

Demographics and Counterfeit Fashion Product Purchase Intention:

An analysis

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Abstract- The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of selected demographic factors on consumer attitudes and intentions to purchase counterfeit fashion products. Thorough literature review was done to deepen the understanding of the concept. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The results describe the influence of gender, age, education and occupation on consumer attitudes and intentions to purchase counterfeit fashion products.

Keywords – counterfeit fashion products, attitude, demographics

I. INTRODUCTION

The increase in the number of fashion conscious consumers because of the proliferation of media has resulted in the increase in demand of fashion products in the market. Consumer demand is increasing due to the pursuit of status goods and the desire of being in tune with fashion and fads (Eisend and Schuchert-Güler, 2006). The craze to own brands has in turn increased fake or counterfeited replicas of the same in the market. While the financially worse off consumers tend to buy cheaper products, such as private labels, non-branded or even fake goods, rich consumers are investing more into products on the opposite end of the price scale (Agarwal and Panwar, 2015). In the developing economies the market with counterfeit goods is growing (Kasl, 2012). Counterfeiting becomes a flourishing industry, especially in Asia. It will not only reduce the profit of global labels, but also does damage to these firms in terms of brand value and brand prestige. Many researchers have discussed this problem and pay their attentions on why do consumers buy counterfeit luxury brands (Wilcox et al., 2009).

Fashion products are, as defined by the American Marketing Association (AMA), a subcategory of a shopping product which contains items that are wanted by consumers for their fashion aspect. These include consumer goods where style holds the primary importance, and the price is secondary (Agarwal and Panwar, 2015). In the fashion industry, for example, counterfeit goods can be found in a number of product items, such as clothing, leather goods, shoes, watches, and jewelry products (Yoo and Lee, 2009). Branded clothes, sportswear, shoes, handbags and watches are still predominant products, when it comes to the question of fake goods in public discourse (Kasl, 2012). It is not surprising since the more successful and popular a brand name, the more likely it will have counterfeits (Nia and Zaichkowsky, 2000). Asia and South America have been suggested as the largest sources for counterfeit and pirated products (Ritson, 2007).

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, original is something that is "initial, earliest, never having occurred or existed before and not copied", while counterfeit is something "made in imitation of something genuine so as to deceive or defraud". Counterfeits of brands are commonly defined as the reproduction or replicated version of the genuine article, usually of a well-known trademarked brand. The copy resembles the genuine article in details such as packaging, colour, labelling, and trademark so as to pass off as the genuine (Ang et al., 2001). Luxury brands are more vulnerable targets to counterfeiters as they are popular with consumers (Shultz and Soporito, 1996). Counterfeit products are considered as illegal, since they are made without permission of the original brand owners. These products copy or imitate the physical appearance of an original product to mislead consumers that they are the same as the originals (OECD, 1998). Such pirated products usually have low quality and are sold at a very cheap price. Interestingly, unlike many other industries, the purchasers of counterfeit fashion products usually know that they are buying a fake product (Triandewi and Tjiptono, 2013).

Counterfeits, especially in fashion products, have long attracted many consumers around the globe. Price is one of the most important issues in affecting consumer intention to buy original brands and counterfeits. Counterfeit products are illegal, cheap, and poor quality duplications of prestigious branded products (Lai and Zaichkowsky, 1999), whereas genuine products are high priced and have premium quality. Many consumers, particularly in developing countries, do not mind purchasing low quality pirated products. For those who love fashion but cannot afford to purchase original designer clothing, having a look-alike product provides them an opportunity to enjoy the prestige of the luxury and popular brand (Triandewi and Tjiptono, 2013). Counterfeit goods presented as real versions of products may deceive consumers (Zaichkowsky, 1995), but for prestige and luxury goods, consumers are often willing accomplices rather than victims of deception (Bloch et al., 1993).

Availability of the counterfeited fashion products like clothes, footwear, belts, wallets, bags, belts, watches etc. at a much lower price than the original versions has prompted the consumers, who otherwise cannot afford to buy the original brands, to buy them (Agarwal and Panwar, 2015). Commonly, consumers purchasing counterfeits of luxury brands are willing to pay for the visual attributes and functions without paying for the associate quality (Cordell et al., 1996). Apart from the economic reasons, there are other factors too that influence the purchase behaviour of the consumers.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature on attitudes toward counterfeiting have examined a host of factors including economic, quality, legal, and ethical issues that shape and influence attitudes of consumers purchasing counterfeits of luxury brands (Eisend and Schuchert-Güler, 2006). Fundamentally, consumers will consider purchasing counterfeits of luxury brands when functional needs are met. According to Cordell et al. (1996) the associated prestige and status symbol that the trademarked brand exudes is a strong propellant for consumers to purchase counterfeits of luxury brands.

The purchase of counterfeits varies across income, education, age, and gender. For instance, in case of counterfeit (pirated) software, Solomon and O'Brien (1991) reported that consumers' age, educational background and family economic background influence the attitudes. However some studies like the one by Bloch et al. (1993) reported that demographic variables do not influence the purchase of counterfeits. On the other hand Cheung and Prendergast (2006) opine that demographics do matter but in an inconsistent manner.

As far as fashion products are concerned females are more likely to be heavy buyers of pirated clothing and accessories (Cheung and Prendergast, 2006). Studies by Ang et al. (2001), Tan (2002) and Kwong et al. (2003) on counterfeit software i.e. pirated software have found that males have more positive attitudes towards piracy than females. Similarly when purchase intention of technical items is concerned the relationship between buying and using behavior is stronger amongst men than women (Moore and Chang, 2006). Cheung and Prendergast (2006), based on 1,152 adult consumers from Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Wuhan, showed that high-income families, people with tertiary education, younger consumers, and males are more likely to be heavy buyers of pirated VCDs and that females are more likely to be heavy buyers of pirated clothing and accessories.

However Bloch et al. (1993) state that demographic variables do not distinguish between the choice groups and there is no significant difference for demographics as far as counterfeit purchase is concerned. Previous studies have reported contradictory findings on the relationship between individual income and the purchase of counterfeits. Phau et al. (2001) and Prendergast et al. (2002) suggested that buyers of counterfeits are not necessarily from lower socioeconomic groups. Kwong et al. (2003) demonstrated that income is not related to pirated product purchase. An increase of income can increase the intention to buy counterfeit brands. Phau et al. (2001) suggested that the poor are likely to spend less than the rich on counterfeit-branded clothing.

Age appears to influence attitudes toward, and consequently the purchase of, counterfeits. According to Rawwas and Singhapakdi (1998) older people are more likely than younger people to exhibit idealistic ethics and stronger business ethics. However, Wee et al. (1995) reported that age did not explain the purchase of counterfeits, especially after controlling for education level and household income.

III. HYPOTHESIS AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this research is to investigate the impact of consumer demographics on counterfeit fashion products purchase attitude and intention. We propose the following hypothesis:

- H1a.) Gender has no impact on the attitudes towards counterfeit fashion products
- H1b.) Gender has no impact on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products
- H2a.) There is no impact of age on the attitudes towards counterfeit fashion products
- H2b.) There is no impact of age on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products
- H3a.) Consumer's occupation has no impact on the attitudes towards counterfeit fashion products
- H3b.) Consumer's occupation has no impact on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products
- H4a.) There is no impact of consumer's education level on the attitudes towards counterfeit fashion products
- H4b.) There is no impact of consumer's education level on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products

The study was conducted in two cities of Rajasthan, namely, Jaipur and Ajmer. A structured questionnaire was administered on a sample of 120 consumers for collecting the primary data. The questionnaire consisted questions

regarding the demographics of the respondents, their attitudes towards counterfeit products and intentions to purchase counterfeits. Snowball sampling was used to reach the respondents. Data was analyzed using SPSS 20.

IV. FINDINGS

Hypothesis testing

The sample age ranged from 20-32 years. 45.8 % of the sample comprised of females and 54.2 % were male respondents. To analyze the different hypothesis, chi-square test was used. Data was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings have been summarized in the tables given below.

H1a.) Gender has no impact on the attitudes concerning counterfeit fashion products

Table 1 summarizes the responses regarding the attitudes of consumers regarding counterfeit fashion products and depicts the chi square results. Since the value of $p > 0.05$ ($p=.988$) we accept the hypothesis. It indicates that gender has no role to play as far consumer attitudes towards counterfeits are concerned.

Gender	Attitude		Total	Chi-Square p-value
	Negative	Positive		
Female	27	28	55	.988
Male	32	33	65	
Total	59	61	120	

Table 1

H1b.) Gender has no impact on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products

In order to know whether there is any significant difference in the intentions of males and females to purchase counterfeit fashion products, chi square was applied on the collected data. Table 2 shows the responses and depicts the chi square result. Since the value of $p > 0.05$ ($p=0.578$) therefore we accept the hypothesis. Results indicate that gender do not have significant impact on intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products.

Gender	Intention		Total	Chi-Square p-value
	No	Yes		
Female	25	30	55	.578
Male	36	29	65	
Total	61	59	120	

Table 2

H2a.) There is no impact of age on the attitudes concerning counterfeit fashion products

Table 3 presents the data regarding the attitude and corresponding age of the consumers and depicts the chi square results. We see that the value of $p < 0.05$ ($p=0.011$) therefore we reject the hypothesis. This indicates that age has a significant bearing on the attitudes towards counterfeit fashion products.

Age	Attitude		Total	Chi-Square p-value
	Negative	Positive		
20	2	4	6	.011
21	1	7	8	
22	2	8	10	
23	11	11	22	
24	3	10	13	
25	5	9	14	
26	5	2	7	
27	5	2	7	
28	6	3	9	
29	5	1	6	
30	5	1	6	
31	5	1	6	
32	4	2	6	
Total	59	61	120	

Table 3

H2b.) *There is no impact of age on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products*

Table 4 presents the purchase intention of consumers, their corresponding age and illustrates the chi square results. Since the value of $p < 0.05$ ($p = 0.026$) we reject the hypothesis. It is clear from the results that age also seems to have an influence on the purchase intentions of counterfeit fashion products.

Age	Intention		Total	Chi-Square p-value
	No	Yes		
20	3	3	6	.026
21	2	6	8	
22	2	8	10	
23	8	14	22	
24	5	8	13	
25	6	8	14	
26	5	2	7	
27	7	0	7	
28	7	2	9	
29	5	1	6	
30	4	2	6	

31	3	3	6
32	4	2	6
Total	61	59	120

Table 4

H3a.) Consumer's occupation has no impact on the attitudes concerning counterfeit fashion products

Table 5 presents the attitude of consumers towards counterfeit fashion products and their respective occupation. It also shows that the value of $p < 0.05$ ($p=0.038$) therefore we reject the hypothesis. This states that there is a significant difference between consumer attitudes depending upon their occupation.

Occupation	Attitude		Total	Chi-Square p-value
	Negative	Positive		
Government Employee	5	1	6	.038
Private Employee	14	10	24	
Student	23	54	77	
Self Employed	2	0	2	
Unemployed	5	6	11	
Total	49	71	120	

Table 5

H3b.) Consumer's occupation has no impact on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products

Table 6 lists the intentions of respondents based on their occupations and presents the chi square result. We see that the value of $p < 0.05$ ($p=0.012$) therefore we cannot accept the hypothesis. Therefore it can be said that occupation does has an impact on consumer intentions to purchase counterfeit fashion products.

Occupation	Intention		Total	Chi-Square p-value
	No	Yes		
Government Employee	5	1	6	.012
Private Employee	17	7	24	
Student	20	57	77	
Self Employed	1	1	2	
Unemployed	8	3	11	
Total	51	69	120	

Table 6

H4a.) There is no impact of consumer's education level on the attitudes concerning counterfeit fashion products

The respondents were divided in three categories of educational qualification- graduates, post-graduates and undergraduates. Table 7 presents the responses of the respondents segregated on the basis the educational qualifications and shows the chi square result. Since the value of $p < 0.05$ ($p = 0.030$) we reject the hypothesis.

Education	Attitude		Total	Chi-Square p-value
	Negative	Positive		
Graduate	29	28	57	.030
Post Graduate	19	10	29	
Under Graduate	11	23	34	
Total	59	61	120	

Table 7

H4b.) There is no impact of consumer's education level on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products

Table 8 depicts the intentions of respondents to buy counterfeit products divided on the basis of their education and also shows the chi-square result. We find that the value of $p < 0.05$ ($p = 0.001$) therefore we reject the hypothesis i.e. education level of consumers has an impact on consumer intentions to purchase counterfeit fashion products.

Education	Intention		Total	Chi-Square p-value
	No	Yes		
Graduate	26	31	57	.001
Post Graduate	23	6	29	
Under Graduate	12	22	34	
Total	61	59	120	

Table 8

V. CONCLUSION

Through this study we find that gender has no influence on the attitude and purchase intention of counterfeit fashion products. Males and females are equally inclined towards counterfeit brands. Unlike technical products and software where males are more motivated than females to buy counterfeits, there is no such differences in consumer preferences on the basis of gender as far as counterfeit fashion products are concerned. This can be attributed to the fact that both males and females have fashion cravings and since counterfeits can satisfy their wants at a much lower price they may equally get influenced to buy them. It is a generally accepted fact that a person becomes mature and more responsible with the advancement of age. We also in this study see a significant impact of age on the attitudes and intentions of consumers towards counterfeit fashion products. We also find students as more positively inclined towards counterfeit products since they have less disposable income and get influenced by peer groups. Despite its contributions, the current study has some limitations. The results are based on the assumption of non-deceptive counterfeiting, i.e. purchase where consumers recognize the product as a copy, therefore results cannot be ascertained for deceptive counterfeiting where consumers are unaware about the copy. There is a scope of future research directed towards exploration of psychographic factors that influence the attitudes and purchase intentions of consumers with respect to counterfeit products.

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