

# Materialism and its Role on Consumer Intentions to Purchase Counterfeit Fashion Products: A Study of Consumers of Rajasthan

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the impact of materialism on the consumer attitude and intentions to buy counterfeit products. A conceptual review was done to understand the antecedents and results of counterfeit fashion products' consumption. A questionnaire was designed to trap the responses regarding the demographic variables such as age, gender, education and marital status, and psychographic factors like personality and their relationship with intentions to buy counterfeit fashion products. The questionnaire was administered as the research tool and descriptive statistics and correlation were used to draw significant findings. Materialism refers to the importance people attach to material possessions. For materialistic consumers, possessions have a crucial position in their lives. In the context of counterfeit purchase, both counterfeits and original products can satisfy materialistic mind of many consumers since both products look-alike. The study finds significant relationship between materialism and counterfeit fashion products purchase intentions.

**Keywords:** Counterfeit fashion products, Attitude, Materialism

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## Introduction

Counterfeiting becomes a flourishing industry, especially in Asia. It has not only reduced the profit of global labels, but has also done damage to these firms in terms of brand value and brand prestige. 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. People's attitudes towards investing and spending money are also changing with times. Moreover consumer demand is also increasing due to the pursuit of status goods and the desire of being in tune with fashions 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. 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. 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 & 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).

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, original is something that is "initial, earliest, never having occurred or existed before and not copied",

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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).

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.

## 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 (e.g. Ang *et al.*, 2001; Eisend and Schuchert-Güler, 2006). Fundamentally, consumers will consider purchasing counterfeits of luxury brands when functional needs are met. However, the associated prestige and status symbol that the trademarked brand exudes is an even stronger propellant for consumers to purchase counterfeits of luxury brands (Cordell *et al.*, 1996; Wang *et al.*, 2005).

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. Previous 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). As far as fashion products are concerned females are more likely to be heavy buyers of pirated clothing and accessories (Cheung and Prendergast, 2006). So, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: *Gender has no impact on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products.*

According to the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), the purchase behaviour is determined by the purchase intention, which is in turn determined by attitudes (Ajzen, 1991). When consumers have more favourable attitude towards counterfeiting, chances are higher that they will purchase counterfeit brands. Similarly, if they hold unfavourable attitudes towards counterfeiting, the less are the chances of purchase (Wee *et al.*, 1995). Most people think that almost everyone else is buying counterfeit goods; in addition, they do not even hesitate to admit that they buy them too (Kasl, 2012). It is therefore postulated that:

H2: *Consumers with positive attitudes towards counterfeits of fashion brands have higher intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion brands.*

Among many individual characteristics, Yoo and Lee (2009) found that there are three significant antecedents, i.e. materialism, perceived future social status, and self-image. Materialism refers to the importance people attach to material possessions (Belk, 1985; Solomon, 2009). For materialistic consumers, possessions have a crucial position in their lives. They believe that such possessions are the sources of personal satisfaction, pleasure, and happiness; symbols of success or achievement; and representations of indulgence and luxury (Peter & Olson, 2008; Schiffman, *et al.*, 2010). In the context of counterfeit purchase, both counterfeits and original products can satisfy materialistic mind of many consumers since both products look-alike. In their study, Yoo and Lee (2009) found that materialism positively affects both purchase intention of counterfeits and originals. Therefore it can be postulated:

H3: *Materialism is positively related with the intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion brands*

## Methodology

The overall objectives of the paper are (1) to ascertain the relationship between gender and counterfeit fashion products purchase intention, (2) to investigate consumer attitudes towards purchasing counterfeit fashion products and whether these attitudes correlate with and predict counterfeit consumption and, (3) to

find out the relationship between materialism and intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products.

The sample for the study consists of 100 respondents from Ajmer and Jaipur city of Rajasthan. Convenience sampling was used to reach the respondents. Questions were asked regarding the demographics of the respondents, their attitudes towards counterfeit products, intentions to purchase counterfeits and about their materialistic values. In order to design the questionnaire, established scales were adapted for e.g. Richins and Dawson (1992) Material Values Scale (MVS) was used to assess participants' level of materialism. This scale treats materialism as a value that influences individual's interpretations of their lives and environment (Richins, 2004) with three sub-categories centrality, success and happiness. Data was analyzed using SPSS 20.

## Findings

The sample age ranged from 20-28 years. 45 % of the sample comprised of females and 55 % were male respondents. Cronbach alpha was used to find out the internal consistency of the data. It was decided to

accept a scale to be reliable if the value of Cronbach Alpha was equal to (or greater than) 0.60. Cronbach Alpha for the scale of materialism, purchase intentions and attitudes was found to be 0.942, 0.930 and 0.916 which was quite satisfactory.

## Hypothesis Testing

*H1: There is no impact of gender on the intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products.*

In order to know whether there is any significant difference in the intention of males and females to purchase counterfeit fashion products, chi square was applied on the collected data. Table 2 and 3 show the results. Since the value of  $p > 0.05$  ( $p=0.433$ ) therefore we cannot reject the hypothesis. Result indicate that gender do not have significant impact on intention to purchase counterfeit fashion products.

*H2: Consumers with positive attitudes towards counterfeits of fashion brands have higher intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion brands.*

As per the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen (1991), the purchase behaviour is

**Table 1: Intention to Purchase Counterfeit Fashion Products and Gender (Cross-tabulation)**

Count		Intention		Total
		No	Yes	
Gender	Female	21	24	45
	Male	30	25	55
<b>Total</b>		51	49	100

**Table 2: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.615 <sup>a</sup>	1	.433		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.340	1	.560		
Likelihood Ratio	.615	1	.433		
Fisher's Exact Test				.547	.280
N of Valid Cases	100				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 22.05.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Table 3: Correlations****Correlations**

		Attitude	Intention	Materialism
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	100		
Intention	Pearson Correlation	<b>.922**</b>	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	100	100	
Materialism	Pearson Correlation	<b>.801**</b>	<b>.884**</b>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100

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

determined by the purchase intention, which in turn is determined by attitudes. Questions like “counterfeits of fashion brands are as reliable as the original version” and “counterfeits of fashion brands provide similar functions as the original version”, etc. were asked to know the attitude of consumers towards counterfeit fashion products. Table 3 shows that there is a high positive correlation of 0.922 between positive attitudes towards counterfeits of fashion products and intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion brands. Hence we accept the hypothesis. This indicates that people who hold a positive attitude towards counterfeits are more likely to purchase them.

*H3: Materialism is positively related with the intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion brands.*

Materialistic values have long been established to have an influence on consumer decision making towards purchase intentions. In order to determine whether the consumer own materialistic values Richins and Dawson’s (1992) 18-item scale of materialism was used. It consisted of statements like I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes; some of the most important achievements in life include acquiring material possessions; I do not place much emphasis on the amount of material objects people own as a sign of success and the things I own say a lot

about how well I am doing in life, etc. We find a high positive correlation of .884 (Table 3) between materialistic values and intention to purchase counterfeits of fashion products, therefore we accept the hypothesis.

### Discussions and Conclusion

Through this study we find that gender has no influence on the purchase intention of counterfeit fashion products. Previous studies have reported some differences in the intentions of males and females as far as technical products like pirated software and CDs are concerned. However despite the fact that markets are loaded with more female fashion products and females do form a major segment for fashion products, there is no difference in their intentions to purchase counterfeit fashion products as compared to males.

Theories have proven that attitudes are antecedents to intentions. Positive attitudes towards a product or service are likely to lead towards positive purchase intentions. We too, in this study, find a positive relationship between attitude and intentions.

People who are materialistic are more inclined to purchase counterfeit fashion products since they believe that things are necessary to satiate their materialistic intentions.

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