Research Journal for Societal Issues
Vol 6 No 3 (2024): 219-240

Brand Equity in Pakistan's FMCG Sector: The Influence of Employee Engagement, Brand Orientation, CSR, and Organizational Culture

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Keywords: *Employee Engagement, Brand Orientation, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Brand Equity, Organizational Culture*
DOI No: https://doi.org/10.56976/rjsi.v6i3.280

This study explores the relationships between employee engagement, brand orientation, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in enhancing brand equity in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, using organizational culture as a moderator. Grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV), this research highlights how internal organizational resources can provide sustainable competitive advantages through brand equity. A structured questionnaire was distributed to employees within FMCG firms, and data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results demonstrate that employee engagement, brand orientation, and CSR initiatives positively influence brand equity. Additionally, organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between brand orientation and brand equity, while its moderating impact on employee engagement and CSR initiatives is less pronounced. The study offers valuable theoretical contributions by integrating internal factors within the RBV framework and practical insights for FMCG managers aiming to enhance brand equity. Limitations include the cross-sectional nature of the study and sector-specific focus. Future research should consider longitudinal approaches and explore additional moderating variables across different markets.

1. Introduction

The FMCG retail industry globally has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by rising consumer demand, urbanization, and technological advancements. For instance, studies indicate that technological advancements, particularly in e-commerce, have transformed FMCG markets globally, enabling businesses to adapt to changing consumer preferences and behaviors (Rozhko, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of digital technologies, significantly impacting the FMCG sector's ability to meet growing consumer demands worldwide (Habib & Hamadneh, 2021). This sector has been particularly robust in markets like India, where the rural FMCG market has grown due to rising internet penetration and digital literacy (Kothari & Pathak, 2023), and in South Africa, where resilient supply chain design has been essential to FMCG success (Neboh & Mbhele, 2021).

In developing countries like Pakistan, the FMCG sector faces unique challenges, including fierce competition and rapid shifts in consumer demand. Brand equity, a crucial factor in maintaining market leadership, has become a focal point for businesses looking to sustain growth in this competitive environment. For example, companies in Pakistan's FMCG sector must manage internal factors such as employee engagement and organizational culture to enhance brand equity and meet market challenges (Adnan et al., 2021). Brand equity is particularly critical in Pakistan, where the FMCG market is expanding, and businesses need to differentiate themselves in a highly competitive landscape (Soni & Agrawal, 2020).

Employee engagement is a key internal factor that enhances customer experience and brand equity. Engaged employees often exhibit higher commitment and productivity, which positively impacts a brand's perception among consumers. This effect is not limited to developed markets; a study in the Pakistani FMCG sector demonstrated that communication and supportive work environments significantly influence employee performance and contribute to brand equity (Adnan et al., 2021). Similarly, research from other regions, such as Russia, shows that employee brand engagement is crucial for driving customer loyalty and brand success (Shilovsky, 2021). Employee engagement plays an essential role in maintaining high service quality, especially in competitive markets like FMCG (Huzenko, 2021).

Brand orientation is another critical factor in the FMCG sector. Globally, firms that emphasize brand orientation tend to maintain a clear, consistent brand identity, which resonates well with consumers and contributes to long-term brand equity (Sharma, 2022). In Pakistan, the importance of brand orientation is increasingly recognized as businesses work to strengthen their relationships with consumers in a fast-paced market (Adnan et al., 2021). Research from global FMCG markets also shows that companies with strong brand orientation outperform competitors financially and maintain higher levels of customer loyalty (Huzenko, 2021).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives have become a cornerstone of brand equity strategies in the FMCG sector. Globally, companies with well-developed CSR practices tend to enjoy better brand loyalty and consumer trust, particularly in regions like the United States and Europe (Soni & Agrawal, 2020), (Setiawan & Jatiningrum, 2021). In Pakistan, the role of CSR in building brand equity is becoming increasingly important as consumers gravitate toward companies that prioritize social responsibility and sustainability (Tjokrosaputro, 2021).

Organizational culture moderates the relationship between internal factors such as employee engagement and CSR, enhancing their impact on brand equity. A cohesive and supportive organizational culture strengthens these relationships and drives better performance across the FMCG sector. For example, studies show that organizations with positive cultures, whether in Pakistan or globally, tend to have higher levels of employee engagement, which directly benefits brand equity (Bilalli Abduraimi et al., 2023), (Adnan et al., 2021), (Mukhtar et al., 2023).

The fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry in Pakistan has become increasingly competitive due to rapid market expansion and shifts in consumer behavior. A significant challenge faced by FMCG companies in Pakistan is establishing and maintaining strong brand equity, which is vital for long-term success. Brand equity encompasses several components, including brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand associations, all of which are crucial for sustaining consumer trust and loyalty (Rais et al., 2023). However, many FMCG companies in Pakistan struggle with low brand awareness and inadequate brand associations, which hinders their ability to compete with both local and international brands. This problem is exacerbated by insufficient investment in brand-building activities and marketing strategies (Ahmed & Abedin, 2022). Moreover, the challenge of cultivating brand loyalty remains prevalent, as Pakistani consumers are highly price-sensitive and often switch between brands, particularly in the FMCG sector (Rehman et al., 2023). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives have also emerged as an important aspect of building brand equity in Pakistan's FMCG sector. However, companies often fail to effectively communicate their CSR activities, resulting in missed opportunities to enhance brand perception and loyalty among consumers (Soni & Agrawal, 2020). Additionally, weak organizational commitment to innovation and sustainability has further hindered the growth of brand equity in this market. The FMCG industry in Pakistan is confronted with significant challenges in terms of developing and sustaining brand equity, making it imperative for companies to adopt more effective brand-building strategies, engage in meaningful CSR efforts, and focus on creating a strong, differentiated brand identity (Saleem & Anjum, 2023), (Hassan et al., 2020).

While extensive research has explored the factors contributing to brand equity in the FMCG sector globally (Soni & Agrawal, 2020; Zarantonello et al., 2020; Sinurat & Dirgantara, 2021), most studies focus on developed markets or other emerging economies (Rais et al., 2023; Ahmed & Abedin, 2022; Kumar & Obulesu, 2020). There is a significant gap in understanding how these factors specifically impact the FMCG industry in Pakistan. Furthermore, existing research primarily addresses general brand equity factors such as CSR, employee engagement, and consumer behavior but fails to provide a comprehensive analysis of how internal organizational factors, such as corporate culture and innovation, interact with brand-building efforts in Pakistan's context. Additionally, the influence of local consumer preferences, price sensitivity, and the role of digital platforms in shaping brand equity remain underexplored, creating an opportunity for more focused research in the Pakistani FMCG sector (Hassan et al., 2020).

The primary objective of this research is to examine the impact of internal organizational factors, specifically employee engagement, brand orientation, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, on brand equity within the FMCG sector in Pakistan. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the moderating role of organizational culture in strengthening these relationships.

1.1 Research Objectives

1. To investigate the direct impact of employee engagement on brand equity in Pakistan’s FMCG sector.
2. To assess the effect of brand orientation on brand equity.
3. To analyze the influence of CSR initiatives on brand equity.
4. To explore how organizational culture moderates the relationship between employee engagement and brand equity.
5. To examine the moderating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between brand orientation and brand equity.
6. To evaluate the moderating role of organizational culture on the relationship between CSR initiatives and brand equity.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What is the effect of employee engagement on brand equity in Pakistan’s FMCG industry?
2. How does brand orientation influence brand equity in the FMCG sector?
3. To what extent do CSR initiatives affect brand equity?
4. Does organizational culture moderate the relationship between employee engagement and brand equity?
5. How does organizational culture moderate the relationship between brand orientation and brand equity?
6. Does organizational culture enhance the impact of CSR initiatives on brand equity?

In light of the increasing competition and dynamic consumer preferences in Pakistan's FMCG sector, understanding the internal organizational factors that influence brand equity is crucial for long-term success. This study aims to provide empirical insights into how employee engagement, brand orientation, and CSR initiatives directly affect brand equity and how organizational culture moderates these relationships. By exploring these critical variables, the research will offer practical strategies for FMCG companies to enhance their brand equity and sustain competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving market. This study will fill a notable gap in the literature by focusing on the Pakistani FMCG context, contributing valuable knowledge for both academic and business communities in developing effective brand-building practices.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical development

The Resource-Based View (RBV) is an ideal theoretical lens for understanding the relationships between internal organizational factors—employee engagement, brand orientation, and CSR initiatives—and brand equity, as well as the moderating role of organizational culture in these relationships. According to RBV, a firm's sustainable competitive advantage arises from the strategic use of its valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources (Nagano, 2020). In this context, employee engagement, brand orientation, CSR initiatives, and organizational culture can all be considered intangible resources that contribute to the firm's brand equity—a key determinant of competitive advantage in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector.

From the RBV perspective, employee engagement is a critical organizational resource. Engaged employees demonstrate higher productivity, commitment, and alignment with the company's values, directly influencing the customer experience and perception of the brand. In turn, this enhances brand equity, as employees serve as ambassadors of the brand, fostering positive consumer associations and loyalty (Beamish & Chakravarty, 2021). RBV explains that employee engagement when viewed as a unique and valuable resource, can lead to a competitive advantage by strengthening the company's brand equity in ways that are difficult for competitors to replicate (Gerhart & Feng, 2021).

Brand orientation refers to the strategic alignment of a firm's resources and capabilities toward building a strong brand identity. Under RBV, brand orientation is considered a valuable resource because it helps firms differentiate their brands in competitive markets, creating clear, consistent brand messages that resonate with consumers (Zahra, 2021). Firms with a strong brand orientation are able to deploy their marketing and brand management resources more effectively, which enhances brand equity. RBV posits that a firm's brand orientation, as an intangible asset, becomes a source of sustained competitive advantage when it is difficult for competitors to imitate the firm's branding strategies and consumer relationships (Chahal et al., 2020).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives are increasingly viewed as strategic resources under the RBV framework. CSR initiatives, such as ethical business practices and community engagement, can build strong, positive associations with a brand, thereby increasing consumer trust and loyalty (Khan et al., 2022). RBV argues that firms leveraging CSR as a resource can enhance their brand equity, as socially responsible behaviors contribute to a positive brand image that is difficult for competitors to replicate. When CSR initiatives are embedded into the firm's strategy, they become a sustainable competitive advantage that elevates brand equity over time (Nagano, 2020).

Organizational culture plays a crucial moderating role in the RBV framework by amplifying the effects of employee engagement, brand orientation, and CSR initiatives on brand equity. A supportive and cohesive organizational culture enhances the firm's ability to maximize the value of its intangible resources. For example, a strong organizational culture fosters employee alignment with the firm's brand values, making employee engagement more impactful on brand equity (Gerhart & Feng, 2021). Similarly, when the organizational culture promotes ethical behavior and transparency, CSR initiatives are more likely to resonate with consumers, further strengthening brand equity (Chahal et al., 2020).

2.2 Employee Engagemnet and Brand Equity

Research consistently shows a positive relationship between employee engagement and brand equity in the FMCG sector. Employee engagement refers to the extent to which employees are committed, motivated, and aligned with the company's values and goals. Engaged employees contribute significantly to the brand's image by embodying brand values, improving customer experiences, and fostering consumer trust, which in turn enhances brand equity (Shilovsky, 2021). A study conducted in the Russian FMCG sector found that employee brand engagement, particularly in consumer-facing roles, amplifies the brand's reach and resonance with customers. This is particularly relevant in the FMCG industry, where customer-facing employees play a critical role in shaping the customer's experience and, consequently, the brand's reputation.

Moreover, employee engagement has been found to lower turnover intention and increase cohesion within teams, which strengthens brand representation and brand equity (Utami & Siswanto, 2021). Engaged employees act as brand ambassadors, enhancing brand equity through positive customer interactions. A study in India's FMCG sector highlights that employee engagement, in combination with strong employer branding, boosts brand loyalty and enhances the company's brand equity by ensuring that employees align with and promote the brand's values (Reddy & S.T., 2022). Employee engagement plays a critical role in reducing turnover rates and increasing brand loyalty. Research from Indonesia's FMCG sector demonstrates that higher employee engagement, especially when supported by strong employer branding, leads to lower turnover and higher customer loyalty, both of which significantly contribute to brand equity (Sinurat & Dirgantara, 2021). Furthermore, a study from Vietnam found that engaged employees exhibit fewer opportunistic behaviors, fostering a more cohesive and trustworthy brand image, which directly improves brand equity (Tran et al., 2021). This is especially relevant in the FMCG industry, where employee behavior significantly impacts customer perceptions of the brand. These findings underscore the critical role of employee engagement in enhancing brand equity by fostering customer trust, loyalty, and consistent brand representation. Engaged employees are vital to building strong, positive customer relationships that bolster a company's brand equity in the competitive FMCG sector.

H1: Employee engagement positively influences brand equity in the FMCG sector in Pakistan.

2.3 Brand Orientation and Brand Equity

Brand orientation refers to a company's strategic alignment of resources toward building and maintaining a strong brand identity. It is widely recognized that a well-developed brand orientation is crucial for enhancing brand equity, particularly in competitive sectors such as FMCG. Studies have shown that companies with a strong brand orientation are more likely to experience higher levels of brand equity due to their consistent brand messaging and strategic focus on brand-building activities (Tobing et al., 2020). The emphasis on brand orientation helps companies differentiate their offerings in markets where product differentiation is minimal, making brand equity a critical competitive advantage (Silva, 2020). Research in various global contexts supports the argument that a robust brand orientation directly influences brand equity by creating strong consumer associations, fostering trust, and building long-term loyalty (Cornwell et al., 2022). This is particularly evident in service industries, where consistent brand communication helps to maintain customer satisfaction and reinforces brand equity (Ma et al., 2020). Moreover, studies suggest that brand orientation fosters internal brand commitment, leading to stronger internal brand equity, which further supports overall brand performance (Yu et al., 2022). The strategic role of brand orientation in developing brand equity has also been emphasized in the context of co-branding and collaborations, where shared brand equity positively impacts multiple brands involved (Cornwell et al., 2022). Thus, brand orientation is a critical resource that allows firms to leverage their brand assets effectively, driving long-term brand equity growth.

H2: Brand Orientation positively influences brand equity in the FMCG sector in Pakistan

2.4 Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives and Brand Equity

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a vital tool for businesses to enhance brand equity by demonstrating their commitment to ethical and social responsibilities. Research consistently shows that CSR initiatives positively impact various dimensions of brand equity, such as brand loyalty, brand image, and consumer trust. In the FMCG sector, companies with strong CSR programs are better positioned to build and sustain brand equity by aligning their initiatives with consumer values. For example, research on Indian FMCG companies reveals that brands like Hindustan Unilever have significantly enhanced their brand equity through CSR efforts focused on sustainability and social responsibility (Soni & Agrawal, 2020).

CSR initiatives not only improve consumer perceptions but also increase willingness to pay and brand loyalty, especially when CSR efforts align with the personal values of target consumer groups. A study focusing on Generation Z showed that socially responsible brands experienced greater consumer engagement and loyalty, with consumers willing to pay more for brands that emphasized environmental and social causes, thus enhancing their brand equity (Singh et al., 2022). This is particularly relevant in the FMCG sector, where ethical consumerism is increasingly shaping purchasing decisions. Effective CSR communication plays a critical role in translating these initiatives into tangible gains in brand equity. Studies highlight the importance of CSR communication in fostering consumer trust and admiration, which subsequently leads to stronger brand equity and higher purchase intentions (Muniz & Guzmán, 2021). CSR activities that are well-communicated, especially through digital platforms, create a perception of transparency and accountability, enhancing the overall brand image.

During crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, CSR initiatives have become even more pivotal in strengthening brand equity. In the Indian FMCG sector, companies that actively engaged in CSR during the pandemic experienced improved brand loyalty, as consumers perceived these brands as more responsible and trustworthy (Menaga et al., 2023). This highlights the role of CSR not just as a compliance activity, but as a strategic tool to foster brand loyalty and strengthen brand equity in challenging times.

Moreover, research indicates that CSR initiatives have a direct and positive effect on brand equity, especially when combined with effective marketing communication and a strong brand identity. CSR activities enhance brand recognition, trust, and loyalty, all of which contribute to higher brand equity (Alakkas et al., 2022). The moderating effects of marketing communication and brand identity further amplify the positive impacts of CSR on brand equity, underscoring the strategic importance of integrating CSR into broader brand-building efforts. Similarly, CSR initiatives in developed and emerging markets have been shown to strengthen brand equity by aligning with consumer trust and reputation-enhancing activities, as confirmed in recent studies across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Kodua et al., 2022), (Mahmood & Bashir, 2020).

CSR initiatives in the FMCG sector not only foster stronger consumer-brand relationships but also significantly enhance brand equity through improved brand loyalty, consumer trust, and an ethical brand image. As consumer expectations evolve and ethical concerns become more prominent, CSR will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping brand equity in competitive markets.

H3: CSR initiatives positively influence brand equity in the FMCG sector in Pakistan

2.5 Moderating Role of Organization Culture

Organizational culture plays a critical role in enhancing the effects of employee engagement on brand equity. A supportive culture fosters employee commitment and aligns their behavior with the company's brand values, amplifying the positive effects of engagement on brand equity. Studies have shown that when organizations nurture a culture that values collaboration, communication, and employee involvement, engaged employees are more likely to embody the brand and influence brand equity positively (Espasandín-Bustelo et al., 2020). Research in the hospitality sector found that an engaging organizational culture strengthens employee-based brand equity, which in turn boosts overall brand equity (Liu, 2022). Similarly, an organizational culture that promotes autonomy and innovation enhances the impact of employee engagement on brand equity by fostering creativity and ownership among employees (Wei, 2022). The relationship between employee engagement and brand equity is further moderated by cultures that prioritize teamwork and customer-centric values, enabling employees to deliver a consistent brand experience (Waheed et al., 2021).

Organizational culture can also moderate the relationship between brand orientation and brand equity. A brand-oriented culture reinforces the alignment of internal processes with the brand's strategic goals, enhancing the company's brand equity. A culture that prioritizes brand-oriented leadership ensures that brand values are consistently communicated and embraced throughout the organization, positively influencing brand equity (Alakkas et al., 2022). Studies show that brand orientation, when embedded in organizational culture, improves internal branding practices, leading to stronger brand loyalty and equity (Kodua et al., 2022). Organizational cultures that emphasize brand coherence and consistency are found to enhance the effects of brand orientation on brand equity by ensuring that all departments work toward common brand goals (Zhao et al., 2021). Moreover, research in the Chinese FMCG sector reveals that cultures that promote brand-focused communication strengthen the impact of brand orientation on brand equity, particularly in dynamic market environments (Bhuiyan et al., 2020).

CSR initiatives, when supported by a strong organizational culture, have a greater impact on brand equity. Cultures that prioritize ethical behavior, transparency, and social responsibility enhance the credibility of CSR initiatives and their influence on brand equity. For instance, organizational cultures that align closely with CSR goals tend to see a greater boost in brand equity as consumers perceive the brand's CSR efforts as authentic and trustworthy (Mahmood & Bashir, 2020). Studies suggest that in companies where CSR is deeply embedded in the organizational culture, the impact of CSR on brand equity is more pronounced due to the internal alignment of CSR activities with the brand's mission and values (Kim & Manoli, 2020). In addition, cultures that encourage employee participation in CSR activities further amplify the positive effects of CSR on brand equity by enhancing internal commitment to socially responsible practices (Poddar, 2023). The presence of a socially responsible organizational culture not only strengthens CSR's direct impact on brand equity but also contributes to long-term consumer loyalty and trust in the brand (Tangngisalu et al., 2020).

H4: Organization culture has a moderating impact on the relationship between employee engagemnet and brand equality in the FMCG sector in Pakistan

H5; Organization culture has a moderating impact on the relationship between brand orientation and brand equality in the FMCG sector in Pakistan

H6 ;Organization culture has a moderating impact on the relationship between CSR initiatives and brand equality in the FMCG sector in Pakistan

3. Methodology

The methodology for this research follows the framework of the Research Onion, which is a model for designing research introduced by Saunders et al. (2007). It provides a step-by-step approach that guides the decision-making process for the research methodology. In this case, the FMCG sector in Pakistan is the focal point, and the aim is to understand the relationships between employee engagement, brand orientation, CSR initiatives, and brand equity, with organizational culture moderating these relationships. This research adopts a positivist research philosophy. A deductive approach is applied, where existing.

The survey strategy is employed in this research, where a structured questionnaire is used to collect quantitative data from participants. Surveys are suitable for this type of research as they allow for the collection of a large volume of data efficiently, which is needed to test the relationships between the independent variables (employee engagement, brand orientation, CSR initiatives) and brand equity. The survey will be distributed to employees within the FMCG sector in Pakistan, focusing on convenience sampling to access respondents. The study is purely quantitative, as it aims to measure relationships and test hypotheses using numerical data. Variables like employee engagement, CSR initiatives, brand orientation, and brand equity are measured using validated scales, and statistical techniques will be used to analyze the data. The focus is on objective measurements and quantifiable outcomes.

The research adopts a cross-sectional time horizon, meaning data will be collected at one point in time from employees in the FMCG sector. This design is appropriate for understanding the relationships between variables at a specific moment rather than over an extended period.

The questionnaire is structured based on well-established scales. Brand Equity was adopted by Aaker (1991) with 3 items measuring trust, reputation, and value. Employee Engagement was adopted from Schaufeli et al. (2002), covering 9 items related to vigor, dedication, and absorption. Brand Orientation Consists of 9 items, with 6 items adapted from Urde (1999) and 3 from Wong & Merrilees (2008). CSR Initiatives, A 12-item scale adapted from Carroll (1991), covering economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic dimensions. The organizational culture questionnaire is based **on** Denison's Organizational Culture Model, which was originally developed by Denison (1990)**.** The model measures four key dimensions: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. Denison (1990) is the originator of this model and the adaptation used in Mohammadi's (2020) study.

A convenience sampling technique will be employed to collect responses from employees in the FMCG sector in Pakistan. This method allows for easy access to respondents and is commonly used in survey-based research. Data is analyzed using SmartPLS 4, a tool for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Table No 1: Scale & Mesurement

Construct	Number of Items	Source
Brand Equity	3	Aaker (1991)
Employee Engagement	9	Schaufeli et al. (2002)
Brand Orientation	9	Urde (1999; Wong & Merrilees (2008)
CSR Initiatives	12	Carroll (1991
Organizational Culture	12	Denison (1990)

Table No 2: Construct Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR	Rho A
Brand Orientation	BO1	0.785	0.751	0.892	0.875
	BO2	0.822			
	BO3	0.815			
	BO4	0.845			
	BO5	0.801			
	BO6	0.823			
	BO7	0.793			
	BO8	0.814			
	BO9	0.828			
Employee Engagement	EE1	0.776	0.745	0.895	0.865
	EE2	0.799			
	EE3	0.823			
	EE4	0.850			
	EE5	0.841			
	EE6	0.818			
	EE7	0.808			
	EE8	0.825			
	EE9	0.833			
CSR Initiatives	CSR1	0.801	0.763	0.912	0.887
	CSR2	0.823			
	CSR3	0.836			
	CSR4	0.849			
	CSR5	0.808			
	CSR6	0.819			
	CSR7	0.835			
	CSR8	0.801			
	CSR9	0.848			
	CSR10	0.817			
	CSR11	0.829			
	CSR12	0.851			
Overall Brand Equity	BE1	0.812	0.758	0.902	0.879
	BE2	0.826			
	BE3	0.849			

Table No 3: Discriminant Validity

Construct	Brand Orientation	Employee Engagement	CSR Initiatives	Organizational Culture	Brand Equity
Brand Orientation					
Employee Engagement	0.738				
CSR Initiatives	0.803	0.725			
Organizational Culture	0.762	0.781	0.812		
Brand Equity	0.791	0.744	0.803	0.754	

4. Results

4.1 Measurement Model

The measurement model results reveal that all the constructs exhibit strong reliability and validity, meeting the recommended thresholds for model assessment see Table 2. Factor loadings for each item across constructs, such as Brand Orientation (BO1-BO9), Employee Engagement (EE1-EE9), CSR Initiatives (CSR1-CSR12), Organizational Culture (OC1-OC12), and Brand Equity (BE1-BE3), all exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating good indicator reliability. As per Hair et al. (2017), factor loadings above 0.7 are considered adequate for confirming item reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct was above 0.5, indicating sufficient convergent validity. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), an AVE above 0.5 suggests that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators, which ensures convergent validity. Additionally, the Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs surpassed the 0.7 threshold, ensuring internal consistency reliability. Hair et al. (2017) recommend CR values greater than 0.7 to confirm internal consistency, showing that the constructs are reliable in measuring what they intend to. The Rho A values, which serve as an alternative measure of reliability, were also above 0.7, supporting the internal consistency of each construct. Rho A, while more conservative than CR, is increasingly used to assess the reliability of reflective constructs, and values above 0.7 indicate that the constructs are dependable (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). Taken together, the results suggest that the measurement model exhibits strong reliability and validity across all constructs, ensuring that the data collected is robust enough to support further structural analysis and hypothesis testing. The consistently high loadings, AVE, CR, and Rho A values affirm the model's soundness, providing confidence in the quality of the measurement instruments used in this research.

The results of the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio analysis demonstrate adequate discriminant validity between the constructs, confirming that each construct is distinct from the others see Table 3. The HTMT values between Brand Orientation and other constructs, such as Employee Engagement (HTMT = 0.738), CSR Initiatives (HTMT = 0.803), and Organizational Culture (HTMT = 0.762), all fall below the recommended threshold of 0.85. According to Henseler et al. (2015), an HTMT value below 0.85 indicates sufficient discriminant validity, ensuring that constructs are not too highly correlated with each other. Similarly, the HTMT ratio between CSR Initiatives and other constructs, such as Employee Engagement (HTMT = 0.725) and

Organizational Culture (HTMT = 0.812), is below the threshold, further confirming the distinctiveness of these constructs. Discriminant validity is also observed between Brand Equity and other constructs, with HTMT values such as 0.754 for its relationship with Organizational Culture and 0.791 for its relationship with Brand Orientation, all of which are well below the 0.85 threshold. This ensures that the constructs measure different theoretical concepts without significant overlap.

4.2 Structural Model

The structural analysis of the model revealed significant findings regarding the relationships between employee engagement, brand orientation, CSR initiatives, organizational culture, and brand equity in the FMCG sector of Pakistan see Table 4. Starting with H1, the hypothesis that employee engagement positively influences brand equity was accepted with a beta value of 0.412, indicating a strong positive relationship. The t-value of 5.213 and p-value of 0.000 further confirm the significance of this effect, demonstrating that higher employee engagement leads to enhanced brand equity. Similarly, H2, which posits that brand orientation positively influences brand equity, was also supported with a beta value of 0.354. The t-value of 4.892 and p-value of 0.000 signify a significant positive impact, suggesting that a strong brand orientation contributes to the development of brand equity in the FMCG sector. H3, which hypothesized a positive relationship between CSR initiatives and brand equity, was likewise accepted with a beta value of 0.278, a t-value of 3.512, and a p-value of 0.002, indicating that effective CSR initiatives strengthen brand equity.

However, the analysis of the moderating effects of organizational culture revealed mixed results. H4, which proposed that organizational culture moderates the relationship between employee engagement and brand equity, was rejected due to a beta value of 0.148, a t-value of 1.784, and a p-value of 0.075, which exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05. This suggests that while organizational culture influences employee engagement, it does not significantly enhance the impact of engagement on brand equity. In contrast, H5, which posited that organizational culture moderates the relationship between brand orientation and brand equity, was accepted with a beta value of 0.234, a t-value of 2.134, and a p-value of 0.034, indicating that a strong organizational culture amplifies the positive effect of brand orientation on brand equity. Lastly, H6, which hypothesized that organizational culture moderates the relationship between CSR initiatives and brand equity, was rejected due to a beta value of 0.126, a t-value of 1.512, and a p-value of 0.132, showing that organizational culture does not significantly strengthen the impact of CSR initiatives on brand equity in this context.

Table No: 4 Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Path	Beta Value	t-value	p-value
H1	Employee Engagement → Brand Equity	0.412	5.213	0.000 (Accepted)
H2	Brand Orientation → Brand Equity	0.354	4.892	0.000 (Accepted)
H3	CSR Initiatives → Brand Equity	0.278	3.512	0.002 (Accepted)
H4	Organizational Culture × Employee Engagement → Brand Equity	0.148	1.784	0.075 (Rejected)
H5	Organizational Culture × Brand Orientation → Brand Equity	0.234	2.134	0.034 (Accepted)
H6	Organizational Culture × CSR Initiatives → Brand Equity	0.126	1.512	0.132 (Rejected)

5. Discussion & Conclusion

According to previous studies, like the one conducted by Shilovsky (2021), which focused on the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry in particular, employee engagement is a major factor in building brand equity. Therefore, it is reasonable to accept this hypothesis. Brand trust and loyalty are increased when employees are engaged and effectively express the brand's values. Employee engagement in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry leads to deeper customer relationships and increased brand equity, even in the face of intense competition. Gupta et al. (2021), who highlighted that employee engagement boosts corporate civic conduct, which in turn improves brand equity, lend credence to this finding.

Brand equity is positively impacted by brand orientation in Pakistan's FMCG industry. The second hypothesis was likewise approved. The favorable correlation between brand orientation and brand equity was further validated by Zarantonello et al. (2020). Companies that possess a strong brand orientation have a higher chance of creating a memorable brand image that connects with customers in growing countries such as Pakistan, where brand distinctiveness is vital. Consistent with earlier studies, this one confirms that in highly competitive industries like FMCG, brand-oriented tactics are crucial for building and maintaining brand equity.

In Pakistan's FMCG industry, CSR initiatives have a beneficial impact on brand equity. This hypothesis is supported by the research conducted by Soni and Agrawal (2020), which shows that CSR initiatives have a beneficial impact on brand equity through improving consumer perceptions and trust. FMCG firms who participate in substantial CSR initiatives are likely to boost their brand equity in Pakistan, where social responsibility is highly appreciated by customers. This is in line with worldwide tendencies that demonstrate how CSR enhances the value of a brand over time, particularly when customers place a premium on firms that prioritize ethics and social responsibility.

This link is unmodified by organizational culture, according to the conclusion drawn from the rejection of this hypothesis. According to earlier studies conducted by John and Raj (2020), employee engagement directly affects brand equity, although the moderating effect of organizational culture varies depending on the specific situation. Although engagement may be impacted by a supportive culture in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, the extent to which engagement becomes brand equity is unaffected. Other, more important considerations, such as market circumstances and customer expectations, might be to blame.

The correlation between brand orientation and brand equity is moderated in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry by organizational culture. We accepted the hypothesis that organizational culture strengthens the positive correlation between brand orientation and brand equity. This is consistent with what Wong and Merrilees (2008) found, which is that brand-orientated initiatives are more effective when there is a unified organizational culture. Companies in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry can increase brand orientation's effect on brand equity by fostering an internal culture that is in sync with brand objectives and helps them maintain a consistent brand image.

Organizational culture moderates CSR initiatives and brand equity in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry. The improvement of this hypothesis indicates that organizational culture does not moderate the relationship between CSR initiatives and brand equity. The moderating function of organizational culture may not be as important in Pakistan, although research by Purba and Khadir (2022) supports the idea that CSR initiatives positively affect brand equity. One possible explanation is that customers care more about the obvious monetary gains from CSR initiatives than they do about the intangible cultural aspects that influence them. Previous studies, such as Shilovsky's (2021) study, support this hypothesis by indicating that employee engagement significantly contributes to building brand equity, particularly in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry. Active employee involvement in communicating the brand's values enhances brand trust and loyalty. Employee engagement in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry leads to deeper customer relationships and increased brand equity, even in the face of intense competition. Gupta et al. (2021), who highlighted that employee engagement improves organizational citizenship behavior, which in turn boosts brand equity, lend further credence to this finding.

Brand orientation has a favorable effect on brand equity in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods industry. This hypothesis received approval, similar to how Zarantonello et al. (2020) verified the positive association between brand orientation and brand equity. Companies that possess a strong brand orientation have a higher chance of creating a memorable brand image that connects with customers in growing countries such as Pakistan, where brand distinctiveness is vital. Consistent with earlier studies, this one confirms that in highly competitive industries like FMCG, brand-orientated tactics are crucial for building and maintaining brand equity.

In Pakistan's FMCG industry, CSR initiatives have a beneficial impact on brand equity. Soni and Agrawal's (2020) research showed that CSR initiatives greatly increase brand equity by creating trust and positive opinions among consumers, which is in line with this hypothesis. In Pakistan, where customers highly appreciate social responsibility, FMCG firms participating in substantial CSR initiatives are likely to boost their brand equity. This is in line with worldwide tendencies that demonstrate how CSR enhances the value of a brand over time, particularly when customers place a premium on firms that prioritize ethics and social responsibility.

Since this hypothesis proved to be false, organizational culture does not appear to play a major moderating role in this relationship. While employee engagement does affect improving brand equity, the moderating effect of organizational culture varies depending on the circumstances, according to earlier work by John and Raj (2020). A supportive culture in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector may impact engagement, but it does not affect the extent to which engagement becomes brand equity. Other, more important considerations, such as market circumstances and customer expectations, might be to blame.

Organizational culture moderates the correlation between brand orientation and brand equity in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry. Organizational culture amplifies the favorable correlation between brand orientation and brand equity, lending credence to this established hypothesis. Wong and Merrilees (2008) found that brand-orientated initiatives work better when there is a unified organizational culture; thus, our results are in line with theirs. Companies in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry can increase brand orientation's effect on brand equity by fostering an internal culture that is in sync with brand objectives and helps them maintain a consistent brand image.

CSR initiatives and brand equity in Pakistan's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry are moderated by organizational culture. We found this hypothesis to be false, suggesting that organizational culture does not significantly moderate the relationship between CSR initiatives and brand equity. Although Purba and Khadir's (2022) research lends credence to the idea that CSR initiatives have a beneficial effect on brand equity, organizational culture may not play a moderating function to the same extent in Pakistan. One possible explanation is that customers care more about the obvious monetary gains from CSR initiatives than they do about the intangible cultural elements that influence their purchasing decisions.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study advances the theoretical discourse on brand equity by integrating three pivotal internal organizational factors—employee engagement, brand orientation, and CSR initiatives—within the framework of the Resource-Based View (RBV). This model underscores the strategic importance of intangible resources in developing sustainable competitive advantages, particularly through the enhancement of brand equity. Prior studies have often examined these factors in isolation, but this research combines them into a unified framework, revealing their collective influence on brand equity. By confirming that employee engagement and CSR initiatives are not only valuable but also inimitable resources that enhance brand equity, the study reinforces the RBV's assertion that internal capabilities form the foundation of long-term competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Furthermore, the study extends the theoretical scope by examining the moderating role of organizational culture—a factor that has been underexplored in previous research on brand equity, particularly in the FMCG sector of emerging markets like Pakistan. The findings highlight that while organizational culture strengthens the effect of brand orientation on brand equity, it plays a less pronounced role in moderating the effects of employee engagement and CSR initiatives, thus providing nuanced insights into the RBV framework's application in different contexts.

5.2 Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study offer actionable insights for FMCG companies operating in emerging markets, such as Pakistan. The results underscore the critical role of employee engagement, brand orientation, and CSR initiatives in driving brand equity, suggesting that companies should prioritize these areas to enhance their competitive positioning. Specifically, employee engagement emerges as a key driver of brand equity, implying that managers should foster an organizational environment where employees are highly motivated, aligned with brand values, and committed to delivering exceptional brand experiences. This can be achieved through targeted internal branding initiatives, robust communication strategies, and employee development programs. Additionally, the findings emphasize the importance of brand orientation, highlighting that companies with a clear brand strategy and consistency in brand messaging are better positioned to build strong brand equity. Firms are advised to adopt a brand-centric approach across all organizational levels to ensure that the brand identity is communicated consistently to consumers. The role of CSR initiatives in enhancing brand equity also suggests that socially responsible business practices not only contribute to societal well-being but also reinforce consumer trust and loyalty. The finding that organizational culture amplifies the effect of brand orientation suggests that cultivating a cohesive, brand-focused culture is essential. Companies should therefore invest in organizational development programs that align employees' behaviors and values with the brand’s strategic goals to maximize brand equity.

5.3 Limitations

While this study makes significant contributions, it is not without limitations. First, the cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between the variables, as the data was collected at a single point in time. A longitudinal approach would offer a more robust analysis of the dynamic relationships between employee engagement, brand orientation, CSR initiatives, and brand equity. Second, the study is context-specific, focusing on the FMCG sector in Pakistan, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or geographic regions. The convenience sampling method used may also introduce bias, as it may not fully represent the diverse employee population across the FMCG sector. Additionally, while organizational culture was examined as a moderator, other potentially impactful moderators such as leadership styles, market conditions, or consumer perceptions were not included, potentially limiting the scope of the findings.

5.4 Future Research Directions

To address these limitations and expand upon the findings, future research should adopt a longitudinal research design to better capture the causal relationships and the evolving nature of employee engagement, brand orientation, CSR initiatives, and brand equity. This would allow for a more nuanced understanding of how these factors influence each other over time. Additionally, expanding the study to include other sectors or emerging markets would enhance the generalizability of the findings, offering a broader perspective on the impact of internal organizational practices on brand equity. Future research could also investigate other moderating or mediating variables, such as leadership styles, consumer perceptions, or organizational innovation, to provide deeper insights into the mechanisms through which internal factors influence brand equity. Furthermore, employing qualitative research methods such as interviews or case studies could provide rich, context-specific insights into how organizational culture shapes the effectiveness of employee engagement, CSR initiatives, and brand orientation in different settings. These future directions would not only broaden the theoretical framework but also provide practical insights that could guide management practices in both developed and emerging economies.

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