ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

L'Oréal v. Naeem Waqas
Case No. D2026-3017

1. The Parties

The Complainant is L'Oréal, France, represented by Dreyfus & associés, France.

The Respondent is Naeem Waqas, Pakistan, self-represented.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <ceraveofficial.online> is registered with GoDaddy.com, LLC (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on July 9, 2026. On July 9, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On July 12, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on July 14, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on July 15, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Policy" or "UDRP"), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Rules"), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Supplemental Rules").

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on July 16, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 5, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on August 11, 2026. The Respondent sent an email communication to the Center on August 11, 2026, requesting whether it could still file a Response. In accordance with Rules, paragraph 5(e), the due date for Response was extended to August 16, 2026. The Response was filed on August 16, 2026.

The Center appointed Flip Jan Claude Petillion as the sole panelist in this matter on August 26, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

On August 27, 2026, the Complainant requested leave to submit a supplemental filing. On August 31, 2026, in the exercise of its discretion under paragraphs 10 and 12 of the Rules, the Panel declined to grant the Complainant leave to submit a supplemental filing as the Panel was satisfied that the Parties had had a fair opportunity to present their respective cases and that the case file contained sufficient information for the Panel to reach a decision.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant is a French company operating in the cosmetics and beauty sector. The Complainant has a portfolio of 36 brands, employs about 86,000 employees, and is present in around 150 countries. The Complainant acquired the skincare brand CeraVe, which was founded in 2005, and which is used in connection with skincare products including cleansers and moisturizers.

The Complainant invokes the following trademark rights in CERAVE:
- CERAVE, Pakistani trademark application No. 600258, filed on January 22, 2021, covering goods in class 3;
- CERAVE, European Union word mark registered under No. 016162752 on June 21, 2017, in class 3;

- CERAVE, United States of America word mark registered under No. 3234519 on April 24, 2007, in class 3.

The Panel observes that the latter trademark is registered in the name of L'OREAL USA S/D, INC.

The disputed domain name was registered on September 12, 2025. The disputed domain name resolves to an online store displaying the CERAVE mark and logo and the Complainant contents that the Respondent offers CeraVe skincare products for sale. The evidence submitted by the Complainant shows that the disputed domain name resolved to a website prominently displaying the CERAVE trademark and logo, advertising facial cleansers, offering the CERAVE products at discounted prices for a limited time with free delivery all over Pakistan, and using the copyright notice "© 2026, CeraVe Pakistan". The website at the time of this decision also displays the title "CeraVe Official" and a copyright notice "© 2026, CeraVe Official". Amongst other information available at the disputed domain name's website, the "About Us" and "Disclaimer" pages of the website mention that "CeraVe Pakistan is an independently operated skincare and beauty products" platform/store "managed by HA TRADER" and is "not owned, operated, endorsed, or officially affiliated with the trademark owners of" CeraVe, L'Oréal Group, or any related companies. "All trademarks, logos, product names, and brand names displayed on this website remain the property of their respective owners and are used strictly for identification and descriptive purposes only."

The Respondent was previously named as a respondent in *L'Oréal v. Asia GUL, ceravepakistan, Naeem Waqas*, WIPO Case No. D2025-5452, concerning the domain names <cerave-official.com>, <ceravepakistan.com>, and <ceravepakistan.online>. In that proceeding, the panel ordered the transfer of the domain names to the Complainant.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its CERAVE trademark because it incorporates the mark in its entirety together with the term "official".

The Complainant further claims that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name. According to the Complainant, the Respondent is not affiliated with or authorized by the Complainant to use and register its trademark, or to seek registration of any domain name incorporating said mark. The Complainant further claims that the Respondent is not commonly known by the disputed domain name. The Complainant submits that the website creates a false impression of affiliation by displaying the CERAVE trademark and logo, offering CeraVe products for sale, using the term "official" in the disputed domain name and using the copyright notice "© 2026, CeraVe Pakistan". According to the Complainant, such use does not amount to a bona fide offering of goods or services, nor to a legitimate noncommercial or fair use.

Finally, the Complainant claims that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The Complainant submits that the Respondent was aware of the CERAVE trademark when registering the disputed domain name and intentionally sought to attract Internet users to its website for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion as to source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement. The Complainant also relies on the Respondent's involvement in prior UDRP proceedings concerning other domain names incorporating the CERAVE trademark, which demonstrates a recurring pattern of registering domain names targeting the Complainant's CERAVE trademark.

B. Respondent

The Respondent, Naeem Waqas, contends that the Complainant has not established the second and third elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name. The Respondent acknowledges that the disputed domain name contains the CERAVE trademark and does not dispute that CeraVe is a known skincare brand.

The Respondent states that the disputed domain name was used for a bona fide e-commerce business selling genuine CeraVe skincare products to consumers in Pakistan. The Respondent denies knowingly selling counterfeit products, engaging in phishing or fraud, or intending to impersonate the Complainant. The Respondent further states that the website contained disclosures in its "About Us" section, other pages, and footer concerning the independent nature of the business.

The Respondent acknowledges the presence of the term "official" in the disputed domain name but submits that this does not by itself establish fraudulent intent or bad faith. The Respondent also denies that the disputed domain name was registered for sale to the Complainant, to disrupt the Complainant's business, or as part of a pattern of abusive registrations.

6. Discussion and Findings

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("WIPO Overview 3.1"), section 1.7.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.2.1.

The entirety of the CERAVE mark is reproduced within the disputed domain name together with the term "official". The Panel finds that the addition of such term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.8.

It is well established that generic Top-Level Domains ("gTLDs"), here ".online", may be disregarded when considering whether the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to a trademark in which the Complainant has rights. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.11.

The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving that a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of "proving a negative", requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.1.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Complainant has not authorized the Respondent to use its CERAVE trademark, and there is no evidence that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name.

The Respondent relies on its claimed activity as a reseller of genuine CeraVe products. UDRP panels have recognized that resellers or distributors may in certain circumstances have rights or legitimate interests in a domain name incorporating a complainant's trademark if the requirements of the so-called *Oki Data* test as set out in *Oki Data Americas, Inc. v. ASD, Inc.*, WIPO Case No. D2001-0903 are met. Among other requirements, the respondent's site must accurately and prominently disclose the registrant's relationship with the trademark holder, and the respondent must not try to corner the market in domain names reflecting the trademark. Cases applying the *Oki Data* test usually involve a domain name comprising a trademark plus a descriptive term (e.g., "parts", "repairs", or "location"), whether at the second-level or the top-level; in this way, the domain name itself (as opposed to the site content) is viewed as part of the assessment of whether the use of the mark is fair and merely referential. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.8.

The Panel finds that the Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant's prima facie case. The disputed domain name combines the CERAVE trademark with the term "official", and the ".online" gTLD. In the Panel's view, this combination does not amount to a fair or merely referential use. On the contrary, this composition carries a high risk of implied affiliation because it suggests that the website is an official online presence of the trademark owner. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.5.1.

Moreover, the disputed domain name resolves to a website prominently using the CERAVE mark and logo, including in the title "CeraVe Official", displaying pictures of the Complainant's products offered at discounted prices together with the banner "Huge Discount for Limited Time", and displaying the copyright notice "© 2026, CeraVe Official". The Panel finds that the Respondent's disclosures concerning its independent status on separate "About Us" and "Disclaimer" pages are insufficiently clear and prominent to overcome the strong suggestion of official affiliation conveyed by the disputed domain name itself and the overall presentation of the website.

The Panel also notes that the Respondent was previously the respondent in UDRP proceedings concerning numerous other domain names incorporating the CERAVE trademark. Apart from *L'Oréal v. Asia GUL, ceravepakistan, Naeem Waqas*, WIPO Case No. D2025-5452, concerning the domain names <cerave- official.com>, <ceravepakistan.com>, and <ceravepakistan.online>, the Panel was able to verify the Respondent's involvement in other UDRP proceedings administered by the Domain Name Dispute Resolution Center ("DNDRC"), regarding '.pk' domain names, such as <ceraveshops.pk>. The Panel finds that this undermines the Respondent's denial of registering the disputed domain name as part of a scheme to corner the market in CeraVe-related domain names.

As a result, the Respondent fails the so called *Oki Data* test for legitimate resellers, distributors or service providers of a complainant's goods or services.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith. Among these factors demonstrating bad faith registration and use is the use of a domain name to intentionally attempt to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to a website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the website or location or of a product or service on the website or location.

In the present case, the Respondent does not dispute that it was aware of the CERAVE trademark when registering the disputed domain name. Indeed, the Respondent states that its purpose was to operate an online retail business focused on CeraVe products in Pakistan. The Complainant's registered CERAVE trademarks predate the registration of the disputed domain name by several years.

The Panel finds that the composition of the disputed domain name, combining the CERAVE trademark with the term "official", is particularly apt to create an impression that the disputed domain name is operated, authorized, or endorsed by the Complainant. That impression is reinforced by the website's prominent use of the CERAVE mark and logo and offering the Complainant's products at discounted prices..

On the available record, the Panel finds it more likely than not that the Respondent intentionally attempted to attract Internet users to its website for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's CERAVE trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent's website. This constitutes evidence of bad faith under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.
The Respondent's claimed disclosures do not alter this conclusion. As noted above, the Panel finds that the Respondent's disclosures concerning its independent status on separate "About Us" and "Disclaimer" pages are insufficiently clear and prominent to overcome the strong suggestion of official affiliation conveyed by the disputed domain name itself and the overall presentation of the website. Where the overall circumstances point to bad faith, the mere existence of a disclaimer cannot cure such bad faith. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.7.

The Panel also takes into account that the Respondent was previously found, by several UDRP panels, to have registered and used domain names including the Complainant's CERAVE mark in bad faith. The Panel finds that this clearly shows a pattern of abusive registrations, which constitutes further evidence of bad faith.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <ceraveofficial.online> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Flip Jan Claude Petillion/
Flip Jan Claude Petillion
Sole Panelist
Date: September 4, 2026