

Chapter 2

Consumer Behaviour Towards Purchasing Counterfeit Products

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analysed factors affecting the consumer purchase behaviour towards counterfeit products, and attitudes effect on the purchase intention of consumers. The considered variables are brand image, social influence, price-quality inferences, novelty seeking, and intention towards counterfeit products. A survey was conducted on university and college students in Lebanon. This research employed a structured questionnaire to measure the attitude of consumers using a Likert scale. Variables were measured using chi-square testing to identify their relationship. Results found that customer behaviour towards counterfeit products has a positive relationship with brand image, social influence, novelty seeking, intention, and price-quality inferences.

INTRODUCTION

Branding of products can be as important as the product itself. Buyers follow brands and favour some brands over others in a way that makes firms begin to invest a lot on the brand of their products. Being memorable and a trusted promise are the characteristics of a brand; it is how certain companies identify themselves in the marketplace to enhance their image and make their goods more desirable to consumers. It is essential for corporations to make their brands notable in the mind of the customers through special logos, words, type font, design, colours, personality, price, and service. In addition, there needs to be continuous work on branding products, not only to keep them marketplace up-to-date but also to global-

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ize their brand names and have positive reputation across different regions. As it has become difficult for organizations to create commitment, involvement, and motivation, which produce brand consistent behaviours (Quarantino and Mazzei, 2018). Brand is the second attribute considered by consumers when choosing a particular product (Ahmed et al., 2012). A major issue faced by companies when it comes to globalization, is the problem of the invasion of imitation product over original and genuine products, these fake imitation come across to consumer as look-alikes with a low price. Commuri (2009) states that the more a firm invests in building a prestigious brand, the more likely the brand is to be copied and then known as counterfeited.

Counterfeit products are widespread nowadays creating a graver economic problem than before. Previously counterfeit products would have different names and styles in a way that they could be easily differentiated from authentic products. The problem has become more serious in the 21st century with illegal manufacturers completely imitating original products using similar packaging, design and brand logo but providing lower quality and price than genuine ones (Kumar, 2015). The problem has even got worse with smart manufacturers copying the product and giving it the same name, providing good quality and a considerably high price naming it as original copy; *“The problem is the fake products today are of better quality and better price than the real names”* Dou (2016).

Counterfeits products can be found anywhere in the marketplace. Though many consumers tend to buy such products, many complain later of their low quality. Nonetheless, demand for counterfeits has dramatically increased.

Counterfeit products have been an organizational problem for more than a decade. Many consumers look for the financial benefit these pirated products can give and ignore the essential importance of the quality. Consumers should be aware that counterfeiting is a federal and state crime towards the brand owners, as it involves manufacturing and distributing goods under another name without the name owner's permission. As a researcher, it is interesting to investigate the reasons behind the excessive demand for these counterfeits.

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of consumer behaviour on purchasing counterfeits and investigate why consumers tend to buy these pirated goods. More specifically, the aim is to know if the price is the sole reason that draws people to deviate from buying original products and purchasing fake ones. Moreover, it is crucial to understand the effect of social group or social anxiety and its importance on the behaviour of the customer in purchasing original or counterfeit products and to explore how consumers desire luxury branded products to feel more honoured, get the impression of others and conform to wealthy people's expectations. The research also investigates whether the best look can determine a good social rank or is tailored to the need for a sense of accomplishment and appreciation from the surrounding. This is in addition to exploring if brand image can help customers feel more self-confident and honoured in their surroundings.

Methodological contribution: This study surveyed people by collecting data using a structured questionnaire that reflects the reality of the problem mentioned. The questionnaire measured the factors that influence customers to purchase counterfeits. Throughout this research, the independent variables (intention to purchase counterfeits) will be controlled and manipulated to know the factors of this purchase behaviour and results will help explain the cause and effect of this relationship.

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