FACTORS CONSIDERED BY CONSUMERS FOR PURCHASE OF PERFUMES / FRAGRANCES: A CASE STUDY OF CONSUMERS IN THE TWIN CITIES OF ISLAMABAD & RAWALPINDI

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ABSTRACT

Perfumes are like cherry on the cake in personal grooming. Perfumes are revered throughout the history. Like many other personal grooming and beauty items, the purchase decision for perfumes is also a complex one comprising of such factors as personal care budget, price, brand, fragrance itself and of course quality of the product. This study was conducted in the Twin Cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi to understand the factors which interplay during the purchase of perfume and are influential on consumers. The outcomes have confirmed that customers are willing to spend their share of wallet if fragrance of high quality are offered with attractive packaging and beautifully designed perfume bottles. If the experience of the customer with any perfume is satisfactory then it will result in repeat purchase and loyalty; the product will be recommended as well.

Keywords: Consumers, Perfumes, Fragrances

INTRODUCTION

To be impressionable and appealing to others create a good personality; doing this requires variety of ways. There is no iota of doubt that man since ages has strategized different ways to leave his impression on others and the use of perfume is historical and integral part of this endeavor. Although, we do not fence the reality that there many ways of choosing how to create impressive image of one before others. It will require a separate article to accommodate all those varied enhancements and standards; but we shall be limiting ourselves to the purchase event of perfumes. We are thus focusing our attention on the imperative factors that inform consumers’ purchasing decision towards perfume. Consumer Buying Decision Process is a complex one and it has many steps which are influenced by factors ranging from Information, Social Factors to Psychological Factors. Of the steps involved in the Consumer Buying Decision Process, we will focus on studying the factors which come into play when consumer is about to make the purchase.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research is conducted to analyze the factors considered by consumers living in Rawalpindi & Islamabad for purchase of perfumes/fragrances. It is hoped that the study will assist in surfacing:

1. Factors which are considered important by the consumers at the time of purchasing perfumes.
2. It is also sought that research will reveal a group or combination of factors which are the most influential for consumers.
3. The combination can be suggested for designing a marketing mix offer which is aligned to purchase behavior of consumers; leading to improved sales and customer satisfaction; specifically for the consumers living in the twin cities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Shaw, R., and Laura (1997) argue that action factors in (consumer behavior models) revolve around the thought process of consumer, therefore to determine factors behind the purchase of perfume, researchers should attempt considering what goes on in the mind of the consumer, as in terms of product categories, product consideration, and abstract causality that is consumer’s perception on the extent to which the considered product of perfume can triggers attraction.

Jim Blythe (2003) argues that understanding the purchasing behavior of consumer is somewhat complicated, consumer’s attachment and involvement with a product or brand are determined by number of reasons and therefore it is almost impossible to nail a definite reason behind consumer’s purchasing behavior. Nonetheless, some consumers have less inclination towards brand than the benefits same product gives irrespective of the brand. In similar fashion, Laurent and Kapferer (1985) developed five factors that could explain consumer’s purchasing behavior. The authors look at the personal interest of the consumer, perceived importance of the product and potential negative consequence associated with a poor choice of product, hence risk importance, probability of making bad purchase, pleasure value derived from the product and the sign value of the product, particularly how closely is the product with the consumer. An allusion to Branning Consulting research, people are more likely to think of their brand as a friend than they will think of their bank which is an unpleasant necessity.

Retiveau (2004) uses different instrument to understand individual different and perception of perfume. Retiveau submits

From an attitudinal and behavioral standpoint, demographic and psychological differences explained independent aspects of motivations and attitudes toward fragrances, but were not sufficient to fully account for the variability in attitudinal and behavioral patterns. Lastly, in terms of fragrance perception and image and personality associations, the combination of both intrinsic sensory characteristics and fragrance hedonic value was necessary to understand patterns of image and personality traits associated with fragrances.

Kotler and Keller (2007) meanwhile surmise from a different standpoint yet somewhat akin, their argument revolves how to fathom consumer’s purchasing behavior. Their argument although can be equally effective in understanding the buying behavior of perfume users. Kotler and Keller underpins problem recognition, (what could have informed the desire for a perfume), information search (about the best of perfume), evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase behavior (the last of course will indicate the extent to which the user is convinced, satisfied or dissatisfied with the product and thus explicable for brand loyalty or discontinuity.

Hoyer and Maclnnis (2008) support the argument that consumers are prone to be attracted to a product or brand on account of how much appealing, eye-catching and attractive models, spokesperson or celebrities reflect the essence of the product or brand. Similarly, research suggests that consumer get influenced by race, being drawn to a product or brand when the advertising model or sale-people share certain commonality appealing to the cognitive disposition of the consumer. Although so many other factors (attractive sources, likeable
sources, celebrity sources, pleasant picture, music and humor) can influence affective attitudes towards a particular product, which does not preclude perfume.

Jobber (2012: 71) concurs to the narratives of top models, celebrity influencing purchasing attitude, giving the fact that these make-to-believe personality have extended their integrity in spectrum of products “from music to clothes to perfume, which are essentially aspiration brands,” and yet argues that consumer’s purchasing behavior is having variety of factors and thus, buying situation is a range of personal influence and some social influences all combine to make up the nature of the relationships that individuals have with products and services.”

While conducting research on employees’ usage of perfume before and after employment, (Dhar et al., 2008) suggests that fragrance carries a strong weight among all factors considered by research respondents, hence, the reason why consumers would prefer foreign brand over local product.

Atul Nayak (2009) suggests that situational analysis should be considered when attempting to understand consumer’s purchasing behavior. According to him, the uncontrollability of situation and need of consumer is potential enough to influence buying behavior. Citing an instance, the absence of a particular and urgently needed product or brand is unavailable in a store, consumer might be forced giving this situation, consumer “may to choose a competitor’s produce.”

Ling (2009) analyses consumer purchasing behavior regarding luxury goods in China, he employs the social psychological theory of planned behavior, which takes into account the inner and external dimension of behavior. The latter leads to the assumption that when trying to pin down the determinant factors for consumer’s behavior, researchers should try understand the extent to which consumers can ‘gain both inner experience value and external social status by purchasing luxury goods’ such as perfume. Besides, Ling suggests that cultural perspective paradigm helps in understanding behavioral similarities and difference, which individualist and collectivist tendency should not be precluded when dissecting consumer purchasing behavior regarding luxury products like perfume.

Amaldoss and Sanjay (2002) agree with Ling (2009) that consumer do not just attempt to fulfill their inner impulse but also ‘social needs such as prestige’, understanding the temperament producers employ different strategies which include ‘exclusive distribution, charging high prices, and limiting production.’

Ling (2009) might have taken into account planned behavior of consumer, Tinne (2011) considers the unplanned factors worthy enough to influence consumer to purchasing a product, be it branded or otherwise. Tinne argues that “discount offer, various scheme, promotional activities, retail store offer, display of product, behavior of sales person, popularity of product, influence of reference group, income level of customers and festival season,” are indisputable variables on consumer impulse buying behavior.

Kunes et al (2011) look at the purchasing behavior of perfume users from a gender perspective as to what really influence the different gender to either choose to purchase or otherwise. The research addresses the role of sales professionals on the behavior of male and female consumers, how effective are advertisements featuring celebrities and models, and the factors that influence male purchase intent for perfume and factors that influence female smell intent for perfume. The outcome of the research suggest print ad featuring either a model or celebrity is irrelevant when a 18-22 year old male is purchasing a fragrance for his mother, while no significant evidence that shows a celebrity endorsed fashion brand fragrance is preferred over a celebrity brand fragrance by 18-22 year old females. Though, 18-22 year old males are more likely to purchase a fragrance with a sales promotion than
females are and 18-22 year old males are more likely to seek sales associate help when purchasing a fragrance than 18—22 year old females.

Rai, M., and Pradip M. (2000) argues in view of globalization and economic liberation unfolding in India. The core of the debate rests on the influence of brand as cogent explanation for the behavior of perfumes user mostly in urban India. Besides, branding accordingly is attached with consciousness and prestige. Such brand consciousness has more to do with the endorsement of celebrities. Although:

Males and females in the age group of 20 to 25 have similar buying pattern and possess two to three perfume bottles for daily use. The adolescents are price cautious and try celebrity brands of lower cost perfumes even though the income levels vary they are more attracted towards celebrity brands. However they are less loyal to a particular brand since they have a tendency to quick switch over. The group is more influenced through their friends and families, while advertisements through television and magazines are subconsciously heartwarming.

Exploring Indians as fashionable people, Borgave and Chaudhari (2010) suggest that the preference and usage of perfumes will have to be placed in accordance with demography, situation, mood and buying motives of the consumer. Although the paper focuses on adolescents between (20-25) preferences for perfumes, yet discovers that gender difference does not change the buying pattern of this age group. Meanwhile, the paper also concurs with the narrative that Indian youth are enchanted to buying perfume on account of price and celebrity brand.

Fah et al (2011) investigate the relationships between advertising appeals, spending tendency, perceived social status and materialism on perfume purchasing behavior among Malaysians. The research outcome delineates a picture which does not totally break from global trend and perception. The outcome shows the willingness of surveyed respondents ready to purchase and spend money on perfume that had high level of advertising appeals, yet influenced by perceived social status and materialism, though their spending inclination is moderate.

Theoretical Framework
HYPOTHESES

Price of perfume, brand of perfume, packaging, bottle design, fragrance, quality, availability, prior experience, recommendations of friends or family, total personal care budget, sales technique of sales person, special offers and promotions and advertisements are various factors which interplay during the purchase of perfumes.

Independent Variables

• Price of Perfume
• Brand of Perfume
• Packaging
• Bottle Design
• Fragrance
• Quality
• Availability of Perfume
• Prior Experience with Perfume
• Recommendations of Friends or Family
• Total Personal Care Budget
• Sales Technique of Sales Person
• Special Offers & Promotion
• Advertisement

Dependent Variable

• Purchase of Perfume

METHODOLOGY

1. Research design: Quantitative methods will be used. Quantitative data will be applied to provide descriptions of the outcomes.
2. Study Setting: Non-contrived
3. Unit of Analysis: Individual
4. Time Horizon: Cross-sectional
5. Sampling Method: Non-Probability (Judgmental)
6. Sample Size: 150
7. Sampling: Samples will be collected from the Twin Cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.
8. Tools and Instruments: Questionnaire will be used to collect data.
9. Data collection: Data, more primary in nature as questionnaire will be used to get responses on key variables. Literature review will be based on secondary data.
10. Data processing and analysis: SPSS will be used to analyze the data; empirical study of data will result in provision of both Statistical Description and comparative analysis.

DISCUSSION AND DATA ANALYSIS

To achieve an insight about the influential factors which affect the purchase of perfume; about 150 questionnaires were floated in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.
Exactly 138 respondents were selected for analysis whereas 12 responses were rejected based on biased answers and as few questionnaires were left incomplete.

The focus of the study remained on those consumers which make their purchase at various outlets. The questionnaires were furnished to bring out the factors which relate to social and economic factors and the interplay of which triggers the final purchase of the perfume. Interestingly, the study surfaced that both genders (male & female), whether they are residing in Rawalpindi or Islamabad, dedicate about Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 2,000 on the average to the purchase of perfume. This amount is spent at regular intervals i.e. less than one month. The intention to purchase perfume is more frequent in Islamabad whereas in Rawalpindi the preference to purchase perfume is more than Body Spray. The affinity of income and spending is very interesting if analyzed for the two genders. The males who have an income level of more than Rs. 55,000 tend to spend comparatively more than the other income levels but the trend is quite different for females. Females, regardless of their income level which means even if their income is less than Rs. 25,000 are more interested in purchasing perfumes.

Further analysis of the data reveals that though females are more interested in buying perfume but they are more price conscious than males. Males tend not to be bothered by price. Analyses of other product related factors such as packaging and bottle design also provide useful insights. Packaging (Logo, Box Color, Box Design, Size, Text etc.) is important to motivate consumers to purchase perfumes; if categorized the explanation on gender basis then female consumers are more attracted towards the packaging than male consumers and males in Islamabad care more for packaging than the male consumers residing in Rawalpindi. The results also show that the consumers are not focusing merely on packaging but also on the Bottle Design i.e. Shape, Color and Size of the Bottle are also important features to the customers. Brand of the perfume has significantly high positive influence on the consumers. It can be rated among factors which has high impact on customers.

Above all, the most important factors among the large spectrum of factors effecting consumer purchase of perfume are Fragrance of Perfume and Quality (Longevity and Durability etc.) – perfume is fragrance after all and that fragrances should last for longer time. Availability of perfumes is comparatively a stronger element to influence the purchase of perfume for customers which belong to Islamabad than the customer in Rawalpindi. It is also ascertained that the Past Experience with any perfume and recommendations of friends, family and colleagues are considered by the consumers at a significant level by the customers while purchasing the perfume. It was also noted that the expertise of salesperson and sales technique used by the salesperson do not significantly motivate the customers. However, further analysis in the same line shows that salesperson in Rawalpindi have more expertise to influence perfume consumers than the salesperson in Islamabad. Special offers and promotional stalls also urge customers to purchase. It is noted equally in Islamabad and Rawalpindi that advertisement guide customers to purchase perfumes but surprisingly, evaluation through data analysis show that female in Rawalpindi are not more attracted through advertisement.

To investigate the correlation among variables, the Pearson Correlation is used. It is obvious that perfume brand has a significant positive correlation with packaging, quality of perfume, availability of perfume, prior experience with perfume, recommendations of friends & family members and special offers & promotional stalls, but having insignificant negative correlation with personal care budget and expertise or sales techniques of salesperson. The packaging has significant positive relation with previous experience with perfume, personal
care budget, bottle design and special offers & promotional stalls, but having insignificant positive correlation with availability of perfumes, expertise or sales techniques of salesperson and advertisement. Moreover, it has insignificant negative correlation with recommendations of friends & family members and quality of perfumes. There is significant positive correlation of bottle design with the recommendations of friends & family members, expertise or sales techniques of salesperson and special offers & promotional stall, but having insignificant positive correlation with prior experience with perfume, personal care budget and advertisement and negative correlation with quality of perfume and availability of perfumes. From all this discussion and the variables being considered to explain the factors those really initiate the customers to purchase the perfumes and the most influential motives that could be used to propagate the sales of perfumes are to improve the sales techniques and give special offers and incorporate promotional stall.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Study has revealed that brand of the perfume, packaging, bottle design are among the important factors for consumers during the purchase of the perfume. However, the ultimate decisive elements are fragrance and quality of the perfume. Any marketer who can come up with a desirable fragrance of high quality and combines it with right type of product elements i.e. packaging and bottle design then we will be confident in guaranteeing any success. It is also noteworthy that even if the perfume has become a success and it is up for recommendations from family, friends and colleagues and customer has positive inclinations due to past experience with perfume, even then marketers must keep on delivering on quality promise.

For future study, the following are recommended:

1. The scope of the study can be extended to other major cities of Pakistan to get nationwide customer trends
2. A study can be made to further probe and explain the demographics of the customers and their relationship with purchase decision of perfumes
3. As the study has highlighted Brand, Packaging, Bottle Design, Fragrance and Quality as major factors, therefore, it is be highly recommended that all these factors should be individually analyzed in depth
REFERENCES


### Table 1.

#### 1. Which Type of Perfume/Fragrance Product do you use most frequently?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Item/ Question</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Perfume</td>
<td>Body Spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Which Type of Perfume/Fragrance Product do you use most frequently?</td>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>57.50%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>40.90%</td>
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#### 2. Personal Income Level (it may include Pocket Money if Not Employed) (Rs.)

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<th>S. No</th>
<th>Item/ Question</th>
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<th>Male</th>
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<td>Below 25,000</td>
<td>25,000-35,000</td>
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<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
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<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
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</table>

#### 3. How often do you purchase perfume?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Item/ Question</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
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#### 4. When did you make your last perfume purchase?

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<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Item/ Question</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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<td>Less Than 1 Month</td>
<td>1-3 Months</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>42.50%</td>
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<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. No</td>
<td>Item/ Question</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Average Monthly Personal Care Budget (Perfume, Sprays, Shampoos, Creams,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lotions, Shaving, Hair Grooming, Make Up, Cosmetics, Visits to Saloons etc.) (Rs.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>If you are purchasing a single Perfume then mostly the price is (Rs.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Price of Perfume does not matter to you when you are purchasing any Perfume</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Brand of the Perfume (e.g. Davidoff, CK, YSL etc.) influence</td>
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<td>S. No</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your decision for buying perfume</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree %</td>
<td>Disagree %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ISILMABAD</td>
<td>64.30%</td>
<td>19.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Packaging (Logo, Box Color, Box Design, Size, Text) influence your decision for purchasing perfume</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree %</td>
<td>Disagree %</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rawalpindi 47.50%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Islamabad 44.70%</td>
<td>23.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bottle Design (Shape of the Bottle/ Color/ Size ) is important factor for you when you are purchasing Perfume</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree %</td>
<td>Disagree %</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rawalpindi 42.50%</td>
<td>27.50%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Islamabad 35.70%</td>
<td>28.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Fragrance of the perfume influences your decision for purchasing perfume</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree %</td>
<td>Disagree %</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rawalpindi 92.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Islamabad 91.00%</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Quality of Perfume</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree %</td>
<td>Disagree %</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rawalpindi 100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Islamabad 95.50%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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</table>
### Longevity & Durability etc.

When you are purchasing perfume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>94.70%</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Availability of Perfume

Influence your decision of purchasing perfume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>32.50%</td>
<td>22.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>64.30%</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Your earlier/ prior experience with any perfume

Influence your decision of purchasing perfume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>78.60%</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
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</table>

### You consider the Recommendations of Friends/ Family Members/ Colleagues

When you are purchasing perfume

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>57.10%</td>
<td>19.60%</td>
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<td>S. No</td>
<td>Item/ Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>You consider your Total Personal Care Budget and it influence on your decision when you are purchasing perfume</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
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<td>Islamabad</td>
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<td>Rawalpindi</td>
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<td>Islamabad</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Expertise/ Sales Technique of Sales Person influence your decision when you are purchasing perfume</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Special Offers/ Promotion/ Stall Activity urges you to make purchase decision for perfume</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rawalpindi</td>
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<td>Islamabad</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Advertisement (Electronic, Print, Viral etc.) influence your purchase decision of perfume</td>
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**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).