size reached to about USD 353.5 billion, which was 1.7% more than the market size in the previous year (Statista, 2022). In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic damaged the purchase behaviour of customers throughout the world, as the customer preferences for health-related products increased for improving their health status; however, the relevant pandemic did not affect the positive growth rate of sportswear market, which could be due to the association of sportswear products with physical health and proximity of customers towards wearing less casual and more sport-like apparels while staying at their home. In just apparel segment of sports market, the total revenue reached to USD 193 billion in 2021, which was expected to further grow and reach to USD 270 billion by 2028 (Statista, 2022). Accordingly, the customer preferences for sportswear products have increased on stable basis, which is anticipated to further grow in the upcoming years. The growing revenue and market size lead to the intensification of the competition in the relevant market, as there are several global

brands competing with each other to attract the customers and keep them loyal to their brands, which include Nike, Adidas, Puma, Reebok and others. In this context, the branding becomes further important for the companies to increase their market share in the growing and profitable sportswear market. The sportswear market in Azerbaijan has been preferred for this research because the respective market reached to USD 39.9 million in 2021 and expected to grow at the rate of 13.2% annually over a time interval between 2023 and 2026 (Statista, 2021). The profitable and growing domestic environment in Azerbaijan is regarded as an opportunity for the business companies operating in the sportswear market to improve their market share. In this case, the research is intended to reflect the potential contributions of branding to the customer preferences of the relevant brand sportswear companies over others in Azerbaijan.

In addition to abovementioned general research purpose, the study addresses five specific questions:

- To determine the influence of brand awareness on each stage of customers' purchasing process
- To find out the influence of brand image on each stage of customers' purchasing process
- To identify the influence of brand loyalty on each stage of customers' purchasing process
- To clarify the influence of brand preference on each stage of customers' purchasing process
- To reveal the impact of perceived quality on each stage of customers' purchasing process

In addition to the aforementioned specific goals, the research targets to respond below research question:

- How different aspects of brand equity influence customers' decision-making stages in sportswear market in Azerbaijan?

1.4 Significance of Study

The research significance is referred as a potential implication of the research findings, which could be divided into three broad categories, like literature-related, practical and managerial ones. The literature-related implication of the study findings is that the research findings are expected to enhance the literature on the relationship between branding and customers' purchasing process. In particular, the conclusions derived from the interpretation of the research findings are expected to

contributed to the existing knowledge about the impact of branding on the customers' decision-making steps. The practical significance of study findings is that the sportswear companies operating in Azerbaijan could use this research as a roadmap for building and improving their market share. In particular, each foreign market has its unique cultural and social norms and values, which should be regarded by the companies while operating in the relation markets. In this context, by reflecting the role of branding in shaping the customers' purchasing process, the research will help the sportswear companies operating in Azerbaijan to understand the customers' evaluation of branding and will shape their presence in the respective domestic market, accordingly. The managerial outcome of the research findings is that the managers dealing with the strategic branding of the sportswear companies in Azerbaijan could benefit from conclusions of the present research. In other words, since the research findings will show them the role of branding in each step of customers' purchasing behaviour in case of sportswear products in Azerbaijan, the managers could position the products of their companies via branding in a more effective way in Azerbaijan.

1.5 Research Structure

The thesis is separated into five different and interdependent chapters. The present chapter was referred as "Chapter 1. Introduction" that pointed out the background information about the significance of branding in the globalized business environment in addition to the research objectives and implications.

The next chapter of research was called "Chapter 2. Literature Review" that introduced and explained two key concepts of research, such as branding and customers' purchase behaviour. In addition, the chapter underlined five key dimensions of branding and steps of customers' purchasing process. The second chapter also provided summaries of researches implemented to assess the role of branding in shaping the customer behaviour. The chapter was completed through highlighting the disparities existing in the relevant literature.

The following chapter of research was labelled as "Chapter 3. Research Methodology". The chapter was dedicated to build methodological grounds of thesis via clarifying the suitable research design, including its philosophy, reasoning method, strategy, choice and time-related plan. The third chapter of research also explained the population, sample and sampling approach of research. The data collecting and analysing approaches used in the study were also explained and justified

in the corresponding chapter. The ethical points followed in the data-collecting process were also underlined in this chapter along with the potential methodology-related research constraints.

The later chapter of research was termed as "Chapter 4. Results and Analysis". The chapter demonstrated the key outputs of the data analysis process along with the interpretation of the relevant research findings. The results of descriptive statistics, reliability test, regression analysis and independent T-Test were presented in the fourth chapter in addition to their interpretation.

The last chapter of research was regarded as "Chapter 5. Conclusion". The chapter summed up the key points of each chapter of research. Besides, the points that should be perceived as roadmap for further research were also suggested in this chapter.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

One of the basics of each research project is related to identifying and explaining the literature that is relevant to the research topic. In this chapter, the main concepts of research, including branding and customers' purchasing process were defined on the basis of the relevant literature. In addition, the chapter explained the key elements of branding and customers' purchasing process that were integrated into the data collection and data analysis processes of the study. The overview of available and relevant researches undertaken to ascertain the relationship between branding and customers' purchasing process was also highlighted in this chapter. The limitations of the existing literature about the impact of branding on the customers' purchasing process were also identified in this chapter.

2.1 Concept of Branding

In the present business environment, one of the fundamental elements determining the success of organizations is determined as branding. Accordingly, branding constitutes a critical dimension of market-related operations and strategies of the companies due to its role in influencing the consumer behaviour (Yuki, 2015). According to Yuki (2015), the concept of branding is regarded as a bunch of brand-related activities and strategies developed and implemented by the companies for making their goods, services and corporate names become recognizable and memorable among the target customers. In other word, the branding is defined as a process of generating brand elements, like logos, symbols, slogans, designs, trademarks and other elements to differentiate the goods or services in the marketplace. In addition, the branding is defined as a set of strategies and activities implemented by the organizations to create a powerful and positive impressions among

the target customers about the company and its products (Schamari and Schaefers, 2015). Hence, the concept is related to a process of generating the brand elements with the purpose of shaping the customer perceptions about organization, its goods and services.

One of the critical factors indicating the success of organizations in producing strong and effective branding is regarded as brand equity, as it determines the extent of influence on the customers' minds about the value of company and its products, which is generated through brand-related activities and assets of the organizations. Therefore, the effective indicator of branding is determined as brand equity, referring to additional value contributed to the actual value of companies, their goods and services as an outcome of customers' evaluation of the brand elements (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). In this context, the brand equity is referred as a degree of value directed to the actual value of company, its goods or services as a result of the capability of the brand elements in shaping the customer minds. Therefore, the branding is considered as successful, once its outcomes contribute to the actual value of companies, its goods and services. According to Yuki (2015), the brand equity is considered as an outcome of branding because once the brand equity of the company leads the customers to perceive the purchase of goods or services of the companies as worthful, it means branding of the relevant company is effective in shaping the customer minds and motivation about making purchase decision.

In addition to the positive contributions of branding to the actual value of companies and their goods and services, it could also cause the damages to the respective value. In particular, if the branding of company generates negative brand equity, it leads the customers to perceive the relevant company and its products as less valuable than their actual value (Yuki, 2015). Hence, the branding could cause the negative perceptions among the customers about the actual value of companies and their products. In case of negative brand equity generated via ineffective branding, the companies experience difficulties in convincing the potential customers to buy their goods or services even if their actual value is sufficient enough for satisfying the expectations and demands of the customers (Lovett et al., 2013). Therefore, the brand equity which is considered as an output of the branding utilized by the companies is a critical factor that determines the customer perceptions and purchase behaviour, accordingly. In this research, the branding is referred as a bunch of operations and plans implemented by the companies in the sportswear market for improving the customer perceptions about the actual value of the respective companies and their

sportswear products. Accordingly, the brand equity is used as a means for demonstrating the effectiveness of branding utilized by the sportswear companies in shaping the customer behaviour in the sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In other words, the brand equity is interpreted as an indicator of the branding-related activities of the sportswear companies in Azerbaijan. Therefore, the brand equity is considered as an extra value contributed to the actual value of sportswear companies and their products in Azerbaijan as a result of customer perceptions.

2.2 Brand Equity Perspective

As an output of branding, the brand equity of a particular company can be assessed from three separate perspectives (Figure 1). In particular, the value of brand equity being generated through branding activities of the companies could be assessed from the financial standpoint, customer standpoint and employee standpoint. In case of financial standpoint, the actual contributions and state of brand equity of the companies are evaluated through analyzing the financial indicators and performance of the relevant companies. In this context, the indicators of financial performance of the companies, especially the total revenues, net profits, stock prices and brand values are used as a set of tools to assess and identify the brand equity of the relevant companies (Farjam and Hongyi, 2015). The brand value is of the most important indicators of brand equity being possessed by the companies, as it enables to compare the brand equity of the organizations to those of direct competitors in the marketplace. However, one of the main obstacles in case of evaluating the brand equity of the companies via financial indicators is associated with the challenge of separating the direct financial benefits generated for the companies via means of their brand equity (Farjam and Hongyi, 2015). Since it is difficult to assess the direct contributions of the brand equity to the sales rates, total revenue and, consequently, net profit of the companies, which could be also affected by other variables, like marketing activities, the financial standpoint on the value of brand equity of the companies provides limited opportunity to assess and identify its actual value.

Employee standpoint about the brand equity is another means for evaluating the value of brand equity of the organizations. The brand equity of the organizations is also evaluated and identified through perspectives of human resources of the organizations (Farjam and Hongyi, 2015). The views and thoughts of human resources provide a capability for the organizations to assess their brand equity. Once the employees possess strong and positive brand knowledge and perceive the brand reputation of their companies as highly valuable and strong, it reflects the strengths and value of brand equity in shaping the perceptions of employees working for the organizations (King

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and Grace, 2009). Besides, the brand equity is also reflected in the behavior of employees in the workplace because the organizations with positive and high brand equity recruit and retain the employees who are more motivated and committed to the fulfillment of their job responsibilities. However, the employees provide limited opportunity to assess the brand equity of the organizations because the principal factor shaping their behavior and perceptions about their companies is the compensation, including financial and non-financial rewards paid to them in return for their extent of commitment and motivation at the workplace (Farjam and Hongyi, 2015). Therefore, in organizations where the employees are overpaid, the brand equity from the perspective of employees are considered as significantly higher than its actual value in the marketplace.

The final perspective about assessment of brand equity is related to the measuring based on the customers' perspectives. In this context, the brand equity is primarily assessed on the basis of identifying the customers' views and thoughts about the value of companies and their products (Farjam and Hongyi, 2015). If branding fails in shaping the customer perceptions due to its lack of capability in producing positive and strong brand equity, the brand elements become invaluable assets of the organizations. Thus, the brand equity is principally indicated in the consumers' perceptions and attitudes. Once the organizations possess the strong brand equity from the perspective of customers, the respective organizations become more capable in case of attracting the customers and increasing the sales of their goods or services (Farjam and Hongyi, 2015). In particular, the principal function of brand equity is related to its ability to convince the customers about the worthiness and value of goods or services and, consequently, to encourage them for buying the corresponding goods or services. Therefore, once the customers possess positive perceptions about the brand elements of the organizations and become willing to be associated with the respective brands, the brand equity of relevant organizations are identified as effective in convincing and motivating customers' purchase decision. In this regard, the customers' standpoint about the brand equity occupies the dominant position in the literature about assessment models and frameworks of brand equity. In fact, the majority of researches in the relevant literature about brand equity was executed on the basis of assessing the customers' perspectives about brand equity (Farjam and Hongyi, 2015). The current research on the impact of branding on the customers' purchasing process was based upon the assessment of the brand equity from the customers' standpoint.

Figure 1. Three Perspectives about Brand Equity
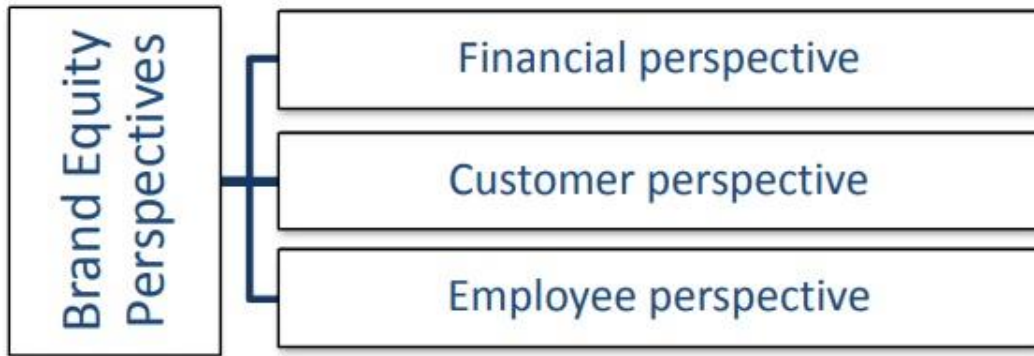
Source: Farjam and Hongyi (2015).

2.3 Components of Brand Equity

The brand equity consists of certain components which are determined on the basis of the customers' behavior and perceptions. There are six basic pillars of brand equity, which are brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty, brand preference and perceived quality (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Brand Equity Pillars
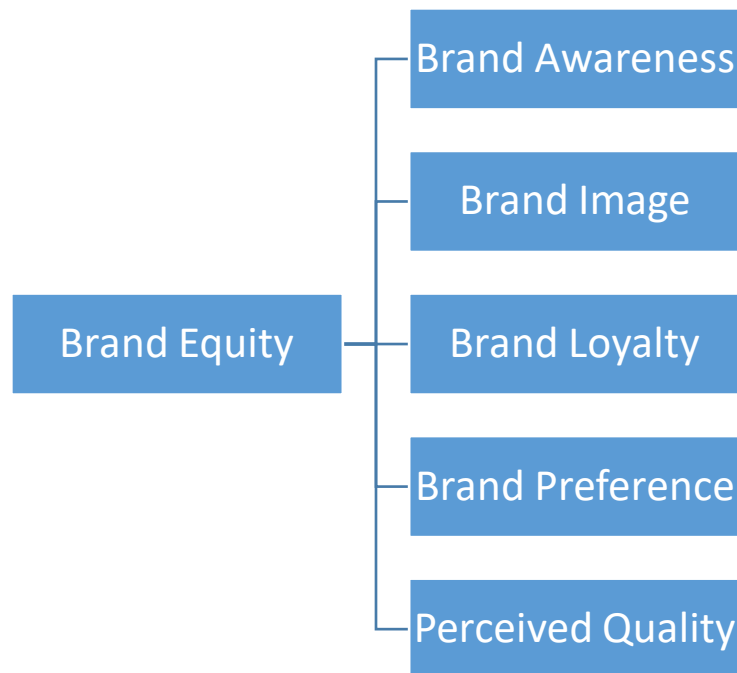
Source: Alizadeh et al., (2014)

The brand awareness as an important component of brand equity is referred as the extent of prominence the brand elements have in the memories of customers (Vincze, 2012). This pillar of

brand equity displays the reflection of the brand elements in the minds of customers. Therefore, the brand awareness is associated with the level of customers' knowledge and information about the values, trustworthiness and reliability of companies and their goods or services (Vincze, 2012). The brand awareness is reflected in the extent of customers' ability to recognize, recall and know the brand (Vincze, 2012). The recognition is the main indicator of the customers' awareness about the brand, which leads the customers to identify and differentiate the branded goods or services after being contacted with those products in the marketplace. The second main indicator of brand awareness is called "top of mind" referring to the ability of the brand being placed in the top of the brands identified as the suitable products to satisfy the customer needs and expectations (Vincze, 2012). If a brand is positioned in the first rank in the recalling process in case of customers' willingness to purchase a good or service, the respective brand possesses the highest brand awareness in the marketplace. Therefore, the 'top of mind" is regarded as the capability of brands being considered as the first buying option for the customers in the recalling process (Vincze, 2012). The brand opinion is referred as the last factor reflecting the extent of brand awareness among the customers. The brand opinion refers to the customers' views about the value, worthiness, quality, price and benefits of the brands in case of addressing their demands and needs (Vincze, 2012). In this study, the level of brand awareness from the customer perspective was measured via means of the customers' capability of recognizing the sportswear brands in the marketplace in Azerbaijan.

The second component of brand equity is brand image, which is referred as the form of impressions experienced by the customers in case of contacting with the brand (Martensen and Gronholdt, 2014). This component of brand equity is related to the notion of customers and associations being generated in their minds in case of confronting with the relevant brand in the marketplace. The brand images are divided into two forms, which are functional brand image and hedonic brand image (Zhang, 2015). The first type of brand image is defined as impressions of the customers about the functional aspects of the brand, including its quality, worthiness and reliability in case of satisfying the customers' expectations (Zhang, 2015). In contrast to the first form of brand image, the hedonic one is associated with emotional impressions of the customers about the brand, rather than the functional impressions. The hedonic brand image is the customers' views about status-enhancing capability of the brands in a particular community (Zhang, 2015). While the functional one is associated with the actual values of the brand for the customers, the hedonic one

is related to the emotional value of the brand for the customers (Zhang, 2015). The present study considers the brand image as the customers' views about the functional aspects of the brands, including the trustworthiness, reliability and worthiness of the brand compared to other brands.

The brand loyalty is also a main component of brand equity, which is referred as the customers' views about the excellence and dominance of a particular brand over others in terms of its quality, value, and benefits (Isabel, 2013). The brand loyalty is referred as the extent of customers' loyalty towards a particular brand due to their perceptions about its superiority over others. The brand loyalty of the customers is divided into two groups: attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty (Isabel, 2013). The first one is considered as a customers' emotional attachment to a particular brand, which motivating them to purchase the relevant brand repeatedly in the market (Isabel, 2013). In case of attitudinal brand loyalty, the customers select one brand repeatedly due to their commitment and bonds with the relevant brand. The latter one is regarded as the customers' performance-related attachment to a particular brand (Isabel, 2013). In particular, if a specific brand accomplishes to satisfy the expectation and demand of the customers, the behavioral brand loyalty prevails among the respective customers, which guides them to buy the relevant brand repeatedly in the market. in this study, the brand loyalty was defined as the extent of customers' loyalty towards the sportswear brands in Azerbaijan in case of purchasing a particular sportswear product. Besides, the research assessed the behavioral brand loyalty of customers, as it aimed to identify the extent of customers' loyalty to one sportswear brand based on its capability of responding to the customer expectations.

The brand equity has another component, brand preference which is referred as the customers' proximity towards a particular brand in the purchasing process (Samiee, 2011). The concept highlights the customers' orientation of preferring one brand over the other brands despite of their similar quality, price and values (Samiee, 2011). In this regard, the brand preference is associated with the customers' willingness to buy the products or services of the same brand, which could be regarded as favouring of specific brand over others under the same product category (Samiee, 2011). There are two types of brand preferences, such as hedonic and revealed preferences (Hsee et al., 2009). The hedonic brand preference refers to the customers' orientation of preferring a particular brand over others due to their emotional associations with the respective brand. In particular, once the customers perceive the brand as an opportunity to improve their inner state, in

terms of their motivation, mental health and status among other customers, the respective customers prefer the relevant brand constantly regardless of existence of other brands with the same value and quality in the marketplace. There is also revealed form of brand preference, in which the customers' choice of a specific brand is completely based upon its actual performance (Hsee et al., 2009). In other words, the revealed preference leads the customers to prefer one brand over others due to the outcome of their past experiences with the relevant brand. If the customers were satisfied with their decision of preferring a specific brand due to its capability of fulfilling their expectations, the respective customers prefer the corresponding brand regularly over others in their future purchase decisions.

The perceived quality is the last basic component of brand equity, which refers to the customer views about superior quality of a brand over other brands in the same market (Malik, 2012). The perceived quality is also referred as the extent of credibility of a specific brand while making judgments in the purchasing process (Malik, 2012). The perceived quality is used as a means for minimizing the risks of purchasing a specific brand, as the customer perceptions about quality of brands enable them to judge the branded goods or services based on their quality. (Kang, 2006). The perceived quality is divided into two groups: technical quality and functional quality. While the first one is associated with the way of obtaining a particular brand in the marketplace, the latter is related to the outcome of brand (Kang, 2006). The technical quality of the brand is associated with the ease, reliability and acceptable nature of buying and consuming the brand for customers. However, the functional quality of the brand is related to the actual performance and benefits of consuming the brand for customers. In the present study, the perceived quality was referred as the customers' views about the functional quality of sportswear brands in Azerbaijan, including the capability of the relevant brands in producing expected performance and benefits for customers.

2.4 Customer Purchasing Process

The purchasing process of customers is purchasing process of customers. Before to defining the respective concept, it is important to explain the consumer behavior. The consumer behavior is referred as a field of study in which the researches are undertaken to assess how customers make decision about spending their financial capital on the products (Fouladivanda, 2013). In this regard, the consumer behavior is considered as a set of studies implemented to identify and explain the way consumers decide about purchasing particular good or service in exchange of their financial

resources. The consumer behavior is principally defined as a study of customers' purchasing process, which is divided into five broad components (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Customers' Purchasing Process
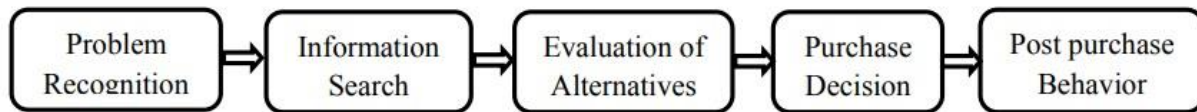
Source: Fauser et al., (2011).

The first component of customers' purchasing process is referred as the initial stage of buying behavior performed by the customers. In the relevant stage, the customers detect their need for goods or services, which is called problem recognition step in customers' purchasing process (Prasad et al., 2017). If the customers accomplish to identify the gap between their expected and current states in regard with the consumption of a particular product, this means the recognition of problem for launching the purchasing process to remove the relevant problem. The second component of customers' purchasing process is the second stage of buying behavior reflected by the customers, which involves the activities implemented by them to identify relevant information about the potential alternatives that would address their pre-detected problems (Palalic et al., 2020). This category of purchasing process is referred as information search, as the customers are looking for relevant data about the products that could address their gaps between current and desirable states. The main goals of the companies that operate in the competitive environment are to shape the customers' purchasing process at this stage because by means of marketing-related activities, the companies ensure the availability of information about their products and through marketing channels, they guarantee the flow of the generated information to the customers (Palalic et al., 2020). In this stage of customers' purchasing process, the customers are committed to identifying as much information about the products as they can, in terms of their price, quality, function, and performance.

The next component of customers' purchasing process is the third step of their buying behavior, in which the customers involve in the judgmental activities (Lin et al., 2019). In this stage, the primary activity conducted by the customers is the judging process of detected alternatives that have potential of addressing customers' recognized problems; thus, it is referred as alternatives' evaluation (Lin et al., 2019). After aggregating information about the details of products, the

customers judge those products based on their details, like price, quality, credibility, worthiness, performance and others. The criteria of judgment are conditional to the preferences of the customers in this stage. This stage of purchasing process enable individuals to compare the products that have potential of addressing their recognized problems. Based on the comparison and judgment about products, the customers involve in the next stage of purchasing process, which is referred as purchase decision (Lin et al., 2019). This component of purchasing process leads customers to prefer a specific product among the bunch of determined products as an outcome of their individual judgment. This is the main component of the customers' purchasing process, as all of the abovementioned customer behaviors are executed to decide about buying a suitable good or service to address their recognized problem in their present state (Lin et al., 2019).

Although the purchasing process is tracked by the customers for making the decision about the right product and, accordingly, could be considered as completed in the stage of purchase decision, there is also next component of purchasing process, which is referred as post-purchase behavior (Stankevich, 2017). After the purchase decision, the customers' purchasing process continues with the next stage, in which they reflect certain behavior based on the performance of purchased good or service. Hence, this component of customers' purchasing process is divided into two forms. In the initial form, the customers prefer the same product to address their same problem being encountered by them in future (Stankevich, 2017). If the preferred product by customers performs well in case of addressing the customers' recognized needs or demands, the respective customers become encouraged to repurchase the respective product once they encounter with the same problem in future. Thus, the customer satisfaction with preferred and purchased product determines the post-purchase behavior of customers through motivating them to repeat buying the same product. In the second form, the customers suggest the preferred products to other customers if the respective products accomplish to address the customers' recognized problems in the purchasing process (Stankevich, 2017). Hence, the post-purchase behavior involves the customers' orientation towards recommending the preferred good or service to others in the marketplace.

The below table demonstrates the integration of the abovementioned components of purchasing process of customers into this study. In particular, the table provides the definition of the components of purchasing process in this study.

Table 1. Customers' Purchasing Process: Components and their Definitions

Components of Purchasing Process	Definition of the Components
Problem Recognition	• Generating customers' recognition of their need for sportswear products
Information Search	• Producing information about various sportswear products that are determined as being capable of satisfying their recognized need
Alternatives Evaluation	• Leading customers to compare various sportswear products
Purchase Decision	• Guiding customers to prefer specific sportswear products over others
Post-Purchase Behaviour	• Motivating customers to repeat purchase of the same sportswear brand to satisfy their other needs • Encouraging customers to suggest the preferred sportswear brand to others

Source: Work of Researcher

2.5 Relationship Between Branding and Customers' Purchasing Process

The literature on the relationship between branding and customers' purchasing process provides an opportunity to develop initial standpoints about how branding contributes to the consumer behavior in the real-life context.

Bakator et al. (2018) studied the relationship between brand awareness and customers' purchase behavior in consumer goods market in Serbia. In the study, the research objective was to detect how brand awareness influence the customers' purchase intentions. In this domain, the primary data about brand awareness and customers' purchase behavior, including their intentions was gathered via survey responded by 418 customers in Serbia. The ordinal regression and correlation analyses were executed to detect the relationship between those concepts of research. The research findings ascertained that brand awareness is a statistically significant determinant of the customers purchase behavior and intentions (Bakator et al., 2018). In addition, the brand awareness was identified as the predictor of the customers' purchase intentions in the Serbian market. According to Bakator et al. (2018), brand awareness influences the customers' purchase behavior due to its role in informing them about the goods or services and, consequently, encouraging them to purchase and consume the branded goods or services.

Riaz (2015) examined the relationship between brand image and customers' purchasing behavior in the apparel industry in Pakistan. The research purpose was to identify how the brand image of companies operating in the apparel industry in Pakistan influenced the customers' willingness to buy the branded clothes in the country. The research developed survey to collect primary data from the sample of 155 customers in apparel market in Pakistan. The linear regression and descriptive statistics were undertaken in SPSS software to achieve the aforementioned research goal. The research findings demonstrated that the brand image was an empirical predictor of the customers' purchase intention and decision in the apparel sector in Pakistan (Riaz, 2015). According to Riaz (2015), the brand image of customers in the apparel sector in Pakistan leads customers to make the purchase of branded products due to the customers' thoughts about the credibility and worthiness of purchasing from the relevant brand.

Ghanbari et al. (2017) analyzed the relationship between brand loyalty and customers' purchase behavior in household goods market in Iran. The research purpose was to ascertain how the brand loyalty motivated the customers to make purchase decision of household products of SNOWA corporation in the respective country. The primary data about brand loyalty and customers' purchase behavior was collected via survey and the sample size of research was 384 customers of SNOWA corporation in Iran. The descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis were implemented to achieve the aforementioned research goal. The findings ascertained that brand loyalty was the statistical predictor of the changes in the customers' purchase behavior. In particular, the customers' purchase intention and decision were positively influenced by their extent of loyalty to the branded products of SNOWA corporation in Iran (Ghanbari et al., 2017). According to Ghanbari et al. (2017), the customers' purchase behavior and intention were determined by their degree of loyalty to the brand of SNOWA corporation in the household goods market in Iran because the customers perceived the corresponding brand as trustworthy and reliable means to satisfy their demands.

Kumar (2014) assessed the relationship between brand preference and purchase decision of customers in the edible oil industry in India. The research objective was to identify how the brand preference of consumers in the edible oil market in India influenced the purchase decision of the consumers. The researchers gathered primary data about brand preferences and purchase behavior of consumers in edible oil market in India through questionnaire, that was responded by the sample

of 406 consumers. The linear regression model was constructed to assess the relationship between brand preferences and customers' purchase decision. The results explored that the brand preferences of customers in edible oil market in India were statistical determinant of their purchase decision (Kumar, 2014). In particular, the customers preferred certain edible oil brands over others due to their perceptions about the superior quality and appropriate price level of the specific brands. According to Kumar (2014), the consumers in edible oil market in India prefer Fortune, Healthy Heart, Sundrop and Gemini oil brands over others because their past experiences motivate them to choose the same brands for their regular consumption of edible oil in India.

Asshidin et al. (2016) assessed the relationship between perceived quality and purchase behavior of customers in consumer goods market in Malaysia. The research primarily aimed to identify whether the perceived quality of national and American goods influenced the purchase decision of customers in Malaysia. The primary data about perceived quality of national and American goods and customers' purchase behavior was obtained by means of questionnaire, that was responded by 270 customers in consumer goods market in Malaysia. The data analysis methods in the research included the descriptive statistics, reliability test and correlation analysis. The findings identified that there existed statistical correlation between the perceived quality and purchase decision of customers in consumer goods market in Malaysia (Asshidin et al., 2016). In particular, the customer perceptions about quality were positively influenced the customers' purchase intention and decision in Malaysia. According to Asshidin et al. (2016), the perceived quality leads customers to choose a particular product over others because customers regard the relevant products as superior than others in the marketplace. In case of Malaysia, since the consumer goods imported to the country from America were perceived as superior than the consumer goods manufactured in the national market, the customers preferred American consumer goods over the national consumer goods despite of their similar functions and performance.

2.6 Research Gap

Despite that the impact of branding on the consumer behaviour was explained by a series of studies in the relevant literature, certain gaps in the relevant field still exist, which are addressed in this study. First of all, the researches undertaken to ascertain the relationship between branding and consumer behaviour overconcentrated on a specific component of branding. In particular, the specific aspect of brand equity, such as brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty, brand preference or perceived quality was assessed for explaining the impact of branding on the

consumer behaviour (Bakator et al., 2018; Riaz, 2015; Ghanbari et al., 2017; Kumar, 2014; Asshidin et al., 2016). In this regard, there are lack of studies combined other significant components of brand equity for explaining the impact of branding on the consumer purchase behavior, which restricted the capability of the existing studies in explaining the relevant relationship with more detailed and reliable way. Hence, the present study is aimed to address the aforementioned research gap by combining significant dimensions of brand equity to explain how branding influence consumer behavior in the sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In other words, the research combined brand awareness, image, loyalty, preference and perceived quality into a single dataset to identify how branding influence consumers' purchasing behavior in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. Secondly, in the literature, when researchers assessed the impact of branding on the consumer behavior, they overconcentrated on the purchase decisions and intentions of customers (Bakator et al., 2018; Riaz, 2015; Ghanbari et al., 2017; Kumar, 2014; Asshidin et al., 2016). The research findings in the existing literature demonstrated how various components of branding influenced the purchase decisions and intentions of customers. This could be considered as the limitation of the relevant researches because of their failure to consider and assess the extent of impact of branding on various stages of consumers' purchasing process. Since the purchase-related decisions and choices of customers are one of five stages of consumers' purchasing process, existing studies failed to identify how branding influenced on other aspects of customers' purchasing process. The present study addresses the aforementioned research gap related to the failure of the available studies in considering all of the components of the customers' purchasing process. In particular, the research assessed how various components of branding influenced each stage of customers' purchasing process in the sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In this regard, the problem recognition, information search, alternatives' evaluation, purchase choices and post-purchase behavior of customers' purchasing process were also analyzed in this study via assessing how various branding components influenced on the specific stage of the respective process.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

The main goal of the study is to analyse how various aspects of brand equity affects different stages of consumers' decision-making in Azerbaijan, which requires the development of suitable methodological basis for achieving the aforementioned research objective. In this context, the third

chapter of study was dedicated to identify and justify the methodological foundation of the research, which could guide for data gathering and analysis process. Hence, the chapter defines the design, data collection and analysis approaches and population and sample. Furthermore, it describes the ethical norms being considered across this research. Finally, the potential constraints of the research methodology constructed in this study are also identified and explained in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

The research design is the methodological foundation of a research, since it defines the strategy about carrying out the research. In particular, it provides an opportunity for determining a suitable plan for tackling the pre-determined research questions via means of gathering, interpreting and discussing the data (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). The research design of the study on the relationship between various aspects of brand equity and different stages of consumers' decision-making is organized into four segments.

3.1.1 Philosophy of Study

The first segment is the research philosophy which is referred as the philosophical perspective and thoughts of researcher about the essence of social reality being analysed through a research project (Hussey and Hussey, 1997). The existing researches in the literature are categorized into groups based on their philosophical standpoints. Accordingly, there are various philosophical perspectives, such as pragmatism, positivism, interpretivist philosophy, and realism (Saunders et al., 2009). The positivism is one of the widely approached philosophical orientation for researchers. The relevant philosophy adheres to the perception that the truth about social phenomenon can be identified and explained via objective observations (Sharp et al., 2002). In this domain, the positivism guides researchers to engage in the objective data gathering and interpreting process. Hence, the role of researchers utilizing positivism as a philosophical position of the research is restricted to the data gathering and interpreting process with distancing themselves from the interferences of their subjective values in the respective process (Saunders et al., 2009).

The philosophical viewpoint of the research on the relationship between branding and different stages of consumers' purchasing process is chosen as positivism. First of all, the data gathering and analysing procedures were undertaken in a value-free form. In fact, the potential impact of

subjective values and position of researcher on the data gathering and analysing process was prevented via certain means. The researcher was not involved in the data collection process via gathering the primary data on online basis. Accordingly, the participants were not influenced by the subjective thoughts and values of researcher. Furthermore, the participants were not directed towards specific answer options for ensuring the objectivity of data. The second reason for selecting this philosophical viewpoint was due to the purpose to develop and propose the claims about the connection between branding and consumers' purchasing process in the sportswear market that could be generalizable to other markets in Azerbaijan. In other word, the conclusion of the research about the relationship between the branding and consumers' purchasing process is aimed to be applicable to other markets in Azerbaijan.

3.1.2 Reasoning of Study

The following segment of the research design is research approach which is referred as a process of reasoning in a rational and sensible manner in a specific research (Robson, 2002). The existing researches in the literature are characterized by using one of two reasoning approaches for the methodological construction of the relevant researches, which are deductive or inductive processing. The deductive reasoning is featured by using the available literature as a roadmap for generating the conclusions about a specific research topic (Robson, 2002). In other words, in deduction, the research is founded upon the assumptions, theories and models available in the relevant literature about a particular topic from which the researcher builds the objectives and questions of research and, then, generates assumptions about the research topic. In contrast to deductive processing, the inductive one is featured by its concentration on the specific observations for the goal of producing general assumptions about the research topic (Robson, 2002). In inductive processing, the research disregards the theories and models in the relevant literature, as primary purpose of research is to produce new and general assumptions about the research topic based on the observations.

The research on the impact of branding on the consumers' purchasing process in case of sportswear market in Azerbaijan adopts deductive processing as its guideline for producing assumptions about the relationship between the respective variables. Since in this study, the research objectives and conclusions were developed based on revision of literature about the branding and its relationship with the consumers' purchasing process, the deduction is preferred over inductive reasoning in

this study. Moreover, as the research does not target to produce and offer new theory or insights about the influence of branding on the consumers' purchasing process, the inductive reasoning was determined as unsuitable reasoning approach for the purpose of this research.

3.1.3 Strategy of Study

One of the basic segments of research design is the plan constructed to collect data for a research, which is labelled as research strategy (Singh, 2006). The studies undertaken to analyse a particular phenomenon and to develop the assumptions about the relevant topic are broadly divided into three groups, such as survey, historical and experimental strategies (Singh, 2006). While the historical strategies are conducted to assess and compare the changes in the past and present period for identifying the causal factors of the respective changes, the experimental researches are undertaken to analyse a particular phenomenon for predicting and controlling the changes (Singh, 2006). However, the survey strategy is used by researchers as a means for assessing the existence and nature of relationship among the research phenomenon (Singh, 2006). In business sector, the majority of researches are characterized by their utilization of survey strategy as a plan of collecting data about the status of their business activities, as the survey strategy enables to obtain data from larger number of cases compared to historical and experimental researches and to generate information about the current state of research phenomenon in a limited time interval (Singh, 2006).

The study on the impact of branding on the consumers' purchasing process in case of sportswear market in Azerbaijan belong to a group of survey-based researches because in this study, the survey was formulated to obtain data about various aspects of branding and different stages of consumers' purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. Because survey strategy guaranteed to gather data from larger cases dispersed throughout Baku city of Azerbaijan in a cost-efficient way and timely manner, the research was based upon the relevant research strategy.

3.1.4 Research Choice

The research choice is also research design's basic segment, which clarifies the methodological tenet of a particular research regarding the decision about combining data types (Singh, 2006). In other words, the research choice clarifies which combination of data types is suitable for study purpose; thus, the studies are grouped into either of two research choices, including mono method

and mixed method. In the first one, the research is based upon one specific data type, such as quantitative or qualitative data (Singh, 2006). In the latter one, the research is founded upon integration of two data types into a single research (Singh, 2006).

The research on the relationship between branding and consumers' purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan was based upon quantitative data. Therefore, the research choice was preferred as mono method. The main reason for preferring mono method over mixed method in this study was due to the intention of avoiding the potential problems in the process of integrating qualitative and quantitative data into the data interpretation process.

3.1.5 Time-Related Strategy of Research

The final basic segment in a research is identified as the time-related duration within which the research is implemented on a particular phenomenon (Easterby et al., 2002). In other words, the time period of data collection is a final aspect of each research's design, as it clarifies the lasting period and frequency of data collection throughout a research project. There are two alternatives for time period, such as cross-sectional and longitudinal forms (Easterby et al., 2002). The cross-sectional research is classified as a research type in which the information about the research variables is gathered for once in a specific time and existing state (Easterby et al., 2002). In contrast to the aforementioned researches, the longitudinal research is defined as a research type in which the information about the researcher variables is collected over large time interval for several times (Singh, 2006).

The study on the relationship between branding and consumers' purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan is classified as cross-sectional research. In the research, the information about different aspects of branding and various stages of consumers' purchasing process was obtained via survey that was executed for once with the aim of identifying the existing state of consumers in the sportswear market in Azerbaijan regarding their perceptions about branding and purchasing process.

3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Process

The population is referred as an aggregate of individuals being subject of research (Singh, 2006). In particular, the population is determined as an individual's group to whom the conclusions of a

research are applicable. In this study, the population is referred as an aggregate of consumers residing in Baku city of Azerbaijan and possessing and using one of the products of specific sportswear brands, like Nike, Adidas, Reebok, and Puma.

The research sample is referred as an aggregate of individuals representing the perceptions and behaviours of research population in a research (Singh, 2006). Hence, the concept is defined as a subset of members of population which are actively involved in the data collection process of research. In this study, the research sample contains 162 individuals that successfully completed all parts of the survey. The responses of 5 individuals participated in the survey of this study were not considered in the data analysis process, as the respective individuals reflected the biased-response behaviour via providing the same answer to all of the questions included in the survey.

The sampling process is another main dimension of research methodology, which clarifies suitable instrument for choosing a representative segment of relevant population (Singh, 2006). Hence, the concept is defined as a process of choosing individuals from the population for representing the thoughts and behaviour of the population. There are two sampling processes: probability and non-probability sampling process. The first one is referred as a sampling process in which each individual of population obtains non-zero likelihood of being chosen for the participation in the research (Singh, 2006). However, the second one is regarded as a sampling process in which the individuals of population are selected to the research sample on the basis of predetermined factors rather than random chances (Singh, 2006). In the study on assessing the impact of branding on consumers' purchasing process in case of sportswear market in Azerbaijan, the sampling process is defined as non-probability sampling due to incapability of randomly choosing the representatives of consumers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan.

There are various non-probability sampling techniques that could be used for selecting the representative part of research population, which are convenience, quota, snowball and judgement sampling techniques (Singh, 2006). In the study, the snowball sampling process was preferred over other non-probability sampling means. Firstly, it provided an opportunity to enlarge the number of consumers in the sample for representing the target population of the research, as the participants in the survey were proposed to distribute the research survey with their friends, relatives and colleagues whom were considered as a consumer of sportswear products in Azerbaijan and could

provide response to the questions listed in the survey. Secondly, this sampling process enabled to avoid the subjective interferences of researcher in the selection process of sample, as the snowball sampling process provided a chance for generating the research sample spontaneously. Via means of snowball sampling, the research accomplished to generate the research sample of 157 consumers that successfully responded to all of the questions included in the survey.

3.3 Data Collecting and Analysis Techniques

Before clarifying the suitable tool of data collection, the form of data should be identified, which are primary data and secondary data (Kothari, 2004). The first data form is referred as data generated for the first time based on the objectives of research (Kothari, 2004). The primary data is also characterized as a data which is unique and unavailable in previous researches executed in the similar research topic. However, the latter one is regarded as a data produced by previous researches and being integrated into the dataset of current researches due to its relevance (Kothari, 2004). Compared to the primary data, the secondary data is more cost-efficient and time-saving, as the researchers use accessible and available data (Kothari, 2004). In contrast to the secondary data, primary data is more relevant and reliable because the researchers produce data that is completely related to their research topics and variables of research in case of primary data (Kothari, 2004). This study explains the impact of branding on the customers' purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan through primary data because of two reasons. First of all, there was not readily available and updated data about the branding and customers' purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan due to the lack of studies executed in the respective field and market in the country. Secondly, the primary data enabled to include questions in the survey which were specific and relevant to the research topic and, consequently, enabled to produce more reliable data for representing the customer perceptions in the existing market in Azerbaijan.

The primary data is created by means of primary data collection tools, which are interview, observation, questionnaire and others (Kothari, 2004). This study used questionnaire as a channel of creating primary data about the variables of branding and customers' purchasing process. The questionnaire is segmented into three sections. Each section is dedicated to assessing various dimensions of the present study. The first section is devoted to create data about the customers' perceptions of importance of branding elements in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. The second section is dedicated to create data about the role of brand elements in customers' purchasing

process. The final section is intended to create data about demographic tenets of research sample. In total, the questionnaire includes 14 questions (Appendix 1). In the questionnaire, the number of answer options provided for participants was 5, as five-point Likert scale was used to construct the answer choices for customers responded to the questionnaire. The reason leading to choose this method to construct answer options for respondents was due to the intention of providing balanced answer choices for participants, as they were not directed to either agree or disagree with a particular statement in the section 1 and 2 of questionnaire due to the availability of answer option of staying neutral towards the statement. Besides, in case of developing dataset, each answer option in the section 1 and 2 of questionnaire was assigned with specific number that ranged between 1 and 5. While 1 and 2 were used to represent Strongly Agree and Agree answer options, respectively, 4 and 5 were used to represent Disagree and Strongly Disagree answer options, respectively. The answer option of Neutral was represented as 3 in the constructed dataset.

The primary data about branding and customers' purchasing process in the sportswear market in Azerbaijan was studied via four quantitative analysis methods. First one was frequency distribution technique of descriptive statistics, in which the distribution of customers participated in the survey according to their demographic tenets was analysed and interpreted. The second one was reliability test, in which Cronbach's Alpha test was applied for clarifying the extent of internal consistence between items of research, such as independent and dependent variables (Table 2). The independent variables of research included various elements of branding, such as brand-related awareness, image, loyalty, preference and perceived quality. The dependent variables of study covered various stages of customers' purchasing process, like problem identifying, information inquiring, alternatives measuring, purchase choice and post-purchase behaviour. The definition of independent and dependent variables was highlighted in the detailed manner in the literature review chapter of the study.

Table 2. Variables of Research

Independent Variables (Brand Equity)	Dependent Variable (Customers' Purchasing Process)
Brand Awareness Brand Image Brand Loyalty Brand Preference	Problem Recognition Information search Alternatives' evaluation Purchase decision

Perceived Quality (Customer perceptions)	Post-purchase behaviour (repeating behaviour)
	Post-purchase behaviour (recommending behaviour)

Source: Work of Researcher

The third tool of quantitative analysis method was linear regression analysis. There were six regression models created to assess the impact of branding on various stages of customers' purchasing process (Table 3). Each below highlighted model assesses impact of branding on different stages of customers' purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. The utilized tool for executing the regression analysis was SPSS statistics software. This quantitative analysis method provided a chance to identify the nature of relationship between branding and purchasing process of customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan.

Table 3. Regression Models of Research

Variables of Regression Models	Regression Model
Problem Recognizing Stage	$Ya = a + b1 * Xa + b2 * Xb + b3 * Xc + b4 * Xd + b5 * Xe + u$
Information Searching Stage	$Yb = a + b1 * Xa + b2 * Xb + b3 * Xc + b4 * Xd + b5 * Xe + u$
Alternatives Evaluating Stage	$Yc = a + b1 * Xa + b2 * Xb + b3 * Xc + b4 * Xd + b5 * Xe + u$
Purchase Choice	$Yd = a + b1 * Xa + b2 * Xb + b3 * Xc + b4 * Xd + b5 * Xe + u$
Repeating Behavior	$Ye = a + b1 * Xa + b2 * Xb + b3 * Xc + b4 * Xd + b5 * Xe + u$
Recommending Behavior	$Yf = a + b1 * Xa + b2 * Xb + b3 * Xc + b4 * Xd + b5 * Xe + u$
Ya = Problem Recognizing **Yb = Information Searching** **Yc= Alternatives Evaluating** **Yd= Purchase Choice** **Ye= Repeating Behavior** **Yf= Recommending Behavior**	Xa = Brand Awareness Xb = Brand Image Xc = Brand Loyalty Xd = Brand Preference Xe = Perceived Quality a = Intercept b = Slope of Lines u = Regression Residual

Source: Work of Researcher

In addition to abovementioned analyses tools, the independent T-test was also applied in the current study for identifying if there existed statistical differences between customer groups established on the basis of their demographic features. Thus, there were four independent T-tests undertaken to measure whether the customers have empirical differences between themselves in case of branding and purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

One of the major aspects of research methodology is research ethics which is referred as a set of ethical points that should be considered by any researcher in case of involvement of human subjects in the research project (Singh, 2006). In the current study, there were certain ethical points considered in the date-collecting process. First of all, the researcher ensured the protection of welfare of participants in the survey via avoiding to include potential sensitive questions in the questionnaire. Secondly, the researcher guaranteed the freedom of refusing the participation in the survey via highlighting its voluntary nature. Thirdly, the confidentiality and privacy of customers included in the research sample were also guaranteed. Finally, the researcher ensured veracity for customers enrolled in the survey through avoiding the choice of deceiving the customers via biased or false information about the variables of research.

3.6 Research Methodology Gaps

The aforementioned details of methodology developed for the current study on the relationship between branding and customers' purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan were explained and justified in a detailed manner. Despite of its suitable methodological basis, the research has three probable limitations. The data-collecting tool of research could be the most probable limitation of the study because it restricted the possibility of obtaining detailed insights about the perceptions of customers. In particular, the questionnaire limited the opportunities of respondents in highlighting their perceptions about the branding and its potential role in shaping their purchasing process. In this context, the interviews with certain portion of the sample members would provide a chance for researcher to detect certain factors about the role of branding in directing customer purchasing behaviour, which is not known for the researcher. The next limitation of study might be connected to the composition of research sample. In other words, the research sample completely consisted of customers in sportswear market, who could lack professional and experienced knowledge about the impact of branding on the customers'

purchasing process. In this regard, the composition of the research sample could be further improved if there were marketing and sales managers involved in the research sample, whose expertise and experienced views would provide a chance to reflect the impact of branding on the customers' purchasing behaviour in a more accurate and reliable way. The final one might be due to the time-related strategy of research, which limited the ability to aggregate primary data about branding and customers' purchasing behaviour over time for demonstrating the nature of relationship in a more effective and reliable way. In particular, the longitudinal research would enable to develop primary data about the branding and customers' purchasing behaviour, which would ensure larger dataset and, consequently, more valid representation of the social reality about the relationship between the relevant variables.

Chapter 4. Results and Analysis

This chapter presents the key findings of the study along with their interpretation according to the research aims. The chapter is subdivided into four sections. The first one provides results and analysis of descriptive statistics for demographic features of the sample members via means of pie charts. The second section presents the outcome and analysis of reliability tests carried out to identify internal consistency of gathered data in the study. The third section introduces the outcomes of regression analyses performed to appraise the relationship between elements of branding and process of making decisions about sportswear products in Azerbaijan. The final section of Chapter 4 expresses the outcomes and interpretations of independent T-tests carried out for detecting whether there is a statistical difference between different customer segments in case of their purchase behavior and perceptions about brand equity in sportswear market in Azerbaijan.

4.1 Results and Analyses of Demographic Statistics

In this study, the demographic analysis was carried out to evaluate and ascertain certain demographics of sample members. Hence, the specific tool of demographic analysis, frequency distribution was utilized for appraising the sample's demographics in regard with its distributions based on participants' gender, age, purchase practices of brand sportswear products and employment. The principal demographical feature of the research sample was related to the gender distribution in this study. Below Figure 4 denotes that 65% of responders in the research sample is male customers. In particular, out of 157 responders in the research sample, 102 of them are male customers (Appendix 3a). The remaining 35% of responders in the sample is female customers (Figure 4). This outcome of demographic analysis presents that there exists gender

imbalance in the distribution of sample, which is an expected outcome because the majority of sport-related activities, ranging from football, wrestling, swimming, and others are performed by male customers throughout the world. Furthermore, although there prevailed the gender imbalance, the ratio of female responders to the male ones enables to conclude that the percentage of female members in the research sample is sufficient enough to represent the thoughts and patterns of female customers.

Figure 4. Gender-related Demographics
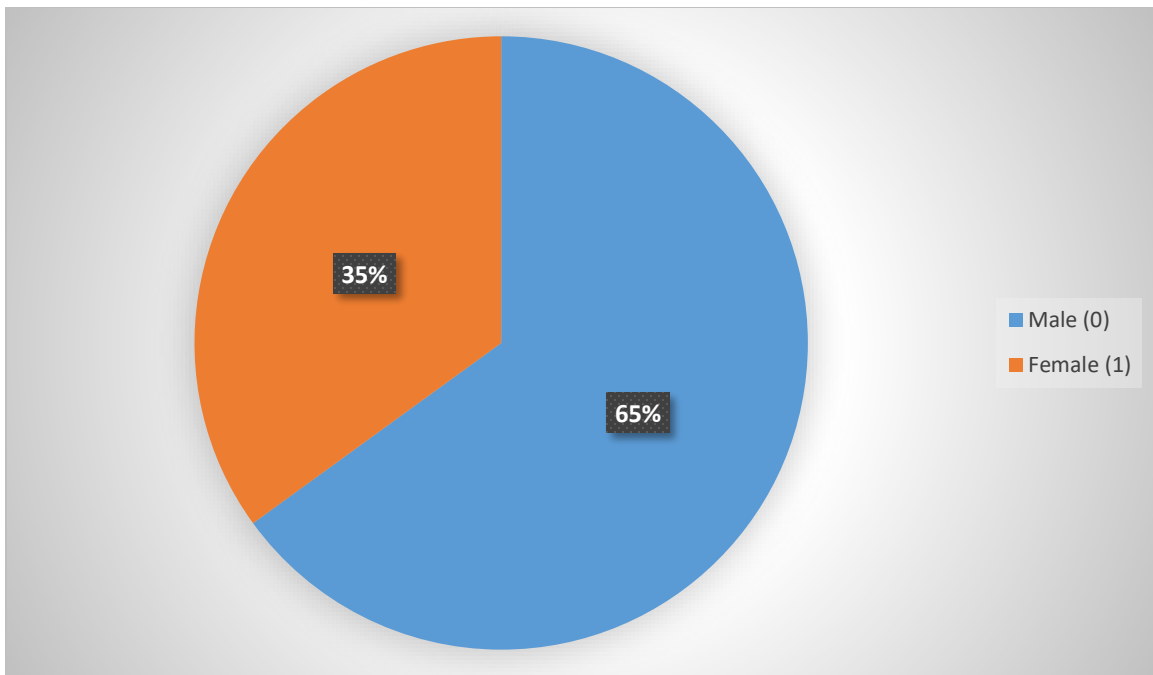
Source: Work of Researcher

In context of age-related distribution of research sample, the demographic analysis prevails that above 80% of responders in the research sample belongs to the age interval between 18 and 40 years. Below Figure 5 denotes that 46.5% of responders belong to the age interval between 18 and 30 years, which is 35.7% for the third age group in which ages range between 31 and 40 years. In addition, there are representatives of remaining two age groups in this study, as 12.1% of total responders belongs to the first age group in which the ages fall below 18 years and 5.7% of the total responders belongs to the last age group whose ages fall above 40 years (Figure 5). This demographic result reveals that there is an imbalance in age-related distribution of sample members, as the number of responders belonging to the second and third age groups outnumbers those belonging to the first and fourth age groups. This finding of study is also expected outcome

because the sport-related activities are usually preferred by the young and adult people rather than the teenage or elderly people in a particular community.

Figure 5. Age-Related Demographics
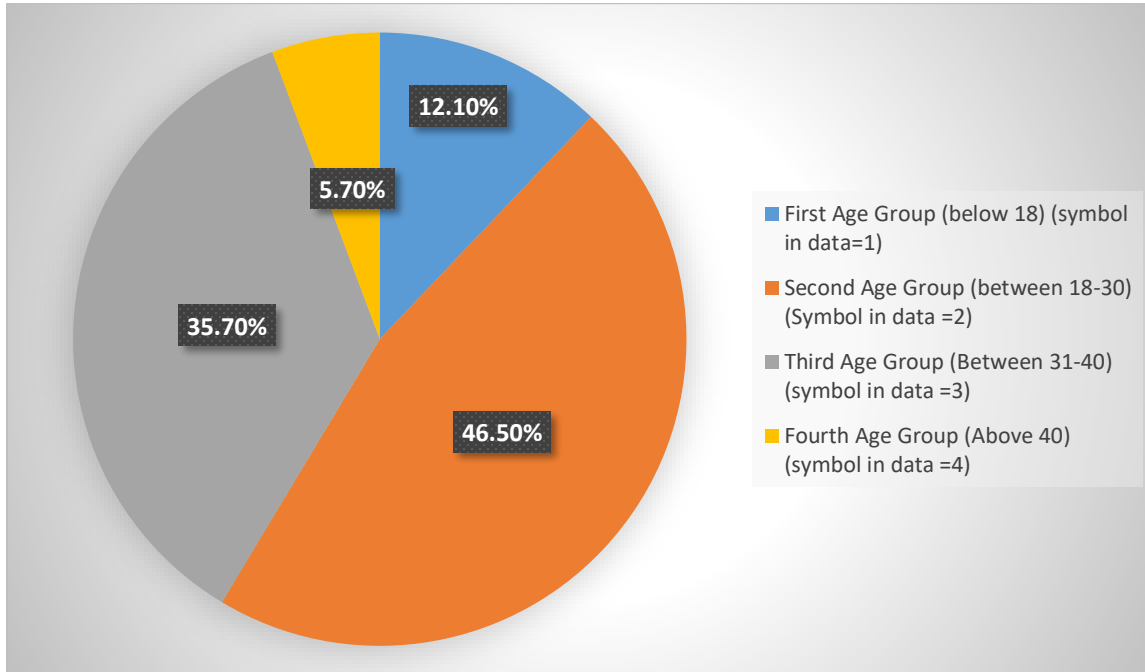
Source: Work of Researcher

Another demographic feature of the research sample is related to the customers' patterns of purchasing sportswear brand. In this context, the study aimed to identify if the research sample was able to attract the customers who had information and perception about the sportswear brands in Azerbaijan so that they could be able to produce reliable response to the questions related to their purchase behavior and branding of the relevant products. Below Figure 6 illustrates how the research sample is distributed according to their purchase patterns. In fact, above 80% of research sample prefers purchase of sportswear brands on regular basis. In particular, while 44.6% of responders buys sportswear brands usually, 40.1% of them purchases sportswear products always once they need for a particular sportswear product (Figure 6). This outcome of demographic analysis reveals that brand sportswear products are highly preferable by the customers in the research sample, which implies that they are experienced and knowledgeable enough to express their perceptions about elements of brand equity and their purchase behavior.

Figure 6. Purchase Patterns of Customers in case of Brand Sportswear Products
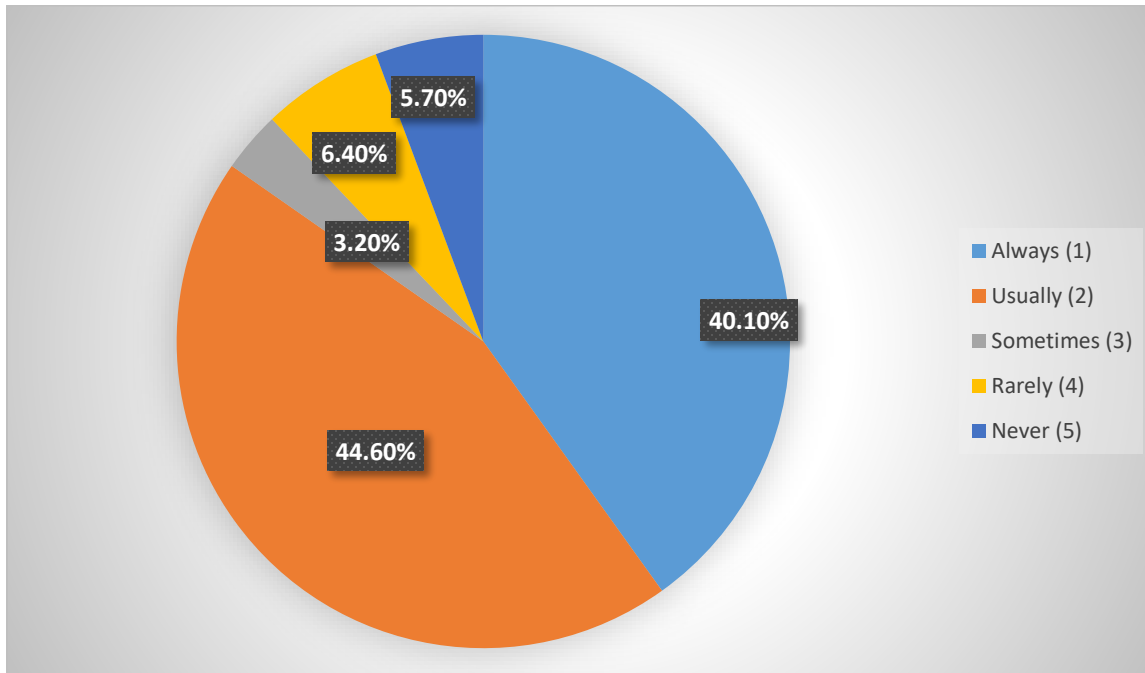
Source: Work of Researcher

4.2 Result and Analysis of Reliability Test

The reliability test is carried out in the study to appraise scale reliability of variables used for measuring customer thoughts about branding and process of making purchase decisions. One of the main techniques of reliability test is Cronbach's alpha, as it provides an opportunity to gauge the power of consistency in a dataset. In particular, this method enables to assess the existence of correlation between the items of survey that are measuring various aspects of variables in a particular research, which accordingly generates consistent responses by sample members. The number of items integrated in the analysis process is 11, there are 5 elements of branding and 6 indicators of customers' purchasing process (Table 4). The coefficients alpha for the dataset is 0.873, which means that there is high internal consistency between integrated items, as the alpha is above the minimum level of internal consistence, 0.70. In addition, as the alpha of study is less than 0.90, the internal consistency of items is not extremely high, which could also threaten the reliability of dataset. Therefore, the coefficients alpha enables to assume that the reliability of

dataset that is used in the analyzing process in this study is high enough to accomplish aims of this study.

Table 4. Results of Alpha Test

Coefficients Alpha	Number of Items
0.873	11

Source: Work of Researcher

4.3 Results and Analysis of Regressions

There are six separate regression analyses carried out to evaluate how branding influence the consumers' purchasing process of sportswear products in Azerbaijan. Since the regression analysis provides an opportunity to identify and explain the type and nature of relationship between dependent and independent variable set in a specific study, this analysis method was considered as suitable for gauging the nexus between branding and consumer behavior in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. The first one is performed to identify the statistical impact of various elements of branding on first stage of the purchasing process of consumers, problem recognizing stage. The primary outcomes of first regression design are displayed at below Table 5. The adjusted R^2 that facilitates determining fitness of linear regression and level of variance in targeted field is 0.846 (Table 5). In this context, the adjusted R^2 enables to identify the extent of ability of first regression design in predicting the behavior of customers in the problem recognizing stage through identified elements of branding. The value of the adjusted R^2 is close to 1, which implies the higher capability of the regression design in predicting the changes in the relevant stage of consumer purchasing process. Accordingly, the respective value reveals that only 15.4% (1-0.846 = 0.154) of changes in problem recognizing step of purchasing process could not be forecasted by the first regression design. As the regression design is statistically able to forecast the behavior of consumers in problem recognizing process, the predictors integrated into this model could be used to further elaborate the analysis process. The p-values are a statistically valuable means to detect which predictors have empirical links with the problem recognizing process of consumers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. There are only three predictors (out of five) that have p-values under 5% significance level, which are brand awareness, brand image and brand preference (Table 5). In this domain, these elements of branding, like brand awareness, image and preference are regarded as

the statistical predicting variables of problem recognizing process of consumers. In addition, the form of relationship between these forecasting variables and problem recognizing process is reflected in the coefficients of the relevant variables. As the standardized coefficients of these three elements of branding, like brand awareness, image and preference are 0.290, 0.138, and 0.549, respectively, the form of relationship of these variables with problem recognizing process is defined as positive (Table 5). In this context, a possible rise in either of three predictors, such as brand awareness, image or preference is followed by a surge in the problem recognizing process of consumers' purchase behavior. Therefore, the findings of first regression design present that branding has a statistical impact on problem recognizing process of consumer behavior in case of purchasing sportswear products in Azerbaijan because the brand awareness, image and preference demonstrate their unsatisfied needs for sportswear products. Therefore, the branding determines the customer purchasing process because the brand awareness, image and preferences enable the customers to identify their needs for sportswear products in Azerbaijan.

Table 5. Regression Design for Nexus between Problem Recognition and Elements of Branding (Appendix 3c)

Adjusted R^2		.846	
Dependent Variable = Problem Recognition Stage of Consumer Decision-Making			
Independent Variables		**Standardized Coefficients**	**Significance Level**
Brand loyalty		.060	.327
Brand awareness		.290	.000
Brand image		.138	.012
Brand preference		.549	.000
Perceived quality		-.034	.405

Source: Work of Researcher

The second regression design aims to evaluate how five elements of branding affects the next step of consumer purchasing process, information search. The primary results of this regression design are showed at below Table 6. The adjusted R^2 reflecting the fitness of linear regression and level of variance in targeted field is 0.862 (Table 6). As in case of previous design, the value of the adjusted R^2 of this model is close to 1 implying the higher capability of the regression design in predicting the changes in the information searching stage of consumer purchasing process. Therefore, relevant value of the adjusted R^2 reveals that only 13.8% (1-0.862=0.138) of variations

in information searching stage of customers' buying process could not be anticipated by this regression design. Since the regression design is empirically capable to anticipate the behavior of customers in information searching process, the predictors added to the second regression design could be used to further expand the analysis process. In this regard, the p-values and coefficients are reviewed to present the nature of relationship between the five elements of brand and information searching step of consumers' purchasing process. In case of p-values, the output of this regression design demonstrates that four of five indicators used in the design have empirical relationship with information searching process of consumers. In below Table 6, the four elements of branding, such as brand loyalty, awareness, image and preferences have p-values falling under 5% significance level (<0.05), which indicates their empirical relationship with information searching process of consumers. Besides, the type of nexus between these four elements of branding and information searching process is determined as positive because their standardized coefficients are positive. In fact, the coefficients of brand loyalty, awareness, image and preference have coefficients of 0.381, 0.184, 0.334, and 0.149, respectively (Table 6). Thus, a potential rise in either of these four predictors is accompanied by an increase in the information searching process of customers' purchasing behavior. Accordingly, the results of the second regression design show that branding has an empirical impact on information searching process of consumer behavior while purchasing sportswear products in Azerbaijan because brand loyalty, awareness, image and preference provide customers with information about available alternatives that could respond to their unsatisfied needs for sportswear products. Therefore, the branding shapes the customer purchasing process, as the brand loyalty, awareness, image and preferences provide sufficient information about the suitable alternatives that could satisfy their needs for sportswear products in Azerbaijan.

Table 6. Regression Design for Nexus between Information Search and Elements of Branding

Adjusted R^2	.862	
Dependent Variable = Information Search Stage of Consumer Decision-Making		
Independent Variables	Standardized Coefficients	Significance Level
Brand loyalty	.381	.000
Brand awareness	.184	.000
Brand image	.334	.000
Brand preference	.149	.011

Perceived quality	-.023	.552

Source: Work of Researcher

The third design of regression analysis examines the impact of branding dimensions on the third step of consumer purchasing process, alternatives evaluation stage. Below Table 7 presents fundamental results of this regression design. The adjusted R^2 which reflects the extent of capability of designed model in forecasting the variations in the alternatives evaluation stage of consumers' purchasing behavior is 0.835 (Table 7). As in case of aforementioned regression designs, the adjusted R^2 of this model is above 0.7 and below 1, which reflects the higher capability of this regression design in forecasting the variations in the alternatives evaluating stage of consumer purchasing process. In other words, the value of the adjusted R^2 highlights that just 16.5% (1-0.835=0.165) could not be forecasted by the predictors used in this regression design. Thus, the variables used in the third regression leads the design to be considered as empirically capable of predicting the changes in alternatives evaluating process of consumer purchase behavior. Because this regression design is statistically able to forecast the behavior of customers in alternatives evaluating process, the predictors used in this design could be further analyzed to identify the nature of relationships between each specific predictor and the relevant step of consumers purchasing process. In this context, there are two indicators that are used to elaborate the relationship between branding elements and alternatives evaluating process of consumers' purchase behavior, which are p-values and coefficients of the respective variables. In regard with p-values, this regression design shows that four of five dependent variables used in this design have statistical nexus with alternatives evaluating step of consumers' purchasing process because the p-values of four branding elements, like brand loyalty, awareness, image and preferences are under 5% significance level (<0.05) (Table 7). Moreover, the form of relationship between these four branding facets and alternatives evaluating process is detected as positive since the standardized coefficients of brand loyalty, awareness, image and preferences 0.387, 0.168, 0.301, 0.129 and 0.042, respectively (Table 7). Therefore, the possible decrease in either of these four branding elements is accompanied by a drop in the alternatives evaluating stage of consumers' purchasing process. The findings of the third design in regression analysis present that branding has a statistical influence on alternatives evaluating process of consumer purchase behavior in sportswear market in Azerbaijan, as brand loyalty, awareness, image and preference improve the customers' capability to assess various sportswear products based on their extent of loyalty

towards, awareness about, image of, and preference for a specific brand product. Hence, the branding could be considered as a statistical determinant of customer purchasing process because its four elements, including brand loyalty, awareness, image and preferences enable the customers to assess various alternatives for making the right decision in sportswear market in Azerbaijan.

Table 7. Regression Design for Nexus between Alternatives Evaluating Process and Elements of Branding

Adjusted R^2	.835	
Dependent Variable = Alternatives Evaluating Stage of Consumer Decision-Making		
Independent Variables	**Standardized Coefficients**	**Significance Level**
Brand loyalty	.387	.000
Brand awareness	.168	.002
Brand image	.301	.000
Brand preference	.129	.043
Perceived quality	.042	.318

Source: Work of Researcher

The fourth design of regression method evaluates the nexus between branding elements and the next step of consumer purchasing process, purchasing stage. Below Table 8 demonstrates key results of this regression design. The adjusted R^2 reflecting the extent of ability of constructed regression design in anticipating the differences in the purchasing stage of consumers' behavior is 0.813 (Table 8). Since the adjusted R^2 of this model is closer to 1 (maximum level of adjusted R^2), the model is highly capable to anticipate variations in the purchasing stage of consumer behavior. In particular, the adjusted R^2 of this design implies that about 18.7% (1-0.813=0.187) of alterations in purchasing stage of consumers' decision-making process of sportswear products in Azerbaijan could not be predicted by the branding elements added to this regression design. Accordingly, the elements of branding added to the fourth design of regression analysis enables the design to statically forecast the changes in the customers' decision of purchasing sportswear products. Since the fourth regression design is empirically capable to predict the behavior of customers while making purchase decision, the independent variables used as predictors in this design can be further assessed to detect the nature of nexus between each of them and purchase decision of customers. On that account, p-values and coefficients of five facets of brand are interpreted to reveal how the branding influence decision of purchasing sportswear products in Azerbaijan. In case of p-values, the outcomes of analysis demonstrate that three out of five predictors added to

the regression design have empirical relationship with the purchase decision of consumers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan, as p-values of brand loyalty, awareness and image fall under 5% significance level (<0.05) (Table 8). Furthermore, the kind of relationship between these three branding elements and purchase decision of customers is appraised via means of their standardized coefficients. As all of three determined branding elements, like brand loyalty, awareness and image have positive coefficients, like 0.202, 0.452 and 0.216, respectively, there is positive nexus between these branding elements and purchase decision of consumers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan (Table 8). Hence, the possible rise in either of these three branding elements is followed by an increase in the purchase decision of customers. Accordingly, the results and analyses of this regression design demonstrate that branding has an empirical impact on the customers' decision of buying sportswear products in Azerbaijan because brand loyalty, awareness and image contributes to their decision of buying a specific sportswear product. In other words, since brand loyalty, awareness and image lead the customers to identify certain brands as the most suitable choice for satisfying their needs due to their loyalty towards, information of and thoughts about a certain brand, these branding elements leads customers to finalize their purchase behavior via making relevant decision.

Table 8. Regression Design for Nexus between Purchase Decision and Elements of Branding

Adjusted R^2	.813	
Dependent Variable = Purchase-decision Stage of Consumer Decision-Making		
Independent Variables	**Standardized Coefficients**	**Significance Level**
Brand loyalty	.202	.003
Brand awareness	.452	.000
Brand image	.216	.000
Brand preference	.130	.055
Perceived quality	.009	.840

Source: Work of Researcher

The fifth and sixth models of regression analysis are designed for assessing the impact of branding on post-purchase attitudes of customers in sportswear market. In particular, the post-purchase attitudes of customers are divided into two patterns based on the review of relevant literature because after purchasing a specific product, customers tend to repurchase the products of relevant brand for their other needs and recommend the respective brand to others, including their friends,

family members, colleagues and others. Thus, the fifth regression design aims to evaluate how a specific form of post-purchase attitude of consumers, repeating the purchase of products from the same sportswear brand is affected by the branding elements. As in case of previous regression designs, in this model, there are five branding dimensions that are used as a set of predictors, which are brand loyalty, awareness, image, preferences and perceived quality. Table 9 illustrates the key outcomes of this regression design. The adjusted R^2 showing the degree of ability of designed regression model in projecting the variations in the customers' attitudes of repeating purchase of the same sportswear brand is 0.807 (Table 9). The value of adjusted R^2 of this design exhibits that 80.7% of variations in the attitudes of customers in case of repeating their purchase decision of the same sportswear brand are predicted by the branding elements added to the relevant regression design. Thus, the branding elements that are used in the fifth design of regression analysis enable to statically forecast the changes in the customers' post-purchase attitudes. As in case of abovementioned regression models, p-values and coefficients are also used in this design as key findings of study for further elaborating the nature of nexus between chosen branding elements and customers' practices of repeating their purchase decision of the same brand after their purchase experience. The p-values of three branding elements, like brand loyalty, brand image and brand preferences fall under 5% significance level (<0.05); thus, there is empirically significant connections between these branding elements and customers' post-buying behavior of repurchasing the sportswear products of the same brand (Table 9). The coefficients of these three branding elements enable to detect the form of relationship between them and repurchasing behavior of customers. Since coefficients of three identified branding elements, including brand loyalty, brand image and brand preferences are positive, such as 0.233, 0.360 and 0.251, respectively, the relationship between them and repurchasing attitude of customers is positive (Table 9). Therefore, an increasing trend in either of these three branding elements is accompanied by a rise in the repurchasing behavior of customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In other words, the findings and examination of this regression design show that branding has a statistical influence on the customers' post-purchase behavior because brand loyalty, image and preferences are empirical predictors of the changes in the customers' willingness to repurchase the same sportswear brand once they are satisfied with their relevant choice in past. In particular, brand loyalty leading the customers to remain loyal to a specific sportswear brand, brand image shaping the minds of customers about worthiness of a particular sportswear brand and brand preferences

encouraging the customers to prefer a specific sportswear brand over others are determinants of repurchase behavior of customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan.

Table 9. Regression Design for Nexus between Repurchase Behavior and Elements of Branding

Adjusted R^2	.807	
Dependent Variable = Repurchasing Behavior of Customers in Post-Purchase Stage of Consumer Decision-Making		
Independent Variables	**Standardized Coefficients**	**Significance Level**
Brand loyalty	.233	.001
Brand awareness	.092	.107
Brand image	.360	.000
Brand preference	.251	.000
Perceived quality	.083	.066

Source: Work of Researcher

The last regression design appraises how another form of post-purchase attitude of consumers, recommending a particular sportswear brand to others is affected by the branding elements. Table 10 shows the principal outcomes for the last regression design. The adjusted R^2 presenting the extent of this regression model's ability to forecast the changes in this form of customers' post-purchase attitude is 0.811 (Table 10). This value exhibits that 81.1% of changes in the customers' practices of recommending a specific sportswear brand in Azerbaijan are anticipated by the branding elements integrated into the regression design. Thus, the added variables in the last regression design are also empirically able to predict the changes in the post-purchase behavior of customers. Furthermore, p-values and coefficients of predictors are also used to further analyze nature of impact of branding elements on this form of post-purchase behavior of customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. Thus, p-values of three branding elements, such as brand loyalty, brand image and brand preferences are below 5% significance level (<0.05) (Table 10). Therefore, the connections between these three branding elements and customers' willingness to recommend a particular sportswear brand are empirically significant. Then, the coefficients of these three branding elements shows the nature of connection between them and recommending behavior of customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. Table 10 shows that coefficients of brand loyalty, image, and preferences are positive numbers: 0.287, 0.259, and 0.253; thus, there is positive connection between these branding elements and recommending attitude of customers. In other words, a growing trend in either of these four branding elements is followed by a rising trend in

the recommending attitude of customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In general, the findings and evaluation of this regression design prevails that branding has an empirical impact on customers' post purchase behavior because its elements, like brand loyalty, image and preferences leads customers to recommend the sportswear brands to others, such as their family members, friends, colleagues, etc.

Table 10. Regression Design for Nexus between Recommending Behavior and Elements of Branding

Adjusted R^2	.807	
Dependent Variable = Recommending Behavior of Customers in Post-Purchase Stage of Consumer Decision-Making		
Independent Variables	**Standardized Coefficients**	**Significance Level**
Brand loyalty	.287	.000
Brand awareness	.156	.006
Brand image	.259	.000
Brand preference	.253	.000
Perceived quality	.068	.129

Source: Work of Researcher

The findings and discussion of regression designs prevail that branding is a statistical predictor of changes in consumers' purchasing process. In particular, brand loyalty leads customers to remain loyal to a specific sportswear brand, the brand awareness provides the customers with information about core features of sportswear products, brand image shapes the customer minds about the worthiness of those products and brand preference leads the customers to prefer the relevant brand sportswear products over others in various steps of purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. One of the unexpected findings of research is related to the perceived quality, as prior to the research project, this branding element had been anticipated to be one of the main predictors of consumer purchasing process; however, the findings of regression designs have presented that the customer perceptions about quality of sportswear products could not influence the purchasing process of branded sportswear products in Azerbaijan. The abovementioned findings of research in respect with a specific component of branding also complied with the existing literature (Bakator et al., 2018; Riaz, 2015; Ghanbari et al., 2017; Kumar, 2014; Asshidin et al., 2016).

4.4 Results and Analysis of Independent T-tests

The independent T-Tests are also carried out in the study to evaluate if there are statistical differences between various customer segments that are divided into groups according to their

demographic features. This data analysis method enables to compare two separate customer groups for identifying whether there exist the statistical differences between the relevant customer groups in case of their behavior and perceptions about branding and purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan, which would demonstrate the need for utilizing various branding options for different customer groups. In this regard, the two demographic features of research sample are integrated into the data analysis process through independent T-tests because of the perceptions about the statistical differences between customers belonging to different gender and employment-related groups. The first one is executed for gender groups in case of their familiarity with the role of various branding elements in shaping their attitudes in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In particular, the customers are categorized into two groups according to their gender. The first group is regarded as male customers, in which there are 102 individuals. In the second group, there are 55 female customers. In case of T-tests, there are three key values used for evaluating the differences between groups, which are t-value, p-value and average values of both groups. In case of T-value, the degrees of freedom (dg) at 155 in two-tailed and at 5% significance level is 1.9752, which suggests that once the t-values of below branding elements stand above 1.9752, there exists statistical difference between identified groups in this study. In two-tailed forms, the negative t-values are also interpreted as positive. There is only one branding element in which its t-value is higher than 1.9752, which is brand preference (Table 11). P-value is also used to verify the alternative hypothesis suggesting that two groups have statistical differences. If p-value is less than 5% significance level, the alternative hypothesis is verified. In case of brand preference, the p-value is 0.47, which falls under 5% significance level, the alternative hypothesis which suggest that the male and female customer groups differ from each other while preferring a specific sportswear brand in Azerbaijan is approved. Then, the mean values are evaluated to detect the nature of statistical difference between two groups. Because average value of male customers is closer to 2 (2 = Agree) than the average value of female customers, the male customers is more prone to preferring the branded sportswear product over others in Azerbaijan.

Table 11. Independent T-test for Gender in case of Brand Equity

Branding Elements	T-value	P-value	Average value by Gender	
Brand Loyalty	-1.275	.766	Male	1.81

			Female	2.02
Brand Awareness	-1.322	.793	Male	1.83
			Female	2.05
Brand Image	-.574	.857	Male	1.85
			Female	1.95
Brand Preference	-2.256	.047	Male	2.05
			Female	2.26
Perceived Quality	.835	.247	Male	2.01
			Female	1.87

Source: Work of Researcher

The next one is executed for gender groups in case of their purchasing process in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In particular, the customers are again categorized into two groups according to their gender. The results of T-test prevail that there are not empirical variations between male and female customers because t-values of each dimension of purchasing process of customers, including problem recognizing, information searching, alternatives evaluating, purchasing, repurchasing behavior and recommending behavior of customers fall below t-value of 1.9752 at *dg* 155 (Table 12). Thus, the female and female customer groups reflect similar patterns of behavior in the process of buying sportswear products in Azerbaijan.

Table 12. Independent T-test for Gender in case of Purchasing Process

Purchasing Process	**T-value**	**P-value**	**Average value by Gender**	
Problem Recognizing	-.532	.047	Male	1.83
			Female	2.17
Information Searching	-.525	.126	Male	1.97
			Female	2.05
Alternatives Evaluating	.017	.223	Male	2.04
			Female	2.04
Purchasing	-.532	.159	Male	1.93
			Female	2.02
Repurchasing behaviour	.213	.558	Male	1.98
			Female	1.95
Recommending behaviour	.045	.516	Male	1.97
			Female	1.96

Source: Work of Researcher

The T-test is also carried out to determine the differences between the customers that are grouped into two categories based on their employment status. Accordingly, in the following two T-tests,

the customers are divided into two groups. The first group consists of either employed or self-employed (freelancer) responders. The total number of persons in the first group (symbol = 1) is 91. Besides, the second group of customers consists of either unemployed or retired responders. The total number of persons in the second group (symbol = 2) is 66. As in case of previous T-tests, t-value, p-value and average values of two groups are used for appraising if there is empirical disparity between these two groups. The *dg* at 155 in two-tailed and at 5% significance level is again 1.9752. The t-value of brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image, and brand preference fall above 1.9752 (Table 13). However, perceived quality has t-value of 1.591 (-1.591) which is less than 1.9752; thus, the statistical disparity between first and second groups does not exist in case of the customers' perceptions about quality of sportswear products. The p-values of all of four identified branding elements, such as brand loyalty, awareness, image and preferences fall below 5% significance level. Therefore, the alternative hypotheses suggesting that there is statistical disparity between first and second groups in case of their brand loyalty, awareness, image and preferences is adopted. Furthermore, the average values of First group in all of four relevant branding elements is less than the average values of second group, which means that the first group reflects higher extent of agreement about the role of brand loyalty, awareness, image and preferences in shaping their attitudes in the sportswear market in Azerbaijan. Therefore, the customers who earn amount of money reflects more brand loyalty, awareness, image and preferences than those who are either employed or retired in domestic environment in Azerbaijan.

Table 13. Independent T-test for Employment in case of Brand Equity

Branding Elements	T-value	P-value	Average value by Employment Status	
Brand Loyalty	-3.252	.001	First Group (1)	1.74
			Second Group (2)	2.29
Brand Awareness	-3.291	.000	First Group (1)	1.76
			Second Group (2)	2.33
Brand Image	-3.883	.009	First Group (1)	1.71
			Second Group (2)	2.36
Brand Preference	-4.586	.003	First Group (1)	1.91
			Second Group (2)	2.62
Perceived Quality	-1.591	.023	First Group (1)	1.89
			Second Group (2)	2.17

Source: Work of Researcher

The final one is implemented among the customers divided into the first and second group based on their employment status for identifying role of brand elements in shaping purchasing process of customers in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. In particular, the customers are again categorized into two groups according to their employment status. The results of T-test prevail that t-values of whole steps of purchasing process are more than 1.9752 at *dg* 155, prevailing that there is statistical disparity between First and Second Groups of responders in the study (Table 14). Besides, their p-values falls below 5% significance level (<0.05); thus, all of alternative hypotheses suggesting that there is a statistical disparity between First and Second Groups in each stage of purchasing process are adopted in this study (Table 14). Moreover, the average-values of First Group throughout all of the steps of purchasing process is less than the average values of second group, which implies that the First group, which consists of employed or self-employed people reflect higher agreement with the statements emphasizing the impact of various brand elements on the purchase behavior than the Second Group. Thus, the people who are capable of generating earnings for themselves reflect more proximity towards using brand elements as a means for recognizing their needs, obtaining information, evaluating alternatives, purchasing the suitable brand product and reflecting post-purchase behavior in sportswear market in Azerbaijan.

Table 14. Independent T-test for Employment in case of Purchasing Process

Purchasing Process	T-value	P-value	Average value by Employment status	
Problem Recognizing	-4.239	.017	First Group (1)	1.82
			Second Group (2)	2.50
Information Searching	-3.314	.001	First Group (1)	1.85
			Second Group (2)	2.40
Alternatives Evaluating	-3.325	.000	First Group (1)	1.89
			Second Group (2)	2.45
Purchasing	-3.164	.003	First Group (1)	1.82
			Second Group (2)	2.36
Repurchasing behaviour	-4.354	.001	First Group (1)	1.77
			Second Group (2)	2.50
Recommending behaviour	-4.371	.006	First Group (1)	1.78
			Second Group (2)	2.48

Source: Work of Researcher

Chapter 5. Conclusion
5.1 Overall Summary of Research

The current marketplace has been characterized as competitive because of actions of the existing participants and new entrants into the relevant marketplace. Therefore, the business enterprises search for potential ways and strategies to initiate and progress their competitive advantages in the growing markets across the world. In particular, the human resources, financial resources, economics of scale, and marketing techniques have become commonly utilized methods of producing and upgrading competitive advantages for the business enterprises, which are mostly imitated by each of the participants in the competitive marketplace. In this context, the branding has become one of commonly approached channels of establishing and upgrading the competitive advantage of companies. The essential reason motivating the business companies to approach the branding as a source of competitive advantage is associated with its potential in grabbing the attention of individuals and encouraging them to purchase the branded products or services. Furthermore, since the branding could not be imitated quickly and easily by the competitors in the marketplace, this feature of branding further expands the incentives of business companies to use the respective factor as a source of competitive advantage for them. Hence, the general target of this thesis was to gauge the relationship between branding and consumer behavior in sportswear market in Azerbaijan. The sportswear market was adopted as a market of analysis in this study because of two main reasons. First of all, this market has experienced significant growth over the recent years, which reflects its prosperity and appropriateness for establishing and broadening the activities in the respective market. Secondly, despite the growth, prosperity and opportunities of the sportswear market, the respective market was dominated by a few corporations. These companies have strong brand equity in the global sportswear market, which restrict the ability of new entrants to fascinate and encourage the customers of sportswear goods and, consequently, to generate the purchase willingness among them. Therefore, the sportswear market is chosen as a market of research in this thesis, as the relevant market is distinguished by the companies with strong brand equity that could generate to the customers' preferences, loyalty, awareness, image and perceptions about their quality. Furthermore, the geographical location of research was chosen as Azerbaijan because there were brand sportswear companies running their business activities in this country through their branches and retailers. The existence of sportswear goods of these

companies in Azerbaijan reflects that these brand sportswear goods are preferred by the customers in this country.

In the thesis, two terms were identified as key research concepts, such as branding and consumer behavior. While the branding was referred as an activity of building meaning to and value for a particular company and its products or services among the customers, the consumer behavior was elucidated as an action executed by consumers in the purchasing process. The branding was associated with five aspects of brand equity, such as brand loyalty, brand preference, brand awareness, brand image and perceived quality. Accordingly, these aspects of brand equity were referred as the principal indicators of the brand value of the sportswear goods being offered to the customers in the domestic market in Azerbaijan. The brand loyalty was described as an extent of customers' commitment to a particular brand through purchasing the same brand again to meet their needs. The brand preference was identified as the customers' tendency of preferring one brand over its alternative on regular basis. The brand awareness was described as a capability of customers in recognizing specific good through its brand. The brand image was referred as overall views of customers about core tenets of a specific brand. The perceived quality was considered as capability of determining the quality of a specific good through its brand. In addition, the research determined the indicators of consumer behavior via the framework of decision-making process. Hence, there were five indicators of the relevant process, such as information searching, problem recognizing, alternatives evaluating, purchasing, and post-purchase action. Furthermore, the post-purchase action conducted by customers was further divided into two indicators, such as recommending and repurchasing behavior. Moreover, the assessment of previous studies attempting to explain the relationship between branding and consumer behavior presented that the branding was statistical determinant of consumer behavior because the brand elements, like its name, symbol, logo and others affected the purchase willingness of customers via motivating them to buy the branded products. Furthermore, the previous studies also highlighted that the indicators of branding, such as brand awareness, loyalty, preference, image and quality statistically influenced the purchase intention of customers, as those factors led the customers to buy the branded products.

The research design of thesis was organized into five elements. In case of philosophical stand, the positivism was described as appropriate for the thesis because of the objective to develop general

statement about the role of branding in forming consumer behavior. In case of reasoning approach, the deduction was assessed as suitable for this thesis because it was not intended to suggest new theory, concept, model or statement about the relationship between branding and consumer behavior. The research strategy was survey, as it was appropriate to gather information from largely distributed customers across Azerbaijan. The methodological preference of study was mono form because the research did not combine qualitative and quantitate data. Finally, the time horizon was cross-sectional because data gathering and analyzing processes were not executed over time. The target population of research was customers of sportswear products, who were living in Azerbaijan at the period of data gathering process. The research sample was assembled by means of snowball sampling form. In addition, the primary data about branding and consumer deciding process was assembled by means of questionnaires and analyzed via four methods of analysis, like descriptive statistic, reliability test, regression and independent T-test.

The analysis of data about branding and consumer deciding process presented certain findings. The first design of regression displayed that brand awareness, image and preference were statistically positive predictors of problem recognizing attitudes of customers. The second design of regression demonstrated that brand loyalty, awareness, image and preference were empirically positive predictors of information searching attitudes of customers. The third design of regression presented that brand loyalty, awareness, image and preference were also statistically significant determinants of alternatives evaluating patterns of customers. The fourth design of regression underlined that brand loyalty, awareness, and image were statistically positive determinants of purchasing decision of customers. The fifth design of regression introduced that brand loyalty, image and preferences were statistically positive predictors of repurchasing activity of customers. The final design of regression presented that brand loyalty, brand image and brand preference were also empirically positive predictors of the recommending behavior of customers. Therefore, the research concluded that branding positively affects the consumer behavior because its key elements, such as loyalty, awareness, image, preference and perceptions about quality provided an opportunity to customers for recognizing their unmet needs of sportswear products, obtaining information about sportswear goods, to evaluate the alternatives, to purchase the right one preferred based on their evaluation, to repeat purchasing the sportswear goods of the relevant brand and to recommend the brand to others. The independent T-tests were adopted to identify if there existed statistical disparities between different customer groups. In case of employment conditions,

the research identified that customers, including employees and freelancers who were capable of generating certain amount of income were more brand-oriented while purchasing the sportswear goods in Azerbaijan, which was an expected outcome because the customers who earned monthly income as a result of their activities were financially in better condition to purchase the branded sportswear goods compared to those could not generate monthly income for their expenditure on branded sportswear goods.

5.2 Recommendation

The conclusions of this thesis might be further improved through responding to the certain limitations of the current study. Firstly, the study mainly focused on aspects of brand equity as indicators of branding. Although the relevant variables were reliable predictors of the brand value that was generated through branding, there were need for considering additional variables reflecting the features of branding, such as logo, symbol, slogan and others. Accordingly, the integration of those additional variables into the dataset would enable to improve the findings about the relationship between branding and consumer behavior, as those elements were potential factors encouraging customers to make decision of buying a specific brand product. Secondly, the research did not generate data representing the expertise approach to the relationship between branding and consumer behavior. There might be a need for integrating the branding experts and managers into the research sample as a separate group whose perceptions and approaches would provide an opportunity to represent the business companies utilizing branding as a means for directing customer behavior in the marketplace. In addition, the experts and experienced persons about branding would offer new insights about the branding and consumer behavior along with their relationships, which were not available in the relevant literature. Finally, the time horizon of study could limit its ability to assess the extent of impact being imposed on consumer deciding process by branding elements because cross-sectional form did not enable to undertake the study over time. Thus, the longitudinal study would enable to collect data before and after exposing the sample members to certain brand-related campaigns, such as brand advertisings, which would enable to gauge how branding affected consumer behavior in a more reliable and accurate manner. The abovementioned suggestions could be used as a direction for developing and implementing further research on the topic of relationship between branding and consumer behavior.

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Appendices
Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Section I. Branding Elements of Sportswear Products

To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products have a positive association towards a specific sportswear brand in Azerbaijan?

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Neither agree nor disagree
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products are capable of recognizing sportswear brand via means of its brand elements?

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Neither agree nor disagree
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products have a positive perception about worthiness of particular sportswear product in your mind?

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Neither agree nor disagree
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products prefer a specific brand over others?

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Neither agree nor disagree
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products have perceptions about quality of a specific sportswear brand?

    A. Strongly Agree

B. Agree
C. Neither agree nor disagree
D. Disagree
E. Strongly disagree

Section II. Consumer Decision-Making Process of Sportswear Products

Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company provide an opportunity for you to recognize your need for a particular sportswear product?

A. Agree
B. Agree
C. Neither agree nor disagree
D. Disagree
E. Strongly disagree

Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company provide information for you while purchasing a particular sportswear product in purchasing process?

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neither agree nor disagree
D. Disagree
E. Strongly disagree

Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company enables you to compare the available alternative sportswear products in the purchasing process?

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neither agree nor disagree
D. Disagree
E. Strongly disagree

Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company leads you to purchase a specific sportswear brand in the purchasing process?

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neither agree nor disagree
D. Disagree
E. Strongly disagree

Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company leads you to repurchase the sportswear products of the respective brand for satisfying your other unsatisfied needs?

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Neither agree nor disagree
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly disagree

Do you agree than brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) motivates you to recommend the relevant brand to others?

    A. Strongly Agree
    B. Agree
    C. Neither agree nor disagree
    D. Disagree
    E. Strongly disagree

Section III. Demographics

Gender:

    A. Male
    B. Female

Age:

    A. Below 18
    B. Between 18-30
    C. Between 31-40
    D. Above 40

How frequently you purchase sportswear brands (such as Nike, Adidas, Reebok, and others) once you need a particular sportswear product?

    A. Always
    B. Usually
    C. Sometimes
    D. Never

Appendix 2: Sources of Questionnaire

Section I	
To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products have a positive association towards a specific sportswear brand in Azerbaijan?	
To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products are capable of recognizing sportswear brand via means of its brand elements?	
To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products have a positive perception about worthiness of particular sportswear product in your mind?	Sharma et al., 2021
To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products prefer a specific brand over others?	
To what extent do you agree that you as a customer of sportswear products have perceptions about quality of a specific sportswear brand?	
Section II	
Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company provide an opportunity for you to recognize your need for a particular sportswear product?	
Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company provide information for you while purchasing a particular sportswear product in purchasing process?	Perera and Dissanayake, 2013.
Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company enables you to compare the available alternative sportswear products in the purchasing process?	
Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company leads you to purchase a specific sportswear brand in the purchasing process?	

Do you agree that brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) of a particular sportswear manufacturing company leads you to repurchase the sportswear products of the respective brand for satisfying your other unsatisfied needs?	
Do you agree than brand elements (including its symbol, image, name, logo, advertising, performance promises and others) motivates you to recommend the relevant brand to others?	

Appendix 3: Data Analysis Outputs
Appendix 3a: Demographic Analysis

gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	102	65.0	65.0	65.0
	1	55	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	157	100.0	100.0	

age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	19	12.1	12.1	12.1
	2	73	46.5	46.5	58.6
	3	56	35.7	35.7	94.3
	4	9	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	157	100.0	100.0	

brandpurchase

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	63	40.1	40.1	40.1
	2	70	44.6	44.6	84.7
	3	5	3.2	3.2	87.9
	4	10	6.4	6.4	94.3
	5	9	5.7	5.7	100.0

Total	157	100.0	100.0

Appendix 3b: Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.873	11

Appendix 3c: Regression Analysis

First Model

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.922[a]	.851	.846	.368	1.807

a. Predictors: (Constant), perceivedquality, brandpreference, brandawareness, brandimage, brandloyalty

b. Dependent Variable: problemrecognition

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.021	.079		-.262	.794
	brandloyalty	.060	.061	.060	.983	.327
	brandawareness	.286	.050	.290	5.731	.000
	brandimage	.143	.056	.138	2.538	.012
	brandpreference	.577	.064	.549	8.952	.000
	perceivedquality	-.033	.040	-.034	-.835	.405

a. Dependent Variable: problemrecognition

Second Model

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson

1	.931[a]	.866	.862	.345	1.773

a. Predictors: (Constant), perceivedquality, brandpreference,
brandawareness, brandimage, brandloyalty
b. Dependent Variable: informationsearch

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.030	.074		.403	.688
	brandloyalty	.378	.057	.381	6.638	.000
	brandawareness	.180	.047	.184	3.856	.000
	brandimage	.341	.053	.334	6.473	.000
	brandpreference	.155	.060	.149	2.566	.011
	perceivedquality	-.022	.037	-.023	-.596	.552

a. Dependent Variable: informationsearch

Third Model

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.917[a]	.840	.835	.374	1.907

a. Predictors: (Constant), perceivedquality, brandpreference,
brandawareness, brandimage, brandloyalty
b. Dependent Variable: alternativeevaluation

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.069	.080		.860	.391
	brandloyalty	.380	.062	.387	6.165	.000
	brandawareness	.163	.051	.168	3.219	.002
	brandimage	.305	.057	.301	5.343	.000
	brandpreference	.134	.065	.129	2.043	.043
	perceivedquality	.040	.040	.042	1.003	.318

a. Dependent Variable: alternativeevaluation

Fourth Model

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.905[a]	.819	.813	.408	1.993

a. Predictors: (Constant), perceivedquality, brandpreference, brandawareness, brandimage, brandloyalty

b. Dependent Variable: purchasedecision

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.004	.087		-.049	.961
	brandloyalty	.203	.067	.202	3.021	.003
	brandawareness	.449	.055	.452	8.126	.000
	brandimage	.224	.062	.216	3.599	.000
	brandpreference	.138	.071	.130	1.931	.055
	perceivedquality	.009	.044	.009	.203	.840

a. Dependent Variable: purchasedecision

Fifth Model

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.902[a]	.814	.807	.404	2.016

a. Predictors: (Constant), perceivedquality, brandpreference, brandawareness, brandimage, brandloyalty

b. Dependent Variable: repeatpurchase

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.044	.086		-.512	.610
	brandloyalty	.228	.067	.233	3.435	.001
	brandawareness	.089	.055	.092	1.622	.107
	brandimage	.364	.062	.360	5.906	.000
	brandpreference	.259	.071	.251	3.670	.000
	perceivedquality	.080	.043	.083	1.850	.066

a. Dependent Variable: repeatpurchase

Sixth Model

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.904[a]	.817	.811	.395	1.893

a. Predictors: (Constant), perceivedquality, brandpreference, brandawareness, brandimage, brandloyalty
b. Dependent Variable: recommendothers

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.008	.084		-.098	.922
	brandloyalty	.277	.065	.287	4.265	.000
	brandawareness	.149	.053	.156	2.783	.006
	brandimage	.258	.060	.259	4.284	.000
	brandpreference	.258	.069	.253	3.729	.000
	perceivedquality	.065	.042	.068	1.528	.129

a. Dependent Variable: recommendothers

Appendix 3d: Independent T-Test

Independent T-Test for gender in branding elements
Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
brandloyalty	0	102	1.81	.920	.091
	1	55	2.02	1.027	.139
brandawareness	0	102	1.83	.976	.097
	1	55	2.05	1.044	.141
brandimage	0	102	1.85	.959	.095
	1	55	1.95	.970	.131
brandpreference	0	102	2.05	.932	.175
	1	55	2.26	0.961	.121
perceivedquality	0	102	2.01	.980	.097
	1	55	1.87	.982	.132

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	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
brandloyalty	Equal variances assumed	.089	.766	-1.275	155	.204	-.204	.160	-.521	.112
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.233	100.725	.220	-.204	.166	-.533	.124
brandawareness	Equal variances assumed	.069	.793	-1.322	155	.188	-.221	.167	-.552	.109
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.296	104.478	.198	-.221	.171	-.560	.117
brandimage	Equal variances assumed	.033	.857	-.574	155	.566	-.093	.161	-.411	.226
	Equal variances not assumed			-.572	109.565	.568	-.093	.162	-.413	.228

brandpreference	Equal variances assumed	3.404	.047	-2.256	155	.798	-.039	.152	-.340	.262
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.245	97.032	.807	-.039	.159	-.355	.277
perceivedquality	Equal variances assumed	1.351	.247	.835	155	.405	.137	.164	-.187	.461
	Equal variances not assumed			.835	110.491	.406	.137	.164	-.188	.462

Independent T-Test for gender in decision-making process

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
problemrecognition	0	102	1.83	.917	.0815
	1	55	2.17	1.052	.935
informationsearch	0	102	1.97	.906	.090
	1	55	2.05	1.044	.141
alternativeevaluation	0	102	2.04	.943	.093
	1	55	2.04	1.036	.140
purchasedecision	0	102	1.93	.915	.091
	1	55	2.02	1.080	.146
repeatpurchase	0	102	1.98	.985	.098
	1	55	1.95	.970	.131
recommendothers	0	102	1.97	.917	.091
	1	55	1.96	.962	.130

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
problemrecognition	Equal variances assumed	4.022	.047	-.532	155	.595	-.084	.158	-.395	.228
	Equal variances not assumed			-.498	91.706	.620	-.084	.169	-.419	.251
informationsearch	Equal variances assumed	2.372	.126	-.525	155	.600	-.084	.160	-.400	.232
	Equal variances not assumed			-.503	98.130	.616	-.084	.167	-.415	.247
alternativeevaluation	Equal variances assumed	1.494	.223	.017	155	.986	.003	.163	-.320	.326
	Equal variances not assumed			.017	102.166	.986	.003	.168	-.330	.336

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
purchasedecision	Equal variances assumed	2.000	.159	-.532	155	.596	-.087	.163	-.409	.236
	Equal variances not assumed			-.506	96.170	.614	-.087	.171	-.427	.254
repeatpurchase	Equal variances assumed	.345	.558	.213	155	.831	.035	.164	-.289	.359
	Equal variances not assumed			.214	112.157	.831	.035	.163	-.288	.358
recommendothers	Equal variances assumed	.425	.516	.045	155	.965	.007	.156	-.301	.315
	Equal variances not assumed			.044	106.275	.965	.007	.158	-.307	.321

Independent T-test for employment in branding elements

Group Statistics

	employment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
brandloyalty	1	91	1.74	.839	.078
	2	66	2.29	1.154	.178
brandawareness	1	91	1.76	.833	.078
	2	66	2.33	1.282	.198
brandimage	1	91	1.71	.846	.079
	2	66	2.36	1.100	.170
brandpreference	1	91	1.91	.812	.076
	2	66	2.62	.962	.148

perceivedquality				91	1.89	.906	.084
	2			66	2.17	1.146	.177

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
brandloyalty	Equal variances assumed	11.357	.001	-3.252	155	.001	-.547	.168	-.879	-.215
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.811	57.579	.007	-.547	.194	-.936	-.157
brandawareness	Equal variances assumed	17.603	.000	-3.291	155	.001	-.577	.175	-.923	-.231
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.715	54.179	.009	-.577	.212	-1.003	-.151
brandimage	Equal variances assumed	7.057	.009	-3.883	155	.000	-.644	.166	-.972	-.316
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.441	59.600	.001	-.644	.187	-1.019	-.270

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Lower	Upper
brandpreference	Equal variances assumed	9.230	.003	-4.586	155	.000	-.706	.154	-1.010	-.402
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.239	63.578	.000	-.706	.167	-1.039	-.373
perceivedquality	Equal variances assumed	5.279	.023	-1.591	155	.114	-.280	.176	-.627	.068
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.427	60.711	.159	-.280	.196	-.672	.112

Independent T-test for employment in decision-making process

Group Statistics

	employment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
problemrecognition	1	91	1.82	.854	.080
	2	66	2.50	.994	.153
informationsearch	1	91	1.85	.840	.078
	2	66	2.40	1.127	.174
alternativeevaluation	1	91	1.89	.835	.078
	2	66	2.45	1.194	.184
purchasedecision	1	91	1.82	.864	.081
	2	66	2.36	1.144	.176
repeatpurchase	1	91	1.77	.828	.077
	2	66	2.50	1.153	.178
recommendothers	1	91	1.78	.803	.075
	2	66	2.48	1.065	.164

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
problemrecognition	Equal variances assumed	5.830	.017	-4.239	155	.000	-.683	.161	-1.001	-.364
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.950	64.415	.000	-.683	.173	-1.028	-.337
informationsearch	Equal variances assumed	10.707	.001	-3.314	155	.001	-.553	.167	-.882	-.223
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.896	58.455	.005	-.553	.191	-.934	-.171
alternativeevaluation	Equal variances assumed	15.747	.000	-3.325	155	.001	-.565	.170	-.901	-.229
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.828	56.330	.006	-.565	.200	-.966	-.165

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
purchasedecision	Equal variances assumed	8.938	.003	-3.164	155	.002	-.540	.171	-.877	-.203
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.782	58.961	.007	-.540	.194	-.928	-.151
repeatpurchase	Equal variances assumed	10.952	.001	-4.354	155	.000	-.726	.167	-1.056	-.397
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.744	57.164	.000	-.726	.194	-1.114	-.338
recommendothers	Equal variances assumed	7.815	.006	-4.371	155	.000	-.694	.159	-1.007	-.380
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.841	58.905	.000	-.694	.181	-1.055	-.332