



ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Counterfeit Intentions of Pakistani Consumers: Effect of Personal and Social Orientation on Counterfeit Purchasing Intentions

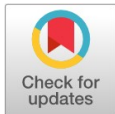
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Abstract— The issues related to counterfeiting and counterfeit purchase intentions have remained a key concern for researchers as well as practitioners in the marketing field. This study aims to assess the purchase intentions of individuals towards counterfeit products by explaining the relationship between the factors: ethical perception, integrity, status consumption, and fashion consciousness. A sample of 334 individuals was surveyed by using a simple random sampling technique, and the data was analyzed using SPSS. The results of the study show that consumers don't consider it unethical to purchase counterfeit products, as most of the respondents have knowingly purchased these products. The status associated with counterfeit products is found to be an important factor. The consumption of counterfeit products is still a new area of research in developing economies. The majority of the previous research has been conducted in developed economies. This study will provide insight into the underlying factors that motivate individuals toward counterfeit intentions.

Index Terms— Ethical perception, Integrity, Status consumption, and Fashion consciousness

Received: 30 November 2022; **Accepted:** 9 January 2023; **Published:** 27 January 2023



Introduction

Counterfeit products are illegal, low-priced, and often, inferior quality replicas of original brands that usually have great brand value. Counterfeits generate a huge amount of trouble for international society; they create a serious risk to genuine companies by threatening novelty, which is a vital source of income and development for a company (Matos & Ituassu, 2007). As counterfeiting is unlawful and prohibited and is normally observed as unacceptable by the common herd, it is considered that an individual who is more vulnerable to social influence will show negative attitudes towards counterfeiting (Islam et al., 2021). Researchers have divided counterfeiting into two distinct categories such as deceptive counterfeiting and non-deceptive counterfeiting. If an individual purchases a counterfeited product without noticing or without knowledge of the violations of intellectual property rights, suggesting the acquisition of a deceptive counterfeited product (Eisen & Guler, 2006). On the other hand, when customers know that they are buying a counterfeited item is recognized as a non-deceptive counterfeited product. As these individuals acknowledged their consumption of counterfeit is not lawful, therefore the producers and sellers of genuine brands cannot be held responsible (Sharma et al., 2022). Counterfeiting of luxury products is common in various countries with different geographical, cultural, and economic backgrounds. According to the European Union Intellectual Property Office, the worth of counterfeit merchandise imports is almost half a trillion US dollars each year (Tunçel, 2022). This is equal to about 2.5% of worldwide imports. This is due to the loyalty of individuals to the trademark and brand name; the manufacturers of counterfeited brands not only challenge the economy but endanger the lives of individuals as well (Basu et al., 2015). Counterfeiting is quite common in most developing countries, particularly the developing countries of Asia, due to the absence of patent laws. In these

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countries, a good number of individuals are fascinated with Western brands while having inadequate budgets. Therefore, buyers in these nations regard purchasing counterfeit products as a substitute for branded luxurious product (Jiang et al., 2019). Some Asian countries, such as China and Vietnam, are known as safe havens for the violators of intellectual property rights (Tseng et al., 2021).

The issue of counterfeiting luxury products is growing with time, and the majority of these products are being produced in countries where legal restrictions are not convincing strong. Even though producing and selling these products is considered a crime, previous studies suggest that about one-third of individuals would knowingly purchase counterfeit products (Phau & Dix, 2009; Rerkklang, 2018) despite the consequences of such purchases. The purchase of counterfeit brands is becoming very common and causing serious threats to a number the industries. In most cases, customers knowingly acquire these products (Vida, 2007). It is, for this reason, that the producers of counterfeit products are improving the quality of these products continuously, and it is becoming more challenging for the customer to differentiate between a counterfeit and an original product. The effect of producing counterfeits is both tangible and intangible, affecting both businesses and society. Businesses not only lose profits as a result of counterfeiting it can damage their reputation and customers' confidence in the branded product as well (Gentry et al., 2006). A decrease in sales due to the purchase of counterfeit products is not considered a key issue, for the reason that those who knowingly purchase counterfeit products have no intention to obtain the original brands (Marckett & Parsons, 2006; Saboor, A., Hussain, M., & Munir, 2009).

As customers' intentions to purchase a counterfeit product are increasing, it turns out to be important to know the reasons that influenced individuals to get involved in the purchase of counterfeit brands even though they are well informed about the quality and material of these products. Previously studies have been conducted in Western and developed countries (Jiang & Cova, 2012, Kapferer & Michaut, 2014, Ha & Tam, 2015). There is little known about the customers in Pakistan (Chaudhary et al., 2014, Sirfraz et al., 2014, Rizwan et al., 2013). This study aims to develop an understanding of Pakistani customers regarding their counterfeit purchase intentions. Issues associated with counterfeit purchase intentions have remained the most important concern for researchers. Particularly, the emphasis of the current study is to comprehend individuals' ethical perception, fashion consciousness, and status consciousness, which might encourage them to obtain non-deceptive counterfeited brands. The study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by testing and validating the hypnotized relationships between the variables. This study further contributes to the existing literature on counterfeit purchase intentions by empirically elucidating the importance that individuals assign to various motives to acquire counterfeited products.

Literature Review

Individuals are aware that it is legally, ethically, and morally unacceptable to manufacture and consume counterfeit products, here, a question arises, then why do individuals not consider before purchasing a counterfeit product (Souiden et al., 2018)? The most obvious reason for individuals to purchase these products is their low price compared to the genuine products, and these counterfeit products are available almost everywhere, whereas genuine products are not (Furnham & Valgeirsson, 2007). Demand for luxury products is growing; individuals purchase luxury goods to ascertain themselves distinctly and communicate their position and status to other individuals in society (Phau & Leng, 2008). As luxury products are expensive and can be easily distinguished therefore, most individuals purchase luxury products mostly for symbolic meanings. Individuals purchase counterfeit luxury products to improve their social image as a result of the explicit acquisition of these products (Mayasari et al., 2022). Luxury brands are an easy target for counterfeit producers because of their high profile and distinctive niche market (Phau et al., 2009). Counterfeiting luxury products is not a new phenomenon; perhaps the most common target of counterfeiting is the currency of every country (Davidson et al., 2019). The manufacture and selling of counterfeited luxury items have turned out to be a major industry international, and few products haven't attracted the attention of those who are involved in this business (Martinez & Jaeger, 2016). With the developments in manufacturing and packaging techniques, counterfeiters cannot produce more undoubted look-alikes. Counterfeited luxury products are indistinguishable from branded products in terms of looks, labelling, packaging, and trademarks; the things which separate the products are price and quality (Ha & Lennon, 2006). Everyone cannot afford to purchase luxury items because of their high prices, and they are accepted and adored by almost every individual. Therefore individuals may be inclined to purchase luxury counterfeit products mainly with the intent to acquire the symbolic benefit associated with these products (Marticotte & Arcand, 2017). Symbolic products are repeatedly being consumed as a source of interpersonal communication and as an expression of an individual's self-concept and need for compliance with social rules and standards (Chaudhury & Majumdar, 2006). The demand for cheap counterfeited products is mounting all over the globe; these goods are providing gratification similar to luxury branded products to those who knowingly purchase counterfeit products (Ting et al., 2016). Undoubtedly, counterfeiting is becoming an economic phenomenon, and it is becoming an international issue and causing a threat to original businesses and majorities of innocent consumers across the world.

Personal orientation

Ethical perception

Ethics are a system of moral values that prohibits individuals from executing immoral activities. The ethics of consumers can be described as "the moral values and criteria that influence their behavior as they acquire and consume the products and services (Sagar et al., 2011). It also refers to the intentions and decisions of individuals associated with purchasing that lead to recognition or refusal from society. When individuals face an ethical issue and when they have to make a decision, then they go through various phases, such as identifying an ethical dispute, forming an ethical sentence, and articulating behavioural intents (Nagar & Sing 2021). In consumer behaviour studies, ethics has drawn the attention of many researchers, specifically regarding the acquisition of counterfeited products (Martinez & Jaeger, 2016). The philosophies of consumer ethics can be measured by two factors, i.e. relativist and idealist, in establishing ethical judgments about an individual. Those individuals who give more importance to trustworthiness and accountability are more likely to possess undesirable approaches regarding counterfeit luxury goods. Individuals with a higher ability to create a justification for their unusual behaviour have shown a greater inclination toward the purchase of counterfeit products (Vida, 2017). Some individuals justify their buying of counterfeit products by labelling their actions as less unethical compared to the vendor (Phau & Teah, 2009). As individuals may have various ethical beliefs influencing their involvement with counterfeit products, therefore it is essential to explore the values and beliefs system of diverse societies across product types (Stumpf et al., 2011). Kim et al. (2009) studied the influences of ethical judgments and the purpose of purchasing counterfeited products and verified that individuals who consider that they might not be able to justify their counterfeit purchase ethically are less expected to purchase the counterfeit products.

Individuals are aware that there is a higher level of societal risk associated with counterfeit products (Bian & Moutinho, 2011). Therefore individuals with a greater moral character do not depend on the opinion of others and have a strong self-identity; they value integrity more, and they are expected they will not to defend themselves against the purchase of counterfeit products (Wang et al., 2005). Therefore, they will consider the purchase of such products ethically inappropriate (Penz et al., 2009). The more an individual considers it unethical to buy counterfeited products, the lesser it is expected that they will purchase such products. Similarly, guilt and embarrassment have a substantial negative effect on the purchase intention of all types of counterfeits product (Ang et al., 2001). Individuals with higher ethical character may be more regretful if others find out that their products are fakes. Consequently, consumer ethical judgment will influence purchase intentions toward counterfeit branded products.

H1: Ethical perception has a significant relationship with the intention to purchase counterfeit products.

Integrity

It is an individual's ethical standard, and those who fall in this class eventually live lawfully. Consequently, fundamental values such as integrity will influence their opinion towards unethical activities. As a result, individuals with higher levels of integrity will prevent showing unprincipled behaviours (Singh et al., 2021). As integrity is adjudged by compliance with the rules and regulations and counterfeit products are prohibited in the majority of the nations, those individuals who consider integrity as vital will consider the purchase of counterfeit products a disgrace and will be less keen to buy those. The intellect of justice acts as a key decisive role during the purchase involvement of an individual. Nevertheless, individuals do not necessarily recognize buying counterfeit products as an illegal act, even though they are endorsing an illegal action (Turkyilmaz & Uslu, 2014). Therefore, it is suggested that integrity has a convincing effect on purchase intentions; if individuals consider integrity as imperative, the probability of them considering showing favourable intentions towards counterfeit brands would be much lesser (Phau & Teah, 2009). In other words, it has been observed that integrity acts as a significant predictor of consumer behaviour; they have shown an inclination to spend extra to buy authentic products. Similarly, Ang et al. (2001) have observed that integrity has a negative effect on individuals' positive attitudes toward the acquisition of counterfeited products.

When an individual feels that acquiring counterfeited merchandise does not result in causing any harmful outcomes to anyone, then they consider that their buying behaviour is morally appropriate, and such feelings motivate them to acquire counterfeit products (Tang et al., 2014). On the other hand, Arli et al. (2015) conducted research involving Malaysians who do not purchase or use counterfeit products to find out the basic motives of their non-involvement in such products, and integrity was observed as one of the essential elements (Harun, 2012). It has been observed that ethics and the purchase of counterfeit products to achieve status have been found to be influencing an individual's buying intentions negatively (Asghar, Ahmad-ur-Rehman, Hussain, & Zulfiqar, 2022; Liao & Hsieh, 2013). Integrity is being reasonable, honest, and having convincing moral values; it has been observed that integrity has a significant but negative association with consumers' buying intentions (Rahpeima et al., 2014). However, in some cultures, it has been found that integrity does not influence consumers' attitudes toward counterfeit products (Wang et al., 2005). Therefore, it is rational to propose that integrity is more expected to influence the buying intentions of an individual towards counterfeit products.

H2: Integrity has a significant relationship with the intention to purchase counterfeit products.

Social orientation

Status consciousness

The Status consciousness is the behavioural propensity to value status and obtain and use goods that deliver status to its consumers, and through such acquisitions, individuals do not strive to enhance their self-image but also communicate it to others as well (Nia & Zaikowsky, 2000). Consumers think about many features of the brand while making a purchase decision which includes an assessment of the brand if it will fulfil their emotional needs (Kumar & Pelton, 2009). Social status is a distinct variable that possibly affects the buying intention of counterfeited goods (Shin & Jin, 2021). The more an individual strive for status, the more they show a positive attitude towards the consumption of status symbol products, and consumers purchase luxury products because these products enhance their social status (Shan et al., 2022). Luxury products generally hold an appeal that spreads beyond their serviceable purposes and delivers the buyers with a seeming status through possession. Previous studies suggest that emotional reaction plays an important role in defining purchase motives (Knight & Kim 2007). Most customers consider various features of the product when involved in a buying decision comprising assessing if the product fulfils their expressive desires (Kumar et al., 2009). Status-conscious individuals with a higher need for exclusivity will acquire luxury products for seemingly fundamental motives, i.e. to enhance self-image.

The estimated duration of a counterfeited luxury product has exhibited a notable impact on individuals' inclination toward acquiring counterfeit luxury products, as individuals do not consider counterfeit products to be inferior to their genuine counterparts (Singh & Sahni, 2019). Through counterfeit products, individuals expect to build their social image and identity (Phau & Dix 2009). Therefore by purchasing these products at lesser prices and pretending as if they are using branded products, individuals strive to link themselves with the impression generated by the branded products (Wilcox et al., 2009). Status-conscious individuals will buy goods with noticeable symbols and signs to exhibit wealth and status. On the other hand, individuals with a desire for exclusivity will buy luxury products but do not consider the label of the brand (Bakhshian et al., 2019). Visible individuals can signify the appearance of a wealthy individual and deceive others; however, internally, they are conscious of being exposed. H3: Status consciousness has a significant relationship with the intention to purchase counterfeit products.

Fashion Consciousness

An individual's level of involvement with stylish attire is recognized as fashion consciousness. To become fashion consciousness, an individual doesn't need to become an opinion leader or fashion innovator. Instead, it is characterized by an individual's interest in fashion (Kautish & Sharma, 2018). Famous fashion products are specifically prone to counterfeiting, and purchasers of counterfeits of such brands are expected to fulfil their need for fashion (Turkyilmaz & Uslu, 2014). It is expected that best brands to place a great value on product features which include brand image, prestige, and fissionability. Penz et al., (2009) suggested that the attitude of smart customers is negatively affected by involvement in fashion, and involvement in fashion strengthens the approach that buying counterfeited goods is a smart behaviour.

Fashion consciousness is also described as the level to which individuals find it essential to be recognized as stylish individuals and the level to which they keep their fashion stuff up to date. Furthermore, fashion items are vehicles of self-expression that normally act as an instrument to impress others (Yunos & Lasi, 2020). Consequently, customer buying behaviour is influenced by their feelings towards fashion products through which they desire to express themselves. Individuals who are not opinion leaders or fashion innovators can still be fashion-conscious by taking an interest in fashion (Yoo & Lee, 2009). Cassidy (2012) suggested that fashion-conscious individuals get more attracted to luxurious products compared to those individuals who are not that much conscious about fashion, as individuals who are conscious about fashion like to acquire the latest and trending products. Research suggests that branded and luxurious products are highly susceptible to manufacturers and counterfeiters as fashion-conscious individuals are highly anxious about having similar status as original articles; therefore, they possibly will get attracted to counterfeits to maintain their fashion-conscious image (Pradeep & Sharma, 2018).

Moreover, the rapid changes in fashion are making individuals consider financial aspects as well while buying original products, and as a result, counterfeits become lucrative for them. Because of the short cycle of life fashion products, most individuals do not wish to spend more money as they do not possess any sort of stability as a result of transforming trends. Therefore, it is further expected that those individuals who are conscious of fashion and do not have enough resources are further expected to buy counterfeit products. However, individuals with high fashion interest may show fewer intentions to purchase counterfeit products (Fernandes, 2013). The influence exerted by fashion elements on an individual is dependent on the individual's attitude towards fashion, this difference can be seen even within similar categories of products, and individuals might differ in terms of their perception of fashion content. Gentry et al. (2006) also recommend that individuals believe counterfeited luxury goods as a comparatively cheaper way of keeping up with the changing fashion trends. By considering the above findings of various studies, it can be concluded that the low price of the counterfeits is not the only reason that influences individuals' intentions to purchase fashion-related counterfeit products, but their involvement in fashion is also one of the contributing factors. Consequently, it is rational to suggest that fashion consciousness is more expected to affect an individual's buying intentions of counterfeit products. The hypothesis considered is

H4: Fashion consciousness has a significant relationship with the intention to purchase counterfeit products.

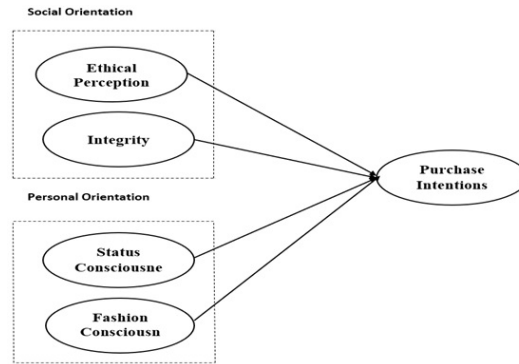


Fig. 1. Theoretical framework

Research Methodology

Sample and data collection

For this study, the researcher obtained a total sample of 334 respondents surveyed by using a simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire used in the study to collect the responses was adapted from different research papers to study the ethical point of view was measured by using the questionnaire developed by Forsyth (1980). Similarly, Integrity was measured by using the scales proposed by Liao and Hsieh (2013). Status was assessed using the scale developed by Eastman et al. (1999). To measure fashion consciousness, the researcher has used the scale developed by Gould and Stern (1989), and to measure the consumer's intention toward counterfeit products, the researcher has used the scale given by Raza et al. (2014). There were two sections of the questionnaire; the initial parts of the questionnaire consisted of structured close-ended questions, whereas the final part of the questionnaire contained questions related to the respondent's demography. A Likert scale of 1 to 5 is used to collect respondents' reactions (1 D strongly disagree/ disagree/ neutral/ agree/ 5D strongly agree). To examine the demographic factors, descriptive statistics were used. While on the other hand, to analyze the responses collected through Licker scale Structural Equation Modeling employed.

Findings and Discussion

Scale reliability

To observe the relationship between the observed and latent variables, the measurement model is used. To examine the reliability of individual items, the measurement model was evaluated initially. For this purpose, the construct reliability was evaluated first, and then the construct validity was evaluated to confirm the reliability and validity of the constructs ahead of assessing the type of relationships that exist between the constructs of the study. It has been suggested that when the Cronbach alpha of each item is greater than 0.60, then it is considered sufficient reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994); on the other hand, it has been emphasized that if the Cronbach alpha values are beyond 0.60, then it is considered to be equitable whereas if the values higher than 0.80 then these values are considered as good values. Likewise, for the item's reliability, analysis was carried out as indicated in Table I. It is essential to mention that no item was deleted during the reliability analysis of the individual items. According to Hair et al. (2011), if the loading value of any indicator is in-between 0.40 and 0.70, then research must consider deleting that indicator from the scale, as a result, the composite reliability will increase. Nevertheless, if the loadings of indicators are below 0.40 then that indicator must always be eliminated from the scale for the reason that these indicators will not have much explanatory power for both latent and observed variables.

To make sure that the validity and reliability of the instrument used in this research, a pilot study was conducted with a sample of 53 respondents. To ensure higher reliability and internal consistency among the items, it was deemed necessary to eliminate some of the items from the questionnaire during the pilot study. This step was indispensable to acquire a suitable average (higher than 0.65) of Cronbach's alpha and therefore ensures greater values of reliability for the used instrument. The result of the reliability analysis shows that the composite reliability was above 0.7, and these composite reliability scores are considered ideal scores; furthermore, the results show that the alpha values of each item were greater than 0.7. It has been suggested by earlier researchers that Cronbach's alpha values must be higher than 0.6 (Devellis, 2003) to determine internal consistency, the alpha values must be higher than 0.80. Similarly, Nunnally (1978) proposed a general guideline where he has submitted that the alpha levels have to be greater than 0.70. Therefore, to establish

the scale's internal consistency, the alpha value 0.70 was applied as a measure for this study. The construct validity was determined by substantiating consistency among the measurement items, and to attain this, a pilot test of the instrument was incorporated.

Table I
Reliability analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach' Alpha
Ethical Perception	6	.816
Integrity	7	.823
Status Consciousness	6	.871
Fashion Consciousness	5	.811
Purchase Intentions	6	.843

Descriptive results

Table II
Descriptive statistics

Demographics Factors	
Gender	
Female	45.21%
Male	54.79%
Total	100.0
Age Group	
19-24	30.3%
25-30	43.7%
31-40	24%
41 and above	2%
Total	100.0
Level of Education	
Undergraduate	23%
Postgraduate	77%
Total	100.0
Employment Status	
Student	52%
Employed	37%
Self Employed	11%
Total	100.0
Have You Ever Bought Counterfeited Items	
Yes	80.3%
No	19.7%
Total	100.0
What Type of Products	
Ladies hand Bags (Designer)	27.6%
Cloths	64.3%
For you purchasing a counterfeited item is	
Ethically Acceptable	69.3%
Ethically Unacceptable	30.7%
Total	100.0

The characteristics and profile of the sample are summarized in Table II. There was a total of 334 respondents, out of which 183 were males, and 151 were females. The sample comprised mainly adults (25-30 years old), and most of the respondents of the study were men (54.79%). The respondents of the study were from different levels of education, out of which most of them were doing postgraduate degrees (77%). The sample contains 52% students, while 37% were employed and 6% were self-employed, and reaming 5% were unemployed. The monthly income of 28% of the respondents was between Rupees. 45-75 thousand, whereas the monthly income of only 8% of respondents was more than 150 thousand.

Further analysis of the descriptive data highlighted some thought-provoking insides about the sample of the study. Interestingly most of them have knowingly purchased a counterfeit product at least once in their life (80.3%), and a good number of respondents have been involved in purchasing more than four counterfeit items (62.4%). The respondents (59.5%) assumed that if purchasing counterfeit

products does not result in causing any harmful outcomes to anyone, buying behaviour is morally appropriate. The most frequently purchased product type among the respondents of the study was clothing items (64.3%), followed by ladies' designer bags (27.6%), whereas only 11.1% of the respondents have been engaged in the acquisition of counterfeit accessories.

Correlation analysis

The purpose of this analysis is to assess the association between variables and to measure how variables are related to each other correlation analysis is used. The person correlation analysis coefficient in Table III shows that there is a moderately significant relationship exist between independent (Ethical Perception, Integrity, Status Consciousness, Fashion Consciousness.640**, .670*, .583**, .521**) and dependent variables (Purchase Intentions). Moreover, all the relationships were found to be positively significant.

Table III
Correlations

	Ethical Perception	Integrity	Status Consciousness	Fashion Consciousness	Purchase Intentions
Ethical Perception	1	-	-	-	-
Integrity	.477**	1	-	-	-
Status Consciousness	.596**	.352**	1	-	-
Fashion Consciousness	.642**	.460**	.386**	1	-
Purchase Intentions	.640**	.670*	.583**	.521**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

Regression

The R² measures the amount of variation caused in the dependent variable because of the presence of independent variables.

Table IV
Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.764 ^a	.583	.578	.540406

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ethical Perception, Integrity, Status Consciousness, Fashion Consciousness.

The R² value in Table IV shows that 58.3% of the variation in purchase intentions is caused by the independent variables, i.e., Ethical Perception, Integrity, Status Consciousness, and Fashion Consciousness.

Table V
ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	134.527	4	33.632	79.094	.000 ^a
Residual	96.078	392	.338		
Total	230.605	333			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ethical Perception, Integrity, Status Consciousness, Fashion Consciousness.

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intentions

Table VI
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Hypothesis
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	1.102	.354			3.110	.002	
Ethical Perception	.494	.068	.506		7.286	.000	H ₁ supported
Integrity	.446	.037	.528		3.250	.000	H ₂ supported
Status Consciousness	.207	.045	.167		4.542	.000	H ₃ supported
Fashion Consciousness	.288	.038	.291		7.492	.000	H ₄ supported

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intentions

The values in the ANOVA table explain if the model is fit for further analysis or not. There is an essential value in this table which is the value of 'F', which has to be higher than .50 to estimate the model fitness as a point of reference for the inquiry. The values in Table V show that the value of F is 79.094; this means that the mode is fit and it fulfils the benchmark requirements. The significance of values in ANOVA should be less than .05 in Table V significant value is .000; this indicates that the model is an overall fit for analysis.

Hypothesis analysis

For the analysis of the hypothesis, regression analysis was used.

H1: Ethical perception has a significant relationship with the intention to purchase counterfeit products.

The analysis of the study has established the relationship between ethical perception and intentions to purchase counterfeit products; therefore, hypothesis H1 is accepted i.e., (β 0.506, t , 7.28, $p > .000$). The results indicate that if individuals perceive purchasing, counterfeit products is unethical then they will demonstrate fewer intentions to purchase counterfeit products vice versa. This shows that individuals are more ethically concerned about their purchases these days, and individuals consider purchasing counterfeit products as an ethical issue. These findings are similar to the findings of Chaudhry and Stumpf (2011) and Phau et al., (2009), as they point out that if individuals have a higher level of ethical behaviour then they are less expected to show counterfeit purchase intention or will not get engaged in the acquisition of counterfeit products.

H2: Integrity has a significant relationship with the intention to purchase counterfeit products.

Integrity consists of other qualities, for example, morality, accountability, manners, and self-esteem. In earlier studies, researchers such as Tang et al. (2014), and Arli et al. (2015), have established that individuals with a higher level of integrity are less expected to support counterfeiting products and will show fewer intentions to acquire counterfeit goods. The results of the research are similar to previous studies, i.e., (β 0.528, t , 3.25, $p > .000$). This indicates that individuals with higher levels of self-accountability and honesty will consider counterfeit products dishonesty with authentic producers.

Besides, individuals with high morality, manners, and self-esteem are considering consuming counterfeit products even though the entire world is condemning this specific business, particularly in luxury products of the fashion industry, which is unacceptable. Individuals with less self-esteem and self-accountability are further expected to purchase this category of products.

H3: Status consciousness has a significant relationship with the intention to purchase counterfeit products.

According to Eastman and Eastman (2011), status consumption is the aspiration of individuals to convey their status in society. Therefore the consumption intensity of products will indicate the degree to which an individual seeks status through purchasing branded products. The results of the study indicate that most individuals obtain counterfeit products for the reason that they want to show that they have enough money to purchase expensive and well-known products. The results of the study validate the association between status consumption and intentions to obtain counterfeit products (β 0.167, t , 4.54, $p > .000$). Therefore, well-known brands with which a higher status is associated will further increase purchase intentions. Because of the higher prices of branded products, only rich customers can manage to pay for these products (Ha & Tam 2015). The results of the research are similar to the results of Phau and Teah's (2009) study as they establish the positive effect of status consumption on the intentions toward counterfeit fashion products. Therefore, those individuals who desire to attain a greater status may be further involved in counterfeited branded products. Consequently, status consumption generates a willingness to buy counterfeited products.

Most individuals support the opinion that everyone cannot afford luxurious products; therefore, for some individuals who wish to express status, counterfeit products are appealing alternatives for them. As a result, status consumption contributes to positive intentions toward counterfeit products.

H4: Fashion consciousness has a significant relationship with the intention to purchase counterfeit products.

According to Jeong et al. (2009), fashion consciousness denotes a person's level of involvement with the fashion and styles of attire. However, it is important to mention here that it does not require an individual to be a fashion pioneer or an opinion leader to be respected as fashion-conscious. Instead, fashion consciousness is categorized according to involvement in apparel and fashion and in an individual's appearance.

The result of the study suggests a positive and significant relationship between fashion consciousness and buying intentions towards counterfeit products, i.e. (β 0.291, t , 7.49, $p > .000$). Previously, researchers such as Cassidy (2012), Pradeep and Sharma (2018) have obtained related results. The results suggest that fashion consciousness significantly and positively influences the intention of an individual to acquire counterfeited goods. From this viewpoint, counterfeit products possibly will be a pleasing alternative for those individuals who are interested in fashion and continue with the contemporary fashion trends. Individuals with convincing fashion consciousness will strongly consider that there are advantages of buying counterfeited fashion products, such as low price, luxurious appearance, and the same particulars of authentic products.

Conclusion

The study provides insights into individuals' buying intentions toward counterfeited products. In the present-day competitive business situation, vendors need to acquire a superior understanding of an individual's buying intentions. It has been observed that producers of branded items are concentrating on acquiring and developing cutting-edge technologies to create further difficulties in producing replicas and counterfeits; however, such arrangements are only addressing the issues that are relevant to business while ignoring the demand side. To develop anti-counterfeit consumption measures, it is essential to comprehend the exact ins and outs of an individual's counterfeit purchase intentions. Manufacturers of famous brands must get directly engaged in developing strategies against counterfeit products. It is important to establishment of new laws in developing countries by focusing on customers and possibly will develop adverse buying behaviours against counterfeit products. On the other hand, producers of luxury items should use status as their advertising concept in support of the authentic item signifying that acquiring counterfeited products suggests that individuals could not manage to attain the wanted status. Earlier studies suggest that the price of counterfeit products is the key influential element; however, the current study has discovered that the status linked with these products also significantly affects an individual's purchase intentions. Furthermore, another vital finding of the study is the fact that the ethical and integrity aspects are not strong regarding buying intentions toward counterfeit products, and this necessitates further research.

Research has revealed that the relationship between fashion consciousness and counterfeit purchase intentions a positive. In other words, individuals with higher fashion consciousness are more expected to consider purchasing counterfeited luxury goods. There are several reasons why fashion-conscious individuals possibly will be more expected to purchase counterfeit goods. Firstly, fashion-conscious individuals may be more concerned with the status and image that comes with owning luxury goods and may be keen to buy counterfeit items with the intention of maintaining this image at a lower cost. Additionally, fashion-conscious individuals might be more aware of the latest fashion trends and styles. As a result, they are more expected to acquire counterfeit products to keep up with these trends.

Implications of the study

The study contributes to the existing theory in several ways. This study contributed by verifying the theory by empirically testing the hypothesized relationships between variables. The suggested model of this research is theoretically grounded, and an in-depth analysis of the model was conducted. Consequently, the results of this research will help future scholars to make use of this framework for similar circumstances of individuals' buying intentions. In addition, this framework can be used to study counterfeit buying behaviour for all product types. Therefore, the results of this study are observed as vigorous, and the model of the study can be used by future researchers to develop a better understanding of counterfeit purchase intentions.

The findings of this study will help businesses to take positive and aggressive actions toward decreasing the size of counterfeits sold by promoting the original goods. The foremost motives why individuals display their preference for counterfeit goods are the high prices of branded items, similar features, and availability of counterfeit products in every market. Manufacturer of branded products needs to focus further on differentiating their products from counterfeits to make it trouble-free for individuals to easily identify the differences between branded and counterfeits. Businesses can achieve this by developing and running promotional campaigns to create awareness and inform individuals regarding the adverse consequences of consuming counterfeit products. Furthermore, they can also draw the attention of individuals towards the features of quality, and by doing so, firms can control and restrict buyers from the acquisition of the counterfeit product.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this research was restricted to luxury or branded products. Even though the researchers have considered a particular category of product for the research, this permits likely control over confusing influences that possibly will be caused by multiple product types. Nevertheless, the responses of individuals may be different subject to the product category, and picking a particular category of the product might limit the likely generalizability of the findings of the study. Therefore, it is suggested that future researchers should consider other low-involvement product categories for their research.

The respondents of the study were from urban areas. For generalization of the results, other segments of society should also be considered with a bigger sample size.

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