Drivers of Value In The Beer Market: Comparing an Imported And A National Brand

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Abstract:

The European brewing industry is a main economic sector and a major activity in the agro food area. While the majority of the product consumption is domestic, imported beer has also increased remarkably in the recent years. This study raises two objectives; firstly to obtain an approximation of the profile of the Spanish beer consumer through a descriptive analysis, and on the other hand, it aims to compare brand equity variables from a domestic brand to an imported brand. A quantitative study is carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire to potential customers, obtaining 281 valid responses. Then, we proceed with an analysis of the variables of brand equity and with comparative study between the two brands in one major European market - the Spanish market-, one domestic-Mahou-and the other one-Corona-imported from México, to analyze differences in brand value from the consumer viewpoint. Our results highlight that Coronate brand has been positioned properly in the market, suggesting that has been able to offer beer consumers a remarkable brand value, and that the consumer is perceiving it.

Key Words: *Beer, Brand Equity, Brand Awareness, Brand Associations, Consumer*

JEL Classification: M31,M30

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1.   Introduction

Today, Spain is the fourth largest producer of beer in the European Union and the ninth producer in the world. The brewing industry is a key economic sector within the Spanish agribusiness industry and beer is considered a beverage for social gathering and its consumption is integrated into patterns of Mediterranean way of living.

Within the Spanish territory there are 6 large beer producer groups, the group Mahou, Heineken España, Damm Group, followed by other smaller brewery companies. Moreover, it should be stressed the presence of the Spanish National Association of Brewing Companies, entity that is composed of the represents all brewery groups in the beer industry. Spanish beer exports amounted in 2010 up to 902.575hl, to reach over the 75 million euros in sales outside the national territory. Nevertheless, if we analyze the total beer consumption in Spain, the data show that over 92% of consumption is domestically produced.

This research aims two different objectives. In first place, obtain an approximation of the profile of Spanish beer consumer, and secondly, to compare the Brand Equity for a national and an imported beer brand. So, this study has been structured as follows. It begins with the theoretical framework, then it sets out the research objectives. In section four, the methodology is analyzed. Then, in the fifth section, we present the results, to continue with the conclusions.

2.   Antecedents and Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Concept of Brand Equity

The brand has become one of the main intangible assets of companies (Keller and Lehmann, 2003). A very relevant aspect is to understand the value of brands, especially from the consumers' standpoint. For this purpose, there are several theoretical models, characterized by the selection of different variables related to consumer behavior, perceptions and preferences (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993). The most recent literature on Brand Equity has focused on developing models for the measurement of Brand Equity, as well as for the analysis of the variables determining Brand Equity (Yoo and Donthu, 2002; Pappu, *et al*., 2005).

According to the literature on brand equity lies in the minds of consumers (Leone *et al.*, 2006), and several authors like Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993, 2007) have proposed models for measuring Brand Equity, characterized by the use of different variables that are related to consumer behavior, perceptions and preferences. Among these theoretical models, there are a number of researches that emphasize the multidimensional nature of Brand Equity (Lassar *et al.*, 1995; Agarwal and Rao, 1996, Kim *et al.*, 2008). Out of all these models there is worth mentioning those proposed by Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993), since they had a great acceptance in the literature (Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Pappu *et al.*, 2005, 2007; Jung and Sung, 2008).

According to Aaker (1991), Brand Equity is a multidimensional concept, which could be defined as the set of assets linked to the brand, its name or logo, that either add or reduce the value provided by a product or service offered from a company to its customers. Following Aaker (1991), Brand Equity consists of five dimensions that are brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand associations -or brand image-, and finally, other assets linked to the brand. Below, we analyze each one of these dimensions.

In first place, *brand awareness* is concept related with the recognition and the recall that the consumer has of a particular brand, as well as their ability to identify the brand in some particular situations (Rossiter and Percy, 1987). The role of brand awareness depends on the level of notoriety a particular brand has reached on the market; so the higher the brand reputation, the greater likelihood that the brand would be considered in the purchase set (Nedungadi, 1990). Other authors, such as Hoyer (1990), point out that that consumers who are capable to recognize and remember a determinate brand within a given product category, are more likely to buy it, because products and familiar brands are usually preferred to those less familiar.

The second variable of Brand Equity, *perceived quality*, it is related to the consumer's subjective response to the different characteristics or attributes of a brand or a product. The consumer perceives the product as a set of attributes that can be used as indicators to infer its quality (Keller, 1993). A high perceived quality takes place when consumers recognize the differentiation and superiority of a brand in relation to other competitive brands. This perceived quality will influence their purchasing decisions and brand choice, by choosing those brands in which is

perceived a higher quality. Following Zeithaml (1988), perceived quality is the overall result of the experience of different stimuli that consumers can use to assess the competitive quality of a brand.

The third dimension of brand equity, *brand associations* –or brand image-, could be defined as the set of associations that are attached to the brand in the consumer' mind (Aaker, 1991, 1996). Following Yoo *et al*., (2000), brand associations consist of the set of images, ideas, facts or any element that has created a strong relationship with brand knowledge. By means of brand associations, companies can differentiate and position their products on the marketplace, creating positive attitudes and feelings toward a brand (Aaker, 1991; Dean, 2004), and this may result in a greater willingness to purchase the product (Yoo *et al*., 2000).

Finally, the variable *brand loyalty* reflects consumer satisfaction with the brand and may generate a commitment and loyalty to a particular brand (Aaker, 1991). Numerous studies have shown that consumer loyalty to a brand is one of the main factors positively influencing brand equity (Yoo *et al*., 2000). That is, consumers loyal to a determinate brand, show more favorable and positive responses toward the brand than those who are not loyal (Grover and Srinivasan, 1992).

Therefore, in our research we propose a model of formation of Brand Equity which incorporates the four dimensions proposed by Aaker (1991), such as brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty and perceived quality. However, our study has taken into consideration that there is lack of research on the influence of Brand Equity on consumer behavior for specific beverage products, and more specifically, the lack of research on the beer market. For this reason, we include the analysis of other two consequences of Brand Equity, namely *willingness to pay a premium price* (Netemeyer *et al*., 2004) and the *purchase intention* (Wilson, 1981), to empirically test them in the beer market.

A high perceived quality may be the basis for paying a premium price for the product or the brand (Yoo *et al*., 2000). In this sense, previous literature indicates that consumers are willing to pay a premium price for those brands that hold positive and favorable brand associations, or for those brands offering a higher quality (Netemeyer *et al*., 2004; Arvidsson, 2006).

Numerous studies show the positive relationship between the dimensions of brand equity, brand preference and the purchase intention (Myers, 2003). This study empirically tests the model proposed by Aaker to the beer sector, focusing on one European mature market. It aims to analyze Brand Equity for a product with great demand and popularity –beer-, by comparing it between a national and an imported brand.

2.2. The country Of Origin Relevance

Consumers evaluate products based on their intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics, such as the country of origin of the product or brand. The concept of country of origin relates to the views that consumers have about the characteristics of products and services produced in different countries (Bilkey, 1993). Many researchers have questioned the importance of country-of- origin image in consumer behavior, highlighting its influence on the overall assessment of the product, as a signal of other intrinsic characteristics of the product which can not be assessed directly (Han and Terpstra, 1988; Yoo, 1992). Additionally, when evaluating imported products and brands -and hence less familiar-, consumers will rely on the brand and the country-of-origin; and especially in those products which mean less consumer involvement and a lower perceived risk (Kapferer and Laurent, 1985; Rao and Monroe, 1989)

Therefore, in international markets, the country-of-origin of a product or brand, is useful as an extrinsic signal in order to assess those product's intrinsic characteristics, such as quality and performance, since consumers have less familiarity with foreign goods than with domestic products (Han and Terpstra, 1988). More specifically, in the food market, consumers use information about the country-of-origin as an indicator of the quality of the imported products (Verbeke and Ward, 2006; Dekhili and d'Hauteville, 2009).

Previous researches show a relationship between the level of economic development of the country of origin of a determinate product and the evaluation of the products manufactured there, so that best evaluations are for those products manufactured in countries with a high level of economic development, followed by products from industrializing countries (Manrai *et al*., 1998). Other authors, like Nes and Bilkey (1993) have demonstrated that products from countries with low incomes are perceived as products with lower quality than those from countries with higher

incomes. Consumers also prefer those products from countries that are culturally similar or like to their own (Cordell, 1991). It is also remarkable the study of Knight (1999), which highlights that consumers prefer goods manufactured in their own country to imported goods, and are even willing to pay a premium price for them. Regarding imported food and beverages, numerous studies demonstrate the existence of differences between countries and that the valuation of these products does not depend exclusively on the country-of-origin, but also on other variables such as the efforts and marketing activities, as well as cultural factors (Usunier and Cestre, 2007; Amine, 2008).

3.   Objectives

Our research pursues two different objectives. First, a descriptive analysis of the beer consumer profile in terms of place, frequency of consumption and most valued attributes in the product. Secondly, this research aims to analyze Brand Equity in the beer sector, and particularly if there are any significant differences in Brand Equity between a national beer brand –Mahou- and an imported beer brand –Coronita-.

For the second part of the research, we chose two brands with good implantation in the marketplace, from the brands cited as those with a higher frequency of consumption. We choose a domestic brand –Mahou- and an imported brand from Mexico –Coronita-, with the purpose of analyzing if Spanish consumers would perceive differences regarding Brand Equity, and even though if they would be willing to pay a premium price for any of them, as well as analyzing their purchase intention for both brands. We obtained a total amount of 100 valid questionnaires for each one of the beer brands analyzed.

4.   Methodology

4.1. Product Category And Brands Selected

This research is based on data collected through a survey carried out among potential consumers of beer, resident in Spain. Data were collected during the month of March 2012, through a questionnaire that was delivered to potential customers via electronic mail. In this first exploratory questionnaire on the Spanish beer market, we included some questions to understand the habits and preferences of Spanish consumers, such as the frequency of beer consumption, the place of consumption,

the attributes and variables most valued in the product and the type of beer most frequently consumed. Finally we included socio-demographic variables such as sex and age. We obtained a total amount of 281 valid questionnaires which were used for the first part of the research, that is, for the descriptive analysis. In this the first questionnaire we also aim to determine which brands the Spanish consumed more frequently, from a number of suggested brands, all present in the Spanish market, in order to select the brands to be analyzed in the second part of our study. The result obtained was that brands most frequently consumed are Mahou –Spanish brand-, then Estrella Galicia –Spanish brand with a large implantation in some Spanish regions-, as well as three imported brands, which are Heineken, Coronita and Carlsberg.

In order to select the beer brand for our study, we used these data since consumers were asked to mention those beer brands they consumed more often. As a national brand Mahou was selected, given the fact that is owned by the largest Spanish brewery company, and regarding the imported brands, Coronita brand was selected. The second part of the study aims to analyze whether Spanish consumers perceive differences in terms of Brand Equity between them. We obtained a total amount of 100 valid questionnaires for each of the two brands.

4.2. Variables and Measurement Scales

In order to develop the measurement scales we used classic Likert-type scales of five points, with 1 being completely disagree and 5 completely agree. First, for measuring *brand awareness* were used 5 items proposed by Yoo *et al*. (2000) and Netemeyer *et al*. (2004), who refer to the global knowledge that the consumer has of the brand, their ability to identify and recognize it compared with other competitive brand. Secondly, the *perceived quality* was measured using a four-item scale proposed by Pappu *et al*. (2005, 2006), which analyze perceived quality as a whole, setting aside the specific attributes of the product category. With regard to *brand loyalty*, we used the scale used by Yoo *et al*. (2000), which assesses whether a consumer is loyal to a brand, if the brand he is asked for would be his first purchase option. Regarding *brand associations*, we considered three type of associations (Aaker, 1996), namely, perceived quality, brand personality and company associations. These items were analyzed using the scales proposed by several authors (Lassar *et al*., 1995; Aaker, 1996; Netemeyer *et al*., 2004). For measuring the intention or *willingness to pay a premium price* for the brand, we used the scale

proposed by Netemeyer *et al*. (2004) and for analyzing the *purchase intention*, we adopted the items proposed by Wilson (1981). Finally, following the proposal of Yoo *et al*. (2000) we included in our research an independent variable measuring the global Brand Equity, that could be defined as the superiority of one brand compared to similar alternatives (Table 3).

4.4. Reliability and Validity Of Measurement Scales

Previously, and before analyzing the results we have obtained in the research, we proceeded to test the reliability and validity of measurement scales. Therefore, reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficients and the test of composite reliability, showing acceptable values of 0.948 for Coronita brand and of 0.946 for Mahou, values that broadly confirm the validity of the measurement scale. Likewise, the reliability of the measurement scale for all dimensions was calculated (Table 1). Our results show acceptable values for all parameters analyzed. If we consider previous literature, the composite reliability indices that exceed the value of 0.5 confirm the internal reliability of the construct analyzed (Bagozzi and Yi, 1989), despite that other authors like Lévy and Mallou (2006) consider upper values in order to accept reliability.

Table 1. *Analysis of scale reliability*		
	Cronbach Alpha	
	Mahou	Coronita
Brand awareness	0.578	0.630
Perceived quality	0.925	0.924
Brand associations	0.892	0.892
Loyalty	0.921	0.923
Brand Equity	0.870	0.871
Disposition to pay a premium price	0.656	0.758
Purchase intention	0.616	0.699

4.5. Sample And Fieldwork

The universe of our study is the beer potential consumers residing in Spain. The sample size was of 281 valid questionnaires and the type of survey carried out was electronic. The fieldwork was developed during March 2012. This sample was used for the first part of the work, that is, the descriptive analysis of Spainsh beer consumer, as well as their habits and frequency of consumption. Moreover, this quantitative information was used in order to analyze which ones were the most frequently consumed beer brands and with more popularity, that we used to select the two brand for the comparative analysis, that is, Mahou and Coronita. For the second part of the research, there was carried out a random sampling, obtaining 100 valid questionnaires from each one of the brands tested. We used an electronic questionnaire, sent to potential beer consumers.

4.6. Data Analysis

In our research we have used two types of techniques and data analysis clearly differentiated. For the first part of the work, and with the intention to obtain a descriptive analysis of the habits and preferences of potential consumers of beer, there was carried out a relative frequency distribution. On the other hand, and for the second part of our research, that is, for the comparative analysis of the two selected beer brands, we proceed with two different analyses. In first place, we developed an analysis of the mean values and standard deviations, which are generally used in classical statistics in order to average and survey populations under study.

In second place, and given the fact that our objective is to research the significant differences in terms of the perception of Brand Equity from the consumers' standpoint, we proceeded to test the mean differences hypothesis for the two independent samples, using the student t statistic and the Levene test for equality of variances. For the statistical treatment of data obtained from the questionnaire there was used PASW Statistics.

5.   Results

5. 1. Descriptive Analysis

In this section, we analyze the data obtained from the beer consumer profile in the Spanish market; and more particularly their consumption habits (Table 2).

Table 2. Sample description

INDICATORS		Frequency	Percentage
Frequency of consumption	Daily	24	8.5
	Once a week	71	25.3
	Several times per week	69	24.6
	Occasionally	104	37.01
	Sometime a year	6	2.1
	Never	7	2.5
	Total	*281*	*100.0*
Place of consumption	At home	42	14.94
	Restaurants	38	13.52
	Bars, cafeterias, terraces	162	57.65
	Discos and nightclubs	21	7.47
	Other	18	6.40
	Total	*281*	*100.0*
Most valued Atributes	Flavor / taste	218	77.58
	Color	14	4.98
	Aroma / bouquet	24	8.54
	Texture	13	4.63
	Alcohol degrees	8	2,84
	Other	4	1.42
	Total	*281*	*100.0*
Type of beer consumed	Pilsner	175	62.28
	Dark beer	8	2.84
	Lager	24	8.54
	Red beer	9	3.20
	Non-alcoholic beer	23	8.18

	Light	7	2.49
	Flavor beer (lemon, apple, etc.)	31	11.03
	Other	4	1.42
	Total	***281***	***100.0***
Age	From 18 to 23 years	129	45.9
	24 - 29	57	18.15
	30 - 39	44	15.66
	40 - 49	30	10.67
	> 50	21	7.47
	Total	***281***	100.0
Gender	Male	107	38.1
	Female	174	61.9
	Total	***281***	***100.0***

Source: Own elaboration

5.1.1. Frequency of consumption

Regarding the frequency of beer consumption by Spanish consumers, we should highlight those who consume it occasionally (37%) and those consumers who consume it once a week (25.3%), as those who consume several times weekly (24.6%). It should be emphasized, moreover, that only a small percentage of Spanish consumers recognize drinking beer in a very sporadically way, with only 2.1% drinking beer once a year and a total percentage of 2.5% admit to not consume beer ever. So we can state that beer has a great acceptance and popularity among Spanish consumers, with frequent consumption.

5.1.2. Place of consumption

Regarding the place of consumption, most of the consumers, up to a 57.65% state to drink beer in cafes, bars and restaurants, while the following consumption places with greater importance are the consumer home (14.94%) and the restaurants (a 13.52%). In fourth place, we should highlight discos and nightclubs (a 7.47%), as well as other places of consumption (6.40%). Although the latest data about the place of consumption, point to an increase in beer consumption in homes due to the economic crisis, the results continue to highlight the consumption of beer outside home, in bars, cafes and terraces.

5.1.3. Attributes most valued in beer consumption

If we analyze the attributes most valued by the Spanish consumer, we should emphasize the great importance of the taste for Spanish consumers, since for the 77.58% state that it is the value or attribute with greater relevance,
next in importance, but to a much lesser extent, the aroma (8.54%), the color (4.98%) or the texture (4.63%).

5.1.4. Type of beer consumed

When analyzing the type of beer that the Spanish consumers demand, the data are revealing, since a 62.28% of Spanish consumers consume pilsner beer, followed far behind by other varieties like beer with flavor (a 11.03%) or Lager beer (8.54%) or even non-alcoholic beer (a 8.18%). These results are also revealing, since only a small percentage of consumers choose the varieties of flavored beer or non-alcoholic beer.

5.1.5. Gender and age consumers' classification

Finally, the potential consumer profile that stands out in our study is that of young people aged 18 to 23 years, with a total of 45.9%, followed by people aged 24 and 29 years (a 18.15%). People aged between 30 and 39 years are up to 15.66% of the total sample, while people aged between 40 and 49 years account for 10.67%, and finally respondents over 50 years of age accounts for 7.47% of total. Likewise, if we analyze the gender of the respondents there is a slight slightly higher proportion of female (61.9%) than males (38.1%).

5.2. Comparative Analysis

5.2.1. Brand awareness

Firstly, as shown in Table 4, we note that the variable Brand Awareness, reaches higher values for all items analyzed for the national brand –Mahou-. This result seems logical, when considering that the brand Mahou is widely established in Spain and being the first national brewery Spanish group, as remarked above. However, we find that for the item Aw5 *I can recognize Corona brand among other*

competitive brands of beer, Corona brand reaches a greater average of 3.88. This finding suggests that is the Spanish brand that consumers easily identify and recognize.

5.2.2. Perceived quality

In relation with the variable perceived quality of the brand, we have obtained higher values for brand Coronita in all items analyzed. We should highlight that for item Cal2 *Products of the brand have a consistent quality*, is achieved a mean value of 3.48 for the Coronita brand. These results may indicate that Spanish consumers perceive that the imported brand offers a quality product in a consistent way, that is, without changes or modifications over the time.

5.2.3. Brand associations

If we analyze the variable of brand associations or brand image, we find some results that deserve some comment. First, regarding the value perceived by the consumer, results show that the brand Mahou has a better brand valuation than Coronita, for all items analyzed. However, average values for both brands are very similar.

Only for item Aso2 *Within the beer market, I believe that brand X is a good purchase*, Coronita obtains a better assessment. In second place, it deserves to be highlighted that for the variable brand personality, imported brand Coronita gets a better assessment for all items in comparison to the domestic brand Mahou. At this point, we should notice the mean average of 3.56 for the item Aso4 *The brand has a personality*, or the mean value of 3.42 for Aso5 *The brand is interesting,* data that may suggest that Spanish consumers perceive the brand Coronita as a interesting and with great personality. Finally, regarding the variable organizational associations, that is, the image that the consumer has about the brewing company, there are no major differences between the valuations obtained for both brands. With the exception of item Aso9 *the Company that makes the brand has credibility*, for which Coronita obtained an average value of 2.98, far above the mean value of 2.12 obtained for the domestic brand Mahou.

5.2.4. Brand loyalty

When analyzing the variable brand loyalty, there is also a remarkable result, as we get better valuations for all items analyzed for the imported brand Coronita. It is quite interesting to remark that for item Loy3 *I would not buy other brands of beer if brand X was available at the point of sale,* the imported brand Coronita gets a mean value of 2.04, in comparison with the mean value of 1.54 that gets the domestic brand Mahou.

5.2.5. Brand Equity

With regard to the variable Brand Equity, which aims to capture the overall or global Brand Equity for a particular brand in a product category, it should be noticed that again the imported brand Coronita gets the best valuations by the Spanish consumers, and more specifically for all items analyzed, Be1, Be2, Be3 and Be4. We should remark that brand Coronita gets a mean value of 2.77 for the item Be1 *It makes sense to buy brand X instead of others available in the market.*

5.2.6. Disposition to pay a premium price

For the following variable analyzed, willingness to pay a premium price, we found that overall mean scores are very low, that is, Spanish consumers have a low willingness to pay a premium price to either beer brands analyzed, being the lower disposition to pay that extra price for the domestic brand. In this point, we must emphasize that the domestic brand obtains a low rating of 1.31 for the item Pre2 *I am willing to pay a higher price for brand X than other brands of beer,* while this disposition gets higher for the imported beer brand Coronita, with a mean value of 1.87.

5.2.7. Purchase intention

Finally, we analyzed the variable purchase intention, and in this case, results show a better assessment also for the imported brand Coronita, in all the items analyzed. It should be noted that for item Int1 *I would buy brand X beer,* beer brand Coronita obtains a mean value of 2.92 compared to the mean value of 2.18 obtained by brand Mahou. Moreover, for item Int2 *Definitively, I would consider buying brand X beer,* again the beer brand Coronita gets a better assessment (2.87) compared to the

domestic brand (2.12). These results may suggest a higher purchase intention to buy the brand Coronita in the Spanish marketplace, compared to the domestic brand.

Table 3: Measurement scales, variables and indicators

VARIABLES	INDICATORS	MAHOU		CORONITA	
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Awareness Yoo et al. (2000); Netemeyer et al. (2004)	Aw1: I have heard about brand X.	4.91	0.417	4.54	0.896
	Aw2: When I think of beer, X is one of the brands that come to mind.	2.90	1.293	2.85	1.109
	Aw3: I am very familiar with brand X	3.93	1.185	3.71	1.226
	Aw4: I know brand X	4.66	0.641		
	Aw5: I am able to recognize brand X easily from among other competitive brands	3.63	1.277	4.25 3.88	0.988 1.338
Perceived Quality Yoo et al. (2000); Pappu, Quester and Cooksey (2005)	Cal1: Brand X offers excellent quality products	3.01	1.080	3.27	1.087
	Cal2: Brand's X products have consistent quality	3.12	1.023	3.48	1.019
	Cal3: Brand X offers reliable and trustworthy products	3.31	1.076	3.37	0.988
	Cal4: Brand X products have excellent characteristics	2.93	1.020	3.17	0.901
Perceived value Lassar et al. (1995), Aaker (1996), Netemeyer et al. (1994)	Aso1:Brand X has a good quality-price value	2.84	0.898	2.75	1.082
	Aso2:Within the beer market, I believe that brand X is a good purchase	2.82	1.058	3.02	1.093
	Aso3:Brand X provides a high value in relation with the price you pay for it	2.73	0.963	2.69	0.961
Brand personality Aaker (1996).	Aso4: Brand X has personality	2.88	1.148	3.56	1.110
	Aso5: Brand X is interesting	2.58	1.061	3.42	0.957
	Aso6: I have a clear image of the type of people who use the brand X	2.12	1.108	2.63	1.237
Company associations Aaker (1996), Pappu et al. (2005, 2006)	Aso7: I trust the company which manufactures brand X	2.88	1.148	2.85	1.017
	Aso8: I like the company which manufactures brand X	2.70	1.059	2.69	0.961
	Aso9: The company that makes brand X has credibility	2.12	1.052	2.98	0.960
Loyalty Yoo et al. (2000)	Loy1: I am loyal to brand X	1.55	0.858	1.88	1.078
	Loy2: If I buy beer, X would be my first purchase option	1.70	1.030	1.90	1.015
	Loy3: I would not buy other brands of beer if brand X was available at the	1.54	0.910	2.04	1.137

	point of sale				
Brand Equity Yoo et al. (2000)	Be1: It makes sense to buy brand X instead of others available in the market	1.93	1.146	2.77	1.246
	Be2: Even if other brands had characteristics that were similar to brand X, I would buy brand X	1.67	0.960	2.62	1.286
	Be3: Although there were other brands of beer as good as X, I would rather buy the brand X	1.63	0.850	2.37	1.103
	BE4: Although the brand X is no different to other brands of beer, it's smarter to buy the brand X	1.88	0.993	2.12	1.060
Premium prize disposition Netemeyer et al. (2004)	Pre1.: The price of brand X would have to rise enough to consider not buying it.	1.34	0.617	2.25	1.046
	Pre2: I am willing to pay a higher price for brand X than other brands of beer	1.31	0.583	1.87	0.991
	Pre3: I am willing to pay much more for brand X than other brands of beer	1.77	1.188	2.42	0.942
Purchase intention Netemeyer et al. (2004)	Int1: I would buy brand X beer	2.18	1.141	2.92	1.266
	Int2: Definitively, I would consider buying brand X beer	2.12	1.080	2.87	1.253
	Int3: I am likely to buy brand X beer	2.34	1.746	2.73	1.285

Source: Own elaboration

5.3. Means Comparison

We aim to examine whether there are significant differences between the two compared brands of beer, the national and the imported brand, that is, between the Spanish beer brand Mahou and the Mexican imported beer Coronita. For that purpose, we will proceed with the test of means comparison through the Levene test. Consequently we will compare the differences for each of the items, analyzing all statistically significant differences. For each one of the variables analyzed, we would consider the following null hypothesis:
H_0: There are not significant differences between the two beer brands.

5.1.1. Brand awareness

In order to analyze how Spanish consumers perceive brand awareness for the two brands of beer analyzed, we start from the following null hypothesis: $H_{01:}$ There are

not significant differences in brand awareness for brands analyzed, that is, consumers have the same capacity to identify and recognize the two brands.

Table 4: *Means comparison for the variable brand awareness*

t mean independent samples	F	*Sig.*	t	gl	Sig. (bilateral)
Aw1 (**)	32.715	0.001	-2.771	68.809	0.007
Aw2 (*)	1.172	0.281	-0.220	117	0.827
Aw3 (*)	1.281	0.260	-0.962	117	0.338
Aw4 (**)	16.251	0.001	-2.578	82.931	0.012
Aw5 (*)	0.046	0.831	1.069	117	0.287

(*)Equal variances assumed

Following results obtained (Table 4), we rejected the null hypothesis of equality of means for items Aw1 *I have heard about brand X* and Aw4 *I know brand X ,*so that we can state that there are significant differences between the two brands compared, Mahou and Corona with a significance level of 0.05%. So, the domestic brand Mahou gets a better valuation for both items.

5.1.2. Perceived quality

$H_{02:}$ There are not significant differences in perceived quality for both brands analyzed, that is, consumers perceive they have similar quality.

Table 5: *Mean comparison for variable perceived quality*

t mean independent samples	F	Sig.	t	gl	Sig. (bilateral)
Cal1 (*)	0.899	0.345	1.271	117	0.206
Cal2 (*)	0.126	0.723	1.915	117	0.058
Cal3 (*)	1.042	0.310	0.279	117	0.780
Cal4 (*)	1.843	0.177	1.382	117	0.170

(*) Equal variances assumed
(**)Not equal variances assumed

We accept the null hypothesis of equal means for all items of perceived quality (Table 5), so that we can state that there are no significant differences between the

two brands analyzed, Mahou and Coronita, with a significance level of the 0.05%. That is, Spanish consumers perceive that there are not differences regarding product quality for both brands analyzed. However, the perceived quality is higher in brand Coronita, if we take into consideration the mean values obtained for all items analyzed.

5.1.3. Brand associations

$H_{03:}$ There are not significant differences in brand associations for both brand analyzed, that is, consumers perceive they have similar brand associations.

Table 6: *Mean comparison for variable brand associations*

t mean independent samples	F	Sig.	T	gl	Sig. (bilateral)
Aso1 (**)	4.544	0.035	-0.462	98.337	0.645
Aso2 (*)	0.007	0.932	1.000	117	0.320
Aso3 (*)	0.042	0.838	-0.220	117	0.827
Aso4 (*)	0.046	0.831	3.237	117	0.002
Aso5 (*)	0.671	0.414	4.475	117	0.001
Aso6 (*)	0.857	0.356	2.391	117	0.018
Aso7 (*)	1.335	0.250	-0.170	117	0.865
Aso8 (*)	0.081	0.776	-0.049	117	0.961
Aso9 (*)	1.833	0.178	4.602	117	0.001

(*)Equal variances assumed

We reject the null hypothesis of equality of means for brand associations for items Aso4 *Brand X has* personality, Aso5, Brand X is interesting, Aso6 *I have a clear image of the type of people who use the brand X* and for item Aso9 *The company that makes brand X has credibility*, because there are significant differences between both brand analyzed with a significance level of 0.05%. In the specific case of brand associations, we can state that the imported brand Coronita obtains a better assessment for these items (Table 6). Thus, we may reject that brand associations or brand image is similar for both beer brand analyzed.

5.1.4. Brand loyalty

H_{04}: There are not significant differences in brand loyalty for both brand analyzed, that is, consumer have similar loyalty to both brands.

Table 7: *Mean comparison for variable brand loyalty*

t mean independent samples	F	Sig.	t	gl	Sig. (bilateral)
Loy1 (*)	3.157	0.078	1.873	117	0.064
Loy2 (*)	0.094	0.760	1.070	117	0.287
Loy3 (*)	3.869	0.052	2.671	117	0.009

(*)Equal variances assumed

(**) Not equal variances assumed

We reject the null hypothesis of equal brand loyalty for the item Loy3 *I would not buy other brands of beer if brand X was available at the point of sale,* for which there are significant differences between the two brands analyzed with a significance level of 0.05 (Table 7). In this case, we can state that the imported beer brand Coronita gets a better assessment, so that Spanish consumer would not buy another beer brand if Coronita was available at the point of sale.

5.1.5 Brand Equity

H_{05}: There are not significant differences in Brand Equity for both brands analyzed, that is, consumers perceive both brands have similar Brand Equity.

Table 8: *Mean comparison for variable Brand Equity*

t mean independent samples	F	Sig.	t	gl	Sig. (bilateral)
Be1 (*)	1.137	0.289	3.835	117	0.001
Be2 (**)	13.581	0.001	4.423	91.426	0.001
Be3 (**)	5.821	0.017	3.995	93.484	0.001
Be4 (*)	0.046	0.830	1.242	117	0.217

(*)Equal variances assumed

(**)Not equal variances assumed

We reject the null hypothesis of equal Brand Equity for the items Be1 *It makes sense to buy brand X instead of others available in the market,* Be2 *Even if other brands had characteristics that were similar to brand X, I would buy brand X,* and for item Be3 *Although there were other brands of beer as good as X, I would rather buy the brand X,* for which there are significant differences between the two brands analyzed with a significance level of 0.05%. In this case, we can conclude that the imported brand Coronita gets a higher assessment for Brand Equity than the domestic brand Mahou.

5.1.6. Willingness to pay a Premium price

$H_{06:}$ There are not significant differences in disposition to pay a premium price for both brand analyzed.

Table 9: *Mean comparison for variable disposition to pay a Premium price*

t mean independent samples	F	Sig.	t	gl	Sig. (bilateral)
Pre1 (**)	12.723	0.001	5.549	77.877	0.001
Pre2 (**)	20.844	0.001	3.567	77.741	0.001
Pre3 (**)	3.887	0.051	-3.331	116.910	0.001***

(*)Equal variances assumed
(**)Not equal variances assumed
***Significance level of 0.01%

We reject the null hypothesis of equality of willingness or disposition to pay a premium price for all items analyzed (Table 9). Thus, we can state that there are significant differences, with a significance level of 0.05% for items Pre1 *The price of brand X would have to rise enough to consider not buying it*, and for Pre2 *I am willing to pay a higher price for brand X than other brands of beer,* meanwhile there is a 0.10% level of significance for item Pre3 *I am willing to pay much more for brand X than other brands of beer.* So, we may conclude that Spanish consumers do not have a high disposition or willingness to pay a premium price for both beer brands, with similar mean values for both of them.

5.1.7. Purchase intention

H$_{07:}$ There are not significant differences in purchase intention for both brand analyzed, that is, consumers have a similar purchase intention.

Table 10: *Mean comparison for variable Purchas intention*

t mean independent variables	F	Sig.	t	gl	Sig. (bilateral)
Int1 (*)	0.219	0.641	3.364	117	0.001
Int2 (*)	0.963	0.329	3.483	117	0.001
Int3 (**)	18.102	0.001	1.394	116.711	0.166

(*) Equal variances assumed

(**)Not equal variances assumed

We reject the null hypothesis of equality of intention to purchase for items for Int1 *I would buy brand X beer* and for item INT2 *Definitively, I would consider buying brand X beer,* with a significance level of the 0.05%. If we analyze the mean values obtained for each one of the brands compared, we can state that consumers have a higher purchase intention towards the imported brand Coronita, and this purchase intention is lower for the domestic brand Mahou.

Using the means comparison analysis, we have examined those items of Brand Equity with significant differences between the two brands. The results obtained show that the Spanish brand Mahou only gets a better assessment for brand awareness, which is coherent since it is a domestic brand with a major implantation in the Spanish market. But on the other hand, it is noteworthy that the imported brand Coronita, gets a higher valuation for the other variables of Brand Equity, namely, perceived quality, brand associations and brand loyalty. Likewise, Coronita gets a better assessment for the overall Brand Equity.

6.   Managerial Implications

This study provides an empirical analysis of Brand Equity in a specific market for a particular product. While Brand Equity has received continued attention from academic researchers and marketing managers, and there is a great abundance of models and concepts related to Brand Equity, there are only few comparative studies

based on empirical data. The value and originality of this study resides precisely in the comparative analysis, based on actual data.

From our study arise three business implications. First implication is related with the product attribute that Spanish consumer value the most, flavor and taste. Company managers of brewery companies should consider this result to focus their efforts on this particular product attribute- taste-, when designing and implementing communication and advertising campaigns. In second place, beer marketing managers should focus their marketing efforts in strengthening the Brand Equity of their products, since a high Brand Equity leads to a higher purchase intention and a better willingness to pay a premium price for the brand (Netemeyer *et al*., 2004).

The marketing managers of the brewing industry should give special emphasis on those dimensions that have been worse valued by Spanish consumers, that is, brand loyalty and the overall Brand Equity. For this reason, some marketing actions would be desirable, aiming to enhance beer brand loyalty. Third and finally, the better assessment of the imported beer brand Coronita, suggests that marketing managers of this company have positioned their brand properly in the Spanish market, since Coronita beer brand is preferred to the national brand.

7.   Research Limitations and Future Research Guidance

First, and as the main limitation of this study is the focus on one single market, which makes it more difficult to generalize the results obtained. Secondly, we understand that a further research is necessary to include other beer brands present in the Spanish market, and that have not been analyzed in this study, such as Heineken, Carlsberg, Cruzcampo or San Miguel. In third place, the present research should be broadened in future to other European markets, since there may be country differences in terms of Brand Equity regarding the brewery market. Finally, as future research guidance, we understand appropriate to incorporate the variable country-of-origin as an antecedent of Brand Equity, given its importance in the food and beverage industry.

8.   Conclusion

From the analysis of the results, we obtained a number of conclusions. First of all, it must be considered that this research has a merely approximation character, to both

the Spanish consumer, and Brand Equity in the beer sector. In relation with the first part of the research –frequency an habits of beer consumption- most of the Spanish consumers drink beer quite often and regularly, and therefore beer is a product that has great acceptance and popularity. Regarding the place of beer consumption -and even though the latest data indicate an upturn in home consumption due to the recent economic crisis- it remains being the most important the *Horeca channel*, that is, hospitality sector, restaurants and cafes. Finally, in relation with the attributes most valued by Spanish consumers in beer, we should remark flavor and taste, getting higher assessment than aroma or texture. This last result should be taken into consideration by marketing managers of the brewing companies when developing their communication and marketing campaigns, in order to reinforce and communicate such characteristic of their product; or otherwise, using the flavor and taste as a valid variable for positioning in the marketplace.

In second place, regarding how consumers perceive Brand Equity for the two brands of beer compared -one national and one imported- we can conclude that the imported brand Coronita has a higher Brand Equity than the national brand. It should be stressed that imported brand Coronita, gets a higher valuation for all variables or antecedents of Brand Equity, except for brand awareness. In this point, the domestic brand Mahou, shows a better assessment for its brand awareness, which seems to be quite logical since it is a brand of the largest Spanish brewery company and well established in the domestic market. Nevertheless, results reveal that the beer brand Coronita obtains a better assessment in relation to the brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Even though no significant differences were found in relation to the brand perceived quality; at this point, the Coronita brand has also had a higher valuation. Finally, beer brand Coronita gets a better valuation for overall or global Brand Equity from the consumers' viewpoint.

As stated by the theory, Brand Equity has two consequences in consumer behavior such as the willingness to pay a premium price for the brand, as well as greater purchase intention. The imported beer brand Coronita, also gets a better assessment for the consequences of Brand Equity analyzed. These results are certainly revealing and suggest that Spanish consumers value better the imported brand, and therefore, they would be willing to pay a premium price for it and subsequently, would have a higher purchase intention for Coronita brand.

These results suggest a deep reflection, because if we consider the theoretical foundation, it would expected get a better assessment of the national beer brand - Mahou-for three reasons that have already been discussed. First, because according to the previous theory, the national consumers would be expected to value better the domestic products and brands rather than the imported (Knight, 1999). In second place, because consumers have a better appreciation of the brands from countries more developed (Wang and Lamb, 1983). And finally and third, because consumers have a better perception and valuation of brands and products from countries culturally similar to their own (Tongberg, 1972); and we understand that Mexico, in spite of being a South American country, today has few cultural similarities with Spain, given that is not an European country. Therefore, the results obtained suggest that the expected worse valuation for the the Mexican brand, has not taken place. Quite the contrary, the Mexican beer brand has a better assessment rather than the national beer brand.

Thus, the results are in line with the results obtained by Amine (2008) who showed that in relation to imported food and beverages, there are differences between countries, and that the assessment of these products –food and drink- does not depend exclusively on the image of the country-of-origin, but also on other variables such as the marketing efforts and activities of brewery companies. Therefore, for the product analyzed –beer-, results suggest that the Mexican company has been able to position itself properly in the Spanish beer market; that it has carried out favorable and positive marketing activities, provided that Coronita brand has a higher Brand Equity for the consumer than the domestic beer brand Mahou. That is, the marketing efforts developed by the Mexican brewery company have allowed it to position the brand Coronita with value and personality, and so the Spanish consumer perceives it this way.

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